



Briefing Note on Proposed White Water Rafting Course, Swift Water Rescue Training Facility and Kayaking/Water Polo Pool at George's Dock, Custom House Quay.

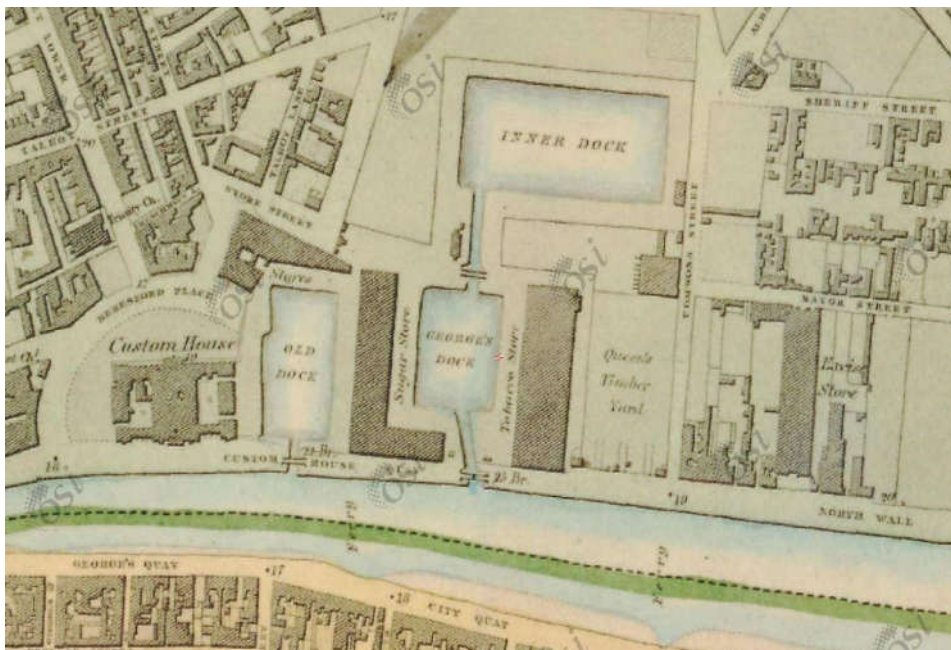


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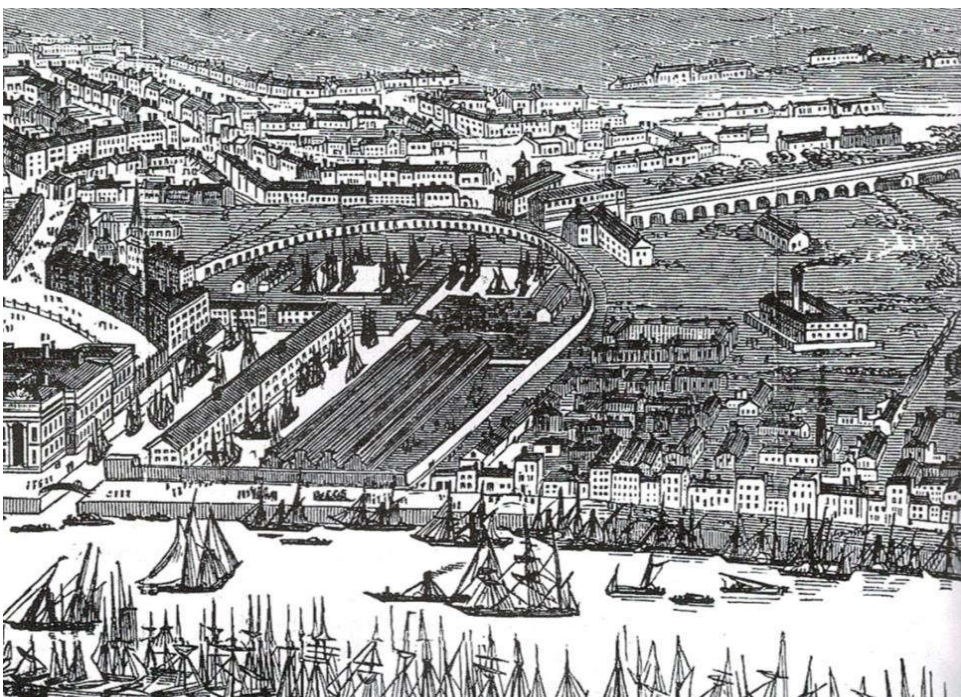
1. History of George's Dock

