

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	19th November 2008
Issue Date:	28th November 2008
Scheme Location:	Trellech, Monmouthshire
Scheme Description:	Primary Care Centre
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

The proposal for this replacement surgery has been developed over the last 16 months, although the need was identified by the LHB several years ago and Ashley House was appointed as preferred developer in 2004. The LHB identified Trellech as the location for this new Primary Care Centre which will replace an existing single doctor's surgery in Trellech. A site options appraisal identified four possible sites and the chosen site is on the northern edge of the village in a residential area. The building is sited to align with the topography and exploit the views to the west.

Discussions with the Local Authority have established the principle of development although part of the site is outside the UDP / settlement boundary. The local authority has suggested that the impact of the loss of open space be mitigated through the location of the proposed car park to retain openness and exploit the views. . The play facilities which exist on the site will be relocated on land immediately to the east.

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

While we are aware of the constraints involved, the Panel was concerned that the proposal appears to have been overly driven by these constraints and is an unacceptable response to the site and the brief. In summary:

- We are very disappointed that the village context was not given more weight in the site selection process, and the resulting scheme has little community presence.

- We are concerned about the impact upon residents' privacy of a community building that will attract many car borne users, at the end of what is essentially a modest private cul-de-sac.
- The arrival experience needs to be improved and made more legible. The building needs to address and respond to its surroundings.
- The proposed west facing facade treatment is too solid considering the opportunity for views in this direction. Fenestration should respond positively to the views and the requirement for good daylight standards.
- The building form and roofscape may also need to be revised in the light of the above and the need to achieve better penetration of daylight to central spaces without resorting to a proliferation of rooflights.
- The architectural treatment is too conservative and domestic. We think that a two storey option should be explored in terms of the benefits it would bring for architectural design, a better response to the approach and easing the building's relationship with surrounding residential properties.
- A landscape architect should be involved to integrate the different aspects of parking, planting, drainage and new play area.
- While commending the commitment to BREEAM Excellent we note that the orientation of the building is not optimal for solar gain/shading. The feasibility report referred to in the BREEAM assessment should be used to inform the choice of low/zero carbon technologies.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The location of the selected site, at the end of a private residential cul-de-sac, is far from ideal for a public building which should be at the heart of the community. In addition it will impact on the privacy currently enjoyed by local residents and increased traffic, although estimated (surprisingly given the number of parking spaces provided) at only six cars per hour, will be significant. We are not convinced by the reasons for discounting site C, which enjoys a more central location next to the community centre. Although there are constraints associated with this site, such as limited car parking space and room for expansion, we thought these could be overcome given the benefits of improved connectivity and reinforcement of the village centre.

We understand the reasons for the proposed location and alignment of the building on the site, and for locating the main entrance to the west. While this alignment is not optimal for solar orientation, it does allow for the exploitation of views and locates the entrance centrally. However, the fenestration and internal layout does not respond well to the views available, and this undermines the justification for this orientation. One unfortunate consequence is that people approaching the site will be faced with a hipped roof gable end, behind a six foot high wall / fence. This aspect does not create a welcoming and legible entrance to the building, which needs to be achieved while providing convenient disabled parking and identifiable cycle storage.

The architectural language is essentially that of a large bungalow and we are not convinced that this domestic interpretation is appropriate for a community building. The Local Authority representative confirmed that they have not specifically requested a traditional approach and would consider a more adventurous design approach.

A two storey solution would reduce the building footprint and ease the relationship with the house to the north east while allowing for expansion space, and in general would give a lower cost per square metre. It would also presumably allow other sites to be re-evaluated in terms of providing the necessary accommodation over a smaller footprint. However, we do consider it possible to produce an excellent single storey building on this site that meets all functional needs and creates a delightful experience for staff and patients.

The opportunities for maximising natural daylight and ventilation are not sufficiently exploited and the suggestion seems to be that daylight standards will be achieved by adding rooflights or sunpipes rather than designing the fenestration to achieve this as an integral part of the design development. It is possible that an L shaped plan [possibly with an atrium] would work better than the proposed cruciform and allow the building to better address the approach road.

In terms of the facade treatment, the south facing gable end is particularly compromised, with small windows and largely blank facade. To the west small windows and largely solid walls fail to exploit the views, and the seating arrangement in the reception area also fails to take advantage of the opportunity to relate to the wider landscape. The depth of plan should be revisited to allow for natural cross-ventilation where possible, and the internal layout should ensure that corridors have better daylight penetration. The WCs are currently not located in a convenient and accessible place, and it is disappointing that the breast feeding room has no outside windows.

The treatment of the car park should use porous surfaces rather than tarmac, and the team confirmed that this has already been agreed with the Local Authority, for reasons of appearance as well as storm water attenuation. A sustainable drainage scheme will be provided on this site, similar to the one already in place for Roman Park View. A Landscape Architect should be engaged to advise on the integration of the drainage system with the site landscape strategy, and its relationship with the new play area.

We commend the commitment to achieve BREEAM Excellent. The feasibility study to consider low and zero carbon technologies, which is committed to in the BREEAM assessment, needs to be done and its findings used to inform the energy strategy. The current proposal for solar water heating and ground source heat pump needs to be justified as the best way to deliver maximum carbon reductions. If the building were oriented to face south [and the approach road] this would have benefits in terms of solar gain and shading.

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.

Please note that DCFW's Design and Access Statement Guide is available on our website

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

Appendix 1: Attendees

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr:
Agent/Client/Developer

Wye Valley Practice [Helen Richards,
Jonathan Jennings]
Monmouthshire LHB [Deborah Harrington]

Pensaer/Architect:

Ashley House [Mark Giles, Julie Woodward]

Consultants:

n/a

Awdurdod Cynllunio/
Planning Authority

Monmouthshire CC [Craig O'Connor]

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:
Design review panel:
Wendy Richards [Chair]
Cindy Harris [Officer]

Elfed Roberts
Phil Roberts
Martin Knight
Richard Parnaby
Ashley Bateson

Lead Panellist:

Elfed Roberts

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Mark Newey, [WAG Planning Division]
Andrew Eustace [Welsh Health Estates]