

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

DATGANIADAU O DDIDDORDEB

Mae gofyn i aelodau o'r panel, arsyllwyr a phartion perthnasol eraill ddatgan unrhyw ddi-ddordebau sydd ganddynt **ymlaen llaw** mewn perthynas â'r eitemau Panel Adolygu Dylunio Bydd unrhyw ddatganiadau o'r fath yn cael eu cofnodi yma ac yng nghofnodion canolog Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare ***in advance*** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCfW's central records.

Statws adolygu/Review status

Public

Dyddiad cyfarfod/meeting date	July 27th 2011
Dyddiad cyhoeddi/issue date	August 9th 2011
Lleoliad y cynllun/scheme location	Coed y Brenin
Disgrifiad y cynllun/scheme description	Commercial
Statws cynllunio/planning status	Application submitted March 2011

Datganiadau o ddi-ddordeb/declaration of interests

- Phil Roberts is Chair of Woodknowledge Wales, which is funded by the Forestry Commission and advises the FC on timber engineering issues.
- Jonathan Hines is a member of DCfW's Design Review Panel

Adran 1/part 1

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The existing Coed y Brenin visitor centre has been very successful, to the extent that it has outgrown its current accommodation. More space is needed for cycle sales and hire, and for visiting school groups and other meetings. It is part of the client's brief that the new building should showcase the use of Welsh timber in construction and be replicable.

The design team quickly concluded that these requirements could not be met by extending the existing circular building. Four different options for the form and location of a new building were explored with the client and other stakeholders, and the preferred option shows a cranked orthogonal footprint located to the east of the

existing building, with a bridge link at first floor level. The new building is designed to be simple and elegant, sheltered to the north but opening up to the south to maximise views and natural daylight. It is intended to sit comfortably next to the existing building while being distinct from it. A new extension to the north of the existing building to accommodate a lobby and shop, will be clad in Corten steel.

The construction method will feature the 'Brettstapel' system of solid timber panels made from low grade Welsh softwood (of which there is a plentiful supply locally) and without the use of glues or nails. The building will achieve BREEAM Excellent and the energy efficient design is based on the principles of 'eco-minimalism'. It is hoped to extend the existing biomass heating system to the new building.

The local planning authority have identified the key issues as the configuration, scale and height of the new building, its visual impact on the existing building, and the use of non traditional building materials.

Crynodeb o'r prif bwyntiau a gododd o'r drafodaeth, i'w darllen ochr yn ochr ag Adran 2 yr adroddiad hwn.

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

The Panel acknowledged the constraints of the site and the difficulties of building alongside the existing building with its distinctive form. In general we are content that the relationship between the two buildings has been satisfactorily resolved, and we think that only minor issues remain to be resolved. In summary:

- While we think that the relationship between the two buildings is successful, it needs to be better justified with the use of wider sections, longer views, and possibly a 3D model.
- The Panel questioned aspects of the internal layout but accepted that the client was fully involved in the design development and was content with the current proposal.
- We are very supportive of the high sustainability aspirations and are confident that this will be a low energy building in operation.
- The use and demonstration of local sustainable materials in a replicable system is greatly commended.
- We think the use of Corten steel is surprising in this context but we think it could work well, providing that the client and local authority are content.
- We think that the possible wind tunnel effects between the buildings should be tested and if necessary mitigated.
- Some regrading of the landscape and planting to the south would soften the visual impact of the new building.
- Attention needs to be paid to the treatment of the hillside to the rear (east) of the new building.
- We are reassured to know that the architect will be retained throughout the contract to protect the design quality and monitor the construction process.

The discussion centered round the relationship of the new building to the distinctive form of the existing building. The Panel thought that the perspective view from the south did not do justice to this relationship and we stated that a section drawing through the site would demonstrate the relationship better, as well as more distant views. We suggested that planting to screen the lower storey would soften the visual impact from the south and make the building appear as a single storey hovering in the landscape. While this was a view requested by the local planning authority, it was acknowledged that most visitors would view the buildings from the main approach to the north.

