

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK / LOCAL AREA PLAN

NORTH QUAYS AREA OF WATERFORD CITY.

SECTION 20 (3) (C) (1) PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT ACT 2000

CITY MANAGERS REPORT.

1. Notice of the City Council's intention to make an Urban Design Framework / Local Area Plan for the North Quays Area of Waterford City was published on 25th January, 2008. A draft of the proposed plan was published and made available in printed format and on the Council's website. Copies of the notice and the document were forwarded to the prescribed bodies. An open evening workshop was held at the Abbey Community College, Ferrybank on February 27th 2008 with members of the Planning Office and the Council's consultant present. Twenty two persons attended, some of whom represented residents associations and other community organisations. The period for the receipt of written submissions ended on March 19th 2008.
2. Thirteen written submissions were received within the prescribed period. The persons who made submissions are:-

DATE RECEIVED	NAME	ADDRESS
1. 3/03/08	Fiona Pericho	5 The Cloisters, John's Hill, Waterford
2. 3/03/08	Starnes Plc	No. 1 Lonsdale Gardens, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TNI INU, U.K.
3. 12/3/2008	George Kehoe, Chairman, Bishopsgrove (Ferrybank) Residents Assoc.	c/o 74 Bishopsgrove, Ferrybank, Waterford
4. 18/03/08	George Kavanagh	Sion House, Ferrybank, Waterford.
5. 19/03/08	TRM Developments Ltd.,	c/o Urban Initiatives, 1 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 5HE, U.K.
6. 19/03/08	Zella (Waterford) Ltd.,	McInerney House, Block 10, Cleaboy Business Park, Cleaboy, Waterford.
7. 19/03/08	Tuskar Asset Management	c/o Fewer Harrington lawlor & Partners, Studio 14 The Atrium, Maritana Gate, Canada Street, Waterford.
8. 19/03/08	Waterford Chamber	2 George's Street, Waterford
9. 19/03/08	Gryphon Waterford	c/o Kenneth Wigham, Architect, Wyse House, Adelphi Quay, Waterford.
10. 19/03/08	Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government	Spatial Policy Section, Custom House, Dublin 1.
11. 19/03/08	The Port of Waterford	c/o Colin Buchanan, 8 Windsor Place, Dublin 2.
12. 19/03/08	Waterford Scout County	c/o Tom O'Neill, County Commissioner, "Rivendell", Ballynageeragh, Dunhill, Waterford.
13. 19/3/08	4 th Year Architecture Students, WIT	Department of Architecture, Waterford Institute of Technology, Cork Road, Waterford.

3. Issues Raised In Submissions.

(1) Fiona Pericho.

The writer is the owner of No. 4 and 5 Sion Row and wishes to preserve the view from these houses across the river towards the South Quays.

(2) Starnes PLC.

The submission requests that the framework should emphasise the following:-

- A.** That it follows on from an international architectural competition organised by the Office of Public Works in 2001 and detailed proposals set out in the Waterford City Plan. It is the culmination of 10 years of consideration, as such is the final element of the consultation phase, not the beginning.
- B.** Delivery and in particular phased delivery.
- C.** The desirability of a significant retail or leisure tenant to act as an anchor for the commercial elements.
- D.** A broad range of housing types but not highlight specific types. Any 3D images of building shapes and mass should be removed as they are far too prescriptive.
- E.** The exact provision and extent of civic building(s). If there is not to be a significant civic building, this should be removed.
- F.** Design should respect the architecture to the South Quays, but it should not necessarily imitate it.
- G.** A mix of dominant, medium and fine grain buildings. At the moment the comments are far too restrictive and heavily weighted toward fine grain buildings.
- H.** A variation in building height with parameters set by the existing structures.
- I.** Solid blocks should contain commercial as well as public uses.
- J.** Architectural diversity but refrain from further architectural competitions.

- K.** Vehicular traffic should be kept away from the waterfront with a connecting spine road adjacent to the railway line and underground car parks. Underground car parks will connect immediately to the waterfront.
- L.** There is no need for further architectural competitions. The pedestrian bridge and any landmark building can be designed by good architects.
- M.** A timescale for possible delivery, i.e. Adoption, the receipt of a planning application, consent and possible start on site.

