

To the President and Members of the Environment and Public Services Committee.

A review of design standards for the St. Helier Waterfront.

I. Introduction

CABE has been appointed to provide independent enabling and design review consultancy services to the Environment and Public Services Committee (E&PS) of the States of Jersey. The site under consideration is the area of reclaimed land on the St. Helier Waterfront (referred to as the Waterfront) lying between the old town and the port. The Waterfront Enterprise Board (WEB) a property and development company wholly owned by the States of Jersey is facilitating the whole waterfront regeneration and development process. CABE's work in particular covers three emerging mixed-use developments where tall buildings are proposed on the waterfront:

- The Quays
- Esplanades Square
- Les Jardins de la Mer

The work of CABE involved a site visit and a review of past documentation provided by the client. We have met key personnel within the client organisation, the Managing Director of WEB and members of the various design teams. As part of CABE's design review role we have attended two design review workshops attended by all the design teams. This report summarises CABE's involvement and recommendations it covers:



- A Review of historic documentation focusing on decisions made and work completed to bringing us up to date.
- Advice on why CABE believe the lack of a coherent and formally adopted Masterplan is a difficulty in the design process.
- We set out the case for a co-ordinated design framework to guide development and ensure coherence across the Waterfront.
- We focus on the challenge of new buildings exceeding the current maximum height permitted in the waterfront.
- We set out what common information CABE considers should be included in a Design Statement to be submitted in advance of and to supplement individual planning applications.
- We set out the case for an overseeing architect/ masterplanner and outline their role.
- A future role is outlined for CABE in the design process.

2. Review of historic documentation

2.1 Brief sequence of events and decisions made

The waterfront area is primarily a reclamation area comprising inorganic waste arising from the island. Plans to develop it were first conceived in the late 1980s. Since that time a number of conceptual designs have been proposed and endorsed. Development has proceeded on the basis of the design concept current at that time. A brief chronology of the design related events is as follows:



1990 Proposals prepared by the Waterfront Advisory Board including a substantial area for new housing were adopted by the States of Jersey.

1992 Specific proposals based on the above were produced by Andrews Downie and Partners (CABE not in existence at this time).

1995 WEB was established and charged with delivering the waterfront

for the States.

2000 The Planning and Environment Committee commissioned Howarth Tomkins Architects (HTA) to produce a Waterfront Design Framework. It was intended that this should be adopted and define the parameters within which WEB and their development partners could prepare proposals. HTA as part of this commission consulted the community through a weekend long design workshop involving some 70 members of the public and stakeholders. Subsequent to the workshop a draft Waterfront Design Framework was produced.

This document reviewed the appropriateness of the previous Masterplan with respect to future development sites; it defined issues of scale, character and massing for future sites. Key axes, routes, land use and public open space were identified. A maximum of 7 storeys were shown and the overall massing was presented in a 3 dimensional model. Next steps were recommended to test the economic, financial and engineering viability of the framework prior to formal adoption.

2001 Drivers Jonas assessed the financial viability of the Waterfront Design Framework. This identified a major budget deficit in the proposals and led to revisions.

The St. Helier Waterfront Masterplan was produced by Michael Felton Landscape Architects for WEB- this document updates the proposals of the Design Framework and addresses some of the economic concerns of its predecessor. In summary, this plan maintained some of the principles of the earlier plan but reduced the level of public infrastructure and buildings. E & PS consider the drawings accompanying this document to best represent the agreed Masterplan in terms of uses and building

heights- the maximum building height proposed is 6 storeys (similar to the earlier plan). Sites are allocated for a Primary School, Police Station and two major landmark civic buildings.

2002 Land conveyed by the States to WEB in order to allow the development to progress through a public private partnership without the need for further public funds.

