



# IHP Design Review Report

City Road, Cardiff

DCFW Ref: IHP Z

Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Review Status	CONFIDENTIAL
Meeting date	19 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
Issue date	20 <sup>th</sup> July 2018
Scheme location	Llanrwst
Scheme description	Residential
Scheme reference number	IHP AE
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. All present at the review were content to proceed following the declarations.

## The Proposals

The vision is to build a high rise apartment development using cross-laminated timber (CLT), with ground floor commercial/community uses. External greenery will be incorporated in the facades/balconies to create a tree tower effect. This would be the first high rise CLT building in Wales, although there are projects in London. The construction method can significantly reduce build times and deliver units at scale. A mixed-tenure approach will be taken, combining social rent with market rent and possibly rent-to-own units.

## 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

- Ground floor, entrance experience and smaller block need further consideration.

### Placemaking

#### Tall building

The team will need to set out clear justification for the height of the building, demonstrating that it is an appropriate response to site and context analysis and how it relates to the local authority's planning guidance on Tall Buildings and City Road.

The overall approach to materials and façade design seems appropriate, but will need further refinement as the design process progresses.

#### Ground floor and entrance experience

The entrance arrangement and ground floor need further attention. It is appropriate to have active uses and the main entrance fronting onto City Road, but the narrow, dark entrance alley needs to be reconsidered. If a concierge is required, it would provide an

opportunity for additional activity at ground floor level. Allowing more generous spaces where residents can stop and meet with neighbours would be positive.

The placement, scale and nature of the second smaller block and the spaces created around it also need further consideration. This part of the scheme is less resolved than the larger block at this stage.

In this location, which has good public transport and active travel options, it is appropriate to exclude parking, especially as cars would deaden the ground floor.

#### Creating a sense of community

The Commission encourages the team to integrate opportunities for social interaction to help foster a sense of community within the development. The location, scale and nature of communal gardens/balconies should be carefully considered. Opportunities for play should also be thought about if it is likely that families will be living in the block.

It would be positive to create better interaction between apartments and the communal corridors, perhaps including opportunities for residents to personalise their apartment entrances. Allowing for visual connections between apartment halls and the communal spaces would make it easier for residents to get to know their neighbours.

#### **Integration of innovation**

Innovation approach: The focus of the innovation is twofold: the use of CLT construction for a high-rise residential block and the integration of vertical green infrastructure on the building façade/balconies. The scheme is aiming to be carbon neutral.

The CLT has the benefits of speeding up construction times on a difficult city site, locking in carbon and being a 'healthy' material.

The greening of the building is appropriate on this busy city street which lacks other green infrastructure. As well as environmental benefits – urban cooling, carbon capture, increasing biodiversity and slowing water run-off – the planting has the potential to offer a wide range of health benefits. It would reduce the impact of noise from the road, reduce overheating in summer, improve privacy and comfort and produce oxygen, and having a view onto trees has been shown to have positive impacts on mental health and well-being.

It is positive that specialist CLT and green infrastructure consultants have been involved in the design process from an early stage. The Commission encourages the team to involve environmental design consultants prior to a planning application being made so that the optimum form, layout and fenestration can be achieved in response to modelling and testing before those aspects become fixed.

#### **Next Steps**

- Give further consideration to the ground floor uses and layout and entrance sequence experience. Reconsider the proposal for the smaller block.
- Consider opportunities for creating communal/meeting spaces and encouraging social interaction between neighbours.

- Refine the apartment layouts and window positions for views, daylight, sunlight, privacy.
- Refine the façade design and set out a clear justification for the building height.

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

## Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Keri Harding-Jones, LINC Cymru
Design/Planning Team:	Phillip Gibb & Bernadette Kinsella, Powel Dobson Architects Meryl Lewis & Naomi Taylor, Savills Gary Grant, Green Infrastructure Consulting
Design Review Panel: Chair Panel	Jonathan Vernon-Smith Angela Williams Richard Woods Amanda Spence
Observing:	Gayna Jones & Darren Hatton