

# Eyemouth Harbourside Study for Scottish Borders Council

Bain, Swan Architects  
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**1.00 Introduction**

In the knowledge of the importance of the Eyemouth harbour area to the town’s wellbeing in the past and in the future, Scottish Borders Council wishes to be better informed about the harbourside block to inform future planning (and development) policy. The study area is bounded by Harbour Road (east), Manse Road (north) and Church Street (west). It falls within the Old Town Conservation Area and is an elongated triangle with a public car park (42 spaces) at its southern end.



**1.01 Scope of The Study**

It was envisaged that the study would be in two stages. In stage one, the aim was to analyse the fabric of the block in terms of its townscape character, to examine the extent to which its individual buildings are more or less deserving of preservation, conservation or enhancement in the event that the more commercial land uses cease to be located in this part of the town.

The aim of the second stage was to determine development scenarios based on a range of possible land uses and to examine the potential for land assembly and phasing opportunities – with a view to future harbour diversification. Because of the town’s current retail deficit, it was envisaged that retail would be part of the development mix.

In the event there were too many development scenarios to allow a credible phasing plan and the study has instead explored a series of broad land use and urban design principles which in the consultations undertaken were generally supported by opinion in the town. The widespread support for the principles canvassed should nonetheless assist the leadership, management and coordination of future effort in relation to diversification of the harbour area.

## 1.02 Study background

The study takes as its starting point the now well understood notion that to replace economic activity lost by the downturn in the fishing industry, in parallel with serving the needs of the industry, the harbour area must develop to exploit the visitor market. This policy aim was established by the 'Eyemouth Harbour Tourism and Development Study' 1997 prepared by Ian White Associates, Bain, Swan Architects and Tourism Resources Co. for Scottish Borders Enterprise, Scottish Borders Council in association with Scottish Tourist Board. It is a policy which is self evidently already in the process of being put into practice all round the harbour area.

Although completed 15 years ago, many of the themes and recommendations of this report are still relevant and the report has been a useful primer for some of the key consultees.

Eyemouth possesses a remarkably strong and naturally attractive sense of place and chief among the report's recommendations is that the setting of the Old Town and its distinctive relationship with its working harbour, together with its strong community spirit are major visitor attractions which could lead a regeneration effort that could benefit the whole of the Eastern Borders.

Building confidence and pride in place is a necessary component in regeneration. Whether it is in the home grown success of Gunsreen House, or the increasing interest in the history and heritage of the town, you can sense in the younger generation and in significant numbers of people who have come to live and work in Eyemouth, a more ambitious spirit, less worn down by the 'aye been' mentality of old.

We can take inspiration from John Bellany, probably the foremost Scottish painter of his generation, whose 70 years retrospective exhibition is currently showing at the National Gallery of Scotland, and whose childhood and lifetime's work are intimately shaped by Eyemouth when he describes the town "*one of the most enchanting places in the world, with its cliffs and Roadstead lying safely behind the Hurkur rocks and its harbour filled with the vibrant colours of fishing boats, stretching from where the Eye joins the sea into the heart of the village*"

John Bellany has achieved remarkable excellence by reflecting through his painting his own lights, his own experience often vividly expressed and interpreted through in a figurative style intimately associated with East Coast fishing towns such as Port Seton and Eyemouth - his own place. His individual vision is at once true to his personal relationship with the world and to the place where he belongs and his art is bursting with integrity and is utterly authentic.

What better example could Eyemouth have as it embarks in planning for the next generation.



Eyemouth Sunset 2002 John Bellany



Eyemouth Harbour 1992 John Bellany

"... one of the most enchanting places in the world"

John Bellany makes a picture out of the separation of the harbour from the town behind the old fishmarket. In urban design terms it would be more satisfactory if it was one place, not two.

**2.00 STAGE ONE:**

**2.01 The Building Fabric**

This aerial photograph illustrates the extent to which modern (20C) mostly steel framed industrial buildings have come to dominate the interior of the harbourside block. Their east-west orientation is a reflection of the historic burgage plots dating from the 18C when Church Street contained the merchants' houses. The Ordnance Survey maps in paragraph 2.04 illustrate the process whereby the harbour has become progressively more industrialised reflecting the development of the fishing industry and its growing requirement for large scale vehicle transport. This has necessitated the straightening out of the Smiddy Brae at the south end, and the introduction of Manse Road at the north end in the mid 60's.

