

Be a Tourist in your own City Teaching Notes

The walk is roughly 2 miles. It starts at the Braille Garden on Armada Way and finishes at Tinside Lido on the Hoe. We advise that before starting this walk, you print out the A4 / A3 map which shows the complete Plymouth 20th century city walking trail map, route and pictures of all the places you will visit.

Please also refer to the **Plymouth: 20th century city** website for additional information including an interactive map, a timeline to show the development of the city in relation to historical events and other resources to help you explore the city and its 20th Century architecture. There is also specific guidance on disabled access, terms and conditions and health and safety. Anyone using the map or other resource material should take care especially when crossing roads and cycle routes. You are encouraged to look up and identify details on buildings or in public spaces, so please be mindful of other pedestrians, and careful of any obstacles or street furniture.

Please also note that the map is intended for use as a walking trail. The inclusion of any individual building does not mean that it is open to the public; the majority of the featured buildings are in private ownership. Please respect the people living or working in these buildings or spaces.

Finally over time, names of buildings and companies have changed and will continue to do so. In **Plymouth: 20th century city** the original names have been used at the time the buildings were completed.

Overview:

- Plymouth was granted city status in 1928.
- Plymouth suffered major bomb damage in the Second World War
- The mayor, Lord Astor, appointed the most famous town planner of the day, Patrick Abercrombie.
- Abercrombie worked with the City Engineer, James Paton Watson to create *A Plan for Plymouth* in 1943 which swept away all the old streets and replaced them with a functionally zoned grid
- The different functions were given their own area eg. shopping occupied the centre of the city, theatre and entertainment to the west.
- The plan is based around a major axis (Armada Way), running north to south from the Railway Station to The Hoe. This links the city to the waterfront
- The city authorities were very enthusiastic about the new plan.

- In April 1947 Plymouth was the first British city to begin rebuilding and in 1951 the first to open new buildings
- The buildings width, height, shape and materials used were strictly controlled. This was to ensure even and harmonious design

- Plymouth represented the architecture of the future – clean, bright and, most of all, optimistic
- Plymouth city centre is the greatest built example of post-War British planning and architecture
- Plymouth has the greatest number of post-war buildings listed (see Notes) in the country, outside London.
- In addition, Plymouth City Centre has a number of surviving 20th century buildings that were built before the Second World War as well as notable others that came later.

Trail map number and details:

Question:



1. Braille Garden (c.1958)
Armada Way
H.J.W. Stirling, City Architect &
J.Paton Watson, City Engineer

A: Where in Plymouth city centre is the Braille Garden?
North, at the top of Armada Way by North Cross Roundabout

At the north end of Armada Way was the only planted garden on Armada Way. It was intended to be a balance to a great water cascade designed for the slope from The Hoe down to Notte Street. (Note – look directly ahead down Armada Way to see The Hoe). The garden was made from stone salvaged from old buildings. In the beds were aromatic plants and, in the centre, an 8 metre (27 feet) diameter pool made from granite blocks from the old reservoir at Roborough. The plants were labelled in Braille lettering on the sloping garden walls (note - look for the holes on the walls near the chess tables) and permanent chess tables. The garden has been much altered but the chess tables, perimeter stone walls and the lines of trees remain.



2. Martins Bank (1955-57)
151 Armada Way
Lucas Roberts & Brown

B: What two creatures are on Martin's Bank coat of arms?
Grasshopper and Liver Bird

The whole building is clad in Portland stone with a polished black granite plinth (base) into which the entrance steps are cut. There are panels of green Westmorland slate in the big stone-framed windows. The rich surfaces are set off by the Bank's shield, high on the wall of the main block on Cornwall Street with its distinctive grasshopper and Liver bird design. The Liver Bird represents the former Bank of Liverpool, who, in 1918, absorbed Martin's Bank Limited. It was an old private bank who had used the symbol of the Grasshopper for many generations. In 1928 the bank shortened its name to Martins Bank. This building was well thought of and won a Premier Award at the Paris Salon in 1957 the year it was completed.



