



IHP Design Review Report

Pennat Hall, Penmaenmawr

DCFW Ref: IHP S

Meeting of 11th July 2018

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Reserved Matters

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 proposals comprise two apartments blocks, with associated parking and hardstanding, on the site of the existing Pennat Hall which is to be demolished.

The Sub-Structure of the scheme, ('on-site' Modular Units) will be manufactured from Timber SIP Panels (Welsh Timber); and installed on site, completely fitted out internally to CCG's specification. All units will conform to DQR, SBD & Lifetime Homes design criteria. This methodology was chosen due to the accessibility of the site and poor road infrastructure. The housing product meets all 5 main elements for a BRE Green Guide Rating of B or above.

The External envelope will be formed using a Weber Rend MT148P Substrate system with a mixture of a Brick Span Finish & Weber Rend MT and Weber Plast TF finishes. These systems carry full LABC Accreditation. All Cavities will have a blown insulation fill and the drainage systems will be designed using the SUD's 'hierarchy' criteria, with the sprinkler system linked to a Grey water harvest system.

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

- No site and context analysis was presented for review.
- The proposed blocks do not appear to meet the requirements detailed in the architectural brief.
- Lack of landscape strategy.

Placemaking

Thorough site and context analysis was not presented at this review. Further analysis would help to inform the design process of both the site layout and buildings. This may help the new development sit more comfortably in this prominent site, especially given the sensitivities of demolishing an existing building which holds some value with the local community. This comprehensive analysis should especially include consideration of boundaries, views, green infrastructure, local vernacular and roofscapes.

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>

The characteristics of the site, including level changes and historic gardens, could be used as a basis to create an interesting scheme which is distinct to this place. The current proposals do not suggest that these opportunities to use the valuable characteristics of the site have been taken.

The internal road infrastructure and visibility splay feel over-engineered and unnecessary to serve this number of dwellings. Car parking currently dominates the site and the design team should question whether this number of spaces are needed on a site which is close to the local centre and well served by public transport. The parking should be rationalised so that it sits more comfortably within the site and doesn't dominate the street scene. Taking a softer approach to scale and materiality of this hard landscape would reduce its impact and most likely reduce cost.

Engaging a landscape architect to design a landscape strategy for the site would add value to the scheme and help to make the most of the unique landscape setting. This could include shared spaces to increase activity on the site and encourage interaction between residents.

The original planning permission required the architectural form to reference the sea side context and original Victorian vernacular. The current proposals fail to achieve either of these requirements and the architectural form and materiality do not sit easily within the context of the site. Thorough analysis of the architectural character of the area should inform the design process going forward and may suggest some useful precedents or palettes.

If the design team intend to proceed with two buildings on the site, rather than a singular villa, consideration should be given to how these buildings relate to one another. This includes whether they should be read as a twin or whether they may have differing materiality or roof finish, for example. No testing of different approaches to this design question were presented in the review.

Views of the sea from the north west point of the site could be optimised by further considering this elevation and opportunities for homes to have sea views from living spaces. Balconies and ground floor terraces could be considered to add value to the living spaces and make the most of the context.

Boundary treatments should be sympathetic to the context and minimise impact on adjacent setting.

Photomontages and views would be useful in depicting the scheme.

Integration of innovation

Innovation approach: Use of dowel laminated timber for residential buildings where lessons learnt will be fed back to Wood Knowledge Wales to influence further use of this material in Wales.

There is an opportunity to use this scheme as an exemplar of use of this material in Wales, however the site layout and architectural form currently undermine this ambition.

Next Steps

- Undertake thorough site and context analysis.
- Reconsider the architectural approach, including; the concept of two buildings, architectural form and approach to materiality.
- Consider appointing a landscape architect to design a landscape strategy for the site.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer: Huw Evans & Ian Gillespie – Cartrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd

Construction: Owain Williams – Williams Homes
Gary Newman – Wood Knowledge Wales

Design Review Panel:
Chair Kedrick Davies
Panel Angela Williams
Jamie Brewster
Wendy Maden