

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 5 July 2006
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: Gilfach Goch

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Primary Care Centre
Scheme Description:

Cleient/Asiant: Rhondda Cynon Taff
Client/Agent: Local Health Board
[Steve Davies]
Welsh Health Estates
[Mallory Armstrong,
Andrew Eustace]

Developer/Datblygwr: GPI [Tony Coke]

Pensaer/Architect: Willdig Lammie
[Martin Garner,
Paul Treweeks]

Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Boyer Planning
Planning Consultants: [Robin Williams]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: RCT CBC [Phil Ratcliffe]
Planning Authority:

Statws Cynllunio: Pre-planning
Planning Status:

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
John Punter (cadeirydd/chair) Ewan Jones
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Phil Roberts
Michael Griffiths Kedrick Davies

Howard Wainwright

Lead Panellist:

Michael Griffiths

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This proposal is part of an ongoing programme for the development of new General Practice (GP) surgeries in Rhondda Cynon Taff. There has been difficulty in attracting GPs to work in the area and the poor condition of the current estate is not conducive to recruitment. The procurement of health care buildings in general is moving towards designed proposals and away from cost-led schemes.

The site is located on the western side of the B4564 between the newer and older parts of Gilfach Goch village, to the south and north respectively. Immediately to the north is the Swn yr Afon nursing and residential home, screened from the proposed site by dense planting. Across the B4564 to the east is a row of Victorian terraces, some of which are in poor condition, and a 20th century community hall. The brief is explicit in terms of the required accommodation and functions, which have been developed in conjunction with Department of Health guidelines into a plan layout. The proposed plan creates a two storey building with a cranked floor plan and a double height central reception area, with front and rear entrances, serving two wings of accommodation and with a single storey pharmacy at the front.

The building is oriented north/south. The shallow roof monopitches echo the gently sloping valley sides. The design targets a NEAT 'Excellent' rating. Exposed thermal mass helps to control internal temperatures and the zoning of internal spaces allows some areas to operate independently. Consulting and treatment areas will be air conditioned because of the need for acoustic privacy. There are good views to the south and west which are exploited, and trees provide some solar shading to the west. Materials will be chosen to satisfy the client's desire for a statement modern building, and there is nothing to be drawn from the immediate context in terms of appropriate local traditions.

The Local Authority representative stated that although the site is outside the current settlement boundaries and they would like to see this facility remain within the village, there are few alternative sites. The site adjoins an existing bus route, and in the view of the authority is acceptable.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel agreed that the site is in a good location, adjoining a main road and linking the two communities of Gilfach Goch. We supported the aim of creating a landmark building on this site.

However, the Panel did not believe that the quality of the design, as presented, offered any confidence for the creation of a landmark building. The plethora of monopitched roofs at different angles appeared incoherent and the fenestration of small square windows did not respond to solar orientation or views. We thought that the overcomplicated, cranked plan and much of the elevational detail was unnecessary and unsuccessful from a design point of view, and would be costly to construct and maintain. The number of awkward junctions and intersections would lead to difficult details. Opportunities have been missed to allow natural light penetration to the ground floor by reducing first floor corridor widths.

Although the Panel has no objection to a strong roof form, the current roof planes appear random and do not provide solar shading from the west. The development of the plan form, the three dimensional form, the roof and fenestration appear very disconnected. **The Panel would like to see a stronger and simpler form emerge, with the elevation and plan developed in tandem, and the budget spent on improving the quality of materials and details.**

The Panel thought that the relationship of the building with the street was poor, which in turn prejudices the site's security. The building appears to orientate itself towards the valley and the south-westerly views, and to ignore the community to the north. The entrances are not prominent or legible, and the location of the refuse collection and service area detracts from the street frontage. In terms of security, the design team have adopted a 'wait and see' approach, with the building itself made secure with shutters, appropriate planting carried out, and the site left unfenced. The Panel thought that it might be better to install a good quality perimeter barrier from the outset, which should be part of the overall concept of the siting and design of the building.

It was suggested that the building could be moved further back on the site and the car park moved next to the road, but levels on the site would make this difficult. It was confirmed that the parking provision of 60 spaces is within the Standing Conference Parking Recommendation for this site of 58-70.

The Panel noted that aluminium cladding was not a robust material for an area where vandalism might be expected. Aluminium is a high embodied energy material, even when recycled, and its use in large quantities for roofing sheets was not considered an environmentally positive choice. The Panel suggested that the possibility of green roofs be reconsidered and confirmed their long term viability. We were informed that solar water heating was the most likely renewable technology to be included, and we agreed that this was one of the most cost-effective options available, with bio-mass heating being another.

We would prefer to see a much more limited palette of materials which should help make a better connection with the site and context. Whilst modern cladding materials might be appropriate above ground level, a change of materials might create opportunities to connect more with the building's context and also, in tandem with fenestration changes, to improve the inherent security of the building.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel is supportive of the design-led approach, the desire for a landmark building and particularly the commitment to a NEAT Excellent rating. We applaud the choice of site and the intention to use the landscape to create a therapeutic environment. We consider these proposals to be an acceptable response to the site and the brief but some major revisions are necessary. In particular:

- There is an overriding need for simplification in the site plan, layout, elevations, roof treatment and materials used, coupled with a more integrated design approach which addresses the elements above as part of a holistic concept for the building.
- A building with a single roof form and a high quality of materials and detailing would represent better value for money.
- The definition of the front and back of the building, and its relationship with the street, need to be revisited and clarified, especially with regard to security impacts.

- The entrances should be clearly defined and legible.
- We think the parking provision could be reduced.
- We urge the team to reconsider a green roof treatment and to adopt other sustainable measures including solar water heating and a biomass boiler.

Diwedd/End

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