3. Western Morning News Office (1937-39)
New George Street
Herbert O. Ellis & Clarke

C: Describe how this building looks different to the other buildings near or next to it.
It is at an angle to the street, different building materials used, the style of the buildings and windows are different to the others nearby. The roof is pitched, not flat.

The Western Morning News is a rare survival from pre-War Plymouth. The building survived the blitz because the printers working overnight could extinguish the incendiary bombs. The angle of the building to New George Street marks the line of the old Frankfort Street which was obliterated by the Abercrombie plan. It was designed by a London firm who specialised in newspaper offices. The red brick walls, sash windows, carved stone surrounds and pitched tiled roof show how English 18th century architecture influenced 20th century architecture. The little building on the west side, also in red brick with sash windows, was added by the architects in 1954. The ground floor was altered to form shops. The original passage way on the east side was filled in after The Western Morning News moved to their new building in Derriford. The new building was designed by Sir Nicholas Grimshaw (who also designed the Eden Project).



4. Pannier Market (1956-59) Grade II

Cornwall Street/New George Street
Walls & Pearn.

D: What words would you use to describe the Pannier Market building?

Curvy, wavy, wiggly, light...

The Pannier Market was one of the great institutions of pre-War Plymouth. Trading survived during and after the War on what is now the east side of New George Street. The magnificent new building was designed by local architects, and their engineer. It consists of seven great concrete portal frames. Between them are a series of concrete ribs which support thin concrete shells which form the large north facing windows of the main hall. The light and any possible overheating is controlled by the shape and direction of these windows. The north and south porches were decorated by David Weeks, a local artist who had trained at the Royal College of Art. The hall is surrounded by permanent shops and offices and the north and south sides have undulating concrete roofs (note – stand on the corner of Market Ave and Cornwall St for a clear view of the roof). Frankfort Gate, to the west of the Pannier Market, was the only formal new square of the Abercrombie plan. The housing, pubs and shops which surround it formed the only genuinely mixed-use area within the ring road.



7. Theatre Royal (1978-82)

Derry's Cross
Peter Moro Partnership

E: What shape is the Theatre Royal based on? Draw or write how many sides this shape has.

Octagon (8 sided).

The Theatre Royal is in the 'entertainments precinct' (or west) of the Plan for Plymouth. It replaced the original theatre which was demolished before the War. The new Theatre Royal was designed by the architect, Peter Moro, who had made his name working on the Royal Festival Hall in London and specialised in theatre design. The bar, restaurant and public foyers wrap around the inside to form theatrical walkways. When the Theatre Royal was built, it was a new and exciting building, with lots of glass on the outside. In the daytime, you can watch people outside moving around the building inside because of the great glass windows. At night people on the outside can watch you doing the same inside. The shape of the building is a regular octagon which echoes Derry's Cross (note – look for the seating area near the Box Office entrance as a clue). The Victorian Derry's Clock, which survived the blitz, was re-erected in the space behind the theatre.



8. Pearl Assurance House Offices (1950-52)

Royal Parade/Armada Way
Alec F. French in association
with Sir John Burnet Tait & Partners

F: What is the stone used on this building and also on lots of other buildings in Plymouth?

Portland Stone

Pearl Assurance and Dingles were intended to form the gateway to Armada Way from Royal Parade and the Great Square (in front of the Civic Centre). Their towers are almost symmetrical and their external materials are similar (note - stand between the two buildings on the opposite side of Royal Parade to see the likeness). Look for the original decorative features in the coat-of-arms over the main doorway and west door (on Courtenay Street) and the bold lettering on the tower. This building, like many in Plymouth, uses Portland Stone. Portland Stone has been used in some of Britain's most famous buildings including, Buckingham Palace, The Bank of England and the British Museum. The canopy (and other canopies in Plymouth) originally held vertical canvas blinds to protect shoppers from the elements.



