



# IHP Design Review Report

Bowling Green, Newtown

DCFW Ref: IHP T

Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Review Status	PUBLIC
Meeting date	11 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
Issue date	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
Scheme location	Newtown
Scheme description	Residential
Scheme reference number	IHP T
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 project aims to create a social rent scheme to provide affordable rented housing and to address fuel poverty issues using home grown timber; to encourage local employment opportunities and use local supply chains; and encourage the development of the wider timber supply chain in Wales from source to construction.

The 26 flat development close to the town centre is to provide general needs accommodation for social rent, taking into account the fuel poverty issues faced by many of those in housing need in Powys. A fabric first approach is being pursued to achieve high thermal properties, along with carbon reduction and a healthy home environment. This will be achieved using home grown timber wherever possible, in line with Powys' Wood Encouragement Policy.

## Main Points

This report is not minutes 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 context shown on any drawings demonstrates lack of consideration in response to surroundings
- No evidence of informative site and context analysis
- Lack of concern for quality of living environments being created – single aspect north facing units, windowless kitchens, north facing outdoor amenity space, long internal corridors

### **Placemaking**

Project vision and ambition

This will be the first housing to be delivered by the council in around 30 years, so it is important that this project sets the standard for future council housing. It should, therefore, be an exemplar of design quality.

It would be good to see Powys Council setting out an ambitious vision for the project and future housing delivery. Achieving ambitious objectives will require a departure from the 'ordinary'. Mediocre should not be acceptable. The current proposals are not ambitious in terms of the quality of living provided.

#### Informative site and context analysis & design in response to surroundings

There was a lack of any good analysis of the site and context having informed the design process. This was particularly evident in the drawings which did not show any context, making it very difficult to assess the quality and appropriateness of response to the surroundings. The panel was especially concerned with how the level changes and relationship with the existing boundary wall were being dealt with. A series of cross sections would be a useful tool to ensure the levels are dealt with without creating awkward or unpleasant spaces.

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>

#### Landscape and public realm design strategies

The spaces around the building are just as important as the building itself and should be carefully considered. A landscape strategy would be beneficial and should consider the following:

- Provision of useable amenity space (this is currently shown as north facing)
- Elimination of 'leftover' purposeless space
- Contribution to streetscape and townscape
- Entrance and arrival experience
- Parking, secure bike storage, car share, electric bike pool, vehicle charging
- Privacy and views
- Bins and waste management

#### Quality of living environments

Better consideration of the quality of living environments being created is needed. The current proposal shows single-aspect north facing units and long internal corridors which are not good for well-being, comfort and energy demand. Overall, fenestration and daylight need better consideration. Deep-plan spaces and internal, windowless kitchens should be avoided.

Further thought should be given to inclusive design, and how residents will deal with rubbish and recycling.

#### **Integration of innovation**

Innovation approach: The first housing delivered by the local authority in approximately 30 years. The ambition is to utilise home-grown Welsh timber for the frame, insulation and cladding to help meet Well-being Goals and provide benefits from the properties of natural materials.

Specification, procurement and Employer's requirements in particular will be important for achieving use of local supply chains.

With the ambition to use local timber, the rationale for the render and terracotta cladding is not convincing. The weathering effects of natural timber cladding should be considered and understood, especially how it would sit alongside other materials after a number of years.

We would like to see an energy strategy developed in response to analysis and testing, and it would be good to have target performance values in mind. Reduction in fuel bills and ease of user controls should also be considered. The form, orientation, layout and fabric of the building will have an impact on energy demand and performance as well as any technology.

### **Next Steps**

- Reconsider design approach based on informative analysis of site and context
- Powys to set out ambition for exemplar council housing which will set the standard for future developments
- Consider quality of living environments created, including environmental design and modelling

*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: 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Cambrian Buildings, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff CF10 5FL T: 029 2045 1964 E [connect@dcfw.org](mailto: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: Jim Knight & Kimberly Caruana, Powys CC

Design/Planning Team: Sam Courtney, LRM Planning  
Campbell Lammie, EOS Architects

Design Review Panel:  
Chair Kedrick Davies  
Panel Angela Williams  
Jamie Brewster  
Amanda Spence