



Schedule 17 stage designs for Washwood Heath Depot, HS2 Ltd

Washwood Heath Depot

In September, the panel met to discuss the Schedule 17 stage designs for Washwood Heath Depot in east Birmingham – in advance of a Plans and Specifications Schedule 17 submission being made to Birmingham City Council.

Overall, the panel supports the Schedule 17 stage designs for the depot buildings. The quality and depth of work reaffirms the significance of Washwood Heath Depot to the local area and Birmingham, and to the success of HS2.

It supports the way the three main depot buildings relate to one other and to the surrounding landscape. The exploration of different material colours and tones is also welcomed.

The panel considers the landscape to be integral to the success of the depot proposals. The concept for this is compelling, taking inspiration from heathland landscapes. The panel also applauds the thought given to how attenuation ponds can provide amenity space for employees.

The way Washwood Heath Depot integrates with the wider context will be a significant factor in its success. It is important that the depot, the area of adjoining open space to the south and the employment land further to the south - form part of a single, holistic, place-driven approach that can help to kick-start the regeneration of Washwood Heath.

The panel encourages HS2 Ltd to establish robust mechanisms that can ensure the quality developed to date is maintained through to construction.

Design Panel activities August and September 2022

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Phase One Depot meetings

- Washwood Heath Depot - sustainability
- Washwood Heath Depot - masterplan

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Schedule 17 stage meetings

- Washwood Heath Depot
- Aston Church Road Overbridge

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Phase One station meetings

- Old Curzon Street Station building

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Governance meetings

- August and September monthly team meetings attended by the Design Panel chair, vice chair, secretariat and HS2 Ltd
- Governance Advisory Panel meeting attended by the Design Panel chair, vice chair, deputy chairs and secretariat

Washwood Heath Masterplan

Since the establishment of an Urban Design and Integration team at HS2 Ltd, the panel has welcomed its work to look beyond the project's red line boundary and maximise its benefits. This mindset is important to supporting collaborative conversations with planning authorities, stakeholders and communities, helping to secure a positive legacy for HS2.

In September, the panel met to discuss the development of a masterplan for an area of employment land at Washwood Heath. The depot is close to some of the most deprived areas in Birmingham, and the aim of the masterplan is to ensure the depot is an employment catalyst in a connected, ecological landscape.

Overall, the panel considers the layout and spatial approach to work well. It encourages continuing engagement with the wider community. For example this could inform plans for spaces and activities that respond to different faith and ethnic groups.

The delivery of the masterplan is likely to be completed by others. HS2 Ltd and Birmingham City Council, will therefore need to carefully balance levels of control and flexibility. The panel suggests developing tools such as design codes to help ensure high-quality places are delivered.



Design Panel site visit to the old Curzon Station building



Steven Tomlinson
Panel member and
Head of Placemaking at
London and Continental Railways

People's stories

Steven joined the HS2 Independent Design Panel in 2022. In his role at London and Continental Railways, he is responsible for the masterplanning of mixed used housing-led developments around stations across England.

He was formerly Design Principal at the London Legacy Development Corporation - shaping significant change in and around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park including Hackney Wick, Fish Island and Bromley by Bow.

"When I joined the panel I was instantly struck by the scale of the opportunity HS2 has to help deliver substantial benefits to communities and places along the line of route, sometimes transformational. I am keen to use my experience to support HS2 Ltd and ensure that design quality is at the heart of decision making - to secure the legacy the public expects from HS2."

Old Curzon Station building

In August, the panel met to discuss potential options for refurbishment of the Grade I listed Old Curzon Street Station - the first railway terminus serving the centre of Birmingham. There are numerous challenges being grappled with, and the panel broadly welcomes the attention HS2 Ltd is giving to resolving these. It highlighted the need for a strong business case and design vision for the future use of the historic building. This will be valuable as a basis for conversations with potential partners and to help identify funding opportunities.



Frame Projects
Secretariat to the
HS2 Independent
Design Panel

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