

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## **DATGANIADAU O DDIDDORDEB**

Mae gofyn i aelodau o'r panel, arsyllwyr a phartion perthnasol eraill ddatgan unrhyw ddi-ddordebau sydd ganddynt **ymlaen llaw** mewn perthynas â'r eitemau Panel Adolygu Dylunio Bydd unrhyw ddatganiadau o'r fath yn cael eu cofnodi yma ac yng nghofnodion canolog Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru.

## **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare ***in advance*** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCfW's central records.

### **Statws adolygu/Review status**

### **Cyfrinachol/Confidential**

Dyddiad cyfarfod/meeting date	24th August 2011
Dyddiad cyhoeddi/issue date	6th September 2011
Lleoliad y cynllun/scheme location	St Davids Hotel, Harlech
Disgrifiad y cynllun/scheme description	Hotel / Leisure
Statws cynllunio/planning status	Cyn gwneud cais/ pre-application
Datganiadau o ddi-ddordeb/declaration of interests	None

### **Adran 1/part 1**

### **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

Previous proposals for this site were seen at Design Review in October 2006 and December 2008. The developer remains the same but the design team has changed since the scheme was approved in 2009. A new application is pending and the current design team proposed to address three significant issues which had been raised at previous reviews, namely appropriateness, impact, and accuracy of information.

This proposal is for the same level of accommodation as the approved scheme, but the aim is to have less impact on this sensitive site and improved sustainability credentials. The volume has been reduced by 15% and the massing steps down towards the north, Coleg Harlech and the Castle. The northern apartment block which replaces the existing student accommodation tower, forms a transitory element between the upper and lower sites, and helps to fragment the mass. Care

has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the images especially the 3D representations.

The intention is to achieve BREEAM Excellent and various technologies are under consideration including a bio-diesel CHP, ground source heat pump and solar thermal and electric panels.

So far there has been an exploratory meeting with the local authority who have not yet formed a view on the proposal.

**Crynodeb o'r prif bwyntiau a gododd o'r drafodaeth, i'w darllen ochr yn ochr ag Adran 2 yr adroddiad hwn.**

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

Given our disappointment at the approval of the previous scheme, the Panel was pleased to see that the developer was seeking to improve on the existing consent and had ambitions for a lower impact, low energy development. However, we think that the design team have so far made the wrong choices in their efforts to improve the scheme, and as a consequence the proposal remains an unacceptable response to the site and context. In summary:

- The proposed bulk and massing are no less significant in this scheme than the previous one, and in some respects have a greater negative impact.
- The physical linking of this scheme from top to bottom, including the transitional element of the northern apartment block and the lack of any visible landscape between the blocks, serves to increase the apparent bulk.
- The scheme should be tested through a formal Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment process.
- A landscape strategy should be carried out which seeks to reinstate the green link through the site. This should be done in conjunction with a full tree survey and public realm strategy.
- We support the ambition for a low carbon development and urge the team to commit to achieving BREEAM Excellent.
- We support the principle of redevelopment on this site but we think a lighter touch is necessary. A successful solution would begin with a thorough contextual analysis and landscape strategy, and would involve a significant reduction in massing with accurate photorealistic images.
- The proposed hotel and apartments would benefit from better space planning and a reconsideration of floor plans.

**Adran 2/part 2**

**Trafodaeth ac Ymateb y Panel yn Llawn  
Discussion and panel response in full**

The Panel expressed disappointment that the previous scheme had gained consent, in the light of our negative comments and the fact that none of our concerns had

been addressed. The developer stated that they wished to improve on the previous application even though it had received officer support and a unanimous approval from members.

The Panel found the contextual analysis insufficient for such an important and sensitive site, with no reference to the adjacent conservation area, Coleg Harlech (a Grade II\* listed building), or the special character of Harlech.

In our view the scale and massing shown is very similar to the previous consented application and overall has no less impact. It would nevertheless be helpful to show the existing view, together with the consented and proposed scheme, as part of the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment process.

The consented scheme when viewed from the west had three distinct elements, and a landscape strip was clearly visible between the hotel on the upper part of the site and the apartment blocks at a lower level. The same view of this scheme shows the three elements more strongly linked by means of the northern apartment block and a unified architectural approach. The green strip appears to have been lost, and the overall effect is bulkier and without articulation. In addition the constant parapet roofline, together with the flat facade, has the effect of increasing the apparent bulk and visual impact.

The Panel noted that no tree survey, landscape strategy or public realm design has yet been done, although the team stated that they had some information from a previous topographical survey.

Although the team is reviewing various low carbon measures, no energy modelling has yet been done. It was confirmed that any ground source heat would be extracted from the lower level (sand) rather than rock. The Panel agreed that a CHP system, sized to meet the baseload heat requirement, might be a good match for the hotel use and we understood that potential links with the college have been explored. Any proposed use of bio-diesel should be subject to a full exploration of its composition, quality-processing, proximity to use and net carbon reductions. The impact of solar panels on the roofline of the upper and lower blocks should be clearly shown on all images.

We urged the developer to make a firm commitment to achieve BREEAM Excellent and to develop an integrated sustainability strategy which shows how the relevant technologies work together to deliver carbon savings. Sufficient space should be allocated for the necessary plant and this should be shown on the plans.

The Panel questioned the local provenance of cedar shingles and how well they would relate to the existing townscape of Harlech.

The Panel suggested that a better, more economic solution would involve a lighter touch on the site and should minimise any cut and fill operation. The plan could be compressed and room sizes reduced. We questioned the necessity for most hotel bedrooms to face the sea. A central atrium for the hotel might deliver efficiencies of

circulation as well as creating a sheltered daylight space. It was suggested that the three buildings could have different identities to break up the scheme and make reference to the variety of Harlech, rather than appearing as a unified development.

**Mae Panel Adolygu Dylunio Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru a'r staff yn croesawu rhagor o ymgynghoriad, a bydd yn hapus i ddarparu rhagor o adborth am yr adroddiad yma a/neu lle bo'n briodol, dderbyn cyflwyniadau pellach. Diolch am ymgynghori â'r Comisiwn a chadwch mewn cysylltiad â ni os gwelwch yn dda ynglŷn â hynt eich prosiect. A fyddech gystal â'n hysbysu o ddatblygiad eich prosiect. Diolch yn fawr am ymgynghori â'r Comisiwn.**

**The Design Commission for Wales Design Review Panel welcomes further consultation and we will be happy to provide further feedback on this report and/or where appropriate, to receive further presentations. Please keep us informed of the progress of your project. Thank you for consulting the Commission.**

***Mae copi iath Gymraeg o'r adroddiad hwn ar gael ar ofyn.  
A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.***

#### **Atodiad 1/appendix 1 Mynychwyr/attendees**

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr Agent/Client/Developer	Aitcheson Associates (Nathan Cozens, Andrew Rutherford)
Pensaer/Dylunydd Trefol Architectural/Urban Designer	Bryden Wood Architects (Martin Wood)
Ymgynghorwyr/Consultants	Byrne Group/Ellmer (Tony Dowle)
Trydydd Parti/Third Party	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio/Planning Authority	Snowdonia National Park (Richard Thomas, Aled Sturkey)
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel Cadeirydd/Chair Swydog/Officer Prif Banelydd/Lead Panellist	Alan Francis Cindy Harris Simon Carne Steve Smith Mark Hallett Simon Hartley
Sylwedyddion/Observers	n/a

