

# Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

## Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	19th August 2009
Issue Date:	3rd September 2009
Scheme Location:	Cwmbran
Scheme Description:	Development framework for existing shopping centre
Planning Status:	Pre-application

## Part1: Presentation

Cwmbran town centre is owned by Prupim who have commissioned Haskoll to prepare a design development framework for zone 1, in the town centre of Cwmbran, with a view to investigating the potential for a new foodstore in this area. GVA Grimley have undertaken an update of their Retail and Leisure Study [2007] which states that there is sufficient capacity within the area for an additional foodstore.

The development framework proposes a new foodstore as a catalyst for further regeneration, particularly to the east, and as a means to improve linkages and legibility, and promote evening and leisure uses.

The Local Authority has concerns about the town's capacity to accommodate the proposed 100,000 sq ft of foodstore and approximately 300,000 sq ft of additional comparison retail floorspace. There is a danger that this proposal is leading the redevelopment of the town centre, rather than the other way round. The linkages and integration with the eastern strip will also be important factors to consider.

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

The Panel welcomed the commitment to develop a strategic framework for the area. However, we are unable to support this proposal without a broader masterplan which identifies an appropriate model for town centre redevelopment and regeneration of surrounding areas, together with a realistic strategy for achieving the vision and responding to the topographic and highways constraints and opportunities. In summary:

- We are not convinced that a new foodstore is the right use for this site, nor that it would deliver the desired improvements for the area.
- It will be important to improve linkages around the site and ensure active uses at street level.
- A green infrastructure plan for the town centre which proposes sustainable solutions to energy use and generation, water, waste and transport, could be made into a unique selling point, and used to promote the area as an exemplary showcase of sustainable development.

## **Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full**

The Panel was not convinced that the redevelopment of this site and the wider area would best be served by additional retail use. Ideally a mixed use solution including residential and commercial uses, would provide a more balanced and heterogeneous framework for sustainable regeneration. An alternative model proposed by the team which concentrated on developing the town as an excellent shopping centre and concentrating residential development away from the town centre, was not supported. We suggested that discussions should be held with the landowners to the east [including Morrisons] with a view to developing a joint framework to include both sites.

It was not clear exactly how the proposed foodstore would generate wider improvements and benefits for the town centre. The team stated that their aspiration is to improve physical linkages within the town, but there is no firm commitment as yet. The challenging topography of the site, together with the proposal for 2 levels of car parking below the store, mean that the impact of the south east corner is of particular concern. The main frontages should be wrapped with active uses and care should be taken to avoid large areas of blank facade on the rear service areas. A wider analysis of pedestrian, cycle and vehicular desire lines and movements should inform any future strategy.

There is an exciting opportunity here, given the extent of Prupim's land ownership, to initiate exemplary sustainability measures, such as a district heating and cooling scheme, sustainable drainage, rainwater harvesting, and improved public transport connections. We would like to see ambitious proposals embedded into any masterplan documents and pursued proactively by the landowner and the Local Authority.

**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

Prupim [Mark Cruddas]

Pensaer/Architect:

Haskoll Ltd [David Leech]

Consultants:

Drivers Jonas [Mark Underwood]

Awdurdod Cynllunio/  
Planning Authority

Torfaen CBC [Duncan Smith, Richard Lewis,  
Neil Boardman, Craig Mead,  
Andrew Ferguson]

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:

Design review panel:

Wendy Richards [Chair]

Cindy Harris [Officer]

Lynne Sullivan

Ashley Bateson

Richard Parnaby

Jonathan Hines

Lead Panellist:

Richard Parnaby

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Takayuki Kumazawa, Okayama University

**Declaration of Interest:** Ashley Bateson works for Hoare Lea who are currently preparing a bid to work with Prupim.