

**Statws/Status:**  
**Cyfrinachol / Confidential**

DESIGN  
COMMISSION  
FOR WALES  
COMISIWN  
DYLUNIO  
CYMRU

<b>Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio: Design Review Report:</b>	<b>19 July 2007</b>
<b>Dyddiad Cyfarfod/Cyflwyno'r Deunydd: Meeting Date / Material Submitted:</b>	<b>11 July 2007</b>
<b>Lleoliad/Location:</b>	<b>Chirk</b>
<b>Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun Scheme Description:</b>	<b>Primary Care Development</b>
<b>Cleient/Asiant: Client/Agent:</b>	<b>Chirk Surgery [Keith Benning, Practice Manager]</b>
<b>Developer/Datblygwr:</b>	<b>Matrix Medical [Simon Wilson]</b>
<b>Pensaer/Architect:</b>	<b>Bundred &amp; Goode [James Bundred]</b>
<b>Ymgynghorwyr Cynllunio: Planning Consultants:</b>	<b>Boyer Planning [Simon Barry, Owen Jones]</b>
<b>Awdurdod Cynllunio: Planning Authority:</b>	<b>Wrexham CBC</b>
<b>Statws Cynllunio: Planning Status:</b>	<b>Pre-application</b>
<b>Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel: Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer)</b>	<b>Ed Colgan Lyn Owen</b>

**Charlie Deng (swyddog/officer)**  
**Carole-Anne Davies, CEO**

**Lead Panellist:** **Ed Colgan**

**Sylwedyddion/Observers:** **Steve Malone, A + DS**

### **Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

This proposal was last seen at Design Review in October 2006 and the design team has used the intervening period to undertake a holistic review of the design, which now bears little resemblance to the previous scheme. The overall amount of floor space has been reduced and the building re-positioned on the site to make better use of the space and relate better to adjoining properties. The architectural style is contemporary, and 'civic' rather than 'cottagey'. A landscape architect has been appointed, and a NEAT assessment has been carried out.

The new site arrangement maximises public space to the west and provides a landscaped buffer for the adjacent housing to the east. The two surgery blocks are connected with a glazed link which provides daylight to the waiting area. The roof of the south facing block accommodates solar thermal and solar PV panels, while the lower north facing roof has a sedum finish. The Pharmacy in the south west corner can be accessed independently [although this is not shown in the drawings] and part of the ground floor can be closed off in non-peak times.

External finishes will be through-colour render on the lower block and split slate cladding on the main block. Windows will be composite timber/aluminium and the main roof finish will be standing seam aluminium.

### **Ymateb y Panel/Panel's Response**

The Panel was pleased to note that many of our previous concerns have been addressed. These include

- the maintenance of a pedestrian route across the site;
- improving the legibility of the main entrance
- improving internal daylight levels
- revising the traditional 'cottage' vernacular approach
- reduction in overall height [from 2.5 to 2 storeys]
- reduction in staff parking spaces [from 42 to 28]

We appreciated that efforts had been made to improve the treatment of areas outside the team's direct control – eg the layout of the access road – although these were not successful.

We noted that the expansion space had been reduced from 30% to 11%, but the developer and end user were happy with that degree of flexibility.

The Panel thought that the proportions of the new pedestrian route were rather mean, for example in comparison to the private garden. The point at which the path entered the site to the east was confined and tortuous, and could present security problems. We advised the design team to consult the recommendations of 'Secure by Design', while adhering to the principle of providing a pedestrian-friendly route across the site. Lighting and CCTV could be used to increase security but should not be treated as substitutes for good design. The Panel suggested that the fence between the footpath and the staff garden could be removed altogether to promote overlooking and natural surveillance. A less desirable alternative would be to reduce the height of the fencing and make it visually permeable.

We would like to see hard landscaping used to demarcate the footpath from the car park, and permeable surfaces used for the car park. We welcomed the location of the bin store close to the car park, but noted the absence of cycle parking on the plans. We were assured that cycle parking was provided at the front for patients and at the rear for staff.

The Panel welcomed the improved legibility and simplicity of the main entrance, but we doubted whether the lobby was sufficiently large to accommodate prams, wheelchairs and two-way traffic. We would like to see some protected outside space such as a canopy, to provide shelter for patients waiting outside. The practice manager stated that outside waiting should not be necessary as the surgery was open from 8am. The Panel accepted that the planted strip to the west afforded some privacy for consulting rooms, but suggested it should be decreased in width to give more usable public space.

The Panel welcomed the location and accessibility of the pharmacy but questioned whether the curved walls would restrict the area of usable space inside. This also applied to the expansion space above.

We would like to see more windows in the waiting room giving views out. Ground floor consulting rooms will have clear glass but with blinds and internal security shutters. We discussed the merits of reversing the conventional arrangement of ground floor clinical functions and first floor administration, but were told that most doctors and patients preferred the convenience and accessibility of consulting rooms on the ground floor.

The Panel expressed reservations about the internal layout. The rooflights over the new entrance hall, although a welcome new proposal, currently seem at odds with the layout of the reception hall and first floor waiting area below them and we suggest further work is put into this in both plan and section. Ideally, the seating plan should allow for some more private areas, rather than showing opposing seating throughout. Similarly, we were not convinced that patients at the reception desk would be afforded a reasonable degree of privacy, although we appreciated that a separate interview room was provided. While we understood the need for supervision, we thought that more provision should be made for informal confidentiality. The design team stated that the double height space and carpet would dissipate noise, and signs would discourage people from approaching too close to the desk. However, we would like the team to reconsider the layout of the waiting area. We were informed that the first floor waiting area would be supervised by means of a CCTV.

The Panel advised that fire doors would probably be necessary and should be planned for now. We thought that they might help to contain the waiting area and hide storage rooms. We would like to see plasterboard internal ceiling finishes rather than accessible ceiling tiles. We were given photographic examples of the split slate cladding to be used on the curved wall and assured that experienced stone masons would be employed.

The Panel welcomed the NEAT Excellent rating but thought that a holistic sustainability strategy was lacking. Rather than a 'menu' of more or less appropriate sustainable technologies, we would have liked to see a site specific evaluation which justified the choice of measures to be included on the basis of low carbon performance and cost effectiveness. On this basis we would question the use of PV panels and possibly the ground source heat pump, and think that a CHP system, possibly with biomass, should be reconsidered.

### **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel welcomed the improvements that have been made since the first review. We support the contemporary design approach, as well as the reduction in height, expansion space and staff parking. However, we think there are further relatively minor revisions necessary. In particular:

- The layout, proportions and security of the public footpath need to be reconsidered.
- The size of the entrance lobby should be revised to avoid congestion
- The staff garden is generously sized when compared to the areas of public realm and will be shaded for much of the year. A detailed

landscape design should address this. We would like to see a revised boundary treatment to the east of the garden.

- The shape and layout of the reception and waiting area should be revised to allow more private spaces, and confidentiality in semi-public spaces, and to form an improved relationship with the rooflights over it.
- The usable public space outside the building is minimal and should be further increased
- A more holistic approach should be developed towards delivering low carbon solutions, based on a systematic evaluation of the various options.
- The applicants need to assure themselves that the curved walls of the pharmacy and the expansion space over, will not lead to inefficient or expensive shelving systems or internal planning.

DCFW will undertake a further assessment of the proposal, on receipt of revised drawings [3 hard copies and 1 electronic copy] addressing the above points, and will issue a written response.

**Diwedd/End**

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