

# Leisure & Cultural Opportunity

Land at Harton Quay (former Glass Works Site) and to the west of Mill Dam, and east of Harton Quay, South Shields, NE33 1EA



Freehold Investment Opportunity: Prime Location for Food, Beverage and Leisure  
Prospectus (18 February 2026) – Call for Expressions of Interest



South Tyneside Council

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# Leisure & Cultural Opportunity

## February 2026

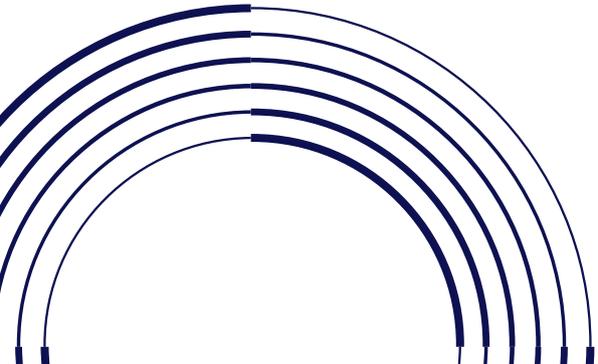
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**This is a unique freehold investment opportunity for a cultural leisure development at Mill Dam on riverside land at the southernmost part of Harton Quay (the former Glass Works Site) which lies to the west of Mill Dam, and east of Harton Quay, South Shields (The Site). This is a prime location for food, beverage and leisure activities. The Site is not considered appropriate for residential/hotel development.**

The Site falls to the north of the Customs House (theatre and cinema venue) within an existing vibrant community/cultural quarter that is a short walk from South Shields town centre with unparalleled views of the River Tyne. The site has vehicle access from Harton Quay and is a short walk from the new public transport interchange building that is located within South Shields town centre.

South Tyneside Council are seeking to dispose of the Site to a party that can successfully demonstrate a strong track record in bringing forward new cultural leisure development that is in keeping with the local area. The development would be required to support the recent and ongoing regeneration of the riverside, town centre and Harton Quay.

Expressions of interest are therefore being sought from potential operators which will enhance this existing cultural leisure quarter of South Shields, and that will complement the ongoing regeneration of the area whilst providing a destination venue which is sympathetic to the rich heritage of Mill Dam area. The Council will only consider Expressions of Interest which put an emphasis on provision of quality food and beverage outlets, accessibility to the local community and visitors eg: providing meeting, performance and retail / workshop spaces. Demonstration of an understanding of how South Shields riverside can be enhanced further as a quality destination, with a bespoke offer, will be well received.



Aerial View Harton Quay Site



Aerial View Harton Quay Site



# The Site

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The Site lies within a scenic riverside location offering panoramic views across the River Tyne, on the edge of South Shields town centre, within the historic core of Mill Dam (falling partly within the designated boundaries of Mill Dam Conservation Area). The land area of the Site is approximately 0.5ha (1.23ac).

The Site is strategically located with excellent transportation access from Harton Quay which bounds the site to the west. The Site benefits from strong local transport connectivity with easy access to key road networks, public transport, and the nearby Shields Ferry Landing that provides a pedestrian public transport route to North Shields. Planning permission has historically been granted for the development of an office building on the northern part of the Site.

South Shields town centre is well-served by bus routes and this Site is within a short distance of South Shields Interchange Station, providing both bus and Metro services, linking the town to Newcastle, Sunderland and the wider region.

Customs House



The Word



# The Site

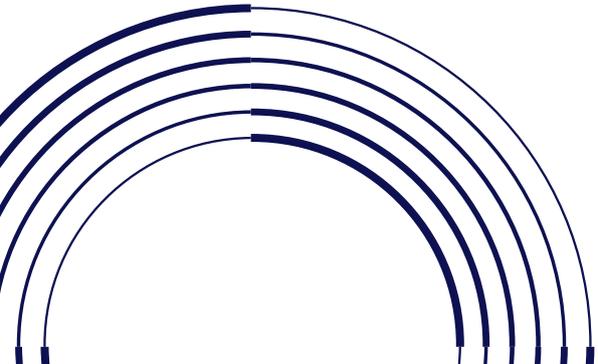
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The Site sits at the centre of a vibrant community with its proximity to local cultural, leisure and retail amenities, strong transport links, and significant potential for growth under the South Shields Riverside Regeneration land allocation. Harton Quay is a prominent location for a high-quality cultural leisure development, including food and beverage, galleries, studios and other commercial uses (subject to planning).