The Island Plan adopted; **Policy BE4** states that “ The.....Committee will expect all developments that come forward within the Waterfront Development Area to be in line with the approved Development Framework”- it should be restated that the Development Framework has not been formally approved. **Policy BE5** outlines the potential for tall buildings in St. Helier noting specifically the Waterfront and the Esplanade. Tall Buildings are defined as those either above five storeys in height, or rising more than two storeys above their neighbours. They will only be permitted where an accompanying design statement fully justifies their exceptional height in urban design terms. Tall buildings will be critically assessed for:

- Appropriateness to the location and context;
- Visual impact;
- Design quality; and
- Contribution to the character of St. Helier.

2004 The States of Jersey Strategic Plan 2005-2010 was agreed by the States. This document marks a turning point in the evolution of the waterfront. The plan seeks to pursue 2% p.a. real growth. The waterfront development is expected to contribute to this growth, become financially self-sufficient and to produce a return on the earlier investment of infrastructure and reclamation costs by the State. The requirement for the Police HQ and Primary School were removed thus creating more development sites.

2005 A Socio Economic Impact Assessment was produced for WEB by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. The economic benefits are assessed for the initial (based on the Michael Felton plan) scenario and a new development scenario. The latter projected to generate considerably greater economic and social benefits.

2.3 Current situation- an evolving plan?

The Waterfront Design Framework and its successor the Waterfront Masterplan presumed a maximum building height of 6 to 7 storeys. The form is based on perimeter blocks drawing reference from the historic plans and forms of the town.



*‘The density and scale of historic St Helier provided clues for the waterfront. 4-5 storey buildings still predominate as the “building blocks” of the town and a coherent hierarchy....’
Waterfront Design Framework 2000*

WEB and their designers now seek to introduce much higher buildings into the waterfront. This is to raise

development returns sympathetic with the Strategic Plan, cross fund community and civic projects and to raise the international profile with grander gestures on the waterfront.

“In its simplest and earliest conception Castle Quay was conceived as a skyline silhouette that would honour the maritime legacy of Jersey, the lyrical forms of grand yachts at sail, and the prodigious granite cliffs of the island’s geography”
Eric Kuhne Architect for Castle Quay

This change in development concept is understood but it is clear to CABE that the proposed introduction of greater building density and more dramatic form must obtain endorsement in principle. This is needed not only to comply with Island Plan Policy BE5 but also best practice for tall buildings. Such endorsement can only be achieved through submission and adoption of an updated three-dimensional Masterplan and overview for the waterfront.

CABE accept that many of the presumptions of the earlier plan are retained in the current proposals. From a review of information provided by WEB we understand the overriding objectives of the current proposals for the Waterfront to be:

- Economically sustainable generating returns to the State;
- A key component to the reviving the tourist industry making it a major International destination (short break);
- A location or base for the financial sector;
- A place where local people can live and find recreation;
- Capacity for urban residential development that reduces pressure on the rural areas;
- A place that respects its urban and maritime heritage;
- A waterfront that is accessible to the public with a high proportion of quality public space;
- Is well connected with the Old Town, the existing Central Business District and Old Port.

2.3 Work completed, in progress, or planned

To date the following developments have been completed in line with the original Waterfront proposals:

- Overall reclamation;
- New Elizabeth Marina;
- Major roads and landscape infrastructure although this is based on a now out dated plan. As a result further roads are needed and the alignment of others questioned;
- Albert Place and Victoria Place social and private housing.
- Underground car park roof garden



- and bowling green
- Leisure Centre
- Multiplex Cinema

The following are under construction, having been approved before the first Waterfront Design Framework:

- Waterfront Hotel;
- Harbour Reach residential apartments.

CABE have not seen details of the projects and they do not form part of this review.

Projects that are planned under the latest development scenario include:

- Castle Quay; a mixed-use development of housing, retail, offices, restaurants, leisure and civic in the form of an Art Galley and marine heritage centre.
- Esplanade Square- Office and retail development re-providing the public car park displaced by the development.
- Les Jardins - residential and holiday apartments plus leisure uses.
- Liberty Wharf- transport interchange and retail development. This recently approved development retains a number of historic waterfront buildings.
- The Weighbridge- improving the public realm of the site of the existing transport interchange once it has been relocated to Liberty Wharf.
- New North Quay- converting existing buildings into retail and waterfront leisure/ dining.

