

**Report Title:** Forth Replacement Crossing  
**Issue Date:** 10 November 2008  
**Client/Developer:** Transport Scotland  
**Lead Designer:** ARUP, Flint & Neil Partnership, Dissing & Welling  
**Local Authority:**  
**Location:** Firth of Forth  
**Planning Ref:**  
**Details:** Proposals for a replacement crossing across the River Forth

**PDF Version:** 56KB



Architecture+DesignScotland  
Ailtearachd is Dealbhadh na h-Alba

## Introduction

This report relates to a meeting to consider design issues related to the proposed Forth Crossing, held on 3 November 2008 at A+DS's offices in Edinburgh. The discussions followed on from earlier meetings held in April and September 2008.

The project was presented by representatives of Jacobs ARUP Joint Venture; Flint and Neil Partnership; and Dissing and Welling.

The meeting was also attended by representatives of Transport Scotland.

## A+DS Views

### 1. General comments

1.1 In earlier reports we have raised the issue of the existing Forth Road Bridge, and the impact that a decision on its future it might have on the designs for the new one. We recommended that an appraisal be carried out to consider how the two bridges, in tandem, might accommodate future transport demands and how the design of the new bridge might be influenced by this. We suggested that it would be premature to rule out a mono-tower as a fourth option until these uncertainties had been resolved.

2.2 We are pleased to hear that such an appraisal has been carried out and that the existing bridge is to be retained, thereby relieving the new bridge of the need to carry pedestrian and public transport. Opportunities have opened up for design development, including reconsideration of that fourth option that was not previously available. The design team are to be congratulated for the way on which they have embraced these opportunities, consolidated and reconsidered the work that has already been done and developed a scheme that is simpler and clearer than any of the options previously presented, and shows great promise.

### 2 Bridge design

2.1 The reduction in width of the bridge, which has led to the mono-tower becoming a feasible, and now evidently favoured, option, is much welcomed. We have always seen this option as offering greater design potential, and are delighted to see that our earlier concerns, that the mono-tower option appeared to have been dismissed, have now been alleviated.

2.2 A decision on the tower option has promoted more focused development of other aspects of the bridge design. We were encouraged by the discussion that took place on the design of such elements as the cables and the deck, which are being developed in an integrated

manner and with a view to an elegant and simple solution. We look forward to hearing how other elements, such as balustrades, lighting, maintenance equipment, engineering and construction details, materials, textures and colour will be integrated into the designs. The design team have previously stated their ambition for a crossing that is an innovative engineering solution of its time, and the way in which the designs are being developed continue to demonstrate this.

2.3 We were also pleased to engage in discussion on the visual relationship between this new crossing and the existing two bridges, and the way in which the three together demonstrate a logical advancement in engineering. The simple minimalist design that the mono-tower option offers is positive in both respects. In our earlier report we suggested that three different bridges from different eras might define an iconic image of Scotland. Again, certainty as to the future of the existing road bridge allows a meaningful discussion to take place, and this is welcomed. We look forward to seeing how the designs develop in this respect, and we are particularly interested in seeing how appropriate public viewing opportunities will be provided.

2.4 Our earlier report supported the intention to create a seamless continuous ribbon that integrates with its landscape. We support the intention to create visual continuity in the bridge deck, and recognise that this is being explored at the moment. We consider that it is of great importance that the transition between the cable stay span and the approach viaduct is gracefully resolved.

### **3 Landscape and the wider context**

3.1 We have encouraged an integrated approach that considered the bridge, approaches, junctions, cuttings and landscape works as a unified whole, and also the impact on adjacent communities and land on either side of the Forth. We recognise that, for good reason, the focus of recent design development has been on the design of the bridge itself, and look forward to seeing how these wider aspects of the proposal develop. We re-iterate the importance of taking account of landscape and urban considerations in both the development and assessment of design options.

### **4 Appraisal and procurement processes**

4.1 We are encouraged by the strong vision so far demonstrated by the project team and their aspiration for high design quality. The procurement strategy will need a high level of defined design specification to ensure that this level of vision and aspiration can be maintained. We welcome Transport Scotland's stated commitment to a more prescriptive approach in the procurement process, and look forward to discussing at a future date how this might be manifested. It is critical that quality and boldness of concept is not diluted at a future date by the introduction of contractor led alternatives.

4.2 Earlier reports laid great stress on ensuring that the appraisal process, whereby decisions were made on how various options were assessed and/or dismissed, acknowledged the impact of the bridge on the landscape and urban structure. We are pleased that the result of the most recent appraisal of options for the tower design has, whether by intention or default, resulted in the most promising design option being identified. We trust that, as the project develops and decisions made that impact on the designs, design quality remains at the heart of the project, and is supported by an assessment process that promotes it at all levels.

## **Conclusion**

We are encouraged by the developments that have taken place since we last saw the designs for this important project. The decision to maintain the existing bridge, and the rigorous process of analysis and appraisal that has ensued, have resulted in a design option that we have consistently promoted being adopted. We look forward to seeing how the designs develop, particularly in relation to landscape and urban issues.

We urge the project team to maintain the vision and aspiration to design quality that they have so far adopted. We look to Transport Scotland to demonstrate their commitment to this by ensuring that the decision making process, procurement route and setting of the budget promote and protect this aspiration to produce a design of world standing.

We look forward to our continued involvement and future discussions.

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