

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	18th February 2009
Issue Date:	3rd March 2009
Scheme Location:	MOD St Athan
Scheme Description:	Defence Training Establishment
Planning Status:	Pre-application

## Part1: Presentation

Metrix consortium is the developer for this project which comprises a 50:50 Joint Venture between Sodexo and Qinetiq. The scheme has been developed to RIBA Stage 3 and DCFW's views are sought on the masterplanning, overall concept, estate configuration, and access arrangements.

The presentation covered in particular the Defence Training Academy centred round the DARA hangar, the East Camp [Heritage Park] and Picketston areas of the site.

The intention is to submit a planning application early in May 2009 and to start on site in August 2010. There will be a bespoke BREEAM assessment and all new buildings will be required to meet BREEAM Excellent.

The Local Planning Authority has been involved in the general masterplanning of the site and shares the aspirations of the developer. The application due in May will be an outline application with all matters reserved, and there will be a series of public consultations on different aspects of the proposals.

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

The Panel welcomed the full and detailed presentation which allowed us to grasp the scope of the project. In order to make our response manageable, it will be necessary to break it down into component parts which can be the subject of separate reviews. In summary:

- To begin with, a 'corridor study' of the new approach road from the west should be brought to Design Review, including the boundary treatments, the access points, the new residential areas, the approach to the main gate and the 'publicly accessible' components of the development.
- Secondly, there should be a presentation of the landscape impact of the whole complex explaining how it will be seen from the major roads and footpaths in the locality, and explaining how the landscape strategy will ameliorate and minimise impacts. There was much interest in the landscape and biodiversity strategies and how these would work across the site.
- Thirdly, individual public and community buildings 'outside the wire', such as the new museum and sports centre, could be considered.
- Fourthly the new residential areas should be reviewed as a group.
- Finally, the Panel were particularly concerned with the design of the major communal buildings as part of the accommodation complex. These seemed to be a riot of different forms and contrasted unduly with the formalism and restraint adopted elsewhere on the site. There were particular concerns as to how these related to the Mall, and the nature and quality of the spaces between them.
- The Panel noted the restrained conversion of the DARA hangar, the formality of the Mall and Parade Ground, and the contrasting flowing, natural forms of the Heritage Park into which the residential blocks were fitted.
- The Panel supported the sustainability strategy, including the biomass CHP system and the re-use of a brownfield site.
- We recommend that future presentations be specific and particular in respect of objectives and proposals.

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

The Panel acknowledged the unprecedented scale and extent of this project for Wales, and the corresponding impacts on the local community. We debated whether our input should be confined to areas and aspects 'outside the wire', focusing on the relationship of this development with the local area, or whether we should also engage in a peer review exercise of the architecture within the secure site.

As a matter of priority a 'corridor study' should be presented, to cover the new approach road and the way it interfaces with the commercial and military elements, the sports complex and the main gate and museum. Secondly, it was agreed that a review of the immediate landscape and boundary treatment, layout of surrounding roads, access points and views into the site would follow. Major public and community buildings should then be brought to separate reviews, including the proposed Museum and sports facilities.

We welcome the commitment to achieve BREEAM Excellent for new buildings and BREEAM Very Good for all refurbishments. A landscape strategy is being developed and will focus on landscaping of the boundary area, local connections and ribbons of planting to reflect existing hedgerows. These will also provide wildlife corridors and requirements for enhancing biodiversity are a major part of the MOD's aspirations for the project. A programme for newt habitat protection is already underway.

There is a sustainable drainage strategy but open bodies of water are not permissible on the site because of the risk of bird strike. Rainwater harvesting will be incorporated and the new training block attached to the hangar will have a 'green' roof.

The general architectural concept includes an aspiration for some award winning civic buildings where appropriate, combined with a quieter more restrained treatment elsewhere. There should be clearer definition of which buildings are 'focus' buildings and which are more neutral 'background' elements, especially along the Mall. We were concerned about the scale and forms of the two facilities buildings on the east side of the Mall. These should be broken up into more distinct units, where the architectural forms can relate more directly to individual uses and locations, and the internal spaces benefit from a less deep plan.

**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 [Alastair Page]
Pensaer/Architect:	HLM [Chris Liddle] Scott Brownrigg [Roger Matthews] Capita Architecture [Colin Campbell] HLM Landscape [Karen Pinckney]
Consultants:	Entec [Alan Chaplin]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Vale of Glamorgan [Steve Ball]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: John Punter [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Steve Smith	Ewan Jones Roger Ayton Lynne Sullivan
Lead Panellist:	Roger Ayton
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Simon Carne [DCFWD Panellist] Nia Morgan [DCFWD placement student] Jeff Perren [WAG]

