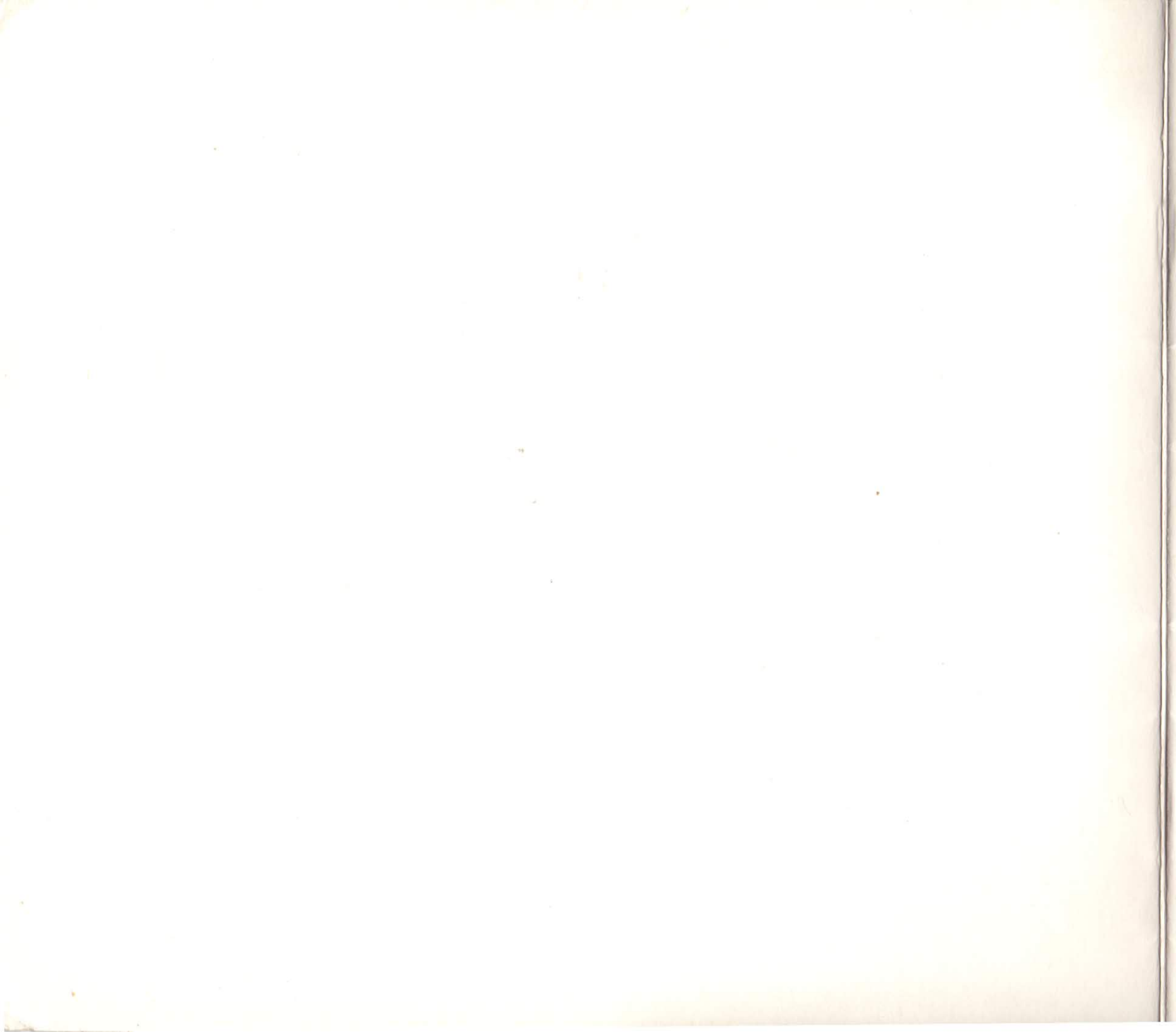


moves to the future: **PRESTON DOCK**



Background Summary

Preston Dock lies on the north bank of the River Ribble, about 9 miles from Lytham, which itself lies at the mouth of the estuary.

The total area of the dock estate presently scheduled for redevelopment is approximately 272 acres. The water area included in this figure is about 48 acres, and comprises the following:

An Entrance Channel 427 feet long which narrows to 66 feet at the first lock; the Entrance Basin, 850 feet long and 300 feet wide; the Main Lock Entrance, with three pairs of lock gates, measuring 550 feet long by 66 feet wide; and the Main Dock Basin, 3,200 feet long and 600 feet wide.

Redundant docklands, of which there are many in the United Kingdom at present, are frequently represented as areas of exceptional difficulty in terms of re-creating on them any kind of prosperous development.

Preston Dock, however, actually presents opportunities – not only is the dock itself carved out of the bed rock, but it is favourably physically located, extending as it does into the heart of the built-up area of Preston to the north, and Penwortham to the south. The site itself is potentially of very great value, and there is every reason to believe that its redevelopment in the late 20th century will provide as exciting and challenging a prospect as did the original creation of the dock during the 19th century.

In considering the direction that any proposed development should take, decisions were required in principle on the following points:

- a) whether water was to be retained in the dock basin;
- b) necessary short and long term measures to be taken if water is retained;
- c) whether proposed recreational uses should be developed, and to what extent;
- d) endorsement of existing and proposed commitments already outlined;
- e) confirmation of requests for feasibility studies in areas of housing, commercial use, and leisure development in specified locations.

At different times, a number of reports from varying bodies, in connection with different aspects of the overall scheme, have been presented and evaluated.

All are technically feasible, but with sometimes great variation in cost. It is fair to say that retention of water in the dock is certainly, on cost terms only, the most attractive option.

If it is agreed that this is the course to take, then a large area of the total space available is accounted for (in-filling would cost millions more, unjustifiable in present terms of land values).

Retention of the water can itself be accomplished in different ways – by sealing off from the river completely (apart from special channels to keep the main body of water fresh); by continuing to use lock gates – and there are a number of ways in which to do this; by controlling water levels with a sill or permanently closed lock gates; by filling in the smaller entrance basin, and providing a navigable channel by some other means and even by re-directing the River Ribble to pass through the dock (though at a cost exceeding five million pounds).;

There are even choices in the retained water level; it could be raised to the top of the quay; settled at the present level; or changed to any other level.

To raise the level to the top of the quay would require pumping from the river, costing about £4,000, with an additional £10,000 per year to make up for water losses.

Retaining the present level would require continued use of lock gates, but with problems if numerous small craft with free access necessitated more frequent opening.

If no river access were required, a fixed barrier (solid filling) could be constructed to block off either the entrance channel or the lock channel.

A sill could be installed across the entrance channel, and this could provide a minimum average depth of 8 to 9 feet of water. The preferred water depth for many of the popular water sports is about 8 feet.

Fixed Barrier

If no access from the river is decided upon, the Entrance Channel could be blocked by a solid barrier such as filling. The water level in the two basins would then be substantially constant. Alternatively, partial blocking of the entrance would permit some exchange of water with the river, but would not allow craft to enter.

Lock Gates

If use of existing chambers and gates is retained, the following conditions will apply:

Design of the 'Mitre' gates requires that they are opened on an incoming tide, as the river level rises to that of the dock. Before the tide falls, the gates have to be closed, and as the cycle is about twelve hours, occurring both day and night, two lock masters have to work in shifts.

The existing gates cannot effectively be used if the required level is only about 3 feet.

If the level is to be raised to the quay, the gates would need to be heightened and strengthened, at a cost that has been provisionally estimated at about £100,000.

New Chambers and Gates

Life expectancy of the existing gates is considerable, and, although maintenance costs of any new gates would probably be lower than the present ones, an initial cost of about £400,000 seems unjustifiable.

A smaller chamber, and smaller gates, could be used to lessen the water lost during 'locking' of craft, but the volume of water in the large basin is such that losses would not be serious.

The cost of producing suitable locks and chambers from scratch would amount to approximately £2,400,000; adapting the existing chamber to a smaller size would be about half of this.

Using a Sill

A fixed sill in the entrance channel is an alternative way of controlling water levels inside the dock chambers. Its level would be a compromise between obtaining sufficient depth on the retained side for craft movements at low tide, whilst allowing enough water depth (and time) over high tide to permit transit of craft.

