Supporting Planning Statement

Planning application for the construction of a replacement building for use as an Education Centre and associated landscaping at Trevor Basin, New Road, Trevor, Wrexham

LL20 7TP

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 This supporting information has been prepared by the Canal & River Trust (the Trust) to accompany a planning application for the construction of a replacement building on site for use as an Education Centre with associated landscaping at Trevor Basin, New Road, Trevor, Wrexham LL20 7TP.

1.2 The proposal is to replace an existing storage building on site and provide a sheltered structure to help facilitate education and learning activities. The aim is to provide improved facilities for education groups, which are established visitors to the Trevor Basin site, but currently do not have any indoor assembly space.

1.3 This statement addresses relevant planning matters including the reasons why planning permission should be granted. The statement is structured under the following headings as described below:

Introduction. Sets out the purpose of the statement, some background context and the full list of plans and documents.

Application Documents. Outlines the purpose of each technical document accompanying the planning application.

Site Description. Sets out a detailed description of land and physical features within the planning application site (the site).

The Proposed Development. Sets out a detailed description of the proposed works scheme that make up the scheme for which the Trust is seeking planning permission.

Relevant Planning History. Sets out the details of relevant planning history recently granted by Wrexham Country Borough Council (WCBC) in relation to various developments at Trevor Basin.

Planning Policy Context. Identifies the 'statutory development plan' for WCBC, establishes land designations within the application site and neighbouring land, sets out a comprehensive list of local planning policies relevant to the proposed development, relevant supplementary planning documents and relevant parts of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12).

Engagement. Provides a detailed explanation of the Trust's approach to pre-application engagement with a range of stakeholders.

Planning Analysis. Provides an analysis of compliance with the relevant planning policy and other material considerations of relevance to a decision on the planning application.

Conclusions. Provides a concise summary of the main points raised and justification for the proposed development.

1.4 In addition to this Planning Statement, the planning application includes the following documents, plans and drawings.

Documents

- Completed application form and signed certificates
- Design & Access Statement
- Heritage Impact Statement
- Ecological Assessment
- Habitat Regulations Assessment ‘Phase 1 Screening’
- Green Infrastructure and Net Biodiversity Benefit Plan
- Arboricultural Appraisal
- Tree Schedule

Plans

- Location Plan
- Existing Site Plan
- Existing Ground Floor Plan
- Proposed Site Plan
- Proposed Sections
- Proposed Elevations
- Proposed Roof Plan
- Tree Constraints Plan
- Proposed Landscape Plan

2.0 Application Documents

2.1 A description of the application documents is set out below.

Planning Statement: addresses the relevant planning matters and relevant planning policy context, including an assessment to demonstrate that planning permission should be granted.

Design & Access Statement: provides supporting information about the characteristics of the site and the methodology of the proposal.

Heritage Impact Statement: provides an assessment of the significance of and impact upon any identified heritage assets as a result of the proposed development.

Ecological Appraisal: provides the results of ecological surveys carried out and an assessment of the potential effects of the proposal along with appropriate mitigation measures.

Green Infrastructure and Net Gain Biodiversity Benefit Plan: defines the measures required to protect and enhance green infrastructure and biodiversity within the site to achieve a net biodiversity benefit as a result of the proposed works.

Habitat Regulations Assessment 'screening': provides an assessment to consider and conclude upon whether the proposed development has a likely significant effect on any European/Ramsar site either alone or in combination with any other project.

Tree Schedule: identifies the name of each tree species and establishes its dimensions, provides a description of the physical and structural condition of each tree and categories each tree in line with BS5837:2012 standards.

Arboricultural Appraisal: identifies the key arboricultural constraint and highlights where potential impacts upon trees can be avoided or minimised as far as possible, whilst identifying opportunities to enhance the tree stock in the long term.

3.0 Site Description

3.1 The site is located at Trevor Basin in Llangollen near Wrexham. It is located centrally within the wider Trevor Basin site, surrounded by the Llangollen Canal and its junction with Trevor Basin, the towpath, pedestrian thoroughfare and vehicular access route, a small car parking area, the toilet block and former Basin Managers House property (currently vacant).

