

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	18th November 2009
Issue Date:	1st December 2009
Scheme Location:	Stormy Castle, Gower
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

The site overlooks the north coast of the Gower, in a sensitive location adjoining National Trust land, with dramatic panoramic views. It is proposed to demolish the existing house which has no architectural merit, and erect a new contemporary dwelling which is embedded into the landscape. Existing stone outbuildings will be retained. For the client and the architect, the integration of the house with the landscape is an over-riding requirement of the design, and the aspiration is for minimal visual and physical impact on the rural setting. The use of Corten steel as an external finish reflects the colours of natural vegetation, man made agricultural equipment and existing agricultural buildings.

The design concept is three linear blocks, for sleeping, eating and living, all earth sheltered by rising ground to the west, and surmounted by an 'energy pavilion' designed to exploit views and accommodate solar water heating panels.

The Local Authority is open to the possibility of a new contemporary building that recognises the sensitivity of the site. This proposal would be an exception to planning policy, which could be summed up as supporting 'like for like' replacement. The client hopes to submit a planning application before the end of the year.

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

The Panel was delighted to receive such a high quality presentation, and was very supportive of the contemporary design approach in this highly sensitive setting. This scheme has the potential to be an exemplar of high quality, innovative design in a

protected landscape. In the context of this strong support we would make the following additional comments:

- The use of Corten steel, fair faced concrete and natural stone, are all a sympathetic response to the context.
- We are encouraged by the involvement of a landscape architect at this early stage and support the analysis of the landscape character and its integration in the strategy.
- The exact form of the pavilion, the three fingers of the building and the relationship between them, provide a strong spatial concept. Further consideration and possibly revision could enhance the concept.
- We support the sustainability strategy in broad terms, and the work that has already been done to demonstrate a commitment to achieve Code Level 4.
- Careful preparation, contractor selection and supervision of the construction contract will be necessary to ensure the quality of the design is translated into reality.
- We understand the policy background which the Local Authority has to consider, but we believe this is drafted too tightly and would strongly recommend that they support an exceptional and innovative design.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel commended the excellent presentation, including comprehensive information and dramatic water colour illustrations. We agreed that the building's impact on the landscape should be the most important factor in considering the design.

The Panel welcomed and supported the basic design concept, the landscape strategy and the use of weathered steel. However, the colours of both steel and bracken were exaggerated in the paintings, and these should be amended to be more realistic.

A number of details were highlighted in discussion. These included the relationship of the new building with the barn, and the puncturing of the stone wall to the north west with the steel and glass facade and glass balustrade. The type of glazing used for the pavilion will need careful consideration and the reflectivity of large areas of glass could be disconcerting when viewed from local vantage points and certain angles. We suggested this could be avoided by the glazing specification or by tilting the glazing slightly.

The Panel supported the concept of the three 'fingers' but was less convinced by their relationship with the 'energy' pavilion. The area around the pavilion is not quite a courtyard and we thought that it needed either more enclosure, or less. We discussed altering the form of the pavilion and/or its roof, while keeping it under the ridge height of the existing building, and the trade-off between views [especially to the west] and the form of the pavilion. The internal spaces flow seamlessly into one another, but we questioned where the 'heart' of the dwelling was located.

A Code for Sustainable Homes pre-assessment indicates that Code Level 4 will be achieved as a minimum. Apart from the energy benefits of earth sheltering and passive solar design, low carbon technologies will be incorporated along with a mechanical ventilation system with heat recovery. We questioned the actual carbon savings of air

source heat pumps and we were not convinced that the inclination and orientation of the solar water heating panels was optimal. Green roofs will be used to attenuate rainwater runoff, while rainwater from other surfaces will be harvested to reduce the use of mains water for non-potable purposes. Swales and reed beds along the existing hedgerow to the south east form part of a sustainable drainage strategy and could be used to treat rainwater to potable standards. Construction materials will be low-embodied energy, including the use of a high recycled content cement, and all demolition material will be reused on site.

The Panel emphasised the importance of the details to deliver buildability and the importance of contractor capacity and experience, in order to successfully realise the design. The team agreed and confirmed their intention to pursue early consultation with construction specialists and to put in place a tightly defined specification. The provisional build cost is £1500/sqm.

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	Mr Eric Woolley
Pensaer/Architect:	Loyn & Co Architects [Chis Loyn]
Consultants:	Camlin Lonsdale Landscape Architects [Richard Barclay] Planning Consultant [G Powys Jones] Gallese Design [Paul Hinam]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	CC Swansea [Steve Smith]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Ewan Jones [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Lyn Owen	Simon Carne Michael Griffiths Maria Asanjo
Lead Panellist:	Simon Carne
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Kieren Morgan [DCFWD]

