

**Report Title:** Leith Docks Outline Proposals, Edinburgh  
**Issue Date:** 12<sup>th</sup> November 2007 [amended 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008]  
**Client/Developer:** Forth Ports Plc  
**Lead Designer:** RMJM  
**Local Authority:** City of Edinburgh Council  
**Location:** Edinburgh  
**Planning Ref:** 07/03895/OUT  
**Details:** Outline masterplan proposals for major development at Edinburgh's waterfront.



## INTRODUCTION

This report relates to an outline planning application for Leith Docks Outline Proposals.

A+DS reviewed this project at pre planning application stage, at a meeting on 1 May 2007. The outline planning application was referred to A+DS by the planning authority in October 2007. Having considered the design and discussed the project with both the design team and the planning authority, A+DS concluded that the project had not significantly changed in any way from that which had been reviewed previously. Consequently this report is based on the restricted report issued on 21 May 2007.

## A+DS VIEWS

### 1. General

1.1 We consider this to be a project of national significance and welcome the recognition that high design quality is vital and sits at the core of the design development. There are many other aspects that are commendable, including, a strong commitment to placemaking, activation of the water and its edge, an emphasis on sustainability, and ensuring variety and complexity is incorporated throughout the whole.

1.2 We understand from the presentation in May 2007 that the updated design strongly follows the Leith Docks Development Framework (LDDF), approved as supplementary planning guidance in February 2005. The project team identified major changes of significance as being limited to the inclusion of a tall building at the north end of Ocean Terminal, a change of use at the east end of the LDDF area, and the deletion of the retailing element extending out into the dock from Ocean terminal. Our observations are made on this basis.

### 2. Observations

2.1 We suggest that further explanation could be provided to justify the choice of 'view corridors' which are being used as the ordering device to structure the design.

2.2 The gridded approach to the division of the large area suggests that masterplan cores would be developed by working inwards from the masterplan edges. In some cases it would appear that the view corridors contain heritage elements, which might otherwise have been used as the starting point around which to generate 'village cores'. It may therefore be appropriate to create a focus for a community at a view corridor, based on either a parkland setting or a heritage feature, rather than between them.

2.3 The view corridors, which divide the masterplan areas, are not simply gaps or negative elements but are also positive features that link and integrate the separate areas, and which may themselves be the focus for a particular community. We recommend that these spaces are conceived as part of a wider integrated public realm strategy, which sets out a programme for their implementation.

2.4 We believe that the successful creation of places at this scale of development requires a considered approach as to how design quality is maintained as the development is built out over the 30 year lifespan of the project.

2.5 The quality of placemaking will also be dependant upon how successful public transport is integrated into the development.

## **CONCLUSION**

We suggest that the finalisation of the Leith Docks Outline Proposals is the appropriate stage at which to consider the relationship between the constituent parts and how an overall cohesive development can be realised that integrates with the wider context of Leith. Instead of separating areas, the 'view corridors' should be conceived as elements which bind and integrate the overall development. We look forward to seeing the first masterplan as it is developed, and how it will relate to adjacent areas.

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