

**Statws/Status:**  
**Cyfrinachol / Confidential**



<b>Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report issued:</b>	<b>18 April 2007</b>
<b>Dyddiad Cyfarfod/Meeting Date:</b>	<b>11 April 2007</b>
<b>Lleoliad/Location:</b>	<b>Ystrad Mynach, Caerphilly</b>
<b>Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun/ Scheme Description:</b>	<b>Local General Hospital</b>
<b>Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:</b>	<b>Gwent NHS Trust [Alex Howells, Glenn Evans]</b>
<b>Developer/Datblygwr:</b>	<b>HBG Construction [Stuart Clack]</b>
<b>Pensaer/Architect:</b>	<b>Nightingale Associates [Kieren Morgan, Lindsay Gibbon]</b>
<b>Cynllunio / Consultants</b>	<b>Arup [David Pitman]</b>
<b>Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:</b>	<b>Caerphilly CBC [John Forrester]</b>
<b>Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:</b>	<b>Pre-planning</b>
<b>Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Wendy Richards (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer) Carole-Anne Davies, CEO</b>	<b>Ewan Jones Michael Griffiths Roger Ayton Ed Colgan</b>
<b>Lead Panellist:</b>	<b>Michael Griffiths</b>

**Sylwedyddion/Observers:**

**Jerry Spencer, RENEW  
Nigel Davies, WHE**

### **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

A previous proposal for a hospital on this site, but with a different design team, was reviewed by DCFW in January 2006. Since then, Nightingale and HBG have been appointed to develop the scheme on the basis of 100% single bed accommodation. The flood plain status of the site [C1] has been an important driver in the design process, and the new ground floor of the building will be at first floor level. Parking will be at ground level, mostly located underneath the buildings, which appear to hover above the landscape. An open, raised area to the north of the site will be used for essential staff parking.

The main public vehicular access will be from the east, off the A469, over a new bridge across the river Rhymney. Access from ground level parking to first floor reception will be by lifts or escalators through a naturally lit atrium. A wayfinding strategy will use signage, colour and artwork to direct visitors and patients to the appropriate area. Service access will be from Caerphilly Road to the west.

The key decision to adopt single rooms with en-suite accommodation has driven the initial stages of the design process. Adopting shallow plan arrangements and grouping of accommodation has informed the overall site strategy. This is now being refined to deal with specific site relationships and architectural form. The built form, elevations and materiality are still at an early stage of development. The roof finish currently is standing seam zinc. There will be maximum use of prefabrication in the construction. A start on site is anticipated early in 2008.

### **Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response**

The Panel noted the natural setting of this semi-rural location, the beautiful views out of the site, and the small scale residential surroundings. The wider setting of the hospital in the landscape should also be considered. There will be long distance views to Ystrad Mynach and the Rhymney Valley from the Sirhowy Valley Park and Rhymney Valley ridgeway footpath, and it may be necessary to undertake a landscape and visual impact assessment, in order to mitigate the intrusion of the roofscape on those views. We noted that key views onto the site from surrounding viewpoints are missing from the documentation.

In this context, we thought it was important to break up the large dominant scale of the proposed development. The architect agreed that work on this should proceed, now that internal relationships between rooms and departments have been established and it is clear where disconnections can be made. We were told that the initial design concept is sufficiently robust and flexible to accommodate this process, and will inform the elevational strategy. In general, the higher built form has been kept to the north, and tiered down to 2 storeys at the south, where this proposal meets residential development.

The Panel was concerned that the strong architectural strategy may be diluted in the development detail, and that the elevations shown did not deliver the promise of the original concept. It was agreed that there was a risk of the elevations becoming too fragmented and a simpler palette of materials should be developed. The Panel thought that the end-of-block treatments should be clarified, given the possibility of future expansion, and it was accepted that these are currently unresolved.

We would like to see the roofscape developed as a mix of green roof and zinc sheet, and we think this should be illustrated in the planning application. We advised that all plant should be fully enclosed, even if this led to a slightly higher roofline, and warned against the dangers of reflections from bright surfaces.

In the Panel's view, the access strategy is geared mainly to private car use, with pedestrian access being treated as secondary. We thought this was unfortunate and failed to take account of current transport policy and likely future trends. The new access and road bridge from a traffic-light junction on the A469 has been determined as necessary by the Environment Agency, to ensure safe access and flood protection. The Panel considered that, if necessary, this access should be retained for emergency use only and that all other vehicular access to the site should be from the west, off Caerphilly Road. We were informed that the team had considered a through road across the site, linking the A469 with Caerphilly Road, but had decided against this to avoid creating 'rat runs'.

