



IHP Design Review Report

City Deal Partnership, Swansea (19B)

DCFW Ref: 19B

Meeting of 21st June 2019

Review Status

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

PUBLIC

21st June 2019
2nd July 2019
Unspecified
Residential
19B
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.

The Proposals

The proposal will focus on scaling up previous technical innovations from IHP years one and two where the Ty Solar house has been technically tested for small scale manufacture. The project seeks to demonstrate how the house type can be scaled up into small housing developments by partnering across five County Councils and RSLs to deliver 150 homes to the Ty Solar low carbon house system which is manufactured off site and made of timber. This is a joint bid to construct homes across several sites in different locations. Details of each site have not been presented.

Main Points

This report is not a 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

The panel's comment is based on a presentation of a hypothetical site with a scheme to be replicated in future sites. This is in itself a concern as each site is different, with their own opportunities and constraints, and will require a different approach to accommodate the proposed house type as discussed below.

No evidence of a response to context, site analysis or placemaking was described at the meeting or evident in the prereview material. The layout provided for the hypothetic site appears to have been mostly derived from the house type needs – notably a need for a south facing orientation to achieve the solar gain and meet PV requirements.

The 'requirement' for the front door to be located on the south side of the house further exacerbates the problems for the site. The north side of the houses/apartments facing the street no longer function as the front, although this is where people approach the house and where their cars are parked. The Secure by Design fencing requirements for back gardens facing the street also make a nonsense of the street pattern. These issues

could be avoided with a proper consideration of the site, layout and the integration of some flexibility within the house type but requires further work to establish some principles for site design.

Placemaking

The site layout, for the hypothetical site, is derived from the house type orientation requirements which takes priority over placemaking. This approach does not promote an effective relationship between the buildings in the form of spaces which have community value.

The play area indicated would seem to be an afterthought, fixed in its use, and positioned at the edge of the site, whereas a flexible space, carefully considered as part of the overall site layout could become a focus for the community.

Integration of Innovation

A site analysis, albeit for a hypothetical site, would help to inform how the site layout could better explore the site and its surroundings, the relationship between buildings and spaces, and wider considerations of sustainable development beyond the house type. These considerations would benefit the environmental quality of a development and encourage social interaction between residents through meeting points and activities.

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 panel had concerns over the apartment house type. Key points to be explored for the apartments are their selection for the over 55's, notably by living on a first floor and how they may be able to respond to people getting older with changing needs, rather than having to move to more suitable accommodation. There is also concern over the separation of the upstairs apartment from the garden and the functionality of the floorplans in terms of vertical access and dimensions.

Sustainability and innovation go beyond the house type and the use of technologies. Placemaking is an essential requirement for a new development and is an opportunity to explore wider benefits that will contribute to the well-being of present and future generations, site activities, social spaces, alternative means of transport, green infrastructure, active travel, strategic collaborative site maintenance are only few of them.

The Commission was not convinced that this concept of scalability has been adequately considered. There needs to be at least a demonstration of a sound understanding of a proper site analysis, and the presentation of the essential components of placemaking, albeit for a hypothetical site.

Next Steps

The Commission would welcome the opportunity to review the scheme again once designs have progressed for specific sites.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer		Glen Peters
Architect/Planning Consultant		
Local Planning Authority		City & County of Swansea
Design Review Panel	Chair	Andrew Linfoot
	Panel	Chris Jefford
		Jen Heal, DCFW
		Larissa Berquó, DCFW
	Observer	Claire Linfoot