

Treverbyn House

Planning and Design Brief

June 2004

Treverbyn House





Background

Plymouth City Council has prepared this planning and design brief as a result of the proposed disposal of this site.

This document will be treated as a material consideration in the decision-making process. It has been subject to full and proper public consultation, prior to being formally adopted by the City Council, thereby giving it greater weight.

The brief has been prepared within the context of the strategic design approach for the city. This is set out within the City of Plymouth Local Plan 1995-2011 (First Deposit 2001) and includes the key urban design principles that will govern the design of new development in the future. These will be reproduced in the emerging Local Development Framework that will eventually replace the Local Plan.



Purpose Of The Brief

The aim of the design brief is to identify and established the main planning, urban design and conservation issues related to the site, that need to be considered by developers, when preparing schemes for re-development of the site. It communicates guiding principles for the development, taking into account the wider context, and will set out key constraints, and specific requirements.

Policy Background

‘The Governments aim is to create high quality towns and cities which people can be proud to live in. They must be attractive, clean, safe and well cared for, combining vitality and interest with practicality, sensitivity to the environment and continuity with the past. They must be well designed and planned, and to make the best use of previously developed land and buildings.’ The Urban White Paper- Our Towns and Cities of the future. 2000.

Current Initiatives

There are a number of strategies and initiatives that should be taken into account as appropriate to the redevelopment of the site:

- The Plymouth City Strategy. Plymouth 2020 Partnership
- The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy. Plymouth 2020 Partnership.
- A New Vision for Plymouth’s Built Environment. MBM Architectes.
- The Regional Economic Strategy for the Southwest of England. 2003-12
- The Economic Strategy for the Plymouth Sub-Region. 2001-4.



Relevant National Policies & Guidance

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policies and Principles.

This guidance note sets out the Government's general approach in relation to planning. The note identifies among other key policy objectives that sustainable development; mixed use development and quality urban design are core values in the Government's approach to planning.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing.

This guidance note sets out the Government's planning policy approach to the development of housing. The guidance states that: 'new housing and residential environments should make a significant contribution to promoting urban renaissance and improving the quality of life'.

In order to achieve the objective this PPG states, among other objectives, that Local Planning Authorities should:

- Plan to meet the housing requirements of the whole community, including those in need of affordable and special needs housing;
- Provide wider housing opportunity and choice and a better mix in the size, type, and location of housing than is currently available, and seek to create mixed use communities;
- Place the needs of people before ease of traffic movement in designing the layout of residential developments;
- Seek to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling, by improving linkages by public transport between housing, jobs, local services and local amenity and by planning for mixed use;
- Promote good design in new developments in order to create attractive, high-quality environments in which people will choose to live.

Sustainable Communities- Building for the Future. ODPM, 2003.

This document provides an important benchmark for the redevelopment of the site and the wider area. The following summarises what the Government considers to be some of the key attributes for a sustainable community:

- A mix of well-integrated uses;
- Good public transport and other transport infrastructure both within the community and linking it to urban, rural and regional centers;
- Buildings –both individually and collectively- that can meet the needs over time, and that minimise the use of resources;
- A well integrated mix of decent homes of different types and tenures to support the range of household sizes, ages and incomes;
- A diverse vibrant and creative local culture, encouraging pride in the community and cohesion within it;
- A positive and distinctive sense of place;
- The right links with the regional, national and international community.

A wide range of guidance on urban design and related issues has been published over the last ten years. Some of this guidance has been referred to in the preparation of this brief. Developers and their architects are advised to refer to the documents in the bibliography attached to the brief.



Relevant Local Policy & Guidance

Important planning policies affecting the site at the local level are contained within the following documents:

- City of Plymouth local Plan Adopted 1996;
- City of Plymouth local Plan First Deposit version (1995- 2011) 2001;

The following principles are particularly relevant to the site and illustrate how the City Council consider that new development should seek to shape the City of the future:

UD Principle 1. A City with individual identity. The characteristics of Plymouth that set it apart from other towns and cities need to be protected and built upon.

UD Principle 2. A City of communities. Communities need to be developed as attractive self-sustaining areas with distinct identities and excellent provision of local facilities, where opportunity exists for people to live work, go to school, shop, relax, play etc. within their own neighbourhood.

UD Principle 3. A City with quality streets and spaces. Safe, pedestrian friendly, accessible and visually stimulating streets and spaces should be created, which also encourage walking as a principle mode of transport.

UD Principle 4. A City with quality architecture. Architectural excellence should be encouraged.