Food and Drink



South Shields



Aerial View Harton Quay Site



# The Site

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Mill Dam lies to the east of the Site, which currently comprises a thriving community with mixed land uses, that include residential, food and drink premises whereas Harton Quays Park (public realm improvement scheme) is located to the west, with the River Tyne beyond.

The Site comprises previously developed land, that has been remediated and cleared of above ground structures except for the brick boundary wall (that delineates the eastern boundary with Mill Dam) and a disused freestanding chimney (south-west boundary) that once formed part of the Cookson's Glassworks factory (the chimney is approximately 9 metres high and 3 metres square). These remaining features date from 1865.

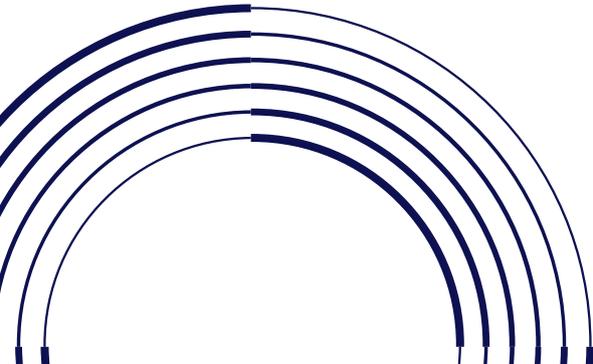
Mill Dam



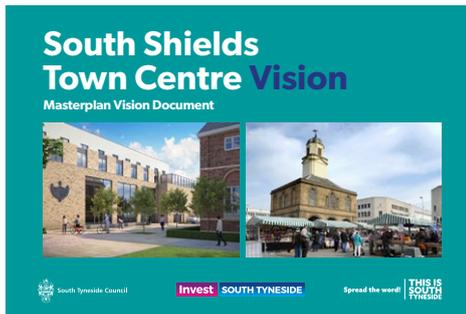
Glass manufacturing began here in the early 18th Century and continued up until the 1890s. Later the site was taken over and used to ship coal from the nearby collieries via the Harton Low Staithe (the Staithe exist on the riverfront between the Customs House and Ferry Landing).

The disused chimney, Mill Dam brick boundary wall and the restored timber Staithe are locally listed by the Council as a reminder of the historical heritage of this area.

Expressions of Interest are sought from parties with the necessary experience, credentials and passion to deliver an exciting cultural leisure development opportunity. Requests for residential/hotel development are not considered appropriate at this site and they will be resisted by the Council as landowner.



# South Shields Masterplan Vision December 2023



The disposal of this Site at Harton Quay, for Leisure and cultural development, would accord with the Council's 20-year South Shields Town Centre Masterplan Vision Document (which was published in 2023 following a public consultation event).

The summary report for this consultation event makes clear that many respondents consider Mill Dam as a great area for socialising and leisure, but they also said that there was plenty to do to improve it. A significant number of respondents said that they were in favour of the leisure / hospitality led option for this Harton Quay site, that was suggested by the Council, as this would allow the riverside to become a hub of activity alongside both the Customs House, and the existing food and beverage premises along Mill Dam road.

## Local Planning Policy

The Site is allocated and safeguarded as Employment Land under Policies SP17, SP18 and Policy 22 of the Council's emerging Local Plan.

The current development plan comprises the Local Development Framework (LDF) which includes a portfolio of statutory Development Plan Documents. The LDF is out of date, and a new Local Plan is in preparation by the Council to replace the LDF. The publication draft Local Plan has now been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in public, with the Stage 2 hearings currently taking place.

Under the existing Local Development Framework, the land is safeguarded as a mixed-use development site under Policies SS2, SS4, SS5, SS6, SS7, SS8, SS9, SS10, SS11 and SS14 of the South Shields Town Centre and Waterfront Area Action Plan (Adopted November 2008). The eastern and southern boundaries of the site fall adjacent to the Mill Dam Conservation Area which is safeguarded for its heritage significance and historic buildings under Policy AAP SS12. A small section (south-east corner) of this Harton Quay site is included within the designated boundary of this Conservation Area.

There are no Listed Buildings included within this Harton Quay site (i.e. buildings that have been placed on the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest). However, there are several Listed Buildings located nearby and that fall within the designated boundary of Mill Dam Conservation Area.

