



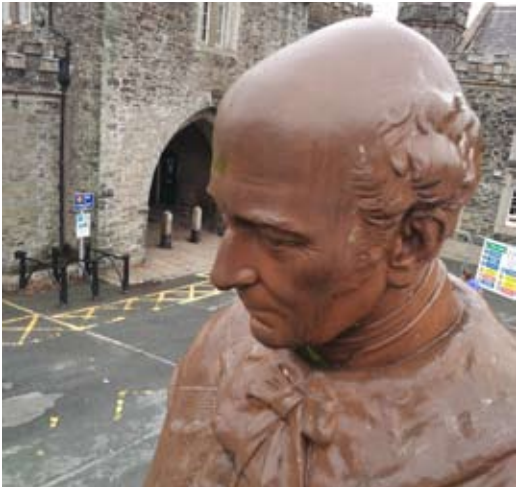
Le Page Architects

Tavistock Guildhall Carpark
Public Realm Works

Design and Access Statement

September 2019

Contents



Introduction

Site context



History

Significance



The Design

Archaeology



Access

Conclusion

Introduction

The site provides the public short stay car park immediately west of the Guildhall listed structure complex located in the centre of the historic centre of Tavistock.

It falls within an area classed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, and forms part of the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape, with many of the buildings in this location having significant heritage value. In addition to providing car park spaces, the site also houses the listed Duke of Bedford Statue as well as the towns War Memorial, both of which are listed structures. A public pavement runs north- south to the site providing access from the riverside, through court gate and into the shopping heart of the town.

Le Page Architects (LPA) were commissioned by Tavistock Town Council (TTC) to gain consent for proposals to re-order the entire external space to provide alternative parking arrangements as well as more importantly, an enhanced pedestrian experience. This follows the adopted LDA strategy document drawn up for the town in 2014, and as well as the upcoming Guildhall complex refurbishment forms the next stage in the large body of THI grant aided enhancement works which have successfully been completed over the past few years. (Butchers Hall, Pannier Market, Public Realm).

Photographs

1. Bedford Square OS Map 1833
2. Duke of Bedford Statue
3. War Memorial

Le Page Architects

Site Context

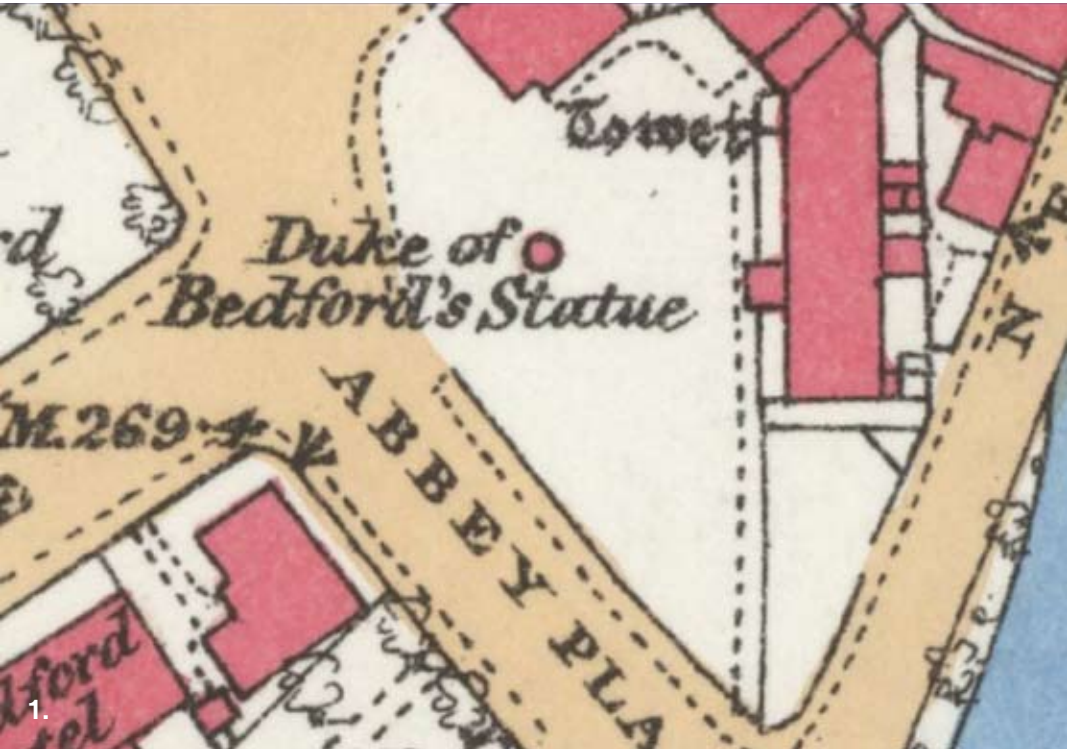
The area covered by the proposed site is highlighted on the plan opposite:

Reference to the AC Archaeology Archaeological Assessment should be made which provides details of the Historical timeline, significance and previous sub-strata knowledge of the site.

The Guildhall and this Car Park site form an important part of C19 Century re-development of the town undertaken by the 7th Duke of Bedford. Both sit in the town in-between the Bedford Square and the river Tavy and are prominent to users of Plymouth Road. The car park provides a popular and convenient parking destination for visitors as well as a well-used thoroughfare for pedestrians.

Vehicle access is gained directly from the A386 road and provides 34 parking spaces, although a number of these are not compliant with current best practice for vehicle manoeuvring.

Pedestrian access is via the Grade 1 listed Court Gate which leads along historic granite setts to the pavement running directly in front of the Guildhall complex. This pavement provides access to Market Road, the adjacent Public Conveniences as well as onto the southern end of the A386 and its pedestrian crossing point.



History

The site, known as Guildhall Square, falls within the shadow of an outstanding group of Medieval and 19th C Gothic Buildings and is owned by TTC.

The layout of the Guildhall complex and the carpark in question, generally follow the Mediaeval Tavistock Abbey Great court plan. Although not particularly identified in the report, The Keystone Assessment of the Police Station and Guildhall from 2005 provides an indication of the car park in its context to these buildings and more importantly its location in the Medieval Abbey plan.

Fairly extensive important late C19 photographic evidence can be found on the car park site, in particular on the hard landscaping details which bear great relevance to the scheme in question. Although archaeological mapping identification is available on the area, drawings of Court Gate from 1797 through to 1830 also indicate the site. It is clear from these that great changes have occurred, mainly in site levels where the ground directly in front of the Guildhall has been raised to those found now. (some 2m in places)

Of great significance to the scheme is an understanding of the site levels, both historic and current as well as the covering of them through time.

An 1830 drawing clearly shows the site sloping from Court Gate down to the now basement level of the Guildhall. The wall to the west of this suggests a retaining structure to higher ground behind, and the 1797 Swete watercolour backs this theory up. In addition, the plan of Tavistock from 1842 shows the walls and pathway from these images.

The 1860 lithograph only 30 years later, suggests the new site wide level from the 1848 completion of the Duke of Bedford's creation of the new Quarter Session Courthouse and Police Station. Clear evidence can be seen of this from the retaining wall to the direct frontage of the Guildhall creating the basement to the Dukes scheme. (railings drawing Tavistock Museum). The 1883 OS map shows this retaining wall, pathway and thus new site level at the Guildhall abutment with the then outside Market area.

Photographs from the early C20 show the area still in use as outdoor Market Space, with a photograph from 1893 showing the site accessible to horse and cart.

The site changed to car access and presumed parking from before or in 1922. Photographic evidence with images from 1934, clearly showing car parking in the site and the current space layout in use in 1955. (with assumed car parking attendant outbuilding in place as well)

Archaeological excavations undertaken by AC Archaeology in 2012 (ACD421/2/0) support all the above and describe 2 two layers of cobbles which remain below the surface being late C18 and from the 1820 town centre remodelling as well as the C19 cobbles.

