

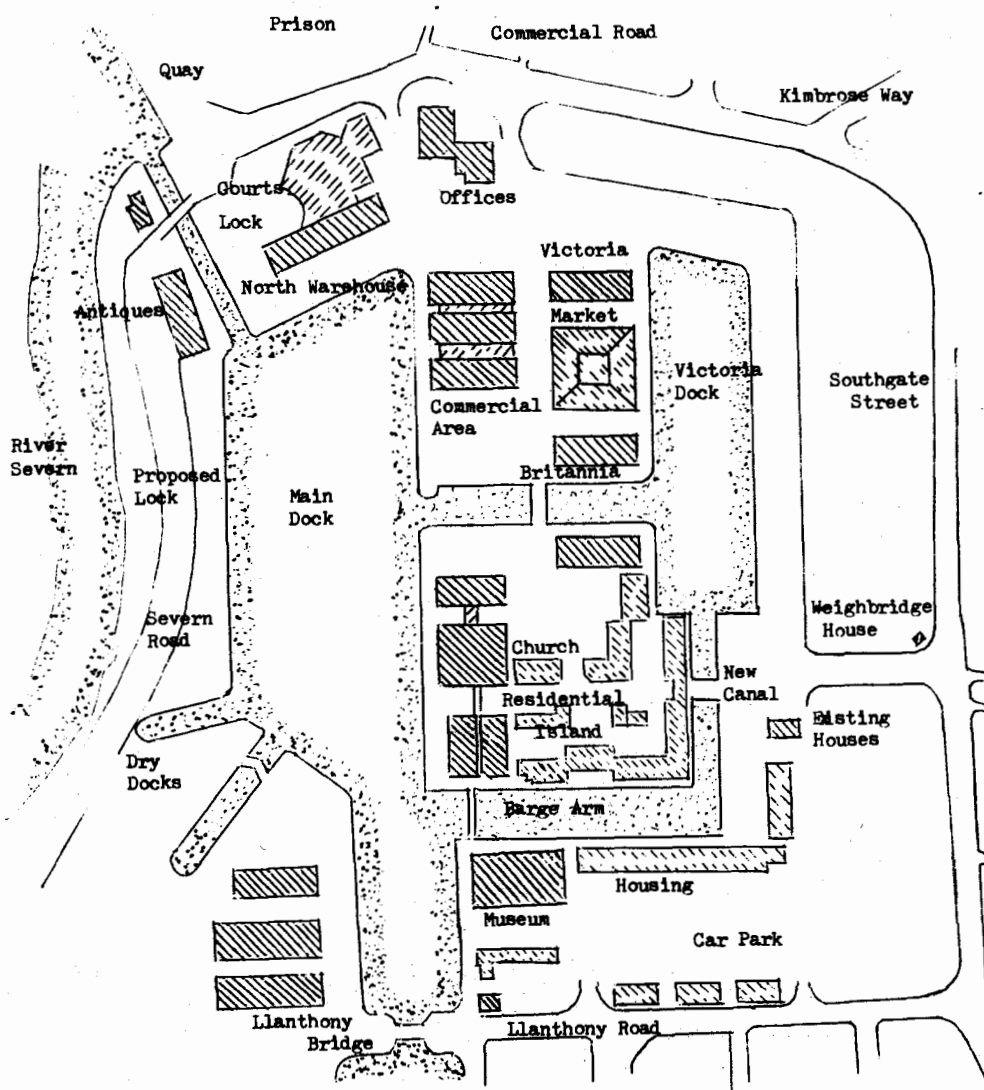
# THE FUTURE OF GLOUCESTER DOCKS

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Recent planning applications for the demolition of numerous minor buildings in the docks area remind us that preliminary work is still continuing on the major scheme, even though the proposed start last summer has now passed. Alterations also occur, so this short article will include some of these.

Starting at the main Southgate Street entrance, the delightful little weighbridge house (now a hairdressers) will have to be moved elsewhere to improve the sight-line at the corner. Incidentally, the amount of traffic which will be generated by the docks scheme into an already over-crowded Southgate Street is proving a considerable worry for the highways authority, the County Council.

PLAN OF GLOUCESTER DOCKS  
Scale 1:500



Just inside the gates, the pair of pleasant houses on the left will remain. Straight ahead will be one of the major proposals of the scheme: the canal linking the Victoria Dock to the end of the Barge Arm, with bridge across. Thus six of the warehouses and the Mariners' Church are on an island, forming the residential area of the scheme. These warehouses are to be turned into flats, priced from £28,000 to £80,000, though no doubt these figures will be raised, with new housing built round the Barge Arm. Planning applications were put in for the flats but these proved to be premature.

The Barge Arm itself will have floating exhibits for British Waterway's new museum in Llanthony Warehouse, situated south of the junction of the Arm with the main basin. The former timber yard adjacent will be turned into car-parks for visitors and staff.

To the north of the residential island, the five existing warehouses form the commercial zone of the scheme, including shops, restaurants, offices and craft areas. Also in this area are two interesting smaller warehouses, due for clearance, but we have asked for them to be retained until demolition becomes absolutely necessary. Adjacent to the Victoria Dock, in the space between the Britannia and Victoria warehouses, is planned a covered market space which can also be used for exhibitions etc.

Next to British Waterways' offices are some good examples of industrial gates, and we have been informed that these will be retained, as well as other dock furniture such as bollards and railings. Nearly at the head of the basin is the North Warehouse which it is hoped will be the offices of a new Crown Court built on the Commercial Road site. However, this is one of several sites being considered by the Government Property Services' Agency.

The warehouse by the lock, which is now an antique furniture showroom, is outside the scheme but the open quay between it and the dry docks is reserved for a new, larger, lock. This will be part of another scheme which will also include re-routing a length of the Severn to enable vessels of much greater capacity to reach Worcester.

The part of the scheme most in doubt is the area along Southgate Street and around the corner into Kimbrose Way, where an hotel, retail units and car-parking were planned. However, demand for them may pick up when the main scheme actually starts. With the future of the old hospital opposite also in limbo, there is an opportunity for comprehensive development of this part of Southgate which would fit in with the dock scheme.

The new starting date for the dock development is (at the time of writing) 1983. At the present moment much work is being carried out on financial arrangements and it is hoped that these will be completed shortly. This will enable the British Waterways Board to sign an agreement with Britannica (Cheltenham) Ltd., who will be in overall control.