



Project Title:	INV 06: Inverkip Power Station Redevelopment
Details:	Planning development framework
Location:	Inverkip, Inverclyde
Use type:	Housing / Retail / Office / Public Realm / Infrastructure
Client / Developer:	Scottish Power
Lead Designer(s):	Turley Associates
Planning Authority:	Inverclyde Council
Planning Status and Ref:	Outline Planning: ref. 09/0175/IC
Issue Date:	11 September 2009

Introduction

This report relates to a planning and development framework prepared in support of an outline planning application for a mixed use urban village (Brueacre Village) on the site of the former Inverkip Power Station, next to Wemyss Bay, Inverclyde presented at an A+DS Design Review meeting held on 25 August 2009 in Glasgow.

Preliminary designs for the redevelopment of the site were presented to A+DS by Inverclyde Council on 24 June 2008, and a restricted report subsequently issued on 11 July 2008.

A+DS Views

1 General

1.1 We thank the project team for their presentation and welcome the opportunity to review the project again at outline application stage.

1.2 When we last saw the project we made a number of comments with regard to the principle of development and the approach to the Masterplan, specifically in relation to context, sustainability and design vision. We felt that a number of strategic issues needed to be addressed. In this regard we suggested a significant consideration would be the sustainability of what was proposed, and questioned whether a standalone, remote settlement reliant on private vehicle use should be encouraged. Were the site to be developed, we encouraged a more creative bespoke design solution that worked with the particular qualities of the site, rather than a conventional response based on urban blocks and formalised street layouts.

1.3 There are aspects of the designs and the process that has been employed in developing them that we support, such as the community engagement that has taken place, the opening up of the waterfront to the public and creation of a sea walk. However, we feel that there are a number of major issues with regards to access, connections, landscape design, sustainability and the procurement processes that still need to be addressed.

2 Access and connections

2.1 Gateway

We recognise the need to provide road access into the site that complies with current road standards. However, we are not convinced that the current arrangement, consisting of two roads stemming off of the principle roundabout, will be successful in terms of creating a high quality gateway into the new village that promotes pedestrian movement and an integrated community. We suggest that a more imaginative approach that is less divisive, whilst still meeting the technical requirements, may be possible through, for example, the use of alternative road treatments and shared surfaces for emergency access. We support the Council in promoting a more liberal and less engineered solution in this respect, and expect to see the principles enshrined in the draft policy document 'Designing Streets', being applied to this project.

2.2 School and community provision

Consideration should be given to the provision of community facilities for the new village. We note that the nearest primary schools will be located towards the north in Inverkip and to the south in Wemyss Bay. It will be incumbent on the design team and the Council to demonstrate that good and safe routes can be provided for children travelling between home and school.

2.3 Transportation links

The provision of public transportation links between the new settlement, adjacent communities and to rail services are critical, in terms of creating a sustainable neighbourhood that is not entirely reliant on car use. We note, however, that as yet there is no clear proposal for how the village is intended to support, and be serviced by, public transport.

2.4 Relationship to Wemyss Bay

The new village is close enough to Wemyss Bay to suggest an extension, but does not seem to have been truly conceived as such. We are interested in the potential for further exploiting the relationship between the two settlement areas. We recognise that there may be difficulties in improving physical connections by road, due to the existing topography; however, this should not preclude the introduction of pedestrian linkages to link the two settlements between residential areas and across the open space at the southern edge of the site.

3 Topography, landscape and identity

3.1 The landscape features, at this scale, have the potential to create identity and sense of place, but they can also act as a barrier. At the moment, much of the landscape design seems to be concentrated into areas that are not suitable for development, and are likely to separate rather than connect the communities around them. We would like to see an approach to the landscape designs that integrates with the built form more successfully, and in doing so informs the urban design and architecture and creates an interesting and coherent proposal.

3.2 Through remediation exercises for the site there are opportunities for a new stepped topography to be created, and for the redesign of the landscape to influence and help generate a more successful urban form for the village. We encourage the design

team to investigate, through the use of site sections, how this might be achieved and how a more cohesive development, that successfully integrates built form, topography and landscape, can be established.

3.3 We are pleased to see the inclusion of the existing harbour in the proposals and would like to see how this can be made more accessible from other locations both outwith and within the new settlement.

4 Procurement process

4.1 The way in which the site is to be developed has a direct impact on the amount of information that should be provided. It is critical that sufficient guidelines are put in place to control the quality of development, especially in the event of the site being sold off for development by others, which we understand is likely to be the case. Sufficient information, including a masterplan and relevant design guidelines, should be provided to ensure that the quality of development that is envisaged is achievable through the procurement process. This is particularly relevant given that, if successful, the outline application would be adopted as Statutory Planning Guidance by the Local Authority. We look to the Council to ensure that there is continuity between what is approved and what is passed on to potential developers in this respect.

Conclusion

We welcome the opportunity to review the planning development framework for the project. However, we do not feel that the current document contains sufficient guidance to ensure the delivery of a high quality development. We encourage the client to commission a full design team, including an architect and landscape architect, to develop the masterplan and relevant design guidelines to help guide a coherent development that is integrated with its surroundings. This should include further explanation of the landscape design, access to community facilities, provision for public transport and phasing of the development.

Appendix

Presenting Team:

Turley Associates
Scottish Power

Stephen Tucker
Steve Marshall

A+DS:

Chair:
Panel:

Rob Joiner
Alison Blamire, Karen Cadell, Chris Rankin
and Paul Stallan

Staff lead:
Staff:

Steven Malone
Angela Williams and Tony Reilly

Other participants:

Inverclyde Council

David Ashman, Nicholas McLaren and
Fergus Macleod