HERITAGE AUDIT & STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In respect of

PLYMOUTH CITY CENTRE

On behalf of

GVA & PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

AHC REF: ND/PM/9235

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1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report, which has been prepared and written by Dr. Nicholas Doggett, MIfA, IHBC, Managing Director of Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd, and Patrick Christopher Maguire, Heritage Consultant at Asset Heritage Consulting Ltd, on behalf of GVA and Plymouth City Council, is to provide a heritage audit and assessment of the significance of Plymouth city centre.

1.2 This report should be read in conjunction with NEW Masterplanning’s Plymouth Precinct Retail Appraisal and together with that document has helped to inform the findings of prepared by GVA for the City Council.

1.3 This study concentrates on a defined study area in the centre of Plymouth. The study area incorporates small portions of two bordering conservation areas but as a whole does not represent a statutorily designated conservation area; however, in light of the planned nature of the post-war city centre and the clusters of listed buildings within it, this report uses methods and concepts traditionally used in conservation area analysis.

1.4 The report considers the area from a built heritage perspective, providing not only an account of its historical development and an assessment of the architectural significance of its various groups of buildings, but also analyses the importance of the spaces around them and the contribution they make to the heritage value of the city centre as a whole.

1.5 The report aims to highlight the key aspects which define the heritage value and historic integrity of the city centre. As well as picking out the most significant elements of the area it notes those buildings or spaces that can most easily accommodate change without detracting from the heritage significance of the city centre as a whole.

1.6 This report acknowledges its debt to Jeremy Gould’s 2000 report Plymouth Planned: The Architecture of the Plan for Plymouth 1943-1962 and his 2010 book Plymouth: Vision of a Modern City. Part of the Council’s brief for this Heritage Audit and Statement of Significance is to present the detailed information contained in Gould’s 2000 report in a more readily accessible format.
1.7 The study area of the report (Fig.1.1) relates to that identified in the City Centre and University Area Action Plan 2006-2021, adopted April 2010. This is primarily the area of the city centre reconstructed following World War Two. The university area is distinct from the rest of the post-war development and as such is treated in our report only as it relates to its listed buildings. As a result, the primary study area corresponds to the areas labelled “Retail” and “Civic Centre” on p.7 of NEW Masterplanning’s Plymouth Precinct Retail Appraisal and the plan on p.71 of Abercrombie’s 1943 Plan for Plymouth (Fig.2 in this document). The area labelled “Civic Centre” in the aforementioned plans is referred to as the “civic area” in this document in order to avoid confusion with the statutorily-listed Civic Centre building.

1.8 The study area represents a distinct period of development, the principles of which were laid out in Patrick Abercrombie’s 1943 Plan for Plymouth. The south-eastern part of the study area incorporates a small portion of the Barbican Conservation Area and is characterised by a distinct cluster of listed buildings which predate the post-war redevelopment but which were retained as part of this process and are clearly of heritage significance in their own right.

1.9 The study area incorporates the Civic Square, an English Heritage grade II registered historic park, and borders at its southern point on the Hoe, also a grade II registered historic park. As well as incorporating a limited portion of the Barbican Conservation Area, a small spine of the Hoe Conservation Area stretches into the southern portion of the study area (Fig.1.1, reproduced overleaf for ease of reference).

1.10 The methodology used in this report is consistent with good conservation practice advocated in documents like English Heritage’s ‘Conservation Principles’ (2008) and ‘Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management’ (2011), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on understanding ‘significance’ and assessing the impact of change on that ‘significance’, together with the additional interpretative guidance to the framework set out in the newly issued (N)PPG.

1.11 As such, this report will demonstrate to the various stakeholders involved in the process (including English Heritage) that the heritage significance of the city centre and its constituent buildings has been fully taken into account by the Council and its professional advisers as part of the emerging plans for the regeneration and partial redevelopment of this important area.
**Figure 1.1**

Modern plan summarising the interaction of surrounding designated conservation areas with the study area.

- The **study area** is highlighted in **solid red**.
- The Hoe Conservation Area is highlighted in **blue**.
- The Barbican Conservation Area is highlighted in **green**.
- The nearby Ebrington Street Conservation Area is highlighted in **purple**.
- The nearby Union Street Conservation Area is highlighted in **yellow**.
2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Plymouth before the War

2.1 Plymouth is the largest city in Devon, with nearly twice the population of its nearest rival Torbay (2011 Census figures); however, it did not become a city until 1928, when it was formed from the three separate towns of Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport.

2.2 Mount Batten, the peninsula south of the entrance to the Cattewater, was a trading point from prehistoric times but by the early medieval period the most important centre was at Plympton, which had a priory and castle. By the 15th century, the smaller dependent settlements around Sutton Harbour were growing in importance and in 1439 the largest of them, Sutton Prior, was incorporated with parts of Sutton Valletort and Sutton Ralf to form Plymouth. This settlement formed the nucleus of the modern city around St. Andrew’s Church.

2.3 The naval importance of the city was already established by the 13th century, when 325 ships were assembled in the Sound to assault the Guienne. Most famously, in 1588 the Navy assembled at the Cattewater while the captains awaited the first sighting of the Armada upon the Hoe. Explorers and sailors who put out from Plymouth included such names as Drake, Raleigh, Grenville, Gilbert, Frobisher, Hawkins, and in later times Cook and Darwin.

2.4 In the later 16th and 17th centuries, the town expanded along the west side of Sutton Harbour and around the site of the medieval Barbican. Further west was Stonehouse, with its own small port. This pattern changed from the later 17th century, when the government began to realise Plymouth’s naval importance, resulting in Charles II’s Citadel and later William III’s Dockyard on the Hamoaze (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 637-8).

2.5 Plymouth’s mayor, Edmund Lockyer, devised a competition for public construction in the city in 1811 and this was won by the London-based John Foulston, who went on to become Plymouth’s major Regency architect. Foulston relocated to Plymouth and in 1820 designed Union Street, which connected Devonport to Plymouth in a single east-west axis. Foulston was also responsible for two other set-piece developments: Princess Square and the Crescent. He also designed several of the 19th-century city’s
major institutions, including the Theatre Royal, the Athenaeum, and St. Catherine’s Church, all in the neo-Grecian style. As the century moved on and the Gothic Revival hit full stride, the new civic buildings around St. Andrew’s Church, notably the Guildhall and the civic offices around Guildhall Square, were designed in a flamboyant medieval Gothic, utilising the local grey limestone.

2.6 The only major open spaces in the crowded Victorian city were Central Park, north of the railway station, and the Hoe, overlooking Plymouth Sound. Sir Richard Lorimer’s Naval Memorial was constructed on the Hoe in 1929-35. Into the 20th century, over Crowding meant that there was little space for new development to keep pace with the demands of a growing population. By the 1930s, department stores were crammed into Bedford Street and Dingles, the city’s largest department store, was unable to expand owing to a dearth of particularly large sites. Motor traffic was a major concern in a city not designed with it in mind and when Paton Watson was appointed city engineer in 1936, he unsuccessfully attempted to implement a road-widening scheme. Overcrowding was a major concern for private housing and much of the housing in the city centre was little better than slums, the city authorities having neither the land nor resources to replace this.

**The Abercrombie Plan and Post-war Reconstruction**

*Wartime destruction*

2.7 During its four years of bombardment, Plymouth was the most devastated city in England. Almost 4,000 houses were destroyed and a further 18,000 seriously damaged. 1,000 civilians were killed, 3,000 injured, and 20,000 displaced. The centre of city, around the Guildhall, Guildhall Square, and shopping centres, was the most damaged element. The city engineer, Paton Watson, closed the city for a month while the Royal Engineers dynamited the damaged buildings and removed the rubble (Gould, 2010, viii shows an aerial view of the city centre following the rubble clearance). This resulted in a huge, clear swathe of space north of the civic area.

2.8 When Lord Reith, the Minister of Works and Buildings, had visited the city in 1941, he urged the city council to prepare a plan for reconstruction and to plan ‘boldly and comprehensively’ in order to be ready for government funds that might be available after the war. With the short-comings of the pre-war city fresh in the minds of Plymothians – narrow streets, over Crowding, and poor-quality housing – the wartime
destruction was increasingly viewed as an opportunity to right these long-term problems.

Abercrombie’s Plan for Plymouth

2.9 Professor Patrick Abercrombie was engaged by Plymouth City Council in 1941 to prepare a plan for the reconstruction of the city following the destruction of the historic centre during the War. The first bombs had fallen over the city in July 1940 and they continued to fall until 1944, though the majority of the damage was done in 1941, hence Abercrombie’s instruction.

Abercrombie (1879-1957) was the foremost town planner of his generation and was made professor of civic design at Liverpool University in 1915 and professor of town planning at London University in 1935. Shortly before this, he had been commissioned by Lord Reith to prepare the County of London Plan, the first of the national reconstruction plans. He was recognised as a first-rate planner and architect and was knighted in 1945 and awarded the RIBA Gold Medal in 1946.

Although dated 1943, A Plan for Plymouth was not published until March 1944 under the joint authorship of Abercrombie and Paton Watson, the city engineer. The plan analysed the history and setting of the city before setting out the principles for its redevelopment. Central to the plan were zoning and the concept of the ‘precinct’. Although several of Abercrombie’s ideas have their roots in the English ‘Garden City Movement’ of the early 20th century, exemplified at places like Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City in Hertfordshire, the concept of the precinct was borrowed from H. Alker Tripp’s 1942 Town Planning and Road Traffic. This involved a hierarchy of main traffic routes, keeping high-speed traffic away from the individual precincts. The city centre became a series of precincts surrounded by a ring road, hitting certain points such as Charles Cross or the Crescent, which were defined by the pre-existing city layout. Traffic flowed around, rather than through the individual precincts, keeping cars away from the predominantly pedestrianised shopping centre.

In Abercrombie’s radical plan, the old city centre was erased but for a few select buildings, and cut through with a grand axis from the Naval Memorial on the Hoe to the railway station at North Hill. This central artery, realised to some degree as Armada Way, was designed to provide a grand vista across the entire city, from
North Hill to the Hoe. The central axis was split across its length by a series of east-west streets, most notably the primary east-west axis of Royal Parade. Zones were designated in the blocks between these (Abercrombie, 1943, 71 - Fig 2 in this document). In Abercrombie’s vision, the civic area retained only St. Andrew’s Church, Prysten House, and parts of Foulston’s Crescent. In the Beaux-Arts tradition, Abercrombie’s plan expressed the road intersections around the perimeter, the intersections of the main and cross axes and the road ends as clear geometrical shapes – ellipses, circles, and semicircles – with the whole composition, certainly of the city centre, symmetrical around the central axis.

2.13 The scale of old Plymouth, with its narrow, crowded streets was replaced with something much grander – the width of the main long axis was to be 200ft (61m – in the event this was only achieved in the stretch north of Mayflower Street) and the main cross axis 175ft (53.3m). Testament to the level of destruction wrought by the Blitz, Abercrombie had not planned anything on this scale elsewhere. Abercrombie had trained in the Beaux-Arts - the 19th-century French system of planning with an emphasis on classicism, geometrical shapes, and symmetry - and it is from this that he drew his predilection towards formal plans. Notably, Abercrombie had discussed the great Beaux-Art plans for New Delhi (Lutyens, 1912) and Canberra (Burley Griffin, 1912) when he was editor of the influential Town Planning Review. Further influence must have come from Welwyn Garden City, which was planned in 1920 and also contained a 200ft central access, the Parkway. Notably, however, Abercrombie did not dictate the architecture of his new city, only that it should be consistent in style and scale with ‘[a]dherence to the approved design...form[ing] the basis of approval for any plan of buildings in the area...(Abercrombie, 1943, 77)’; however, J.D.M. Harvey’s illustrations suggest a classical design and a city en fête with flags flying and public fountains playing.

2.14 The plan’s illustrator, J.D.M. Harvey (1895-1978), was an artist who had trained as an architect and was one of the leading perspectivists of the 1930s. He had worked for Lutyens and Grey Wornum and had published Small Georgian Houses and Their Details 1750-1820 with S.C. Ramsey in 1919. In this he expressed a similar admiration for Bath as Abercrombie. Harvey’s architectural training allowed him to produce realistic illustrations from Abercrombie’s deliberately non-specific descriptions. Gould argues that Harvey’s neo-classical illustrations, notably of the new Guildhall, were specifically designed to appease the City Councillors (Gould, 2000, 14).
2.15 Certainly it is unlikely that Abercrombie had neo-classical construction in mind, as, although he did not dictate a building material, saying only that it should be consistent, he did discuss the use of reinforced concrete, polished to show the aggregate and without stone cladding (Abercrombie, 1943, 110).

2.16 In line with most of his contemporaries, Abercrombie disliked Victorian architecture (‘...it was not a fortunate period in English architectural design’; Ibid, 69), and his plan called for the destruction of the unscathed Victorian houses of West Hoe, as well as the Guildhall, regarding the Victorian development of the city as of low quality and as an interference with the zoning dictated by the plan.

2.17 Plymouth City Council adopted *A Plan for Plymouth* in September 1944. A Reconstruction Committee was convened and Abercrombie was appointed consultant architect to it until 1947. Abercrombie had strong connections within the Ministry of Town & Country Planning (MTCP) and Plymouth was the first city to complete its public inquiry and to place ‘declaratory orders’ before the MTCP for compulsory purchase of city centre land. The layout of the new city was approved in July 1946 and work began on the new sewers in Raleigh Street in March 1947, with King George VI opening the first section of Royal Parade in October of the same year.

2.18 The realisation of the plan was left to Paton Watson’s city engineering department and to the city architect, Edgar Catchpole. The plan had been revised by 1947 and, at least from our perspective today, fortunately retained more of the surviving elements of the historic city than had been envisaged by Abercrombie, notably 69 New George Street (the former Western Morning News office) and the Guildhall. The main north-south axis, Armada Way, and cross streets north of Royal Parade were narrowed to give more space for shops, though Armada Way in particular remained massive in scale. The proposed, great semi-circular gyratory roads shown in Fig.2 were replaced with roads which better took into account the topography and the historic layout surrounding the new centre (see Fig.3). Significantly, the rigid zoning dictated by Abercrombie was retained, as was the rectilinear geometry of the principal spaces.

2.19 Abercrombie recommended the appointment of a consultant architect to oversee the development and vet the planning applications, ensuring the consistency and quality
of design. A former pupil of his, William Crabtree, was appointed. His work involved the division of blocks into building plots and the controlling the overall heights and cornice lines of shops. In 1948, the number of planning applications became such that Thomas Tait, the architect of the new Dingles department store on Royal Parade, was appointed design consultant.

2.20 Tait was the senior partner in the nationally-significant firm of Burnet, Tait & Lorne and had been responsible for the Royal Masonic Hospital at Ravenscourt (RIBA Gold award for best building of 1933; RIBA Journal May 2013) and St. Andrew’s House, Edinburgh, the seat of the Scottish government until 1999. He was offered a knighthood in 1938, though the offer was eventually withdrawn due to a breach of confidentially (DNB Thomas Tait, 2010). His influence on the form of the city blocks and the architecture was considerable, defining much of the quality of the earliest development along Royal Parade and at St. Andrew’s Cross. This work set the style for the new city.

2.21 The uniform use of Portland stone (and later reconstituted Portland stone), which had only very limited precedent in the city, fulfilled Abercrombie’s wish for consistency across the development as a whole. Interestingly, the use of Portland Stone was accepted by the City Council on the basis that it was much used in London and other great English cities; certainly, there no precedent for its widespread use in Plymouth before the post-war period.

2.22 The earliest elements of the plan to be constructed between 1948 and c.1952 were the major commercial buildings along the northern side of Royal Parade (see Fig.3). These were inevitably the larger businesses, such as banks, insurance companies, and large retailers, who could afford the best locations and the expensive building licences which allocated scarce resources.

2.23 Following this initial phase of major construction, the next period, c.1953-8, saw the completion of Royal Parade and its termini at Derry’s Cross and St. Andrew’s Cross, as well as the expansion of construction up Armada Way.

2.24 Between roughly 1958 and 1962 the side streets stretching out from Armada Way (New George Street and Cornwall Street) were completed, catering for mostly smaller retailers. Pannier Market replaced the temporary market at the western end of New George Street in 1956-9. Mayflower Street, at the northern end of the planned development, remained largely incomplete.
2.25 The Civic Centre was completed in 1961 and the Reconstruction Committee was disbanded in the same year.
3.0 THE CITY CENTRE TODAY: ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 The purpose of this section is to offer a description of the primary spaces within the study area, together with an assessment of the heritage significance of both the spaces and the buildings within them.

3.2 This section defines the significant elements of Abercrombie’s plan and highlights the elements of built development which make a positive contribution to the heritage significance of the site and those that detract from this. Buildings which have a neutral impact are only highlighted where they are buildings of a significantly large scale or footprint to warrant mention in this assessment.

The ‘Abercrombie Concept’

3.3 A useful tool for investigating the heritage significance of the city centre is to classify the main elements of the city centre envisaged in Abercrombie’s plan and to compare how the existing elements of the realised development relate to this. This will inform the wider assessment of the significance of the buildings and spaces (see below).

3.4 The Abercrombie plan related to broader city planning rather than building design or even the detailed design of spaces, so individual buildings are unlikely to feature directly within such an analysis; however, individual buildings and spaces will be of interest to how the broader elements of the plan have been realised e.g. where they define a space highlighted in the plan.

3.5 It should also be noted that buildings and spaces may have heritage value largely unrelated to the Abercrombie plan. Other architects, notable Stirling, Crabtree, and Tait, were largely responsible for the realisation of Abercrombie’s vision and the approval of individual building designs. Buildings with heritage significance unrelated to the Abercrombie plan may be high-quality buildings in their own right or may pre- or post-date the realisation of the plan.

3.6 A careful reading of Abercrombie’s Plan for Plymouth reveals several key design concepts:
3.7 Zoning and defined precincts. Zoning was not a new idea in the 1940s but the destruction of the pre-war city centre and its subsequent treatment as a clear site allowed Abercrombie an opportunity to apply this concept to his plan for Plymouth.

3.8 ‘The plan is based on the conception of a number of ...precincts devoted to various uses, such as the shopping centre, civic centre, offices and residential areas, all joined together and inter-connected by the road network. Such a system would provide quietude, convenience and efficiency unknown to properties abutting on nondescript roads congested with through and local traffic inextricably intermingled (Abercrombie, 1943, 33).’

3.9 ‘This principle envisages a road system which dissects the town into a series of pockets, or precincts as they are termed, surrounded by traffic roads, each precinct so designed that through traffic is either impossible or discouraged, thereby leaving the area free for full use of its planned purpose (Ibid, 69).’

3.10 The study area incorporates four of the major precincts of Abercrombie’s vision: the civic area; the shopping centre; government and other offices; and the cultural centre (Fig.2).

3.11 The civic area was split from the shopping centre by the east-west axis and was centred upon St. Andrew’s Church. The western end of the civic area, where it abutted the inner ring road, would form a precinct around the Royal (now Reel) Cinema, marking the terminus of the east-west axis. This was to form a theatre precinct (Ibid, 74).

3.12 The shopping centre occupied the space within the inner ring road north of the east-west axis and south of what is now Mayflower Street. Topographically it filled the valley between the Hoe and North Cross (Fig.4). It was bisected by the pedestrianized north-south axis (Armada Way) and cut across by several cross streets, which Abercrombie envisaged as forming the main shopping streets in the city and being open to motor traffic.

3.13 The triangle within the ring road between the shopping centre and North Cross, was envisaged by Abercrombie as the setting for government and professional offices
The triangle of space to the north-west of the shopping centre bounded by North Hill and North Road East was labelled as the cultural centre in Abercrombie’s plan (Fig.4). He saw this as being redeveloped for a new technical college and any expansion of the city’s museums or art galleries (Ibid, 75).

Abercrombie intended a clear break between the old city and the new at the eastern end of the civic area ‘...here it will be possible to step to pass from the spacious new centre into the homely old streets. The break, the contrast between the two, should be consciously stressed (Ibid, 66)’.

Although zoning was a central tenet of Abercrombie’s plan, it is not clear that he envisaged its implementation as being wholly strict, allowing for some mutability in the use of space. Specifically, he noted that the large scale of the streets in his plan would allow for tall buildings and that within the shopping centre ‘...[t]his additional area if not required in connection with the shop beneath may be used for specialist shops and cafés not requiring window displays or for offices or residential accommodation, the open layout and many open spaces making it very suitable for the latter purpose (Ibid, 74).’

Road layout and traffic control. Abercrombie’s vision involved an elliptical ring road, with the space within the ring road being split by two major axes, which defined the zoning within the city centre (Fig.2). Smaller east-west roads cut across the north-south axis, creating a grid pattern. Alleys between the blocks allowed north-south movement, without reliance upon the main north-south axis. There were also minor north-south axes at the east and western ends of the shopping centre, allowing non-through traffic direct access to the centre from the ring road.

