

5.00 THE PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION AND LOCATION OF USES

Survey and Analysis

5.01 Introduction

This section examines the Authority's policies and objectives in relation to the distribution and location of the various land use categories throughout the enlarged Custom House Docks Area.

Map no. 3 illustrates the existing location and designation based on the existing Planning Scheme for the original Custom House Docks site and the Dublin Development Plan for the additional areas. Map no. 5 illustrates the Authority's new land use designations.

5.02 Office use

Within the original Custom House Docks site there have, in effect, been two categories of office development i.e.:

1. Financial services offices
2. Ordinary commercial offices

The previous Planning Scheme divided them in land-use terms into different areas. However, in practice it has not been practical to create two separate zones and the Authority will not seek through the mechanism of the Planning Scheme to distinguish between the two categories.

To date approximately 440,000 sq. ft. nett lettable (528,000 sq. ft. gross) has been constructed on the original site. In addition a further 50,000 sq. ft. nett lettable is currently under construction. Slightly in excess of 2,000 people are employed within these office areas.

On the basis of the IDA figures the current demand for space by companies licensed for financial services operations is of the order of 175,000 sq. ft. nett lettable. In land-use terms this amount of space could be accommodated quite readily on the central spine block area of the original site; this area could accommodate up to 200,000 sq. ft. nett lettable quite comfortably. On the assumption that other commercial offices may wish to locate in the general area, and also to allow room for expansion of financial services offices, it would seem appropriate to zone additional areas over and beyond the spine block area. In particular, the former An Post Sorting Office, and perhaps sections of Connolly Station or additions to it, offer appropriate locations.

The site of the former National Sports Centre contains land which could accommodate office development and it would be appropriate to designate some of this area for such development. However, it should be noted that no tax incentives apply to this area. The most suitable location by reason of prominence, access and environment would be the North Wall frontage and Commons Street.

5.03 Residential

A substantial area is shown zoned for residential use in the original Planning Scheme and construction has commenced on a development of 333 apartments. Of these, 233 units are two-bedroom, 92 are single-bedroom and 8 are three-bedroom units. Based on the densities achieved in similar types of developments within the incentive areas in the city, this should produce a population of approximately 673 persons.

A proposal for six duplex units has been included in a recent development proposal in the vicinity of Stack B, and the Authority would encourage the provision of similar additional residential development through other zoned areas where it would contribute to the enlivening of the general area and increase the residential population.

The Sheriff Street flats site is zoned Objective A1, i.e. to protect and improve residential amenities, in the Dublin Development Plan. Dublin Corporation is currently constructing 113 residential units ranging from 1-bedroom flats up to 4-bedroom houses. These units are designed to accommodate the majority of the remaining tenants within the existing flat blocks. Aside from the residential use there is a public house and 38kv station located in the north-western corner, as well as a sports centre opposite St. Laurence O'Toole's Church.

In the light of the existing development and the Government's and Dublin Corporation's stated intention to sell the remaining flat blocks for private development, the Authority is zoning this area primarily for residential use. The National Sports Centre site is very suitable for residential development given its relative ease of development and proximity to the city centre. Although the housing market is subject to fluctuation, long term projections would suggest that household formations will continue to increase on a fairly steady basis so that a substantial area of the National Sports Centre site could be zoned for residential use. The most appropriate location would be opposite the Sheriff Street flats where the opportunity now exists to put a substantial residential population in place, which in turn would reinforce the retail and office economy in the general area. Environmental considerations would also suggest that this is the most suitable location.

The Post Office site would also offer residential units, particularly in the light of the location of the substantial development on the Custom House Docks site itself.

The residential element must provide a range of types and sizes of accommodation and should comply with the Planning Authority's design considerations and standards for residential development outlined in the Dublin Development Plan as reasonably modified to take account of the character of the area and the inner city location. The Authority would welcome in particular the provision of larger residential units to provide opportunities to accommodate families with children.

