

# Water Lane: A Prospectus of Community Interests and Concerns

## Colour key:

- Red colour: headings
- Green colour: principles / guiding ideas (not fully developed throughout the different chapters, chapters 1 and 2 can serve as examples for what needs to be developed for the rest)
- Blue colour: summary notes derived from various feed-back forms
- Black colour: direct answers from various documents and feed-back forms

More opportunities should be afforded to the local community to engage actively with Exeter City Council, Developers, and interest groups to shape the needs of the area.

The aspirations for this development are exciting and much needed for Exeter. We need developments that are central, dense and allow low-car living. We very much hope that this development meets these aspirations. It could become an exemplar for the city.

Instrumental is a focus on a wider site: including the built-up area between Alphington Street and the river/canal and. When Ian Collinson was asked about redeveloping the City Industrial area he said they were not including it for current proposals, and this can be seen on the developers presentations.



## Chapters

- **1) Building great neighbourhoods: Establishing a master plan for the area between Alphington Street and river/canal**
  - A special location with supreme potential
  - Developing an urban lifestyle in a location in the vicinity of a city centre, an existing nature conservation area and an established recreational/leisure hub

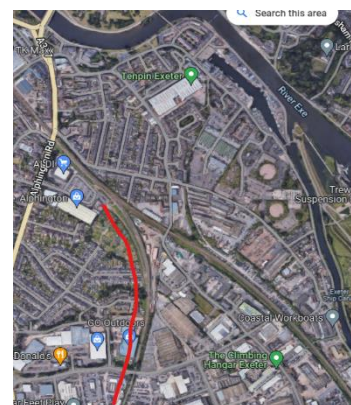
- Synergetic effects of bringing old and new communities together on an environmentally enhanced journey: mutual benefits for old and new residents
- Fostering social cohesion: by mixing population instead of segregation
- Planning and building from bottom-up: meaningful collaboration between residents' groups, developer and ECC
- Delivering a low-carbon development that can be a model for future developments: energy centre, ground heat-pump technology, solar, blue and green roofs, green facades
- Planning for a working-living continuum
- 15 mins working and living environment in a demographically mixed community
- Creating something inspirational and open for future developments: a lifelong development instead of a once and all developer masterplan; benefiting from the vibrance of a living community
- Ongoing research into regeneration through collaboration with Exeter University and Exeter College: future city building, living and working
- Prepare regeneration of Marsh Barton
- Height of buildings should reflect heights of the tallest buildings in the area.
- The principles of a 15 minute community is supported to ensure the community's basic needs are met without using a car.
- The surface electricity sub-station is clearly a major infrastructure, and we appreciate that the cost of removing this may be prohibitive. We expect that you and the site's owners will undertake a risk assessment of the facility to consider any possible danger to neighbouring properties from fire or explosion. If the area is to be a mixed development, we wonder whether buildings for employment may be best located either side of the site to reduce any danger to people's homes.
- Continuous tall buildings parallel with the canal should be avoided because it will result in shading on the water, and a deadening effect.
- We hope that no new homes will be built close to the railway, and that a road or tree buffer will be introduced to soften any noise from trains.
- My feedback is in relation to the focal point of the development. I do agree that it helps to have one. However it doesn't need a 9 storey building to achieve it, it can be done by path and road layout leading to it, an open space eg a town square, a change in style of architecture, a statue etc. How old style town squares used to be.
- **2) Social, retail & leisure provision: Promoting active, creative and healthy lifestyles**
  - Developing a local delivery, community volunteering and recycling hub
  - Increase recycling rate in a creative and community based active way (model of East German 'recycling corner shops')
  - Creating incentives and support for a retail base: environmentally friendly coop / farmers' market outlet
  - The wider Water Lane area must be developed with a broad range of shops, including a pharmacy.
  - Provision for a new Primary school is supported.
  - Doctors' surgery
  - Provide a community / heritage centre for the area. (old Gasworks manager's house?)
  - Public toilets on east side of basin/canal

