

BIRNBECK ISLAND & PIER COMPETITION

Q1. How many boards should be submitted?

A1. *As indicated in the cover note which is being sent to registered competitors, submissions should be on a maximum of three A1 lightweight foam boards.*

Q2. Do I have to be an RIBA member?

A2. *No, this is not a requirement.*

Q3. Is it possible to have the CAD drawings (plans, elevations, sections) of the existing buildings present on the project site (especially the ones that are listed, but also the main hall building)?

A3. *This information is not available.*

Q4. When the pier/bridge is restored do you have a sense of if will it be able to support vehicles and if so of what size/weight?

A4. *We anticipate that the pier would be capable of bearing the weight of a transit van or similar for servicing/deliveries only.*

Q5. In relation to the pier deck how high is High Tide typically and what is its greatest height in the year?

A5. *High Tide can reach 13metres. The Bristol Channel can reach highs of 15 metres.*

Q6. Is low tide typically 12m below high tide?

A6. *Low tide can reach 0.6metres.*

Q7. Why have the RNLI stopped using the original boat house and ramp?

A7. *The RNLI have ceased using the slipway connected to the 1901 Lifeboat House for health and safety reasons but still occupy and use the Lifeboat House. Due to the uncertainty of the pier's future over the years, expenditure on major structural repairs could not be justified and it was felt that the RNLI's funds would be better spent elsewhere, thus the slipway has gradually fallen into disrepair and is now judged to be operationally unsafe.*

Since purchasing the pier and island in 2006, Urban Splash has agreed an 18-month licence with the RNLI to reinstate and make use of the old north slipway, together with a temporary compound on the island. This allows the RNLI to maintain 24-hour operations. The longer term operational suitability of this is currently being assessed.

The Lifeboat House is still in use, and the freehold is with the RNLI, thus is not strictly included in the competition but if a suitable alternative is found the RNLI may consider this as an option.

Q8. What facilities do RNLI need to continue using the site in future?

A9. *Please refer to the RNLI brief relating to their typical operational requirements, below.*

RNLI Brief regarding Operations at Birnbeck Island, Weston-super-Mare

As the RNLI is a registered charity, high-quality construction with low maintenance costs are essential.

BS6349 Code of Practice for Maritime Structures are applied as a minimum requirement by the RNLI for any part of a structure exposed to direct sea action, sea spray or to flooding by seawater.

Public access is encouraged to certain areas of lifeboat stations, where practical, and safe full disabled access is provided, although currently at Birnbeck no public access is available at all.

Typical RNLI Station Dimensions:

Boat Room

A plan area of 20m x 6m and clear height of 4.3m is provided for housing the two inshore lifeboats and their launching tractors. Wherever possible a flat concrete apron, extending 10m from the boathouse door, is provided for turning and washing down. The maximum gradient for any launching ramp is 1 in 6 with a transition section of 1 in 12.

Crewroom/Training Room

A room at either ground or first floor capable of holding a minimum of 18 people, ideally with views over the launching area and, if practical, seaward and over nearshore, operational and approach areas.

A galley (small domestic kitchen) is typically incorporated into the crew room.

Lifeboat Operations Manager Office

Typically such an office does not exceed 8m² and is situated adjacent to the crew room/training room.

Changing Room/Wash Room/Drying Room

Generally this is a room on the ground floor of approximately 30m² with space for 16 sets of protective gear, two WCs (no urinals), and washing facilities.

Workshop/Mechanics Store

Typically located on the ground floor, with one and a half door access to the boat room, approximately 3m x 3m.

Souvenir Sales Outlet

Currently there is no such outlet on Birnbeck Island. Generally such outlets are between 10m² and 30m².

Storage

The following storage areas are generally required:

General Store: 7m²

Oil/Antifreeze Store: Approx. 1m². This need not be full height and can be situated within workshop with internal access.

Petroleum Store: Approximately 1m x 1m, 1.2m high, to take 25 x 10 litre cans.

Delivery Store: To take Euro pallet and be accessible externally for deliveries day or night.

Site Specific Information

Optimum location on the island: To allow efficient launch and recovery into all-tide sheltered water.

Optimum orientation: To give shortest and most direct route to water.

