

LOCATION: PORTLAND PORT, CASTLETOWN, PORTLAND

APP REF: WP/20/00692/DCC

PROPOSAL: CONSTRUCTION OF AN ENERGY RECOVERY FACILITY WITH ANCILLARY BUILDINGS AND WORKS INCLUDING ADMINISTRATIVE FACILITIES, GATEHOUSE AND WEIGHBRIDGE, PARKING AND CIRCULATION AREAS, CABLE ROUTES TO SHIP BERTHS AND EXISTING OFF-SITE ELECTRICAL SUB-STATION, WITH SITE ACCESS THROUGH PORTLAND PORT FROM CASTLETOWN.

CASE OFFICER: JS

SITE VISIT: 03/11/2020

CONSERVATION & DESIGN OFFICER COMMENTS

SUPPORT	
SUPPORT SUBJECT TO CONDITIONS	✓
UNABLE TO SUPPORT	
NO OBJECTION	
REQUEST FOR FURTHER INFORMATION	
OTHER / PRE-APP	

SUMMARY

We support this application, subject to conditions.

Based on our assessment, and subject to approval of the conditions set out below, we are broadly supportive of the proposals. We are in broad agreement with the impact assessment set out in the Environmental Statement, although we have added additional impacts to assets considered in that document to be unaffected. To summarise, we have identified **less than substantial harm** to the significance of the following designated heritage assets:

- Battery 200 yds E of the Naval Cemetery (Scheduled Monument, 1002412; and Grade II as 'East Weare Batteries at SY 694741', 1281863);
- Verne Citadel (Scheduled Monument, 1002411), including associated designated heritage assets within;
- Portland Castle (Scheduled Monument, 1015326; and Grade I, 1205262), including associated designated heritage assets;
- The Citadel, North Entrance (Grade II*, 1206120);
- Dockyard Offices (Grade II, 1203099);
- Inner and Outer Breakwater, including Coaling Shed, Jetties and Forts (Grade II, 1205991);
- Battery approximately 160m NE of East Weare Camp (Grade II, 1447946);
- East Weare Camp (Grade II, 1205814);
- Battery approximately 80m SE of East Weare Camp (Grade II, 1444030); and
- Underhill Conservation Area.

Taking into account the assessments of significance, the scale and nature of harm caused and the weight of public benefits, it is considered that, with the addition of heritage-related benefits secured through a programme of mitigation, the public benefits will be made **sufficiently substantial** to outweigh the harm caused to the above heritage assets. Without this mitigation, it is not considered that the proposals meet the requirements of national and local plan policies.

We also identified the following levels of harm to the significance of non-designated heritage assets:

- **substantial harm** to the significance of the Breakwater Branch Railway, which we consider can be fully addressed by retaining this element on the site; and
- **no harm** to the significance of the Viaduct on former Easton & Church Hope Railway.

SITE DESCRIPTION / CONTEXT

The application site extends in its entirety to approximately 6.29 ha. This is broken down into two principal elements: in the NE corner of Portland (i.e. the E end of Portland Port) is the main, triangular development site of approximately 2.14 ha, whilst the remaining 4.15 ha comprises cable routes to the electricity substation off Lerret Road. Unless otherwise specified, where the terms 'the site' or 'the application site' are used below, they are to be taken as referring to the triangular site where the main buildings of the development are to be sited. Other than a slope in the SW corner, the site is mostly flat and has been previously developed. It has been vacant for several years, with a number of buildings having been demolished in 2016/17 and the rubble cleared in 2018. The only significant structure remaining on the site is a weighbridge.

Access to the site is along Main Road, which heads E from the main Portland Port gate in Castletown and so the site is not publicly accessible. The site is bordered to the E by the shingle foreshore of Balaclava Bay (along which run a cluster of above-ground fuel pipes); to the N by Storehouse jetty and the associated old and modern buildings around The Camber; to the SW by Incline Road, the former railway embankment and the scrub-covered cliffs above. Incline Road provides a route through the site to other port-owned areas to the S, whilst the Inner Breakwater adjoins the NE corner of the site.