(3) *Bishopsgrove Residents Association*

- A.** Building height should as a maximum match the existing, no towers should be permitted.
- B.** Building design should be of high quality – need to address both sides i.e. the river and the Dock Road.
- C.** Need to reconfigure the dual carriageway and improve pedestrian access.
- D.** Need for controls during demolition and construction phase.
- E.** Need for a broad mix of residential accommodation, daytime and night time uses.
- F.** Protect the view from Rockshire Road.
- G.** Provide for berthing facilities.
- H.** Encourage river usage.
- I.** Need for good security systems
- J.** Develop a nautical museum.
- K.** Establish and protect rights of way
- L.** Provide a park on the site.
- M.** Ensure adequate parking is provided.

(4) George Kavanagh

Protect views to and from Sion House, including views of its grounds.

(5) Urban Initiatives.

Need to integrate Ard Ri site into the framework. Accepts the urban design principles underlying the Framework. Need to improve connectivity of Ard Ri site to the North Quays. Queries location of public open space at ridge level.

(6) Zella (Waterford) Ltd.,

The submission mirrors that of Starnes Plc.,

(7) Tuskar Asset Management.

Access and circulation – three access points off Dock Road, east-west distributor road through the site

Facilitate a rail platform

Provide for public transport on the new bridge.

Create a new public realm along the waterfront with complimentary land and building uses at ground floor level, including leisure and retailing.

Provide for a mixture of commercial, retail, cultural and residential uses with a 70% commercial 30% residential ratio.

Provide iconic buildings at strategic locations.

The design framework should be a contemporary response not seeking to replicate the South Quays. Building height of 8 storeys and 10-12 storeys

In general plot ratios of 1:2.5 – 1:3.0

Sustainability should be considered at both macro and micro levels.

The submission suggests detailed amendments to the framework. The effect is to remove all reference to block layouts.

(8) Waterford Chamber

North Quays represents a singular opportunity to revitalise the city. The framework needs to be flexible, take into account economic realities and not act as straightjacket for development.

(9) Gryphon Waterford.

The submission presents an alternative vision for the area, including a new road bridge at the Mall, a looped public transport system, a new railway station, extensive foreshore development using piled deck structures, a “layered” approach, providing a podium dock over the site, including the railway line, with new buildings sited on the podium level.

(10) Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

The framework is a positive step towards implementing the strategic objective of regenerating the North Quays.

The Council should have regard to the Departmental Guidelines and EU Directives in making the Plan. The issue of flood risk should be considered.

(11) Port of Waterford.

The framework lacks an economic appraisal and funding strategy for infrastructure and a phasing framework.

The provision of civic buildings and open space is not detailed i.e. provision by who and how funded.

The level crossing is not an acceptable means of access.

(12) Waterford Scouts.

The Plan should provide for community and youth facilities and a “teenager friendly” public realm.

(13) Department of Architecture W.I.T.

The submission examines various aspects of the framework including existing buildings, block structure, a new rail station, and building over the railway line, sustainability issues. It recommends:-

- the framework should be more robust
- a presumption in favour of retaining existing structures
- a detailed examination of each block in terms of orientation, levels and existing structures is required
- the integration of C.I.E.s proposals into the framework
- consideration of the use of designation as a Strategic Development zone.

RESPONSE & RECOMMENDATION

An analysis of the submissions received reveals that the major issues arising are:-

- the degree to which the plan/framework is prescriptive
- implementation, phasing and delivery
- access, circulation, parking
- urban form, grain and building type
- land use mix
- views
- civic uses, public realm

1. PRESCRIPTIVENESS.

The Framework aims to provide concise, direct and measured guidance in order to promote the proper and sustainable development of the area. The aim is to provide developers with a vision which includes development flexibility to meet market demand, yet provides guiding criteria which will ensure that the areas economic, social and environmental potential are maximised and ultimately sustainable.

It is necessary that certain elements of the Framework are prescriptive in order to give certainty and to ensure the integration of the development of different parts of the area. For example the access and circulation strategy is prescriptive in order to ensure the delivery of the required infrastructure, enable a phased development to occur and provide for a permeable structure linked to the surrounding networks.

The draft Framework has been reviewed in the light of the submissions received and amendments have been proposed where it is considered that the draft is over prescriptive.

2. PHASING AND DELIVERY.

The Framework will facilitate the development of the area on a phased basis. The current City Development Plan requires the adoption of a Master Plan to give guidance and provide coherence to a phased development. The Framework identifies development zones within the Plan area. There are a number of initial steps that need to be undertaken to facilitate and encourage the redevelopment of the area. These include the provision of the critical infrastructure such as the bridge crossings from Dock Road and the new city centre bridge. The redevelopment of the area will be carried out by the private sector using the Framework outlined. Public investment and leadership in a number of key infrastructural projects will complement private investment. It is recognised that development may take place in the short term utilising existing infrastructure, subject to appropriate mechanisms being put in place to ensure delivery of key new infrastructural elements.

