

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	23rd September, 2009
Issue Date:	7th October 2009
Scheme Location:	The Old Rectory, Bedwas, Caerphilly
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

The brief is to provide additional accommodation [new kitchen, study and en suite bathroom] for the existing Grade II listed building. The client and architects are committed to retaining and protecting the original character of the building, while introducing sympathetic contemporary additions. They are open to suggestions for how best to achieve this and have engaged in pre-application discussions with the Local Planning Authority.

The Conservation Officer described how the building has medieval origins, but has been amended many times and has a recognisable Georgian influence. This proposal has generated debate within the DC section of the LPA, as to how flexible they should be in interpreting their own design guidelines. They respect the need to modernise and adapt historic buildings, but have particular concerns about the rear elevation and the catslide roof.

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

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to comment on this proposal at an early stage, and appreciated the willingness of both architects and planners to engage in debate and test different solutions. We could support this scheme provided that the following major recommendations are adopted:

- The planning application should include a historical analysis of the relative importance of different parts of the building, to inform and justify the current proposals.

- The two proposed extensions should relate better to one another and the study extension should follow the simple design approach of the kitchen extension.
- The quality of detailing and materials should be rigorously specified and monitored, to achieve a result similar to the one shown in the D&A statement. We would expect this to be controlled through the listed building consent process.
- The proposed study extension should be replaced with a single storey version, and alternative ways explored of providing a new upstairs bathroom.
- The problem of security to the rear needs to be solved as part of this proposal, whether by new boundary treatment, a screen wall, or diverting the footpath.
- The spot level to the ground abutting the rear extension should be fixed and verified.
- The opportunity to improve the energy efficiency of the existing building should be taken and maximized.
- It is possible that selective demolition could deliver a better plan and energy efficiency improvements, but this would need to be carefully justified.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel welcomed the open-minded approach to this review, shown by the design team. We support the principle of a contemporary architectural treatment for the proposed extensions, which respects the old building and allows the continuing history of modifications to be identified and understood. An analysis of which parts of the building were of particular historical importance would be useful and would help inform the eventual design solution.

With regard to the front elevation, the proposals sit comfortably with this approach. However, in the view from the churchyard the end gable of the kitchen extension is very prominent and its successful resolution will depend on the quality of detailing and materials. While the scale and form of this extension works well, it needs to be elegant and beautifully detailed along the lines of the precedent shown [fig 18] in the Design & Access statement.

The other key view is from the railway bridge and public footpath to the rear, and the study and bathroom extension here is very different in character from the first. This extension is too bulky in appearance and the catslide roof, which joins the main roof very close to the ridge, appears out of proportion and has the effect of obscuring the roof line of the older building. In addition, the detailing of the junction between the catslide roof and the main roof to the west will be awkward to resolve. We would prefer to see the design approach to this extension follow the one adopted for the kitchen extension and the two sitting together more comfortably.

The bulk of the study extension is largely due to the requirement for an upstairs bathroom resulting in two storeys, and we wondered whether alternative ways of providing the new bathroom had been explored. It would be possible to include this within the existing floorplan, either by moving the master bedroom and bathroom to occupy the two connected bedrooms to the west, or by installing a bathroom pod within the current master bedroom. The latter solution would be facilitated by the relocation of the existing Victorian stairway, possibly into the new study. Alternatively, building over the existing extension in the centre of the rear elevation might offer a better solution.

The Panel agreed on the benefits of protecting the existing rear wall from damp, by enclosing it within the proposed extension. Given the problems with petty vandalism and the need to provide security for the rear of the building, we considered the provision of a wall, fence, railings or defensive planting along the boundary. Alternatively, the rear wall of the building could be used as a screen wall to define the boundary. This could be extended to the east to provide a glazed corner similar to the one proposed for the western corner. We understood that previous attempts to move the footpath had failed, but we thought this might be re-visited.

The row of Velux rooflights shown on the rear extension would be better replaced with a slot of integrated roof glazing.

We were encouraged by the intention to superinsulate the new extensions, and advised that this should apply equally to the highly glazed element, by using triple glazing or insulated shutters. Simple upgrades to the existing fabric (increased roof insulation and draught-proofing) should be the first priority. The proposed new front door will give better draught protection and this could be improved even further with an internal lobby. The client is considering installing solar water heating on the nearby garage.

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	Geoff Harris [not present]
Pensaer/Architect:	Arden Kitt Associates [Chris Brimble, Justin Williams]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Caerphilly CBC [Patricia Martin, Colin Grimes]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Ewan Jones [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Jonathan Hines	Simon Carne Mark Hallett Howard Wainwright Ed Colgan
Lead Panellist:	Jonathan Hines

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Glen Dyke [DCFW]

Maria Amparo Asenjo [DCFW]