The site forms part of the wider historic port of Portland, whose name is attested from the 9th century and points to a long history of shelter for ships, probably around the area of Castletown. The harbour was first fortified in 1539-41, when the opposing artillery 'Device' forts of Portland Castle and Sandsfoot Castle were built by Henry VIII to give protection to ships sheltering in the Portland Roads. The suitability of Portland for fortification is evidenced as early as the Iron Age, when the earthwork ramparts of a hillfort were constructed on the site of what is now the Verne Citadel. Development of the harbour began in earnest in 1845, with the recommendation that a 'harbour of refuge' be established for the Navy and the subsequent breakwater designs drawn up in 1846 by James Meadows Rendel (1799-1856), a civil engineer with form for marine projects, including the Millbay Pier in Plymouth (1841) and the near-contemporary Holyhead Breakwater (1845). The works were progressed by John Coode (later Sir John Coode) (1816-1892) after his appointment as resident engineer in 1847. Following Rendel's death in 1856, Coode succeeded as engineer-in-chief. It seems highly likely that Coode, a noted engineer of harbours worldwide, would have been based in the building known as the Dockyard Offices, which he also designed and built in 1848. Work on the breakwaters began with a stone-laying ceremony by Prince Albert in July 1849 and completion was marked by his son, then Prince of Wales and later King Edward VII, in August 1872. The need for stone for their construction resulted in the formation of the Admiralty Quarries and the tramway along 'Admiralty Incline' (now Incline Road), which terminated within the application site, though the associated tracks appear to have been lifted in the past. From 1923, the base was officially titled HM Naval Base Portland, a title it retained until its closure in 1996.

The Verne Citadel, on the highest point of Portland, was built and fortified as a siege fortress in the period 1858-1882 with nine gun emplacements. The fortification was a response to the French invasion scare throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s, a period which also saw the construction of the Inner and Outer Breakwater Forts and, in 1862-1869, of the East Weare Batteries, which were connected to the citadel by a sally port by 1873. The latter batteries were decommissioned in 1956 and then used until 1995 by the Royal Navy's Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) as a Disaster Relief exercise (DISTEX) site. At around the same time as their construction, the neighbouring East Weare Camp was constructed (in 1866) as a detention barracks, notably designed to be

defensible should the area come under attack. In later years, gun emplacements on the Verne were further enhanced with the construction of the Verne High Angle Battery (HAB) in 1890-95, which had six guns mounted at a 70-degree angle and with a 360-degree circle of fire. The guns were decommissioned in 1906 and removed in 1910. During the Second World War, the area S of the Verne found a new impetus with the construction of the Heavy Anti-Aircraft battery in 1941 to the S of the earlier High Angle Battery, whilst a number of pillboxes were constructed around the East Weare Batteries. After the war, the area to the E of the HAB was developed as the RAF's underground ROTOR radar station in 1950-51.

Before the construction of the port, the site itself formed part of the large undeveloped Common Weares which extended across the N and NE sides of Portland and are shown on the Tithe Map of 1840. With the development of the port from the mid-1840s onwards, by the time of the 25-inch OS in 1889, the site had been well developed to a form recognisable today, defined by the Inner Breakwater to the NE, the Coaling Shed and The Camber to the N and the Dockyard Offices to the NW. The main buildings on the site at that time comprised a Royal Navy hospital, situated about 90 m ESE of the Dockyard offices against the railway embankment, a predecessor of the later hospital at Castle Road completed in 1906. The map shows the remainder of the site covered with a variety of tracks, sidings and small buildings at what was the junction between the Admiralty Incline railway and the Breakwater Branch railway. The tracks of the latter and an adjacent tramway ran along the N side of the site along the breakwater and into the Coaling Shed, as well as westwards towards the mainline junction at Victoria Square. The site remained much the same in 1901, the only significant change being the construction of the Easton and Church Hope railway (fully opened in 1902), which saw the construction of the viaducts (one now removed) to take the extended track past the RN Hospital and over the Admiralty Incline.

Mapping undertaken during and between the wars likely plays down or falsifies what was present on the site, though it seems from aerial photographs in the 1940s that the RN Hospital buildings remained, though probably repurposed. In 1927, the site had become the home of the ASDIC Research and Development Unit (ARDU) of HMS Osprey, which took over some existing buildings in use as the admiralty slaughterhouses for research into anti-submarine sonar. In 1947 it became HM Underwater Detection Establishment (HMUDE), later becoming part of the Admiralty Underwater Weapons Establishment in 1960 until its closure in 1995. Photographs of the site in the 1990s show that it was densely packed with buildings, with a collection of single- and two-storey structures occupying the NW corner and the main structures being 2No long conjoined four- and three-storey ranges which extended SSE towards Incline Road. The latter buildings were demolished in 2005, with the remainder demolished by 2017.

SIGNIFICANCE

There are no designated heritage assets on the application site and it is not within a Conservation Area. However, though not identified in the Cultural Heritage section of the Environmental Statement ['the ES'], we consider that the site contains a **non-designated heritage asset** in the form of the former Breakwater Branch Railway from the port to the Inner Breakwater, itself Grade II-listed. The significance of these tracks, including any contribution made by their setting, might be summarised thus:

- **historical association** owing to its ability to illustrate both the development of the historic transport routes around the port and their association with the use of the Inner Breakwater and association coal stores/victualling yard;
- **rarity** as one of the few extant visible sections of trackway from this railway, which originally extended all the way through Castletown to join the mainline of the Weymouth & Portland Railway at the original Portland Station in Victoria Square;
- **group value** arising from its historical relationship with the surviving component elements relating to the historical use of this area of the port, including the Inner Breakwater, Victualling Store/Coal Stores, the Dockyard Offices and the Admiralty Incline.