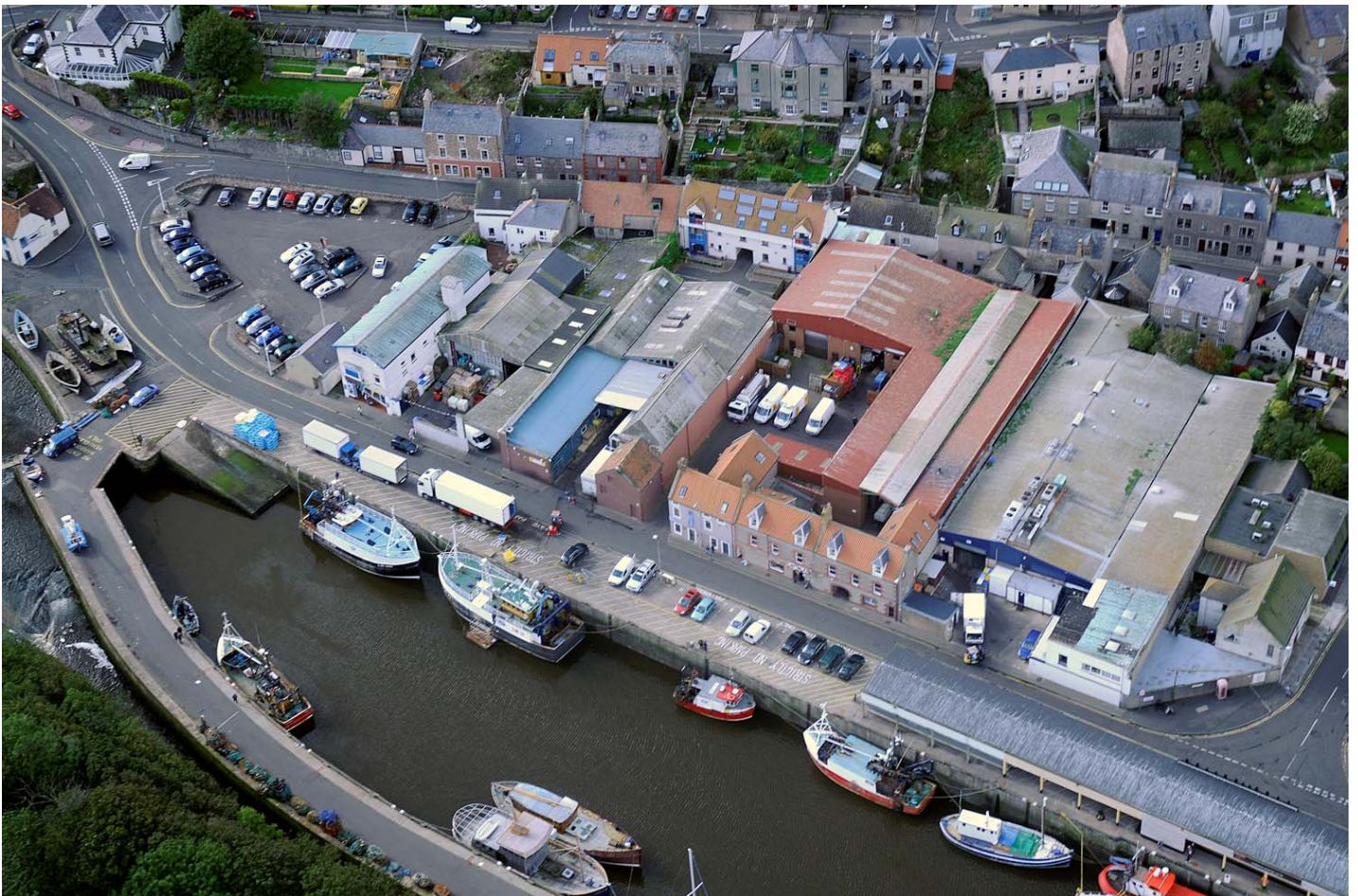


Image courtesy of Lawson Wood



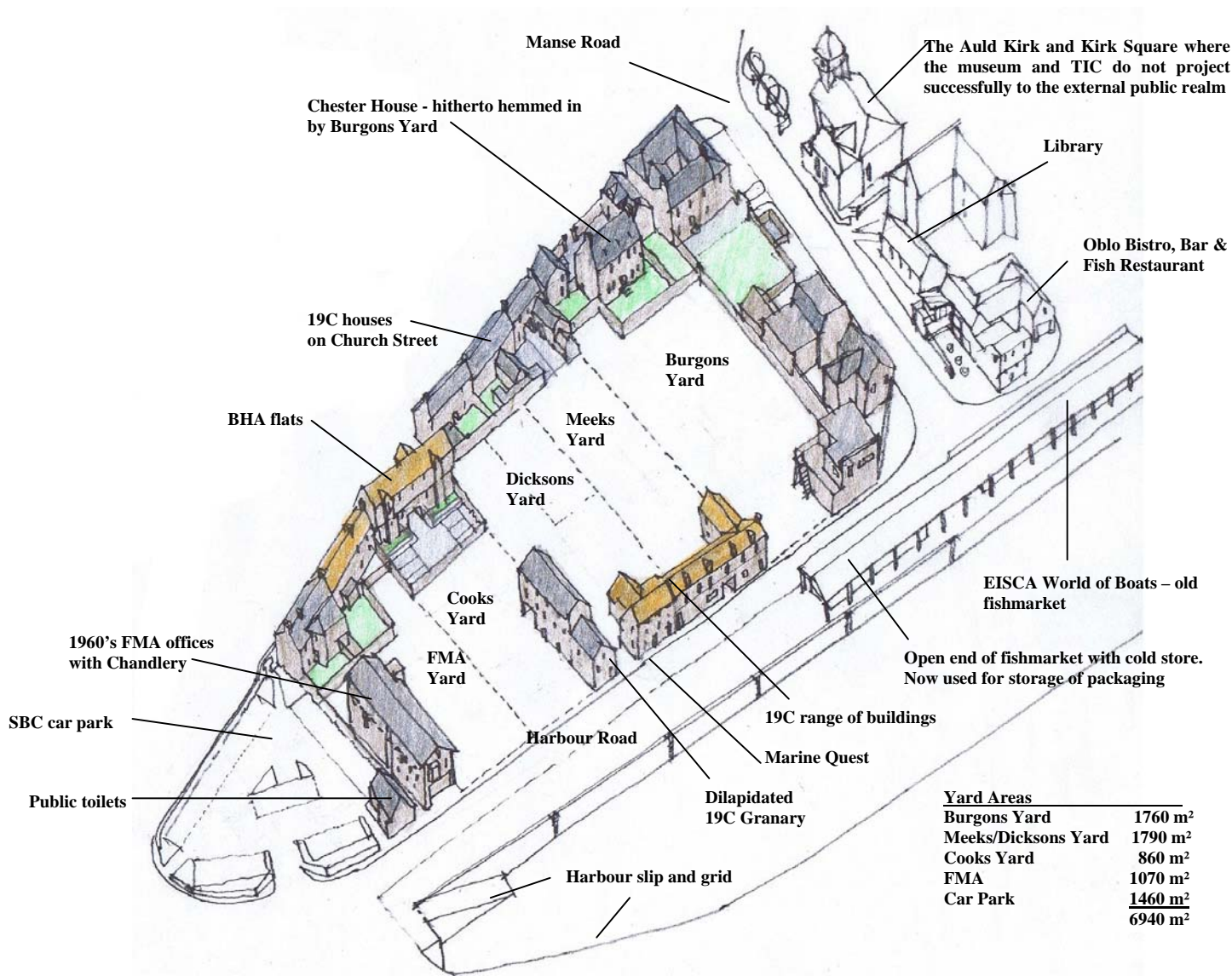
The needs of large scale transport now dominate Harbour Road, and the quayside can often take on the character of a marshalling yard for the adjacent commercial premises.



The pedestrian visitor route from the Town Centre to Gunsreen House .....

**2.02 Harbourside stripped of its industrial buildings**

If, as illustrated below, the commercial premises could be relocated elsewhere in the town and the industrial buildings removed, the internal cleared area including Meeks and Dicksons Yards and the public car park would amount to 6,940 m<sup>2</sup>



The buildings remaining on this sketch are largely 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> C with the exceptions of:-

- the public toilets in the Harbour Road car park (1980's)
- The FMA building (1960's)
- The BHA flats in Church Street (completed 2002)
- the buildings fronting Manse Road and of the same era (1960's) including :-  
 the garage – owned by D R Collin, The Bank of Scotland and the veterinary surgery - Merlin Vets and solicitors -Melrose and Porteous with flat over
- Burgon (Eyemouth) Ltd offices

The buildings fronting Manse Road, together with Burgon's office building are of relatively low architectural quality. Chester House (Grade A listed) with its walled courtyard fronting Church Street is easily the best building, but its east elevation has historically been hemmed in by the back of Burgon's yard. No.s. 2-4 Manse Road, formerly the Bakehouse Café, possesses a sturdy east facing frontage overlooking an enclosed garden. Both buildings could contribute more to the public domain than they presently do.

## 2.04 Historical Analysis: OS Maps

As is usually the case, OS historic plans are instructive and four are included to illustrate the development of the block in relation to changing circumstances as the harbour developed from mainly coastal trade in the 18C through to the herring boom of the 19C to the high point of the white fish fleet in the 20C and then onwards to its decline at the end of the 20C to the present day.

The earliest map, **1857**, shows the merchants' houses fronting Church Street with their long plots extending eastwards, some of which are beginning to fill with buildings associated with harbour uses.

