

VENTNOR VENTNOR EASTERN ESPLANADE

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BRIEF



DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICES
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1. Objectives

This brief has been prepared by the Isle of Wight Council to promote appropriate and complementary development on the Eastern esplanade at Ventnor linked to the construction of a new Harbour on the adjoining seaward side.

The aim is to provide some limited but high quality development which complements the new Harbour but also retains the open character of the area in line with its importance to both tourists and local people as an informal recreational resource.

2. Location and context

Ventnor is located towards the southern tip of the Island and grew as a tourist resort when Queen Victoria made the Island a popular location for the well to do. The climate of Ventnor and the Undercliff was identified as a major health benefit for the treatment of respiratory problems.

The Esplanade has historically been an open and accessible tourism and recreational facility linked to the former pier and beach. This has undergone considerable investment from Southern Water through the construction of a pumping station which doubles as seating and viewing point and has created further open areas with potential to enhance the tourism infrastructure of the seafront and the town.

The Eastern Esplanade provides an important focal point for both visitors to the seafront by car (to access existing facilities such as pubs, arcades, beaches and holiday accommodation) as well as those walking between Bonchurch and Ventnor (or visa versa), using the skateboard park, fishing from the seawall, jogging etc. These functions are important and must be retained for both local people and tourists. The car parking is reasonably well used by visitors and local people especially during the summer months.

3. Site description

The site comprises a level area of land located below the Cascade (an attractive landscaped waterfall area), and is currently occupied by open car parking, public toilets, paddling pool, seating and also provides pedestrian access along the seafront from Ventnor to Bonchurch by way of the revetment. The northern boundary of the site is formed by the cascade and cliff whilst the southern boundary is the seawall. The site extends eastwards towards the temporary Southern Water pumping station and westwards is bounded by the esplanade road.

4. Ownership

The site is exclusively within the Isle of Wight Councils ownership.

5. Services

All main services are thought to be available in the vicinity of the Esplanade. The toilets are already served by electricity and connected to drainage/sewage services however not all services are thought to be available through the whole site and the means of servicing any proposals, either individually or collectively will be an important consideration in assessing any development proposals.

6. Existing buildings, features and uses

The site is characterised by its open aspect and undeveloped appearance. The only building of note is the public toilet built into the wall of the Cascade. The area is predominantly open car parking but also includes the Isle of Wight paddling pool. This has existed in this area of the esplanade for many years although it has been relocated to accommodate the access road for the car parking area towards the eastern end of the site. The public consultation exercise (discussed in more detail below) determined that any development proposals would need to resolve the retention or relocation of both the public toilets and the paddling pool within the scheme.

7. Planning and policy background

The statutory development plan for the area is the Isle of Wight [Unitary Development Plan \(UDP\)](#) May 2001, which provides up to date planning policy guidance.

The site is located within the development envelope for Ventnor where development is normally acceptable in principle subject to more detailed policies of the Plan ([Policy G1](#)). The principle policy factors will be:

- [G4 \(General Location of Development\)](#), which states amongst other things that proposals are expected to harmonise with their surroundings, create an interesting, attractive environments and do not intrude into prominent views.
- [D1 \(Design\)](#) all developments are expected to show a high quality of design, which maintains and enhances the quality and character of the built environment.

Other policies relating to highway, parking, landscaping and the specific use proposed may also be relevant and the key issues are appended to this brief (Appendix A). The full text of the UDP can be located on the Councils web site at <http://www.iwight.com/>

8. Other planning considerations

Parts of the Ventnor area have been the subject of ground movement and the small specific areas of concern have been identified in a Landslip study undertaken between 1998 and 1991 although the site itself is not thought to be affected the requirements of PPG 14 will need to be considered in determining any development proposal with reference to [Policy G7 \(Development on unstable land\)](#) of the UDP