Development on the site also has the potential to affect the **setting** of a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets. All of the former are identified in the Cultural Heritage section of the HS, whilst we have added the non-designated heritage assets identified from the Dorset HER and confirmed through our site inspection. It should be noted that we defer to the Jurassic Coast Trust, as the relevant consultee, for the consideration of the significance of the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site and any contribution made by its setting.

The heritage assets potentially affected are dealt with in turn below, beginning with the designated heritage assets, outlining some relevant elements of their setting which contribute to their significance. Where relevant, excerpts are provided from the Cultural Heritage section of the ES (Chapter 7), with the paragraph numbers given; unquoted elements therefore represent our additions.

- **East Weare Batteries**, taken here to include the battery 200 yards E of the Naval Cemetery (Scheduled Monument (1002412) and Grade II-listed (1281863)), and the Grade II-listed East Weare Camp (1205814) and adjacent batteries (1447946 and 1444030):
 - ‘the scale of the group of batteries and their function to overlook the approaches to the harbour and breakwaters’ (7.63) – the ES states that this element is ‘much diminished by the encroachment’, however this is only a visual consideration and, vegetation being impermanent, does not affect the intrinsic significance of this element of the setting;
 - the spatial and historical relationship of these batteries with the Second World War batteries to the S of the Verne (see below), which together illustrate the ‘strategic significance of Portland Harbour over a long period (7.60);
- **Verne Citadel** (Scheduled Monument), including the **North Entrance** (Grade II*) and designated heritage assets contained in the area enclosed by the Scheduled Monument:
 - ‘the setting is of value to the appreciation of the functional aspect of the defences and the relationship to Nothe Fort’ (7.62);
 - ‘it is a dominating presence in many views of and across Portland’ (7.62);
 - ‘the dark mouth of the entrance gate has a dramatic landmark role seen above the town in views from approaches along the A354 Portland Beach Road and from many areas to the north, for example by the marina’ (7.62);
 - the spatial and functional relationship of the designated heritage assets which comprise the Verne citadel as a whole, all of which combine to illustrate its changing use and development from military site to prison;
 - its visual experience with Portland Castle as a defensive counterpoint on the shoreline below (see ‘Portland Castle’ below);
- **RAF Portland, site of Rotor early warning RADAR station** (Scheduled Monument) and **Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery** (P3 Verne), 275 m SW of Fancy’s Farm (Scheduled Monument):
 - ‘the setting and the visual connections across the publicly accessible land at the centre of the island are of value to the legibility of the assets as part of the defences of the harbour and the group value of the military sites across Portland’ (7.64);
- **Portland Castle** (Scheduled and Grade I), including designated heritage assets included within the Scheduled Monument:
 - ‘the marine setting is essential to the legibility of the functional relationship to the bay to the northeast and to Sandsfoot Castle’ (7.65);
 - ‘the immediate setting is enclosed within the walled courts at the castle entrance, the domestic gardens and the beach to the north’ (7.65)