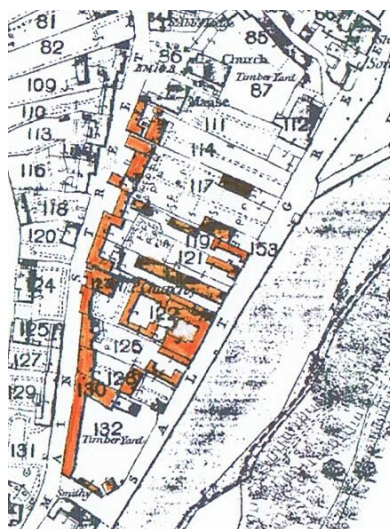
One reminder of the 18 and 19C grain trade is the granary which, though very dilapidated, still stands adjacent to D R Collin's yard.

An elegant early 19C house with its garden fronting on to Saltgreens (the old name for Harbour Road) survived until the 1960's.

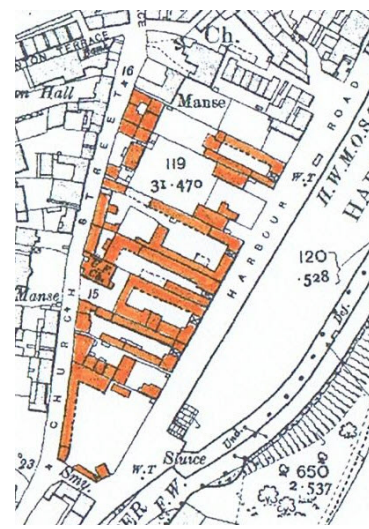
The **1908** map shows the formation of the fish cadgers' yards lined with their characteristic timber post and beam open sided buildings accessed through pends in the Harbour Road frontage (see photo. Para. 3.01.05). This is a classic stage in this development of the block.

The **1968** map is built on the same format, though by now there are large areas of shed, notably in Burgon's Yard, where lobster ponds supplied with pumped seawater were pioneered. In this era the market took place in the open on the quayside and vehicle congestion was beginning to become a problem. This would lead to the construction of Manse Road in the late 1960's.

The walled yard at the south end which had hitherto been a timber yard was also owned by Burgon's and the map shows the recently erected FMA building immediately to the north. The church on Church Street has been converted to the town's cinema.



1857



1908



1968



Current

The **current plan** shows the extent to which sheds have filled the internal area of the harbourside block though the old burgage plots can still be discerned. The quayside fishmarket has been erected, extended and improved to meet EU Hygiene regulations and superseded in 1998 by the new fishmarket at the Gungreen Basin, itself overtaken by the downturn in the fishing industry and never fully used. The town cinema has been replaced by Housing Association flats. Meeks and Dicksons Yards have been developed (1988) for marine engineering services and fishermen's stores and the yard at the south end is now a public car park.

The lessons to be gained from the OS data are:-

- that the area has been subject to enormous and relentless change
- that further development will best retain authenticity by respecting the grain established by the old burgage plots, the foundation of the town plan.

### 3.00 STAGE TWO: First Round of Consultations

#### 3.01 The Key Players – What They Do

This section gives a brief indication of the character of the businesses on Harbour Road. A significant number have outgrown the need to be located on the harbourside and could be relocated.

##### 01 Burgon (Eyemouth) Ltd

The directors Burgon (Eyemouth) Ltd are John Burgon and Grahame Sinclair who have recently sold the business to The Blue Sea Food Company based in Paignton, Devon ('Devon Crab'). The firm is the largest employer in Eyemouth recently topping 100 in the summer. This figure reduces to about 60 in the winter. Their business is shellfish processing and they now buy the majority of their raw product from elsewhere, although they still take local crab and lobster landings. Historically, Burgons pioneered the storage of shellfish, installing salt water lobster ponds with sea water pumped from the pier at the harbour entrance. Hitherto it was useful to be on the Harbourside because the ambience impressed business visitors, but the advantages of modern premises Grahame Sinclair now considers would be equally attractive, not least because of the greater efficiency.

Processed shellfish product is packed and dispatched by lorry, with loading in Harbour Road. Vehicle movements have increased in recent years, though not to the level of DR Collin's activities. Burgons rent the now defunct cold store in the open end of the old fishmarket as well as two of the storage units in Meeks Yard.

In 1999 they made a considerable investment in new buildings, cold stores and processing space and investment has continued even since the recent takeover. The Blue Sea Food Company wish to continue to develop the Eyemouth enterprise opening up new product lines. The business does not depend on the Harbour Road location, but they would need a considerable incentive to relocate to Gunsreen Hill. The conjunction there of a shellfish processing hub and the sewage works was not in the past attractive to them, but that objection may be fading.



**The entrance to Burgons Yard with loading operations overflowing into Harbour Road**

##### 02 DR Collin & Son Ltd

DR Collin & Son Ltd began as a small family business, run by James Cook, and have recently become a limited company. Their vertically integrated business is in high premium live shellfish transported from more than 100 working boats on the east and west coasts to the Eyemouth hub. A core product is live langoustine, repackaged in Eyemouth and transported in their own road transport fleet. Much shellfish is caught by sustainable fishing methods using salt water tanks on board fishing vessels and an egg crate container system. Products also include live lobster, crab claws, cockles, squid, line caught mackerel, razor clams, live scallops and velvet crabs as well as sea trout and salmon.

The firm owns around 50 vehicles which sometimes produce 40-50 vehicle movements per day. The yard has very limited space for loading and the business relies on the use of Harbour Road and the adjacent quayside and, it must be stated, the tolerance of the town, the Harbour Trust and adjacent businesses, some of which (e.g. Marine Quest) are often adversely affected. In this sense they have long outgrown their premises at 34 – 36 Harbour Road. Health and Safety in Harbour Road is a concern locally, though there is a recognition that the business is a very worthwhile one for the town. The firm is a business leader in its field, employing 54 in Eyemouth and 23 in Berwick and it is of course essential that it is retained in the town. They are a key Harbour Trust tenant of the Fishmarket at the Gunsreen Basin and they retain a significant range of other premises in the town for storage and other purposes as well as at The Ramparts Industrial Estate in Berwick upon Tweed.

The business is a market leader and has expanded at around 10-15% annually in recent years and there is potential, and probably pressure from new shareholders to increase annual expansion to 20%. A previous attempt to persuade the firm to relocate to Gunsreen failed, but the attraction of modern premises fitted out to suit the firm's particular operation with space for expansion are nonetheless likely to be attractive in the context of sufficiently enticing incentive arrangements.



**The entrance to Cooks Yard. The yard depends on Harbour Road and the quayside for vehicle loading and unloading**

### 03 Fishermen's Mutual Association (FMA)

The FMA's history is that of a locally run cooperative organisation providing management, buying, marketing and servicing for local boats. Their decline in business has mirrored the decline in the fishing industry particularly where white fish is concerned. Their in-house boats have declined in numbers from 40 to 10 and their employment figures have recently dropped from 18 to 12. Though they transport fish and shellfish to processors for 30 boats, the bulk of their business originates from outwith Eyemouth on the Northumberland coast. Like Burgons, the FMA operate lobster ponds and land products from local boats. Their Chandlery business is an important income contributor selling gear to boats up and down the coast with deliveries affected by their own lorry fleet.