George's Dock was built in 1821 to designs of the Scottish engineer John Rennie, known for his many canals, bridges, docks and harbours. Historically, it formed part of a complex of warehouses and docks constructed immediately west of the then new Custom House, which opened in 1791.

The first to be built was the East Dock, also referred to as 'Custom House Dock' or 'Old Dock' which was commenced in 1791 and completed in 1796. It was located alongside the eastern front of the Custom House. George's Dock followed in 1821, the year of the visit of George IV to Ireland. The Revenue Dock or Inner Dock was built in 1824.



Extract from First Edition OS Map 1837



Extract from a View of Dublin, Illustrated London News, 1846



Triumphal Arch

The entrance to the docks complex from Amiens Street was marked by a triumphal arch of rusticated granite, built in 1813. It was moved in 1998 to an open area SE of George's Dock.

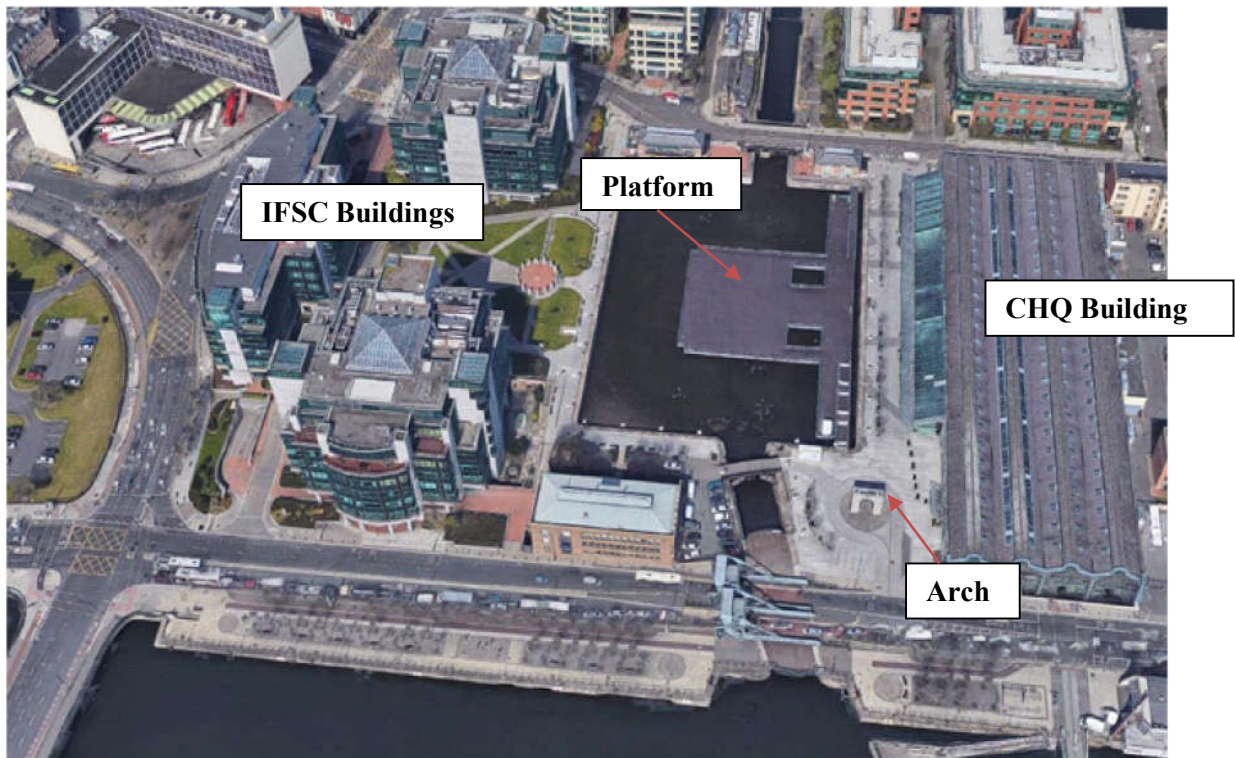
The former Tobacco Warehouse (Stack A), now known as the CHQ Building was built in 1820, also to Rennie's design. The AIB building to the south of George's Dock, retains the two-storey façade and basement of Rennie's former West Store, which Taylor's map shows to have been completed before 1824. The Harbour Master's House at the western side of the lock connecting George's Dock to the Inner Dock was built at some point after 1824.