Images from 1860, 1890 and 1893 all indicate the site still laid to cobbles which concur with the late C18 ground level adaptations, yet photographs from 1922 onwards suggest this had been overlaid with hoggin. This would have survived until the modern tarmac was laid to the area of an unknown date. Granite posts with twin horizontal railing surround the site on all sides and can be dated back to the 1860 lithograph image which suggests two horse and cart entrances to the site in question.

The current A386 vehicle entrance is formed from both of these openings (with two of the 1860 posts repositioned in the site) as original gate post pins can still be seen. (evidence of another gate remains at the southwest corner of the site at the pedestrian crossing too).

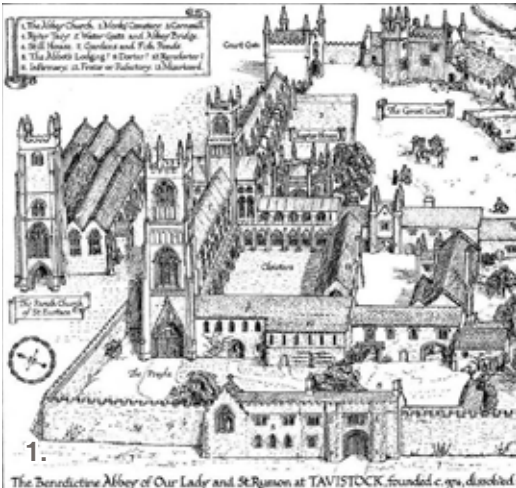
Former lamp posts can be seen from historical images at two locations (1890 large lamp adjacent to northwest railings) and a smaller one opposite the Guildhall north-south pavement.

These are still in place in 1910, but lost by 1922 with a 1934 image evidencing pavement lighting to the west of the site. A modern lamppost was erected adjacent to the Public Toilets and an unknown date. No other lighting currently sits within the site, although modern pavement streetlights surround the western perimeter.

The Duke of Bedford statue cast by Stephens and Son and erected by public subscription in 1864 remains in its original position with its base, as does the war memorial although originally it did not have its surrounding posts and chain. It originally stood alone (1934 image), and the base kerbs now forming its quadrant were added sometime before 1955. (probably as part of the WW2 names)

Photographs

1. JHF Finbery Illustration
2. Cost Gate 1830
3. Bedford Square 1860
4. Market Area circa late C19
5. Carpark area circa early C20



Significance

The Keystone Report notes that “from a national perspective the Guildhall and Police Station represent an instructive and delightful example of the persistent value of Gothic in medieval, early and late 19th century guises”, and the carpark site falls within the cloak of this at the very least visually.

More importantly the AC Archaeology Assessment (ACD2125/1/0) of the site gives clear indication of the significance of the buried medieval abbey below the site (NHLE 1020401), and all proposals respect and put the Scheduled Monument at the forefront of all proposals.

Listed Structures within the site

DUKE OF BEDFORD STATUE, GUILDHALL SQUARE

National Grid Reference: SX 48200 74400
Duke of Bedford Statue SX 4874 4/27 7.9.51
II GV

Francis Seventh Duke of Bedford. Bronze standing figure on circular stone pedestal, the metal from local mines. The Seventh Duke was responsible for many of the public buildings of Tavistock.
Listing NGR: SX4820074400

WAR MEMORIAL, ABBEY PLACE

National Grid Reference: SX 48209 74383
78/0/10025 ABBEY PLACE 20-FEB-07 War Memorial
II War memorial, 1921 by Messrs Rogers, constructed of light grey granite with black lettering.

PLAN: It has a square three stepped base with a tapering square plinth, rising to an octagonal shaft, topped by a clover leaf cross. In the southwest a scrolled tablet of additional names leans on the steps. The whole is set within a polygonal stone fenced grass enclosure.

ELEVATION: The circular centre of the cross bears the logo IHS in Gothic script on the south western face. The plinth also bears the text; ‘I stand/ To bear proud witness to these men of Tavistock/ who died in England

in the Great War/1914 -1918.’ The names of 119 men are inscribed upon the plinth and top step. The stone tablet, set against the steps at the southwest bears following text; ‘In memoriam 1939 to 45 / Also to those who made the supreme sacrifice during the Second World War’, and the names of a further 40 men. The whole is set within a small grassed polygonal enclosure with a low fence of granite obelisks linked by chamfered kerbstones and a single strand of loose black metal chain. Immediately opposite the entrance to the enclosure, on the southwest, is a plain light grey granite plaque with black lettering, bearing the text; ‘lest we forget.’