The shop has been improved and expanded in recent years with additional storage, making use of bulk buying through Marine Co. and is diversifying into a 'high street' outlet. With increasing diversification of the harbour, sales have increased to leisure vessels. The shop is the only part of the business which is dependent on the harbourside location. Space in their yard is limited and the FMA, like DR Collin and Burgon(Eyemouth) Ltd, utilise Harbour Road and the adjacent quayside for loading, storage of fish boxes, etc.



**FMA with its Chandlery and yard entrance**

Their ice manufacturing business, operated from the ice plant at Gunsreen Basin, faces difficulties. The high quality plate ice it manufactures was appropriate for vessels making longer white fish trips when it was built in 2000, but these are almost gone and its more expensive plate ice suffers in price compared with smaller flake ice plants most used by day boats. They have therefore had to look for other customers in the food processing industry. There are also some up and coming equipment replacements to be financed. The plant is therefore under threat of closure and this in turn is a threat to the viability of the harbour since the availability of ice is a key part of the harbour infrastructure which can attract visiting boats. The FMA argue that Fife Council, which supports the ice plant in Pittenweem, is more attuned to the importance of ice in the harbour infrastructure than is Scottish Borders Council.

A generational change is imminent in the management of the organisation, with George Walker and other senior personnel due to retire next year. The unavoidable prognosis is a managed reduction in business activities with the boats left to fend for themselves.



George Walker has no expectation of a revival in the fishing industry that would give rise to an appetite for expansion. The demise of the FMA would be a further threat to the viability of the harbour with the loss of harbour dues. If the ice plant were lost it would be a drain on the ability of the Harbour Trust to maintain a viable range of harbour infrastructure. The circumstances of the FMA therefore put at a premium on achieving new income streams through non fishing harbour diversification.

04 Marine Quest

Marine Quest are an exemplary harbour diversification business run by the Easingwood family. They provide services for divers and sea anglers (marketing to the continental seaboard), including good quality overnight bunkroom accommodation (20 bedspaces) and a small café which caters for visitors and in spite of its location, hemmed in by D R Collin's operation, attracts a worthwhile local clientele.



**Marine Quest's building hemmed in by DR Collin's operations**

They wish to expand, but this aim has been frustrated by the unavailability of the store premises at the rear, presently leased by W L Collin, Electrician, and the continuing inability of Scottish Borders Council Estates Department to consent to the erection of a balcony on the south side of the property to provide access to a further bedroom. This ought to be attended to without delay.

05 Meeks and Dicksons Yards

Built in 1988 to provide fishermen's net stores and fishing industry related engineering premises, this complex has never fulfilled its potential due to the subsequent decline in the industry. New, cheaper storage erected by the Harbour Trust at Gunsreen Quay is presently servicing the needs of the industry, although this is not without its environmental problems. Parts of Meeks and Dicksons Yard are now let to D R Collin, Burgon (Eyemouth) Ltd and EISCA. No. 1 Dicksons Yard was sold to Duncan McFarlane who sold it to D R Collin. The management of the Yards with unauthorised parking, general debris, has become a running sore.



**Meek's Yard in its early 20C heyday**



**From the same viewpoint today. The management of Meeks and Dicksons' yard with unauthorised parking and general debris continues to be an intractable problem.**

06 Harbour Café

A small café with a mainly local clientele owned by James Cook who has previously expressed interest in converting it to a restaurant specialising in seafood.

07 28 Harbour Road

Bain, Swan Architects offices. The second floor is let to EISCA and is their Eyemouth office.

08 Eyemouth Harbour Trust

The focus of the Trust continues to be on maximising income to enable it to continue to maintain the harbour and its related facilities to a high standard to attract fishing, commercial and leisure vessels. The management team which includes the Business Manager, Christine Bell, continues to explore income generating opportunities. These have included the letting of the (new) fishmarket to a range of tenants, the installation of pay parking on the quayside, providing dive access at Gunsgreen and providing pontoons and services for visiting leisure craft in the harbour.

Eyemouth is midway between the Forth and the Tyne and a good landfall for yachts from Germany and Holland. Last year visiting yachts brought more than 2000 visitors into the town and The Trust want to increase capacity by installing further pontoons at the top end of the old harbour.

The Trust sees the top end of the harbour as the logical place to extend visitor craft facilities but appreciates that visitors like the ambiance of a working harbour which has the added attraction of the Boat Yard. The Trust's concentration of visitor craft at the top end of the harbour is not without its difficulties: fishing craft naturally want to use this already very busy part of the quayside for landing because of its nearness to the commercial premises on Harbour Road.



**Floating pontoon moorings on the middle pier**

09 EISCA

EISCA is a key player since as well as its boat and marine artefacts collection stored at Gunsgreenhill and Meek's Yard, Andrew Thornhill has an interest in Eyemouth Boatyard (Coastal Marine Boatbuilders Ltd) and the Ship Hotel. They have an Eyemouth office HQ at 28 Harbour Road.

Stephen Walters continues to express interest in various expansion projects including:-

- expanding the Gunsgreenhill (ostrich shed) storage facility for additional storage and display and for training and research purposes
- restoring the windmill at Gunsgreenhill – housing part of the model boat collection and providing a look-out tower
- establishing a training and boat repair arm, perhaps in Meek's Yard and the Pendaris unit, in conjunction with the 'World of Boats' exhibition in the old fishmarket. Although they lease a part of the Yard this area is not considered sufficient for their purposes.



**The old fishmarket done up to look like an 18C frigate, houses 'The World of Boats'**

- expanding the 'World of Boats' exhibition into the 'open' part of the old fishmarket. They have a 25 year lease granted by the Harbour Trust. Their planning consent, obtained in November 2003 was granted for a limited period of 10 years. A further application is required to extend the consent on the basis that the external cladding is constructed of materials of insufficient standard and general appearance for permanent retention.

However, although EISCA wants to retain the Eyemouth base as a main hub for its Scottish collection, its current preoccupation is elsewhere in Cardiff and Belfast where they can benefit from generous incentives and a much greater footfall. The consequence is that there will be less concentration on Eyemouth in the foreseeable future.

10 Berwickshire Housing Association

The Association, in the person of its chief executive Helen Forsyth and Housing Development Consultant, Ann Wilson, have taken part in discussions on Eyemouth's future through the Town Council, the Vision Group and the Development Trust. Its constitutional remit allows it to broaden its activities beyond the provision of housing into fostering 'thriving neighbourhoods, full of choice and opportunity for all ages, where future generations will choose to stay and prosper'. It is therefore potentially an important partner in any harbourside redevelopment. In addition it is actively looking for premises in Eyemouth to permit the establishment of an administrative centre at least equal in size to the one in Duns.

### 3.02 Eyemouth's Retail Deficit: A New Supermarket?

The notion of locating a new supermarket at the harbourside was floated as a way of exploiting the town's retail deficit to increase the footfall to the commercial advantage of the High Street



Co-op Chirside



Co-op Eyemouth



Sainsbury's Peebles

The study area is shown here with various superimposed supermarket footprints. During the first and second stages of consultations, opinion was universally against the proposal on grounds that:

- o quite a large supermarket would be needed to prevent shoppers from travelling to larger supermarkets elsewhere,
- o the harbour is the town's unique selling point and should not be wasted,
- o the harbour has a much greater potential for attracting visitors and a large supermarket would devalue the area environmentally and put pressure on car parking.

