



DESIGN
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Design Review Report

Abergelli Power Station

9th December 2014



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.

Review Status

Meeting date

Issue date

Scheme location

Scheme description

Scheme reference number

Planning status

PUBLIC

9th December 2014

12th January 2015

North Swansea

Gas power station

57

Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

None Declared.

Consultations to Date

Satautory consultation took place during October and November 2014. Non-statutory consultation was carried out in June 2014.

The Proposals

The proposal is for the development of a gas fired 'peaking' power station at Abergelli Farm near Swansea, South Wales. The project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) requiring a Development Consent Order (DCO) from the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change based on a recommendation of the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

Abergelli Farm is to the north of the M4, outside Swansea. The farm is on rather poor marshy land used for horse breeding and some sheep grazing, and some of the land has been used for inert landfill. The landscape generally is of poor quality farmland with large numbers of electricity pylons, substations etc. and a post industrial, urban edge feel. A major strategic electricity substation is immediately adjacent to the farm. A large-scale gas compression plant has already been constructed at the farm and is operational. It links into the main south Wales gas line that passes through the farm. The gas and substation plant are effectively screened by mature hedgerow and tree plantations.

The proximity of the substation and ready availability of the large scale gas supply is the driving logic for the selection of this location for the power project. The plant will provide support to the grid during periods of very high demand or when supplies from elsewhere are reduced. It is likely to run for 1500 hours per year, complementary to the use of wind power and other alternative power sources in bridging the gaps in intermittent power supply. A large-scale solar power generation plant is under

construction at Abergelli Farm also feeding into the adjacent substation. A number of similar projects are in operation on adjacent land.

Main Points in Detail

Location

There is a clear logic behind the selection of this site for the intended project, in terms of existing energy infrastructure and demand. The Design Commission supports this well considered and well justified scheme, and believes that the design processes that the team are undertaking are guiding the project in the right direction. A clear case was made for the need for the facility, and it is good to see a new economic use of the farmland.

Visual Impact

The impact of the scheme on long distance views will largely be defined by the type of engineering plant selected. As the Rochdale Approach is being taken, defining maximum development envelopes, the precise impact will not be known at DCO stage. Although the Commission understands that the choice of generation plant size and numbers will be determined by financial decisions, we would prefer to see five smaller units rather than two or three much larger ones.

The Commission does not necessarily subscribe to the view that infrastructure should be 'camouflaged' in the landscape, especially when that landscape is already industrial in nature, as is this. However, we are aware that this is a widely accepted approach and that the team will use colour and other treatments/approaches to address matters of visual impact.

The Commission commends the colour experiments that the team has been undertaking on this, and other power projects. We agree that, on this site, a simple colour scheme with a darker colour for the base and a lighter colour for the flues, would work well.

Landscape Opportunities

The treatment of the landscape within the site, especially at the edges, should reflect the open countryside nature of the site. Minimising grey, hard landscaping and maximising green landscaping and planting around supporting structures would help to do this. The wooded back edge of the site could also be reinforced with new planting.

It would be beneficial to fence the scheme so that the route through the middle of the site remained accessible to public for recreational use.

Site Management

Developing a wider site management plan would be a positive step towards making this scheme an exemplar 'farm of the future'. The plan should coordinate the various energy and farming projects and associated infrastructure works at Abergelli. The management plan could also cover issues such as landscape patterns, boundaries and fencing, planting strategies, recreation uses, landscape maintenance and eventual decommissioning and landscape reinstatement.

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

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer: Adam Heffill, Stag Energy

Architectural/Urban Designer: James Dick, Sheppard Robson Architects
Colin Turnbull, Peter Brett Associates

Planning Authority: Andrew Ferguson, Swansea Council

Design Review Panel:

Chair

Ewan Jones

Lead Panellist

Steven Smith

Simon Power

Amanda Spence, Design Advisor, DCFW

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