



DESIGN
COMMISSION
FOR WALES
COMISIWN
DYLUNIO
CYMRU

IHP Design Review Report

Eco Valley Homes, Aberdare

DCFW Ref: IHP Q

Meeting of 19th June 2018

Review Status	PUBLIC
Meeting date	19 th June 2018
Issue date	26 th June 2018
Scheme location	Aberdare
Scheme description	Residential
Scheme reference number	IHP Q
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.

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 the declarations.

The Proposals

The scheme is to build 'energy positive', highly energy efficient houses integrated with a renewable energy source (air source heat pump/PV solar panels). These developments will be constructed using a SIPs system. Essentially, these developments will require substantially less energy to heat and light the property. When energy is required, a renewable energy source will provide a high percentage of the energy. The homes will be fitted with mechanical ventilation, which will provide fresh, filtered air, making for a healthier, more comfortable indoor environment. Electricity generated through solar panels will allow owners to generate income via 'The Feed-in Tariff' scheme. The vision is to improve many aspects of home life, by creating healthy, energy efficient affordable homes as standard.

Main Points

This report is not a 'minute' 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 energy strategy should be reviewed as the number of green technologies incorporated into the scheme may be unnecessary. Streamlining the number of technologies could help the homes function more efficiently and reduce capital cost.
- An independent energy consultant could be usefully engaged in order to assess the appropriateness of renewable technologies along with different orientations of the buildings.
- The layout of the site and location of this specific plot will profoundly impact both the environmental sustainability of the buildings, but also the quality of life for future residents. This layout should be considered from the perspective of both orientation and creation of sense of place, to deliver a sustainable and desirable place to live.

Placemaking

This proposal is located on a plot under the ownership of the applicant, which is set within a larger site under development by a different developer. Given that the wider site layout is currently being re-configured, it is important that opportunities are taken at this point to create a desirable place to live. Both the orientation of the building and the layout of the site are important to the success of this scheme, in order to achieve high environmental performance alongside a sense of place and good quality of life for residents. Proper site analysis should be undertaken, which will inform how the site should be designed, from the individual plots to the wider site scale.

DCFW's guide for Welsh Government, Site and Context Analysis: Capturing the Value of Site, can be found here:

<https://gov.wales/topics/planning/policy/guidanceandleaflets/site-and-context-analysis-guide/?lang=en>

Integration of innovation

Innovation approach: Small house builder developing energy efficient houses from within the community, whilst learning lessons in order to replicate the model on this site and beyond.

The applicant is seeking to develop the units using local skills and resources, however they are struggling to access good quality, independent consultants to advise on energy concerns. An independent energy consultant would be helpful in exploring various orientations on the site, along with appropriate renewable technologies to make the scheme as efficient as possible and replicable on other plots. Consideration could be given to how access to this advice could be facilitated through the IHP process.

Next Steps

- Engage an energy consultant to review the energy strategy.
- Encourage the design team of the wider site to take a placemaking approach to the site layout, to ensure that the homes on this plot are set within an environment which positively contributes to the quality of life of residents.

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: 4th Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E 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: Phil Booth, Eco Valley Homes

Architect/Planning Consultant:

Local Planning Authority:

Design Review Panel:

Chair	Jonathan Vernon-Smith
Panel	Ed Green, WG
	Wendy Maden
	Kedrick Davies
	Ashley Bateson
	Amanda Spence