

Statws/Status:
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DESIGN
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CYMRU

Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	23 May 2008
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Meeting Date:	14 May 2008
Lleoliad/Location:	Trecenydd, Caerphilly
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Primary Care Centre
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	Caerphilly LHB [Clive Williams, Nigel Edwards]
Developer/Datblygwr:	Haven Health Properties [Michael Luckley]
Pensaer/Architect:	C2J Architects [Iestyn Wyn Jones]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Caerphilly CBC
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) Mark Hallett	Gerard Ryan Ewan Jones Roger Ayton
Lead Panellist:	Wendy Richards/Gerard Ryan

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Eric Dawson, A+DS
Esme Farewell, WAG
Nicola Powell,
Welsh Health Estates**

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The proposed new primary care centre will provide new facilities for the Trecenydd and Nantgarw surgeries, serving 7000-8000 patients and currently operating from inadequate premises. An extensive site evaluation process has been carried out with 12 potential sites identified initially, narrowed down to this site at Castlegate which the team feel is the most appropriate site within the outlined catchment area.

The site is described as barren and lacking in context, and this has led to the desire to create a very legible visual marker, maximising the building's presence on the main access road and roundabout. A site analysis based on views, sunpath and prevailing wind, has driven the building design and site layout.

External materials have been chosen to reflect function, with lighter materials used to denote public functions, and darker materials for private/clinical areas.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Chair began by referring to DCFW's 10 Point Guidance for PCCs, which the architect had not received. We would like future presentations to reflect the design approach set out in this document. The Panel was informed that the requirement to bring this scheme to DCFW was included in the original plan and the client decided to pursue this although it was no longer a formal requirement within Welsh Health Estates.

With limited knowledge of the site selection process, as outlined within the team's submission, the Panel thought that the chosen site was not optimal in terms of proximity to the catchment area and the town centre, and would have the effect of moving essential services to peripheral locations, increasing car use and disadvantaging pedestrians. We were told that the only other realistic possibility was a site which had been identified on an industrial estate, as far away from the town centre as this one, and the landowner was reluctant to sell.

The Panel questioned the form and location of the building on the site, given the prevailing winds and the desire to present a legible and welcoming

entrance point. The presenting team's own site analysis seemed to have been largely ignored or even contradicted. We thought that the more dominant two-storey element, with a monopitch roof presenting at its highest point and possibly a two metre high fence in front, created a rather austere first impression. One of the perspective views, taken from a location where no visitor would normally go, showed the type of view that one might expect to see on the building's approach.

The architect stated that they had considered locating the courtyard and entrance to face the roundabout, but wanted to provide a strong visual marker and to avoid patients having to approach through the main body of the car park. We thought that creating a large billboard-type sign was not a good way to achieve legibility, which would be better realised through the design and layout of the building itself. In addition the architect said that the other main driver was the ability of the proposed scheme to allow the staff parking to be effectively cordoned off. We thought that using this as a reason to position the building as shown, was a case of a lower order requirement dominating the design and resulting in an inappropriate strategy.

With regard to the car park, we were told that the proposed level of parking was determined by the Local Authority. The project team claimed good pedestrian connections existed, especially to residential areas to the east, and there was a bus stop within easy walking distance. There was some discussion about the ease with which pedestrians might approach the Centre, having alighted from the bus.

The Panel noted the lack of a sustainability strategy, beyond the requirement to achieve a NEAT Excellent rating. The team stated that with their M&E consultants [Hoare Lea] they had optimised the building's orientation and thermal mass, and were considering green roofs and solar water heating. The Panel stated forcefully that sustainability aspirations and the measures identified to achieve them, should be entrenched into the design development from the very beginning, otherwise they would be lost in the process of design development and competing demands on the budget.

We were informed that a noise survey of the site was unlikely to lead to sealed windows. It was confirmed that external materials were likely to be through-coloured render or brick for the lighter elevations together with a darker cladding system, although powder coated Kalzip was likely to be excluded on cost grounds.

The Panel felt that the information provided had been inadequate and more detailed information was necessary on items such as the cost plan, materials and finishes, and how a NEAT Excellent rating would be achieved - rather than seductive CAD images. In general, we thought the presentation lacked an adequate explanation of the design process and how choices were made to optimise and gain maximum benefit from the site.

We were left wondering what the main architectural concept was and how it would be protected in the face of budgetary constraints. Given these constraints, we noted that some relatively costly elements had been included, such as the articulated elevations including the north west facing courtyard and balcony, and the frequent changes of planes and materials. We were not convinced that these would add to the design quality and user satisfaction, or that this was the best allocation of costs. In the absence of more financial information, we speculated that the desired quality may be better achieved through a bold simplicity, and that this might also prove a more cost effective solution, although the quality of details and materials would be even more critical. The developer stated that he was satisfied that what was shown could be delivered – perhaps with some minor changes of materials – and that they have the best solution in terms of site layout.

It was noted that the building and its internal arrangement seemed to work efficiently as a diagram. What was missing was the relation between that diagram and the best use of the site.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel was pleased to review this scheme and would be happy to see the other proposals as they are brought forward within the LHB's estates strategy. However, we consider this proposal to be an unacceptable response to the site and the brief. In particular:

- We are disappointed that the choice of site fails to reinforce town centre uses and sustainable forms of transport. We are not convinced by the claims for pedestrian accessibility.
- We think that the presented material fails to bear examination or provide justification for the choices made. There is an excess of detailed 3D CAD imagery without a convincing design framework or any real decision making about materials and construction.
- We would have liked to see more information, of the sort that would form part of a Design and Access statement.
- We suggest an architectural approach based on simplicity and quality, and achieving legibility by more subtle means than large signage.
- We are dismayed by the lack of a sustainability strategy, and while we accept that a NEAT Excellent rating will be achieved, we find no recognition of the higher standards that are imminent, in terms of BREEAM Healthcare, and the aspiration for low and zero carbon buildings.

We regret any discomfort felt by the team during the review and we refer to the pre-review information sent out to all presenters:

'Design Review is a rigorous process and in the short time available our comments and evaluation are likely to be direct, robust and incisive, but we also aim to be constructive and courteous'

Diwedd/End

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