



Update on proposed Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Discovery Centre

Dublin City Council Culture, Recreation and Economic Services commissioned a feasibility study for a UNESCO Biosphere Discovery Centre in 2014. The findings of this study formed part of the recent tender procurement process for the appointment of a full design team to develop design and management proposals through all stages of development. A full design team led by Howley Hayes Architects were successful in the tender and have been commissioned to develop a design for the new Discovery Centre on the Bull Island.

The design team including interpretive consultants are currently working on the early stage of the appointment which involves further analysis, appraisal, consultations, review, survey and investigations of the site and to propose an integrated design with supporting explanatory illustrations, information and clear recommendations, sufficient for facilitating further consultation with interested stakeholders.

Separately DCC will appoint a planning team to work closely with the design team in the development of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report for the proposal. This process will also include extensive pre-planning consultation to include discussions on any design and planning issues.

During the consultation process of the feasibility stage, the response from the public, residents and amongst a wide range of stakeholders, was very supportive of the project. Concerns were raised with regard to the scale and bulk of the building depicted in the concept design. The new design will take these concerns on board through design concepts of – balance, landmark, low-impact and local distinctiveness, it will respond directly to the delicate changing and predominantly horizontal landscape that sits between sky and sea. Located at the point where the island meets the causeway, the building represents both a ‘gateway’ and a ‘beacon of discovery’ about the island and the biosphere.

The concepts of a ‘360 degree’ interpretive strategy and ‘Learning by Seeing’ in the feasibility study are being brought forward in the current proposal. An integral part of the design is providing a panoramic 360 degree view of the biosphere encompassing the island, surrounding wetlands and Dublin Bay from Howth to Dalkey Island. Less an ‘object’ in the landscape but more a ‘lens’ through which it is ‘discovered.’

Over time the building will become an integral part of the island, purposely designed to have a low impact both visually and environmentally. It will serve visitors to the

island with a sense of welcome, discovery and excitement, combined with the comfort of a public living room.

A key objective in the planning from the outset has been to engage the local community and stakeholders in the process to ensure the proposal meets expectations within the community. It is proposed therefore to continue this consultation with a series of meetings in the next few weeks with community representatives and stakeholders who have expressed an interest to date. These meetings/workshops will focus particularly on the interpretive themes that cover Bull Island, Dublin Bay, the Biosphere and also climate change issues.

Leslie Moore, Head Of Parks Services, Dublin City Council

Donncha Ó Dúlaing, S.E.O. (Project Manager), Dublin City Council



Photography: Underwater Photography: Lichin - Dave Wall, Bloody Hen - Dave Wall, Conger Eel - Dave Wall, Scorpion fish - Padraig Keane, Spider Crab - Dave Wall, Mocha Jellyfish - Dave Wall, Cuckoo Wrasse - Padraig Keane. Terrestrial Photography: Shelduck - Bernard Dupont, Grebe - Ian Kirk, Bar-tailed Godwit - Martin Harris, Grebe - Andy Beagrie, Salsicoria - Marco Schmitt, Ligeia - Chris Downes, Common Lizard - Thomas Brown, Rabbit - JJ Harrison, Owl - Tom Keenan, Kestrel - Tony Hoggart, Kestrel - Andy Marlowe. Illustration by Gareth Tisdall DCC Parks Department

Biosphere Reserves are places, designated by UNESCO: to find creative, effective ways for people and nature to thrive together.

The functions of a Biosphere Reserve are:

Conservation: promoting the protection of landscapes, habitats, wildlife and cultural values

Learning: supporting education and research, for a better understanding of nature and global issues

Development: fostering a sustainable economy and society for people living and working in the area

Freeman Tilden, one of the most prominent interpreters of environmental issues, stated that:

