



# IHP Design Review Report

St Ishmael's Eco Homes

DCFW Ref: 19M

Meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> June 2019

**Review Status          PUBLIC**

Meeting date	21 <sup>st</sup> June 2019
Issue date	27 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
Scheme location	Pembrokeshire Coast NP
Scheme description	Residential/IHP
Scheme reference number	19M
Planning status	Outline Consent 2016 St Ishmael's
Site	

## 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 these declarations.

## The Proposals

The proposal is for New-build solar eco-homes at Manse Field, St Ishmael's, and Withybush Lodge, Pembrokeshire. The project vision as described in the registration documents is to deliver a pilot for solar eco-homes employing off-site construction, having built-in flexibility to adapt/re-use the homes in the future. The HouseKit approach as proposed is described as 'combining the benefits of kit-construction with ecological design to engineer homes that are naturally healthy and high performing, yet low-impact in nature'. The proposal states that the intention is to integrate into sites, encouraging genuinely affordable procurement models. The proposal for the St Ishmael's site consists of 13 dwellings, including five affordable homes on a south facing site, adjacent to the village primary school. St Ishmael's is close to the coast and in proximity to the Pembrokeshire Coast Path. The smaller Withybush Lodge site would accommodate three dwellings.

The registration documents states that an outline consent was granted for the St Ishmaels site in September 2016 following submission of the application in May 2016.

## Main Points

This report is not a set of minutes of the full discussion that took place during the review, rather a summary of the key points related to design quality and approach that have been identified that would help to improve the project and any concerns regarding the funding of the project.

### **Urgent Design Concerns**

This idea for innovative housing communicated to the Design Commission during the meeting was one which stemmed originally from an idea formed a decade ago and has not been sufficiently developed or updated. Fundamentally it involves the need for a detailed components/pattern book, for manufacturing and supply chain which has not yet been explored or identified. The concept is that homes would be high performing 'kit' homes,

'sitting lightly' on land. They are intended to be robust yet also be a capable of being dismantled, moved and reassembled elsewhere.

There is no evidence of any research, materials or manufacturing testing; construction, assembly or installation methodology, or testing of the implications of dismantling and re-location.

Tenure and planning policy and consenting practice have not been fully explored although some very loose idea of ground rent/leasing arrangements on agricultural land was mentioned.

Given the above, the major concern is that this is an unformed concept which would require considerable work before it could justify the investment of public funds.

### **Placemaking**

There was no consideration of response to context, site analysis or placemaking evident at the meeting. The site layouts provided, particularly for the St Ishmael's site, did not reflect the aspirations set out in the discussion. Whilst the aspirations of a low impact approach to the house installation and access is interesting, it was not evident whether what was being described could be achieved on the site.

### **Integration of innovation**

This concept is insufficiently formed. Considerable investment of public funds would be needed to facilitate skilled human resources as well as supply chain capacity and capability. The Commission was not convinced that this concept is sufficiently mature or thought through as to be at the stage where such investment should be made. In its current form it represents high risk.

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

## Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:

iDeA Architects

Architect/Planning Consultant: As above

Local Planning Authority: Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority  
Case Officer: Andrew Richards

Design Review Panel:  
Chair Andrew Linfoot  
Panel Chris Jefford  
Steve Smith  
Jen Heal, DCFW  
Carole-Anne Davies, DCFW