HISTORY: The war memorial was erected in 1921, by public subscription at a cost of £450. The list was declared closed in 1923, and the World War II section was added in the late 1940s.



The Design

The proposals for the regeneration have been guided by The Tavistock Public Realm Strategy document compiled in 2014 and adopted by TTC. This document was part of the stage II submission for the Townscape Initiative programme, and incorporated a process of public consultation and approval from various organisations.

This proposal follows the general principles of option 1 in that document to retain car parking, provide a new public lawn but to reposition the statue. (although our scheme proposes a different location).

The LPA Proposals aim of the Car Park is to enhance and improve the town centre settings of the built environment and the compliment the surrounding historic buildings. Key features propose to include surface finishes predominately, but also lighting and de-cluttering of the overall visual impact. All will help establish the role and identify the location as one of the towns best assets.

Materials and Finishes

Hard Surfacing

The existing tarmac area which forms the car parking space(s) is to be refinished in an aggregate resin bound surface (LeesonBound Systems) . This high-performance resin will compliment that already laid to the Pannier Market Public Realm works thereby providing visual continuity, and will again provide a nonslip surface which is durable and suitable for both pedestrian and vehicles. The aggregates in the mix will be a mixture of different size gravel chips in light grey and buff colours complimenting the tones of the existing stonework and proposed new granite setts to the site and its surroundings.

The proposed car parking bays, the southern pavement that serves spaces 12-19, and the area around the Public Conveniences is also to be laid to resin.

To give consistency of product and material, the disabled car parking bays and loading bays are to be laid to hatch disabled user sign in a yellow tone of the resin.

LeesonBound Resin products:

- Car Park: Titan Silver
- Car Bays: Heather
- Car Park pathway : Alpine
- Public Conveniences: Alpine

To maintain constancy of product and materials to the main pathway and other “piazza” areas granite has been chosen to blend in with the historic environment, as well as a continuation of the Bedford Square and recently completed Pannier public realm hard landscaping.

Marshall's products:

- Main Pathway: Despina Chinese Granite, blasted
- Main Piazza: Despina Chinese Granite, blasted
- Northwest Pavement: Yaletown Vietnamese Granite, flamed
- Northwest road/pavement kerb: Conservation Kerb, Silver Grey
- New Statue position west of Court Gate: Despina Chinese Granite, blasted
- Car Parking bay outlines: Neso Yellows Granite, blasted

Stonemarket products:

- Pathway(s) perimeter edges: Chinese Granite glacier textured edging kerbs

From historic maps it can be seen that a pavement ran north-south along the frontage of the Guildhall complex. This is to be retained as well as the creation of a new “Piazza” area to the Courtroom and Police Station buildings. To ensure prominence these areas are to be finished with granite

setts, matching tone and quarry to those used in the Pannier Market Public Realm landscaping.

In addition, the western area to Courtgate where the Duke of Bedford statue is to be repositioned will also be laid with the same granite setts, but in a formal pattern for the statue base.

For the most part, the levels of the car park are to remain unchanged, but all kerbs are to be omitted and the new resin coatings blended at pavements to provide a level intersection between them. This generally means that perimeter levels all remain as is to the site, this is essential to avoid disturbance of the main pavement, road and historic building levels.

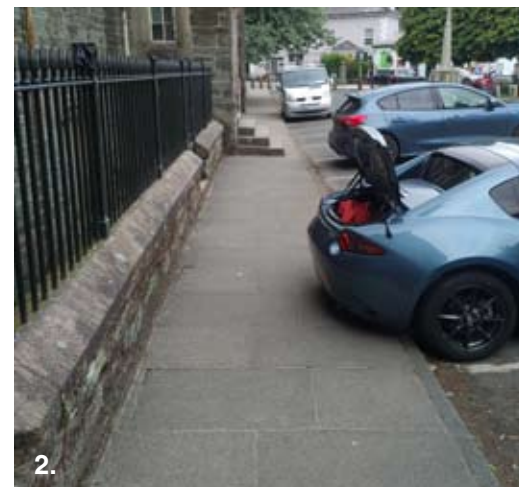
At the western pavement and at the northern historic granite setts a maximum 10mm shadow gap is to be designed in to the junctions, to emphasise the original kerb lines.