The motor car was at the heart of Abercrombie’s vision for the city centre: ‘The streets of the shopping centre should be especially designed for motor traffic; large car parks should be provided, and the streets made sufficiently wide to permit of continuous short-term parking without hindrance to the traffic flow (Ibid, 32).’ The city centre was designed with a ring road around the outside, which would keep fast-moving through traffic away from the shopping centre. Buses would not enter the
shopping centre but would have stops at all the points where the internal cross roads connected with the ring road (Ibid, 72).

3.19 Private cars would have access to the interior cross roads within the shopping centre and the east-west axis (Royal Parade). As only traffic directly related to the shopping centre would enter the centre, it would be slow moving, and therefore safer, and on-street parking could be provided either in the centre or at the sides of the generously-proportioned streets (Ibid, 74).

3.20 Abercrombie quoted figures of private car ownership in Great Britain for 1938 as 1,944,394, or one to every 22 persons, but envisaged that this would rise rapidly. The roads in his plan accounted for a doubling of this load (Ibid, 33). With these sorts of numbers in mind, Abercrombie envisaged the provision of ‘...free parking places in the main shopping street...for short period waits. The design allows for two such rows....accommodating 320 cars with ease. For longer waits, crescent-shaped car-parks are planned at both ends of the main streets...capable of accommodating 150 to 200 cars (Ibid, 74).’ The angle of Market Avenue, Cornwall Street, and New George Street around the Pannier Market roughly relates to the westernmost such crescent in Abercrombie’s vision.

3.21 Abercrombie envisaged only the north-south axis (Armada Way) as a pedestrian route and saw the function of the ring road, keeping fast-moving through traffic away from the city centre, as ensuring the safety of pedestrians on the main shopping streets.

3.22 Open spaces and vistas. In the Beaux-Arts tradition, the provision of formal open spaces and defined vistas was a central tenet of Abercrombie’s plan.

3.23 His plan made reference to the overcrowding and narrow streets of pre-war Plymouth, noting that ‘Plymouth is deficient in open spaces....In the Plan we have endeavoured to provide both sufficient area and improved distribution...(Ibid, 33).’

3.24 Abercrombie planned for wide roads, which would be extensively planted: ‘We recommend that the wider streets should be tree-lined, and extensive use made of
the sub-tropical vegetation which can be established with success in this area (p.71).’

3.25 Central to Abercrombie’s design were two primary axes, one north-south and another east-west.

3.26 The north-south axis (Armada Way) was designed to provide a vista across the city centre, from North Cross to the Hoe. Visitors arriving by rail would have a clear route into the city centre along this axis, with the Hoe Memorial as a constant visible landmark (Ibid, 67, 70).

3.27 This vista was to be lined with buildings, the topography creating a disparity in building heights along the slopes at either end creating a series of closing screens (Ibid, 67).

3.28 The east-west axis (Royal Parade) was designed to separate the civic area and the shopping centre and to terminate on the banking precinct at the western end and the theatre precinct, designed around the retained Royal (Reel) Cinema at the eastern end (Ibid, 74).

3.29 Abercrombie envisaged the blocks within the shopping centre to have central courtyards, even where a single large shop occupied the entire block. He did not plan for these spaces to be required for parking, as on-street parking was to be sufficient, and he imagined the provision of small rest gardens ‘...each of these would have its shelter and public lavatory building (Ibid, 72).’

3.30 Abercrombie envisaged the blocks as permeable, allowing north-south and east-west movement throughout the shopping centre, without relying upon the larger, formal roads (Ibid, 71).

3.31 Architectural consistency. Abercrombie did not specify a building style but called for consistency of style and material.

3.32 ‘If we are to recapture the wonderful continuity of the street scene obtained by Nash and Wood the Younger, as in Old Regent Street and Bath, but in the modern idiom,
then it is essential that the new streets shall be designed as a whole. We recommend that a design in outline for the whole architectural treatment in the reconstruction area should be prepared. Adherence to the approved design should form the basis of approval for any plan of buildings in the area…(Ibid, 77)’.

3.33 ‘Limestone is, of course, the traditional building material of Plymouth. Unfortunately the lack of skilled masons and the high cost will preclude its use except for monumental public buildings. Modern principles of economy will demand that local materials be used in the light of the latest technical forms. Also, modern methods of rapid buildings construction must use steel or reinforced concrete frames, and it is mere sham to clothe these buildings in heavy masonry. With the local abundance of suitable aggregate, it would seem that reinforced concrete is the material which will be most used…(Ibid, 77).’

3.34 Abercrombie noted in his plan that the width of the roads he envisaged would allow for tall buildings (‘Wide roads permit of high buildings, which would have four, five, or even six storeys, providing a very much greater potential shopping area than existed before (Ibid, 32).’). Although he did mention using different building heights as a screening tool (Ibid, 67), Harvey’s illustrations, including the section diagram, suggest a consistent building height (with different cornice levels created by changes in topography) throughout the shopping centre (Figs. 4 and 8), with taller towers marking either end of the north-south axis.

3.35 It is fair to say that Abercrombie was rather vague on the nature of the buildings he had in mind for Plymouth and the illustrations that accompanied the plan cannot be seen as anything other than conceptual; however, consistency of material and style were clear elements of the Abercrombie concept.

**Methodology for Defining and Assessing Significance**

3.36 Having defined the primary elements of the ‘Abercrombie concept’ it is possible to assign relative levels of heritage significance to the existing built development in the city centre. Before doing this it is necessary first to say something about the indicators used in this process and their suitability for defining ‘significance’. This is good practice in a study of this kind as it offers a clear guide to how the assessment has been carried out.
In identifying the various levels of significance ascribed to the various heritage assets in the study area, the following indicators, which are closely based on those contained in national guidance on the preparation of Conservation Plans and documents like English Heritage’s *Conservation Principles* (2008) and *Understanding Place, Historic Area Assessments: Principles and Practice* (2010), have been used to define the different levels of significance:

**High.** This is used to identify heritage assets of clear historical or architectural interest, which are either already statutorily listed or are likely to meet the current criteria for inclusion on the statutory list. The retention and beneficial re-use of such heritage assets (and the maintenance or improvement of their settings) would be a ‘given’ in any regeneration/redevelopment of the area. Heritage assets of high value will include listed buildings as well as listed parks and gardens within the study area. Where designated conservation areas encroach upon the study area these area likely to be considered spaces of high significance.

**Medium.** This is used to identify heritage assets of local heritage interest, which make a significant contribution to the overall character and appearance of the city centre. Heritage assets in this category might be of ‘landmark’ quality or at least form a distinctive and important part of the familiar and established local scene. In this case such heritage assets are notable for the contribution they make in creating a ‘sense of place’ and/or contribute positively to character and appearance of Plymouth city centre. Heritage assets in this category will include buildings that may have been recently recommended for listing but failed to meet the necessary stringent criteria for inclusion on the statutory list.

**Moderate.** This is used to identify heritage assets of lesser heritage interest, which nevertheless make a contribution to the overall character and appearance of the city centre. These heritage assets might have some ‘evidential’ value (such as demonstrating a past land use) but given their lack of intrinsic architectural or historic interest their retention would not necessarily be essential as part of the area’s appropriate redevelopment.
Low. This is used to identify buildings or spaces which are not of importance to the overall significance of the area, yet do not substantially detract from or have a severely adverse impact on its character or appearance. There would be no particular heritage justification for the retention of these buildings or spaces as part of the city centre’s regeneration/redevelopment.

Intrusive. This is used to identify buildings or spaces which are intrusive to the overall character and appearance of the city centre or actively detract from individual elements important to it. Opportunities to remove buildings or improve spaces in this category should be considered in any redevelopment proposals.

3.38 While any attempt to define the historic and architectural significance of any old building or site inevitably reflects, to a greater or lesser degree, contemporary values, the following ‘objective’ criteria (broadly those adopted in the selection of buildings for listing) have been used in this report to define the various levels of significance on the site.

3.39 There is naturally some interconnection between the different criteria and as a consequence they are not ranked here in hierarchical order, although it is usually the ‘architectural/aesthetic’ and ‘historical’ that have primacy in the selection of buildings for statutory listing or in identifying heritage assets with the potential for retention as part of a redevelopment scheme. The criteria are as follows:

- Architectural/aesthetic
- Historical/evidential
- Social/communal
- Technological
- Visual

Architectural/aesthetic

3.40 The area contains various buildings or spaces of architectural and aesthetic merit which range from the pre-war survivals at the southern end of the study area (primarily within the Barbican Conservation Area) to the post-war buildings constructed as part of the realisation of Abercrombie’s plan. Buildings may contribute to spaces of particular aesthetic merit, such as Civic Square.
3.41 Another important factor in establishing the significance of individual buildings and spaces within the study area is the degree to which their original form, function and character have been modified by later additions and alterations. In some cases, of course, changes will themselves be regarded as significant, adding another layer to the 'story' of the building or space's evolution and simply because a building or space has been altered from its original character, particularly if that change is itself a response to an especially important event, does not necessarily reduce the level of its significance.

3.42 The final factor to consider when assessing the architectural or aesthetic importance of individual buildings in particular is their condition. It should be emphasized, however, that poor condition alone is not likely to be a reason for assessing a building as of low significance and it is only when the condition is so poor that the building has lost a large number of original features or that its original use is no longer recognizable that this will be a material consideration in assessing significance.

Historical/evidential

3.43 It should be recognized that the interest of the buildings, groups of buildings, or spaces might lie as much in their reflection of particular processes, events or associations as in their purely architectural interest or aesthetic value. In other words, where such buildings or spaces are identified for protection through statutory listing or by other means, the reasons for this are often to be found in their links with past events or as evidence for now gone but once important ways of life. Such buildings or spaces are often valued for their importance to social and economic history rather than for their purely architectural or aesthetic qualities.

3.44 Plymouth city centre has a distinct history, an awareness and appreciation of which is fundamental both to an understanding of its evolution and established character and thus to determining its significance in heritage terms.

3.45 The site represents one of several post-war planned reconstruction efforts, the most obvious example being at Coventry, which is generally regarded as a better example of this type of redevelopment.
Social/communal

3.46 This criterion is closely linked to the historical. The city centre remains the core of Plymouth and is a place of employment and leisure for both residents and visitors. A number of ‘community memories’ will be associated with the area and could be important in defining significance, although in this context (as with the ‘historical criterion’ considered above) it should be emphasized that this category of significance will be almost exclusively local, rather than national or even regional.

Technological

3.47 The technological importance of the various buildings and designed spaces as they reflect advances in town planning, engineering, and architecture might also be important in defining significance.

3.48 Abercrombie’s use of zoning and Beaux-Arts planning schemes were very well-established principles by the 1940s (indeed, Plymouth was one of the last Beaux-Arts city plans) and the technological value of the city centre is primarily limited to only a few buildings, for instance the vaulting at Pannier Market. The majority of construction used established techniques.

Visual

3.49 The visual contribution made by historic buildings both in their own right and to the quality of the surrounding area, especially in terms of their contribution to creating a ‘sense of place’, is almost always important in defining their significance.

3.50 The city centre as whole represents a planned spaces, with the buildings in many cases designed to demarcate or highlight specific spaces of quality.

3.51 Several of the buildings are placed in prominent locations with specific views in mind. The city centre is designed on a north-south axis along Armada Way, with the view of the Hoe along its length being central to Abercrombie’s vision. Buildings are placed at ‘landmark’ points, such as the Royal Bank of Scotland (formerly the National Provincial Bank) on St. Andrew’s Cross.
3.52 Consideration has also been given to the contribution that individual buildings make to the visual coherence of the site as a whole and their visual relationship (positive or negative) to adjoining buildings.

3.53 All these criteria have been used in assessing the heritage significance of the four principal phases of building activity in the study area, as a result of which the following conclusions can be drawn. Relative levels of significance are also applied to spaces of particularly high quality, which themselves are often defined by the surrounding construction.

3.54 **Heritage Assets of High Significance.** The only heritage assets to fall into this category are the individually listed buildings or parks and gardens which are not only architecturally/visually and historically significant in themselves but also make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the city centre in which they are situated. For the most part these are clustered around the Civic Centre and the historic core of Plymouth (incorporating the Barbican Conservation Area) between Royal Parade and Notte Street.

3.55 **Heritage Assets of Medium Significance.** The heritage assets in this category are chiefly those buildings that, while they are not of ‘listable’ quality, are clearly (alteration notwithstanding) of distinct architectural importance and interest. Buildings unsuccessfully submitted for listing are likely to fall within this category. ‘Landmark’ buildings, such as Dingles (House of Fraser) and the Pearl Assurance building at the junction of Armada Way and Royal Parade are significant for the contribution they make to the setting of nearby listed buildings and towards creating a ‘sense of place’. High-quality spaces which are made up of such buildings are likely to fall within this category.

3.56 **Heritage Assets of Moderate or Low Significance.** These categories include heritage assets which make a positive contribution to their setting but may be individually unremarkable or have been substantially altered, both physically and in terms of their setting. These heritage assets may also have strong historical/evidential value and some social/communal value but will have only limited architectural/aesthetic, visual or technological value.
3.57 Buildings/Spaces of Neutral Significance and Intrusive Buildings/Spaces. Neutral buildings/spaces do not actively intrude on the character of the city centre or the setting of designated heritage assets, although none can be said to be of any intrinsic heritage interest. Intrusive buildings/spaces actively detract from the heritage significance of the site and have a negative impact on the setting of buildings of heritage significance. Certainly, their replacement by appropriate new development more sympathetic to the prevailing character of the city centre would not damage and in some cases could only enhance the area’s overall significance in conservation terms.

3.58 For the purposes of this assessment, the study area has been split into several divisions, the layout of which can be seen in Fig.1.4. The heritage assets in the study area have been assessed by the criteria set out above and the outcome of this assessment is summarised in Figs.1.2 and 1.3. These figures can be found at the end of the document but for ease of reference are also reproduced overleaf.
Figure 1.2

Modern plan summarising the assessment of significance made in Section 3.0. The study area is highlighted in solid red. Buildings of high significance are highlighted in red. Buildings of medium significance are highlighted in orange. Buildings of moderate significance are highlighted in yellow. Buildings of low significance are highlighted in green. Buildings of neutral significance are not highlighted. Intrusive buildings are highlighted in blue.
Modern plan summarising the assessment of significance made in Section 3.0. The study area is highlighted in solid red. Spaces of high significance are highlighted in red. Spaces of medium significance are highlighted in orange. Spaces of moderate significance are highlighted in yellow. Spaces of low significance are highlighted in green. Spaces of neutral significance are not highlighted. Intrusive Spaces are highlighted in blue.
Figure 1.4

Modern plan summarising the divisions of the study area in Section 3.0. Note that the St. George Street, Cornwall Street, Mayflower Street division is bisected by the Armada Way division. Also note, the University Area is labelled but not coloured as this area is not covered in the document except as relates to nearby listed buildings. There will inevitably be some overlap between these divisions, so boundaries should be considered permeable.
North Cross

3.59 North Cross is located on North Hill, leading downhill onto Armada Way and the shopping centre, itself located in the valley below. It is a space of medium significance, playing an important role but not fully realised role in the composition of Abercrombie’s plan.

3.60 North Cross has suffered greatly from the construction of the 1970s multi-storey station car park immediately between it and the station (plate 1 below). This cuts off the planned relationship between the station and the city centre, which had been explicitly intended by Abercrombie (Abercrombie, 1943, 70), providing an extremely poor sense of arrival for those travelling to the city by train. As well as the extant subway on North Cross itself, Abercrombie had envisaged a ‘highly modelled enclosure planted with palms (Ibid, 67)’ with a subway running through North Hill, which was to be topped with a grand hotel.

3.61 The formal space in front of the station hotel would have provided a view directly from the station, along Armada Way, to the Hoe (Ibid, pl. facing 68; Figs. 4 and 5). Harvey’s illustrations show this view framed by two pilons at the northern end of Armada Way. This vista was designed by Abercrombie to be ‘the visitor’s guide’ as ‘[t]he station at Plymouth is a long way off, and at present there is no indication to the arriver where the town centre or sea front lies (Ibid, 67).’ It is unfortunate that this problem remains.

3.62 The railway station at North Cross was intended by Abercrombie to form the northern terminus of his north-south axis, the Cardo Maximus in his Beaux-Arts street plan which was effectively cruciform in focus rather than Hippodamian. When Abercrombie composed his plan, the 1877 former North Road Station was still in place and the current station, opened in 1962 and much altered since, is a building of limited merit. The towering office block above the station, an early example of this arrangement, is designed to reference the campanile of the Civic Centre at the southern end of Armada Way but this intended relationship is neither discernible nor successful on the ground.

3.63 North Cross itself is a pleasant enough space which benefits from the retention of a series of Victorian villas and terraces running north-eastwards into the North Hill wedge that Abercrombie describes as the ‘cultural centre’ of his plan, now largely dominated by Plymouth University. The setting of the terraces is, however,
diminished by the harsh infrastructure which surrounds it and by its isolated location, a result of the destruction of surrounding residential development by WWII bombing.

3.64 The Victorian terraces at Caprera Place add to the disconnection between the station and the city, and in Abercrombie’s vision would have been demolished for the construction of his Station Hotel. They lack the quality of Portland Villas and the North Road East Terraces, and there are far finer examples of Victorian housing in the conservation areas that abut the city centre (Ebrington Street and Union Street). The Caprera Place terraces are of neutral significance.

3.65 The North Cross roundabout incorporates a pedestrian underpass which enables the clear vista down to the Hoe. This space features prominently in Abercrombie’s vision, e.g. Fig.5, and has been well realised.

Plate 1.

The immediate view southwards from the Railway Station
Buildings of Note:

Portland Villas – mid C19th

3.66 Portland Villas on North Cross forms a planned group of mid-19th-century villas which incorporate the Christadelphian hall at no.17. The group is faced with stucco and has asbestos tile roofs. The constituent buildings are of substantial group value and this good-quality grouping remains a rare survival in this part of the city. The terraces are listed at grade II through seven separate designations made in 1975 (Appendix 1).

3.67 They form an important framing element to the vista from North Cross and are of high significance.

North Road East Terraces – mid C19th

3.68 As with Portland Villas, the terraces of North Road East represent a planned Victorian development. They are a rare Victorian survival in an area otherwise dominated by late 20th-/early 21st-century university construction.

3.69 The North Road East houses are covered by three grade II listings (12-30 North Road East, 15-39 North Road East, and 34-42 North Road East) made in 1998 (Appendix 1). The houses are of three storeys on the north side of the road but are of two storeys on the south, owing to the change in ground level. They have moulded triple-arched windows. These terraces predate 1867, when they appear on OS maps, and are clearly of heritage value, forming a cohesive, planned group of contemporary moulded stuccoed houses of good quality. They are of high significance.
Armada Way, Cornwall Street, and Mayflower Street

Armada Way North

3.70 For the purposes of this document, Asset Heritage uses the description Armada Way – North to refer to the stretch of this pedestrianised road running north of New George Street as far as North Cross. Combined with Cornwall Street and Mayflower Street this generally represents the portion of the shopping centre constructed during the second major phase of rebuilding, c.1953 to c.1962 and is on a distinctly smaller scale to the earliest construction further south.

3.71 Armada Way was the central focus of Abercrombie’s original Beaux-Art plan and in terms of its original planning is probably the best realised element, making it a heritage asset of high significance. It runs directly through the heart of the rebuilt city, stretching for a kilometre from the Hoe, dipping into the valley of the commercial centre before rising to the rebuilt station at North Cross. This grand pedestrian avenue was to provide the central focus of the new commercial centre but, as is widely documented, only the earliest construction along the southern part of the parade matches the scale of Abercrombie’s street grid, with the quality and height of the building diminishing as one moves northwards.

3.72 The most significant individual buildings are those relating to Royal Parade (see below) and there are only a few individual buildings of note in the shopping centre north of New George Street (the major exception is the Pannier Market, covered under New George Street below).

3.73 There is some contradiction in Abercrombie’s plan as, although he discussed framing being achieved by differing cornice levels (Ibid, 67), the illustrations in his plan actually suggest that the scale and height of the buildings was to remain consistent along Armada Way, as far as the rise north of Mayflower Street (Fig.4). The scale of the existing buildings in this area cannot be reconciled with the grandeur of their immediate setting, and it is unfortunate that the massing is very low in relation to the width of Armada Way though, in our opinion, it is certainly fortunate that the scale that has been achieved remains consistent along much of Armada Way.

3.74 The commercial buildings in this area are of a lower quality to those on Royal Parade and represent the later application of the revised Abercrombie/Paton Watson plan. National retailers had concentrated on the high-profile locations along Royal Parade
leaving the northern part of Armada Way to be dominated by smaller, local retailers. Strict zoning applied by the local authority during reconstruction (the application being stricter than that suggested by Abercrombie in his plan; Ibid, 74) meant that residential flats were not constructed above the commercial properties and, as these buildings were constructed for small retailers, their function did not justify the three or four storey heights that Armada Way was intended to have.

