

REPORT

HS2 Independent Design Panel Meeting to discuss the Schedule 17 stage designs for Canterbury Works Shaft Headhouse

10.00 – 12.30 Wednesday 7 October 2020
Via Microsoft Teams

HS2 Independent Design Panel

Tony Burton	Vice chair of the HS2 Independent Design Panel
Mike Martin	HS2 Independent Design Panel
Jonathan McDowell	HS2 Independent Design Panel
Sam Richards	HS2 Independent Design Panel

Attendees

Dan Ashmore	Assistant Project Manager, HS2 Ltd
James Dearing	Design Panel Manager, HS2 Ltd
Rebecca Poll	Consultant, Infrastructure Directorate, HS2 Ltd
Ravi Raveendiraraj	Project Engineer, HS2 Ltd
Joyce Tang	Town Planning Manager, HS2 Ltd
Joaquin Beltran	Deputy Package Manager, Design House
Vinicius de Siqueira	Deputy Discipline Lead - Architecture, Design House
Mark Fisher	Discipline Lead Architecture, Design House
Luis Maximiliano Gonzalez	Architect ECW, Design House
Paul Gully	Lead Design Manager, SCS Railways
Javier Gutierrez	Architect ECW, Design House
Marie Claire Lhoest	Asset Owner, Design House
Aneta Mika	Landscape Team, Design House
Lucy Neal	Town Planning Interface Manager, SCS Railways
Wouter Ombregt	Landscape Lead ECW, Design House
Juan Jose Varillas	Architect Lead ECW, Design House
Vega Vanacore	Canterbury Package Manager, Design House
Ulrich Vosloo	Consents Team, Design House
Paige Ireland	Planning Officer, London Borough of Brent (LBB)
John Stiles	Principal Urban Design Officer, LBB
Edward Bailey	Frame Projects
Lana Elworthy	Frame Projects

Apologies / copied to

Swati Singh	Sustainability Manager, HS2 Ltd
Robert Howard	Landscape Manager, HS2 Ltd



Pippa Whittaker	Senior Communications Manager, HS2 Ltd
Nia Griffiths	Head of Consents & Engagement, SCS Railways
Martin Short	Landscape Manager, HS2 Ltd
Kay Hughes	Design Director, HS2 Ltd
Alex Pendleton	Head of Engineering & Environment, HS2 Ltd
David Glover	Development Management Manager, LBB
Leah Wright	Officer, LBB
Damian Manhertz	Area Planning Team Manager, LBB
Christoph Brintrup	Head of Landscape, HS2 Ltd
David Cochrane	Head of Engineering and Environment, HS2 Ltd
Chelsea Evans	Apprentice Project Manager, HS2 Ltd
Paul Gilfedder	Town Planning Manager, HS2 Ltd
Bernadette Hurd	Head of Benefits, HS2 Ltd
Nicole Linney	PA to Design Director, HS2 Ltd
James Mumby	Town Planning Manager, HS2 Ltd
Giles Thomas	Phase One Engineering Director, HS2 Ltd
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Design Inbox	HS2 Ltd

Note on Design Panel process

The HS2 Independent Design Panel was established in 2015 at the request of the Department for Transport to help ensure that, through great design, HS2 delivers real economic, social and environmental benefits for the whole country.

The HS2 Design Vision sets out nine principles grouped around three themes: People; Place; and Time. The design uses this framework to help the HS2 Ltd leadership, project teams and other partners to make the right design choices – and this also informs its advice on designs that are to be submitted under Schedule 17 of the High Speed Rail (London – West Midlands) Act 2017.

The panel plays an advisory role, providing impartial and objective advice, to support the design process. At a pre-application stage it is for HS2 Ltd to decide what weight to place on the panel's comments balanced with other considerations. Once a Schedule 17 application is submitted, the panel's advice may inform the local planning authority's decision making process.

Further details of panel membership and process are available at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-design-panel>

The HS2 Design Vision is available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/607020/HS2_Design_Vision_Booklet.pdf

The HS2 Independent Design Panel comments below follow on from three pre-application reviews which included the Canterbury Works Shaft Headhouse.

Timing of Schedule 17 meeting

This meeting took place in advance of a Schedule 17 submission for the Canterbury Works Shaft Headhouse – which will be submitted around December 2020. The application will also include indicative mitigation proposals, including soft landscaping measures, which will be formalised in later ‘bringing into use’ and ‘site restoration’ submissions.

HS2 Ltd indicates that it is satisfied that the proposal would meet the aspirations of the HS2 Design Vision and the Sustainability Approach.

HS2 Ltd confirmed that there will be no significant design changes, except some minor changes as a result of ongoing design development.

Local planning authority views

London Borough of Brent

To date there have been two pre-application meetings, at which London Borough of Brent provided feedback on the proposals for Canterbury Works Shaft Headhouse. The most recent meeting was held on Friday 1 October 2020.

In general, the Council is supportive of the way the designs have evolved. It notes that there are a number of sensitive receptors around the site, and it would therefore welcome further information on views of the site, including views from elevated positions.

