

Statws/Status:

Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:

Design Review Report:

15 July 2005

Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd:

Meeting Date / Material Submitted:

6 July 2005

Lleoliad/Location:

Penarth Heights

Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun

Scheme Description:

Residential development

Cleient/Asiant:

Client/Agent:

Pensaer/Architect:

**Mark White
Vale of Glamorgan Council
Crest Nicholson [SW] Ltd
Paul Talbot**

Landscape Architect:

**Nicholas Pearson Associates
Nicholas Pearson**

Awdurdod Cynllunio:

Planning Authority:

**Vale of Glamorgan Council
Jane Crofts, Vicky Creed**

Statws Cynllunio:

Planning Status:

Pre-planning

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:

Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair)

Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)

Ed Colgan

Ann-Marie Smale

Kedrick Davies

Wendy Hall

Douglas Hogg

Lead Panellist:

Wendy Hall

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

**Peter Roberts
Design Review Assistant**

Declaration of interest:

Ann-Marie Smale declared involvement in a separate competition bid. It was agreed that this did not constitute a present conflict of interest and that she should remain.

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The successful competition scheme was presented which focussed on the inherent strengths of the site, such as good connections with the town, stunning views across the Bay, and a good solar aspect/orientation. However, it was recognised that this is an edge of town site and effectively a cul-de-sac with no through traffic. Two important characteristics of the existing townscape within Penarth were identified: the sinuous winding streets and the orthogonal built forms running down the ridge to the west.

The proposal shows a main route running east / west through the site and following the ridge. Side streets run at right angles to the contour, opening up a series of views. Existing views are partially maintained between the square blocks or 'captains houses'. This is a mixed residential development, comprising two thirds houses, and one third apartments, with a variety of house types. There is a fair allocation and distribution of affordable units. Materials will be predominantly painted render and red brick. The longer blocks are treated as a whole composition, with larger corner houses and smaller units in between. A topographical study is now complete; a site investigation is being carried out; and a services strategy is being developed. Dialogue with the Highways Department is ongoing. Specific investigations are underway into the demolition and reuse of materials on site, and into 'Modern Methods of Construction'.

The landscape strategy recognises that this is a scheme of edges, and that how they are treated is vital. It is intended to establish good physical and visual connections and to stitch the new development back into the existing grain. The allotments will be integrated into the scheme and improvements are planned for Plessey Square. The approach road between the square and allotments will have a 20 mph speed limit, and from there it is intended that effective design and appropriate surfaces will control movement. 'Home Zone' type courts will be established at street intersections. Side streets will be one way at 3.6 metres wide, and the main route will be two-way at 4.8 metres wide with chicanes and slightly raised sections. Recent discussions with highways engineers have confirmed their general support for this approach. An effective public art strategy will be developed, establishing a narrative of the area with interpretive trails.

Public consultation already carried out has identified increased traffic congestion as the main concern, along with loss of views, building heights and general disruption. In response some alterations have been made to the layout, with some blocks reduced in height [leaves height 1 metre above road level] and extra height added to the large semi-circular block to the west. The effect now is of a cascade of houses set into the hillside. A core consultative group has been set up.

The Local Authority could not comment in any detail in advance of receiving a planning application, but were nevertheless concerned at the apparent dominance of on-street parking. They stressed that full public consultation needed to be maintained.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

One of the main issues identified in the last design review report on this scheme was that of on-street parking. It was felt that progress has now been made on this, with an agreement on the shared surface issue. The developers would like to see a further reduction of the parking ratio [currently 130%]. They also intend to adopt a green travel plan, including a shared car scheme and promotion of better bus routes. The design team is committed to the idea of streets as public spaces and the sensitive integration of parking within these, which is where people will park anyway.

While the Panel was generally supportive of reduced parking levels and shared use areas, we were still concerned about the dominance of cars and the visual impact looking down the roadway, and about how parking restrictions would be enforced without signs, particularly if the demand for spaces exceeded supply. The designers remained convinced that parking and movement could be controlled by good design, strategic planting, and minimal road widths, although they acknowledged it would be a challenge. The Panel warned that the Home Zones approach was often difficult to realise in practice, even when it had been agreed at an early stage, and that it was essential that the Local Authority be committed to support this approach through section 38 negotiations.

The Panel expressed some doubts about the excessive formality of the block layout, which might discourage pedestrian movement, and suggested they could be more fragmented. The frontages appear rather regimented and the change from traditional to modern appearance seems contrived. The Panel regretted the dominance of garage doors at ground level, which we thought created a hostile environment for pedestrians. The relationship between fronts and backs [eg in the crescent of smaller houses, and the public open space surrounded by the large semi-circular block to the west] was not clear or well resolved. The designers stated that fronts would be characterised by small areas of defensible space and that refuse collection would be from the front.

The Panel advised that the standard overlooking distance of 21 metres could be reduced and this would help resolve the layout structure. We thought this standard should not apply especially where buildings front areas of public realm.

The substantial changes in levels on the site raised some important issues in terms of how edges are dealt with. This is the case especially around areas of public/private interface, where the Panel was concerned that high fences should not dominate. Many details are still to be resolved and these will be informed by the results of the topographical survey.

The links around the Arcot Street triangle were explored, including the proposed dingle. It was felt that the links to the historic character of Penarth were too conscious and should be expressed more informally.

The scheme presented was clearly a rigid, formal one and the increased massing at the corners reinforces this as a tight, urban scheme. The Panel welcomed the urban form in principle but wondered whether, in the context of Penarth, this had been taken too far.

Some breaking down of this, to create more informality in some areas would be a major benefit.

The developers are committed to achieving an Eco-Homes 'Very Good', although the design brief only specifies Eco-Homes 'Good'. They will of course meet the exacting requirements of the new Building Regulations [2006] on thermal efficiency and carbon reductions. The regeneration of a brownfield site is a positive feature. Public transport links are good and will be encouraged, and the compact terrace house form is inherently energy efficient. Some use has been made of passive solar gain, although a compromise has been made, given the direction of the best views to the north. A district heating scheme was judged to be too expensive.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel commends the quality of the design team, the inclusion of landscape architects at an early stage, and the work done on contextual analysis and public consultation. The following areas remain unresolved:

- The success of the scheme will largely depend on how well the various edges and boundaries are treated and integrated. The present arrangement of 2 metre high fences bordering public space in many areas, needs to be fully reconsidered.
- We agree with the developer that the parking ratio should be reduced further, in the context of a green transport plan.
- We support the 'Home Zone' approach and recommend that the Local Authority commit to it fully and irreversibly
- We suggest that a reduction of the 21 metre distance between dwellings is considered and think that it is inappropriate to insist on this standard throughout the whole development.
- We welcome the tight urban fabric being developed, but feel that it doesn't accurately reflect the existing informality of Penarth.
- We are concerned at the dominance of 'up-and-over' garage doors at street level, which together with the level of on-street parking will create a hostile environment for pedestrians.
- We would like to see more efforts made to incorporate sustainability features
- Existing walkways to and around the Bowl should be protected and enhanced

The Panel recognise that this scheme is still at a very early stage and that much work remains to be done. We would be pleased to see this scheme again at Design Review, as it progresses through the various stages of design development.

Diwedd/End

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