- 'the castle appears as a landmark on the shore in public views from walks around Portland Marina, with Verne Hill and the dramatic north gateway of the Verne Citadel above' (7.65);
 - 'the contribution to the setting is enhanced by the interest of the activity of the range of shipping using the port and marina (7.65);
 - the spatial relationship between the Castle site and Castletown to the E, reflecting a growing settlement to cater for the changing and expanding needs of military activities around the Castle site, though again this has been diminished with the extent of modern development;
 - the open surroundings to the SW of the Castle which, though no longer the original Mere, contributes to illustrating and experiencing the Castle's historically open setting;
 - the visual experience of the Castle across the open ground between it and the A354 Portland Beach Road;
- **Dockyard Offices (Grade II):**
 - the spatial, functional and visual relationship with the Inner and Outer Breakwaters – the building was designed (by John Coode, 1848) as the Engineer's Office;
 - the spatial, functional and illustrative relationship with the wider elements and structures of the historic port of Portland;
 - the visual experience of the building as a gateway to the NE corner of the port;
- **Inner and Outer Breakwater, including the Coaling Shed, Jetties and Forts (Grade II):**
 - 'the very expansive natural setting contributes to the appreciation of the monumental scale of the breakwaters and the harbour and the related fortification high above, and is enhanced by the interest of the activity of the range of shipping using the port (7.59);
 - the spatial, functional and historical relationship with the 11-bay coaling shed, included as part of the listing;
 - the spatial, functional and historical relationship with the later Bincleaves groyne and the NE breakwater of 1893-1906 (also Grade II listed), which completed the enclosure of the harbour;
 - 'it is also of value to the legibility of the group value of the assets of the naval base and the related coastal defences' (7.59);
 - the visual experience of the breakwaters from public vantage points, such as the footpaths around the NE side of the Verne (e.g. PRow S3/72) and, on the N side of the harbour, Nothe Fort, from where the sheer scale of the arms can be appreciated and their purpose understood;
- **Mulberry Harbour Phoenix Caissons (Grade II):**
 - '[they] appear within the setting of the adjacent piers and the marina, and the changing shipping at the port which preserves the value as part of the naval base and the related defences' (7.69);
 - the visual experience of the caissons from the public walks along Portland marina, where not only their imposing presence, but also their plain, functional architecture can be appreciated and understood;
- **Underhill Conservation Area:**
 - 'the setting [of the CA] is expansive (Chesil Beach, northern cliffs, The Verne and common land around it, East and West Weares, Portland Harbour, Lyme Bay). From high ground...are panoramic views of Underhill, its setting, the Dorset coastline and open sea. Whilst travelling along Portland Beach Rd or the Coast Path, there are wide views of Underhill, set below the cliffs and the Verne, with Chesil Beach accompanying it on the right' (Portland CA Appraisal, p. 4);

- the CA Appraisal identified a number of ‘gateway experiences that are important to the setting’, including from Portland Beach Road (see above), Chesil Beach, Merchants’ Incline and Portland Harbour (CA Appraisal, p. 17).
- **Viaduct on former Easton & Church Hope Railway** (non-designated heritage asset):
 - the spatial, functional and historical relationship with the remainder of the railway line (now dismantled, but route remains mostly legible);

PROPOSALS

The proposals comprise the construction of an Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) for the treatment of 183,000 tonnes of refuse-derived fuel (RDF) per annum, with capacity for up to 202,000 tonnes per annum. The facility will be capable of generating approximately 15.2 MW of electricity for local use or for export to the National Grid. The proposed timeline indicates that construction would take approximately 2 years, with a further 6 months of testing and commissioning before the site would be operational. The site will be accessed via the existing port gate in Castletown and thence along Main Road, with a one-way system in operation through the site.

The ERF comprises two principal buildings, a stack and a number of ancillary structures amounting to a total floorspace of approximately 8,564 m². The larger is the Boiler House and the attached Turbine Hall, which form two volumes and together extend across the site on a NW-SE axis and to a maximum of 201 m long and 51 m wide in the NW, narrowing to 24 m wide in the SE and, in height, 47 m in the N reducing to 19 m in the SE. The larger building will have 3,389 m² of PV panels to the roof of the RDF storage area at the SE end of the building.

The second, smaller main building sits just to the NE of the latter, separated by the width of a new HGV route through the site to connect Canteen Road to Balaclava Road. The heights of the latter extend from a minimum of 6 m to a maximum of 17 m, whilst the footprint extends to 54 m in length with a width between 11 m and 23 m. The stack is located approximately 10 m to the NW of the Boiler House and is 80 m high with an outside diameter of approximately 2 m.

The various other elements of the scheme comprise:

- a transformer compound located to the W of the NW corner of the Boiler House with a footprint of 15 m by 17 m and a height of 4 m;
- a control room adjacent to the existing weighbridge, proposed to be retained and used as part of the scheme;
- a compound for shore power switchgear, contained within a shipping container (12 m long, 3 m wide and 3 m high);
- a ‘gatehouse to monitor access to and from the site’ – this is mentioned in the Non-Technical Summary [‘the NTS’] (NTS.15), but not in the description of access in the ES (2.27-2.28, p. 2-5) and is not identifiable on the proposed site plan (TOR drawing no. 262701B-TOR-XX-XX-DR-A-P004), but it is presumably a minor structure;
- a second weighbridge between the Turbine Hall and Office Building;
- water and sprinkler tanks between the Office Building and Turbine Hall;
- a small auxiliary fuel store in the NE corner of the site;
- 28No parking spaces to the NE of the Office Building, with a further 8No adjacent to the existing weighbridge;

- below-ground cabling to the existing electricity substation off Lerret Road and to 2No substations (each comprising a shipping container 6 m long, 3 m wide and 3 m high) at berths on Queens Pier and Coaling Pier;
- a perimeter security fence to the ERF, comprising a 2.4 m-high palisade fence which will merge into the building. Exposed sections of the building will have Armco barriers;
- a lighting scheme based on wall-mounted, bollard and column-mounted luminaires to light walkways, roads, the service yard and car parking areas, to be designed to minimise outward or upward spill; and
- a landscaping scheme to comprise small areas of planting around the weighbridge, Office Building and parking area with stone-filled gabions and various small areas of habitat.

