BLACKPILL, DERWEN FAWR AND MAYALS RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Swansea Bay Sea Front Sites Proposals.

Thank you for providing an opportunity for public consultation on the proposed development sites along the Swansea Bay sea front.
The Blackpill Derwen Fawr and Mayals Residents' Association, having discussed some of these issues at our AGM would make the following observations.

Sketty Lane Car Park:
The Association welcomes the opportunity to freshen up this site.
The provision of a cafe of a striking, environmentally pleasing design like the building which we understand was originally proposed for Sketty Lane but then moved to St Helens, would be welcomed.
So would additional car parking: although the Association would want any site boundary to be within the Swansea side of the front: ie not impinging on the common land toward the foot golf site.
We would welcome a good-sized space for bicycle parking to enable people to bring picnics and child gear etc.
We would welcome an open air exercise point with a variety of equipment forming a focal fitness point for more social keep- fitters.
We would welcome beach activities : ie volley ball nets.
We would welcome a change to the existing bye-law which prohibits dogs from the beach during the summer between Sketty lane and the Clyne river at Blackpill.
We would look to the City to take steps to ensure that the remains of the ancient dunes along the front at this point are offered protection.

Blackpill Lido:
The Association regards this site as very sensitive.
We feel that the benefits this site offers in terms of free access to a healthy, popular activity to all the citizens of Swansea is very important and that the free public access should be maintained.
The play facilities have been poorly maintained and run down. The Association would hope that the playground could be revitalised with innovative as well as traditional equipment to provide stimulating play for a wide age group; -reflecting the use of the lido area.
The Association would like to see more parking facilities for bicycles so that families are encouraged to use bikes to get to the lido.
Exercise equipment could again also be a focal point.
The Association would not want to see any part of the existing lido fenced off.
It therefore becomes problematic when trying to create a commercial environment.
However, there are opportunities for development.

Being opposite the crossing into the Clyne Country Park there is an ideal bicycle hire business opportunity. Cycling from Blackpill to South or North Gower is a fairly easy family trip using the cycle track to Killay or Gowerton. And a pier-to pier route is clear.
From time to time, it has been mooted that the creation of an all-weather ice skating rink could be sited at this point along the prom.
The existing bouncy castle is popular, and well organised: possibly this could be extended under licence during the summer.
However, whatever activities might be developed, the Association would point out that, even with the extra car parking spaces soon to come into use at the new Mill Lane car park, there is a desperate need for consideration to be given to local residents' need for minimum disturbance from a hugely busy pedestrian and car population at this location during the summer.
Infrastructural needs should be given proper consideration. At times on a hot bank holiday the over-full car parks, Roman Court, Mill Lane, Mayals Road, Mumbles Road, Ashleigh Road, Derwen Fawr Road, the bridleway into the Clyne Valley off Derwen Fawr Road, Gwerneinon Road and Glynderwen Crescent have been blocked at some point. Although it is only happening a few times a year, it causes chaos and aggravation that should be avoided.

Land Around the Skate Ramp:
The Association understands that the Mumbles Community Council has now concluded preliminary planning consultation with the City Council regarding this site and will shortly be submitting a planning application. The Association will be able to express a more considered view at that time.
Here, we would say that we have major concerns about car parking throughout Llwynderw and cars stopping on Mumbles Road.
We have concerns about child safety on an unsupervised site with mixed age and ability children on potentially fast runs.
We would suggest again that bicycle parking is essential.
We would suggest that, space permitting, this site may also potentially be the location for an ice cream parlour, which may encourage parents to use the site while their children use the ramps.
The site is probably far enough away from The Junction at Blackpill and Ripples at West Cross, to be a popular stopping point for promenaders.

Additionally in relation to the Swansea Bay Sea Front:
The Association would like to see more Mumbles Trains using the prom. The Association feels that this is an under-used resource when looking at other tourist areas and the use that is made of such facilities there. Many residents feel it may well be viable as an economic venture to have a reasonably frequent regular service from Oystermouth to the leisure centre which would serve not only as a visitor attraction, but also shoppers and commuters.

The Association would strongly oppose any housing or residential development along the sea front that breaks the existing views into the seascape.

The Association hopes that these comments are useful.

