

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	18th March 2009
Issue Date:	1st April 2009
Scheme Location:	MOD St Athan, Vale of Glamorgan
Scheme Description:	Business Park & Residential
Planning Status:	Pre-application

## Part1: Presentation

### 1. Aerospace Business Park

Three development options are under consideration, the deciding factor being the optimum location for the engine testing facility [ETF]. This presentation considers Option B with the ETF located south of the runway. The development will be staged in three phases. BREEAM Excellent will be the requirement for all new buildings. The landscape strategy will be important and will be informed by the guidance document produced by the Vale of Glamorgan. The Local Authority is primarily concerned with the physical impact of the development on the surrounding area. In view of the height of some buildings [up to 25m], views into and out of the site will be critical. The impact on the Heritage Coast and the Grade II listed farmhouse on the site will need careful monitoring.

### 2. Service Family Accommodation

This is integral to the main MOD scheme for a Defence Technical College and will form part of the same planning application. A total of 483 new build units is required by April 2014 and construction therefore needs to begin early in 2011. Four sites have been identified to the west, north and east of the site boundary, at Tremains Farm; North of West Camp; Picketston South West; and the Golf Course. The MOD has strict requirements on the type and size of accommodation, garage provision, length of garden and height of boundary fence. All units will be built to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. The Local Authority expects to receive an outline application in May 2009. They will need evidence of integrating the development with existing communities, and information on how the Code 4 standard will be achieved. They welcome the opportunity to co-locate residential and employment uses, and are encouraged by the approach to site layout based on Home Zones and Manual for Streets.

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

### 1. Aerospace Business Park

The Panel appreciated the presentation on this interesting project which is obviously at an early stage. A comprehensive landscape and public arts strategy could be a valuable opportunity to maximise links with the community and ensure a physically well integrated development. More work is necessary to demonstrate accurately the likely visual impact and any necessary mitigation measures. We support the reuse of existing buildings and the development of a green travel plan. Close liaison and collaboration with the developers of the DTC site will be essential.

### 2. Service Family Accommodation

Again, the Panel welcomed this presentation and we directed our comments mainly to the only illustrative layout provided in advance, for the Golf Course site. This should be an exemplary scheme in terms of realising the potential for placemaking by creating more pedestrian friendly spaces at the heart of residential estates. In summary:

- The site layout should follow the principles laid down in Manual for Streets, but this is made more difficult by the low density, high parking numbers and set back garages with long driveways.
- A clear hierarchy of routes should be established to create legibility and ease of movement, and to allow the development of Home Zone areas.
- We welcome the variety of parking options shown including a proportion of on-street parking.
- An analysis of existing connectivity, desire lines and local linkages should be used to refine the site layout and movement strategy
- The landscape strategy should be strengthened to increase legibility and integrate public open spaces.
- Further development of architectural styles and variety is needed and this could be combined with development briefs or design codes.
- We support the commitment to achieve Code 4 and advise the team to consider the benefits of connection to the biomass CHP system on the DTC site.

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

### 1. Aerospace Business Park

The Panel agreed that the landscape strategy would be a major opportunity to integrate the development with its surroundings and establish a positive relationship with the local community. Ideally this would be developed alongside the corridor study being prepared by Metrix, and be integrated with a public arts strategy. The involvement of artists at an early stage is essential, to ensure the integration of artworks with the landscape strategy throughout the Park.

The three development phases will take until 2028 to be completed. It is yet to be decided whether new buildings will be developed on a speculative basis or not, although the external envelope would be largely unaffected by the particular end user. We noted that

many of the existing buildings will be reused initially and the listed farm buildings will be renovated and used as an Administration Centre. There will be a single EIA and green travel plan for the whole site. The development of the northern part of the ABP site and boundary treatments will require close cooperation with the DTC scheme.

Demonstration of the visual impact will necessitate site sections, photomontages, and the development of an approved palette of colours. Details of night-time lighting will also be important.

## 2. Service Family Accommodation

The illustrative site layout provided for the Golf Course site shows a very low density and high parking ratio which conflicts with the principles of Manual for Streets. These principles are also compromised by the extent of garages and driveways, leading to large gaps in street frontages and little opportunity for back-to-back gardens.

A hierarchy of routes within each site should be clearly shown on the plans, with primary routes defined by footpaths, trees and visitor parking, and reinforced by the treatment and massing of adjacent buildings. Secondary routes and proposed home zone areas need to demonstrate pedestrian priority and be well integrated into the site layout and landscape structure.

An analysis of linkages to local amenities and desire lines should inform the further development of the site plan. Consideration of different treatments for fronts and backs of houses would underpin an approach to defensible space and natural surveillance. The way in which the Golf Course site development turns its back on the principal road to the north could be avoided. The possible advantages of developing Design Codes to provide rules for the proposed layouts ( private/public interface including parking, active frontage, street sections and treatments, elevational approach, materials, scale, massing and built form) should be considered, although maintaining a variety of treatment is also important - for example the Tremains site with 160 units shows only two types of dwelling.

The green space and play areas concentrated to the north east of the Golf Course site should be distributed more evenly throughout the site, to give more, smaller local areas for play [LAPs] attached to home zones. Existing trees will not be retained, as they are short lived, fast growing and too close together, but important vegetation such as existing hedgerows will be retained on some of the other sites. The development of ecological corridors and sustainable drainage systems will be important features in the overall landscape strategy.

We support the commitment to achieve Code 4 for all new housing and a strategy for achieving this will need to be built into the design development from the beginning. There would be considerable benefits in terms of energy efficiency for the SFA sites to be linked to the planned biomass CHP energy system which is part of the DTC scheme. Such an integrated approach would bring economies of scale and would be preferable to the provision of individual solar water heating or photovoltaic panels, which might necessitate reorientation of the houses in the masterplan.

This scheme is part of a nationwide rationalisation of services and facilities by the MOD. The team stated that SFA numbers have been matched to the size of the DTC college and once the PFI contract has been signed, hopefully in April 2010, the size of the development

will be protected. As far as the Local Authority is concerned and irrespective of this scheme, 7500 new dwellings have been identified as necessary in the LDP, with St Athan and Barry the most likely areas for development.

**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

Welsh Assembly Government  
[Nicky Bailey]  
MOD [John Jones]

Pensaer/Architect:

White Young Green [Paul Vining,  
Jonathan Vining, Lee Morris,  
Catrin Oliver]

AwdurdodCynllunio/  
Planning Authority

Vale of Glamorgan Council  
[Rob Thomas, Steve Ball]

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:  
Design review panel:  
Wendy Richards [Chair]  
Cindy Harris [Officer]  
Simon Carne

Lynne Sullivan  
Lyn Owen  
Richard Parnaby  
Ann-Marie Smale

Lead Panellist:

Lynne Sullivan

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

David Harvey [DCFWD Panellist]