

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus / Public



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	21 November 2007
Dyddiad Cyfarfod/ Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:	14 November 2007
Lleoliad/Location:	Dixton Road, Monmouth
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Residential
Developer/Datblygwr:	Redcliffe Homes [Tom Sheppard]
Pensaer/Architect:	Heath Avery Architects [Malcolm Sutton]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Monmouthshire CC
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Application submitted 18 September 2007
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Wendy Richards (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer) Carole-Anne Davies (CEO)	Howard Wainwright Roger Ayton Ashley Bateson
Lead Panellist:	Howard Wainwright

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The site for development, formerly occupied by Dixton clinic, fronts Dixton Road to its north, which is one of the key approaches to Monmouth town centre. The site is located within the Monmouth conservation area and it is thought that the remains of the old town wall run beneath the site's eastern boundary. The developer Redcliffe Homes, who also own the site, have commissioned further archaeological investigation. The number of 24 dwelling units is supported by the Local Authority, with a mixture of one and two bedroom units, and 30 percent of them are affordable.

The proposed development is brought northward and maintains a setback from the road for a planted area, with an additional wing lying along the western edge. The layout responds to views to the south, to May Hill and other local landmarks. The existing vehicle access from the Burgage to the south is retained, in line with the Highways Authority's requirements. The parking ratio is 1:1 with visitor parking of six spaces and cycle parking is provided at 1:1 ratio. Pedestrian access from Dixton Road is discouraged by the Highways Authority to avoid on-street parking and deliveries from Dixton Road. The change of level of the site limits the possibilities for level access. The elevation of the three storey building is broken down vertically by different colour rendering and different setbacks and the flat roofs step down from west to east. Of the three different massing options considered, the architect believes that the flat roof option works best to address the buildings on either side.

Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes Code 3 is the aspirational target for environmental performance. Timber frame, local brick and render, highly insulated walls and roofs are intended to be implemented. Thermal modelling has not yet been carried out.

The Local Authority supports the residential use on the site, but considers the current design is out of scale, and the flat roof option does not reflect or enhance the local conservation character.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel welcomed the design approach to move the building line closer to Dixton Road and to provide a green, semi-public/private landscape space between the pedestrian footpath and the building. However, we thought that more consideration should be given to establishing a closer architectural relationship to Lancaster House. We queried the distance between the southern wing and the western boundary and thought that the distance from habitable rooms to the site boundary of 3.5 to 4.5 metres was too close and may cause overlooking issues.

The Panel was disappointed by the designer's interpretation of the town's character. We pointed out that the Monmouth Conservation Area is dominated by pitched roofs, gables and dormers with an established level of detailing and facade proportion. We found the proposed flat roof solution to be alien and unsympathetic to the wealth of detailed information which could be gleaned from this context. The Panel supported the design approach of using level differences across the site to split the building vertically, and we considered the building could be higher than two storeys. However, the architectural form and massing needs to be executed more convincingly as an extension of the existing urban form and with reference to local examples of turning corners, to reflect the Monmouth character. The Panel was pleased to see that a massing and elevation study was carried out, but considered that the wrong option was chosen. We suggested that the design team do more contextual analysis to inform the scale, proportion and subdivision of the building elevation. The Panel considered the corner at the east end of the building in particular needed to be addressed, since this is the first element to be seen on the approach to the town centre.

The Panel felt strongly that there should be a pedestrian entrance to the building direct from Dixon Road, for ease of access and to provide an active frontage. The Dixon Road frontage should form the main entrance to the building, instead of bringing the pedestrian access through the rear car park. We supported the design team's wish for a further reduction of parking spaces to provide more amenity space for the residents, including the retention of a substantial part of the green triangle in front of the Almshouses. Safe pedestrian access should also be provided to the refuse storage area on the southern boundary. We supported the provision of cycle parking at 1:1.

The Panel was disappointed to find that there was a lack of substantial commitment to sustainability in this project, especially given that a planning application has been submitted. The Panel agreed that Sustainable Homes Code 3 would be an appropriate standard for this development, but regretted the lack of more detailed information. In particular, more consideration should be given to the use of sustainable materials and the internal layout revised to avoid single aspect, north facing units.

The Panel considered the current access statement was far from complete, and urged the design team to consult on all aspects prior to finalising it. It was confirmed that level access was possible for only two units to the south. It would not be possible to share the Lancaster House access from Dixon Road because of the high boundary wall. The Panel urged the Local Authority and the development team to cooperate with the Almshouse redevelopment to share public space and servicing.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review this scheme, and supported the principle of a brownfield site, town centre residential development. However, we consider this an unacceptable response to the site and the context, and recommend a resubmission of the planning application to resolve the outstanding major issues. In particular:

- The massing and roofline of the proposed design is problematic, although we have no objection to the building height. We think that the pitched roof options would be more acceptable in this context.
- We support the proposed building line and frontage but consider it vitally important that there should be pedestrian access direct from Dixton Road.
- Given the town centre location, the number of parking spaces should be reduced, to allow for a more careful landscape treatment providing flexible public amenity space.
- The Panel encourage the team and the Local Authority to coordinate this development with the Almshouse site, and to maximise common public space and servicing.
- We are greatly concerned by the lack of consideration and commitment to sustainability measures, especially at this stage of design development.

Diwedd/End

NB A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.