



IHP Design Review Report

Amazing Grace Spaces, Newport

DCFW Ref: 19AB

Meeting of 26th June 2019

Review Status

Meeting date
Issue date
Scheme location
Scheme description
Scheme reference number
Planning status

PUBLIC

26th June 2019
9th July 2019
Newport
Residential
19AB
No

Declarations of Interest

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.

DCFW Panellist Elfed Roberts works for the Housing Association Pobl who are also submitting a bid for IHP funding. It was made clear to the presenting team that Elfed's role on the panel was to contribute his expertise in housing and design. All were content to proceed on this basis.

The panel Chair was advised that Gayna Jones, Chair of the Design Commission for Wales, chairs the IHP Group. Gayna was not present in the meeting.

The Proposals

Please note: The project promoter was not present at the review, so this report is based on the information provided within the registration document and pre-review material. Without a full explanation of the proposals it is difficult to comment on many aspects as there is uncertainty about what is proposed. However, the following are considered to be key points in the development of the proposals which must be taken onboard if they haven't already.

The proposal is for modular affordable meanwhile housing to be located on a site that was previously a Council yard off Acacia Avenue, Somerton, Newport. The proposed site may be used for meanwhile or permanent accommodation to provide one-bed self-contained apartments and emergency units for families.

In addition to this, Amazing Grace Spaces has developed a Pod to be located within town centres to help accommodate those sleeping rough and difficult to reach. Without the benefit of a presentation from the project team it was unclear how the Pod format related to the proposed site which, it is assumed, is to be the location for the shipping container model.

Main Points

This report is not a record of the full discussion that took place during the review, rather a summary of the key points that have been identified that would help to improve the project and any concerns regarding the funding of the project.

Urgent Design Concerns

The intentions of the project to provide affordable accommodation for those most in need and to utilise currently unused sites are good and supported but the detail how that will be done successfully is not currently clear and a number of design concerns remain.

The local planning officer present at the review raised concerns about the proposals based on reports that a similar development (albeit temporary) located in the Pillgwenlly area of Newport has attracted anti-social behavior which is thought to be due to lack of management. It was also reported that the units installed in this location did not have planning permission and that enforcement action is being taken. With the limited information available it is unknown whether the proposed development will be similar in nature to the Pillgwenlly site, but it is essential that proper management of the site and support for people living there is provided.

Further narrative is needed to explain why shipping containers are the best solution for this challenge and not an alternative modular construction which is easily transported but may be more suitable for accommodation.

Placemaking

The location of the site will have a significant impact on the type of place it will be and its suitability for different residents. The proposed site is suburban in nature, some distance from the City centre and amongst family homes. It may be a suitable location for the housing of homeless families but does is somewhat isolated from the facilities of the City Centre which may make it less appropriate individuals who need to access the centre. An analysis of local facilities and transport connections is needed to support the suitability of the site. Part of developing this model further could be to establish principles for how to address different sites based on their location and the attributes of the area.

There was no evidence of site analysis or that any design principles have been established that would inform the layout of the site and help to create a place that is positive, welcoming and safe. For example, defining the boundaries of the site, the creation of any communal space or communal facilities, the arrangement of public and private spaces and parking/bike storage.

Integration of innovation

Consideration of building lifespan need to be considered. Is this a permanent or temporary solution? How readily can the units be moved from one place to another given the different features of each site and the potential disruption caused to residents?

The potential to help people directly from rough sleeping into a pod then on to a small studio or one bed space is positive, but it is not yet clear how this transition will take place and be managed.

Next Steps

- Further explanation of the proposals in general and specifically for the proposed site are needed.
- Details of the management of the site and process.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:

Architect/Planning Consultant:

Local Planning Authority: Vicky Quinn, Newport City Council

Design Review Panel:

Chair

Panel

Simon Richards

Angela Williams

Elfed Roberts

Jen Heal, DCFW

Larissa Berquó, DCFW