

Statws/Status:

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Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:	21 September 2006
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:	6 September 2006
Lleoliad/Location:	Llandudno Junction
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	WAG regional office building
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	WAG Location Strategy Team [Lisa Thomas]
Developer/Datblygwr:	HBG [Lee Bibby, Trevor Hough]
Pensaer/Architect:	Aedas Architects [Bryan Hamilton]
Project Managers:	EC Harris [Peter Glynn]
Design Advisor:	Aukett Fitzroy Robinson [Giles Alldis]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Conwy CC
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Pre-planning
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:	
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair)	Jonathan Hines
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)	Lyn Owen
Wendy Richards	Ed Colgan
Richard Parnaby	
Lead Panellist:	Richard Parnaby

NB: The Design Review Panel had no pre-review material to examine prior to this meeting. Our response, therefore, is necessarily provisional and we await receipt of the full planning application drawings in order to be able to offer informed and considered comment.

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This project was last reviewed by DCFW in May 2006. Since then, the process of finalising the user group's requirements has been ongoing, and is now nearly completed. The design has been signed off by the senior user groups and a planning application will be lodged by 11 September 2006. It is hoped to start on site at the beginning of 2007, with completion in June 2008. The architect emphasised that the external form and appearance remain largely unchanged and the revisions since May relate to the internal arrangement.

The revised accommodation strategy has increased the building footprint, stretching the three wings on the east/west axis, while retaining the form which won the competition. A 'one stop shop' will be located in the central wing at lower ground level, along with an internet library and coffee bar which will be open to the public. This requirement has led to a further re-examination of the heart of the building, which has become a more sociable space. Also in the central wing, meeting room suites have been included. New IT provision will be located in the rear basement.

Externally, the slate rainscreen remains along with the copper clad external stairways, the attenuation pool, main entrance, and location of the CAF/CASS office outside the security point.

A travel plan has now been produced, allowing for 350 parking spaces. These will be reduced over time to the 260 spaces required by the BREEAM assessor. There is still some debate about whether that is enough. The possibility of a temporary car park on adjacent land would help to ease the situation until the green transport plan had had time to take effect.

A landscape architect has been appointed and initial sketches presented. These show a strategy to provide links with the slate and solidity of the building, across the sloping land in front of the pool, down to the bus stop on the road, gradually announcing the building's presence to those arriving from the south west. This would be done by a series of retaining walls and terraced levels with planting to discourage off-path access.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The architect confirmed that he would not have opted to change the building form, even if that had been possible.

The Panel was informed that the building footprint has been increased by 10,000 sq ft. 650 work spaces will be provided, leaving some room for expansion, but there is no provision to extend the buildings upwards in the future. Given the increase in meeting room accommodation, the team anticipated some difficulty in avoiding artificial cooling altogether. In fact 33% of the building is now likely to be standard air conditioned office space, with the rest being mixed mode. Cooling cassettes will be used where possible to minimise roof based plant. The roofscape will be kept as

clear as possible. The location of the flue for the biomass boiler is still under discussion. The roof finish is likely to be profiled metal sheeting behind a parapet wall.

The client has requested a rainwater collection system and a ground source heat pump. They have also instructed the architect to include either photovoltaic or solar thermal panels. The Panel suggested that photovoltaic panels, if included, could be used for solar shading in laminated vertical or inclined glazed panels. We were told that the harvested rainwater would be used for irrigation only and we urged that it be used to offset mains water use, for example WC flushing. The Panel queried how appropriate it would be to have a ground source heat pump alongside a biomass boiler and advised that their functions would need to be well integrated.

It was confirmed that materials will be sourced locally as far as possible. The slate will come from the Penrhyn quarry but it has proved impossible to insist on the source of the copper. A sustainable timber material imported from Germany will be used in prefabricated panels for the core areas. Prefabrication will also be used for external wall panels around the steel frame. An interior designer has been appointed and a workplace consultant is about to be appointed.

