

**Statws/Status:**

**Cyhoeddus / Public**



**Adroddiad Adolygu Dylunio:** 13 October 2005  
**Design Review Report:**

**Dyddiad Cyfarfod / Cyflwyno'r Deunydd:** 6 October 2005  
**Meeting Date / Material Submitted:**

**Lleoliad/Location:** Hawarden Castle Estate,  
Flintshire

**Disgrifiad o'r Cynllun** Extension to Farm Shop  
**Scheme Description:**

**Cleient/Asiant:** William Hall, agent,  
**Client/Agent:** Hawarden Estate

**Pensaer/Architect:** David Bentheim

**Awdurdod Cynllunio:** Flintshire CC [Kirsty Martin]  
**Planning Authority:**

**Statws Cynllunio:** Detailed application  
**Planning Status:** submitted

**Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel:**  
Alan Francis (cadeirydd/chair) Paul Vanner  
Cindy Harris (swyddog/officer) Nick Davies  
Wendy Hall Elfed Roberts

**Lead Panellist:** Wendy Hall

**Cyflwyniad/Presentation**

This proposal is for an extension to an existing farm shop which needs enlarged facilities if it is to be economically viable. There is an existing demand for local farm produce and the

estate owner is strongly committed to selling locally produced food, in some cases from the estate itself.

The site is located on the eastern side of the Hawarden Castle Estate [a Grade 1 listed historic park and garden] approximately 50 metres from the B 5125, in a relatively underused part of the estate. The 600 acre estate includes a mediaeval castle, as well as the main residence, Broadlane Hall, and is used largely for animal rearing and forestry [1200 mixed species trees planted per annum].

It is intended that the proposed new building will reflect its context and surroundings. It sits alongside and to the east of an existing agricultural building and replaces a semi-enclosed timber shop. The new shop will be built with laminated European Larch, sourced from the estate and allowed to season naturally, with no chemical treatment. The timber post and beam frame of the building will extend to provide a covered entrance area, and the building will be shielded from the road with trees and earth banks. The building is 5+ metres high, with a flat roof and a band of clerestory glazing running round the top of the walls and covered by fixed louvres. These are intended to provide some shading and as a deterrent to theft and vandalism, which unfortunately has occurred recently.

The existing agricultural barn, which is square in plan, sits alongside the new elongated building to the west. Consisting of a steel frame with unrendered concrete block infill walls, it is unattractive but is unfortunately outside the current brief which relates to Phase 1 of the development only. A sitting area with tables and chairs is located on the south side of the barn, beyond an attached 'pergola' which will be planted with climbing plants and will screen the south side of the barn. Due to an error, the barn as shown on the presented drawings is 1 metre shorter than it actually is, suggesting a large difference in height between the old and new buildings. In fact this difference is only 300mm – the new building is slightly higher.

The agent for the estate described the client's aspirations for a delightful and elegant building which would attract visitors and customers from a wide area and which might ultimately achieve an award for its design. The shop would provide a stimulus to the local economy and an outlet for local farmers and producers. The client's agent noted that this new structure could also serve as a visitors' centre for The Hawarden Estate.

The local planning authority welcome this scheme in principle, but find the current proposals to be utilitarian and unsympathetic to their context. They would prefer to see the site considered in a holistic way to include the existing building, and think that the proposed height, length and bulk of the proposed new building are excessive.

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

The Panel explored the implications of the proposed phasing, and established that Phase 2 would include the demolition and replacement of the barn, if the expansion represented by Phase 1 was successful. We considered that any aspiration to an award winning building would be compromised by the unsightly existing barn.

The phasing also applies to the external works, with improvements to the existing car park in Phase 1, and a further 30 spaces to be created and integrated into the surrounding landscape in Phase 2. The permeable gravel surface, which currently exists to provide ad hoc parking, will assist drainage. The Panel suggested that planting and other landscape

materials and finishes should be sourced locally. We also recommended that more benign insulation materials be considered, instead of plastic foam and glass fibre. These could include a UK produced sheeps wool insulation quilt, and recycled cellulose fibre produced in South Wales.

The possibility of including a 'green' roof on the new building was discussed. The designer thought that the extra weight would be a problem, necessitating larger section laminated beams, but the Panel informed him that new lightweight green roof systems were available, using sedum as the roof finish. The Panel thought that a green roof would improve the visual impact of the building from distant views and would also provide a more robust and durable roofing material than mineralised felt. The designer agreed to re-examine the green roof option.

The height of the building was justified in terms of maximising wall space and providing an uplifting theatrical experience to enlarge expectations and raise customers' perceptions. It was acknowledged that with fixed louvres the windows would all have to open inwards for cleaning, and this detailing will need to be extremely carefully handled if the purity of the building form is to remain. There will be underfloor heating in the shop and the Panel suggested that this could be fuelled by locally sourced biomass eg wood chip. The boiler will be located in the barn.

The location of the play area was questioned, as it could not be easily overlooked or supervised. A better location might be alongside the 'summer tables courtyard' to the south of the barn. It was difficult to assess the appearance of the pergola as it was not shown on any drawings, but the Panel thought that it should not attempt to replicate or compete with the 'portico' entrance to the shop [which is now smaller than shown in the drawings, and better for this reduction]. The pergola should be no higher than the eaves height of the barn.

Signage will be the subject of a separate application and a graphics package is currently being prepared. Following the recent theft, CCTV cameras have been installed. There will be metal shutters on the entrance doors to the shop, which again will need to be carefully detailed.

The Panel considered the proposed phasing to be a major problem with the current scheme, and suggested that both phases should be designed now, and a holistic approach to the development of the whole site be developed as a masterplan and made the subject of an outline planning application. Phase 1 could then be developed to a detailed stage and constructed first. This would have the advantage of giving the planning authority the security of knowing what was planned for the site in the future. The masterplan should include a complete landscape scheme for the site and car parks, as well as consideration of the location and phasing of the boiler room, and design of the flue.

### **Crynodeb/Summary**

The Panel welcomes the principle of creating a viable, locally supplied retail unit constructed with sustainable materials. Our more detailed recommendations and observations are:

- A masterplan should be prepared for the whole scheme, including a landscape strategy for the site as a whole.

- As an element in this holistic approach, we think that the proposed height and bulk of the new shop, as shown on the model, are acceptable.
- We encourage further exploration of a green roof for the shop and the use of locally produced and environmentally benign insulation materials
- We suggest that a low carbon heating fuel, such as wood chip or logs, be examined
- The play area should be relocated to the south side of the barn.
- We regret the inaccuracies shown on the drawings [such as the height of the barn and the area of the 'portico' / shop entrance], which have led to misconceptions and a more negative view of the scheme than might otherwise have been the case.

**Diwedd/End**

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