

CUMBERLAND COUNCIL DELEGATED PLANNING DECISION

1.	Reference No:	4/24/2372/0F1
2.	Proposed Development:	PRIOR NOTIFICATION OF PROPOSED DEMOLITION – WINDSCALE ADVANCED GAS-COOLED REACTOR TURBINE HALL
3.	Location:	SELLAFIELD, SEASCALE
4.	Parish:	Ponsonby, Beckermest with Thornhill
5.	Constraints:	ASC;Adverts - ASC;Adverts, Flood Area - Flood Zone 2, Flood Area - Flood Zone 3, Safeguard Zone - Safeguard Zone, Coal - Off Coalfield - Data Subject To Change, Key Species - Potential areas for Natterjack Toads, DEPZ Zone - DEPZ Zone, Outer Consultation Zone - Sellafield 10KM
6.	Publicity Representations &Policy	See report Site Notice displayed
7.	Report: Site <p>The site is located within the Sellafield nuclear complex, to the north-west within proximity of the boundary fence. It measures approximately 4,760 m2 and comprises the Turbine Hall and adjoining office building, plus the immediate surrounding hardstanding and area made up of footpaths and roads. The turbine hall and office are adjoined and comprise one single combined structure.</p> Proposal <p>Demolition of the Windscale Advanced Gas cooled Reactor Turbine Hall (WAGR), a redundant plant building constructed between 1958 and 1963, is proposed. It forms one of the remaining parts of the redundant Windscale Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor complex and</p>	

housed a steam turbine that generated electricity during WAGR's operational years 1963-1981.

The building is five storeys tall and of brick and corrugated sheet construction. At the fifth storey, a walkway of metal construction on the eastern aspect links the building to the neighbouring nuclear reactor building. The building roof is constructed of steel sheets over a metal frame. There are no internal floors, as the building contained heavy equipment used in the generation of power and a large overhead crane in each was required for maintenance work when the plant was operational. A series of single-glazed, aluminium-framed windows run nearly the full length of the north and south walls. The Turbine Hall building measures approximately 66m x 40m. External elevations above ground level vary from 25m to 30m.

Asbestos was used in the original building construction as insulation and fire protection, the remains of which have been surveyed and will be removed prior to demolition works taking place.

Power generation ended in 1981 and the turbine, generators and ancillary equipment had been removed by the mid-80s, after which the building was repurposed as an engineering test facility. Offices within the building were retained for their original purpose.

Reason for Demolition and Future Use of Site

The turbine hall is now redundant and has reached the end of its useful life. Option studies are being undertaken into future development of the site. At present, the proposed future use is not confirmed and the building requires demolition to remove unnecessary maintenance until a future development design is confirmed. In the interim it is the intention to use it to locate demolition machinery and project accommodation in association with the subsequent demolition of the remaining WAGR complex.

Method of Demolition

Given the nature, age and original purpose of the building this will be complex. A key issue is ensuring the safe removal and disposal of any asbestos.

A full refurbishment and demolition asbestos survey (R&D) has been undertaken on the building and any remaining asbestos removal will take place prior to any demolition works (unless advised by the contractor that removal poses a greater risk than post demolition treatment.). Licensed demolition contractors will undertake all licensable asbestos work.

Most bulk asbestos in the building was removed in the 80s post generation. The building has benefited from multiple asbestos cleans as it was repurposed and modified over the years. Remaining asbestos cement cladding constitutes the bulk of remaining asbestos. This cladding will be carefully removed and segregated, placed into an approved sealed container for transport to an off-site disposal facility.



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A new primary access route to the reactor building will be established through an existing opening at the base. Once the new access is available for use, the elevated access corridor will be removed and the opening in the reactor building permanently closed.

Demolition will be progressive using long reach machines. Local exclusions zones will be implemented and managed throughout the works to control risks and minimise impact on adjacent operations. Redundant trenches will be cleared out and back-filled, active trenches will be protected by a suitable and sufficient floor plate. Any loose radiological contamination of the building will be removed prior to demolition. Where decontamination is not possible, the affected material will be segregated and directed to an appropriate disposal route dependant on classification.

Nearby drains will be protected against material ingress and services protected as required.

The turbine hall will be removed to the existing ground floor level and the interface with adjoining facilities made good to re-establish weather tightness.

The site will be secured with a temporary 'Heras' type fence to control access and egress during demolition.

