



Father of Docklands re-birth has died

Pat Coughtrey , News Editor [<mailto:pat.coughtrey@newhamrecorder.co.uk>] Tuesday, 11 January, 2011
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A VISIONARY for the commercial regeneration of derelict East London as the legendary first chief executive of the London Docklands Development Corporation (LDDC), Reg Ward, died on Thursday (Jan 6) aged 82.

He was the policy inspiration behind the Docklands Light Railway network that delivered a metro system to areas bereft of modern transport and London City Airport that now has more than 3m travellers through its terminal.

The setting up of the LDDC quango by Michael Heseltine in Margaret Thatcher's government in 1981 was controversial and acrimonious as it was seen by communities in Newham, Tower Hamlets and Southwark as usurping local governance.

It was fought all the way by the traditional Labour strongholds until seeing the changes in economic benefits and political shifts.

Ward, for the first six months, was the only manager on the LDDC payroll, able to shape a much mourned but different future of a ship free docks area that led to the creation of Canary Wharf, Europe's new-money financial capital.

He headed the LDDC: from 1981 to 1987.

George Iacobescu CBE, Chief Executive of Canary Wharf Group, said: "On behalf of everyone at Canary Wharf Group, I was very sorry to hear about the death of Reg Ward."

"As the first Chief Executive of the London Docklands Development Corporation he was a crucial figure in the creation of the Canary Wharf project. He had a great ability to see the potential of this area when most people saw only problems.

"Reg's legacy lies in the transformation of east London - without him it just would not have happened."

A tribute to him on the LDDC veteran's website says: "So much of what the London Docklands are today is a direct result of Reg's huge vision for the area. He was much loved by all who worked for him in those heady days and he will be greatly missed."

So much of his vision flowed to what can be seen in Docklands today. Without it the Olympics bid could never have been successful without his work to create infrastructure and put East London on the map, it is said.

His early career was in the civil service and architecture before public service. After he left the LDDC he dealt with major regeneration projects around the world, the most recent being in St Kitts in the West Indies.

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