

CITIES ON THE EDGE: A REGENERATION STRATEGY FOR PORTS

Ports have traditionally played the lead part in framing the cultural and commercial character of a city and, following a period of decay, many redundant ports are now resuming their former glory as the city's centre-piece. Bringing ports back to life has its own challenges, some of which have to be overcome in all regeneration projects. We have looked at a number of case studies – all with varying degrees of success – in order to identify the most important factors in forming a regeneration strategy of a disused port. By virtue of their historic nature and waterfront location, the sites usually have their own inherent qualities and therefore opportunities. When these are maximised, then a formerly obsolete dockland area can become a thriving and sustainable environment, attractive to residents, tourists and investors.

Following an in-depth analysis of a wide variety of case studies from across the world, we have stripped out a number of key considerations that help drive the successful regeneration of a port, as set out on the right. We have focused our analysis on disused ports where an entirely new direction has needed to be adopted.

THE VISIONARY MASTERPLAN

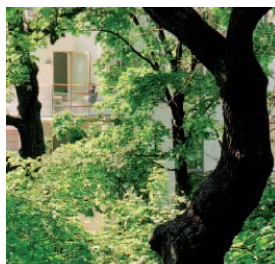
Regeneration schemes aim to drive forward mass economic and social change through cultural infrastructure and the creation of a new city image. However, a common criticism is their subsequent displacement of the indigenous community and failure to solve pressing social issues in their locality. In order to resolve these complex concerns, as well as navigate the delivery of a measured, coherent, organised and efficient scheme on a grand scale, a strong and ambitious masterplan is essential.

Creating a clear aim at the outset is key and Hammarby in Stockholm demonstrates what is possible when a coherent plan is created and carried out. As CABA observed, *The most striking feature of the area is the similarity between the Masterplan on paper, the aspirations it embodies and the physical environment as it has been developed.*

A key element to the City of Stockholm's masterplan was to reduce the energy consumption of the developed site by 50%, compared with 1990s standards of construction. As a result, the entire development has been planned on a sustainability premise, incorporating waste recycling, higher levels of public transport, on-site power generation and a strong bias towards pedestrianised travel in terms of the layout. Renewable fuels, bio-gas products, the re-use of waste heat along with efficient energy consumption in buildings have contributed to Hammarby's reputation of an exemplar project in environmental terms. The initial drive to reduce the energy consumption by 50% has been largely achieved.

However, it is worth noting that the Hammarby project wasn't overly dogmatic; when it became apparent that the development failed to provide sufficient education facilities, partly because it had not anticipated how attractive it would become to young families. The plan was flexible enough to incorporate the inclusion of two schools.

Hammarby Eco Solutions: Solar Cells, Drainage, Vegetation, Waste Treatment Centre, Biogas



Source: Hammarby Sjostad

TOP TEN ATTRIBUTES

1. A Visionary Master-plan
2. Public Sector Support
3. Transport Linkages
4. Effective Integration
5. Wide Range of Uses
6. Public Realm
7. Tourist Destination
8. Landmark Building
9. Leveraging Historical Context
10. Maximising Waterfront Potential

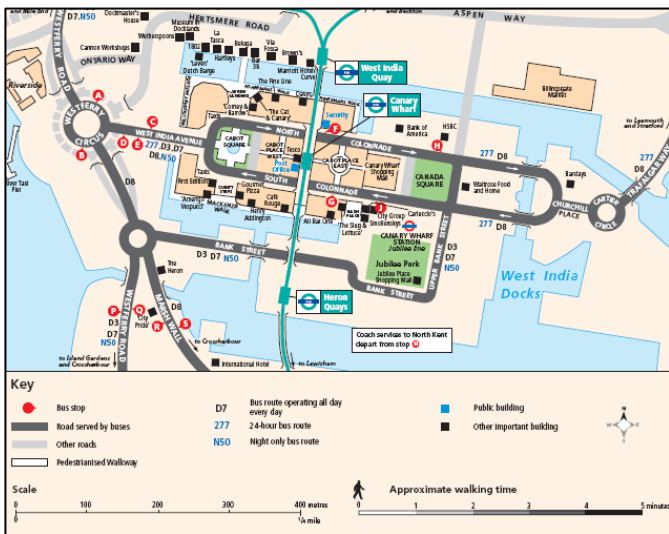
Source: CB Richard Ellis

GETTING CONNECTED: TRANSPORT LINKS

In any regeneration scheme accessibility is vital, linking the area with its wider surroundings. Limited transport can reduce the development's appeal to residents, visitors and commercial tenants and subsequently investors.

