



Frequently asked questions about The Polish Bridge Art Project – part of The Road to Mayflower

19 April 2021

1. What is The Road to Mayflower and how does the project relate to Mayflower400?

2020 marked the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower from Plymouth UK to Plymouth Massachusetts USA.

Plymouth's local construction and built environment professionals have been keen to play their part in helping the city prepare for the Mayflower400 commemorations. Over the past three years led by the Building Plymouth partnership, there has been extensive planning and engagement to 'get on board' for a construction industry volunteering led Mayflower400 'Adopt a Street' project, known as 'The Road to Mayflower'.

Our Vision: To leave a lasting legacy for Mayflower400 by transforming the welcome experience at Marsh Mills Roundabout and along Embankment Road, in order to deliver a world class visitor impression for Plymouth, Britain's Ocean City.

This project is endorsed by Destination Plymouth, Mayflower400 and Plymouth City Council.

2. Who is leading The Road to Mayflower initiative?

All voluntarily pledging help and support, The Road to Mayflower core team are made up of professionals representing the following local organisations: AECOM, Building Plymouth, Hoare Lea, KPMG, Stride Treglown, SWH, Womble Bond Dickinson and YGS Landscapes.

We have set up 'The Road to Mayflower (R2M) Company Ltd' as a private company limited by guarantee with five appointed to the Board of Directors:

- David Bayliss – Stride Treglown
- Emma Hewitt – Building Plymouth
- Karl Friedrich – Hoare Lea
- Rachel Dyer – formally AWW
- Steve Warren-Brown – YGS Landscapes

All decisions relating to the project design, delivery and financial decisions are approved by the Board of Directors.

There is a project board consisting of the board of directors and key stakeholders.

3. Why are we delivering The Road to Mayflower?

In response to the Mayflower400 'Make a Difference' campaign, as a team of committed volunteers, we want to positively impact on people's perception of our city and leave a lasting legacy for 2020.

Our objectives align with the aims of Plymouth's specific Mayflower400 goals:

- Improve the welcome for visitors entering the city from the A38 and travelling along the key gateway route, the A374
- Catalyse improvements to physical space and experience transforming residents and visitors' experience of Plymouth
- Facilitate residents' engagement including the local business community, leisure users, people living on or around the street, people looking to get into work and raising aspirations with young people
- Enhance Plymouth's perception through showcasing our history and heritage of discovery
- Leave a lasting and sustainable legacy with opportunities for ongoing development
- Instil civic pride in our residents, children and young people
- Enhance the image of construction and the built environment industry

Despite the impact of the pandemic which delayed delivery by a year, we are keen to ensure our legacy projects for Plymouth are completed during 2021.

4. What are the key projects for The Road to Mayflower?

The intent is to deliver/complete all projects during 2021:

- Creating a green gateway at Marsh Mills Roundabout – **The Mayflower Forest** (On schedule to complete by end of April 2021)
- Bridge Art on Cattedown Road Bridge, Gdynia Way – **The Polish Bridge** (Completed mid-April 2021)
- **Welcome to Plymouth Art Panels** (Subject to Planning permission – expected installation July 2021)

For further information and progress on the key projects please visit:

www.buildingplymouth.co.uk/road-to-mayflower/road-to-mayflower-projects

5. What is The Polish Bridge Art project?

A bridge. One of the few words that conveys so many positive meanings, most of these linked with joining places, people or ideas together. It unites, brings closer divided communities.

Aim: to re-energise the 'Polish Bridge' - Cattedown Road Bridge, Gdynia Way, Plymouth

Design brief: To create and implement an art design for the 'Polish Bridge' on Gdynia Way, Plymouth as a lasting legacy for Mayflower400.

We aimed to deliver a contemporary design that incorporates or responds to the following:

- Reflects Plymouth, as Britain's Ocean City as this bridge is on the main gateway into the city for the visitor economy welcome
- Active engagement with the Plymouth Polish community - through the Saturday Polish School and Plymouth Gdynia Twinning Panel
- Involve a research trip to Gdynia, Poland to ensure authenticity of the final design

6. What is Plymouth's relationship with Gdynia and why is this important?

The cities of Plymouth, UK and Gdynia, Poland have been twinned since September 1976, following the signing of a 'Declaration of Cooperation.'

