

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	17 September 2008
Issue Date:	26 September 2008
Scheme Location:	Denbigh
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Pre-application [outline consent granted 2006]

## Part1: Presentation

The County Council brought forward policy in their UDP to allow enabling development on this site linked to the retention of the existing Grade II and II\* listed buildings. Outline consent for residential use was granted in 2006 with the conditions that: £4.6 million [index linked] was paid into a restoration fund by September 2009 at the latest; and that development briefs for the different phases were approved before the submission of reserved matters applications. A site-wide masterplan was also required. Listed Building consent has been granted for selective demolition.

A design brief for phase 1 was received by the Local Authority and DCFW the day before the review, which did not allow time for sufficient consideration. The Prince's Regeneration Trust has indicated a keen interest in the development of this site, and a meeting has been arranged between the Trust and the Local Authority.

## **Summary of key points arising from discussion, to be read in conjunction with Part 2 of this report.**

The Panel agrees with the Local Authority's strategy for the site, including enabling residential development and selective demolition. The proposal is therefore acceptable in principle but requires major changes in layout, design and sustainability measures:

- A revised plan needs to be developed, addressing issues of social sustainability, mixed use, community facilities and connectivity with the town including public transport links.
- Design codes, a phasing programme and a justification of the proposed number of units in terms of overall impact on the area, together with any mitigating proposals, should be considered within this revised plan.
- The possibility of including some affordable housing should be pursued.

- Different character areas should be developed. Soft edges should be maintained and a village-style development concentrated in the centre of the site.
- The treatment of streets and parking areas should be re-designed following the principles set out in Manual for Streets
- CSH Level 3 should be achieved as a minimum, and BREEAM Very Good for non-residential uses. The building layout should respond to solar orientation. A district heating system should be included and space allowed for a centralised energy centre. Natural sustainable materials should be specified.
- Every effort should be made to find a viable alternative use for the main listed building. It is vitally important that this is refurbished sympathetically to attract future investment. Similarly, any new development should address and complement the appearance and setting of the listed buildings.

## **Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full**

The Panel welcomed the masterplan drawing [titled Design Concept 2] presented by MCK well in advance of the review, which appears to respect the major trees and woodland, and to protect the green parkland to the southeast. The vistas culminating in significant buildings or landscape elements, and the layout showing an orthogonal arrangement close to the listed buildings, becoming more informal towards the edges of site, are all positive aspects of this proposal.

However, the detailed development and interpretation of this drawing, as shown in the design brief, does not maintain or continue this initial promise and resembles a traditional housing estate. There is no evidence of the emergence of character areas or variation in the built form. The question of solar orientation appears not to have been considered. The elevations presented suggest a pastiche design which would be completely inappropriate to the elegance and authenticity of the setting and extremely difficult to achieve without reverting to the use of traditional glazing systems which do not comply with current regulations.

A revised plan should be brought forward which focuses development around the important buildings and maintains a soft edge to the site, and which addresses the sustainability agenda. Design guides or codes could be employed which, once agreed, would ease the reserved matters process. We have no objection to the proposed density per se, but there should be a justification for the proposed number of units, in terms of overall impact as well as financial viability. Given the size of the site and its context, a phasing programme should also be agreed prior to commencement.

Ideally this would be a genuinely mixed use, mixed tenure scheme, to form the basis for the development of a sustainable community. With regard to affordable housing provision, we regret that a commuted sum was allowed 3-4 years ago, as an offsite contribution. There may yet be a possibility to include some affordable housing, without compromising the profitability of the scheme, by inviting an RSL to finance their own small development within the site.

Any proposal for live/work units is welcomed and we would like to see provision for food production and allotments. The suggestion that this development might help to save the

local school is positive, but it is unfortunate that a proposal for healthcare use on the site was not pursued.

In terms of social sustainability this proposal is not encouraging and we fear it may develop into a gated community. Its layout suggests a strong reliance on car-based transport and the parking arrangements – in hammerheads and unsupervised parking courtyards – is not in accordance with best practice as set out in Manual for Streets.

We support the commitment to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes level 3, as a minimum, and we think that a site-wide district heating system should be included in future planning applications as an integral part of the design development. Renewable generation should be exploited and a comprehensive sustainability strategy presented. Natural, locally sourced materials should be specified and uPVC doors and windows should not be consented. A sustainable drainage strategy should be developed for the whole site and permeable surfaces used where possible.

**The Design Commission for Wales Design Review Panel and staff welcome further consultation and will be happy to provide further feedback on this report and/or where appropriate, to receive further presentations. Thank you for consulting the Commission and please keep in touch with us about the progress of your project.**

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

#### **Appendix 1: Attendees**

<b>Asiant/Client/Datblygwr: Agent/Client/Developer</b>	Not present
<b>Pensaer/Architect: Consultants:</b>	Not present
<b>Awdurdod Cynllunio/Planning Authority:</b>	Denbighshire CC [Phil Ebbrell, Ian Weaver]
<b>Y panel adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Alan Francis [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer]</b>	Phil Roberts Martin Knight Michael Griffiths Ed Colgan
<b>Lead Panelist:</b>	Michael Griffiths
<b>Sylwedyddion/Observers:</b>	None present