The docks could easily handle most ships using the port up to the 1840s. However, after this the Port Authority began to focus attention on the creation of deep-water berths upstream from the Custom House, as larger vessels could not pass through the locks, which would have been too expensive to widen. Gradually, the Custom House Docks fell into disuse as shipping could dock upriver at all states of the tide, rather than having to wait for high tide to enter through locks. The Custom House Docks nonetheless continued to be used as a warehousing estate for storing goods landed elsewhere in the port.

In 1927, the Old Dock was filled in and its site is today occupied by the extension of Amiens Street and Beresford Place/Memorial Road onto Custom House Quay.

2. Description of the Site and Current Uses

The setting of George's Dock has undergone very significant change with the redevelopment of the Docklands area. This began in the 1980s with the establishment of the Irish Financial Services Centre (IFSC), built to the west of George's Dock. Today George's Dock lies within the Docklands business district between the IFSC, which stands on three sides of a landscaped forecourt to the west, and the restored CHQ building (formerly Stack A) to the east. A glazed canopy covers an outdoor terrace on the western side the CHQ building along the full length of the dock.



Setting of George's Dock

The dock itself is used for very occasional public events. A large rectangular temporary platform has been built at the centre of the dock, which extends to the east, with further projections forming a linear strip parallel to the eastern quay wall, with ramped gangway access points from the northern and southern quaysides located close to the SE and NE corners. This is considered a particularly insensitive intervention and in no way justified by the occasional events it accommodates. Events typically involve the erection of temporary tent structures on the platform.

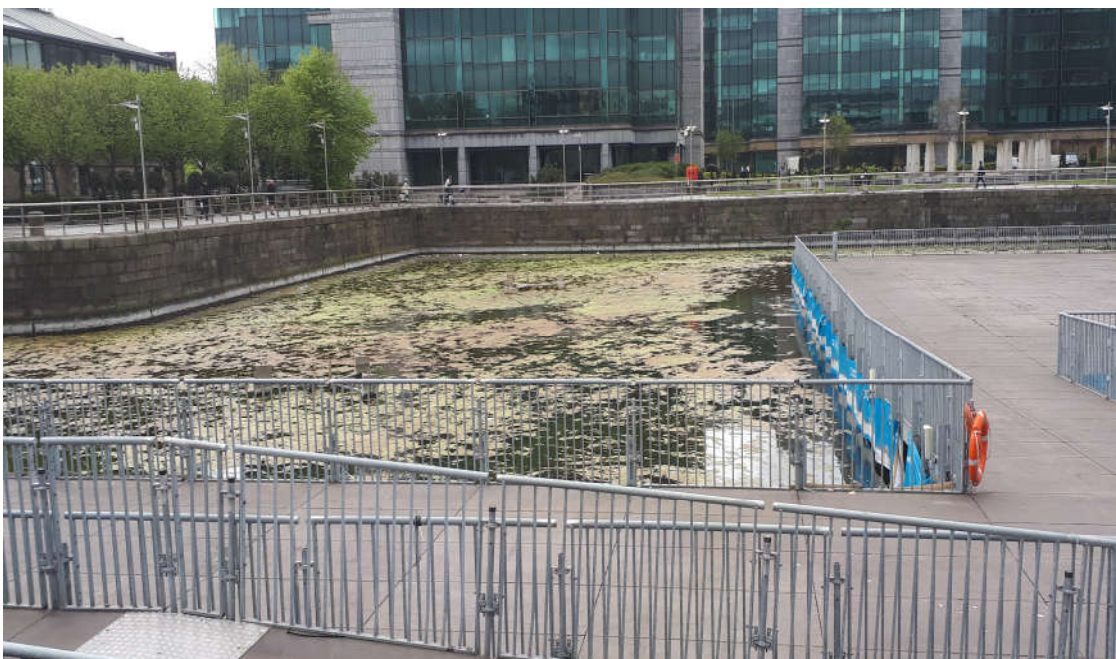
The dock was partially 'filled in' to reduce the water depth. Unfortunately, the reduced water depth has facilitated the growth of algae which detracts from the visual appearance of the dock especially in the summer months.

