

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 9 February 2007
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 31 January 2007
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: Llanwern village

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun
Scheme Description: Residential

Cleient/Asiant: Newport Unlimited
Client/Agent: [David Ward]

Developer/Datblygwr: Gallagher Estates [Spencer Claye]

Pensaer/Architect: PRP Architects [Robert Coles]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Newport CC [Andrew Dawe,
Planning Authority: Wendy Richards]

Statws Cynllunio: Pre-application
Planning Status:

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/
Design Review Panel:
John Punter (cadeirydd/chair)
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)
Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer)
Roger Ayton
Lyn Owen
Martin Knight
Elfed Roberts
Ed Colgan

Lead Panellist: Ed Colgan

Sylwedyddion/Observers: Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW
Huw ap Rhys, DCFW

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The proposed development consists of a new settlement of some 1100 dwellings situated astride a low ridge in open countryside to the east of Newport. It embraces the existing communities of Llanwern, Little Milton and Cot Hill. The site is anchored by woodland on four corners, and there is an open valley to the east. The landform of the site is undulating with high points to the south and the north.

The scheme works to reinforce existing movement patterns, by extending an existing footpath as the principal spine of the development along the ridgeway to the north, and by incorporating existing east/west hedgelines into new green routes. A linear park or Village Green sits in the middle of the site running north-south and acting as a focus. At both ends of the Village Green, significant buildings are introduced to provide a sense of place. The principal access to the site is from the Southern Distributor Road to the west, with possible additional future access from the southeast and northeast of the site.

The built form is arranged on a green grid (a 'tartan rug' which has been allowed to settle naturally on uneven ground) to respect field and drainage patterns. It will be graduated from a higher density, larger scale and more formal layout around the green (45-50 dw/ha) to a less dense and informal layout at the fringes. New planting is introduced around the ancient pasture area to the west to provide a strong protective screen for the development and to create a buffer area for the village to the southeast. Community facilities (as yet undecided) and a new school are centrally located to the proposed and existing villages.

The site is part of the East Newport expansion area, allocated for residential use. The Local Authority representative stated that the presented masterplan is a departure from the original one prepared by David Lock (being substantially larger and extending further to the north) and more site sections and photomontages would be necessary to properly evaluate it. SPG is currently being developed to guide design development. The current proposal is aiming to fix the parameters for development, and details will be controlled by a design code as the site will be sold off to housebuilders once it is serviced. Although part of the site lies outside the red line, the developer stated that they may well acquire this land in the future.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel considered that the claim of 'a fully integrated, high quality and sustainable extension to the city' was not realised in the presented proposal. We noted that the site is physically and visually segregated from other urban development (aside from the adjacent hamlets) and that it was misleading to describe it as an 'urban extension'. It was not clear how the development planned to the south and east, with its highway connections into the valley, was intended to interface with this proposal. The Panel was told that additional pedestrian connection points could be created on the south-western side of the site towards the existing school. However, the Southern Distributor Road is a substantial physical barrier to any additional linkages, so the new settlement would remain divorced from the existing built up area, and less than sustainable as a result.

This constraint makes the provision of public transport particularly important. The Panel was informed that the existing bus service through Ringland will cross the SDR [with a full movement junction] to service the new development, and another express service is

proposed. A site has been reserved for a new rail halt with 1000 car park spaces to the south east which would also serve the ex-steelworks site, but this would be a regional aspiration and would require the involvement of WAG. The developer confirmed that the proposed new route running east/west through the site would be designed as a secondary road, to avoid creating 'rat runs' and would incorporate pedestrian and cycle routes. The current proposal shows two right angle bends to reduce traffic speeds.

It was acknowledged that some unresolved issues remained relating to boundaries and transport routes. The Panel noted the difference between the presented proposal and the development brief. While land ownership was recognised as a constraint, the developer stated that sufficient land was available, with more under option, to satisfy the development brief.

