

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

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| Dyddiad cyfarfod/meeting date | 8th February 2012 |
| Dyddiad cyhoeddi/issue date | 20th February 2012 |
| Lleoliad y cynllun/scheme location | Cwm Idwal, Ogwen valley |
| Disgrifiad y cynllun/scheme description | Visitor Centre |
| Statws cynllunio/planning status | Application submitted October 2011 |
| Datganiadau o ddi-ddordeb/declaration of interests | None |

Adran 1/part 1

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

The brief for this proposal was developed in 2010 with all major stakeholders including Countryside Council Wales (CCW), the National Trust, and Snowdonia National Park Authority. The clients wanted a high quality, sustainable design, with an emphasis on education provision for the approximately 250,000 visitors a year including school groups, with a budget of £600,000. An invitation to attend Design Review was declined in July 2011. The proposal was considered by the planning committee in December 2011 and questions were raised about the canopy and parking issues. Subsequently a second application was submitted with a revised canopy design.

The proposed new building is located to the west of the site, opening up visibility of the main walkers' path up to Cwm Idwal. The wardens' area to the west of the building is stone clad. The timber-clad kiosk serving refreshments is located centrally, and to the east a highly glazed interpretation centre fosters connections

with the external environment. A pitched roof with a raised central element will be finished in Pennant slate laid in diminishing courses.

The local authority outlined the committee's concerns which related largely to the pitch of the canopy roof, the degree of shelter offered, and maintenance/cleaning issues.

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 commended the intentions, observations and 'story' behind the design development, originating in the landscape and local environmental conditions. However, the design is currently over-complicated and would benefit from a fundamental re-think. It is currently an unsatisfactory response to the site and the brief. In summary:

- The Panel welcomed the thorough presentation and explanation of the brief. We accepted the justification for the proposed demolition.
- The design of this building needs to be simple, elegant, well resolved and understated in its response to the powerful landscape.
- The current form and footprint is a relatively costly design solution, which does not deliver corresponding benefits.
- The canopy will provide valuable sheltered space although this should be tested for different wind and weather conditions, with perhaps additional shelter provided towards the west. The reverse pitch of the original canopy design would not have offered an adequate degree of shelter.
- The inflexible layout of internal spaces should be reconsidered to provide better internal connections and fewer entrances protected by draught lobbies. This would be more functionally efficient, as well as more energy efficient, and would provide a more flexible building for the future.
- The external expression of the interpretation centre and particularly the degree of glazing should be reconsidered to complement its function.
- The sustainability strategy should begin with a tight and well-insulated building envelope. Relevant sustainable technologies should then be used and demonstrated, and hydro technology would appear to be the most appropriate for this location.

Adran 2/part 2

Trafodaeth ac Ymateb y Panel yn Llawn Discussion and panel response in full

The Panel understood the need to replace the existing building with a new centre which could offer far more in the way of facilities and amenity for visitors. However, we did question whether part of the building envelope could be retained and incorporated into the new building, for reasons of economy and reuse of materials.

While the Panel appreciated the large amount of work which had gone into understanding and referencing the particular local environment and landforms, we thought that the overall form of the building was too complex and introduced unnecessary expense. The complicated, articulated roof form, and organic curved footprint are costly solutions which deliver no particular benefits and would be difficult to detail successfully.

We would like to see a simpler, stronger design concept developed, with a rectilinear form and simple pitched roof. If the three-part roof form is retained, options for future use of the taller roof space should be explored, together with an assessment of whether it would be better located over the principal indoor space – i.e. the interpretation centre.

The Panel understood the design intention to reflect the surrounding topography in the built form, but we thought the curve would be better expressed as a landscape element outside the building, perhaps helping to direct visitors to the start of the path. The relationship between the landscape and the building has not been explored, and there is an opportunity to bring ‘the outside in’ which has not been realised.

The colonnade and canopy work well to deliver a sheltered space but would need to be tested for the actual degree of shelter in different weather conditions. Seating could be incorporated into the elevations in the more sheltered spaces. The Panel thought that the canopy could work equally well glazed or solid, but required a simple, straightforward, seamless connection with the roof form. However, if it were to be completely solid, its effect on daylighting of the interiors would need to be modelled and if necessary supplemented by roof lighting.

The internal organisation would benefit from more linked facilities, using a short internal corridor which could be top lit, and allowing direct internal access to the kitchen, WCs, and office. Operationally, this would be more functional and efficient and could deliver improved service access to the kitchen, i.e. from the side/front rather than round the back. Future flexibility of use would also be enhanced.

The Panel questioned whether the full height, structural glazing on the interpretation centre was the best use of the limited budget. It would still be possible to achieve a good relationship with the outside by framing chosen views within an opaque wall. In addition, displays and exhibits would require a certain amount of internal wall area, and the avoidance of glare which can arise from large glazed areas. This could be tested by daylight modelling of the interior.

The Panel welcomed the brief to showcase sustainability strategies, which would be especially relevant in such a remote building. The first step should be to maximise the energy efficiency of the building and especially to reduce the number of external door openings, by introducing an internal corridor. All remaining external doors should have a draught lobby. We were encouraged to learn about the potential for a hydro-electric scheme in phase 2, in conjunction with the National Trust, and we

urged the client to pursue this option rather than introducing an air source heat pump, which would not function well in freezing conditions.

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

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| Asiant/Client/Datblygwr Agent/Client/Developer | Snowdonia National Park Authority (Emyr Williams, Pete Trumper) |
| Pensaer/Dylunydd Trefol Architectural/Urban Designer | Dewis Architecture (Dewi Williams, Gareth Owen) |
| Ymgynghorwyr/Consultants | n/a |
| Trydydd Parti/Third Party | n/a |
| Awdurdod Cynllunio/Planning Authority | Snowdonia National Park Authority (Aled Sturkey) |
| Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel Cadeirydd/Chair Swyddog/Officer Prif Banelydd/Lead Panellist | Wendy Richards Cindy Harris Lynne Sullivan Michael Griffiths Kedrick Davies Richard Parnaby Jonathan Hines |
| Sylwedyddion/Observers | Angela Williams (DCfW) |

Melanie Godfrey (Welsh Government)