

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

THE HOE

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Name:	THE HOE
District:	City of Plymouth (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
National park:	N/A
label.localisation:	Latitude: 50.364921 Longitude: -4.1417404 National Grid Reference: SX 47771 53862 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001635 Date first listed: 15-Jul-2002

Details

A public walk and parade ground of medieval origin, developed in the C19 and C20 as a public park and setting for a group of public monuments.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

During the medieval period the headland known as The Hoe was used for recreation by the residents of Plymouth. In 1530 Westcote reported that, 'Here the townsmen pass their time of leisure in walking, bowling and other pleasant pastimes' (quoted in Worth 1890). Two figures of giants holding clubs, popularly known as 'Gog Magog', were cut in the turf of The Hoe. These survived until c 1671 when Charles II constructed the Royal Citadel, a military fort, at the eastern end of The Hoe. It was first claimed that Sir Francis Drake (1540-96) played bowls on the Hoe whilst awaiting the arrival of the ships of the Spanish Armada in 1588 in a Dutch publication in 1624, a story later included in Drake's 1736 biography, and made popular in 1855 by Charles Kingsley in 'Westward Ho!', and by others. However there is no authenticated contemporary record of the fact. The Hoe continued to be used as an informal place of recreation during the C16, C17, and C18.

As Plymouth assumed greater significance as a naval town in the early C19, so the Corporation sought to develop The Hoe in a more formal way with walks and gardens to complement the adjacent residential developments built by John Foulston and George Wightwick (Cherry and Pevsner 1989). In 1836 a Committee was appointed to examine the condition of the fences, seats, and approaches to The Hoe (Hoe Committee Minutes). An officer was instructed to 'repress the practice of bathing at improper hours in the summer months and prevent visitors to the Hoe being molested by persons soliciting alms who constantly resort there at periods when the Hoe is most frequented for exercise' (Minutes, 27 April 1836). The Committee continued to implement gradual improvements throughout the 1830s and 1840s: walks were re-gravelled, the seats below The Hoe were repaired, and by c 1838 a camera obscura had been built (Minutes, 9 September 1836, 7 December 1839, December 1841). The Hoe continued to be used for military purposes by the garrison stationed in the Royal Citadel, and its management was limited by the conflicting interests of residents and the military. In 1847-8 the Corporation concluded negotiations for the lease of the Governor's Meadow and Citadel Field from the Board of Ordnance (Minutes, 25 June 1844, 24 November 1847). This process of expansion had begun in 1844 when land adjoining The Hoe to the north-west had been bought from Col Elliot

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(Minutes, 21 September 1844). In November 1847 the Committee requested the Surveyor to draw up plans for planting the western and northern boundaries of the Governor's Meadow and for a lodge at the head of Lockyer Street, with the assistance of 'Mr Pontey' (John Pontey, nurseryman, c 1763-1854). In 1849 land in front of The Esplanade, presumably on the site of the parade ground, was levelled (Minutes, 1 December 1849), and in 1854 the Horticultural Society was granted permission to hold its show on The Hoe (Minutes, 29 August 1854). By 1859 features of The Hoe included the camera obscura, a navigation obelisk, and a bathing house on the foreshore (Minutes, 1859).

In 1860 the practise of grazing The Hoe with sheep was discontinued, and the area became known as Hoe Park (Minutes). By 1873 Jewitt noted that:

'The Hoe ... is converted into public gardens for the free and unrestricted use, day and night, of the inhabitants, and forms one of the most delightful and inviting ... promenades in the Kingdom. The Hoe ... is laid out in paths, with shrubberies on its town side and beneath the cliffs; and along its centre, running in a line from the Citadel ... to West Hoe ... is a broad gravelled promenade, where the townspeople and visitors, in fine weather, assemble in thousands ... On the East side of the Hoe a public carriage drive is formed from the town at Saltram Place, down to the cliffs and so along by the sea to West Hoe Terrace and Millbay; and on the sea side of the cliffs, winding paths and flights of steps, with innumerable alcoves, recesses, and seats are provided for the comfort of the public'. (Jewitt 1873)

