

Statws/Status:

Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	28 April 2008
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Meeting Date:	16 April 2008
Lleoliad/Location:	Market Hall, Blaenau Ffestiniog
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Community Arts Centre
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	Menter y Moelwyn [Alan Norton, Eifion Williams]
Developer/Datblygwr:	As above
Pensaer/Architect:	Baart Harries Newall [Mark Newall]
Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Gwynedd CC
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Pre-application
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel:	
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)	Ashley Bateson Phil Roberts

Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer)
Jonathan Adams

Michael Griffiths

Lead Panellist:

Phil Roberts

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Mark Hand, Newport CC

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This scheme was previously reviewed by DCFW in February 2008 and the design team, including the client, have made every effort to respond to the recommendations made at that review. Their first reaction was to simplify the brief, and the Menter y Moelwyn committee have worked to re-formulate the internal layout and include more flexible, less functionally specific spaces. Specifically the kitchen has been relocated to the south western corner of the ground floor, and this has freed up space around the main entrance, which was previously very congested. The architectural treatment has been simplified and the old and new elements are now joined with a glazed link.

The sustainability strategy has been developed and improved, and BREEAM assessors have been engaged to advise the team. A trial scoring gave the scheme a very high Very Good score, and they are confident of achieving BREEAM Excellent. BDP acoustics have carried out an acoustic survey, and they are confident that any impacts can be adequately mitigated.

Sketch drawings of a possible landscape treatment for the car park, by Howard Bowcott, were tabled for our information.

The team have had a meeting with the planning authority to discuss the latest plans and received an enthusiastic response.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel was very pleased to see the revised proposal, which is very much in line with what we had intended. The internal layout works much better and we think will deliver improved functionality and flexibility. The architectural treatment is simpler and stronger, and the contextual response more appropriate.

The Panel thought that the entrance still needed to be made more legible, with more space immediately inside. We discussed the possibility of taking into the building some of the external triangle to the west of the door. We suggested that the disabled

toilet at ground floor level should be accessed from the staircase rather than opening directly on to the exhibition space.

In general we found the circulation spaces at both levels were still slightly cramped, and we questioned the adequacy of the single doors into the first floor auditorium. The function of the two folding screens between auditorium and cafe, to give an acoustic airlock, was explained to the Panel. We thought they would be bulky even when folded back and suggested that it might be possible to have a single, higher spec, folding wall to give the same acoustic performance.

The balconies projecting at first floor level will have glass balustrades and be used for breakout space, viewing points and to accommodate smokers. We would like to see a more subtle arrangement of external signage. It was explained that 'Yr Hall', while apparently anomalous in Welsh, derives from local usage over many years.

External materials will be Welsh slate [the roof pitch having been adjusted accordingly] and the metal cladding to the second floor will be patinated zinc. Aluminium windows were suggested and the Panel advised the team to consider using composite timber and aluminium windows, which have a better environmental profile. The client group have in mind a local constructor for the recycled granite walls, and the architects have ample experience of conservation work.

The team hope to engage Dulas Engineering to advise on renewable energy provision and passive cooling. Nighttime cooling will be optimised through the use of thermal mass and openable windows. Solar thermal panels will be discretely located on the rear [south facing] pitch of the new building.

The challenge now lies with getting the detailing right. For example, the depth of the intermediate floor of the new building should coincide with the depth of the spandrel on the glazed wall, and not be visible beyond it. At top floor level, the detail of how the glazing system interfaces with the columns needs clarifying. The architect agreed with these points and confirmed that the detailing will be done with a view to preserving design quality. He noted that the practice has a reputation for achieving thin roof edges. The Panel noted that access to the external lift would need to be controlled and that the lift pit would need to be drained. The lift over-run should be shown on the drawings, although we were told it would be negligible. Consideration should be given to the maintenance of the small flat roof over the lift and the junction with other roofs.

The Panel understood that the aspirations for landscaping lie outside the remit of this scheme and will depend on European funding. However we repeated our view that the overall success of the building will depend on an attractive and well used public realm.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review this revised scheme so soon after the initial presentation. We consider the proposal has been significantly improved and we think this will result in a much better building, in terms of aesthetics and functionality. This is now an acceptable response to the site and the brief, and we think minor revisions only are necessary. In summary:

- The internal layout has benefitted from more flexible spaces and the relocation of the kitchen
- The main entrance needs to be made more legible and the entrance space immediately inside needs to be enlarged
- We suggest that a single acoustic screen be investigated for the first floor theatre
- We applaud the sustainability aspirations and the strategy that has been adopted to achieve them. We would like to see composite timber/aluminium windows specified.
- Correct detailing of the elevations, particularly the new element, will be vital to achieve the promised design quality and needs to be defined now. We advise that sections and detailed drawings should be submitted with the planning application.
- In particular the detailing on the external lift needs attention. We think that either this should be made an internal lift, or the implications of security and maintenance addressed.
- We support the aspirations for a quality landscape treatment of the car park area and advise that shared surfaces should extend up to the building, with no kerbs.

Diwedd/End

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