3.75 Paton Watson retired in 1958 and the standards he had rigorously regulated were relaxed, with brick and reconstituted Portland stone being preferred by developers to the more expensive solid Portland stone previously used. As economic recovery took hold in the later 1950s, developers realised that retailers would still rent lower-quality buildings, and tenant shopkeepers did not have an incentive to invest in the buildings, resulting in the generally lower quality of the later buildings in this area (Gould, 2010, 33).

Plate 2.

A view south-eastwards up the eastern side of Armada Way. This shows the consistent scaling and Portland stone palette of the buildings in this area.
3.76 The facades of the commercial buildings are consistent in the palette of their materials, including the Portland stone specified by Crabtree and Tait, although this increasingly turns to reconstituted stone as one moves northwards, but not in design. Cherry and Pevsner note that this variation in fenestration and cornice height might be expected to provide some happy variety but that the overall ‘impression is bittiness’ (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 667). In our view this remains a fair assessment.

3.77 The character and appearance of the Portland stone buildings along this stretch have been degraded over time, notably through unsympathetic replacement of windows and shop fronts.

3.78 That said, it is fair to say that Armada Way does benefit from the uniformity afforded by the Portland stone (whether reconstituted or not) palette and has some buildings of notable quality (plate 2). It is at its weakest north of Mayflower Street where the previously consistent Portland stone palette gives way to brick. It is on the side streets, however, notably Mayflower Street and the western stretch of Cornwall Street, that the overall quality becomes noticeably lower.

**Plate 3.**

The Armada Centre as visible from Armada Way - North
3.79 The Armada Centre (M.P. Design Group and Igal Yawatz & Associates – 1984-6) at the north-western end of Armada Way stands out in particular (plate 3). This is set back from the line of the street, creating a jarring visual break in the building line, which otherwise continues uninterrupted along the length of the street. The red-brick of Beckly Court and the Salvation Army building opposite, although lacking the uniformity offered by the Portland stone palette further south, are certainly more in keeping with the rectilinear form of the street plan than the Armada Centre.

Plate 4.

3.80 Two buildings of particular quality stand out on Armada Way - North. These are 122-4 Armada Way (1953-55) (now Game) (plate 4) on the eastern corner with New George Street and the former Martins Bank at 151 Armada Way (1955) (plate 5) on the eastern corner with Cornwall Street. These both represent early construction in the area and 122-4 Armada Way relates more to the quality buildings of the eastern stretch of New George Street than to Armada Way – North. It has a façade of moulded Portland stone and its entrance faces the street at a 45° angle (Gould, 2010, 46).
3.81 While the stretch of Armada Way north of New George Street does suffer in comparison with the portion south of this, it remains redolent of its era. It is unfortunate that the scale of construction does not match the width of space but the consistency of scale achieved in this area is a success.

Plate 5.

151 Armada Way (former Martin’s Bank)

3.82 The layout of Armada Way is in its scale a triumphant realisation of Abercrombie and Paton Watson’s plan. Abercrombie imagined Armada Way as, from the north, providing a ‘magnificent impression of the expanse of the business and civic centres and...[a view of] the Hoe beyond’ (Abercrombie, 1943, 70). This great linking view is fundamental to the composition of the Beaux-Arts plan and this remains as relevant today as when Abercrombie envisaged it. This Beaux-Arts garden vista has unfortunately been destroyed by the construction of the intrusive multi-storey car park in front of the railway station (plate 1), which obliterates any sense of connection between the station and Abercrombie’s city centre. The modern planting along the centre of Armada Way is more in line with the 1947 revisions than Abercrombie’s original plan and closes off the green, open space he envisaged. The curved paving, artificial streams, and heavy planting (plate 6) do not reconcile
themselves well with the open spaces and geometric forms expressed in the 1943 plan (Abercrombie, 1943, e.g. pl. facing 74; Fig.8). Notably, the planting, although pleasant, blocks much of the intended view down towards the Hoe.

**Plate 6.**

![Paving and planting on Armada Way - North](image)

*Armada Way – South*

3.83 For the purposes of this document, Asset Heritage uses the description Armada Way – South to refer to the stretch of this pedestrianised road running south of New George Street to the junction with Royal Parade. The edges of Royal Parade are defined here by the elevations of the former Dingles and Pearl Assurance Company buildings (see below).

3.84 This part of Armada Way is distinct from the area further north as the construction here represents the earliest part of the reconstruction effort. The former Dingles and Pearl Assurance Company buildings are covered in detail below but needless-to-say they are constructed on a scale more in line with Abercrombie’s vision, and hence the scale of Armada Way itself, than the buildings further north.
3.85 This space has not been planted to the extent of Armada Way – North and has more the character of a square than a street (plate 7). This is highlighted by the placement of a large public screen here. Pavement widening at the junction with Royal Parade makes a positive contribution to this aspect of its character, as well as tying the space more closely with the Civic Square to the south.

Plate 7.

![Armada Way - South](image)

3.86 The consistency of the construction on this part of Armada Way is ensured by the presence of only two buildings, which are contemporary. The space relates more to Royal Parade than the rest of Armada Way in its realisation of Abercrombie’s plan.

3.87 This is an impressive space that acts as a strong illustration of the implementation of Abercrombie’s plan at its purest and remains a heritage asset of high significance. That said, the unbroken expanse of Armada Way here feels exposed, making it windswept on even mild days, while the consistent Portland palette, though striking
and attractive, results in reflective and somewhat harsh glare, particularly on hot summer days.

3.88 Armada Way – South stands as a striking, attractive, and highly significant illustrative example of the application of Abercrombie’s plan but it also makes it clear that if his vision had been carried on in this pure form along the entire length of Armada Way, a far less hospitable shopping precinct would have been achieved.

*Cornwall Street*

3.89 Cornwall Street slopes downhill from east to west, cutting across Armada Way. It is fair to say that the geometry and apparent symmetry of Abercrombie’s plan does not translate as well to the relief on the ground as it might appear on paper. Abercrombie was of course aware of the changing ground levels but appears to have paid more attention to the north-south relief, as it related to the vista along Armada Way, than the secondary east-west alignment.

3.90 The construction along Cornwall Street can be broken into two groups, with those on the eastern stretch of the street being of generally higher quality than those on the west.

3.91 Methodist Central Hall (plate 8) on the corner of Eastlake Street at the eastern end of Cornwall Street is an attractive building, with a rendered, pedimented frontage of 1940 disguising the original Ebenezer Chapel of 1816 behind. Cherry and Pevsner describe it as: ‘One of the last of the plain, earlier C20 Methodist centres, without ecclesiastical overtones (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 647).’ In this way it has minor illustrative value and it is of low significance.

3.92 The immediate setting for the Methodist Central Hall is the western elevation of Drake’s Circus Shopping Centre. This is a high-quality building of modern design. It is of no heritage value but does not diminish the setting, satisfactorily closing the vista along Cornwall Street (plate 9), and is of neutral significance.

3.93 Those buildings on the southern side of the eastern stretch of Cornwall Street were designed by Catchpole in 1951 but developed by local architects in 1954-5 (Gould, 2000, 59). They benefit from the consistent Portland palette exhibited on Armada Way. The fenestration is mostly uniform but the cornice height does vary due to
changes in the ground level. As elsewhere, the buildings have suffered from changes to shop frontages but there is certainly nothing intrusive in this grouping.

**Plate 8.**

![The eastern stretch of Cornwall Street from the east with Methodist Central Hall on the right-hand side of the image](image)

3.94 The northern side of the eastern stretch of Cornwall Street consists of uniform red-brick construction and also dates from 1954-5. The use of brick is borrowed from Western Morning News (69 New George Street) via Dolcis (33-37 New George Street), and is no doubt down to cost considerations. The scale and massing is borrowed from the Catchpole buildings on the southern side of the road and the effect is quite successful. Cornice heights vary but this is in line with the downward slope of the street. Notably, the buildings in this area benefit from stone detailing, such as around the windows of 10-22 Cornwall Street (1954 by Alec French & Partners). The brick construction gives way to Portland stone as one approaches the junction with Armada Way.

3.95 The eastern stretch of Cornwall Street can be best appreciated from Armada Way looking uphill (**plate 9**). Despite the differences in material, the similar massing and fenestration imparts a sense of symmetry which, with their contemporary construction, must have been the intent of the designers.
Plate 9.

The eastern stretch of Cornwall Street looking up from Armada Way

3.96 Discounting the high-quality former Martin’s Bank on the corner with Armada Way and the back of 66-68 New George Street, which forms 67-71 Cornwall Street, the western stretch of Cornwall Street is of generally lower quality than the eastern stretch. This stretch of the street, running as far as Pannier Market consists of lower-quality and smaller-scale brick construction dating from 1957-8 (plate 10). The low scale and quality contrasts with the use of brick on the northern side of the eastern stretch of Cornwall Street, where an attempt had been made to match the Portland stone blocks in brick.

3.97 Gould characterises the brick construction on this part of Cornwall Street as: ‘Their designs were based on the same ideas that Catchpole used to compose the eastern end of Cornwall Street but there was even less attempt to form a larger composition out of the blocks, the rhythms are much less clear (if they exist at all) and the elevations are uniformly dull and unadventurous (Gould, 2000, 66).’ We agree with this assessment.

3.98 Cornwall Street is a successful cross street which represents an important part of the realisation of Abercrombie’s vision. The character of the eastern half is defined by
high-quality construction, with an attractive and cohesive view along its length available from Armada Way. This space forms a heritage asset of moderate significance. The incohesive, lower-quality construction on the western side, combined with its lack of clear visual terminus, diminishes its quality and this space remains a heritage asset of low significance.

**Plate 10.**

![Image of Cornwall Street looking down from Armada Way](image)

The western stretch of Cornwall Street looking down from Armada Way

*Mayflower Street*

3.99 Along its length, Mayflower Street represents the weakest portion of this area. The construction relates to the Abercrombie plan only in its maintenance of the building line.

3.100 Mayflower Street was not laid out until the 1970s and consequently construction along it is later than that further south, most of it dating from the 1970s and 1980s, e.g. the Armada Centre (see above), and there is little of heritage value here. The uniformity found elsewhere, either in Portland stone or brick, is not exhibited along the western stretch of Mayflower Street, which represents a mismatched collection of
styles, cornices lines, and scales that is not pleasing to the eye (plate 11). For instance, the Iceland building at 67-85 Mayflower Street (plate 13) is on a puny scale compared to the buildings on either side and has a flimsy façade to its upper storey. It integrates panels of brick facing around a concrete frame, a visually-unsuccessful conceit which bears no relation to its setting.

3.101 The eastern stretch of Mayflower Street (plate 12) is more uniform in scale than the western part, with large buildings marking the intersections, though the palette remains varied.

Plate 11.

The western stretch of Mayflower Street looking westwards
Plate 12.

The eastern stretch of Mayflower Street looking eastwards

Plate 13.

The Iceland building at 67-85 Mayflower Street
Royal Parade

3.102 While Armada Way was designed as the primary north-south axis of Abercrombie’s plan, Royal Parade was planned as the principal east to west axis of the new city. It runs from St. Andrew’s Cross in the east to Derry’s Cross in the west and visually bridges the space between the civic area to the south and the commercial centre to the north. It is certainly amongst the highest-quality spaces in the city. Despite some changes in detail, the conjunction of Royal Parade and the southern portion of Armada Way around the civic area, represents the most complete realisation of Abercrombie’s plan, meaning that the space as a whole represents a heritage asset of high significance.

3.103 The name of the street derives from its opening by King George VI and it reads as a via triumphalis, running past the rebuilt Guildhall and St. Andrew’s Church to the triumphal arch of the former National Provincial Bank (now the Royal Bank of Scotland) at its eastern terminus. The civic area buildings along the southern side of the road are the result of direct planning by Stirling, Crabtree, and the other city planners while the buildings on the northern side of the road represent how the centrally-dictated specifications could successfully be adapted for commercial use.

3.104 This street is not pedestrianised in the manner of Armada Way, nor was it ever intended to be, but the pedestrian spaces, especially on the southern side are generous and well-planted. This creates a remarkably pleasant walk, especially as one passes St. Andrew’s Church and the Guildhall.

3.105 The commercial buildings on the northern side of the road, all dating from c.1951, represent the high-quality construction which formed the earliest part of the rebuilding effort. They form a coherent group which is defined by the towers of Pearl Assurance and the former Dingles Department store at the junction with Armada Way – very much in keeping with Abercrombie’s vision. Styles take Beaux-Arts influences veering towards more classical proportions at the eastern end of the road but the consistent palette ties the group together well. Most importantly, the scale and proportions of the group match that of the space in which the constituent buildings have been constructed.

3.106 The buildings at either end of this street are covered under St. Andrew’s Cross and Derry’s Cross (below) but the north side lacks anything that could be described as a
foil, being of consistently high quality along its length. Sympathetic cleaning would certainly benefit these larger buildings and would emphasise the hard lines clearly envisaged in their original designs.

Plate 14.

House of Fraser (formerly Dingles) from Armada Way

Buildings of Note:

House of Fraser (formerly Dingles) – Thomas Tait - 1949-51

3.107 This was one of the first department stores in England to be reconstructed after the war (Pevsner and Cherry (1989, 666) claim it was the first but John Lewis in Liverpool was designed a year earlier) and was one of the first elements of Abercrombie’s revised plan to be constructed. It must be understood in relation to the adjacent Pearl Assurance Company building, from which it derives much of its group value. Together the squat towers of the two consciously mark the junction between Royal Parade and Armada Way (plate 14). The building was designed by Thomas Tait, with the verticality of its towers exaggerated by the windows and their incised spandrels. The building’s elevations are a play of horizontal lines and masses
set against the tower. The windows of the upper floors are long horizontal incisions into the flanking blocks, accentuated by slightly projecting sills and heads and recessed panels of Ham stone; some of these facing Royal Parade are boldly sculpted with flowers and fruit. Internally, it had the first escalator in the west of England (Gould, 2000. 31).

3.108 The architecture is based on the Beaux-Arts as translated for the American office block. Dingles is the more abstract of the two buildings and, like Pearl, its original hard lines have been partially obscured by an accumulation of dirt. The scale of the building is massive, in line with Abercrombie’s original plan.

3.109 In 1960 a fourth storey was added, also by Thomas Tait. It originally covered half the floor space but was expanded to cover the whole in 1963-4. In 1975, at the same time that the House of Fraser took on the Dingles name, a fifth storey was added. In December 1988 a fire completely destroyed the fourth and fifth storey, and badly damaged the rest of the building. The store was refurbished and the top two storeys rebuilt by 1989. A sixth storey has since been added (EH Pastscape).

3.110 As with the Pearl Assurance Company building, the rear elevations are in brick (plate 41 below), enclosed by the buildings of New George Street, and their utilitarian character contrasts starkly with the grandeur of the primary, public-facing elevations, which present a “show front” to Royal Parade.

3.111 This is an unlisted building (it was assessed for listing in 2010 but did not meet the criteria, notably due to internal alteration and because the 1980s addition of the top floor was deemed to have had a detrimental effect on its massing) of considerable design value, representing Tait’s approach to the Beaux-Arts on a large scale and playing an important role within the realisation of Abercrombie’s revised plan. It is of medium significance.

**Pearl Assurance – Alec F. French & Partners with Sir John Burnet Tait & Partners - 1950-2**

3.112 Pearl Assurance forms a pair with the former Dingles building, the pair flanking the junction of Royal Parade and Armada Way. Pearl Assurance was the more detailed of the two buildings, with its fluted pilasters and column-and-ball mullions defining the rhythm of the office windows. The pilasters are unbroken and give the primary elevations a greater sense of verticality than the former Dingles building (plate 15).
3.113 The form follows the same inspirations as the former Dingles building. The two buildings remain distinct while also offering some sense of symmetry. This is a function of their design value, representing the compromise between the contemporary MTCP’s wish for symmetry against Crabtree’s (as consultant architect) opposite desire (Gould, 2000, 31). The Pearl Assurance building is of medium significance.

Plate 15.

The Pearl Assurance Company building from Armada Way

Lloyds Bank (formerly Lloyds Bank and Popham’s Department Store) – Easton & Robertson - 1954-8

3.114 The Lloyds building incorporated Popham’s department store, giving it an added sense of scale which benefitted its location on Royal Parade. Its architects were nationally renowned and both RIBA Gold medallists. Robertson was an admirer of commercial classical architecture in America (as explored in Robertson’s 1924 *Principles of Architectural Composition*) and followed these examples through his emphasis on vertical proportions, achieved through the use of stone piers rising to a
projecting cornice. The three-storey curtain wall between the columns was of dark teak, a material unknown elsewhere in Plymouth. The carved sea horses and dolphins on the top storey are by local sculptor Amyas Munday (Gould, 2010, 29).

3.115 The repetitive bays separated by piers and a projecting cornice is not dissimilar in form to the primary façade of the nearby Royal Bank of Scotland building at St. Andrew’s Cross, though the comparison is not favourable to Lloyds; however, this attractive building by nationally significant architects retains clear design value and group value as part of the significant parade of buildings along this part of Royal Parade. It is of moderate significance.

Plate 16.

Debenhams from Royal Parade

Debenhams – Donald Hamilton, Wakeford & Partners – 1952-8

3.116 This represents two original blocks joined by a 1980s bridge (plate 16). The western part of the building, 30-36 Royal Parade forms a block with House of Fraser, and the eastern part was originally constructed as John Yeo, a local department store (Gould, 2000, 32-4).
3.117 The former John Yeo portion of this building (16-22 Royal Parade) is of notable quality, marked out by its great central window supported by fluted engaged columns and divided by long mullions. It is of moderate significance.
Civic Area and Historic Core

3.118 The civic area and historic core consists of the area between Royal Parade and Notte Street from the Civic Centre eastwards. The historic core is, as was the medieval town of Plymouth and its Victorian successor, centred upon the Guildhall and St. Andrew’s Church and this formed the centre of Abercrombie’s plan from the outset. This area now incorporates a small but significant part of the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1). The main thoroughfares in this area are: the stretch of Armada Way between Royal Parade and Notte Street, which forms the grade II (Parks and Garden) listed Civic Square (Appendix 1); the pre-war Catherine Street; and the conjunction of Finewell Street/Abbey Place/St. Andrew’s Street, which incorporates both pre- and post-war elements.

Plate 17.

Civic Square from the north
Civic Square

3.119 The Civic Square is dominated by two towering structures: the gargantuan Civic Centre and the rebuilt 19th-century Guildhall. Abercrombie had envisaged a rather more classical town hall on the eastern side of the square, replacing the Guild Hall, and it is fortunate for both aesthetic and heritage reasons that this did not occur (Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 75 – the classicizing nature of the building may be a result of Harvey’s illustration rather than Abercrombie’s vision, as Abercrombie was not an enthusiast for such styles). The extant Guildhall and Civic Centre preside over the Civic Square, which is a high-quality, statutorily-listed space (plate 17). In his original plan for the Civic Centre, Stirling, the city architect, had envisaged a ‘Continental square...for civic ceremonies’ and this was liberally interpreted when Jellicoe, an experienced garden designer, took over the design.

Plate 18.

Former Barclay’s Bank and Crown Court from Civic Square

3.120 Stirling had envisaged ponds but Jellicoe enlarged these to match the scale of the space and of the adjacent buildings, placing the pools parallel to the axis of Armada
Way and of the Civic Centre itself. Elegant concrete seating was set in rings. The square reads as a continuation of Armada Way and, with the narrowing of Royal Parade at this point, is visually defined on its northern side by the tower of Pearl Assurance and the former Dingles building. The southern end opens towards the Hoe, as envisaged by Abercrombie in his concept for the civic area, and this is closed on the eastern side by the projecting façade of the former Barclays Bank, the most classical of the city’s post-war buildings. The Civic Square is itself of high significance and is listed at grade II as a park and garden. Another listed park, the Hoe, abuts the Civic Square at its southern end, creating a grouping of exceptional quality.

**Plate 19.**

Princess Court from Civic Square

3.121 The buildings in the area are of generally high quality with some major exceptions. Although of good-quality construction, the Crown Court (plate 18) is not in our opinion an attractive building and relates poorly to the square and to the Guildhall in particular. Other than blocking the view of the Guildhall from the south with a far weaker building, it does not detract greatly from the space, but adds little, and can be regarded as of neutral value. Despite its correct scaling, the repetitive
fenestration of Princess Court creates a disappointing closure to the south-western end of the Civic Square (plate 19). This building detracts from the space and fails spectacularly in comparison to the quality of the former Barclay’s Bank directly opposite. The vista onto the Hoe, central to Abercrombie’s vision, has been somewhat enclosed by later construction but remains an impressive feature.