The Council also requests further information on materials, textures and the potential inclusion of feature lighting. It asks the team to consider whether these elements could be used to help express the function of the building visually, in different elevations. It supports the proposals to create a new piece of amenity space for the school, and asks for further information on this as well.

HS2 Independent Design Panel's views

Summary

The HS2 Independent Design Panel considers that the Schedule 17 stage proposals for the Canterbury Works Shaft Headhouse building have the potential to meet the aspirations of the HS2 Design Vision and the HS2 Sustainability Approach – subject to the quality of its detailed design and landscape. It notes that a substantial amount of work is still required as part of subsequent approval processes, including the design of the ATS building, landscaping and materials. The designs for the head house building promise architecture of a high quality if the materials and construction shown in the drawings provided 'for information' can be achieved. The panel supports the intention to include illustrative information on the landscape design in the Schedule 17 submission, although this will be dealt with formally through later 'bringing into use' and 'site restoration' applications. The design of the landscape will play a fundamental role in determining whether the Canterbury Works Shaft Headhouse meets the aspirations of the HS2 Design Vision, and the panel would welcome continuing involvement in this aspect of the scheme. It is pleased to see that an urban integration study has been completed for the site. Translating this vision into reality will require leadership by HS2 Ltd to catalyse partnership working and identify funding opportunities. The panel considers there is a tension between security requirements and the landscape vision with, for example, the scale and nature of the boundary walls impacting on the public benefit and viability of the proposed planting. It asks the team to revisit security requirements and assumptions made to date, and to explore opportunities to introduce alternative approaches. Integrating HS2 with the surrounding context in a subtle way should remain the priority for the site, including any consideration of lighting and changes to the street. These comments are expanded below.

Head house building

The panel considers the Schedule 17 stage designs for the head house promise to deliver a high quality building. As noted at previous meetings, the panel highlights that the level of detail on materials and construction is limited in the drawings intended for approval, and that more detail is included in those provided 'for information'. The panel's support for the proposals is dependent on the quality promised by the 'for information' drawings being delivered.

The panel supports the concept of expressing the headhouse's function through its architecture, but notes that this aspect of the design will only be seen from certain perspectives, from the railway in particular. The articulation of this aspect of the building is therefore very important.

The view of 'the machine' within the building from the train will be briefer than for some of the other headhouses along the Area South section of the Phase One route, which provide a more complete view. It suggests that the team further considers how the building will be seen from the north, particularly from the train, and how the designs for the northern side of Canterbury Works Headhouse could be refined to more clearly express its function. For example, a more expressive and bolder element, such as greater verticality to the section above the shaft, could be introduced.

Surrounding residents will have a fixed relationship with Canterbury Works Headhouse. Therefore, the intricacy of the design detailing will be crucial to the scheme's success. It will be important to explore opportunities for the information submitted as part of the 'plans and specifications' Schedule 17 submission to help convey the commitment to design detail and quality and ensure its delivery.

The panel notes that the chosen material palette does not appear to reflect the conclusions of the context analysis as presented. It highlights the need to carefully consider how the submission information can clearly describe the design choices which have been made to date, including how the character of the surrounding context has influenced the designs.

The panel suggests the team provides further information on how the proposals are expected to weather over time, and how the quality of the detailing will provide assurances on weathering. For example, the use of Accoya is welcomed by the panel but it notes that how this material is detailed and installed will be fundamental to achieving a high quality finish.

Automated Transformer Station (ATS) building

The ATS building is important to the acceptability of the overall scheme. The panel encourages the team to identify opportunities to include this as part of (or alongside) the Canterbury Works Headhouse Schedule 17 "plans and specifications" submission.

In principle, the panel considers the approach taken to the design of the ATS building to be acceptable. However, it is essential that the submission information provides a clear and accurate impression of the impact of the ATS building, including assurances on how it will integrate with the rest of the site to create a holistic scheme.

Landscape

The design of the landscape will play a crucial role in determining whether the designs for the Canterbury Works Headhouse meet the aspirations of the HS2 Design Vision. Consent for the details of the landscape design will not be sought through the 'plans and specifications' Schedule 17 application, but will be further defined during the 'bringing into use' and 'site restoration' stage.

The panel notes that the Canterbury Works Headhouse site offers a significant opportunity to add to the character of the area and to create new public benefits - alongside the need to respond to the different sensitivities of the surrounding context. The panel therefore welcomes the landscape vision and the focus on embedding the proposals within the surrounding context. It also welcomes the confirmation that the landscape proposals will be included within this submission (for information only) to demonstrate the commitment to delivering a high quality landscape.

It also welcomes the intention to simplify the northern boundary of the scheme and share an access route with Network Rail to avoid overly complicated and unnecessary boundary treatments. It is important that the team continues to engage

with Network Rail on the designs for this northern edge to ensure designs for Network Rail and HS2 land successfully integrate and complement each other.