- Whilst the proposals are to develop a new community, we do wonder how many facilities can be successfully incorporated into this relatively small area. A community needs a local shop, pharmacy, hairdressers, post office, greengrocers and perhaps café; although we recognise that a good local shop can provide much of this.
- It is good to see proposals for a new school, and this should result in a large green space for the school's playing field. Schools are independent these days and often built to standard government plans, but it would be good to see some enhance facilities provided to support community activity, particularly for children.
- Developing the area as a low car ownership mixed use area should naturally lead to people leading healthier lifestyles, but it is essential that homes are built with adequate storage to support this.
- If Gabriel's Wharf is developed as a new leisure hub, restoring and enhancing the quay is crucial, and providing improved access which will not interfere with commercial use of the quay is essential.
- There must be provision for retail units, and there must be given time for businesses to take-up premises. Maybe the city council can offer some business tax relief to help new businesses become established. In addition, we hope that developers are already talking to small retail businesses in the hope that retail premises will be occupied early on.
- There must be provision for facilities such a pharmacy and other essential retail outlets.
- The developer's outline masterplan talks about a 15 minute neighbourhood. This is critical to making a success of the low-car, green community aspirations for this location. Adequate provision needs to be made so that social, retail and leisure services can be provided on site or very closeby. This space must not be squeezed out. It is imperative that the developer's aspirations that "*everyday needs will be close at hand*" is delivered.
- With families moving into the development, the Unit would hope to be able to attract more cadets , and possibly staff . Were a school to be placed in the development, there might be opportunities for the Sea Cadet Unit and the school to work together.
- **3) Transport: Assuring permeability and interconnectivity exemplary for future developments in a low-car community**
  - The principles of a low-car community are supported.
  - Principle of a people-centred development as built in Vauban, Germany, are reflected upon.
  - Routes for pedestrians and cyclists around and connecting the area should be appropriate and not shared.
  - 20mph throughout area except parts of Water Lane.
  - We support the principle of low car ownership, and to review how this may work we have studied the district of Vauban, Freiburg, Germany. The transport arrangements in that area has been described as world leading and it seems to us that the most of principles used there will work at Water Lane.
  - We support quiet streets where pedestrians and cyclists have priority, but where cars are not banned.

- Proposals for up to 20 Co-Car is welcome, but we understand there is an age limit of 75 which will restrict users.
- We hope your discussions with Co-cars will result in a good range of vehicles being available at the transport hub to support people's needs, and for larger families.
- A low-car, low-carbon development is just what the city needs as it faces the challenges of this century.
- 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT THROUGHOUT HAVEN BANKS WITH THE EXCEPTION WATER LANE

### 3a) Access to the site

- [The second underpass under the railway at Tan Lane should be opened up to support active travel.](#)
- Access by vehicles to the new residential streets should be strictly limited to those who are disabled, drop off and pick up, access for maintenance contractors, and visiting healthcare workers. Can there be a controlled visitors parking area?
- Providing access to the wider area for work or leisure is essential. Cricklepitt Bridge does provide this access, but the Trews Weir suspension bridge, and the footbridge over the flood relief channel are inadequate for current use, let alone any additional use. Both of these bridges must be enhanced by additional river crossings if the volume of people at peak times is to be accommodated.
- Routes into the site for active travellers (people walking, scooting, wheeling, rolling or cycling) should be safe, not build in conflict with other road users (i.e. not shared paths) and allow access to/from the site from all points of the compass. Particular attention needs to be paid to improving the size and safety of the Tan Lane entrance. Other access/egress points for active travellers were a little unclear from the existing developer's plans and would need confirming to ensure there are several, safe access/egress points.
- Serious consideration should be given to opening up the unused rail link running from the SW of the site into the main N-S train line. This could be a valuable active travel link to the site. This line has not been used since 2015 (and belongs to Network Rail). This active travel corridor could be used as a walking/ cycle path to connect the Water Lane site to employment in Marsh Barton, retail (Sainsburys, retail and employment and green space in St.Thomas
- Careful attention needs to be given to all the access points to the development. The developer needs to lift their vision beyond the development's red line boundary.
- The foot/cycle bridge in front of Puerto Lounge needs to be replaced to ease the increased foot/cycle footfall from the development into central Exeter.
- **Access to the Unit (on Haven banks beside the Canal).** Whilst we appreciate the need to reduce car use within the development, the Unit will still need relatively straight forward access from Haven Road. Better bus services would help, but might not be the whole answer. The Unit would also need to be able to transport our boats and canoes off our



site, partly as they sometimes go 'out of Exeter', partly due to the need to launch them, either via the old slipway in the Basin, or possibly in any proposed new slip way elsewhere in the development. Our cadets also travel as a party from the Unit on occasion.

