



IHP Design Review Report

Former United Reformed Church, Northop

DCFW Ref: 20X

Meeting of 17th September 2020

Review Status

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

PUBLIC

17th September 2020
24th September 2020
Northop, Flintshire
Residential - affordable
20X
Planning approved

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

The proposed development consists four two-bedroom houses and two one-bedroom flats on the site of a currently disused church building.

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

Planning is already in place for this development which significantly reduces the scope to change and add value to the scheme.

Retention of the church building was considered but deemed not suitable for conversion for affordable housing. It is unfortunately that the requirements for DQR, Lifetime Homes and Secured By Design are not flexible enough to enable reuse of the existing building which would have had advantages in terms of embodied carbon and the character, identity and history of the site.

It is not intended that the properties will express and features relating to the timber frame construction of the properties or their Passive House standard, but rather they are to express a 'traditional' house. However, they currently lack the character, detail, charm and delight of the older properties in the adjacent conservation area. Further work is needed to ensure that quality is delivered in the detail and character of the building either drawing on a contemporary interpretation of the context or perhaps relating to the innovation of the scheme.

Placemaking

The space to the front of the houses holds the potential to contribute more to the setting of the properties and the amenity of residents. The amount of hard surface should be minimised with opportunities for more green space including the potential for communal

growing space to be explored. A separate pedestrian access would be appropriate to avoid conflict with vehicles at the main entrance and to respond to desire lines.

The development presents a gable end with a secondary window onto High Street. This does little to help animate the street or provide additional natural surveillance. Turning this end unit to have a front door onto High Street could have helped to address this.

It is positive that the existing railings around the site are to be kept. Further opportunities to reference the history of the site and the presence of the former church could be explored to support the meaning and memory of the site.

Integration of Innovation

The Passive House approach and MMC is being retrofitted to an existing proposal which results in some compromise that might have been resolved had they been integrated from the beginning. It is unfortunate that the whole scheme does not meet Passive House Standard given the small size of the scheme and the ambitions for IHP. It would have been a big positive step forward to be able to deliver a fully Passive House Standard scheme.

Next Steps

- Ensure options that could result in a fully Passive House Standard scheme have been explored.
- Consider improvements that could be made to the external space to the front of the properties and in the character of the homes.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer: Emma Hancock, Wales and West Housing

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Local Planning Authority:

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Panel

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