

Statws/Status:

Cyfrinachol (Confidential)



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 15 Mehefin 2005
Design Review Report: 15 June 2005

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 1 Mehefin 2005
Meeting Date / Material Submitted: 1 June 2005

Lleoliad/Location: Newport
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun
Scheme Description: City Centre Retail
Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Mathews & Goodman

Planning Consultants: (Mike Ralph)
Client/Agent Cleient/Asiant: Modus Properties, Project
Manager: Anthony Kilbride
Pensaer/Architect: Leslie Jones Architects:
Andrew Ogg, Stephen Watson
Gillespies Landscape
Architects: Sally Nash

Awdurdod Cynllunio:
Planning Authority: Newport City Council,
Wendy Hall
Peter Williams
URC: Newport Unlimited
David Ward, John Burrows

Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status: Pre-planning

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
John Punter (cadeirydd/chair), Carole-Anne Davies, CEO (swyddog/officer)
Douglas Hogg, Ewan Jones, Phil Roberts, **Lead:** John Punter
Wendy Hall – Stepped down from the panel in order to provide a local authority view on this project.
Ewan Jones – Declared his involvement at an earlier stage and suggested he step out. The presenting team requested that he stay as his insight was welcome and his earlier involvement, now ended, was not considered to represent a conflict of interest.

**Sylwedyddion/Observers:
Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

Steve Pritchard, ABP

The scheme forms a major element of the urban regeneration of the city of Newport and target completion is for autumn 2009 with work starting on site in 2007. A hybrid outline planning application is to be submitted in Autumn of this year. The developer and design team have been selected following a competition between five such teams and the presentation represents their first thoughts on an appropriate approach.

The scheme comprises 400,000 sqft of floor space including residential, mixed leisure and retail. The design approach is informed by the evolution of settlement patterns and morphology of the area since the mid 19th century, and by the need to reconnect the heart of the city with its waterfront. Key features include a two level arcaded street providing links between the Leisure Centre to the south and a new bus station to the north. A third level includes a multiplex cinema, health/leisure complex and cafes/bars with a residential tower straddling the mall, which is anchored by a two storey, 105,000sqft Debenhams department store at its southern end. There are two cross connections taking Llanarth Street and Austin Friars through the complex east-west, the former descending via escalators to the riverside level, the latter emerging as a first floor pedestrian bridge to cross the Kingsway Boulevard.

At the riverside level a new public realm is being created with a new 'square' at the entrance to the scheme, although this is bisected by Kingsway Boulevard (Hannover was cited as an example of how the boulevard might become a 20 mile per hour traffic calmed square)

The Boulevard façade of the shopping centre is screened by a crescent of single aspect apartments, which also hides a servicing lane. At its northern end an apartment tower of some 17 storeys sits astride the side mall linking to Austin Friars at right angles to the Galleria. The new bus station occupies the north east corner with an open aspect to the Kingsway Boulevard

Cafes and restaurants on three floors will overlook the new square at the southern end of the Galleria. Here the facades are entirely glazed, but the canopy of the Galleria is free standing creating a sheltered, but definitely outdoor street. European precedents were cited at Rotterdam and Nijmegen in the Netherlands and Berlin (Potsdamerplatz and Hackische Höfe) as indicative of the design aspiration.

Newport Unlimited and Newport City Council stated that they are encouraged by the ambition of the scheme and the track record of those involved. However they expect many issues to emerge as the project progresses and that this is very much the starting point of the development of the design.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel questioned whether the developer intended to retain the project once completed and were told that the developers are long term investor/developers, though the residential developments might be sold off.

The Panel questioned the permeability of the scheme. The design/development team offered reassurance of 24 hour open access routes through the scheme both north south

and east west (two routes) with CCTV surveillance and private maintenance of these internal streets.

The Panel considered the scheme to work well on two levels due to the natural fall in the land between Commercial Street and the riverside. They considered the Galleria to have a potentially strong footfall between the bus station and the expanded Kingsway Centre car park, leisure centre and potential University campus to the south.

Asked to clarify the nature of the bus station and plans for public transport integration, Newport Unlimited stated that they recognised the existing bus station occupied a large area and valuable site and that its links with the rail station were not ideal. However there were plans for a central bus loop to link to all major locations in the town centre and a second bus station might be built adjacent to the rail station. Newport Unlimited consider it possible to bring all the bus routes through the bus station on Kingsway Boulevard if this became necessary.

