

DOCKING STATION

Institute of Cultural & Creative Industries

University of Kent



July 2023

Planning Consultation Booklet

University of
Kent | Institute of Cultural
and Creative Industries
icci

THE **HISTORIC**
DOCKYARD
CHATHAM





Early design view from Dock Road

The Vision

Docking Station is a brand new state-of-the-art digital hub for the cultural and creative industries and it's coming to Medway in 2025.

Developed by the University of Kent's Institute of Cultural and Creative Industries (iCCi) in partnership with Medway Council and the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, Docking Station will be a centre for new digital immersive technology and will provide training, teaching, and opportunities for the people of Medway to experience the latest in new tech.

Providing the facilities and training opportunities to support digital innovation it will create an exciting and attractive offer for those who want to take their studies further. Most of all, it will bring world class digital opportunities to Chatham! We want to put Medway at the forefront of innovation, education & engagement in digital immersive experiences and to put on exciting digital performances from across the world.

The Context

Docking Station arrives at a time when the government is firmly backing the creative industries and is part of a regional strategy for the Thames Estuary Production Corridor which has a vision to transform 60 miles of the estuary into one of the most exciting cultural hubs in the world. It also fits well with the work that Medway Council are planning as part of their cultural regeneration and placemaking programmes. iCCi places the University and the Docking Station at the heart of these plans.

iCCi was set up as a catalyst for culture and creativity, enabling new ways of researching and teaching and playing a key role in the development of these innovative and fast-moving industries in the region.



Early design image of the Motion Capture technology



Motion Capture technology in use

The University is committed to promoting the cultural and creative industries in Medway and we want Docking Station to inspire young people to take their first steps in a creative career in Medway, in an industry that is set to grow nationally and globally, and that provides well-paid and interesting careers. We also want to help bridge the gap for graduates between university and the world of business, so that we can keep our creative talent local by growing excellent start-ups in Medway.



Design image of the refurbished Section House



Aerial view of the site (Google Earth)



The Section House in its current condition

The Benefits

Docking Station will restore and regenerate the Police Section House, a Grade II listed, Scheduled Ancient Monument at the former Royal Dockyard Chatham which once housed unmarried police officers serving at the Dockyard. It will breathe new life into this historic riverside site, preserve the building with a viable & sustainable new use whilst retaining its historical significance and provide a range of public benefits as follows:

- Boost the local economy and increase inward investment
- Address the skills gap in the creative digital sector and improve student employability
- Generate a creative cluster for local businesses and provide tailored support
- Connect industry with academics to drive research and innovation
- Increase engagement with the local community
- Preserve The Police Section House and create new inviting public realm



