

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus / Public



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:
Design Review Report: 13 April 2005

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd:
Meeting Date / Material Submitted: 6 April 2005

Lleoliad/Location: Cardiff

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun
Scheme Description: International Sports Village
Residential, leisure, retail

Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio:
Planning Consultants: Hephher Dixon
[Chris Potts]

Cleient/Asiant:
Client/Agent: Cardiff CC in conjunction with
Orion, Bridehall [Robert Hume]

Pensaer/Architect: Carey Jones
[Gordon Carey; Tim Tolche]
S&P Architects [Robert Guy]

Engineers: Ove Arup [Paul Richards]

Awdurdod Cynllunio:
Planning Authority: Cardiff CC [Kevin Doyle]

Statws Cynllunio:
Planning Status: Section 73 application + detailed
applications for pool, retail and
infrastructure

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) | John Punter |
| Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) | Lyn Owen |
| Ewan Jones | Howard Wainwright |

NB Geraint John and Paul Vanner were not present

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The site is one of Cardiff's premier regeneration locations. More than £20m has been invested to date on remediation works, as parts of the site were heavily contaminated. A leachate barrier was constructed, within which the range of uses is restricted. This is the area where leisure and commercial activities are allocated; the residential area has been remediated to a higher standard.

Recent documented interest in developing the site goes back to 1998 and an outline planning consent was granted in 2003 for 997 residential units, 500 hotel rooms and associated sports, leisure and retail use. The Council, acting as developer, commissioned a masterplan, traffic assessment and environmental impact study at this time. Orion Life and Leisure is the joint developer for the sports, leisure and residential uses, and Bridehall is the joint developer for the two major retail units, including identifying future tenants of these units. There is a third joint developer for the infrastructure. Victoria Wharf on the western edge of site has full permission for 470 residential units, granted in 2002, and construction work is progressing.

Currently, a section 73 application has been lodged to vary the conditions of the original consent, based on a newly commissioned masterplan by Carey Jones. The accompanying traffic assessment and environmental impact study have also been revised. Concurrent detailed applications have been submitted for the swimming pool complex; retail unit no 1; and infrastructural works. They are all consistent with one another and with the masterplan. The sequence of development is important, as the retail unit will enable much of the infrastructural works, and the leisure development [casino; snowdome] will enable residential uses.

Carey Jones architects were commissioned by Orion and inherited a partly developed project. In developing the masterplan, their initial focus was on establishing movement routes, focal points and public spaces. This led to the formation of development blocks with a new public square on the waterfront, surrounded by lively uses. The residential development is formed as a series of blocks set at right angles to the Bay, with diagonal views through to the water and private courtyards with parking underneath.

The swimming pool, designed by S&P architects, will be the first building to be built and has to be able to stand alone. It is a bold, simple design and the ovoid shape is determined by its function and components. A temporary car park will be located to the south, and access to the main entrance on the north side will be via two ramps wrapped around the building. The 50m x 25m Olympic size pool, built above ground, has 10 lanes and is only the third in Britain to comply with FINA regulations. There is space for 900 spectators and an outdoor terrace to the southwest. The complex will also include a leisure pool, children's pool and water slides, and health and fitness provision. A gently sloping monopitch roof is highest at the northern end and the fully glazed walls show a mix of fritted and tinted glass in blocks of different colour and texture. The curtain walling system will be of high quality and provide a homogeneous facade.

Retail unit no 1, to be taken by Morrison's, is located to the north of the site, with access from the road junction to the south east and a smaller service road to the north. Extensive landscaping will be provided along the northern and western edge of the retail site to screen views from the PDR. There will be good cycle and pedestrian links. The design of the store is a bespoke one which, it is claimed, responds well to the site. External materials are glass, reconstituted stone, terracotta and composite panels and the main entrance is denoted by a two storey glass box with signage. Staff facilities and a customer restaurant are provided in a separate two storey building to the south west. Retail unit no 2 has yet to be designed or marketed.

The waterfront area on the southern edge of site is designated for sports use such as white water rafting and canoeing.

The transport strategy aims to minimise car dominance. People arriving by public transport will have the same [or better] arrival experience as those arriving by car. Pedestrian facilities and bus routes will be integrated with natural desire lines. The site will be linked to the rest of the Bay and the city centre with an express bus services [with bus priority measures], a possible water ferry service with water boat landing and eventually possibly a dedicated rail link. A footbridge is planned across the Ely linking to Penarth and a walk and cycleway will follow the shore except that it will have to skirt the yacht club at the southern end of the peninsula.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

In general the Panel questioned the overall sustainability of this scheme and wondered whether there was too much activity proposed for one site. We were concerned at how the scale and wide range of activities could be successfully integrated. The dense urban feel of the central zone does not sit comfortably with the out-of-town feel of the large retail units and surrounding parking. In addition to physical links the visual appearance of the buildings and the landscaping should be designed to assist integration. It was recognised that the commercial imperative is being allowed to dominate the layout, as the retail units are the enabler for necessary infrastructure provision. This will never produce good urban design and will prejudice the integration of the development across the peninsula and back into the city.

