

# Euston Portal Headhouse Design

## Frequently Asked Questions

High Speed Two (HS2) is the new high-speed railway for Britain.

Skanska Costain STRABAG (SCS) is the main works contractor that will build the section of HS2 between Parkway and Hampstead Road, known as Euston Approaches.

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## HEADHOUSE PURPOSE AND LOCATION

### What is a headhouse and why are they needed?

Headhouses are above-ground buildings that allow exit from the rail tunnel in case of an emergency. They also provide access for emergency services and for maintenance requirements.

The amount of, and locations of our headhouses were agreed with the London Fire Brigade and are required to meet all necessary safety regulations. We also have to factor in the design of the railway as well as the available space in the existing railway cutting.

We are building two headhouses in the Euston Approaches/Camden Cutting. This one is known as the Portal Headhouse, and the other, close to the top of Park Village East is known as the Cavern Headhouse.

While both headhouses provide emergency access to the tunnels, the Portal headhouse also provides ventilation to the Euston portal below, as well as powers the Cavern headhouse.

### What exactly will the Portal Headhouse comprise of?

Images of the proposed design are available online [here](#).

The headhouse building will be set back from the road behind Park Village East parapet wall (and a new access gate).

Between the wall and the headhouse will be a hardstanding area for emergency and maintenance vehicles when required.

The portal headhouse building will contain lifts, and mechanical and electrical equipment.

The exterior of the portal headhouse will include an architectural feature noise barrier and a green roof and other vegetation.

The headhouse will not have any office space and will not be staffed when not in use.

The headhouse will be closely monitored by security via a radar detection system which will alert the control centre.

### Where will the Portal Headhouse be located?

The Euston Portal headhouse will be located in the railway cutting opposite Silsoe House, south of Mornington Street bridge. It will be built up from track level and sit on top of the concrete box HS2 trains will pass through between Mornington Street bridge and Granby Terrace bridge.

## STRUCTURE AND SHAPE

### How big will it be/will we see it?

The headhouse will be set back from the Park Village East parapet wall by approximately 20 to 25 metres and has been designed to be as low as possible. As it is 8m tall, it will be visible from street level when walking along PVE, though will be hidden from some angles by the vegetation in the reinstated planter.

### Could the height be reduced so the headhouse is not visible from street level?

The height is required to ensure there is space for all the necessary equipment.

The upper part of the building also includes a noise screen to reduce the amount of noise generated by the headhouse once it is operational and keep it within strict environmental regulations.

## MATERIALS

### What will it be made of?

This is something we have consulted on with the local community. We proposed a mix of steel, concrete and blockwork.

We received a range of feedback on our proposed design during our engagement events in February 2024, and in response to the questions asked. Once this feedback is assessed we will be able to confirm the materials in the final design.

### How were the proposed materials selected?

We selected the materials proposed for the building following discussions with, and recommendations from, the London Borough of Camden, The Crown Estate, and an independent design panel of experts in architecture and urban planning. The design and materials have been proposed with the local area and existing structures in mind to ensure consistency, including the various historic buildings and structures, and are in line with the design principles set out in the HS2 Act. In this case, the nature and the heritage of the area is dominated by the railway as it approaches one of the country's most famous stations, and the design and materials reflect that.

In particular, we selected the blue engineering block to integrate with the existing blue grey brickwork on the retaining walls to the railway.

### Where will the materials be sourced from? Will any be reused from what is being removed from the Euston Approaches site?

Material will be re-used where possible, but we are unsure yet how much will be available and whether they will be of useable quality. Material is sought to be reused as much as possible and if they are unsuitable for this purpose, they can potentially be used elsewhere.

## How are you considering the environment in this design?

We have included a green roof area in the design. We also propose to integrate insect bricks into the perimeter wall, and log piles and depressions included to increase the temporary retention of rainwater for additional ecological habitat value. Additionally, we will rebuild and plant the southern Park Village East planter.

## LANDSCAPING

### What is the Green Roof area?

This is a section on the top level of the headhouse that will be planted to create a more meaningful contribution to local biodiversity and to act as a stepping stone habitat. This is known as a 'green roof'.

### What plants will be in the planter on Park Village East?

When we rebuild the planter on southern Park Village East, we will plant a range of appropriate foliage.

### What plants will be used within the headhouse compound?

The plants selected have been inspired by existing local flora, with a focus on London Borough of Camden priority species. The planting palette will be made up of evergreen plants and shrubs for year-round colour and habitat and ensure there will be no net loss of habitat or biodiversity as a result of the work.

### How will the planting and green roof area be maintained, and by who?

The details of this have not yet been determined but the planting and green roof area will be privately maintained.

## CONSTRUCTION

### What will be the impact to the community during construction?

We are currently at the design stage. Construction methodology will be developed and shared at a later date, alongside potential traffic management and noise impacts. However, we will endeavour to undertake this with minimal impact to neighbours and the local community and in keeping with permitted limits for noise and vibration. Wherever possible we try to design in a way that reduces the need for particularly impactful construction methods.

We will provide updates to the community ahead of works via [HS2inCamden.co.uk](https://hs2incamden.co.uk), as well as through a variety of other engagement methods and materials.

## OPERATION

### How often will the headhouse need to be attended to by workers once operational?

The headhouse will be mostly unattended with access only required to complete routine maintenance of the building and in the instance of an emergency.

