

Please note that this report refers only to the version of the scheme seen at the time.

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: Public

Meeting date:	19th January 2011
Issue Date:	1st February 2011
Scheme Location:	Llan Ffestiniog
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Pre-application

Part1: Presentation

This scheme was seen previously at Design Review in September 2010, and as a result of the Design Review report, the planning application was subsequently withdrawn. The client explored our recommendation to try and secure additional land to the north. However, although the landowner was willing to sell, he wanted to sell the whole plot which was more land than the client required, and would have meant a new application and the loss of the existing outline consent. The additional cost to the project could not have been offset by additional units, and so the decision was taken to review the scheme on the present site. This has led to a reduction in the number of units, from 35 to 32, but the client is nevertheless content with the viability of the scheme. Service charges will be kept as low as possible using renewable energy systems.

The design team have maintained their original design concept of creating minimal impact on the village by breaking up the massing and maintaining views to Snowdonia. However, the small block to the east has been removed, and the reduced footprint allows more 'breathing space' on the site and improves the relationship with the listed chapel. The setback from the lane has been increased and some soft landscaping introduced to the front of the blocks.

The Local Planning Authority is more comfortable with this revised solution, as opposed to expanding development into the open countryside. The new layout also helps to address concerns from the local community.

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

The Panel thanked the team for bringing this revised scheme back to Design Review, and for addressing our previous concerns. We think that the revisions represent an improved scheme, and minor issues remain to be resolved. In summary:

- We understand why it has not been possible to address all our concerns in detail at this stage and we accept the assurances from the team that this will be done as the design develops.
- Our main concerns now are the resolution of the lift shafts, fine tuning of the elevations and fenestration, and the appropriate number of front doors facing the street.
- Further supporting material should be provided in the form of site sections and accurate photomontages, showing a street view along the rear lane, and views of the development from different levels in the village.
- We expect the Design and Access statement to include a commitment to achieve BREEAM Excellent.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel was pleased to hear that our previous report had been useful to the Local Authority and we appreciated the way in which the issues we raised have been addressed by the project team.

We understand the difficulties involved in acquiring additional land and while we regret the necessary reduction in the number of units, we think that losing the small two-storey block to the east is a positive move for the overall site layout and achieves a better resolution with the listed Chapel. The relationship with the rear of the existing Peniel Terrace and the cottages along the rear lane is improved, and now approaches the kind of intimacy which would normally be found in a small village. Ideally the works should include resurfacing of the whole lane, which effectively becomes the forecourt of this development. The smaller footprint also serves to give more space for access and the Panel noted that the Transport Statement showed no detrimental effects from traffic generation on adjoining residents.

Legibility of the main entrance has been marginally improved, with a change in surface finish used to direct pedestrians towards the entrance. The Panel advised the team to retain the sense of a threshold at the front of the building, and to ensure that plant beds were adequately sized for the proposed planting. We questioned the viability of the proposed tree planting in the car park as the space/soil volume shown between the parking bays would appear to be very limited. We thought that the parking provision could be slightly reduced to allow for more space between the trees. (There is evidence available to show that the percentage of car ownership in extra care schemes is very low.)

While we were pleased to note the change in colour of the render, we stated that care would still be necessary in detailing the interface at ground level. The eaves overhang will be compatible with traditional details. The Panel accepted assurances that our concerns over the north facing fenestration would be addressed and in particular the rear elevation of the front block would be revised to reflect the prevailing character. The team also agreed to reconsider the distribution of materials on the elevations and how this might reinforce their concept of three blocks linked by lower elements. Currently, this concept is weakened by

mixed materials throughout and a predominantly rendered finish to the more traditional gabled elements, whilst the more modern link blocks are shown in stone.

With regard to the block fronting the A470, we think this should appear as much like a three unit terrace as possible, with three front doors, even if they do not directly serve each unit. We are pleased to note the inclusion of a lift which will improve access to the main road from the lower accommodation blocks.

The Panel still had concerns about the appearance of the lift shafts. We would like to see them either reduced in height or incorporated within the envelope, so that the strong diagram of the three gables is not compromised. The sides of the dormers should be the same colour as the roof finish.

We were not convinced that the ridge height of the main three storey block had been accurately represented on the photomontages and we suggested that the actual visibility of the ridge from the main road and other higher points in the village should be explored. A wide section drawing of the site in relation to the rest of the village should form part of the planning application

In the absence of any further details on the sustainability strategy, the Panel encouraged the team to commit to BREEAM Excellent. We were informed that the client has incorporated an additional area of PVs on a recent scheme in Holyhead to take advantage of the feed-in tariffs, and is looking to repeat this approach here.

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	Tai Eryri (Eleri Llewelyn)
Pensaer/Architect:	PRP Architects (Clare Cameron, Alex Pitney)
Consultants:	n/a
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Snowdinia National Park Authority (Richard Thomas)
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design Review Panel: Ewan Jones [Chair]	Richard Parnaby Andrew Linfoot

Cindy Harris [Officer]
Simon Carne

Phil Roberts
Steve Smith

Lead Panellist:

Phil Roberts

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

Angharad Williams (research student,
University of Bath)