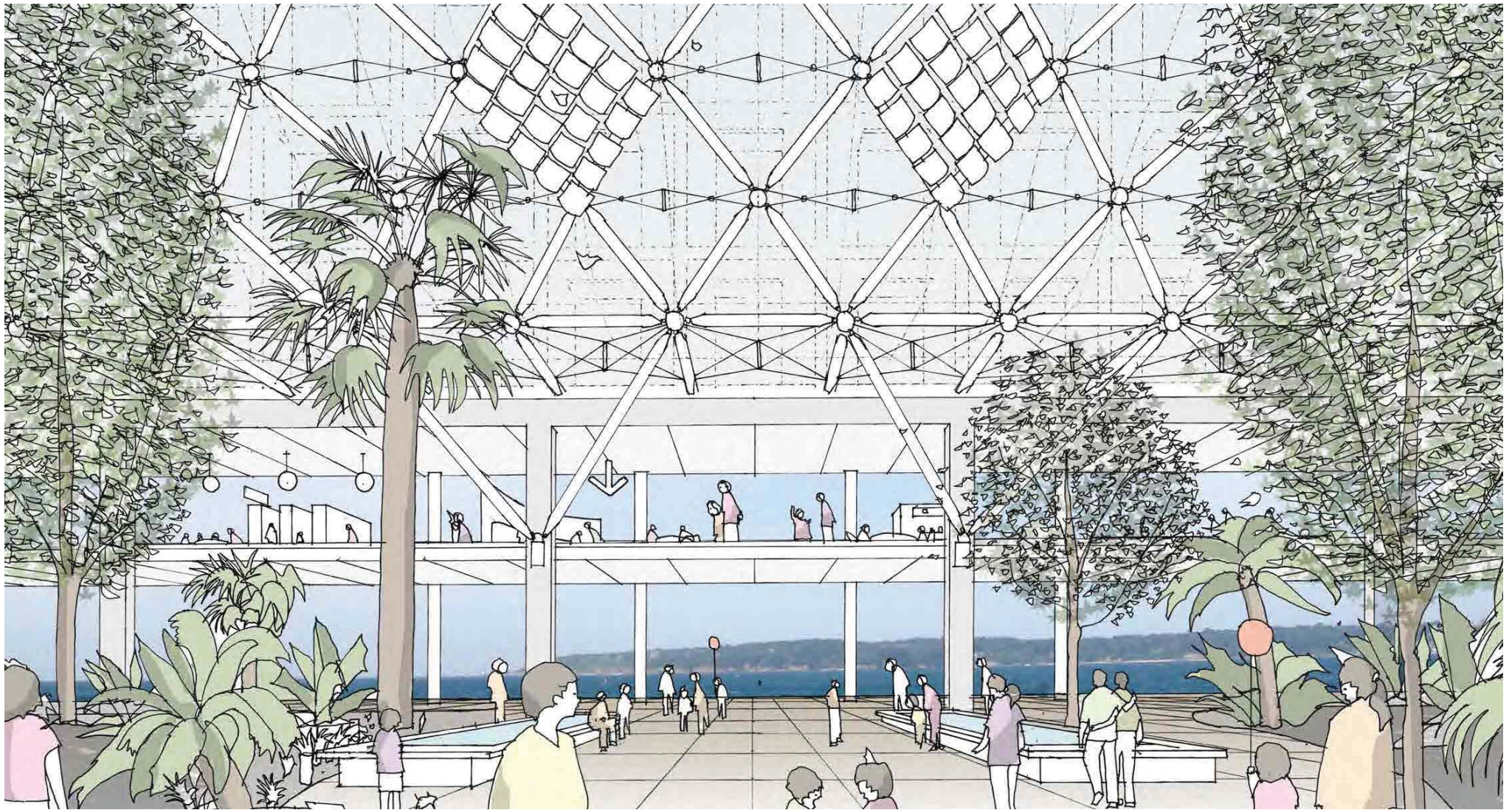


Masterplan for the Esplanade Quarter, St Helier



15th April 2008

View from the winter garden to St. Aubin's Bay

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Summary

In April 2006 the Minister for Planning and Environment adopted new Supplementary Planning Guidance for the Waterfront (SPG). Prepared by Chris Shepley CBE, it was adopted after a long and extensive period of public consultation. This document provided a set of key criteria to guide, control and shape development within that part of the waterfront which remains undeveloped.