Sirs,

Please accept my apologies for not using the official consultation survey site for this. There are some problems with it. For example, the word 'development' is frequently used to describe the proposals. At very best the word used should be 'changed', and the people who do this kind of thing should not be described as 'developers' if the vandalism that is being imposed on the iconic Mumbles Head is an example of the kind of thing they do. Nor do I believe that the public at large are clamouring for the kind of thing the council I suspect would like to see. There is no reason to suppose e.g. that the need for public toilets which exists because the council have closed/restricted those which have been available in the past will be satisfied by the activities of a few large private English companies. Nor should the excuse of 'employment' be used. The sea view for many residents of Swansea at large has not been improved by the addition of the 27 storey stump at the Marina, and surprisingly the 300-odd jobs with which objections to it were palmed-off have not yet arrived. The whole of the FAQ section on the site suggests a done deal up with which we the sites' owners will have to put.

There are however some real possibilities for the sites.

The tourism industry in Swansea would seem to be largely car-based. Mumbles however cannot really take many more vehicles than already end up there. So nothing should be done which encourages more people to drive that far west. As a look at the whole promenade on almost any day in summer shows people walk, cycle etc. in large numbers. They also do this in the winter. They appear to enjoy it and this should be encouraged as a selling point for the whole city. No more parking spaces should be allocated as a result of whatever happens to these sites. This will retain the views etc. and the 'specialness' of the promenade zone. Not even 'developers' would want to drive around the Bay past one long car park, although they will probably be long gone by the time the rest of us notice the damage.

Taking the sites one by one:

1.1 The Sketty Lane car park might be improved by the addition of a restaurant of the same kind as Verdi's but smaller in area. I would concede that the loss of parking caused by this (to the extent, say, of e.g. at most ten vehicle spaces) could be made up at the edges of the site. The construction should not be used simply to add more parking to it. Such parking as there is should be screened by tree planting. Whatever is built should not encroach on the former railway line. The area is very susceptible to erosion and no chances should be taken with this. Use the existing landward parking area only.

1.2 Blackpill Lido already fulfils a useful function and it would seem as if the parking and refreshment facilities there are up to the task. Young families especially may be attracted by the fact that this represents an economic day

out. Nothing should be done except minor 'tidying-up' which will not interfere either with the existing promenade or spoil the feeling of space the area gives. An open-air swimming pool (but one with no effect on the views) is a possibility but these almost always lose money so one will not satisfy the council's financial ambitions.

1.3 The provision for skateboarding in Swansea is (I am assured) very poor by comparison with other similar-sized settlements. It should be enlarged horizontally and provision made for athletes of the whole range of abilities. It may be worth thinking about installing pay-as-you-go lighting, electronically limited as to evening availability. It would be possible too to find a corner in which to put a small over-the-counter café using perhaps as a selling point non-plastic packaging containing 'healthy' products and so on. Again, no provision should be made for parking other than perhaps a scheme such as that suggested in 1.4 below. Skaters by and large are young and ingenious; they will find their own way to the ramps as they do now. Cycle locking facilities would help and can be provided immediately at little cost. (The same goes for the rest of the promenade. Do it now!)

1.4 The land west of the West Cross Inn may be used for car parking for re-charging electric vehicles only. Thought should be given to the kind of provision made in e.g. Dundee or (I think) Milton Keynes where a semi-circular array of solar panels is used to charge vehicles parked underneath. There would inevitably be some loss of visual amenity, but this could be offset by tree-planting to the north-east to north-west (landward) sides to screen the area. Electric cars are of course almost silent, so there will be no serious noise pollution. (The current provision in Swansea for electric vehicle charging is frankly pathetic. One rapid charger on the M4, one public fast charger in Llansamlet, and a group of some 5/6 private, mostly inaccessible, fast/slow chargers elsewhere. If the city wishes to attract visitors the city fathers would do well to look at what happens in Scotland or Ireland.)

1.5 This is the most intractable of all the sites. As far as I am aware, all of the Langland tennis courts are still managed by the city council. They have been well-used in the past but no doubt have incurred costs in term of maintenance, booking, supervision etc. But they are relatively inaccessible and should only be used for some kind of sporting or like specialist small-court activity. Maintenance costs whatever is put there are inevitable, but it should be possible to improve the situation (booking and charging etc.) via the internet. Make admission to the courts via electronically-operated gates. The area is well-provided for in terms of cafes and restaurants and there is no evidence that more are needed. While changing facilities, hot showers, and so on are necessary (and again can be charged-for electronically), any kind of larger scale building on the site would adversely alter its character, as would provision for more car parking.