In addition there are proposals for a network of civic spaces and improved public realm linking all the above developments

3. Why we believe the lack of a coherent and formally adopted Masterplan is a difficulty.

It is clear from our review of the above projects and documentation that over the history of the waterfront decisions have been taken that with the benefit of hindsight could have been tackled differently. The overall planning and economic objectives have changed and there is regrettably no accurate plan or Masterplan that reflects the broad aspirations and detailed objectives. This is unfortunate as the opportunity to bring about comprehensive redevelopment is enhanced in Jersey by the controlling interest being with one organisation. A successful masterplan would have been able to be flexible and been changed over time. This is an essential tool to guide the development and design process and communicate the overall concept to the community and stakeholders at large. This would also assist in developer 'buy in' and give confidence to investors. Furthermore there is no formal document approved by the States that will facilitate the timely review of schemes through the statutory development process. Many of the questions raised here have been well rehearsed by CABE and it may be useful to refer to *Creating Successful Masterplans: A guide for clients* and *Design Reviewed: masterplans*, which form part of a series of client guides published by CABE.

CABE have reviewed the design proposals for Les Jardins de la Mer, Castle Quays and preliminary proposals for Esplanade Square. Although each scheme has its merits and all attempt to respect the now historic Masterplan all schemes at varying degrees lack clarity in the way each project respected and connected with each other and the historic town. The approach of individual sites to tall buildings also lacked consistency and clarity- these comments should not be seen just as a criticism on the individual designs but the result of designing without the benefit of a comprehensive 3 dimensional concept. It was clear to us that although the 3 design teams had been working together each had a different approach and concept which in turn was not necessarily shared by the public body.

The three design teams have responded proactively to CABE's initial comments. The teams are working together and as a result there is now emerging a cohesive plan and 3 dimensional concepts for the waterfront. This work must now be consolidated formally into a Design Statement. We fear that if detailed applications are made without the benefit of clear design policies to review against the process would be protracted and painful to all involved. Effectively, repeating the early problems which have stalled the development of the Waterfront.

4. The need for a co-ordinated design framework to guide development and ensure coherence across the waterfront development.

It is CABE's view that ownership of the new design concept is a fundamental requirement before WEB progress to delivery of more individual development sites. Through review and ultimately endorsement of the Design Statement the Planning Minister will give clarity to the design expectations such as development mix and tall building policy for the area. To its credit the current Committee has brought in CABE which we hope will aid the decision making process.

The Minister should agree in principle the suitable locations for tall buildings within St. Helier and the waterfront. The locations where the buildings are (and are not) should be identified in the Design Statement with proper regard to the local environment and government planning policies. The locations should be supported through effective engagement with local communities - we believe the proposed locations of tall buildings should be communicated as a whole to the community and not left to individual applications.

5. The challenge of new buildings exceeding the current maximum height permitted in the waterfront

CABE believe that a case could be made for tall buildings on the waterfront. Much will depend on the design quality and making the case for the composition of the structures in this location. If tall buildings are to be proposed then it may be preferable to propose them at a height which will ensure that their potential elegance is not lost. The architect for each development and overall concept will need to demonstrate that the solution presented is the best architectural solution as well as having the desired commercial return.

Tall buildings must be properly planned as part of a place making process informed by a long-term comprehensive vision, rather than in an ad hoc reactive and piecemeal manner. In the recent plans, buildings of up to 20 storeys are proposed. The number of storeys appropriate for St Helier can only be determined by a comprehensive 3 dimensional study where the proposed heights can be modelled. Any development where the buildings proposed exceed the predominant building heights in St. Helier is deemed 'tall'. The principle must first be AGREED that tall buildings are appropriate then the exact heights determined on the needs and capacity of the sites to accommodate height in an elegant form.