Gdynia is the Polish port city on the Baltic coast. The bridge on Gdynia Way, the main gateway into Plymouth, was decorated with Polish floral folk decorations that had faded due to exposure of time and the elements. However this physical representation of the twinning collaboration is really not recognised by our city's residents including the Polish community (estimated at 15K of the city's population). The refurbishment of Gdynia Way is the perfect opportunity to revive the bridge's symbolism in a new way; that will celebrate the coexistence of two communities: the Poles and the British - living together in Plymouth. This will benefit our visitors by offering a much improved welcome impression from freshly designed bridge art which could tell a migration story about a different moment in history.

Extracted from the Mayflower Sparks Bid which was informed by the Polish community:

The Past: One hundred years ago Gdynia was a small fishing village in the newly independent state of Poland. Through the vision of Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, Deputy Prime Minister of Poland at the time, Gdynia became the first Polish seaport, and emerge as a city.

The first significant migration of Poles to Plymouth happened during WW2; Plymouth's Devonport Naval Base became the location of the Southern Command of the Polish Navy (established in 1918), which was no match to the mighty Kriegsmarine (Nazi Navy) and had to evacuate to the UK at the start of the war. The presence of the Polish Naval personnel in our city was significant, and although the Poles did not have many vessels, they fought bravely alongside their British Allies. The Polish Air Force also played a crucial role in fighting throughout WW2 and the pilots of No.302 Polish Fighter Squadron who were stationed in nearby Harrowbeer, helped to defend Plymouth's ports and bases.

The camaraderie of Poles and Brits in Plymouth had a very special and inspirational moment. After WW2 in 1946 there was a lot of political pressure on British government from the Soviet Allies to stop any Polish servicemen marching in the Victory Parade, so although many soldiers, airmen and sailors from many other allied forces marched in London, the Poles were not invited. A lesser-known fact is that Plymouth was the only city in the UK where the Polish Navy marched alongside the British Navy through the streets of Plymouth, celebrating not only the end of the war, but also mutual respect, heroism and military cooperation.

The Present:

The beginning of the 21st century opens a new chapter in Polish-British relations. After many years being behind the Iron Curtain, followed by years of economic changes, reforms and development, Poland joined the European Market in 2004.

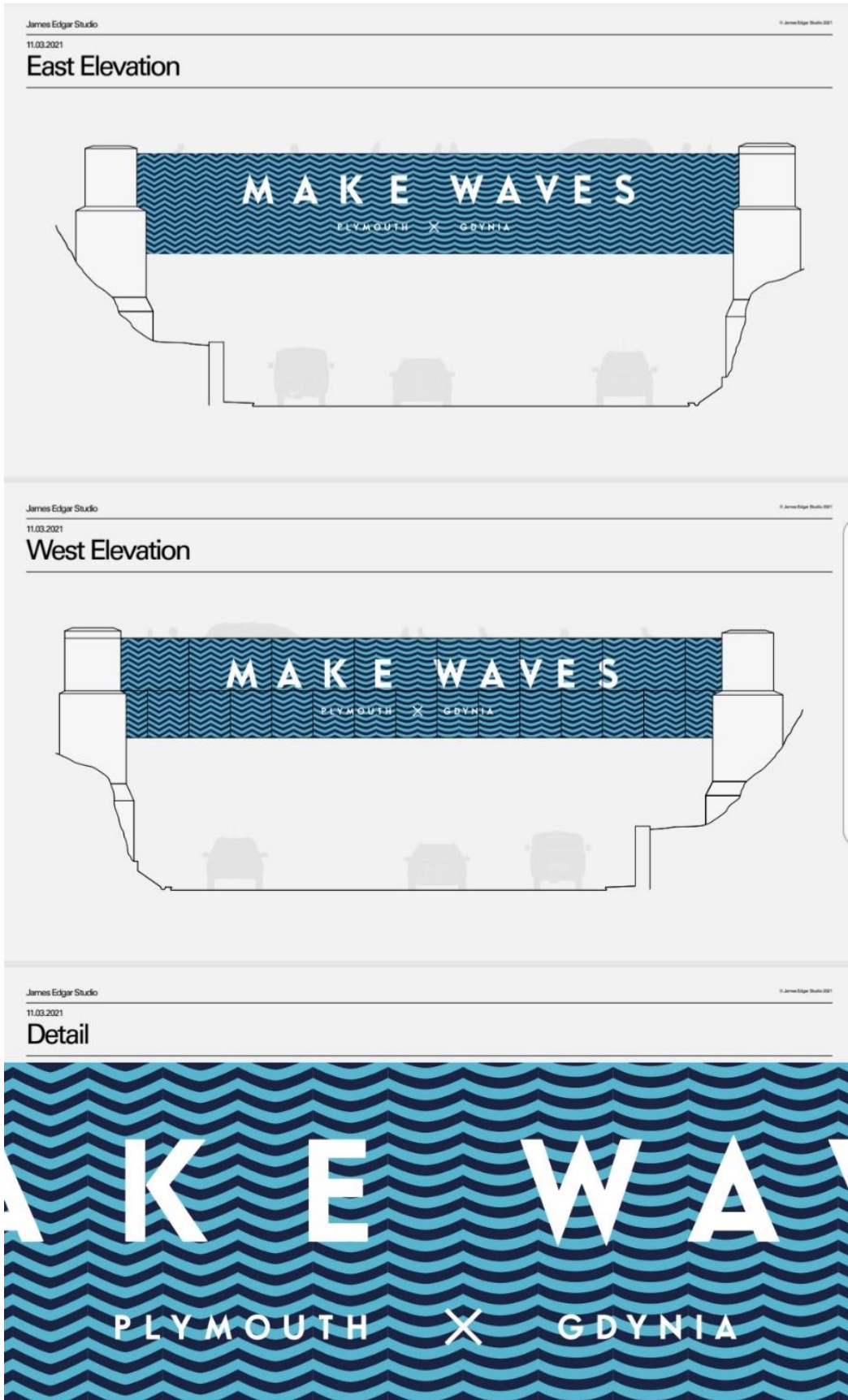
Many Poles saw a great opportunity to emigrate from their homeland to European countries, including Britain, seeking a new life and opportunities. Many arrived in Plymouth, seeking employment, a career change, or simply a better life. Their strong work ethic became well known and sought after by employers. Polish shops and restaurants started to appear on Plymouth streets, becoming an integral part of the local landmark.