Silting within the entrance basin would, however, cause problems at lower water levels.

During an average Spring tide, over 3 feet of clearance would be available for about 4 hours. A higher sill would reduce this period.

Rapid changes in levels between the basins and the river, however, cause high currents, and the transit period would need to be restricted to about 1 hour each side of high water.

Water Level Control only in Entrance Chamber

Since the volume of the entrance basin is only about 10% of that of the main basin, the water level would follow much more closely that of the river, resulting in lower current rates across the sill.

Siltation

If locks were retained, with probably more frequent use, siltation could be expected to increase, but the amount of increase could be dependent on the retained water level.

A fixed barrier would significantly reduce the exchange of water between river and docks, and siltation would be minimal.

A Sill would allow more water exchange than locks and consequently siltation would increase, particularly so after an initial 'filling-in' period. A higher retained water level would reduce the need for disposal methods.

River Embankments

The Dock Estate is below the level of the highest recent flood. Redevelopment should therefore encompass protection of the area against flooding, probably by means of a wall or embankment.

Schemes for Development

Most of the schemes envisage access from the river to the Entrance Basin, and many also include access to the main basin. Most also allow river vessels to enter and moor in one or both basins.

Alternatives Considered

Four possible schemes are proposed and discussed below. Each allows for flood protection within the overall package.

a) Barrier across the Entrance Channel

Unlike the other three, this scheme would not permit access from the river. All four pairs of lock gates would be redundant, and without the need for large mooring capacity, a wide range of water sport could be accommodated.

Exchange of water with the river would be provided by a new channel, to provide a 10% change of water per month.

Flood control for the Dock Estate is by extended walls or embankments.

b) Sill across Entrance Channel

With all lock gates removed, the whole water area would be accessible, but with the problems of high currents and increased siltation mentioned earlier. Access times would be reduced, and difficulty of silt removal would be increased.

With lock gates removed and Main Lock Entrance filled, a ramp could be built down to the smaller basin to provide a slipway. The tidal exchange channel would be required, just as for the barrier across the entrance channel.

A higher sill would reduce the speed of siltation, but would reduce times of access to the entrance basin.

c) Additional Lock Gate in Entrance Channel

With this, it would be possible to maintain a higher level throughout both basins, but there would still be the problem of continuing siltation of the two basins. If a maximum level of water was retained, the amount of exchange of river water would be reduced, thus also reducing the siltation. This scheme, too, suggests blocking off the main basin, though with a regulating culvert between the two basins.

The cost of provision of an additional lock gate would be considerable. It would be possible to install one set of the redundant gates, or alternatively build out the walls and provide a new pair of narrower gates.

d) Existing Lock Gate in Entrance Channel

This scheme also requires removal of the lock gates, and filling-in between the two basins. The entrance basin would then operate at a level dependent on the previous high tide (a range of about 6 feet), with the lock gate being opened whenever the level in the river is higher than in the basin.

Large amounts of sediment, as at present, would inevitably be allowed to enter, unless a control duct between the two basins is used to maintain higher levels in the outer basin. This would probably restrict access to times of high tides (eg about 2 occasions per month, for 3 or 4 days). Siltation could then be very much reduced.

Story so far

- Aug. 1981: Draft development scheme approved.
Sept. 1981: 10 Consortia interviewed – four short-listed.
Oct. 1981: Brief finalised.
Feb. 1982: Detailed schemes received from four consortia.
Mar. 1982: Public consultation carried out.
May 1982: Consortia interviewed.
July 1982: John Mowlem Group chosen for negotiations.
July 1982: Lancashire Enterprises Ltd offers aid.
Sept/Oct. 1982: Negotiations start with Mowlem and LEL.
Jan. 1983: Separate talks start with Wimpey as Mowlem/LEL talks drag on.
Feb. 1983: Mowlem/LEL told to speed up negotiations.
June 1983: Riverside (including Wimpey) and NEDA consortia brought back for further talks.
July 1983: Council drop Mowlem – decide to negotiate with NEDA and LEL.
July 1983: Debenham, Tewson and Chinnocks withdraw as council advisers. Later submit fees for £80,000.
July 1983: Clive Lewis and Partners, London, appointed new consultants. Talks with NEDA/LEL resume.
Oct/Nov. 1983: NEDA/LEL partnership deal collapses. Council agrees to negotiate solely with former NEDA partner Balfour Beatty.
April 1984: Censure motion by Conservatives and Liberals on council's Labour leaders defeated.

Introduction

Balfour itself will put in all the main site roads and services such as sewers, street lighting, etc, but will compete with other construction companies for some of the building jobs.

The company will start with new spine roads starting from Strand Road and Watery Lane, with roundabout systems just inside the main access points opposite the old Dock Office and Pedders Lane.

This will open up large tracts of land for development, including one area for housing between the dock and the River Ribble.

The council has already built another new access further west along Riversway, while the county is making one from the new Penwortham by-pass at the eastern end.

Balfour promises to complete the first phase of the work, the shopping and the infra-structure, within three years.

Shopping is to include a superstore and retail warehouses, a car showroom, an exhaust and tyre centre, a petrol filling station and a garden centre.

Infra-structure will include: spine roads and roundabouts, footpaths, kerbing, street lighting, sewers, dockside paving and lighting and landscaping.

The shopping area will be on the north side of the dock, near Pedders Lane gate, and apart from its major activities will have dockside walkways, and sitting-out areas with open-air cafes and kiosks looking out on the water.

Car parking will be 'well landscaped' with covered pedestrian walkways.

Land-based leisure projects, says Balfour, will be family-based, including restaurants, billiards, bowling and darts centres in a multi-purpose complex.

Outdoors, there will be a mini-kart track and an open courtyard for local displays and exhibitions.

Within the marina there will be facilities for dinghy sailing, windsurfing, rowing and canoeing – but not water skiing or power boat racing because of noise and pollution.

Balfour says the aim will be for activities which are 'relatively inexpensive' and available to a large number of people.

They expect to see with the marina a chandlery, boat sales shop, changing and club rooms, while in the outer basin temporary mooring is planned for boats awaiting repair and maintenance, and on the quayside, a car and boat park with servicing facilities and a refilling station.

On the industrial front, Balfour Beatty will share both development and promotion with the council.

Preston will retain the old industrial area along Chain Caul Road – an area which includes oil and tar installations – and will assume responsibility for a big face-lift there.

Balfour will promote industry and commerce at the east end of the dock where there will be sites for one-off developments for firms wanting custom-built premises and high-specification multi-purpose buildings for administration, professional and support services.

Housing will not be confined to one type, or to one builder. Private builders and housing associations are expected to offer a wide range of types, sizes and prices, ranging from high-density small houses near the marina, to larger detached dwellings in heavy landscape, looking over the river to Penwortham Church and golf course.

A highly-skilled manager will be appointed to direct operations on site and co-ordinate all the different activities and contractors.

The Council and Balfour will also make an estate management agreement to ensure that all areas not in operational use – such as landscaping, roads and other services – are regularly maintained.

Retailing – the key to development

Under the auspicious guidance of the Central Lancashire Development Corporation, Preston and its hinterland has become one of the leading lights in the North West's struggle back from the economic and social decline of the last decade. Encouraged not least by the growing size of the area's total population the retailing sector in Preston has experienced little of the effects of regional economic decline, as reflected in the low number of vacant retail premises in the town's central area and the increasing interest of a number of the major superstore chains in moving into the area – an area which for years they have avoided.

Regarded by many of the superstore chiefs as being one of the most promising sites in Preston, interest in the dock area has been both large and constant throughout the planning stages. Competing with both the Butler Street development and the Fulwood East development, the dock site appears to be first choice.

The regional shopping context

The hierarchy of the North-West is well established, with large city centres and smaller town centres combining to serve the whole region.

The designated area contains three well established shopping centres of which Preston, the most important, is one of the largest in the North West after Liverpool and Manchester.

Preston serves as the major centre for a wide area extending beyond the boundary of the designated area until the influence of the surrounding centres (Blackpool, Blackburn, Bolton, Wigan and Southport) begin to be felt.

Of the other two centres in the area, Leyland has a mainly local role but Chorley is of considerable importance at an intermediate level.

