



DESIGN
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Design Review Report

Wylfa Newydd Main Site, Anglesey

DCFW Ref: N60

Meeting of 18th May 2017



Review Status

PUBLIC

Meeting date	18 th May 2017
Issue date	xx 2017
Scheme location	Wylfa, Anglesey
Scheme description	Main Nuclear Facility
Scheme reference number	60
Planning status	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.

Panel member Alister Kratt was part of a team that were unsuccessful in bidding to be appointed as design team for this stage. All present confirmed that they were content to proceed following this declaration.

Consultations to Date

The Design Commission for Wales has been engaged in consultation on the development associated with the new nuclear facility for over two years during which time several review meetings have taken place. This is the second time that the main site has been reviewed with the previous review having taken place in August 2016.

The Proposals

This review focused on the main site of the proposed nuclear power station. The Design Commission was advised that there is limited scope to influence the positioning and design of the many of the buildings but the design team are working on proposals for the landscape design and approach to the design of a number of buildings within the site.

Main Points

This review provided the opportunity for the team to update the panel on progress and changes since the previous review in August 2016. An 'optimisation' process had been undertaken which has led to a number of changes to the design of the main site and proposals for supporting development both on and off site. A new design team has also been appointed to take forward proposals for the buildings and landscape of the main site but work on these elements had only begun fairly recently following the optimisation process.

It is positive that a design team has been appointed to develop a vision and principles for the main site which addresses one of the points raised at the previous review. However, it is a matter of concern that this process began so recently with a fast

approaching application submission target date of August 2017, the extent of what constitutes 'the site' appears limited and that the proposed final statutory consultation for the project is imminent. This is a significant intervention in the landscape and locality, and time needs to be given to ensure design iteration and maturity to achieve design quality and avoid compromise. Consultees need adequate design information properly inform the consultation process and ensure that the design is realisable.

The following key points were identified in the review and should be given further consideration as proposals for the site are developed.

Analysis

Further and more thorough analysis of the site and its context is required and should be related back to the design process. It needs to be clear how the analysis and understanding of the landscape, including the designed landscape of Sylvia Crowe, has influenced the concept and proposals for the site and to provide the basis for the rationale of design decisions. This needs to be undertaken at a range of scales to properly understand and inform the impact of the development on the landscape.

Of particular importance is how the proposed new landscape should 'stitch in' to the existing landscape and further analysis of field patterns and boundaries is needed to establish how this can be achieved, both in terms of landscape character and how it is viewed from a range of distances.

Grid concept

The concept of the grid overlaid on the buildings, public realm of the main site and landscape is potentially a strong one. However, the idea is clearly in its relatively early stages so further work is needed to enhance the narrative and translate the concept into reality. At this stage of testing and exploring, it is important to ensure that it is the right concept and will be achievable. We are uncertain about the merits of the 'button and textile' narrative but consider the concept of reflecting and extending the 'engineering lines' of the main site into the surrounding landscape to be sound.

The design principles defined in the design document were limited in their scope and definition. It is key that design principles are given sufficient breadth and weight in the project and are applied to all aspects of the project design and approach to the environment. The concept of the 'grid' is noted but should ideally form part of a broader set of design principles that the landscape and visual assessment and ultimately judgements about design merit can be judged against.

It is important that the grid is relevant at ground level rather than from a more elevated position and that the grid is more than pattern making and supports a genuine landscape and visual integration strategy. This could be enhanced by relating the grid to the function of various spaces within the site where possible and impact the alignment and arrangement of elements of the project. If there is the potential to influence the position and alignment of buildings and other features within the site, the grid should form an organising principle. A set of 'rules' that inform the application of the concept could be useful to ensure that every element from buildings down to the small scale of bollards and fence posts are in alignment.

One of the most significant landscape challenges is the interaction of the grid with the proposed mounds. This requires further work. The design of the mounds is being led by a separate team that relates to the impact assessment and it is important that effective coordination is achieved to ensure that the two work together positively with the formal nature of the grid meeting the informal nature of the mounds successfully. Delivering both the ambitions of the grid concept as well as the necessary requirements for noise and visual buffering is fundamental.

Glimpses of the grid in the landscape could provide interesting hints to the presence of the power station in areas that are more screened but should be considered in the context of the overall approach to visual impact and interaction with key settlements and roads.

