

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: 19 December 2005
Design Review Report:

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: 7 December 2005
Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

Lleoliad/Location: Old Town Dock, Newport

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Residential
Scheme Description:

Cynllunio: CBAT [Zoe King]
Consultants:

Cleient/Asiant: Westmark [Richard Keogh]
Client/Agent: Newport Unlimited
[David Ward]

Pensaer/Architect: Feilden Clegg Bradley
[Carl Gulland, Andy Theobald]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Newport CC
Planning Authority: [Wendy Hall]

Statws Cynllunio: Pre-planning
Planning Status:

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Howard Wainwright
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Mike Biddulph
Ewan Jones

Lead Panellist: Ewan Jones

Sylwedyddion/Observers: Charlie Deng
Design Review assistant

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This scheme was last seen at Design Review in September 2005 and it was agreed that the presentation would focus on the recommendations made by the Panel in that report.

The architect reported that the issue of the north facing apartments had been discussed at length with the developer and their collective view is that solar access is not an important issue, given that there are good views, large windows, and only three apartments would be seriously affected

Following a detailed survey, flood levels have now been established and this has resulted in the blocks being raised, and the semi undercroft parking becoming full ground level parking. The designer recognised that this would mean high quality screening of parked cars particularly at night.

The landscape treatment has been developed and a boardwalk now links the main road with the river bank, providing greater clarity about public/private spheres. Surrounding the boardwalk is an estuary-like habitat within the building courtyard facing the river, with a series of posts forming an artistic intervention. This landscape translates into a harder urban form, with horizontally laid gabions, as it approaches the main road. A layered hedge boundary treatment is envisaged for Usk Road.

The elevations too have been developed, starting with the idea of a protective outer brick wall. This has been retained but with an additional layer of three terracotta bands of brickwork in varying shades, to achieve a bolder statement and to overcome the repetitive effect of stacked apartments. The dazzle camouflage of first and second World War ships provided the inspiration for this facade treatment. The inner walls of the blocks, facing the courtyard, will be rendered, between brick end walls. The standalone building between the blocks will be clad with timber veneer panels.

The Local Authority has been involved in the development of this scheme and Newport Unlimited strongly supports the progress of the design. CBAT have facilitated consultation meetings with public representatives and most responses have been positive. The designers remain committed to involving artists in the design of the elevations and to enliven pedestrian routes.

A detailed planning application is due to be submitted in the very near future.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel was disappointed to see the issue of solar access dismissed as a kind of optional extra and we disagree that the lack of it will not affect the quality of the internal space.

We were also disappointed at the full ground level parking arrangement, although we understand the reasons for this and accept that this is not a strictly urban site.

The Panel considered that the hierarchy of public/private spaces had been satisfactorily addressed by the new landscape strategy. However, we regret the loss of the strong

through route from the previous scheme, which was emphasised by the chamfered edges of the blocks, positioned closer together.

The Panel was encouraged by the previous architectural treatment, which we described as 'interesting, appropriate and memorable'. We were sorry to see the disappearance of the distinctive 'tweed' effect, which we thought was a good example of the integration of public art with the design. We have doubts about how well the harsher camouflage treatment and block patterns will work. We were told that there is the potential for some relief in the plane of the brickwork, which would help offer more elevational relief in long views and might also help overcome technical issues such as movement joints. The fenestration of internal walls appears to have become overly horizontal, reinforced by the balconies, and we would prefer to see the windows providing some vertical contrast to the long low form.

The commitment to achieving Ecohomes 'Excellent' remains, and there will be a centralised heating system serving the whole scheme which could in the future be linked up with a larger one serving the whole riverside park. We urged that consideration be given to using a CHP [combined heat and power] system with a low carbon fuel, and encouraged the client and developer to continue to investigate the possibility of a small wind turbine on the site. The cladding for the smaller riverside building is a new, untested [in this country] product, made from cellulose fibre and resin with a timber veneer face. It is claimed to be immune from weathering and the natural greying of exposed timber, and so will retain its yellow colour. However, because of its thin profile, it will need to be carefully handled on corners to avoid exposing difficult edges and junctions.

The central courtyard will feature bands of reeds and grasses and is not meant to be publicly accessible. It was pointed out that there is lots of other outdoor space within the riverside park. The Panel queried how and why residents should be kept out, especially those living on the ground floor, and also expressed concern over maintenance and the inevitable accumulation of litter. The boundary hedges should be of native species and their maintenance should be planned for in the long term. We thought that the hard surface gabions should be separated slightly from the surrounding blocks.

The procurement method will be Design and Build with a start date of autumn 2006. The architects have used this D&B model before in Bristol and Cheltenham, with good results. They will be retained and novated after the detailed design stage. The Panel pointed out the importance of securing good bricklaying skills for this design [something very hard to find in the current market].

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel recognises that this proposal has the potential for a high quality scheme. While we regret the loss of certain features from the previous scheme, we consider this to be an acceptable design approach, with minor revisions. In particular:

- We have some concern about the quality of the elevational treatment in terms of the detailing and execution of the brickwork
- We regret the loss of the opportunity to partially bury the car parking, but accept that the designers have developed some interesting options for screening.
- We think that the central courtyard could easily become a place where litter collects, and query why it is not available to residents. The harder landscape needs more refinement in the way in which it meets the building.

- We welcome the introduction of public art into the facade treatment and open spaces
- We applaud the commitment to EcoHomes 'Excellent' and we urge the team to go the extra mile to make this an exemplary sustainable development
- We very much hope that the procurement route and the shortage of time in which to develop the design does not impinge on the promised quality.

Diwedd/End

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