

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 27 October 2006
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 18 October 2006
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: Ocean Plaza, Rhyl

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Mixed use
Scheme Description:

Developer/Datblygwr: Modus [Andrew Duffy]

Pensaer/Architect: BDP [Richard Elsdon]

Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: HOW Planning
Planning Consultants: [Richard Woodford]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Denbighshire CC
Planning Authority: [Mark Dakeyne]

Statws Cynllunio: Pre-planning
Planning Status:

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
Wendy Richards (cadeirydd/chair) Ann-Marie Smale
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Elfed Roberts
Charlie Deng [swyddog/officer] Mike Biddulph
Douglas Hogg

Lead Panellist: Mike Biddulph

Sylwedyddion/Observers: James White, DCFW

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This proposal seeks to develop the western end of the sea front at Rhyl with residential, office, leisure and retail uses. The triangular site lies between the promenade and West Parade to the north; Sydenham Avenue and a residential area to the east; Wellington Road and the marine lake to the south; and the 'blue bridge' across the River Clywd to the west. This is one of the main approaches into Rhyl and the site is seen as a gateway opportunity. Further east down the promenade is the Drift Park development [reviewed by DCFW in Jan 05], which is nearing completion, and there are plans to develop a marina in the Clwyd estuary to the north west of this site, possibly with a new footbridge linking the two.

The B5118 West Parade will be diverted through the centre of the site and the promenade will become a calmed pedestrian space, fronted by 4 residential blocks set at an angle to the promenade on a NE/SW axis. Five storeys of accommodation are located above a retail podium and the blocks are designed to resemble ocean liners. A 4 storey office block is located at the western end of the sea front, angled around a new public square, where the proposed new bridge would terminate. A hotel is located at the westernmost point of the triangle, and a new leisure block is located on the southern perimeter, adjacent to a roundabout linking the realigned B5118 with Wellington Road. An Asda store takes up the south east corner of the site, together with a row of affordable housing units facing Wellington Road, and the central area of the site is largely given over to car parking.

An 'urban park' built on podium is shown surrounding the vehicular entrance at the north east corner, with car parking underneath. The car parking behind the residential blocks sits under a planted and paved deck, with the entrance to the blocks at first floor level. Elevational materials are render and timber for the apartment blocks, and red brick for the office block.

The design aspires to an EcoHomes Very Good rating. The intention is to deal with all construction waste on site. The office block will be naturally ventilated so far as possible. The potential for tri-generation [heating, cooling and electricity] is being explored, as is the purchase of energy from a local ESCO [Energy Supply Company]. Ten 'quiet revolution' vertical axis wind turbines will be installed along the promenade and Wellington Road. The site is close to a cycle route and cycle parking spaces are provided. The developers are working with the Local Authority to maximise public transport to the site.

The Local Planning Authority has been involved in discussions on this site for the last two years. The site is allocated for tourism development and is seen as critical to the regeneration of West Rhyl. The Authority supports the principle of mixed use and confirmed that plans for the marina development are progressing, with initial infrastructure improvements due to start next month. The planning application for this site is about to be submitted and a decision is expected early next year. A recent public consultation day attracted 5% of the population of Rhyl, with 80% supporting the proposal.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel noted that the scale and ambition of this proposal indicated a step change and an increased level of confidence in the regeneration of this area. We were informed that the Asda store is a relocation from Kinmel Bay and that a retail study has shown that the regeneration benefits outweigh any possible detriment to the town centre. The geographical separation of this development from the town centre increases its

dependance on the marina to ensure its success, and we considered it vital that the proposed footbridge is built. The adjacent run-down site to the east along West Parade is in urgent need of redevelopment and ideally this should happen in tandem with this development, to support the regeneration of the whole area.

The Panel supported the realignment of West Parade to create a calm pedestrian seafront route with animated frontages. The developer believes that the commercial units are viable, with some interest shown already, and the Local Authority is looking for new outlets and uses relating to the harbour and the seafront. However, the Panel was concerned about the lack of legible pedestrian routes running north/south across the site, and the domination of the southern part of the site by large retail and leisure blocks in a sea of car parking. We suggested that a route could be opened up, possibly following the line of the existing Quay Street, to improve connectivity between the seafront and marine lake. We would also like to see a more positive relationship with the housing to the east.

The Panel had severe doubts as to how well the proposed green park would be used, given that it is severed by a service road, and suggested that the considerable investment that the developer is prepared to make in building over a car park, might be better used in developing an elongated green space or 'play street' along Sydenham Avenue. We were informed that a grill mesh with climbers will be used to shield the residential car parking from the road, and that an embankment to cope with level changes also occurs at this point. The Panel emphasised the need for legible accessible pedestrian entrances to the apartment blocks. We would like to see some softening of the central car park with planting.

The Panel supported the architectural approach to the design of the residential blocks and considered the density appropriate for the aspirations of the Local Authority. We suggested that the heights of the blocks could be varied, possibly stepping up towards the bridge approach to the west. The idea of introducing colour into the facades was discussed, and the Panel would like to see something more visually uplifting to overcome the bleak flatness of the site. We were told that the orientation of the blocks optimises views to north and south, but we thought there might be problems of overlooking.

The Panel was less convinced by the office block and its relation with the apartment blocks, and we noted that the fenestration as shown does not appear to correspond with the internal uses. We discussed the possibility of combining the hotel and office block into one landmark building, providing that the form of the building properly acknowledged the needs of pedestrians in this area, whilst also maintaining a built edge to Wellington Road.

There is currently an awkward relationship between the row of affordable homes and the rear of the supermarket, and we suggested that the residential units should be integrated with the supermarket building and wrapped round the corner into and along the length of Sydenham Avenue.

The Panel was surprised that only an Eco Homes 'Very Good' was being sought, given the range of sustainability features included. The developer confirmed that they will seek to achieve an Excellent rating. The heating system for the blocks has not yet been identified but the M&E consultants are also the sustainability consultants for this project.

The Panel noted that no development brief has been produced for this site.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel recognised and supported the ambition underlying this large and complex scheme. We welcome the proposed mixed use, the public realm created by the realignment of the road, and the architectural treatment of the residential elements. However, we think that major revisions are necessary in the site planning. In particular:

- We think that the large amount of car parking needs to be much better integrated with the rest of the site and softened by a strong landscape strategy.
- We consider it vital that more north/south pedestrian permeability and connectivity is achieved.
- We do not think the green space will work well in its current configuration and suggest that it be extended down Sydenham Avenue to improve the relationship with the housing to the east.
- We are not convinced by the parking and access arrangements to the rear of the residential blocks.
- We would like to see the affordable housing integrated with the superstore but still addressing the street.
- The relationship of the office block with the residential blocks should be re-examined.
- We commend the approach to sustainability, and would encourage the design team to achieve a BREEAM/EcoHomes Excellent rating.
- The development of the marina, including the new footbridge, and the redevelopment of the snooker hall site to the north east are essential to support the aspirations of this scheme.

Diwedd/End

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