

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

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| Meeting date: | 2nd December 2009 |
| Issue Date: | 8th December 2009 |
| Scheme Location: | St Cyres Learning Campus, Penarth |
| Scheme Description: | Education |
| Planning Status: | Pre-application |

Part1: Presentation

The Vale of Glamorgan Council is pursuing a schools investment strategy. Cowbridge school was the first to benefit, and this is now on site using the same design team as St Cyres. Originally a simple replacement of the existing St Cyres school was envisaged, but the strategy has now changed to include two others schools which are in poor condition. These are Ysgol Erw'r Delyn which is a special needs school, and Ashgrove school which caters for autistic pupils.

The design is still at an early stage and the location of the new building[s] on the site is still open. A number of capacity studies have been prepared, to ensure that the required accommodation can be delivered on the site. Some co-location options have become more limited as a result of client feedback, and the design process needs to be responsive to the competing demands of pupil integration with a necessary degree of protection and security.

The site layout will be designed to provide a welcoming and legible approach, with the different functions easily identified. Community use will be encouraged and existing pedestrian links to the east will be strengthened. A new vehicular access into the site is proposed from Sully Road to the west. The buildings will achieve a BREEAM Excellent rating as required by WAG, and the sustainability strategy is based on passive design and good solar orientation.

The Local Authority looks forward to further dialogue, as the options are narrowed and they can make specific comments.

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

The Panel appreciated the opportunity for early consultation and to comment on the procedure which should now be adopted to progress the design development. Although we had insufficient information to assess the quality of the design as a whole, we would make the following comments:

- The capacity diagrams have been useful but should now be set aside and the team should focus on site analysis, landscaping strategies, and on translating the vision into an appropriate built form, shaped by consultation input, site constraints and environmental factors.
- In particular there should be comprehensive consultation with the users and the communities of each of the individual schools involved, so as to arrive at a thorough understanding of their differing needs and approaches to the delivery of education.
- The co-location strategy and the extent and nature of shared facilities should be carefully considered and agreed with future users, including all means and extent of any necessary segregation.
- We think that parking provision should be minimised, and all options explored which would reduce its impact on site. Any 'at grade' parking should be located away from the open countryside and views to the west.
- We welcomed the commitment to BREEAM Excellent and advised that passive solar principles be used to guide the orientation of the buildings on site. A holistic energy strategy should be developed for the site as a whole, including consideration of a district heating system.
- We would be pleased to see this scheme again at Design Review as it moves into the detailed design stage.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel was reassured to learn that full consultation with the three schools involved was taking place. This should be the starting point of any design process and should constitute the main driver for site and block layout and further design development. The functions of the different elements should determine the form of the blocks. We appreciated the need to strike the right balance between integration and segregation of the various uses, and noted that the middle four site layout options shown were presumably no longer relevant, as they assumed full connectivity. It was agreed to treat these options as capacity diagrams only, even though the level of detail shown seems to indicate a more advanced status.

The team stated that there was less scope for co-location than had originally been thought, but that some possibilities remain, such as shared physical education and catering facilities which could yield economies. These would probably need to be centrally located and physically contiguous. If co-location is agreed as a way forward, the built form and importantly the external landscaping will need to be thoroughly tested to ensure that the necessary divisions between uses are practical and deliverable.

The Panel thought that a thorough site analysis should be undertaken as soon as possible, to optimise the relationship of the building with the surrounding landscape, maximise the benefit of daylight and views, and assess the extent of acoustic protection needed. The opportunities for outdoor learning areas, along with play and sports facilities, should help to define the form of the building. The location and legibility of the main entrance will be important to resolve, given the approach routes from different directions.

The amount and distribution of parking will have a significant impact on the amenity potential of the site. It is anticipated that the original requirement for 350 parking spaces will be reduced through negotiation. The team confirmed that underground parking or split deck options were under consideration, and we encouraged them to minimise the impact of parking and hard tarmac surfaces on the site, and to maintain views to the west.

The Panel was pleased to learn that a BREEAM Excellent standard will be achieved and we urged the team to consider solar orientation principles in the site layout. Buildings which are designed to face predominantly north/south have greater potential to benefit from useful solar heat gain in winter, and to shade internal spaces more effectively from summer sun. We also advised consideration of a single district heating system to serve the whole site including some residential accommodation. The team commented that they have learned a lot about achieving BREEAM Excellent from the Cowbridge scheme. They have an ecologist on board, they will be commissioning a traffic survey, and will seek to reinforce pedestrian and cycle access from the east.

The Panel requested more details about edge conditions and boundary treatments. It was confirmed that a perimeter fence [or similar] around the whole site is a client requirement. In addition there will be a need for barriers of some kind to enclose outdoor areas used by autistic children. We suggested that wherever possible, the buildings themselves should delineate spaces and routes, and form the necessary barriers to unsupervised movement.

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

Vale of Glamorgan [Sara Dowd]

Pensaer/Architect:

HLM Architects [Phil Grant,
Gareth Woodfin]

Consultants:

Arup [Matthew Chambers]
Davis Langdon [Ron McLean]

Awdurdod Cynllunio/
Planning Authority

Vale of Galmorgan [Jane Wade,
Jane Crofts]

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:
Design review panel:
Alan Francis [Chair]
Cindy Harris [Officer]

Jonathan Adams
Chris Jones
Ashley Bateson

Lead Panellist:

Jonathan Adams

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Tim Raine, WAG [DE&T]