

Application Number:	P/LBC/2025/05844
Site address:	Lyme Regis Harbour The Cobb Lyme Regis DT7 3JJ
Proposal:	Repair to void under The Cobb by filling with marine concrete and repair to damaged/destroyed concrete toe. Erection of temporary counterbalance scaffold and Haki steps
Applicant name:	Adam Steele
Case Officer:	Eve Van der Steen
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Bawden

1. Reason application is going to committee:

This application has been brought to committee as the structure to which the application relates is owned by Dorset Council and Dorset Council is also the applicant.

2. Summary of recommendation:

GRANT subject to conditions as set out at the end of this report.

3. Key issues

Issue	Conclusion
Impact on Heritage Asset, Setting and Conservation Area.	No adverse impact.

4. Description of site

- 4.1 The Cobb is a monolithic sea wall of medieval origins which contains the harbour at Lyme Regis. It is grade I listed and provides some defence of the town against the effects of coastal erosion and storm damage. The Cobb shelters the harbour, a working fishing port.
- 4.2 The part of the Cobb to which this application relates is the base of the outer face of the area locally known as the 'Ginshop Turn'. This is the curved section of walling between the High Wall and the Southern Arm, as indicated on the plan within the submitted Design and Access Statement.
- 4.3 The Cobb is built of various types of stone, but the outer face of the area to which this application relates is of massive, squared blocks thought to date from an 18th or 19th century phase of repairs and rebuilding.

5. Description of development

- 5.1 These emergency works seek to repair a section of deep voiding beneath the Cobb and advanced stage deterioration of the structure's concrete toe. This work involves the infilling of the void with marine concrete and the repair and reinstatement of the failed concrete toe.

6. Background and relevant planning history

WD/D/17/001111 - Decision: RESPONDED Decision Date: 15/06/2017

Pre-Application Consultation - Installation of cylindrical steel piles for the permanent anchoring of pontoons

WD/D/20/001420 - Decision: GRANT Decision Date: 17/12/2020

Extension and repairs to existing slipway and extension of existing boat storage

1/W/03/001935 - Decision: WITHDRAWN Decision Date: 28/11/2003

Erect extension to existing rock armour

1/D/10/001057- Decision: GRANT Decision Date: 23/09/2010

Fix 3 hardwood timber fenders

P/ESC/2021/03181 - Decision: EIA Decision Date: 27/09/2021

EIA Screening Opinion - Lyme Regis Structures and Breakwater Improvements.

P/ESP/2021/03192 - Decision: SCOPED Decision Date: 29/10/2021

EIA Scoping Opinion - Lyme Regis Structures and Breakwater Improvements.

7. List of constraints

Grade I Listed Building: The Cobb Piers and Walls, Including North Wall: HE Reference: 1229437 (*statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*).

Grade II Listed Building: Buildings on the Cobb Pier occupied by Lyme Regis Sailing Club HE Reference: 1279078 (*statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*).

Within the Lyme Regis Conservation Area (*statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*).

8. Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

1. **Lyme Regis Town Council** - The town council supports the emergency works to maintain the integrity of the Cobb structure.

2. **Lyme Regis Ward Member**– no comments received.
3. **Historic England** – No comment: Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice.
4. **National Amenity Societies** – no comments received.

Representations received – None.

9. Duties

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - includes a general duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

10. Relevant policies

Development Plan

West Dorset Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2015

The following policies of the Local Plan are considered to be relevant:

ENV4 – Heritage Assets

Material considerations

Emerging local plans:

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- the stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The Dorset Council Local Plan

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options consultation took place between January and March 2021, with further consultation between 18 Aug – 31 October 2025. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the draft plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended 2025)

Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'- Paragraph 212 says that when considering designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. The effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account (para 216).

Lyme Regis Conservation Area Appraisal (Review 2010)

The Lyme Regis Conservation Area appraisal outlines the history and development of the Cobb, highlighting that The Cobb is a key characteristic of the Conservation Area and contributes significantly to its special interest. The appraisal goes on to state that this structure forms the town's maritime 'gateway' and that it is the most prominent landmark in the settlement, providing immense architectural, historical and visual interest. Page 14 states that *"walking The Cobb is one of the great Lyme experiences, whether on the top paved route out towards sea or at the lower level around the harbour with its famous steps called Granny's Teeth, stores, anchored boats and views inland and along the coast. The Cobb's structure is equally memorable."*

11. Human rights

Article 6 - right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted development plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the human rights of the applicant or any third party.