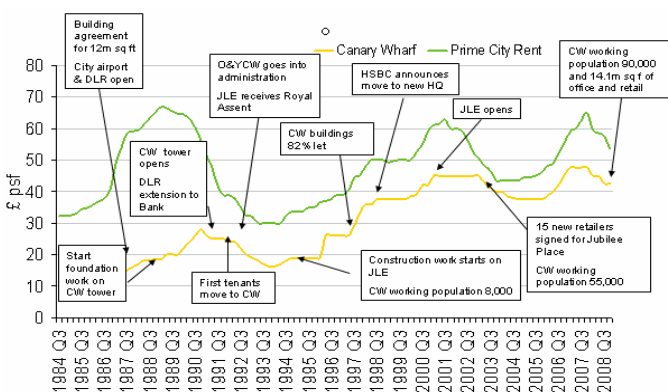
Without adequate links into and out of London, it is unlikely that Canary Wharf would be the commercial success that it is today. As the DLR and Jubilee lines expanded, so too did the area's prosperity. It now benefits by being ten minutes from both the Square Mile and City Airport. Residents and workers can use the tube, DLR and even riverboat. The improvement in rental values in the area illustrates the impact of such transport initiatives.

Central Canary Wharf Local Area Map



Source: TfL

Docklands Prime Rents, 1984-2008



Source: CB Richard Ellis

Poor connectivity can significantly impair the development's integration within its surrounding area. For example, the Albert Docks in Liverpool could have benefited more from being close to the city centre, which was also the subject of a great deal of investment over the last decade. However, due to poor connectivity and the dominance of Strand Street splitting it from the centre, the docks feel slightly isolated. Success has perhaps taken longer than it ought to have done, as the area has had to work harder to establish itself as a destination in its own right.

GETTING THE PUBLIC SECTOR ON BOARD

Ideally, the local government should be supportive of regeneration efforts, particularly in derelict dockland areas. Due to the scale of these projects, ownership of the land is likely to be fragmented and the procurement process can subsequently be long and tedious. In this instance, local government can help secure all the relevant land through Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs), or guide the scheme through the planning process.

The local authority may own a substantial portion of the land, making their involvement yet more critical. The potential of Local Asset Backed Vehicles (LABVs) was already emerging before the credit crunch hit, but they are now even more relevant and could play a vital role in development going forward. Such public-private partnerships that involve an input – either via land or finance – from the local authority at the outset can often be the only way that a scheme becomes viable, particularly in the current climate, given the debilitating lack of finance. This is even more pertinent to port regeneration schemes, which typically have higher up-front cost, associated with issues such as contaminated soil and complex yet decaying infrastructure.

Direct public sector investment can also deliver essential infrastructure facilities to the site that will then encourage further investment. Improved transport links are a good example of how such levels of commitment build confidence around the project from the outset.

HafenCity in Hamburg illustrates the difference public sector support can make, as The City of Hamburg's contribution was instrumental to early delivery. It owned 90% of the site and contributed €1.3B to the €5.5B investment from the private sector.

The entire development was managed by the HafenCity Hamburg GmbH (owned by the City of Hamburg) who had complete control of over 50 separate development projects on-site. The additional development land was allocated in a competitive bid environment, where the price was fixed and the selected parties provided proposals that best fit the ideals and briefs for the site. This underlines HafenCity's complete control and opportunity for a coherent delivery. Hafencity was a tremendous success, but public sector involvement does not have to be this far-reaching. However, it does have to exist in some capacity; to be in opposition is to be almost at a dead end.

HafenCity, Hamburg



Source: www.hafencity.com

GIVING PORT LOCATIONS A NEW PURPOSE

If the port is derelict and disused, it is important that give it a fresh new direction; its role must be replaced by one of equal importance and value to the community. The inherent historic and scenic qualities of ports usually lend themselves well to a regeneration approach lead by culture and leisure. Further commercial and residential development can lie in support of these, and will usually help drive values and viability.

The Albert Docks provides an excellent illustration of how influential cultural additions can be. All have drawn upon and complemented the area’s existing character; the Merseyside Maritime Museum, The Liverpool Duck Tour, The Beatles Story, The International Slavery Museum, the Tate Gallery and the 10,000-seat capacity Liverpool Echo Arena. Such prominent cultural attractions have since encouraged an assortment of development in the wider area, widening the potential demand pool and footfall. The Albert Docks now draws around 5m visitors per year and have not only succeeded as a destination in itself, but has also helped lift the city as a whole. This was illustrated by its award for European Capital of Culture in 1008.

Albert Docks, Liverpool



Source: www.albertdock.com

The Inner Harbour in Baltimore State provides another example of how a redeveloped port can complement the city. The city already boasted four internationally recognised universities and three advanced technology colleges. In order to leverage off these existing qualities, the port was redeveloped as a ‘digital harbour’ as part of a wider Smart Growth initiative, building up Baltimore as a centre for technological excellence. Not only did the new development instantly enhance its surroundings, but it has helped stem the ‘brain drain’ of mature students leaving the city. Now more remain, facilitating stronger economic growth in the city.

