

P/17/0262/FP

HILL HEAD

EASTERN SOLENT COASTAL
PARTNERSHIP

AGENT: EASTERN SOLENT
COASTAL PARTNERSHIP

RECONSTRUCTION OF 150 METRES OF SEAWALL

HILL HEAD BEACH HILL HEAD FAREHAM HAMPSHIRE

Report By

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Site Description

This application relates to a stretch of coastline located to the east of the Hill Head Sailing Club building and public car park and toilets to the south of Cliff Road. The application site involves approximately 150 metres of the promenade and beach adjacent to the immediate north of which lie a number of beach huts.

At present the promenade is surfaced in concrete and shingle in front of the beach huts. The edge of the promenade where it meets the shingle beach is a sea wall constructed of gabion baskets and concrete filled bags which was built approximately 25 - 30 years ago. The land, and therefore these coastal defences, are owned by Fareham Borough Council. The frontage has been significantly affected in the last 12 years with a 30m section of the sea wall and promenade being rebuilt with similar materials in 2005. A further 30m section of frontage failed and was re-built and patched in 2014.

In September 2016 planning permission was granted for a beach recharge involving the importation of shingle onto the beach to top up the levels which had become depleted over time (reference P/16/0800/D3). Repairs were also carried out to the existing timber groynes on the beach to help protect the seawall from waves.

The application site lies adjacent to, and work will occur temporarily within, the Solent & Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) and the Solent and Dorset proposed Special Protection Area (pSPA). In addition the site is adjacent to and, temporary works would take place within, the Lee-on-the-Solent to Itchen Estuary SSSI and close by to the Titchfield Haven SSSI.

Description of Proposal

Planning permission is sought for the reconstruction of a 150 metre stretch of the existing seawall.

It is proposed to partially encapsulate the existing seawall within the new structure which would be built extending the promenade in width to the south onto the beach. A sheet piled wall clad in reinforced concrete would be constructed where the extended promenade abuts the beach and the gap behind the sheet piles would be infilled. On top of the sheet piles, which would be at the finished level of the promenade concrete slab, would be a further 600mm high recurve 'upstand' wall sloped towards the sea at its top. On top of the upstand would be a stainless steel barrier rail at an additional height of 500mm with posts a maximum of 1 metre apart (revised drawings were provided by the applicant on 10th April to change the design and materials of the rail barrier from a pre-galvanized "Kee Klamp" style). In total the upstand and barrier rail would be 1100mm (1.1m) higher than the level of the promenade. The height of the upstand and barrier rail on the beach side of the

structure would vary according to the level of shingle on the beach.

Access to the beach from the promenade is proposed via a concrete slipway at the western end of the new wall, a set of steps approximately 45 metres east of there and another set of steps around 20 metres from the eastern end of the new wall. The eastern end of the wall would link into the existing seawall to the east of the site. That end of the promenade would also be wider than the rest with the aim being to correct the existing 'kink' in the wall at that point. An area for four benches plus a strip of vegetated shingle would be located on the northern side of the promenade at that point also.

Policies

The following policies apply to this application:

Approved Fareham Borough Core Strategy

CS4 - Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

CS5 - Transport Strategy and Infrastructure

CS14 - Development Outside Settlements

CS15 - Sustainable Development and Climate Change

CS17 - High Quality Design

CS21 - Protection and Provision of Open Space

Development Sites and Policies

DSP13 - Nature Conservation

Relevant Planning History

The following planning history is relevant:

P/16/0800/D3 Beach Recharge, involving importation of shingle to raise beach levels for flood and erosion protection

APPROVE

02/09/2016

Representations

Thirty-eight letters have been received in response to the application being publicised.

Many of the letters expressed support in principle for sea defences in this location. However the letters all objected to the proposal raising the following main planning issues:

- The visual impact of the proposed wall and in particular the rail barrier
- Restriction on access to the beach

Consultations

INTERNAL

Highways - No highway objection is raised. Various notes for information are suggested for inclusion on the decision notice.

