



# IHP Desktop Review

Five Crosses, Bwlchgwyn, Wrexham

DCFW Ref: 20DD IHP4

Meeting of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2020

## **Review Status**

Meeting date  
Issue date  
Scheme location  
Scheme description  
Scheme reference number  
Planning status

## **Confidential**

15<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
17<sup>th</sup> September 2020  
Bwlchgwyn, Wrexham  
IHP Residential  
20DD  
Pre planning

## 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 Proposals

A 4 bedroom Supported Living Bungalow, and 6 General needs apartments on the site of the former Five Crosses Inn in Bwlchgwyn, Wrexham. The project is being developed by First Choice Housing Association (FCHA) and Grŵp Cynefin. The scheme is located next to an industrial estate

## Main Points

This report is not a verbatim 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.

### **Key Design and Sustainability Concerns**

If the proposed demolition of the former Five Crosses Inn building is not justified in the submission and it is not clear why it is as necessary for the development of the site. It is unclear whether the building is vacant, and its condition is not explained in the submission.

The most sustainable approach to this site would be to retain the existing former 'Five Crosses Inn' building. The building adds to distinctiveness, sense of place adds to the urban fabric of the area. Its potential as a business or community opportunity should be considered and tested. Proposing demolition as a first step to any development is wholly unsustainable.

### **Community**

Much more analysis is needed of the existing demographic of the community surrounding the site as well as those who may live in the proposed buildings. Consultation with the local community would result in more informed scheme, allowing for insights that could be incorporated into the design in order to accommodate the needs, aspirations and well-being of the wider community in this area. It is possible that the inclusion of a coffee-shop, or a community hub in the former pub on the site could aid sense of a place with purpose.

## **Placemaking**

Further work is needed on the placemaking aspects of the development. It is important that the design considers how this development feels as a place to live, and that exploration is currently lacking. Experimenting and testing alternative site access points and other site layout options could result in a scheme that integrates more effectively with the existing urban fabric and would be necessary in any Design and Access Statement submitted with a planning application.

Further work is needed on the routes in and out of the proposals, and the relationship of the proposals with their surroundings.

## **Innovation**

The concept of the flexi-home is unclear given that there are a limited number of configurations of the modular units. The spatial layout that results is inefficient, and it is challenging to see how good quality living space, good daylight and logical circulation might be achieved. It would be beneficial if the designs, particularly the design of the bungalow, were to be revisited and refined. The current proposals are prescriptive, and we question whether the modular approach represents innovation.

The duplication/repetition of stairs within each of the flats, rather than a communal stairwell, needs justification given its inefficiency. Analysis and illustrations of the proposed interiors of these buildings could aid with the understanding of what kind of places these would be like to live in.

Further site design development could consider incidental meeting spaces, where people would meet their neighbors, and develop a sense of community cohesion, as well as ownership and enjoyment of the greenery in the site. The possibility of these becoming communal gardens could enhance the sense of community on the site.

## **Next Steps**

Further site analysis, as well as analysis of the tenant demographics, could inform the design as it is developed further.

Work is needed on options for the design of the proposal, both in terms of site layout and access, and the internal layout of the proposed buildings.

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

## Attendees

Design Review Panel:

Chair:

Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive DCFW

Panel:

Efa Lois, Place Advisor, DCFW

Kedrick Davies

Simon Carne