

Application Number:	P/LBC/2025/03873
Webpage:	https://planning.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/plandisp.aspx?recno=415585
Site address:	King George III Statue, The Esplanade, Weymouth DT4 8DE
Proposal:	Replace sceptre to King George III Statue.
Applicant name:	Mr Trevor Ford
Case Officer:	Nicola Yeates
Ward Member(s):	Cllr Orrell

1. This application has been brought to committee as the structure to which the application relates is owned by Dorset Council.
2. **Summary of recommendation:** Grant subject to conditions.
3. **Key planning issues**

Issue	Conclusion
Impact on Heritage Asset, Setting and Conservation Area.	No adverse impact.

4. Description of site

- 4.1 King George III Statue is Grade I Listed and located within the Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area in a prominent position at the junction of Esplanade, Westham Road and St Thomas Street.
- 4.2 As stated within the submitted Heritage and Design and Access Statements, the statue is an iconic landmark along Weymouth seafront. This statue, to commemorate the 50th year of the reign of King George III, was erected in 1809/10. The statue is made mostly from Coade stone with other minor mixed materials and set on a tall Portland stone pedestal. The statue is flanked by a gold lion and a white unicorn also in Coade stone.
- 4.3 Kings Statue was first listed in 1953 with the listing description mentioning the sceptre held in the right hand. However, the statue is now missing the sceptre, believed to have been removed in the 1970s.

5. Description of development

- 5.1 The proposal seeks to replace the missing sceptre to the statue.

6. Background and relevant planning history

07/00158/LBC3 - Decision: GRA - Decision Date: 22/11/2007

Restoration works to include some repainting, limewashing and re-gilding.

Re-install sceptre to statue (missing since mid-1960s).

7. List of constraints

Grade I Listed KINGS STATUE HE Reference: 1365879 (*statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*).

Within the Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area (*statutory duty to preserve or enhance the significance of heritage assets under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*).

8. Consultations

All consultee responses can be viewed in full on the website.

Consultees

1. **Weymouth Town Council** - The Council warmly welcomes the proposals.
2. **Melcombe Regis Ward** – no comments received.
3. **Historic England** - Historic England supports proposals to replace sceptre to King George III Statue in Weymouth, however the application does not include any details of the design, materials or fixings. Dorset Council should ensure that this detail is provided and that all new materials and fixings are appropriate to ensure no longer term harm to the existing statue.
4. **National Amenity Societies** – no comments received.

Representations received – None.

9. Duties

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - includes a general duty to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering whether to grant listed building consent.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of conservation areas.

10. Relevant policies

Development Plan

West Dorset Weymouth and Portland Local Plan 2015

The following policies of the Local Plan are considered to be relevant:

ENV4 – Heritage Assets

Material considerations

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (as amended 2025)

Section 16 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'- Paragraph 212 says that when considering designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. The effect of an application on the significance of non-designated heritage assets should also be taken into account (para 216).

Emerging Local Plans:

Paragraph 49 of the NPPF provides that local planning authorities may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to:

- The stage of preparation of the emerging plan (the more advanced its preparation, the greater the weight that may be given);
- the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant plan policies (the less significant the unresolved objections, the greater the weight that may be given); and
- the degree of consistency of the relevant policies in the emerging plan to the NPPF (the closer the policies in the emerging plan are to the policies of the NPPF, the greater the weight that may be given).

The draft Dorset Council Local Plan

The Dorset Council Local Plan Options Consultation took place between January and March 2021. Being at a very early stage of preparation, the relevant policies in the draft Dorset Council Local Plan should be accorded very limited weight in decision making.

Emerging Neighbourhood Plans

Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan - The Weymouth Neighbourhood Plan has been submitted for examination but has limited weight applied to decision making until it is 'made'. The draft plan (December 2024) includes the following policies of relevance:

W45 - Heritage Assets

11. Human rights

Article 6 - right to a fair trial.

Article 8 - right to respect for private and family life and home.

The first protocol of Article 1 protection of property.

This recommendation is based on adopted development plan policies, the application of which does not prejudice the human rights of the applicant or any third party.

12. Public Sector Equalities Duty

As set out in the Equalities Act 2010, all public bodies, in discharging their functions must have “due regard” to this duty. There are 3 main aims: -

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where participation is disproportionately low.

Whilst there is no absolute requirement to fully remove any disadvantage the Duty is to have “regard to” and remove or minimise disadvantage and in considering the merits of this planning application the planning authority has taken into consideration the requirements of the Public Sector Equalities Duty. The proposal will not impact on people with protected characteristics.

13. Assessment

Impact on Heritage Asset, Setting and Conservation Area

- 13.1 The statue is considered a significant element of the overall experience of Weymouth. The statue sits tall facing north along The Esplanade in a very prominent position, on a large island, at the junction of several roads and therefore is clearly visible.
- 13.2 The proposal seeks to replace the missing sceptre to the statue believed to have been removed in the 1970s. The exact reason for the removal is not known.
- 13.3 The submitted documentation states that the existing materials are Coade stone, timber, paint and gilding. The proposed materials and finishes for the new sceptre would be hardwood and coated in gold leaf. The supporting documentation states that the new sceptre would be as exact a replica as can be produced by a specialist conservation contractor. The proposed works would see a sceptre created matching that shown in the photograph submitted dated 1964.
- 13.4 The fixing of the new sceptre would be similar to the original with support from the hand and leg. The fixing is stated to be in modern materials. No specific plans or details have been provided regarding the design, size and fixings. This has been highlighted within Historic England’s comments.
- 13.5 The proposal would see the sceptre reinstated bringing the statue back to the original condition. The submitted statement states that this will enhance the experience for locals and visitors to the town as the statue is open for all to visit and view at all times. It is considered that the proposal would enhance the statue and complete the scene bring the statue back to the original condition. The proposal is considered positive and would not cause harm to the Listed structure nor detrimentally alter the appearance of this heritage asset. Furthermore, the proposal would not impact the setting of the neighbouring Listed buildings nor the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- 13.6 It is considered that the principle of the replacement sceptre is acceptable and that the design, size and fixing details could be agreed by way of a condition.
- 13.7 Permitted Development enquiry P/PDE/2025/00190 was submitted and it was concluded that no planning permission was required for the proposed works.

Conclusion

- 14.1 It is concluded that the proposal would enhance the special architectural and historic interest of this heritage asset and therefore would not result in harm to the significance of the Listed structure. The proposal would not result in harm to the neighbouring Listed buildings nor the special character and local distinctiveness of the Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area.
- 14.2 In reaching this conclusion the proposal has been assessed with regard to the duties under section 16 of the NPPF (2024) and applying Sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

15. Recommendation: Grant listed building consent subject to the following conditions:

1. The work to which this listed building consent relates must be begun not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date on which the consent is granted.

Reason: This condition is required to be imposed by reason of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

2. The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

PP-14144711v1 Location Plan

Reason: To preserve the architectural and historical qualities of the building.

3. Prior to installation detailed drawings and specifications showing the design, size and fixings of the replacement sceptre shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority and agreed in writing. Thereafter, the works shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.

Reason: To preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the heritage asset.

Informative Notes:

1. Informative: National Planning Policy Framework Statement

In accordance with paragraph 39 of the NPPF the council, as local planning authority, takes a positive approach to development proposals and is focused on providing sustainable development.

The council works with applicants/agents in a positive and proactive manner by:

- offering a pre-application advice service, and
- as appropriate updating applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application and where possible suggesting solutions.

In this case:

- The applicant was provided with pre-application advice.
- The application was acceptable as submitted and no further assistance was required.