



IHP Design Review Report

Hafan Refuge, Newtown

DCFW Ref: IHP B

Meeting of 22nd May 2018

Review Status	CONFIDENTIAL
Meeting date	22 nd May 2018
Issue date	31 st May 2018
Scheme location	Newtown
Scheme description	Residential
Scheme reference number	IHP B
Planning status	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.

None declared.

The Proposals

Hafan Refuge is a crisis centre for women all over the UK. The proposal is for a number of units of follow-on accommodation, to house those who no longer need crisis care within the main refuge, but who are perhaps not yet ready to enter open market accommodation elsewhere. The proposal includes a variety of sizes of unit to accommodate different family groups within the secure and discreet grounds of the existing refuge. The intention is to deliver the scheme using off-site construction in order to keep the construction time on site, with associated third parties, to a minimum.

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

- Lack of evidence of informative site and context analysis
- Exploration and testing of various layouts not evidenced
- Provision and function of shared spaces should be better considered

Placemaking

Concept

The 'comfort blanket' concept is well conceived and rational, given the unique nature of the brief and resulting sensitivities. However, the layout of the units and provision of shared spaces should be strengthened to make the concept more convincing.

Layout and orientation

The layout of the blocks should be further explored to ensure that proximity to boundaries and orientation do not compromise the potential for natural sunlight and passive solar gain into the properties, this is of particular concern for units 9-12. A layout study could be undertaken to explore the use of different parts of the site for

development, in addition to the potential for linear blocks on different axes, to ensure the proposed configuration is the most appropriate for the site. The orientation of the monopitch roof could consider the potential to incorporate solar thermal and PV technologies to increase sustainability and reduce running costs of the units.

Landscape design

Adding a Landscape Architect to the design team could add value at this early design stage in order to create a series of shared outdoor spaces with varying functions, which create a friendly, community feel for residents. The design concept and site characteristics lend themselves to this landscape-led approach. The blocks could then frame these spaces and better tie the concept together to create a safe, comfortable and friendly place to live. Co-housing models take a similar approach to shared amenity space which might serve as a useful precedent for this proposal.

Materiality

Contemporary off-site construction methods do not guarantee design quality and as such the semi-permanent nature of the accommodation should not compromise the feel of the place. The domestic nature of the site lends itself to materiality and built forms which feel light hearted, safe and positive. This sense of place should be reflected in the proposed units and outdoor spaces.

Integration of innovation

Innovation approach: Using off-site construction methods to deliver bespoke accommodation within a short on-site construction period in a sensitive situation.

The use of off-site construction alone does not necessarily lead to quality. The role of a main contractor operating between the design/client team and the off-site manufacturer should be carefully considered and defined so that it does not add unnecessary cost and complexity to the process.

If delivered to a high standard this project could form a precedent for both 'follow on' housing and quick construction within sensitive crisis contexts, which could be replicable.

The life-cycle of the units could be better explored to discover potential re-use of the units elsewhere, adding to the innovation and sustainability benefits of the proposal.

Next Steps

- Develop and justify site strategy through site and context analysis and testing of layouts and massing. The Welsh Government *Site and context analysis guide: Capturing the value of a site* may be helpful in undertaking this exercise. This guide is available at: <https://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/site-and-context-analysis-guide/?lang=en>
- Explore a landscape-led approach to the site to create functional and varied shared spaces
- The Commission would welcome the opportunity to review the scheme again once designs have progressed

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Alex Dawson, MWAH
Architect/Planning Consultant:	Doug Hughes, Hughes Architects
Local Planning Authority:	
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Jon Vernon-Smith
Panel	Ed Green Wendy Maden Chris Jefford Kedrick Davies Jamie Yeoman Amanda Spence
Observer:	Alex Davies