The amount of shopping space within the area reflects the wider influence of Preston and to a lesser extent that of Chorley.

In fact, local authorities involved in the designated area enjoy more than the national average of retail selling floorspace per head of population: the figure of 0.74 square metres (8.0 square feet) in 1968 compares with 0.63 (6.8) for England and Wales as a whole.

This in part reflects the wide influence of Preston town centre but is a phenomenon common to many of the larger urban areas with a range of shopping facilities from large modern stores, operating at maximum efficiency, to considerable numbers of small corner shops many of which are struggling to remain viable.

Superstore hopes hold the key

The importance of securing a commitment by any of the major retail chains is reflected in the attitude of the main contractors who are not willing to make any sort of speculative moves to start

work until they know the needs of the actual operator. The dimensions of retailing at this level are now such that to create any sort of parameters even at this early stage would be to severely restrict the flexibility and site potential.

In return for the shopping development, the cost of which is estimated at some seven million pounds, Balfour Beatty (the main contractors) would hold a 125 year ground lease. They would provide the necessary spine roads to unlock the many acres of dock which are at present relatively inaccessible.

Balfour Beatty are part of the huge BICC group which has an annual turnover of £2 billion, and fellow director Mr Jim Moore pointed out that although it was best known for civil engineering and building, it had a good track record in property developments and industrial units.

The Preston scheme is planned in two phases, the first taking in the main dock area up to the new western access on Riversway, the second on underdeveloped land to the west.

There Balfour expects to build further housing and leisure facilities – including a sports stadium and country park with possibly hi-tech industry 'sympathetic to the open space provision there.'

As indicated on the key diagram the main retail centre, consisting of superstore, DIY/Homecare store and several smaller shops, is to be located on the Northern boundary of the site giving access to off-site as well as on-site consumers via the dock by-pass. Whilst the dock location may at first appear to be remote from the town's main residential areas, the new road network at present under construction will provide easy access from all points.

Fulwood, for example, despite its close proximity to Preston, appears to be 'under shopped' even though the figures exclude shops combined with living accommodation.

Seen by the developers as a catalyst for the future success of the dock development as a whole, Preston's Chamber of Trade has had its doubts about the repercussions of locating a large retail outlet away from the existing retail centre.

Within the County Borough there is in addition a well developed system of district centres, such as Lane Ends, New Hall Lane, Plungington Road and Ribbleton Lane, with important local functions, generally situated along the old main roads.

These district centres vary in size from 30 to more than 100 shops and probably account for one third of the total floorspace, although the turnover per unit area is generally considerably higher in the town centre.

These fears have, at least on paper, been dispelled by a special survey into the area's retail potential by the London based firm of Donaldsons, who convinced the council that the potential for more shopping in the town without harming the existing town

centre trade, did actually exist. The findings of the survey basically confirmed the strength and status of Preston shopping centre serving central and North Lancashire. In addition it was estimated that there would be by the mid 1980's a need for some 280,000-340,000 sq ft of additional shopping development within the Preston area.

Preston centre contains a wide range of shops catering mainly for durable goods.

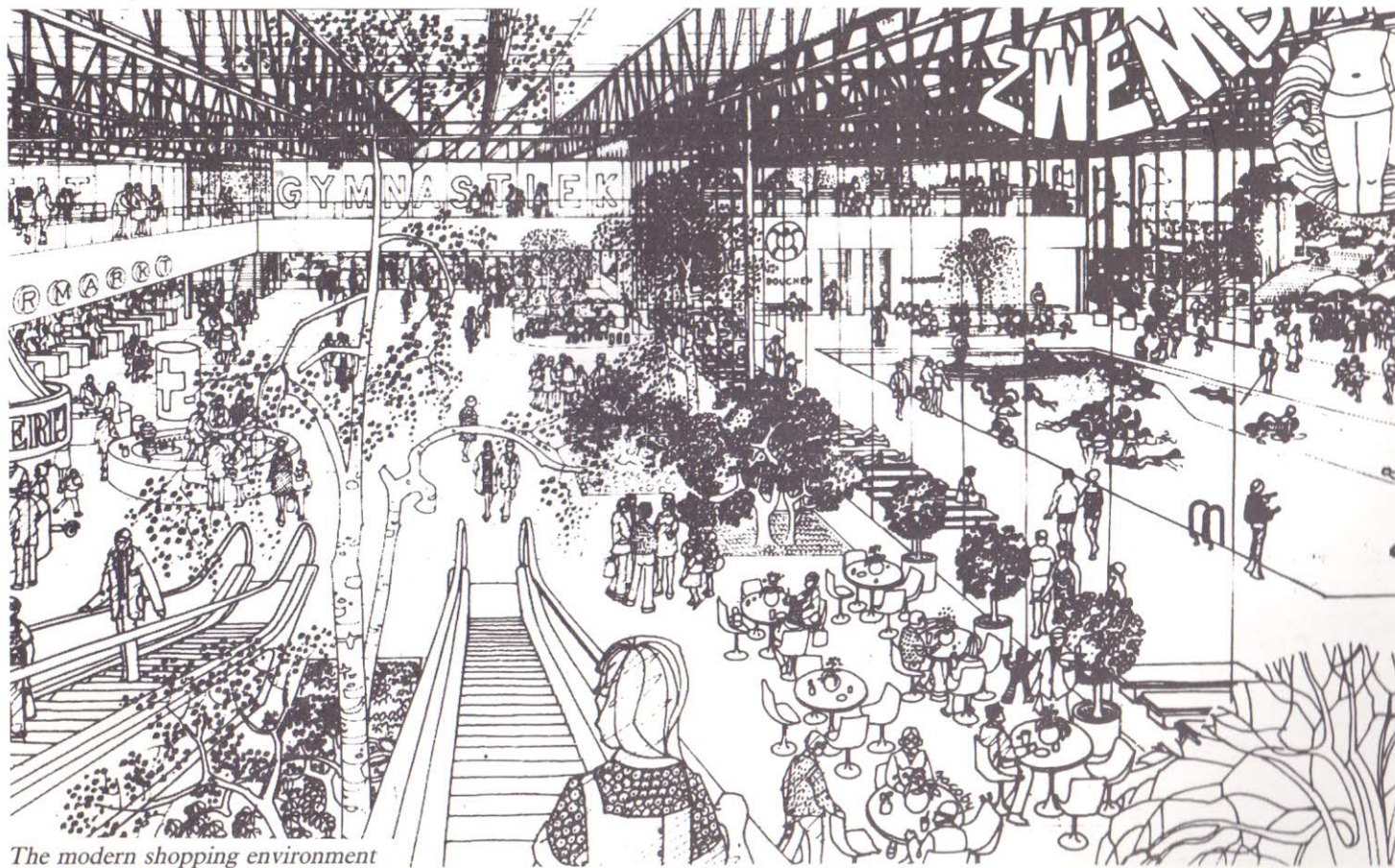
'Durable' goods consist of larger more occasional purchases such as clothing and footwear, furniture, electrical appliances, jewellery, medicines and surgical goods; 'convenience' goods consist of purchases made frequently such as food, books, newspapers and magazines, toilet requisites and cosmetics, tobacco, wines and spirits.

It seems likely that up to 80% of the turnover in the central area

is in durable goods for which shoppers traditionally are prepared to travel long distances. It also seems likely that more than half of the trade in Preston centre is drawn from outside the boundaries of the town.

The recent development of new shopping precincts, plus the expansion of some of the leading stores, and the erection of new accommodation for the market, have reinforced Preston's position in the region, without significantly increasing the amount of quality shopping available.

The role of a major retail outlet in the dock development is seen as being essential to the overall success of the scheme. As well as providing additional and alternative shopping in a new environment for a growing number of potential customers from the area, the development scheme as a whole will benefit from the interest that the new shopping development is likely to create.



The modern shopping environment

Housing proposals

The Dockland Development Scheme contains twenty three acres of land which is zoned for housing.