Catherine Street

Parallel to the Civic Square, Catherine Street is a space of unique character in the city and for the most part it falls within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1). Running uphill from Notte Street to Royal Parade it, along with the rest of the Barbican Conservation Area, represents much of the surviving historic core of the city. It is dominated along its length by the tower of St. Andrew’s Church, with the handsome stuccoed façade of the Synagogue standing out against the stone of the surrounding buildings. While lacking the planned grandeur of the Civic Square, this space represents a density of high-quality construction unmatched elsewhere in the city. This ranges from the 1956-9 Baptist Church at the southern end, through the 18th-century Synagogue and late-19th-century Abbey Hall, to the 15th-century St. Andrew’s Church at the northern end. The group value of this set of buildings is remarkable, representing a microcosm of the variety of worship in the post-war city. At the northern end of the street, the two most remarkable buildings of the post-war reconstruction, the Guildhall (at this point the former treasury, now the Treasury Bar, at its eastern end) and St. Andrew’s Church, form an attractive pairing of some significance in the street scene. Looking downhill from the northern end of the road, the spire of the Unitarian Chapel is the distinctive landmark. All the buildings along this road are of high significance and work together as a group to create an area of remarkable character, as is reflected in the cluster of statutory listings. The space in its layout and the configuration of its built form represents a heritage asset of high significance.

Finewell Street/Abbey Place/St. Andrew’s Street

The configuration of Finewell Street/Abbey Place/St. Andrew’s Street is defined by the position of the historic buildings of Catherine Street along its western end. This area would have fallen in the ‘historic Plymouth’ zone of Abercrombie’s original plan, connecting St. Andrew’s Cross and Notte Street in a direct manner which has not been realised. The Finewell Street end of this area benefits from the Baptist Church
and the 15th-century 33 St. Andrew’s Street. At the northern end, 1-5 St. Andrew’s Street form a distinctive group, facing onto Abbey Place and the rear end of St. Andrew’s Church. The unlisted buildings in this area (e.g. the Magistrate’s Court and St. Andrew’s Court) have a neutral impact on the streetscape. The majority of this space falls within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1) and can be regarded as being of high significance.

**Buildings of Note:**

**Civic Centre – Jellicoe, Ballantyne, & Coleridge with H.J.W. Stirling (City architect) - 1954-61**

3.124 Plymouth’s Civic Centre is a central feature of the new city and was designated a grade II listed building in 2007 (Appendix 1). Abercrombie’s initial scheme had envisaged the Civic Centre and Town Hall as classical buildings placed on the eastern side of the Civic Square but Stirling’s 1951 scheme for the area moved them to the western side. This necessitated the compulsory purchase (1957) and demolition (1962) of John Foulston’s St. Catherine’s Church, which had survived the Blitz but not the reconstruction effort.

3.125 The Civic Centre lies in an area zoned for civic function, near the former Guildhall and forms part of a group of high significance. The design of the new civic area was masterminded by H.J.W Stirling who was appointed city architect in 1951. Stirling’s revised plans won the Grand Prix d'Honneur at the National Festival of Architecture and Monumental Art in Paris in 1956. In February 1957, Stirling's scheme was approved by the City Council but by May that year the architects Jellicoe, Ballantyne & Coleridge had been appointed to complete the detail of Stirling’s design as his office had more work than it could cope with.

3.126 Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe was a founding member and president (1939-49) of the Institute of Landscape Architects, and is especially known today for his garden design and landscaping work, for instance the 1957-9 Water Gardens at Hemel Hemstead or 1964-5 JFK Memorial Garden in Runnymede. The quality of such work can be clearly seen in the Civic Square but in the 1950s Jellicoe was as equally well known as an important architect with a specialism in housing and public offices, to the extent that he had been engaged to produce the Plan for Hemel Hemstead in 1947.
Records suggest that Jellicoe and his partner Alan Ballantyne were given a fairly free hand to redesign the detailing of the buildings in this area, while retaining and interpreting 'the spirit' of Stirling’s general layout and concept. The quality of their detailing in comparison with other contemporary buildings in Plymouth, for instance...
the tower of the station on North Hill, shows the difference between local work and that of an internationally respected practice. The acoustician for the project was Hope Bagenal who designed the Festival Hall. The Royal Festival Hall is referenced, more successfully than at the Athenaeum (below), in the great porch projecting onto the square.

3.128 Construction was undertaken in three phases and began in 1958 with work on the foundations and substructure commencing in August that year. On 21 March 1962, the 21st anniversary of the destruction of the old municipal offices, the fully-furnished new Council House was formally handed over to the Corporation and the building was officially opened by the Queen in the same year. As is to be expected in a building expressing civic function and celebrating local pride, the Civic Centre brings together the work of several noteworthy artists, particularly in the Council House, including John Hutton (1906-1978), Mary Adshead (1904-1995), and Hans Tisdall (1910-1997), the commissioned artwork keeping to an unusually homogeneous composition.

3.129 The Civic Centre is a primary landmark in Plymouth’s civic area, with Cherry and Pevsner describing it as ‘...a disturbingly prominent lopsided imposition on the N vista from The Hoe, but more effective when one approaches from the E, where it becomes one of a series of civic landmarks, following St. Andrew’s church and the Guildhall (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 657).’ Cherry and Pevsner denounce the distinctive tower as an ‘afterthought’ imposed upon the plan in 1960 (Ibid, 666); however, it did appear in some form in Stirling’s earliest plans and was carried through into Jellicoe’s well-considered revisions.

3.130 Plymouth Civic Centre, as a particularly complete and coherent civic centre, is of high design and illustrative value. It compares well with others of its date including Newcastle Civic Centre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (listed at grade II*) and New County Hall, Truro (listed at grade II). In its careful massing and position it stands as a landmark within the city centre (plate 20) and embodies the hope and aspirations of a newly confident City Council following the devastation of the Second World War; as such it a striking testimony to the spirit which guided the rebuilding of the city. Nowhere is this better reflected than in the Council House with its collection of artworks of rare quality and cohesion themed around Plymouth's history (2007 List Description). The Civic Centre is of high significance.
3.131 The City Council will be leaving the Civic Centre in the near future, making the immediate future of its usage uncertain.

Former Barclays Bank— W. Curtis Green, Son, & Lloyd of London — 1950-2

3.132 The former Barclay's Bank building on Notte Street/Armada Way was listed at grade II in 2003. It occupies a significant position on the Civic Square at the conjunction of Armada Way and Princess Street, operating as part of the cluster of high-quality buildings on the civic area stretch of Armada Way between Royal Parade and Princess Street (plate 18). It employs the Portland Stone used elsewhere in the development, alongside a polished granite plinth and detailing. Rectangular in plan it has a large central lightwell and internally the banking hall, with its classical detailing, remains intact. The exterior of the building is adorned with carved heroic figures by William McMillan RA VCO.

3.133 The building was altered in 2005-7 when two further storeys were added to the building in the form of a glazed extension, with restaurants on the ground floor and flats above.

3.134 The former Barclays Bank was designed by the firm of W. Curtis Green, the London architect of the Dorchester Hotel who won the RIBA Gold medal in 1942. It was probably designed by W. Curtis green’s son, Christopher Green, and is of both design and illustrative value as the most overtly classical building in the post-war city. Two additional floors were originally intended and these have only recently been completed in the form of a distinct modern extension; however, the building still achieves a sense of scale in keeping with the surrounding precinct.

3.135 The building is of importance as Plymouth’s first post-war bank and forms a strong visual group with the listed Civic Centre and Guildhall around the listed Civic Square. Its porched entrance provides a southern terminus to the view down the Civic Square from Armada Way. It is of high significance.

Guildhall, assize courts, and former city treasury — 1870-4 by Norman and Hine, reconstructed by H.J.W. Stirling (City Architect) -1953-9

3.136 The Guildhall was listed at grade II in 1975 (Appendix 1) and falls within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1). The original building was constructed by
Norman and Hine with E. Godwin as consultant. Godwin had established a national reputation with his work on Northampton Town Hall in 1861-4. Only half of Norman and Hine’s 19th-century building survives, with the north block, which contained the council chamber and municipal offices, having been demolished as part of the rebuilding process (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 656).

3.137 The original Guildhall was damaged during the war and Abercrombie’s plan suggested its demolition except for the tower, which might be incorporated into future construction. Despite initial enthusiasm for such an approach amongst the Reconstruction Committee, by 1949 they had resolved to reconstruct the 19th-century building. The City Architect, Stirling, was appointed to oversee the restoration of the building. Stirling had originally been employed to oversee the modern rebuilding of the city and although he restored the main pitched roof and repaired the gothic windows, he designed the low front roofs as flat and all the new elements were distinctly modern.

3.138 The high design value of the Guildhall differs from that of St. Andrew’s Church, which was a modern if relatively faithful restoration, with Stirling adapting and adding to the existing materials in order to create something quite new. This is a nationally significant example of such an approach, born out of post-war optimism, and is of high illustrative value. The initial phase of work concentrated on stabilising the existing building, which was primarily achieved with brick and concrete rather than stone.

3.139 The Guildhall has substantial group value. Stirling’s design placed the building both in the context of the pre-existing St. Andrew’s Church to the east and the new Civic Centre to the west, tying the building into its central role within the new city centre. The entrance was moved from the north, where the old Guildhall Square had been replaced with Royal Parade, and moved it to the west, facing onto the new Civic Square and providing an axial approach onto the Civic Centre. The tower, which adds an Italian campanile to an otherwise French gothic building, is a striking urban landmark and forms an odd pairing with the tower of the Civic Centre opposite. Together with the towers of Pearl Assurance and the former Dingles building, these provide a tower on each corner of the junction of Royal Parade and Armada Way, a scheme quite in the spirit of the Abercrombie plan.
3.140 The interior is of high design value. The lobby has white terrazzo floors, walls of white marble sheets, dark mahogany joinery, and bronze main doors. The freestanding columns are clad in dark green marble and hardwood strips. The stairs are of white marble with black inlaid strings, bronze handrails, and quilted blue leather balustrading. The ferrules to the handrail were designed in turned bronze, as might have been found in contemporary Sweden, but the coffering to the lobby is white lozenge shapes like Gordon Andrews screen to the Science Museum Exhibition for the Festival of Britain. Circular rooflights are cut into the roof like Alvar Aalto’s at the Viipuri Library (1927-35). The Hall itself has a maple strip strung floor with a dark green marble skirting, the walls are panelled in Cuban mahogany in a broken bond ‘stonework’ pattern of fielded edge panels, much more like Stockholm Town Hall than the architecture of the Festival of Britain, and this influence is obvious too in the three huge chandeliers borrowed, but updated, from the Ceremonial Hall at Stockholm. Even the abstract rectilinear patterns of the acoustic treatment at the east end are similar to the wall decoration of the Stockholm Council Chamber although they rather incongruously surround the Gobelin tapestry of Raphael’s Miraculous Draught of Fishes which forms the centrepiece to the Hall. The arch to the Gallery is in a shallow segment – another favourite Stirling motif – repeated in the panelling to the War memorial and in the plaster ceiling (1975 list description).

3.141 The interior is also of artistic value, with local artists being commissioned to decorate the major spaces and in some cases utilising new techniques to do so. On the ceiling of the Hall, David Weeks applied fibrous plaster figures of the Twelve Labours of Hercules – set white against the Wedgwood blue ceiling. The original Gothic windows were glazed by F.H. Coventry with scenes from Plymouth’s history rendered in the new ‘Sculpt-art’ technique, where colour was applied to the diamond cut surface (technological value). Murals were also applied to the stair to the Lower Hall by Wyn George, depicting famous figures from Plymouth’s maritime history. It is remarkable that the interior remains almost unaltered, remaining for the most part a ‘Festival of Britain’ interior of substantial illustrative value.

3.142 The Guildhall is an urban landmark of national significance. It contains one of the finest modern interiors in Britain and plays a central role as a major part of the Plymouth’s civic area. It is of high significance.
St. Andrew’s Church – C15, restored by Frederick Etchells - 1945-57

3.143 St. Andrew’s Church was listed at grade I in 1954 (Appendix 1) and falls within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1). Historically it is the largest parish church in Devon and it enjoys a high-profile location on Royal Parade. It forms part of a group of high significance with the Guildhall, synagogue, Abbey Hall, and the dispensary.

3.144 The tower dates from at least 1460 and the aisles were completed in 1481-2. The interior was restored by John Foulston in 1826 and Sir Gilbert Scott in 1875. The exterior retains the structure of its 15th-century windows with the perpendicular tracery dating from Gilbert Scott’s restoration. The building was heavily damaged during the Second World War but was heavily restored by Frederick Etchells between 1945 and 1957. Etchell restored the exterior to something approaching its medieval appearance, and the interior was similarly restored using modern techniques to create a medieval appearance. Vaults were formed with thin-cast concrete shells, disguised with appliqué oak ribs and false oak wall plates. All the interior fittings were designed in oak following historic designs. The stained glass windows are by John Piper (probably the most famous modern British artist of that time) and Patrick Reyntiens and their highly abstract and brightly-coloured designs stand out as an effective foil against the otherwise monotone (‘rather dull’ according to Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 642) interior.

3.145 The building predates Abercrombie’s plan and was incorporated into its development, especially the tower as part of the planned panorama (Abercrombie, 1943, pullout plan p.68 – Fig.4). Abercrombie zoned religious buildings as part of the civic area, a consideration dictated by the presence of St. Andrew’s Church and the historic Guildhall in this area, and this in turn dictated the eventual location of the Civic Centre, and further churches in this area. This has resulted in a highly significant cluster of high-quality buildings immediately to the east and west of Armada Way to the south of Royal Parade. It is also a working church of spiritual and communal value. St. Andrew’s Church is of high significance.

Prysten House (Yogge’s House) – c.1498

3.146 Prysten House was listed at grade I listed in 1954 (Appendix 1) and falls within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1). Like 33 St. Andrew’s Street, it represents a
rare survival of medieval residential construction in this part of the city and for this reason is of high illustrative value.

3.147 The house was built as a merchant’s house by Thomas Yogge (the merchant who paid for the tower of the adjacent St. Andrew’s Church) shortly after 1498 and, presumably due to its location, it was erroneously identified as the ‘Priest’s House’ in the 19th century, hence its common name. It is of limestone with granite dressings. It consists of three wings around a back courtyard, with the rear, western wing having been demolished for the construction of the Abbey Hall in the 1920s (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 661).

3.148 This is an attractive building of high illustrative value and forms part of a close group with the grade I listed St. Andrew’s Church and the grade II listed Abbey Hall. It is of high significance.

St. Andrew’s Abbey Hall and Church House Assembly Room – 1895

3.149 This building was listed at grade II in 1998 (Appendix 1) and forms part of a strong group with Prysten House and St. Andrew’s Church, as well as being an important part of the civic area grouping of high-quality buildings along Catherine Street, facing onto the Guildhall and the Synagogue. This cluster of pre-war survivals forms the core of the civic area of Abercrombie’s plan and falls within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1).

3.150 This building is of aesthetic value but is most significant for its group value. It is of high significance.

Synagogue, Catherine Street – 1762

3.151 The grade II* listed (Appendix 1) Synagogue on Catherine Street has group value both as part of the cluster of religious buildings including the Unitarian Church and Baptist Church along Catherine Street and as part of the group of pre-Victorian survivals in this area which includes the adjacent Guildhall, St. Andrew’s Church, Pysten House, and Dispensary. It falls within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1).
3.152 This is the oldest English Ashkenazi synagogue and has a plain rendered exterior with arched windows, the two in the east wall added after 1874 and the west front window also of 19th-century date. The fantastic interior is of high illustrative value, being (despite restoration in 1862) a remarkably well-preserved 18th-century synagogue interior, including the original deal pews and turned 18th-century balusters. The latticed women’s galleries have thin, latticed iron columns. Fluted Corinthian columns flank an arch filled with a coffered pattern and there are large urns on the entablature, with the Tablets of Law above. The balusters to the bimah are surmounted by eight original brass candlesticks (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 648).

3.153 The interior of the building is of extensive aesthetic value while externally the building makes a positive contribution to the character of its setting. As the first English Ashkenazi synagogue is of high commemorative value, as well as possessing substantial spiritual value as a working place of worship. It is of **high** significance.

**Dispensary, St. Catherine’s Street – 1807-9**

3.154 This is of illustrative value as an early example of this building type, which only existed in larger towns (1975 list description). As with so much in this area, it is of substantial group value, neighbouring the Synagogue and facing onto the Catherine Street Baptist Church, forming part of a group of high value to the character of the civic area. Listed at grade II in 1975 (**Appendix 1**) and falling within the Barbican Conservation Area (**Fig.1.1**), it is of **high** significance.

**Baptist Church, Catherine Street - Louis de Soissons RA & Partners – 1956-9**

3.155 This design by de Soissons is near contemporary with his work on the adjacent Unitarian Church. The church has an open-pedimented gable and a timber lantern and detailed copper spire referencing that of the adjacent church. Covered walkways and a courtyard connect the main building to the Hilliard Hall building along Notte Street. The main building is aligned to Catherine Street and has substantial group value as part of a group of high-quality buildings of worship including the Unitarian Church and Synagogue.

3.156 Cherry and Pevsner characterise this building as ‘*[a] careful interpretation of the needs of a post-war city-centre congregation* (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 647’ and
it certainly retains communal and spiritual value as a working church. It was listed at grade II in 2008 (Appendix 1). The list description highlights the design value of the building as ‘carefully-considered composition by a recognised national firm of architects’. It also notes that the church remains unaltered: the most conspicuous addition to the building being the 1959 spire (a year after the rest of the complex was completed), which was actually part of the original design. This spire forms a definitive visual landmark from the northern end of Catherine Street. The building is of high significance.

**Unitarian Church – Louis de Soissons RA & Partners - 1955-8**

3.157 The Unitarian Church forms part of the significant grouping on the eastern side of the southern part of Armada Way, centred upon St. Andrew’s Church and the Guildhall. This group includes the Synagogue and the Baptist Church (on Catherine Street and also by de Soissons), representing a microcosm of the variety of worship in the post-war city. It was listed at grade II in 2008 (Appendix 1).

3.158 The building is designed in a crisp, elegant neo-Georgian style and incorporates an octagonal timber lantern and a slender copper spire with a ball and point finial. The exterior incorporates a plaque reading ‘UNITARIAN CHAPEL 1831’ reused from the previous Unitarian chapel on Treville Street, destroyed during the Blitz. The interior remains largely unaltered and retains de Soissons’ fittings, including a raised dais in light oak at its northern end, a light hardwood floor and light oak altar, pulpit, and organ.

3.159 This is a high-quality building by a nationally-renowned firm of architects. It has substantial design value and forms part of a significant group of buildings. It is a working church which replaced the previous Unitarian chapel destroyed during the war and is of spiritual and communal value. It is of high significance.

**33 St. Andrew’s Street – mid C15th**

3.160 There are a cluster of buildings in the area to the east of the civic area and St. Andrew’s Church which survived both the Blitz and the reconstruction effort. They form a group of high significance along St. Andrew’s Street. 33 St. Andrew’s Street is a 15th-century merchant’s house which was remodelled in the 16th and 17th
centuries. It has an ‘excellent show front of timber between stone walls (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 661).’ The building was heavily restored in the 20th century.

3.161 Wedged between the Magistrates Court and St. Andrew’s Court, it is, along with Prysten House, a rare survival of a medieval residential building in this part of the city and forms part of a highly-significant, dense grouping of listed buildings which includes the Catherine Street Baptist Church and St. Andrew’s Abbey Hall. Listed at grade II* in 1954 (Appendix 1) and falling within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1), it is of high significance.

1A, 1-3, 4, and 5 (Kitty O’Hanlan Public House) St. Andrew’s Street – mid C19th

3.162 This group of 19th-century houses survives as part of the significant city centre grouping of listed buildings surrounding the restored St. Andrew’s Church. Located within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1), these retained 19th-century houses face onto St. Whimple Street on the north and St. Andrew’s Street on the west. The block is subject to four separate grade II listings. The earliest, covering the northern corner building 11 Whimple Street/1A St. Andrew’s Street was made in 1975, and the other three (separately covering 1-3 St. Andrew’s Street, 4 St. Andrew’s Street, and 5 St. Andrew’s Street at the southern corner) were all designated in 1998 (Appendix 1).

3.163 This row of houses has high group value both as a rare grouping of Victorian houses in this part of the city and as part of the grouping of high-quality buildings in the post-war civic area. The St. Andrew’s Street group are all of stucco with a heavily moulded cornice and form a cohesive grouping of high aesthetic value. The group is of high significance.

12 Buckwell Street – Late C17

3.164 12 Buckwell Street is a 17th-century merchant’s house which falls on the eastern border of the study area. It is located within the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1) and relates more to the historic Barbican to the east than to the study area in general. This represents one of the buildings which would have been destroyed by the south-eastern stretch of the ring road in Abercrombie’s original plan (plate 1) but was saved by its revision in 1947 (plate 2).
3.165 The 4-storey frontage of this building was restored in the 20th century and consists of render on a timber frame, with a glazed 8-pane shop window below. The side elevations are of rubble.

3.166 This is an attractive building which forms part of the historic core of the city centre. It would have been destroyed in Abercrombie’s original plan but has survived due to subsequent revisions. It was listed at grade II in 1981 and is of high significance.

