



## Euston Portal Headhouse

In December, the panel met to discuss Plans and Specifications Schedule 17 stage designs for Euston Portal Headhouse - the first headhouse on the HS2 route heading north from Euston Station. The meeting took place in advance of community engagement activities and a submission being made to London Borough of Camden.

The panel strongly supports the proposals. The modest scale of the building from street level, compared with the epic scale of the cutting, is well balanced and the addition of the crown feature subtly celebrates the Nash Villas and the railway. It encourages further consideration of the opportunity to celebrate this landmark in views from the train.

Landscape will be approved at a later stage, but the panel stressed that it will play an important role in the success of Euston Portal Headhouse, particularly along Park Village East. Further work is needed to demonstrate that landscape designs can meet the expectations of the HS2 Design Vision.

The panel has now commented on Schedule 17 stage designs for all Key Design Elements. Overall, it has found the quality of work to be high, often applauding the thoughtful response to context while meeting the technical requirements of high-speed rail.

The panel recognises that HS2 is under increased cost and programme pressure. However, it is important that this does not undermine the quality and public benefits inherent in the work developed to date.

## Design Panel activities October to December 2023

# 4

- Edgcote Viaduct
- Interchange Station
- Colne Valley Viaduct
- Euston Portal Headhouse

**Schedule 17 stage meetings**

# 4

- Learning Legacy - urban integration
- Learning Legacy - station design team procurement
- Landscape delivery lessons
- Euston Station sift process

**Route-wide meetings**

# 3

- October and December team meetings attended by the Design Panel chair, vice chair, secretariat and HS2 Ltd
- Design Panel programme workshop

**Panel operation meetings**

# 3

- HS2 Independent Design Panel Senior Executive meeting attended by the Design Panel chair, vice chair, members of the HS2 Ltd senior executive team, and HS2 Design Director
- Governance Advisory Panel meeting attended by the Design Panel chair, vice chair, deputy chairs and secretariat
- Department for Transport (DfT) Design Leadership meeting, attended by the DfT, the Design Panel, and HS2 Ltd

**Governance meetings**

# Landscape delivery

The panel has consistently highlighted that the success of HS2 will depend hugely on the landscapes it creates and enables along its route. Landscape is therefore as important as the effort put into the design of buildings and structures.

In December, the panel met to discuss how lessons learned on landscape design delivery are being applied to existing and future contracts.

Overall, the panel applauds the HS2 Landscape Team's approach to learning and applying lessons. A great deal has been achieved, but with the submission of Schedule 17 (Bringing Into Use) applications due to start shortly, which will seek approval for landscape design, the next stage of Phase One will be crucial in determining whether HS2 landscape and wider strategic ambitions are delivered. It is important that the design quality and commitments made at Schedule 17 (Plans and Specifications) stage are protected through to construction.

As this stage also coincides with increased cost and programme pressures on HS2, it is particularly urgent that the value of landscape projects is demonstrated, within HS2 Ltd and externally. Senior leadership and clear communication are needed to ensure landscape is seen as a priority and that its benefits, and the opportunity costs of failing to deliver quality, are widely understood and its value championed.



## People's stories

Eric Hallquist leads the landscape architecture studio at Allies and Morrison. He has worked as a landscape architect for nearly 25 years in prestigious multi-disciplinary studios delivering award winning projects across the UK and world. He has a particular focus on the design of public realm. Eric joined the Design Panel in 2021.

"I am delighted to be part of the HS2 Independent Design Panel. I believe that quality landscapes and public realm are vital to the success of our communities and integral to tackling environmental issues such as air quality, water management and carbon sequestration.

"Good design of large-scale infrastructure investment must be underwritten with solutions to these challenges while at the same time continuing to create beautiful and memorable places for people."

## Cancellation of Phase Two

The panel is hugely disappointed by the government's decision to cancel Phase Two and it fully supports the calls for the government to keep the land acquired for Phase Two, while plans for rail infrastructure in the north are clarified. Nevertheless, in meetings with the senior figures in the Department for Transport and HS2 Ltd, the panel has stressed the importance of sufficient design capability within HS2 Ltd, supported by the Independent Design Panel, in helping to align programmes, reduce costs, and delivering agreed outcomes more efficiently. At this time of change in the programme, the panel stands ready to help.



Frame Projects  
Secretariat to the  
HS2 Independent  
Design Panel

**HS2 INDEPENDENT  
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