

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	2nd December 2009
Issue Date:	9th December 2009
Scheme Location:	Picketston Sports Centre, St Athan
Scheme Description:	Training / Leisure Use
Planning Status:	Pre-application

## Part1: Presentation

The proposed sports centre will be used primarily for military training, but it will be open for community use at evenings and weekends. It is located to the north of the new northern access road [NAR] and outside the main site security, but there are some CTM [counter terrorism measures] which have to be addressed.

Vehicular access to the centre is via a left turn off the NAR and involves the construction of a new access road to the north of the playing fields. This is due to highways constraints designed to keep traffic away from the village of St Athan. Pedestrian access from the east is provided for military trainees and local residents.

The architectural form is a simple big box, which contains all the necessary accommodation and plant within the envelope. Aluminium cladding is used on a masonry plinth and a glazed shaft cuts through the roof over an internal 'sports mall' running east/west. The main entrance is at the east end of the mall and an external arrival space to the east allows for the necessary stand-off distances. A relatively simple landscape setting is envisaged to maximise views. Indigenous planting and existing hedgerows will be reinforced. Sustainable drainage is provided, with swales and a dry basin to the south.

The Local Authority informed us that outline consent for the whole scheme has just been granted, and a Section 106 agreement signed. They would like to see a 'family' of buildings, and an appropriate relationship between this building and the other large buildings nearby – the DARA hangar and the REME museum. The entrance arrangement, sports plaza and the 'blade of light' are welcomed, but the planning officer thought the elevations were rather austere and needed to be relieved - perhaps with large graphics – especially on the south elevation which can be seen from the main road.

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

The Panel welcomed the presentation and appreciated the effort invested in the design so far. We supported the architectural idea of a 'big box' with simple incisions, as a logical, efficient and well realised concept. This is basically a good design approach and our relatively minor concerns are summarised below:

- Our main concern is with the legibility of the entrance and the circuitous access road. The team should explore a realignment of the footprint to improve this.
- The pedestrian access from the east needs to be strengthened and made more direct.
- We would like to see more contextual information [such as views from the north east], site sections and a rationale for the proposed raising of the site levels.
- The design concept will need careful and well executed detailing to be successful, especially around the entrance and the 'blade'.
- Large graphics should be avoided and legible access achieved through the building design and site layout.
- The right angled junction of the access road with the NAR should be redesigned to give a more oblique approach from the west and the notion of a main entrance to a significant sports complex should be celebrated at this point.
- We continue to support the site-wide sustainability and drainage strategy.

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

The Panel supported the architectural concept of a 'big box' with a glazed central street. The modelling of the box and the 'shaft of light' complement the clean, engineered simplicity of the form. We would like to see this strong form reflected in the landscape treatment.

The Panel found it difficult to understand how the building sits in the landscape, especially given the lack of site sections in the presentation material. We were informed that site levels will be raised approx 1.5 metres above the road level but the rationale for this was not fully explained. We thought that this would result in visual intrusion for existing residential properties to the north east, and would like the team to explore the benefits of reducing site levels and dropping the building down into the landscape.

Our main concerns relate to the vehicular approach to the building which is particularly convoluted, an expensive solution, and renders the main entrance invisible to members of the public approaching by car, or passing by on the NAR. The Panel explored the suggestion of re-aligning the building and the running track along a north west / south east axis and parallel to the road connecting the NAR with Picketston village. This would improve the legibility of the entrance when approaching from the car park to the north.

The team explained that the entrance was located to reflect the major use, by trainees approaching from the east, and to face the village of St Athan. The Panel thought that this main focus should be supported by a stronger and more direct pedestrian / cycle link. The legibility of the entrance and access routes should be achieved by the building itself and by

adequate signposting on the NAR, without the need for large graphics which would detract from the robust simplicity of the architecture. We thought that a good lighting scheme for the building would be a positive attraction.

The access road off the NAR next to the service family accommodation [SFA] should be less sharply angled to give a gentler approach and improve visibility. This would make the entrance to the site more legible and allow this area to 'breathe', although it might affect the southern corner of the SFA and the location of the community creche.

The team confirmed that the glazed rooflight was orthogonal within the roofscape and aligned with the Mall below, and that any risk of overheating will be addressed. The building will be connected to the site-wide CHP system, and will conform to the site-wide strategy for sustainable drainage. We were reminded that all new buildings are required to meet BREEAM Excellent. Large quantities of aluminium will be used to clad the building and while this is a very high embodied energy material, we accepted that it was eminently recyclable and stated that a high recycled content should be specified.

**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 / Metrix
Pensaer/Architect:	HLM Architects [Chris Liddle, David Shields] Scott Brownrigg [Roger Matthews]
Consultants:	Davis Langdon [John Carney]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Vale of Glamorgan [Steve Ball]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Alan Francis [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer]	Howard Wainwright Ashley Bateson Chris Jones
Lead Panellist:	Howard Wainwright
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Tim Raine, WAG [DE&T]

**Declaration of Interest: Ashley Bateson works for Hoare Lea which is working with Scott Brownrigg on another project**