



IHP Design Review Report

Tesco House, Cardiff

DCFW Ref: IHP AM

Meeting of 11th July 2018

Review Status	CONFIDENTIAL
Meeting date	11 th July 2018
Issue date	18 th July 2018
Scheme location	Cardiff
Scheme description	Residential
Scheme reference number	IHP AM
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. Gayna was not present in the meeting. All present at the review were content to proceed following the declarations.

The Proposals

The project consists of the refurbishment of the former Tesco House office building to provide 108 flats, and the former car park will be built on to provide 20 modular houses. The vision is to create a high-quality, desirable community featuring a mix of dwellings and tenures using innovative modular housing, transformation of the disused building and prioritised sustainability to create a vibrant place for people to live.

Oscos Homes is a not for profit organisation which factory-builds high quality homes and will work with Cadwyn to deliver the 20 modular houses. The main structure is built from light gauge steel frames which are assembled into wall panels, floor and roof cassettes with external finishes.

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

- Open space dominated by cars and parking
- Quality of living environments in flats in converted building
- Lack of landscape and public realm design input
- Ground floor of conversion poorly considered
- Initial proposals do not create a vibrant, desirable place for people to live

Placemaking

Informative site and context analysis

The commission would like to see a number of options for the site layout meaningfully tested in response to a good site and context analysis process. Options might consider whether retail or residential uses fronting onto Maes y Coed Road are most appropriate,

active uses for the ground floor of the conversion and back-to-back relationships for the new houses.

It would be good to see the inclusion of retail provision based on local market research.

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>

Parking

Cars dominate the open space in the layout presented at the review. The Commission encourages the team to challenge local authority parking standards if good public transport and Active Travel options are available. Providing a shared electric car/bike scheme may also help justify a reduction in parking numbers. Pedestrian movement through the site should be prioritised to encourage walking.

Landscape design and streets

A good landscape design strategy should consider the following:

- Provision of useable amenity space
- Elimination of 'leftover' landscape space
- Arrival, circulation and entrances
- Creating a sense of community
- Provision of appropriately sized private garden spaces
- Future maintenance of shared open spaces
- Integrated play spaces
- Provision for bins, secure cycle storage, utilities etc.
- Public-private hierarchy
- Design of the courtyard inside the existing building

The Commission suggests *Manual for Streets* and *Building for Life 12 Wales* are referred to in relation to the design of streets and spaces between buildings.

Early involvement of a landscape architect and engagement with highways are recommended.

Quality of living environment

The Commission was particularly concerned about the quality of spaces the proposal would create in the reused office building, including single-aspect north facing units, views directly onto the rear of surrounding buildings, long internal corridors and lack of defensible space between flat and the parking/street. Flats on the lower level with windows only into the courtyard could be particularly poor. Appropriate levels of privacy should also be considered.

There was a lack of consideration for an entrance and circulation strategy and how this would relate to the surroundings, routes and open spaces in the development.

Modelling for daylight, ventilation and thermal comfort would inform an environmental strategy and help achieve better quality living environments in all flats.

Is it suggested that the design team draws and meaningfully tests different options for reuse of the office building, including but not limited to dual-aspect through units, maisonettes, direct entrances at ground floor, and inclusion of non-residential uses at ground floor.

Integration of innovation

Innovation approach: Reuse of a former office building plus new houses constructed using an off-site manufactured panel system produced by prisoners in England. The system aims to provide fast on-site construction, and good performance.

The viability and social value of rolling out the prison manufacturing process in Wales should be further explored.

Next Steps

- Reconsider approaches to site layout in response to good analysis of site and context. Test different options.
- Test different approaches to reuse of the existing office building to provide good quality living environments.
- Explore viability of rolling out prison manufacturing in Wales.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Simon Fry, Cadwyn HA
Design/Planning Team:	Phil Chamberlain, Tony King Architects Jon Hurley, WYG
Design Review Panel:	
Chair	Kedrick Davies
Panel	Angela Williams Jamie Brewster Amanda Spence