

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment

Design review

Hayle Harbour Redevelopment

Masterplan to create a mixed-use scheme on three quays in the heart of Hayle's historic waterside areas; includes 1,039 homes.

Review date: 28 October 2008

Lead designer: LDA Design

Client: ING

Local authority: Penwith District Council

Location: Hayle, Cornwall

Region: South West

Categories: Neighbourhoods and Regeneration

Introduction

We welcome the regeneration possibilities and the commitment to restoring and reactivating Hayle Harbour that this proposal offers. The financial imperative behind the timing of the development proposals for North Quay is understood and accepted. For this reason we have concentrated the majority of our comments on this area of the masterplan. Although we have a number of reservations about the detailed design, we support the general strategy for development of North Quay and do not oppose any of the principles that underpin the upcoming detailed application for the Wave Hub infrastructure.

We have much more fundamental concerns about the proposals for Riviere Fields and we do not support the proposals for the South and East Quays. For this reason we do not support the current planning application and we recommend that North Quay, is separated from the application for Riviere Fields and South and East Quays, to enable it to progress more quickly. We also think that more detailed masterplans for North Quay and Riviere Fields should be prepared before any full or reserved matters applications for individual sites are brought forward. We are pleased that the applicants have been working with the local planning authority in the preparation of the Area Action Plan for the town, but believe that the proposals for Riviere Fields, and South and East Quays are premature in coming forward before the AAP process has been completed.

The application is for outline consent with all matters reserved, however, there is a lack of clarity as to what constitutes the application parameters and what is purely illustrative. We understand that Penwith District Council is considering every aspect of the full set of documents as application material and intends to tie, with conditions and Section 106 obligations, all the material submitted (including that which is purely illustrative), to any outline consent. Although we have concerns as to the validity of this

approach, it is on this basis that the application has been reviewed by CABE.

We are disappointed to see that the design proposals, although now illustrated in three dimensions, have not substantially developed over the course of the year since we commented on them in pre-application form.

Context

The baseline research information does not appear to have sufficiently informed the design process. The site has many special qualities: the fine landscape setting, the varied waterfront conditions, the proximity to the beach, and the town of Hayle's history and contribution to the development of Cornwall's tin industry. Clearly these are strong assets, all of which, if capitalised on, will help to give a distinct character to the new development. We do not feel that the masterplan has yet exploited the richness and inherent opportunities of the site, or has used these qualities as design generators.

This level of development will have a huge impact on the existing town infrastructure. While we are not concerned about the level of change per se, we do not believe that the impact of the proposals has been considered sufficiently in the context of Hayle as a whole. It does not appear that the impact of, and the relationship between, the development and the existing town, particularly where South Quay meets Foundary Square, has been thought through with sufficient rigour.

Only views of the development from the south-east are included in the application. We recommend that, given the scale and potential impact of the development, all key views should be illustrated including views from the north-west and south-west. These views can only currently be appreciated from the physical model, which does not form part of the application

Movement strategy

We do not believe that the movement strategy currently proposed reflects the likely pedestrian desire lines. It is essential that the new pedestrian and vehicular infrastructure network is considered in the context of the town as a whole. For example, given its importance to the town, it is disappointing that the link between the railway station and the new development has not been enhanced. We are not convinced by the primacy being given to the proposed quayside pedestrian route because it relies on the masterplan being fully built out. Given our serious concerns about the development on both South and East Quays we recommend that the key pedestrian route should cross the water next to the proposed vehicular bridge over the existing Copperhouse Pool bridge. This should be enhanced as a major connection of North Quay with the existing town and the only connection in the absence of development on South and East Quays.

A number of public spaces have been proposed in the new development. There is not sufficient information included within the application to explain what uses are proposed for each and how they relate to one another and to the whole network of existing and proposed streets, pedestrian routes and open spaces in the

town. We are concerned that the use, enclosure and scale of the spaces proposed have not been fully considered. The spaces do not appear to have been designed with pedestrian users as the first priority; vehicular routes and parking spaces generally take precedence in their layouts.

In all cases, the quality of the public realm will be vital, and we urge the local authority to work with the Highways Department to ensure that the roads and junctions are designed to create self-calmed streets that put pedestrians first, rather than purely as engineered traffic routes. The Government's guidance on residential street design, *Manual for Streets*, should be followed.

Parking strategy

We feel that the parking strategy needs to be more fully resolved. This strategy should quantify and justify the number of parking spaces required and clarify the difference between residential and visitor parking, and summer and winter. It would be unfortunate if ill-conceived parking were to blight the landscape setting of the harbour. For example, we have particular concerns about the parking shown on the triangular spit, the beach parking above North Quay and the parking on the tip of South Quay, all of which are sensitive, highly visible locations.

North Quay

We understand the economic drivers behind the development on North Quay and we do not oppose any of the principles that underpin the infrastructure works necessary for the development of the Wave Hub. We support the consolidation of the sustainable energy technology and fishing and marine related activities along the quay and the quantum and mix of uses generally. We think the proposed structure of North Quay, with the water-front walk, quayside blocks, street, street blocks, rising terraces, lane and hilltop chalets has potential. However we have reservations about the detailed resolution of the proposals. We recommend that any approval is conditioned to demand that a more fully resolved, detailed masterplan for North Quay is approved before any detailed proposals, other than those required to progress the Wave Hub infrastructure, come forward. We believe that it would be dangerous to approve the design codes submitted with this application and that they should be revaluated and resubmitted with the revised masterplans for each area in due course.

We can see a potential urban design structure to North Quay but we are not always able to understand the rationale behind it. For example, although we support the principle of the distribution of the buildings on the site in fingers rising up the cliff, we question whether the routes indicated are the natural ones as they appear to take steepest lines up the cliff. We also feel that North Quay should have a clearer relationship to the existing cricket pitch, one of the site's existing assets. The proximity to and views of the water are a key characteristic of the site yet the routes down the cliff are terminated by the backs of waterfront buildings rather than connecting through to the waterside promenade.

We are generally comfortable with the scale of buildings (with the exception of the multi-storey car park) proposed along the waterfront. The strong line of the cliff and dunes create an

unbroken backdrop against which the new large-scale buildings along North Quay will be viewed. However, we do have serious concerns about the impact of the multi-storey car park on North Quay. It is not clear what parking need it serves. It has not been shown on the model, or included on a number of the images and indicative masterplan drawings included in the Development Framework. There is no view of the site from the south west included in the application but the suggested form and massing of the block indicates that it will have a significant impact on the views of North Quay. It will also terminate the views across the quay from the end of East Quay towards the North Quay Entrance Space.

We support the location of the new road to the Wave Hub although we think that its character needs to be developed in more detail to ensure that it also works as a street with natural traffic calming properties. We are concerned by the quantity of parking shown along the road's edge on the illustrative masterplan and by the lack of a strong incident within the public realm along the road that will mark North Quay as a destination on the route to the Wave Hub. The detailed traffic junction proposals need to be developed to reflect pedestrian as well as vehicular usage. We are concerned that only traffic engineering drawings have been submitted and recommend that these need to be developed in more detail, with pedestrian use in mind, as part of the landscaping strategy.

We think that the location of the new vehicular bridge is appropriate but we feel that its detailed design needs to be considered further. The current design is utilitarian and, although we understand the regulatory constraints associated with the design of road bridges, we believe that a design could be developed to become the landmark for the site. This should be in preference to the landmark buildings on the South and East Quay promontories, which we think are misplaced. We also feel that the design of the bridge should be considered with pedestrian users in mind, in conjunction with the dedicated pedestrian crossing at the existing bridge, to create a clear pedestrian connection between North Quay and the existing town.

Riviere Fields

We have serious reservations about the current design. Although we note that the site is not currently allocated for housing, if the local authority accepts it as a potential housing site then we have no objection to residential use in this location. However we are not satisfied with the form and layout of development shown in the application. At present, there does not appear to be a convincing rationale for the proposal and we think that the form should be reworked from first principles. It will be particularly important, bearing in mind that it is likely that plots will be sold off to volume house builders, that a robust layout and design principles are embedded in the Development Framework.

There appears to be no meaningful relationship between the analysis and the emerging, rather generic suburban design; the contextual analysis and the potential relationship of Riviere Fields to North Quay and the existing town should be reconsidered. We are concerned by the front to back relationships of the housing plots because this will create one-sided streets, and do not believe that a preference for south facing gardens is sufficient to justify the

current form of Riviere Fields. Assuming traffic issues can be resolved, reassessment and intensification of the density on Riviere Fields should be considered, within a maximum two storey height in this location. The layout should respond more closely to the existing topography and the size and function of the central open spaces should also be reconsidered, alongside their relationship to the dunes and the existing cricket pitch, to ensure that they will be safe and well used.

South Quay

We have fundamental reservations about the urban design principles and, furthermore, question the economic, and social justification for the current proposals. We were initially optimistic that the proposal for South Quay had potential. However, now having seen it illustrated in three-dimensions, it is clear to us that the typology, urban form and scale of the proposed development in relation to the existing urban context of Hayle, and Foundary Square in particular, appear inappropriate and unconvincing.

While the scale and massing on North Quay is considered appropriate because the strong line of the dunes behind the new buildings remains intact, we are not comfortable with the scale and massing of the blocks on South Quay. These will be much more visible and dominant against the adjacent urban form of the existing town and appear to break the line of the viaduct when viewed from the north. The 20-metre setback of the buildings from the water's edge and the scale of the open spaces suggested towards the end of the promontory feel too large. Both lack a meaningful relationship to the water and sufficient human scale or intimacy.

We question the need for a landmark building at the end of South Quay. We also suggest that there should be a difference, both in the form of the buildings and the nature of the quayside promenade, in response between the two sides of South Quay. The designs of the pedestrian bridges are not shown in the application; this is a concern because they will be highly visible.

There is a lack of synergy between the development on either side of the viaduct and no convincing justification as to why the character of South Quay should need to be so distinctly different from the existing town centre north of the viaduct. We believe that any future development on South Quay should act as an extension of the existing town, which consolidates and supports the strengths and deficiencies of the existing form and uses. We are concerned that the current development proposals could, unless carefully considered, have a negative impact on the existing town centre by changing its commercial and physical centre of gravity.

East Quay

We have fundamental reservations about the urban design principles and the economic and social justification for development on this site. Again we question the proposed landmark building, particularly as it has no identified function.

Conclusion

Although we support the principles of development on North Quay, because of our serious reservations about the design of Riviere Fields, South Quay and East Quay, we do not support the current outline application. We feel that a separate masterplan application for North Quay alone, which addresses the comments made by CABE, should be submitted and approved before any detailed applications, other than that for the Wave Hub infrastructure, come forward.

[See design review comments for other schemes](#)

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
1 Kemble Street, London WC2B 4AN