

CONSULTATION RE. APPLICATION FOR LISTING OF ONE COOLING TOWER, ONE HEAT EXCHANGER BUILDING, ONE REACTOR AND TURBINE HALL, CALDER HALL, SEASCALE.

Lead Officer: T Pomfret – Development Services Manager

To consider and respond to the above consultation received from English Heritage on 29 July 2005.

Recommendation: That English Heritage be informed of this Council's support for the listing of the identified buildings with the exception of the cooling tower.

Resource Implications: Nil

1.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.1 English Heritage have sought the views of this Council on the above application for listing certain structures as the Calder Hall Site, Seascale. Representations about the architectural or historic interest of the building will then be taken into account by English Heritage in formulating their recommendation to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

1.2 Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 "Planning and the Historic Environment" includes Government guidance on the listing process. The main criteria which the Secretary of State applies in deciding which buildings to include in the statutory lists are as follows:-

- **architectural interest:** the lists are meant to include all buildings which are of importance to the nation for the interest of their architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship; also important examples of particular building types (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms;

- **historic interest:** this includes buildings which illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural or military history;

- **close historical association:** with nationally important people or events;

- **group value,** especially where buildings comprise an important architectural or historic unity or a fine example of planning (e.g. squares, terraces or model villages);

1.3 Para 6.12 of PPG 15 states:-

"The approach adopted for twentieth century listing is to identify key exemplars for each of a range of building types – industrial, educational,

residential, etc. – and to treat these exemplars as broadly defining a standard against which to judge proposals for further additions to the list”.

1.4 In terms of historical associations para 6.15 goes on to state:-

“Well-documented historical associations of national importance will increase the case for the inclusion of a building in the statutory list. They may justify a higher grading than would otherwise be appropriate, and may occasionally be the deciding factor. But in the Secretary of State’s view there should normally be some quality or interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing. Either the building should be of some architectural merit in itself, or it should be well preserved in a form which directly illustrates and confirms its historical associations (e.g. because of the survival of internal features). Where otherwise unremarkable buildings have historical associations, the Secretary of State’s view is that they are normally best commemorated by other means (e.g. by a plaque), and that listing will be appropriate only in exceptional cases.”

1.5 Clearly the historical significance of Calder Hall as the world’s first commercial nuclear power station is a material consideration. As stated in the above para. 6.15 of PPG 15, there should also normally be some quality or interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify statutory protection.

1.6 I am not aware (and the limited timescale for response has not permitted detailed research) whether the Calder Hall cooling towers represent technological innovation or virtuosity. In terms of visual impact, however, the cooling towers are generally regarded as negative landscape features. On balance, listing of the cooling towers is not supported.

1.7 The heat exchange building, one reactor and turbine hall, however, are considered to represent worthy candidates for listed status due to their national and international significance in the evolution of the nuclear industry.

1.8 To afford listed status to these buildings would undoubtedly create significant issues for the site operators. However, these issues, per se, should not detract from the credentials of the buildings as worthy candidates for the protection listing would afford.

Contact Officer: Tony Pomfret – Development Services Manager

Background Papers: Letter from English Heritage dated 26 July 2005.