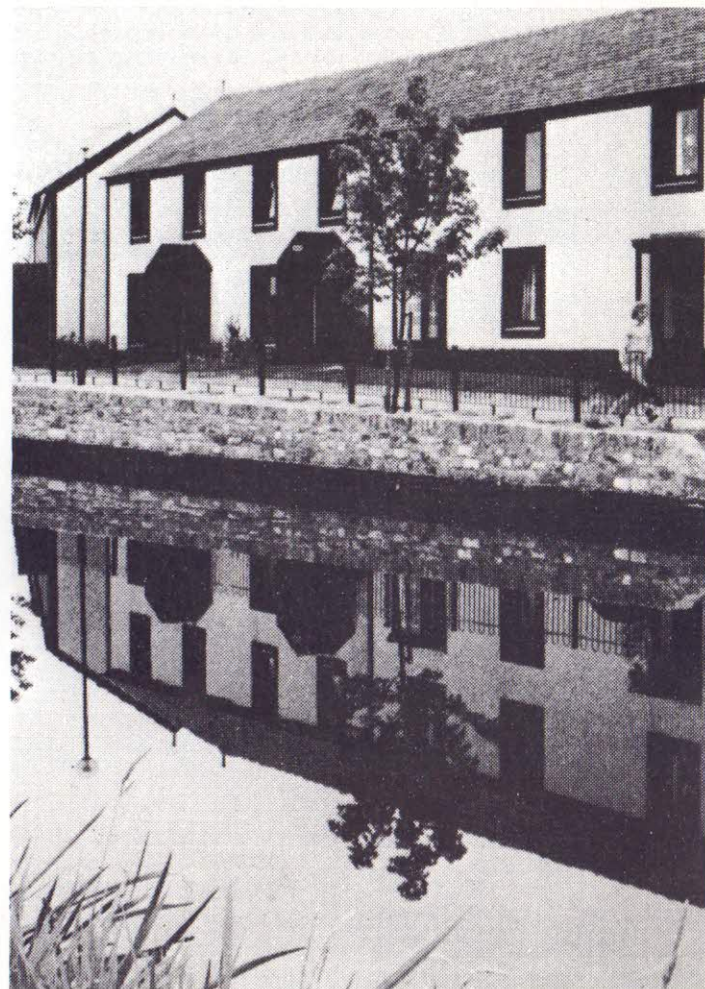
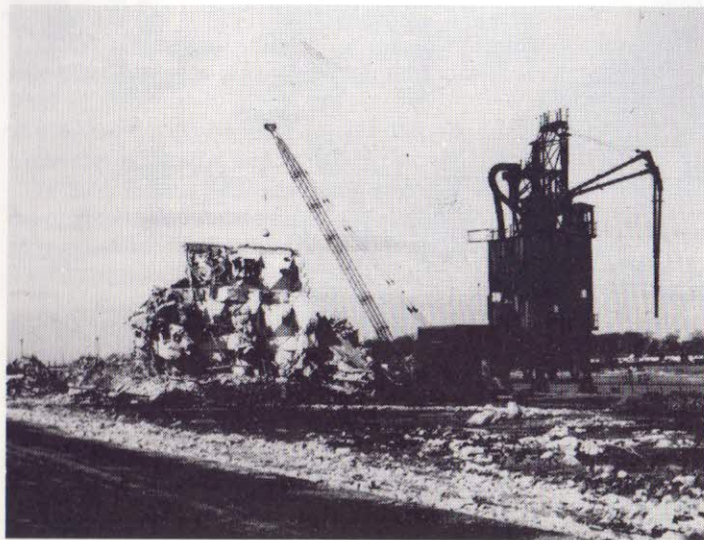
Approximately half of this land runs parallel with, and is also of similar length to, the dock basin, the site being approximately twice as long as it is wide and bound on the south by the River Ribble. It is proposed that this site, adjacent to the marina, should be used for high density housing. Being sandwiched between the river and dock basin it is not envisaged that it will be of great interest to families with younger children. It can, however, provide a good mix of small two- and three-bedroomed town houses for young marrieds, retired persons and families with older children.

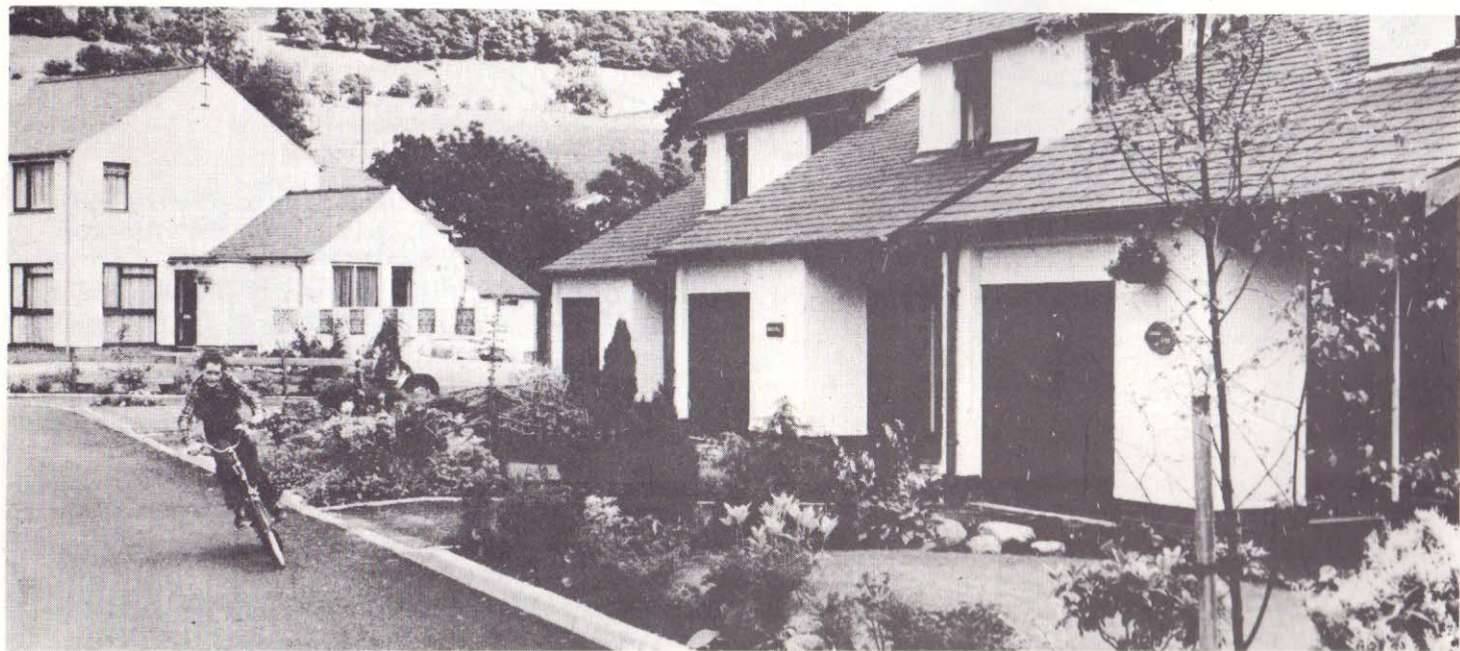
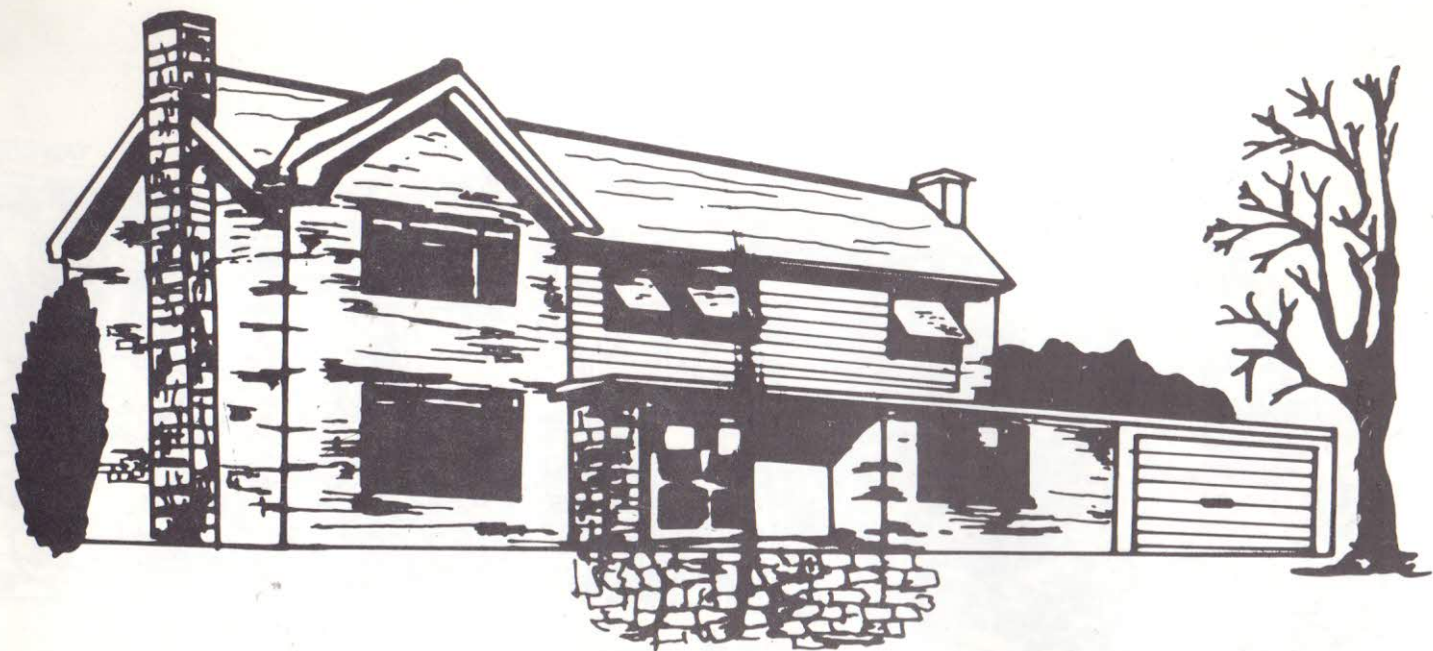
There is also a need for one- and two-bedroomed maisonettes and flats for single persons, that could be met by this site. Parking spaces will be required as will landscaping at the front of these dwellings and small private gardens at the rear. Separate provision should be made for garages.