12. Public Sector Equalities Duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have "due regard" to this duty. There are 3 main aims: -

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have "regard to" and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The proposal will not impact on people with protected characteristics.

13. Assessment

Impact on Heritage Asset, Setting and Conservation Area

- 13.1 The Cobb is an iconic and monolithic stone structure which encloses the working harbour at Lyme Regis. It also acts as a significant line of defence against coastal erosion and storm damage. It is highly visible from many vantage points around the town and forms a key element of the town's distinctiveness and historic character.
- 13.2 This proposal seeks to undertake repairs to a significant void beneath the stonework of the Cobb in a discrete area of the outer wall on the area of the structure known as the 'Ginshop Turn' – adjacent to the northern most part of the southern arm. The void is c. 7m by c. 2m and has a depth of approximately 0.3m and has resulted in large stone blocks being unsupported.
- 13.3 The proposed repair is suggested as a 'stopgap' repair whilst the larger Lyme Regis Environmental Improvement Works - Phase 5 is designed and goes through the approvals process. This larger project is intended to stabilise the whole of the Cobb.
- 13.4 It is proposed that marine concrete is pumped into the void from a temporary scaffold over the Cobb. The scaffold will be weighted down and not affixed to the structure. Once the void is filled, precast concrete blocks will be placed in front of this area in order to prevent washout of materials. These will be removed once the repair is complete. The damaged concrete toe will be repaired to match the areas either side of the failed area, using wooden formwork and marine concrete. The infill of this large void beneath the Cobb will locally stabilise the structure, preventing further wash-out of the core of the wall.
- 13.5 Opportunities to undertake this work are severely limited by the tides and weather as water levels must be very low to enable access to the base of the wall. It had been hoped that these repairs could be undertaken during the very low tides in the late autumn, however the weather was poor and it was agreed that a temporary holding repair using 11, one-tonne rock bags at the base of the wall would be undertaken instead. It is planned that the works for which consent is now sought will be carried out when tides/ weather permit in the New Year.
- 13.6 Prior to the submission of this LBC application, Historic England (HE) were consulted, regarding the urgent requirement for emergency intervention, at formal HE pre-application stage. Supporting methodologies, specifications and plans were reviewed, and consequently in response to consultation on this application Historic England had no comments to make and deferred detailed consideration of the proposals to the Council's conservation specialists. Furthermore, Natural England have confirmed that "*the plan or project as proposed would not have an adverse effect on the integrity of European sites.*"
- 13.7 It is considered that the scale and methodology of these emergency repairs has been clearly justified and that the work will not cause harm to the significance of the listed structure, nor to the character and appearance of the Lyme Regis Conservation Area. Indeed, without these localised repairs, further undermining and scour of the base of the outer wall is possible which may result in much larger scale damage to the structure thereby increasing the scope of the wider stabilisation project in due course. As such the development is considered to accord with Policy ENV4 of the adopted Local Plan and the NPPF.

14. Conclusion

It is concluded that the development would have no adverse effect on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area or the significance of the Grade I listed structure and as such the proposals accord with the development plan and the NPPF. Regard has been had to the relevant duties of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in reaching this conclusion.

15. Recommendation

15.1 Grant listed building consent subject to the following conditions:

1. The work to which this listed building consent relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the consent is granted.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by reason of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

10/10/25 Location Map

LYMH-25-014-DW-002XS - Lyme Regis Cobb Emergency Repairs 2025 Outline Design Sheet 1 of 3

LYMH-25-014-DW-001PV - Lyme Regis Cobb Emergency Repairs 2025 Outline Design Sheet 2 of 3

LYMH-25-014-DW-003HZV - Lyme Regis Cobb Emergency Repairs 2025 Outline Design Sheet 3 of 3

Reason: To preserve the architectural and historical qualities of the building.

3. The development hereby approved shall be carried out in strict accordance with the repair method set out within the submitted Design and Method Statement produced by Sean Norsworthy, Dorset Council dated 3 October 2025

Reason: To preserve the special interest of and to prevent harm to the designated heritage asset.

Informative:

1. Please note that this decision notice relates only to listed building consent and does not grant planning permission for the proposed works or infer that the works would be permitted development.