3.2 The image below illustrates the extent of the site edged in red and remaining Trust landownership in blue.



3.3 The site currently includes a low-level corrugated metal structure constructed in the mid-20th century, which is used by the Trust for storage. Land around the existing structure is mainly a grass surface finish but has some made ground in parts and a hardstanding for vehicular parking. There are also some randomly spaced trees on site and two established tree groups that form a hedgerow to the rear boundary. The frontage elevation is mainly open facing the canal and basin but with some existing boundary fencing in situ to part.

3.4 The image on the following page illustrates part of the west elevation of the site looking from the Basin towards the car park and toilet block to rear, which is screened by tree coverage.



3.5 In a wider context the site is located within the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site and the designated Conservation Area.

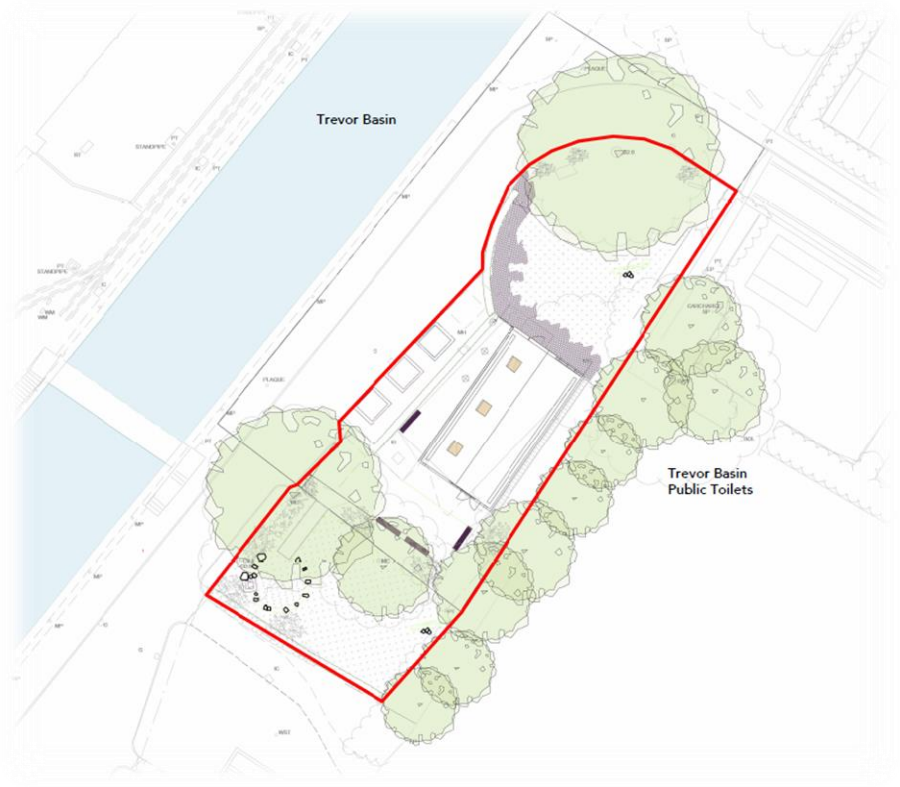
3.6 In 2009 the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, Trevor Basin and eleven miles of the Llangollen Canal between Chirk and Horseshoe Falls were inscribed as a World Heritage Site (WHS). The WHS recognises the worldwide importance of the landscape character and heritage value of the canal, basin, and aqueduct.

3.7 Trevor Basin and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct are a popular tourist destination. There are high visitor numbers to this location for tourism, leisure, and recreational purposes. Water based activities and use of the adjacent towpath and surrounding land are very popular.

4.0 The Proposed Development

4.1 The proposal is to replace the existing storage building on site and provide a new Education Centre as a sheltered space with some useable outdoor curtilage to facilitate education and learning activities. The aim is to provide improved facilities for established education groups, which are existing visitors to the Trevor Basin site, but currently do not have any assembly space.

4.2 The image below illustrates the proposed site layout.



4.3 The existing education and learning groups that currently meet at Trevor Basin consist of managed school children groups agreed between 5yrs – 18yrs, a variety of local community groups, volunteers and educational staff. On that basis, it is considered that an indoor assembly space building for up to 30 people would be satisfactory.

