

PRESS RELEASE

ESB INTERNATIONAL, ROUGHAN O'DONOVAN AND KNIGHT ARCHITECTS SHORTLISTED IN UK PYLON DESIGN COMPETITION

INNOVATIVE NEW DESIGN SEEKS TO REDUCE VISUAL IMPACT OF HIGH VOLTAGE ELECTRICITY NETWORKS

A design submitted to the [RIBA / DECC/ National Grid Pylon Design Competition](#) by engineering consultancy firms ESB International and Roughan O'Donovan and architecture practice Knight Architects is one of six shortlisted out of a total of 250 entries to the competition, the UK Secretary of State, Chris Huhne announced today.

The competition, which is organised by the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Competitions on behalf of the UK Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) and National Grid, invited architects, designers, engineers and university students from those disciplines to come up with proposals for a new generation of electricity pylons. The six shortlisted designs will be included in a public exhibition taking place in the Victoria and Albert Museum from 14 September to 5 October as part of the London Design Festival.

“Our success in making it to the final six of this prestigious competition reflects the combined expertise of the design team”, said Martin Knight, Director of Knight Architects. “Each member of the team brought a unique perspective based on their respective backgrounds in electricity transmission, innovative structural design and architecture. We were able to harness this to develop an efficient and innovative design that is highly functional and provides a simple, elegant form with a contemporary identity.

The traditional steel lattice pylon design typically seen in the UK and Ireland was designed in 1927 by Sir Reginald Bloomfield to carry high-voltage electricity conductors across the country and has remained largely unchanged since then. Over the years a number of alternative pylon designs have been considered but none has achieved the ubiquity of the Bloomfield design.

As well as exploring the design of the pylon itself, the Pylon Design Competition asked entrants to consider the relationship between energy infrastructure and the environment within which it is located. The challenge was to design a pylon with the potential to deliver for future generations, whilst balancing the needs of communities and preserving the beauty of the countryside.

“In developing the design, we questioned the form and function of each component of the electricity pylon. The key innovation in our design is the use of composite fibre materials to provide both structural support and insulation, allowing us to reduce the insulating connections from 5.2 metres to just a few centimetres. The result is a clean, uncluttered Y-shaped structure which is over 15m shorter than the steel lattice pylon and provides a clear and visually appealing identity, whether viewed on its own or as part of a linear sequence”, said Mr. Knight.

A scale model of the proposed pylon will be on display as part of the exhibition taking place in the Victoria & Albert Museum over the coming weeks and members of the public will have an opportunity to comment on the design. The judging panel for the competition will meet on 9 October to choose a winner.

About ESB International

ESB International is a multi-disciplinary engineering consultancy which provides a full range of engineering, operations and maintenance and strategic consultancy services to the global energy sector. The company has extensive experience in the planning, development and management of high voltage electricity transmission networks and is wholly owned by the Irish state electricity utility, ESB.

Roughan O'Donovan

Roughan O'Donovan specialises in the engineering design of major infrastructural projects, such as transportation, bridges, building structures, environmental and energy projects. The company particularly specialises in complex and innovative solutions for the international bridge market and, as part of the detailed design team with Techniker, has recently completed the design of the unique cable-stayed bridge across the River Wear in Sunderland. When completed, it will become the tallest tower in England.

Knight Architects

Established in 2006, Knight Architects is a RIBA chartered practice, founded on the belief that good design is vital and that simple, beautiful solutions are based on a clear understanding of function, context, value and time. The company has a strong reputation in the field of bridge design and has enjoyed success in UK and international competitions.

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