

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:
Design Review Report: 15 September 2005

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

Lleoliad/Location: Old Town Dock, Newport.

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun
Scheme Description: Residential

Cleient/Asiant:
Client/Agent: Westmark [Euan Cresswell,
Richard Keogh]

Pensaer/Architect: Feilden Clegg Bradley
[Gill Smith, Carl Gulland]

Landscape Architect: Macgregor Smith [Tim Rose]

Public Art Consultants: CBAT [Zoe King]

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

Statws Cynllunio:
Planning Status: Pre-planning

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Ewan Jones
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Ann-Marie Smale
Richard Parnaby Ed Colgan
Phil Roberts

Lead Panellist: Richard Parnaby

Sylwedyddion/Observers: Gillian Wulff DCFW

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This residential scheme is intended to set a new standard of high quality development with greater commercial value for this area of Newport, in the context of a larger mixed use scheme and riverside park. Investment has already been made in site acquisition and land reclamation and the developers recognise the potential to create a desirable place to live and work. The size of apartments and external space is 10-15% above the norm and the blocks will be distinctive in appearance. Energy efficiency measures are included with an ability to connect to the wider scheme in the future. All parking will be underground and there will be a high standard of landscaping. Public art will be incorporated and consultants are already part of the team and working on elevational treatments. The presentation material is the competition entry and a planning application will be made in about 12 weeks.

This presentation relates to phase 1 – a development of 150 apartments arranged in three blocks, two at 5 storeys and one at 3 storeys. As part of the attempt to reconnect with the river, where old wharfs and jetties were arranged at 90 degrees to the shore, this plan shows a similar arrangement of blocks as 'fingers' pointing towards the river. This layout also maximises potential views and aims to give each unit either a view of the river or good solar access. A central pedestrian route follows the line taken from Dolphin Street with an A3 unit at ground level in the end block on the riverfront. The public / street sides of the blocks will be contrasted with the semi-private sides, - currently shown as black and white on the drawings, but could be expressed by colours or textures. The ground floor is raised half a level above grade and over car parking spaces. A large, 2 metre deep, balcony is provided for each single-aspect, wide-frontage apartment, arranged on either side of a central corridor. The main entrance will be housed in a 3 or 5 storey atrium, depending on the height of the block.

The open areas enclosed by the blocks will be grass or timber decking. The latter has light wells into the underground car park with trees growing through. External materials will be locally sourced and referenced, and lighting may be incorporated into paving to give a sense of security after dark. There will be a new bridge across Jacks Pill, structured tree planting along Usk Way, and large semi-mature oaks on the grassed area.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel welcomed the aspirations of the Urban Regeneration Company in setting up this model for future development. Given the lack of any existing context, getting an appropriate architectural and urban design solution is a big challenge. We applauded the commitment to underground parking and the architectural clarity and simplicity of the proposed design. However, we thought that the relationship with Usk Way and the Octopus roundabout was not respected and developed as much as it could have been. It was pointed out that the layout of the road junction may well change in the future and that the blocks were of necessity set back from the road because of existing major service runs. Moreover, the parallel lines of the blocks facing the street respect and follow the continuation of Usk Way south of the roundabout.

The Panel was uncomfortable with the poor aspect of the most enclosed, north facing apartments. The organisation of the internal layout was discussed and the suggestion made that arranging flats around stair/lift cores would allow the introduction of at least some dual

aspect units. The Panel was not convinced by the design team's suggestion that this would result in apartments which were oversized. A distinctive treatment for top floor units and corner units might provide an opportunity to resolve this problem. Introducing daylight into the central corridor which could then be borrowed into the rear of apartments, would also help. Another option would be to physically split the southernmost block at the corner, to introduce sun into the courtyard and apartments. The developer was less concerned about the poor aspect and thought that expansive glazing and good views were equally important in terms of saleability. The Panel urged the designers to continue to challenge the design in this respect and work to achieve some solar access for all units.

An Eco-homes rating of 'Excellent' will be achieved mainly through high levels of insulation, efficient building forms and a centralised heating plant, with the infrastructure for a possible link with a future CHP system in the wider scheme . The Panel suggested that a CHP system could be used within this scheme, ideally running on a low carbon fuel, and that this would greatly enhance the scheme's environmental credentials. The porous external surfaces will facilitate a sustainable drainage system.

We welcomed the public art consultant's input at this early stage, particularly in helping to create a textured 'tweed' effect on street elevations, and the creation of a separate [ring fenced?] arts budget. We noted that consultations with the local community are seen as an important part of this process.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomes the aspirations of this scheme, the architectural simplicity and commitment to sustainability. We are pleased with the quality of the design team and the basic design concept, and the involvement of landscape architects and public arts consultants is likewise applauded. However, we feel the following areas require further resolution:

- Our main concern is with the poor aspect of some of these high quality, high value apartments. This could be mitigated by a high quality of external space, but the area to the south will also be largely shaded and the situation is not helped by the light vent and trees. We urge the design team to challenge the layout again and to continue to search for an innovative solution.
- We would like to see some extra commitment to low carbon measures in the long term operation of this development, on top of the high standards already specified, to mark the scheme out as an environmental exemplar.
- The public realm treatment needs refining. The necessary setback from the road and the level differences across the site require a high level of detailing
- The way in which the site is split by the central pathway works well but attention needs to be given to the boundary treatment. There is currently a lack of clarity between public and private space.

The Panel commends the ambition of the proposal which has the potential, when fully resolved, to set the standard for urban living in Newport. We reiterate our view that, while the architectural character of the proposal is interesting, appropriate and memorable, the most important aspects of the design of this "pioneer" project is the standard it must set in terms of urban design and sustainable development.

Diwedd/End

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