This place making process must:

- Identify areas appropriate for tall buildings and justify;
- Be presented in form that enables effective public consultation;
- Reduce the risk of inappropriate, insensitive speculative applications in the wrong places;

- Protect the historic and maritime environment and the qualities that make St. Helier special;
- Have due respect for streetscape, scale, height, grain, topography, significant view of skylines, landmarks and their settings, backdrops, important views, prospects and panoramas.
- Be of high quality and not substituted for poorer design later.
- Be thoroughly tested and debated – their impact is such that they require careful scrutiny.

6. What common information should be submitted in a Design Statement?

'By Design' (CABE / DETR) provides good guidance on what should be included in a Design Statement (Page 66 and Check list 2). More specifically we note below specific points that would prove beneficial and facilitate timely review of the proposals by the States of Jersey.

6.1 Context

Describe the context and setting of the proposed developments through a character appraisal identifying important features and constraints covering:

- Streetscape;
- Scale;
- Height;
- Urban grain;
- Natural topography;
- Significant views and prospects;
- Existing landmark buildings (e.g. The Old Town, Fort Regent and Elizabeth Castle)
- Backdrops and skylines;
- Panoramas within which the project will sit;
- Transport infrastructure.

It is important to recognise the setting of the project not only from the land but also approaches from the sea – in effect 360 degree views and different times of the day and year.

6.2 Overall development

Summarise graphically and in a development schedule the key components of the various sites covering:

- Land uses;
- Gross floor area for each use and site;
- Resident population for each site;
- Car parking numbers for each site;
- Building heights.

6.3 Urban Design and Planning

Describe the overall planning and urban design principles underpinning the developments covering:

- Figure ground;
- Principal planning axis / grids;
- Sight lines / view corridors;
- Massing of the developments (preferably a CAD 3D model)
- Identify and justify the locations where tall buildings will occur indicating their heights above OD and number of storeys;
- Identify proposed locations for public buildings and public art;
- Pedestrian, road and cycle network;
- Car parking and servicing concepts;
- Designation of private and public space;
- Open space linkages and gateways;
- Broad areas of hard and soft landscaping;

The 3D model should be used to illustrate as many of the above principles as possible. In addition, photomontages from agreed viewpoints should also be used. The analysis should cover linkages at street level and uses for the various levels of the development above and below ground.

6.4 Environment

Advice on the effect the developments will have on the local environment covering:

- Microclimate;
- Overshadowing;
- Night-time appearance;
- Navigational requirements (aviation and maritime-if any)

6.5 Sustainability

A statement on the sustainability objectives of the developments covering environmental, economic and social aspects covering:

- Energy use;
- Green travel objectives;
- Material selection (local sources, renewable and reclaimed)
- Economic sustainability;
- Social objectives (mixed use and tenure etc.)

6.6 Common Design elements

A statement on the proposed elements that are common to all the developments that helps contribute to the overall quality and consistency of the whole waterfront.

- Suggested common material palettes for buildings and hard landscape (e.g. local granite, nautical references etc.)
- Structural planting species (e.g. Cordeline, Mulberry, etc.)

6.7 Construction and Phasing

Provide details of how the projects will be phased and how the overall infrastructure will be delivered. If necessary show where temporary infrastructure will be needed.

7. DESIGN REVIEW WORKSHOPS

Two design review workshops were held in London. These were seen as an extension of the regular design sessions which all the teams were engaged with.

The ability to review planned and consented schemes in the context of one another is a positive and extremely useful exercise. The manner in which the design teams and clients were prepared to share ideas and talk openly about problems and issues was welcomed and we felt contributed considerably to the overall success of these workshops. The process has been successful and is charted below but intentionally makes little reference to the detailed architecture of each scheme or indeed the uses proposed as these are felt still to be evolving and a matter for the planning authority to agree.

In our opinion, the least successful aspect of the first meeting, and a theme which we have consistently returned to was the lack of a single coherent drawing showing all schemes and the wider context at the same scale. Consequently, the most encouraging outcome was that at the subsequent meeting a single drawing had been produced as a result of collaborative working. Furthermore, the design teams had all made changes to their proposals in response to comments and the emerging plan itself. Indeed, the design teams may now be considered to be 'on the same page'. It will be important that an updated physical model is used as design tool in the subsequent phases of design development.

