

## Media Regeneration and Renewal

**Date:** 28/04/2006  
**Type:** Trade and Technical  
**Frequency:** 49/Per year  
**Circulation:** 20063 (ABC)  
**MediaDisk Ref:** U4D-211.50  
**Page:** 13

## Order

264690003  
DLG/CI

MTH1 13 5020

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# Huddersfield waterfront

**Name of scheme** Waterfront Quarter design statement and masterplan, Huddersfield

**Published** March 2006

**Commissioned by** Ramsden and Colne Developments LLP and Kirklees Council

**Produced by** DLG Architects

**Scope/purpose** A development framework and outline planning proposals for a canalside former industrial site at the southern edge of Huddersfield town centre.



**Patrick Berry comments:** This masterplan sets out proposals for a major mixed-use redevelopment on one of Huddersfield's last remaining major industrial sites. Lying adjacent to the town centre, the scheme will form an important component of the town's regeneration.

The site presents its fair share of challenges: it is triangular, and the land declines by as much as 17 metres to its eastern side. It also incorporates the River Colne and the Huddersfield Narrow Canal. Taking a delivery-focused approach, the two landowners and the developer are trying to create commercial value on the site while at the same time providing significant regeneration benefits to the town.

The proposals envisage a mixed-use leisure, residential and commercial scheme, using the form and mass of the buildings in the surrounding area to create what appears to be a waterside quarter with a reasonably dense urban feel. If taken forward in its current form, the development will clearly provide an alternative leisure focus in an interesting and potentially high quality environment slightly away from the current town centre. The focus on pedestrian move-

ment within the scheme is partly driven by the site's nature, but nonetheless will strengthen the development's status as a desirable leisure and recreational location. It would, however, have been nice to see some further thought given to pedestrian connectivity to the town centre.

The focal point of the development is a new, multi-level urban square around the canal basin, which will act as a heart for the development. The final quality of the materials and design of the square are likely to be critical to the scheme's overall success, but the current design will create an interesting and accessible space.

It is estimated that the site will create 2,000 new jobs and around 500 homes: as such it will have a major impact on the town centre and surrounding area, becoming a leisure destination in its own right. Contextually, it would have been interesting to understand how a proposed development of this scale fits with the regeneration of the town as a whole – particularly developments in the town centre.

The design statement and masterplan present ambitious development proposals that seek to maximise the potential of the site, creating a scheme on a scale more often found in Manchester or Leeds. Understandably, the document does not provide much detail in the way of commercial deliverability at this stage, though a phased development is anticipated.

Overall, the masterplan provides a robust but challenging basis on which to move forward to public consultation and more detailed planning. It will be very interesting to watch its continued development.

● Patrick Berry is the director of regeneration at architectural and integrated design practice Broadway Malyan.