On further questioning, it was established that there are as yet no funds available to construct the footbridge, and it is not part of this costed scheme. The proposed jetty forming an extension of the public square into the Bay, which could be used as a water ferry stop, also remains an aspiration which may be progressed only after on-shore proposals. The Panel felt that the footbridge particularly needs to be an important element in the scheme [though we questioned its position on the site].

The Panel observed that most arrivals would be greeted by the multi-storey car park and flat, surface parking linked to the retail stores, and questioned the appropriateness of this and how legible access to and navigation around the site would be facilitated. The designers stated that drivers will be encouraged to leave their cars as close to the entry point as possible and proceed on foot. The central amenity zone is compact and signage will be pro-active. An information building will be located opposite the main exit from the car park across a 15 metre wide street. This was felt to be a relatively narrow space surrounded by tall buildings, and not an attractive meeting/gathering point. It was pointed out that the tall buildings were terraced back and only gradually revealed to view from street level.

Permeability within the site and connectivity to surrounding areas was discussed. Safe and direct pedestrian links within the site should be provided and these should join up to adjacent sites such as the Red House and Prospect Place. Road crossings should be designed to provide safety on what may be busy roads. The capacity of the proposed road linkages to the Cogan spur and other access roads was questioned, but the developer indicated that extensive transport studies had been carried out which support these proposals.

The footpath along the waterfront will be routed around the rear of the yacht club for reasons of health and safety. This appeared unconvincing on the drawings and needs to be made more clearly legible and given greater importance. The Council will retain ownership of the walkway and revetments. The walkway is included in the masterplan and will be progressively implemented as each waterfront development is completed. A cycling strategy is included in the transport assessment and improvements to the Taff Trail are envisaged. The

Panel emphasised the importance of the new footbridge in establishing links to the west and connections to rail services to Cardiff, the Valleys and the west, but felt that greater consideration needs to be given to its position. Mention was made of the relocation of Cogan Station. A development of this scale ought to ensure the certain provision of these facilities as a means of providing better public transport access to the leisure facilities.

A statement of design principles, in the form of a design code or brief, is required by the planning department, along with details of building and landscape materials. The Panel suggested that the masterplan should be made more descriptive and prescriptive. We understand that Carey Jones is to be retained for the foreseeable future and we welcome that continuity.

Landscape features will be important, along with the roofscape, when seen against the backdrop of Penarth and when viewed from above from Penarth. Landscape consultants are yet to be appointed, yet the principles of landscape design should be fundamental to the masterplan and incorporated into any design guidance. The coherent and coordinated design of the public realm also needs to be ensured with clear dimensions for roads, furnishings and materials.

The Panel questioned the wisdom of physically separating residential from other uses. This was done partly because the residential area has been remediated to a higher standard, and partly because it was felt that some separation was desirable for privacy and noise protection. However, a degree of residential use within the main complex would provide a measure of natural surveillance and security, and would help to integrate the different uses. This increased mix and density is suggested only on the assumption that the scheme's overall density is sustainable and suitable.

Provision of accessible public transport links is vital to the success and sustainability of the project, and the developers are aiming for 20% of all trips to be made on public transport by the completion of the development. Access points into the site need to be made more attractive and initial views considered, eg car parks, retail service areas.

Sustainable design principles should inform the design development, including energy efficiency measures and opportunities for renewable energy generation.

The impact of phasing development over a long time period on the marketing and promotion of the various uses should also be considered. In particular, there may be some considerable period when both the pool and retail unit 1 are built, but no other buildings are yet started on site, and this masterplan and the communication links in place during this time need to be tested. There was some confusion over whether the pool's ramped entrance might be exposed until later phases of the project. If this is so, the Panel would have great concerns over this.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel recognises the particular constraints inherent at this stage of a large project with some elements fixed and some that are fluid. We would welcome the opportunity to comment further on the development of the overall design as well as the design of discrete elements. However, we have concerns in the following areas of the present proposal:

- The density and consequent sustainability of the proposals appears ambitious for its location. It is vital that the masterplan tests the scheme in its various phases, especially as two important elements of the scheme are already submitted for detailed consent. The masterplan should resolve the physical and design integration of the disparate uses proposed

- The public realm remains undesigned and unconvincing, with no definition on the southern perimeter of the leisure area. These streets must be given a strong identity and must be addressed properly by the different buildings, or the project will take on the character of a retail park. The pedestrian connection westwards looks likely to be unattractive unless the retail development is developed in a very creative way. There should be a direct southern connection between the Ely River banks and the leisure complex.
- All streets within the leisure area should be lined with active frontages.
- The transport strategy lacks the certainty of bringing to fruition many of the assumptions on which it is based. As currently designed the project relies almost totally on car transport and will overload already busy roads. The connection to the Cogan Spur will be a major congestion point.
- In particular, the proposed footbridge to the west is vital in establishing connectivity with Cogan station, the Penarth headland and beyond. A landing jetty for water boats is also considered to be essential in reducing car use.
- We would like to see the proposed use for the sites on the waterfront to the south clarified, together with their relationship to other elements in the scheme.
- The legibility at the main entrance points remains problematic and requires further consideration
- Tall buildings should be slender rather than slab blocks and should carefully consider the views into and out of the site, and avoid overshadowing amenity space and the public realm.
- The masterplan should identify the specific sustainability measures proposed for this development

Diwedd/End

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