Any other relevant information: Facilities are fully accessible 24/7 with light vehicle access to allow delivery of stores and fuel.

Q9. Will we have access to more site plans and elevations?

A9. *Please see answer to Q3. There are a number of topographical survey plans (including site plan) available on the competition website.*

Q10. Is there a 3D model of the whole existing buildings and surroundings?

A10. *No.*

Q11a. Please find enclosed the two pdf files.



We require CAD drawings (plans, elevations, sections) of all the marked buildings shown on the map in the enclosed pdf files.

A11a. *Please see answer to Q3.*

Q11b. Please provide a key map to locate / identify the following buildings listed on the Competition Website

Toll House - Grade II Listed
Original Pier Entry Gates, Railings and Turnstiles
- Grade II Listed
Pier - Grade II* Listed
Clock Tower - Grade II Listed
RNLI Lifeboat Station (built 1901) - Grade II Listed
North Jetty - Grade II Listed
Pier Master's Cottage - Curtilage Listed
Lifeboat House (built 1887) - Curtilage Listed
Toll Houses to North Jetty - Curtilage Listed

A11b. *This has been added to the website.*

Q12. Please provide tide maximum and minimum water levels.

A12. *High tide in the area can reach approximately 13 metres, and low tide can reach approximately 0.6 metres. Tide heights in the Bristol channel can reach 15 metres.*

Q13. Could you please add on your pdf's (site map_key and ordnance survey) a graphic scale bar?

A13. *A graphic scale bar has been added to the ordnance survey pdf. Due to the nature of the site plan it is not possible to add an accurate scale bar.*

Q14. Could you please add on your dxf files a graphic scale bar?

- A14. *It is not clear which files these are. All files on the website are dwg or pdf.*
- Q15. Since the pdf files are locked, we would like to ask if you could forward their passwords (necessary to unlock and to process the drawings further)?
- A15. *The only pdf file that is locked is the graphic site map. As this is Urban Splash's intellectual property we'd prefer entrants do not edit this. If entrants want to use this for design purposes it is possible to trace over the map.*
- Q16. Could you please tell us which buildings (island and mainland) have to be maintained? - an extra drawing highlighting which parts of the existing pier and which buildings need to be integrated into the new vision would be very helpful.
- A16. *Please see answer to Q11 which provides details of listed buildings on the site. Please refer to your own research for related policies/regulations.*
- Q17. Could you please provide us with the information what the original use/purpose of all buildings on the competition site is/was ?
- A17. *Please refer to your own research.*
- Q18. Should the slipway and landing stage be maintained ?
- A18. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q19. What was the original function in the north-east corner of the island (intersection of landing stage and pier bridge) - was it a small harbour ?
- A19. *Please refer to historical information provided in the competition brief, competition website or visit www.birnbeckpier.org for further information..*
- Q20. Which of the buildings have their foundations on the rock ?
- A20. *As far as we know all island buildings have their foundations on rock.*
- Q21. Which of the buildings have their foundations on the concrete platform ?
- A21. *As far as we know all island buildings have their foundations on rock.*
- Q22. Could you provide extra photographs showing birnbeck island with lowest and highest tide?
- A22.