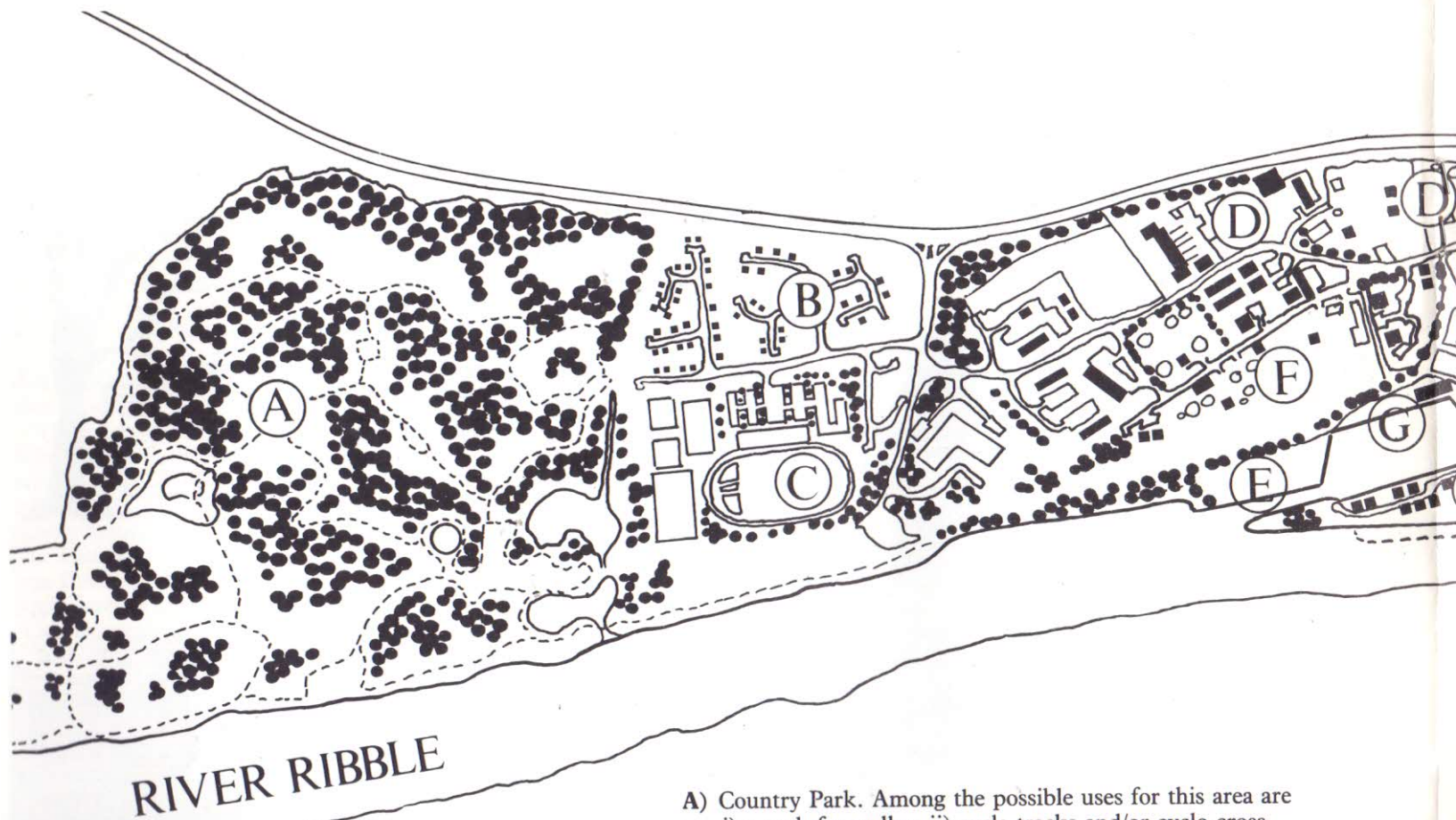
The other site for housing is to the north west of the plan area; being approximately square in shape, it will be bordered by the proposed Country Park which provides the western boundary of the scheme. To the east of the housing site will be situated high quality industry and to the south there will be the Sports Stadium. The Country Park would provide a fitting background to luxury type three- and four-bedroomed houses with integral garages and larger gardens. Two- and three-bedroomed semi-detached houses of similar quality could also be accommodated on this site.

