



IHP Design Review Report

VICTORIA STREET, CWMBRAN

DCFW Ref: 224

Meeting of 17th September 2020

Review Status

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

CONFIDENTIAL

17th September 2020
29th September 2020
Cwmbran
IHP Residential
224
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 Proposals

The proposed scheme is for one- and two-bedroom accommodation in line with the Welsh Government decarbonisation agenda for energy efficient properties.

The proposals will require the demolition of the former solicitor's office and rifle club on the intersection of Victoria Street and Ventnor Road in Cwmbran. The site is walking distance to the town centre, and approximately 100m from an existing car park. The site is located on a corner in an area of predominantly Victorian housing stock and retail units.

Consultations to Date

The review was originally intended to be a conventional Design Review, following a previous Design Review for this project on the 23rd of April 2020. However, it was agreed at the beginning of the meeting to review this project as a potential IHP project.

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.

Design Concerns

General simplification of the massing would be beneficial to the scheme. Developing the mansard roofs on the current design to become full-height spaces would be beneficial both in terms of the integration of the proposal to the existing townscape, and beneficial to the residents of the proposal.

The general layout of some of the ground floor flats have been compromised in order to allow for private stairwells to the first-floor accommodation.

Amenity Space and Parking

The site is currently prioritising parking over quality outdoor amenity space. There are limited areas for the drying of clothes outside, and places for residents to sit and read outside, for instance.

The parking is also negatively impacting the site layout, as parking spaces are very tight to the building's ground floor windows in some areas of the plan.

It is important to consider, as the design is developed, what it would be like to live in these dwellings. It is worth exploring whether there is space for a communal garden on site, and whether roof terraces could be integrated into the design.

Massing and the Corner

The civic nature of the north-west corner of the site lends itself to a 3 storey building, while the more southern end of the site, adjacent to the 2 storey Victorian terraces, lends itself to a neighbourly 2 storey relationship. The surrounding townscape should dictate the massing of this project in order to ensure successful integration into the built environment.

The units at the junction end of the site don't have their own external space; it would be beneficial if this could be incorporated within the design.

Elevations

The elevations require simplification – applied use of contrasting brick, such as heads and fills (cills?) in contrast, would echo the local Victorian references. A reduction in the number of doors on the façade could result a more successful reflection of the surrounding Victorian houses, thereby integrating the building more successfully into the townscape.

Innovation

No material regarding the innovation was provided during the review, but the possibility of an infra-red electrical system was raised. Further research will be needed to see whether this would be viable on this scheme.

The integration of PV panels into the design, the possibility of car charging points and an electric carpool car were also raised.

Shared transport facilities on this small town centre site could alleviate the conflict within the scheme, as presented, between the number of parking spaces required by policy and the desirability for the scheme to include some useable and pleasant private outdoor amenity space.

Next Steps

Including a meaningful amenity space, and then fitting the parking around that space, would result in a more successful place to live and would be highly beneficial to the scheme. Exploring options is a key part of the design process and testing which options will and will not work is often how successful schemes are developed. DCFW would welcome further consultation if the team would find it helpful within the timescales for IHP.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer:	Gary Colston – Bron Afon Greg Jones – Bron Afon
Architect/Planning Consultant:	Karl Lewis – Letrucco Design
Local Planning Authority:	Helen Smith – Torfaen Council
Design Review Panel:	
Chair:	Jonathan Vernon-Smith
Panel:	Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW Efa Lois, Place Advisor, DCFW Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive DCFW Chris Jefford Lynne Sullivan Stephen Smith