

Design Review Report

Wylfa Gateway, Anglesey

DCFW Ref: 60

Meeting of 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

CONFIDENTIAL

Meeting date	9 th December 2014
Issue date	19 th December 2014
Scheme location	Anglesey
Scheme description	Associated development to proposed Nuclear Power Station
Scheme reference number	60
Planning status	Pre-application

Declarations of Interest

Ewan Jones and Simon Power are employed by Grimshaw and Arup respectively. Ewan Jones has been involved with EDF, at Hinkley and Sizewell, and Simon Power declared that Arup were a party to a PPA for Grid Transmission work via Jacobs, but that he was not directly involved. All parties confirmed that they were content to proceed with these declarations recorded.

Consultations to Date

Wylfa Newydd is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) to be determined via the PINS for application, examination and determination of a Development Consent Order (DCO). A Stage 1 public consultation on proposals for this nuclear facility has been carried out. This includes the broad scope of the 'gateway' development but not detail.

The Proposals

The gateway site includes three buildings that constitute associated and enabling development for the Wylfa Newydd Nuclear Power Station. These elements will be submitted as a TCPA application in advance of the main DCO application.

Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre will host education and cafe facilities, providing for passing walkers as well as those coming specifically to visit the power station. Accompanying SUDs and ponds will form part of the educational element. The Visitor Centre planning application will be for outline consent.

Sports and Social Club

The existing Magnox Sports and Social Club is to be demolished to make way for the new power station development and therefore an equivalent replacement is required.

Horizon is committed to replacing the building 'like for like' in terms of floor area but the application will be for a temporary building. The sports pitch and all-weather pitch are associated with this facility.

Alternative Emergency Control Centre and District Survey Laboratory (AECC&DSL)

The AECCDSL is a Magnox facility that will serve the existing power station. It is a replacement for the existing facility which is in a location that is required for the development of the proposed power station. It is largely a back-up facility, not in full use on a day to day basis. The District Survey Lab will accommodate a small number of people who will work there on a day to day basis.

Main Points

The Design Commission for Wales welcomed the opportunity to receive information about the proposals for the gateway site which is a significant development for the area in its own right and part of the much greater nuclear power project which will have a transformational impact on the area. The presentation follows preliminary discussions with Horizon and Isle of Anglesey Council during 2014.

The visitor centre will form a key part of Horizon's development and will be the point at which the general public will have the greatest interaction with the new power station development. It will be the public face of Horizon and an important 'early' representative of the whole future power station development. Given its status the centre should be of exemplary design quality, establishing a benchmark for the future works.

There are three scales at which the Design Commission considers the need for further clarity and consideration, to explain and more clearly justify the proposals: site selection, layout of the site and design of the buildings. The presentation lacked the 'story' behind the proposals including strategic and site analysis, the brief for the quality and performance of the buildings, the vision and how the design proposals have responded to this context. These elements need to be addressed to ensure that the design quality is the best it can be and so that the proposals are clearly and effectively communicated in the forthcoming planning application, given the scale and nature of the project.

Site Selection

Although this development is associated with the New Nuclear Build which will be subject to a DCO application, it will be applied for separately as a TCPA application and therefore must be justified on its own merits. A key aspect of this is the site selection for these uses.

A comprehensive and coherent process for site consideration and justification for the selection of this site, for each of these uses, needs to be conveyed. This will include the locational requirements of the various uses as well as the qualities of the site that make it appropriate for these uses over other potential locations.

Other future construction requirements including temporary accommodation, park and ride and other 'lift and shift' facilities should form part of the 'big picture' of this development in the context of what else is to come.

Beyond this site, the Design Commission would also like to see the opportunities and potential for the relocation of the coastal path between the proposed power station and the coast to be explored. The possible safety and security implications are acknowledged, however decisions made now should not prevent the potential for this route to be put in place once construction is complete.