Environmental Health - No objection. Where possible works that may result in noise being emitted from the site that are likely to impact on nearby residents should be carried out between reasonable hours (ie. Monday to Friday 0800 - 1800; Saturday 0900 - 1500 and

not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays).

Ecology - The proposal is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts on ecological receptors.

EXTERNAL

Natural England - No objection subject to appropriate mitigation being secured. Suggested conditions relating to timing of works and accordance with Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Planning Considerations - Key Issues

a) Need for a new seawall

The applicant, the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership, has supplied various pieces of information in support of the application. The Environmental Issues Report (p10) describes the need and purpose of the sea wall and explains that in recent years the existing sea wall has failed a number of times. In particular the severe winter storms of 2013/2014 eroded beach material from the frontage to the extent that by 2015 beach levels had dropped by up to 1.2 metres below the level observed just three years earlier in 2012.

The increased storm frequency and severity experienced in recent years has undermined the structural integrity of the sea wall. Works were carried out last year to recharge the beach and repair the timber groynes, however these works on their own cannot be expected to protect the seawall during winter storm conditions in the long term. The applicant states that a more long-term solution is required to address the still existing high risk of further future failures of coastal defences along this frontage.

Core Strategy Policy CS14 looks to strictly control development on land outside of the defined urban settlement boundary such as this. It explains however that "acceptable forms of development will include that essential for agriculture, forestry, horticulture and required infrastructure". Given the demonstrable need for improved sea defences in this location the development proposed is considered to be required infrastructure and so an acceptable form of development subject to an assessment of the impacts, including the impact on the landscape character, appearance and function of the countryside and coastline which is discussed below.

b) Design and appearance

The height and design of the wall has been arrived at by the Eastern Solent Coastal Partnership as the best design solution to fulfill its purpose of protecting the coast from flooding and erosion. The applicant has explained that the seawall was designed in accordance with the Construction Design Management Regulations 2015. Under these regulations there is a statutory requirement for designers to consider foreseeable risks and eliminate, control or reduce these over the life of the structure. The applicant has identified that the risk and consequences of a fall from height from the seawall is too great and as a result a barrier rail 500mm on top of the upstand is proposed to protect the public from falls when the beach levels are low.

Whether the rail barrier is required or not for health and safety purposes is not a matter for the Planning Committee to consider. However, its appearance and the visual effect on the beach and promenade is an important planning consideration.

There have been a number of letters received from local residents and owners of beach huts raising concerns over the inclusion of the upstand and, in particular, the rail barrier and Officers acknowledge the strength of feeling on this particular matter.

The fact that the new wall would have an upstand would mean it would appear different from the existing wall which does not. Notwithstanding the new upstand would be relatively low at 600mm above the level of the promenade and would not be visually prominent within the wider landscape. Rail barriers can be seen in a few areas nearby including along the steps leading down to the beach from Cliff Road and around steps from the promenade onto the beach. Safety rails are common place in many locations in the public realm including seafront promenades. The rail barrier proposed is modest in terms of its height above the level of the upstand and would be constructed of a good quality material in stainless steel (which is a revision from the originally proposed pre-galvanised "Kee Klamp" product). Officers do not consider that the presence of a barrier rail would have a materially harmful effect on the appearance and character of the beach.

As a result there would be no conflict with Core Strategy Policy CS17 which seeks to ensure development responds positively and is respectful of the key characteristics of an area, including amongst other things the landscape and use of external materials. The proposal also complies with the requirements of Core Strategy Policy CS14 in that it would not adversely affect the landscape character, appearance and function of the countryside and coastline.

c) Access to beach

Another important issue raised by residents and beach hut owners is that of access to the beach from the promenade.

At present there is no upstand or rail barrier preventing access from any part of the promenade down onto the beach so long as the levels of the beach allow. The proposed seawall would provide two sets of steps down to the beach and a further ramped access at its western end. Whilst this may mean that beach users are required to walk further along the promenade before accessing the beach the distance between access points is not considered excessive and the need for such points needs to be balanced with the overall objective of the wall to prevent flooding and coastal erosion from occurring. Taking into account therefore its purpose, the seawall would not be materially harmful to the permeable movement of people on and off the beach such that it were found to be contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS17.