The Mission – 1885

3.167 The former St. Thomas Mission Chapel is located at the eastern edge of the study area on Palace Street. This forms part of the Barbican Conservation Area (Fig.1.1) and relates more to the historic construction in the Barbican than to the city centre.

3.168 The building was constructed as a chapel but at some point was converted into an artist’s studio and gallery. In 2008 it was converted into a restaurant and bar.

3.169 The building is constructed of red brick with a limestone plinth and rubbed-brick dressings. It has a hipped slate roof with hip gablets, crested and pierced clay ridge tiles, and a tall brick stack with entablature. The windows have round-headed surrounds of rubbed brick, cills of blue engineering brick, and leaded panes of coloured and stained glass. It is a single-storey building with a narrow basement at its west end. It is rectangular in plan with a shallow pitched outshut on the north side.

3.170 This is late Victorian church of simple design and proportions built in the local vernacular architectural style using predominantly local materials. It is a fairly good example of a mission church; however, the interior appears conventional in form and, apart from the embellishment of the roof and the coloured window glass, is largely without ornamentation or decoration. In addition, the church furnishings and fittings have been removed. It does play a positive part in the street scene and adds to the character of the area (English Heritage Listing File).

3.171 The building was considered for listing by English Heritage but did not meet the required criteria, although it was deemed to be a high-quality building it was considered plain and neither distinctive nor innovative. This is an attractive building which makes a positive contribution to the Barbican Conservation Area and to the eastern part of the civic area. It is of medium significance.
Roman Catholic Church of Christ the King – Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, Son, & Partner – 1960-2

3.172 This listed building is on the south side of Notte Street and falls outside the study area but is of high significance. It is by an architect of national importance and was listed at grade II in 2009 (Appendix 1). Its red-brick exterior and campanile was designed to balance the tower of the nearby 1949-51 NAAFI building, demolished in 2010. The campanile is of course a reference to the Guildhall tower. The two towers, of the NAAFI building and the Church of Christ the King, would have acted to frame the view onto the Hoe, in the manner suggested in Harvey’s illustrations of the Abercrombie plan e.g. Fig.9.
Derry’s Cross

3.173 Derry’s Cross is one of the major elements of Abercrombie’s original plan and was originally carried through relatively well into the completed city (Fig.7). Containing theatres and cinemas, the southern part of this area was included in the ‘civic centre’ (civic area) of Abercrombie’s 1943 plan with the northern part stretching into the ‘shopping centre’. It forms one of the termini to the significant Royal Parade and benefits from some high-quality construction, notably W.J. Reed’s Co-op. The corner buildings are of a similar quality to those in the northern part of Royal Parade in general. The Theatre Royal immediately to the south, in the eastern part of the area, is one of the few high-quality modern buildings in the area not related to the post-war reconstruction. There are also some historic survivals, in the form of the Clock Tower and former Lloyd’s Bank immediately behind the Theatre Royal. As with Royal Parade, the scale of the buildings here matches that of the landscaping and this benefits the space immensely; however, it has suffered lamentably from low-quality modern construction in the form of the intrusive Travelodge building (plate 21) which dominates the southern end of Derry’s Cross itself, and the intrusive multi-storey car park which blocks in the former Lloyd’s Bank to the east of this (plate 22). The multi-storey car park to the rear of the Civic Centre also has a negative impact on the setting of the former Lloyd’s Bank and Clock Tower.

3.174 The Grosvenor G Casino on the corner of Derry’s Cross replaced the 1956-8 Drake’s Cinema in 2002. The original form of the building can be seen in Gould, 2010, plate 75, and the new casino references the ship on the primary façade while maintaining the building line. It is unfortunate that the quality of the original building has been lost but the casino retains its scale and its relationship to Derry Cross, its entrance still set at a 45° angle, and has a neutral impact.

3.175 It is regrettable that the Travelodge building has closed off the open space as envisaged by Abercrombie, resulting in the loss of the vista down Raleigh Street, which once terminated upon the façade of the Athenaeum (plate 23).

3.176 As an important but much-altered element of Abercrombie’s plan, Derry’s Cross as a space, notably in its effect on the setting of Royal Parade, represents a heritage asset of moderate significance.
3.177 A very small portion of the Hoe Conservation Area stretches into the study area immediately to the south of Derry’s Cors, incorporating 22-24 Lockyer Street at the rear of the Reel Cinema (Fig.1.1). This space is of **high** significance.

**Plate 21.**

The Travelodge on Derry’s Cross from the north

**Plate 22.**

The Clock Tower and Bank Public House with the multi-storey car park on the right-hand side
Plate 23.

The view of Derry’s Cross looking south from Raleigh Street

Buildings of Note:

Co-op – W.J. Reed, staff architect to Co-operative Wholesale Society - 1950-2

3.178 The Co-op at the junction of Royal Parade and Derry’s Cross (plate 24) was the largest shop constructed as part of Abercrombie’s revised plan. From the first floor up, the external elevations consist of the repeating motif of a single bay of glass bricks separated by engaged piers. Each bay is fitted with a window at first- and second-floor level. The cornice forms the base of a balcony to the third floor, which has a prominent balcony painted yellow. The use of repetitive bays to light the shop floor in this way was taken from J. Emberton’s 1939 Oxford Street HMV but the scale employed here was unprecedented.

3.179 This is a high-quality building in a prominent position. It is significant in its departure from the symmetrical window openings and blocky massing of the other early buildings in this development, suggesting a liberality to Tait and Crabtree’s approach to the imposition of Paton Watson’s and Abercrombie’s revised plan. Its location on the corner of Royal Parade and Derry’s Cross helps to define this significant part of the early application of the revised plan. It is of medium significance.
Plate 24.

The Co-op on Derry’s Cross looking north-westwards

Athenaeum, Derry’s Cross – Walls & Pearn - 1958-61

3.180 Foulston’s 1818 Athenaeum was destroyed during the Blitz and its replacement at Derry’s Cross was always part of the Abercrombie plan. The building was designed to be precisely symmetrical about the axis of Derry’s Cross and Raleigh Street. The symmetrical north elevation is of design value, and once provided the terminus to the vista down Raleigh Street.
3.181 The principal façade (plate 25) of the Athenaeum reads as a miniaturisation of Leslie Martin’s Royal 1951 Royal Festival Hall. The main frontage was raised on two round concrete pilotis to form the recessed entrance and the first-floor window was divided into eight bays with window mullions corresponding to the meeting room divisions behind. Pevsner and Cherry characterise the building as a ‘pathetic replacement’, which does seem unnecessarily harsh (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 667) though the scale of the structure is certainly much reduced to that envisaged by Abercrombie (Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing p.71 – Fig.7). The view of the façade from Derry’s Cross and Raleigh Street has been lost through the construction of the Travel Lodge building on the southern part of Derry’s Cross. This open vista was a key element of Abercrombie’s plan (Fig.7) and it is much to the diminishment of both Derry’s Cross and the Athenaeum that this is no longer extant.

Plate 25.

The Athenaeum at Derry’s Cross

3.182 The main auditorium is of some technological value, representing an early use of a lightweight steel-framed structure. Gould argues that the modernist design of the building is of communal value, representing a post-war spirit of optimism that
allowed the replacement of pre-war buildings with distinctive modern replacements. The building is of moderate significance.

Plate 26.

The Reel Cinema at Derry’s Cross

Reel Cinema (originally Royal Cinema) – William Riddell Glen – 1936-8, damaged 1941

3.183 This building was constructed shortly before Second World War and was retained as part of the reconstruction, facing onto Derry’s Cross. Abercrombie described Derry’s Cross as ‘[a] precinct…formed on the existing Royal Cinema’ and the building was explicitly retained in his plan. It can be seen in one of Harvey’s illustrations (Fig.7), where it no doubt influences the design of the theoretical buildings around it. It remains a simple building of classical proportions with Art Deco detailing, the fenestration of its louvred central windows defined by fluted engaged columns without capitals and a moulded architrave.
3.184 This is an attractive pre-war building (plate 26) by a well-known architect of cinemas. W.R. Glen worked as architect to the ABC cinema group and four of his movie theatres, in Northampton, Lambeth, Southwark, and Halifax, are now statutorily listed. The building is constructed with a steel frame clad in brown brick, faced with Portland stone on its primary façade. The double doors at the front of the building are a late 20th-century replacement.

3.185 It survived the reconstruction effort through conscious planning. Like the Athenaeum, it once provided an important element of the vista from Raleigh Street across Derry’s Cross and it is unfortunate that this view has been lost. Along with the Hoe Naval War Memorial, this is the only precedent for the use of Portland stone in Plymouth prior to the post-war reconstruction. The building was assessed for statutory listing by English Heritage in 2008 but was found not to meet the necessary criteria, primarily due to the high level of internal alteration (one of the three screens was converted into a bingo hall in 1976). It is of medium significance.

Plate 27.
Theatre Royal – Peter Moro Partnership – 1978-82

3.186 Peter Moro’s Theatre Royal on the eastern part of Derry’s Cross (plate 27) is the only architecturally important new building in the centre postdating the application of the revised Abercrombie plan. Pevsner and Cherry categorise it as ‘lacking the dynamism of [Peter Moro Partnership’s]…earlier designs’ but ‘[a] smoothly elegant, slightly bland polygonal structure with a cluster of concrete fly towers above the sleek curtain-wall.’

3.187 As can be seen in plate 27, the tower of the theatre frames that of the Civic Centre when viewed from the west. This is a high-quality design which is not part of Abercrombie’s or subsequent plans for the city centre but integrates itself into it without resorting to pastiche. It is a lesser work by a firm of national significance and it has some group value as a positive contribution to Derry’s Cross and is of moderate significance.

Clock Tower, Derry’s Cross – Keen & Page - 1862

3.188 The 19th-century Clock Tower was listed at grade II in 1975 (Appendix 1). Along with the 1889 Lloyds Bank (now the Bank Public House) opposite (plate 22), this free-standing clock tower represents the only surviving pre-war construction in this part of the city east of the civic area. It is situated behind the 1978-82 Theatre Royal but does not form a coherent group with this, though its relationship to the former Lloyds Bank is of significance. The tower is an attractive structure but sits somewhat awkwardly upon a pedestrian triangle, hemmed in by modern construction.

3.189 The exterior of the tower incorporates three fountains, which have never been connected to a water supply. This is a mark of ingenuity, as the corporation did not originally have the authority to construct a clock tower but did have leave from Parliament to erect fountains.

3.190 The symbolic value of the structure derives from its local connotations as a symbol of defiance, standing tall while all around it was destroyed in the war. It is of social value and historically any attempts to relocate the tower have been met with local opposition. This statutorily-listed structure is of high significance.
The Bank Public House (originally Lloyds Bank) – 1889

3.191 The Bank Public House shares with the Clock Tower the distinction of being one of the only extant pre-war buildings in this part of the city. Alongside the Clock Tower (plate 22), it was listed at grade II in 1975 (Appendix 1). It received a modern glass rear extension in 1986. Cherry and Pevsner describe it as a ‘handsome Italianate building with bowed end designed to fit a street corner that no longer exists’ (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 667).’ This seems a fair description, noting the building’s aesthetic value, which is emphasised by its distinctiveness to the buildings in the immediate vicinity (especially the multi-storey car park to the immediate south, which detracts substantially from the quality of the space); however, the real significance of the building comes from its illustrative value, as a rare surviving example of Victorian architecture in this part of the city, and its symbolic value which is much the same as that of the Clock Tower. It is of high significance.

22-24 Lockyer Street – Foulston & Wightwick – early-mid C19th

3.192 This is the northernmost part of a group of a series of 19th-century terraces on Lockyer Street. They are illustrative of Foulston’s 19th-century redevelopment, which placed Plymouth at forefront of town planning. These three houses represent a rare survival, as the other buildings in this terrace were destroyed during the Blitz and subsequently rebuilt. The façade is of detailed stucco, with Doric porches with unfluted columns to 22 and 23, and 24 (the end terrace) has an angled porch to the right-hand corner.

3.193 The three form a cohesive group but their setting suffers from the overbearing multi-storey carpark to the north, which also detracts from the Bank Public House and the Clock Tower. The houses also form a wider group with the other listed Foulston terraces on the portion of Lockyer Street south of Notte Street. The terraces were listed at grade II in 1974 (Appendix 1) and fall within the Hoe Conservation Area (Fig.1.1). They are of high significance.
**St. Andrew’s Cross**

3.194 St. Andrew’s Cross is a further integral element of Abercrombie’s plan, marking the eastern terminus of the major east-west axis of his scheme. As with the commercial buildings on the northern side of Royal Parade, this represents the earliest part of the realisation of the revised Abercrombie plan and the high quality of construction is carried through to this space. The Royal Bank of Scotland (former National Provincial Bank) at the eastern end, the façade of which forms the terminus of the vista down the Royal Parade, is a landmark building of particular quality (plate 28). There is a variety of architecture in this area which veers towards the classical, most notably with the Royal bank of Scotland and the Royal Building. Thankfully, and as with the rest of the development around Royal Parade, the scale of the buildings in this space matches that of the landscaping dictated by Abercrombie’s scheme.

3.195 This space represents an important element of Abercrombie’s vision, providing a strong terminus to Royal Parade. It is characterised by high-quality architecture and is central to the layout of the city centre. The space represents a heritage asset of medium significance.

3.196 The high quality of construction is carried onto Old Town Road Street and there is nothing in the immediate vicinity that could be described as intrusive.

**Buildings of Note:**

**Royal Bank of Scotland (formerly National Provincial) – B.C. Sherren, staff architect to National Provincial – 1958-9**

3.197 The Royal Bank of Scotland on St. Andrew’s Cross was listed at a grade II in 2009 (Appendix 1). This building occupies a location of highest importance to the realisation of Abercrombie’s revised plan, marking the terminus of Royal Parade at St. Andrew’s Cross. The impressive portico marks one of the most significant vistas of the post-war city.

3.198 Built on the first free-standing plot in the new city, little expense was spared on the construction of this regional headquarters, resulting in an aesthetically pleasing building of substantial design value. The building utilises high-quality materials, such as granite and internal stone cladding, bronze windows, balustrades and handrails,
and copper roofing. Artistic elements include mosaic, worked bronze doors, and sandblasted glass.

3.199 The plan form is an open E. To the front the character is civic and ceremonial in character, to the rear defensive and military. The principal, west, elevation to Royal Parade is of five storeys, plus the set-back attic storey. It is fifteen bays wide with a large deeply recessed flat-headed portico of four storeys framing the central section, within which eleven bays are reduced to seven. The six slender granite columns to the portico - rectangular in plan and without ornament - are connected at the second floor by a continuous open balcony with railings. The columns have concealed lighting built into their rear face. Above ground-floor level the recessed windows are laid in a rigid grid around the portico where they are contained within the joint lines of the Portland stone cladding. The ground-floor windows are double-height, those to front of the portico lighting the banking hall and those to the side lighting the stair lobbies. The rear wall of the portico is decorated with turquoise mosaic, heightened with lilac, and enlivened by gold devices drawn from the histories of both the National Provincial Bank and Plymouth. The mosaic has been repaired in places. The two symmetrically placed entrances to the banking hall have door frames of white marble within which are set bronze double doors each containing ten decorative roundels depicting ancient and modern coins. A plaque to the north wall credits the builder. To either side of the portico, granite planters with fluted fronts are incorporated beneath the windows. The attic storey, with its copper cladding, is a shallow barrel-vaulted structure of nine bays with square windows. From its centre rises an illuminated clock tower of copper-sheathed steel with blue glass panels, which is surmounted by an access platform with bronze balustrade and flag-pole in the manner of a look-out or crow's nest (2009 list description).

3.200 The building is of substantial design value. The design, which bears a striking resemblance to the Finland Station built in Leningrad at the same time, is a compelling synthesis of recent Scandinavian Modernism, the Festival of Britain style (its curved copper roof recalling that of the Festival Hall), and traditional classicism. This subtly original interpretation of Classicism is based on the work of the Italian Rationalists and also draws on the local context for its effect (2009 list description).

3.201 This is a high-quality listed building on a site of substantial importance to the realisation of Abercrombie’s revised plan, of which it forms the eastern boundary of the primary east-west thoroughfare. It forms part of a significant grouping on St.
Andrew’s Cross which includes the grade I listed St. Andrew’s Church, as well as the Royal Building and Norwich Union House. It is the finest post-war building in the city centre and is of high significance.

**Plate 28.**

The RBS (formerly Royal Provincial Bank) at St. Andrew’s Cross


3.202 The former Royal Insurance building on St. Andrew’s Cross (plate 29) represents similar ideas to those applied by Tait and others at Pearl Assurance and Dingles on a smaller scale and without the constraints of ground-floor shops. The result is less angular and more classical, with the first- and second-floor windows suggesting a piano nobile. There is a defined cornice and a separate attic level.

3.203 The overall result is somewhat squat but this is an attractive building which forms an early part of the revised Abercrombie plan. It occupies a prominent position, flanking
the terminus of Royal Parade on St. Andrew’s Cross but it plays a lesser role than the Royal Bank of Scotland Bank. It is of moderate significance.

Plate 29.

The Royal Building at St. Andrew’s Cross


3.204 The Post Office (plate 30) occupies a high-profile location on St. Andrew’s Cross. Together with the Royal Building it flanks the Royal Bank of Scotland (former National Provincial Bank).

3.205 The shape of the building is defined by the constraints of the site and it faces directly onto St. Andrew’s Cross. The upper three floors are clad in thin sheets of Portland stone expressed as a frame around the façade and raised on round pilotis (once faced in black terrazzo but now tiled). Within the frame of Portland stone, the individual floors are expressed as horizontal bands of glazing and green slate spandrels. As with the Athenaeum, this is the architecture of the Festival of Britain,
with Gould noting that for the primary elevation ‘...the ultimate source was the side elevations of the Royal Festival Hall which were also clad in Portland stone, framed and raised on round columns.’

3.206 This is an attractive building which occupies a high-profile location as part of a major set piece. It is of moderate significance.

Plate 30.

The former Post Office at St. Andrew’s Cross

Norwich Union House (2-6 Royal Parade, 1-9 Old Town Street, and 3-9 New George Street) – Donald Hamilton Wakeford & Partners - 1950-2

3.207 As with the Royal Building, Norwich Union House (plate 31) occupies a prominent position on St. Andrew’s Cross. It applies a similar style to that employed by Tait and others at Dingles and Pearl, with fluted panels suggesting pilasters. The primary, south-eastern elevation is defined by its huge bronze window, flanked by unfluted columns. The southern elevation references the symmetry of the primary elevation
in its composition but this is less successful on the long elevation running along Old Town Street, which lacks the sense of symmetry achieved elsewhere. As with Tait’s buildings, it incorporates ground-floor shops which are not adequately reconciled with the scheme above ground-floor level.

3.208 Norwich Union House is of design value, representing a manipulation of a similar design scheme as seen elsewhere in this development. It is a high-quality building but lacks the finer detailing or the sense of mass and verticality enjoyed by the best of the Royal Parade buildings and, although of aesthetic value, is ultimately less successful. It is of moderate significance.

Plate 31.

Norwich Union House on the corner of St. Andrew's Cross, Old Town Road, and Royal Parade
New George Street, Old Town Street, and Market Avenue

New George Street East and Old Town Street

3.209 The construction on the eastern stretch of New George Street is in line with that of Armada Way rather than the other cross streets (Cornwall Street and Mayflower Street). In terms of quality, Old Town Street reads as a continuation of this part of New George Street, connecting with St. Andrew’s Cross. This area is characterised by high-quality construction and is the most successful cross street in the city centre, notably retaining some north-south permeability with Royal Parade through Bedford Way. It is a space of medium significance as a heritage asset.

3.210 The construction on the southern side of the eastern stretch of New George Street incorporates the rear portions of the earliest construction along Royal Parade and is consequently of a high standard, being of a consistently large scale. The consistent Portland stone façade is carried along this side of the road, with some exceptions (notably the former Dolcis Shoe Shop at 33-37 New George Street); however, where there are exceptions the quality of construction is retained.

3.211 The consistent scale of construction is for the most part retained on the northern side of the eastern stretch of the road, as is the consistent Portland stone palette. The effect achieved when looking down George Street is much the same as that obtained when looking northwards up Armada Way.

3.212 The eastern stretch of New George Street is slopes slightly upwards running west to east but this very gentle. It results in some minor variations in cornice height, which have a positive framing effect. The western elevation of the Natwest Bank at 12-14 Old Town Street provides an attractive terminus to this pleasant space.

3.213 The eastern stretch of New George Street represents an early part of the rebuilding of the city centre and is characterised by high-quality construction of a consistent character. There are more ‘stand-out’ buildings in the earlier construction of the southern side of the street but the consistency of construction on the northern side offers substantial group value. Its value is not as great as that of Armada Way or Royal Parade, which are the showpieces of the Abercrombie plan, but it is a rather complete example of the early rebuilding effort and as a high-quality space is of moderate significance.
Plate 32.

