

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR AT THE WATERSIDE

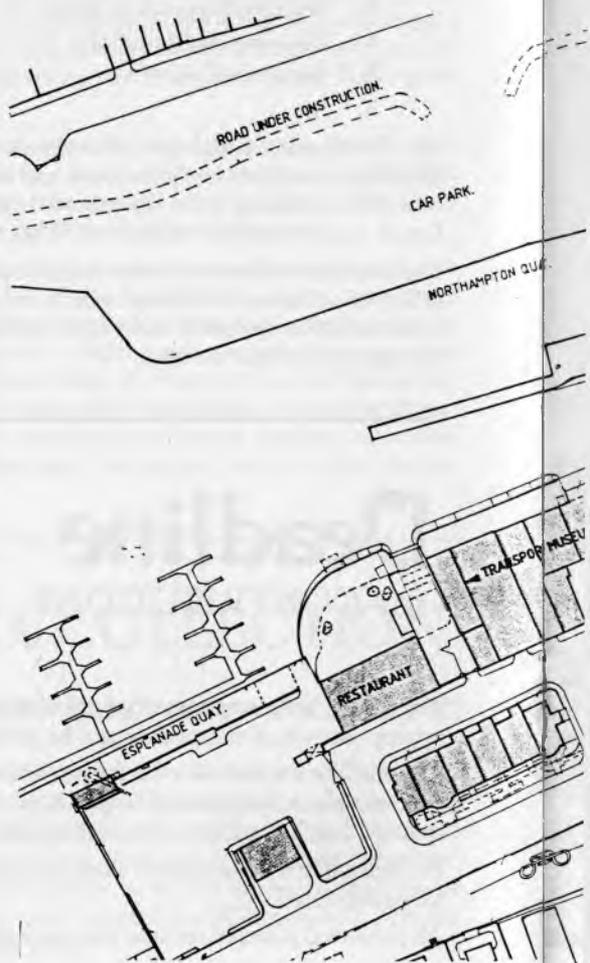
Throughout the ages, from Roman times right up to the second world war, Dover's Western Docks formed the power-house of the town. The prominence of the location, which offers safe passage between the cliffs facing on to the narrow point of the Channel, has formed a natural funnel. It was through this funnel that the wealthy and famous have had to pass on their way to and from Europe.

Consequently Snargate Street was the prosperous centre of commercial activity. Businesses clustered around the inner harbours jostling to trade with the rich flow of traffic.

But it was because of this ease of access that it was necessary to cordon off the docks to maintain a ring of security when hostilities raged across the Channel. By the time the sound of bombs and artillery had died away at the end of the last war the character of the water-front had changed completely. The inner harbours became transit areas for goods rather than people so it was convenient to maintain the restrictions for the safety of the public and the security of cargoes.