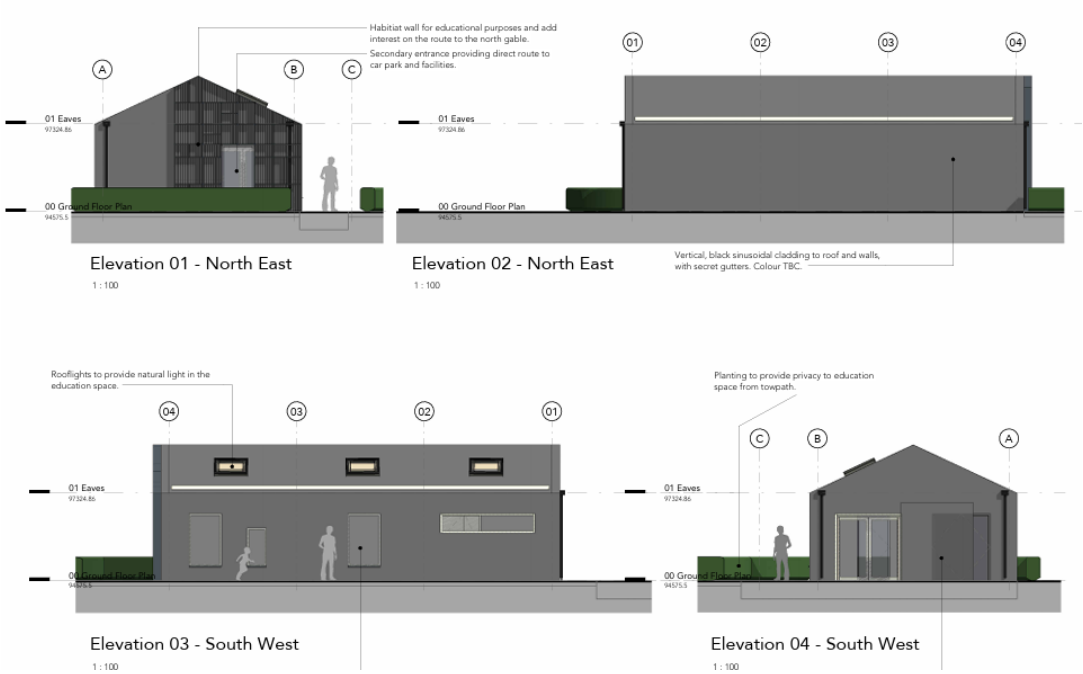
4.4 To accommodate this need, a new building is proposed on site, which will replace the existing storage building in situ. The new replacement building will be constructed on the same footprint as the existing storage building and will be of similar dimensions in terms of scale, bulk and mass.

4.5 The proposed education centre has been designed to accommodate a class/group of up to 30 people with seating and kitchen facilities. It also includes an area for coats and bags and has two separate storage areas associated with the education and learning activities. It does not include any new toilet or WC facilities. The existing toilet block in the adjacent car park will continue provide to provide satisfactory toilet/WC facilities for the education and learning group visitors.

4.6 The image below illustrates the internal layout of the proposed Education Centre building.



4.7 The image below illustrates the external elevations of the proposed Education Centre, which is finished with a black corrugated metal clad finish, which has a robust industrial appearance.