Low Tide



High Tide



Paul Groom Photography, 2007

- Q23. Could you please give information regarding the typical vegetation of Weston-Super-Mare ? - common plants, trees, flowers etc...
- A23. *The typical vegetation of Weston-super-Mare includes gardens, parkland such as Grove Park, woodland such as Worlebury Hill and coastal grasslands/relict sand dune communities such as Beach Lawns and Ellenborough Park.*
- Q24. What is the vegetation of Worlebury Hill like ? What kind of trees and plants are growing there?
- A24. *Worlebury Hill is mostly secondary (relatively young) semi-natural broadleaved woodland. There is also some ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland. Typical tree species include Holm Oak and Sycamore.*
- Q25. What's the average increase of Weston-super-mare's population during summer holidays (holiday makers)?
- A25. *From the last census the population of North Somerset is 193,000. Based on North Somerset Council statistics In July 2006 there were 966,000 visitors (day and staying) to North Somerset, and in August 2006 1,012,000 visitors (day and staying). Specific statistics in relation to Weston-super-Mare are not available. Please refer to your own research for further information.*
- Q26. What is the population increase (in %) of Weston-super-mare during the weekends?
- A26. *We do not have this information. Please refer to your own research.*
- Q27. Is the pier/island accessible by car?
- A27. *Please see answer to Q4.*
- Q28. Is the land owned by North Somerset Council the subject of this competition?
- A28. *The plan provided with the printed brief shows the full extent of the competition boundary. Land in North Somerset Council's ownership is highlighted in green. These areas are included in the brief but are subject to viability and planning.*
- Q29. I've just found this planning brief document (please see attachment) on the website of North Somerset Local administration (<http://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/>). How do we have to consider the above brief?
- A29. *This is an Open Ideas Competition. We have not stipulated any requirements other than for fantastic ideas that will lead to the regeneration of the area at this stage. Therefore this is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q30. Is the Council brief to be considered as a completion of the competition brief? So should the project be according to the requests specified in the Council brief attached on this email?
- A30. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q31. Is the Council Brief to be considered as superseded by the more open Competition's Brief? So basically there are no specific requirements in terms of uses and square meters?
- A31. *This is an Open Ideas Competition. We have not stipulated any requirements other than for fantastic ideas that will lead to the regeneration of the area at this stage. Therefore this is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q32. Are there other documents that are relevant to this project's development? Would it be possible to publish on the competition website any document that would be relevant to consider to develop this project according to the public administration's will?

- A32. *This is an Open Ideas Competition. At this stage we are simply seeking fantastic ideas that will lead to the regeneration of the area. Please refer to your own research for policy information.*
- Q33. Please clarify which buildings and structures are Listed, preferably by means of a plan annotated with the names of the respective buildings.
- A33. *Please see answer to Q11b.*
- Q34. At what approximate level is Mean High Water (MHW)?
- A34. *Please see answer to Q5 and Q6. Please also refer to www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/tides for further information.*
- Q35. At what approximate level is highest anticipated water level? At what approximate level is Mean Low Water (MLW)?
- A35. *Please see answer to Q5 and Q6. Please also refer to www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/tides for further information.*
- Q36. What is the possibility of re-introducing pleasure steamers to the island (assuming a new pier is built)?
- A36. *It may be possible to re-introduce the paddlesteamers, however this is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q37. Are there any height restrictions to both Island and Mainland?
- A37. *Please refer to your own research.*
- Q38. Will the Island still be secured/gated, e.g. to have limited visiting hours?
- A38. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q39. Are there any restrictions of development within the Island itself – expansion beyond the present footprint?
- A39. *The original footprint of the Island was extended in the early 1900s via the use of reinforced concrete pillars, which still exist today. Please refer to the site ownership plan for the extent of Urban Splash's ownership. Any expansion is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q40. Are the buildings/structures on the Island protected? Can these be removed?
- Please see answer to Q11b and refer to your own research.*
- Q41. We understand that the Pier has undergone major restoration works. Is it possible to obtain any information, eg Engineers Report/Calculations to demonstrate the structural stability?
- A41. *Please see answer to Q4. We do not feel any further information is necessary at this stage of the competition.*
- Q42. Is the area marked in white in the file "Site map key.pdf" the "Blue line" meaning is this whole area for design or should the design be restricted to a smaller area?
- A42. *As detailed in the key at the bottom of the page, the area marked in white is within Urban Splash's ownership and is included in the competition brief.*

