

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: **Public**

Meeting date:	2nd March 2011
Issue Date:	25th March 2011
Scheme Location:	Parc Llanilid
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Application submitted August 2010

Part1: Presentation

This proposal was previously presented at Design Review in November 2010. The revised landscape-led masterplan is intended to demonstrate a clear spatial hierarchy and a high degree of permeability. The road layout has been simplified and made more legible and street widths reduced to 6.5m.

The Panel was informed that additional character areas have been identified and broad design principles defined. The 'green corridors' have been retained and made more coherent. The village centre now has active uses on to the A473.

This is a major strategic site in the LDP, the adoption of which is imminent. The Planning Inspector has endorsed the allocation of this site for residential development of up to 2,100 dwellings. The local authority is working with the developer on ways to ensure design quality throughout the phasing programme.

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

The Panel was pleased to have the opportunity to review a further iteration of this important strategic proposal. While we acknowledge the changes that have been made to increase permeability and improve the relationship with the A473, we think the current level of design development is unsatisfactory for an outline planning application. In summary:

- The material provided does not address the key issues of site strategy in regard to block format, green infrastructure or public realm including street space, all of which are necessary at the stage of seeking outline approval.
- There was much reference to different character areas within the scheme, but only the village centre is described in any detail. There are street and greenway profiles, but these only define the margins of each development area and say nothing about internal layout, landscaping, building types and car parking.
- The same was true for differential densities for each character area. These are not indicated or mapped across the site.
- The local authority should make clear how they intend to achieve design quality throughout the period of development, and should ensure that they are given all the necessary information and cooperation to establish the appropriate tools.
- The Design and Access Statement (DAS) should be revised and reissued to include accurate up-to-date information, more precise use of recognised urban design terminology, and the level of detail required to secure the benchmarks for Reserved Matters applications.
- The minimal commitment to sustainable development is extremely disappointing. We would expect this major strategic development to commit to much higher standards of low carbon, resource efficient design and construction.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel appreciated the progress made in the development of the masterplan, for example with regard to the road layout, improved permeability and frontages on the A473. Nevertheless we were concerned that little supporting information was provided that addressed the primary residential nature of the proposal.

The documents presented to us for this review did not demonstrate a clear site strategy that would identify an overarching spatial vision for the site, a sequence of linked focal points, a visual framework, and a hierarchy of street spaces, routes and frontages. The green 'fingers' are described as significant pedestrian and ecological linkages, with an alignment defined by the proposed drainage scheme. However, these routes do not appear to provide an integrated landscape or recreational resource/amenity for the site, lacking variety and functional hierarchy. The illustrative cross sections of streets in the village centre, green corridors and boulevard are useful, but fall short of a site character structure.

There was limited information on how different areas of the development will be designed, or how quality in space and built form will be delivered. The layout as presented is uniform and lacks differentiation. There is no delineation of the proposed block format or layout principles, identifying access to frontages, parking arrangements, or private and shared spaces including home zone treatments. The Panel had profound concerns about the team's stated intention to leave these matters almost entirely to the housing developers, and we agreed with the local authority that the crucial question now is how best to secure the design quality. The inexact use of recognised terminology in the documents is problematic and potentially misleading, particularly given the insufficient level of drawn information.

More work is needed to specify the built form and its intended function, what contribution it makes to the design of the whole, and the scale and density of the different development parcels related to these objectives. The existence of a strong landscape structure is important but in isolation, it is insufficient to provide a robust development framework for the scale of residential development proposed.

The Panel acknowledged that information submitted in the previous Design and Access Statement (DAS) (in August 2010) does provide site-wide information in respect of building height and density, for example. However, this material does not provide the level of detail which the Panel believes is necessary, and it is essential that the DAS is revised, providing an updated record of those elements which are to be retained, which have been changed, and how the design proposal will be developed into Reserved Matters applications.

The material in its current form is inadequate for an outline application, especially for such a major development. There is certainly not enough information on which to base any design coding, nor provide sufficient assurance that the Reserved Matters applications will be capable of delivering the quality to which the planning authority aspires. While we appreciate that the individual house builders will require some flexibility, it is important that the local authority is provided with a greater degree of clarity, certainty and confidence in this proposal.

No further information was provided on the suggestion for a site-wide energy strategy, or on the potential for this very large development to deliver innovative low carbon, resource efficient solutions. In discussion it became apparent that there was no commitment to achieve anything more than the statutory minimum standards for environmental performance.

The Design Commission for Wales Design Review Panel and staff welcome further consultation and will be happy to provide further feedback on this report and/or where appropriate, to receive further presentations. Thank you for consulting the Commission and please keep in touch with us about the progress of your project.

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

Appendix 1: Attendees

Asiant/Client/Datblygwr:
Agent/Client/Developer

Cofton (Wales) Ltd (Leigh Pudge,
Andrew Stanton)

Pensaer/Architect:

Davies Landscape Architects
(Mike Davies)

Consultants:

Savills (Geraint John, Paul Williams)

Awdurdod Cynllunio/
Planning Authority

Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC (Jim Bailey,
Robert Chiat)

Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio:

Design Review Panel:

John Punter [Chair]

Cindy Harris [Officer]

Carole-Anne Davies

Roger Ayton

Jonathan Adams

Andrew Linfoot

Ewan Jones

Lead Panellist:

Roger Ayton

Sylwedyddion/Observers:

None