However, in view of the town's retail deficit and the objective in the longer term to introduce retail space into the harbourside, (see para. 3.05) food retail should not be ruled out as a matter of principle. A smaller "food store" might assist the retail deficit and provide a useful facility for visiting leisure craft.



A food store on the Tobermory harbour frontage serves both the town and visiting leisure craft

### 3.03 First Round of Consultation: Conclusions

The first round of consultations were essentially fact finding, but the following conclusions emerged:-



**Large scale transport vehicles dominate the quayside**

- The late 20C era of the fishing industry manifested itself in ever increasing industrialisation of Harbour Road and was characterised by large scale processing and fish handling premises and the need to cater for large scale transportation. With the decline of the fishing industry, this era is at an end, with Harbour Road fish processing and distribution businesses now relying on product arriving from elsewhere and no longer depending on fishing boats landing at the adjacent quayside.
- The industrial nature of Harbour Road, which has taken on the character of a marshalling yard, is inimical to the attraction of visitors to this end of the harbour.
- However, the majority of this business could be carried on from suitable alternative premises, opening up opportunities for the harbour to diversify into visitor related activities and broaden the town's economic base.
- Some businesses seem destined to decline, but some are very valuable to the town's economy, and have capacity to expand
- Some premises currently allow businesses to operate on a low cost basis, and other businesses have invested significantly in premises. All will require some incentive to relocate. Other businesses are already exploiting opportunities arising from the visitor trade.
- There was general understanding of the need and support for continuing harbour diversification towards visitor related activities. It was noted that the working harbour was itself an attraction.
- There was a general acceptance that a fishing revival was unlikely, although capacity should be retained to ensure the town could benefit from an upsurge.
- It was clear that the pace of change, which in the 20C has been very considerable, was set to continue. If left to itself, it seemed unlikely to most consultees that satisfactory reorientation of the harbourside block and upper end of the harbour towards the visitor market will result. There being no Eyemouth organisation with the necessary breadth of responsibility, most consultees felt it was for Scottish Borders Council to establish a common purpose and lead and manage a process of renewal.



**The early 20C quayside with an elegant early 19C house set back with its garden fronting the harbour**



**The same view during the construction of the FMA in the 60's. The building on the right would soon be demolished to make way for a new yard.**

### 3.04 Revised study aims

One of the aims of the study was to determine development scenarios and to examine the potential for land assembly and phasing. However, predicting the extent of development land and the timing of its availability is at this stage problematic: there are too many possibilities. Also, the process of moving towards whatever is the chosen scenario is unlikely to be a linear step by step process, because of the unpredictability involved. A more achievable modus operandi was to construct a set of principles and test them in a further round of consultation with key agencies and individuals. If necessary wider public consultation could also be undertaken. The hope was to establish a settled view that might then underpin a general policy framework for the harbourside block and the river end of the old harbour for the next generation. A policy framework which had wide support in the town would then be a useful tool, perhaps quite a potent one, in negotiations with the interested parties on the harbourside.

### 3.05 The 'Vision' Sketch

The main component in the second round of consultation was a three dimensional sketch of the Harbourside block. This was not intended to be a detailed forward plan, having regard to all the complex business, operational and ownership issues and prepared in the expectation of agreement with all the relevant parties to its precise implementation. Rather, the intention was to illustrate and canvass some (mainly) urban design ideas at a more fundamental level. The hope was to establish some key principles which might assist in building a vision for how, in principle, the harbourside could be reinvented to serve the town better in the future.

The warmth of reaction when showing consultees old photographs of the unencumbered quayside was remarkable. They wanted their town back and they appreciated that a big step towards this would be the restoration of the town's relationship with the harbour with frontages containing harbour and visitor related businesses actively addressing the quayside, thus confirming a fundamental principle in urban design – that the main public spaces should be overlooked by appropriate buildings and that the combination of the two gives identity, distinction and a sense of place to the public realm.

#### A changed relationship between town and harbour

The process involved examination of the changing relationship of the town and harbour, comparing the present with the past and use was made of old photographs. This might be regarded as indicative of a romantic or nostalgic approach, but an understanding of how the past has developed to the present day is essential when planning the future.



The post war Harbour Road frontage had a satisfyingly direct relationship with the harbour. The quayside is as yet unencumbered by the Fishmarket built in the 1960's



Now we have this: heavy goods traffic and the unloading and loading of fish product from elsewhere on the east and west coasts now completely dominates the quayside. Compare this with the Tobermory example on the next page where some of the shellfish product that arrives at D R Collin is caught.

### The example of Tobermory

Towns which express their authenticity in simple and direct ways are intrinsically attractive to visitors. What better example is there than Tobermory. If something of this ilk could be achieved in Eyemouth, it would be a big step in reinventing the place.



Tobermory's coloured houses and the 'Balamory' marketing effect make it instantly recognisable. But its underlying urban design form with its frontage directly addressing the quayside and the bay is simple and highly successful. There is generous parking all along the quayside and visitors can come and go as they please. The harbour frontages contain a variety of niche and standard retail outlets, pubs and restaurants, a museum – serving local and visitor needs. If Eyemouth could recover the simple relationship the harbourside frontages once had with the quayside it would be a big step in reinventing the place.



Tobermory's marina is on the other side of the Bay, whereas at Eyemouth visiting craft can tie up right in the heart of the town.



Tobermory is one of many small ports up and down the east and west coasts which supply to D R Collin's live langoustine export business.

You can find D R Collin's boxes on Tobermory pier- specially developed by the firm for transporting sustainable catches of live shellfish to the D R Collin transport hub – on Eyemouth harbourside for repackaging and onward dispatch to continental markets.

Eyemouth benefits substantially from this ground breaking business. D R Collin is a leader in its field. The contrast between Tobermory and Eyemouth is ironic since at the Eyemouth end the number of heavy vehicle movements generated by this trade (and others) represents a formidable obstacle to the reorientation of its harbour area to the visitor trade.

**The 'Vision' Sketch** - this annotated drawing was used in the consultation process and is included to illustrate some of the principles which might reinvent the harbourside

**The problem.....**In a little over a GENERATION the INDUSTRIAL SCALE of development at the Harbourside has grown in response to the evolving fishing industry.

This era is nearly over. While FISHING is still vitally important, new ways have to be found to exploit the SPECIAL CHARACTER of the HARBOUR

- To attract a range of visitors
- encouraged to come because of the DISTINCTIVENESS of the PLACE and the range of activities available.

A way is needed to relocate some of the existing harbourside fishing related businesses so they can grow without their daily operational arrangements conflicting with HARBOUR DIVERSIFICATION.

- These businesses, although they are very important to the town, are no longer reliant on their harbourside location.

**A SUPERMARKET?**

Eyemouth HARBOUR is one of the Borders special places, an important resource, which if well marketed could attract many more visitors.

A large dominant supermarket here would be a denial of the spirit of the place.

It would reduce the distinctiveness and authenticity of the harbour and restrict HARBOUR DIVERSIFICATION.