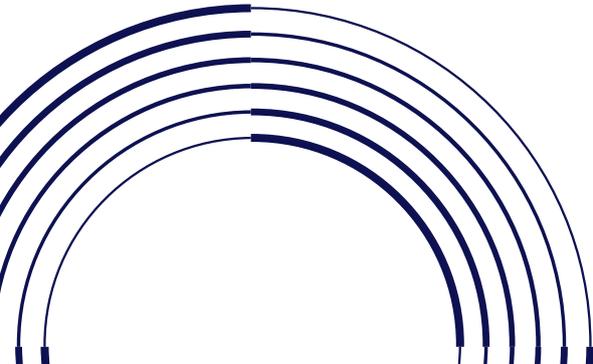
# The Story So Far

## Regeneration within the Riverside and South Shields Town Centre

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Over the last 10 years, South Shields Town Centre and this riverside area have undergone a period of significant transformational change through Council led regeneration schemes, including Harton Quays Park (a public realm improvement scheme linking the riverside to the town centre), the reinvigorated Market Place, The Word (public library), new transport bus and metro light rail interchange, the relocation of Tyne Coast Colleges and Halls of Residence, along with site assembly for future developments with demolition work ongoing, and the Holborn Riverside development which is a major housing scheme on reclaimed dockland.

Harton Quays



The World



South Shields Transport Interchange



South Tyneside College



Harton Quays



# Site and Requirements

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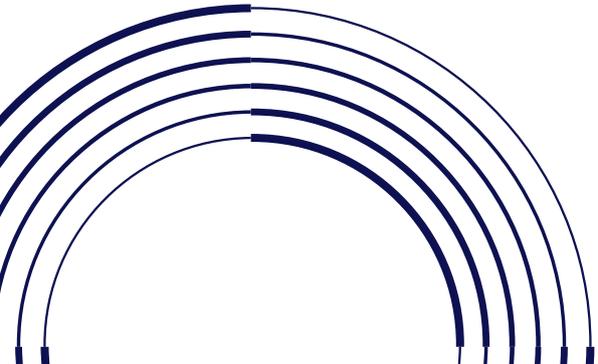
Both the Holborn Riverside major housing development (currently under construction) and the Customs House (Grade II Listed theatre building) are situated a short distance to the south of this Site. The former BT offices at One Harton Quay located to the north of the Site, are about to be transformed into a Halls of residence student accommodation, to serve the new Tyne Coast college campus that is currently being built within South Shields town centre (a few minutes' walk from the Site). South Shields Town Centre is around 150m to the north-east.

Construction work on the new Tyne Coast College campus development is at an advanced stage and once occupied this will establish a significant further education presence in the Town Centre which will complement the arts and cultural offer provided at The Word and the Customs House.

**Arising from the South Shields Masterplan, it is envisaged a site would be identified to provide opportunities for cultural leisure use. Any provision of cultural leisure development on the site would be subject to planning approval, Council agreement and approval of stakeholders and partners.**

Appendix A gives details of stakeholders and partners.

The Council would be looking to dispose of the freehold interest of this site.



# The Proposal

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## Expressions of Interest should include:

- Details of current business portfolio
- Previous relevant experience
- Visuals or precedent images
- Minimum development area for a viable scheme
- Approach to Planning and Environmental sustainability (note the Site is close to the River Tyne and it lies adjacent and partially within Mill Dam Conservation Area, with Locally Listed Cooksons Chimney, Mill Dam boundary wall and nearby timber coal staithes, and other statutory Listed Buildings within the immediate surrounding area).
- A demonstration of an understanding of the Council's South Shields Masterplan Vision document in terms of:
  - its current offer, the need to safeguard the heritage value of Mill Dam alongside listed and locally listed buildings,
  - how the development would represent an improvement to the area in the form of a distinctive, unique, cultural destination
- Any other supporting information that is considered relevant to the proposal

# Expressions of Interest

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Should be returned via email to Vicky Smith,  
Regeneration Programme Coordinator:  
**vicky.smith@southtyneside.gov.uk**

Interested parties are invited to submit expressions of interest to explore the development opportunities available at Harton Quay.

We welcome all enquiries and can provide additional information on planning, and development guidelines.

Deadline for submission **4 March 2026**

## Appendix A: Stakeholders and Partners

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### Stakeholders and partners include:

- Private Sector Businesses
- Voluntary and community based organisations
- Residents of South Tyneside including those residing within South Shields town centre
- Visitors to South Shields and the wider North East area
- Members and officers of South Tyneside Council



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