Balfour Beatty will put in all main site roads and services such

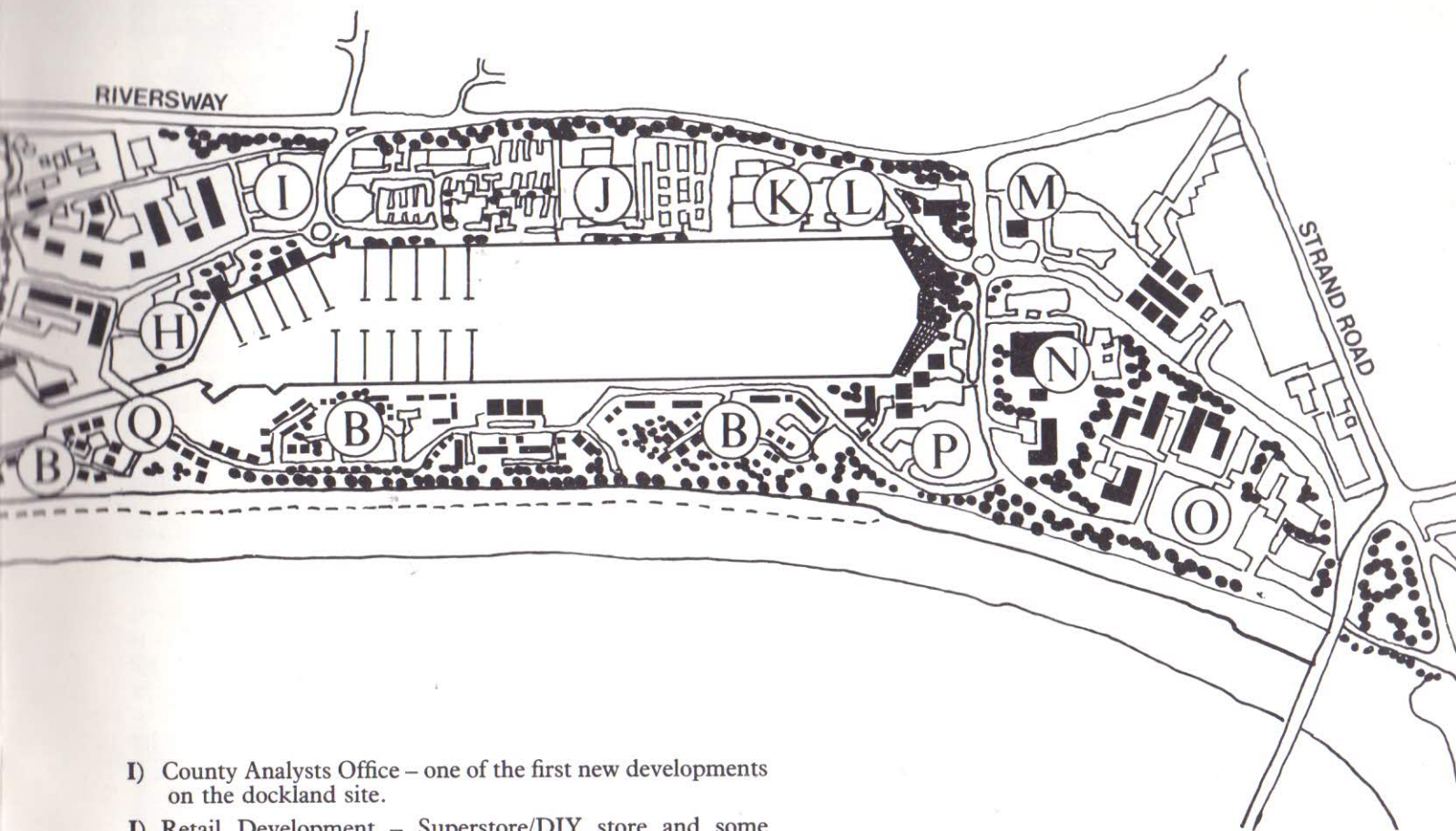
as sewers, street lighting, footpaths, kerbing and landscaping, but will compete with other construction companies for some of the building work. The company will start with new spinal roads from Strand Road and Watery Lane with roundabout systems just inside the main access points, opposite the old Dock Office and Pedders Lane. The housing sites will be disposed of, by the Council, to various private builders and Housing Associations, thus ensuring a good social mix and a wide range of types, sizes and prices. Whilst the main contractors, Balfour Beatty, will retain a one hundred and twenty five year ground lease on a substantial part of the new development, the sale of residential properties will be on a freehold basis.







- A) Country Park. Among the possible uses for this area are
 i) a park for walks ii) cycle tracks and/or cyclo-cross
 iii) a golf course iv) a motor racing track.
- B) Residential Areas – offering a variety of dwelling styles.
- C) Sports Stadium – including facilities for a full range of outdoor sports and athletics.
- D) Traditional Industry.
- E) Marina Workshops – small repair workshop and a ships chandlers.
- F) High Quality Industry – Modern High-Tech Companies in quality environment.
- G) Boat Yard – providing professional service and expertise on all aspects of water sports.
- H) Marina Clubhouse – usual yacht club facilities including changing rooms, bars, and possibly a restaurant.



- I) County Analysts Office – one of the first new developments on the dockland site.
- J) Retail Development – Superstore/DIY store and some smaller retail outlets, with substantial car parking areas.
- K) Additional Water Sport facilities – with teaching and equipment hire available.
- L) Sports Centre – provision for a variety of indoor sporting needs.
- M) Main Dock Entrance, including site offices.
- N) Site for NW Gas development.
- O) Area designated for Bespoke Industry.
- P) Prestige Regional Office Centre in high quality environment.
- Q) New Swing Bridge – Lock Gate with railway crossing and gate control house.

Leisure Facilities

The docks development area is extensive, and it is proposed to provide a variety of leisure facilities. In fact it seems that leisure is to be one of the main developments in the area, and it is hoped to turn Preston into one of the top leisure spots in the country.

One of the major attractions is to be a marina, the 45 acres of redundant water in the main dock basin being the proposed site.

It is planned to remove some of the hard stone sites and replace them with pebble beaches. Construction of a lower promenade alongside the dock walls in various places will enable people to reach the water with ease. It is also proposed to provide a safe

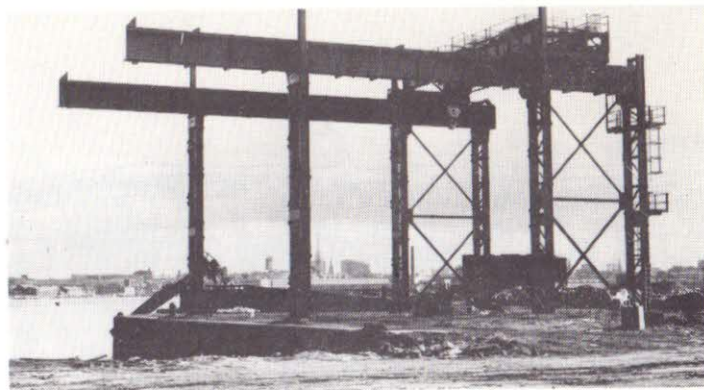


shore for those who take to the water accidentally. The plan is to divide the water into two parts, east and west.

The eastern part will be used for sailing, rowing, canoeing and windsurfing. It will not however be used for water skiing – the high level noise, diesel and petrol fumes and spillage, and excessive wash being incompatible with other uses.

The western section is to be reserved for approximately 400 yachts, but this will still leave enough space for a racing course of 500 to 700 metres.

On the shore it is proposed to have a fully commercial repair workshop with servicing facilities, including cranes to lift boats on and off slipways, a refuelling berth, bottle gas stores, a laundrette, a chandler, showers and toilets, ventilated dry stores for yacht gear, sails etc, and water taps at strategic points.



It is also proposed to build a yacht clubhouse on the south west corner of the main basin, this to be a commercially operated business incorporating changing rooms, lockers, club room and bar. It will be the focal point for the various water sports.

There will also be facilities for anglers, and training for sailing and rowing for groups such as schools, sea cadets and local sailing clubs.

As an added attraction, when no sailing is taking place, it is proposed as a visual interest to install a tall water jet or fountain which will be floodlit at dusk.

It is proposed to build a multi-million pound sports complex, which will incorporate facilities for several sports. One of these is expected to be ice-skating, as the Ice Development Association are pressing for an international ice rink, with an arena containing 12,000 seats, which could be used for a variety of sporting events. Preston also wish to provide as an alternative a 500 capacity Alpine styled free-form ice-rink.



Included in the multi-purpose complex is provision for a leisure pool, which will have terraced seating to the water's edge for the spectators. The size of the pool is not yet decided, but it is doubtful that a competition style pool will be provided.

The main aim will be an exciting water-orientated fun pool in Mediterranean style with wave-making facilities and water falls. Its surroundings will contain rocks and palm trees and the hope is that the pool will be adequate in size to contain six 25-metre lanes for competition swimming.

Additionally, there is to be a sports hall with squash courts, all-weather pitches and an indoor bowling green.

Other proposals include an athletics stadium, alongside which is to be sited a new club house for a par-72 riverside golf course. This golf course is to be 'pay as you play' with a driving range and putting green, which is being designed by Ryder Cup golfers Peter Allis and Dave Thomas. It will be run by their firm as a commercial enterprise.

As a variation from the sporting theme, proposals are under consideration for a museum complex. It is planned to retain four



The story of the 'Manxman' has been one of intermittent frustration and despair. The delays over choice of developers have hit the promoters hard, and on at least two occasions the ship came very close to being removed from Preston. The latest problem has been one of providing sufficient car parking space.