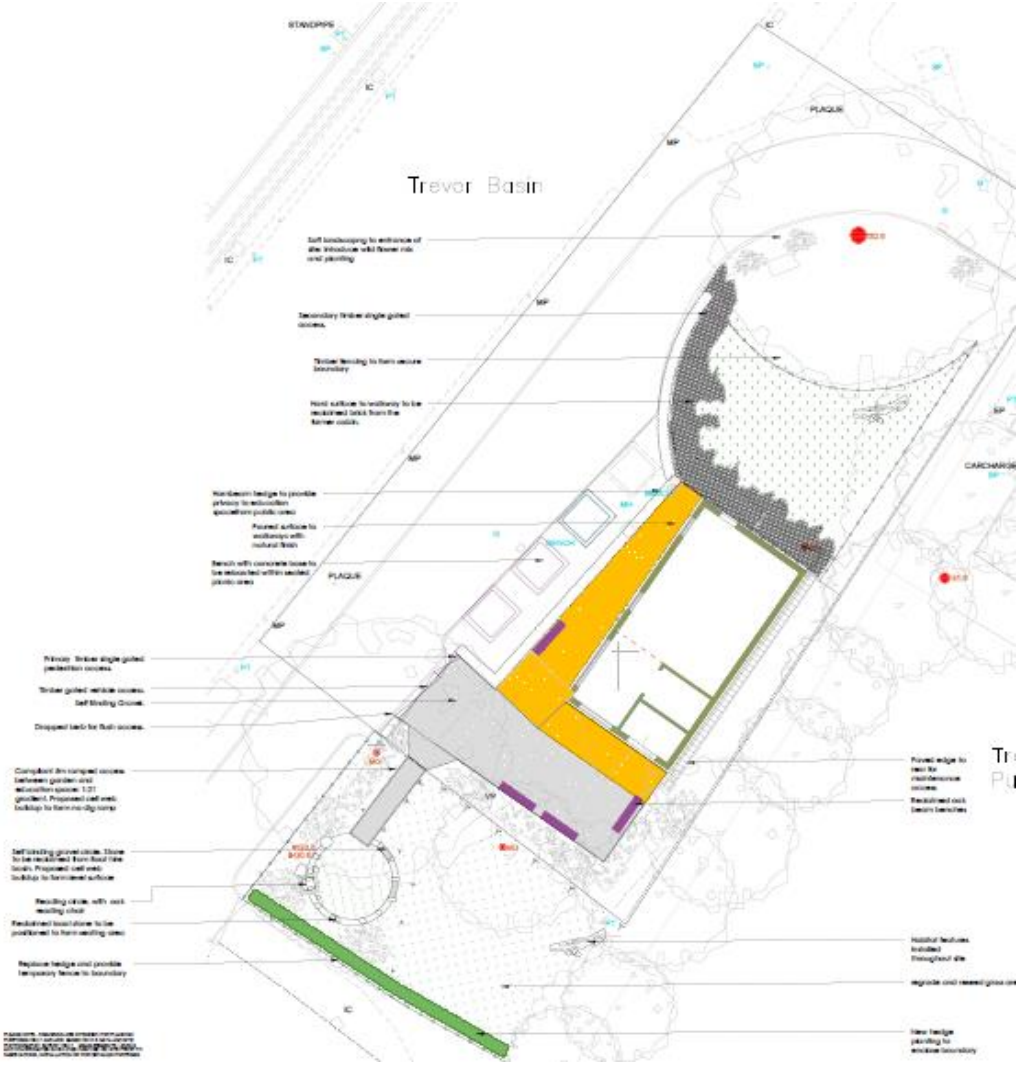


4.8 The proposal also includes a high-quality landscaping scheme within the curtilage of the site to create a useable outdoor assembly area associated with the new building. Some new timber fencing and a new hedgerow is proposed along the currently open-fronted boundary sections, including access gates, for security.

4.9 Hard surfacing will be created in parts for pedestrian access to the building and other useable surfaces within the curtilage of the site, such as the 'reading circle'. Some re-claimed brick paving that is currently stored in the existing building will be utilised as the finish surface material for pedestrian access from the north east. Other hard standing surfaces within the site include a resin-bound permeable surface, paving and a self-binding gravel, all suitable for pedestrians and for retention of the existing vehicular parking area.

4.10 The majority of the grass surface within the curtilage of the site will be retained, which will reseeded where necessary. New soft landscaping includes native hedgerow species, bulbs, woodland understorey plants, perennials, and shrubs that are attractive to insects and pollinators and increase the biodiversity of the site.

4.11 The image below the external landscape proposals that accompany the scheme.



5.0 Relevant Planning Policy Context

Local Planning Policy

5.1 The Statutory Development Plan is made up of 'saved' planning policies in the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

5.2 The site is shown on the UDP Policies Map to include the following designations:

- Trevor 'Settlement Limit' boundary
- Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site boundary
- Conservation Area
- Site of Nature Conservation and Geological Importance

5.3 Land adjacent to the south and east of the site is designated as:

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

5.4 Furthermore, the site is also located close to the River Dee Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and within the buffer zone of the River Dee Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which are located on land to the south.

