

Northam Town Council – Minutes of the Public Planning Meeting held 16th March 2023 at 6.30pm in the Council Chamber, Windmill Lane, Northam.

Present: Cllrs Davis (Chairman), Edwards, Ford, Hames, Mrs Hodson, Mrs McCarthy, Laws, Sargent and Tisdale.

In attendance: Guy Langton – Deputy Town Clerk
Tina Tucker – Admin Officer
Twenty-eight member of the public.
Mr Matt Harding (Goodrich Cutler Associates)
Mr Jeremy Murfitt (everything is somewhere Ltd)

001 Introduction and Apologies

Cllr Davis opened the meeting reminding the assembled that it was being conducted in line with the Council's Protocol on Pre-application Meetings. In line with the protocol, the meeting was open to the public as observers. Any questions members of the public had should have been passed to a Councillor prior to the meeting so they put it to the developers.

Apologies were recorded on behalf of Cllrs Miss Manley and Newman-McKie.

002 Declarations of interest:

Members were reminded that all interests should be declared prior to the item being discussed.

003 To receive a presentation from *everything is somewhere* regarding the plans for development at Richmond Dock and the surrounding land, Appledore.

Mr Matt Harding (of Goodrich Cutler Associates) and Mr Jeremy Murfitt (of everything is somewhere Ltd) introduced themselves and proceeded to present the attached to the assembled members of the council and public.

They opened by saying that the land owners were seeking a location to store boats and ships in their collection once those vessels had been restored.

It was confirmed that currently, the proposal being drawn up was for the roof and a small building which would service the

Briefly, the developers stated:

- That the body and fabric of the dry dock would not be affected.
- The planned wooden beam-supported roof design would stand on concrete legs that were outside the dock.
- The walls surrounding the dock would remain undisturbed.
- The dock gates would be refurbished, and remain in use, in the current arrangement. Weather-doors were planned to be installed above the gates to protect the vessel(s) inside the structure from the elements.
- The planned roof would be higher than the existing walls, though given the angle of view, people passing on foot would not be able to see the roof structure from the adjacent roads.
- Historic England had noted concerns regarding the roof, especially the expanse of 'living green roof'. The designers were reconsidering this.
- The remainder of the yard would be retained as working space. The small building planned would be in the yard. The yard would be tidied up.

Members of the Council asked the following questions and made the noted statements:

Cllr Tisdale asked why the planned roof height was low, concerned that this would restrict future use.

Response: The centre of the roof would be 2m higher than the perimeter. The roof height was restricted.

Cllr Tisdale asked what 'living green roof' would be made of.

Response: It was planned to be sedum, for aesthetic and water-attenuation reasons. Historic England had indicated their preference was for the roof to be in-keeping with the original industrial use of the dock.

Cllr Laws considered the proposal to renovate Richmond Dock a boon for the people of and visitors to Appledore. He asked if the owners planned to open the dock to allow members of the public to visit.

Response: It was anticipated that some open days would be occur each year and that schools could be given access on agreed dates. The site would ordinarily be closed to the public.

Cllr Ford considered that the proposals looked good on face value. He noted the contentious history of the site but that the proposals to renovate it deserved closer consideration.

Cllr Hames considered the inclusion of solar PV and water capture as part of the roof design would be positive changes. He asked if the yard space would be developed for workshops. He reiterated that public access would be a positive move.

Response: the images circulated showed the yard area having a 'civic' look but this would be changed.

The developer had been in dialogue with the RNLI, Maritime Museum and a Gig Club about their use of the yard areas, though these discussions were at an early stage.

Cllr Hames asked how the action of the dock, with water ingress and egress, would affect the tidal flow, water levels and local flooding and that the wider building activity would affect local people. He note that this should be dealt with through the planning process.

Cllr Edwards asked if the developer would share the presentation that was given?

Response: it would be shared in due course.

Cllr Edwards asked if the dock would be a dry or wet dock?

Response: It would be a dry dock, though it was believed a stream ran through the bottom of the dock.

Cllr Edwards asked what vessels were planned to be stored in the dock?

Response: The landowner had a small number of boats currently, which would be renovated and refurbished before being brought to the dock for storage.

There was a short adjournment at this juncture for a comfort break and to allow members of the public to pass questions to the elected members to put to the developers.

Cllr Ford noted that the developers would have to undertake full surveys before any works were carried out but that left alone the site would continue to deteriorate. He noted that part of the site may be Environment Agency-owned land.

Cllr Tisdale asked if any other development was planned for the site?

Response: Not at this stage the planners had been instructed to design the roof and one additional building.

Cllr Hames asked where the parking would be and how many spaces would be provided?

Response: The whole yard area could be used for parking. The number of spaces had not been calculated.

Cllr Hames asked what the small building that formed part of the proposal was for?

Response: It would be the office(s), welfare space, toilet facilities etc. for the dock area.

Cllr Laws requested that more of the perimeter wall be glass, so members of the public could see what was happening in the dock.

Response: the walls of the dock cover were designed with large expanses of glass.

The meeting closed at 7:10pm

Signed.....Dated.....