The Panel wondered how much weight could now be attached to the East Newport development framework/masterplan which suggested a smaller residential area on the current site and a second residential area to the north around Langstone. There was reference to continued development to the north east, but it was not clear how this would affect the current access arrangements or distribution of use. Clearly the current scheme could be extended northwards but, if this were to happen, the whole centre of gravity would have to be shifted northwards and the scheme largely redesigned. We were told that new local authority SPG was nearing completion and that the current proposal was in line with this. The Panel commented that this development should be considered in the light of other major developments in the area, and the principles of sustainable development and greater self sufficiency should drive the design.

The Panel supported the way in which the proposed built form was based on the existing land form and topography, the way views were exploited, how different sub areas were developing their own character, and the use of a linear green as a central public space. The design demonstrated a genuine commitment to deliver community facilities, such as a village hall and possibly a pub at the centre of the development. However, we believed it was important that the necessary inclusion of such facilities should be founded on their practical and commercial viability, and we thought they might be better located where they could attract passing trade on the new north-south route planned to the east. We would like to see community use of the school building and playing fields built into the brief from the start.

The Panel was pleased to learn that existing hedgerows will be retained and reinforced within the proposed green areas/public space network. We considered that the site was well contained by the landscape and woodlands to the north west and south, but that a more robust landscape strategy would be necessary to reinforce the character of the eastern edge and the interface with Llanwern village. We noted that the relationship between access, developed frontage and associated planting, will be a key aspect in determining how well this new development is integrated into the valley setting. An important question was who would own and manage these green spaces and the adjacent woodland and fields.

The Panel noted that the 'perimeter' blocks appeared to be organically shaped although no details were shown. We considered that this format would not deliver enough continuity and enclosure of the public realm. We thought that the blocks bordering the village green and the spine roads should have a more formal building line to provide greater enclosure.

The phasing will be subject to a Section 106 agreement. The developer stated that they would prefer to carry out the infrastructure work themselves, and would commit to the school at an early stage.

A sustainable drainage strategy is proposed which would attenuate as much runoff as possible on site. Porous surfaces will be used along with wet and dry attenuation areas and storm cells. Environmental standards for buildings will be included in the design codes. An EcoHomes Very Good [2006] will be specified based on a post-construction assessment, which will be relatively hard to achieve because of the greenfield, edge-of-town site. The Panel thought that over the period of development, higher energy standards should be built into the codes. We recommended that the infrastructure be designed to include works for a district heating scheme.

The Panel was pleased to learn that biodiversity issues have been addressed and will be included in an updated landscape strategy.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to see this important proposal. However, we are concerned about the danger of premature development with this scheme exceeding the limits prescribed in the East Newport Development Framework, and new SPG not yet available. We think there are many admirable features in the design and layout, but we are not convinced that this development as currently designed would be a well integrated part of a larger settlement. The following areas need further attention if this is not to become an unsustainable enclave development, however pleasantly laid out and landscaped:

- While we recognise the constraints of the topography and road network on access and connectivity, we consider it vital that good road and pedestrian linkages are established. The proposal should resolve the primary road network and appropriate connections between the new north/south link proposed to the east of the village and the SDR. The relationship between this proposal and other possible new developments to the north east and south, should be clarified.
- Good public transport provision from an early stage is crucial for the development to be sustainable, and this requires better integration of bus routes and bus stops. While welcoming the proposed rail halt, we recognise that it may be undeliverable.
- We welcome the broad outlines of the landscape design and the retention of existing greenery. The way the scheme sits in the landscape is positive and needs to be reinforced with considerations of biodiversity and the details of the sustainable drainage system. The completion of detailed proposals for landscaping and open space provision should be prioritised.
- We think the idea of a self-sustaining village centre is problematic in terms of the size of the scheme and the viability of commercial outlets. If the scheme were to be part of a much larger settlement, the centre would be more viable but would have to be relocated.
- We support the sustainable drainage strategy and the inclusion of EcoHomes standards as a requirement in the design codes, although we would expect to see these ratcheted up over time as the development proceeds
- We would like to see this scheme again, especially in the context of the emerging SPG and the whole East Newport expansion area strategy. At that stage we would like to explore the nature of the design code.

Diwedd/End

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