



Docklands History Group meeting Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007

## **The Re-Development of the Greenwich Peninsula**

By Susie Wilson, the Community Development Manager for Meridian Delta Limited

Susie produced some old plans of the Peninsula showing the marshland, telegraph cable works, gas works, etc. Members may recall one of the members, Mary Mills, giving a fascinating talk on the history of this area. Susie confirmed they were using Mary Mill's book to gain historical background.

She went on to set out the following timeline.:-

In 1996 the Peninsula was selected for the exhibition site. She made the point that the criticism of the money spent by the government on the site did not take account of the costs of the works of removing pollution and repairing the riverside wall.

In 1999 Sainsbury's and B & Q arrived on site.

In 2000 there was the exhibition at the Dome.

In 2001 Meridian Delta came into being to bid for the development of the Peninsula. It was a consortium of five or six property developers. Only Land Lease and Quintain Estates remain of those original members. Quintain has a 49 per cent interest, so Land Lease with the majority has the main responsibility for the development. Susie is employed by Land Lease, which is an Australian development company responsible among other things for the Sydney Olympic village and for building and managing Blue Water. Quintain is known for revamping a large area in Wembley and is experienced in residential development.

In 2002 Meridian Delta was the selected consortium because they were one of the few consortiums able to deal with a development site of the size and complexity of the Peninsula site, and had members expert in all the types of development involved, including the leisure space of and around the Dome. The Anschutz Entertainment Group had joined the Consortium to develop the entertainment areas. It is a U.S. company well known for theatres and other arenas it has developed. The Oscars are held in one of its buildings in Los Angeles.

Since that date they have been obtaining planning permissions, and entering into planning agreements which provide for community facilities to be developed and programmes to be set up to train local people for jobs on the Peninsula. English Partnerships wants an ecological park and retail on site. Beckham Academy for football has opened, but this is only planned to be on site for five years. The urban development will be high density. A master plan has been devised, the architect for this being Terry Farrell. In a few months the development will begin. Residents should be moving in by 2009.

The Consortium is involved for the long term. The government has claw back provisions and it is certainly not true that they got it cheaply. English Partnerships has the freehold and the Consortium gets a 999-year lease and sub-lets on 150 year terms to developers who then develop specific areas. These developers have to sign up to Land Leases' site standards. Land Lease has signed up for the carbon footprint in the office blocks to be excellent and is keen that all the development incorporates environmental advances.

With regard to transport, already they have new underground escalators being installed and the underground trains serving the site all have an additional carriage. The problems with the signalling system are now being tackled. On the roads, highway improvements have been undertaken. There are presently 44 buses going to the North Greenwich Station and eventually there will be 88.

Only seventy per cent of the homes will have parking. Those within easy walking distance of the underground

station will not. The area is being designed to make the open spaces as safe as possible. Thirty-eight per cent of 10,000 homes (flats) will be affordable housing and seventy per cent of the affordable housing will go to Housing Associations with key workers occupying thirty per cent. Gardens and parks will be built at different levels throughout the development. Gardens will not be at ground level because of the pollution of the soil at lower levels.

The aim is to boost the local economy and stimulate growth in the Borough. The Consortium will be putting one million pounds into the community. Susie is involved in consultation locally, receiving feed-back, talking to schools and promoting the development of courses for local people to give them the skills they will need for the work which will be available in construction and leisure on site. She also assists by looking at plans from a practical point of view.

The Masterplan originally drawn up provided for:

Five billion pounds end value (although this figure will now be out of date)

19,000 jobs in construction

20,000 residents

3.5 million square feet of employment space

350,000 retail space

The Dome has a 23,000 Capacity arena. It will have a hotel and entertainment and leisure space around it and surrounding the arena will be a covered street of retail outlets providing refreshment. There will be an average of three events a week in the arena. It is due to open this July.

Had the casino come to the Peninsula it would have required a third floor to be constructed and would have been less than ten per cent of the area of the Dome. The fact that it is not will not affect the current plans. Anschutz has bought Thames Clippers and will be running commuter services along the river from the Peninsula.

Quintain already owns the land to the west of the Dome and will be developing it for residential, building across the Blackwall Tunnel approach road, so that there is continuity. They will have to undertake remedial work on this land which is still polluted, as it was not part of the original site.

The development is subject to restrictions such as height restrictions due to the airport, land earmarked for a possible new bridge across the river, the presence of the Blackwall tunnel vent shaft and the Pilot Pub and cottages, which are listed. They will be developing the riverside path and retaining the reed beds planted by English Partnerships. The heart of the retail area is Peninsula Square, about the size of Leicester Square, which has been constructed. Residents associations will be set up and already an on-site multi faith chaplaincy service has been set up. The Millennium Village is to the south of the site.

Members asked questions about the development of moorings for visitors coming by boat and the possibility of expansion of youth training already provided by Greenwich Yacht Club, as well as arts and culture and the naming of places on site to reflect their history.

Sally Mashiter - 8/2/2007



