

this report relates only to the version of the scheme seen at Design Review on 17th November 2010

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

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| Meeting date: | 17th November 2010 |
| Issue Date: | 30th November 2010 |
| Scheme Location: | Bridge Street, Cardiff |
| Scheme Description: | Commercial office |
| Planning Status: | Pre-application |

Part1: Presentation

The proposed scheme is an emerging design response to a very heterogeneous built context with wide variation in heights and quality. Although this is a tall building at 12+ storeys, the aim is to knit it into the immediate smaller scale context, with active uses for 80% of the ground floor. The building has grown from an original 5 storeys and become more articulated. The form and massing have been tested through several iterations. A five metre deep, two storey colonnade runs along the west side and connects the new public space with the internal ground floor. This space links with the food court in St Davids 2, and the extra footfall which this building will generate – estimated at an extra 3000 workers – will be an important economic generator.

Environmentally, the greatest performance challenge will be cooling the building. The south facade features horizontal shading, in the form of projecting floor beams/cills. East and west facades have vertical shading throughout. There are two small atria to north and south, and a double height space at each end of the floorplates to provide quality environments for team-working. Thermal and solar modelling has been carried out leading to the use of mechanical ventilation with high efficiency heat recovery and chillers. The building will achieve BREEAM Excellent and it is planned to install 600 sqm of solar PV.

The Local Authority representative confirmed that an earlier outline consent for an 8 storey residential block has now lapsed, and they expect a full application for this proposal early next year. They are pleased with the progress so far, and welcome the promised enhancement of the skyline and the public realm.

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

The Panel was delighted with the sophisticated architectural response to this brief, and the way in which the design is developing in response to the context. We realize that this development is still ongoing and we have confidence that the design team will achieve a positive result. In our view minor issues remain to be resolved. In summary:

- We welcome the visually recessive elevations and the understated approach to finishes, in order to achieve a sophisticated architectural treatment. We particularly welcome the 'Portland Stone' ideas for building finishes.
- We were pleased to see the consideration which had been given to views of the building from across the city, and we supported the general approach to the design of its top.
- The massing, fenestration and transparency of the building are all well considered and the present proposal appears well resolved.
- While recognising that this will set a new precedent in terms of maximum height for future development, we are broadly comfortable with the proposed scale of this building, although we have some concern that it will create a canyon effect for the public space on Mary Anne Street.
- The way in which the building responds to the adjacent conservation area needs further attention, taking into account the impact on views south from the Charles Street conservation area and Barrack Lane.
- We welcome the commitment to BREEAM Excellent, and the way in which the energy strategy is developing in tandem with the design of the façade and the roofscape. It is important that the elegant and clean appearance of the roofscape should not be compromised by competing demands for plant, PV arrays, or façade cleaning equipment.
- We applaud the transition between internal and external space at ground level, the western colonnade and the transparency of the ground floor.
- The design for the relatively small area of public open space should be simple and uncluttered, with high quality robust materials and well integrated public art.
- The lighting strategy for both the building and the spaces could contribute much to the area which will be very busy most evenings

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel appreciated the fluid nature of the emerging design but noted that there was no opportunity for a considered response to the new material presented on the day. We very much welcomed the physical models as a way of locating the building in its context and exploring different options of form and massing. The ground floor layout and its relationship with the colonnade appeared to work well, and the Panel supported the articulation of the massing and the striation of the elevations. The north facade has a similar pattern of fenestration as the south but with less shading, and we thought that the different elevational treatments would aid legibility.

The Panel had some concern with the proposed height of this building, and we noted that it would set a precedent for further redevelopment of this area of the city. Hopefully it will

provide an opportunity to inform the urban design parameters of adjacent and neighbouring sites. It is important that the building responds positively to the conservation area immediately to the north, and views of the building from the conservation area need to be developed further. It was confirmed that 120 parking spaces will be provided underneath the building.

The facade materials were discussed and the architect stated his preference for a moulded facade rather than a curtain wall treatment. A pre-cast Portland stone finish is being considered, and the Panel was assured that, with the client's agreement, any signage or branding will not be over-prominent. We thought that it was important for the architecture to identify the building and signify the quality in an understated way. It was clarified that there will be full height glazing behind the louvres on the east and west facades, but that desks would be positioned against solid panels, to prevent glare and allow oblique external views for occupants.

The client has specified BREEAM Excellent, and the location and incorporation of renewables is currently under discussion. The Panel agreed that photovoltaic panels would be appropriate in this context, but would alter the roofscape if they were sited at roof level. The alternative of integrating PVs into the horizontal shading was recognised, but this would compromise the ability of the 'shelves' to reflect daylight back into the building and might disrupt the architectural effect of the southern facade. We expect these issues to form the basis of design discussion and building modeling, in order that the required EPC rating of 40 is achieved. We thought it might be possible to improve fabric performance and reduce energy consumption to the point where renewables provision could be reduced or avoided altogether.

The plant located on the roof will be enclosed by an extra storey and a half covering the western half of the roofspace. The aim is to include a roof terrace with proper parapets rather than domestic style balconies, and we suggested that a 'green' or 'brown' roof finish could be considered, both to increase area for biodiversity and to reduce solar heat gains.

The Panel sought clarification on the distinction between public and private outdoor space. We were told that the aim was to merge this distinction, by allowing public access into much of the ground floor, and by continuing the external paving materials through to the interior. The full height glazing will also help to blur the division between inside and out, and will lighten the colonnade.

The Local Authority representative noted that this development would involve a loss of green space [although only recently installed and intended to be temporary]. However, this increases the importance of replacing it with a high quality, well landscaped public space. The team stated that their aim is for an uncluttered design with a high quality of details and materials, and that the design will have to be approved by Land Securities, as owners of St Davids 2. The Panel advised that ideas for the design approach, such as coloured lighting in the paving, should not have the effect of dividing the space. A strategy for public art should be integrated with the landscape and public realm design.

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

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| Asiant/Client/Datblygwr: Agent/Client/Developer | Admiral Insurance Group Stoford Developments [Tony Nash] |
| Pensaer/Architect: | Glen Howells Architects [Glen Howells, Sandeep Shambi] |
| Consultants: | Arup [Matt Chambers] Hyland Edgar Driver [Chris Butten] Turley Associates [Tom Rocke] |
| Awdurdod Cynllunio/ Planning Authority | Cardiff CC [Lawrence Dowdell] |
| Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design Review Panel: John Punter [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Ed Colgan | Simon Hartley Michael Griffiths Martin Knight Andrew Linfoot |
| Lead Panellist: | Michael Griffiths |
| Sylwedyddion/Observers: | n/a |

Declaration of interest: Gaunt Francis Architects, one of whose directors is Chair of DCFW, is currently acting for the developer, Stoford, with responsibility for the fit-out.