MAIN ISSUES

The site does not contain any designated heritage assets and is not in a Conservation Area. However, the site contains a designated heritage asset and development on the site has the potential to affect the setting of a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets. The main issues to consider therefore include the following:

- 1. the impact of the proposed development on the significance of the at least the following non-designated heritage asset:**
 - **Breakwater Branch Railway (Dorset HER MWX68);**
- 2. the impact of the proposed development on the contribution made by the setting to the significance of the following designated heritage assets:**
 - **Battery 200 yds E of the Naval Cemetery (Scheduled Monument, 1002412; and Grade II as 'East Weare Batteries at SY 694741', 1281863);**
 - **Verne Citadel (Scheduled Monument, 1002411), including associated designated heritage assets within;**
 - **RAF Portland, site of Rotor early warning RADAR station (Scheduled Monument, 1021302);**
 - **Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery (P3 Verne), 275 m SW of Fancy's Farm (Scheduled Monument, 1459502);**
 - **Portland Castle (Scheduled Monument, 1015326; and Grade I, 1205262), including associated designated heritage assets;**
 - **The Citadel, North Entrance (Grade II*, 1206120);**
 - **Dockyard Offices (Grade II, 1203099);**
 - **Inner and Outer Breakwater, including Coaling Shed, Jetties and Forts (Grade II, 1205991);**
 - **Battery approximately 160m NE of East Weare Camp (Grade II, 1447946);**
 - **East Weare Camp (Grade II, 1205814);**
 - **Battery approximately 80m SE of East Weare Camp (Grade II, 1444030);**
 - **Mulberry Harbour Phoenix Caissons (Grade II, 1203075);**
 - **Underhill Conservation Area;**
- 3. the impact of the proposed development on the contribution made by the setting to the significance of the following non-designated heritage assets:**
 - **Viaduct on former Easton & Church Hope Railway (Dorset HER MWX69);**
- 4. if harm is identified to designated heritage assets, any public benefits of the scheme that are sufficiently substantial to outweigh any harm caused, along with any other relevant tests in national or local policy; and**

- 5. if harm is identified to non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement taking into account the significance of the asset and the scale of harm or loss.**

NB. We defer to the Jurassic Coast Trust, as the relevant consultee, for the consideration of the potential impacts on the setting of the Dorset and East Devon Coast World Heritage Site.

COMMENTS ON PROPOSALS

Given the complexity of the scheme, the comments here are broken down into a number of convenient sub-headings.

Principle

It is clear from map regression and the general history of the naval base since the mid-19th century that the site has been developed as part of the wider context of naval operations, functions and ancillary needs. The main period of the site's use was in the mid-20th century, when the large HMUDE buildings were constructed on the site and the majority of the remainder of the application site had buildings of some form. The general principle of development on the site in heritage terms is therefore accepted.

The site has a recent planning history which is considered relevant to the assessment of the current proposals. In January 2010, permission was granted for the construction of an energy plant on the site, which would utilise vegetable oil to create a fuel (09/00646/FULES). This consent was subsequently varied in July 2013 to allow for the use of rubber-crumbs from tyres as an alternative to vegetable oil in its power oil production and power generation plants (WP/13/00262/VOC). A Certificate of Lawful Use or Development was subsequently issued by Dorset Council in October 2019 (WP/19/00565/CLE), subsequently confirming that the previous consent had been implemented. The submitted site plan and visualisation of the consented scheme is included in the D&A Statement [‘the DAS’] (Figs. 1.14 and 1.15) and shows a number of elements including 2 No 27m-high stacks and a tank farm.

We also note the outcome of an appraisal of sites allocated in the Waste Plan undertaken by the applicant and summarised in the ES (2.119-2.126) and Planning Statement [‘the PS’] (6.77-6.84, pp. 83-84). One of the criteria for the site appraisal is listed as ‘potential for effects on the historic environment’ (ES, 2.120) and we are therefore satisfied that consideration of heritage implications has informed the summary ranking of sites given in Table 2.1 of the ES (2.121).

Scale and Massing

The application documentation explains how the scale and layout of the building is to some extent dictated by the plant and processes required for the ERF (DAS, sections 2.1-2.2 and Figs. 2.1-2.4). The design evolution through a number of layout and massing options is set out in the DAS (section 3.4; Fig. 3.7) and summarised in the ES (2.131-2.134). Early iterations for a ‘landmark’ building were presented at a public consultation in December 2019, but were subsequently discarded in favour of a more recessive building after discussions with Dorset Council landscape and AONB officers. The design evolution and final proposed scale and massing therefore follow this preference for a building which attempts to blend in with its surroundings and context. Though many of the elements intended to contribute to this approach can be dealt with as design elements below, the main implications for scale and massing are reflected in the building's form.

