

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	16 July 2009
Issue Date:	24 July 2009
Scheme Location:	Barry Waterfront
Scheme Description:	Mixed use
Planning Status:	Pre-application

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

The Panel was encouraged by the current discussion and the ongoing dialogue with members of the design team over the last year. On this occasion we particularly appreciated the contribution from the Local Authority planning officer. In summary:

- The link to the main railway station to the west is of crucial importance and the three major stakeholders [Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), the Vale of Glamorgan Council and the Consortium] should work together to facilitate this. There should be a firm commitment to install the link north to the town, and resolve any conflicting requirements of the steam railway adjacent to the site.
- We understand the constraints on the character and treatment of the 'Main Street', but the nature of the enclosure and height-to-width ratio of buildings along this frontage will be important. The relocation of the proposed supermarket petrol filling station behind a skin of residential use would be a major improvement.
- The Panel accepts the arguments in favour of an exclusively pedestrian waterfront. We support the principle of using level changes to create defensible private space for waterfront blocks. The success of this will depend on detailed design considerations.
- The public space at the western end of the Mole should be enclosed by active frontages and the size of the kiosk in this area should be reduced. It would be best if the apartment building wrapped fully around the corner. The location and type of active frontages [residential/commercial] should be clearly shown on the masterplan drawing.

- The planning application should include some indication of future proposals for the Mole, and temporary uses should be encouraged.
- We thought the landscape strategy was progressing well, but warned against an approach to public art that was not fully integrated with the rest of the design development.
- A strong planting framework within the public realm design should be used to civilize the walkway and the car park to the south of the supermarket and protect major routes and connections.
- The development of the different character areas was broadly supported and we agreed with the desire to build in flexibility. The use of sketches to illustrate these areas in place of photographs of other places would be very useful in future, to identify the proposed character of the areas.
- Different phases of development should be progressed via collaborative working between developers [if more than one] within each character area, with a joint planning application to ensure a coherent character has been created. A phasing diagram should be included within the master plan.
- The sustainable energy strategy should be determined at this stage and used to inform the site layout. A clear programme for implementing the Code for Sustainable Homes (CSH) levels and BREEAM through the different phases in response to a time line should be outlined, taking on board current national and local planning policy in Wales. A district heating solution should be anticipated in the site layout and infrastructure works.
- The required level, distribution and delivery of affordable housing provision needs to be resolved.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

In the context of the three previous reviews of this proposal, it was agreed to continue the discussion with particular reference to the following issues:

Connectivity

The Panel thought that a safe and direct pedestrian and cycle link to the railway station (Barry Town) to the west was crucial to support a sustainable transport strategy. While we appreciated the difficulties of crossing active railway lines, and that relevant land ownership was not in the control of the consortium, the masterplan shows a development layout aligned to this major connection. Without provision being made for future connections, particularly to the railway, the rationale for much of the masterplan becomes meaningless. The Design and Access statement should make explicit the relationship between the site layout and a wider connectivity framework, together with the role of the different stakeholders in enabling connections to be made.

A link to the town centre via the underpass should be more easily achievable and should not be prejudiced by any application relating to the steam railway. A connection to the Knap should also be included in the connectivity strategy.

Roads Access and Parking

The 'Main Street' through the site follows the line of two sewer easements and this affects the ability to undertake substantial tree planting. The character of the street reflects this, together with the three sets of traffic lights and the extra queuing lanes which intrude into the public realm, although the distance between buildings [22m] has not increased. More planting will be possible at the southern end where the road crosses the green space, and the team thought that the curve in the road would make it feel less oppressive. The three storey scale of the enclosure seems appropriate and could rise to 4 storeys on corners. It was suggested that the petrol filling station associated with the proposed supermarket, which currently breaks the building line, could be relocated and we thought this would bring major benefits.

The Panel accepted the argument in favour of excluding cars from the node, between the Leisure Centre and supermarket, and the consequent disconnection between the two secondary roads. However, in its present arrangement the role and function of the space is unresolved.

Public realm and landscape

The nature of the central public space at the junction of the Mole with the rest of the site needs improving and refining. The kiosk is too intrusive and should be reduced in size while the commercial tower could be wrapped around the corner to the north and west to open out the space. Active frontages are essential to ensure well used and sociable spaces.

The character and use of waterfront areas on the Mole need further development and this was acknowledged by the team. It was confirmed that the Mole will not be included in the planning application and that the likely quantum of development here is uncertain because of unstable ground conditions. We thought that the site of the proposed leisure centre at least should be included within the red line. The large areas of car park and boat storage necessary for the marina should ideally be enclosed by development facing the water on both sides of the Mole. Temporary uses should be encouraged and facilities provided for community groups to have access to the water for sport and recreation.

