

PA01 Western Docks and Freemantle Industrial Area

Context

- Western section of Southampton docks to west of study area.
- Waterfront to south.
- Bounded by Mountbatten Way and main line railway to north.
- This area stretches for some considerable distance to the west and includes dry docks.
- The area is flat, reclaimed land.

Grain

- Coarse grain throughout.

Scale

- Buildings are long, low (single storey but this is often on an industrial scale so more equivalent to two storeys and sometimes more) and large floorplate.
- A significant exception to the general scale of building is the Solent Mills building on a grand scale and seen from some distance as part of the waterside ensemble of buildings and infrastructure.
- Low pitched roofs or flat roofs.

Uses

- Storage – large areas of cars awaiting export or stored after importing.
- Car parks for cruise passengers.
- Container stores – the area is strongly characterised by the monumental scale of the containers stacked up to five high.
- Passenger embarking and disembarking to and from cruise ships.

Public Realm

- Public realm is poor with little or no hard or soft landscaping.

Connectivity

- Area is restricted access so connectivity is almost non-existent for the public.



Storage containers form a defining and ever changing part of the character of the operational dock area

- The area is very well-connected visually and is the subject of a number of strategic views from areas CA1, CA11 and CA34 and provides the backdrop for strategic views of the city from the Itchen Bridge.

Building types

- Purpose built sheds.
- Some purpose built offices.
- Dry docks.
- Cranes.
- Warehouse/mills.

Architectural qualities

- A very low level of architectural quality with highly functional utilitarian buildings of limited interest, the exception being the Solent Mills building which is on a grand scale but well detailed and articulated.
- The cranes are visually stunning and have sculptural qualities and are the subject of a number of strategic views of this peripheral character area.

Heritage Assets

- Solent Mills building is of considerable local interest and a landmark building on the waterside.
- The dry dock is of some architectural and historic interest.
- The area is historically important for its association with some of the most famous cruise ships in the world.
- Archaeological significance relating to potential for prehistoric occupation prior to drowning of valley; structures or features created when area was river, and industrial archaeology.

Materials

- Red brick (Solent Mills), corrugated metal, asbestos sheeting, steel.

Condition

- The area appears to be in reasonable condition.

Ownership

- Associated British Ports.

Intervention

- A level of public access to the waterside would be of significant benefit to the city and could provide an additional visitor destination. This could be combined with a museum or exhibition space celebrating the importance of Southampton to the cruise liner trade.

Key design principles

- Height and location of any proposed buildings should be carefully considered in relation to the strategic views to the cranes, the waterside and the Solent Flour mill complex.