

DEVELOPMENT ENQUIRY SERVICE
PRE-APPLICATION SUMMARY REPORT



Application number	20/01282/MOR
Site address	Land below MBA on Madeira Road, The Hoe
Proposal	Pre-application for 'Welcome To Plymouth' sign and landscaping

Date of Response: DRAFT 10 SEPTEMBER 2020

Summary of key elements to the proposal

The original proposal also included benches and planting, however following guidance from Historic England in relation to Scheduled Ancient Monument consent this aspect has been removed, leaving only the sign for consideration.

Only advertisement consent will be required and the reinstatement of the 'Welcome to Plymouth' sign is considered to a good addition to the highly visible landscape of the Hoe. The choice of materials has been led by Historic England and is considered to be acceptable.

Relevant policies

The proposal has been assessed against the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2019, with particular reference to Stratgic Objective S03 (Delivering growth in Plymouth's City Centre and Waterfront Growth Area), PLY20 (Managing and enhancing Plymouth's waterfront), DEV20 (Place setting shaping and the quality of the built environment), DEV21 (Development affecting the historic environment), DEV23 (landscape character) and DEV29 (Specific provisions relating to transport).

The proposal has also been assessed against guidance set out in the Plymouth and South West Devon Supplementary Planning Document and the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.

Site Description

The application site is an area of sloping grassland on Plymouth Hoe, positioned between Madeira Road and the Marine Biological Association building. The area has previously had 'Welcome to Plymouth' lettering in the grass, which has been a mix of planting and chalk, although this has been left to grow over in recent years.

The site is positioned in a sensitive location and is within the Historic England Register of Park and Gardens, the Citadel Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Hoe Conservation Area and is in the setting of a number of listed buildings.

The slope it is positioned on is relatively steep, making it very visible and leads from a footpath at the top to a 1.2 metre drop down to a footpath and road below.

Relevant Site History

None

Consultation Responses

Urban Design – No objection to principle. Materials should reflect that of the surrounding built form. Raised concerns over planters on the slope and had queries regarding the sedum planting and linking it with other grassland.

Natural Infrastructure Team – Advised no significant issues and SPD guidance should be used

Historic Environment Officer – Verbal confirmation that they concur with the Historic England comments.

Local Highway Authority – Advised that there were no objections to the proposal

Historic England – A separate pre-application was made to Historic England as the site is within the Citadel Scheduled Ancient Monument. Their comments have been included as they are significant when assessing this proposal.

Historic England did not object to the principle of the lettering, however raised concerns over the material choice, recommending limestone or granite to tie in with the surrounding historic fabric. They raised concerns over planters on the slope and objected to the installation of any trees.

Assessment

Due to the removal of the benches and planting elements from the proposal, these will not be included in this report.

Lettering

The proposal is for an area of sloped grass approximately 4 metres height by 10 metres width to be reinstated with 'Welcome to Plymouth' lettering in large individual letters.

This signage has been in place in various forms over previous years, primarily by planting of brightly coloured flowers or chalked letters, however this has become overgrown in recent times.

The principle of reinstating the signage is supported, as it provides a prominent addition to the waterfront that is visible from both land and on the water, creating an eye-catching feature for those arriving by ferry to the city, drawing eyes towards the Hoe and the surrounding historical features. This would support the aims of Policies PLY20 and DEV20.

The submitted documents put forward a choice of materials, however due to being within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (the Royal Citadel), the choice of materials must be very carefully considered to avoid harming the significance of the Citadel and surrounding historic features.

The Council's Urban Designers considered that the choice of materials should reflect that of the surrounding built form and that local limestone or granite would be an appropriate choice. It was recommended placing a sample of any proposed materials in the grassland for a month or so to monitor how it weathers in terms of colour change, staining or other impacts that could influence the final material decision.

Separate pre-application advice was sought from Historic England, who advised that corten steel edging and resin-bound sandstone coloured gravel would be an acceptable choice of materials to tie in with the Scheduled Ancient Monument setting, whilst still providing contrast with surrounding planting. This is considered to be acceptable, as it will allow the signage to be clearly visible without dominating the Citadel and surrounding landscape.

The proposal is therefore considered acceptable in accordance with Policies SO3, PL20, DEV20 and DEV21.

The choice of materials and design is not considered to generate any highway safety concerns in accordance with Policy DEV29.

Planting on slope

The slope on which the planting is proposed forms part of an engineered sloping ground that was designed to provide a clear field of fire for the Citadel in times of war. The originally proposed benches and high level planting have been removed and it is proposed to alter the existing slope to sedum to improve maintenance of it.

This change is not considered to require planning permission as it does not fall under any significant engineering works and forms part of the general landscaping of the area. It should be confirmed with Historic England that the landscaping does not need Scheduled Ancient Monument consent due to the works.

Care should be taken to ensure it visually ties in with the surrounding landscape and surrounding grass.

Conclusion of Acceptability

Overall, the proposal would be supported in principle, subject to removal of certain aspects and with specific material choices.

The reinstatement of the lettering is welcomed, and the Historic England comments have been taken on board in terms of material and level of works proposed.

Advertising consent would be required for the signage from the Local Planning Authority, with Scheduled Ancient Monument consent being required from Historic England.

Planning Application

An application for advertising consent would be required for the signage. The easiest way to apply is online at www.planningportal.co.uk. The application would need to be accompanied by the following documents:

- Application form
- Fee of £462
- Site location plan – This should be to a recognised metric scale (recommended 1:1250), with the site boundary outlined in red and any other land under the same ownership outlined in blue. It must display a north arrow, at least one named road and a valid Ordnance Survey license number for use.
- Site plan – This is recommended to be at a scale of 1:200 or 1:500 and show the proposed lettering in place
- Lettering elevations/section – This is recommended at a scale of 1:50 and should show the protrusion of the lettering above the ground, as well as the level below the surface.
- Lettering plan – Recommended to a scale of 1:50
- Details of materials
- It is recommended to include any comments from Historic England on the proposal, as this supports the chosen design.

Separate consent from Historic England will be required for the Scheduled Ancient Monument consent. These two applications can be assessed in parallel by the relevant authorities.

PLEASE READ THESE NOTES CAREFULLY

Any advice given by council officers following pre-application enquiries does not constitute a formal response or decision of the council in respect of any future planning applications.

Any views or opinions expressed are given in good faith, and to the best of ability, based on existing planning policies and standards, without prejudice to the formal consideration of any future planning application. The final decision on any application that you may then make can only be taken after the Council has consulted local people, statutory consultees and other interested parties. The final decision on an application will then be made by senior planning officers or by the Council's planning committee and will be based on all of the information available at the time.

It follows that officers cannot give any guarantees about the final formal decision that will be made on any future planning application. However, any pre-application advice that has been provided will be carefully considered in reaching a decision or recommendation on an application, subject to the proviso that circumstances and information may change, and so alter that position. (The weight given to pre-application advice notes will inevitably decline over time and little or no weight may be given

to the Council's pre-application advice for schemes which are submitted more than two years after the advice being issued.)

Any advice given in relation to planning history of the site, planning constraints or statutory designations does not constitute a formal response under the provisions of the Local Land Charges Act 1975.

Pre-application requests for advice are made public and documents will normally be released if we receive a freedom of information request or environmental information request and our file notes will form part of the public file if an application follows. We cannot therefore guarantee confidentiality. If the information you provide includes commercially sensitive or confidential information this should be clearly stated at the head of the submission. We can then take this into account should an FOI/EIR request be received.

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