

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus / Public



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| Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report: | 17 October 2006 |
| Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted: | 4th October 2006 |
| Lleoliad/Location: | Holywell, Flintshire |
| Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description: | Community hospital |
| Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent: | NE Wales NHS Trust [Andrew Williams] Welsh Health Estates [Nigel Davies] |
| Pensaer/Architect: | TACP [Steve Taylor] |
| Cynllunio/Consultants: | Gifford [Anthony McGlory] |
| Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority: | Flintshire CC |
| Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status: | Planning application approved May 2006 |
| Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel: | |
| Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) | Douglas Hogg |
| Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) | Michael Griffiths |
| Phil Roberts | Ed Colgan |
| Lead Panellist: | Michael Griffiths |
| Sylwedyddion/Observers: | Charlie Deng, Design Review Assistant |

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The proposal is for a 44 bed community hospital. The steeply sloping triangular site faces north and runs alongside the B5432 into Holywell. It is close to the A55, within half a mile of both existing hospitals, and adjacent to a GP practice. The site entrance is from the north, off the lane which leads to the GP practice, and the 100 space car park is located in the north east corner. Site excavation and the need for retaining walls have been minimised.

The main entrance to the building faces north and is located on the same contour as the access point. There is a separate service and staff access from the rear. The building is two storeys at the front [to the north] and one storey at the rear, so that only the pitched roof will be visible from the B road. The first floor wings enclose two courtyards and have a maximum depth of 12 metres. Daylight will be maximised and natural ventilation used where possible. Lighting, colour and artwork will be used to create a legible and uplifting therapeutic environment. Views to the north have been exploited. The building is designed to be long life and adaptable. Natural, local materials will be used including reconstituted roof slates.

The energy strategy is based on reducing demand. Insulation levels will be 25% better than current Building Regulations requirements and air tightness will be 50% better. Solar shading will be achieved through planting and rainwater will be harvested for WC flushing. A biomass boiler and CHP system were considered but rejected. Perimeter hedgerows will be maintained, and a wildlife habitat created in the south corner.

Planning approval was gained in May 2006. The full business case was approved in August and the scheme is currently out to tender.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel noted the unusual situation of having been asked to review a scheme which has already received planning approval, and therefore the scope of our comments and their usefulness for this project would be extremely limited, but may be useful for future projects.

We supported the general site layout, plan form, access and car parking. Bus routes and the location of bus stops will need to be resolved with the Local Authority but ideally the bus route would come into the site and drop passengers at the main entrance. We were informed that the junction of the site access road with the B5432 is due to be improved. The Panel would like to see more pedestrian linkages to the south west, the reinstatement of a footpath along the east side of the B5432 and a suitably located pedestrian crossing.

While we welcomed the internal layout and the use of light and colour to create welcoming and intimate spaces, we found the elevations disappointing. The pattern of fenestration does not reflect solar access or the splendid views to the north. The main entrance to the building is not well expressed or legible. We supported the idea of the courtyard spaces but wondered whether they were too tight and might lead to overlooking. We did not consider reconstituted slate to be a local or natural material, nor an appropriate finish to the large pitched roofs which will be the dominant visual element. We did not think that the expense involved in the areas of metal cladding was the correct priority for the budget. We suggested that composite timber/aluminium windows would be more appropriate than powder coated aluminium.

The Panel welcomed the proposed landscaping and the wildlife area, but we would like to see the courtyards and other spaces to the rear of the building made more attractive. We suggested that the retaining walls could be linked to create a protected level area. We thought that access and legibility would be improved by public entrances on both sides of the building, the rear entrance opening on to pleasant open space and linked back to the main road and residential development to the south and west.

The reasons for rejecting biomass and CHP were discussed, but the Panel supported the demand reduction strategy and stressed that sustainability considerations should drive the design from the beginning. We noted that a NEAT Excellent rating has been achieved. We would still like to see more daylight introduced into the corridors.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed many aspects of this scheme, including the site layout, low built form, and interior design. However, if we had been reviewing this proposal at an earlier stage the Panel would have recommended major revisions. In particular:

- The overall architectural expression should be simpler, more understated and more civic
- The main entrance should be more legible and should link through to a rear courtyard. We thought the reception area was possibly undersized.
- Pedestrian links to the south and west should be increased and supported by bus stops, pavements and a crossing
- We would like to see more daylight introduced into the central corridors, and a re-arrangement of fenestration to reflect solar access and views
- We think the material finishes are not of sufficiently high quality and the priorities for expenditure should be reviewed
- We applaud the NEAT Excellent rating but have concerns about how well sustainability measures have been integrated into the design process.

Diwedd/End

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