

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

DATGANIADAU O DDIDDORDEB

Mae gofyn i aelodau o'r panel, arsyllwyr a phartion perthnasol eraill ddatgan unrhyw ddi-ddordebau sydd ganddynt **ymlaen llaw** mewn perthynas â'r eitemau Panel Adolygu Dylunio Bydd unrhyw ddatganiadau o'r fath yn cael eu cofnodi yma ac yng nghofnodion canolog Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare **in advance** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCfW's central records.

Statws adolygu/Review status

Public

Dyddiad cyfarfod/meeting date	4th May 2011
Dyddiad cyhoeddi/issue date	13th May 2011
Lleoliad y cynllun/scheme location	Cwm Coke Works, Beddau
Disgrifiad y cynllun/scheme description	Residential/commercial
Statws cynllunio/planning status	Application submitted 14/10/10
Datganiadau o ddi-ddordeb/declaration of interests	None

Adran 1/part 1

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This site is one of several strategic sites identified in the recently adopted LDP to deliver new residential and employment uses in the area. The proposal is for a housing-led, mixed use development comprising 825 dwellings together with 3860 m² of office / light industrial space and 400m² of leisure / community uses. Centrally located on the site are two Grade 2* listed cooling towers, which are heavily contaminated and fenced off. The steeply sloping colliery tip will be remediated and remodelled for recreational use.

The 'final draft illustrative masterplan' shows a central landscape corridor around a major north/south access route, with employment uses and a possible site for a new school located at the southern end of the site near the main entrance, and playing fields at the northern end. The indicative sketches and precedents for the residential buildings suggest a contemporary/industrial aesthetic. Sustainability targets are the statutory minimum.

In the absence of the applicant, local authority officers presented this scheme to the Panel. They thought that the retention of the listed structures, the proposed phasing and access issues all remained to be resolved. The applicant did not attend although a representative of the architects/masterplanners was present for most of the review. The site was the subject of a previous application which was refused in 2004 and then appealed but dismissed in 2007.

Crynodeb o'r prif bwyntiau a gododd o'r drafodaeth, i'w darllen ochr yn ochr ag Adran 2 yr adroddiad hwn.

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

The Panel appreciated the local authority's presentation of this proposal for one of their strategic sites. The site itself has significant local and historic importance, and deserves a well considered response. The outline application needs to be supported by other detailed documentation, as stated below, and given the current level of information it is unsatisfactory. In summary:

- A masterplan should be developed including a design code and strategies for the public realm, movement and access, and sustainability. Given the current commercial climate, particular requirements in the masterplan could be relaxed but time-limited.
- The future of the cooling towers is uncertain and should be resolved before any decision is made on the development of the rest of the site. Depending on how they are treated, they could be an attraction or a blight.
- The location of the school, playing fields and other community facilities should be reconsidered, to create a central, walkable, non-residential hub of activity.
- We have strong reservations about the proposed density, and whether a marketable scheme can be delivered within these parameters.
- We would like to see greater ambition for sustainable development and at least the incorporation of effective solar orientation, which could be done at no extra cost.
- We appreciate the challenging viability issues and suggest that section 106 contributions focus on the public realm, public transport and remediation of the towers.
- We recommend that the use of sub-area masterplans be considered as a way of developing character areas and controlling development packages over a long period.

The current level of information provided is less than would be expected for a masterplan, which would require details of a public realm and movement strategy, sustainability analysis, energy supply assessment, phasing and possible design code. If consented, this proposal would give a very weak platform for moving forward towards the delivery of a high quality design and we would have little confidence that this could be achieved on the basis of the current proposal.

In our view the masterplan should be accompanied by a design code which responds to different character areas and considers the road hierarchy, location of play areas and open spaces, access and walkability. Given the current commercial climate, consideration might be given to relaxing parts of the agreed masterplan, but then time-limiting those relaxations, or creating a time-limited addendum. The current homogeneous layout needs to be refined and a consideration of perimeter blocks and their effect on sociable streets, should be undertaken. The green boulevard needs a meaningful destination or connection at either end. The Panel did not accept the proposition that there was no built context worth responding to. Contemporary design could be appropriate here, but should still be contextual.

