

## HS2 INDEPENDENT DESIGN PANEL

# REPORT

### HS2 Independent Design Panel Meeting to discuss the Schedule 17 stage designs for Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse

10.00 – 13.00 Tuesday 30 March 2021  
Via Microsoft Teams

#### Attendees

Tony Burton (chair)	Vice chair of the HS2 Independent Design Panel
Jonathan McDowell	HS2 Independent Design Panel
Kathryn Moore	HS2 Independent Design Panel
Sam Richards	HS2 Independent Design Panel
Jean-Marc Barsam	Senior Project Engineer, HS2 Ltd
Angelina Damianou	Senior Project Engineer, HS2 Ltd
James Dearing	Design Manager, HS2 Ltd
Robert Howard	Landscape Manager, HS2 Ltd
Rebecca Poll	Consultant, HS2 Ltd
Ravi Raveendiraraj	Project Engineer, HS2 Ltd
Joyce Tang	Town Planning Manager, HS2 Ltd
Laura Williams	Historic Environment Manager, HS2 Ltd
Gemma Andrews	Design Manager, SCS Railways
Christiaan Robinson	SCS Railways
Mark Fisher	Architectural Lead, SCS Railways Design House
Jonathan Ip	Architect, SCS Railways Design House
Neil Martini	Package Manager, SCS Railways Design House
Niki Nikolova	Architect, SCS Railways Design House
Wouter Ombregt	Landscape Architect, SCS Railways Design House
Martin Swaffield	Town Planner, SCS Railways Design House
Jingchun Xu	Architectural Assistant, SCS Railways Design House
John Nicholls	Consents Manager HS2, London Borough of Camden
Jennifer Walsh	Deputy Team Leader, London Borough of Camden
Phillipa Jopp	Senior Urban Designer, London Borough of Camden
Edward Bailey	Frame Projects

#### Apologies / copied to

Nia Griffiths	Head of Consents & Engagement, SCS Railways
Paul Gully	Area Central Design Management Lead, SCS Railways
Sotira Sykas-Taylor	Euston Area Design Management & Engineering Lead, SCS Railways
Ophelia Blackman	Heritage Specialist, SCS Railways Design House
Dan Ashmore	Assistant Project Manager, HS2 Ltd

Christoph Brintrup	Head of Landscape, HS2 Ltd
Chelsea Evans	Apprentice Project Manager, HS2 Ltd
Keith Fairey	Land and Property, HS2 Ltd
Kay Hughes	Design Director, HS2 Ltd
Bernadette Hurd	Head of Benefits, HS2 Ltd
Paul Gilfedder	Head of Town Planning, HS2 Ltd
Nicole Linney	PA to Design Director, HS2 Ltd
Giles Thomas	Phase One Engineering Director, HS2 Ltd
Martin Short	Lead Architect, HS2 Ltd
Swati Singh	Sustainability Manager, HS2 Ltd
Pippa Whittaker	Senior Communications Manager, HS2 Ltd
Design Inbox	HS2 Ltd
Deborah Denner	Frame Projects
Lana Elworthy	Frame Projects

#### 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](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 of Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse.

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## Timing of Schedule 17 meeting

This meeting took place in advance of 'Plans and Specifications' Schedule 17 submission for Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse. The submission seeks approval for the headhouse building, boundary and security walls, lighting, and the hardstanding / parking area.

The Schedule 17 request for approval for Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse is scheduled for submission to Camden Council in Spring 2021.

There will be a separate Schedule 4 consent for any temporary or permanent highway consents, and separate Schedule 17 submissions for the concrete upstand and berm, which has been approved in March 2021.

'Site Restoration' and 'Bringing Into Use' requests will be submitted to the local planning authority, at a later stage.

HS2 Ltd indicates that it is satisfied that the proposals will meet the projects aspirations including the HS2 Design Vision and the HS2 Sustainability Approach.

*Post meeting note: HS2 Ltd confirmed that there will be no significant design changes, except some minor changes as a result of ongoing design development. This includes alternative parapet options to reduce the size of the building, in line with comments made by the local planning authority and the Design Panel.*

## Local planning authority views

Camden Council is the consenting authority for the Key Design Element (KDE) Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse and has had pre-application meetings with SCS Railways during design development.

The council notes that the site is located within a sensitive historical context, opposite the Grade II\* listed Nash Terraces to the west and within/adjacent to the Regent's Village Conservation Area.

