

Deacons Boatyard Ltd

Replacement of Pontoons & Associated Dredge Harbour Works Consent Application

Clarification to RHHA

Introduction

This document provides a clarification regarding the letter from the River Hamble Mooring Holders Association to the RHHHA (undated).

The marina layout that was consented by the Harbour Authority on 30th September 2011 consisted of jetties extending out to the Y pontoons. This layout also received all the necessary Marine Consents.

At the LPA planning meeting the local councillors took the view (against the officers recommendation) that this layout was unacceptable.

Deacons have taken the view that, in light of the strength of local objection to the closure of the gap between X & Y pontoons, a new layout would be considered. This is despite the collected evidence that shows this gap is not used for through traffic, which many claim.

At this point it should be noted (as is recorded in the EBC planning reports) that the gap between X & Y pontoons can be closed with the current marine consents already in place, (i.e. the marina seaward of MLW does not require planning permission provided it remains unconnected to the land).

RHMHA Letter

As stated in the letter we met with the RHMHA representatives and supplied them with A3 copies of the application drawings. We also explained the key differences between the new proposal and that submitted previously.

It is unreasonable to imply that the extension to Y had not been drawn to their attention as at all times we explained the differences. The extension to the Y pontoons was also on the previous submission.

The RHMHA's main objection seems to focus on the ability of a vessel to turn between the A27 bridge pier and the end of the Y pontoon. This is the same objection that was raised for the previous layout.

For the previous layout all the expert navigation advice accepted that this was NOT a concern. This is demonstrated by the issuing of the relevant consents.

With the previous layout the RHMHA claimed that vessels would become stuck in this position (effectively just off the slipway with no escape route between X & Y pontoons as currently exists). Much was made of this potential by the local councillors, hence the refusal.

The fundamental difference with the current proposal is that an escape route now exists between X & Y pontoons as claimed essential by the previous objectors.

The RHMHA suggest three possible cases –

1. Vessel wishing to turn on the ebb tide. It appears here that a vessel is attempting to turn to port (so will be on the starboard side of the channel) and complete the turn within the channel. Whilst such a manoeuvre might be questionable the previously consented scheme made no allowance for such a manoeuvre. In the proposed scheme there is now an escape route (a route than many have claimed they use regularly) so a vessel making such a turn has adequate room.
2. Vessel passing through the bridge from upstream on an ebb tide. It is claimed that a vessel will have a *current of at least 3kn beneath them*. It is unclear where this value has come from. The ABP Mer report states that the ebb tide has a peak of 1.3m/s (2.53kn) for a short period. It is true the within the bridge itself the flows will be higher than the main channel but these reduce back to the channel ebb flows quickly due to the rapidly increasing cross-sectional area. The postulated danger is no different to that which currently exists. With the proposed layout a significant escape channel remains.

It is also stated that the RK dock can accommodate vessels of up to 50 tons. In the Harbour Board minutes of 8th April 2011 it is stated that *'the hoist was likely to reach its weight capacity at boats approximately 50' in length'*. The hoist is actually a 40 tonne hoist and typical 50' vessels range from 12-20 tonnes.

Additionally the minutes state that *'...a set of operational procedures, to include the use of a picket boat when traffic volumes dictate, are to be agreed..'* It is clear that the Harbour Board has considered the passage of large vessels in this area.

In order to have a balanced view it should also be pointed out that a vessel passing upstream under the bridge has significantly less room to manoeuvre upstream of the bridge than is proposed downstream of the bridge. At this location the nearest pontoons are approximately 28-34m (depending upon which side of the river), significantly less than that proposed at Deacons. Similarly, the channel width is some 5m narrower (15m compared to 20m). So if a large motor vessel was passing downstream on an ebb tide and another heading upstream then the area proposed downstream of the bridge is significantly better than that currently accepted upstream of the bridge.

To quote from the Risk Assessment undertaken by the RHH for the previous scheme –

Everybody that goes afloat has a responsibility for their own safety. This is especially so for those in charge of vessels and those responsible for children. Skippers of vessels have a responsibility to plan their voyage from berth to berth and canoeists, kayaks, dinghy sailors and boaters should think about and plan what they wish to do. Whilst training, skill and experience all assist in keeping the experience of being afloat safe; common sense is always a pre-requisite. Skippers of vessels using Deacons Boatyard will have a responsibility to keep out of the way of

vessels using the main channel in the River. Those in small boats also have a responsibility to look out for themselves. The Harbour Authority and the marinas have a responsibility to regulate, guide and inform but that does not remove the duty from all those that go afloat to act within the law, take reasonable precautions and be sensible.

3. Vessel wishing to turn on the flood tide. This relates to how a vessel may moor on the Y pontoon. Peak flood tidal flows are much less than those on the ebb (ABP Mer state 0.8m/s on the flood tide) so any turning manoeuvre is actually much less of an issue than on an ebb tide. We do not agree that a vessel would *normally* make the approach by turning within the main channel. With the previous scheme such a turn might have been necessary but with the proposed layout it is obvious that a vessel may use the access channel (which is *wider* in the proposed scheme) to make an approach and then turn into the tide at the end of Y pontoon.

As an example the photo below was taken on 6th August 2012. This clearly shows an even distribution of mooring direction.



Google Earth imagery for the area is available for 31/12/1999, 31/12/2005 & 21/04/2007. From these images it is clear that the direction of berthing is actually fairly evenly distributed on Y pontoon.

Summary

Despite receiving consents from all the marine authorities Deacons have taken the view to try and meet the requests of the objectors by making a significant alteration to the proposed layout.

We consider that the revised layout offers a substantial compromise to those that claim use of the gap between X & Y, for whatever reason. The access channel is wider and offers good navigable access. The operators of Deacons are clearly the most experienced users of this section of the river and their local knowledge and expertise should be given appropriate weighting. It is always possible to postulate situations which might be seen as unsafe, however in this case we firmly believe that we have produced a fully acceptable scheme and one that goes beyond what was previously required by the marine authorities.