

**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:** Bangor Centre  
**Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun**  
**Scheme Description:** Retail,  
Menai Shopping Centre

**Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio:** N/A  
**Planning Consultants:**

**Client/Agent Cleient/Asiant:** Cathco Developments: Nigel Dick;  
GTMS: Paul Smith, Jeff Day;  
Foreman Roberts: Tony Sutton;  
Shepherd Gilmour: Geraint Owen

**Pensaer/Architect:** Leach Rhodes Walker:  
Christian Gilham

**Awdurdod Cynllunio:** Cyngor Gwynedd Council  
**Planning Authority:**

**Statws Cynllunio:** Outline consent exists for retail  
**Planning Status:** and car parking. Detailed  
application not yet submitted.

**Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:**  
John Punter (cadeirydd/chair); Carole-Anne Davies, CEO (swyddog/officer)  
Douglas Hogg, Wendy Hall, Ewan Jones, Phil Roberts

**Lead:** Wendy Hall  
**Cyflwyniad/Presentation:**

The current design team were asked to review the scheme that was given the outline planning consent and were supported by officers to provide a new, more modern design solution. The original scheme oriented buildings to the street but failed to deal with servicing issues and lacked the use of local materials.

This is a major redevelopment proposal to replace the inward looking and outdated Wellfield Shopping Centre at the heart of Bangor town centre with some 16 shop units and two large store units, with a scheme that will be outward looking. Garth Road Bangor is currently suffering low retail activity, and a new single storey Marks & Spencer store has recently been built to the north. Further retail infill development will take place on High Street and the servicing bays and access will be improved, and provide an improved aspect from residential properties on Well Street. New frontages will be created on the northern side to face M&S, and a new Cathedral Walk will lead shoppers from the refurbished MSCP to Garth Road and up to the High Street. Several of the units on High Street are not part of the application including a 1930s Woolworths. More public space will be created adjacent to the Clock Tower by trimming back the existing building line on the south west corner of the scheme and providing a level entrance into the new department store

The Debenhams store acts as the anchor and occupies much of the upper level of the Garth Road and Cathedral Walk frontages, with a restaurant with a large extruded panoramic window overlooking the north west corner.

The upper levels of the exterior are clad in slate panels recessed behind a strongly horizontal concrete frame, and the same treatment is applied to two infill sites on the High Street. The elevations work better on Cathedral Walk where there are two strong corner treatments to enliven the façade, and where the nearly level ground makes the shopfronts fit more comfortably within the façade. However on Garth Road the change of level creates big differentials in the height of the shop fronts and there are some awkward relationships between shopfront and pavement. However here too there is a strong discipline imposed by the white concrete frame and the slate panels, with the entrance to Debenhams fully glazed over two storeys.

The rear of the scheme is as carefully designed as the main frontages and the clean lines of the white frame above the loading bays tie into the retail frontage to the north and the upper level plant screens particularly successfully. The setting back of the loading bays has improved the amenity of the houses on Well Street significantly and will make the servicing more efficient

Roof plant will not be visible from the streets and will also be well screened from views from the surrounding hills if the photomontage is anything to go by.

#### **Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response:**

The Panel welcomed the refurbishment of this very run down shopping centre and supported the general approach of the architects to make it more outward looking, reinforcing the streets and creating active frontages on all sides of the building. The architects had been very bold, employing large scale simple rectangular shapes, strong horizontals, contrasting materials and colours to good effect. The scheme created large floor plates and efficient units that would work well over four different levels and would be easy to access and service. The question now was could they detail the building to give it

some refinement and quality, particularly at the pedestrian level where it will be viewed up close. In this regard, procurement will be important and the design team confirmed that they are commissioned to take the scheme through both planning and scheme delivery and they will be novated to the contractor. The bulk of the detail is to be agreed prior to contractor appointment. The Panel were partially reassured on this point.

The panel emphasised the opportunities within the smaller scale elements to vary the palette of materials and develop good street architecture to respond to the historic character of Bangor, without resorting to pastiche. The smaller refurbished units on High Street might be treated differently from the other facades and be more sympathetic to the existing architectural mix and smaller scale of this street.