The grid concept also needs to take into account the existing Sylvia Crowe landscape and other existing features including areas of woodland. There perhaps needs to be a layered approach to integrating the history of the landscape with the proposed big, new intervention. The relationship of the 'naturalistic' designed landscape and the formalised 'engineered' landscape was discussed.

Mounds

A number of questions still remain regarding the rationale used for the design and nature of the proposed earth mounds around the main site. Whilst mapping of the landscape has been provided, analysis is still needed to explain why the mounds are the way there are and how the land use is to work. The extent of the influence of the grid should be extended to consider the wider site area which forms the DCO application boundary. The design also needs to be informed by the landscape and visual impact assessment, which needs also needs to form part of the narrative.

The idea of diverting the Coastal Path to take advantage of the view from the elevated position of the mound has some merit but it is not clear how this will work with the future use and management of the land. Judgements about the amenity of the route also need to be considered. Who manages the land in the future will impact on how it should be designed and may determine how far the landscape grid concept can extend into and across the mounds.

The landscape proposals or design principles do not include any strong ecological narrative or approach and this should be addressed. The potential for hedgerows, field boundaries, planting and land management should be considered in the context of enhancing the ecology of the site.

Buildings

We continue to seek a clear and coherent set of principles for the overall expression of the buildings on and off site. The new design team and optimisation process has meant a step backwards in design progression and the design team have had little time to move things forward. Some of the initial ideas regarding simplification, the colour strategy and overall expression of the buildings appear to be heading in a positive direction but there is little detail to review and a limited idea of what can be influenced and how. Whilst the sketches presented are helpful in illustrating the concepts, we would expect to see significantly more developed images and/or photomontages as part

of the iterative design and environmental mitigation process, particularly with the proposed application date of August 2017.

The principles for building design are of critical importance for the coherence of the development. This should include the hierarchy of buildings, materials and their application taking into account how they will change over time, a family of details, colour palette, guidance on form, and how to reference the precedents identified. There is a substantial amount of work still to be done here. It was not clear what was achievable in relation to the building design or whether the simplification of the built form in the views presented is deliverable.

It is positive to hear that a design competition is proposed for the visitor centre. Design quality and ambition must be prioritised on all of the buildings as they all have a significant and long term positive impact on the context.

It was clear that the 'outages building' that lies to the edge of the site and could be possibly one of the most immediate buildings to impact local views and the public's experience of the project, did not form part of the design proposals. This should be addressed and the design principles used as a guide to its design.

Worker accommodation and construction phase

A change in approach to the temporary worker accommodation now sees it concentrated to the north of the site close to Wylfa Head. Following the optimisation process we would expect to see an analysis of the different options considered for the location of the accommodation and a clear justification for this choice. As the land-take of the main site has reduced, there may have been opportunities to consider accommodation on some of the newly available land along the edge of the main site. The Commission continues to have concerns over the location of the accommodation close to Wylfa Head with its effects on the wider landscape. The different locations need to be weighed up in relation to the impact on the site, site constraints and opportunities, as well as suitability for workers and their quality of life and well-being.

The proposed modular and temporary nature of the accommodation is appropriate given the context. There is the opportunity to create an innovative approach to accommodation of this type through consideration of environmental performance, future use, how it sits in the landscape, and the quality of accommodation and amenity space created.

Limited information was provided regarding the impact of the worker accommodation on the local community and how the site will interact with existing settlements.

The construction phase of the project will need to address local impacts and the permanent design should be cognisant of this. Where appropriate, temporary effects should be addressed with positively designed interventions given the duration of the construction phase.

Development Consent Order (DCO) Commitments

The material submitted with the DCO application should clearly demonstrate and communicate design commitments and how these will be followed through whilst

retaining an element of flexibility. It is important to get the level of detail right at this stage, to maintain ambition and not to compromise quality.

Next steps

A further review before the DCO application is submitted may be of value however the timescales are challenging. The materials being prepared for consultation and DCO submission will need to explicitly address the issues raised in this and earlier reviews to ensure that the quality and full impact of this project is properly appreciated by interested parties, members of the public, the local authority and the Inspectorate.

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

Attendees

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