A stainless-steel guardrail runs around the dock on all sides. The area between the CHQ terrace and the eastern side of the dock is configured as a paved promenade, landscaped with a row of trees. A large open area exists at the end of this promenade, between the dock and Custom House Quay, bounded to the east by the CHQ building and to the west by the former access channel and lock. The triumphal arch of 1813 was moved from Amiens Street to the centre of

this space in 1998, and stands axially at the end of the promenade. The western side of the dock is also formed as a promenade, and connects to a landscaped forecourt bounded on three sides by the blocks of the IFSC.



Eastern Side of George's Dock



Algae Growth in George's Dock

To the north, Mayor Street has been extended west to meet Amiens Street, with a modern bridge across the lock connecting George's Dock to the Inner Dock. The character of the Inner Dock has been significantly compromised by a residential development called Custom House Harbour. As part of this development, which was constructed in the early 1990s, a section of the dock was filled in to create an island on which two large six-storey apartment buildings were built with the open space between connecting to the northern quayside.



Inner Dock

Ownership of George's Dock was transferred to Dublin City Council when the Dublin Dockland Development Authority was disbanded in March 2016.

3. Outline of the Proposed Development

Dublin City Council is considering the development of a white water rafting course, a swift water rescue training facility and a kayaking/water polo pool at George's Dock. It is envisaged that the white water rafting course will be located around the edge of George's Dock with the swift water training facility located at the northern end of the dock and the pool located in the centre of the dock. The pool in the centre will be used for flat-water kayak training, canoe polo and water polo.

George's Dock and the Inner Dock are currently seawater docks with water pumped in from the Liffey. It is envisaged that they will be converted to fresh water docks. Possible water sources being investigated include the Royal Canal, ground water and/or treated water from the public water supply. It is also proposed, as part of the overall project, to refurbish/repurpose the existing and largely vacant City Council Docklands Offices on Custom House Quay to service the new facility.

The project will consist of the following elements:

1. A pumping station.
2. A raft/kayak conveyor.
3. A pontoon and associated full height wall to separate the course from the River Liffey.
4. A central island pool for flat-water kayak training, water polo etc.

5. A swift water rescue-training channel incorporating a flooded urban street scene for swift water rescue training.
6. A Mechanical Control Centre (MCC) building which will be located adjacent to the channel between the dock and the River Liffey. This building will house the mechanical plant associated with the white water facility. It may also accommodate a small café to provide passive supervision.
7. The refurbishment/repurposing of the City Council's Docklands Office on Custom House Quay in order to address deficiencies in the current building, to meet the needs of the Docklands Office and to provide support infrastructure for the white water facility and for other water activities on the River Liffey. The support infrastructure will include a reception/ticketing area, a visitor orientation area, changing rooms, training rooms, storage, staff facilities, drying facilities, toilets etc. It will support all dockside activities based at this location including the white-water facility, water tours on the *Spirit of Docklands* and other water sport activities on the Liffey. However, it is envisaged that the land-based activities related to the Jeannie Johnston, which are currently provided from the Dockland Offices site, will be relocated.

Artificial white water courses suit a large variety of users and water sports disciplines from recreational primary school groups to competitive Olympic athletes and can serve a broad range of community groups. They are also used to facilitate swift water training by emergency services.