The beach and promenade is part of an area of public open space designated in the local plan. In accordance with Core Strategy Policy CS21 the proposed works would not reduce the recreational value of the open space and would instead look to safeguard this recreational asset from future flood and erosion risks.

d) Ecology

The application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and a Badger Setts Report. The Council's ecologist has advised that the proposal is unlikely to result in significant adverse impacts on ecological receptors. Natural England have raised no objections to the proposal.

The approach to retain and where possible enhance habitats of protected species following

the works and to reduce recreational disturbance is appropriate. The mitigation measures referenced in the submitted Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) are sufficient to mean that planning permission could be granted with a suitable planning condition securing the development proceed in accordance with that plan. A further condition requiring the works to have finished prior to the over-wintering period for migratory birds is recommended by Natural England.

e) Construction management

The public car park will be closed and the area used for construction purposes and for the turning of the large delivery vehicles. It is anticipated that there will be approximately 100 lorry loads delivering construction materials over a three month period, planned for July, August and September. The timing of the development is intended to avoid disturbance to over-wintering birds on the Solent. Several advisory notes are suggested at the foot of this report to help the applicant avoid unnecessary impacts on the highway network and neighbours living nearby through noise nuisance.

Conclusion

The proposal is found to accord with the relevant policies of the adopted local plan namely Policies CS4, CS5, CS14, CS15, CS17 & CS21 of the adopted Fareham Borough Core Strategy and Policy DSP13 of the adopted Fareham Borough Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies.

Recommendation

PERMISSION subject to the following conditions:

1. The development shall begin before the expiry of a period of three years from the date of this decision.

REASON: To allow a reasonable time period for work to start, to comply with Section 91 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, and to enable the Council to review the position if a fresh application is made after that time.

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved documents:

- a) Drawing no. SE13-1365 Rev A - Site Layout Plan
- b) Drawing no. SE13-1394 - Mean High Water Tide Levels
- c) CM-102 - Existing Location Plan
- d) CM-121-03
- e) CM-122-03
- f) CM-123-03
- g) CM-131-03
- h) CM-132-03
- i) CM-133-03
- j) CM-141-03
- k) CM-142-03
- l) CM-152-03
- m) CM-153-03
- n) CM-161-03
- o) CM-162-03
- p) Note of ecological watching brief for Hill Head Beach Management
- q) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - July 2016
- r) Badger Sett Report - February 2017

- s) Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
 - t) Construction Environmental Management Plan - January 2017 (updated)
 - u) Drawing no. SE13-1364 - Access Route
 - v) Drawing no. SE13-1382 Rev A - Pedestrian - Traffic Sign Plan
- REASON: To avoid any doubt over what has been permitted.

3. The development shall be carried out fully in accordance with the approved Construction Environmental Management Plan - January 2017 (updated) unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To protect habitats important to biodiversity.

4. No work relating to the development hereby permitted shall take place between 15th October and 31st March in the following calendar year unless otherwise agreed in writing by the local planning authority.

REASON: To avoid impacts on over-wintering birds.