Taken together, these suggestions allow for an increase in tourist trade in the promenade zone. Different age- and interest-groups would be provided for – families with children, teenagers, older people (who are to a degree already provided for). The key is the outdoors, and, with global warming as a given, these suggestions seem

viable. Unfortunately, there is little or no chance of serious profit-making from the promenade without the kind of thing that is going on at Mumbles Head: permanent damage to an amenity with little or no gain to the city. At which point Swansea becomes a Bournemouth or a Brighton and its treasure is lost. Make and keep the prom unique.

More generally, but very much allied to the use of the promenade:

2.1 The council should give immediate and serious thought to creating family-only 'camping municipale' sites in the eastern approach to the city, in the city centre, or in e.g. Clyne woods. Small shops/bars on these would generate useful trade within the city – the sites could be leased to local businesses, accommodation being provided for supervisors on site (see too 2.2 below). These facilities could then be used as a base for exploring the city and promenade on foot or by cycling.

2.2 Provision should be made in the area for cycle hire. These facilities of course should be advertised. (It would be very advantageous if this were made part of a Wales-wide cycle-camping network using existing cycle routes with overnight stops of this kind at say 30 mile intervals. Something the City Council should put to our Government perhaps)

2.3 More parking should be made available in the Marina area and more made of the chosen site as the start point of a 'promenade adventure'. Few people would want to sit in the developing traffic jams on the Mumbles Road if there was a thought-through 'fun alternative'. A trip to the beach is all in a day's work to those of us who live here, but much, much more could be made of it for those who are not so fortunate.

2.4 With 2.3 in mind the current park and ride systems should be extended into the Marina area. It should be possible to provide services to go with this (bike hire, park and ride ticketing etc.) at this end point. There are still areas available for this: a general use multi-storey car park may be useful in this context.

2.5 Warning could be provided of the parking/traffic situation in Mumbles and on the Mumbles Road and incoming traffic encouraged at the same time to use a park-and-ride facility.

2.6 The café at St.Helens, with its attendant facilities, should be retained and improved always providing that building there is visually attractive and to a scale commensurate with the open space nature of the promenade. Some more provision may be made for customer parking but this should not be used as space for general parking such as that generated by the Guildhall.

2.7 It goes without saying that toilets and like basic amenities should be provided or re-established and that those which exist should not be closed at 5 (which may suit the city council but does not suit the public a large) which is what happens at the moment. Holidaymakers go to the beach in the mid-morning/early afternoon and often stay there well into the evening.

The tone of the Council's advertising of their intentions suggest that the need for 'development' of these sites is to a degree unavoidable, notwithstanding that most city residents who live along/within the coastal zone I suspect would rather things were left more or less as they are. But the best (indeed the only) way to make use of these sites is to include them within a larger plan for tourism in the city. There must be no repeating of the piecemeal pandering to commercial interests, to the kind of things represented by the vandalism at Mumbles Head and the 'taller than any in Cardiff'

foolishness of the Marina stump, which in the long term benefit no-one. Offer an accessible, reasonably-priced experience in a beautiful environment and we will all benefit.

Swansea Bay Foreshore Group

Response to Swansea Council Consultation on Seafront Sites

- What we have today
  - Iconic views from the road as you drive from the centre of Swansea to Mumbles and back the other way.
  - A feeling of being by the sea and in the country at the same time as you walk or cycle along the promenade between the centre of Swansea and Mumbles
  - Access to a multi purpose green space currently used for dog walking, picnics and the siting of memorial benches and trees.

- What do the Council want
  - To raise income from the sites
  - To provide more amenities for residents and visitors by utilising the sites

- Issues to consider
  - Small scale commercial developments (eg. Café, bike hire etc) will raise very little from an annual rent
  - Poorly sited commercial developments will detract from the iconic views
  - Poorly sited commercial developments will damage existing businesses and ultimately not increase the provision of amenities
  - Car parking provision must be adequate or businesses will fail. Key currently successful businesses (Verdi's, Castlemare, Langland Brasserie, Oyster Wharf) all benefit from large car parks.
  - Current traffic congestion problems will increase
  - Over-commercialisation or intrusive built development will damage the fabric of the attractiveness of the area which attracts visitors in the first place.