It is expected that the facility will cater for the following uses:

- Tourist recreational rafting.
- General community/recreational rafting (incl. schools/youth groups, active retirement groups, corporate groups etc).
- Fire brigade/emergency service and other local authority staff who need to undertake swift water rescue training.
- Kayak training, from introductory flat water level to advanced standard.
- Elite kayak slalom squad training.
- National and international white water kayaking events to ICF standard.
- Canoe polo and water polo matches.

The preliminary estimated capital cost is in the region of €12m. It is envisaged that the capital costs of constructing, fitting out and equipping the facility will be funded by a combination of grant aid and the Council's own capital resources. The facility will not be required to remunerate the capital cost. The objective will be to ensure that the facility can operate on a financially sustainable basis meeting its full operating costs including the full costs of maintenance, refurbishment and replacement of equipment etc. as required.

The facility will be operated by the Sports Section of Dublin City Council with appropriate use of part time qualified staff and the use of external contractors for certain services (e.g. security, cafe, etc).

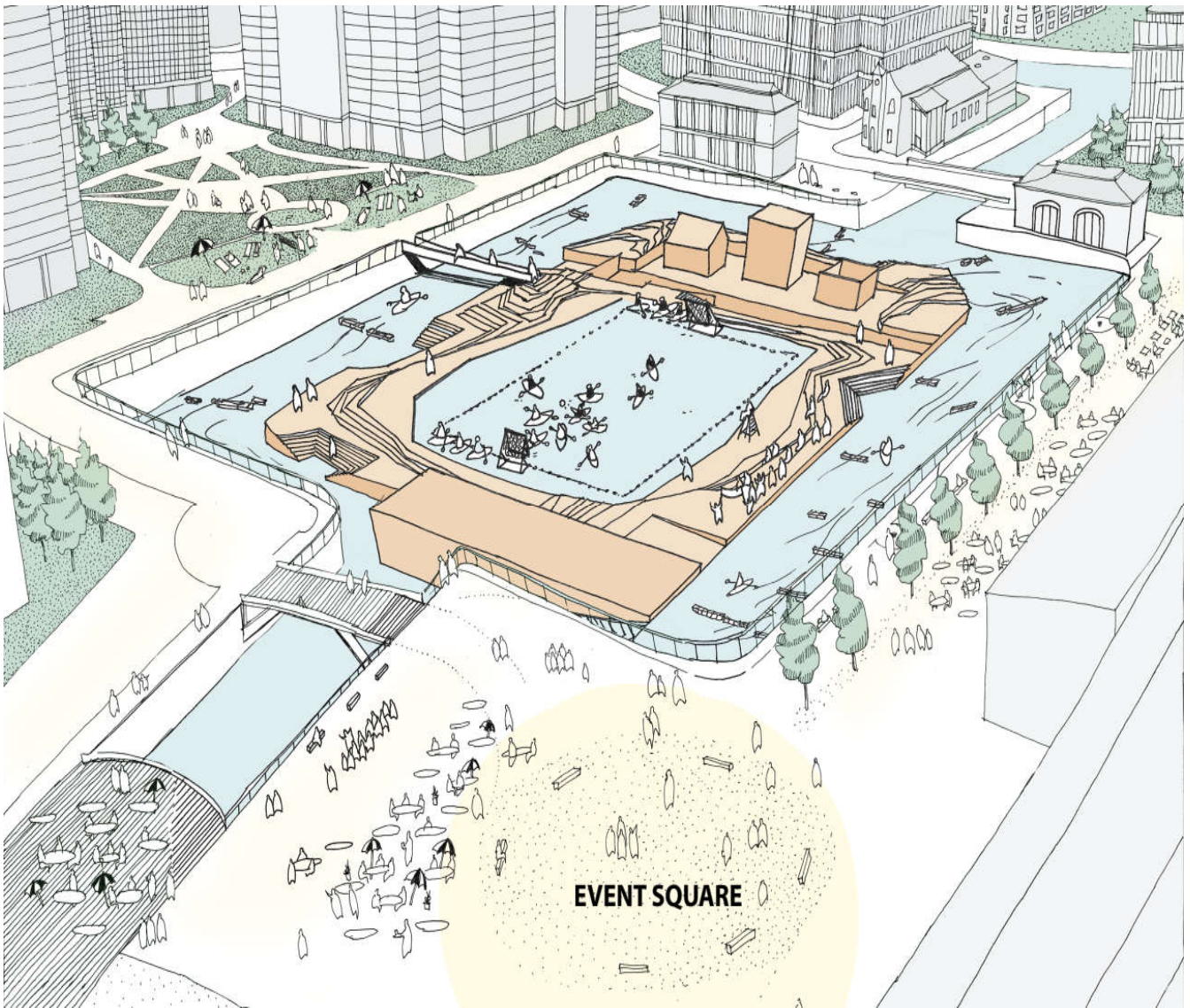
The proposed development is consistent with the '*Water Animation Strategy for the Docklands Area*' prepared in accordance with the '*North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ Planning Scheme 2014*'. The Strategy envisages George's Dock being developed as an 'Active Zone', which will facilitate active and passive sports and events. (See Appendix 1).

