

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:
Design Review Report: 10 August 2005

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd:
Meeting Date / Material Submitted: 3 August 2005

Lleoliad/Location: Princess Way, Swansea
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun
Scheme Description: Retail Scheme

Cynllunio/Consultants: APS Project Management
[Noel O'Donnell]

Cleient/Asiant: Thurleigh Estates
[Roger Hamilton-Brown]

Client/Agent:

Pensaer/Architect: Holder Mathias Architects
[Peter Mathias, Jamie Yeoman]

Awdurdod Cynllunio: Swansea City Council
Planning Authority: [David Gill, Bryan Graham,
Huw Mowbary]

Statws Cynllunio: Pre-planning
Planning Status: Application imminent

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| John Punter (cadeirydd/chair) | Howard Wainwright |
| Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) | Ed Colgan |
| Lyn Owen | Kedrick Davies |

Lead Panellist: Kedrick Davies

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Gillian Wulff Design Review Assistant
Gerard Ryan [DCFW Commissioner]
Allan Boyd, Richard Baker
[WAG Estates Division]**

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This proposal was considered by the Design Review Panel in May 2005. The mixed-use scheme originally tabled for DCFW consideration no longer exists and has been replaced by an exclusively retail scheme fronting Princess Way and Castle Square. The present scheme comprises Phase 1 of the development of the entire block and is supported by the commitment of a number of key retailers interested in the four units. It is intended that later phases of development will include the corner buildings to the north of this site facing the Kingsway roundabout [currently outside Thurleigh's ownership and referred to as 1b] and a residential redevelopment of the central block in Castle Street [Phase 2].

It was emphasised that this is now a deliverable scheme and is essential for the regeneration of this part of the city centre. As the profile of the area is raised and confidence established, it is anticipated that Phase 2 will follow, and the developers are committed to this. Similarly, if ownership issues are resolved, Phase 1b could be incorporated into the current proposals. Consultations have been held with focus groups and local traders, who support the scheme and in particular the narrowing of Princess Way and the contemporary design. Subject to the Design Review Panel's comments, the team are hoping to submit a planning application in 3 to 4 weeks.

The design team has accepted some of the recommendations made in the last Design Review report, such as: the removal of the triangular projections; different elevational treatments according to orientation; a commitment to upgrading the public realm; service road improvements; and a simpler elevational treatment. The introduction of a roof top café was considered but rejected due to insufficient market demand.

The local authority representatives expressed a commitment to the scheme, emphasising a close working relationship with the development team. They have commissioned a city centre study, which identifies four key areas for regeneration, of which this is one. Minor areas of concern included the treatment of the corner on to Castle Square and the detailing of the copper cladding on the second floor. The importance of the public realm treatment as an integral part of the scheme was emphasised. The local authority will ensure that this is delivered by themselves, the developers, or by both in partnership.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

While welcoming an incremental approach to the development of this site as more likely to deliver, the Panel examined the implications of the proposed phasing. We were reassured that development of the units to the north was being carefully considered and would be incorporated into this phase if at all possible.

The repetitive simplicity of the frame and its correspondence with the parapet and fascias of existing buildings on Princess Way, gained approval. The Panel was pleased to see that the triangular projections, previously considered unsympathetic, had been removed. The revised elevational corner treatment onto Castle Square, with copper panelling projecting through to first and upper/ground floors, works relatively well, accentuating the importance of this corner. The detailing of this, however, is crucial and any final assessment would depend on seeing 1:20 detailed drawings. The use of Portland stone stall risers is a positive feature of the design. Ideally these will be made by re-using stone from the existing building, but if this proves impossible, new Portland stone will be used.

The treatment of the northern end of the block is less successful and the interface between the proposed units 1 / 2, and the units to the north fronting the roundabout, remains uncomfortable. This is a temporary solution, but could become permanent if it proves impossible for the present developer to acquire the units to the north. It may well be better to look for a more permanent solution and to treat the north end of the block in a similar way to the Castle Square corner. The Panel would prefer to see a solution which works effectively, irrespective of what happens to adjacent units.

