

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential

DESIGN
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CYMRU

Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio
Design Review Report: 11 March 2005

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd:
Meeting Date / Material Submitted: 2 March 2005

Lleoliad/Location: Hood Road, Barry

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun
Scheme Description: Entrepreneurship Centre
Comprising of 8 workshops, 15
office units and Economic
Development Office

Cleient/Asiant:
Client/Agent: Vale of Glamorgan Council and
WDA (Barry Action)

Pensaer/Architect: Austin Smith Lord
[Revti Kerai, Dennis Hellyar]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Vale of Glamorgan
Planning Authority: [Bob Gun, Emma Smith,
Tom Dunnon]

Consultants: Davis Langdon
[Jonathan Thomas]

Statws Cynllunio:
Planning Status: Pre-planning

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:

Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Wendy Hall
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Nigel Hanson
Howard Wainwright Douglas Hogg

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Gillian Wulff
Peter Roberts**

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This proposal is for an entrepreneurship centre, located around 500 meters south east of Barry town centre. The proposal incorporates a mix of office and workshop units, which are intended to provide an opportunity for young businesses to develop. The scheme has been initiated by Barry Action, an informal partnership between the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the WDA. The primary aim of this partnership is to encourage socio-economic development within and around Barry.

This proposal lies within an area designated by the Council as the Commercial, Educational and 'Heritage' Quarter. A masterplan has been constructed which details the full development of the quarter and includes additional buildings and uses, including a medical centre and a number of live-work units. Indicated through the masterplan is an improvement to the existing connectivity of the site, with the possible connection to Barry Island and Barry Centre identified. It is intended that the development of the site would result in a tight urban grain with well defined streets and a high quality public realm.

The site lies on a plateau, and is highly visible from the surroundings. Adjacent to the proposal site is the pump house which is a substantial building with a distinct character, including a significant chimney. There is the possibility that this will be converted in the future to become a Centre for Life Long Learning.

The building itself consists of a central core with two wings of equal size, each with workshops at ground level and office space on the first floor. The units vary in size to offer opportunities for a range of users. The intention is for the front of the building to portray a highly commercial image, despite the ground floor workshop uses, with the rear of the building having more of a light industrial character.

The key elements of the surrounding context that have been taken into consideration in developing this proposal include the character of the pump house and Barry station signal box. The proposal seeks to maintain the character of the railway and industrial buildings of the area through the use of materials and detailing. The use of a heavy brick at ground floor, with lighter brick at first floor is intended to reflect this and the use of timber relates to that on the signal box.

The Vale of Glamorgan Council are in general support of the proposal. The planning policy supports the proposed use and they have no major concerns regarding the design. The proposal is likely to go to Planning Committee in April.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

Although the Panel welcome the production of a masterplan, there are general concerns regarding its implementation. Phase two does not appear to be forthcoming and therefore the likelihood of creating the tight urban grain desired is questionable.

The Panel encourage the Council to retain or actively renew the masterplan and endeavour to secure funding for phase two. Without the further development coming to fruition, the

proposed building becomes isolated and elements of the design that are intended to be hidden, such as the bin store, will become visible from the main access point.

The masterplan previously created links through the site that necessitated new links through the listed building. The Panel feel that if this proposal is no longer likely, the masterplan needs to be reconsidered.

The Panel are disappointed to see that the glazed roof light has been abandoned but recognise that financial constraints have led to this. We feel that as this structure no longer performs this function, its inclusion within the scheme should be reconsidered.

The building has a deep plan form. This results in the first floor space being less than ideal and as the roof pitch appears to be guided by the adjacent pump house form, this culminates in an enormous unused roof void. The Panel questions the floorplate of the building and considers that a more appropriate and less expensive solution could be prepared.

It is considered that the inclusion of windows on the front of the building within the workshop spaces may create difficulties in the operation of these units. Thought should be given as to how this issue could be resolved appropriately. They also appear to be very similarly detailed on both front and rear elevations, whereas the orientation of the building suggests alternative treatments.

The Panel feel that the location of the store room in the building needs reconsidering. This is one of the most prominent parts of the building and it is somewhat of a lost opportunity that it is not home to a more active use. It was suggested that the central core area would provide a social hub for the building and yet the ground floor layout precludes this by providing separate entrances away from the core. The 'Chinese hat' plan form also results in a restricted central area and car park access when this is likely to be the main entrance to the building. The plan form appears to slavishly echo the masterplan and we question that presumption.

At present there is a minimal external works scheme, inexpensive paving and road finishes and virtually no planting proposed. The Panel consider this to be a crucial element of the proposal due to the exposed nature of the site, particularly when there is such uncertainty as to whether phase two will be developed. Tree and shrub planting should be included in order to screen views of unattractive parts of the design such as the bin store and minimise the impact of the boundary fencing. We therefore urge the development of a detailed and extensive planting strategy to accompany this proposal.

We welcome the measures made towards sustainable development and the commitment to achieving a BREEAM rating of 'very good'.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel understands that the masterplan has dictated the form of this proposal and we encourage future development to be in accordance with the masterplan. We do suggest however, that it should be revised in order to improve the connectivity of the site whilst protecting the listed buildings. In addition:

- The Panel understands that the financial constraints of the project have restrained certain aspects of the design. As such we feel that the inclusion of the roof light

structure, that now performs no function other than providing natural ventilation, should be reconsidered.

- It is considered that the high ceilings in the office units will create uncomfortable spaces and as such the section of the building should be reviewed.
- Whilst the Panel acknowledge the need for a store room within the building, its location at the most prominent part of the building seems inappropriate. The Panel would prefer to see an active use in this location.
- The quality of the external works around the building and connections to the wider public realm around the site are crucial to the building's setting. It is strongly recommended that these are reconsidered, particularly the planting proposals, to integrate the building more into its surroundings and to soften the impact of the built form on the landscape.
- The Panel considers that a review of the basic floorplate and section of the proposal may well bring about a more economic scheme which better suits the site and provides better quality workshop and office space and a more appropriate central core.

Diwedd/End

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