The City Council is very conscious of the protected structure status of George's Dock and of the rich architectural heritage of the general area. A preliminary conservation assessment of the proposal has been completed by Lotts Architecture and Urbanism Ltd, which will inform the design of the project.

4 Rationale for the Proposed Development

The rationale for the proposed development is as follows:

1. The white water rafting course and the greatly improved access to water activities on the River Liffey will constitute a major new attraction for tourists, visitors and residents in Dublin which is well located and highly accessible.
2. It will help to develop a cluster of high quality tourist attractions in the Docklands area around the Epic Centre, the Jeannie Johnson and the Famine sculptures.
3. It will help to animate George's Dock and address the current inappropriate uses of the dock.
4. It will assist the Sports Section of Dublin City Council in providing a range of programmes targeted at groups with particular needs.
5. It will facilitate swift water rescue training in safe conditions for DFB and other emergency services/local authority staff.
6. It will assist the development of white water kayaking, slalom kayaking, canoe polo and water polo in Ireland.
7. It will provide safe access to water based activities and provide developmental opportunities for residents of the Docklands area.



Indicative Overview of Proposed Development

5. Current Status of the Proposed Development

The City Council has recently commenced the EU procurement process to appoint an integrated design team to undertake detailed design of the facility.

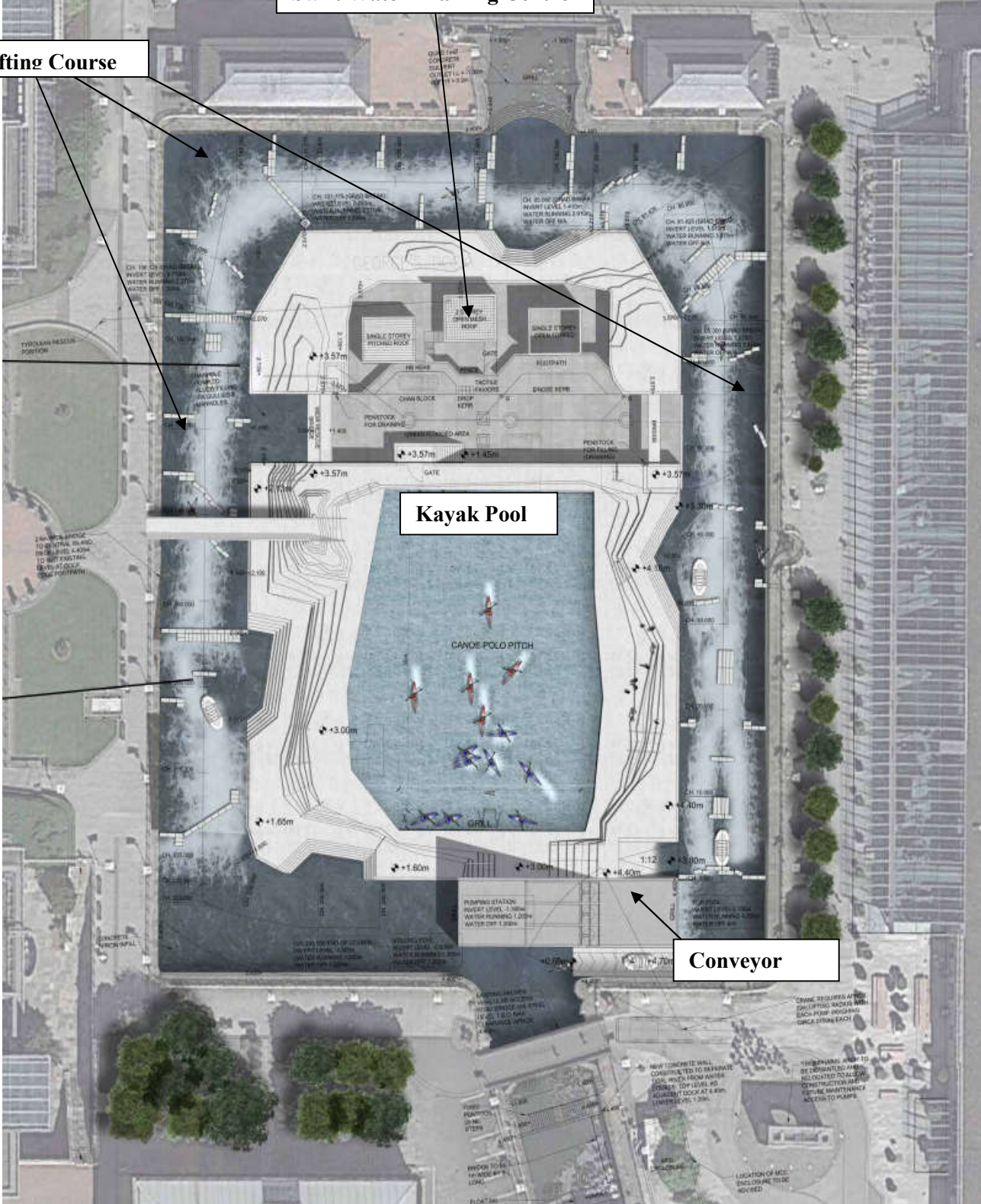
In addition, following a procurement process, a firm has been appointed to prepare a detailed Business Case and a preliminary Business Plan for the proposed facility.