The DAS highlights that the final form takes its inspiration from the angular geometry of Portland, particularly when viewed from the N and NE (section 3.3 and 3.5.7; Figs. 3.6, 5.1 and 5.9), clipped and shaped around the minimum massing volumes required for the processes internally. This approach is also applied to the Office Building to ‘visually amalgamate’ the two structures (ES, 14-2). Generally, we accept that the design process has resulted in an imaginative building which

expresses itself in minimised volumes intended to reflect the immediate context as far as is possible. The stack is clearly an element that affords fewer opportunities for discretion and the land-form offers few vertical punctuations that could serve as a counterpoint. We acknowledge that the stack has been placed so as to be read against the cliff backdrop in long views from the N and NE and, standing at 80 m, will not break the skyline in these views. However, even after the design process, the stack remains a prominent visual element in views from the W and NW, where it is seen against the skyline.

Whilst we acknowledge that the building is minimally sized to accommodate the required plant and broadly accept the massing, we have some concerns over its scale, which at its maximum height is about twice the height, or slightly more, than the tallest building of the HMUDE. In addition, the removal of these buildings has enhanced the setting of heritage assets potentially adversely affected by their presence, including the Scheduled Monuments of the East Weare Battery and Verne Citadel above, both of which depend partly for their significance on unbroken views out from Portland and, in the case of the Verne Citadel, on visual dominance in long views. Therefore the impact of the new building, at a considerably greater scale, cannot be reasonably construed as comparable with the preceding buildings on the site. In addition, the additional height of the building will impact considerably on panoramic views over the harbour and breakwater from the public vantage points on the cliff above (e.g. PRow S3/72), which permits the sheer scale, engineering and purpose of the latter to be appreciated and understood in a wide sea- and landscape context.

To this we might add some concerns over the impact of the stack. Whilst we accept that this will not break the skyline in views from the N and NE, this is not the case in views across the harbour from the NW and W – see, for example, verified views from Ferry Bridge by Fishermans Quay and from Sandsfoot Castle. From these angles, the site does not benefit from a landform backdrop and therefore the building and stack, however narrow their profile in comparison to the NE elevation, stand prominent against the sky, forming at least some measure of visual distraction from the Verne and the breakwaters.

Design Elements

Whilst the form of the building is dealt with above, there are a number design elements that merit comment, in particular the proposed treatment of the two conjoined volumes of the ERF. Here the design process is again set out with admirable clarity and method, with a number of different options and treatments considered (DAS, section 4). To put it broadly, the intention is stated to create a 'calm, simple aesthetic', with 'one volume clad in white to light grey cladding reflecting the exposed limestone cliff faces, whilst the second volume picks up on the green scrub vegetation of the lower escarpments' (DAS, 4.1.5). The preferred design proposes that the taller volume (the Boiler House) be clad metal sheeting profiled with angled cleave lines and 'stratified' with horizontal drip flashings between the layers (DAS, 4.3.11-4.3.13); the overall intention being that it reflect an 'exposed limestone cliff face' (DAS, 4.2.5; 4.3.3).

Though again consideration of various options for 'greening' the smaller volume (Turbine Hall) are demonstrated, the preferred option proposes a façade printed with photographs of the cliff-face vegetation behind (DAS, section 4.8; Fig. 4.22), to be achieved either through a PVC mesh stretched over a frame or through a vinyl wrap applied directly to the façade. It is considered that this would 'provide the best camouflage from long distance views in the AONB' (DAS, 4.8.4). Again, a similar treatment is proposed for the Office Building in order to create a 'cohesive aesthetic' (ES Summary Tables, 14-2). Consistency throughout is also intended through the provision of a louvred external envelope to the lower 6 m of each elevation on each building to conceal ventilation and to help 'ground the building from long distance views in a similar way to the water stained lower strata of the limestone cliffs found around the southern tip of the island by Portland Bill' (DAS, 4.4.8).

Other design elements include the stack and the roofs. The former is discussed in DAS section 4.12, where the difficulties of colouring it to blend in successfully in views from both the N/NE and

the NWW are discussed. The conclusion is that a 'neutral battleship grey' colour will be the least visually prominent solution. The roofs of the ERF and Office Building are proposed to be dark-coloured fibre cement panels, with PV panels (with a non-reflective coating) to the RDF store on the S end of the ERF building. It is contended that both these elements will not result in glare and will assist the building's recession into the cliff backdrop. We welcome the positioning of the air-cooled condensers on the Turbine Hall roof, where they can be better concealed by extending the walls upwards.

