
SPD Comments.docx

292

From: Julian Rees [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 September 2017 21:47
To: Planning Policy Internet
Subject: SPD Consultation Comments

Dear Sirs,

Please find attached my comments on the Gosport Waterfront and Town Centre SPD.

Yours faithfully,
Julian Rees

Sent from [REDACTED] Windows 10

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Gosport Waterfront and Town Centre (SPD) Consultation.

My Comments

1. Vision

I agree with the vision and the objectives set out in it.

2. Strengths

Many important Georgian and later buildings remain in the town centre including the Arts & Craft Discovery Centre designed by Alfred Cross. The High Street has a pleasing domestic scale and is not spoilt by high rise buildings.

3. Weaknesses

Lack of ambition could result in missed opportunities to provide cutting edge facilities and buildings for the benefit of residents and visitors to Gosport.

4. Opportunities

Create visitor attractions of national importance to attract tourists to Gosport and provide employment for residents.

As part of the cultural quarter, create a live performance venue.

Turn Haslar Bridge into a swing bridge, dredge Haslar Creek and provide deep-water access to the Gunboat Sheds and a new marina in Haslar Creek. This will create employment opportunities and bring further investment to Gosport.

Provide a "Town Quay" between the Gosport Ferry pontoon and the Haslar Marina Breakwater to encourage short stay visits by leisure craft. This will provide direct access from the water to new waterfront cafes and restaurants, provide a modest source of income to the council through overnight tariffs on visiting yachtsmen, help to add a sense of vitality to the waterfront and High Street, provide greater footfall for all businesses on the waterfront and in the High Street. It will also provide a landing space for pleasure cruises and facilitate visits from vessels such as "The Waverly" paddle steamer. A town Quay could also help to improve connectivity between Gunwharf Quays, the Isle of Wight and Gosport and even other parts of the peninsula with the High Street.

The town quay at Dartmouth is a great example of what could be achieved.

5. Challenges

Overcoming local "inertia" and the reluctance by residents to agree to any change in the built landscape.

6. Themes

Theme A. No comments

Theme B. Employment opportunities could be created by the provision of a "Town Quay". With Gosport being situated on a peninsula and difficult to access by road it makes sense to improve access by sea. A town quay could help to

drive additional visits by tourists and the management of the quay would also create employment opportunities.

By converting the current Haslar Bridge to a swing bridge and dredging part of Haslar Creek an opportunity could then exist to provide access to the currently redundant “Gunboat Sheds” for marine businesses and additional marina facilities could be created within the creek. All of which would create additional employment.

With Gosport’s abundance of Listed ex MOD buildings, including the soon to be vacated Fort Blockhouse, overtures could be made to the National Maritime Museum with a view to having an “outpost” of the museum in Gosport. In partnership with the National Maritime Museum make an application for Heritage Lottery funding to create a Maritime Museum Outpost in Fort Blockhouse, (like the Tate Outpost in St Ives, Liverpool, Royal Armouries in Leeds, Turner Contemporary Margate). This will create employment and attract visitors to Gosport and provide a fitting home for the Maritime Museum collections in one of the Listed Buildings at Fort Blockhouse for example. It would also complement the existing museums at Porsmouth Dockyard and the Submarine Museum in Gosport.

Theme C. Make an application for Arts Council Lottery Funding to create a performing Arts space in the Cultural Square. Gosport would be good candidate due to being an identified area of social/economic deprivation. This would attract visitors to the area in the evening and create employment opportunities.

Consider putting a large visitor attraction on the Waterfront such as a large ferris wheel proving stunning views of Portsmouth and the harbour.

Theme D. I am concerned with the proposed density of residential dwellings in the area around the top of the High Street including on the existing Bus Garage site. The population of Gosport increased by 13% between 2001 and 2011 and has risen ever since. With the proposed increases in residential dwellings on the Haslar Hospital site and St Vincent College and Royal Clarence Yard and Fort Blockhouse etc, how will the roads into the peninsular and health services and schools cope with the increase in residents?

Theme E. No comments.

Theme F. No comments.

Theme G. No comment.

Theme H. No comment.

Theme J. Create a Trim Trail with stops including Walpole Park, Falkland Gardens, Arden Park, Trinity Green.

7. Character Areas.

The High Street has a pleasant domestic feel about it as many of the buildings are Georgian, Regency or Victorian. I believe that it is important to respect this quality and therefore no building higher than those that currently exist should be permitted to be built.

The area around the Falkland Gardens and Bus Station is an absolute mess with an accretion of superfluous street furniture and signs which has built up in a piecemeal fashion over many years. Most of it should be removed and a review undertaken of directional signage. The many prohibition signs around the waterfront provide an unwelcoming and overbearing sense of civic bossiness. There are signs on the breakwater rocks warning people not to throw stones! Signs telling children not to play ball games, signs telling children not to use skate boards. For heavens sake, it is a shared urban space and we should be encouraging children to use the space to create a sense of vitality, not banning them. Go and see what happens every day on London's South Bank and take in the amazing energy of the place with people of all ages using and enjoying a shared space, including the most amazing displays of skateboarding which people travel from far and wide to witness.

I like the idea of opening up the Gosport Lines and to make more sense of the journey, Gosport should consider providing a home for a historic ship at the end of the Lines in Forton Creek thus neatly bookending the walk. A historic ship would also attract visitors to Gosport making more of its maritime heritage and providing employment.

8. Overall Comments.

I have read all three documents that make up the SPD and I feel that they are well researched, well thought through and articulate a clear and imaginative vision for the development of Gosport.

But what I would say is that the Council must not be constrained in their ambitions for Gosport. Make the case to Government for extra funding, Gosport faces many challenges with the reduction in MOD jobs and is a special case requiring special consideration.

Develop a strategy to access Arts Council and Heritage Lottery funding for some big ticket iconic projects such as an outpost of the National Maritime Museum. Consider how a live performance venue can be provided in the area of the High Street to help regenerate the area and improve the night life.

When seeking development partners, for example for the Bus Station site, make it a condition of the contract that they bring serious operators with them to open and operate restaurant and leisure facilities. Don't end up with another Royal Clarence Yard situation where most of the retail units are empty.

Does the Bus Station have to be on the Waterfront? This is prime real estate with great commercial opportunities, being used currently as facility for bus driver tea breaks. There can be a bus stop and transport interchange in the current location but why not locate actual terminus elsewhere such as on a brown field site near ASDA.

Julian Rees