Swift Water Training Centre

Rafting Course

Kayak Pool

Conveyor



Indicative layout of Proposed Development

Appendix 1 **North Lotts and Grand Canal SDZ Water Animation Strategy**

In 2018 a ‘*Water Animation Strategy for the Docklands Area*’ required under the ‘*North Lotts and Grand Canal Dock SDZ Planning Scheme 2014*’, was prepared by the City Council in consultation with Waterways Ireland (WI) and Dublin Port Company (DPC). The purpose of this document is to develop a clear DCC/WI/DPC vision regarding the future animation of the waterways in the Docklands area by the three statutory agencies.

The Strategy area includes the five major water bodies within the SDZ, namely the Liffey, the Dodder, the Grand Canal Dock, Spencer Dock, and George’s Dock.

The Water Animation Strategy seeks to build on the successes of previous plans further promoting the area as a world class destination for living, doing business, tourism, leisure, wellness and cultural activities.

The Strategy proposes a spatially led approach to the management of the waterways with activities divided into four distinct zones as follows:

Docking/Mooring Zones

These areas are primarily focused on providing space to ships and other watercraft to reside on a medium to long term basis.

Active Zones

These are areas primarily focused on providing quayside campshire space for water sports, cultural uses and regular events.

Passive Zones

These are areas primarily focused on providing quieter spaces for sensitive uses and areas of reflection and ecology.

Clear Zones

These spaces will generally be kept clear to maintain significant views, for safety reasons or will provide spaces for short-term stays to large vessels.

George’s Dock has been designated as an Active Use Zone under the Strategy.

Water Animation Strategy Map

