

Addroddiad Adolygu Dylunio Design Review Report

Review Status: Public

This report supercedes all previous reports and advice from DCFW

Meeting date:	19th August 2009
Issue Date:	2nd September 2009
Scheme Location:	Stradey Park, Llanelli
Scheme Description:	Residential
Planning Status:	Reserved matters application March 2008

Part1: Presentation

This scheme was previously reviewed in March 2009, and in response to our comments the development layout as a whole has been re-planned with a much clearer hierarchy of routes, and the number of units has been reduced from 450 to 350.

The Local Authority did not attend, nor did they respond to our request to send their written comments. The development team informed us that a number of prospective developers in the area had joined together to try and resolve the delay in dealing with planning applications affected by the discharge issue. Together, they have commissioned an environmental impact study to examine the impact of increasing discharges into the estuary, and to propose solutions.

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

The Panel was pleased to note improvements to this proposal, made in response to our previous comments. In particular, we welcome the increased clarity of the hierarchy of roads and paths. We support this scheme with the following minor, but crucial, recommendations:

- The architectural quality of key focal buildings needs to be revised and improved, especially the 3 storey building facing the main square.

- The squares themselves need greater enclosure using the built form, and should be treated with a single surface to deliver an integrated public space and civic presence.
- A parking strategy should be developed with a genuine mix of provision, and on-street parking should be used to animate streets, including the primary route.
- The architectural treatment of the homes should reinforce the street hierarchy, with clear differentiation between areas.
- We support the approach to sustainable drainage, but we think this scheme should achieve Code for Sustainable Homes [CSH] Level 3, especially given the probable timing of construction and increased standards likely to be adopted in revised Building Regulations.
- The landscape strategy needs to be developed further and integrated with the main site layout and the public art/heritage proposals. These should be developed early through the use of an independent public arts consultancy and a programme of local consultation.

Part 2: Discussion and Panel Response in Full

The Panel welcomed the proposed revisions to the earlier scheme, especially the greater clarity of a primary route running across the site, north east to south west, with secondary, shared surface roads leading off it. In the absence of a clear parking strategy, we repeated our earlier advice that there should be a mix of parking provision, to include on-street and off-street parking, and this may mean some road widening to allow for parallel parking.

A central main square is identified, but this is poorly enclosed and is tending to 'bleed away' at the edges. Buildings should be brought up to the edge of the square to reinforce a sense of enclosure. The squares should be treated as a single space to include parking, through traffic, access and recreation and should be finished with a single surface material. The units with integrated garages are less appropriate off the main square and the location would probably better suit townhouses with garages to the rear.

The architectural treatment has not improved, however, and we have particular concerns about the elevations of the 3 storey townhouses fronting the main square. While the simple elevational treatment of the two storey detached houses lining the streets is acceptable, this could be further refined. It may be advantageous to use one material with more conviction and create more differentiation between the character areas. The team stated that it was their intention to distinguish different character areas by materials and landscape treatment.

The Panel recognised that key buildings are distinguished by increasing their scale, but further design development is needed to reinforce corner blocks and other significant locations. Gable ends should not be blank walls but should celebrate views from particular locations wherever possible.

The team stated that they will endeavour to achieve Code for Sustainable Homes [CSH] Level 2 – the equivalent of the original commitment to EcoHomes Good. A sustainable drainage strategy will be implemented to take all the surface water on site out of the already overloaded sewer. A new pumping station will be installed to manage foul drainage, and porous surfaces requiring low maintenance will be used where appropriate.

The Panel advised the team to anticipate forthcoming changes to the Building Regulations in 2010. It was confirmed that there is no requirement for affordable housing provision on site, in recognition of the contribution being made towards a new rugby stadium.

Accessibility and legibility for visitors is problematic – for example with respect to houses on the western boundary fronting the green space. While architectural references and street names may offer some guidance, ease of access should be evaluated and optimised for every house on the site.

The Panel welcomed the landscape strategy and the quality of the precedents shown. This now needs to be integrated and coordinated with the main plan. The developers are working with the ex-players association to develop commemorative features and historical references. It is important that these should be integrated with the landscape and public realm strategy, and we advised that professional advice should be sought in commissioning public artwork.

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	Taylor Wimpey [Brad Checkley, Andy Bowen]
Pensaer/Architect:	Focus on Design [Mark Farrow]
Consultants:	Asbri Planning [Barrie Davies]
AwdurdodCynllunio/ Planning Authority	Carmarthenshire CC
Y Panel Adlygu Dylunio: Design review panel: Wendy Richards [Chair] Cindy Harris [Officer] Richard Parnaby Jonathan Hines	Ann-Marie Smale Lynne Sullivan Ashley Bateson
Lead Panellist:	Ann-Marie Smale
Sylwedyddion/Observers:	Takayuki Kumazawa [Okayama University]

