

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	19th August 2009
Issue Date:	3rd September 2009
Scheme Location:	Gallifords Yard, Newport
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

This proposal is for a block of 38 residential units on the east side of the River Usk in Newport, adjacent to the Grade II* listed George Street bridge.

Undercroft parking is provided with access to six stair cores, each accessing two units per level. All apartments will be dual aspect with riverside views and balconies. All habitable rooms will be naturally daylit and have mechanical ventilation, with openable windows. Parking is provided at a ratio of 1.5 parking spaces per unit. 25% of the apartments will be allocated for social housing. The development will achieve Code for Sustainable Homes [CSH] Level 3 and 20% of energy use will be from renewable resources.

The Local Authority have some concerns about the elevations, particularly the riverside one, although they are somewhat reassured by the 3D images presented at the review. Their main concerns relate to the relationship with the listed bridge and views from across the river and new footbridge, along with the impact on the existing terrace housing in Maindee to the north east.

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 scheme, in the context of the continuing redevelopment of Newport city centre. However, we are unable to support the proposal for the following reasons:

- The scheme does not respond adequately to its context, either to the Victorian terraces to the north, or the emerging developments along the river and the bridge to the south.

- The creation of improved linkages and enhanced permeability should be a key starting point for the development of this site.
- The architectural treatment, particularly on the riverside frontage, is unrelieved and needs further refinement.
- The arrangement of balconies and fenestration should be reviewed to ensure usable external spaces and good levels of daylight internally.
- A detailed sustainability strategy should be developed urgently to inform future design work and ensure appropriate decisions are made, starting with measures to reduce energy demand.
- A landscape strategy needs to be integrated with the rest of the design development, to ensure a positive relationship with the surrounding public realm and to give purposeful resolution to areas immediately surrounding the buildings.
- The condition and species of the trees on the sloping bank to the rear should be evaluated with a view to improving access to the riverside.
- We support the provision of undercroft parking which will enable a high quality approach to landscape and the public realm.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The development appears to be an isolated block at the end of a cul-de-sac. The Panel felt that this was not acceptable for a city centre development of this size. Every effort should be made to provide linkages with Morris Street and Cyril Street to the north, together with improved pedestrian access along the riverside extending to the new footbridge and the City Vizion development. The thickly treed boundary to the north east will be a challenge for improving access and permeability, but we think it is important to address this. In particular the view from the end of Cyril Street should be reconsidered, which is currently shown as a refuse area. It is unfortunate that no sections were provided to indicate the contextual change of levels from north east to south west, but we were told that this was approximately 6 metres.

The riverside frontage should present an open character and form, and we considered that the alternative layout of blocks at right angles to the river, with pockets of green in between, had not been fully investigated. The team stated that this arrangement would not deliver the necessary density, and they did not consider it appropriate to replicate the Victorian block structure. The landscape in front of the proposed block appears institutional, and requires a more informal treatment.

The Panel was not convinced by the references to a 1930's aesthetic and did not think that this had in fact been carried through into the design. We understood that the design driver was the creation of dual aspect internal spaces with river views and terraces. However, we questioned the actual benefit of the north facing balconies, with the same uniform depth as the south facing ones, and with the risk of overlooking properties to the north. Fewer balconies with optimum orientation and more usable space would provide a better amenity for residents. Overall, the rear elevation illustrated in the 3D modelling appears more successful than the front, and the riverside elevation needs further design development.

The design team stated that the proposal was intended to be deliberately subservient to the bridge, at effectively 4.5 storeys, and in their opinion a high rise development on this

site would not be viable. They maintained their view that traffic noise from the bridge would pass over the building and confirmed that an acoustic consultant will be part of the team. Adequate ventilation will be provided by the mechanical ventilation system without the need to open windows.

The team have anticipated the requirement to meet CSH Level 3 as a minimum standard of environmental performance and carbon reduction, particularly as the development may be built by a Registered Social Landlord as social housing. However, a detailed and site-specific sustainability strategy should be developed and included with the Design and Access statement as part of the planning application, and used to inform the design development. Currently there is no indication as to how the standard will be met, nor any justification for the proposal to generate 20% of energy from renewables. At this stage priority should be given to reducing energy demand as far as possible, before specifying renewable generation. Technologies such as air source heat pumps or solar PV will need to be evaluated as part of this strategy. We noted that the proposal to place PV panels on a north east facing roof would not be appropriate.

Daylight levels should be checked as adequate especially for the deep plan rooms, and this may affect the fenestration proposed. It was confirmed that the vertical glazing slots shown on the elevations were obscured on the lower half. We noted that only two of the cores were provided with lifts and questioned this arrangement.

The Panel felt strongly that this scheme should make a positive contribution to the city and the local community. We looked to the Local Authority in particular to facilitate an improved riverside walkway with maximum permeability.

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

Mr N Karbani

Pensaer/Architect:

RFP Architects [Jonathan Williams
Lindsay Williams]

Consultants:

RPS [Colin Pullan]

Awdurdod Cynllunio/
Planning Authority

Newport CC [Tracey Brooks,
Joanne Davidson]

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:
Design review panel:
Wendy Richards [Chair]
Cindy Harris [Officer]
Richard Parnaby
Ann-Marie Smale

Ashley Bateson
Jonathan Hines
Lynne Sullivan

Lead Panellist:

Ashley Bateson

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Takayuki Kumazawa, Okayama University
Chris Tudor, Consultant.