**9. Dingles
Department Store
(1949-51)**

Royal Parade/Armada Way
Thomas S. Tait of Sir John
Burnet Tait & Partners

G: What can you see in the panels between the upper windows?

Frescos, flowers, fruits, plants.

Dingles is the last built work of the notable architect Thomas Tait. Tait was in charge of the largest architectural firm in London and was well known for many great buildings, including the pylons of Sydney Harbour Bridge. The influence of these can be seen in the towers for both Dingles and Pearl Assurance. Dingles uses contrasting Portland and Ham stone. Look for the bold moulding around the otherwise frameless shop windows. There are exotic fruits and plants sculpted into the panels between the upper windows and on New George Street a ball high up above the back staircase. The upper floors were extended by the same architects in the 1960s and further altered after a fire in 1988. Dingles was the first shop in the South West to have escalators installed. (Note - look for the original Dingles lettering to the east side of the building on Royal Parade).



**12. National
Provincial Bank
(1955-58)
Grade II**

St. Andrew's Cross
B.C. Sherren, staff architect to
National Provincial Bank

H: What is on the doors and what are they made from?

Ancient British / Greek Coins. Bronze

The Bank's headquarters terminates the end of Royal Parade. It has granite-clad columns which formed the entrance to the treble-height banking hall. The hall was originally entered through twin bronze doorways. The unusual façade is made of Venetian glass mosaic tiles. The tiles include gold designs of fish, anchors, castles and squirrel, these are from the National Provincial Bank's coat-of-arms. At night, the building is lit from behind sending a shimmering light out into the city. The mixture of exotic materials – the curved copper roof, the lantern clock tower, etched glass of the north entrance with motifs based on ancient Greek and British coins make this one of the greatest 1950s buildings of the city centre. The great banking hall has now been filled in and the front of the building on Royal Parade no longer acts as the public entrance.



**16. St. Andrew's
Church
Grade I**

Royal Parade
Rebuilt by Frederick Etchells
(1948-57).

I: Do you think St Andrews Church is an old or new building?

It is both. It was badly damaged during the War and was restored to how it looks today.

St. Andrew's is the parish church of Plymouth. It was left a roofless shell after the blitz. Its restoration was a symbol of the survival of the city and of the post-War reconstruction. The architect, Frederick Etchells put back the rooflines of the medieval church. All the woodwork – pews, lectern and organ case – although apparently old are to his designs. The new interior might have been rather plain had it not been for the commissioning of John Piper (one of the most famous British artists of the day who had designed glass for many churches, including Coventry Cathedral) to design six stained glass windows. The first, which is situated west inside the church, was a memorial to Lord Astor, the wartime mayor and commissioner of Plan for Plymouth. The later five were more colourful and abstract. (Note – look for the word Resurgam above the entrance. It translates as 'I shall rise again').



**15. Lloyds Bank
and Pophams
Department Store
(1955-57)**

8-14 Royal Parade
Easton & Robertson

As you come out of St Andrews, look across the road to other side of Royal Parade. This building is Lloyds Bank and Pophams Department Store combined to make one large building (note - look for the two doorways, this is a clue). Pophams was to the west and Lloyds to the east. The ground floor shop windows were originally framed in bronze, the remains of which can still be seen. The attic wall was decorated with sculptures of a sea-horse and a dolphin by local artist, Amyas Munday, (who also worked on the external sculptures on the Guildhall). This building is very special. It was designed by TWO Royal Gold Medallists called John Murray Easton and Sir Howard Robertson (see Notes for more information about the Royal Gold Medal).



**17. Guildhall
Grade II**

Royal Parade/Armada Way
Norman & Hine with E. Godwin
(1870-74), rebuilt by H.J.W.
Stirling, City Architect (1954-59)

J: Looking at the roof of the entrance, where else have you seen a similar shape in Plymouth?

Pannier Market Roof.

