

Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Discovery Centre



BITHSFÉIR
Chuan Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin Bay
BIOSPHERE



Comhairle Cathrach
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City Council

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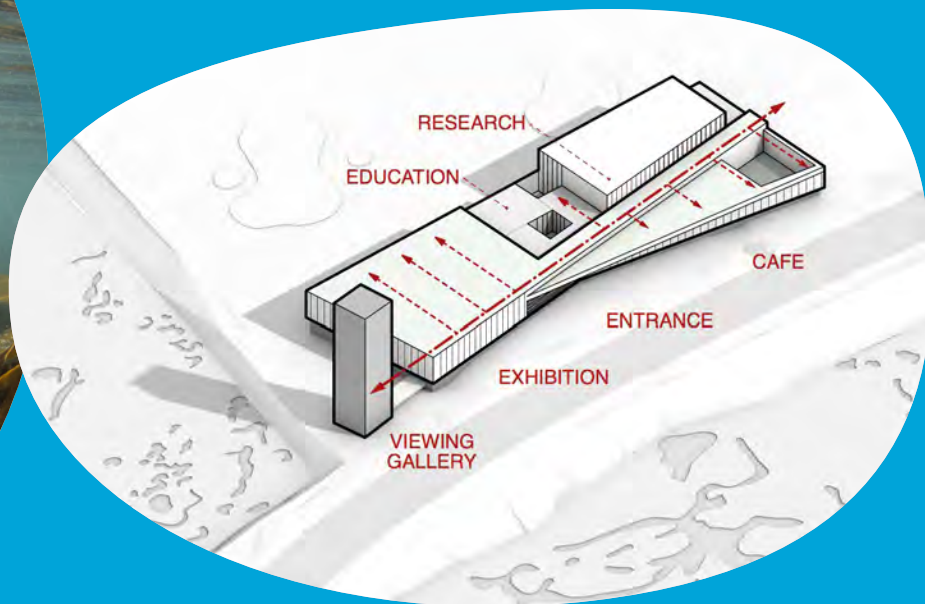


Background

The UNESCO designation of Dublin Bay Biosphere with Bull Island as its centre piece, is unique for a world capital city. Biospheres are places where nature and people connect.

They are internationally recognised for their biological diversity yet also actively managed to promote a balanced relationship between people and nature through three goals: Conservation, Learning and Development.

Dublin Bay Biosphere, stretching from Irelands Eye around to Dalkey Island including the City, Port and coastal suburbs, contains an extraordinary combination of world class natural and built environments.



The Purpose of the Discovery Centre

Dublin City Council (DCC) is embarking upon an exciting project to build the Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Discovery Centre in the heart of the UNESCO Biosphere on Bull Island. An ambitious yet sensitive design that creates a powerful place for discovery and learning the Centre will illustrate and interpret Bull Island, Dublin Bay, the world network of Biosphere Regions and global climate issues.

It is the ambition of Dublin City Council that the Discovery Centre will be the genesis for the resolution of the management issues in the nature reserve and Dublin Bay as well as inspiring the values of UNESCO in promoting global citizenship.

Uniquely, the Discovery Centre will provide opportunity to people of all abilities in society who heretofore could not access the dunes and beach to visit the Nature Reserve and gain an understanding of the intricate terrestrial and marine ecosystems that make the Bull Island and Dublin Bay such a special place. The Discovery Centre will also act as a 'gateway' to the Nature Reserve and clearly signify the importance of the Nature reserve as a wilderness that must be respected.

In 2018, UNESCO undertook a review of 20 UNESCO designated sites from all around Europe with visitor centres assessing their value in improving understanding, interpretation and appreciation of the UNESCO site. The review illustrated the key role that visitor centres can play in supporting a sustainable balance between people and nature by influencing visitor behaviour and orientation.

It also re-affirmed that the active involvement of the local community should be one of the drivers of success for any visitor centre in a UNESCO site.



Design of the Discovery Centre

The proposed Dublin Bay Discovery Centre is to be located at the heart of the UNESCO Dublin Bay Biosphere, on causeway road where it meets Bull Island, a highly sensitive and protected landscape.

It marks a “gateway” entrance at the centre of the island while providing extensive views across some of its most beautiful, sensitive and protected areas. At this key location the centre is conceived as a powerful place for conservation, education and research marking the protected core zone of the biosphere with a contrasting prospect tower and a low ground hugging horizontal form.

The dominant horizontal lines of the island landscape have influenced the design of the long low main building. A predominately single storey ground hugging building with a smaller first floor area, it is designed to grow from and relate directly to its immediate environment through its form and use of natural materials.

The Dublin Bay UNESCO Biosphere Discovery Centre will create a powerful place for conservation, education and research, to see, touch, taste, smell and hear Bull Island, Dublin Bay, the world network of Biosphere Regions and critical global climate issues.



What The Discovery Centre Will Tell

As a gateway to the Biosphere, the interpretation or ‘storytelling’ at the Discovery Centre will encompass the following elements:

Natural Heritage – exploring the ever-changing wild habitats of Bull Island and Dublin Bay, encouraging personal connections to nature.

Human Influence – looking back at human use and intervention in Dublin Bay, offering an opportunity to reflect on our changing attitudes towards the natural world.

The Biosphere – highlighting the importance of Dublin Bay as an invaluable local laboratory for studying global environmental issues as part of UNESCO’s World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

While nothing can substitute experiencing the natural world first hand, much of the bay, headlands and islands are virtually inaccessible. The inclusion of immersive experiences within the Centre is important for reaching audiences who cannot access the wider environment or who visit in inclement weather, or who visit out of season for migrating birds.

Fundamentally, through the Discovery Centre we want to help people understand and appreciate this special place. We want to inspire them to take care of it.

As Freeman Tilden, one of the most prominent interpreters of environmental issues, stated:

“Through interpretation comes understanding; through understanding comes appreciation, through appreciation comes protection.”

What are your views?

As part of ongoing engagement we are seeking your views on the proposal in advance of completing the design development and lodgement of a planning application in 2020.



You can submit your views on:

<https://consultation.dublincity.ie/parks/discovery-centre>



For further information go to **www.dublincity.ie/discoverycentre**



Or email **discoverycentre@dublincity.ie**



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