The drive to develop the SPG and the masterplan was a response to the disappointment over the delivery and quality of the development provided so far on the waterfront. It is essential, in the Minister's view, that the masterplan remains compliant with the principles and recommendations in the SPG as the first step in providing a coherent and deliverable vision for the waterfront.

The masterplan's principal objectives are to:

- * Integrate the old town with the waterfront and address the separation presently caused by the road;
- * Create a distinctive mixed use quarter of quality which makes a step change in design and appearance;
- * Create a new office quarter to serve the financial services industry;
- * Provide new homes for local residents;
- * Create new areas of public space that provide a real sense of place for residents and visitors to enjoy; and to
- * Create new opportunities to broaden the offer within the tourism and visitor sector, providing a new hotel and self-catering accommodation.

Those collective objectives all combine to deliver a new concept for a development which is very different from past developers' proposals, which saw the schemes for Les Jardins de la Mer and the Esplanade Square carpark designed in isolation and, as a consequence, maintaining the separation of La Route de la Liberation between the two sites.

Sinking the main road is a significant project taking 2-3 years. Traffic management measures during construction will include a temporary dual carriageway through the existing Esplanade Square car park. More details are provided elsewhere in this document. A temporary car park off site will also be provided while construction work continues. When the work is finished, a replacement public car park will be provided underground. Much of the excavated material will be re-cycled during the construction work on site. The States will insist on the highest achievable levels of recycling of excavated material with the remainder being taken to the current Jersey reclamation site, east of La Collette.

The area will provide an estimated 620,700 square feet of office space in a new financial quarter. There will be approximately 400 new apartments for islanders; 1,420 underground parking spaces will be provided, as well as two new public squares and a new winter garden (which in total provide more than three times the space in St Helier's Royal Square); a 30 bedroom boutique hotel; 65 self-catering apartments; and a range of shops, restaurants and bars. The scheme will be constructed to the highest environmental standards and will incorporate a range of energy saving technologies. Under an agreement with WEB, the developers of the Esplanade Quarter will be required to make guaranteed payments of £50m to the States. In addition to this guarantee some other overage payments will be payable to the States and these are currently estimated to be not less than £25m. Furthermore the developers will be required to complete the sinking of the road at no cost and no risk to the States. The cost to the developers of lowering the road is estimated at £45m.

The development will provide a new town quarter, very much a part of St Helier; a space for all islanders and visitors to enjoy. Within this the new financial centre will meet evolving business accommodation needs and underpin economic performance and growth in the future. The masterplan sets out the requirements for development in the area. It sets standards of excellence for design and it provides guidelines for building footprints, heights and massing. Before the Minister for Planning and Environment takes any decision on the masterplan, it will be debated by the States Assembly. Only then will development applications be considered, and they will be assessed against the masterplan.

At the heart of the masterplan is the requirement that the new waterfront development must be sustainable and it must take into account the most recent thinking on environmental issues and to clearly set a benchmark for all future developments on the Island. If and when an application is submitted it will be accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The masterplan will set the highest architectural standards and ensure that only development of outstanding quality will be accepted. Local experts in Jersey's history and architectural traditions are already helping to develop and shape the design approach. The sequence of squares, streets and spaces is not unique to Jersey but the manner in which they are connected and the nature of the buildings that connect them must relate sympathetically to Jersey's history and traditions, albeit expressed in a modern idiom. The vision behind the plan is to create a new and exciting quarter that is part of the existing town, serves Jersey's most pressing needs and meets the continuing and changing demands that confront the Island in the widest sense. All this to manifest itself in a design and layout which is derived from the past but is clearly of a character and quality which is entirely of today.

