

1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 Decision to amend the Planning Scheme

In the light of this year's budget announcement that the Custom House Docks Area would be extended to include the Sheriff Street flats site, the Authority, at its 90th Meeting on February 24th 1994, decided to amend the Planning Scheme to include both the Sheriff Street flats site and the National Sports Centre site as well as areas not covered previously in the Planning Scheme, i.e. the area to the front of the existing Custom House Docks site extended to the centre of the River Liffey, Connolly Station and the An Post sorting office at Sheriff Street. In addition it affords the Authority the opportunity to re-examine the area covered by the existing Planning Scheme in the light of experience to date.

It should be noted that the Sheriff Street site is not within the direct control of the Authority, the greater part being owned by Dublin Corporation. Connolly Station and the An Post sorting office are similarly not within the Authority's control. The Authority acts as agent for the Department of Education in relation to the National Sports Centre site, the greater portion of which is now under its control.

1.02 The sites

The new Custom House Docks Area is shown on Map 1 and in aerial photograph no. 1. Although now one enlarged Custom House Docks Area, nevertheless the various sites have their own particular characteristics because of either physical constraints or existing uses and commitments.

The sites could be listed as follows: -

The original Custom House Docks Site, the larger part of which was the subject of the 1987 Planning Scheme.

The areas not dealt with originally in that site, i.e. the An Post sorting office and Connolly Station. The river frontage stretching from the Matt Talbot Bridge to the intersection of North Wall Quay and Guild Street.

The former National Sports Centre site (N.S.C.)

The Sheriff Street flats site.

1.02.1 The An Post site

The An Post sorting office occupies an area of land which was formerly an integral part of the Custom House Docks. It was purchased by the Postal Authorities in the early 1950s and the Office of Public Works designed the purpose-built sorting office which was opened in 1964. Virtually all of the activities within the building have now been transferred in line with a rationalisation and relocation policy being pursued by An Post. An Post wish to sell the site and it would therefore be appropriate to deal with it under the new Planning Scheme.

1.02.2 Connolly Station

Connolly Station started life as the Dublin terminus of the Dublin and Drogheda Railway Company. It was then operated by Great Northern Railways and subsequently by CIE. It serves as the main terminus for the east coast serving Belfast and Rosslare. It also serves the north-west area of the country. In addition to its main rail line there is a DART station further to the north of the Custom House Docks site. The station also contains a FastTrack point.

The station is likely to continue its current function and it could be safely anticipated that its role as a commuter station will increase as further development takes place in the vicinity. CIE have indicated that it is their plan to upgrade the station in line with the upgrading of the Belfast/Dublin line and have indicated that they may wish to develop the station for additional commercial purposes, such as offices.

1.02.3 The Quayside

The river front lying between the Matt Talbot Bridge and the junction with Commons Street is under the control of the Authority. However, that lying between Commons Street and Guild Street is under the control of the Dublin Port and Docks Board. Although cut off from the main Custom House Docks site and former National Sport Centre site by the heavily trafficked route to the port, nonetheless this area is of vital importance in determining the overall use and visual image of the area.

1.02.4 The former N.S.C. site

The former National Sports Centre site is a flat, featureless site which has been largely cleared of a considerable amount of derelict building. It presents a blank canvas to the Authority in determining its' future use and visual appearance. It is anticipated that it will be totally within the control of the Authority within a short period.

1.02.5 Sheriff Street flats site

The Sheriff Street flats are currently in the course of being de-tenanted and Dublin Corporation is erecting 113 residential units along the northern strip of the site. It is the stated intention of both Government and Dublin Corporation to sell off a significant section of the southern side of the site with a view to seeing the existing blocks developed for private apartments.

1.03 Preliminary studies

A number of studies have been undertaken by the Authority prior to the preparation of the Plan and these have included

- A land use and condition survey.
- A survey of existing and planned services and utilities.
- A re-examination of all site investigation data.
- A study on the future likely demand for IFSC space.
- A forecast on the demand for retail space.
- Transportation and movement, with particular reference to parking demand.
- Urban design studies, with particular reference to building heights.

1.04 The Urban Renewal legislation

The Urban Renewal legislation requires the Planning Scheme to address

- the nature and extent of the proposed development
- the proposed distribution and location of uses
- the overall design, including maximum height and external finishes

The Planning Scheme itself consists of a written statement and a series of plans which set out the Authority's general policy and objectives in complying with the above criteria, and the format of the document reflects the general duty of the Authority to secure the redevelopment of the enlarged Area within the parameters of the Planning Scheme and other statutory obligations.

Chapters 4,5,6 and 7 specifically address the statutory obligations of the Authority and include a discursive survey and analysis prior to setting out the essential written elements of the Planning Scheme which are listed under the heading "Key Elements".

Maps numbered 1,2,3 and 4 are information and analysis maps. Those numbered 5,6 and 7, together with the heights drawings numbered 1 to 5 inclusive, address the Authority's statutory obligations. Map number 8 is illustrative of the development as it might ultimately evolve.

Both the written statement and the plans should be considered together in interpreting the Authority's intent. However, should there be any perceived dichotomy between either, the written statement is the primary interpretative element within the overall Scheme.

1.05 Roles of Public/private sectors

It is anticipated that the Authority will rely on partnership with the private sector to achieve many of its goals for redevelopment, and to this end the Scheme is designed to create a secure framework upon which investment decisions can be taken. It also seeks to strike a balance between prescriptive and flexible criteria in order to allow designers considerable latitude whilst meeting the urban design concerns of the Authority.