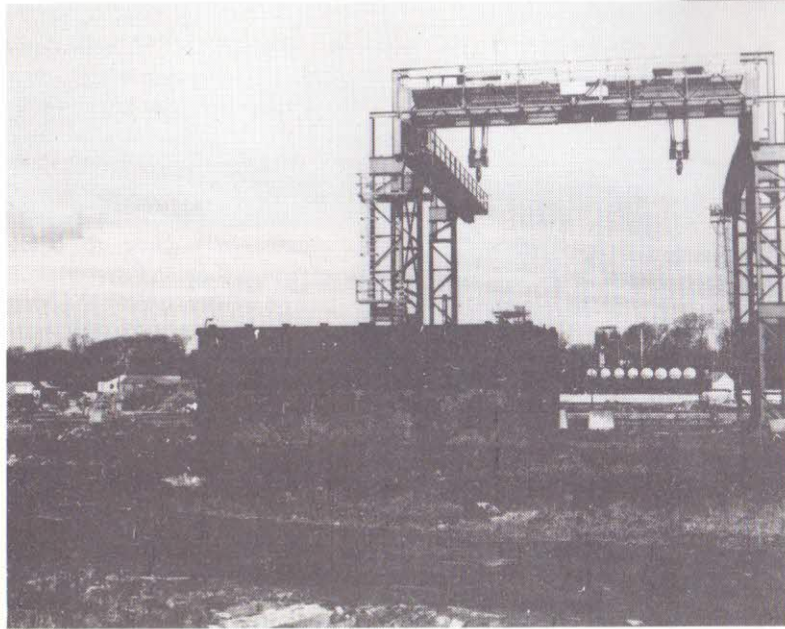
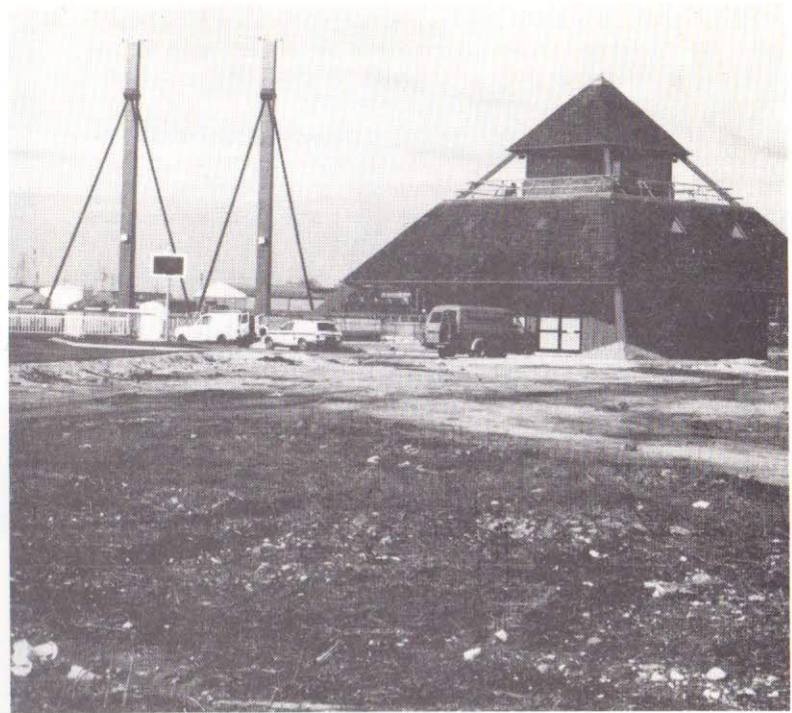
of the old buildings in the dockland area, with conversion of those buildings which are of historic interest into various uses. Suggestions have been made for a water-side pub, a restaurant, studio flats, an indoor athletic track which is being converted from a large storage shed, and an industrial and maritime museum. Studios and offices will be provided above, with dockland artefacts and perhaps a boat outside the museum.

Another option for the leisure department to provide is a huge country park, which would be located along the river-side at the far western end of the dock estate. A further proposal is for an equestrian centre, which would have stables and an indoor and outdoor riding show paddock, as well as a cafe and leisure room. Parking would also be provided, for cars and loose boxes.

The country park will be a major recreational amenity, needing large scale re-shaping of the land, with tree and shrub planting.

It has been said that it will be used for walking, camping, horse riding, nature trails and other outdoor pursuits, including archery and model aircraft flying.

Suggestions for a world class motor racing circuit at the West end of the dock estate are in the early stages of discussion. As the Council could not possibly raise the estimated



£3m of capital investment required, the motor sport lobby are attempting to obtain private funding for the project.

There have been preliminary talks with Council leaders, and a blueprint for a two-mile track, with ancillary services, will be drawn up in the next two months by professional advisers, for presentation to the Council.

Some interest has already been shown by international motor racing, and it was expected that a good class circuit would quickly be financially viable. The only track in the north at present is at Oulton Park.

Proposals are for a complex capable of attracting club, regional, and international events, which could also support othersports,leisure activities, and commercial enterprises.

Caravan facilities are also foreseen. It is hoped that grants will be given by the Forestry Commission and the Department of the Environment, and that the park will eventually be looked after by a ranger or warden service.

These are the main ideas for leisure development in the area – it is certainly going to be interesting and lively, attracting a great number of people, and should prove very profitable for Preston.

Traditional Industries

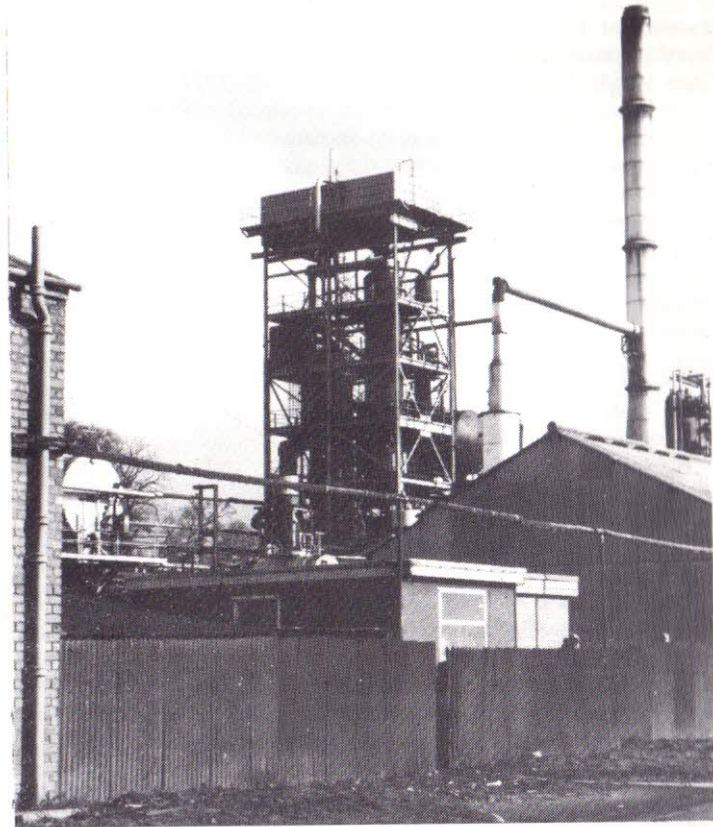
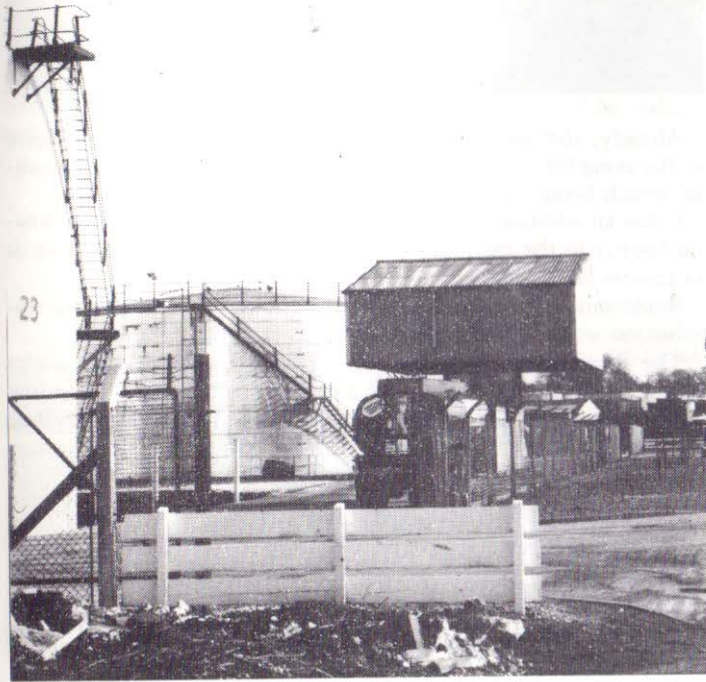
The opening of the docks in 1892 enticed industry to Preston and the surrounding area.