Prior to demolition commencing, all small plant items and equipment will be removed. Larger plant, such as pumps or generators will be drained of fluid prior to demolition commencing and be removed as access improves during demolition works. An internal gantry crane is present and will be removed after the gable is dismantled and access is available. The crane will be moved to ground using a suitable tracked excavator and size reduced.

Consultation Responses

Beckermeth without Thornhill Parish Council

No objections

Ponsonby with Calderbridge Parish Council

Request additional information regarding transport movements and timescales.

Cumberland Council – Environmental Health

No objection. Initially requested a condition to cover the reporting of unexpected contamination but given that this is a prior notice procedure they are satisfied if the requirement is brought to the attention of the applicant separately in writing.

Cumberland Council – Highways and LLFA.

No objection, consider the proposal will have no material effect on highway conditions or drainage.

In response to the issues raised by Ponsonby Parish Council the applicants, Sellafeld Ltd,

offer the following comments:

- Transport movements and timings.

The vehicle movements carrying waste materials to their disposal location will be between 9am and 4pm – so timed to avoid rush hour traffic.

- Request for Vehicle movements to be from Sellafield to Blackbeck Roundabout and not through Calderbridge.

The building summary document states the HGVs used to remove the waste material from the site will leave via Main Gate. The preferred route north to Lillyhall or Flimby etc. will be via Yottenfews and Blackbeck roundabouts. Routing of vehicles from the North Gate of Sellafield to the traffic lights at the A595/C4013 junction in Calderbridge will not occur due to restrictions on the vehicle size which can use North Gate. Equally routing vehicles via Main Gate to Calderbridge (via the U4044 and C4013 roads), or from Calder Gate along the U4465 and B5344 to the A595 at Gosforth would both represent significant and unnecessary diversions (not to mention increasing the transport costs), therefore it will not be acceptable to SL to use those routes.

- Clarity regarding project time scales - how long the additional vehicle movements and demolition works will take.

There will be ten HGV movements carrying up to 200 tons per day. Given there will be approximately 10,600 tonnes of material to remove from the site, this will require approximately 53 full working days of vehicle movements removing around 530 loads. Taking into account issues such as poor weather, weekend shutdowns, public holidays, roadworks, site exercises etc. which can slow down transfers, it is expected these works would take around 3 calendar months.

It is considered that the response adequately addresses the issues raised.

Planning Policy

Planning law requires applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan

On 1st April 2023, Copeland Borough Council ceased to exist and was replaced by Cumberland Council as part of the Local Government Reorganisation of Cumbria. Cumberland Council inherited the local development plan documents of each of the sovereign Councils including Copeland Borough Council, which combine to form a

Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Cumberland.

The inherited the local development plan documents continue to apply to the geographic area of their sovereign Councils only.

The Consolidated Planning Policy Framework for Cumberland comprises the Development Plan for Cumberland Council until replaced by a new Cumberland Local Plan.

Copeland Local Plan 2021 – 2039 (LP)

Cumberland Council continued the preparation of the LP as commenced by Copeland Borough Council.

The LP was adopted by Cumberland Council on the 5th of November 2024 replacing the Copeland Local Plan 2013-2028 and the saved policies of the Copeland Local Plan 2021-2016.

The following LP policies are now considered relevant to this proposal and carry full weight in decision making:

Strategic Policy DS1: Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development

Strategic Policy DS2: Reducing the impacts of development on Climate Change

Strategic Policy DS4: Design and Development Standards

Strategic Policy N1: Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Strategic Policy NU1 Supporting Development of the Nuclear Sector

Strategic Policy NU2 Maximising Opportunities from Nuclear Decommissioning

Policy NU4 Nuclear and Associated Development at Sellafield.

Other Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

Potential Demolition Impacts

Wastes and Transport

It is estimated the project will generate some 10,600 tonnes of material to remove from the

site,

Where demolition arisings can be repurposed for use on the Sellafield site they will be. For example, existing trenches that previously contained the turbine condenser circuit will be backfilled with in-situ crushed compacted concrete, subject to characterisation results and internal approval.

Any material found to be radiologically contaminated will be embargoed and sentenced to a suitable alternative disposal route.

The turbine hall is of substantial construction. Removal of demolition arisings to off-site disposal and recycling facilities is estimated to require up to ten 20.0Te HGV vehicles per day with sorting and segregating of arisings constraining the rate of dispatch. HGVs will depart site via main gate and be timed to avoid rush-hour traffic. No other route is proposed which satisfactorily addresses the concerns raised by the local Parish Council of the potential for movements going via Calderbridge.