A crucial question concerns the future of the listed cooling towers, which we understood were structurally unstable and contaminated with arsenic and heavy metals. Whether or not they can be remediated at a reasonable cost remains unclear, although we were informed that this is the responsibility of the landowner - in this case CPL Ltd - and their demolition was considered in 2006. The Panel thought that this issue should be resolved before moving any further forward with plans for residential development. Currently the towers represent an unwelcome exclusion zone in the heart of the site, but if they could be restored and integrated with a new and vibrant public realm, this could be a positive advantage for the scheme as a whole. The notion of 'something special' at the heart of the site should be retained as a focal point for non-residential uses.

With reference to the submitted drawings, the Panel thought it was inappropriate to locate the playing fields so far away from the school, irrespective of flooding constraints. We would like to see employment uses located more centrally and, together with other community facilities, used to generate further residential development. Some traffic calming measures will be necessary on the central spine road in line with the guidance contained in Manual for Streets.

The Panel has serious concerns about the proposed high housing density and noted that it would be difficult to deliver affordable housing to this density. The affordable housing proportion is 20% but some provision would be made off site and phased over the life of the development. We were informed that a range of densities was envisaged, to help create a particular sense of place in different areas, in which case this differentiation needs to be more explicit in the masterplan. We questioned whether the indicative density referred to in the LDP applied to the site as a whole or to the net developable area.

The Panel was disappointed that only the minimum sustainability standards would be met. We would have liked to see a site-wide energy efficiency strategy for

generation, delivery and demand reduction, which might have made use of the listed structures or their site. In general the claim for good solar orientation is not borne out in the grain of development indicated on the drawings, and should be revisited. A site-wide sustainable drainage strategy should be integrated with the landscape and public realm proposals.

The Panel understood that there were issues of financial viability with this scheme and advocated a pragmatic approach to section 106 discussions. We thought they should focus on the enhancement of the public realm, public transport improvements (particularly the potential rail link), and the refurbishment of the cooling towers. In particular we thought that a proposal for two new bridges fairly close to one another was not appropriate in the context of marginal viability. We recommended that the local authority consult colleagues in North Somerset Council with regard to their Ashlands site at Portishead, (which is a high density development on a previously contaminated site) where good use was made of sub-area masterplans to control design quality.

Mae Panel Adolygu Dylunio Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru a'r staff yn croesawu rhagor o ymgynghoriad, a bydd yn hapus i ddarparu rhagor o adborth am yr adroddiad yma a/neu lle bo'n briodol, dderbyn cyflwyniadau pellach. Diolch am ymgynghori â'r Comisiwn a chadwch mewn cysylltiad â ni os gwelwch yn dda ynglŷn â hynt eich prosiect. A fyddech gystal â'n hysbysu o ddatblygiad eich prosiect. Diolch yn fawr am ymgynghori â'r Comisiwn.

The Design Commission for Wales Design Review Panel welcomes further consultation and we will be happy to provide further feedback on this report and/or where appropriate, to receive further presentations. Please keep us informed of the progress of your project. Thank you for consulting the Commission.

***Mae copi iath Gymraeg o'r adroddiad hwn ar gael ar ofyn.
A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.***

Atodiad 1/appendix 1 Mynychwyr/attendees

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr Agent/Client/Developer	Amethyst Ltd (not present)
Pensaer/Dylunydd Trefol Architectural/Urban Designer	LHC Group (Ian Richardson)
Ymgynghorwyr/Consultants	n/a
Trydydd Parti/Third Party	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio/Planning Authority	Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC

(and main presenter)

(Simon Gale, Nicola Gulley,
Robert Chiat, Gareth Davies)

Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/Design Review Panel
Cadeirydd/Chair
Swydog/Officer
Prif Banelydd/Lead Panellist

Alan Francis
Cindy Harris
Mark Hallett
Gerard Ryan
Phil Roberts
Lynne Sullivan

Sylwedyddion/Observers

Kevin Woodward
UWE placement student