In general terms, whilst this does not override our concerns about the scale, we consider that the proposed design is the result of a carefully thought-out process of evaluation and we do not object in principle to the overarching design responses to the site. We consider that a large building with a distinctly modern aesthetic not only has greater visual advantages over, for example, a large building comprising a selection of rectilinear stacked boxed masses, but also has greater capabilities of being successfully integrated with its context. However, it must be acknowledged that, however successful attempts at concealment are, they are more successful in digital images than they are to the naked eye; the building will remain visible in long views towards the Verne Citadel and therefore will present some measure of visual distraction from the heritage asset.

One additional concern relates to potential affects resulting from light-spill from the development and the resulting impact on views towards the Verne Citadel at night or on dark days. We note that the application does not include any verified views or drawings to demonstrate the appearance of the development at night in a way that renders is comparable with existing lighting around the island. We would therefore recommend that this be provided as variations to the provided verified views.

Harm

It is necessary to assess the resulting scheme, however minimal in its intentions, against the potential impacts on heritage assets. The Cultural Heritage section of the ES (Chapter 7) identifies a broad array of designated and non-designated heritage assets that could potentially be affected by the development. In general, we concur with those identified, the only addition being the non-designated heritage asset represented by the surviving viaduct of c. 1900 (see above). We also generally concur with the assessments of significance given, including contributions made by setting, although, as can be seen in the section above on 'Significance', we have seen fit to supplement the assessment's findings with additional observations on setting.

In their assessment of impact, the ES identifies 'adverse' impacts to a number of designated heritage assets, combined with a degree of effect. It is explained in Fig. 7.6 that 'moderate' degrees of adverse effect 'correspond to substantial or less than substantial harm as defined in the NPPF'. In these comments we have used the latter terminology both in interpreting the impact assessments given and in providing contrary interpretations where required. No direct impacts on the fabric designated heritage assets are proposed in the scheme. The CEMP (ES, Technical Appendix C, p. 19) provides for site-specific mitigation to address the potential impact on adjacent listed structures through accidental damage, to include timber hoarding around the site perimeter and the 'potential' for boxing around the commemorative date-stone on the Inner Breakwater. We would also suggest that the works (e.g. vehicle movements and percussive elements) are risk-assessed for their potential impact on the Dockyard Offices and that suitable temporary hoarding and/or protection be provided around them where required.

The Cultural Heritage assessment (summarised in ES, Table 7.3) finds less than substantial harm to the significance of the following designated heritage assets owing to adverse impacts on the contribution made by their setting:

- Battery 200 yds E of the Naval Cemetery (Scheduled Monument, 1002412; and Grade II as 'East Weare Batteries at SY 694741', 1281863);
- Verne Citadel (Scheduled Monument, 1002411), including additional designated heritage assets;

- Portland Castle (Scheduled Monument, 1015326; and Grade I, 1205262), including associated designated heritage assets;
- Dockyard Offices (Grade II, 1203099); and
- Inner and Outer Breakwater, including Coaling Shed, Jetties and Forts (Grade II, 1205991).

The assessment also considers a number of schemes on Portland for possible cumulative impacts on the above heritage assets (ES, 7.101-7.111). A number of adverse effects are identified which give rise to additional less than substantial harm. In general, taking into account the raised level of harm arising from cumulative effects, we also concur with the level of harm assessed to the above designated heritage assets and do not see grounds to elevate any aspects to substantial harm.

In addition to the above, the assessment found adverse impacts classed as 'slight' – and therefore not 'significant' – to the following designated heritage assets:

- Battery approximately 160m NE of East Weare Camp (Grade II, 1447946) (ES, 7.86);
- East Weare Camp (Grade II, 1205814) (ES, 7.86);
- Battery approximately 80m SE of East Weare Camp (Grade II, 1444030) (ES, 7.86);
- Underhill Conservation Area (ES, 7.94)

However, recent court judgements (e.g. *R (oao James Hall & Co Ltd) v. Bradford Metropolitan DC* [2019] EWHC 2899 (Admin), esp. para 34) have confirmed that only three categories of harm are recognised in the NPPF ('substantial harm', 'less than substantial harm' and 'no harm') and therefore even harm which is stated as 'limited' or 'negligible' is to be construed within the category of 'less than substantial harm'. On that basis, we also consider the 'slight' adverse harm to be 'less than substantial harm' as per NPPF paragraph 196 and therefore include these to the list above.