The eastern stretch of New George Street looking eastwards

New George Street West and Market Avenue

3.214 The character of the western side of New George Street differs to that of the eastern side, especially as it runs towards Market Avenue. The southern side of this stretch retains much of the high-quality construction exhibited on the eastern side of the road (plate 33), notably running up to the former Co-operative building (see Derry’s Cross above). The red-brick former Western Morning News building (69 New George Street) represents an attractive pre-war survival, which has been incorporated into the rebuilt city centre. Its red-brick façade is referenced in the high-quality 33-37 New George Street (former Dolcis Shoe Shop), on the eastern stretch of the road.

3.215 The best retail building on the northern side of New George Street is 66-68 New George Street (Poundland formerly Woolworths), which benefits from its larger scale, and as a group 50-80 New George Street (on the northern side of the western stretch of the road) are of a good standard, notably in their retention of the Portland stone palette exhibited on Armada Way. This group dominates the westwards vista.
from the junction with Armada Way. The quality of this construction is comparable to that on the eastern stretch of the road and reads as a similarly successful rendering of Abercrombie’s vision in the built form.

3.216 Unfortunately, the quality of construction on the north side of the road drops off towards Pannier Market, with 82-100 New George Street, which were constructed towards the end of the 1950s, being of less uniform design and of lower quality.

Plate 33.

The western stretch of New George Street looking westwards

3.217 Pannier Market is a significant exception to the low quality of the building towards the far western end of New George Street. It forms the western end of New George Street, stretching the depth of the block and traversing the corner with Market Avenue and Cornwall Street. It represents high-quality work by local architects and its standard contrasts markedly with the rest of this part of the street.

3.218 In Abercrombie’s plan, Market Avenue was part of a continuation of Raleigh Street that ran as far north as the ring road. Old Town Street played a similar role on the eastern end of the city centre. The curve of Market Avenue would have provided a crescent for on-street parking, something never realised in the largely-pedestrianised city centre.
3.219 As far west as 80 New George Street, roughly in line with Courtenay Street, the western stretch of the street reads as a high-quality space in line with the built realisation of Abercrombie’s vision. The failure to retain this quality along the entire length means it does not achieve the consistent character of the eastern stretch of the street, creating a space of moderate significance. The drop in consistent character, the loss of the Portland palette, and the reduction of scale at the western end of the street creates a space of low significance, notwithstanding the quality of the Pannier Market at the centre.

Buildings of Note:

Buildings of New George Street East and Old Town Street

26 Old Town Street/7-9 Cornwall Street (Marks & Spencer) – Lewis & Hickey - 1952

3.220 Marks & Spencer on Old Town Street is an attractive building of somewhat standard design. It matches the palette used elsewhere in the development but using reconstructed Portland stone, rather than the solid stone preferred for most of the earlier building. The neo-Egyptian façade to Cornwall Street was rather pompous but the scale was about right. The more abstract, modular façade on Old Town Street (based on Robert Lutyens 1930s modular system which Lewis & Hickey had used on various stores since 1934) was more suitable for the setting. The elevations are adorned with two delicate stone reliefs by E. Bainbridge Copnall, which are of artistic value.

3.221 The eastern elevations are now encompassed within the Drake Centre (Figs. 34 and 35) and are partially visible within this, providing an attractive internal wall within the modern building.

3.222 The building is of standard design but has carvings of artistic value. It is of low significance.
Plate 34.

The northern elevation of Marks & Spencer and the eastern end of Cornwall Street looking westwards

Plate 35.

The eastern elevation of Marks & Spencer on Old Town Street from within the Drake’s Circus Shopping Centre
2-6 New George Street (formerly Boots now Cotswolds) – C. St. Clair Oakes, staff architect to Boots – 1951

3.223 The easternmost building on New George Street, 2-6 New George Street, forms the corner with Old Town Street. It was constructed in reconstructed Portland stone to a design by St. Clair Oakes. The design borrows somewhat from that for Burtons on Old Town Road (demolished 2002), which it postdates in design but predates in construction (Gould, 2000, 36). St. Clair Oakes tended to work with brick-faced rectilinear designs, and the constraints of the Reconstruction Committee’s specifications defined the nature of his work here. The porthole windows which define the staircase enliven the façade (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989 666). This is the best building on the northern part of New George Street. It is of moderate significance.


3.224 This is an attractive building which, despite its later date, retains the Portland stone palette and large scale of reminiscent of the earlier construction in this area. Its handsome façade has a strong visual role as the eastern terminus of New George Street. It is of moderate significance.

33-37 New George Street (former Dolcis Shoe Shop) – Ellis E. Somake, staff architect to Dolcis – 1949-51

3.225 This was one of the first retail establishments in the new city and forms part of the block with the former Dingles building on the southern side of the eastern part of New George Street (plate 36). Its lack of consistency with the Portland stone mass of the former Dingles buildings is justified by the use of red brick in the retained Western Morning News building (69 New George Street) on the western part of the road but may well have been the result of cost considerations, as suggested by the use of reconstructed Portland stone and aluminium on the windows, rather than bronze and solid Portland as used elsewhere in the early construction.

3.226 The interior of the building brought to Plymouth the contemporary style of the Festival of Britain, later seen in the Civic Centre and the Athenaeum, far lighter than
Tait’s architecture of mass. It was the first new building in Plymouth to be published in the *Architects’ Journal* and is of **medium** significance.

**Plate 36.**

The eastern stretch of New George Street looking eastwards. The Dolcis shoe shop building, 33-37 New George Street, can be seen towards the centre of the right-hand side of the image.

**11, 15-17 New George Street – A.J. Ardin with Edgar Catchpole (city architect) – 1955-6**

**19 New George Street – Edward Narracott with Edgar Catchpole (city architect) – 1954-5**

3.227 These buildings are worth picking out as high-quality brick construction at the eastern end of New George Street (**plate 37**). Their fourth storeys are each recessed and fitted with a concrete roof perforated with large circular openings and steel railings to the parapet. The recessed top floor allows the cornice line to match that of the adjacent Portland stone building. The fenestration and massing suggest that the architect intended to match the nearby Portland stone construction in brick.
3.228 This is an interesting group of buildings which, as with 33-37 New George Street (Dolcis), show the possible quality of brick construction in this development. The circular roof openings are an unusual flourish. The group is of **moderate** significance.

**Plate 37.**

11 (left) and 15-17 (right) New George Street (19 is off the right-hand side of the image) looking southwards
Plate 38.

The western stretch of New George Street looking north-eastwards. The southern elevation of 66-68 New George Street, formerly Woolworths on the left-hand side of the image

Nos.66-68 New George Street (Poundland, formerly Woolworths) – W.A. Draysey, staff architect to Woolworths – 1952

3.229 This was an early building designed to set the major rhythm of New George Street (plate 38). It is of Portland stone, symmetrical with a great window flanked by solid stone walls, a cornice and a full-width projecting canopy (now removed).
This building is of conspicuously higher quality than that of the shops elsewhere on this part of New George Street but compares poorly to the commercial buildings of Royal Parade and elsewhere. It is of **low** significance.

**Plate 39.**

69 New George Street (the former Western Morning News building) looking south-westwards

**69 New George Street (former Western Morning News)**

The former Western Morning News building (**plate 39**) on the southern side of New George Street predates Abercrombie’s plan and is one of the few pre-war buildings in this part of the city. It is red-brick neo-Georgian with a pitched tile roof. Its red-brick façade was used to justify the use of the material elsewhere in New George Street and it is necessary in order to understand their presence.

It has been extensively altered at the rear but is a building of some aesthetic value and of illustrative value as a rare pre-war survival. It is of **medium** significance.
Pannier Market – Walls & Pearn – 1956-9

3.233 Within the new city, this is the highest quality building north of Royal Parade and away from the significant listed group around the Civic Centre and St. Andrew’s Church. Pannier Market was the only major building in the city centre by local architects and it rejected the classical composition utilised almost exclusively elsewhere. Walls & Pern produced a cathedral-like hall, 40ft high with seven great concrete portal frames spanning 150ft and thin concrete shell vaults between forming rooflights. It was in a modern tradition of raw concrete structures which had their sources in inter-war Germany (Gould, 2010, 30-2).

3.234 The structural engineer on the building was Albin Chronowicz and it derives technological value from the innovation shown on his part. The portal frames were constructed first, with the shells built on shuttering afterwards - a far more flexible and economic system than trying to pour the two elements together. The portal frames took up the weight of the shells, gradually, with negligible transference of resulting stresses into the shell membrane. The design of the roof was thus reduced to its simple elements, and in addition a greater speed of construction was possible with less shell shuttering and scaffolding required. This was the real innovation of the Pannier Market that marks it out as a development from other north light shell concrete buildings, together with the system of pre- and post-tensioning that could then be adopted. It is an early example of a post-war market built using a shell concrete system. Shell concrete was pioneered in Germany before the war, but was only widely adopted in Britain afterwards, when shortages of steel and timber, and rising costs, made it an ideal solution for bridging large spans without columns. Here the use of conoid shells made it possible to incorporate north-facing rooflights, providing a cool even natural light across the interior that adds to its powerful simplicity (2003 list description).

3.235 The building is of substantial social value. The original market was bombed in 1941 and had determined to keep going through a series of temporary iron structures through the war; its permanent rebuilding was symbolic of Plymouth’s survival and regeneration. Its completion as one of the last buildings of the new shopping area was also symbolic of the spiritual completion of central Plymouth (2003 list description).
3.236 The Pannier Market was listed at grade II in 2003 (Appendix 1). It is of **high** significance.

**Plate 40.**

![Colin Campbell House](image)

**Colin Campbell House – Edgar G. Catchpole - 1938**

3.237 The rendered streamline moderne façade of Colin Campbell House in the centre of Colin Campbell Court (off Market Avenue) is of notably higher quality than the later construction around it. Its smooth, white façade rises somewhat incongruously from the tarmac of the surrounding car park (**plate 40**).

3.238 Like the Royal (now Reel) Cinema, its survival is likely due to its modernity at the time of the reconstruction effort. It was constructed in 1938 to designs by E.G. Catchpole (city architect) and is the only surviving example of Art Deco architecture in Plymouth city centre ([http://www.c20society.org.uk/casework/colin-campbell-house-plymouth/](http://www.c20society.org.uk/casework/colin-campbell-house-plymouth/), accessed 14 April 2014).

3.239 The primary façade is defined by curving, streamline moderne window bays, enlivening what otherwise could have been dull rectangular form. The ground floor
consists of shop fronts and the upper floors are delineated by strips of windows along their lengths.

3.240 The rendered elevations are now rather dirty, especially at the upper levels and on the side elevations. Historically a car show room, this is a large building and only the lower floors have been occupied in recent years.

3.241 This is a high-quality building which was unsuccessfully recommended for statutory listing by the 20th Century Society in 2001. It did not play a part in Abercrombie’s vision for Plymouth but has defined the nature of the development around it, which places it in the centre of a court. It is of medium significance.
Charles Cross

3.242 Charles Cross forms the eastern extent of the ring road laid out in Abercrombie’s plan and is defined by two buildings: the grade I listed ruins of the 17th-century Charles Church in the centre of the roundabout; and the 2002-6 Drake’s Circus shopping centre which runs the length of Charles Street. The current Drake’s Circus Shopping Centre replaced the original one constructed in 1971 is based on the model of an American mall. Its closed façades, which internalise shopping in a way alien to the open shop fronts of Paton Watson’s implementation of Abercrombie’s plan, does not attempt to relate to the post-war architecture around it. It is of no heritage value but it is not an ugly building and does not detract greatly to the setting of Charles Cross. The shopping centre’s heritage impact is neutral.

3.243 The space as a whole is defined the presence of the grade I listed church and this creates a fine landmark entrance to the city centre. It forms part of the setting of the Ebrington Street Conservation Area and should be regarded as of high significance.

Buildings of note:

Charles Church – 1640-68

3.244 Charles Church was destroyed in the Second World War and was retained as a ruin on Charles Cross, defining the eastern extent of the new city. These elegant ruins are a rarity as, despite their construction during the Commonwealth, they are ‘wholly Gothic in detail and largely in character (Cherry and Pevsner, 1989, 641).’ The interior was refitted in 1828-9 by J.H. Ball but nothing of this remains.

3.245 The ruins work remarkably well in their roundabout location. They are of high aesthetic value and retain commemorative value as a poignant reminder of the destruction wrought in the city centre during the Blitz in the same manner as Coventry Cathedral. The ruins were listed at grade I in 1954 (Appendix 1) and are of high significance. A central feature to any potential regeneration in this area would be the necessity to respect and improve the setting of this church.
Drake’s Cross and Drake’s Circus

3.246 Drake’s Circus is a point of flux, where the new city meets the pre-war street plan. It runs north-eastwards uphill forming the southern boundary of what Abercrombie designated the ‘cultural centre’ in his original plan. Its northern side is bounded by university buildings up to the boundary of the 18th-century Drake’s Place and reservoir. The southern side is dominated by the city’s Library and Museum, a handsome Edwardian building which was restored under the Paton Watson/Abercrombie scheme. The construction in this area is peripheral to the main scheme and the alignment of the road is defined by the earlier construction rather than being imposed by the rebuilding. The spire of the Sherwell Church forms a recognisable landmark from the bottom of the hill here.

3.247 The space itself is defined primarily by modern construction but its layout is important in providing one of several gateways to Abercrombie’s city centre. Equally, the view up to the North Hill is quite affecting. The space is not particularly sensitive to change but these elements should be maintained, rendering the space a heritage asset of low significance.

Buildings of note:

Library and Museum – Thornely & Rooke – 1907

Library Annexe (former St. Luke’s Church) – J.H. Ball - 1828

3.248 This Edwardian Baroque building was restored in 1954 following damage during the Blitz and was listed at grade II in 1975 (Appendix 1). The centrepiece of the library is a large Venetian window under an open pediment. The stained glass celebrating literary figures is of 1925 and is by Morris & Co.

3.249 The linear façade of this building, running along Drake’s Circus, stands out against the surrounding construction. It contrasts starkly with the Roland Levinsky building opposite and is of definitive significance to the character of this part of the city running northeast from Drake’s Cross. The building is of high significance.

3.250 The annexe at the rear of the library on Tavistock Place is the former Church of St. Luke and was separately listed in 1998. This was constructed in 1828 and represents
a good example of a 19th-century church in the classical style. It is of high significance.

**Sherwell United Reformed Church and associated buildings – Paull & Ayliffe – 1864**

3.251 This building is prominently located on Drake’s Circus, North Hill, and was listed at grade II* in 1991 (Appendix 1). It was the first Nonconformist chapel in the West Country in a gothic style and was constructed in limestone rubble. Its 135-ft spire is especially prominent from Drake’s Cross.

3.252 This prominent local landmark is of design value as a competently handled composition by a well-known Manchester firm. It is of high significance.

**Drake’s Place – 1754**

3.253 This represents the site of the city’s 18th-century reservoirs. The main house was designated a grade-II listed building in 1954 (Appendix 1). This handsome stuccoed villa dates from 1754 and is on the site of a 1617 culvert, though it incorporates spolia from as early as 1598. The remains of Drake’s Leat, the 1617 conduit, are built into the wall near the west entrance and this was incorporated into the listing in 1975. The house and reservoirs were remodelled in 1874 and further remodelled in 1891. The walls and railings facing the road (separately grade II listed in 1998) were probably a result of this later remodelling.

3.254 This remains a group of high value which has substantial commemorative value as a monument to Plymouth’s water supply. It is of high significance.
The ‘Abercrombie Concept’ Revisited

3.255 Having defined the Abercrombie concept and then investigated the modern city centre, it possible to consider how the extant city centre relates to that envisaged by Abercrombie and Paton Watson.

3.256 **Zoning and defined precincts.** It is remarkable the extent to which zoning has been retained in the city centre. The city planners responsible for the realisation of Abercrombie’s plan (Stirling, Crabtree, Tait etc.) were more strict application of this than perhaps even Abercrombie had envisaged (he had entertained the idea of situating flats in the upper floors of the large buildings of the shopping centre; Abercrombie, 1943, 74). There remains, as Abercrombie planned, a clear distinction between the civic area, the shopping centre, and the surrounding residential districts.

3.257 In all but one case, the precincts envisaged in the Abercrombie plan can still be traced on the ground.

3.258 The civic area remains a distinct group in the space between Royal Parade and Notte Street. More pre-war buildings were retained than Abercrombie had planned, notably the Guildhall, where Abercrombie’s new Civic Centre would have been situated, but the function of the space is as he envisaged.

3.259 The eastern part of the Civic Centre does not provide the clear break with the historic city that Abercrombie had planned, with the Barbican Conservation Area stretching into the civic area at this point. This is because the south-eastern stretch of Abercrombie’s ring road (Fig.2), which would have destroyed much of the Victorian construction in the western part of the Barbican, was never constructed.

3.260 Abercrombie envisaged the western end of the civic area as a theatre precinct centred upon the Royal (now Reel) Cinema (Ibid, 74-5). This was realised in the form of Derry’s Cross, with the Reel Cinema and the Athenaeum forming the focus for this. Peter Moro’s Theatre Royal (1978-82) completed this element of the vision. The demolition of the Drake Cinema (c.2000) and the construction of the Travelodge (2003), blocking the view of the Reel Cinema and the Athenaeum from Derry’s Cross, have diminished the realisation of this element of Abercrombie’s vision.

3.261 Abercrombie envisaged the eastern end of the civic area as a banking centre. This was realised architecturally with the construction of the National Provincial Bank
(now the Royal Bank of Scotland) at St. Andrew’s Cross. The nature of regional banking has changed since the 1940s and Royal Bank of Scotland have now largely decanted from this building and this area is no longer the banking centre envisaged by Abercrombie.

3.262 The shopping centre continues to occupy the precinct designated as such in the Abercrombie plan. The function of Armada Way and the cross streets within this space is as envisaged by Abercrombie, except for the pedestrianisation of the cross streets, but there is not the north-south permeability between the blocks that Abercrombie planned. This diminishes the legibility of the space and means north-south movement is almost entirely reliant upon Armada Way. Abercrombie’s narrow alleys between the blocks, designed to mimic the pedestrian shopping streets of Bath (Ibid, 71), were not realised.

3.263 The area which least relates to Abercrombie’s plan in terms of zoning is the triangular space within the ring road north of Mayflower Street, labelled as ‘government and professional offices’ in Abercrombie’s plan. The need for such offices on the scale envisaged by Abercrombie did not exist and the space now reads as a continuation of the shopping centre; however, it does not benefit from the consistent palette and scale enjoyed in the shopping centre proper and the construction here, especially on the western side of Armada Way, is generally of a lower quality (see below).

3.264 The area labelled as the ‘cultural centre’ in Fig.2 was envisaged as the setting for a technical college by Abercrombie (Ibid, 75). The zoning of this area has remained largely in line with Abercrombie’s vision, with the former technical college, now Plymouth University, dominating development here. As Abercrombie planned, Sherwell Church and Drake’s Reservoir have been retained.

3.265 It is worth reiterating that the level to which zoning has been retained is remarkable and is in fact somewhat stricter than what seems to have been envisaged by Abercrombie. This has created some issues for the city centre, with it becoming devoid of life or activity outside of ordinary business hours. The relaxation of zoning restrictions on the upper floors of commercial properties would certainly be in line with Abercrombie’s vision.

3.266 Road layout and traffic control. As mentioned above, the road layout derives itself from Abercrombie’s vision and consists of three main elements: a surrounding ring road; a north-south axis; and an east-west axis.
3.267 The ring road as realised runs around the city centre much as envisaged by Abercrombie, though a comparison of Figs. 2 and 3 shows how this vision was not wholly realised south of Royal Parade. The ring road does not cut southwards through the western part of the Barbican, which thankfully saved much of the pre-war architecture in this area, but this has meant that there is not the clear divide between the new city and the old that Abercrombie had planned. This lack of a clear divide between the civic area and the Barbican diminishes the legibility of this area.

3.268 The failure to fully realise the ring road south of Royal Parade means that Royal Parade acts as the southern arm of the ring road, though Abercrombie had envisaged the main function of the ring road as keeping through traffic out of the centre. That being said, his vision would have moved this major through road to the Hoe, now a designated historic park, and the use of Royal Parade, which was always envisaged with some motor traffic in mind, seems preferable to this.

3.269 In terms of layout (the visual aspects will be discussed below), the north-south vista has been realised much as intended by Abercrombie, with Armada Way forming a grand, pedestrianized way running through the heart of the heart of the city centre, from North Cross to the Hoe.

3.270 Equally, the east-west vista has been wholly realised in the form of Royal Parade. Derry’s Cross does not provide the junction with the ring road as envisaged in Fig.2 but it does provide a visual terminus for the main east-west thoroughfare.

3.271 The broad layout of Armada Way and Royal Parade as the north-south and east-west axes of the city centre represents the best realised portion of Abercrombie’s plan and this is of high significance. These parts of Abercrombie’s plan were easier to realise than the ring road as they were constructed on what was essentially a clear site, whereas the ring road was forced to interact with the existing city around the centre. With this in mind, the form of the ring road represents a very good imposition of Abercrombie’s conceptual plan onto the reality of the rebuilt city.

