

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## Review Status: **Public**

Meeting date:	24th March 2010
Issue Date:	6th April 2010
Scheme Location:	MOD St Athan, Corridor Study
Scheme Description:	Landscape / public realm
Planning Status:	Outline planning permission granted [Highways and landscape have detailed planning permission].

## Part1: Presentation

The team stated that they have adopted an integrated approach to the design of the new Northern Access Road [NAR] which links a number of key community facilities and housing areas, as well as providing the main and service access points to the new Defence Training College [DTC].

The proposed road corridor provides a connective ecological habitat with a strong landscape structure using native species and reinforcing existing hedgerows. A pedestrian footpath and cycleway follows the new route and improves connectivity between Llanmaes, Boverton and St Athan. The existing Eglyws Brewis road is retained and will provide public transport access.

The Local Planning Authority is broadly supportive of the landscape based approach, and the way in which the main buildings work together. It was confirmed that the new highway and the landscape strategy have detailed planning consent.

## Summary of key points arising from discussion, to be read in conjunction with Part 2 of this report.

Following this inconclusive review, the Panel noted the importance of establishing an appropriate level of communication between ourselves and the design team. The pre-review materials submitted were diagrammatic and suggested an early stage of design development, yet we were told that detailed consent existed. There was inadequate

information for us to make an assessment, and this led us to make some fundamental observations, which can be summarised as follows:

- The main road junction between the NAR and the B4265 is overbearing in its impact and unnecessarily complicated.
- The layout does not appear to reflect prevailing or predicted traffic flows.
- There is a particular need for three dimensional information relating to contours and topography along the length of the NAR.
- The strategy for non motorised uses and pedestrian connectivity needs further illustration and justification.
- As noted at the previous Design Review in March 2009, the relationship of the new housing areas with the NAR is problematic.
- All parties need to work together to produce agreed principles of corridor treatment. This may take the form of a Design Guide which would cover landscape, materials, and detail design as well as a strategy for public art.
- The design needs to be explained at a number of levels, from an overall strategy for movement for all modes of transport, through to detailed design including topography, landscape, planting, lighting, and structures including the footbridge.

## **Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full**

The Panel understood the rationale for creating a new access road given the difficulty of widening the existing road and railway bridge. However, we questioned the necessity for such a large junction with the B4265, and the plan form of that junction which suggests that most traffic will be approaching from the north west. Although we understand that it has been designed in response to predicted traffic numbers and movement studies, we think this junction is overscaled and overcomplicated. We would not support the use of the large landscape 'islands' as a suitable location for public art – any art work should be integral to the landscape design. Similarly the junctions along the NAR [and the highway corridor width] appeared to be oversized, although we agreed with the intention to keep traffic away from the village of St Athan.

We were told that the road follows the existing contours as far as possible, but in the absence of any sections or profiles, it was impossible for us to assess this claim. There was a complete lack of detailed information relating to the NAR, although we were told that such information exists and presumably formed part of the planning application.

We were not convinced by the possibilities for good pedestrian links, given the relatively large amount of blacktop shown in the freehand sketch views presented on the day of the Review. In fact no details were given of a strategy for pedestrian connectivity, cycle facilities, or detailed junction designs.

A more thorough analysis of walking routes and assessment of the location of community facilities outside the wire is needed. This will need to consider the 'walkable neighbourhood concept', and be realistic about reasonable walking distances. We thought the new creche could be located more centrally – for example close to the existing Spar shop – to relate to the existing community and encourage linked trips. There may be the

potential to deliver additional shops/facilities outside the wire which could also support the Aerospace Business Park.

It was confirmed that the new footbridge is for military use only. Despite the planning permission for the road there is no detailed design for the footbridge.

The interface between the road and the new areas of housing is problematic and all drawings appear to show the backs of houses and rear boundaries facing the road. We struggled to understand the relationship between Rose Cottage and the road/footpath connections. It appears that this building's amenity will be highly compromised by the very close proximity of the new road and the need for changes to the existing topography.

The construction of the NAR is planned to begin in January 2011. It was agreed that the Vale will send a copy of the phasing document to DCFW. Given the number of design teams involved in the road and adjacent developments, we thought that it would be essential to agree a set of design principles governing the public realm, public/private interface, and connectivity.

**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	MOD Defence Estates [Stephen Harness] WAG [Nicky Bailey] Metrix [Chris Liddle]
Pensaer/Architect:	HLM Architects – [Roger Matthews]
Consultants:	White Young Green [Paul Vining, Jonathan Vining]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Vale of Glamorgan [Rob Thomas, Steve Ball]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Ewan Jones [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Steve Smith	Simon Carne Howard Wainwright Ben Sibert
Lead Panellist:	Howard Wainwright

**Declaration of Interest:** Ben Sibert declared that his employers, Arup, have been commissioned by Metrix to work on existing buildings on the site, behind the security boundary. There were no objections to his remaining on the Panel.