

MIKE SHARROCKS CONSULTANCY

Tourism Feasibility • Development Planning • Urban Design • Urban Regeneration • Environmental Appraisal

United Kingdom

BARRY: A VISION FOR A SENSE OF PLACE

For the Welsh Development Agency and the Vale of Glamorgan County Borough Council, 1996

Mike Sharrocks was commissioned, in association with Robert Maguire Consulting, to identify the key elements of built and natural environment that contribute towards Barry's identity, as well as people's perceptions of it as a place in which to live, work and visit. Barry is a medium-sized town (pop. 46,000) in South Wales that has suffered the effects of structural change and economic decline.

The study recognised the importance of the linkage between the town's environmental quality and its prospects for economic prosperity. To this end it was necessary that a design framework be established as a basis for Barry's long-term regeneration.



It was important to establish how a sense of place for Barry, embodying its heritage and existing character, should be enhanced to promote the town's future identity. Which features could be incorporated into development and how should new schemes be designed to reflect this character?

The town's heritage and pattern of growth was assessed together with the quality of major development proposals and the prospects for change. Opportunities for growth and change focused on the extensive and mostly redundant docks area. Significant public funds had already been invested into site formation works for this part of the town, principally by the WDA.



A townscape appraisal was carried out which assessed the key characteristics and features ranging from urban structure and natural setting to detailed design qualities. The town presented a variety of character areas from one part to another, rather than an urban uniformity. This ranged from Barry Island as the seaside resort, the dockland area that incorporated reminders of the town's former economic prosperity, and the town centre that had some interesting Victorian buildings.



Recommendations were outlined, in terms of generic urban design solutions as well as site-specific proposals, which would help to establish a definitive sense of place for Barry. These drew on relevant good practice examples from elsewhere in the UK and overseas. An inventory of built form features, which needed to be retained within new development, was also prepared.

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