



# IHP Design Review Report

48-54 City Road Cardiff

DCFW Ref: 19X

Meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019

**Review Status**

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

**CONFIDENTIAL**

21<sup>st</sup> June 2019  
12<sup>th</sup> July 2019  
Cardiff  
Residential  
19X  
Pre-Application

## 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.

Panel member Steve Smith is engaged with GI Consultancy and Powell Dobson Architects on other, unrelated projects.

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.

All present at the review were content to proceed following these declarations.

## The Proposals

To construct a new build, medium rise flatted development using cross laminated timber incorporating external greenery to roof terraces and facades. Flexible unit types are intended to lend themselves to adaptation to provide accommodation for homeless people. Site area is 804sqm and the number of units proposed is 46-52, dependent on type of unit used and flexibility of layout.

The project information suggests this could be the first cross-laminated timber building in Wales, a construction method that can significantly reduce build times and deliver units at scale. Proposed vertical greening and space on roof terraces of the building is intended to provide external amenity space for residents. The use of a 'blue roof' and irrigation system to support the planting will provide an opportunity to test technologies that respond to new green infrastructure guidance in Cardiff. The block will be mixed tenure combining social rented with accommodation for homeless people with the aspiration to link the project to the neighbouring existing YMCA.

## Main Points

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

### Urgent Design Concerns

The proposals for the development were well presented. The following points should be addressed as the scheme develops.

- The suitability of the ground floor for flats/living arrangements of quality needs attention and further consideration as does the nature of tenure and mix.

- The proposed terraces and communal spaces are not yet sufficiently resolved requiring clarity on their purpose and how they could be managed to encourage their use. There may be value in fewer larger terraces which offer greater flexibility in their use.
- Terrace spaces will need cost assessment for the long term and future evolution as the project matures over time. Full accessibility is not yet achieved and the detail of patterns of use and associated control/management in use is not yet clear. This is critical if maximum benefits are to be achieved.
- The courtyard space, its design, landscape quality and management, and its potential used shared with adjacent land uses would all benefit from further detailed consideration to ensure use and value beyond appearance.
- The proposed greening of the building to support health and wellbeing and create a safe, secure and supported environment for tenants does not seem to be a robust argument and other interventions could achieve far greater social value for tenants for equivalent capital and revenue costs.
- Level entrances and full access for all users is not yet achieved in the proposals.
- A genuine sense of safety will need to be articulated through the design approach and in the management arrangements for this and other spaces to avoid the dilution of the health and well-being objectives of the greening and external spaces.
- The ambition of the greening, blue green roofs and the planting scheme will require sophisticated horticultural infrastructure and management. We were not wholly convinced that the plant species mentioned would succeed, given their need for significant planting depth and soil borne nutrients. Whilst an idea for encouraging tenants to take on some management may be valuable, it should not be relied on.
- The long-term success and operational costs need careful analysis now if the project is to succeed.

### **Placemaking**

Careful consideration is needed in relation to the ambition to link with the YMCA and with proposed developments in proximity which may or may not be at similar stages. The impact on the quality of external spaces, public realm and living spaces could be considerable. Ground floor uses, connections and quality will be similarly affected. There is a risk that the well-being objectives are restricted by surrounding development.

### **Integration of innovation**

We note the cross laminated timber approach and contribution to decarbonisation agenda but how explicit replicable, scaleable innovation is integrated is unclear. The greening and blue/green roof proposals are not in themselves unprecedented nor are they fully integrated into the proposal.

***Comisiwn Dylunio Cymru Design Commission for Wales is the trading name of DCFW LIMITED, a Private Limited Company established under the Companies Act 1985 and 2006, Company No: 04391072 incorporated in England and Wales as a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government. Registered office: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E [connect@dcfw.org](mailto:connect@dcfw.org). The comment recorded in this report, arising from formal Design Review through our Design Review Service, is provided in the public interest for the consideration of local planning authorities as a material consideration, and other users of the Design Review Service. It is not and***

***should not be considered 'advice' and no third party is bound or required to act upon it. The Design Review Service is delivered in line with DCFW's published protocols, code of conduct and complaints procedure, which should be read and considered by users of the service.***

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

## Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer: Keri Harding Jones, Linc Cymru Housing Association

Architect/Planning Consultant: Phillip Gibb, Powell Dobson Architects  
Gary Gram, GIC  
Paul Williams, Savills  
Emma Popham, Savills

Local Planning Authority: Ross Cannon, Cardiff City Council

Design Review Panel:  
Chair Andrew Linfoot  
Panel Chris Jefford  
Jen Heal, DCFW  
Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW