

4.00 NATURE AND EXTENT OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

Survey and Analysis:

4.01 Introduction

This chapter of the Planning Scheme examines the nature and extent of development the Authority considers appropriate to the revised Custom House Docks Area. It sets out in broad terms its general policy for the area, whilst the chapters on Use, Overall Design and Traffic and Pedestrian Movement will deal in more detail with those individual aspects.

4.02 The wider context

It is the general duty of the Authority to secure the redevelopment of the Area, but in carrying out its duty the Authority will seek to carry out development which will encourage the urban renewal of the general north-eastern inner city, strengthen its urban economy and provide further employment opportunities.

4.03 Mixed-use level

The original Planning Scheme envisaged a mixed-use development, reproducing in microcosm within its local area a broad range of uses normally found within an urban area. The Authority has decided to retain this vision in the new Scheme, but will target particular uses to their most appropriate locations and seek in particular to further capitalise on the Financial Services Centre to act as the main catalyst for future development.

The Authority will be able to accommodate all the known demand for financial services floor space within the original Custom House Docks site, and indeed accommodate other office-users.

The Authority recognises the importance of providing uses such as restaurants, shops, public houses, etc., which will cater for the demands of the new office workers and residents in the area, as well as providing visual and lively interest to the original site. The Authority also wishes to secure a hotel development on the site to both service the evolving development and provide variety in the use pattern. The Authority also has an objective to secure a major visitor attraction for Stack A to both ensure its conservation and bring additional visitors into the site.

It will also encourage substantial residential use to reinforce the population of the north inner city and help arrest the decline in that population.

The Authority envisages that a residential population of approximately 673 persons should be accommodated on the original site. A more substantial population could be achieved if a significant area of the National Sports Centre site were to be devoted to residential use, combined with the area of the Sheriff Street flats it is proposed to sell.

A significant residential content would help underwrite the other non-office elements in both the original and extended Custom House Docks Area.

4.04 Opportunity for national project

The National Sports Centre site offers a particular opportunity to accommodate a significant national project such as a Conference Centre, or indeed any resurrected form of National Sports Centre, given its location, the substantial State ownership and the vacant possession of most of the individual sites within it. The Authority, whilst providing for the possibility of such a major national institution in its Planning Scheme, is nonetheless indicating on the drawings a layout which caters mainly for residential, together with a more mixed-use area suitable to the Liffey frontage.

4.05 Density

The Authority will also seek to develop the various sites at a reasonably high density appropriate to an area which lies on the fringe of, and forms part of, the natural extension of the city centre and which is also appropriate to a location close to major public transport nodes.

Plot ratio/site coverage

The Authority did not invoke conventional controls such as site coverage and plot ratio in the Planning Scheme. These were difficult concepts to apply in the light of the large area occupied by the two dock basins. However, from experience to date and in the light of the height proposals contained later in this plan, a suitable maximum plot ratio would be 1: 2.5 for undeveloped areas such as the spine block and National Sports Centre area where they are zoned for offices or city centre activities, with a maximum site coverage of 80%. In the case of the An Post building the existing plot ratio of 1: 2.1 and site coverage of 87.5% would be the maximum. Connolly Station presents a particular issue because of its nature as a major transport node and it is not proposed to invoke a plot ratio/site coverage maximum in this case - rather the Authority will rely on its proposals for maximum height and building lines to determine built form.

In the case of the residential areas the Authority would consider densities of up to 50 units per acre. Should residential use be considered for the An Post site, the Authority would consider a density of up to 70 per acre.

4.06 The waterside character

The Authority recognises the particular character of the area with its substantial water bodies, i.e. the River Liffey, the Royal Canal (Spencer Dock) and the water bodies of the George's Dock and the Inner Dock. It will seek to exploit these to both maximise their potential for public amenity and to lend particular character to the new emerging urban fabric. Except in the case of the Inner Dock, it will seek to conserve the open aspect of these areas and maximise public access to the water's edge.

The Authority considers that conventional amenity space in the form of public parks is inappropriate to the area and that amenity should derive from dockside walks, views over the open water areas, as well as exploring the possibilities for water-based active recreation.

4.07 Conservation

It also recognises that the existing road pattern, materials and particular buildings have a visual and historical value well worth conserving for future generations.

4.08 Architectural and urban design

The Authority will seek the very highest standards of architectural and urban design, including landscaping, street furniture, signage, etc., believing that such high standards are instrumental in furthering the perception of the city's overall visual improvement and thus its economic improvement.

4.09 Traffic and the pedestrian

The Authority will seek to control vehicular traffic so as to provide for the ordered and appropriate system of access and a quality environment for the pedestrian, but will seek to animate streets or space with traffic when necessary.

PLANNING SCHEME

4.10 Key Elements:

The Authority will encourage

4.10.1 Mixed use

Mixed-use development with emphasis on the IFSC and residential use as a catalyst in developing other uses.

4.10.2 Density

A relatively high density of development, as is considered appropriate to the location in line with the standards set out in paragraph 4.5 above.

4.10.3 Conservation

The conservation of the best of the old and the very highest standards of design in the new.

4.10.4 Vehicles/pedestrians

The control of vehicular traffic to provide a safe quality environment, and pedestrianisation provided where appropriate.

4.10.5 Parking

Adequate parking to cater for visitors and commuters.

4.10.6 Guidelines on height/materials

The Authority is setting out clear guidelines for heights and materials to ensure a coherent and attractive urban design form to the extended area.