



IHP Design Review Report

Glasdir, Ruthin

DCFW Ref: 19AC

Meeting of 3rd July 2019

Review Status

Meeting date
Issue date
Scheme location
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Scheme reference number
Planning status

PUBLIC

3rd July 2019
9th July 2019
Ruthin
Residential
19AC
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.

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 site is owned by Welsh Government.

The Proposals

The proposal is for the development of 50 affordable dwellings utilising a timber fabric solution that includes Welsh timber insulation. The aim is to provide sustainable, low carbon (target of zero carbon), affordable homes.

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 proposed system using Welsh timber including Welsh wood fibre insulation has good potential to offer environmental benefits and benefits to residents in terms of reduced energy requirements. The concerns of the panel were focused on the site strategy and emerging layout.

The lack of a thorough site analysis and concept plan means that the rationale for the layout decisions made are not clear and are not refined. The constraints and opportunities of the site need to be integrated with a clear vision for what type of place this will be and then translated into the layout. A concept plan that highlights the key features of the site and vision could help with this.

How parking is handled in a residential development is key to the quality of the environment. The number of spaces provided per dwelling needs to be realistic but moves should also be made to support residents to enable lower car ownership, for example through active travel improvements and promotion, public transport and the potential for a car club/hire scheme.

The location of a significant amount of the parking to the rear of properties is a significant design concern. Rear parking courts are only generally successful when used as part of a mix of parking solutions (such as on-plot to the side of properties and on street) and when they are small (maximum of six properties). The dominance of rear parking in some areas of the layout means that the fronts and backs of properties are confused – it is not clear whether people will enter their houses from the street or parking area and where will their back gardens be located, it creates additional roads as many properties have roads to the front and back, and the parking areas are not very well overlooked which may result in security issues. This approach needs to be reconsidered.

Plans for the different house types were not provided but will be fundamental as the proposals develop. A/several corner unit house types are required that will address the public realm on two sites. Terraces should be considered as an efficient house type that can provide a strong sense of structure to the place. Consideration should also be given to boundaries, bin and cycle storage.

Further work is needed on the proposed form and materials of the properties. The adjacent recent residential development is not necessarily something to take reference from. Instead consider the wider context as well as whether the proposed innovation could be reflected in the design of the properties.

Placemaking

The placemaking ambitions expressed in the documentation and as described at the review such as connectivity, reduced car dominance and the creation of distinctive spaces are not translated into the layout.

Pedestrian routes through the site, particularly to the school, need to be considered and integrated into the pattern of development. All footpaths should be well overlooked.

Consider the potential for future development to the south and how this might connect in with the current proposals.

Work more on the avenue to ensure it will be the type of environment described. Think about where people, including children, will safely walk and cycle, how much space is required for trees and landscaping, and ensure that properties front on to this route if it is to be a primary feature.

Consider how each of the spaces will be used and design out left-over spaces that could become a maintenance burden without adding to the quality of the place.

Look to reduce the amount of space given to roads.

Integration of innovation

The orientation of properties to maximise the potential of the proposed PV panels need to be considered. Many of the properties in the current layout have east-west facing roofs.

The innovation could be further expressed in the design of the properties as discussed above. Reassurance is needed that, should the render or cladding fail in any area of the property, the proposed wood fibre insulation will not be extensively damaged. For

example, if one part gets wet does the whole panel need to be replaced or can it be dealt with more locally?

Next Steps

- Use site and context analysis to interrogate the design and amend in response.
- Better reflect the ambitions of the project in the layout.
- Reconsider the parking strategy.
- Work more with the landscape architect in the design of the public realm and residents' amenity space.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Arwyn Evans, Clwyd Alyn Owain Williams, Williams Homes Tony Hughes, Williams Homes
Architect/Design Consultant:	Rob Blount, JPH Architects Gary Newman, Wood Knowledge Wales
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Jamie Brewster
Panel	Toby Adam Jamie Yeoman Jen Heal, DCFW