

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: Confidential at time of review

****This report applies to the scheme seen at the time of the review****

Meeting date:	15 October 2008
Issue Date:	29 October 2008
Scheme Location:	Cwrt y Gollen, Crickhowell
Scheme Description:	Development Framework and Masterplan for mixed use
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

This project was last reviewed by DCFW in February 2008. Since then the development brief and framework have been progressed in more detail and a sustainability strategy prepared. 200 residential units, ranging from 2-bed flats to 4-bed detached houses, are proposed along with a residential care home and 15,000 ft² of B1 commercial space.

The Development Brief has been approved with 30% affordable housing provision and the Local Planning Authority is pleased with the way the project is progressing. Their major concern relates to the relationship of this scheme with the landscape and existing communities. The proposed new access road and its effect on the landscape is the main outstanding issue.

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

The Panel was pleased to see the development of the site plan, and the progress made in the last few months. We strongly support the ambitions for exemplary sustainable development and these should be protected and enshrined in all relevant documents.

We think this is now an acceptable response to the site and the brief, although we have major concerns about the delivery. In summary:

- More connectivity between this proposal and the existing community is necessary if this development is to be a fully integrated part of Glangrwyney village.
- We support the two main accesses into the site, although we are not convinced about the feasibility of a bus loop.
- We have concerns about the future management and protection of the open parkland.
- The issues of boundary treatments, definition of public/private spaces and on-street parking arrangements, need to be reconsidered.
- We strongly support the sustainability strategy, including the commitment to achieve CSH Level 4 and BREEAM Excellent. We would like to see a firm commitment to implementing the proposed biomass district heating system.
- The most appropriate procurement route should be selected in order to maintain the desired quality and character.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

An outline application is imminent for both residential and commercial elements, and will be assessed against the approved development brief. Given the vision in the brief for this to be 'an exemplar and sustainable part of the village of Glangrwyney', we thought that connectivity with the village to the south east should be improved, although we understand there is some resistance from existing residents.

We support the proposal for a new access road into the site from the West, which would allow the more formal route from the North West to be narrower. The new route should be treated as a country lane, without lighting, and the relatively small amount of residential and commercial traffic should not prove an unacceptable impact on the landscape. This would also facilitate the proposed bus link into the site, a contribution for which has been included in the Section 106 agreement. It is unlikely that the bus route will operate until the development is near completion. If it proves to be unfeasible, there is a fallback position to improve existing bus stops with a new footpath link.

The character and quality of the 'accent' buildings, in particular the two isolated houses [C25 and C26] will be vulnerable to the constraints of procurement and implementation. The design intention for slightly random, chaotic and intricate designs will need faithful translation; otherwise the quality will be lost. Design codes may help in this regard but an appropriate procurement method and conditioned details will be most important. The selection of architect[s] to implement the scheme will be crucial, and should not be made without the involvement of Crickhowell Estates.

The proposed courtyard fronting the residential care home should be better enclosed, and the parking on the North West side moved to an alternative location. We would like to see more parallel street parking, rather than end-on, which would give a more efficient use of space and allow for narrower streets. Shared surfaces should be specified where appropriate. There is currently confusion over fronts and backs, and the interrelationship of shared open spaces with boundary treatments.

We support the intention to install a biomass district heating system and are reassured that a local supply of woodchip is available. A procurement model for this system now needs to be explored, taking into account the costings prepared by Arup and the opportunity to engage an Energy Supply Company.

The general orientation of the development, along a north/south axis, is not optimal for passive solar gain. However, urban design imperatives have been allowed to predominate in this instance. Internal daylight levels are adequate and the mainly west facing gardens are suitably deep.

Development will be phased starting from the western edge. Crickhowell Estates will install all the necessary infrastructure and then form development partnerships with interested house builders. It will be important to make effective arrangements for the long term retention and management of the open parkland setting, and we understand that a management company will be set up to do this. Future uses such as the relocation of the local tennis club would be welcome.

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.

Please note that DCFW's Design and Access Statement Guide is now available on our website www.dcfw.org

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

Appendix 1: Attendees

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr:
Agent/Client/Developer

Crickhowell Estates [Ross Murray]

Pensaer/Architect:	LDA Design [Nora Tichey, Duncan Chapman]
Consultants:	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio/Planning Authority:	Brecon Beacons National Park [Tracy Nettleton]
Y panel adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Ewan Jones [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer]	Ashley Bateson Lyn Owen Wendy Richards
Lead Panellist:	Ann-Marie Smale