



Clyde Docks Preservation Initiative

*Protecting and Promoting the Evolving Maritime Heritage of the Tidal River Clyde*

## **Intended Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) for Govan Graving Docks**

### **Revision February 2023**

We intend to submit a Masterplan Proposal of Application Notice (PAN) for Govan Graving Dock in due course, to start an application process for Planning Permission in Principle. Our aim is to submit the PAN notice this year, with the schedule to be confirmed following discussions with our architects.

CDPI does not intend to lead delivery of this proposal - rather we aim to establish the basis of and inform discussions supporting future ambitions for the site that will allow greater community influence in guiding its future. We urge stakeholders and others who wish to get behind this broad concept (and synergistic proposals from others) to come together through the Govan Docks Regeneration Trust charity.

In approaching a planning application without necessarily intending to lead the delivery; our aim is to establish an up-to-date precedent in planning policy and planning decision making that will secure the site as a maritime infrastructure asset while allowing public access and space that enables sustainable community-driven uses.

**We also aim to challenge the misleading and false narrative that housing development is needed for a regeneration of the graving dock site to be financially viable.**

Until now the early-stage development of plans for Govan Graving Docks has been shrouded in commercial confidentiality. Our aim is to bring it into the public sphere for open discussion.

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## Overview

**Our proposal is a light-industry led regeneration of Govan Graving Docks that anticipates possible future transfer of the site into community ownership.**

Our primary aim is to secure the protection of Govan Graving Docks as a strategic maritime asset - to serve future potential for growth of this industry on the Clyde in the future – and allow appropriate interim uses that have community buy-in and will deliver community benefit. To achieve that, we aim to approach the site in its entirety as an adaptive space – one where uses can easily and quickly change without impacting the listed structures or constraining uses with permanent buildings.

Our approach is a diametric alternative to housing-led redevelopment of the site (which has been pursued repeatedly by developers without any progress since 1989) – which we believe would put an end to any long-term prospect of returning industry and practical maritime uses to the site in any form.

We recognise the challenges faced by growth in the maritime sector on the Clyde – such as the size of vessels the river can accommodate and competition with shipbuilding and marine industries in places like mainland Europe and the Far East. However, Glasgow and Scotland have a strong portfolio in high-tech research and development that is underpinned by the expertise in Glasgow’s universities and colleges (such as the Department of Naval Architecture, Ocean & Marine Engineering at the University of Strathclyde and the Faculty of Nautical and STEM at City of Glasgow College).

Coupled with Scotland’s key position in the North Atlantic and potential in our marine renewables and aquaculture sectors, there is considerable scope to create new and future demand for maritime industrial infrastructure in the West of Scotland. We can already point to The Scottish Marine Technology Park under development in West Dunbartonshire and the reopening of Kishorn Dry Dock in Strathcarron as evidence of willingness to make serious new investment in this sector.

Following the disappointing rejection of the Clyde Green Freeport bid, there is scope to build a broader, community and stakeholder-driven entrepreneurial/innovative approach to the maritime competitiveness of the Clyde that empowers SMEs, start-ups and the third-sector.

Govan graving docks could be ideal for an innovation-led research and light engineering/fabrication dry dock facility that is ideally placed for access to the Atlantic coast, as well as benefiting from nearby transport links such as the M8 motorway and Glasgow Central / Queen Street rail stations connecting to the rest of Scotland and the UK, and globally via Glasgow and Prestwick airports. As a vibrant, modern and culturally-diverse city;

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Glasgow has everything needed to attract and retain a high-skilled workforce provided the opportunities are available.

There is opportunity to address the presence of natural space in the urban waterfront and the community benefits of this - using the tidal basin area as a canvas - building on the work done in the past by Dr Ruth Olden and the current projects being undertaken by Blue Green Glasgow on the site. Coupled with industrial and innovation uses of the dry docks, this could make the graving dock site an important educational as well economic asset for Glasgow.