- Q43. Is the green area in the file "Site map key.pdf" part of the design area, or only the area owned by "Urban Splash"?
- A43. *As detailed in the key at the bottom of the page, the green area is land within North Somerset Council's ownership. This land is included in the competition brief, although is subject to viability and planning.*
- Q44. Is there an Outline Plan or a Detailed Plan showing land uses? What is the land use for the site according to an approved plan?
- A44. *Please refer to your own research.*
- Q45. Are there any restrictions for the future land-use?
- A45. *Please refer to your own research.*
- Q46. What are the restrictions according to approved plans: Building lines, built-up area, height restrictions (above ground and underground?)
- A46. *Please refer to your own research.*
- Q47. Are there restrictions regarding buildings on the sea-shore? (distance from the sea, height etc.)
- A47. *Please refer to your own research.*
- Q48. Should transportation and parking be part of the proposal?
- A48. *This is an open ideas competition. At this stage we are simply seeking fantastic ideas for the site. It is left to the competitor's discretion whether this includes transportation and parking issues.*
- Q49. Is there a document describing the type of soil and rock?
- A49. *We do not have this information. Please refer to your own research.*
- Q50. Are the buildings designated for preservation (and which of them) or is it up to the design?
- A50. *Please see answer to Q11b and refer to your own research into listed building policy.*
- Q51. Are there plans for the buildings on the islands similar to the plans provided for the Pier Master Cottage?
- A51. *Please see answer to Q3.*
- Q52. Should the proposal include a structural preliminary design or is it only a pre-design proposal?
- A52. *At this stage we are seeking concept designs only.*
- Q53. Since we are a foreign firm, could you refer us to an Internet Site with the relevant British Building Codes?
- A53. *www.planningportal.gov.uk or www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding are useful reference websites.*
- Q54. You made survey information about the pier and the pier master's house available. Can you provide further information regarding the buildings on the island (plan, section & elevation)?
- A54. *Please see answer to Q3.*
- Q55. What is the limit of Urban Splash ownership on Birnbeck Island? And the immediate surroundings of the island ?
- A55. *Please refer to the Site Map.pdf on the competition website or printed brief, and see answers to Q42 and Q43.*
- Q56. What can we demolish on the site?

- A56. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q57. What is the condition of the existing infrastructure – Is the water/electricity supply still functional?
- A57. *This information is not relevant at this stage.*
- Q58. Can we still use the existing jettys/slippages?
- A58. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q59. What is the structural integrity of the pier foundations? Can we add to this? Has it reached its life span?
- A59. *Any additions are left to the competitor's discretion. The structural issues surrounding the pier are not relevant at this stage.*
- Q60. Can you mark on the map, the line of the high tide (in case that you will deliver us the survey map of the building on the island).
- A60. *Please see answers to Q5 and Q12 and refer to www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/tides.*
- Q61. Does an urban development project or a simplified planning zone for this area exist?
- A61. *Please refer to your own research.*
- Q62. Will the proposal need consent from the local authority, or is this considered to be managed as a planning zone project?
- A62. *As stated in the competition brief, all proposals will be subject to planning consent from the local authority.*
- Q63. What class of uses would you like to have on site? Shops, offices, hotels, residential, services?
- A63. *The competition brief is open. We have not stipulated any requirements as to uses. This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q64. Is it possible to show two proposals, as a main one and a variant?
- A64. *This is acceptable.*
- Q65. Can the proposal integrate the four proposed sites or must it have clear borders between sites?
- A65. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q66. Can the proposed sites for the car parking, Marine Parade and Prince Gardens be changed?
- A66. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*

Car Parking

- Q67. Do you have an estimation of the numbers of cars to park?
- A67. *No. This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q68. How many underground floors/levels can be built?
- A68. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q69. Is there a height restriction in relation to number of parking levels above ground?
- A69. *Please refer to your own research.*
- Q70. Will it be a fee parking system?

A70. *This is left to the competitor's discretion, although we do not feel this is relevant at this stage.*

Prince Consort Gardens

Q71. Can we change the layout of the gardens?

A71. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*

Q72. Are there any preservation orders in place?

A72. *Please see answer to Q11b and refer to your own research.*

Q73. Is it possible to build a two storey construction to use for services (restaurant, library)?

A73. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*

Marine Parade

Q74. Is it possible to build a two storey construction to use as a bar/restaurant?

A74. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*

Q75. Is it possible to increase the number of piers from Marine Parade?

A75. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*

Birnbeck Island

Q76. Is it necessary to keep all existing constructions, or only the Pier Master's Cottage?

A76. *Please answer to Q11b and refer to your own research into listed buildings.*

Q77. Is it possible to increase the area/sq m of the structure above the island?

A77. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*

Q78. Is it possible to build satellite stations above water level around the island?

A78. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*

Q79. Will the access to the island be controlled, or used as a public space?