- Questions and Comments
  - What additional amenities are actually needed/ wanted
  - Why have such amenities not already been provided by the private sector if they would be commercial viable in the long term
  - Mumbles has many entrepreneurial businesses- some successful, some not so successful – but wherever a gap in the market is spotted someone will have a go at filling it.
  - The large number of residents and visitors means any new business is virtually guaranteed an initial footfall and then it is up to what the business has to offer
  - The Council does not generally need to intervene in that business model.
  - Where the Council can offer attractive locations then obviously that potentially means they could obtain a reasonable rental income although outside the mainstream tourist locations new businesses my well require some Council start up help – thus delaying any net financial benefit to the Council.

- Concerns
  - Commercial developments along the foreshore would potentially be either too small to generate serious income for the Council or too large to be visually acceptable. All would probably need additional parking provision.

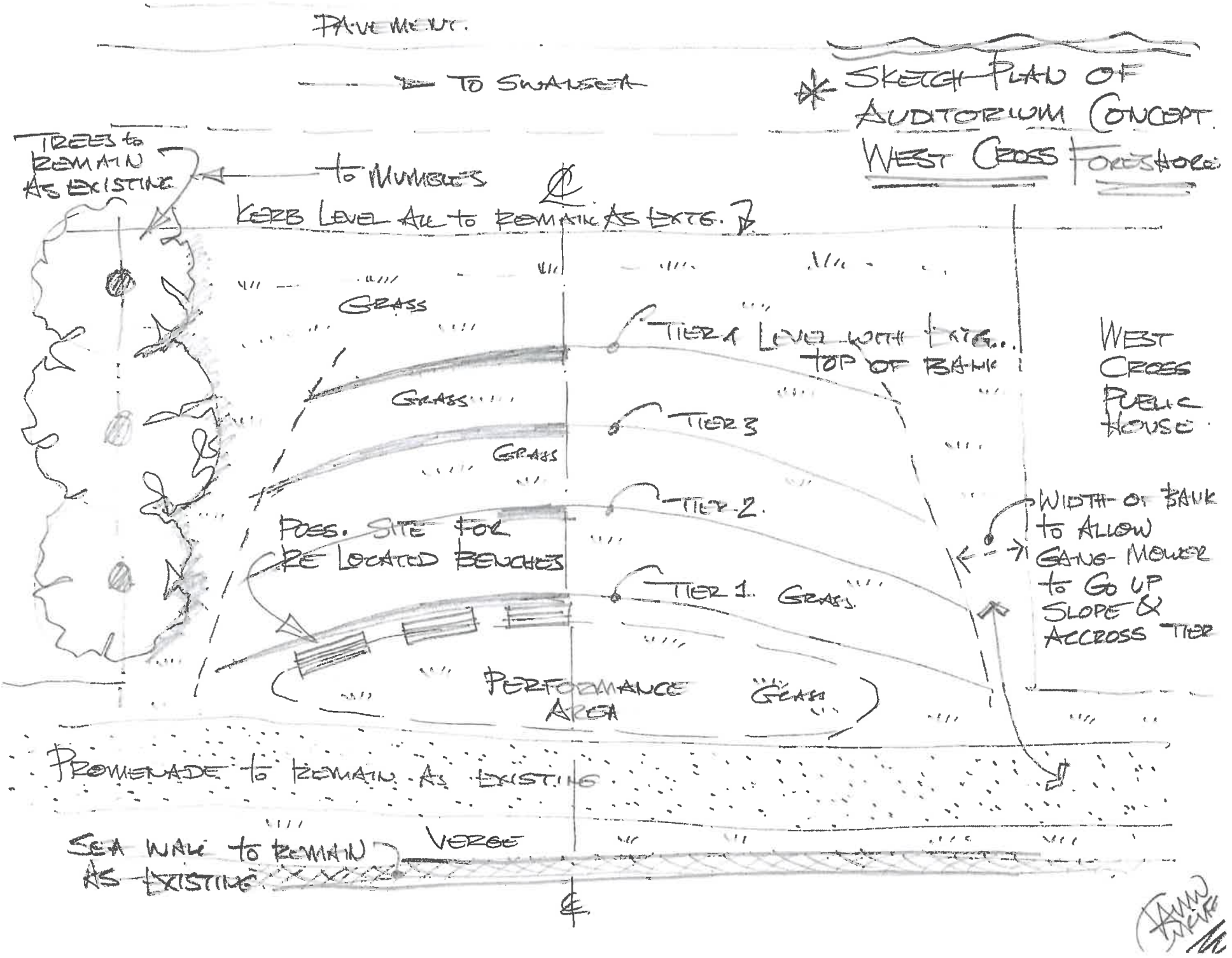
- Non-commercial developments (Skate Board Park ?) would be expected to be provided from public funds probably free of charge and so would generate little or no income for the Council.
- Development of some of the sites will inevitably lead to a negative environmental impact.
- Potential future flooding due to rising sea levels associated with climate change may create long term issues at some of the sites.

