



# IHP Design Review Report

Sandfields Redevelopment, Port Talbot

DCFW Ref: 19Y

Meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019

**Review Status**

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

**PUBLIC**

26<sup>th</sup> June 2019  
1<sup>st</sup> July 2019  
Neath Port Talbot  
Residential  
19Y  
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.

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

The proposal is to add 71 new flats to the site of 72 existing flats which will also be refurbished. The new units will be located between and on top of the existing flat blocks supported by an exoskeleton frame and utilising modular construction. The existing flats will be retrofitted with energy saving, more efficient and smarter systems.

## 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 proposal addresses a number of identified issues including the condition of existing properties and housing need in the area. However, it does not fully resolve the issues related to the quality and use of the spaces around the buildings. Further work on the masterplan for the site in conjunction with a landscape architect is needed to maximise the potential of these spaces and avoid them remaining or becoming negative spaces again. This process should consider the use of the space in conjunction with residents the hierarchy of public, semi-private and private spaces and SuDS requirements.

There is the potential to explore what other benefits could be integrated into the proposals for existing residents. They will face significant disruption (albeit less than if demolition was proposed), some loss of internal space, and the introduction of many new people into their neighbourhood. Potential benefits could include the introduction of balconies and improvements to amenity space around the buildings.

The rationale for the height of the proposed additions needs further testing and explanation as well as a justification for the number of new units proposed. Densification can be positive but the impact of the additional height on the quality of the surrounding open spaces and the potential for solar gain and the effectiveness of PV panels on the roofs needs to be modelled and tested.

The potential to take greater advantage of sea views should be explored further.

### **Placemaking**

The project has the potential to improve the quality and use of the spaces between the buildings which could foster greater social interaction and community cohesion. However, this is not yet demonstrated in the plans. A number of 'left over' spaces remain, for example at the ends of the blocks, but could be designed out. The overall structure of the open spaces should be designed in conjunction with a landscape architect but should also provide flexibility to accommodate residents needs/preferences. The design should also accommodate facilities such as bike and bin stores and the potential for drying areas.

The potential for improvement to the open space around the building is dependent on the low level of parking proposed. The justification for the lower provision should be clear based on an understanding of tenants, the location of the site, and the potential for a car pool, links to public transport and active travel.

### **Integration of innovation**

This proposal seeks to address a problem that many RSLs will face in the need to upgrade and update existing stock that have a poor sustainability performance and inherent design issues. The proposed exoskeleton and modular units provide a way to adding to the existing blocks with a reduced period of disruption for residents, which seems like a feasible solution, however, there was little detail on the proposed structure to review in detail. The proposed appearance of the buildings makes little reference to the innovation in the structure of the building. Reviewing how this might be expressed could result in a form and appearance with more substance and reflect how this is a different place.

The innovation needs to be explained more clearly. A narrative that sets out the problem, objectives, analysis of the site, exploration of options, the preferred solution, the innovation involved and how it might be replicated in other locations would help to refine the proposals and strengthen the case for the project.

### **Next Steps**

- Test and review the height of the buildings.
- Revisit the masterplan for the site to test what more can be achieved to resolve some of the external spaces.
- Work with a landscape architect on the design and function of the external spaces.
- Clearly define what the IHP approach is.

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

## Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Linda Whittaker, Tai Tarian Andrew Carey, Tai Tarian Andrew Hall, Tai Tarian Richard Oatway, Tai Tarian
Architect/Energy Consultant:	Denis Hellyar, DH Architects Phill Stokes, DTS
Planning Consultant:	Richard Bowen, Asbri Eleanor Sullivan, Asbri
Local Planning Authority:	Russell Borthwich, NPTCBC
Design Review Panel: Chair Panel	Simon Richards Angela Williams Elfed Roberts Jen Heal, DCFW Larissa Berquò, DCFW