

NB. This report was confidential when it was seen at pre-application stage and relates only to the version seen at that stage. It has been made public since the building was completed

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Confidential**

Meeting date:	20th October 2010
Issue Date:	29th October 2010
Scheme Location:	Cyswllt Contact, Cardigan
Scheme Description:	Community
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

Cyswllt Contact is a charity providing help and support for people with drug and alcohol dependency problems, operating in Cardigan, Aberystwyth and Haverfordwest. Their existing premises in Cardigan are cramped and not fit for purpose. Until now, they have always rented their premises but they have recently secured funding from Welsh Assembly Government [WAG] for the purchase, restoration and conversion of a building able to accommodate their different functions. They have a multi agency approach and their delivery partners will also be suitably accommodated in this building. A needle exchange service will operate from the rear of the premises with a separate entrance via a side alleyway which also serves as the disabled access.

The building in question is Grade 2 listed [primarily for its group value] and is close to the town centre, easily accessible by public transport but not in a residential area. Many external and internal elements are to be retained on the advice of Cadw and the Local Authority. Class D1 planning permission will be sought. A bat survey has been carried out [no evidence of a bat roost was found] and a Type 3 asbestos survey will be necessary.

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

The Panel was pleased to review this proposed conversion of a listed building, which would extend its useful life and provide much needed accommodation for a socially valuable service. We think that major revisions are necessary to ensure that the client's needs are met and the full potential of the project is realised. In summary:

- More detailed information on building features, fixtures and patterns of use should be included in the D&A statement. The case for any desirable changes to these features and fixtures should be well researched, prior to a meeting with Cadw and the Local Authority.
- Internal spaces should be as light and spacious as possible, given the therapeutic nature of the project.
- Maximum flexibility of use should be provided by the option of sliding partitions with good acoustic protection.
- Circulation routes and overall area should be reassessed. Long dark corridors and wasted space should be avoided.
- The fire escape requirements need to be clarified, and any impact on the existing stairways should be incorporated into the design.
- The whole building should be fully accessible and an alternative access of equal status to the main entrance should be provided for those less able, towards the front of the building.
- We supported the choice of materials [other than the multifoil insulation] and urged that the additional costs involved be 'ring fenced' in the budget.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The client expanded on the service they provide and how that would be accommodated in this building. A reception and drop-in centre on the ground floor is the first point of contact, to be followed up where necessary by brief interventions requiring activity rooms and offices on the rest of the ground floor. The upper floor which is currently not fully accessible will be used for more intensive treatment and counselling, and space will be made available on the ground floor if necessary to accommodate this level of treatment for disabled people.

We had concern over the quality of some of the internal spaces, especially given the therapeutic purpose of the project. Some rooms have little or no direct daylight, and this will tend to reinforce a sense of cramped space and institutional care. By contrast, there is a large amount of circulation space which could possibly be rationalised and reclaimed to maximise room sizes. Long dark corridors should be avoided wherever possible. Greater flexibility of use would be delivered by installing moveable partitions between rooms and spaces, with good acoustic protection.

The Panel advised that more detailed drawings, supporting photographs and a condition survey record should be prepared, showing existing features and their historic significance and status in terms of replacement / retention. This would actually give the client more freedom to argue in favour of desirable changes, which might reduce the complicated and space-consuming circulation areas for example. The case for any change to the external fabric or internal fixtures should be well researched, prior to a further meeting with Cadw and the Local Authority.

The client and designer need to have more clarity and precise information on the nature and flexibility of the constraints, bearing in mind the functional requirements for bringing the building back into use. An assessment of potential options that could greatly improve

the functioning and quality of the internal environment should be investigated, but they would all depend on a thorough assessment of the historic fabric.

It is important that projects receiving public funds are fully DDA compliant and we thought this could be achieved with a stair lift on one of the staircases. The Panel was not convinced that the fire escape facilities were adequate and we thought that one of the staircases may have to be replaced to meet the regulations. We were concerned about the nature of the disabled access and urged the team to explore the possibility of a new side entrance directly into the drop-in area [or the reception area which could be 'flipped' to the other side of the building].

The Panel welcomed the use of FSC certified timber, lime mortars and renders, and natural Welsh slates, and we urged that these essential features should be protected in the budget. We advised that the performance of the proposed multi-foil insulation material for the roof was questionable, and that a safer and more robust approach would be to insulate between the existing rafters and ceiling joists with a quilt material. This would still allow the roof space to be used for storage.

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	Cyswllt Contact [Rob Allen]
Pensaer/Architect:	Collaborative Designs [Jonathan Arndell]
Consultants:	n/a
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Ceredigion CC
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design Review Panel: Wendy Richards [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Roger Ayton	Kedrick Davies Kieren Morgan David Harvey Simon Carne
Lead Panellist:	David Harvey
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Mike Simmons [Pembrokeshire CC]

Harriet Brown [Pembrokeshire CC]