

Hoe Neighbourhood Forum
Proposed alternative wording for policy PLY27

Policy PLY27

Register office, Lockyer Street, The Hoe

Land at Lockyer Street, The Hoe, is allocated for housing or hospitality uses, or a mix of both. Development should positively enhance the Conservation Area, to a maximum building height of 5 storeys.

Development should provide for the following:

1. High quality architecture that responds positively to the Hoe Conservation Area's historic character and the site's role as a strategic gateway to Armada Way. The design should be informed by a detailed heritage character assessment to be undertaken for the proposal.
2. Active ground floor frontages to be encouraged to enliven all public streets and spaces – Armada Way and Citadel Road in particular.
3. Improved east / west public access along the site's north boundary, linking Armada Way to Lockyer Street.
4. High quality public realm including enhancement of Armada Way.
5. Innovative car parking solutions to reduce the visual impact of vehicles on the public realm.
6. Relocation of the register office function within the Hoe / Waterfront area.

4.108 This is a major opportunity site within the Hoe Conservation Area. It sits at the southern gateway from Plymouth's major waterfront park to Armada Way: the grand Abercrombie-designed boulevard which links the Hoe to the City Centre and continues north to Plymouth's Central Railway Station.

4.109 The site is currently occupied by a late 20th Century two storey brown brick building housing Plymouth's Register Office. The building is identified as being of 'neutral quality' by the Hoe Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. It does not respond positively to its context in terms of its footprint, massing, design and materials and contributes little to the street scene. Redevelopment of the site will therefore be supported to create high quality architecture for housing or hospitality uses and an environment worthy of the site's location. The Waterfront Strategic Masterplan highlights the opportunity this site presents for a landmark development.

4.110 Any proposal will be expected to address the site's frontages and have active ground floors, whilst being sensitive to the Hoe Conservation Area context and adjacent listed buildings. Height, massing and orientation of development on the site must have full regard to impacts on the Conservation Area, and Registered Park & Garden with a positive relationship with the scale of adjacent streets, spaces and buildings. Architectural competitions will be encouraged, as will the integration of artists within the design process.

4.111 It is expected that public realm adjacent the site will be enhanced and redesigned as part of the site's regeneration.

Hoe Neighbourhood Forum Commentary

Policy PLY27 should follow the pattern of development policies within the City Centre, explicitly stating a maximum building height in order to ensure that the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and Registered Park and Garden are preserved or enhanced by development, in line with the requirements of NPPF.

The Hoe Neighbourhood Forum can find no justifiable rationale explaining the lack of restrictive building height for Policy PLY27, particularly in the light of the density of listed assets in the area. Policies PLY7, PLY8, PLY9, PLY10, PLY11, PLY12, and PLY13, restrict building heights in Colin Campbell Court, Royal Parade, Mayflower Street, Cornwall Street, New George Street, and Armada Way. We propose that an equivalent wording is added to policy PLY27.

The Hoe Neighbourhood Forum believe that heritage preservation and enhancement must take precedence over housing delivery targets on this site. We therefore propose alternative wording for Policy PLY27 that places greater emphasis on the importance of meeting the historic environment requirements of the NPPF. The above policy wording removes pressure to maximize density, achieve unrealistic housing targets, and permit development out-of-scale with the surroundings, in favour of wording which emphasizes quality, offers flexibility, and addresses the under-supply of family homes in the area.