5.5 Relevant planning policies from the UDP, which relate to the proposed development and development on sites within the above designations are set out below:

Part 1: The Strategy policies

- Policy PS1: Location of new development
- Policy PS2: No detrimental effect
- Policy PS3: Previous developed land
- Policy PS4: Settlement pattern and character

Part 2: Specific Policies

- GDP1: Development Objectives
- EC1: Green Barriers
- EC4: Trees and Development
- EC6: Biodiversity Conservation
- EC7: Conservation Areas
- CF7: Informal Recreation
- T8: Parking
- T9: Access

5.6 In addition, there are also a series of Local Planning Guidance Notes to be read in association with local planning policies from the WCBC Development Plan. The Local Planning Guidance Notes relevant to the proposed development in this location are:

- Local Planning Guidance Note 7: Landscape and Development
- Local Planning Guidance Note 17: Trees and Development
- Local Planning Guidance Note 32: Biodiversity and Development
- Local Planning Guidance Note 33: Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site

5.7 Also relevant within the local context is:

- The Trevor Basin Masterplan (2020), which was endorsed by WCBC in November 2020.

National Planning Policy

5.8 National planning policy is currently provided by the Welsh Government in Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12 (PPW). National policies relevant to the proposed development in this location are set out in the PPW in:

- Paragraph 3.10. Placemaking in Action
- Paragraph 3.38. Placemaking in Rural Areas
- Paragraph 5.5.3. Tourism
- Paragraph 6.1.7. Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
- Paragraph 6.1.22. World Heritage Sites
- Paragraph 6.3.7. Landscape
- Paragraphs 6.4.24 & 6.4.39. Biodiversity and Ecological Networks

5.9 Additionally, Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, was adopted in 2021, it is a national framework for planning change and development in Wales over the next two decades. The development plan sets a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system.

5.10 Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 policies relevant to the proposed development in this location are:

- Policy 1: Where will Wales Grow
- Policy 9: Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure
- Policy 12: Regional Connectivity
- Policy 20: National Growth Area – Wrexham and Deeside

6.0 Relevant Planning History

6.1 A search of the WCBC online planning history database and the Trust's own planning history database has identified the following relevant planning history.

6.2 In 2017, the Trust secured planning permission for the use of nearby land off Tower Hill as a car park to be used in association with the Trevor Basin Visitor Centre and the World Heritage Site.

- **P/2017/0888**: Change of use of land for car parking at Land north off Tower Hill, Trevor. Granted by WCBC on 14.12.2017.

6.3 In 2022, the Trust secured planning permission for a new small-scale development at Trevor Basin to facilitate relocating the existing boat hire business premises within the site.

- **P/2021/0560:** *Redevelopment of canal basin for use as boat hire business including erection of 2 buildings and storage enclosure* at Trevor Basin, New Road, Trevor. Granted by WCBC on 06/07/2022.

6.4 In 2024, the Trust secured a Certificate of Lawful Use of Proposed Development for a replacement of the existing footbridge within Trevor Basin.

- **P/2023/0812:** *Lawful development certificate for proposed construction of lift bridge* on land south of Scotch Hall Bridge, Trevor. Granted by WCBC on 28/02/2024.

6.5 In 2025, the Trust secured planning permission to construct a new improved pedestrian access route from Trevor Basin to the lower part of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

- **P/2024/1180:** *Improvements to public footpath below Pontcysyllte Aqueduct including realigned footpath, new steps and landings, new railings and handrails and landscaping* on land below Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

7.0 Pre-application Engagement

7.1 The Trust recognises the importance of engaging with stakeholders at the pre-application stage. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal World Heritage Site is a particularly important site within the Trust's portfolio, which attracts a significant amount of visitors, being of significant historic interest and accommodating a considerable amount of boating activity.

7.2 As a reflection of the commitment to pre-application engagement, the Trust has engaged with the following stakeholders ahead of making this planning application.

