

Cornish Ports and Harbours; assessing heritage significance, threats protection and opportunities

Key Management Recommendations for Cornwall and Scilly's Ports and Harbours

This Project's Stage 3 project Report, Section 10 report sets out the generic issues and management recommendations for each class of port and harbour, each Historic Character Type and each type of port and harbour component that were mapped, described and assessed as part of Stage 2 of the project (Johns and Fleming 2016). The management recommendations are also synthesised in the Historic Environment Action Plan (HEAP) for Cornwall and Scilly's ports and harbours (Fleming and Johns 2016).

The key management recommendations for Cornwall and Scilly's ports and harbours arising from the 'Cornish ports and harbours' project are summarised below.

Audit and condition survey

Many structures at Cornwall Council (CC) owned ports and harbours (and others) have suffered in the past from a lack of maintenance; some are in only fair or poor condition and all are at risk of future deterioration as a result of increasing impacts from climate change events and coastal erosion. There is regular need for annual maintenance of structures (e.g. pointing) and long term maintenance and repair of quays over time.

An audit and condition survey should be carried out of all designated and undesignated port-related heritage assets (cf recommendations for an audit and condition of all CC-owned maritime assets by Fisher Associates 2014a).

Heritage Partnership Agreements

The 2014 study by Fisher Associates carried out a study of ports and the historic environment for Historic England (Fisher Associates 2014b). The study concluded that initial engagement with ports confirmed that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to the port sector is not appropriate, and that engaging with the port industry is paramount for successful outcomes. It recommended a strategic approach comprising four key measures:

- Measure 1: Build better relationships.
- Measure 2: Stand-alone guidance on how to deal with historic environment and heritage assets.
- Measure 3: Update master planning/other guidance.

- Measure 4: Heritage Partnership Agreements (non-statutory/statutory).

Each of the strategy measures has its own merits in particular circumstances, with Measure 1 building the foundation for the other measures to be successfully implemented. The stand-alone guidance is possibly the most valuable, as this could be made available to all ports. This relies on Measure 1 being properly implemented with on-going engagement. Updating the master planning guidance would assist ports that use it to develop their longer term strategies, while updating Measure 2 would make the guidance available to all trust ports.

Heritage Partnership Agreements (HPAs), whether non-statutory or statutory, will be applicable to only some ports, which should become apparent as the relationship between Historic England and the port industry grows. Only a few (non-statutory) HPAs have been implemented to date, thus there is limited best practice to draw from, and there are mixed views on their success. As highlighted in this report, Cornwall Council is currently working on a HPA with the National Trust, using Mullion Harbour as a pilot project with the idea of using it as model for further HPAs for Cornwall Council owned ports and harbours. Heritage Partnership Agreements were recommended for the following Stage 2 ports and harbours: Penberth Cove, Penzance, Portreath and Truro.

Conservation Management Plans

Most Cornish ports and harbours would benefit from adequately-resourced Conservation Management Plans, informed by appropriate condition surveys and structural assessments. Such Plans should include a vision for the port or harbour along with a set of management policies, taking into account the historic character of the place. These policies should be specific to the needs of each port or harbour and its related heritage and the people who value it and its current management issues. It is important that there should be inclusivity across all port interests in generating such Plans, their Vision and management policies. CMPs are recommended for the port-related heritage of the following Stage 2 ports and harbours: Bude, Charlestown, Fowey, Hayle, Lerryn, Newlyn, Penberth, Penzance, Portreath, St Mary's Harbour and Truro.

- At Mullion Cove, on the Lizard peninsula, ongoing maintenance of the structure of the harbour walls and breakwater has been needed since their construction 115 years ago. Maintenance costs since 1992 have been over £1 million, indicating the extent to which this harbour is exposed to the power of the sea. Because the Harbour is under constant threat from slowly rising sea levels and increased storminess future options need to be assessed. The first stage of the HPA is a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the harbour which was commissioned in June 2016. The Plan will include a vision for Mullion Harbour along with a set of management policies, taking into account what has gone before. These policies will be

specific to the needs of Mullion Harbour and its port-related heritage and the people who value it and its current management issues. In particular, the CMP will identify the tipping point at which it will be necessary to call a halt to further work when, with the involvement of local authorities and Historic England, repairs would not be undertaken although the harbour walls might be consolidated to preserve most of the structure for as long as possible.

Conservation Area Appraisals

Conservation Areas were first introduced in 1967 through the Civic Amenities Act and to date more than 9000 exist in the UK. The current Act governing the designation of these 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance' is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Under this Act local planning authorities are required to designate conservation areas, to keep them under review and if appropriate to designate further areas. Designation remains the principal means by which local authorities can apply conservation policies to a particular area. Current guidance is set out by Historic England in the Advice Note 1 'Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management' (Historic England 2016a).

Most of the larger Cornish ports and harbours have Conservation Areas. Portreath is a notable exception, a fact highlighted by the Stage 2 study. In accordance with guidance issued by Historic England it is good practice to regularly review Conservation Area Appraisals to ensure they remain accurate and up to date. The Stage 2 studies recommend that Appraisals should be carried out for Hayle, Lerryn and Polruan and Bodinnick and that reviews should be carried out for Bude, Charlestown, Newlyn, Penzance and Truro.

Digital surveys

In order to help better understand the heritage assets of Cornwall's ports and harbours digital survey of key historic components is recommended; this should include a measured topographical survey as well as surveys of historic buildings and structures.

- In 2009 Historic Building Analysis of the south pier at Penzance was commissioned by the Halcrow Group Ltd as part of a planning application in connection with extensions to the harbour facilities at Penzance (The Cahill Partnership 2009); following on from this a Schedule of Conservation Repairs was prepared by Jonathan Rhind Architects. The preparation of similar Schedules is recommended for other historic piers and breakwaters, such as Portreath and Albert Pier, Penzance.

Protection through Designation

There is generally a good level of designation and protection in place for the majority of Cornwall's historic port and harbour areas, including Conservation Area status. In order to ensure the best protection for all maritime heritage assets within historic port areas, however, ongoing assessment and evaluation to identify suitable candidates for designation is recommended. Guidance criteria for the Listing and Scheduling of heritage assets is set out in the Listing and Scheduling Selection Guides on the Historic England website (<https://historicengland.org.uk>).

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/listing-selection/>

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/selection-criteria/scheduling-selection/>

Local Lists

Encourage local authorities jointly with communities and neighbourhood groups in the production of Local Lists of heritage assets, following the guidance set out in the 'Advice Note 7 Local Heritage Listing' (Historic England 2016b).

Sustainable forward planning

Future management of Cornwall's ports and harbours should combine planning system requirements with sustainable forward planning at ports, based on an inclusive approach to generating Conservation Management Plans accompanied by a relevant Vision and management plan policies.

Consideration should be given to the management of designated and undesignated heritage assets in the formulation of long term business and strategic plans for Cornwall and Scilly's ports and harbours.

- In 2016 a ten-year management plan for Penzance Harbour was prepared by Arcadis (UK) Limited for Cornwall Council. The management plan notes the Listed Buildings and the undesignated buildings of historic interest identified by the Penzance Conservation Area Appraisal (Cornwall Council 2010). It also includes relevant Aims and Objectives from the Cornwall Maritime Strategy (Cornwall Council 2012) relating to the historic maritime environment in support of its 'Vision' for Penzance Harbour: *'To provide a safe, functional and financially self-sustaining harbour which delights visitors, supports local businesses and is a key contributor towards economic regeneration and environmental stewardship in Mount's Bay'*.

References

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