A broad open conversation is needed to address the future of the Govan Graving Docks with key stakeholders. However, this is being constrained by private ownership of the site through property speculation and aims to redevelop parts of it for housing (and apparent reluctance of the owners to discuss alternatives to housing).

Govan Graving Docks is not needed in addressing the area's need for new affordable housing. There is a great deal of vacant land nearby along Broomloan Road / Transformation Regeneration Area in Govan/Ibrox as well as throughout South West Glasgow – sites that are not complicated by factors such as flood risk and historic environment / listed structures. The continued push to build housing on the docks is based purely on the developers' aims to realise a return on their investment. However, outcomes of private sector investment risk and flawed property development speculation should not be a concern for the community or for local authority planners and alternative ways [to sale of housing units] for the owners to be reimbursed need to be addressed. The site has been held for two decades by a company with core competence in the building of mid-market suburban villa housing. Their scope to appropriately and successfully develop a site such as Govan Graving Docks in a commercially viable way is uncertain and this should be of concern to local authority planners.

We believe The Scottish Government should establish Govan Graving Docks (and other maritime facilities on the Clyde) as protected key economic assets – in a similar approach to the Safeguarded Wharves established on the River Thames in London – to protect further loss of infrastructure to private property speculation that does not provide sustainable, local wealth creation opportunities that could support thriving communities.

**Bringing more industry back to the city (with clean, modern industry that addresses climate and sustainable development goals) will work towards outcomes of discussions of “20-minute neighbourhoods” and creating a more diverse, skills-driven urban economy fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Particularly now we are seeing significant shift in the retail sector more towards online shopping.**

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## Background

Our proposal draws directly on the findings of Govan Docks Regeneration Trust's National Lottery Funded Govan Voices Consultation and the (widely applauded) proposals for the graving docks which were put forward by Ferguson Marine in 2018. It also encompasses the extensive research and collaboration undertaken by us with the University of the West of Scotland, Fablevision, the River Cities Network and a diverse group of researchers and artists who have looked at Govan Graving Docks over the past decade.

By accident the site has become a "living laboratory" and with a planned, adaptive space approach to its future - this "living laboratory" can be unlocked to provide sustainable community and economic benefit.

A key element of Govan Docks Regeneration Trust's consultation was a 2019 design competition (which we sponsored) for final year architecture students to propose masterplans for regeneration of Govan Graving Docks. Out of 10 validated, entries none of the students proposed any kind of housing development on the site, but focused on public park and nature space as well as light industry and boat building projects. The winner and runners up, chosen by an independent judging panel Chaired by Tom McNally and coordinated by Neil Baxter, proposed mixed use public space with light engineering work making use of reactivated dry docks.

We anticipate the details of future site uses could be the subject of further architecture competitions that facilitate more in-depth collaboration with students and the local community to produce design briefs. With an established approach of adding only non-permanent buildings to the site, this can become an ongoing repeated process of established academic/education and community collaboration – extending the "living laboratory" approach our network previously applied to intangible heritage to physical architecture and engineering innovation (and bridging the two - with clear benefits for placemaking).

To date much of the planning for the future of the site has been behind closed doors with no broad input into design objectives. Plans that are already decided-upon without broad input have been announced in the media. The entire design process, starting with the sharing and curating of ideas, now needs to be brought into the open and taken forward in an inclusive democratic space with all stakeholders (and without compartmentalisation of participants).

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## Potential Opportunities: Our Outline Proposal

### **Dry Docks 1 and 2:**

We propose both dry docks 1 and 2 be restored as working dry docks. A proposal is already in progress for the restoration of No. 1 dry dock as a ship repair and maintenance facility. We propose to allow this to proceed as planned (and to open up new future investment potential for it by ruling out any housing development that would conflict with it).

We also propose restoration of the middle No.2 dock for commercial marine engineering work including yacht maintenance and fabrication and service work for a fleet of river buses on the River Clyde in anticipation of future launch of such a service. Our collaboration with researchers in Gdansk, Poland has identified that numerous shipbuilding and docks facilities there have adapted to build and service superyachts.