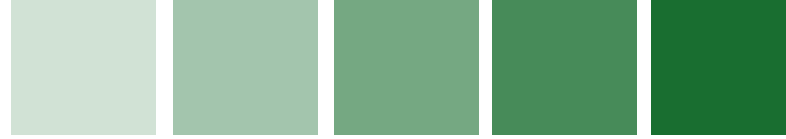
UD Principle 5. A City that respects its historic environment. Plymouths unique historic buildings, historic landscape, and historic townscapes are preserved and enhanced.

UD Principle 8. A legible city. The richness, quality, interest and variety of the environment should be safeguarded and improved, making it easy for people to orientate themselves within the city.

UD Principle 9. A sustainable City. Decisions taken about the development of the city today should aim to leave a positive legacy for its people of tomorrow.

The site is identified within an area covered by Policy 37, Hostels and Homes. This provides some criteria that will need to be met when granting planning permission for change of use to a home or hostel. This includes ensuring there is no discernible change to the residential character of the area, no loss of amenity to adjacent users or the character of the area.

Policies within the plan need to be considered by developers when preparing development schemes for the site. Policy 77: Development Setting is particularly relevant, which concerns the design and quality of new development in the city.



Context Studies

This section of the brief illustrates the findings of an appraisal of the site and its surrounding context. The appraisal has been carried out to inform appropriate development responses for the site.

Site Characteristics & Context (refer to figure 1)


The site is located in the Plympton area, an established residential district to the northeast of the city. The site is contained on three sides by existing residential properties, facing Plymbridge Road to the west, and slopes slightly to the south. The existing House was built prior to 1894. Its frontage faces south, onto landscaped grounds with some existing mature trees. To the north of the house is a courtyard area, with some recent buildings of modest scale, but of low architectural value. Along the western boundary, the site contributes significantly to the street scene and townscape character, with an existing hedge bank wall, an imposing entrance to the southwest, and significant trees and vegetation. The existing vehicular entrance to the northwest is significantly degraded in townscape terms. The boundary to the south is also relatively poor and degrades the local amenity value considerably. A number of trees and trees groups are subject to Tree Preservation Orders. This is illustrated in Appendix A. A condition survey has been prepared for Treverbyn House itself.

Townscape & Historic Environment (refer to figures 2 & 3)

The site is located in an area characterised by a number of large Victorian and Edwardian houses set in significant grounds, along the Plymbridge Road, which also has traces of a hedge bank wall. Subsequently from the 1930s, new housing development has surrounded these properties. The site was subsequently acquired by the City Council and has been used as a training centre until recently. Now only part of the complex is used by Social Services.

The site has a southerly aspect, with some filtered views from higher ground over the houses to the south, to the distant ridgeline. The site has an open vegetated boundary to the west, along Plymbridge Road, with views of the house from select viewpoints from the southwest or northwest. The mature trees in the grounds are visible from a number of locations in the area, and contribute to the visual amenity of the area.

The building has significant architectural quality, predominantly of brick, constructed prior to 1894. Other materials locally used include period construction methods, with primarily render finish or stone and traditional slate hung roofs.



Land Use (refer to figure 4)

The area is predominantly residential, including a number of elderly persons residential homes.

The site lies within the catchment for Hele's School, Seymour Road and Ridgeway School, Moorland Road.

Plympton village centre houses a compact and convenient facilities. There are several public house within the immediate facility, with several located within a two mile radius. The shopping facilities include a food store, gift shops and other retailers.

The village centre is also located a short distance from the main community activity hub that house a range of social activities and clubs for a wide age range. There is also a community health centre that provides both convenient and emergency treatment.

Transport (refer to figure 5)

At peak times Plymbridge Road can be a significant barrier to pedestrians.

The bus route runs approximately one every hour from the bus stop immediately adjacent to the site. The service runs in both directions to the City Centre zones and Plympton village centre, community facilities and neighbouring regions. Access to the City Centre is a 30 minute bus journey. There is a local Park & Ride site nearby at Coypool.

Building Typologies & Density (refer to figures 6 & 7)

Treverbyn House is two to three storeys in height. The surrounding area has a fairly low density of housing, mainly two storeys in height, with a varied range of accommodation, including family housing, and some residential homes for the elderly.

Housing directly adjacent to the site consists predominantly of 1930's semi-detached properties, with some more recent additions, although other large houses of a similar Victorian origin exist in the vicinity and contribute to the character of this area.



Guidelines For Redevelopment

The appropriateness of development proposals for the site should be considered against these guidelines.