A79. *This is left to the competitor's discretion. However, public access to the island should be maintained.*

Q80. Will the Birnbeck Island feasibility study commissioned by The Friends of the Old Pier's Society and the Town Council be made available to competitors?

A80. *No. This document is owned by The Birnbeck Regeneration Trust.*

Q81. Are the objections from the then Nature Conservation Council available from Nature England on the proposals for a marina development for Birnbeck Island which were rejected in 1989 / 1990?

A81. *Please refer to your own research.*

Q82. Are there any recent planning policy developments relating specifically to the site which we should be made aware of?

A82. *Please refer to your own research.*

Q83. Who owns the lifeboat station and slipway and should they be effectively excluded as a part of the site?

- A83. *The RNLI owns the freehold to the 1901 Lifeboat Station and slipway, and thus these buildings are not included in the competition brief. However if a suitable alternative for the Lifeboat Station is found then the RNLI may consider the alternative as an option. Please see answer to Q8 for further information.*
- Q84. Will the results of the full structural surveys carried out on the pier etc. be made available to competitors?
- A84. *This information is not relevant at this stage of the competition.*
- Q85. The statement about the North Somerset land in section five is unclear. Please can you confirm whether we should consider this area for built proposals.
- A85. *The land owned by North Somerset Council is included in the competition, the brief for which is open to all uses. It is left to the competitor's discretion whether built proposals are suitable for the North Somerset Council land.*

Questions asked at the Site Visits

- Q86. What is the current status of the RNLI Lifeboat Station and what are the RNLI's plans for the future?
- A86. *Please answers to Q7 and Q8.*
- Q87. Please confirm the building listings for the island and mainland buildings.
- A87. *Please see answer to Q11b.*
- Q88. What was the raised concrete walkway used for and when was it built?
- A88. *From an old aerial photo circa 1905 (below) it would appear that the walkway was used as an elevated walkway and sundeck along the north side of the buildings at roof level, turning left along the west side of the island to the south edge where it finished at the end of the Switchback Railway ride.*
- Q89. Please provide more detail on the previous uses of the Island.
- A89. *Please refer to your own research.*
- Q90. Is there potential to extend the footprint of the island?
- A90. *Please see answer to Q39.*
- Q91. What is the tidal range at Birnbeck?
- A91. *Please see answer to Q5 and Q6 and refer to www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/tides for further information.*
- Q92. What are the tide times?
- A92. *Tide times vary from week to week. Please refer to www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/tides for up-to-date information.*
- Q93. Please can you provide plans/elevations of the buildings on the island?
- A93. *Please see answer to Q3.*

- Q94. Please can you give details as to the previous owners of the Island and their plans/ideas?
- A94. *Please refer to your own research. Previous owners include John Critchley and more recently Peter Lay.*
- Q95. Please publish on the website details of the structural condition of the pier.
- A95. *This information is not necessary at this stage of the competition.*
- Q96. Are business or cost plans needed in the submission?
- A96. *No. At this stage we are just seeking concept designs.*
- Q97. Please provide details of the levels of the competition area.
- A97. *This information is included in the topographical survey plan named 4681-1 available on the competition website.*
- Q98. Please confirm the extent of Urban Splash's ownership of the site.
- A98. *Please see answer to Q55.*
- Q99. What is the rock structure of the island like? What type of rock?
- A99. *We believe the island is built on Carboniferous Limestone. No further information is available.*
- Q100. What type of stone was used for the buildings on the Island?
- A100. *The stone used is Carboniferous Limestone, however depending on where it was quarried in and around Weston it went by various names including Weston Bluestone, Worle Bluestone, Milton Bluestone and if quarried from around the pier head, Birnbeck Bluestone. The light coloured stone used for the lintels, etc. is Bath Sandstone.*
- Q101. We believe the Island is within the SSSI. Where does this designation begin?
- A101. *Please refer to the Natural England website www.natureonthemap.org.uk*
- Q102. Is there any possibility of alternative access to the island other than the pier?
- A102. *This is left to the competitor's discretion.*
- Q103. Is the site within the RAMSAR designation?
- A103. *Please visit www.ramsar.org for information.*