Overall, the council welcomes the changes made to the scheme, which have reduced the presence of the building – in particular the soft landscaping proposed for the roof. The building as a whole is now considered to be a positive addition and its simple form successful. There are a number of areas where the Council is seeking further clarification and assurances, including the quality and detailing of the material palette, lift overrun, lighting and CCTV, and the landscape strategy for hard standing.

## HS2 Independent Design Panel's views

### Summary

The panel is confident that the Schedule 17 stage proposals for Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse have the potential to meet the aspirations of the HS2 Design Vision – subject to some further design work, including some relevant to the 'Plans and Specifications' submission, and to the quality of its detailed design and landscape (aspects of which will be approved through a separate mechanism) being maintained through detailed design and construction. The panel is supportive of the overall concept, and recognises that considerable progress has been made and positive changes introduced as a result. These include the overall reduction in height, the simple and robust material palette, the introduction of soft landscaping to the roof and within the compound, the removal of the entrance splay, reducing lighting requirements, and reinstatement of the existing boundary walls. The panel highlights the need to include a compelling narrative for the overall landscape strategy as part of the supporting information. The panel also asks the team to revisit the decision not to reduce the parapet height further, prior to the Schedule 17 stage submission being made. The success of the scheme will depend significantly on its quality being maintained during detailed design and construction. It is important that supporting information submitting alongside the Schedule 17 stage application provides assurance on this, particularly for aspects such as material choices, detailing and the design of the entrance gate. The panel notes the Schedule 17 stage presentation did not include sufficient information to allow the Design Panel to come to a conclusive view on whether the proposals for Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse meet the ambitions of the HS2 Sustainability Approach. The panel also noted areas that required further work, including the pedestrian experience, wider integration of the site, public access, and the design of the berm. The panel would welcome an opportunity to support the team post-Schedule 17 stage to refine and deliver these design aspects where this would be considered helpful. These comments are expanded below.

### Design approach

The panel finds much to admire in the Schedule 17 designs for Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse and its surroundings. It is supportive of the overall approach including the design approach of 'revealing the machine', and feels that the proposals respond well to a challenging brief.

A number of changes have been made since the last review meeting, which are welcomed by the panel and help the project to respond with care and sensitivity to the location. The panel feels that the Schedule 17 stage designs have the potential to meet the ambitions of the HS2 Design Vision, but that some further design work is required. This includes some aspects relevant to the 'Plans and Specifications' Schedule 17 submission.

## Architecture and materiality

The panel is supportive of the progress made in developing the architectural language of the headhouse building, and considers the concept of a ‘background’ building to Park Village East to be successful. It also considers the approach to layering elements and simplifying the material palette to be appropriate to the context.

The panel supports the use of a single material, brick, for the headhouse building. It also strongly supports the separation in materiality between the railway elements, in dark blue engineering brick, and the boundary walls, in red brick. This helps create a clear aesthetic distinction based on function and the panel asks for this to be maintained.

The panel welcomes the commitment to maintaining the quality promised through detailed design and construction, which is crucial to the scheme’s overall success. However, it feels more should be done to provide assurances that aspects such as materials and detailing, entrance gate design, brick perforations, pavement materials and lighting, will deliver the quality promised at Schedule 17 stage.

Some aspects of the design, such as the proposed timber, are difficult to detail and it is important that time is spent now on refining these prior to construction stage. Material samples will also be a valuable tool in conveying the commitment to maintaining design quality.

The panel supports of the overall reduction in height of the headhouse, but it strongly encourages the team to revisit the decision to not reduce the parapet height further. It feels that a lower parapet would be more appropriate, better supporting the focus on diminishing the building’s presence on the street, as well as offering glimpses of the green roof from the street. The panel is confident that the height of the parapet can be reduced without exposing roof clutter. For example, the safety railing could be set back from the parapet to hide it from views from the street, and the lift overrun could be well detailed in brick.

The panel understands the need to ensure maintenance can be carried out safely, but urges the team to explore alternative management options which overcome safety concerns and avoid the need for an increase in the height of parapet – which will have a permanent impact on the street.

If, after further consideration, this approach is not possible then the panel highlights the importance of clearly communicating the development of design thinking in the supporting information.

## Lighting

The panel welcomes the commitment to minimising the amount of lighting and, where it is required, limiting the time it is in use.

The panel suggests that the team explores opportunities to use the lighting as part of an overall art strategy, from the railway side in particular, while being mindful of the impact to residents on the other side of the cutting.

