



Heritage and the Low Carbon Transition: Planning for Ports And Harbours

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Ports and harbours are fast leaning into the modernisation of infrastructure to anticipate the needs of a new generation of vessels and to meet the challenge of climate change. The sector must ensure it is conversant with the shore side planning system in order to bring forward change as effectively and efficiently as possible, often whilst grappling with development challenges in locations with a legacy of heritage infrastructure.

On 16 September 2024, Powerfuel Portland (“the appellant”) was granted planning permission by the Secretary of State for the development of an energy recovery facility (“ERF”) with site access through Portland Port from Castletown.

A key consideration raised in the course of the public inquiry into the recovered appeal was the impact of the development on the heritage assets in and around the port and upon the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site and listed buildings.

Among a host of issues, the Inspector considered that the starting point for an analysis of the impact of the appellant’s proposal on the setting and significance of all the heritage assets was that the appeal site was a working commercial port and was once a significant Royal Navy base.

The Inspector accepted the appellant’s point that modernisation of the Port shore power provision by means of the ERF was a continuation of the evolution of the port. The Secretary of State agreed that the proposal would take its place as another functional building or structure of significant scale, within the immediate and wider port context.

The Secretary of State identified heritage benefits, job creation, electricity generation, the provision of shore power and potential carbon emission reduction among the factors weighing in favour of the proposal.

As the climate change agenda continues to accelerate under the new UK government, decisions of the Secretary of State such as these and the reasoning of the Inspector in this recovered appeal will pay dividends for port and harbour operators planning an upgrade of their infrastructure over the short to medium period.

The Secretary of State’s decision letter and the Inspector’s report can be read in full [at this link](#).

LA Marine advise Portland Port Limited in relation to many aspects of port operation, which includes, but is not limited to, the purchasing and leasing of property, planning and development, the purchase of workboats, mooring advice, ports and harbour regulation and general commercial advice.

About the author

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