Cadw

7.3 Cadw is the Welsh Government's historic environment service and is a Statutory Consultee, commenting on relevant planning applications submitted to local planning authorities across Wales. Given the importance of heritage assets in this location, Cadw is an important organisation to engage with ahead of submitting a planning application.

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal Steering Group

7.4 In 2006 a Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal Steering Group was established by Wrexham Council (World Heritage Site Planning, Landscape and Conservation Delivery Group). The group was set up to involve key partners in the ongoing management of the site, which involves representatives from: WCBC, the Trust, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Denbighshire County Council, Cadw, Shropshire Country Council, English Heritage, Inland Waterways Association and UNESCO Wales.

7.5 Five 'Sub-Groups' have been established to progress specific areas of work. The Trust met with the Planning & Landscape Sub-group the 16th of January 2025 to present this proposed development and to gather comments and feedback.

Engagement with Cadw and the Pontycysyllte Aqueduct and Canal Steering Group

7.6 In accordance with best practice, and the recommendations of Planning Policy Wales Technical Advice Note 24 and Local Planning Guidance Note 33, the Trust sought informal pre-application advice on the proposals directly from Cadw and from the statutory authorities via the World Heritage Site Planning, Landscape and Conservation Delivery Group. Section 5 of the Cadw Conservation Principles states that, "*Owners and managers of historic assets will be encouraged to seek advice ... in preparing their proposals for change*" and, to this end, the Trust engaged with both Cadw and the World Heritage Site Planning, Landscape and Conservation Delivery Group throughout the development of the proposals to ensure that principal stakeholders were aware of the proposals as they developed and were given the opportunity to comment and periodically review, prior to a formal planning application being submitted.

7.7 An initial site meeting was held with Cadw on 24th July 2023 to examine the existing building and share the initial concept proposals which, at this stage, were for the larger building. The Inspector of Monuments, Ashley Batten, was supportive of the plan to replace the existing grey shed with something more appropriate and stated that the initial concept design, incorporating storage and interpretation of the tramway rail uncovered

during the archaeological investigations of the new boat hire base building was, “exactly what I was hoping for”.

7.8 A further site meeting was held on the 14th September 2023 when the preliminary designs were presented to the World Heritage Site Planning, Landscape and Conservation Delivery Group. Again, the group were supportive of the plan to replace the grey shed, and welcomed the opportunity to improve the public offer to the local community.

7.9 Following a revision to the scope of the project, and subsequent reduction in the size of the building the revised proposals were tabled at a meeting of the World Heritage Site Planning, Landscape and Conservation Delivery Group on the 29th of February 2024, including the new Inspector of Monuments for Cadw, Guy Salkeld. No adverse comments on the design were forthcoming.

7.10 Finally, the detailed proposals for the replacement building were presented to the World Heritage Site Planning, Landscape and Conservation Delivery Group on 10th April 2025. The attendees commented on the fact that the cladding had changed from corrugated steel to Abodo heat treated timber, (a change orchestrated by the architects for ease of maintenance, and already queried by the Trust) and would therefore require further justification. As a result, the cladding was changed back to corrugated steel, reflecting the materiality and appearance of the original, industrial building.

Llangollen Rural Community Council

7.11 The Llangollen Rural Community Council is made up from elected Council members who serve the interests of the local communities of Frontcysyllte, Garth and Trevor.

7.12 The Llangollen Rural Community Council is consulted by WCBC on planning applications for new development in this location. As a representative of the opinions of the local communities and the elected Councillors having a substantial amount local knowledge and understanding of the history of how development within Trevor Basin and the surrounding progressed in previous years, the Trust considers the Llangollen Rural Community Council to be an significantly important stakeholder.

7.13 The Trust met with the Llangollen Rural Community Council on the 4th of February to present and discuss this proposal. It is considered that feedback was positive with Councillors acknowledging that the proposal would be a beneficial introduction in the area. No further comments or concerns were raised.

8.0 Planning Analysis

8.1 Having regard to the proposed development, its location and the relevant planning policy context, it is considered that the key matters to address in this application are:

- Location of development
- Enhancing the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site
- Heritage
- Ecology
- Visual Amenity
- Trees & Landscaping
- Vehicular Access

Location of development

8.2 UDP Policies PS1 and PS3 are relevant, in which it seeks to direct new development within the identified settlement limits on previously developed land. The site is located within the settlement limit of Trevor, therefore is considered to comply with policies PS1 and PS3.

