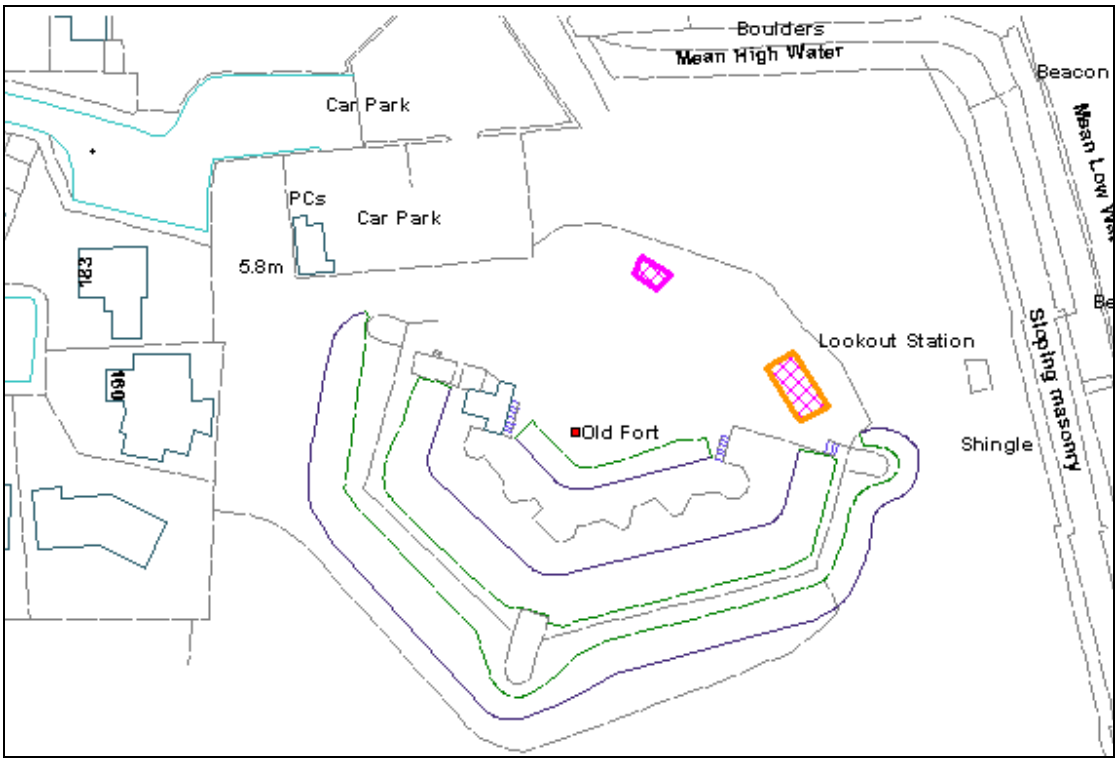
Application Number: AWDM/1560/14 **Recommendation – Temporary approval for 5 years**

Site: **Old Fort, Forthaven, Shoreham-By-Sea West Sussex**

Proposal: **Retention of WWII style Nissen hut and food hut to be used as education facility in connection with Scheduled Ancient Monument (5 year permission) (retrospective).**

Applicant: Mr Tim Hague Ward: Marine

Case Officer: Peter Barnett



Not to Scale

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Proposal, Site and Surroundings

This application relates to Shoreham Fort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument located at the eastern end of Shoreham Beach adjacent to the Harbour entrance. It was built in 1857 as a response to the escalating fear of invasion by France. The fort was also in use during the Second World War when, amongst other modifications, three Nissen

huts (tunnel-shaped sheds of corrugated steel) were erected to billet troops. They were removed in the 1950s, leaving the concrete bases that they were built on.

In 2013, a Nissen hut was donated to the Friends of Shoreham Fort for use as secure, dry, internal education space for schools and visiting groups. The hut was erected on the site in March 2014, together with a small food hut.

This application seeks retrospective permission to retain these structures, on a temporary basis only for five years.

Consultations

***English Heritage**:* The huts are harmful to the heritage significance of Shoreham Fort because they obstruct key views and appreciation of the morphology of the Victorian Fort. The national heritage significance of the fort lies in its Victorian design and purpose, not in its later use during the Second World War. However, we recognise that the buildings provide facilities for the valuable educational work that the Friends of Shoreham Fort do and we would wish them to continue this work and establish better facilities in the medium term.

Therefore, we do not object to a five year permission but the buildings should be taken down after five years if they are no longer necessary for educational use, or if a better long-term solution can be found. Scheduled monument consent has been granted for the retention of the buildings until 1 October 2019.

***West Sussex County Council**:* The **Archaeological Officer** has no objection to a temporary 5 year permission to retain the buildings as there have been no excavations and their emplacement has caused no direct impact on the fabric of the scheduled fort. Further intrusion of new structures upon the monument should not be permitted in future, or there will be a danger of cluttering the site and so reversing the benefits to the monument arising from the enhancements to date.

***Adur & Worthing Councils**:* The **Shoreham Harbour Regeneration Officer** has no objection. Strategic Objective 9 of the Draft Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan (2014) includes the protection and enhancement of the area's historic assets, including the Scheduled Monument at Shoreham Fort. Policy JAAP 10 supports the comprehensive restoration of the Fort. Paragraph 2.9.2 notes that various plans have been considered for the fort, which have highlighted local interest for a facility that could be used for educational purposes.

The Nissen hut is situated in close proximity to Shoreham Fort and therefore does impact on the setting of this Scheduled Monument. However, this impact should be weighed against the educational benefits of retaining the hut. The Partnership is supportive of the educational activities carried out by the Friends of Shoreham Fort. Given that the application is for a temporary permission for 5 years, the Partnership would urge that the application to retain the hut as an education facility is approved.

Representations

None received

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

Adopted Adur District Local Plan 1993-2006 (ADC 1996) (saved policies): AG1, AB1
National Planning Policy Framework (CLG 2012)

Relevant Legislation

The Committee may grant planning permission for development carried out before the date of the application in accordance with Section 73A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Save that the development will have already commenced, this is a conventional planning application, and the Committee should consider the planning circumstances existing at the time of the decision in accordance with:
Section 70 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) that provides the application may be granted either unconditionally or subject to relevant conditions, or refused. Regard shall be given to relevant development plan policies, any relevant local finance considerations, and other material considerations; and
Section 38(6) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that requires the decision to be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Planning Assessment

Principle

The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and any development should not detract from the significance of this heritage asset.

Visual amenity and impact on Scheduled Ancient Monument

The buildings are very prominent and could be considered to contrast adversely with the architectural form of the Victorian fort and as such detract from the setting of the SAM. Both buildings have, however, been sited on existing hardstandings to the north east of the fort, with the Nissen hut very close to the original remaining walls of the fort.

Responses from consultees, including English Heritage, support the retention of the structures for a temporary period. English Heritage has stated that they recognise that the buildings provide facilities for the valuable educational work that the Friends of Shoreham Fort do and they would wish them to continue this work, but with the hope that they will establish better and more appropriate facilities in the medium term. This view is shared by the Shoreham Harbour Regeneration Team.

On balance, therefore, it is considered that temporary five year permission can be granted exceptionally, because of the educational benefits of retaining the buildings, but it is hoped that the Friends of Shoreham Fort will find a better long term solution by the end of that period. The permission should run until 1 October 2019 to be consistent with the scheduled monument consent granted by English Heritage.

Recommendation

APPROVE

Subject to Conditions:-

1. Temporary permission expiring 1 October 2019
2. Approved plans

19th January 2015