The building has a well defined "top", "middle" and "bottom". Some reservations were expressed that the elegance of the structural rhythm was compromised by the change of materials, from stone, to terracotta, to copper. With respect to the copper "top", the Panel would prefer to see some fenestration incorporated into the flowing form to ensure future flexibility of use, but this was not favoured by the future tenant or by the local authority. The potential exists for an artist to lead the design team on this element of the building, exploring the opportunity to create a more sweeping feature and an even more dramatic skyline. The architects agreed to develop this aspect further. The Panel was disappointed that the addition of a roof top café is not considered feasible and would encourage the team to pursue this opportunity further. Again, the introduction of some fenestration would allow this and other uses to be developed in the future, if they became economically feasible. We were pleased that active retail uses were intended for the second floor and the transparency of the building would increase the vibrancy of the street.

The inclusion of brise soleil on the southern elevation, as a distinct response to its orientation, was welcomed and it was suggested that they be made adjustable, so that winter sun could be admitted. The Panel thought that more consideration could be given to the servicing strategy in terms of heating, lighting and insulation standards, but the developer pointed out that they were primarily building a shell, to be fitted out by individual tenants. They are confident of achieving a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating on the building shell.

The Panel supported the narrowing of Princess Way, which will facilitate better connectivity and improve footfall and vibrancy. The public realm on Princess Way should be integrated and delivered with this scheme. The Panel was concerned that no work has yet been done on this, particularly as the whole of the street and the roundabout to the north are to be reshaped. Given that a large part of Princess Way is being allocated to the retail development, it is essential that the local authority ensure a high standard of public realm for the remainder of Princess Way. This could incorporate some form of shelter, arcading or canopy to provide some weather protection.

The use of lighting will be crucial to the success of the scheme. It was agreed that dedicated lighting for the copper clad top floor should be designed in situ to emphasise its theatrical

and sculptural qualities. Street lighting will probably be fixed to columns on the façade and these facades will also be illuminated.

Necessary basic improvements to the rear service area will be carried out, such that it will be able to accommodate a 'small artic'.

In response to our questions about the integration of signage, drawings were produced showing signs behind the glass within the ground floor bay, supplemented by small projecting signs, the details of which are still to be agreed. It was felt that the entrances to the shops would benefit from more definition in the framing of the units and fenestration details.

The Panel was concerned that street animation should extend beyond the ground floor and we were assured that first floor areas will be used for retail and not storage. The tenants' handbook will emphasise the importance of maintaining active façades and display windows. The Panel urged that this handbook should encourage tenants to adopt an energy efficient approach to fitting out.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel recognises the vital importance of this scheme for the regeneration of Swansea city centre, and wishes to support the development in principle. The Panel appreciates the way in which previous comments raised at Design Review have been addressed by the design team. We are pleased that the scheme has been significantly calmed, with a simpler, more refined design approach. In particular:

- We support the consistent framed elevational treatment, the recessed glazing, the dramatic curved second floor and the removal of the triangular projections.
- While we recognise that a piecemeal approach to the development of this area is appropriate, we are concerned that the northern end of the block should be treated with the same degree of refinement as the Castle Square corner. Ideally, Phase 1b will be resolved and incorporated before detailed design work begins.
- We applaud the active street frontages being created and urge that the building transparency be maintained at ground and first floor levels.
- The second floor design should allow for greater flexibility of use for future occupiers.
- We are pleased with the inclusion of the brise soleil on the southern elevation and strongly suggest that this be made adjustable. The Panel trust that the achievement of a BREEAM 'Very Good' rating will be treated as a minimum requirement.
- A high quality treatment for the public realm in what remains of Princess Way is vitally important. The Panel would like to see some form of freestanding shelter as part of this treatment. We encourage the local authority to use their powers to maximise the quality and amenity value of this area.
- The Panel discussed the issue of weather protection and considered that they should have suggested arcading of the facade at an earlier stage. Perhaps the design team might consider the addition of a glazed canopy to achieve some weather protection for shoppers.

Diwedd/End

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