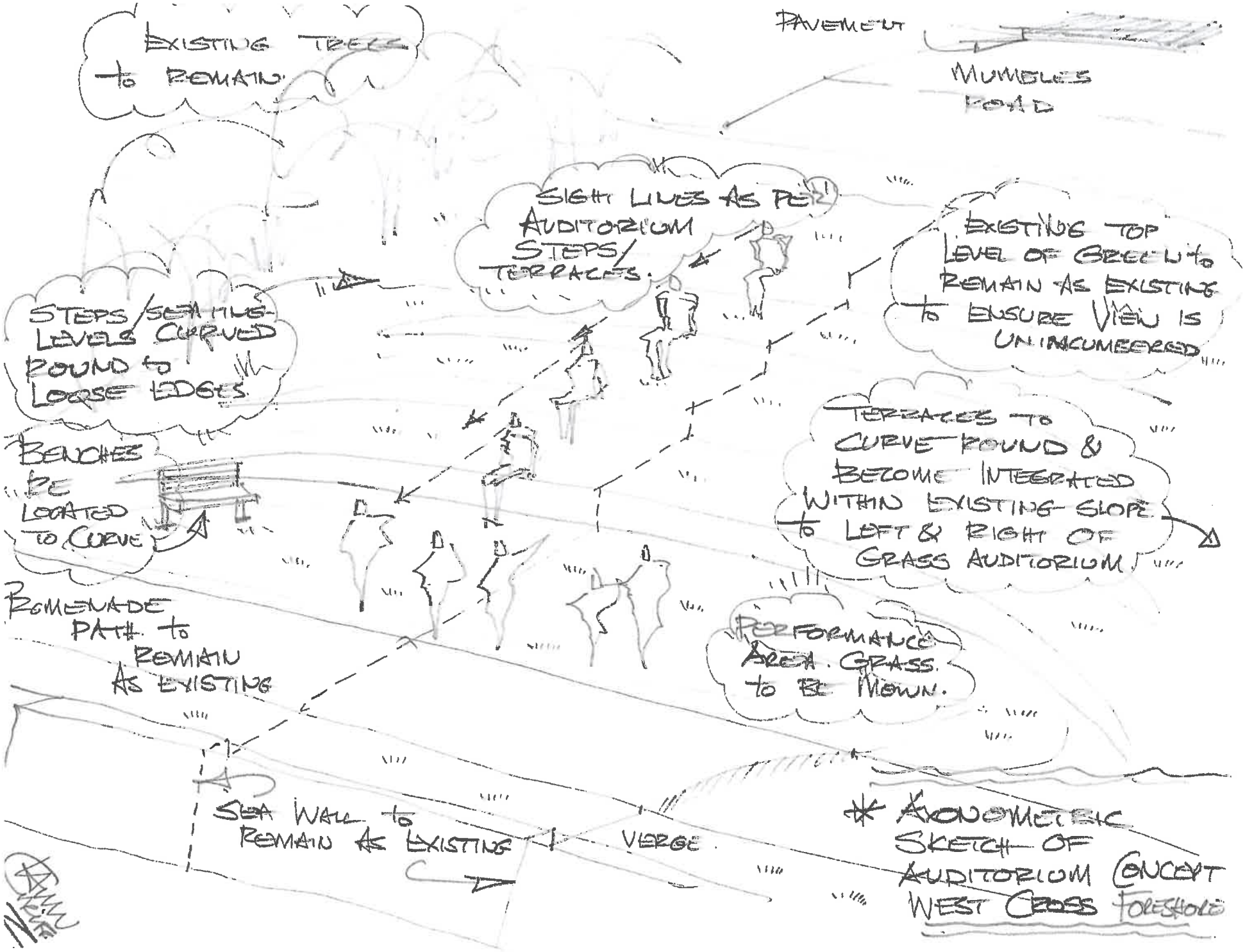
❖ Conclusions
- Some of the sites suggested by the Council would be much less visually damaging than others if they had sympathetic development.
- The area at the bottom of Sketty Lane could accommodate extra parking and some small low rise development without impacting adversely on the area.
- The Blackpill site could be improved to increase the amenities available for families, particularly with smaller children, without any significant adverse impact.
- The current skate board ramp area could be enhanced again without a significant adverse impact providing no car parking provision was required close by.
- The site adjacent to the West Cross Inn could not really be developed commercially without a fairly major adverse impact on the area and potentially on local businesses. It is immediately adjacent to the West Cross Inn and close to other businesses on the foreshore path and opposite the West Cross Inn. Parking is severely limited and the area has been effectively a memorial park/village green for many years.
- The Langland tennis court site may be able to be developed without too much of an adverse impact on the area but this would depend entirely on what was proposed and how it impacted on existing businesses.
- A more general point is that perhaps some thought should be given to the possibility of widening the promenade, particularly where congestion and cycling/ walking conflict is creating health and safety concerns.