Each scheme is at a different stage of economic and architectural development and therefore these observations should be read not only as comments of individual schemes but also pertinent to the whole. It is to the credit of all that following the CABE reviews fundamental changes were made to each scheme.

In our view, the Les Jardins scheme required the most work to make it acceptable. Clearly many decisions had been made about the site, its context and the admirable public consultation exercise which appeared relevant at the time but in the context of future developments now appeared too limited in their scope. In particular, the entrances, the engagement with the public realm and the arrangement of the two blocks seemed to be poorly conceived. The composition of the two blocks appeared to create a gateway yet it was not successful as either a visual or physical opening; in no sense was it a gateway. The entrance sequence to the apartments seemed unconvincing and convoluted and required a rethink.

At the second review the scheme had substantially changed. The imposition of a high level public space forced a major rethink of the ground floor and entrance sequence and fundamentally changed the scheme. However, there is still much to do before this can be regarded as successful and issues relating to the height and form of the blocks, orientation of apartments, length of corridors and to the distinction between private, communal and public space need detailed consideration and further architectural articulation but we believe that these can be successfully resolved.

Our concern is that this scheme's success is heavily dependent on the provision of substantial and costly public realm works. In our view, this benefits all the developments and further negotiation is required to ensure that no single developer

is over burdened. That said the ability of the developer to bring forward this scheme is now hampered by the need to resolve other off-site issues, such as vehicle access and a pedestrian footbridge.

We were not able to resolve the issue of the small slither of land adjacent to the Radisson, however, as currently designed with a small single aspect building was not convincing.

In our opinion, the significance of the public realm means that it could be legitimately treated as a design exercise, or even design competition, in its own right – we feel it should be treated as such and a suitably qualified practice could be engaged to provide additional design expertise and coherence.

Esplanade Square was less well advanced than the other two schemes. This offers the opportunity to change and model the scheme at the earliest stages. Although the architectural expression has not yet been developed, and so we are unable to comment, the urban design strategy seemed convincing.

We raised questions about the need for so much public space – it could be difficult to animate and to define leading to poorly maintained or desolate spaces. We also question the desire to have a ‘landmark’ building or feature at the western edge. Given the potential for a new pedestrian bridge we felt it worth exploring the potential for a tall element adjacent to this bridging part of the site. In addition, raising the ground level will make this the highest point of the site and so could form a better location for a tall element than as a marker to the western approach. In our view, the strength of the architecture in terms of its overall quality should be the aspiration rather than seeking a ‘feature’ as a landmark, which may have little relevance to the site, St Helier or Jersey.

We also felt that the public space could be further divided and that it was important to think clearly about the function, scale and hierarchy of the space in and beyond the Esplanade Square development. We would not object to less public realm if it resulted in a better quality, more direct route from waterfront to town centre. The ability to offer various occupiers private open space we felt could enhance the overall development architecturally and in economic value. This would also highlight the main route as more of a ‘street’, a linear connection with a more intimate feel rather than a meandering series of connected open spaces. We think that it is important for the architects to clearly demonstrate through modelling techniques what these spaces will feel like and to seek appropriate, relevant precedents to illustrate how this space will need to function.

CABE also made a series of observations about the Castle Quay development [The Quays], directed mainly at the compositional arrangement of the three towers. Initially, this scheme appeared more advanced than the others and we were impressed that many of our comments from the first review had been addressed by the second review. The design team and client are to be applauded for wanting to ensure that this scheme is of a high quality and appropriate to this location. The detailed design analysis and architectural consideration behind the proposal was welcomed.

The changes made to the towers for the second meeting were all broadly welcomed. We are still not convinced that the proportions of the towers – the height to the width – is as elegant as it could be, although we accept that one outcome of this statement could be to make the buildings taller. The main concern is that while they appear elegantly slim and responsive to the harbour when viewed from the sea, they appear slab-like and bulky when viewed from other locations. In our view their impact is so significant that they need to be considered against the highest standards of design and performance. We think that their impact should also be studied from long, medium and close up views.