The port was built to serve the growing Industrial Area of the West Coast. With a water area of forty acres, it was the largest single dock in the country. The main imports during this period were wood pulp, timber, petroleum, oils, china clay, grain and coal.

The wood pulp was imported from the Baltic and Scandinavian countries, the raw material being used in the paper-making industry along with China Clay from Cornwall. Special berths were provided for the import of petroleum, grain, animals and vegetable oils.

During the war trade prospered, but with the necessary import restrictions that followed, and with exports at a low ebb, the port began to suffer.

The Port Council decided to launch a one million pound scheme to improve the port's facilities. From this improvement the two major industries developed. The introduction of Geest Industries Ltd. brought citrus fruit and bananas from the Windward Isles.



The company soon began to prosper, but Preston, owing to tidal problems, could not provide deep enough water for the large ships needed by the company.

The introduction of roll on and roll off services enabled goods to be transported with only two handlings, so cutting costs, breakages and pilfering.

Because of the new roll on and roll off system Preston bought eighteen modern electric cranes to help the nineteen steam, diesel and petrol driven cranes, and the mobile cranes.

Large areas of covered storage, of about 170 acres, were provided. More than 2000 ships, totalling more than 1 million tonnes, used the port annually.

But Preston was unable to deal with the larger ships that were needed by these booming industries – the channel to the docks was too shallow – and soon the number of cargo ships entering Preston began to dwindle.

The large companies that grew with Preston Docks gradually

transferred their business to Liverpool and other Ports in the North. Container tonnage that had been big business had slumped from 1,383,215 tonnes to 520,000 tonnes by 1975.

The main problem that Preston docks faced at this time was the large number of strikes, the most detrimental being in 1969, a ten-week strike that stopped everything. Dredgers were withdrawn and the docks began to silt up. By the time the strike was over the channel was so silted that dredgers made little impact.

It was in 1975/1976 that the Conservatives took control of the Council – they looked closely at the figures for the dock and a decision was made to bring about the slow closure of Preston Dock.

Clearing Operations

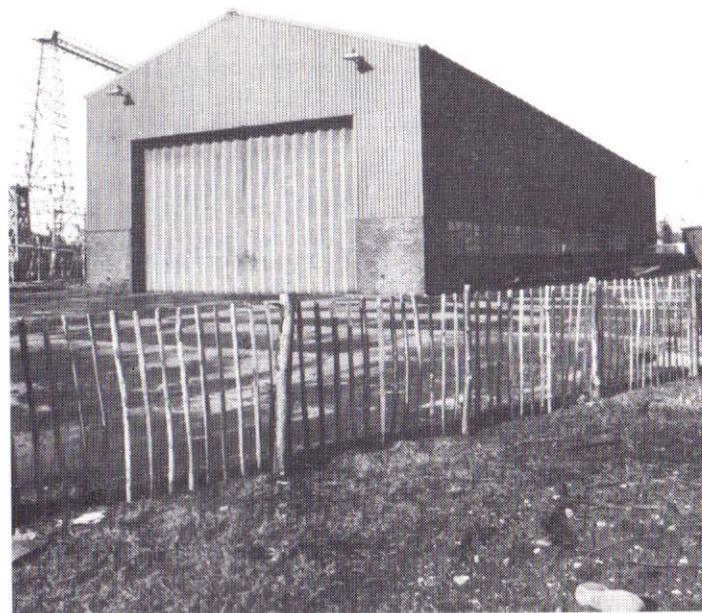
More than £9m has been spent on the dockland before the main developers have even turned a spade.

Removing the scars of a century of heavy industry and preparing for a brighter future has taken two years.

And the bill is likely to have topped £13m by the time the preliminary work has been completed – much of it paid for by the Government.

Generous cash aid for derelict land clearance on a scale the region has not seen before have given the 450 acre project a tremendous send-off.

Not only have they paid for derelict buildings to be flattened, and highly-toxic soil dug out, they have also paid for a vital new range of infrastructure jobs to help make the site as marketable as any green field development.



Already, the dock estate has a new rail system, flood defence works along the river, and a £2m swing bridge over the lock channel which brings in boats from the sea.

It has an additional western entrance road with another following shortly in the east, and new traffic signals and landscaping at its central main gate.

Replacement loco sheds are being built and various ground stabilisation work is being carried out.

The jobs to date include: swing bridge and associated works £2.2m; flood bank 1, from Sea Cadet HQ to Bull Nose (including riverside walk and 11,000 trees) £1.2m; flood bank 2, from Bull Nose to Savick Brook (including replacement lock gates) £1.5m; western entrance £656,000; landscaped main entrance £67,000; loco sheds £310,000; traffic signals £55,000; demolition £106,000; ground stabilisation £392,000; Penwortham by-pass slip road to dock £354,000.

Whatever happened after the first 12 to 18 months, the council would have land available to be developed by someone else, while the scheme still allowed them to claim the remaining millions of pounds of derelict land grant from the Government.

North West Gas move in

International construction group Balfour Beatty wants to turn Preston dockland into 'a unique and attractive environment' to bring industrial and commercial firms to the area.

They pledge their own huge resources and expertise – they are part of the giant BICC group – and a commitment to make this major project a success.

And they claim that the wide-ranging £100m redevelopment they plan together with the borough council will turn the dock again into 'a flourishing and vitally important area for the future prosperity of the town.'

A Prestige development involving 350 jobs has been clinched for Preston's revamped Dock Estate, providing it can beat a tight deadline.

North West Gas Board chiefs had promised to build a huge five-acre district control centre, but now say they want 6.5 acres if they can make an early start.

One other unnamed firm has requested a site of approximately 4 acres in the same area.

The site boundary of the centre can not be settled until their chosen developer is confirmed because of doubts over conflicting interests. However, the site is likely to go somewhere just inside the main dock gates on Watery Lane near the British Aerospace car park.

Once the contracts are exchanged the work on the site could possibly start by September 1985. The project would then be likely to be finished by March 1987, and Preston will be pulling out all the stops to complete the work by this date.



North West Gas intends that the new centre will replace both its present Warwick Street depot in Preston and the site at Lostock Hall gas works. It would cover operations for the whole of Preston, Walton-le-Dale, Leyland and Chorley, to give a higher standard of service to 100,000 Gas Board customers. Facilities there would include big new workshops and storage with a servicing and repair set-up for the 120 vans which will operate from the new complex.

However, according to a N.W. Gas spokesman the most important thing would be improved customer contact.

Commerce competes for new sites

Delay in starting has not deterred firms queueing up for dock sites. In the last 12 months, even with marketing generally at a standstill, the Council has had no less than 10 substantial enquiries from business chiefs wanting to move there or to expand.

Enquiries received include some for major leisure projects in addition to solid industrial developments.

One Chorley based commercial film maker, I.C.P. Films, has plans for a £4.5 million studio, water-side restaurant, exhibition hall, disco, pub and 'living film set' of working craft shops.

The queue also includes requests for offices, a vehicle valeting station, and a site building and temporary rail sidings, while the County Council wants a site for a day care centre and British Aerospace has requested a 21-year lease on car parking space. One firm already established on the dock has asked for additional land for expansion. Altogether interest shown in the Preston Dock Estate by various companies is very encouraging.



Production Notes

This booklet is intended as an exercise in presentation of ideas and schemes at a level higher than standard typed documents and sketch plans.

It incorporates the selection and organisation of information, use of photographs and other illustrations, simple design and layout, copy-writing and input of text matter, and elements of artwork production, including electronic page make-up.

The project was undertaken by students on the First and Second Years of the HNC Town and Country Planning course, and the individual subject areas were researched as follows:

Retailing – Keith Molloy

Housing – Kath Brogan and Vanessa Hodgson

Leisure – Lindy Andrews and Pauline Ellis

Traditional Industry – Pauline Hickson and Ann Turner

New Industry/Commerce – Andrew Parrish and Gary Cross

Origination work was completed in the printing workshops of the Faculty of Art and Design, and production and finishing was by the Central Polytechnic Printing and Reprographic Unit.