We understood that the assumption that 90% of visitors and patients will arrive by car into individual courtyards has led to the location of the main entrance at the northern end. The Panel thought this would be inefficient in terms of internal travel distances, and create a poor wayfinding environment for non-car users. We were also concerned about the impact of the raised flood protection deck and service areas along the Caerphilly Road edge of site. We suggested that the main entrance could be moved to a more central location along Caerphilly Road. This would benefit the circulation strategy and break down the visual impact of the flood protection deck.

We noted the proposal for a new park on the site of the existing hospital and the opportunity for new entrances and linkages on and across Caerphilly Road. In general, the Panel would like to see this building responding better to the neighbouring environment to the west, rather than appearing to turn its back on the surrounding community. We were informed that a regular bus route runs along Caerphilly Road, and that travel plans for staff are being developed in conjunction with Arup.

The Panel noted the lack of a strategic landscape approach, despite the effective creation of a new land form on the site. We thought that such a strategy was necessary and urgent, and were informed that a landscape architect [Fira] is involved. The landscape strategy should be as strong as the architectural strategy and should be protected in the budget. It needs to refer to the aerial view contained in the presentation, and retain the strong simplicity of the newly created green planes. This strategy should seek to integrate the development with the planned park to the west and the river frontage to the east. The Panel was informed that an arboricultural survey of the site is being carried out and that the majority of existing trees on the edges will be retained, but not unfortunately the Cedar of Lebanon in the centre of site. We suggested that solar shading for south facing rooms could be achieved by using vegetation and be integrated into the landscape design. The internal courtyards are shown with the inclusion of substantial trees and the Panel thought this might be optimistic given their depth and enclosure at ground level by parking. The Panel was advised that the courtyard spaces at their widest measure 50-60 metres across and will support tree planting if they are correctly positioned.

Mixed mode ventilation will be used to achieve comfort conditions with minimum energy use. Good levels of daylighting are provided throughout. A biomass heating system is envisaged, dependent on a WEBS\* grant, with a gas CHP system as a 'fallback' position. Biomass CHP has been excluded as an emerging technology, although the Panel commented that in order for the technology to emerge and develop it needs the support of public sector clients. We thought that the menu of sustainable options presented should be developed into a coherent strategy and form part of the planning application. We were not convinced by the location of the energy centre opposite domestic dwellings, but the architect stated that this was the best compromise position and would be outweighed by the outpatient entrance.

[\* The Forestry Commission's Wood Energy Business Scheme]

The Panel was told that an art strategy would contribute to the sculpture and wayfinding strategy, but we thought that this was tokenistic. The Panel suggested that greater value could be achieved by engaging an experienced, high calibre professional artist to work closely with the

landscape team. We urged early consultation with artists and professional art consultants.

The Panel was concerned that the programme, which envisages a detailed planning application by end the of May, was too ambitious and unrealistic and we were informed that the timing was under review.

### **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel was pleased to have the opportunity to review this proposal. We are encouraged by the architectural approach and the quality of the design team and their presentation. However, some major issues remain to be resolved:

- The scale of the blocks needs breaking down further and we are confident that the architects can achieve this satisfactorily.
- We support the general built form and internal layout, but question the location of the main entrance at one end of the linear block formation.
- We are not convinced by the transport and access strategy and question the assumption that virtually all visitors will arrive by car, over the lifetime of the building. In normal conditions, we would like to see all vehicles entering the site from the west, off Caerphilly Road, and a better integration of vehicular and pedestrian access.
- The development should achieve a better relationship with Caerphilly Road and the environment to the west, with new entrances to the site and connections to the park and river corridor.
- We applaud the inclusion of a biomass heating system, and would urge the team to go further in supporting new technologies and delivering an exemplary low carbon building.
- We urge the design team to work with professional artists and consultants from an early stage to ensure a high quality and well integrated artwork.
- A strong and ambitious landscape strategy needs to be developed alongside the building design to complement it and enhance the setting of the development.
- We are concerned that the current programme is unrealistic and think the designers need more time to develop the detailed design and retain the promised quality.

**Diwedd/End**

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