5.04 Retail use

The vision expressed in the original Planning Scheme for retail was one of a specialist nature to be carried out in conjunction with a major visitor attraction such as a museum or other cultural use. The plan also envisaged a wide variety of choice in determining the appropriate location for such use. It is apparent as development builds up on the site that there is a significant demand within the site itself for retail and restaurant/pub facilities. The residential development will further reinforce these requirements. From a study carried out to determine an appropriate area of shopping based on the immediate catchment, and to determine the optimal location for such a development which was based on pedestrian movement, orientation, visual prominence, access, etc., the Authority is now zoning the most appropriate area for the retail use and is determining a minimum requirement for 30,000 - 40,000 sq. ft. The Authority is including both restaurant and public house use under the heading of retail. Aside from looking at specialist retail outlets the Authority would seek the provision of conventional convenience shopping to cater for the immediate site and general area.

It is considered that the eastern side of the George's Dock area generally provides the best location for such retail, and the Authority would encourage the main location of shopping within the enlarged Custom House Docks Area in this location. The Authority would also consider the provision of localised neighbourhood shopping within the Sheriff Street and National Sports Centre sites, as well as more particular shopping uses along the North Wall frontage.

5.05 Cultural use

The cultural designation in the original Planning Scheme was tied up with the conservation of Stack A. This building, by its physical nature, is extremely suitable for exhibition purposes given the large amount of open flexible space. It is also quite suitable for retail and other developments. Although the Authority would wish to see a cultural presence on the site, the overriding concern is that Stack A be suitably conserved so that it will accept a wide variety of uses that would ensure the suitable conservation of the structure whilst also creating a lively public presence in the area.

5.06 Hotel

The Authority considers the securing of a hotel development to be a vital component in achieving its objective for a mixed-use development on the original Custom House Docks site. It would be also be prepared to consider such uses within the Sports Centre site, in particular along the Liffey frontage where advantage can be taken of good access and orientation and views towards the Dublin mountains. The Authority is therefore retaining its hotel zoning within the original site area and permitting such use on the National Sports Centre site within the city centre activities zoning. Should a hotel proposal prove more feasible on the National Sports Centre site the Authority reserves the right to consider the hotel site on the original site for other city centre activities.

5.07 Multi-use/conference centre

Forfas's Dublin Exchange Facility is now located in the area previously designated for a conference centre on the original site. In the light of this, and given the kind of space requirements that a modern conference centre demands, it is not considered that the original Custom House Docks site can successfully accommodate such a use. By contrast, the National Sports Centre site has the capacity in terms of space to cater for it. However, it is recognised that the location of a conference centre is a Government decision, and whilst the Planning Scheme allows for it the Authority has zoned the former National Sports Centre site on the basis that a more conventional mixed development is likely to occur on this site.

5.08 Industrial/Warehousing

This was the traditional use in the general area, particularly on the Custom House Docks site. The only area which could possibly accommodate such development is the National Sports Centre site. However such uses might be at odds with the primary residential zoning in the general area. The Authority will, however, consider such uses where they are not seen to be detrimental to the amenities of other users. In particular, the Authority would consider retail warehouse type operations on the North Wall Quay frontage, similar to the tile showrooms seen further to the east.

5.09 Recreational use

The only site having the capacity to accommodate substantial recreational use is the former National Sports Centre site and it is particularly suitable for a national-type institution given its proximity to the main transport nodes which serve both the city and country, so it could readily accommodate a 50m swimming pool or similar facility. Aside from dedicated uses, Dublin Corporation consider there is a requirement for hard play areas to replace those existing in Sheriff Street in the area lying between the new houses under construction and the existing flat blocks.

5.10 Amenity areas

The new Custom House Docks site has very considerable advantages in amenity terms because of the water bodies within the Area, including George's Dock, the Inner Dock and the Liffey frontage. The Royal Canal (which is outside the Area) could also be developed for passive amenity use in the sense of waterside walks etc. The Authority does not consider it appropriate to cater for conventional amenity areas such as parks, etc., given the particular potential of these water body areas which, in a sense, act as the open space and lungs to the developed urban area.

5.11 Community Training Workshop

The Authority recognizes the valuable role that a community training workshop can play in teaching local people the skills which will enable them to take advantage of the employment opportunities that will arise in the further development of the Custom House Docks Area. The Authority will therefore encourage the provision of such a facility within the Area. Suitable locations include the An Post site, the former National Sports Centre site and the Sheriff Street flats site.