### What will the lighting look like and will this impact on neighbouring properties?

The lighting design consists of a variety of lighting, including wall mounted, pole mounted, street lamps and downlights.

The lighting design is purely functional. When the building is unoccupied there will be only very dim lighting to assist monitoring for security purposes. When there is an emergency or when the building is occasionally occupied for maintenance at night, additional lights will be switched on to allow visibility and safety. Fittings have been designed to be mounted as low as possible so they should not be directly visible from Park Village East.

### How much noise and vibration will be generated by the headhouse?

The equipment in the headhouse is designed to run as quietly as possible and any operational noise impacts will be within strict legal requirements. We considered these within the project's Environmental Statement, which was submitted during the planning process. The only exception would be in case of emergency, when the ventilation system would run faster, resulting in it potentially being audible outside.

During initial assessments, we found that the Portal headhouse generated slightly higher levels of noise than the Cavern headhouse and so we have incorporated a noise screen into the design to mitigate this. This is located around the top level of the building and has been carefully designed to be aesthetically pleasing.

### Will required access to the headhouse impact on-street parking or driveway access?

The headhouse will only be attended for routine maintenance and access to the shafts, On these occasions, the courtyard in front will be used for parking vehicles. In the rare event of an emergency, it is possible vehicles will need to park on the street, but we do not anticipate this being a regular occurrence.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / HOW TO CONTACT US

### What is a key design element?

HS2 has classified certain structures or parts of the railway as 'Key Design Elements', including the Euston Portal headhouse. This means it is important for us to involve the local community in their design.

The Euston Portal headhouse is a significant structure due to its location in a residential area. We want it to respect the surroundings and the local area. We have designed the Key Design Elements to do their jobs effectively, to last 120 years and offer taxpayers value for money in the long term. This means there are some aspects of the designs that we can't change.

You can find a full list of the Key Design Elements in Table 1 of [HS2 Information Paper D1: Design policy](#), which is available online from GOV.UK.

### How do we involve the local community?

We involve the local community through a series of engagement events. As part of the 'involve' stage, we held four public events in February 2024 to explain the proposals and the process. We sought views on the materiality of the following in particular:

- Your preferred option for the brickwork of the Euston Portal headhouse
- Your preferred finish for the Euston Portal headhouse gate
- How the proposed design of the Euston Portal headhouse could be improved

The next stage is 'you said, we did' engagement to inform the community of the final design we will submit for approval. This follows the 'involve' stage where we gathered community feedback on the headhouse design. Where possible, we will incorporate the feedback received into the final design for the Euston Portal headhouse. However, not all comments may be included due to competing views. We will talk through the changes we made to the initial design and help the community understand why some feedback was unable to be incorporated.

### What prior engagement has been undertaken and with who?

We have had regular dialogue with London Borough of Camden, Historic England, The Crown Estate, and with the Independent Design Panel throughout the design process and we have incorporated their feedback along with that received from the community. Feedback was formally received at engagement events held throughout February 2024 with the residents directly opposite the proposed location and the wider community.

We are planning the 'you said, we did' stage of the engagement process where we inform of the final design we will be submitting for approval. This is not an opportunity to gather further feedback on the design. We are hoping to hold these events in May 2024 and will inform the local community once dates are confirmed.

We have also been mindful of the feedback received from the community and Council during our works to date, including with regard to the Cavern headhouse which will be built at the northern end of Park Village East.

### **What are the next steps? Will there be any opportunities or further engagement?**

In June 2024 we will submit our application with the final design to London Borough of Camden as the planning authority for approval. Camden Council have the opportunity to run a 21-day consultation period on the design once we submit our application and they will pass all comments through to us for our response. Camden Council will confirm a decision within eight weeks from the date of submission.

### **Contact us?**

If you have a question about this topic, HS2, or our works, you can contact our HS2 Helpdesk team 24 hours a day on 08081 434 434, or email [HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk](mailto:HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk). For those who have speech or hearing difficulties we offer a minicom service on 08081 456 472.

# Keeping you informed

We are committed to keeping you informed about work on HS2. This includes ensuring you know what to expect and when to expect it, as well as how we can help.

## Residents' Charter and Commissioner

The Residents' Charter is our promise to communicate as clearly as we possibly can with people who live along or near the HS2 route.

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter)

We also have an independent Residents' Commissioner whose job is to make sure we keep to the promises we make in the Charter and to keep it under constant review. Find reports at: <http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner>

You can contact the Commissioner at: [residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk](mailto:residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk)

## Construction Commissioner

The Construction Commissioner's role is to mediate and monitor the way in which HS2 Ltd manages and responds to construction complaints. You can contact the Construction Commissioner by emailing: [complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk](mailto:complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk)

## Property and compensation

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[www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property)

Find out if you're eligible for compensation at:

[www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2](http://www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2)

## Holding us to account

If you are unhappy for any reason, you can make a complaint by contacting our HS2 Helpdesk team.


For more details on our complaints process, please visit our website:

[www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain](http://www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain)

## Contact Us

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team all day, every day of the year on:

 Freephone **08081 434 434**

 Minicom **08081 456 472**

 Email **[hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk](mailto:hs2enquiries@hs2.org.uk)**

Write to:

**FREEPOST**

**HS2 Community Engagement**

Website [www.hs2.org.uk](http://www.hs2.org.uk)

To keep up to date with what is happening in your local area, visit:

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