

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	20th May 2009
Issue Date:	3rd June 2009
Scheme Location:	MOD St Athan
Scheme Description:	Corridor Study
Planning Status:	Outline application submitted 13th May 2009

Part1: Presentation

The Defence Training Academy element of this project was reviewed by DCFW in February 2009, and the Aerospace Business Park and Service Family Accommodation elements were reviewed in March 2009.

The presentation highlighted the application boundary and showed views along the new Northern access road and adjacent areas of public realm, with particular attention paid to the main public buildings to be provided – a new military museum, sports centre and a 'world faith centre'. Indicative layouts for the four new residential areas were also tabled, but not discussed in any detail. The buildings are on target to meet BREEAM Excellent with pre-assessment scores of between 70 and 90.

An outline planning application for the development was received by the Local Authority on 13th May 2009. There will be widespread consultation and public exhibitions of the proposal, and key issues are identified as public accessibility and the civic nature of the public buildings. The Vale wish to see maximum public use of the sports centre and an integration of its function and staffing with other local facilities. The northern access road should accommodate pedestrians and cyclists and facilitate sustainable journeys to work, to exploit the co-location of residential and employment uses. A green travel plan has been submitted with the application.

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

Despite the deficiencies in and very late arrival of the pre-review material sent to the Panel, the opportunity for an open discussion was valuable. The Panel was concerned that, in spite of considerable efforts by the design team, a number of elements for which there

appears to be no overall co-ordination, are weakening the potential for the delivery of an integrated development strategy. We would welcome proposals to address this, together with a process of continuing engagement with the developers and Local Authority, and we agree that a programme for future consultations on specific areas should be drawn up with the executive architects. In summary:

- A full corridor study should be presented including a landscape and public realm strategy with additional detail on public access and movement, ecology, and the relationship of major buildings with the wider landscape setting.
- The current lack of coordination between different aspects of the development as a whole needs to be remedied, so that an integrated and holistic approach based on good urban design principles can be achieved.
- The proposed location of the crèche and community centre should be reconsidered as part of a wider strategy for public uses in the proposed developments.
- We support the sustainability strategy with the very important proviso that the district heating system should include the residential and leisure areas, to maximise community benefit and energy efficiency. Provision should be made for the BREEAM rating to be confirmed by a post-construction assessment.
- The main entrance roundabout and road layout should be scaled down and humanized and made more pedestrian friendly, with the old and new churches better integrated.
- We have concerns about the proposed scale and design of the museum in its context and setting, and suggest that this would be an ideal subject for an architectural design competition, with a brief based on the emerging space requirements.
- We would like to see the results of the public consultation exercise.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel was disappointed in the quality of the presentation and late submission of material, which falls well short of a full corridor study. The schematic series of views which we were presented with was informative, but lacked an underpinning landscape or urban design strategy.

In order to comment fully on this, the Panel would need more detailed information on the treatment of public realm and landscape, along with examples of detailed edge treatment, such as the location of cycle lanes and pedestrian routes. We need to be given a sense of the experience of travelling this route, and an illustration of how it delivers on the objectives contained in the green travel plan.

All the above need to be addressed at the outline stage of the planning process. Ideally a connectivity strategy should be developed which then informs the location and scale of the buildings bordering the corridor. Continuing engagement with DCFW, which would be welcome, should be focussed on specific project issues, establishing key areas to be addressed and securing the means to ensure integrated delivery.

We understand that different elements are being developed with different clients and designers, but it is essential that these are coordinated to ensure a comprehensive and

integrated strategy. For example, the housing layouts are currently internally focussed and present rear boundaries to the new access road, whereas a more positive relationship and engagement with the public realm needs to be established. The Local Authority will have a major part to play in ensuring an integrated design approach and the coordination of issues relating to Section 106 agreements, such as landscape and public art.

Decisions have already been taken, regarding access to the sports centre and the location of the creche, which are not necessarily the most appropriate and [unless revised] will have a negative impact on the implementation of good urban design principles.

It was stated that the biomass CHP district heating scheme will be provided by an ESCO and will be restricted to the MOD site initially. The Panel advised that the system should be connected into the residential areas from the outset and the opportunities which arise from co-location should be fully exploited. Given the involvement of WAG who are strongly advocating such link-ups as part of their 'planning for sustainability' strategy, it would be difficult to explain a failure to do so.

The commitment to achieve BREEAM Excellent remains absolute and the pre-assessments scores are encouraging. We noted that this relates to BREEAM 2006 and would not necessarily include a post-construction assessment, which should therefore be a separate requirement. A CEEQUAL assessment is also required by the brief and we advised that this should be done at an early stage.

With regard to the public buildings, these should exhibit a civic quality rather than purely military associations. The scale of these buildings will be important, particularly where they are close to residential areas, as with the museum, and the way in which they relate to the wider landscape setting will need careful consideration. The museum is such a large scale public building, and houses such an important part of military engineering history, that it should be the subject of a separate design competition. The energy centre is prominently situated and we are not convinced of the design concept for a transparent facility highlighting the function of the building, in a quasi rural area. Long range views onto the site from local vantage points are essential, and we were told that a range of photomontages had been submitted as part of the planning application.

The Panel had particular concerns relating to the main entrance roundabout which, because of the scale of the roadworks, the isolation of the existing church, and the huge hangar-like museum, appeared to lack any human scale. The faith buildings are a step towards a more civilised and appropriate response, and they need to make explicit the links between the DTA and the local community. The whole entrance area needs to be re-thought to provide a less traffic-engineered, roundabout-dominated area, with the old and new churches and faith area better integrated as a 'place' where many very personal events (marriages/funerals etc) would take place. The panel appreciated the complexity of vehicle movements and entrance security which had been resolved in the proposed layout, but urged the design team to think again about this all-important interface with the community. Opportunities for public art as part of the museum's setting and the public picnic area, should be included in the overall design and public art strategy.

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	Metrix Consortium on behalf of the Ministry of Defence
Pensaer/Architect:	HLM Architects [Chris Liddle, Brian Spires]
Consultants:	Scott Brownrigg [Roger Matthews] Capita [Colin Campbell]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Vale of Glamorgan [Rob Thomas, Steve Ball]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: John Punter [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Ashley Bateson	Roger Ayton Michael Griffiths Simon Carne Kedrick Davies
Lead Panellist:	Roger Ayton