The redevelopment of Valetta Waterfront was also an extremely successful example of creating a ‘destination’. It has become a major hub for festivals, performing arts and other cultural activities, but drew from its inherent character in its redevelopment; there were no new buildings, rather the old historic waterfront buildings were preserved and restored. The vibrant waterfront area now provides a key contribution to the local economy.

The Victoria and Alfred Waterfront in Cape Town provides a similar example on a larger scale. It is around 123 hectares and is now South Africa’s most visited destination, attracting around 20 million visitors every year. It achieved this through a number of means:

- Making it a ‘destination’ retail hub, with a wide variety of hotels, as well as 6,000 secure parking spaces.
- The residential element on the site means that the development is lively all year round. Its luxurious character draws high wealth individuals, likely to spend money on the complex.
- The office and commercial space is high quality, attracting occupiers from the more popular Cape Town business districts.
- The history of the site means that it is an interesting place to visit; the museums, historic buildings internationally renowned aquarium, maritime museum are all complemented by over 70 restaurants and bars.

CREATING A NEW IDENTITY

Although it is important to recognise and complement the area’s existing qualities, it is also important to give it a new identity, removing all previous stigmas that the area may have suffered. A prominent landmark can be pivotal in this respect and project a positive image for the area that will be instantly recognisable across the world. The buildings can take any form, so long as they are fit for a postcard. Frank Gehry’s unusual design for the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao had such a positive impact on the wider area that it coined the phrase ‘The Bilbao Effect’.

Turning Torso, Malmo

The Turning Torso in Malmo at the Bo-01 site illustrates how a striking building can stimulate further success. It replaced the shipping cranes at Kockrum that had previously been the city’s most notable landmark. The Turning Torso brings with it vastly different connotations; Santiago Calatrava’s 54-storey tower comprises a mix of 147 apartments and offices in its futuristic structure, providing both economic anchor and statement architecture, around which the port is regenerating.



Source: CB Richard Ellis

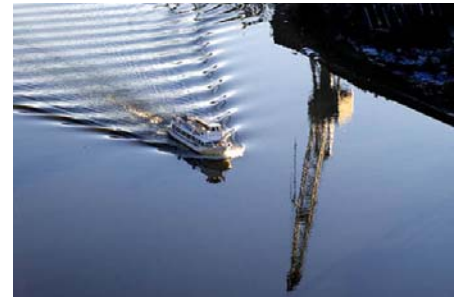
QUALITY URBAN DESIGN

Stunning buildings are important, but so too are the spaces between these buildings. Quality urban design is now filtering through to the forefront of regeneration strategies; it is also supported by a strong commercial rationale. There is inevitably a temptation to deliver as much saleable space as possible, but this can sometimes be to the detriment of Gross Development Value for the wider scheme.

Designating areas for public realm can lift the quality of the entire development, improving it socially and economically and making it a 'destination' area for visitors. Tying the buildings and spaces together with natural walkways and aesthetically enjoyable areas will encourage a greater footfall and longer stay periods, helping attract visitors and subsequently commercial tenants and investors. Research by CABA Space showed that better streets and public spaces can result in higher market prices. Their analysis indicated that in London, an improvement in street design quality can add an average of 5.2% to residential prices and an additional 4.9% to retail rents.

This space might take the form of anything from beaches and commons, to squares and shopping precincts. In the redevelopment of a port, it makes sense to leverage off the inherent amenity value of its waterfront. Public realm was made a priority at Glasgow Harbour, where it now comprises around 40% of all the development space. The 38 acres of parks and open space, along with the 3km stretch of riverside path undoubtedly added to its success.

Glasgow Harbour



Source: www.glasgowharbour.com

CONCLUSION

Port regeneration schemes can offer a unique opportunity to shift the axis of a city away from the centre, to create a new destination for work, family and leisure. Our analysis indicates that there are a number of key components that drive the success of port redevelopment. Two are critical; the support of the public sector and the provision of good transport links. Other components will be determined by the individual purpose of the project; for example, whether it is to be tourism-driven, such as Pinto Wharf or Victoria & Alfred Docks, or a commercial node, such as Canary Wharf or Baltimore. This will dictate the character of the urban design layout, architecture, key occupiers, investors and indeed the new identity that the port assumes. There must be a mix of uses, underpinned by commercial rationale, that must interact positively with one another. Perhaps most importantly, it is essential that these are outlined in a coherent and visionary master-plan in order to be delivered effectively and efficiently to create an elusive 'sense of place' that is captured by the most successful schemes.

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