

Design Review Report

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Panel members, observers and other relevant parties are required to declare ***in advance*** any interests they may have in relation to the Design Review Agenda items. Any such declarations are recorded here and in DCfW's central records.

Review status

Public

Meeting date	24 October 2012
Issue date	6 November 2012
Scheme location	Milford Haven Dock
Scheme description	Masterplan
Scheme reference number	78E
Planning status	Pre-application
Declaration of interests	There were no declarations relevant to this scheme

Consultations to date

The Local Planning Authority representative stated that this project was still at an early stage. The site is allocated for residential and employment use, as an extension of the town centre. They will be looking closely at the impact of the foodstore on local businesses, and connections to the town and the station. The authority may require more detail in certain areas than a normal outline application would provide.

Two stakeholder workshops have been held, a public 'drop in' session, and a public exhibition in July 2012. Ongoing comments are also being invited through social media websites. In view of this it was agreed that this report would be made public.

Summary

The Panel was very pleased to see this interesting and challenging project at an early stage of its evolution. While major issues remain to be resolved, reflecting the early stage of development, we are supportive of the general approach and

aspirations, and we are confident that the team will work to develop the masterplan successfully. In summary:

- We applaud the integrated approach towards the evolving masterplan and the commitment to a high quality extension to the existing town centre with a diverse range of uses.
- When formulating any design brief or guidance, it will be important to convey a strong architectural vision, and to integrate this with landscape, heritage buildings, and sustainability considerations.
- The necessary phasing should be used to promote early wins, such as the footbridge, which in turn should encourage future development.
- Good links with the town are critical, and in this context we strongly recommend that the Trunk Road status of Hamilton Terrace be challenged and revised.
- The Panel was doubtful that a pedestrian access from Hamilton Terrace via a lift within the new car park was really a deliverable solution and urged the team to explore this further before committing to it.
- The impact of the car park on the development around the dock should be re-evaluated before committing to this proposal.
- The distribution of the residential development, and its effect on public space, needs further consideration.
- We would like to see the boat storage yard located near to the marina, on the north east edge of the dock, and we think there are benefits in mixing the docks/boating environment with the retail/commercial.
- We would welcome the opportunity to see the scheme again as it progresses towards a planning application.

Discussion and panel response in full

The Panel appreciated the opportunity to review this scheme at an early stage. However, the Design and Access Statement is largely incomplete, and a full list of objectives is needed to steer the design development. We think the key to its success will be the coordination and integration of all the separate elements, and the biggest challenge will be to deliver a holistic scheme when the end uses are not certain.

The project team confirmed their intention to shift the focus of the town centre, to improve linkages with the existing town centre, and to exploit the unique site location with access to the Haven and Pembrokeshire National Park. Phase 1 would include relocating the boat storage yard to the south west corner of the site, and the construction of a new lock gate and new footbridge to facilitate east/west pedestrian access across the dock. The existing dry dock will be relocated to Pembroke Dock. The retail outlets, residential units and car park will follow over a 5-6 year timeframe.

The Local Authority cautioned that this should be seen as an extension of the town centre, rather than a re-focus, and it would be important to spread the main

attractors across both destinations. We agreed that the quality of the town centre should complement new work on the dock, in order to attract visitors from land and sea. A clear steer is required from the LPA and their Regeneration colleagues, on the importance of activity and connections between the marina and town centre.

The Panel thought that the work that had been done so far was a good approach which demonstrated integrated thinking. A strong architectural vision is needed with appropriate references and precedents. We were told that design guidance for future development would set parameters, e.g. for heights and massing, and we urged that it should include required standards for landscape and public realm. It will also be important to fix sustainability targets and incorporate low carbon measures at an early stage of design development. It may also be useful to refer to the historic characterisation process developed by Cadw in relation to other Welsh towns.

The Panel thought that the bulk of the car park was in danger of overwhelming the context and advised that this proposal should be properly considered through views from different locations. The green space on top of the car park at the level of Hamilton Terrace, intended to be a leisure destination in itself, will need careful handling if it is to succeed as a new public space. Furthermore, the proposal to link that space via a lift with the dockside five levels below was potentially fraught with security, design and maintenance issues, and the Panel urged the team to consider all those issues fully. The Panel suggested that the project team re-evaluated the root concepts of the car park access including its location along the length of Hamilton Terrace.

In line with the recommendations contained in our Design Review report of October 2008 (on the regeneration proposals for Milford Haven town centre), it will be important to continue to press for the de-trunking of Hamilton Terrace, to enable a more pedestrian-friendly access and context, irrespective of the final outcome for the car park.

The relocation of the boat storage to the edge of the waterfront onto the Haven, adjacent to the new lock gate and behind a high wire fence, would in our view compromise the attractiveness of the setting. We suggested that it would be better situated on the north east side of the dock, along with the chandlery and other related retail uses. This location would add to the diversity of uses and historical references, avoid a purely retail/commercial setting, and be more convenient for users of the marina. In developing the site layout it will be important to understand movement patterns and desire lines, and to allow disparate uses to sit alongside one another.

The Panel had some doubts about the distribution of residential units across the site, some appearing rather isolated, while others seemed congested. The important issue will be the quality of the public realm, and the design team should start their proposals for the dockside environment with a landscape strategy, within which development could then be proposed.

We suggested the possibility of engaging with Sustrans in the development of the new bridge and, if extra finance were available, a truly innovative and exciting design could be delivered.

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A Welsh language copy of this report is available upon request.

Appendix 1

Attendees

Agent/Client/Developer	Milford Haven Port Authority (Kevin Hobbs)
Architectural/Urban Designer	Turley Associates (Rob Peters, Jonathan Vernon-Smith)
Consultants	Transport Planning Associates (Peter Evans) Novell Tullett (Jane Fowles)
Third Party	n/a
Planning Authority	Pembrokeshire CC (Mike Simmons)
Design Review Panel Chair Officer Lead Panellist	Alan Francis Cindy Harris Ben Sibert Jonathan Hines Steve Smith Ashley Bateson Carole-Anne Davies