The Panel was keen to see an integrated strategy for the future use of the water space and raised concerns that the marina may limit the recreational use of the water. Defining the limits to the marina moorings is most important in order to protect expanses of open water for visual and recreational reasons. The Panel would wish to see the community access to the water space maintained and the potential of the dramatic setting contribute more actively to the development of the project.

The landscape strategy has been strengthened to capitalise on the waterfront and a series of public spaces. The Panel advised that an integrated arts strategy is needed and that identifying 'Strategic Artwork Locations' does not allow the potential for an artist to integrate their work throughout the public realm. It may also result in an expectation by others of producing 'statues' to fill the places identified. A more innovative approach in response to the Supplementary Planning Guidance set out by the Vale of Glamorgan is expected.

District Centre and car park

To be acceptable, the proposed supermarket needs to be well integrated into the urban fabric and be accessed by a high quality public realm. In particular the route to the south of

the supermarket, potentially linking the waterfront area with the station, needs to be enhanced and its character as a major pedestrian thoroughfare needs to be ensured with adequate width and appropriate soft and hard landscaping. The consortium agreed to make it 'wider and greener'. It was suggested that the whole area to the south could be designed as a single hard surface, delivering a place of value rather than a soulless parking space. This could focus on the provision of clear pedestrian routes indicated by changes in materials, but soft landscaping should also be used to break up the space and make movement more comfortable for those walking from their cars. Strong landscaping is also required to protect residential amenity on three sides, and the edge of the walkway might benefit from a line of trees.

Character areas

The proposal to develop different character areas for West Pond and South Quay has been covered in previous reviews. The information and images presented need to be consistent, and we thought that sketches would convey the desired impression better than photographs of specific precedents. Such references to other projects can lead to misunderstandings and rarely convey the distinctive sense of place appropriate for a scheme of this nature.

We did not have time to comment on the density and layout of the Arno Quay scheme which in our view is overdeveloped

Codes

To a large extent it will be up to the Vale to determine the required level of design details or design codes. In our view, what is most important is to establish a viable mechanism for protecting design quality, and to allow sufficient time for design.

Phasing

The phasing will be based on the defined character areas. Where a number of different developers are involved, there should be a coordinated approach to ensure the delivery of an integrated proposal, in the context of reserved matters applications. It was confirmed that parameter plans will be part of this application, and the masterplan will be treated as illustrative.

Resource efficiency and 'green' infrastructure

The sustainability strategy needs to be further developed and strengthened. Any references in the documents to the defunct EcoHomes standard should be replaced with a firm commitment to achieve a Code for Sustainable Homes Level in excess of the minimum requirement from 1st September 2009. The policy to use local sustainable materials where possible should be made more explicit, with examples of possible collaboration with local supply chains. Similarly, the stated aspiration for 'innovative and experimental' design solutions should be fleshed out.

A commitment to install a CHP district heating system would be an important vehicle for delivering low-carbon energy efficiently, but we were advised that the high capital costs made this unlikely at present. Nevertheless we urged the team to enable this solution in

the future by installing pipe work under new roads and allowing space for the necessary plant and fuel delivery.

Affordable housing

The percentage, location and delivery of affordable housing for the scheme has not yet been agreed and Section 106 discussions are still ongoing. The developers will work with Registered Social Landlord's (RSL's) to deliver affordable housing, in pro rata phases dispersed through the site. RSLs should be involved at an early stage and the affordable housing should be indistinguishable from private housing.

Partnership

The Panel welcomed the contribution of the Vale to the discussion and would encourage all parties with an interest in the future of the area to engage effectively in delivery of key elements of the regeneration, particularly those pedestrian connections which require access over the railways. We believe the development at Barry Waterfront represents a significant challenge and the courage of the consortium to take this project forward in the current climate should be matched by the Local Authority expediting the necessary connections off-site. Indeed, the currently fragmented contribution of others to the delivery of this key project is disappointing and will weaken the quality of the project and its regeneration potential for the town.

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	Consortium comprising Persimmon Homes, Taylor Wimpey and Barratt Homes [Richard Keogh, David Thomas]
Pensaer/Architect:	Holder Mathias [Stephen Hill]
Consultants:	Soltys Brewster [Simon Brewster] CDN Planning [Kedrick Davies] Nathaniel Litchfield Partnership [Gareth Williams]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Vale of Glamorgan [Steve Ball]
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: John Punter [Chair]	Simon Carne

Cindy Harris [Officer]
Wendy Richards

Roger Ayton