9. Consultation

In order to ascertain public views on any future development an exhibition showing sketch proposals of a potential scheme were made available for public comment in Spring 2001. The two-day exhibition received the full support of the Town Council, the Hoteliers Business Association and the Regeneration Forum. In addition over 200 residents attended and there was unanimous support for the Harbour proposal. The suggested landward components of the scheme included:

- Restaurant
- Sailing Club
- Chandlery

- Seafood preparation and shop
- Car parking
- Existing toilets
- Paddling pool
- Fountain rock garden feature

10. Appropriate Development Responses

Uses Sought, and Viability:

In association with the new the harbour facility (and public uses supported by the consultation exercise), any landward development must be appropriate and complimentary to both the activities and character of the Harbour as well as the wider esplanade and town.

The site would be acceptable for a mixed-use development which could include commercial/tourism/leisure community facilities (e.g. family zone, restaurant/ other A3 uses, play, marine related employment etc.) provided these enhance, complement and do not conflict with public access and domain of the esplanade area.

The possible relocation of local fishing businesses from the beach at the Western Esplanade may play a key role in establishing the complimentary nature and mix of uses supported by the consultation exercise.

The site could either be developed out as a single proposal or as an incremental development over a longer time period.

Additional Infrastructure and Facilities:

- Parking areas to the East of the proposed site should allow for storage/over-wintering of boats when it is less well used.
- A Harbour-master's office should be incorporated into the scheme; the possibility of this being housed in the existing toilet block should be explored.
- Shower and toilet provision for harbour users should be planned into the scheme at an early stage.
- Existing public slip ways should be enhanced
- Street lighting will need to be carefully designed and positioned and should avoid light spillage. Bulkheads flush fittings and ground-level units are alternatives to conventional street lighting.

Layout, including access, parking and circulation:

The site will need to accommodate both vehicular and pedestrian access to the eastern esplanade and this should ensure the most efficient and effective use of land. Consideration should be given to shared surfaces particularly along the quayside/revetment. It should be designed as a pedestrian priority area whilst recognising the need for vehicular access. Consideration should be given to:

- Maximizing harbour and sea views for all users
- Giving a clear sense of direction and destination to walkers using the Esplanade
- Uniting The Cascade with the paddling pool and recreation areas
- Increasing the vitality of the quay
- Improving the junction with Shore Hill and the Esplanade

- Closely relating new development to existing natural features
- Providing opportunities for high quality open space which reflects the unique strengths of this site

Planning Standards:

Road widths will not be expected to meet with minimum standards provided the design and materials can ensure a safe shared surface environment for pedestrians and other users.

Scale, massing and height:

The appropriate scale, height and massing of the development is crucial to its success. The views inland from the harbour and the sea, as well as the roofscape from the Winter Gardens and Shorehill must be cohesive, attractive and interesting, and should reflect local character.

It is anticipated that a development of random one-, two- and some elements of three-storey terraced buildings in a variety of styles, materials and finishes may be appropriate. Varied building lines and irregular structures will provide an organic and intimate character, optimizing the sense of enclosure provided by the cliffs. The street scene should be interesting and fully reflect the quayside setting. Although local materials and traditional finishes should be used and the Victorian heritage of the town respected, the Council will consider appropriate high quality contemporary designs.

Any proposal will need to carefully balance the fundamental principles of:

- complementing what will be a working Harbour
- minimising the impact of buildings on what was previously an open and undeveloped area.
- Well designed shared surfaces that a) ensure pedestrian safety and b) encourage a variety of uses
- ensuring the development is characterised by complimentary public and commercial uses

Landscaping:

Any re-routing of vehicular access could release a significant area at the western end of the site, encompassing the padding pool and the Cascade. Linked together this could become a child friendly environment. Landscape treatments here should encourage informal community use and provide a focal point at the harbour entrance as well as a visual link and setting to the Cascade.

Hard landscape treatments for the rest of the site will be most appropriate to a harbour side location. Any planting would be difficult to establish and maintain in what would be a hostile environment. Interest may be added through a variety of surface treatments. Street furniture should be simple, functional and robust as appropriate for a working quay and harbour environment.