## Landscape

The design of the landscape will play an important role in determining whether designs for the Euston Cavern Shaft and 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’ stages.

The panel is supportive of a number of elements of the landscape design including the introduction of a green roof, planting within the compound, introduction of trees and planting along the boundary wall. Whilst it won’t be for approval at this stage, the panel welcomes the intention to include landscape information alongside the ‘Plans and Specifications’ Schedule 17 stage submission. The panel urges the team to ensure the supporting information provides a compelling narrative for the overall landscape strategy – this should be in addition to other, more detailed, information such as a planting plan and a management and maintenance strategy.

## Water management

The panel appreciates that water management requirements on the site will be minimal. However, it encourages the team to ensure that any water is managed in an integrated and sustainable way by, for example, highlighting where SuDS systems and soakaways are in place and where water is being re-used on site.

## Security and boundary treatment

The panel applauds the teams’ success in avoiding the use of barbed wire, and also supports the reinstatement of the boundary walls along the street, which will help maintain their positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. The panel also welcomes the intention to introduce a variety of native species to the strip between the two boundary walls, including the ecological improvements this will bring.

It asks that further consideration is given to opportunities for the wall to make a more active and positive contribution to the street, for example by introducing seating. This would help to enhance the narrative presented as part of the Schedule 17 submission. This work should be informed by an exploration of the spatial experience of using the street.

The panel also encourages the team to explore opportunities to re-use the existing bricks from the boundary wall during the re-build of the two walls along the street.



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The panel welcomes the removal of the large entrance splay, and confirmation that level access for pedestrians will be maintained across the entrance point. It questions whether the proposed change in material pattern to mark the vehicle entrance is needed, and asks the team to explore whether the pavement material and pattern can continue across the entrance.

### **Berm and upstand**

The panel understands that the berm and upstand have a specific function in supporting the Victorian wall, and in enabling some maintenance activities, and will form part of a separate approval process. However, it suggests that the team consider whether this space could be used in a more productive way. They should consider short term and long term uses, including art and culture opportunities, and how the design work carried out now could support this ambition.

### **Wider integration**

The panel appreciates that nearby schemes, such as Euston Portal Headhouse, are at different levels of design maturity. However, the connection and relationship Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse has with the wider area is an important part of the design story, and should be clearly communicated in the supporting information.

The panel notes that a number of separate submissions are being made by HS2 Ltd in this area, and that significant decisions are also yet to be made, such as the proposals being developed by the Euston master development partner. It asks the team to consider how each submission in the area can clearly communicate the relationship between different HS2 elements and submissions, and show how they have been future-proofed to adapt as necessary to future development.

### **Public access**

The panel asks the team to explore the potential to introduce public uses such as a viewing point, whether temporary or long-term, as work progresses. This will require collaborative conversations between HS2 Ltd, Camden Council and others to identify potential opportunities, and the mechanisms needed to help make them a reality.

### **Sustainability**

The panel notes that the design team's response to the HS2 Sustainability Approach is ongoing, but that there have been some valuable achievements to date. However, the Schedule 17 stage presentation did not include sufficient information for the Design Panel to reach a conclusive view on whether the proposals for Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse meet the Sustainability Approach requirements.

### **Next steps**

The panel considers that the Schedule 17 stage proposals for Euston Cavern Shaft and Headhouse have the potential to meet the aspirations of the HS2 Design Vision – subject to further design work and the design quality presented being maintained through detailed design and construction.

It asks the team that the designs for the parapet of the headhouse building are revisited to further consider options to further reduce its height. The panel would welcome an opportunity to discuss this specific design challenge further, if this would be of value.

The panel supports the intention to include indicative information for the aspects of the landscape not being approved at this stage as part of the 'Plans and Specifications' Schedule 17 submission. It urges the team to ensure the supporting information includes a clear and compelling narrative for the landscape strategy.

The landscape design will play an important role in the success of these proposals. It therefore asks that more design development is carried out following the Schedule 17 submission in areas discussed above. This includes opportunities to further enhance the civic contribution of the boundary wall along Park Village East, and the continuous pursuit of sustainability benefits.

The panel would welcome an opportunity to be involved in commenting on the proposals further at 'Bringing Into Use' and 'Site Restoration' stage, once the 'Plans and Specifications' Schedule 17 decision has been made. In particular, it would be keen to discuss the scheme's integration with the surrounding city, including the future use of the berm, and the detail and delivery of the landscape designs.