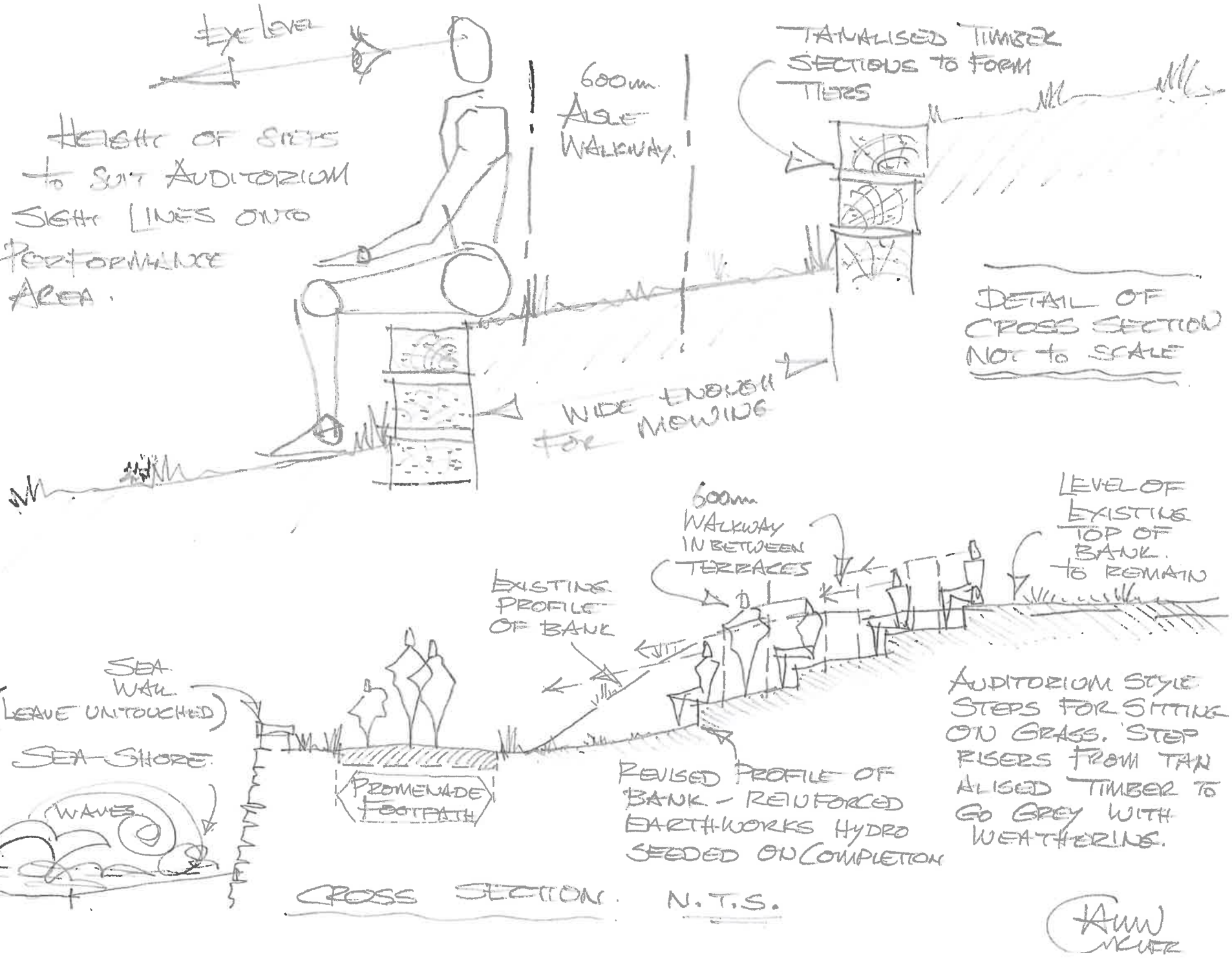
❖ Improvement Suggestions - whilst we began as a West Cross focussed group a number of residents from other foreshore areas have joined us but we have concentrated our improvement thinking so far on the site adjacent to the West Cross Inn