- ANOTHER ACCESS ROUTE
- FINISH OFF MICHAEL BROWNING WAY INTO WATER LANE
- RE-INSTATE MALLISON BRIDGE

### **3b) Permeability through the site**

- Pedestrian priority on Haven Road between the climbing centre and Piazza Terracina is supported to reduce traffic levels.
- A link between Michael Browning Way and Water Lane should be provided, as previously envisaged.
- Whilst we support the principle of delivery hubs, we do not think these will work for all people or all deliveries e.g. furniture and white goods.
- All pathways in the site need to prioritise people walking, scooting, wheeling and cycling. This means all the junctions should adhere to LTN 1/20 design standards. Cars should not have priority on internal junctions
- The foot/cycle bridge in front of Puerto Lounge needs to be replaced to ease the increased foot/cycle footfall from the development into central Exeter.
- PEDESTRIAN CROSSING OUTSIDE CLIMBING CENTRE
- REPAIR HAVEN ROAD OUTSIDE MARITIME COURT.

### **3c) Cycle and car parking**

- Low car use is supported but there must be adequate vehicle parking for those who a vehicle is essential for their work or lifestyle
- High quality cycle parking to be provided.
- All parking provision, whether for car or cycles should have electric charging facilities
- On street parking arrangements in the area need to be improved to prevent inappropriate parking and the blocking of pavements.
- We would like to see some parking on the periphery of the site to support people and families who need a car on a day-to-day basis, and for people who need a van or other vehicle to undertake their daily work. Without some car parking such people will be excluded from this type of development.
- There should be some parking for drivers with disabilities adjacent to living accommodation.
- If bicycle storage is to be provided for residents it needs to be secure storage for each home, not outside hoops or a shared cycle shed. Bicycles are expensive and owners need secure storage. In addition, storage must be large enough to accommodate all that a family needs, such as sports equipment etc.
- Plentiful cycle parking which is secure, weather proof, overlooked and/or with CCTV surveillance. The bike parking should contain Sheffield stands and also ample room for non-standard bike forms (trikes, cargo bikes etc)

- The bike parking needs to be very conveniently sited so that it is less hassle to reach one's bike compared to one's car.
- Bike parking slots should greatly exceed the minimum number laid out in the current council policies (these policies are now old, pre-date the council's more recent transport strategy and are in the process of being updated)
- Bike (and scooter) parking slots need electric charging points
- New developments in Exeter, despite being described as 'sustainable' and 'allowing easy active travel options' have been blighted by car littering on pavements and junctions. The road design has 'allowed' this illegal and inconsiderate behaviour to embed. This has been exacerbated by DCC being slow to formally adopt the roads. Physical design solutions (as well as yellow line marking) needs to disable car littering on pavements, paths and junctions.
- A process is needed to ensure that residents do not bring cars to site
- The signage for this site needs to reinforce the 'cars as guests' philosophy that needs to underpin this development.
- Having discussed the matter with other residents in the area, parking is a concern. The Unit is an enclosed area, but that does not stop people wanting to park there. This might become a greater issue depending upon what is developed immediately to the land side of the Unit property. Parking in the area of the Unit is already an issue.
- RESIDENTS PARKING FOR CHANDLERS WALK
- DOUBLE YELLOW LINES IN STREAM COURT
- LONG TERM NO PARKING PERMITS FOR ANY RESIDENT IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

### **3d) Links to city centre and Marsh Barton**

- [The unused branch rail line from Marsh Green Road West \(at Sainsburys\) to Tan Lane should be opened up as a pedestrian/cycle route.](#)
- [Mallinsons Bridge needs to be reinstated to provide a link from Cricklepit Bridge to the city centre.](#)
- [A high-quality segregated pedestrian and cycle route between Water Lane and Marsh Barton station is needed.](#)
- The proposals indicate at least one new pedestrian bridge over the canal, and possibly others. Any such bridge(s) will be a great benefit to walkers and cyclists, but need to be positioned high enough above the canal to allow smaller craft through unimpeded – the Friends of the Canal will hopefully have commented further on this issue.
- We accept that reliance upon Stagecoach for an integrated bus service is difficult because they are a private company, not a public bus service. But it is essential that there is an agreement between Stagecoach, the Highway Authority, and developers.
- The existing Green P&R service provides a good linkage between the area, Marsh Barton, the city centre, and Sowton to support people working and for leisure activity.
- We think it is essential that the second underpass under the rail line at Tan Lane should be opened up to provide improved access to the area for residents, businesses, and public transport, and future residents of a re-developed Marsh Barton. The new residents of Marsh Barton will need good access to the Riverside Valley Park, the new primary school, and leisure facilities on the canal and river. Secondary age children in

the Water Lane area will need good access to secondary schools, either at West Exe or elsewhere. We hope that proposals will include a canal side link to the new Marsh Barton station for both pedestrians and cyclists. The towpath should be segregated between cycling and walking, with sufficient margin between the path and any new buildings.