PLANNING SCHEME

5.12 Key elements:

Original Custom House Docks Site

5.12.1 Office use

The Authority is retaining the areas zoned for financial services and commercial offices in the amended plan. In addition the area now occupied by the Dublin Exchange Facility, as well as an extended area, have been positively zoned for office use.

5.12.2 Residential use

The Authority is retaining the existing area zoned for residential use, but will seek to more positively encourage residential use in other zoned areas.

5.12.3 Retail use

The Authority is zoning a specific area for retail use, i.e. primarily around the Mayor Street Bridge area and the Stack A vicinity.

5.12.4 Stack A

Stack A is being given a special designation in that the Authority "I consider any use which is likely to achieve its conservation objective and encourage a lively use of the building, with preference for a cultural or major visitor attraction Use.

5.12.5 Conference centre

The Authority is omitting zoning of an area for a conference centre. However, it will consider such a use if it is of a size and scale which can be accommodated in the areas zoned for office use.

5.12.6 Hotel

The Authority is zoning a specific area for a hotel on the south eastern corner of the site. It will consider other city centre activities for this site should a hotel prove to be more feasible on the former National Sports Centre site.

5.12.7 Multi-storey car-park

The Authority is zoning a particular area for a multi-storey car-park which would cater for approximately 500-600 spaces in a new location shown on Map no. 5. The Authority "I consider proposals for fronting the car-park with office use in order to improve its visual amenity.

The An Post Central Sorting Office

5.12.8 Use objectives

The Authority will consider any of the permitted uses listed in Dublin Corporation's Development Plan, as well as considering those in the 'open for consideration, category. However, in the light of the restricted extent of the area which qualifies for the 10% financial services Corporation Tax, it is a positive objective of the Authority to encourage the use of this building or a replacement building for financial services or other related office services. The Authority would also positively consider residential development or a combination of office and residential.

Connolly Station

5.12.9 Office use

Should there be space which is surplus to the requirements of CIE within the station area which lies within the Custom House Docks Area, the Authority would consider financial services or related offices as being open for consideration. It would also consider additional office space on the condition that it can be provided without interfering with the main function of the station, and so long as conservation objectives for the station are met.

5.12.10 Vaults

The Authority would also seek to rationalise the ownership of the station area and encourage the active use of the vault areas for retail or storage or other useful related use.

Quayside Area

5.12.11 Public open space

The primary use of the quayside will be for public open space. The Authority will only permit uses which have full public access in pavilion style buildings, i.e. restaurants, public houses or exhibition space. In the case of the former Jetfoil building the objective of the Authority will be to secure a use which would attract the maximum number of people, such as a restaurant, exhibition use, etc. The Authority will consider the use of a section of the jetfoil building for office use.

Former National Sports Centre site

5.12.12 Residential

The Authority has zoned the greater part of the land for residential use to be located on the northern section of the site off Mayor Street.

5.12.13 City centre activities

The Authority will encourage mixed-use development along the North Wall Quay and Commons Street frontage, with freedom to incorporate a wide range of city centre activities including offices and showrooms.

5.12.14 Retail

The Authority would encourage the provision of small neighbourhood retail units on condition that they do not detract from the viability of main areas zoned for retail within the original Custom House Docks site.

5.12.15 Community facilities

The Authority will encourage the provision of community facilities to cater for the residential development.

5.12.16 Major national institution

The Authority will consider the inclusion of any major national institution or building such as a conference centre or sports centre as well as any ancillary economically supporting retail, leisure or entertainment facility.

5.12.17 Quayside

The quayside is designated primarily for public open space with provision only for small pavilion style buildings to which the public have access and which enhance its amenity. Sheriff Street Flats site

5.12.18 Residential

The predominant land use zoning is residential.

5.12.19 Other uses

The Authority will consider any other use which contributes to the residential amenities of the area including community or other uses.

5.13 Interim uses

The Authority may wish to assign interim use to some buildings on the site for its own use or for short-term commercial use during the course of the development. It reserves the right to assign a particular use on an interim basis to any building on the site. It also reserves the right to assign portions of the site to such uses as surface car parking and temporary service routes for developments completed on the site at an early period in the development time frame, which may not be able to benefit from the ultimate extent of provision of car parking, access routes, and other services.