

Plymouth Design Panel Review

Wednesday 23rd July, Thursday 24th July 2008
Elliot Terrace, Plymouth.

In Attendance

Les Sparks (chair)
Bruce Duncan
Prof Adrian Gale
Martin Harradine
Rebecca Child
Mark Pearson
Tanya Griffiths (secretary)

The panel welcomes Rebecca Child, conservation architect as its new member.

Agenda Items

1. Athenaeum Site - pre-application /confidential
2. Drift Cottage, Turnchapel part live application/ part pre-application
3. Tothill Sidings - pre-application /confidential
4. Update Plymstock - pre-application /confidential
5. Update Derriford Hospital New Entrance- live application
6. North Cross Framework - pre-application /confidential

Note: The developers of some of the agenda items have requested that the reports be treated as confidential at pre-application stage. If any of the pre applications discussions result in the submission of a planning application the Plymouth Design Panel report will be available on request and will be referred to in the Planning Officer's report. They will also be published on the Plymouth City Council website as a matter of record.

2. Drift Cottage, Turnchapel

The panel felt that it was not appropriate to assess the constraints of the site in respect of the height in relation to the views from the adjacent cottage but determined that it would limit its comments to the design, materials and composition of the proposal.

The panel expressed general support for the ambition of the project to create a unique dwelling conceived as a marine object, with an 'engineered' aesthetic, evocative of something either brought ashore or on the verge of being launched and felt that this was a suitable location for such a project. There was not a consensus on the panel as to whether the proposal had attained this ambition or the integrity of the design concept had been successfully maintained within the limitations of the site constraints.

It was, however, the panel's view that the quality of the materials and detailing were crucial to the success of the project. The panel felt zinc was an appropriate cladding material and thought that the finer grid of jointing in the planning application scheme was preferable over the setting out of the withdrawn scheme. There was a general view that the detailing should convey a quality of engineering; simultaneously robust and refined throughout.

As part of the concept to suggest that the building might be mobile it was noted that the secondary connecting elements should be lightweight. The choice of glass balustrade over a more marine/industrial aesthetic was questioned.

The detail of the condition between the underside or 'hull' of the building on the piers and in the way in which it meets the ground was thought to be important.

Although the panel did not express an opinion about the height with respect to views it was felt that the height in relation to the eaves line of the existing Drift Cottage was a relevant concern and which was addressed in the live application scheme.