Notes for Information

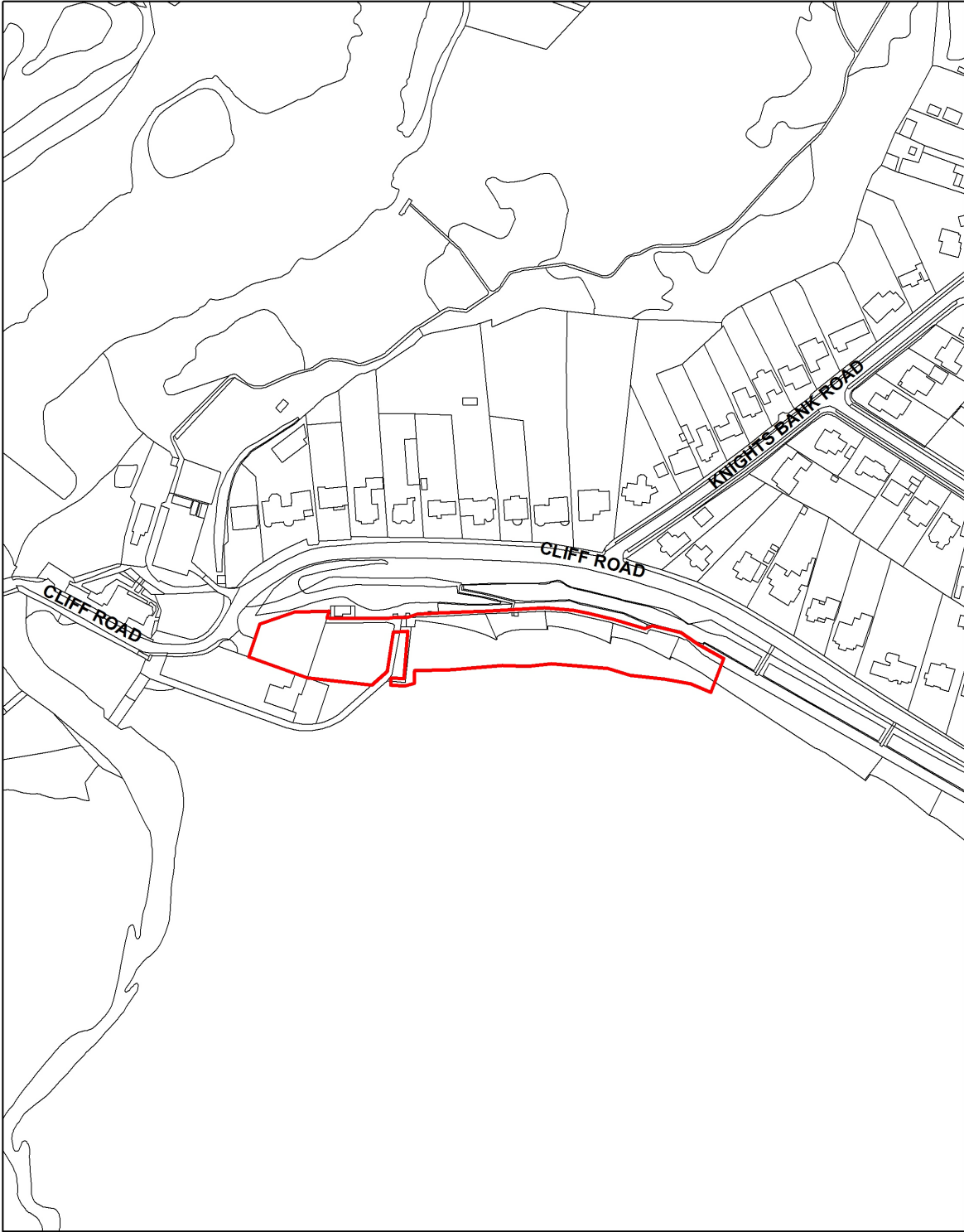
- a) A banksman should be stationed at the access to Cliff Road whenever large construction vehicles leave the site
- b) Adequate parking space should be provided on site for operative's private vehicles
- c) Within reason, no lorry activity should take place on Cliff Road between 0700 - 0930 and 1600 - 1830 hours.
- d) The surface of Cliff Road should be immediately cleaned if debris is drawn out from the site.
- e) Before and after inspections of the highway should be held to ensure any damage arising from the development is made good.
- f) Where possible works that may result in noise being emitted from the site that are likely to impact on nearby residents should be carried out between reasonable hours (ie. Monday to Friday 0800 - 1800; Saturday 0900 - 1500 and not at all on Sundays or Bank Holidays).

Background Papers

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FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL



Hill Head Beach
Scale 1:2500



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