

Statws/Status:

Cyhoeddus / Public



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	17 October 2006
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:	4th October 2006
Lleoliad/Location:	St Davids Hotel, Harlech
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Hotel / apartments
Cleient/Asiant Client/Agent:	Windrush Developments [Edward Dadley]
Developer/Datblygwr:	as above
Pensaer/Architect:	Powell Dobson Architects [Andrew Cross]
Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:	Drivers Jonas [Colin Williams]
Consultants:	Hyder Consulting [Stephen Sissons] EJ Hales [P Morris]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Snowdonia NPA [Richard Thomas]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Outline application resubmitted
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:	
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair)	Douglas Hogg
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)	Michael Griffiths
Phil Roberts	Ed Colgan

Lead Panellist:

Douglas Hogg

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Charlie Deng,
Design Review Assistant**

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This proposal is for a 64 bed hotel and 74 serviced, self contained apartments, with a restaurant, bar and leisure suite at ground floor level. The former hotel building will be demolished and the new building erected on the existing plateau. The refurbishment option has been considered but was found to be impractical. The proposed design and massing has evolved following discussions with the Local Authority, the Welsh Tourist Board and the local Golf Club, as well as other local interests. The intention is to make the scheme commercially feasible without the need for grant assistance. The developer now seeks an in principle agreement and an outline planning application has been submitted, following the withdrawal of an earlier application.

The proposals indicate a stepped linear development roughly on the line of the existing hotel foundations, with the highest point to the north responding to the nearby tower of Colleg Harlech, and the roofline stepping down towards the south, following the line of the hills to the east. Every unit has a balcony and sea views. The design intention is for a contemporary approach using local and demolition materials. Car parking is provided at ground and undercroft level, with an overflow car park at the bottom of the site. Parking areas will be landscaped and numbers [162 spaces] have been determined by the Local Authority. A dedicated bus shuttle will give access to the golf course and the town. It is intended that this will be a benchmark for sustainable development in the region, incorporating solar shading, roof mounted wind turbines, and photovoltaic panels.

The Planning Authority view the proposed use as desirable and accept the case for demolition. The concept fits well with their policy and aspirations. They have no comment on the design at this stage. Cadw have been consulted and have requested more information, but have raised no objection.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

Contrary to what is contained in the planning statement, the Panel established that the proposed scheme represents a significant increase in height [estimated by the Panel to be 30 metres to the ridge as against the current 20 metres] and will intrude more into the arc of view from Harlech castle. The Panel was concerned that the roofline steps up towards the most sensitive part of the site and this, combined with the building footprint being moved northwards, results in the new tower and the Colleg Harlech tower together forming a vertical visual break in the wooded hillside behind. We found the roof form aggressive and pointed out that the overhangs would not work as solar shading, even for the top floor apartments, given the low level of the sun to the west.

The Panel questioned the assumption that the site needed, and could accommodate, a statement building. Certainly we thought that a city centre type of landmark was not appropriate and any 'statement' should be tempered by the sensitivity of the site. We supported the aspirations for a contemporary design but we were not convinced by the

stepped, ziggurat form and would prefer to see a more lateral, horizontal emphasis. We also thought that the site demanded an exceptional quality of materials and detailing. We were concerned that the proposed build cost of £150/square foot would not be adequate to ensure this.

The Panel suggested that the development would work better, and the same number of units could be accommodated, if lower level blocks were set into the hillside, following the contours. We thought that this could be done sensitively, without a significant loss of tree cover, possibly incorporating rooftop gardens. We noted that images of Portmeirion had been included in the presentation material, and thought that this showed a good example of building sensitively on a sloping wooded site.

The possibility of lowering the existing plateau had been considered, but this would cause problems with gradients at the entrance. An alternative solution was discussed, which would involve relocating the leisure suites at lower ground level, enclosing the car park and enlarging the building footprint at this point, resulting in reduced massing.

The design team confirmed that solar photovoltaics and wind turbines were an aspiration, but that rainwater harvesting would be installed, with a collection tank at low level. We supported the team's intention to optimise the building form and envelope, with good levels of insulation and air tightness, and appropriately sized, energy-efficient fenestration.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel appreciated the opportunities as well as the constraints of the site and we supported the proposed use and density. However, the proposed design solution, and in particular the massing, is unacceptable in this context. In summary we would make the following points:

- We suggest an alternative built form be developed, ideally by building at lower levels down the slope. A reduced massing in the present location might be made to work.
- We are not convinced by the stepped roofline and would prefer to see a level silhouette
- We support the contemporary design approach and would like to see a more restrained treatment and horizontal emphasis
- A view from Harlech Castle should be produced showing the exact extent of the proposed development
- If a high quality sensitive development on this site is not commercially feasible, then financial assistance should be sought eg from the Welsh Tourist Board
- Sustainable measures should be included at an early stage and should inform the design development

Diwedd/End

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