The copper pods of the external staircases have been retained as the architect wanted flexibility of internal space and no impediment to cross ventilation. There is the additional advantage of the reduced time scale offered by prefabrication. The Panel advised that the strong element of the copper clad curved wall might be diluted by the copper pods.

An arts group has been formed to discuss ideas and commission an artist. The Panel re-stated DCFW's position on public art, which is that artwork should be integrated into the building's form and finishes, rather than presented as discrete items or 'statues on plinths'.

The car park surface will be part of a sustainable drainage system, using permeable blocks or porous asphalt. A bus stop area is included within the site and will be integrated with the park & ride scheme. We were told that the time scale for reducing parking spaces to the desired amount for the green transport plan would be 5-10 years. The public open courtyards between the blocks and the edges of the pool will be treated with hard landscaping. Manicured hedging suggested by the landscape architect could act as wind buffers and will be explored. The boundary treatment to the south and east will retain the existing fence and trees. A new fence will be erected to the north, and to the west the landscaping itself will act as a deterrent to inappropriate access.

The Panel returned to the question of the ventilation and cooling strategy. We were informed that natural and cross ventilation would be achieved by a combination of manually operated windows with automatically controlled top opening lights for night-time cooling. We advised that insect meshes on the latter may be necessary. It was confirmed that ductwork would be minimised by using cooling cassettes with individual vents, and the exposed slab ceilings would carry lighting cables only. Meeting rooms will have suspended ceilings.

The Panel expressed concern that the requirement for a naturally ventilated building has virtually been abandoned and that a different system was now envisaged rather

than a 'topping up' approach. This is a departure from the brief, with implications for the long term sustainability of the building. We understood that the M&E consultants were still working on this and urged that the highest priority should be given to remaining faithful to the original brief and finding a 'top-up' solution. We acknowledged that this situation had arisen as a result of the changing brief in the context of a fixed built form.

The Panel enquired about whether the budgetary constraints had changed since the last review. Although the overall size and therefore price has increased, there was no consensus on whether the price/m² had increased. We were told that this would depend on detailed solutions still being developed. It was generally acknowledged that this would mean working to develop a target cost over the next few months, and a start on site without any cost certainty for the client. The Panel considered that the cost of £1500/m² was probably too low to achieve the quality required.

The project team confirmed that the intention was to maintain a collaborative way of working with direct channels of communication, as intended in the original procurement process.

The Panel suggested that a public display be set up, exhibiting the design and construction process with models and descriptions of how the various systems will work. We were informed that a visitor centre will be established in a temporary building on the site to house a public display.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel was pleased to be presented with an update on this project but regretted that no pre-review information was made available. We consider it essential that the vision for an exemplary building contained in the original brief be maintained, and where compromise decisions need to be made, the decision makers should have all the relevant information presented to them, including the implications for long term sustainability. As an interim statement, we would make the following points:

- We are concerned that the original strategy for a naturally ventilated building is becoming severely compromised and we urge a holistic approach towards a solution
- We have not had sufficient information on the entrance area to form a judgment, but we are pleased to see that the retaining wall has been simplified
- We applaud the inclusion of further renewable energy technologies, where appropriate, such as ground source heat pumps, solar electric/thermal, and rainwater harvesting
- We are pleased to see the beginnings of a landscape strategy and the formation of a public art group.
- **We are extremely concerned about the timescale and the lack of a fixed price. The issue of proceeding with target costs only has to be acceptable to the client as a legitimate form of public procurement. We think there is a danger of major problems occurring if construction works starts before the conflicts between space requirements/built form/ sustainability/ and costs are resolved. We would much prefer to see the design team take a step back and resolve these issues before starting on site. It is vital that the long term sustainability of the**

building is not compromised by quick and easy solutions that have serious implications for future energy use.

- We would like to receive three hard copies of the planning application drawings as soon as they are issued, together with an indication of how they differ from what we have seen today, and the areas remaining to be resolved.

Diwedd/End

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