The revised masterplan

The draft masterplan was presented to the Council of Ministers on 18th October 2007. A period of consultation followed which ran from November 2007 to January 2008. The outcome of this consultation is that the masterplan has been amended. The principal changes are:

- * The arrangement and location of public spaces and their relationship to the proposed buildings has been revised.
- * The central section of the main square has been lowered to incorporate a load-bearing granite colonnade surrounded by cafes, shops and bars with direct access to the adjacent carparks.
- * A winter garden has been introduced to improve the relationship of the scheme with Les Jardins de la Mer. This will become a key all-weather public space for the town.
- * The buildings on the Esplanade have been set back from the existing sea wall to further improve the relationship of the new scheme to this area.
- * The amount of retail space within the scheme has been halved and the area reallocated to provide additional residential accommodation.
- * Maximum building heights have been established.
- * An internationally renowned landscape architect has been appointed to work on the scheme.
- * A full model of the traffic management proposals both during and after consultation have been developed and agreed with the Transport and Technical Services Department.

Consultation

Consultation timetable

The Esplanade Quarter is the largest and most significant development that the Island will see for at least a generation. The Minister for Planning and Environment is confident that this masterplan provides a strong framework for the future. All States departments have been consulted in the preparation of the draft. Departments closely involved with the development work are represented on a project steering group.

A period of public consultation started on 14 November 2007. The document was available for review, discussion and comment for almost two months, in the run-up to Christmas and into the New Year. During this period there were presentations, an exhibition, a dedicated website and extensive opportunities to meet the scheme architects, WEB and the Planning and Environment Department team to discuss all aspects of the proposals. Also, the Minister's Waterfront Design Group – which includes some of Jersey's most experienced design and heritage advisers and interest groups – reviewed the proposals in detail. The consultation period closed on 10 January 2008. The Minister will publish the results of the public consultation in April 2008.

What happens next will depend on the outcome of the States Debate. If the States endorse the principles of the masterplan, the Minister will approve it as formal design and policy guidance for the future development of the Esplanade Quarter. Before the masterplan is approved by the Minister there will be a further opportunity for revisions to take account of issues and concerns raised in the States Debate.

Design codes

To supplement the masterplan, a set of design codes are to be produced for the Esplanade Quarter development. These will provide a manual or 'pattern book' to guide the future implementation of the scheme. They help to assure quality by defining the required standards for the detailed design and construction work and for the selection of materials. The developer will be bound, through its agreement with WEB, to adhere to the design codes. The codes will also be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Minister for Planning and Environment. The Waterfront Design Group will work with Hopkins Architects, WEB and the Planning and Environment Department to prepare design codes.

The Minister is grateful to the members of the Waterfront Design Group, who are making a very significant input to the development of the proposals.

The planning application process

It is anticipated that the developer will submit a planning application for the Esplanade Quarter in summer 2008, if the masterplan is approved. This will contain much more detail and will be accompanied by a full environmental impact assessment and a transport assessment. Once a planning application has been submitted, there will be further consultation on these more detailed proposals.

Due to the scale and importance of the scheme, a Public Inquiry will be held before the Minister determines the planning application. This is a requirement of the new Planning and Building Law – and this will be Jersey's first Public Inquiry. The Inquiry will provide an opportunity for all interested parties to submit comments on the proposals to an independent Planning Inspector. These comments will be submitted in writing. The Inquiry is likely to take place in September/October 2008.

After considering all the evidence and the material put to him during the Inquiry, the Inspector will present a report to the Minister with his recommendations for the determination of the application. After considering the Inspector's report, the Minister will then make his decision. The decision will then be subject to Third Party Appeals, in line with Jersey's Planning Law.