The assessment finds no harm to the following designated heritage assets, with which we broadly agree:

- RAF Portland, site of Rotor early warning RADAR station (Scheduled Monument, 1021302) (ES, 7.89);
- Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery (P3 Verne), 275 m SW of Fancy's Farm (Scheduled Monument, 1459502) (ES, 7.89); and
- Mulberry Harbour Phoenix Caissons (Grade II, 1203075) (ES, 7.98).

In the above, the assessment of impacts on harm on Cultural Heritage has identified less than substantial harm to designated heritage assets, including three Scheduled Monuments, bringing into play para 196 of the NPPF. The NPPF requires that 'great weight' be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. In terms of designations, Scheduled Monuments enjoy the highest level of national designation. Furthermore, any harm, at whatever scale, requires clear and convincing justification.

It remains here to assess the harm on the significance of non-designated assets affected by the development, as discussed above, but not included in the Cultural Heritage assessment:

- Breakwater Branch Railway (Dorset HER MWX68) – though it is not specifically shown for removal, the proposed site plan does not show the retention of the tracks along Canteen Road. The removal of these tracks would result in the partial loss of this heritage asset and therefore result in substantial harm to its significance, divorcing the tracks along the Inner Breakwater from the remainder of the port. However, this harm could be avoided by their retention in the resurfaced road and we would therefore require this as a condition of support for the scheme;
- Viaduct on former Easton & Church Hope Railway (Dorset HER MWX69) – the asset sits just outside the application site and would not be directly affected by the scheme. Taking into account the elements of setting that contribute to its significance, we do not consider that the scheme will result in harm to its significance.

Public Benefits and Mitigation

The application sets out detailed public benefits considered to flow from the scheme (DAS, Introduction; PS, section 4), which are generally accepted. However, the scheme will also result in harm to a number of heritage assets of considerable national importance, attracting the greatest level of weight in favour of their conservation. The PS concludes that 'the benefits of the proposed development far outweigh any disbenefits (which have been reduced through appropriate mitigation)' (PS, 9.16). However, in terms of heritage mitigation, the ES appears to claim that no further mitigation is possible as 'primary mitigation' was incorporated into the design process and any residual effects will result from the 'fundamental characteristics of the proposed development' (ES, 7.99). There are therefore no heritage-related mitigation proposals offered.

Taking into account the acknowledged public benefits of the scheme, the designations of the harmed heritage assets and the scale and nature of the impact on their significance, we consider that support for the scheme should be predicated upon a suitable programme of heritage-related mitigation in the form of a Heritage Strategy to be agreed with the Local Authority. This is to ensure that opportunities for minimising or offsetting the harm resulting from the 'fundamental characteristics of the proposed development' are explored. Heritage-related public benefits of the scheme could be related to a number of aspects related to adversely affected assets and could, for example, include some or all of the following:

- subject to consultation with Natural England and any necessary agreements and consents, scrub-clearance and repairs to the scheduled East Weare Battery, which is on Historic England's 'at risk' register;
- providing public access and/or interpretation to any or all of the East Weare Batteries; and
- subject to any necessary agreements and consents, external/internal repairs to the derelict Dockyard Offices.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

In assessing the proposals, particular consideration has been given to the following:

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended), sections 66, 72
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): section 16, in particular paras. 189, 190, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197
- West Dorset Weymouth and Portland Local Plan, in particular Policies ENV4, ENV10, ENV12
- Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole & Dorset Waste Plan (2019), in particular Policies 14 and 19

ADDITIONAL POLICY CONSIDERATION / GUIDANCE

Portland Neighbourhood Plan (2020), in particular Policies Port/EN4 & Port/EN7
Portland Conservation Areas Appraisal (2017)
Isle of Portland Heritage & Character Assessment (AECOM, 2017)
Historic England, The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2nd edn (2017)
Historic England, Local Heritage Listing, 2nd edn (2016)
Design and Sustainable Development SPD (2009)

CONDITIONS

1. A revised site layout is to be provided and approved in writing demonstrating the retention of the extant tracks of the Breakwater Branch Railway.

2. Details of proposed temporary protection works to the Inner Breakwater (e.g. commemorative plaque) and Dockyard Offices (if required) are to be provided and approved in writing.
3. Additional verified views are to be provided and approved in writing showing the impacts of the proposed lighting scheme in night-time conditions.
4. Samples and/or product details of the proposed roofing, walling and cladding materials are to be provided and approved in writing.
5. The final designs for the proposed printed photographic elements of the buildings' cladding are to be provided and approved in writing.
6. Before commencement, a Heritage Strategy outlining a programme of heritage-related mitigation is to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority in writing. Any agreed works are to be undertaken and completed before completion of the main works on site, taking into account the need for any consents.

Informative

N/A

OFFICER: James Weir

TITLE: Senior Conservation Officer (Spatial Planning & Majors)

DATE: 17 November 2020