

**LOCATION:** PORTLAND PORT, CASTLETOWN, PORTLAND DT5 1PP

**APP REF:** WP/20/00692/DCC

**PROPOSAL:** Comments on Heritage Mitigation

**CASE OFFICER:** Kathryn Melhuish

**Site Visit:** February 2023

## **DESIGN & CONSERVATION OFFICER COMMENTS**

### **THE PROPOSALS**

The 'Updated Access Path Strategy Paper' dated February 2023 includes details of how the applicants propose to mitigate the harm to the Heritage Assets, by re opening a closed footpath to the public, and introducing a 2m high fence either side of the fence. Secured through a S106 obligation.

Please note these comments relate solely to the impact of the proposed mitigation upon the heritage assets.

### **MAIN ISSUES**

Statute requires that in considering whether to grant planning permission for any works or development, special regard shall be had to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. There is also the statutory duty arising under section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This would also include its setting.

The main issues to consider are;

- The effects of the proposal on the character and setting of the Heritage Assets on the slopes of the Verne, these being; ***East Weare Camp (Grade II), Battery approximately 160m NE of East Weare Camp (Grade II), Battery approximately 80m SE of East Weare Camp (Grade II)***
- Consideration must also be given to whether any harm that may occur would be outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

## **POLICY CONSIDERATION**

In determining the proposals due consideration has been given to the following:

- *In determining the proposals due consideration has been given to Section 16 (Paragraphs 189-208) of the NPPF, Section(s) 66/72 of the 1990 Act*

## **COMMENTS ON PROPOSAL**

- Presently the footpath is closed to the public, and the batteries can only be experienced from the top of the citadel, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, which houses several Listed Buildings.
- There will be a public benefit from re- opening the presently closed footpath.
- There will also be public benefit from clearing the scrub around the batteries for a better visual experience.
- If the 2m fence is erected, this will compromise the immediate setting of the batteries, and change the way they are experienced and have been experienced historically. This will cause harm to the setting of the Heritage Assets
- The degree of immediate harm will be dictated by the type of fencing and the public views through to the assets. If the fence is approved, the exacting details should be conditioned, and I would suggest some form of interpretation should be secured. A maintenance programme for the batteries could be included in the 106, which would be a benefit to the structures.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

- Overall it is considered that the proposed mitigation will harm the significance of the batteries, their immediate settings, and their wider settings.
- The Batteries have substantial Group importance and historic importance in British naval history, by virtue of architectural design and position on the Verne Citadel. These elements are key elements to the significance of these assets and wider grouping of structures. The proposed fencing will fundamentally alter the way the assets can be experienced. The batteries by their very nature were designed to be open so views through the Port and landscape could be observed.
- Therefore, I would conclude that the proposed mitigation will cause less than substantial harm to the heritage assets, with limited public benefit to outweigh this harm. The level of harm would be considerable.

**OFFICER:** Kathryn Melhuish BA MA (Arch Cons) IHBC

**TITLE:** Team Leader Conservation and Design

**DATE:** 22/2/2023