3.272 Away from the major axes, the layout of roads within the shopping centre matches Abercrombie’s vision in some fundamental ways but differs in others. The provision of a series of smaller east-west roads, creating a clear street grid and blocks of buildings, is much as envisaged in the Abercrombie plan; however, the blocks themselves are far less permeable than Abercrombie intended and there is no north-south movement through them.
3.273 The interaction between the cross streets and the ring road is non-existent except for in the case of Mayflower Street. Abercrombie explicitly intended that there would be some interaction with the ring road: Old Town Road and Raleigh Street would have extended as far north as the ring road, forming minor north-south roads between Royal Parade and the ring road. This would have allowed shopping traffic to enter the shopping centre and would provide convenient locations for bus stops, keeping buses away from the shopping centre itself but retaining accessibility for shoppers (Ibid, 72).

3.274 The lack of interaction between the shopping centre and the ring road ties into the other main departure from Abercrombie’s vision: pedestrianisation. Abercrombie envisaged only the north-south axis as a pedestrian way but welcomed motor traffic in the rest of the city centre. The ring road was designed to ensure the safety of this, as fast-moving through traffic would be kept away from the shopping centre. In its realised form, there is no vehicle access to the shopping centre other than Mayflower Street. As a result, there is no on-street parking as planned by Abercrombie, resulting in the centre of blocks being used as car parks.

3.275 The retention of the layout of the planned “Abercrombie grid”, comprising Armada Way and Royal Parade is of high significance. The layout of the cross streets (New George Street, Cornwall Street, and Mayflower Street) is less representative of Abercrombie’s vision but represents a real effort to realise it on the ground and is of medium significance.

3.276 Open spaces and vistas. Abercrombie was clear that he viewed the lack of open space as one of the major problems with pre-war Plymouth and that he saw the replanning of the city centre as an opportunity to address this deficiency (Ibid, 33). His response to this was primarily through the introduction of wide, tree-lined streets, formally laid out in the Beaux-Arts tradition.

3.277 The width of the streets as realised is not as great as Abercrombie envisaged (Armada Way only reaches the 200ft he specified at its northernmost end) but they are certainly in the same order of magnitude and conform to his general scheme (see above).

3.278 Abercrombie did not define how he wished planted to be enacted, only providing the recommendation that ‘...the wider streets should be tree-lined, and extensive use
made of the sub-tropical vegetation which can be established with success in this area (Ibid, 71).’

3.279 As Abercrombie did not define the manner of the planting he envisaged it cannot be said to what extent the extant planting relates to his vision; however, the curving pathways in place certainly do not relate to the rectilinear geometry of his design.

3.280 As emphasised at several points above, the north-south vista along Armada Way, utilising the topography to provide a view of the Hoe Memorial from North Cross, was a central feature of Abercrombie’s vision, designed to provide a constant landmark and a sense of connection between the city and the railway station to the north.

3.281 This element of Abercrombie’s plan has been realised to a great extent, and from North Cross there is a clear line into the city centre, allowing an unfamiliar visitor to easily find their way from there into the city centre; however, this connection does not extend to the railway station itself. The vista along Armada Way is of high significance but it could be improved at its northern end (see below).

3.282 Royal Parade represents an excellent realisation of Abercrombie’s east-west vista and closes on the high-quality façade of the Royal Bank of Scotland at its eastern end. The western end closes on Derry’s Cross and specifically on the façade of Ladbroke’s. This is a building of neutral significance in itself, though if it were ever replaced in the future a similar termination of the vista would be required here.

3.283 The open spaces within the blocks of the shopping centre, where Abercrombie envisaged rest gardens, have not been realised in line with his plan. Two main factors explain this: the spaces are required for service yards for the shops, something Abercrombie did not seem to take into account to any serious extent; and the increase in car ownership, in conjunction with the lack of the on-street parking as planned by Abercrombie, means that in several cases these central spaces have been utilised as car parks.

3.284 The lack of permeability within the blocks, combined with the lack of the secondary north-south roads envisaged by Abercrombie at the eastern and western ends of the shopping centre, mean that legibility is not as good as it should be and north-south movement within the shopping centre is much more reliant on Armada Way than was the case in Abercrombie’s vision.
3.285 This lack of permeability within and between blocks also reduces the number of minor views and glimpses between spaces, which where they do exist are quite affecting and certainly benefit orientation, e.g. the view towards Royal Parade and St. Andrew’s Church from New George Street through Bedford Way (between 25 and 29 New George Street).

3.286 **Architectural consistency.** As detailed above, Abercrombie’s vision called for a consistent architectural style and palette of materials, though the nature of either the style or the material was not defined.

3.287 At its best, this has been achieved in the realised city centre. The most notable success is along Armada Way as far north as Mayflower Street, where there is a consistent scale and a unifying palette of Portland stone. This falls away in some of the side streets (see above) and is lost entirely on Mayflower Street, a later development than the rest of the city centre, which represents the weakest space in the shopping centre.

3.288 Abercrombie envisaged that the wide streets would allow for tall buildings (‘...four, five, or even six storeys (Ibid, 32)’) and although this is realised at the southern end of Armada Way, the scale falls off as one moves further north. The scale increases again at the very northern end of Armada Way but the quality of construction here is lower.

3.289 The section drawing in Abercrombie’s publication (Fig.4) suggests that he envisaged a consistent scale throughout the shopping centre, though he did write about varied building heights when discussing vistas (e.g. Ibid, 67). There would certainly be scope to introduce taller buildings of a consistent style and palette within the constraints of Abercrombie’s vision.

3.290 House of Fraser (Dingles) and the Pearl Assurance building represent some of the best realised portions of Abercrombie’s vision in the built form, providing a large-scale and consistent appearance along the southern stretch of Armada Way, which they dominate.
4.0 OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHANGE

4.1 Section 3.0 established the buildings and spaces which make a positive contribution to the historic character and heritage value of Plymouth city centre.

4.2 The city centre is not a designated conservation area, so the only statutory heritage-related constraints on regeneration/redevelopment are related to the settings and fabric of the listed buildings/parks and gardens within the study area and of those conservation areas which extend into (the Hoe and the Barbican), abut (Ebrington Street), or are close to the boundary of (Union Street) the study area.

4.3 That being said, as Section 3.0 shows, as well as the statutorily-designated elements, there are various non-designated heritage assets within the study area. Any future plans for regeneration would need to take these into account in order to benefit fully from the opportunities offered by the distinctive historic character of Plymouth’s city centre.

4.4 So, having established in Section 3.0 what elements of the built heritage of the city centre are of significance and in what way, it is possible to identify possible ways in which sympathetic change or regeneration could be enacted in a manner which would not diminish but would enhance these key features.

4.5 Opportunities for change arise particularly where there are chances to more fully implement the favourable elements of Abercrombie’s vision, complementing those parts that have been realised, without diminishing those elements of the built environment which are of intrinsic heritage value independently from Abercrombie’s plan.

4.6 The study areas used in Section 4.0 are the same as those used in Section 3.0 and are summarised in Fig.1.4, which has been reproduced overleaf for ease of reference. The outcome of Section 4.0 is summarised in Fig.1.5, which has also been reproduced below for ease of reference.
Figure 1.4

Modern plan summarising the divisions of the study area in Section 3.0. Note that the St. George Street, Cornwall Street, Mayflower Street division is bisected by the Armada Way division. Also note, the University Area is labelled but not coloured as this area is not covered in the document except as relates to nearby listed buildings. There will inevitably be some overlap between these divisions, so boundaries should be considered permeable.
Figure 1.5

Modern plan showing the areas which could best accommodate change on heritage grounds, as identified in Section 4.0. The areas identified in Section 4.0 are tinted in red. Areas where planting could be introduced or improved are highlighted in green. Numbers are referred to in the accompanying text.

Small-scale changes, such as improvements in shop frontages, could be accommodated throughout the study area.

The limits of the study area are highlighted in solid red, significant building lines are highlighted in solid purple, and nearby conservation areas are tinted in blue, green, yellow, and purple.
**The ‘Abercrombie grid’**

4.7 The layout of the ‘Abercrombie grid’ consisting of the main north-south axis (Armada Way), the main east-west axis (Royal Parade), and the smaller cross streets (New George Street, Cornwall Street, and Mayflower Street) is a definitive factor in the character of the city centre and represents a solid attempt to translate Abercrombie’s conceptual design into a real-world setting. The grid is a planning element of high heritage significance and its broad layout and building lines should be maintained.

4.8 Abercrombie’s grid does not interact with the surrounding ring road in the manner he envisaged, being largely disconnected from it due to the pedestrianisation of the city centre. Although car ownership is far higher than in Abercrombie’s day, a case could be made on heritage grounds for the limited introduction of slow-moving motor traffic to the cross streets of the shopping centre as envisaged by Abercrombie.

4.9 Most importantly, Abercrombie’s original vision had far greater north-south connectivity than has been achieved in its realisation. This diminishes the legibility of the city centre. The introduction of lower-order north-south connections between the cross streets would improve the pedestrian experience of the city centre and at the same time bring it closer in line with Abercrombie’s vision. With this borne in mind, the improvement of north-south connectivity should be viewed as an opportunity for change relating to both the Abercrombie grid and the city centre blocks in general.

4.10 The conversion of the former Western Morning News Building at 69 New George Street gives a good example of how further north-south connectivity can be provided without damaging the visual relationship between individual buildings and the street, meaning that where appropriate, further permeability could be provided without any demolition, allowing for its integration in more sensitive areas; however, where such permeability is required but the buildings affected are not of direct value in themselves (e.g. on Mayflower Street and Cornwall Street), larger gaps which provide greater visual connectivity, providing glimpses through to other spaces, should be considered.
**North Cross**

4.11 The only heritage constraints to change around North Cross are those dictated by the setting of the listed Portland Villas buildings. In fact, this area represents a significant **opportunity for change** through the possibility of restoring the connections and views onto Armada Way which are so central to the Abercrombie concept.

4.12 Plymouth Station (1 in **Fig.1.5**) is a building of **neutral** significance, with no intrinsic architectural value. It represents an **opportunity for change** in terms of reconnecting its relationship with the city centre.

4.13 The location of the station was used as a landmark in Abercrombie’s planning of Armada Way. The multi-storey car park immediately in front of the station (**plate 1** and 2 in **Fig.1.5**) is **intrusive** and breaks up the visual relationship between the station and the city intended by Abercrombie. This diminishes the arrival experience of those approaching Plymouth by train and makes orientation reliant upon signposting.

4.14 Abercrombie’s vision had allowed for the construction of a subway starting in the location of the car park and running through North Hill, in the manner exhibited on North Cross, creating a vista down to the Hoe, making orientation intuitive for visitors arriving by train.

4.15 Abercrombie’s vision involved the demolition of the Victorian terraces of Caprera Place (3 in **Fig.1.5**) for the construction of his Station Hotel. These buildings add to the sense of detachment between the station and the city centre and are of little heritage value in themselves, representing an **opportunity for change**.

4.16 The reconnection of the station with the city centre could best be achieved through a direct route, i.e. a subway through North Hill as envisaged by Abercrombie, but less radical solutions might include the formation of clearer, formal routes around North Hill to North Cross running directly from the station entrance.

4.17 From North Cross itself (4 in **Fig.1.5**) there is scope for regeneration as long as the vista onto the Hoe is retained and not blocked. This could even be enhanced through high-quality screening buildings, as suggested by Harvey’s illustrations of
Abercrombie’s plan (e.g. Fig.6). This might involve the construction of taller ‘gateway’ buildings at the junction of North Cross and Armada Way.

Armada Way, Cornwall Street, and Mayflower Street

4.18 There is limited opportunity for change on Armada Way – South (6 in Fig.1.5). Notably, the buildings here are significant and high quality, and the scale and quality of construction here should certainly be maintained. This is a significant space but is unsheltered and feels harsher than intended in Abercrombie’s plan. It would benefit from planting, perhaps in the manner suggested in Harvey’s illustrations of Abercrombie’s plan (e.g. Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 74) but any regeneration would have to respect the existing buildings and spaces.

4.19 Traditional Beaux-Arts street planning uses formal planting in order to create vistas and promote certain views and this is certainly what was intended by Abercrombie. Such a layout creates a clear sense of legibility but allows public use of the space for movement, recreation, street markets etc. This has been diminished in Plymouth through the implementation of more ornamental planting in the early 1980s. A return to the formal, rectilinear planting of Abercrombie’s Beaux-Arts scheme would benefit the legibility of Abercrombie’s grid as well as the setting of the buildings which inhabit it.

4.20 The opportunities for change increase as one moves northwards up Armada Way. Although the lack of planting on Armada Way – South makes the space harsher than originally intended, the planting on Armada Way – North is too developed for the space (7 in Fig.1.5). Notably, this diminishes the vista along Armada Way towards the Hoe. The curved ornamental paving and artificial streams (plate 6) are at odds with the rectilinear geometry of the space and feel out of character with Abercrombie’s strongly-planned Beaux-Arts axis.

4.21 The only point where the planting is truly successful is at the northernmost point of Armada Way (8 in Fig.1.5), at the rise located between the Copthorne Hotel and the YMCA building. Here the landscape composition uses natural stone and includes two terraces, a fountain, and a pond. There are a series of parallel walls with copings and two ornamental lion heads honed in Plymouth limestone. This represents an isolated success in the transplantation of the Beaux-Arts idiom into the landscaping along Armada Way and should be maintained.
4.22 Despite the quality of its landscape composition, this top stretch of Armada Way – North between Mayflower Street and North Cross suffers from the buildings on its western side: the Armada Centre (plate 3) and the Copthorne Hotel (9 in Fig.1.5). The Copthorne Hotel maintains the building line but is not an attractive building and is of neutral significance. On the other hand, the Armada Centre is intrusive. Its raised car park ostensibly maintains the line of Armada Way but provides an unwelcome visual break in the line of buildings along this central axis. It lacks an active frontage at any point, either onto Armada Way, Western Approach, or Mayflower Street, and interacts poorly with the spaces around it.

4.23 There are some opportunities for change in the buildings of Armada Way – North, especially relating to their modern shop fronts. The consistent palette and building line as far north as Mayflower Street is of significance and should be maintained but there are ample opportunities for change in terms of increased massing to meet the scale of the street as well as improvement to shop fronts, which have almost universally been diminished by gradual alteration.

4.24 If any increases in building height were enacted, the continuity of a consistency of scale and palette along the block would be required to remain in line with the application of Abercrombie’s vision. Any unilateral changes in height would require the setting back of the taller elements, so that a visual sense of conformity is retained on the ground.

4.25 Some visual differentiation in building height could be achieved at specific landmark points, in the manner of the pylon towers at the junction of North Cross and Armada Way visible in Harvey’s illustrations of Abercrombie’s plan (e.g. Fig.6). Carefully placed taller buildings could be used to mark gateway points and to differentiate junctions, and would also have the added benefit of framing key vistas, as imagined by Abercrombie (Abercrombie, 1943, 67).

4.26 The use of taller buildings as defining landmarks is already successful at the junction of Armada Way and Royal Parade (defined by the towers of House of Fraser, the Pearl Assurance Building, the Guildhall, and the Civic Centre) and a similar effect could conceivably be achieved at the junctions of Armada Way with Mayflower Street and Cornwall Street, improving legibility for pedestrians. The gateway points where the cross streets of the city centre meet the ring road could also benefit from similar treatment.
4.27 Mayflower Street (Figs. 11 and 12) exhibits ample opportunities for change (9 & 10 in Fig.1.5). This represents the lowest quality construction in the city centre and substantially post-dates the other post-war reconstruction. There is nothing here of heritage value. The buildings represent an incoherent mix of ages and styles that is not of aesthetic value. The consistent building line, which is an element of Abercrombie’s plan, should be retained. The redevelopment of this space with a consistent palette, which would not necessarily have to be Portland stone would benefit the space and bring it more in line with the application of Abercrombie’s vision as exhibited elsewhere in the city centre. The junction of Mayflower Street and Western Approach could benefit from framing by taller buildings, marking this as a gateway point.

4.28 The western stretch of Cornwall Street as far as Market Way represents the lowest quality construction pre-dating 1961 (10 in Fig.1.5). It is of some illustrative value regarding the declining standard of the application of this portion of Abercrombie’s plan in the later part of the 1950s but is visually far less appealing than New George Street or the eastern part of Cornwall Street. Discounting the former Martin's Bank on the corner with Armada Way, the buildings in this area are of neutral significance and this space represents an opportunity for change. Notably, further north-south connections could be inserted in this area, running through to the western stretch of Mayflower Street, without damaging any buildings of specific heritage value.

4.29 With this in mind, the block which runs between Market Way on the west, Armada Way on the east, Cornwall Street on the south, and Mayflower Street on the north (10 in Fig.1.5) represents a particular opportunity for regeneration, the only major constraints in heritage terms being that the frontage of this block along Armada Way should be maintained and that any redevelopment should respect the setting of the Pannier Market.

Royal Parade

4.30 Royal Parade represents one of the best spaces in the city and is characterised by high-quality construction (11 in Fig.1.5). It has been improved in recent years by the widening of the pavement at the junction with Armada Way. There are few opportunities for change in terms of the buildings along this road, which represent some of the highest-quality construction in the city centre. Their massing, so much greater than that of the smaller-scale buildings along the northern parts of
Armada Way, are of substantial illustrative value regarding the early application of Abercrombie’s vision.

4.31 There is, however, some **opportunity for change** in the quality of the public spaces in this area. This road was always intended to handle motor traffic, but Abercrombie’s vision did not involve it being used for through traffic (which would have utilised the unrealised southern portion of the ring road) but rather slower moving access-related traffic. As such, it is less friendly to pedestrians than originally intended. Notably, in Abercrombie’s vision, buses (which currently make heavy use of the road) would not have utilised this road but would rather have deposited shoppers at access points around the precinct (Abercrombie, 1943, 71).

The northern side of the road tends to be very crowded and is difficult to traverse. There is certainly scope for the widening of the pavement already present at the junction with Armada Way being extended to further points along the street, creating a more shared sense of space. The widening of pavements would also improve the pedestrian experience of the large scale of the buildings along this road.

**Civic Area and Historic Core**

4.32 The Civic Area and Historic Core are the most significant spaces in the city centre (12 in **Fig.1.5**).

4.33 The Historic Core represents the cluster of statutorily listed buildings around St. Andrew’s Church and Catherine Street. This area is incorporated into a westward projection of the Barbican Conservation Area (**Fig.1.1**).

4.34 Catherine Street is unique in the city centre for its density of listed buildings and **does not represent an opportunity for any significant change**.

4.35 Taking into account their impact on the setting of the nearby listed buildings and the Barbican Conservation Area, the unlisted buildings of Finewell Street, e.g. the Magistrate’s Court and St. Andrew’s Court, are of **neutral significance** and there are **opportunities for sympathetic alteration** taking into account the setting of the nearby listed buildings and conservation area. The historic line of the street, suggested by the alignment of 33 St. Andrew’s Street, should be maintained if any changes are made in this area.
4.36 Abercrombie had envisaged a clearer divide between the new city and the old (Fig.2) in a line running roughly south from St. Andrew’s Cross. Although the failure to realise this has saved much of the pre-war construction in this area, some attempt to more clearly delineate the transition between the civic area and the Barbican would improve the legibility of this area.

4.37 Civic Square is a high-quality, statutorily-listed space which benefits from a number of listed buildings located along its perimeter. It was designed by Jellicoe in connection with the adjacent Civic Centre and is a space of high significance. There are two elements which represent opportunities for change: the Crown Court is a building of neutral significance, while Princess Court is an unattractive building which detracts from the space and relates poorly to the former Barclay’s Bank building opposite. Although these buildings are not of intrinsic value in themselves, any alteration here would need to take into account the setting of the nearby statutorily-designated heritage assets from the earliest planning stages. Notably, the scale of any replacements would need to at least match that of the existing buildings in order to meet the demands of the space.

**Derry’s Cross**

4.38 Derry’s Cross (13 in Fig.1.5) is a fundamental element of Abercrombie’s plan but has been subject to substantial alteration and there are therefore opportunities for change. Any future regeneration should be expected to maintain the broad layout of one of Abercrombie’s key spaces, notably maintaining its visual role as the western terminus of Royal Parade.

4.39 The Travelodge building (plate 21) blocks the vista along Raleigh Street which previously terminated on the façades of the Athenaeum and the Reel Cinema (14 in Fig.1.5). This was something explicitly intended by Abercrombie and the Travelodge is a poor replacement which detracts from the space. It is unrealistic to suggest that the original view into this space be restored but some improvement of the southwards vista onto Derry’s Cross might be considered. As the Travelodge building has diminished the sense of space engendered by the original view, such improvement could be as simple as improving the existing glimpses of the Reel Cinema to the side of the new building, perhaps through screening with formal planting.
4.40 The Grosvenor G Casino (15 in Fig.1.5) is a new building that replaced the Drake Cinema in 2002 but maintains the building line and the central conceit of the ship on its primary façade. It is in a high-profile location and the layout of the space requires that a building of at least this scale should be retained on the plot; however, the scale of the space would certainly allow for a pylon or tower in this gateway location. If such an aesthetic conceit was considered, a high building of similar scale might be expected on the opposite building to create a visually satisfying gateway. This is not suggested in Abercrombie’s plan by Harvey’s illustrations for this space (Fig.7) but would certainly be in keeping with the gateway towers shown elsewhere in Abercrombie’s plan e.g. at the top of Armada Way (Fig.6).