But a smaller food store could be part of a new retail mix

Take every opportunity to introduce pedestrian routes.

This new piece of town should be as porous for pedestrians and vehicles as the Old Town - and should include plenty of parking

**BUILD ON THE CAR PARK?**

Get people living here too. Something exuberant rather than a dreary car park. Compensate with quayside parking and parking within yards development.

**STRAIGHTEN the Smiddy Brae**

- as of old to reduce vehicle dominance of the street and create a possible development opportunity

There is big potential for up river improvement

DUNDEE HOUSE has great potential

ENHANCE slip related activities - boats and harbour related activities are attractive to visitors.

The BOAT YARD supplies "working harbour" character.

Establish PARKING on Quayside. Easy come and go for short stay visitors with traffic calming and environmental improvements to street. There should be generous parking in the yards too.

THE REMOVAL OF EXISTING HEAVY COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC WOULD MAKE THE HARBOURSIDE MORE PEDESTRIAN AND VISITOR FRIENDLY.

The quayside should be well connected with new yards development

A new community use for the Town Hall

These frontages are good and could be brought back into play

KIRK SQUARE Performance Space

TIC and MUSEUM - Needs to address the public domain more visibly

INTRODUCE NEW ACCESS INTO THE YARDS FROM MANSE ROAD

Maybe a one Stop SHOP?

Mission/Hippodrome - A new community/ social/ harbour diversification use would benefit the whole harbour area

Easy come and go parking for visitors all along the quayside

Ship Inn has potential for expansion

OBLO - a key place revitalised by an improved connection to the harbour

THE REMOVAL OF FISHMARKET WOULD BE TRANSFORMATIVE  
Get EISCA into the block and encourage them to maximise the potential of their excellent collection in a significant new visitor attraction that would include sealife, diving, fishing

EXPAND THE LEISURE CRAFT FACILITIES - pontoons, etc. ....But keep fishing craft too - they are attractive to visitors

**The Urban Design Aim:**

- To make a new piece of town, at one with the HARBOUR and authentically Eyemouth
- To exploit the natural attractiveness of the harbour, to engender PLACE SPECIFIC economic, cultural and social activity integrated with traditional harbour uses, and broaden the Town's economic base.

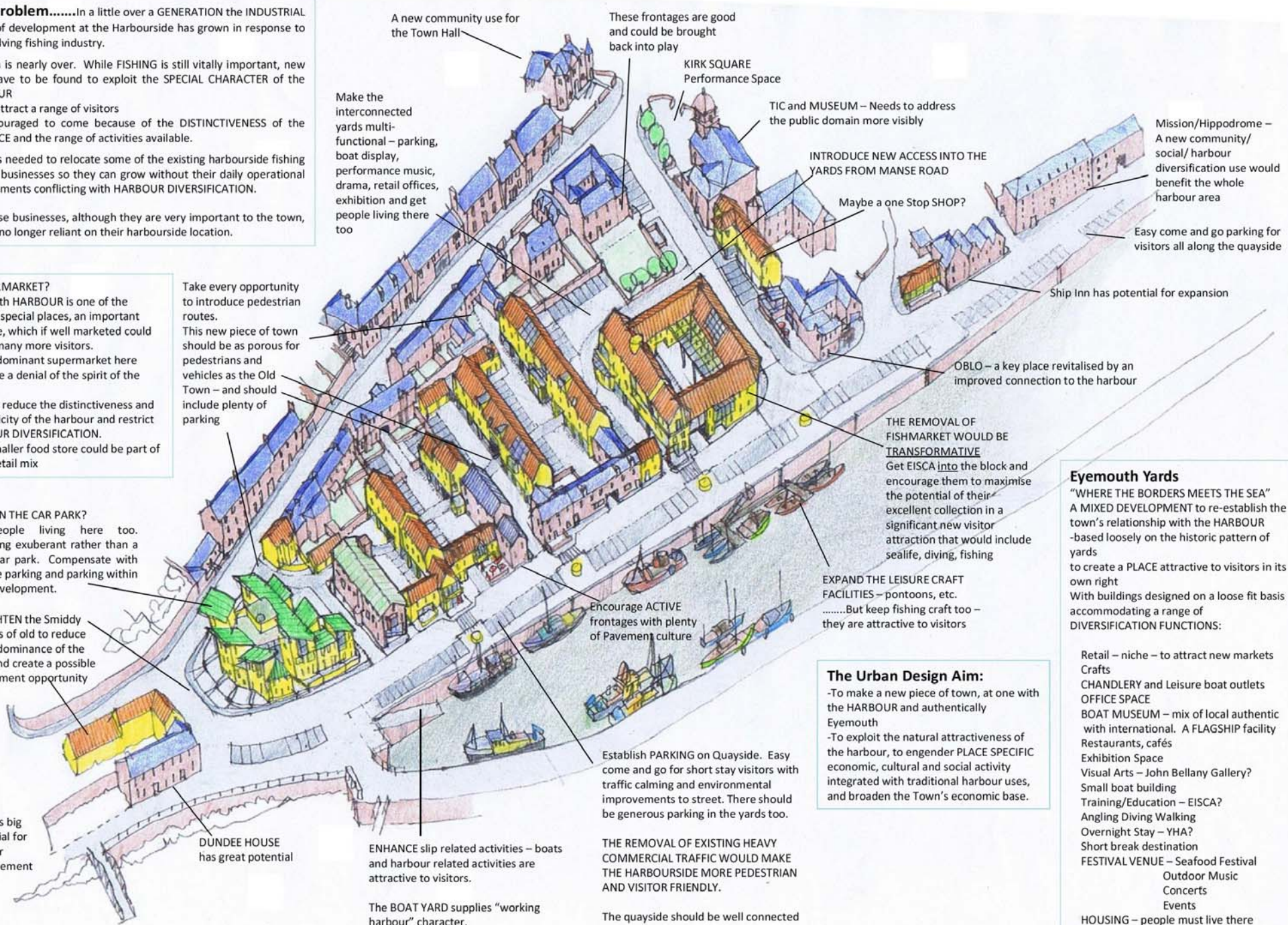
**Eyemouth Yards**

"WHERE THE BORDERS MEETS THE SEA"  
A MIXED DEVELOPMENT to re-establish the town's relationship with the HARBOUR -based loosely on the historic pattern of yards

to create a PLACE attractive to visitors in its own right

With buildings designed on a loose fit basis accommodating a range of DIVERSIFICATION FUNCTIONS:

- Retail - niche - to attract new markets
- Crafts
- CHANDLERY and Leisure boat outlets
- OFFICE SPACE
- BOAT MUSEUM - mix of local authentic with international. A FLAGSHIP facility
- Restaurants, cafés
- Exhibition Space
- Visual Arts - John Bellany Gallery?
- Small boat building
- Training/Education - EISCA?
- Angling Diving Walking
- Overnight Stay - YHA?
- Short break destination
- FESTIVAL VENUE - Seafood Festival
- Outdoor Music
- Concerts
- Events
- HOUSING - people must live there





### 3.06 Second round of consultations

The main issues and findings including reactions to the Vision Sketch were as follows:

#### 01 Upsurge in interest

The interest in building a better future for Eyemouth is palpable and is reflected in the vigorous revival of organisations such as the Town Council, the Chamber of Trade and the establishment of new organisations such as the Eyemouth Initiative, which has led to the setting up of the Development Trust. A group dubbed the Vision Group composed of various individuals, MSP's and councillors and representatives from town organisations has met several times to discuss the future. Such enthusiasm and passion for the place needs feeding or disillusionment will set in and the moment will be lost.