We think that more could be achieved with this proposal to enhance the ground plane, in particular the main square. We suggested that it could be desirable to 'extract' some of the 'public' functions from the base of the towers or blocks to form individual buildings – the obvious candidate being any potential art gallery. Notwithstanding this we sense that the buildings should address the square in a more engaging way.

With all of these proposals it will be important to ensure adequate testing of climatic conditions is carried out. These locations are very exposed and so robust, durable or planned replacement materials will need thorough testing as will the impact of wind and sunlight on the buildings and spaces.

Undoubtedly, these schemes will individually and collectively change the waterfront. Their impact needs to be assessed thoroughly. In our view, design workshop sessions held with independent or a representative group are helpful and should continue. We see no reason why the States should not engage with this process and seek to set up a review process of its own for the waterfront, for example a review panel.

The potential to create a coherent and attractive public realm has been the most successful outcome of the workshops and we would urge that further effort is made by the design team as a whole to develop this. If this is achieved then the creation of great buildings, tall or otherwise, will be made easier.

8. The need for and role of an overseeing masterplanner / architect.

There is undoubtedly a determined effort by WEB's development partners to progress their respective schemes. The lack of a plan or Masterplan that accurately reflects the broad aspirations and detailed objectives for the Waterfront has hindered this process. It is hoped that the Design Statement to be submitted by WEB will address this deficiency.

CABE believes there is a role - even now - for a coordinating professional experienced in masterplanning to coordinate and broker the sometimes contradictory professional approaches of each team.

This role will help make the Design Statement as robust as possible. It can bring together the policies and proposals put forward by the individual team members into a single and coherent statement. The integration of landscape design, urban design and transport is particularly critical in achieving this coherence. It is recognised by CABE that various teams have articulated the vision of their site to different levels - the masterplanner will help rationalise these and pitch them at a consistent level.

Once the Design Statement is formally adopted the overseeing masterplanner has an ongoing role to assist in ensuring that each individual scheme is true to the statement. This can be achieved through periodic design reviews and audits. Furthermore the masterplanner has a strategic role in coordinating and guiding the other developments to emerge from the Waterfront such as Liberty Wharf, The Weighbridge, New North Quay and the public realm work along La Route de la Liberation.

9. The future role of CABE

CABE's role to date has been both as an Enabler to advise the Minister on the best way forward to secure developments of the highest quality in terms of policy and design process and also as a Design Reviewer considering in detail the proposals emerging.

There are opportunities to continue both roles:

- An enabling role assisting the Minister in reviewing and monitoring the Design Statement and providing policy guidance on other emerging schemes. This could involve contributing to the preparation of design briefs and reviewing schemes against these briefs.
- On design review providing a detailed review as part of CABE's Design Review programme (or other) providing advice to the Minister on the quality of individual selected designs as they come forward. This will depend on resources and whether CABE can assist with full Design Review services.

APPENDIX ONE

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment – CABE

CABE is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body. It is funded by both the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Its Board members are appointed by the Secretary of State. CABE will shortly be established as a statutory body but in the meantime has been incorporated as a company limited by guarantee.

CABE's Enabling Programme provides support to a wide range of public and private organisations. The main focus of work is assisting people who are charged with delivering or procuring new facilities or buildings and those involved in setting the policy context for development. Enabling involvement is at the outset of the design and development process, often prior to the appointment of a design team, consultants or a developer. The programme's interest extends from single buildings to masterplans.

The Design Review Programme offers free advice to planning authorities and others on the design of selected development projects in England. It is particularly interested in strategic projects in their early stages - 'strategic' encompassing not only projects of national importance but also those which have a significant impact on a local environment or set standards for future development.

Both CABE's Enabling and Design Review functions have been engaged in this project.

This report was prepared by Peter Sandover, Peter Sandover Associates, on behalf of CABE with Ben van Bruggen, CABE Senior Design Review Advisor.