

Falmouth Harbour Commissioners

Neighbourhood Plan Submission for Church Street Car Park Pontoon and Facilities

One of the aspirations of the Community Plan is to improve access to the harbour both for those seeking to enjoy the view and those wishing to go afloat. The proposed development of part of Church Street Car Park offers an opportunity to give greater access to a public open space adjacent to the harbour and also to provide an access for sustainable marine facilities that could enhance the Town and deliver significant economic benefit.

The area around Church Street Car Park was identified in the Penryn River Study¹ as a Commercial Waterfront Leisure Zone. The Study's 'demand assessment' showed the significant potential for growth in the leisure /craft market, particularly for larger vessels. However, the study identified that a major constraint to this potential growth of the Marina and leisure boating related sector was a lack of suitable sites providing the appropriate level of land and water access. A change of use from car parking at Church Street would create such a land / water access site with significant potential for supporting marine facilities.

The Community Plan study has already identified a requirement for improved access for disabled passengers into ferries and an easily accessible water taxi berth close to the Town Centre. These objectives could be achieved by the use of a long bridge (to reduce operating angle) on to the water and a large stable landing pontoon as currently proposed. However, in order to achieve long term financial sustainability additional uses need to be considered. It has been a long standing limitation of the Town as a maritime centre that it lacks an open area with slipway access to allow the hosting of dinghy championships. There is also insufficient pontoon space in high season to allow hosting of other events requiring alongside berthing. By adding pontoon berths to the currently proposed bridge / landing pontoon arrangement and by creating a light slipway from the car park, these limitations could be overcome.

A further benefit of adding additional pontoons would be the ability to provide increased berthing for visitors with access to the centre of town via the re-developed car park. Currently there is visitor access via a pontoon system on North Quay but this has restricted capacity and limits visitor numbers in high season. A visitor pontoon system such as that shown in figure 1 would provide increased visitor capacity together with a large events capacity for those events with a requirement for berthing medium sized craft such as the increasingly popular Falmouth Classics Festival. During the winter months the pontoons could be used to meet the "live aboard" berthing requirement.

In order to support the development of the pontoon system, ashore infrastructure will be required in the form of an amenity centre providing showers and toilets as well as laundry facilities. In 2016 the visitors' pontoons at North Quay had an estimated 33,000 visitors. The amenity block provided had 6 shower and 6 toilet cubicles and met this requirement satisfactorily. There would also be a requirement for a water supply to the pontoons delivered via a break tank and for 3 phase electricity to provide lighting and service points. In order to meet the needs of the proposed dinghy events, a slipway capable of accommodating dinghies on their launching trollies needs to be provided. It is envisaged that this could be accommodated on the South wall of the Site.

Overall this concept has the ability to provide a significant economic gain from increased visitor berthing and events capacity and offers the opportunity to provide improved access to water transport as well as facilitating youth sailing. The increased use of the site by pedestrians will significantly enhance the business opportunities on the Site and help exploit the opportunity to create an enhanced attraction for the Town with scenic views and nearby boating activity.

Whilst initial funding will be required to assist with capital costs, the proposal is economically sustainable as revenues collected for facility use can be used to fund ongoing maintenance and development opportunities.

Notes

1. Port of Falmouth and Penryn River Economic Analysis, Supply Chain and Demand Assessment August 2015 prepared for Cornwall Development Company.

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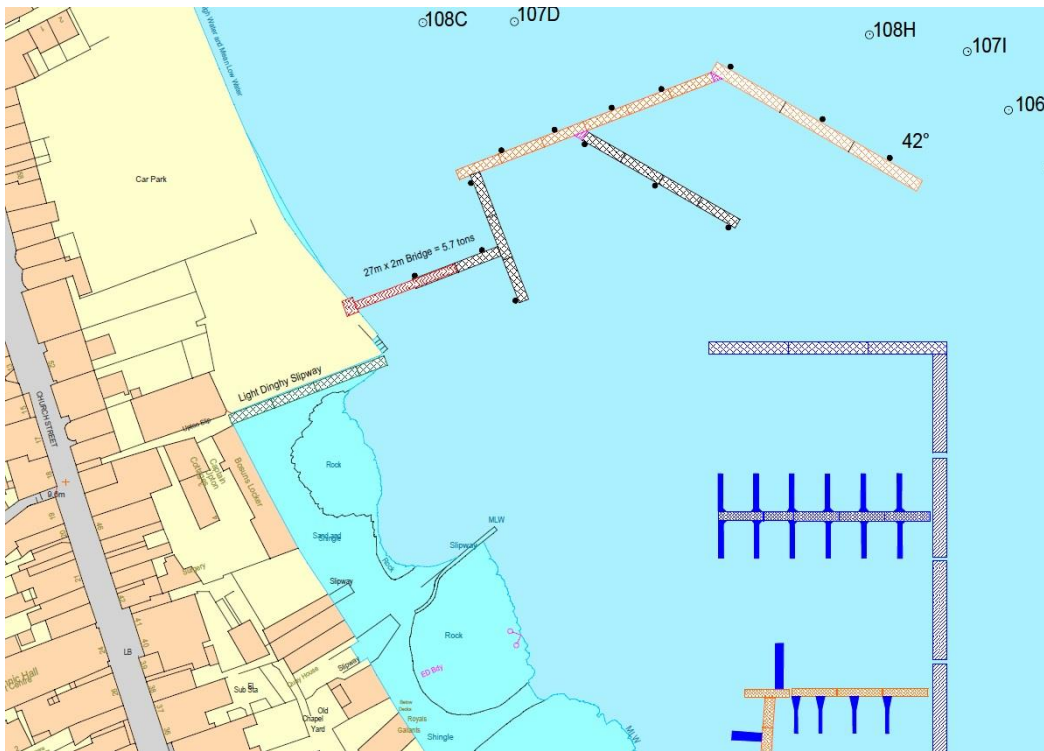


Figure 1