

Statws/Status:
Cyfrinachol (Confidential)



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:
Design Review Report: 11 February 2005

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd
Meeting Date / Material Submitted: 2 February 2005

Lleoliad/Location: Slate Quay, Caernarfon

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun
Scheme Description: Masterplan, mixed use

Cynllunio:
Consultants: DTZ
Datrys Consulting Engineers
Gwynedd Archaeological Trust

Cleient/Asiant:
Client/Agent: Gwynedd County Council

Pensaer/Architect: Wyn Thomas Gordon Lewis
[Jonathan Vining, Catrin Oliver]

Awdurdod Cynllunio:
Planning Authority: Gwynedd CC

Statws Cynllunio:
Planning Status: Pre-planning

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:
John Punter (cadeirydd/chair) Lyn Owen
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Ed Colgan
Douglas Hogg

Sylwedyddion/Observers: Peter Roberts (DCfW)

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

Although the main client is Gwynedd County Council, the current proposals have been developed with the wider client team, comprising the WDA, Cadw and the Harbour Trust. Unfortunately, Darren Parker of DTZ and Aled Davies for the client were unable to attend this Design Review Panel meeting. There has been extensive public consultation and two public exhibitions have been held. The first was attended by more than 100 people and 25 per cent returned the comment forms, most strongly favouring redevelopment of this area of the town.

A site analysis has been informed by the historical context and an assessment of all listed buildings and structures within the area. A market appraisal confirms the commercial viability for residential development, in the form of low rise apartments and town houses, and possibly a marina. It is intended that this would act as a catalyst for related developments, such as restoration of the quay wall which is in poor condition. A car parking and traffic movement study has also been carried out.

Four emerging options have been identified, as detailed below: the first two include a marina; the second two do not:

Option 1: with marina and tidal gate.

1a) The marina is located on the south bank of the river Seiont and an adjacent new car park, also on the south bank, serves the marina and the town. A new pedestrian bridge is proposed over an impoundment gate, linking the proposed new car park with a new public open space, visitor centre and limited car parking at the north end of the bridge, just south of the castle. The adjacent roundabout is replaced with a T-junction and the island site with the Harbour Trust building is retained. A large part of Slate Quay around the castle is removed, allowing water to lap at the foot of the castle.

1b) Very similar to 1a) except that the quay around the castle is retained as a larger public open space.

Option 2: without marina

2a) The existing swing bridge is retained and refurbished and a new pedestrian bridge links the public space around the castle directly with the opposite bank. All car parking is accommodated on the north bank and there is no new development on the south bank.

2b) A new footbridge is proposed to replace the existing swing bridge over a tidal cill which could allow for a future marina. A new car park is located on the south bank linked to the open space around the castle by a new pedestrian bridge as in option 1.

The designers would like to identify one preferred option, to carry the scheme forward.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel established that it is intended for the station of the Welsh Highland Railway to remain approximately in its current position. It was acknowledged that the current car parking arrangements detract from the castle, but that locating a new car park on the south bank, however well landscaped and screened, would constitute a major incursion into open countryside and would impair the view south from the castle. In general the Panel would

prefer to see the south bank left undeveloped, given its proximity to a World Heritage Site and the SSSI. Our preferred option would therefore be 2a), although we think the pointed corner of Slate Quay could be rounded to respond better to the river.

In terms of the north bank development, we feel that there are too many new buildings of the same style along the waters edge. The historic buildings should be allowed to dominate here, and the continuous line could be broken, with plots in between buildings serving as small scale car parking. The large scale parking currently adjacent to the castle could be relocated to the southern end of Slate Quay, possibly with a shuttle link at peak season. Instead of a new visitor centre, we suggest that it could be accommodated in the Harbour Trust building.

With regard to the proposed marina, it has been established that there is a demand for more berths locally. The Panel noted that the cost of any barrage would be considerable, as would the cost of removing part of the quay. The designers have been asked to evaluate costings for the preferred option only.

We were informed that the local authority envisage a redeveloped Slate Quay complementing the town centre and fulfilling a tourism role, together with small scale employment. It should link in with the proposed redevelopment for Y Maes to the east of the castle. The Panel noted that response from the WDA to these proposals has not yet been received. We are aware that the development prospects of the site will be influenced by the progress of the scheme at Victoria Dock. We would like to see the local authority ensuring intensive use of these important sites and discouraging large scale site assemblage, especially within the purview of the castle.

The development brief which will follow on from this study should identify the important design principles, such as: ensuring the dominance of, and sensitivity to, the castle; small scale, fine-grained, mixed use; intimate relation to the river bank. Existing owners and tenants will be accommodated either on this site or elsewhere and the Panel felt it was important to retain a genuine and diverse mix of uses and building types.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel favours the development option which leaves the south bank of the river undisturbed. We are concerned that any of the other options could open the way to unwanted development in this area. In addition:

- We would like to see development on the north bank treated in a conservative, understated manner which allows the historic buildings to dominate
- The redevelopment should be small scale, fine-grained, permeable and mixed use including some residential
- Lively frontages should face the riverside walkway
- We applaud the provision of a second footbridge and a circular pedestrian walk
- The pointed corner of Slate Quay by the castle should be rounded off, and the position of the new bridge, if necessary, adjusted accordingly
- Existing local tourist attractions such as the Welsh Highland Railway should be positively catered for, and car parking requirements should be accommodated as unobtrusively as possible.
- We assume that all new buildings will be roofed with Welsh slate.

Diwedd/End

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