

# Major milestone in restoration of Fort Bovisand as work on stabilising cliffs gets under way

**The ambitious project to restore the historic Fort Bovisand and build more than 80 houses and apartments on the wider site have come an important step closer, with the start of essential cliff stability works.**

Stabilising the cliffs will secure the road providing access to the Fort, and, just as importantly, preserve access to neighbouring residential properties.

Original plans had these works starting in March, but they were delayed by the pandemic. It is now anticipated that this stage will now be completed by early September when work will start on the rest of the project.

“We have taken the first step on the way to saving the Fort and bringing it back into sustainable and meaningful use”, said Greg Dyke, the former director general of the BBC and chairman of Fort Bovisand Developments. “This is the first stage of our exciting plans for the future of the Fort”.

“Basically, we are starting a £26 million project by spending more than half a million pounds making sure the access road at the front of the Fort doesn’t fall into the sea. Obviously this has to be done first before we get on with the rest of the project.”

Built in the 1860s as a defence against the threat posed by Napoleonic France,

Fort Bovisand is one of the best surviving Palmerston Forts. In recent years it became one of the largest and most important commercial diver training centres in Europe. The fort is in urgent need of repair and is currently on Historic England’s ‘at risk’ register.

The regeneration plans will bring new life to the site, restore the Fort’s historic buildings, improve sea defences and reinstate the harbour.

Two towers in the Upper Fort, demolished in the early part of the last century, will be rebuilt in a sympathetic style on their original foundations.

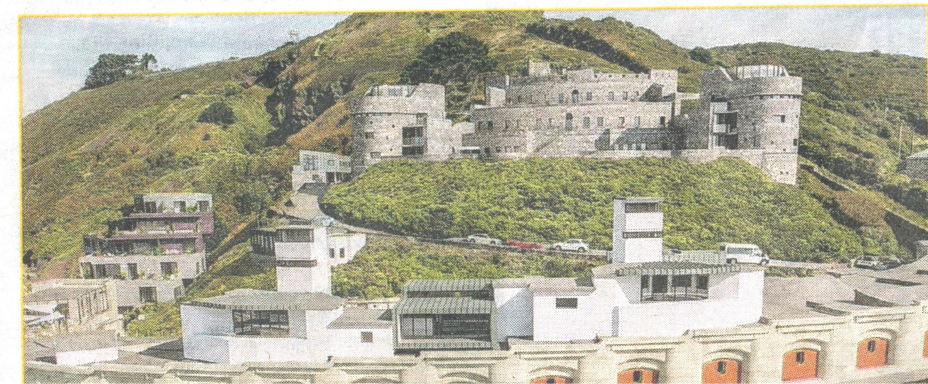
Three of the casemates will provide space for a bistro café and rooftop terrace offering stunning views across Plymouth Sound, and there will be a Visitors’ Centre and events space to promote the importance of this historic site. The regeneration plans include 81 new homes affording spectacular sea views from their terraces.

Access from the Fort Bovisand harbour to the South West Coast Path will be reinstated, and it is planned that a regular local ferry service will operate from there to points around Plymouth Sound.

Greg Dyke added: “For me this is a very exciting moment. I am delighted we are now in a position to start on this



Cliff stabilisation work under way at Fort Bovisand



project. We acquired this magnificent site some years ago, so actually starting on site is an important moment. As soon as I saw it and understood its history, I was determined it should be saved”.

“Very quickly it became clear that the best chance of saving and restoring the Fort was by allowing sensitive development on parts of the site. Both South Hams District Council and Historic England agreed with this

analysis and have been very supportive in getting a workable scheme agreed to achieve the future life of the fort”.

“With the Mayflower 400 commemorations deferred to 2021, this is an opportune time to commence restoring and developing the Fort, for the benefit of future residents, the rural economy, local residents, visitors and schools alike.”

[www.fortbovisanddevelopments.com](http://www.fortbovisanddevelopments.com)

# Work on development of Fort Bovisand to start in January after cliff repairs completed

**Ambitious plans to redevelop Fort Bovisand and create new properties and leisure amenities have demanded huge investment to secure access to the historic fort via the cliff road.**

After a sometimes hot, dry summer peppered with torrential rainfall and strong winds, remedial works on the first phase to secure the cliff face at Fort Bovisand are nearing completion.

The cliff supports the only access road serving the Fort and the nearby dwellings, and was, until the start of the stabilisation works, in imminent danger of crumbling away into the sea.

The Fort itself is also in urgent need of restoration and is currently on Historic England's 'at risk' register. Once the integrity of the cliff and approach road has been fully secured by Christmas, extensive renovation works on the buildings themselves can begin in earnest.



Aerial view showing the cliff face work under way

Matting being installed to stabilise the cliff face



Holidaymakers have made great use of the beaches overlooked by the Fort in the last few months. All the while, intensive drilling work to reinforce the cliff face has continued unabated.

Hundreds of stainless-steel soil nails have been inserted, together with pins to support stainless steel anti-erosion mesh. The addition of draining to remove excess ground water will help maintain the integrity of the remedial work and help prevent the possibility of damage in the years to come.

With these drains in place, the overlying mesh and protective matting doubles as a base for vegetation growth. The matting has been seeded with a coastal seed mix, rendering the remedial works virtually invisible as this grows in.

With the matrix of steel nails, matting and

drainage system now in place, the cliff-face is currently undergoing the final phase of these stability works, with the placement of rock-armor and the repair of the sea wall.

Completion of the majority of these works before Christmas will herald the start of the next exciting phase of the project early in the New Year.

Following some preparation work, the construction of the first dwellings will begin in January. This will be followed by the replacement of the crumbling accommodation building by the harbour and further renovations to the range of listed buildings and other works within the site to completion over the next couple of years.

There are still other stages to finish the major stabilisation work, but the future is already looking brighter for Fort Bovisand.