Site Layout

This is a large site, close in size to neighbouring Tregale, and therefore a substantial intervention in this location. It will be an important point of interaction with the existing neighbourhood and with passing traffic on the A5025 and should set the tone for the development as a whole.

The 'story' of the proposals for the site would benefit from a plan that summarises the constraints of the site including the Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water main; existing and potential future pylons and overhead cables; the topography of the site, views in and out etc. The microclimate should also be considered at this stage to inform how the layout responds to prevailing wind and sun path.

Rather than being considered solely as a constraint, the power lines could be used as a feature and could help inform the structure and layout of the site – they are a crucial part of the power station operation. Their impact on visitor amenity should also be considered.

The proposals currently lack an overall vision that informs the design of the site and the individual buildings. The Design Commission encourages the team to consider the message that they wish to communicate and the experience they wish to create for people, from the point of arrival, and how this can be reflected in the layout, materials, forms, landscape design, and signage of the development. This will help to determine whether, for example, the pylons and cables will inform a more geometric layout or the surrounding landscape will inform a more rural field structure.

It is important to understand how the three proposed buildings will function and be managed on the one site, recognising their differing users and operators, so that there is coordination and the shared spaces are coherent.

Buildings

The Commission did not have sufficient information, plans or elevations of the proposed buildings at this meeting, so the review was based on the illustrative views provided with the presentation. Each of the buildings is very different in their purpose and nature and, whilst they need to coordinate on the site, they should respond to these requirements.

Visitor Centre

As mentioned above this is a significant building that will represent the face of the company to many who visit. It is important for the building to reflect the message that Horizon wishes to portray, be it innovative, transparent, modern, sensitive. This will then help to determine how the building will sit in the landscape or perhaps become part of it.

The business case for the visitor centre should inform the brief for the building – the number of groups expected to visit, how long they would stay for, how many individual visitors will come each day, where they will be coming from and how they will get there. The functions of the building can then inform the form of the design. For example, dedicated separate access to the rear of the building for delivery and refuse collection vehicles may not be required, or appropriate, allowing the amount of hard landscape surface to be significantly reduced.

It is understood that BREEAM Excellent is the target for this building and the Design Commission would be interested in understanding more about the approach to achieving this as the design of the building progresses.

Precedents have been considered by the design team and the Design Commission would encourage further analysis of precedents to identify how they can inform the design or be used as a benchmark for quality.

Sports and Social Club

The emerging design for this building has a pavilion style which is a theme that could be taken further. A simple and honest design approach could be fitting for this building which is subservient to the visitor centre. If this is the desired approach the quality of materials and simplicity of design should be followed through the next stages of design.

Bringing some of the grassed areas up to edge of the building could help to ground it in the landscape.

AECC & DSL

The security fence requirements for this building are recognised but the fence should be integrated into the design to reduce its potentially negative impact on the appearance of the building. Planting that forms part of a wider landscape strategy could also help to achieve this.

The design of the building could be simplified further but must be well detailed with the right materials.

Next steps

The Design Commission for Wales would welcome and encourage further dialogue on this scheme prior to the finalisation of designs for the planning application, as early as possible in the new year. A follow up workshop session on the site analysis and layout along with a more detailed review of the building designs could help to shape and refine this important scheme. We encourage Horizon to liaise in a timely manner with the Design Commission for Wales to arrange appropriate meetings for this to take place, and with the Local Authority. The project's architects and landscape architects participation in these meetings will be crucial and they should be present along with Local authority representatives to ensure that sufficient information is provided to assist the decision making and determination process.

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

Attendees

Horizon Nuclear Power:

Voirrey Costain
Vaughan Finch
Angus McLeod

Local Authority (representing):

Gary Soloman, Burges Salmon (Observing)
Note: Local Authority representatives sent their apologies as they were attending a Horizon project Stakeholders meeting.

Design Review Panel:

Chair
Panel

Ewan Jones
Steven Smith
Maria Asenjo
Simon Power
Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive, DCFW
Jen Heal, Design Advisor, DCFW