- The site is large and walking from there to the city centre will take between 20 minutes and 40 minutes for a fit and able walker. We hope you will refrain from stating that it will only take 15 minutes.

- **4) Canal basin and canal links: A true waterside community at the heart of Exeter**

- Access for water based activities with adequate vehicle parking must be maintained and improved. But this should not be an overspill for local residents parking.
- Consideration of the need for land and buildings to support maritime activity and boat building must be part of redevelopment proposals.
- Improved access to the canal is needed via an improved slipway.
- Gabriel's Wharf is an important quay and should be developed to provide access to the canal, and a place for maritime activity
- No development should restrict aspirations for the canal to be developed further with moorings for boats.
- Any new bridges over the canal should be sufficiently high to allow the majority of small craft to pass under. New bridges must easily openable for larger craft to navigate the canal.
- We wish the canal to be a vibrant, living waterway, busy with boats. While we strongly support the overall low-traffic aspiration of the scheme, owners of boats, kayaks, etc. need to be able to bring their cars to the appropriate points on the canal or basin for transfer to and from the water, or for loading/unloading.
- If Gabriel's Wharf is developed as a new leisure hub, restoring and enhancing the quay is crucial, and providing improved access which will not interfere with commercial use of the quay is essential.
- The Water Lane development because of its access routes and proximity to the canal and basin is inextricably part of the waterway's future as the heading of the initial proposals, 'Ideas for a waterside community for Exeter', reflects. The idea of a waterside community owes its credibility to the existence of Exeter Ship Canal. The canal's vitality and facilities are crucial therefore.
- We hope there will be recognition of the need for a development whose objectives and initiatives are complementary to those for an active waterway with working quays and maritime businesses such as boat building, restoration of historic vessels (plans already underway), repairs and boat storage and the gradual resumption of low-impact waterborne commercial freight and passenger traffic.
- The core of our ideas and objectives for a viable future for the canal and basin are set out in our publications *Making the Canal Matter Again to Exeter* and *Exeter Harbour: A New Outlook for Exeter Canal Basin [attached]*. These ideas have gained wide acceptance since publication.
- To summarise the key aspects that will affect the Water Lane proposals:
  - – A priority for the waterway is the active encouragement of more boats of all sizes to visit the canal and use improved boatyard facilities at and on the approaches to the basin, as well as peaceful 'green' moorings for holidays afloat.

- – Full vehicular access to the basin needs to be maintained for craneage and equipment and trailers for boats of a range of sizes.
- – Exeter Quayside and the canal areas are the second most visited areas of the city by locals and tourists. The interest and vibrancy of boats and boating activity on the water and the surrounds will strengthen visitors' and residents' interest. To achieve this it is necessary that land and buildings around the canal are made available, and water, electricity and toilet facilities are provided at mooring points.
- – The case of Gabriel's Wharf is central. Under the 'Emerging Ideas for Phase 1', Gabriel's Wharf ceases to have anything but merely vestigial relevance for the canal and becomes an adjunct to the housing scheme only.
- Gabriel's Wharf was until recently a location for high quality new boat building. The potential for attracting boatbuilding, design and repairs here, whether using traditional craft skills or hi-tech, is considerable if facilities are properly developed.
- Since space at the canal basin is tight to meet today's requirements, Gabriel's Wharf is an essential space to allow Exeter's maritime businesses and boating activity, with access to the sea, to grow.
- Gabriel's Wharf must have a slipway fit for this purpose, with enough nearby public parking also – including for boat trailers – so users can bring their craft and their families. For recreational craft hired on the spot there must still be a satisfactory way onto the water at this point. We hope that the development and traffic planning of the Water Lane area will not close down these aspirations.
- We suggest an immediate feasibility study of the full potential at Gabriel's Wharf for a maritime facility as well as recreational boat use, before the possibilities of the site are lost altogether.
- – Seven or eight storey buildings shown at the waterside for the new community hub are out of scale and proportion for the area and will overshadow the waterway, which will affect the water's ecology and ultimately navigability. Contrary to their reflecting traditional characteristics of waterside buildings, eight storeyed warehouses were never part of Exeter Ship Canal's towpaths, nor even part of the basin. Each location has its own spirit that should be respected.
- We accept the hard fact that need and demand can drive density but believe it would be good to set the architect a challenge now to develop a better canal-side theme.
- – The towpath past the former SecAnim factory: an imaginative re-evaluation is required of this stretch of canal-side frontage in terms of attractive waterway and waterway-related uses. It is a stretch of waterside that needs especially sensitive handling to maintain its character, because this length of towpath will also be a strategic route for passengers walking or cycling to and from the new Marsh Barton Station. We hope passenger ferries will also run there, in time.
- – We support the desire for low traffic use in the Water Lane development overall. To support ship, boat, and recreational activities on the canal that are so important to people, necessary vehicle access and parking must be maintained at the canal basin and Gabriel's Wharf for the launch and maintenance of craft.
  - – Waterside access and facilities should be accommodated for increased recreational activity such as rowing, canoeing, paddle boarding and dragon