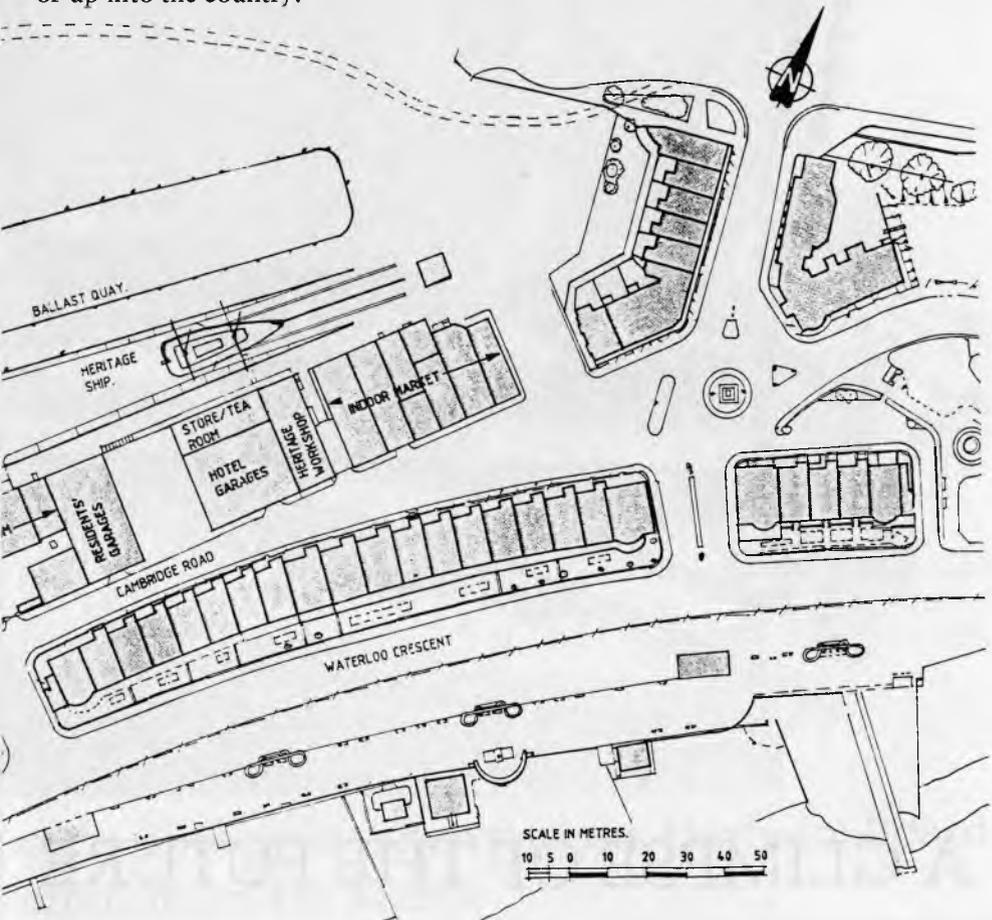
Now 16 million people from all over Europe pass through the port each year, but they pass largely unnoticed and for the most part they fail to have any inkling of the incomparable heritage which lies so close to their path.

Fortunately a coincidence of circumstances has arisen which should transform and breathe new life into the area.