Significant improvements took place in the 1870s and 1880s which included levelling around the depression known as the Bull Ring (Minutes, 29 July 1870), obtaining the lease of the south glacis adjacent to the Royal Citadel which was laid out with walks in 1878-9 (Minutes, 19 January 1877), the construction of a new entrance at the north-east corner of the Governor's Meadow (Minutes, 4 July 1878), and the construction of new roads to the east and west of The Hoe and the extension of The Promenade to a design by the Borough Surveyor (Minutes, 31 July 1880). In 1881 Alderman Norrington donated a drinking fountain (Minutes, 12 March 1881), while the following year a pier was commenced by the Plymouth Pier Company below The Hoe (Minutes, 10 September 1881). The foreshore was purchased from the Duchy of Cornwall in 1882 to prevent quarrying, stone-gathering, and speculative development (Minutes, September 1882). The upper section of John Smeaton's Eddystone Lighthouse (1756-9) was re-erected on The Hoe in 1882, while the first of a significant group of public monuments, the statue of Sir Francis Drake, was erected in 1883 (Minutes, 1 September 1883). In 1887 improvements including a new lodge were made at the east end of The Promenade (Minutes, 1887), while the following year the Corporation began negotiations to obtain the camera obscura from Miss Simpson, its custodian for over fifty years (Minutes, 8 December 1888). The camera was demolished in June 1889. Further structures, including a cast-iron bandstand supplied by Walter MacFarlane & Co of Glasgow (Designs, WDRO), two shelters, a tower, and a Belvedere, known as the Corporation Seat, were constructed in the late C19.

Following the First World War, The Hoe was chosen as the site for the Naval War Memorial designed by Sir Robert Lorimer. During the 1930s the carriage drive, Hoe Road, was reconstructed in cantilevered reinforced concrete to form a sun terrace and promenade; at the same time a Lido was built together with further concrete terraces and bathing stations along the foreshore. During the Second World War the Pier was destroyed by bombing (1941), while after the war the Naval Memorial was extended to designs by Edward Maufe. The Naval Memorial was chosen by J Paton Watson and Patrick Abercrombie, architects for the reconstruction of Plymouth following its war-time bombing, as the terminal feature of a new north/south vista extending through the city centre (Paton Watson and Abercrombie 1943).

In the mid C20 the late C19 bandstand was removed from The Hoe, while in 1988 The Hoe Visitors' Centre was constructed to the design of the City Architect's department on the site of a group of late C19 recessed shelters. Today (2002), The Hoe remains municipal property.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The Hoe is situated immediately south of the mid C20 civic centre of Plymouth. The c 15ha site comprises four areas linked by historic development: the area known as Hoe Park to the north of The Promenade, The Hoe to the south of The Promenade, the Lido and associated bathing facilities on the foreshore south of Hoe Road, and West Hoe Park. The registered site also includes an area of lawns and gardens bounded by Armada Way and Notte Street to the north which link The Hoe to the post-war city centre and Civic Square (qv). To the west and north-

west the site is bounded by Lockyer Street, and the early C19 buildings of The Esplanade and Cliff Road. To the south the boundary of the site is formed by the foreshore of Plymouth Sound, while to the south-east and east it adjoins the Royal Citadel, from which it is separated by Hoe Road, which originated as an early C19 public carriage drive leading to the shore (Tithe map, 1846; Jewitt 1873). To the north-east the site is bounded by C19 buildings to the north of Hoe Road and Lambhay Hill. The site occupies the summit of a ridge which extends from east to west approximately on the line of The Promenade. To the north the ground drops away towards the city centre, while to the south it falls towards Plymouth Sound, allowing fine views south towards The Breakwater, south-east towards Mount Batten, and south-west towards Mount Edgcumbe (qv). The ground also falls steeply to the north-east, allowing further views across Coxside towards Saltram (qv).

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The principal entrance to The Hoe is situated at the eastern end of The Promenade on Hoe Road. A pair of broad flights of granite steps flanking a central ramp ascend from Hoe Road to The Promenade. To the north of the entrance stands a single-storey late C19 lodge (listed grade II). Of rendered construction with an ornamental cast-iron verandah to the south facade and ornamental bargeboards, the lodge was designed by the Borough Surveyor in 1887-8 (Minutes, 1887) as part of a scheme of improvements to The Hoe. An original single-storey wing extending north-east from the lodge contains public conveniences. This wing is screened from the adjacent walk by evergreen shrubbery. To the west of the lodge a small late C20 formal garden with figurative topiary is enclosed by clipped evergreen hedges.