4.41 The multi-storey car park to the southeast of Derry’s Cross (plate 22 and 16 in Fig.1.5) is intrusive and has a negative impact on the immediate setting of the statutorily-listed Clock Tower and Bank Public House. There is scope for improvement of the setting of these listed structures.

St. Andrew’s Cross

4.42 St. Andrew’s Cross (17 in Fig.1.5) is a more successful space than Derry’s Cross and relates directly to the high-quality construction on Royal Parade. The buildings and setting are of high quality and there are few opportunities for change here. Improvements in the pedestrian navigation of the space might be considered but the vista along Royal Parade should not be compromised. Naturally, any alteration or redevelopment would have to take into account the setting of the statutorily-designated Royal Bank of Scotland.

New George Street, Old Town Street, and Market Avenue

4.43 The southern side of New George Street consists of a series of high quality buildings and any future alteration or regeneration should be expected to respect the consistent character of these buildings.

4.44 The consistent palette remains a significant element on the buildings of the northern side of the road, especially on the eastern stretch, representing a relatively early phase of the post-war reconstruction; however, there are few standout buildings on this side of the road and it is certainly of less significance than the southern side.
There is some opportunity to increase the massing of the buildings on the northern side, notably bringing this in line with the massing of the construction further south, but (as with Armada Way) a consistency of scale and palette along the block would be required to remain in line with the application of Abercrombie’s vision. Any unilateral changes in height would require the setting back of the taller elements, so that a visual sense of conformity is retained on the ground.

4.45 Sympathetic alteration could be considered as relates to shop frontages, which have been replaced by modern examples in most cases. Sympathetic stone cleaning to the Portland stone frontages would also benefit the character of this area.

Plate 41.

The rear of the Pearl Assurance Company building

4.46 The service yard of Pearl Assurance Company (plate 41) is accessible from New George Street and serves as a car park and the entrance to some businesses (18 in Fig.1.5). The rear elevations of House of Fraser are utilitarian brick work of a lower order of significance than the primary façades and development could be undertaken in this space without affecting the heritage significance of the buildings. Similar principles could be applied to the service yards of any of the blocks, and an
increase in north-south permeability through the blocks, as suggested by Abercrombie’s vision, would certainly be a positive development.

4.47 Drake’s Circus shopping centre (19 in Fig.1.5) interacts with the eastern end of New George Street, where it encloses what was previously the northern portion of Old Town Street. The effect of this development on New George Street is neutral, being only widely visible at its south-western corner, though its glazed tower is somewhat incongruous to the street scene.

4.48 Market Avenue is a largely pleasant space which provides a suitable setting for the listed Pannier Market (20 in Fig.1.5). It provides one of the few opportunities for north-south transit away from Armada Way and broadly represents the western of Abercrombie’s ‘parking crescents’ (e.g. NEW Masterplanning, Plymouth Precinct Retail Appraisal, 10). The construction around Market Avenue is later than that to the east and is of generally lower quality and scale, characterised by the use of brick rather than Portland stone; however, the brick construction here does form a coherent group and any replacement would need to be similarly uniform. Any increases in building height here would need to be very carefully considered in relation to the setting of the statutorily-designated Pannier Market, which should remain the dominant building in its immediate vicinity.

4.49 Colin Campbell Court (21 in Fig.1.5) represents an opportunity for change, being characterised by lower-quality construction of a similar order to that found on Market Avenue but lacking the consistency of style or material. Any regeneration in this space might be expected to retain Colin Campbell House and enhance its setting.

Charles Cross

4.50 Charles Cross is a significant space (21 in Fig.1.5) which consists of two major features: the grade I listed Charles Church and the Drake’s Circus shopping centre.

4.51 Charles Church is a building of high significance and its setting should not be substantially altered without considerable prior consideration regarding the possible impact upon it.

4.52 Drake’s Circus Shopping Centre has a neutral effect on this area. There are opportunities for change here but, as highlighted above, any alteration to this
would need to be considered in relation to its possible impact on Charles Church and the setting of the nearby Ebrington Street Conservation Area.

**Drake’s Cross and Drake’s Circus**

4.53 Drake’s Cross (22 in **Fig.1.5**) is defined by university buildings to the north, the Drake’s Circus shopping centre to the south, and the rise of Drake’s Circus (street) to the northeast.

4.54 There are **opportunities for change** around Drake’s Cross itself, which only garners heritage significance from its role as part of the layout of Abercrombie’s plan; however, any alteration would need to maintain the vistas to the southeast (to Charles Church) and to the northeast up Drake’s Circus. The vista up Drake’s Circus is particularly important, providing the setting for the grade II listed Library and Museum and the grade II* listed Sherwell United Reformed Church.

4.55 As discussed above, there would be scope for introducing taller ‘gateway’ buildings in this area, at the junctions with Cornwall Street and Mayflower Street to the north.
5.0 SUMMARY AND PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

5.1 As shown in this report, the layout of construction in the study area is defined by the 1947 revision of Abercrombie’s plan. The historic core at the eastern end of the civic area represents a cluster of high-quality medieval and later pre-war survivals; although some of these buildings, such as St Andrew’s Church, were identified by Abercrombie for retention, their survival into the 21st century is largely due to revisions made to his plan as it was implemented in the 1950s. The significant pre-war buildings in this area are also statutorily listed.

5.2 The broad layout of the Abercrombie plan has been retained to this day, with Armada Way remaining the primary north-south axis of the city centre and Royal Parade the east-west axis. Various cross streets connect Armada Way to the surrounding gyratory roads, as intended by Abercrombie; however, several nuances, such as the secondary north-south roads or the alleyway connections between and through blocks, which would have improved the utility of Abercrombie’s plan, have not been realised.

5.3 Abercrombie’s Beaux-Arts street plan is a relatively unadulterated example of post-war planning by the most important figure in that field. It is of high significance. There are elements in which departures from the plan have diluted its significance, notably the relationship between the station, North Cross, and the Hoe, where there are some opportunities for change. Both Abercrombie’s plan and later revisions dictate that there should be some form of planting along the majority of Armada Way but the current form of this is not of heritage significance and could even be said to detract from the purity and clean lines of Abercrombie’s original Beaux-Arts vision.

5.4 Although the street plan is tied directly to Abercrombie’s vision, the architecture is not necessarily so. Mervyn Miller characterises the realisation of the Abercrombie plan in the following manner:

‘Unfortunately the architecture failed to match the boldness of the concept, with Abercrombie opting for the safety of the stripped Georgian style, which was carried through with little imagination or flair (DNB Sir Patrick Abercrombie 2011).’
5.5 This statement may be a little unfair on Abercrombie as his plan did not specify the use of a particular architectural style and the conceptual illustrations (by J.D.M. Harvey) in fact seem to suggest a stripped-back form of neo-classicism. Whatever Abercrombie’s stylistic intentions may have been, the ‘stripped Georgian style’ of what was actually built is almost certainly the result of the influence of William Crabtree and Thomas Tait who served as consultant architects during the earliest reconstruction in 1948-52.

5.6 As noted above, Abercrombie did not stipulate a specific building material but did suggest that ‘[w]ith the local abundance of suitable aggregate, it would seem that reinforced concrete is the material which will be most used.’ More important in Abercrombie’s plan was to ‘...recapture the wonderful continuity of the street scene obtained by Nash and Wood the Younger, as in Old Regent Street and Bath, but in the modern idiom...’ and with this in mind he recommended that ‘...a design in outline for the whole architectural treatment in the reconstruction area should be prepared. Adherence to the approved design should form the basis of approval for any plan of buildings in the area...’ The use of Portland stone was a design decision by Thomas Tait and was actually at odds with Abercrombie who noted that when using modern building techniques it was ‘...mere sham to clothe these buildings in heavy masonry (Abercrombie, 1943, 77).’ Its consistent use as a unifying palette was, however, in line with his vision.

5.7 Construction within the city centre can be divided into several very broad periods and in very general terms construction moved northwards from Royal Parade over time:

5.8 *Pre-war survivals*. The city centre was extensively cleared prior to the reconstruction. Where pre-war structures were retained it was generally due to their high quality or recognised historic significance, e.g. St. Andrew’s Church, Prysten House, Charles Church. The majority of pre-war survivals are in the eastern part of the civic area, clustered around St. Andrew’s Church and incorporated into the Barbican Conservation Area ([Fig.1.1](#)); these represent the core of the medieval and Victorian town. These tend to be statutorily listed buildings of **high** significance. There are three examples of 1930s architecture (Reel Cinema, Colin Campbell House, and Methodist Central Hall, parts of which are Victorian) which, whilst good quality, were presumably retained during the reconstruction due to their relative newness and lack of damage rather than their historic value.
5.9 The initial period of reconstruction between 1948 and 1952. The extent of this can be seen in Fig.3. This generally represents construction by large, national retailers and banks and is concentrated around Royal Parade, Old Town Street, and New George Street. Design controls remained tight in this period and construction maintained the strict Portland stone palette (33-37 New George Street (Dolcis) being the major exception) and the scale of construction generally matches that suggested by Abercrombie’s plan. Buildings of this period tend to represent high-quality construction on high-profile sites (such as House of Fraser (Dingles) and the Pearl Assurance building) and for the most part retain substantial design and aesthetic value. Extant buildings of this period are generally of medium or moderate significance.

5.10 The second period of reconstruction, roughly 1953-58. This broadly represents the period following Catchpole’s retirement as co-ordinating architect in 1954. Construction of this period on high-profile sites such as St. Andrew’s Cross (e.g. RBS, formerly National Provincial Bank) or Royal Parade (e.g. Debenhams) remains of high quality and is generally of medium or moderate significance (RBS is a particularly fine example of high significance). Much of the construction along New George Street and Armada Way was completed during this period and quality remains high. Design controls were relaxed somewhat and brick construction becomes more common but generally matches the scale and fenestration of the nearby Portland stone construction and is not intrusive. Brick construction on the eastern side of the northern end of Armada Way (YMCA and Salvation Army) is constructed in this period but for most part Armada Way, certainly as far north as Mayflower Street, maintains a consistent Portland stone palette. This period also saw the construction of high significance buildings around the civic area, such as the Civic Centre (1954-61) and the Unitarian Church (1955-8).

5.11 The final period of reconstruction, roughly 1958-62. This period sees an increase in prefabricated construction and general decrease in the quality of building, with some major exceptions (e.g. the Pannier Market of 1956-9 or the Athenaeum of 1958-61). Construction from this period tends to be of low to neutral significance and tends to be less uniform than earlier post-war construction. The low-quality brick construction at the western end of Cornwall Street dates from this period as does the later work at the eastern end of New George Street.
5.12 *Post-*1962. The Reconstruction Committee disbanded in 1962 and much of the city centre was complete, and in a form not dissimilar to what it is today, by this point. Due to the planned nature of the reconstruction, construction following 1962 has been geographically confined and consists of three clusters: Drake’s Circus shopping centre, which is of neutral significance; construction around Derry’s Cross, such as the intrusive Travelodge building and multi-storey car parks; and the neutral and intrusive construction along Mayflower Street, which was laid out in the 1970s, including the Armada Centre.

5.13 As mentioned above, in the broadest of terms construction began towards the core of the city centre and moved northwards over time, whilst quality of construction decreased over time as building controls were relaxed. This means that the lowest quality construction tends to be clustered towards the northern part of the city centre, notably Mayflower Street and the western end of Cornwall Street.

5.14 Abercrombie’s vision did not call for a specific style of architecture but it did call for consistency of style and scale. The scale is not consistent across the site, dropping off north of New George Street but, as discussed above, this is representative of the way in which the plan was realised and it is unlikely that the maintenance of the scale seen on Royal Parade would have been visually pleasing along the entirety of Armada Way and certainly not the cross streets. The palette remains consistent Portland stone along Armada Way as far north as Mayflower Street and this is certainly a visually-affecting tool of heritage significance.

5.15 Where quality does drop off, e.g. the western end of Cornwall Street, this represents a departure from Abercrombie’s plan. This in itself could be seen as having some heritage value, with construction being redolent of its era, but the retention of low-quality construction of neutral value to the setting in order to preserve the site as it was in 1962 would not be sound heritage practice.

5.16 The quality of construction along Mayflower Street, notably the Armada Centre, detracts from the character of the city centre as a whole and its sympathetic redevelopment, maintaining the building line and introducing a consistent palette, could only enhance the character of the city centre.

5.17 Policy CC01 of the *City Centre and University Area Action Plan 2006-2021*, adopted April 2010 notes that ‘[t]he City Council will protect and enhance the most
successful elements of the City Centre’s historic environment, including the Beaux Arts grid of streets and key historic buildings.’

5.18 The Beaux-Arts street grid is central to the heritage significance of the study area and we agree that this should be maintained, including the current building lines. Abercrombie’s vista along Armada Way, from North Hill to the Hoe, should be maintained and enhanced.

5.19 Policy CC02 of the same document notes that ‘[t]he blocks forming the northern side of Royal Parade are the best surviving examples of the quality that was envisaged in the Plan for Plymouth. Replacement of these buildings will not be permitted, although it is recognised that it may be necessary to sensitively alter the buildings in order to retain viable successful uses.’

5.20 We agree that Royal Parade remains, along with the civic area, the most successful space in the city. It represents much of the earliest construction and is successful both in terms of the quality of the construction and how this relates to the overall city plan, for instance the use of House of Fraser (Dingles) and the Pearl Assurance building as landmarks to demarcate the junction of the two major axes of Abercrombie’s planned city.

5.21 As shown in the document, the construction on the southern side of Royal Parade is of almost uniformly high significance (exceptions towards the western end) whilst the construction on the northern side is all of medium or moderate significance. Although zoning was a key element of Abercrombie’s plan, this does not relate to the modern heritage significance of the buildings: changes of use could be permitted to the buildings on the northern side of the road without affecting the heritage significance of the buildings as long as the frontages to Royal Parade were maintained.

5.22 As shown above, the areas of the city centre with the greatest opportunities for change are those located away from Royal Parade and the civic area, notably around Mayflower Street and the western end of Cornwall Street, the northern end of Armada Way (north of Mayflower Street) and North Cross.

5.23 The buildings of Armada Way – North (see above) are of less significance individually than those of Royal Parade but retain group value through their
common Portland stone palette, adherence to the buildings lines of the Abercrombie grid, and shared scale. Any alterations here would be expected to maintain both the building line of the existing buildings and a consistent palette and scale.
REFERENCES


Brian Moseley’s Plymouth Data Website, [www.plymouthdata.info](http://www.plymouthdata.info), accessed 30th April 2014.


Gould, J., *Plymouth: Vision of a Modern City* (Swindon, 2010).


Original documentary sources, maps, and planning records – fully referenced in the text
### Appendix 1  Summary of Listed Buildings in Study Area

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Listed buildings in study area</th>
<th>List status</th>
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<td>1386362</td>
<td>MidC15, C20 restoration</td>
<td>1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II</td>
<td>11 Whimple Street, 1A St. Andrew Street</td>
<td>1386495</td>
<td>MidC19</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II</td>
<td>1,2,3 St. Andrew's Street</td>
<td>1386359</td>
<td>MidC19</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4 St. Andrew's Street</td>
<td>1386360</td>
<td>MidC19</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Kitty O’Hanolan Public House (St. Andrew Street)</td>
<td>1386361</td>
<td>MidC19</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II</td>
<td>12 Buckwell Street</td>
<td>1130006</td>
<td>Late C17</td>
<td>1981</td>
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<td></td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Roman Catholic Church of Christ the King</td>
<td>1393246</td>
<td>1961-2</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>II</td>
<td>Clock Tower, Derry's Cross</td>
<td>1130056</td>
<td>1862</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>The Bank Public House (former Lloyds Bank on Derry’s Cross)</td>
<td>1130057</td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>22-24 Lockyer Street</td>
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<td>1974</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>Royal Bank of Scotland, St. Andrew's Cross</td>
<td>1393429</td>
<td>1956-9</td>
<td>2009</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>Pannier Market</td>
<td>1350321</td>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>2003</td>
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<td>I</td>
<td>Charles Church</td>
<td>1130021</td>
<td>1640-58</td>
<td>1954</td>
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<td>Category</td>
<td>Name of Building</td>
<td>Designation</td>
<td>Date of Construction</td>
<td>Date of Status Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Library and Museum</td>
<td>1386293</td>
<td>1907</td>
<td>1975</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Church of St. Luke City Library Annexe</td>
<td>1386433</td>
<td>1828</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<tr>
<td>II*</td>
<td>Sherwell Church and Associated Buildings including Shelly Hall</td>
<td>1386295</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>1991</td>
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<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Drake's Place</td>
<td>1386291</td>
<td>1754</td>
<td>1954</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>Drake's Place - Walls and railings facing the road</td>
<td>1386292</td>
<td>c.1891</td>
<td>1998</td>
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</table>
Figure 1.1

Modern plan summarising the interaction of surrounding designated conservation areas with the study area. The **study area** is highlighted in solid red. The Hoe Conservation Area is highlighted in blue. The Barbican Conservation Area is highlighted in green. The nearby Ebrington Street Conservation Area is highlighted in purple. The nearby Union Street Conservation Area is highlighted in yellow.
Modern plan summarising the assessment of significance made in Section 3.0. The study area is highlighted in solid red. Buildings of high significance are highlighted in red. Buildings of medium significance are highlighted in orange. Buildings of moderate significance are highlighted in yellow. Buildings of low significance are highlighted in green. Buildings of neutral significance are not highlighted. Intrusive buildings are highlighted in blue.
Modern plan summarising the assessment of significance made in Section 3.0. The study area is highlighted in solid red. Spaces of high significance are highlighted in red. Spaces of medium significance are highlighted in orange. Spaces of moderate significance are highlighted in yellow. Spaces of low significance are highlighted in green. Spaces of neutral significance are not highlighted. Intrusive Spaces are highlighted in blue.
Modern plan summarising the divisions of the study area in Section 3.0. Note that the St. George Street, Cornwall Street, Mayflower Street division is bisected by the Armada Way division. Also note, the University Area is labelled but not coloured as this area is not covered in the document except as relates to nearby listed buildings.
Figure 1.5

Modern plan showing the areas which could best accommodate change on heritage grounds, as identified in Section 4.0. The areas identified in Section 4.0 are tinted in red. Areas where planting could be introduced or improved are highlighted in green. Numbers are referred to in the accompanying text.

Small-scale changes, such as improvements in shop frontages, could be accommodated throughout the study area.

The limits of the study area are highlighted in solid red, significant building lines are highlighted in solid purple, and nearby conservation areas are tinted in blue, green, yellow, and purple.
Figure 2

Abercrombie, 1943, 71. Zoning around the city centre
Figure 3

Architects’ Journal 12th June 1952 719. This shows in essence the 1947 revised plan, with the buildings already completed marked in black. Note that Royal Parade is largely in place while work is yet to begin on the civic area.
Figure 4

Detail from Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 68

Original caption: ‘A section through the north-south axis [Armada Way] of the City Centre layout, showing the difficult configuration of the ground, and indicating clearly the basin in which the shopping and civic centres are located, with ground rising steeply on the south to the Hoe and similarly to the north. To give safe passage for pedestrians to and from the Railway and Bus stations a subway is indicated passing beneath the Station Hotel and Cobourg Street Traffic Place [North Cross] giving, as will be seen, an easily grade approach to the station from the City Centre.’
Figure 5

Detail from Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 68.
Original caption: ‘A bird’s-eye view of Coburg Street Traffic Place [North Cross] showing the pedestrian subway.’
Figure 6

Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 70
Original caption: ‘The traffic centre at North Road and Cobourg Street [North Cross].’
Figure 7

Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 71
Original caption: ‘The vicinity of Derry’s Clock showing the Civic and Theatre precincts viewed from roof level.’
**Figure 8**

Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 74
Original caption: *The Shopping Precinct looking north from existing Guildhall Tower.*
Figure 9

Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 75
Original caption: 'Aerial view of the Civic Precinct and proposed approach to the Hoe.'
Note the new Civic Centre on the eastern side of the Civic Square in the location of the Guildhall.
Figure 10

Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 110
Figure 11

Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 111 – top
Original caption: ‘An impression of a Community Centre and Café as the focal centre of the Barbican.’
Figure 12

Abercrombie, 1943, pl. facing 111 – bottom

Original caption: ‘A view from the station as it might be, an attractive introduction to the city showing the rear of the proposed hotel, bus station and pedestrian subway to the city centre.’