



IHP Design Review Report

The Patch, Llanharry

DCFW Ref: 19G

Meeting of 25th April 2019

Review Status

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

PUBLIC

25th April 2019
8th May 2019
Llanharry, RCT
Residential
19G
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 these declarations.

The Proposals

The proposal is for 22 dwellings that challenge 'affordable house' typologies, specifically DRQ requirements, though internal flexibility and future adaptability for users of all ages and needs.

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 design of the two bed properties is developing positively and it is understood that the same approach will be applied to create a suite of seven property types. The potential for terraced and town houses should also be included as this would enable exploration of different densities.

The approach to the design of the houses must be considered in the context of the site in order to test how it will work and how the aims of greater social interaction will manifest. The expertise of a landscape architect would benefit the design of the external spaces, both private and communal. Any left-over spaces should be designed out. Drainage requirements should also be positively integrated.

Some small tweaks to the open plan layout could be considered from a functional perspective including the integration of a lobby. Bin storage should also be considered. An effective corner unit is needed to ensure the corners of the site are addressed positively.

Placemaking

The testing layout that has already been submitted for planning and is recommended for approval must be put to one side and a new approach to the layout taken that aligns with the aim of the project.

Some challenges that will need to be addressed positively in order to make the project successful include parking, street design, density and integration of public and private space. Parking requirements in particular have the potential to eliminate the possibility of integrating any positive communal space within the scheme and should be addressed proactively in discussions with the local authority. A rationale for reducing parking requirements could be put forward but it is also important to be realistic about how cars will be integrated into the space. The potential for on-street parking on Llanharry Road should be explored.

Achieving a positive space within the site may be a challenge if the road is to be adopted as this is likely to bring requirements that will not fit with the design ethos. Given the small size of the site, consideration should be given to a unadopted approach.

Integration of innovation

The 'problem' that is being addressed in this proposal (i.e. the limitations of DQR standards and the high frequency of costly retrofitting) is a compelling one. Combined with the aspirations to improve social interaction through the design of the properties and layout of the site, it has the potential for multiple benefits. Site layout principles and their application for this site must be part of the proposals in order to achieve these benefits.

The narrative of the project could be improved. Clearly setting out what doesn't work currently, how it has been addressed and what the benefits are for residents will strengthen the proposal. For example, demonstrating that a smaller garden size is still adequate for the needs of residents and highlighting the benefits of communal or balcony space.

Working with residents and the management of communal space, whether it is allotments or other uses, is critical for its success.

Environmental sustainability considerations should be integrated into the proposals to avoid becoming 'add-ons'.

Next Steps

Engaging with other RSLs could help to strengthen the case for the proposals.

We encourage the team to return for a second review once the proposals for the site layout have been developed. This will be a very important stage to check that the aims of the project have been integrated and can be realised within the site. A slot for a second review should be arranged as soon as possible.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer: Gari Rowlands, Rhondda Housing Association

Architect/Planning Consultant: Richard Collins, Holder Mathias

Local Planning Authority: Giles Howard, RCTCBC

Design Review Panel:

Chair

Panel

Jamie Brewster

Angela Williams

Kedrick Davies

Jen Heal, DCFW

Larissa Berquò, DCFW