Two further formal entrances are situated on Hoe Road to the north-east at points opposite Hoe Street and Hoe Approach. Another entrance is situated to the west, at the southern end of Lockyer Street. The north-east entrances comprise a pair of granite piers between which are placed three cast-iron bollards; these entrances were constructed in 1878 (Minutes, 4 July 1878). The west entrance comprises an outer pair of granite piers surmounted by lamp standards flanking an inner, taller pair of rusticated granite piers (listed grade II) surmounted by turned finials. The piers are separated by further cast-iron bollards. A lodge was proposed for the end of Lockyer Street in 1847 (Minutes, 24 November 1847), but this structure appears not to have been erected (OS 1855-6); the present entrance is contemporary with the adjacent mid C19 terraces overlooking The Hoe. A further formal entrance at the north-west corner of the site adjacent to the junction of Lockyer Street and Citadel Road incorporates an early C20 war memorial (listed grade II). There are further informal entrances to the site which, since the mid C20, has been largely unfenced, although to the north and east, on Citadel Road and Hoe Road, low stone boundary walls formerly supporting C19 railings survive.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The area to the north of The Promenade or parade ground is predominantly laid out as lawns planted with scattered specimen trees, while to the north-east, adjacent to the boundary, some planting appears to survive from the mid C19 shrubberies (Minutes, 1847). A raised walk extends along the north-east boundary, linking the north-east entrance and the entrance at the east end of The Promenade. The grass slopes below this walk are planted with trees and shrubs. An early C20 red granite obelisk (listed grade II) with bronze plaques stands c 130m north of the east entrance. The obelisk commemorates Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig-Holstein who was killed in the Boer War, and was erected in 1902 (inscription). To the east of the raised walk grass slopes descend to the level of Hoe Road, which is here planted with an avenue of mature trees. To the east of Hoe Road lawns and formal flower beds extend below the walls of the Royal Citadel. From the north-east entrance a straight tree-lined walk extends c 190m south-west across the site. Some 150m south-west of the entrance a white marble and red granite Gothic-style drinking fountain stands to the west of the walk. This was donated in 1881 by Alderman Norrington (Minutes, 12 March 1881). A further curvilinear walk extends parallel to the northern boundary: this was established by 1855 (OS), while the remaining walks are shown in their present form by 1881 (Maddock, 1881). To the west of these lawns a further, rectangular area of lawn is enclosed to the east and west by walks, while to the south stands the Naval War Memorial (listed grade II*). The original First World War memorial (1920-4) by Sir Robert Lorimer comprising a monumental Portland stone obelisk bearing bronze memorial plaques and surmounted by a bronze globe finial stands on a raised stone terrace. To the north the Second World War memorial by Edward Maufe takes the form of a lawn enclosed by low stone walls bearing bronze memorial plaques. The north-facing slopes to the east and west of the memorial are planted with shrubbery. The axis of the rectangular lawn north of the memorial is continued by a triangular-shaped lawn to the north of Citadel Road and a further area of gardens to the north of Armada Way which link The Hoe to the post-war civic centre (Paton

Watson and Abercrombie 1943). To the north-west of the war memorial an early C20 bowling green (OS 1914) is situated on an artificial raised terrace. A mid C20 pavilion stands to the north of the bowling green.

The Promenade extends c 430m from east to west across the site to the south of the war memorial. Today (2002) The Promenade is a broad, level tarmac terrace bordered by lawns. To the north a series of public monuments adjoins the terrace. From the east these comprise: the Second World War RAF memorial, the Armada Tercentenary monument (listed grade II*) erected in 1888 to designs by Herbert A Gribble with sculpture by W Charles May, and the Drake Statue (1884, listed grade II*) with a bronze sculpture of Drake by J E Boem. The Promenade corresponds to a feature shown on the 1830 map of Plymouth, and the Tithe map (1846). It was extended and further levelled in the late C19, when it assumed its present form.

To the south of The Promenade the ground falls away towards the coast. Some 160m south-west of the east entrance to The Promenade, the Smeaton Tower (listed grade I), the upper section of the mid C18 Eddystone Lighthouse designed by James Smeaton, stands at the centre of a rondpoint on a walk leading south from The Promenade. The circular tapered tower of painted granite surmounted by an ogee lantern was re-erected on The Hoe in 1882, in place of an early C19 navigation obelisk which stood on a site slightly further east (J Cooke, 1820; OS 1855-6). A late C19 single-storey open shelter (listed grade II) supported by cast-iron columns stands c 20m south-east of the tower. To the south-west of The Promenade the lawns are retained by C19 stone walls, below which are rocky slopes planted with shrubs and rock plants. The retaining wall is terminated to the east by a late C19 stone octagonal lookout tower (listed grade II). This structure may correspond to the fisherman's lookout discussed by The Hoe Committee in June 1888 (Minutes, 16 June 1888). Some 100m north-west of the lookout tower, the Belvedere or Corporation Seat (listed grade II) is set into the south-west-facing slope of the former Bull Ring. The structure comprises a series of three balustraded terraces and open-fronted shelters supported by C17 granite Tuscan columns removed from the Old Market (listed building description). The Belvedere is surmounted by a viewing terrace, while the lowest section incorporates the arms of Plymouth and the date 1891. The Belvedere was rebuilt in 1891 on the site of a smaller, early C19 seat which stood above the hollow of the Bull Ring (OS 1855-6). The terrace above the present Belvedere corresponds to the site of the camera obscura which stood on The Hoe from c 1838 until its demolition as part of improvements in 1889 (Minutes, 8 December 1888, 8 June 1889). Below the Belvedere is a small area of formal gardens retained above the level of Hoe Road to the south by a low stone wall. On the slopes above the Bull Ring, to the east and west, stand a pair of late C19 single-storey open shelters supported by cast-iron columns (both listed grade II). Flights of steps descend east and west of the Belvedere to give access to Hoe Road and the foreshore.