The architect stated that it was not their intention to hide the new building, but to complement and enhance the existing. The Panel agreed that a repetition of the circular form would not be appropriate. The design team have avoided a pitched roof which would compete with the existing cedar shingled dome, and instead used a flat roof with a 'brown' roof finish using a 50mm depth of excavated material and allowing it to self-seed with surrounding species. By digging the building into the ground at the northern end, its height and impact are reduced.

Uses located to the north such as toilets and stores do not need natural daylight. By contrast the building opens out to the south with full height glazing and balcony area for meeting spaces. The cranked form responds to existing contours, minimises the amount of cut, and references the curved form of the existing building. The taper is purely functional as less accommodation is needed in the northern part of the building.

The Panel questioned the internal layout of the meeting room and suggested that the position of the projector and table be reversed. We thought there would be advantages in reducing the level of fenestration and keeping the large south facing window as the only one. The design team stated that blackout blinds will be used when necessary but that the flexible and multi-use spaces would benefit from a high level of glazing. While we understood the advantages of being able to join up the two meeting spaces when required, we did question whether the lobby might be better located more centrally.

The Panel welcomed the high sustainability aspirations for the project and noted the experience of the design team in delivering low energy buildings. We were pleased to hear that the existing wood chip heating system could take the (small) additional load of the new building and that work was in hand to improve its operational efficiency. The use and showcasing of Welsh timber as a structural system is an excellent example of adding value to a local, sustainable product.

The design team stated that the use of Corten steel for the extension makes the entrance more legible and has received a largely positive response from the client

and the local planning authority. However, other options could be investigated if required.

The Panel thought that the microclimate in the space between the two buildings needs to be tested. This is a major pedestrian and cycle route linking the car park with the heads of trails and, as a funnel shaped space facing south west and the direction of prevailing winds, any wind tunnel effects will need to be mitigated. The possibility of a covered link between the buildings was discussed but it was agreed that this could impact negatively on the road underneath.

The Panel sought to explore the ambiguity of the relationship between the two buildings which we thought related to the form, roofline and eaves level, not just to the view from the south. The architect stated that there was very little room for flexibility on the eaves height (100mm at most), given the need to connect with the existing building at a certain level.

The Panel emphasised the importance of ensuring that the edge of the roof between the two buildings is kept thin and straight. This will be difficult to achieve in practice and will not work as shown. We suggested that the detailing of this 1.5m overhang needs to be reconsidered and well supervised during the construction phase.

Overall the Panel was content that the relationship between the two buildings has been successfully resolved. We accepted that with a 4-5 metre separation, the buildings would not be read as one. While we understood that it was not practically feasible to achieve a complete match between eaves levels, we would like the team to test the eaves relationship again. We were pleased to learn that the architect will be retained throughout the length of the traditional contract.

Mae Panel Adolygu Dylunio Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru a'r staff yn croesawu rhagor o ymgynghoriad, a bydd yn hapus i ddarparu rhagor o adborth am yr adroddiad yma a/neu lle bo'n briodol, dderbyn cyflwyniadau pellach. Diolch am ymgynghori â'r Comisiwn a chadwch mewn cysylltiad â ni os gwelwch yn dda ynglŷn â hynt eich prosiect. A fyddech gystal â'n hysbysu o ddatblygiad eich prosiect. Diolch yn fawr am ymgynghori â'r Comisiwn.

The Design Commission for Wales Design Review Panel welcomes further consultation and we will be happy to provide further feedback on this report and/or where appropriate, to receive further presentations. Please keep us informed of the progress of your project. Thank you for consulting the Commission.

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

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr Agent/Client/Developer	Forestry Commission Wales (Chris Edwards)
Pensaer/Dylunydd Trefol Architectural/Urban Designer	Architype (Jonathan Hines, George Mikurcik, Polly Upton)
Ymgynghorwyr/Consultants	n/a
Trydydd Parti/Third Party	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio/Planning Authority	Snowdonia National Park (Huw Roberts)
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel Cadeirydd/Chair Swydog/Officer Prif Banelydd/Lead Panellist	Alan Francis Cindy Harris Ben Sibert Jonathan Adams Phil Roberts Roger Ayton
Sylwedyddion/Observers	Alex Berry (CPlan student)