The lavish Victorian Guildhall was also reduced to a ruin by the blitz. Abercrombie planned to remove it but by 1951, perhaps due to concern that too much of the old city was disappearing, the Council voted to keep it. The City Architect (Hector Stirling) planned for a total re-design rather than restoring the building. He created what must be one of the finest 1950s interiors outside London. Facing the Great Square, a new main entrance was created with a wavy coffered canopy painted blue and yellow. The foyer is made from marble and mahogany, with a white (travertine) marble staircase. The main hall is panelled in Cuban mahogany. Its ceiling is painted Wedgwood blue, and is adorned by David Weeks' (Pannier Market) 'Labours of Hercules'. The restored Gothic windows hold painted glass, depicting scenes from Plymouth's history.



**18. Civic Centre (&
Great Square)
(1954 – 62)
Grade II**

Armada Way/Royal Parade
H.J.W. Stirling, City Architect
(1954-57) succeeded by Allan
Galantine of Jellicoe Galantine
& Coleridge (1957-62).

***K: When the Civic Centre was built what was at the very top?
A restaurant.***

The Civic Centre marks the end of the major phase of rebuilding the city. At fourteen stories it was by far the tallest building in the city. On its roof, under a dramatic 'V'-shaped concrete canopy was a public restaurant from which visitors could admire Plymouth's achievements. The design was much influenced by the famous Lever House in New York which had set the style for new office buildings. Local materials like Delabole slate cladding are used as well as Italian glass mosaic tiles on the columns. The interior was influenced by the architecture of Scandinavia, with coloured marbles and exotic hardwoods. The Council House is especially rich and brought together the work of important artists, carefully selected fabrics, and Scandinavian furniture and light fittings.

The Great Square was not included on the original *Plan for Plymouth* but the idea emerged in the 1950s. The landscape was eventually designed by Geoffrey Jellicoe, one of the greatest modern British landscape architects. His design weaves together the angled face of the Guildhall and the scale of the Civic Centre. (Note - look for the triangular paving near the Guildhall). The abstract, curvy patterns of the planters and the two rectangular ponds are based on drawings by the artist Ben Nicholson whom Jellicoe admired. Although the details of the paving have been altered, the Square still provides a space in the city to linger.



20. Barclays Bank (1949-52) *L: What clues tell us that this building use to be a bank?*
The lettering above the entrance on Notte Street.

Grade II

Armada Way/Notte Street
W. Curtis Green RA, Son & Lloyd.

Barclays Bank was designed by William Curtis Green, a distinguished London architect who won the Royal Gold Medal in 1942 (see Notes). This building is detailed in fine Portland stone with a polished granite plinth (base) and granite columns in the two semi-circular entrances, on Princess and Notte Street, (note - look for the original Barclays wording above the entrance on Notte Street). The design includes William McMillan's sculptures of an Elizabethan and contemporary sailor and the more abstract gods representing the business of the Bank. The building was never completed – it was intended to have two more floors. Eventually, in 2005, glass upper floors were added and are now converted into flats.



23. Roman Catholic Church of Christ the King (1960-62) *M: What other things did the architect who created Christ the King Church design?*

The Red telephone box, Liverpool Anglican / Guildford Cathedral, Bankside (Tate Modern) and Battersea Power Stations

Grade II

Notte Street/Armada Way
Sir Giles Scott, Son & Partner

The Church was the last work of Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and completed after his death in 1960. Scott had devoted his life to building the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool and he received the Royal Gold Medal in 1925 (see Notes). He was a prolific designer of smaller churches and is also known for Bankside (now Tate Modern in London), Battersea Power Station and the design of the red (K6) telephone box. This church is Gothic in style with plain brick walls (possibly chosen to match the NAAFI/Hoe Centre opposite on Armada Way). The interior is very simple with a beautiful timber boarded roof, painted blue and grey with red, gold and black embellishments. The presbytery and hall, adjoining the church to the south, were added in 1963 to the designs of Sir Giles' son, Richard.