The foreshore from West Hoe to a point c 80m west of the Yacht Club, a distance of c 650m, is laid out with a series of early C20 concrete sun and bathing terraces, platforms and other associated facilities, with ornamental shrubbery and alpine planting on the adjacent rock faces. Hoe Road is cantilevered out to form the Tinside Colonnade, Promenade and Sun Terrace (listed grade II), while immediately to the east, on the central north/south axis of The Hoe, is the Lido or Tinside Pool (listed grade II). The predominantly concrete Lido is built in the Art Deco style with pavilions and changing rooms to the north, a swimming pool with fountains and perimeter terraces, and a sun terrace projecting to the south. The Lido and Tinside Colonnade were constructed in 1935 to the design of J Webberley, the City Architect. The Lido was constructed on the site of the early C19 Ladies' Bathing Place, which had been provided with a new shelter in 1871 when permission for the Crystal Palace Company to open an aquarium on this site was refused (Minutes, 14 January 1871). There are further facilities including a cafe and concrete terraces in Tinside Cove to the east of the Lido, and the bathing facilities are terminated to the east by the semicircular concrete enclosure of the Men's Bathing Place.

To the east of Hoe Road, c 270m south of the north-east entrance and at the south-west corner of the Royal Citadel, an approximately rectangular grass terrace is raised above the level of Hoe Road to the west and Madeira Road to the south by grass banks. On the terrace stands a memorial to the Royal Marines of the Plymouth Division who were killed in the First World War (listed grade II). The memorial is approached from the junction of Hoe Road and Madeira Road to the south-west by a path and steps. To the east of the memorial a walk extends c 270m east-south-east below the walls of the Royal Citadel and above a steep grass and rocky bank which descends to Madeira Road. This walk was laid out in 1878-9 following the lease of the former Citadel defences to the Corporation in 1877 (Minutes, 19 January 1877).

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West Hoe Park to the west of The Hoe comprises a level area of lawns and games pitches, separated from The Hoe by steep rocky cliff faces to the east and north. Areas of shrubbery and specimen trees are planted below the rock faces. To the north of the park is a C20 children's play area, while to the west are bowling greens and tennis courts. The park was laid out on the site of West Hoe Quarry c 1890 (OS 1855-6, 1895, 1914), and was extended to the north-west in the mid C20 when properties in Pier Street were cleared.

REFERENCES

L Jewitt, *A History of Plymouth* (1873), p 663 R N Worth, *History of Plymouth* (1890), p 3 National Geographic Magazine lxxiv, (July 1938), pp 59-77 J Paton Watson and P Abercrombie, *A Plan for Plymouth* (1943), pp 66, 103-4 B Moseley, *Vanishing Plymouth* (1982), pp 8-9 B Cherry and N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Devon* (2nd edn 1989), pp 664-6
Maps Great Map of the West, mid C16 (British Museum) J Cooke, *Borough of Plymouth, 1820* (West Devon Record Office) E Becker, *The Three Towns of Plymouth, Stonehouse and Devonport, 1830* (West Devon Record Office) W Snell, *Tithe map for St Andrew's, Plymouth parish, 1846* (West Devon Record Office) W H Maddock, *Map of Plymouth, Devonport, Stonehouse, Stoke, Morice Town, & Ford, 1881* (West Devon Record Office)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1914 1938 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published c 1880 2nd edition published 1895 OS 10' to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1855-6

Archival items Minutes of the Corporation of Plymouth Hoe Committee, 1836-60 (HO 1/56), (West Devon Record Office) Minutes of The Hoe Committee, 1859-90 (HO 9/64), (West Devon Record Office) Designs for bandstand, kiosk, shelter and drinking fountain, late C19, some signed Walter MacFarlane & Co, Glasgow (1328/2-5), (West Devon Record Office) Early C20 photographs of The Hoe including aerial view (National Geographic Mag 1938) Aerial views of The Hoe, c 1950, 1958 (published in Moseley 1982)

Description written: February 2002 Register Inspector: JML Edited: December 2002

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 05/03/2019

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.