

Consultation Advice

Application reference: R/2020/0411/FFM

CONSTRUCTION OF THE REDCAR ENERGY CENTRE (REC) CONSISTING OF A MATERIAL RECOVERY FACILITY INCORPORATING A BULK STORAGE FACILITY; AN ENERGY RECOVERY FACILITY; AND AN INCINERATOR BOTTOM ASH RECYCLING FACILITY ALONG WITH ANCILLARY INFRASTRUCTURE AND LANDSCAPING

REDCAR BULK TERMINAL

Proposal

1. The application is an EIA application from which the historic heritage was scoped out from the environmental assessment at an earlier stage consultation with the Council.
2. Consequently, there is an archaeological desk-based assessment (DBA) submitted with the planning application, rather than a cultural heritage chapter in the Environmental Statement. The DBA is produced after consulting the Council's HER, the National Heritage List, historic ordnance survey maps, and other maps. These are the usual sources, and the DBA follows industry standards and guidelines. There has been no site visit, but we agree with the compilers that a site visit was not critical in this instance.
3. The site is located on made ground lying formerly within the mud-flats and inter-tidal zone of Bran Sands. It lies to the west of the nineteenth century breakwater at South Gare, and slightly higher ground bordering the sands and the Tees.

Assessment

4. (a) The DBA evidences no designated assets on site, and considers that there are no settings of designated assets that would be adversely affected by the development (primarily as a result of the landscape baseline conditions, of heavy industrial development).

(b) The only non-designated asset recorded in the DBA, of local significance, is the tramway that ran east-west along the former Redcar Jetty. The DBA states that the jetty and tramway are no longer extant, having been destroyed by alteration of the landform in the 1970s; they are not visible on current aerial photographs. There are stray finds of prehistoric flint recorded by the DBA.

(c) The HA does not address the archaeological value of the tidal margin at Bran Sands, as an area of possible prehistoric exploitation. It is reasonable to assume that the low-lying land at the coastal margins represented a valuable resource in prehistory, and that identifiable marginal habitats do not become lost to study because they are subsequently buried by made ground. In this instance the site straddles the site of a former jetty, not the approximate site of a previous high-water line, beach or

river bank. The first edition of the Ordnance Survey six-inch series (not referred to in the DBA) shows that before the later nineteenth century the area occupied by the site consisted of shifting sands and periodically navigable swatchways. However, the construction of parts of the development are very significant undertakings, in particular the 'bunker', indicated on submitted plan and section drawings to be structure that will be excavated to a depth of 12 metres, extending to up to 3000 square metres in area. In consequence, we are of the opinion that it would be a reasonable precaution, in ensuring that no archaeological deposits are destroyed without adequate record, to require archaeological review of borehole logs and test pit data carried out as part of ground investigation. This would be with a view to ascertaining whether, when construction proceeds, any archaeological watching brief or similar is desirable.

Recommendation

5. We therefore suggest the following condition be attached to any planning permission granted.

(a) No development shall take place until all borehole logs and trial pit data carried out as part of ground investigation works have been reviewed by a competent archaeologist in accordance with a written scheme previously approved by the local planning authority. The written scheme shall provide as a minimum that the competent archaeologist shall produce a report on the significance of the logs and data to assist in determining whether an archaeological watching brief (or other work) is required of ground disturbance during the remediation works and during construction groundworks in any areas identified as of archaeological interest.

(b) Before construction or remediation takes place, and where the local planning authority determines that a watching brief or other archaeological work is required during remediation and/or construction, the developer shall secure such work according to a written scheme of investigation (WSI) approved by the local planning authority for the purpose. The developer shall thereafter carry out the approved scheme.

North East Archaeological Research Ltd,

1st September 2020