

Design Review Report

Report Status

Confidential

Meeting date	12 September 2012
Issue date	20 September 2012
Scheme location	Ysgol Dyffryn Tywi, Llandeilo
Scheme description	Education
Scheme reference number	77A
Planning status	Pre-application
Declaration of interests	n/a

Summary

The Panel welcomed the clear and thoughtful documentation and presentation of the design development, which responded to issues raised in the previous review in December 2011. We thought that minor issues remain to be resolved. In summary:

- The Panel applaud the care and attention given to the landscape context and detail design, which moves from an informal rural setting to the more formal treatment of the courtyard and layout of the building.
- Landscape and Visual Impact assessments should be used to inform the development of the detailed design, which the designers acknowledged was not yet satisfactory. Views of the building from ground level are needed to verify the design.
- The sustainability strategy is promising and the commitment to achieve BREEAM Excellent is welcomed.
- The Panel questioned the separation of entrances and the resulting lack of passive supervision.
- Animation of corridors could be improved by lowering the height of the extensive high level of glazing on classrooms.
- The approach to materials choice and colour was well argued, but should be tested by building sample panels on site.
- The parking/drop-off area to the north should be re-configured to allow uninterrupted views from the building to the impressive setting beyond.
- We would be happy to see this scheme again if required, before the submission of a planning application.

Discussion and panel response in full

The Panel appreciated the way in which the scheme has developed and our earlier comments have been responded to. The relationship of the building with the main road and access arrangements in general are now improved. We were still concerned about the 'fifth elevation' – the roofs when seen from the bridge and surrounding high points. Supporting material is now needed, in the form of a Landscape and Visual Impact assessment, to show the building in this truly remarkable landscape setting.

The sustainability strategy is based on the commitment to achieve BREEAM Excellent and this was welcomed, together with its integration into the design development. We suggested that the permanent shading on the east and west facing glazing could be reconsidered, while maintaining optimum internal daylight levels.

The landscape strategy which is intended to show a progression from an informal response to the rural setting, through to a more formal layout in the courtyard – was persuasive. However, the Panel could not identify the drivers for the courtyard landscape and noted that an urban precedent had been used, which is not appropriate for this scheme.

There is a sustainable drainage strategy for the site as a whole using the existing ditch which marks the line of the old railway. The pedestrian link to the north is welcomed.

The Panel questioned the separation of the student entrance from the main entrance. We were told that this was the result of strong opinions expressed by the stakeholders, in favour of a separate entrance for staff/visitors. The effect is to reduce the possibility of passive supervision of students from the reception desk. It is unfortunate that a senior management team for the new school is not yet in place, to inform the consultation discussions about circulation and supervision. More detailed work needs to be done to create a sense of civic quality around the main entrance, which does not seem fully resolved.

The architects have attempted to specify a facade treatment which minimises the visual impact of the building in the landscape. Dark grey and earth-brown bricks are proposed with matching mortar, but the Panel thought that this palette might be too dark, especially when wet, and would need testing with sample panels on site. The Panel asked the designers to think about celebrating the building's civic significance but this would of course need to be tested and consulted upon.

The sports building accommodates a broad vocational curriculum with students from a wider catchment area, and a high level of community uses. These aspects are reflected in its physical relationship with the main building.

Views to the north from the SEN block would be improved if the small amount of parking and drop-off space could be reconfigured.

The linear strip of glazed panels shown on classrooms lining corridors might be lowered, to help with passive supervision and animation of corridors.

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***Mae copi iath Gymraeg o'r adroddiad hwn ar gael ar ofyn.
A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.***

Atodiad 1/appendix 1 Mynychwyr/attendees

Agent/Client/Developer	Leadbitter (Noel Ashman) Carmarthenshire CC (Meirion Jones)
Architectural/Urban Designer	Austin.Smith:Lord (Andrew Lewis, Chris Moor)
Consultants	Asbri Planning (Richard Bowen) SABA M&E (Phil Merad)
Third Party	n/a
Planning Authority	Carmarthenshire CC (Graham Noakes, Kevin Phillips)
Design Review Panel Cadeirydd/Chair Swydog/Officer Prif Banelydd/Lead Panellist	Wendy Richards Cindy Harris Gerard Ryan Richard Parnaby Angela Williams Simon Carne