8.3 PPW is also relevant, in paragraph 3.41 it is stated that:

'*An essential component for a sustainable place is where development is to be located. Development plans will provide the basis for this by identifying areas and sites for new development.*'

8.4 PPW, paragraph 3.55 is also relevant, in which it is stated that:

'Previously developed (also referred to as brownfield) land should, wherever possible, be used in preference to greenfield sites where it is suitable for development. In settlements, such land should generally be considered suitable for appropriate development where its re-use will promote sustainability principles, and any constraints can be overcome.'

8.5 The location of the proposed development in a sustainable location, within an identified settlement limit and on previously developed land, which is considered acceptable in terms of the local and national planning policy context.

Enhancing the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site

8.6 The aim of the proposed development is to help improve the quality of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site as a cultural destination within the local community. To achieve this, a new sheltered space is proposed on site, which will provide improved facilities for education and learning groups that are already well-establish existing visitors to the Pontsycyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site but currently do not have any indoor assembly space on site.

8.7 It is considered that UDP Policy CF7 (Informal Recreation) is relevant to the proposed development in this location, in which it recognised that the canal and WHS are valuable local water attractions, which can be enhanced through 'small-scale developments' related to the recreational use of the canal. It is stated in UDP Policy CF7 that:

'The Llangollen Canal, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Trevor Wharf are valuable local water recreation attractions that could be enhanced by small-scale developments directly related to the recreational use of the canal'

8.8 Also, the Trevor Basin Masterplan (2020), sets out a preferred option for development of the Trevor Basin Area that will improve facilities and linkages to surrounding areas, safeguarding the future of the WHS as a multifunctional visitor attraction. It is stated that the preferred masterplan options are:

- *'A primary arrival space with car parking and a Welcome Centre or 'Hub' building*
- *Rewilding the former manufacturing site*
- *Creation of a Treetops Walk*
- *Enhanced public realm and repurposed buildings and spaces*
- *A woodland activity & education centre*
- *A glamping / camping site*
- *Dee Valley walks and a new river bridge*
- *Potential mixed-use development area and development plot'*

8.9 Additionally, national planning policies in PPW are also relevant to proposed development in this location. In PPW paragraph 3.38, it is stated that:

'The countryside must be conserved and, where possible, enhanced for the sake of its ecological, geological, physiographic, historical, archaeological, cultural and agricultural value and for its landscape and natural resources. However, the need to conserve these attributes should be balanced against the economic, social and recreational needs of local communities and visitors. To achieve this, rural places should foster adaptability and resilience to help maintain vibrancy of communities and availability of services.'

8.10 Also, PPW paragraph 5.5.3 is relevant, in which it is stated that:

'In rural areas, tourism-related development is an essential element in providing for a healthy and diverse economy. In addition to more traditional forms of rural tourism, planning authorities should plan positively for active, green and cultural tourism where they are appropriate. Development should be sympathetic in nature and scale to the local environment.'

8.11 It is considered that the proposed development is compliant with UDP Policy CF7, the Trevor Basin Masterplan 2020 and information provided in Guidance Note 33, in that it will contribute towards enhancing the County Borough's tourism, culture and leisure offer by introducing an improved small-scale facility for visitors to Trevor Basin and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, including an enhanced public realm and the repurposing of an existing previous developed space within Trevor Basin.

8.12 The proposed development also complies with the relevant parts of PPW referenced above by providing an enhanced facility for visitors to the World Heritage Site. Given its location and purpose, the proposed education space facility is considered to be a 'tourism-related' development, which will contribute towards the economic, social and recreational needs of local communities and visitors.

Heritage

8.13 It is considered that the proposed development will enhance the character of the area by removing the existing mid-20th Century storage structure in situ on site and replacing it with the new education centre, which has been carefully designed to fit protect and enhance the well-established character of the surrounding area.