Dust

Much of the work does not have significant dust generation potential. Concrete removal and crushing has dust generating potential and shall be managed using dust suppression techniques including water sprays. The area around the turbine hall is a heavily trafficked area of the Sellafield site and the majority is paved. Vehicle movements should not generate significant dust even during dry periods.

Timescales

As stated above the work will generate ten HGV movements carrying up to 200 tons per day. Given there will be approximately 10,600 tonnes of material to remove from the site, this will require approximately 53 full working days of vehicle movements removing around 530 loads. Taking into account issues such as poor weather, weekend shutdowns, public holidays, roadworks, site exercises etc. which can slow down transfers, it is expected these works would take around 3 calendar months. This timescale is considered acceptable.

Noise

As regards potential for noise, to limit this demolition activity hours will typically be 0700-1900 Monday-Thursday and 0700-1500 Friday. To minimise the impact to operation of adjacent facilities by demolition exclusions zones, some weekend working will be required but this will be on an ad-hoc basis. There are no nearby residential receptors likely to be affected and it is reiterated that Environmental Health raise no objection.

Ecology

The habitat surrounding the turbine hall is predominantly hardstanding, with minor areas of modified grassland and introduced shrub. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site has been undertaken and informs that the Site and immediate surroundings are of limited biodiversity value. No statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation,



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	<p>irreplaceable habitats, or priority habitats that were identified during the desk study or walkover survey are likely to be impacted by the proposed scheme.</p> <p>As the site offers moderate suitability for roosting bats further survey work is recommended.</p> <p>As regards mitigation works this will be further informed by the additional survey work and will be undertaken in accordance with good practice.</p> <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Demolition is classed as falling within the definition of development and only prior notification is required. This does not permit the Local Planning Authority to object to the removal of the building but only to ensure that the method of demolition and subsequent restoration is satisfactory and conforms to the relevant planning policies.</p> <p>The proposal does not raise any material issues in this respect as the method of demolition, although complex in this case involving considerable asbestos removal, is stringently controlled by Sellafield Ltd. And there were no adverse impacts identified that cannot be made acceptable by appropriate mitigation. There were also no issues in respect of noise and dust.</p> <p>The concerns raised by Ponsonby with Calderbridge PC regarding the routing of HGV movements, working hours and timescales have been addressed.</p> <p>The ecological appraisal confirms there no ecological constraints that would prevent the demolition and that the biodiversity value of the site is low. There is some moderate suitability for roosting bats to be investigated by further survey work.</p> <p>It is recognised that the site does have future development potential. However, it is considered acceptable in the interim, given the sites location within the Sellafield boundary, to leave it in a tidy state at base slab level and re-purpose for demolition storage to assist with the remaining demolition of the complex.</p> <p>As the site is situated within a highly industrial and secure complex and it is not considered appropriate to require a condition covering restoration.</p>
8.	<p>Recommendation:</p> <p>Approve</p>
9.	<p>Conditions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The demolition works shall be carried out within a period of 5 years from the date of this decision.

	<p>Reason</p> <p>To comply with the requirements of Part 11 Class B.2 (b) (ix) (aa) of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).</p> <p>2. Demolition shall relate to the following plans and documents as received on the respective dates and development shall be carried out in accordance with them: -</p> <p>1 BE 3032289 Rev F Location Plan</p> <p>1 BE 3032289 Rev F Location Plan Issue 2</p> <p>Prior Notification Covering Letter AGRTH by Sellafield Ltd, dated 29 October 2024</p> <p>RDA Pilots Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report AGRTH, by IDS (Integrated Decommissioning Solutions), dated 9 February 2024 2024.</p> <p>Building Summary Report – Windscale Advanced Gas-Cooled Reactor (WAGR) Turbine Hall, Issue 2, by Sellafield Ltd.</p> <p>AGRTH RAD Pilots Bat Survey Report Issue 2, by IDS (Integrated Decommissioning Solutions), dated 8 October 2024.</p> <p>Reason</p> <p>To conform with the requirement of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.</p>	
Case Officer: H.S. Morrison		Date : 29/11/2024
Authorising Officer: N.J. Hayhurst		Date : 29/11/2024
Dedicated responses to:- N/A		