

** This report relates only to the version of the scheme seen at Design Review on December 2nd 2009**

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: Confidential [made public on December 3rd 2010]

Meeting date:	2nd December 2009
Issue Date:	9th December 2009
Scheme Location:	Ty Glan Menai, Caernarfon
Scheme Description:	New hotel.
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

The scheme proposes a 12 bedroom hotel directly adjacent to the foreshore of the Menai Straits, close to an existing golf club-house and within walking distance of Caernarfon. The site is not served by public transport. DCFW understands from the Local Authority submission that the Aber Foreshore Road, which serves the property, is sub standard and prone to inundation. The planning consultant referred to the Wales Spatial Plan and the existing Gwynedd Unitary Development Plan.

The site is brownfield and well screened from the road by trees, with two access points. It slopes steeply from south to north with outstanding views from all aspects. The architect wishes to take advantage of the views, utilise the existing screening provided by the trees and retain the mature gardens and terraces. The proposal attempts to use the existing terraces so that the building appears to emerge from them and is anchored to the ground with a stone plinth. Galvanised steel and glass balconies emphasise the horizontal layering of the front [north facing] facade.

The Panel was informed that the proposed number of hotel rooms has been reduced from 26 to 12.

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

The Panel appreciated that this is an outstanding site with particular challenges but also great potential, and it is appropriate that the LPA would seek to place stringent requirements on any proposal. We think that this proposal has the potential to be a good design and a positive intervention in the landscape. However, we have some major concerns as it currently stands:

- Based on the material submitted, we are content with the proposed scale and massing. However it will be necessary for the design team to agree viewpoints with the Local Authority, from which to carry out further visual impact studies. These should include direct views as well as oblique views.
- The sustainability strategy is weak and should be incorporated into the design from the beginning. Clear commitments on environmental performance and carbon reductions should be made in any planning application.
- The choice of materials should be rationalised and the elevational treatment calmed.
- Genuinely local materials should be embraced as a positive feature in the design and a way of giving something back to the landscape and the wider community. If necessary the roof pitch should be reconsidered.
- Any problems concerning the access road, and any proposed measures to mitigate this, should be addressed in the Design & Access statement.
- We recommend a stronger expression of the stone plinth and a more recessive treatment of the upper floor balconies.
- The south facing elevations should be revised to make better use of solar gain and daylight; and the outdoor areas re-planned to maximise their value and amenity potential.

The Panel welcomed the early presentation and encouraged the team to return for further consultation at a later stage. We noted the apologies of the Local Authority representative.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

From the information that we have been given, we have no objections to the proposed scale and massing, and the visual impact from Ynys Mon appears to be minimal. However, visual impact is a concern for the LPA and the current drawings/material show only oblique views from the road. The applicants should agree with the Local Authority on the exact location for a number of key views into the site, and develop CGI images of the proposed building from these locations, to give an accurate impression of the likely visual impact.

The Panel was informed that the access road is outside the extreme floodline and the Environment Agency currently has no objection to the proposal. While we noted

that the road is single track with limited passing opportunities, the design team stated that the additional traffic generated would be negligible, and that emergency and service vehicles could already access the adjacent golf club. There is a pull-in space at the western service entrance and goods could be taken up the drive on trolleys.

There is a lack of detail and commitment in the sustainability strategy and while potential exists for solar water heating and/or solar PV panels, the roof form and pitch does not respond to this. Energy efficiency measures should be built in, rather than added on – for example triple glazing or low U-value double glazing may be preferable to sliding insulated shutters on the north facade. The corridors and circulation spaces could provide a buffer zone against overheating on the south side, but a better approach might be to open up the south facade and maximise daylight and useful solar gain.

Indeed, the Panel thought there was great potential on the south side to revise the rear elevation and use the terraces to create better value and amenity. The stairs and corridors as they are currently proposed could feel basic and institutional. Increasing the glazed areas and integrating the lift shaft better would improve the appearance and avoid creating the impression of a 'back yard'. A generous eaves overhang could provide shading in peak summer months.

The strong stone base to the building works well and responds to the existing terraces, but the upper levels and balconies are less well resolved. If the stone plinth was brought forward to the same plane as the upper storeys and the lower balcony walls were stone clad, appearing to grow out of the plinth, this would give a stronger form and have the effect of minimising the apparent bulk of the building.

While recognising the sensitivity of the site, the Panel thought that the scheme should be justified more in terms of exceptional quality and environmental standards. A BREEAM assessment is a recognised way to benchmark the environmental design proposals. The opportunity exists to showcase genuinely local materials such as stone, slate and timber, and this should be maximised. As it stands the palette of materials is unnecessarily complicated, and would require significant attention to detail at edges and joins, in order to avoid crude finishes and achieve the desired quality. We would like to see the elevational treatment substantially calmed with larger areas of the same material and fewer materials used.

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 M McKenna [not present]
Pensaer/Architect:	David Tyrer, Architect
Consultants:	Jan Tyrer Planning [Jan Tyrer]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Gwynedd CC
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Alan Francis [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Carole-Anne Davies [CEO]	Ashley Bateson Chris Jones
Lead Panellist:	Ashley Bateson
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Tim Raine, WAG [DE&T]