

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	14th October 2009
Issue Date:	28th October 2009
Scheme Location:	Royal Gatehouse, Tenby
Scheme Description:	Residential, Hotel, Commercial
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

The original Royal Gatehouse hotel, which was to have been refurbished, was destroyed by fire in 2006. The Local Authority has determined that any redevelopment on the site would have to replace the original building in a replica style. Cadw has advised that the main facade of the listed cinema, which is also part of the site, will need to be retained.

The proposal is for a 68 bed hotel, 37 apartments, 2 commercial units and a new cinema. A new public square will be created in front of the old cinema and all major uses will open on to it. There is a possibility that White Lion Street will be pedestrianised up to Upper Frog Street. All servicing will be from Deer Park Road to the rear of the site. Terms have already been agreed with a hotel operator.

The Local Authority stated that this is a key site within the Conservation Area and the National Park. The local community greatly regret the loss of the old hotel and the consensus between all parties is that a replica replacement is the best solution. The contemporary element of the scheme has proved more controversial. Planning officers wish to protect the hotel use on the site and welcome the provision of 13 affordable housing units on land to the north of the site.

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

The Panel was pleased to review this proposal which has huge local significance. The general design approach to the massing and elevations works well and we support this scheme with the following minor recommendations:

- The replica approach will need very careful attention to detail, to be successful.
- The car parking entrance and grilles should be treated as recessive elements, with details in keeping with the replica design. Provided this is done, we reluctantly accept the vehicle access arrangement.
- We welcome the new public square and this use should be reinforced by the pedestrianisation of White Lion Street. The design of the public realm needs further development in conjunction with traffic calming or preferably pedestrianisation of White Lion Street.
- We support the contemporary design approach for the link building but the elevational treatment needs to be simplified, with particular attention to fenestration, materials and colours.
- The junction of the hotel and apartment blocks needs to be refined with a more sophisticated treatment.
- The main entrance of the hotel should be made more legible without relying on signage.
- The rear service access makes good use of the whole site but we are not convinced that servicing arrangements for the hotel have been adequately resolved.
- We urge the design team to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel acknowledged that this is a difficult site to develop, given the historic importance attached to it, as well as the restricted access. We would have liked to see images of the building to be replaced, but were assured that there are full records which have been faithfully interpreted, although the original proportions have been changed. While the ridge height is roughly the same, the new scheme includes an extra floor by using reduced floor-to-ceiling heights. The top storey is housed behind a mansard roof which is set back from the main facade to reduce visibility and provide a high level balcony for residents.

In this context we broadly supported this design approach while noting that the continuous storey line on the elevations, independent of the street gradient, signals that this is not the original Georgian building. The introduction of different height cill and head levels to the middle building would reduce the visual evidence of this. The success of a 'replica' building will rely heavily on the authenticity of details such as glazing bars, stone quoins, window reveals and rainwater goods and we recommend these details are conditioned as part of a planning permission.

We had some reservations about the grade access to the semi-basement car park off High Street which, together with the adjacent grilles, degrades the streetscape with dead frontages. We understood the problems associated with alternative access from the rear and we accepted the proposed arrangement, welcoming the green courtyard as a residential amenity. No attempt should be made to decorate the parking grilles with public art and these elements should remain recessive in the overall elevations. The gate detailing should be sympathetic to the overall treatment, in keeping with a mews access for example.

Every effort should be made to ensure that the new public square outside the cinema and hotel reception is a vibrant and active space. We think it is essential that the adjacent street is pedestrianised, or at least that traffic calming measures are in place and pedestrian priority is established. This will be helped by the rear servicing arrangement and the fact that no extra traffic along White Lion Street will be generated by this scheme. The square itself should incorporate an integrated approach to public art, lighting, landscape and shelter and it would be preferable for these elements to form part of the planning conditions.

The Panel supports the scale and massing of the link building but we think it should touch the older buildings more lightly. In particular the circulation core between the hotel and apartment block, which could act as a neutral/recessive element detaching the two main masses, is currently too clumsy and needs refinement. The layout and elevations are too busy and we noted seven different elevational treatments. The scheme as a whole would benefit from a reduced palette of materials and types of fenestration. Local references are meaningless if the materials themselves are not local or authentic. The use of colours across the whole development needs to be carefully handled to ensure that they work well together. A good lighting design for the square and the buildings fronting it would be a sound investment for attracting evening activity. The signage is currently much too overstated.

The hotel entrance is weak and not sufficiently legible, as it is viewed from Upper Frog Street, and this is not helped by the location of the signage. While we appreciate that the canopy on the south east facade of the apartment block replaces the original, it will compromise daylight access into the ground floor units and further narrow the pavement at this point.

The arrangement whereby some of the hotel bedrooms appear to be overlooking commercial space in the old Pavilion cinema, which would be under a separate tenancy, is problematic.

We commended the various green initiatives, such as centralised gas boilers, green roofs and rainwater recycling. We would like to see the team aim for a higher Code standard than the minimum planning requirement.

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

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr:
Agent/Client/Developer

Gatehouse Development [S. Fry]

Pensaer/Architect:

C2J architects [Keith Chichester,
Michael Chichester]

AwdurdodCynllunio/
Planning Authority

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park
[Vicki Hirst]

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:
Design review panel:
John Punter [Chair]
Cindy Harris [Officer]
Lynne Sullivan

Ann-Marie Smale
Glen Dyke
Martin Knight
Steve Smith

Lead Panellist:

Ann-Marie Smale

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Toby Adam [DCFW]
Chris Jones [DCFW]