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Ardersier planning update

It was identified last year that the tallest structure that has been built within the upgraded Ardersier Waste Water Treatment Works is higher than allowed by the planning consent for the development.

Scottish Water apologises for this failure to comply with the planning consent and we are carrying out an investigation to understand the cause; and to prevent a similar situation from recurring.

In response to an Enforcement Notice served by The Highland Council, Scottish Water submitted a retrospective planning application in order to allow the issue to be appropriately resolved via the planning process. The application addresses three structures within the site:

- The Picket Fence Thickener tank (which has been built)
- The Inlet Works (which has not yet been delivered to the site)
- An electricity substation which is part of the site's permanent power supply

The Planning Committee deferred consideration of the application and asked Scottish Water to engage further with the Community Liaison Group (CLG) about options to mitigate the visual impact of the taller structures, as well as providing further information.

At meetings in November, December and January, the CLG provided feedback and Scottish Water has carried out work in response, focused on lowering the taller structures where we can without significant adverse effect on the site's operation; and otherwise mitigating their visual impact.

The changes proposed are presented in the following posters.



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Picket Fence Thickener tank

The Picket Fence Thickener reduces the water content of sludge, before it is stored for collection by tanker.

In response to feedback from the CLG, Scottish Water has agreed to lower the structure so that the height complies with the existing planning permission. This work will be carried out once approved by the planning authority.

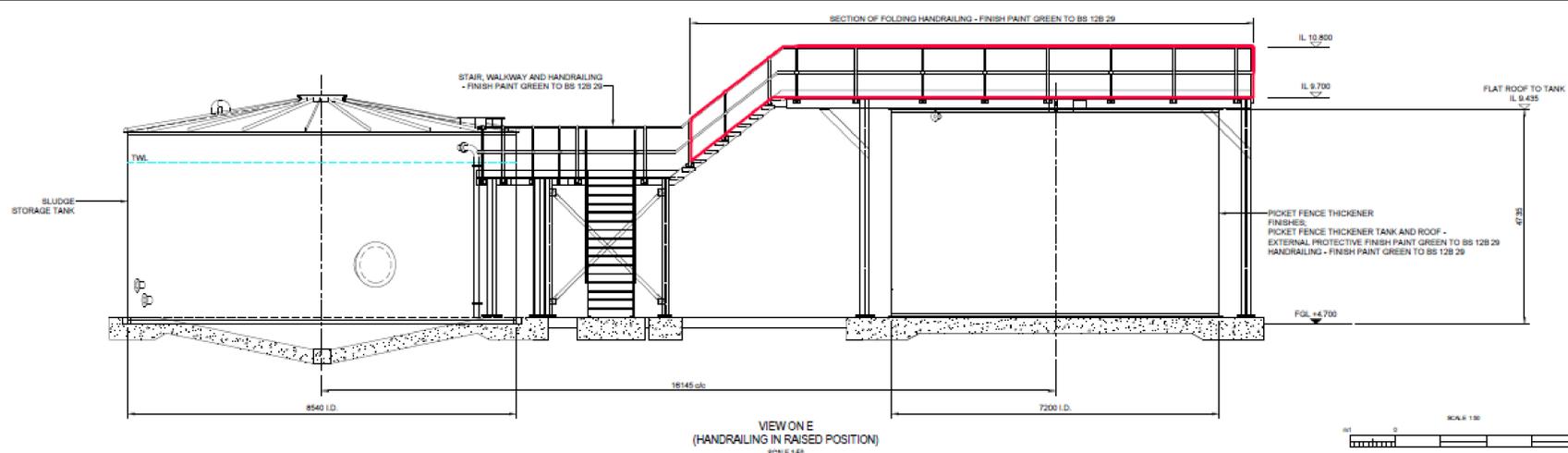
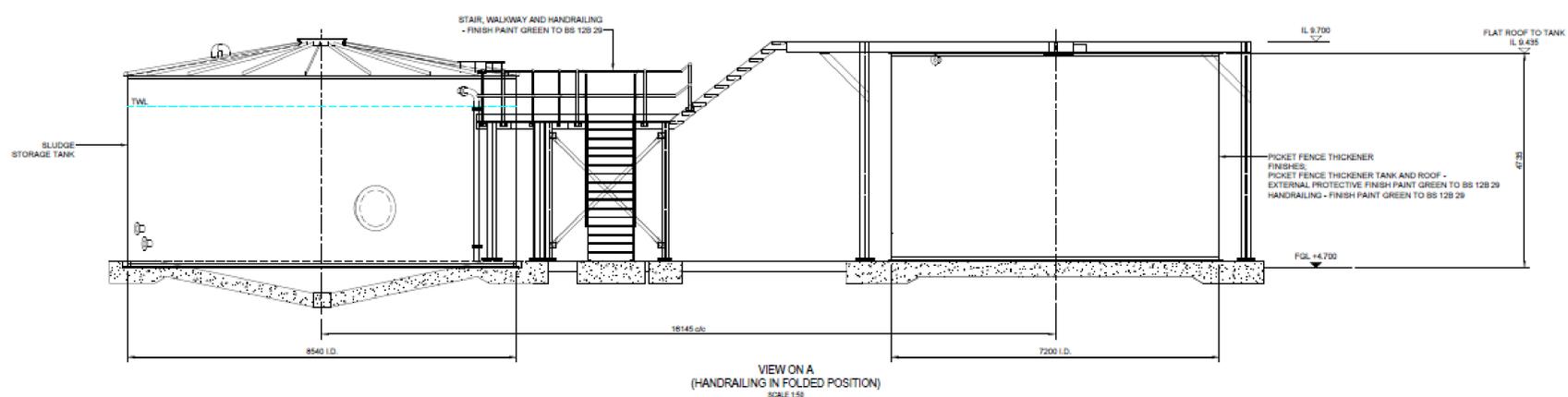
A folding handrail would be used on the access gantry (indicated below in red) which would only be in the upright position for infrequent access by operators.