Design image of the exhibition & events space in the Section House



The current condition of the Section House

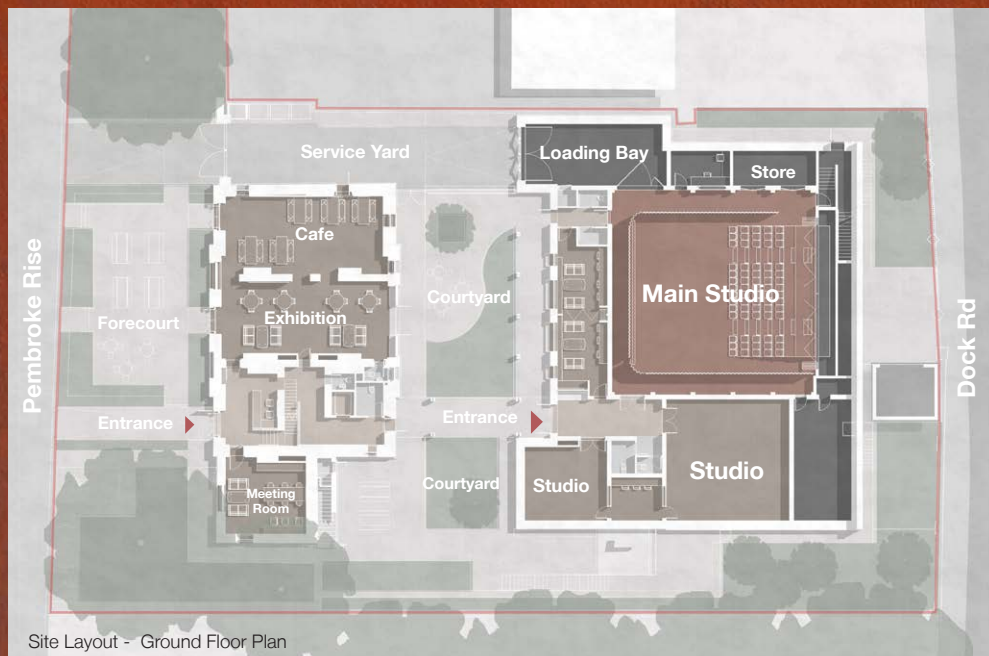
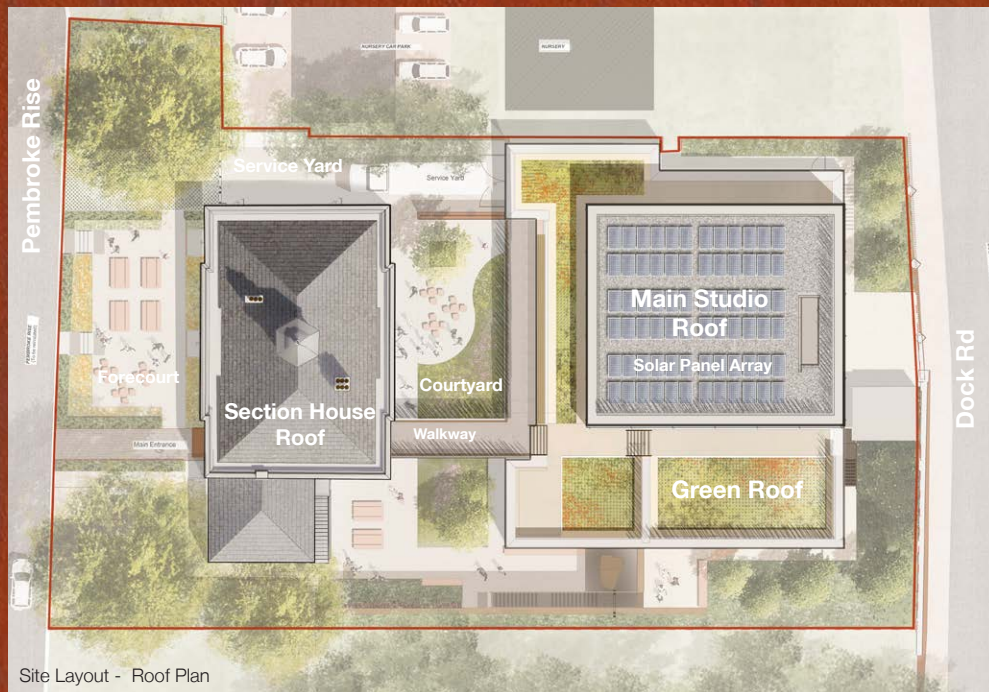


Design image of the Section House refurbishment

Section House Interiors

The Police Section House is an important local landmark but it's been derelict since the 1980's, awaiting a viable use to regenerate the building. The Docking Station facility will restore and enhance the building's original character, telling the story of its former use, whilst making it safe and functional, and providing the new technical infrastructure required to host a varied programme of events and performances. This will allow the public, students and local businesses to be welcomed into the Section House for the first time in its history.

The ground floor will provide cafe and exhibition gallery space which will be open to the local community, offering opportunities to experience and interact with cutting edge immersive digital technologies. The Cafe will extend out into a new landscaped forecourt which will also be accessible to the public, serving building users, local residents and visitors.



Site Layout

The Digital Studios



The Design

Docking Station will be eco-friendly. A deep retrofit will enhance thermal performance and the use of sustainable materials, low energy heating, lighting and ventilation systems and on-site electricity generation (through solar panels) will ensure a low carbon footprint for the future. This £14.5M regeneration project will deliver c.966 sqm of new creative space including:

- Flexible performance spaces
- Teaching facilities
- Co-working, office & business incubation spaces
- Exhibition spaces & a café
- State-of-the-art digital production studios – including virtual production, motion capture, photogrammetry and volumetric capture technology

Beyond the creative and cultural sector, these technologies have a wide range of applications in industries as diverse as engineering, sports science, health and wellbeing and creative heritage.

The design of the new studios has been carefully considered to sit alongside the Section House. The new building has been positioned discretely behind the existing building, leaving views of its primary aspect uninterrupted, preserving its historic relationship with the Dockyard. The support spaces at ground floor are excavated and embedded down into the landscape to reduce their perceived scale and visibility. The upper portion of the Main Studio is smaller than the ground floor footprint and the roof level is aligned with the Section House parapet, in order to complement rather than compete with the grandeur of the existing building. The scale and location of the building has been discussed in detail with Medway Council's Planning and Conservation Officers, and Historic England, to inform the emerging design.