The Future:

Well, unknown as yet, but the Poles and the Brits have had a great history of coexistence during the difficult years of war, and as long as the Poles feel welcome on one hand, and proud of their heritage on the other, they will continue to their contribution to the prosperity of Britain.

A bridge between the past and the future; the Polish Bridge is an enduring symbol of how the two communities continue to be united, living together in Plymouth, especially in light of Brexit and the need for increased inclusion.

7. What is the final bridge art design?



8. How was this design developed? What does this bridge art represent?

After developing a positive relationship with PDF (Plymouth Design Forum), The Road to Mayflower (R2M) Company Ltd commissioned local designer James Edgar, James Edgar Studio Design www.jamesedgardesign.com

A Bridge. What better metaphor is there to represent a connection between communities, cultures and people? Now more than ever we need to connect and build relationships. This bridge will celebrate the friendship and twinning of Plymouth with Gdynia whilst symbolising the bond for many more years to come.

James Edgar Studio's work is based upon in-depth research and design thinking. It was important for the design team to visit Gdynia, Poland (January 2020) where they immersed themselves with the culture and meeting the locals including connecting with the Polish design community. As well as the obvious physical similarities of both cities such as the architecture, population and location, the design team found a city full of creativity and culture. A city aware of its own identity and design aesthetic. A city looking forward and not backward.

After speaking with many locals the design team became aware Gdynians are known as the 'Sledz' (the Herrings) with two Sledz featured on their flag. Herrings spawn in the shallows of the Baltic and every year the Gdynians celebrate this by walking amongst them.

With such a harrowing history it is easy to understand why Gdynia is firmly focused on the future. There is a sense of positivity and determination which was recognised in speaking with cultural leaders in the city. On the Muzeum Miasta Gdyni steps the word 'Smialo' is painted in large white letters, meaning 'go ahead, move forward, be positive, be bold'. A sentiment that cultural leaders in Plymouth can certainly identify with.

The design team felt it was important to have a similar positive message which resonates with Plymothians but also celebrates the city's own identity. 'Make Waves' is both positive and bold whilst acknowledging the City's relationship with the ocean and the existing strengths and investment in marine and maritime, as well as the future development of Plymouth's National Marine Park.

In the engagement workshops held with Plymouth's Saturday Polish School, the children designed their own bridge artwork. The ocean appeared in many forms and the connection and similarities between the two cities was explored through typography, colour, flags, and pattern.