#### 02 Focussing on the harbour

A remarkable unanimity has coalesced around the 'vision' sketch principle of focussing on the harbourside block and the adjacent harbour as a means of attracting visitors and reinventing the place.

#### 03 Commercial uses in Harbour Road

Universally, consultees recognised that the current commercial operations in Harbour Road were a barrier to the diversification of the harbour towards leisure uses and therefore a barrier to the future development of the town itself. The consultees who expressed this view included those operating the key businesses in Harbour Road.



Harbour Road sometimes resembles a marshalling yard

#### 04 Restoring the town's relationship with the harbour

Virtually all consultees responded favourably to the idea. Those old enough to remember the open quayside did so with much nostalgia. Younger consultees and newcomers immediately saw the benefit in terms of the town's improved presentation to the harbour and the greater opportunities which would arise to develop visitor trade.



The pre war Harbour Road before the fishmarket and Manse Road



The old fishmarket is a visual barrier between the town and its harbour

#### 05 A new supermarket

The idea of a large, dominant supermarket was universally rejected. It would waste an important opportunity to re-orientate and rebuild the town's economy round its most important asset, the harbour. However, in view of the town's retail deficit, food retail on Harbour Road in conjunction with other retail outlets remains a possibility; a food store here would be well located to attract trade from leisure craft.

06 Making it authentically Eyemouth

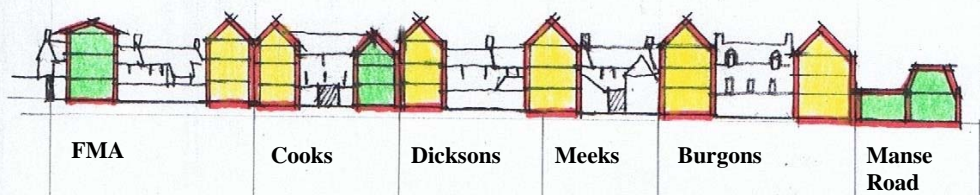
The notion that new development of the type envisaged should have authenticity at its foundation was well understood paralleling the modus operandi of Gunsreen House where the ersatz and fake and lowest common denominator is avoided and instead the genuine is made accessible. These were also the core principles of the Eyemouth Seafood Festival which had a successful 6 year run in the late 1990's, early 2000's.

07 Eyemouth Yards – where the Borders meets the sea

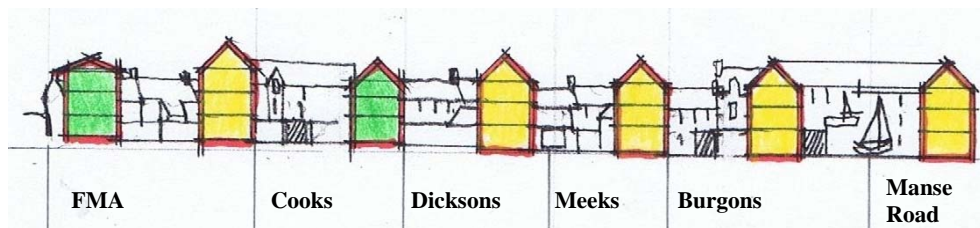
The development proposals roughly indicated on the Vision Sketch are intended to explore some key design principles:

- the development should have a strong urban design backbone. The aim should be to arrive at a “piece of town”, at one with the harbour area and authentically Eyemouth
- it should exploit the natural attractiveness of the harbour to engender place specific economic, cultural and social regeneration integrated with traditional harbour uses to broaden the town's economic base
- a key objective is to re-establish the town's direct relationship with the harbour by clearing the quayside and establishing active frontage along Harbour Road. The removal of the old fishmarket would be transformative, unifying the harbour area and opening views up Manse Road connecting it to the High Street
- a proper piece of town implies a mixed development capable of accommodating a range of diversification functions. The mix should include housing, but carefully integrated with niche retail to attract new markets with chandlery and leisure craft outlets, facilities to service the angling, diving, walking and short break visitor trade, crafts, exhibition space, visual arts components, office accommodation, small boatbuilding/repairs and training and education. A food store could be included in the mix.
- placemaking should be at the heart of the design effort with a vibrant piece of town being itself an attraction capable of being marketed as a destination in itself and as a festival and events venue making possible a revival of the Seafood Festival, outdoor music, theatre and concerts.
- it is essential to provide plenty of accessible car parking on the quayside to enable visitors to come and go. Parking within the development is essential to retain capacity on the quayside for day visitors.
- This has a bearing on land assembly and phasing: the successful integration of car parking into a yard format will be heavily curtailed in the event of a phased development, a yard at a time. This argues for a more comprehensive approach which can deliver a fully connected public realm, which, like the Old Town itself, should be fully porous to both vehicular and pedestrian movement.
- the choice of yard structure in this illustration might be considered a romantic throwback, but its use, if it were done in an interconnected way, could provide the mechanics for an enclave of public realm spaces recalling the tightness of the Old Town and shared by pedestrian and vehicular traffic with a range of multi purpose buildings designed to accommodate a range of uses.

Land assembly and phasing – impact on design layout



Developing on a yard by yard basis implies placing buildings on boundaries restricting buildings to a single, inbound aspect format, thereby reducing design flexibility. The available space in some yards will reduce car parking and pedestrian and vehicular porosity throughout will be curtailed with individual yards tending to form culs de sac.



If yards can be assembled together, a more even layout of relatively deep plan double aspect buildings is possible, promoting added flexibility, easier servicing and wider yard space for more efficient car parking. Linking the yards is easier and the pedestrian and vehicular porosity engendered produces a fully connected public realm – recalling the Old Town.

- moving EISCA’s maritime museum into the harbourside and extending its scope to include coastal sea life may be a way to achieve a substantial visitor attraction which could lead the harbour diversification process.
- the Harbour Road car park contributes nothing to the townscape and although not an easy site to develop, a good sized building here could improve the approach to the harbour and make a strong contribution to the harbour area streetscape.

08 Rebranding

Not many towns are blessed with a harbour that penetrates so far into the town and this was acknowledged as a unique selling point and helpful to the notion of a marketing / rebranding exercise along the lines of ‘Eyemouth – where the Borders meets the sea’.

09 Synergy with the Harbour Trust’s diversification plans

The proposals chimed closely with the harbour development proposals of the Harbour Trust whose project to extend its pontoon installation at the upper end of the harbour has been successful in attracting a Coastal Communities Fund grant.



**The pontoon on the Middle Pier**

10 Keep the working harbour

The need for continued use of the harbour by fishing boats for access to the grid and slip was universally acknowledged, since it is well understood that the fishing boat and working harbour activities are attractive to visiting yachts and visitors.