Early design drawing - Elevation along Dock Road

Materials & Character

The materials and facade of the new Digital Studio building has been carefully considered and is inspired by the materials and technologies which have defined the Dockyard historically. This includes the brickwork ground floor 'plinth' which references the dry docks and engineered walls of Brunel's Sawmills. Also, the Main Studio's cladding of patterned, cross-braced metal, is inspired by the construction of boats, masts and rigging in the Dockyard. The weathered metal cladding, creates a warmth and timeless quality, which will harmonise with the aged brickwork of the Section House.

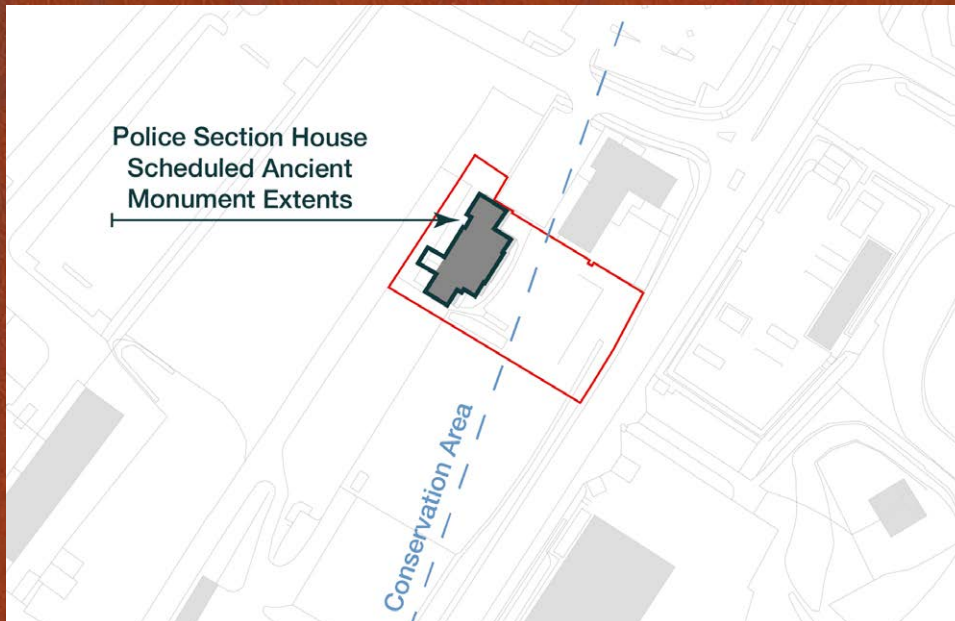


Taking inspiration from the materials and engineering in the Dockyards

The above-ground structure will be made of a timber frame and wall panels which uses far less embodied carbon than concrete or steel equivalents. The proposed use of timber and metal detailing will create a sensitive and crafted building, whilst also keeping alive the traditional skills and trades which once defined the Dockyards. Green roofs, landscaped courtyards, and new trees will further help the building assimilate within its built and natural surroundings.



Facade material collage - Digital Studios Building



Existing Site & Building Details

Listing Description

The Police Section House is Grade II listed (listed on 13 August 1999) and designated as a Scheduled Monument "Chatham Dockyard, the Expense Account Department, Wages Division" (ref: TQ 762 694). The listing description describes the building as a mid-19th Century disused building which is known for its yellow stock brick with stone dressings and slate roof. The building is currently vacant and in disrepair. The site can be accessed from Pembroke Rise from the south of the site.

Planning Designations

The site is subject to the following designations:

- The site is partially located in the Chatham Historic Dockyard Conservation Area
- The Police Section House is Grade II Listed
- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Chatham Historic Dockyard Strategy Area
- Flood Zone 1

Approximate Timeframe

The proposed timeframe for the project's design and construction are as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| • RIBA Stage 3 Design Development | July 2023 |
| • Planning Application submitted | July 2023 |
| • RIBA Stage 4 Technical Design | October 2023 |
| • Tender for contractor | Jan - Feb 2024 |
| • Construction to Start | Spring 2024 |
| • Completion | Late 2025 |

Project Funding & Support

The project has received support from a number of public funding bodies including; Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities, The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (via Arts Council England) and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Supported using public funding by



**ARTS COUNCIL
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**CREATIVE
ESTUARY**

More Information

If you'd like to discuss the project with us further, or like more information on these proposals, please feel free to contact us at: **dockingstation@kent.ac.uk**

Leaflet & Images Produced by:

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