In the studio the design team decided to embrace the complicated bridge structure and develop a grid to compliment the design. A Herringbone pattern was developed in line with Gdynia's graphic aesthetic and architecture. The pattern evolves from herringbone into waves which joins both sides. Gdynia's design integrity meant colour and typography were an important consideration. A colour palette of deep dark blues of the Baltic and the lighter Atlantic hues were chosen and Gdynia's historical road sign typography was reworked to create a recognisable but very legible font.

9. Who is leading The Polish Bridge art design and project delivery?

Commissioned by and reporting to The Road to Mayflower Board of Directors, the art design and installation has been led by James Edgar Studio, Plymouth.

The key project delivery partners are:

- James Edgar Studio – commissioned for the design and installation of art works
- Building Plymouth – Overall project management and funding
- Midas Construction – Construction expertise
- Stride Treglown – Design expertise
- Jem Scaffolding – Bridge safe structure for works
- Plymouth City Council – Bridge maintenance programme
- SWH – Site highways contractor

In terms of engagement with the local Polish community positive relationships have been established to inform the design and delivery with:

- Plymouth's Saturday Polish School
- Plymouth Gdynia Twinning Panel

10. What is Plymouth City Council's role in delivery of The Polish Bridge Art Project?

Plymouth City Council endorses The Road to Mayflower project and more specifically, delivery by the construction industry of The Polish Bridge art installation as a legacy project forming part of the city's Mayflower commemorations.

Plymouth City Council's Highways Team undertook the bridge maintenance programme alongside the bridge art installation project.

Representatives of Plymouth City Council including the City Leader, Cabinet member for Street Scene and the Environment, and the Strategic Director for Place have approved the final design specification after agreement by The Road to Mayflower Board of Directors and approval by the Plymouth Gdynia Twinning Panel.

Plymouth/Gdynia Twinning Panel – Terms of Reference held with the Lord Mayor's Office:

- The aim of the Panel is to promote the Twinning link between Plymouth, England and Gdynia, Poland, as originally established through the 1976 Declaration of Cooperation, between interested organisations and individuals of the respective cities
- The Panel acts as a coordination group between the Council, via its Councillor membership and interested organisations and individuals from Plymouth
- Aims of the Panel: To promote the Twinning relationship among the residents of Plymouth and Gdynia, with a view to the stimulation of cultural, sporting, education and commercial links; To advise, encourage and support local organisations and individuals wishing to undertake visits to Gdynia (and vice-versa), whether leading to exchanges or not; To support organisations and individuals within Plymouth engaged in the promotion of the Polish language, culture and traditions; and To assist, if and when called upon by Plymouth City Council, with the development of the Twinning link, including official engagements of the Lord Mayor

There has been no funding received from Plymouth City Council to deliver the bridge art installation project.

11. What will be the maintenance programme post project delivery?

During March and April 2021, the Bridge had a significant maintenance programme managed by Plymouth City Council Highways team. The paint materials used for the bridge art are of the highest marine standards suitable for the highways environmental conditions including an anti-graffiti coating. It is anticipated that this art work will have a 20 years lifespan. The bridge structure remains under the ownership/ responsibility of Plymouth City Council.

12. What about permissions and risk management?

Plymouth City Council's Planning Department has assessed The Polish Bridge project and confirmed that planning permission was not required for the art works. Plymouth City Council, Destination Plymouth and Mayflower400 are fully supportive of the project and have been actively engaged in design decision.

Legal advice and contractual guidance has been provided by Womble Bond Dickinson.

Road safety was a key consideration for the overall art design and experts approved the final design selected.

13. How is The Polish Bridge Art project being funded?

Our volunteer led project is attracting significant in-kind support from the construction industry and has also successfully generated the following income:

- Private sector sponsorship = £8K (sponsorship from Plymouth Waterfront Partnership, City Centre Company, WBD and Midas Construction)
- The Polish Bridge Art Project with the Saturday Polish School is part of Mayflower 400 Community Sparks - a partnership project between Mayflower 400, Plymouth Culture, Plymouth City Council, The Box and Vital Sparks' = £2.5K

Jem Scaffolding provided £15K in-kind support for the scaffolding works.

There has been no funding received from Plymouth City Council to deliver the bridge art installation project.

Further information can be found:

www.buildingplymouth.co.uk/road-to-mayflower/the-road-to-mayflower

Social media Twitter - @buildplymouth Facebook – Building Plymouth

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