11 Parking

The Harbour Trust’s current quayside parking arrangement is not popular. This should be seen against the Trust’s continuing need for sources of income to sustain the harbour infrastructure. Most consultees appreciated that the Harbour Road car park did not present a welcoming face to visitors on the approach to the harbour, but many felt that there needed to be obvious and immediately accessible parking for short stay visitors on the harbour, together with as much parking as possible for residents and people working in the town.

12 Working together

Eyemouth organisations have not always worked together well, but now there seems to be an excellent spirit of cooperation and a sense of common purpose. This is a phenomenon which good leadership can exploit – another reason why it is essential for Scottish Borders Council to perform this role. The leadership and coordinating role provided by Scottish Borders Council in the preparation of the Coastal Communities applications for visitor facilities for Gunsgreen House, Eyemouth Museum / TIC and Harbour Trust was highly valued.

13 Promoting the town

Consultees consistently referred to the difficulty of promoting the town and the area to visitors. There was a strong sense that it was difficult to persuade visitors travelling north on the A1 with their sights set on Edinburgh and the north to turn right into East Berwickshire. There was resigned irritation that Visit Scotland has apparently so little commitment to the area, exemplified by its lack of interest in providing appropriate visitor information at Lamberton and the Chamber of Trade’s admirable initiative to rectify this. The sense that the town and district will have to do its own promotion is growing.

14 A leading visitor attraction

Many people have promoted the idea of a substantial visitor attraction which could lead harbour diversification in a way that a large store anchors a shopping mall. Universally, people felt this would have to do with the sea and the town's fishing heritage.

If EISCA could be persuaded to move into the harbourside and exploit its undoubtedly excellent marine collection with particular emphasis on local boats, that might be part of the answer. Related boat repairing and training would be good bedfellows.

A sea life component related to the St Abbs/Eyemouth Marine Conservation Area is a related possibility and on this the town is fortunate to have the redoubtable presence of Lawson Wood. His diving experience all over the world and importantly his underwater photography are very special and of international stature. He was very involved in the failed attempt by the Scottish Wildlife Trust (supported by Scottish Enterprise Borders) to establish a sea life centre at Gunsgreen in the late 1990's. Could something similar be resurrected? Perhaps it could be an amalgam of sea life with an emphasis on the European stature of diving off the coast (Lawson's photography is stupendous – an under the sea at St Abbs IMAX?) with local fishing heritage and techniques, EISCA boats, boat building, lots of hands on stuff for children, some integrated visual arts (a small John Bellany gallery?), all connecting with the visitor diversification activities of sea angling, diving, walking, bird watching and so on. Again training and education could be incorporated. This way it could be thoroughly local, completely authentic with a modern ecological slant for universal appeal and with the potential for partnership support from a multiplicity of organisations.

Dunbar is beginning to think along the lines of some sort of sea life centre, perhaps taking a cue from North Berwick. In view of Eyemouth's poor showing in the recent economic study of towns at risk prepared by Scottish Agricultural College's Rural Policy Centre, it would be a pity if this particular boat was missed.

#### **4.00 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.01 The commercial businesses on the harbourside have had to adapt to the evolution and progressive decline of the fishing industry and now rely on locally landed fish product only to a small degree. The three key businesses are good quality businesses, D R Collin laying claim to being a national leader in its field, but none have an overriding need to be located on the quayside any more.
- 4.02 The more their horizons have stretched the more they have become reliant on large scale road transport to bring in product from up and down the east and west coasts and to export it in some cases as far away as the continent.
- 4.03 The large scale commercial vehicles and related loading and unloading operations have overflowed the yards and now dominate Harbour Road and the quayside to a point where there are Health and Safety issues.
- 4.04 Conflict also arises with the settled aim of diversifying the harbour towards leisure craft and the need to re-orientate the harbour area generally towards tourism to diversify the town's economy.
- 4.05 The pace of change along Harbour Road has been intense and it is now clear that:-
- the industrial scale of operations is no longer appropriate for this part of the town
  - there is limited scope for further business growth without increasing problems on Harbour Road and the quayside.
  - the businesses have no overriding need to be located here and
  - to permit the town to re-orientate the harbour area more fully towards tourism, businesses have to be persuaded to relocate. It is vital for economic and employment reasons this relocation is in Eyemouth.
- 4.06 In the absence of an obvious sequential approach to a phased redevelopment of the area because there are too many scenarios, this study has set out some key urban design principles which should be taken into account in any harbourside redevelopment effort. Other criteria may emerge as matters develop.
- 4.07 The consultation process carried out in conjunction with this work has revealed a remarkable unanimity among key individuals and organisations in the community in relation to the general aims and approach of this study. This is a useful resource when considering how to move forward. The renewed vigour in local organisations and intense interest generally in the future of the town is a phenomenon which can also be exploited. The other side of this coin is that if progress is delayed, disillusionment will set in and the moment will be lost.
- 4.08 The task of replacing the town's declining income from fishing by re-orienting towards the visitor market is already well underway, so developing the harbourside block and the quayside at the inner end of the harbour follows a trend already in train. However, left to chance and the individual commercial decisions of the various businesses, the outcome is unlikely to be successful. An element of forward planning is therefore essential.
- 4.09 The absence of financial resources should not invalidate the importance of leadership, especially in the critical short term. No organisation within the town has the breadth of responsibility to match the Scottish Borders Council, whose skills and resources alone can coordinate and lead an effort which, because the harbour area is at the heart of the town, amounts to reinventing Eyemouth to provide a better and sustainable economic, social and cultural future for the next generation and beyond.

Allan Swan  
Bain, Swan Architects  
February 2013

## APPENDIX 1

### Consultation Exercise

To gather information on the circumstances and the future proposals of the various key businesses, the following were consulted. Then key businesses and town organisations were re-consulted to obtain their view on broad proposals for future development, largely relating to diversification of harbour uses.

Burgon (Eyemouth) Ltd	Grahame Sinclair
D R Collin + Son Ltd	James Cook
FMA	George Walker
EISCA	Stephen Walters
Marine Quest & Café	Jim & Ian Easingwood
Harbour Trust	Christine Bell, Elaine Grahame Sinclair, Chairman Ian Waddell Jim Easingwood Catherine Home Robertson
Harbour Café	James Cook
Eyemouth Town Council	Jo Pawley, Chair
Eyemouth Initiative Vision Group	Sina Anderson, Anne McNeil MSP's: Paul Wheelhouse, John Lamont, SBC Councillors: Michael Cook, Jim Fullarton, Town Council interested parties, Chamber of Trade and other interested parties
Eyemouth Development Trust	Sina Anderson, Anne McNeil, Lawson Wood and others
Eyemouth Chamber of Trade	Kara ter Morsche, Secretary
Gunsgreen House	Derek Janes, Administrator
Eyemouth Development Trust	Committee
Berwickshire Housing Association	Helen Forsyth, Ann Wilson – Consultant
Churches Hotel	Lawson and Leslie Wood
Eyemouth Museum	Mark Halsall, Chairman
European Fisheries Fund Facilitator	Hugh Williams
Eyemouth Rib Trips	Tim Grimshaw