Land-Use Guidelines

1. The site should be developed for residential use, community use or office use or a combination of these uses. This could include sheltered housing, or general housing.
2. The residential capacity should be compatible with the character of the site, but may exceed the density characteristics of the locality.
3. Proposed residential densities should not compromise a quality living environment, and should be achieved within a building of suitable scale.
4. Affordable housing. On sites of more than 25 units 25% should be affordable. Plymouth City Councils policy about affordable housing is currently under review; a draft Interim Planning Statement has been prepared.
5. Lifetime Homes. On sites of more than 10 units 20% should be Lifetime Homes, unless the site is developed for student housing.
6. Residential accommodation should be arranged so that there is a positive interaction between the function of the building and the public spaces.
 - There should be direct access to the building for pedestrians from the street, ideally with multiple entrances, if individual dwellings, or apartments.
 - Balconies and roof terraces should be considered, to take advantage of the south facing aspect of the site.
 - Habitable rooms and windows should; be positioned to maximize surveillance of the public spaces, and projecting windows, bays and corner windows might be considered.
 - These should be designed in such a way not to conflict with the privacy of the existing residential properties.

Transport Guidelines

One single vehicular access should be provided to the development off Plymbridge Road, to the northern end of the development, in the existing approximate location. A further pedestrian access would be created in the existing gates to the south.

Car parking will be provided to the agreed levels, depending on the number of units. A ratio of one car parking space per unit will be permitted on site for housing. Car parking should be provided to the south of the development, either in the existing location, or so as to be discrete and not have an adverse impact on the landscape setting. Parking can also be provided to the hard landscaped courtyard to the north. In addition to the residents car spaces, visitors spaces should be considered. Secure cycle parking/ storage should be provided for the development.



Layout Design Guidelines (refer to figure 8)

1. The proposed building should respond positively to the main site public spaces. The new development should back onto the existing back garden boundaries to the north and east of the site. This will establish spaces with good surveillance.
2. The retention of the existing building will be strongly encouraged, with adaptation to its new use, and developed to create a positive front and back with the careful location of any service areas, to ensure they are well concealed and not overlooked. Proposals involving redevelopment of the House will only be considered if a demonstrably high design standard and quality can be achieved, to compensate for the loss of this important townscape building. Redevelopment of the eastern wings of the existing house may be considered, if these are well designed and successfully integrated. This should not exceed the existing buildings in height.
3. The new perimeter buildings will have a single aspect with living space/ glazing to the front of the buildings and ensure that there is no loss of privacy to the existing properties to the rear. The existing green area to the south of the house should be retained, and enhanced.
4. Vehicular access into the development should be designed to be as discrete as possible.
5. Car parking, cycle parking and other servicing or storage needs to be located and designed to minimise visual intrusion and minimise impact on the existing landscape character.
6. A tree survey and assessment of health and condition will be required for all trees over the site. This will also be used to establish protective zones and protect the trees to be retained during the construction works, to the relevant British Standard. The retained trees to be incorporated into a comprehensive landscape scheme prepared for the site. There may be justification for the removal of trees no 18, 19 and 21, although any loss of these trees should be mitigated with replacement trees of an approved advanced nursery stock size with species and locations to be agreed. The relevant TPO would be transferred to these trees.

Scale, Massing & Height Guidelines

The development should sit comfortably on the site, in scale with the surrounding townscape. The new two storey buildings along the boundary of the site are to be consistent with height of the existing one & two storey offices to be demolished, with height minimised through use of contemporary ceiling heights, flat or shallow pitched roofs.



Design Quality Guidelines

The new buildings should relate positively to the townscape fabric of the area. It should not attempt to replicate architectural attributes that give neighbouring historic buildings their special interest.

1. They should therefore be a sensitive, contemporary building (of its time) and not attempt to copy neighbouring buildings.
2. They should be intelligently composed and respond to the site and other opportunities.
3. They should seek to be sustainable, energy efficient, and should maximize the quality of living environment for residents- for example; making the best use of views, increasing natural daylight, ventilation and sunlight, creating good surveillance of the street.
4. The new buildings to be designed to ensure that the outlook and amenity from the existing properties is not compromised, and use a high quality of design, finishes and boundary treatment to address this. The new buildings should be designed to integrate with their setting and not compete with the existing house and its townscape setting. The materials and design approach may therefore depart (at least in part) from those used on the existing building, and be designed as sensitive additions to the grounds.
5. Proposal to enhance the public realm around the building should form an integral part of the proposals. Hard and soft landscape works in public areas and to the communal courtyard areas should represent good quality landscape design.
6. The boundaries to the south should be improved structurally and visually, and the existing boundary wall and original gateposts to the southwest retained.
7. The existing building should retain its original character, including use of timber windows.



Contributions

1. A contribution of £50,000 will be required for off-site improvements to a neighbourhood park.

2. An educational contribution may be required, subject to the proposals for the development and whether this includes family accommodation, The Educational Contributions IPS4 provides guidance on the levels of contribution required.