boats, and competitive events on the river and canal, all attracting participants of all ages from sometimes considerable distances from the waterway itself.

- – Today's outlook for waterborne canal activity is good. People's access to open water is much more important now to fitness and well-being since the pandemic. We are working with the County Council as Highway Authority to ensure that when the bascule and swing bridges on the A379 are replaced the draught under the bridges is substantially increased to allow the majority of smaller craft to pass under without the need to open the bridges and disrupt journeys. This will also result in cyclists and pedestrians passing under the A379, which will be a significant safety gain as they currently have to cross all four lanes of the dual carriageway. It will make the canal more navigable for many purposes, including trip and pleasure craft.
  - Therefore, new crossings over the canal should provide at least this same draught, and any new bridges should be swing or lift bridges and both user and electrically operated.
  - Proposals that turn their back on the waterway except as an adjunct to a property development will, if they go through, block off opportunities for a water-based renewal for the City of Exeter for generations to come. We are sure this is not the developers' intention.
  - A living and changing variety of interest and activity on the canal can only be good for adjacent housing and add to the joys of life for the people there. It requires focus and background knowledge in the planning. We wish to work with the developers to help achieve this successful outcome and would very much value a meeting with them before the proposals are developed in more detail.
  - The Friends of the Canal also hope that the Development Management Company will understand that the impacts of the Water Lane scheme on citizens and organisations in Exeter are complex and affect many different interests. It will take more time than is being allowed to achieve genuine community involvement and understanding. We urge the Developers, as do other local organisations, to show appreciation of this and extend the timetable of the consultations and their follow-ups.
  - The Unit makes great use of the Canal and River for training cadets on both canoes, rowing and powered craft. Our safety protocols call for the use of a safety boat. We understand the wish to see a busy Canal, that shouldn't be at the expense of existing organised Canal & River users such as ourselves, and the Rowing and Canoe Clubs. There would have to be some way of managing this. The aim should not be to squeeze the various clubs out to accommodate occasional users. It was very marked on a recent walk beside the canal to see the number of individuals who had come to the area with inflatable paddleboards, presumably attracted ( at least in some places by cheap or non-existent parking charges.
- **5) Natural environment: Building corridors and bridges to river and canal valley**
    - The area should have adequate green space for the number of expected residents to be able to socialise if homes will be apartments with little outside space.
    - Planting at the perimeter of the site to shield the railway should soften that aspect of the development – perhaps this could be achieved on the embankment by working with Network Rail.
    - Enhancement of the Exe Valley Park with more trees and social spaces may be possible, but this must be done through consultation to ensure the area maintains its naturalness.

- **6) History: Keeping heritage alive in the new living quarter**

- Development must respect the historic setting of the canal and basin rather than dominate it. Exeter's industrial history C19 and early C20: archaeology of the industrial age
- Do not allow the quay and canal area to be over developed for residential use. If this is allowed the character of the area will be lost.
- It seems that there is little left in the way of buildings to reflect the history of this area. The steel clad buildings that dominate the area are certainly of the 20<sup>th</sup> century having no place in the proposed residential area, but where older historical buildings are found, they should be preserved and incorporated into new development. Perhaps the road network and former railway branch line can retain with some local art to celebrate the industrial past.
- The canal quays and Gabriel's Wharf quay must remain functional for water-based activity, and if the former tow-paths are to be developed they should be done sensitively to reflect the past history of the first pound lock canal in England.
- we hope that ECC will do everything in its power to preserve the heritage of the area.
- COMMUNITY/HERITAGE CENTRE IN NEW DEVELOPMENT.