

LAND AHOY

Development opportunities Five companies are vying to win the remaining 90 acres for mixed-use schemes at Barry waterfront – one of the largest urban regeneration projects in the UK. By *Claire Robson*



It is one of the largest urban regeneration projects in the UK, so it is no surprise that buyers are vying for the remaining 90 acres of development land at Barry waterfront.

The Welsh Assembly government and Associated British Ports have shortlisted five developers to complete the final phase of development at Barry's No 1 Dock. The land disposal represents the final piece in the jigsaw for the 190-acre waterfront development. The remit is to deliver a mixed-use scheme in an effort to cement Barry's position as a leading waterfront destination.

The unnamed bidders are now drawing up proposals for mixed-use development, before the selection of a preferred partner next month.

Steve Pritchard, regional property manager at ABP, says: "Since we signed the development agreement with the former Welsh Development Agency in 1994, the waterfront has been transformed, and we're keen to start work on phase two."

So far, £26.4m has been invested in preparing derelict land for

development. The joint venture partnership has sold 65 acres to private-sector developers such as Westbury, Persimmon, Redrow and Barratt, which between them have built 770 homes.

The site has also attracted 120,000 sq ft of retail development, with occupiers including Morrisons, Focus DIY, Argos and Halfords.

Gradual decline

Mike Lawley, managing director of the scheme's joint agent Cooke & Arkwright, says: "In its heyday, the port was the largest exporter of coal in the world. Although it is still operational, the decline of the industry means that large chunks of land are now available for redevelopment."

Michael Rees, director of development and residential consultancy at joint agent Atisreal, says: "Given the shortage of housing in the area and proximity to the capital, it's little wonder that the majority of enquiries have been from the volume housebuilders."

But the owners do not want the

Barry Waterfront: owners ABP want to see more leisure space as the docks become a safe place to visit

site to be dominated by flats. "We want to create a sustainable community," says Pritchard. "I'd particularly like to see more leisure space, such as pubs, bars and restaurants. The docks are finally being seen as a safe place to go out."

There may also be potential to provide food retail to the west of the site on the basis of a transferred consent, although Pritchard insists that any retail must complement rather than compete with that available in the town centre.

Christopher Black, associate partner at local agent Burnett Davies, says: "I'd also welcome more commercial development, perhaps 10,000 sq ft or so of offices, to try and kickstart the market. There are companies with requirements for space, and it would help to bring more jobs to the town."

Whatever the nature of the winning scheme, there is unlikely to be any development until 2010. Rees says: "It could take three years to secure planning consent, although there's potential for work to start sooner on a couple of the smaller sites."