

Statws/Status:

Cyfrinachol / Confidential



Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:	17 October 2006
Design Review Report:	
Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:	4 October 2006
Lleoliad/Location:	Colliery Road, Chirk
Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:	Primary Care Centre
Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:	Wrexham LHB [Gaynor Edwards] Welsh Health Estates [Bryn Phillips]
Developer/Datblygwr:	Matrix Medical [Simon Wilson]
Pensaer/Architect:	Bundred & Goode [Philip Goode]
M&E Consultants:	ESC [Chris Read]
Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:	Boyer Planning [Simon Barry, Robin Williams]
Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:	Wrexham CBC
Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:	Pre-planning
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:	
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair)	Douglas Hogg
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)	Michael Griffiths
Phil Roberts	Ed Colgan
Wendy Richards	

Lead Panellist: Phil Roberts

Sylwedyddion/Observers: Charlie Deng, Design Review assistant

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This site is the only viable one within Chirk for this type of development. The northern part of the site has been allocated to Tai Clywd for the construction of seven ‘bungalows’. The site is on the edge of the Chirk conservation area, and the developers are required to replace the inadequate existing vehicular access from Colliery Road.

The proposed building faces the western boundary and a public car park to the rear of the Hand hotel. Secure staff car parking is provided behind the building, within the separation distance required between this development and housing to the east. The internal layout is based on a hierarchy of movement patterns. Present and future flexibility is provided for, and the design refers to locally observed built form and materials.

Heating will be zoned and provided by gas condensing boilers. The building will be naturally ventilated where possible. There will be a rainwater harvesting system for WC flushing and solar water heating panels are included. External lighting will be designed to minimise light pollution.

The design team has been working closely with the Local Authority over the last two years, to progress this project. No landscape strategy was presented although we were informed that this is in hand.

Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response

The Panel was not convinced that the design as presented was truly contemporary, as claimed. While we welcomed the robust early diagram showing movement and access hierarchies, we thought that this had not been translated well into the proposed layout. In particular, the deep plan appears to drive the roof form, which is not used to bring daylight into the centre of the building, and will restrict any future use of the second floor roof space. Elements of the local vernacular appear to have been applied to a built form which does not correspond to local precedents. We were concerned about the quality of the curtain walling and associated materials and detailing.

The Panel suggested a simpler, more robust approach, with a more straightforward roof form and possibly less accommodation space provided. Only the central part of the roof space would be usable in the future and would have no windows [only rooflights], leading to a poor quality working environment. If the second floor were to be omitted this would reduce the scale and bulk of the building and allow for a more contemporary approach. We were informed that it was an NHS requirement to provide 20% expansion space from the outset, [although this was later denied by the representative from Welsh Health Estates].

The Panel considered that opportunities had been missed to create an attractive, well daylight and welcoming waiting and reception area. The small lightwell created near the entrance would not be sufficient to achieve this and we thought that the introduction of a large central lightwell or atrium would benefit the whole scheme. The arrangement which shows the toilets opening directly into the waiting area should be revised. The legibility of the main entrance, currently recessed between two protruding bays, is problematic and needs rethinking.

The Panel expressed concern about the new road layout, which would impact on the amenity of the residents of the bungalows [more accurately cottages]. We were informed that the proposed new vehicular access had been recommended and approved by Highways as the best possible option. Nevertheless, the Panel suggested that the road should run straight from the new entrance [possibly moved slightly to the west] through to the north west corner of the medical centre site, leaving a more cohesive, L-shaped site for housing. Although we recognised that the Tai Clwyd scheme was outside the control of this design team, the two developments need to relate well to one another and we thought that there was an incongruence between the two in terms of scale.

The Panel observed that given the restricted site and the large amount of staff parking provided, there remained little scope for the development of any public realm. We were informed that a 2- metre high, metal palisade perimeter fence was proposed to the north, east and south boundaries. The staff parking area would be gated at the north west corner. The loss of the cow path across the site was unfortunate and the alternative pedestrian access bordering the east and south of the site would not be enhanced by the metal fencing. The Panel would like to see the staff parking provision reduced to allow for a properly integrated landscape scheme which accommodates parking, pedestrian access and movement, planting and a degree of public open space. The existing hedges to the south should be retained and managed. We suggested that consideration be given to leaving the site unfenced and maximising the possibilities for natural surveillance, and we noted the precedent set by Pencoed PCC in this regard.

In terms of sustainability measures, the Panel considered that the proposed solution did not meet the aspirations of the client. While applauding the commitment to rainwater harvesting and solar water heating, we queried the reasons for rejecting biomass heating, CHP and ground source heat pumps. We would like to see a commitment to passive ventilation throughout. Most importantly, we stressed that a NEAT assessment should have been carried out at a much earlier stage, so that sustainability considerations could have informed the design and been fully integrated from the beginning.

The Panel suggested that a Project team be formed to oversee the development of the whole site, including Tai Clwyd and the public car park, to ensure that the scheme works holistically and from all aspects including tourism.

Crynodeb/Summary

The Panel recognise the difficulty of developing this restricted site with the required separation distances and consequent poor orientation. However, we consider this proposal to be an unacceptable response to the challenges presented by the site and the brief. In particular:

- We think that opportunities have been lost to introduce solar gain and daylight into the deep plan
- The application of a ‘cottage’ vernacular is inappropriate to a building of a very different scale
- We think that there is an overdevelopment of the site and suggest that the scale and height of the building is reduced and a built form developed which allows for expansion in the future.
- We would like to see the new access road realigned and made straighter
- We recommend a reduction in staff parking provision to allow for a more generous and integrated strategy for landscape and the public realm.
- A NEAT assessment is long overdue and we would like the design process to be re-assessed so that sustainability measures can be fully integrated

Diwedd/End

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