The panel applauds the proposal to create a new piece of landscape for the school. It strongly encourages the team to collaborate with the school regarding the designs for this space. As detailed design work continues, careful consideration will need to be given to its long term use, ownership, access, management and maintenance. It is important that this space feels part of the school and avoids any unnecessary boundary treatments which may diminish this sense of ownership. If required, the panel encourages the team to integrate any boundary requirements as part of the landscape.

There are a number of questions which are yet to be answered and the detailed aspects landscape proposals will be absolutely crucial to the scheme's success. For example, the panel questions how successful the planting proposed adjacent to the wall on the western side of the site will be given the likely impact of the concrete wall. Careful thought will need to be given to species selection, maturity of planting and how the long term life and quality of the planting will be secured. The panel suggests another option could be to relocate the planting to the other side of the wall where there is more space available, and where residents of the adjacent housing would gain more value from any new planting introduced.

As a general point, the panel highlights the importance of committing to the inclusion of mature planting, particularly for trees and in the areas alongside boundaries with surrounding neighbours. It also suggests the team includes tree cells to help maximise their potential growth. The panel also urges the team to include a range of indigenous species, and to consider how species selection may help soften the proposed boundary treatments.

The panel welcomes the inclusion of planting to the roofs of the buildings and the intention to maximise the biodiversity net gain opportunities the site presents. It urges the team to consider how the layout and planting of these could be designed to respond to the views of residents who will look down onto these. It also notes the importance of including precedent images in the submission information to reflect the scale and nature of the proposals for Canterbury Works Headhouse building.

The panel suggests that the team, at detailed design stage, further considers whether art opportunities could be integrated as part of the scheme.

Security

The panel welcomes the further information presented on proposed boundary treatments, and the clarification that the Schedule 17 submission will only seek approval for their location. The scale and design of the boundary treatments will be subject to further design development and subsequent approval processes.

As part of ongoing detailed design work, the panel encourages the team to carefully scrutinise the nature and scale of the boundary treatments, including the way they integrate and connect with each other, and with the other elements of the scheme. For example, the concrete and brick wall that encloses some of the site is specified to respond to vehicle mitigation requirements, but the panel asks the team to

interrogate this further to ensure this level of specification is only included where necessary. Reducing this specification could help improve the viability of the proposed planting areas, lessen material use and help reduce the visual impact of the wall.

It is important that any proposed boundary treatments are appropriately designed for the context, and as part of the envisaged family of elements along this section of the route. The panel suggests details could be incorporated within the boundary treatments, such as different bonding techniques, glazed finishes, and textured brickwork. This would help introduce a greater sense of craft and help reduce the impact of their scale. It asks for this to be explored further at detailed design stage, particularly on the walls to the southern, eastern and western boundaries.

Urban integration

The panel is pleased to see that an urban integration study has been carried out for the site, as for other key design elements along the Area South section of the route. This aspect of the project will be a crucial element in ensuring HS2 offers real benefits to the communities impacted by the construction of HS2.

There is, however, uncertainty around whether these ideas, or others which are as yet unidentified, will ever become a reality. The panel urges the team to give further thought to how it can provide leadership to ensure they can be realised. Ongoing partnership working will be essential to identify long-term management and maintenance mechanisms and connect with potential funding streams.

Views

While views into the site at ground level will be limited, there will be a number of elevated views and potentially long distance views (over the railway corridor) as well as views from passing trains. The panel highlights that the Schedule 17 stage submission should provide a range of clear and accurate views, including views from surrounding residential units (e.g. Canterbury Terrace) at ground and elevated levels.

The panel highlights that views and drawings of the proposals, such as cross-sections, should also include the surrounding context to help people better understand the scheme's impact and its relationship to the context.

Access road design

The panel welcomes the confirmation that the site access will be subtle and will respond to the existing character of the street. For example, it supports the intention to mirror the existing brick pillars adjacent to Canterbury House on the HS2 site entrance. It considers that any alterations to the street, including any entrance splay, should prioritise pedestrians.

Lighting

The panel supports the focus on integrating subtle lighting and avoiding feature lighting. It suggests that it would be helpful to provide further information on the likely

impact of the lighting proposed and, in particular, how it will impact on views for residents and neighbours, as part of the information submitted.

The panel notes that there may be an opportunity to include feature lighting on the railway side of the scheme. It asks the team to engage with a lighting designer as design development continues for this aspect of the proposals.

Next steps

The panel feels that the Canterbury Works Headhouse building has the potential to meet the aspirations of the HS2 Design Vision and HS2 Sustainability Approach at Schedule 17 stage – subject to the design of the ATS building and the quality of the detailed design and landscape.

The design of the landscape will play a fundamental role in determining whether the designs for Canterbury Works Headhouse meet the aspirations of the HS2 Design Vision. The panel therefore asks for an opportunity to comment on the landscape design at the 'bringing into use' submission stage. This should include information around the design of the proposed pocket park, planting, urban integration opportunities, and the long term management and maintenance of the landscape.