



DESIGN
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IHP Design Review Report

Heol Dinas Garage Site, Aberystwyth

DCFW Ref: 20U IHP4

Meeting of 22nd September 2020

Review Status

Meeting date
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Scheme location
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PUBLIC

22nd September 2020
28th September 2020
Penparcau, Aberystwyth
IHP4 Residential
20U
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.

None.

The Proposals

This scheme brought forward by Mid Wales Housing Association and Tai Ceredigion proposes 9 one bedroom flats for a linear, recently cleared former garage site, adjacent to an existing settlement of some scale and a school at Penparcau, Aberystwyth. The affordable dwellings are intended to be constructed using modular construction methods to a high energy performance and responding to Wales DQR guidance. The site benefits from an existing bus route.

Main Points

This report is not a verbatim 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

As currently proposed, there is a good deal of design work still needed to better resolve some key issues of aspect, quality of living spaces, public realm, energy strategy and environmental strategies. This is essential if the vision for good quality homes is to be fully realised on this challenging site. However, if they can be resolved successfully, much could be learned and adapted for similarly challenging sites in future. A number of precedents of redevelopment of single aspect units on garage sites were available but no comparison was evidenced.

Integration of Innovation

The commitment to modular/MMC is evident and underpins the proposals. The ability to source and transport 4.9m wide modules is wider than the norm, and allows for spatial flexibility needed for the specific demands of this site.

The same design considerations apply here as with any construction method and several key points would benefit from further consideration:

- Amenity, the quality of external space and its relationship to the flats is of critical importance and must be resolved so as to support regular use and enjoyment. Linking the development to the nearby greenspace is important as is overall

'greening' of the proposals. Many of the flats have an upstairs potentially exposed terrace remote from the unit and screened from the South view, and the security and amenity value was questioned.

- The ground floors are a particular challenge and not yet sufficiently addressed, with principle GF unit windows directly onto the pavement and being poorly overlooked from the opposite side of the street. The 'garage courts' are inset off the street with high level wind-prone ventilation 'slots'. Front doors and entry points were not designed in a way to maximise security and natural surveillance.
- The rear boundary/connection to the school needs further resolution to maximise amenity and where possible to retain and enhance existing trees.
- A comprehensive energy strategy needs to be developed to fully integrate the suggested heat pump technologies, demand control ventilation and PV installation which it was suggested could deliver net zero heating and HW, and which we understand will be monitored post completion.

Placemaking

The site presents some challenges however it is located in proximity to existing dwellings and a school which offers good placemaking opportunities which through further design work noted above could be better resolved. This is a challenging site but well worth the further analysis and testing of options to reach the best possible quality and a good place to live.

Next Steps

Development and testing of the design response to the placemaking elements, layout and connections will be necessary given that there remain some key questions to resolve. Good site and context analysis will help inform responses and this is an essential means of moving closer to the vision. A follow up opportunity would be welcomed by the Commission should the team find it useful.

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

Attendees

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