The new eastern pavement is to be laid to existing levels, except outside the Trowtes House where the surface will fall at 1:12 ramp down to the level of the main proposed Heritage Centre entrance doorway (former fire engine house entrance). A new granite step will be incorporate to the Trowtes House doorway to compensate for the small level change.

The historic granite setts outside the Police Station are to be carefully taken up from the pedestrian entrance door, and re-laid to fall, again finishing at the level of the Heritage Centre entrance doorway. This work will require the granite stone immediately outside the Police door to receive a small cut along the line of the 3 western stones which abut it. Having considered these historic stones carefully, this method allows level access to be created with minimal intervention to the historic granite

Photographs

1. General levels maintained across the site
2. Historic Pavement location
3. Entrance to Guildhall
4. Current kerb levels
5. Vehicle entrance



The Duke of Bedford

The statue is proposed to be carefully dismantled and repositioned in front of Court Gate facing directly up Plymouth Road to the Drake statue at the opposite end.

The Grade II listed Bronze statue is of local metals coated with a modern protective layer to all surfaces, and is formed from individual sections making up the main torso with integrated circular bronze plinth. This sits on a large single column base noting the Duke and public subscription. This in turn sits on a leaded joint to the circular base stone, which then sits on 4 sections making up the thin ground plinth.

The bronze statue plinth is fixed horizontally with bronze iron rivets at the Duke's left foot, and is thought from previous experience, and other UK cases, to have been the last wedge of the plinth fixed in place after the (assumed) vertical securing threaded bars had their nuts tightened, fixing the statue to the stonework.

This wedge runs from the front face to the plinth, along the back of the statues left foot heel to the other side finishing again at the plinth front. In addition, a horizontal tenon joint sits just above the left foots ankle, supporting this final build section theory.

This all corresponds to the horizontal joint line to the statue at the hip (running through the Dukes's cloak), meaning the statue is

made up of 3 sections (upper body, legs and final wedge).

Although the precise vertical fixing method of the statue is unknown, it is assumed that doweled anchor points are set into the granite stone base from the main statue bronze plinth section.

The method of repositioning has been thoroughly considered and the chosen procedure is considered to be the least hazardous to the bronzework. Rather than dismantle the statue it is proposed to retain it on its main base, but separate that from the lower granite base at the lead joint.

A structural engineer will design a protective timber cage to be formed around the statue to ensure it is protected and as importantly, make sure it remains vertical and without strain on the joints.

The sculpture base will then be carefully slung and a hi-ab crane used to take the weight and ensure that with the protective cage the statue will stay secure and not topple or twist. The effective complete upper section of the statue will then be lowered to the ground.

The lower granite stone base will be removed from the ground plinths and set aside, then in turn the 4 base stones will be carefully removed.

This will be undertaken under a watching brief of the project Archaeologist to ensure any below ground data is recorded.

The reinstatement in its proposed position being the reverse of above, however a lead joint would not be incorporated between the granite bases but a resin-based material. The project does not at this time propose for the removal of the modern coatings to the bronzework, as it is concluded that this is offering protection against oxidation and tarnishing.

It is proposed to clean all the granite base and plinth stones however with the super-heated doff/thermatech system.

War Memorial

The memorial will remain mainly undisturbed, yet it currently suffers from the two overbearing conifer trees to the road frontage. These stop any view to it from the west, and the roots have dislocated the raised grass area where the airmen memorial stones lay.