3. ACCESS, CIRCULATION.

Access to the site should be at appropriate locations, providing a clear sense of identity and arrival and connect to an internal road structure that is coherent, safe and efficient in connecting the building layout. The following circulation principles and access points have been developed:-

- use of the existing bridge access in the short term
- a new road access from Dock Road west close to the existing Ard Ri entrance
- a new road access close to the junction of Fountain Street and Abbey Road
- Improvement of Abbey Road to provide access to areas bisected by railway lines
- a rear spine road parallel to the railway line
- a pedestrian priority waterfront
- where feasible pedestrian routes from Ferrybank into the Quays
- a new city centre bridge connecting the North and South Quays
- public transport will run along the new green route through Ferrybank with appropriate stops.

The submission from Gryphon Waterford proposed the provision of a new road bridge at the Mall and the development of a tramway loop. The provision of such a bridge was considered and modelled during the preparation of the Waterford PLUTS and was deemed to be unsustainable due to its impacts on the wider road network. However the proposed access arrangement off Abbey Road is such that this proposal is not precluded in the longer term. The provision of a public transport loop in the city centre is desirable. It is proposed to investigate the feasibility of providing a light public transport system connecting the existing city centre with the North Quays using the new bridge and to ensure that the bridge design takes this into account.

The Framework would encourage the integration of the rail network into the redevelopment of the North Quays including the provision of a new platform within the site and where feasible development of the air space over the railway lines.

4. URBAN FORM, GRAIN AND BUILDING TYPE.

It has been suggested that the urban form and grain proposed is over prescriptive particularly as illustrated in 3D images of building shapes and mass and in photographs of other dockland sites.

These images were intended to be indicative of potential development types and are not prescriptive.

It is intended that the building massing should be compositional in form, that is the final assembly of buildings should read as a coherent composition containing a variety of block sizes, a vertical and horizontal interplay with opportunities for taller buildings and larger assemblies. It is intended to amend the draft Framework to reflect this objective.

It is considered essential in the interests of promoting diversity of use, whole day activity and variety in building type that a proportion of fine grain development is provided within each of the development zones.

The Framework has not specifically provided for development over the railway lines, due to the necessity to provide a degree of certainty in the planning process. However, the framework should not preclude such development and a positive statement towards such a form of development should be included.

The Framework does not propose significant encroachment into the river as is proposed in the Gryphon submission. This was in order to minimise uncertainty in the process. Any such encroachment would require foreshore licencing and would be subject to an Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive.

5. LAND USE MIX.

The draft Framework proposes a 50-50 land use mix between residential and commercial development. It is considered that this may not be feasible and that a more realistic mix for a city centre area is 70% commercial and 30% residential. This would still involve a substantial residential development within the site.

It is considered that the framework should encourage the attraction of significant “anchor” uses to the site, in particular in relation to retail, office and tourism development.

6. VIEWS.

Significant vistas across the site have been identified and these should be maintained and enhanced by an appropriate building form. These include:-

- High level view from the N25 towards Christchurch Cathedral and the historic quarter
- View from the Clock Tower and Broad Street towards Mount Sion house
- View from the railway station towards the Clock Tower
- View from Rockshire Road towards the river.
- High level views from the Ard Ri site

The viewsheds from these locations have been plotted and development areas identified which ensure the maintenance of significant vistas.

It is not considered reasonable that development should be constrained by preservation of the views from Sion Row.

7. CIVIC USES – PUBLIC REALM.

There has been an aspiration to provide a significant civic building on the North Quays and this objective was a substantial element of the Architectural Design Competition. However no feasible proposal has emerged in the interim. It is not desirable that this aspiration should inhibit realisable proposals for development on the site.

It is considered desirable that the redevelopment of the area should provide for community, cultural and leisure facilities which are appropriate to a city centre.

The Framework provides for a number of key public spaces and in particular the Waterfront area. These spaces should be provided in association with development proposals to an agreed overall design, using high quality materials, equivalent as a minimum to recent city centre schemes

CONCLUSION.

It is recommended that the Draft Urban Design Framework / Local Area Plan be amended based on the response to the submissions received outlined above. Any material amendments will be subject to further public consultations for a period of four weeks.

A copy of the Framework document with the recommended amendments is attached.

Amendments which involve deletions from the Draft are in red font. Amendments involving additions are in green font.

16th April, 2008.

**Michael Walsh,
City Manager**