



IHP Design Review Report

CRESWELL ROAD, SWANSEA

DCFW Ref: 20C IHP4

Meeting of 23rd September 2020

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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

9 residential dwellings on two parcels of land, including an area of landscaping, and a site including a 1970s housing office that is proposed to be demolished, in Swansea. This scheme is being developed by Swansea Council.

The proposals build on previous IHP developments and the properties will be built to Homes as Power Stations specification – highly insulated, with integrated PV solar roofs, ground source heat pumps, MVHR units and Tesla Battery storage.

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.

Design Concerns

It would be highly beneficial to this scheme if the site in between both of the plots, which is also owned by Swansea Council, were to be integrated into the development as joint public open space.

Site analysis

Site analysis is of key importance to this type of development and will need to be carried out to fully understand all constraints and opportunities, as it was missing from the presentation. More exploration of building massing and site layout is needed.

It would be beneficial if the design strategy were to look at perceived problems such as area required for swales and develop the design to respond to them and turn it into a positive.

As it was highlighted in the presentation that this is an area of high housing need, a higher density of dwellings could be justified, if the site analysis indicates that this is suitable.

Site and context analysis would be useful in order to gain an understanding of how this site fits into and links with its surroundings, how many people walk through it, and

whether it's a route where people to walk to school or work. This could, in turn, be reflected in the site layout.

The landscape approach to the proposed green spaces and footpaths should be reviewed to ensure that each piece of the space has a clear purpose and benefit. On the other hand, the landscape scheme should contribute to an increase in biodiversity of the area and has potential to be an asset for the whole neighbourhood.

The boundaries to existing and new properties need to be addressed

Retention of the existing building

As Swansea has declared a climate emergency, and there is an existing building on site, it should be considered whether it requires demolition. More analysis is needed to prove if it is worth demolishing, which was not provided in the presentation. It would be more innovative, if this building were to be kept, or some materials from the building were to be kept and reused.

Internal layout

The current layout creates deep spaces, which won't have a lot of daylight penetration, which could create unpleasant spaces for the inhabitants to live. A 'day in the life' exercise with or without residents living in the area or other sites, imagining what it is like to live in these spaces, could be highly beneficial to the design. Future trends such as home working and home-schooling should also be considered.

Consideration of any potential views from the site, and how windows are positioned to for residents to benefit from them should be incorporated into the elevation design. The window height of the living room could be adjusted to suit residents sitting and enjoying the view.

The possibility of utilising the loft space for some of the storage as well as plant such as the MVHR should be explored. Floor to floor heights should be reviewed as well as eaves' height to ensure the body of the building and the roof are in proportion.

Elevational treatment

The elevations require further design development and a rationale with regard to material choices.

Integration of Innovation

The proposals develop the learning from previous IHP schemes. The lessons learnt and how this scheme moves things forward should be clearly set out. POE should also include views of residents living in the previous schemes.

The opportunity to eliminate wet trades by avoiding blockwork construction on the timber frame needs to be explored as it will help to reduce on-site construction time, cost and have embodied carbon benefits.

We encourage further ambition in relation to reducing the overall environmental impact of the properties including the move towards 'plastic-free' which includes a review of UPVC windows, fascia boards, rainwater goods etc.

Next steps

It is worth exploring the potential of creating a variety of different house type models which could still be based on the same principles and method of construction, rather than just one Swansea standard house type. This could be an exploration of how houses on hills could be designed, or how houses in courtyards could be designed. This would result in proposals that were much more relevant to their site and context.

However, it is of key importance that each of these sites have been through the necessary site analysis in order to understand the place where the dwellings will be located. Proper site analysis, and a proper vision for the site is key to the success of this kind of development.

Consideration of the place that is being created, and how it feels to live here is of key importance while developing this design further.

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

Attendees

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