24. Naval Memorial *N: How many Royal Gold Medallists are there in Plymouth?*
Grade II

Hoe Park
Sir Robert Lorimer (1920-24) &
Edward Maufe (post-1945)

Can you name one other piece of architecture in Plymouth designed by a Royal Gold Medallist?
Six - Lloyds Bank and Pophams (2 Royal Gold Medallists), Christ the King, Barclays Bank, the Naval Memorial and A Plan for Plymouth.

The memorial was designed by the great Scottish architect, Robert Lorimer. The design of an obelisk supporting a globe was also repeated on the naval memorials at Portsmouth and Chatham. The lower walls and terraces on the north side were added after the 2nd World War by Edward Maufe. It uses similar materials: ashlar Portland stone with cast bronze plaques. Maufe also added the life-size sculpture by William McMillan (Barclays Bank). Often adorned with wreaths and flowers, it is powerfully moving, a sanctuary of contemplation amid an area devoted to leisure. It is worth pausing and reading the many forgotten names, places and dates where the British Navy intervened in world history.

(Note – look directly ahead along Armada Way to see the Braille Garden and other buildings on the trail).



25. Tinside Lido *O: What shapes can you see at Tinside Lido?*
(1929-35)

Grade II

Hoe Road
W.J. Wibberley, City Architect

Semi-circles, rectangles....

The Hoe foreshore was the only part of the water's edge of Plymouth to be devoted to leisure. From the 19th century it was used for bathing in the natural rock pools. Permanent buildings, changing rooms and a pier were added but it was not until the 1920s that the Tinside Lido was built. A lido was a new type of building so it was appropriate that the new 'jazz modern' architect style should be used and this was the first example in Plymouth. Access to the pool was via a staircase tower (complete with engraved window showing bathing scenes). The pool itself was refreshed at each tide, and decorated with fountains. It is surrounded by a series of pavilions with characteristic semi-circular shapes, flat roofs and ships' handrails. Generations of Plymothians learned to swim here and when it closed in 1992 there was a public outcry leading to its restoration and reopening in 2005.

Notes:

Listing

“Marks and celebrates a building’s special architectural and historic interest, and also brings it under the consideration of the planning system so that some thought will be taken about its future.

- *Grade I buildings are of exceptional interest, sometimes considered to be internationally important. Just 2.5% of listed buildings are Grade I.*
- *Grade II* buildings are particularly important buildings of more than special interest. 5.5% of listed buildings are Grade II*.*
- *Grade II buildings are nationally important and of special interest. 92% of all listed buildings are in this class and it is the most likely grade of listing for a home owner.”*

English Heritage website.

- Plymouth has the most Post-War listed buildings in the country outside of London
- On the full version of Plymouth 20th century city map, there are 11 listed buildings
- On the shorten version of the Plymouth 20th century city walking trail, 9 buildings are listed

Royal Gold Medallists

Established in 1848, the Royal Gold Medal is awarded annually to a person or group of people whose influence on architecture has had a truly international effect. It is given in recognition of a lifetime's work, and is approved personally by Her Majesty the Queen. In Plymouth there is the work of six Royal Gold Medallists.

Below are the names, dates that they won the award and buildings that are on the trail:

- Sir Patrick Abercrombie (1946), (who along with the City Engineer, James Paton Watson created *A Plan for Plymouth*)
- Sir Howard Robertson (1949) - Lloyds Bank and Pophams Department Store, 8-14 Royal Parade
- John Murray Easton (1955) - Lloyds Bank and Pophams Department Store, 8-14 Royal Parade
- William Curtis Green RA (1942) - Barclays Bank, Armada Way / Notte Street
- Sir Giles Gilbert Scott (1925) - Church of Christ the King Church, Armada Way / Notte Street
- Sir Edward Maufe (1944) - The Naval Memorial, Hoe Park.

There was a 7th Royal Gold Medallist who also had work in the City - Percy Thomas (1939). Thomas designed a Methodist Chapel, but this building has now been demolished.

To find out more about the Royal Gold Medal and its winners -

<http://www.architecture.com/Awards/RoyalGoldMedal>