It is proposed to remove fully the two trees to open up the site (the remaining trees adjacent to the Public Toilets will remain undisturbed (although the landscaping at their bases will be upgrade to ensure future growth)), but the raised lawn which they sit on is to be removed fully. Due to the historic remains below ground the tree trunk will be taken to ground level only and the roots left insitu, unless the Archaeologist watching brief at the time allows such.

The granite kerbs will be rearranged in front on the ground scroll stone to complete the base surround and the area filled in with white chippings. Poppies are to be planted around the perimeter and the airmen memorial stones laid in the chippings to the eastern side.

Uplighters will light the cross at night, ensuring these changes provide dignity at all times of the day.

Lighting

The proposed modern street lamp is to be replaced with an iGuzzini Platea Pro unit to reflect those being fitted to the front of the Guildhall.

The site is in need of upgraded lighting, particularly for pedestrian users. To avoid excessive visual impact, it has been decided to incorporate flush diffuser spread lights (Cecil 90-3L) set in a grid pattern to the main path and the outer perimeters of the resin path and piazza.

Photographs

1. Duke of Bedford
2. Final plinth wedge (below)
3. Final plinth wedge (above)
4. Trees to war memorial
5. Existing concrete street lamp



Granite Posts

The site is surrounded by granite posts, most of which have two square profile balusters still sitting between them. Several posts still retain their gate pin hinges (at the main vehicle entrance, southern pedestrian entrance and directly opposite the Public Conveniences), and these are all to remain instu to ensure the historic locations are kept.

A number of original posts have been obviously re-located within the site, mainly at pedestrian entrances, and it is proposed to remove these to infill the western perimeter where modern benches are to be taken out, and so return the original post positions here.

Features

Granite sanded round bollards are proposed at car parking spaces 1-19 to ensure pedestrian safety, whilst ensuring low level visual impact against the Guildhall.

The existing car parking ticket machine and sign will be positioned to the new central piazza area outside the former Courtroom, again to avoid direct visual impact on historic elevations (Note: this is a direct suggestion from Historic England from the pre application to them)

Archaeology

The site sits above mediaeval remains of the abbey and the proposals all reflect the importance of maintaining this fabric insitu. 3 trial ditches are to be excavated under an Archaeological watching brief by AC Archaeology along plan section lines BB, CC and EE. This will give a better understanding of the sub strata and archaeological remains specifically to the area, to better inform as a whole.

The proposals all allow for shallow excavations of the modern tarmacadan and upper ground of a maximum depth of 475mm, and this has been specifically designed to avoid any impact on the Tavistock Abbey.

Initial desktop study work has been undertaken with AC Archaeology and their advice and conclusion at this time based on current knowledge, is that the proposals will not impact buried mediaeval remains (1.30m below the surface from previous investigations) directly to the car park site. (AC Archaeology Assessment ACD2125/1/0: Sept 2019)

Access

The designs do not alter the use of the area either for vehicles or pedestrians. Indeed, it enhances the pedestrian flow and use of the site by omitting all major changes in level at kerbs etc.

Lighting, signage and flow will all be improved particularly in front of the Guildhall complex where vehicles, steps and people clash at the Courtroom steps.

Access to the Duke of Bedford statue is vastly improved as it, along with the War Memorial , has been removed form the vehicle area of the site.

Conclusion

The proposals fall in line with the Towns strategy plan and will enhance the car park to reflect the Town's historic and architectural status. They also will mirror the refurbishment and enhancement work being completed to Guildhall complex, and so complete the Bedford Square area as a whole.

Previous Pre application discussions with both Historic England and the local Conservation officer have proved extremely positive, allowing a scheme that enhances the site whilst providing a superior experience for vehicle users and pedestrians.

Extreme sensitivity has been taken to ensure that the Abbey remains which sit below the site stay undisturbed, meaning Tavistock's precious history continues whilst its day to day needs of the town have been enhanced.

Photographs

1. Historic gate posts repositioned (existing)
2. Historic gate posts
3. Ticket machine and sign
4. Northwest pavement
5. Tree trunks at tarmac



Le Page Architects

Plumer House
Tailyour Road
Cornwhill
Plymouth
PL6 5DH

T +44 (0)1752 849 880

enquiries@lepagearchitects.com