Given the monolithic scale of the centre as a whole it is crucial that shop fronts have some depth and quality and are well detailed and controlled. There was some debate over the deliberate off-setting of columns, panels and shopfronts, which created a very restless effect on Garth Road facing the Cathedral and its grounds.

The Panel welcomed the proposed extensions to the public realm in the form of a new piazza on High Street and the new Cathedral Walk and look forward to seeing these spaces designed in detail. The use of a public art strategy was encouraged in order to integrate the work of professional artists into the scheme. There was a need to avoid the simple placing of objects without relationship to their context.

Signage and orientation will be important and this needs detailed consideration at this stage to provide consistency. The quality of the public spaces and views need greater attention, particularly at the south west corner where the retaining wall might be redesigned, and throughout Cathedral Walk.

The Panel emphasised the need for views of the roof of the building to be more fully considered from different vantage points. Improved roof treatment could also help "flat" edges of buildings.

The treatment of service areas was generally welcomed. However, these could be further improved with the introduction of greenery and high level planting.

Sustainability features such as heating, lighting and ventilation need further examination and this area is particularly weak given the size of the scheme. The M&E engineers argued that tenants were not interested in energy saving features, but the Panel did not consider that this allowed the design team to ignore the obligation to produce a more sustainable building in line with government policy in Wales. Resource efficient alternatives are possible and proven technology exists to reduce plant requirement. Passive solar and natural ventilation could be used more creatively, and photovoltaics could be used to generate electricity. A green roof was seen as particularly relevant given the visibility of the scheme from the hills around and the vast flat expanses that needed to be covered. The design team were also encouraged to future proof the scheme, to accommodate legislative requirements for sustainability likely to be required in less than a decade.

## Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed what would clearly represent a huge improvement to the centre of Bangor. They complimented the architects on their bold approach and the clean lines of the scheme that work particularly well on the rear of the scheme! They welcome the use of slate providing it is locally sourced, though they remain to be entirely convinced of how the panels will be detailed in relation to the shopfronts, and whether the uniformity of the panels will work with the more or less random width of the shop fronts. Careful attention to detailing of the elevations and the choice of materials is required. The Panel seeks further reassurance with regard to the design of the roof and the views thereof from the hills to the south and north.

The Panel compliment the architects on the design of the rear of the building and the improvements made to the efficiency of the servicing bay. They particularly welcome the improved living conditions provided for the residents on the west side of Well Street.

There is scope for greater development of Cathedral Walk as a piece of public realm, and the public spaces it creates at either end. The same is true of the piazza on the High Street and the retaining wall on Garth Road, which might be redesigned as an amenity in itself. Better paving on High Street and at the entrance to Debenhams would also greatly improve the quality of the street as would better conditions for the growth of the mature trees in the street. Whilst care is required to avoid the over articulation of the elevations which could date the scheme, the south east corner of the scheme needed to provide greater character and a more positive relationship to the streets.

Shop signage needs detailed attention because it will be critical to getting some continuity and refinement on the scheme, particularly on Garth Road where it faces the Cathedral Churchyard.

Public art should be integrated and used in the detailing and elevational treatment and within the public spaces. 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](http://www.cbat.co.uk)  
(CBAT: The Arts & Regeneration Agency)

[www.cywaithcymru.org](http://www.cywaithcymru.org)  
Cywaith Cymru Artworks Wales

The Panel is particularly concerned to see much more effort made to improve the sustainability of this major retail complex. While it recognises that it can be difficult to convince retail tenants of the importance of the sustainability agenda nonetheless this building could do much more to reduce energy use and reduce other environmental impacts. The panel particularly recommends the exploration of the following:

- Green roofs to reduce energy and maintenance costs and to improve amenity;
- A strategy to reduce energy use and increase levels of natural ventilation. There are opportunities for the extensive use of photovoltaics;

- A commitment to the use of locally sourced materials, renewable where possible;
- A reduction in the amount of impermeable surfaces in the servicing area;
- Provisions for recycling.

**Diwedd/End**

***A Welsh language copy of this report has been provided.***