

Statws/Status:

Cyfrinachol / Confidential

DESIGN
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DYLUNIO
CYMRU

Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	23 January 2007
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:	10 January 2007
Lleoliad/Location:	Tonypandy
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Primary Care Centre
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	Rhondda Cynon Taff LHB [Paul Western, Allison Green, Steve Davies] Welsh Health Estates [Bryn Phillips]
Developer/Datblygwr:	GP Group [Tony Coke]
Pensaer/Architect:	Willdig Lammie [Martin Garner Paul Treweeks]
Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:	Boyer Planning [Robin Williams]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC [Judith Jones, Andrew Eustace]
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Pre-application

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:

Wendy Richards (cadeirydd/chair)

Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)

Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer)

Ben Sibert

Jonathan Adams

Phil Roberts

Gerard Ryan

Richard Parnaby

Ashley Bateson

Lead Panellist:

Gerard Ryan

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This scheme was first reviewed by DCFW in August 2006, and this review resulted in the design team re-evaluating the original site, which was considered too small but also had problems of soil stability. The team now think they have found a better site which was not available earlier, and is well known locally as the site of the old gas works. Two circular foundation pads remain – the bases for the former gasholders - and it is understood that these foundations are substantial and heavily reinforced. The team wished to avoid extensive excavation and a design decision was taken to base the footprint of the new buildings on the existing pads. Sufficient space remained on site for parking and landscape. Local Authority parking guidelines have been followed and cycle parking is included.

The design of the building capitalises on views north and south, up and down the valley, and to hills to the east. A heavy base of recycled blue Pennant stone supports rendered walls and a slate roof [using recycled slate if available]. Kalwall [polycarbonate] panels will be used for the lantern roof light above the waiting area.

Internally, a zoned heating system will reflect different patterns of use. A biomass boiler option has been considered but is not yet specified. Most spaces will be naturally ventilated and heat recovery will be applied to any mechanical ventilation. Light wells or tubes will be used to bring daylight into northern corridors. Rainwater recycling and solar water heating are included.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel was pleased to note that the design team had responded positively to many of our previous comments. With regard to the new site, we were informed that there was a noticeable shift in the current settlement pattern towards the north of the town and therefore towards this site, and that a recently consented Asda store was located nearby. Although we had reservations about the accessibility of the new site and

its distance from the main population centres, we thought that this was ultimately a matter for the health authority.

We had greater concerns about the difference in levels between the approach road and the level site, which in the north west corner is more than six metres, with regard to ease of access for the old, infirm and disabled. We thought that a bridged access to first floor level would be worth considering. The design team stated that they could make the levels work in terms of providing statutory access, and the the site level would be raised by 900mm. The position of the main entrance seemed counter-intuitive, as one would have expected it to be in the connecting wing, and we were told that this position was now being considered, although the location of the waiting area would remain unchanged. We thought that a single staircase would give rise to long and inefficient circulation.

There was a strong desire on the part of the client for an 'iconic' building, which referred to the previous use of the site and other historical associations. Although we appreciated the desire for historical reference, we did not feel that the design idea of two circular buildings was adequately justified in terms of the benefits and opportunities it offered. Furthermore, we had concerns about the extra costs involved in building to a non-orthogonal plan, especially in the absence of any cost plan, which might result in undesirable economies being made further into the design process. In addition, the Panel advised that circular plans can make internal layouts problematic and a lot of space can be wasted to accommodate standard furniture.

While in general we applauded the principle of retaining existing foundations where possible, we noted that this did not mean that the new footprint was necessarily constrained to an exact reproduction of the existing one. In other words, an orthogonal building could make use of and bridge the circular foundations. We also advised that there may be problems in insuring buildings which use an existing substructure.

The Panel was informed that there had been no investigation into site conditions and possible contamination, to support the reuse of the foundation bases. A site survey conducted 4-5 years ago identified certain problems which led to partial remediation. As part of the conditions of sale, the site will be fully remediated to current standards.

The design team confirmed that they were looking at the possibility of a structural laminated timber frame, if this could be made compatible with the required thermal mass. A framed solution would provide future flexibility. Exposed thermal mass is part of the environmental strategy, together with a suspended concrete floor slab, exposed [non-suspended] ceilings, and a perimeter duct for all services. The Panel thought that a

two storey atrium would have provided a more attractive internal space, but we were told that this had been rejected to allow better visibility from and daylight into first floor spaces.

The Panel thought that structural and M&E consultants should have been engaged on the project at an earlier stage, to inform the design concept and development. There was a need to test some of the design ideas in conjunction with a servicing strategy, and also to test the fenestration with the need to avoid overheating. We urged the team to commit to installing a biomass boiler, at a stage where it could be accommodated in the design development. It was suggested that the team might aim for a zero emissions building.

The Panel thought that the presentation indicated a scheme which needed more time to develop. The CGI images, while seductive, actually distracted from a realistic appreciation of what was being proposed. We would have liked to see sections of the buildings in context, particularly given the abrupt change in levels, and they would have helped our understanding of the scheme. The Panel regretted the lack of any detailed landscape proposals and would like to see the car parks broken up with more green spaces.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel welcomed the opportunity to review this scheme again. We have some reservations about the choice of site, and even more about the desirability and economics of a circular building. Most importantly, we think that this is a rushed proposal, justified by CGI images rather than a carefully reasoned design rationale. There are major issues still to be resolved, in particular:

- The way in which the difference in levels can be overcome to ensure easy access, needs to be demonstrated.
- The position of the main entrance should be rethought and justified, along with the single staircase.
- The proposed circular plan should be costed and the viability of using the existing foundations investigated, prior to a re-assessment of the benefits and drawbacks of this layout, compared with more conventional alternatives.
- The sustainability strategy should be tested by an M&E consultant as soon as possible. A commitment should be made to biomass heating, as an efficient, low-carbon technology.
- A landscape consultant should be engaged as soon as possible to address the relationship of the building to its context, and exploit the wooded banks to east and west.

Diwedd/End

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