The dry dock is capable of accommodating large yachts and far from being blue-sky thinking, we have already identified potential commercial backers and customer bases provided the operation can be made competitive. Potentially this could be more attractive in terms of investor return than housing and would create significantly more permanent skilled jobs and training opportunities for local people. The navigation of such vessels to and from the docks would also be a significant visitor attraction, particularly if viewing areas to observe the docks are also created.

**We are also rolling-out a process of stakeholder engagement to assess the potential to develop markets for a passenger water-transport corridor on the Clyde linking Glasgow to the Firth and West Coast.**

Dry docks could also be used for a wider diversity of engineering applications such as testing of submersibles and scale engineering prototypes in a controlled contained environment. Anything that requires a large basin of water to be filled and drained could be a potential use; not just work on ships' hulls. There is a great deal of research and investment now being done in zero-emissions shipping. The graving docks could be an ideal research facility for this, as well as for other renewables.

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### **Dry Dock No 3:**

We propose to divide this dock into two sections.

The western section (D3b in the appended layout plan) could become a semi-permanently drained / sealed dry dock as a permanent out of water display for an historic ship.

Initially the eastern section (D3a in the layout plan) could be used as a wet berth with access to the river (for vessel maintenance that doesn't require dry docking and or as a waiting-berth for dry dock access) or sealed so that the water level can be dropped to allow the existing steps to be used to access pontoons / floating structures.

Options for long-term use of the eastern section could be decided through collaboration with a range of stakeholders and the wider community.

### **Dry Dock Quay Space**

The quay space between no 1 dock and the river could be divided to allow public access to the waterfront. Use of this waterfront space will form the basis of detailed collaboration with stakeholders and the wider community. There could be opportunities for pop-up street food, rest/picnic areas, community event space, etc.

The quay spaces adjacent to docks 1 and 2 and part of the quay space adjacent dock 3 (as shown by the blue areas in the layout plan) would be required to service the operation of the docks.

A controlled access area would be needed adjacent to dry dock 3 to allow access between the working dock quays across the pedestrian access from path linking to Pacific Quay. Shared public and works access could also be available via the slope extending from Clydebrae Street into the site subject to appropriate segregation design.

Normally the working dock quay space would be closed to the public however consultation with operators, stakeholders and health & safety experts could assess what public access may be possible during periods the docks are not in use.

The quay space around dock 3 would be public space (possibly with an upper deck area at street level along Govan Road to protect and enhance the views across the river) and the uses of this could be determined based on collaboration with stakeholders and the wider community. As with the public quay space between No. 1 dry dock and the river we

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anticipate this would be adaptable space to allow seasonal uses and events (e.g. community activities, pop-up retail, street food, artistic/cultural activity, etc.)

Installation of buildings on the quay space would be limited to movable structures such as converted shipping containers or sheds, with uses that are not directly affected by flood risk. This means no foundations would be created that impact on the A-listed dry dock structures.

#### **Tidal Basin Area**

This area of land we propose as a blank canvas nature space / park area, potentially with the creation of a tidal lagoon in the basin itself. A project is already underway making use of this as a growing space and we anticipate a nature park could emerge as a logical progression of, this without need to identify new delivery partners (though greater direct community involvement is needed). This area could also accommodate a launch slip for small boats access to the river.

#### **Pump House**

Our proposal would see restoration of the pump house as a café, visitor centre, gift shop or arts/creative space. Further consultation with the wider community and market research is needed to decide on the long-term purpose of the building.

#### **Bridge Access**

We propose bridge access to and from Pacific Quay (opening bridges to allow vessels to pass) and across the middle of No. 3 dry dock. As well as access to No. 3 dock, the opening bridge proposal anticipates possible future development of a marina / moorings in the Prince's Dock canting basin.

#### **Site Plan Key:**

- A Tidal basin area
- B Public quay space
- C Pump house building
- D1 No. 1 dry dock
- D2 No. 2 dry dock
- D3. No. 3 dry dock

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