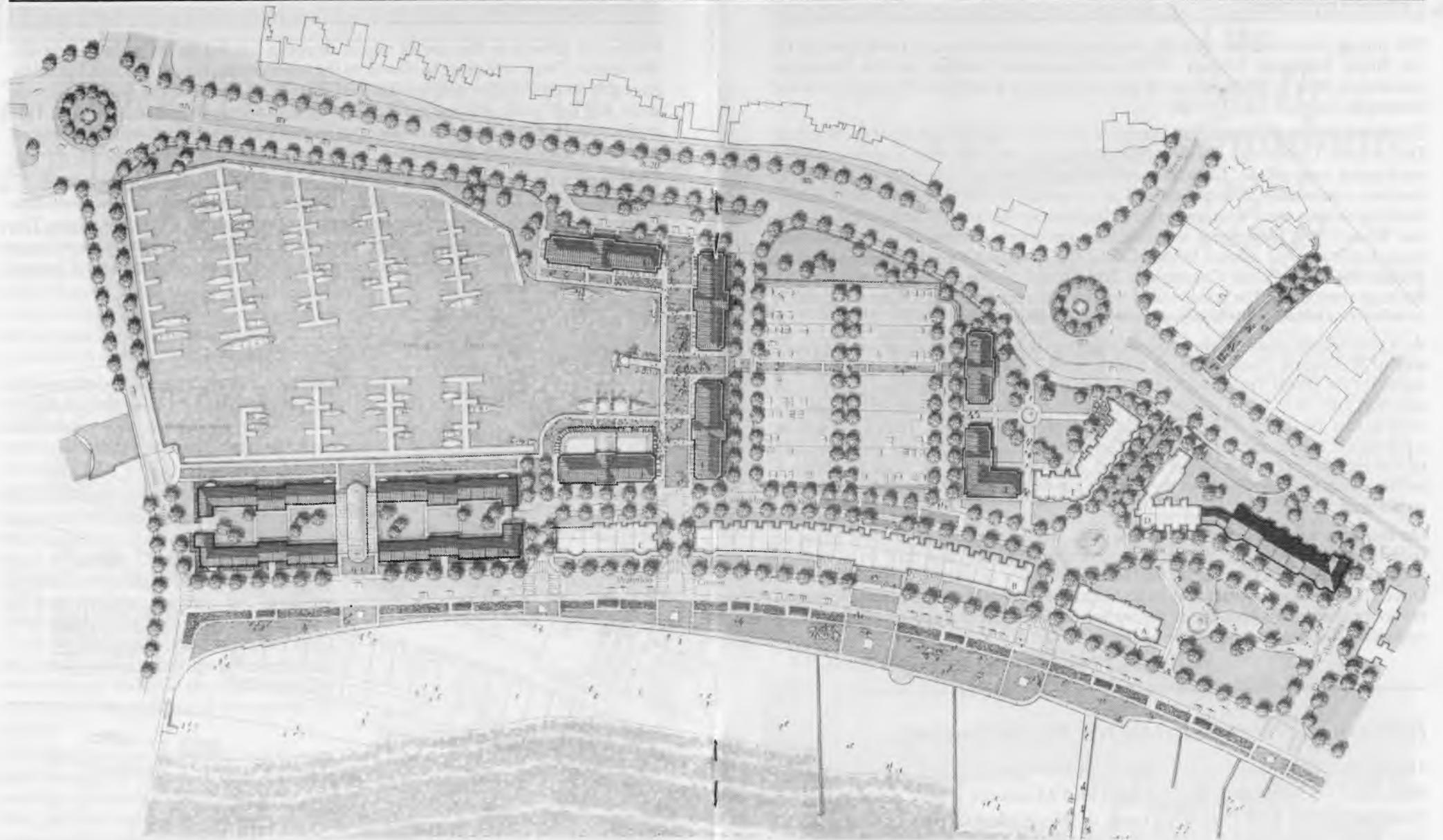


Firstly the growth in the size of world shipping has led to the point where the Wellington Dock, which is the closest to the town centre, is now too small to fulfill its traditional rôle of serving commercial ships. This traffic in the Dock is coming to an end this summer allowing the existing marina to expand and flourish. This enables the Harbour Board to throw open its gates once more and invite visitors and businesses back to the waterside.

Then there is the new A20 link to the motorway which is to be completed in 1993. This will provide Dover and the Western Docks with an exceptional shop window framed by the castle, cliffs and sea, which no passing traveller will fail to notice. The display in this window will be designed to show that Dover has so much more to offer than being just an efficient machine for discharging people across the Channel or up into the country.



THE WELLINGTON DOCK, EAST END: THE FIRST PHASE



A GLIMPSE OF THE FUTURE

A copy of the plan shewn at the Harbour Board
Exhibition on 4th March

The timing also coincides with the removal of trade barriers and the formation of the Single European Market. With its exceptional position on the European crossroads there is the opportunity to turn the shop window into a show-case for businesses from all over Europe.

The Harbour Board is preparing extensive plans to release the whole of the Western Docks from Cambridge Road to Admiralty Pier over the next few years as the traditional uses recede. Once more the area can become the hub of a thriving business community. The policy will be to attract visitors from far and near by building on the award-winning lead that has been set by Dover District Council with the White Cliffs Experience and town centre improvements. It will add to the remarkable interest offered by the Castle, the historic Gaol, the Roman Painted House, the White Cliffs Countryside Project and all the rest of our outstanding heritage attractions. The result will be widespread recognition that Dover has much to offer as a location for business as well as pleasure.

As a preliminary phase in the process, existing sheds and workshops on the south side of Wellington Dock are being transformed, on a temporary basis, into a new home for the Dover Transport Museum with space for added maritime interests. In addition there is to be an indoor market where it is planned to attract stallholders from across the Channel as well as from the Garden of England. Then there will be a restaurant and general store to serve visitors to the area and to cater for thousands of visiting yachts coming into the marina each year. Finally we hope to obtain a heritage ship for renovation on the existing slipway as part of the public attraction to the area.

On the other side, facing on to the new A20, will be the start of the first phase of redevelopment. This will eventually transform the area and lead to a vibrant waterside full of activity, colour and interest to draw an extensive new market to Dover. The timing depends to a large extent on external factors, but there can be no doubt that the re-opening of the waterfront provides the opportunity to bring renewed prosperity to the whole of Dover.

W. FAWCUS, Property Development Manager, D.H.B.

Review Writers wanted for the following :

4th April – 10th May	The Four Georges
18th May – 19th July	Artists and Museums
18th May – 5th June	Dover in Words and Pictures
12th June – 19th July	South Kent College Art Show
25th – 26th July	Model Railway Show

ALL AT DOVER MUSEUM.

Please contact the Editor if you would like to review any one of these interesting events or become one of our panel of writers.