



IHP Design Review Report

North Wales Collaboration Project

DCFW Ref: 19Z

Meeting of 5th July 2019

Review Status

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

Confidential

5th July 2019
12th July 2019
North Wales
Residential
19Z
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 joint proposal from four housing associations is to produce a set of standard house types to be delivered by a contractor to provide well designed, sustainable low-carbon homes. The review provided an overview of the collaboration and the development of the proposed house types as well as more detail on four of the 11 proposed sites.

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.

Urgent Design Concerns

The collaboration between the four housing associations is welcomed to avoid duplication and to generate sufficient scale for effective delivery. The following comments should be considered as the proposals develop. Some general considerations are given here and in the placemaking section below and some brief points specific to each site are also provided.

- Retaining the involvement of the architects through the design and build process is important to ensure design quality and that the ambitions of the project are not lost.
- The potential to increase the floor to ceiling height within the house types that are being developed should be explored as this has benefits in terms of mitigating overheating as well as creating a greater sense of space and delight within the properties.
- The porches are more generous than DQR standards which is a practical approach and improves the overall appearance of the properties.

Old Pendlar School, Caernarfon

- The road is very dominant – explore the potential to treat the road differently around the communal space to improve the quality of the space.
- Consider closing the view at the end of the street.
- Trees and landscape treatment will help to soften the environment as well as provide opportunity for integrating SuDS requirements.
- If possible, the proposed Pods should be integrated into the overall layout.

Bryn Du, Llanfaelog

- Explore opportunities to soften the frontage of the properties including the boundary treatment to fit the rural nature of the site.
- The open view at the end of the street is appropriate in this location as it is a rural outlook.
- Trees could help to shelter the public space.

Ponc y Rhedyn, Benllech

- The scale is appropriate for this location.
- The northern units have limited rear garden space which must be balanced with well-considered front gardens and communal space.
- Corner units are particularly important in this location.
- Consider orientation for PV potential.

Maes Bleddyn, Rachub

- The pedestrian link to the road and play areas within the neighbouring development is useful and should be well designed and integrated into the layout and landscape proposals.
- The trees to the northern boundary could be clustered to give a more natural appearance.
- Look at opportunities to break up the dominance of the road, for example around the central space.
- Keep working on the layout of the properties to ensure the angles are appropriate and they sit comfortably on the site.

Placemaking

It is positive that placemaking principles have been identified and each of the sites demonstrate an improvement from previous planning applications. However, the successful application of the placemaking principles for each site is compromised for various reasons. At this stage in the process, the reasons for compromise could be reviewed and the principles or site layouts adjusted appropriately. There are some general considerations that are common across all sites including the dominance of parking and roads. Opportunities to address these matters in conjunction with the local authorities' planning and highways departments should be fully explored. This could result in a suite of agreed street design and parking principles that could be applied with the house types. A landscape approach that enables the parking areas to be more flexible in nature and softer in appearance could be considered.

Site selection should be a key consideration if this approach is to be taken forward more widely. Placemaking potential is significantly impacted by the location of the site and its connection to local neighbourhood facilities and public transport connections.

Integration of innovation

Limited detail was available at this stage regarding the proposed contactor(s) and source of local materials. Details of this are important in assessing the feasibility and sustainability of the proposals. Enabling the contractor to input ideas is a valid approach but they must meet the performance specification.

The layout of the house types proposed is sufficiently flexible to respond to different site contexts and layouts.

The house types are designed to Passive House principles but will not meet the full standards. This could be pushed further to improve the performance of the properties.

The success of each development should be monitored and any learning applied to future sites.

Next Steps

- Work with local authorities on street design, public space and parking principles.
- Provide further detail about the local supply chain.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Mike Soffe, AA Projects Helen Williams, North Wales Housing Penny Storr, CA Ian Gillespie, CCG Gwyndaf Williams, Grwp Cynefin
Architect/Planning Consultant:	David Parry, AGA Gethin Jones, AGA
Design Review Panel: Chair Panel	Jen Heal, DCFW Lynne Sullivan Chris Jefford