- Provision of picnic tables
- Provision of a concentrated outdoor gym
- Use of the site by schools/parents/carers for outdoor learning and exercise with groups associated with the West Cross Inn and the Ripples Café
- Use of the area by personal trainers
- Provision of a small scale amphitheatre – sketches attached

We are keen to discuss our comments and suggestions with the Council and hope that we can arrange to do that over the next few weeks.


PAVEMENT.
TO SWANAGE
SKETCH PLAN OF AUDITORIUM CONCEPT
WEST CROSS FORESHORE
TREES to REMAIN AS EXISTING
to MUMBLES
KERB LEVEL ALL to REMAIN AS EXTG.
GRASS
TIER 1 LEVEL WITH EXTG. TOP OF BANK
WEST CROSS PUBLIC HOUSE
GRASS
TIER 3
GRASS
TIER 2.
WIDTH OF BANK to ALLOW GANG MOWER to GO UP SLOPE & ACCROSS TIER
POSS. SITE FOR RE LOCATED BENCHES
TIER 1. GRASS
PERFORMANCE AREA
GRASS
PROMENADE to REMAIN AS EXISTING
SEA WALL to REMAIN AS EXISTING
VERGE


EXISTING TREES to REMAIN
PAVEMENT
MUMBLES ROAD
SIGHT LINES AS PER AUDITORIUM STEPS/ TERRACES.
EXISTING TOP LEVEL OF GRASS to REMAIN AS EXISTING to ENSURE VIEW IS UNINCUMBERED
STEPS/SEATING LEVELS CURVED ROUND to LOOSE EDGES
TERRACES to CURVE ROUND & BECOME INTEGRATED WITHIN EXISTING SLOPE to LEFT & RIGHT OF GRASS AUDITORIUM
BENCHES to BE LOCATED to CURVE
PROMENADE PATH to REMAIN AS EXISTING
PERFORMANCE AREA. GRASS to BE MOWN.
SEA WALL to REMAIN AS EXISTING
VERGE
* AXONOMETRIC SKETCH OF AUDITORIUM CONCEPT
WEST CROSS FORESHORE


Ex level
Height of steps to suit Auditorium sight lines onto performance area.
600mm Aisle Walkway.
Tanalised timber sections to form tiers
Detail of cross section not to scale
Wide enough for mowing
600mm Walkway in between terraces
Level of existing top of bank. to remain
Existing profile of bank
Cut
Sea wall. (Leave untouched)
Sea Shore
Waves
Promenade Footpath
Revised profile of bank - reinforced earthworks hydro seeded on completion
Auditorium style steps for sitting on grass. Step risers from tanalised timber to go grey with weathering.
Cross section. N.T.S.
Ann Kuer