Photos showing Picket Fence Thickener tank as currently installed, before proposed reduction in height. Above: from the north on the coastal path. Below: from the north on the B9006.



Elevations showing proposed revision to Picket Fence Thickener



(Above: handrail folded down in normal operation. Below: handrail shown in raised position to allow infrequent maintenance access.)



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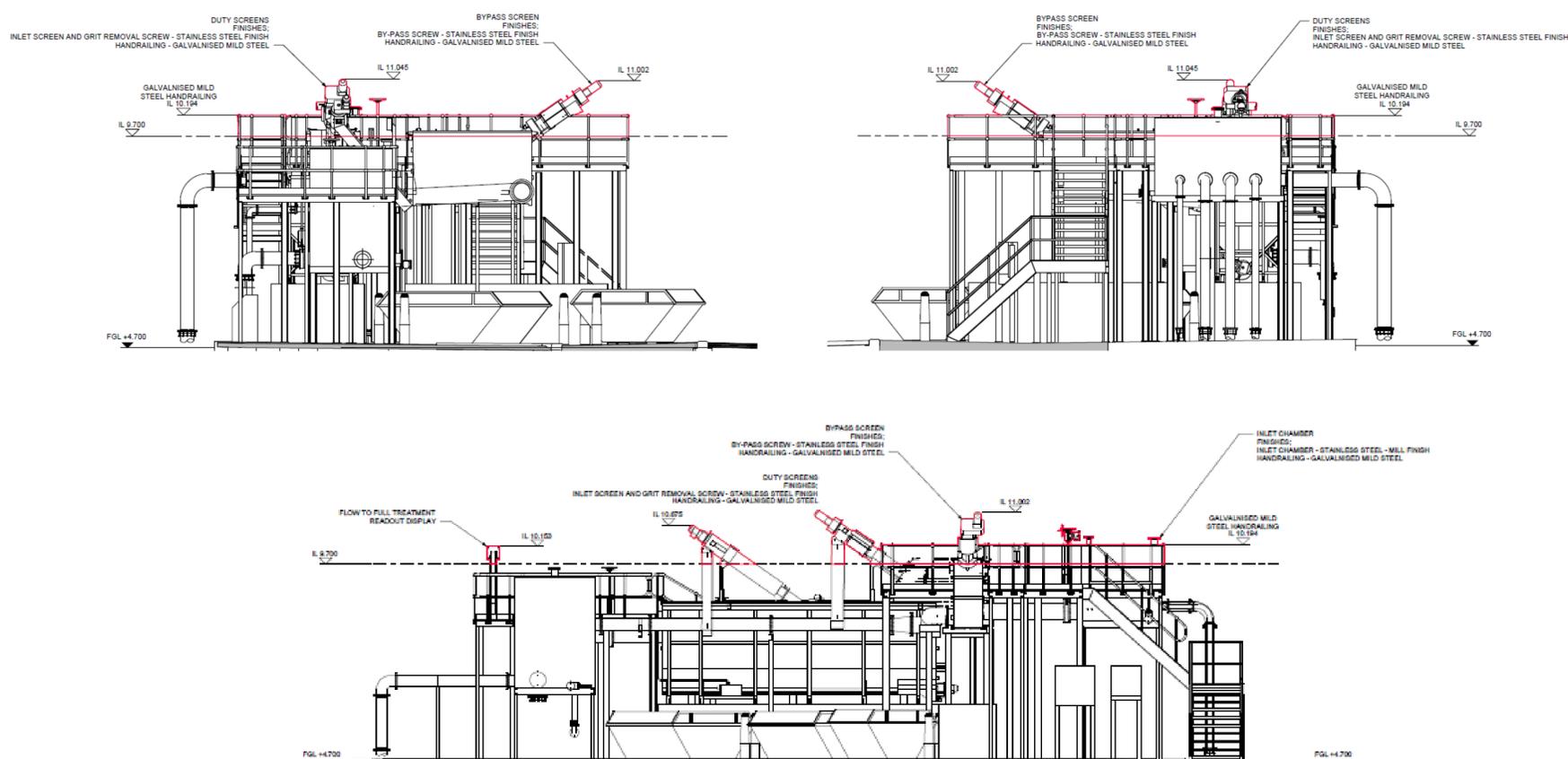
Inlet Works

This structure plays a vital role by screening out 'rags', debris and grit from the waste water at the start of the treatment process. It will be located on the side of the site nearest to the public road and furthest from the most sensitive vantage points on the coastal path.

To maintain operation of the site via gravity, rather than pumping, we are proposing that some elements of the structure would extend above the height allowed in the current planning consent (shown in red in the drawings below).

These include 3 tubes which house motors to operate the screens and the upper part of a handrail. The highest part of the protruding elements would be 11.05 metres above ordnance datum, which is 6.35 metres above ground level.

Elevations showing proposed revision to Inlet Works



Three elevations of the proposed Inlet Works, with elements of equipment above 9.7 metres AOD outlined in red.



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Next steps and feedback

Following the work that we have carried out in response to the Community Liaison Group's feedback, Scottish Water is preparing new visualisations which will allow the visibility of the revised structures to be assessed. These will also reflect the substantial landscaping and planting which is part of the site's layout.

After further discussion with the CLG, we are seeking feedback from the wider community before submitting the proposed revisions to the council. If you have any comments or questions that you would like to submit to Scottish Water, please do so **by 5pm on Tuesday 23rd February** using the contact details below.

Once final, the revised proposals, with visualisations and other information that has been requested, will be submitted for consideration by the Planning Committee. The application will also include an electricity substation which is a lower and smaller structure at the northern corner of the site.

When a revised planning application is submitted, this will be re-advertised by The Highland Council and there will be a further opportunity for representations to be made to the planning authority.

More detailed versions of the drawings shown in these posters are available to download on Scottish Water's project website or can be posted out on request.

Feedback

Comments or questions can be submitted to the email address below. You can also find further information on the work of the CLG and drawings at the project website:

Email: ardersier@scottishwater.co.uk

Website: www.scottishwater.co.uk/Ardersier