



IHP Design Review Report

Williams Aige & Lansdowne
House, Welshpool, Powys

DCFW Ref: 19T

Meeting of 19th June 2019

Review Status

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

PUBLIC

19th June 2019
12th July 2019
Welshpool
Housing
19T
Completed

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 scheme is for a redevelopment of an existing derelict property and grounds to improve the condition of 22 existing properties and provides 15 new apartments. The aim of the project is to improve resilience and flexibility of homes, quality design and placemaking.

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 intentions of the project are positive as the proposals will provide additional units, improve existing dwellings and address a disused site. It provides the opportunity to comprehensively improve and upgrade the site, however, the site opportunities have not been captured or exploited to embrace its full potential. There is a lack of interpretation regarding the concept of residential amenity to encourage life and activity for the future and existing residents. This is reflected in both internal and external spaces and in the integration between the new and existing buildings.

The proposed number of units and resultant parking provision has an overly compromising effect on amenity, access and circulation for both existing and new residents. This results in the over-development of the site. Reconsidering the number of units would help to address these problems, but consideration could also be given to ways to promote lower car ownership such as a car share scheme.

The entrance is apologetic and cramped by parking which will affect legibility.

The day room is remote from the entrance, cramped by parking and at the end of a long corridor. This could be an important space for social interaction and community use if it is easily accessible and a delightful space. The corridors could also become the setting for life and interaction, but they are not currently designed to do this.

The roofscape appears overly complex, poorly resolved and potentially prone to weak detailing. Overall the design process should seek to simplify the building to reduce visual complexity, contribute to passive house principles and reduce potential maintenance issues.

There is no consideration of appropriate and attractive outdoor amenity space for residents. Existing green space has been removed to provide additional parking spaces but opportunities to explore improving other green areas could be taken. The courtyard space could be delightful but is heavily compromised by parking.

Further analysis of the local vernacular as well as a vision for the proposed new building is needed to inform its character. The new build should not necessarily seek to replicate the existing buildings as there is scope to significantly improve the design quality. For example, window proportions should be informed by views, daylight, the quality of the residential environment and the overall composition of the building rather than being led solely by the proportions of the existing.

Integration of innovation

The principle of adding units and upgrading the existing properties is good but the benefits are currently compromised by the design. The placemaking contribution of the development is compromised by the number of units and parking.

Next Steps

The design team should urgently consider the key issues above in particular the amount and location of parking, the design of the entrance, location of the day room and complexity of the building form.

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

Attendees

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Harry Bowen, Mid Wales Property

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Design Review Panel:

Chair
Panel

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