

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	8th February 2012
Dyddiad cyhoeddi/issue date	21st February 2012
Lleoliad y cynllun/scheme location	Pantglas Hall, Llanfynydd
Disgrifiad y cynllun/scheme description	Hotel/residential
Statws cynllunio/planning status	Application submitted November 2011
Datganiadau o ddi-ddordeb/declaration of interests	None

Adran 1/part 1

Cyflwyniad/Presentation

This proposal is for a 92 bedroom hotel and 80 new dwellings, as part of an international tourism development aimed particularly at Chinese clients. The new hotel would be built around the Grade II listed Italianate tower, which is all that remains of the original hall. The tower would remain the predominant feature, linked to two new blocks either side via glazed links.

The proposed new dwellings are large detached houses designed to respond to the steep gradients, and five basic house types are proposed. The developer's intention is that the same house types will also be marketed for other international locations in China, Canada and Germany.

A new vehicular entrance is proposed from the north west, although the developer has right of access along the existing track from the north east. A new multi storey

car park to accommodate 220 car spaces is located to the north of the existing access route and partly buried in the hillside.

The local planning authority confirmed that they had only just received the Environmental Assessment (EA), which now forms part of the planning application, and so could not comment on it. They recognise the importance of tourism for the local economy and this has to be weighed against any potential adverse environmental impact. Any new development would need to be sympathetic in nature and scale, and have due regard to its setting in the rural landscape.

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 recognised the natural beauty and distinctiveness of the site and its surroundings, which offers huge potential for a sensitive development to enhance tourism and the local economy. However, this proposal does not meet this challenge and is an opportunity missed. It is a radical departure from the extant consent and in our view does not conform to the requirements for design quality and sustainable development contained in local and national planning policy, and is therefore unacceptable. In summary:

- There is no underlying design concept based on either the interpretation of local design traditions or any coherent architectural or cultural theme.
- A strong landscape strategy should have been developed early on and used to inform and integrate the housing layout, while protecting views and vista from the hotel/tower.
- The principle of hotel use is sound, and the proposed location and associated preservation of the tower is welcomed. However, the proposed design and relationship with the tower is not well resolved.
- The 'suburban' style layout and density of the houses, together with their large-footprint and 'international style', is not appropriate for a sensitive and locally distinctive development in this rural setting.
- The scale and location of the multi-storey car park is problematic and we refer the developer and local planning authority to the principles contained within Manual for Streets.
- There is no information or understanding of how to manage the quantity of excavated material, the impact of this scale of excavation on the landscape, and the associated traffic impacts of disposal off-site. We would expect this to be included in the recently received EA.
- A development of this size and prestige should be setting sustainability targets higher than the statutory minimum. The proposal for a site-wide biomass heating system combined with CHP appears not to have been fully thought through.

- Any development of this scale needs to consider future proofing and demonstrate a robust and flexible approach to phasing and possible alternative scenarios of use/ownership.

Adran 2/part 2

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

The Panel appreciated the local and historic landscape designations, natural beauty and rolling parkland landscape of the site, and agreed that a leisure/tourism use was appropriate. We understood that an extant planning consent exists for 89 small chalets.

The Panel accepted the rationale for developing the new hotel around the tower in a way which respects its primacy. However, although the tower remains the tallest element, the scale of the hotel is substantial and could become dominant. In our view the design approach falls between a faithful historicist interpretation and a contemporary 'take' on traditional design. Careful study of the original hall, coupled with the use of high quality materials, is required to create a serious and appropriate response that preserves and enhances the setting of the listed tower. While the 3D image shows classical proportions and historical references, the danger is that modern, composite materials in a 'thin' skin, will result in a pastiche design. The architect stated that real local stone would be used on the ground floor, with render on the two upper floors.

The proposals for the housing units represent a huge increase in footprint overall, compared with the extant consent. The layout of the units does not respect the outlook and views from the main house which historically would have been protected. Furthermore, the layout appears suburban and inappropriate in its context, with no reference to local typologies and materials, or any over-arching design concept. The steep gradients of the site will involve very large amounts of excavation and cut-and-fill to create a series of terraced plateaux. Combined with approximately 10 metre separation distances, this would give rise to overlooking and compromise the privacy and amenity of residents. In terms of the house types proposed, we think that the bland, disparate and rootless architectural language, designed to appeal to international clients irrespective of site and location, does not do justice to the quality appropriate for this site.

The multi-storey car park would have a significant impact on the landscape and would require further large amounts of excavation. The Panel thought that it would need to be mechanically ventilated although the architect stated that it was open to the elements on three sides. We were informed that the parking standards were a local authority requirement, and that transport within the site would be by electric buggy. However, we remained concerned about the scale of this landscape intervention, and the lack of consideration given to the quantum and transportation of the excavation material. No consideration of alternatives, such as incorporating parking beneath the hotel building, had been explored.

There is little evidence that respect for the existing landscape has informed these proposals, although a detailed tree survey has been undertaken in accordance with BS 5837, with category A and B trees retained where possible. In our view, the housing layout should have begun with and been informed by a comprehensive landscape strategy responding to the existing topography and vegetation cover. The overly dense and uniform layout does not appear to be part of a coherent and integrated landscape approach to the site.

The Panel questioned the flexibility and future proofing of the scheme, should the marketing strategy fail, but we were assured that the developer is confident of its viability. The phasing plan is yet to be decided, but we were told that the hotel is seen as an essential hub for the residential development. The Panel questioned how the landscaped area in front of the hotel would be delivered since it lies outside the application boundary.

The Panel noted that statutory minimum sustainability standards were proposed, although the architect stated that they were aiming for a higher Code rating for the houses. However, there is no indication that this proposal 'has taken a leading stance on sustainability' as claimed. We thought that a site-wide biomass heating system would bring low carbon benefits, provided that the fuel was sourced locally, and the plant was located centrally on site to minimise losses in heat distribution. The current location of the plant house behind the multi-storey car park is poorly configured, undersized and not suitable for large scale fuel deliveries. There was no information on how the proposed CHP would be fuelled, and no flues are shown to the plant areas, which could potentially have a landscape impact.

Greater clarity is needed on the likely pattern of use of this development, and the local impact of seasonal occupation. Real and quantified benefits for the local economy should be identified so that the regulatory authority as well as the local community can make an informed assessment. We suggested that the National Trust should be consulted on this proposal, as the owner and operator of the nearby Dinefwr Castle.

The Panel was aware of and sensitive to the benefits of tourism for local regeneration. In our view this would be best promoted by a development with a distinctive character and recognised architectural quality and innovation. Given the attraction of the natural capital inherent in the location, any proposed development should respond sensitively to the precious landscape setting and seek to enhance its amenity value.

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	Maxhard Ltd (Tianang Li)
Pensaer/Dylunydd Trefol Architectural/Urban Designer	Maxhard Ltd (Lamidi Evbuomwan, Julian Castle)
Ymgynghorwyr/Consultants	Asbri Planning (Robin Williams) Corun Engineers (Matthew Anderson)
Trydydd Parti/Third Party	n/a
Awdurdod Cynllunio/Planning Authority	Carmarthenshire CC (Graham Noakes, Ceri Davies)
Y Panel Adolygu Dylunio/ Design Review Panel Cadeirydd/Chair Swydog/Officer Prif Banelydd/Lead Panellist	Wendy Richards Cindy Harris Michael Griffiths Kedrick Davies Lynne Sullivan Richard Parnaby Jonathan Hines
Sylwedyddion/Observers	Angela Williams (DCfW) Carole-Anne Davies (DCfW) Steve Jones (Cadw)