The Panel enquired further about the “airport quality” of the bus waiting area cited in the presentation materials and how this might be achieved. The team stated their intention to design and manage the area to the same standard as the rest of the scheme with good daylight and open space and supporting commercial units. It was noted that lower grade retail units would be attracted to the refurbished Kingsway Centre rather than the Galleria.

The leisure element was described as a loss leader at this stage and its content will be more closely defined in the future. There is a need to address the relocation of the facilities within the Newport Leisure Centre in the future; the building may then become part of the new University and student union facilities.

The Panel looked carefully at the way the scheme knitted back into the urban fabric of Upper Dock Street and adjacent lanes. They emphasised the need to ensure that the scheme did not encroach too much on Upper Dock Street, and created a much more comfortable and higher quality space at John Frost Square. The micro climate of this space was as important as the need to provide active frontages and an appropriate focus. Upper Dock Street needs fine grained active frontages. The design team thought there was potential for a mix of office/hotel/residential uses at its northern end and the Panel agreed.

The Panel requested more detail on the design of the ground floor of the single aspect residential units facing on to the Kingsway Boulevard. It was not convinced that the lobbies on the ground floor and the screening of the car parking and servicing were adequate to reinforce the activity on the street, and more consideration should be given to allocating some active bar, restaurant or retail activities facing on to the boulevard. There was concern that the curve on the residential rather undermined the boulevard, but since the frontage is so close to the road this may not be a problem. However, the lack of enclosure the Bus Station provides to the boulevard is a continuing concern

There were no objections in principle to the residential tower but its design needs to be considered as part of the whole question of Newport’s emerging skyline.

The Panel thought there was a major opportunity to conform to Welsh Assembly Government policy and to develop a scheme with excellent sustainability credentials. There were positives with the glazed arcade not requiring heating and being naturally ventilated, though solar gain would have to be carefully assessed. Sedum roofing should be considered

and a more sophisticated approach to environmental design would help improve the roofscape and reduce the need for plant and mechanical services. Natural ventilation could be more extensively used. More work is needed in relation to wind tests and overshadowing.

Procurement was raised as an important factor, as were materials and labour sources and supply chains. Newport Unlimited and Newport CC gave details of their construction skills initiative linked to the project, and of the concrete crushing facility being created and co-ordinated with demolition work. These were welcomed.

A major commitment is being made by all parties to public art. The Panel will expect more detail on this and refer the team to the professional agencies concerned. This element must not be proscribed by the landscape architecture and the early appointment of, and collaboration with, professional artists was advocated by the Panel.

The Panel expressed concern over the variety of public realm treatments and features set out in the brochure. It was concerned that too many ideas were being applied to a small number of streets and spaces. What was important was the quality of materials and the simplicity of design in the existing historic streets, with opportunities for more innovative and spectacular elements in Usk and John Frost Squares. The Panel were concerned that the Leisure Centre and the facing car park did not offer much hope for an improved space on the south side of Usk Square.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed many elements of the concept and were encouraged by the way that the proposals integrate into the existing fabric in terms of permeability, grain and scale. The disposition of the blocks works well and 24 hour access through the Galleria is welcomed, as is the idea of an unenclosed Mall that is naturally ventilated.

The transparency of the scheme where it faces on to Usk Square is positive and the integration of the bus station, car parking and servicing are excellent. There is the basis here of a scheme that will make a major and lasting contribution to the regeneration of Newport city centre.

The main concerns of the panel are:

- The residential tower, and perhaps a hotel tower and how these will affect the skyline, important views and the microclimate at street level.
- The enclosure of the Kingsway Boulevard, particularly in front of the bus station, and active ground floor uses that will encourage pedestrian activity and surveillance.
- Consistent, quality treatment of the public realm in a calm but creative way, taking the opportunities presented by John Frost and Usk Squares, the latter needing a serious effort to deliver major traffic calming where it is bisected by the boulevard.
- The lack of an adequate commitment yet to the detailed aspects of sustainability in the design, and the need to carefully consider energy efficiency and generation,

natural ventilation, green roofs and the use of locally sourced, low embodied energy materials.

- Public Art: The client and planning authority, engaging the usual tender procedures, may wish to approach both professional consultancies supported by the Arts Council of Wales to provide strategy, commissioning and project management on public art programmes. Details of both organisations are listed below in alphabetical order:

www.cbat.co.uk

(CBAT: The Arts & Regeneration Agency)

www.cywaithcymru.org

Cywaith Cymru Artworks Wales

- The Panel would welcome further consultation as the scheme progresses.

Diwedd/End

A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.