

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	24th June 2009
Issue Date:	6th July 2009
Scheme Location:	Mumbles Pier
Scheme Description:	Lifeboat station
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

Mumbles Pier and the existing lifeboat building are Grade II listed but in poor condition. The pier in particular is structurally weak. Consequently this scheme is dependent on the repair or partial rebuilding of the pier, and negotiations are ongoing between RNLI and the owners. An alternative use will be sought for the existing lifeboat station but failing that it may have to be demolished.

Because of the introduction of the new Tamar lifeboat over the next five years, a larger building is necessary to accommodate it. The proposed structure has a wave form, copper clad roof and larch clad walls. The exact location has been narrowed down to two potential sites, one at the head of the pier and the other on a spur to the north.

The Local Authority are content with either of the chosen sites and think its visual prominence should be celebrated. It accords with the regeneration strategy for Swansea Bay. Cadw have been consulted and their further comments are awaited. A planning application is expected late this year or early next year.

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

The Panel was pleased to see this important scheme at an early stage, when our comments can be most useful. We fully support the planned location of a new lifeboat station at Mumbles Pier. However, we cannot support the design of the building as it stands. In summary:

- The client and his team appear well resourced and capable of assessing all the factors involved in determining the preferred location. All other things being equal,

we would like to see the pier head developed as the preferred site, provided proper public access is made right to the end(s) of the pier, as it is both a destination and a landmark. The design should not compromise the quality and integrity of the listed structure, and Cadw's views on this will be important. The alternative position to the north of the existing pier offers a more complicated, less legible composition.

- The design of the building should be re-thought and a more simple and robust industrial typology should be developed, based on a pure symmetrical form. Door and window openings should be rationalised so that the glazed wall gives a dramatic view of the boat with minimal visual interference, and the main entrance is clearly identified.
- We welcome the commitment of the client to a long life, low energy building, and support the efforts made to evaluate and incorporate low and zero carbon technologies.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel was satisfied that alternative locations had been fully explored, and established that both remaining options were operational and cost neutral, although the option off the spur [option 6] would be more difficult to make fully accessible. The finished building should be a public destination and this would seem to favour the pier head site [option 8]. Obviously the costs of the pier repairs would have to be monitored and the new building would not go ahead until this had been agreed.

The functionality of the building should determine the design approach and its finished form should be simple, pure and symmetrical – more akin to the traditional boathouse form. We found the 'wave form' too literal and overstated and would like to see a more restrained approach to the design development. The new piles should align with, or relate directly to, the existing grid structure. The fenestration and entrances should be rationalised, and the glass wall through which the boat will be viewed should have a minimal framing system. The potential for a glazed wall on the north side facing back towards Swansea, below the eaves of any roof, should be explored and would give a dramatic silhouette especially at night. A well designed lighting scheme would enhance the destination status of the building, and illuminate the boat within.

The client confirmed their requirement for a robust, low maintenance and energy efficient building. They intend to use a ground source heat pump to provide background heating, which they have used elsewhere, and have also pioneered heat recovery from sea water. Rainwater storage will be provided as there is a heavy demand for fresh water. The insulated timber frame will be sustainably sourced, and the timber cladding will be untreated but is expected to have a reasonably long life if carefully selected. The client will also consider whether wind or solar PV technology can be usefully incorporated, and we encouraged this exploration.

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	RNLI [Howard Richings]
Pensaer/Architect:	Alan Culshaw Associates [Alan Culshaw]
Consultants:	Opus International [Chris Smith, Brian Hillman] Planning Consultant [G Powys Jones]
Awdurdod Cynllunio/ Planning Authority	CC Swansea [Steve Smith, Gail Evans]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Ewan Jones [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Ed Colgan	Ashley Bateson Ann-Marie Smale Martin Knight David Harvey
Lead Panellist:	Ashley Bateson
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Eleanor Marks [WAG, DE&T]