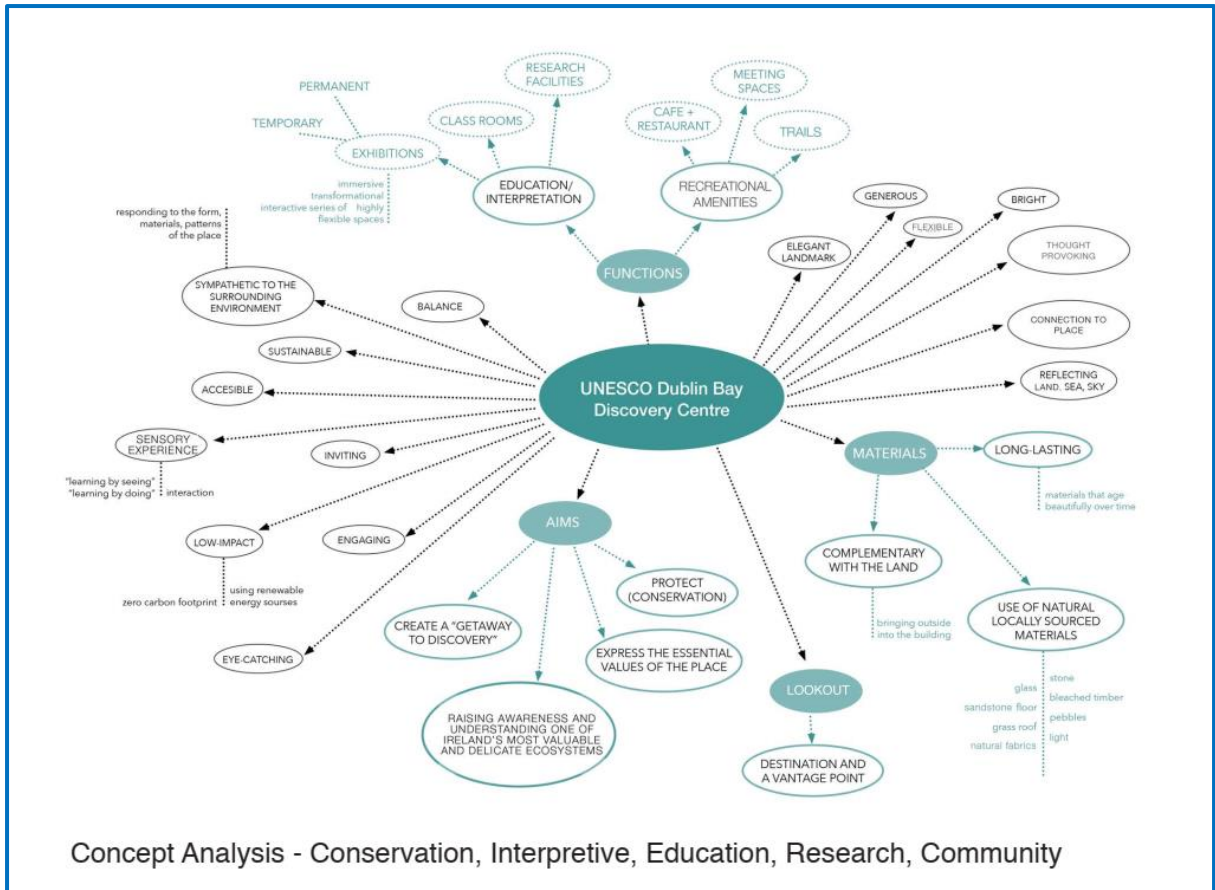
"Through interpretation comes understanding; through understanding comes appreciation, through appreciation comes protection. The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation."

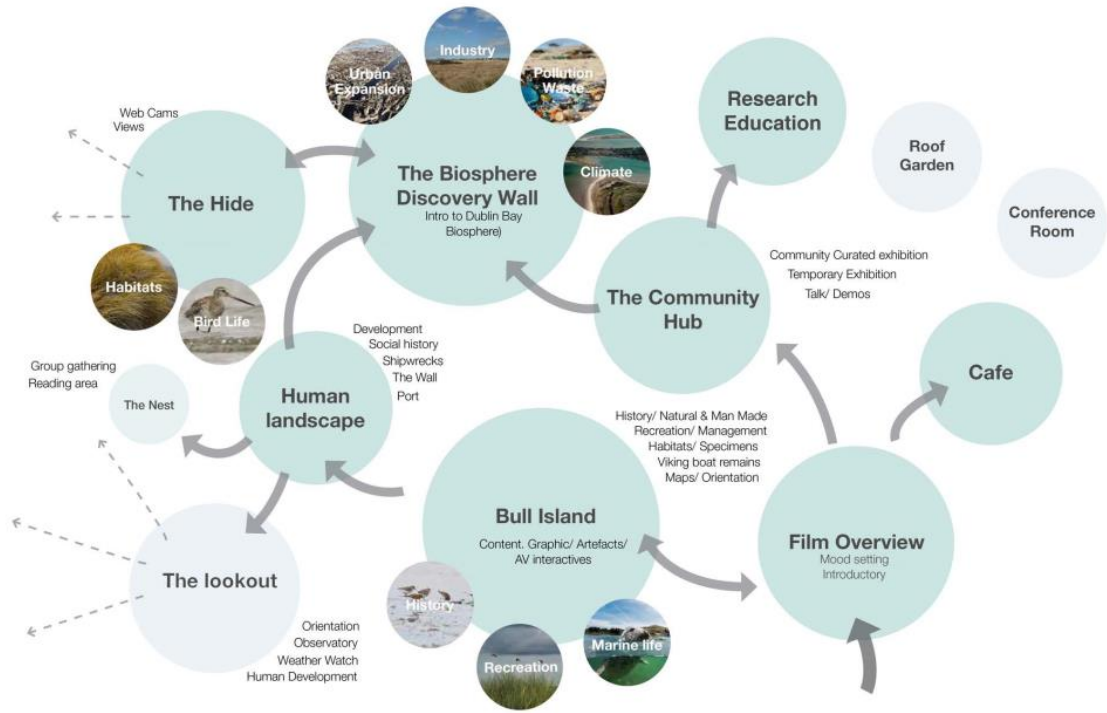


Case Study - Naturum Vattenriket Visitors Centre



Case Study - Sill Landscape Discovery Centre





Concept Analysis - Conservation, Interpretive, Education, Research, Community