8.14 The site is located within the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site and a designated conservation area, which are widely recognised for their special historic characteristics. UDP Policy EC7 is relevant to protecting land within conservation areas from harmful development, in which it is stated that:

'Within, and in close proximity to, conservation areas, the priority will be to preserve and/or enhance those buildings, structures, streets, trees, open spaces, archaeological remains, views, and other elements which contribute to the unique character of the area'

8.15 WCBC Local Guidance Note 33 (Pontcysyllte Aqueduct & Canal World Heritage Site) is also relevant in the consideration of planning applications within the World Heritage Site boundary. In paragraph 5.2, it is stated that:

'The following objectives are taken from page 79 of the Pontcysyllte World Heritage Site Management Plan (2007 – 2012):

- *To manage the World Heritage Site and Buffer Zone in a sustainable manner to conserve, enhance and present the Outstanding Universal Value of the site locally and internationally.*
- *To balance the needs of protection, conservation and access, the interests of the local community and the achievement of sustainable growth.*
- *To engage with and deliver benefits to the local communities around the site.*
- *To attract visitors to the area; and*
- *To generate income that adds value to the local economy or is reinvested in the running of the site.'*

8.16 Guidance Note 33, Table 1 (Typical Development Scenarios) sets out typical examples of possible appropriate forms of development and guidance criteria in relation to those developments in the WHS. Table 1 is set out below.

Table 1 – Typical Development Scenarios

Development Scenario	Development Type	Detailed Guidance
1. Any development within the WHS, or immediately adjacent to it.	● Typically small scale ● Householder (residential extensions and conservatories) ● Changes of use ● Minor tourist development (toilets, small parking areas, picnic areas).	● Minor tourist development for essential small scale facilities could be appropriate in the open countryside where the openness of the countryside is maintained. ● Design siting and materials important. ● Statement required to state how the development contributes to the WHS's character.

8.17 Additionally, there are national planning policies in PPW that are relevant to proposed development in this location. In PPW paragraph 6.1.6, it is stated that:

'The Welsh Government's specific objectives for the historic environment seek to:

- *protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Sites;*
- *conserve archaeological remains, both for their own sake and for their role in education, leisure and the economy;*
- *safeguard the character of historic buildings and manage change so that their special architectural and historic interest is preserved;*
- *preserve or enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas, whilst the same time helping them remain vibrant and prosperous;*
- *preserve the special interest of sites on the register of historic parks and gardens; and*
- *protect areas on the register of historic landscapes in Wales*

8.18 Also, PPW paragraph 6.1.9 is relevant to development in this location, in which it is stated that:

'Any decisions made through the planning system must fully consider the impact on the historic environment and on the significance and heritage values of individual historic assets and their contribution to the character of place.'

8.19 PPW paragraph 6.1.22 is also relevant, in which it stated that:

'*World Heritage Sites are international designations recognised for their Outstanding Universal Value, as inscribed by UNESCO. The planning system recognises the need to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Sites in Wales. The impacts of proposed developments on a World Heritage Site and its setting and, where it exists, the World Heritage Site buffer zone and its essential setting, is a material consideration in the determination of any planning application.'*

8.20 The Trust has prepared a Heritage Impact and Justification Statement to accompany the application, which has been prepared in accordance with Section 6.1 of *Planning Policy Wales* (Ed. 12, 2024) and paragraph 1.15 of *Technical Advice Note 24* (2017), as well as relevant Cadw guidance.

8.21 The Heritage Impact and Justification Statement sets out the historical context of the site including all designated historic assets and the site history, other relevant features (such as the existing building in situ) are established, the relevant planning policy context is identified alongside pre-application engagement with local stakeholders, and an assessment of the 'impact' is provided. In the concluding paragraphs of the Heritage Impact and Justification Statement, the following is established, which is considered suitably demonstrate that the proposed development is compliant with the relevant planning policy context.

'It is recognised that as the Trevor Basin site of high significance, as reflected in the various formal heritage designations. However, the relative impacts of the proposal are considered to be neutral to beneficial, with any perceived harm being of 'less than substantial harm' as defined in the NPPF. Such harm must, in accordance with Central Government advice within paragraph 208 of the NPPF, be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals. In the case of the proposals to replace the existing corrugated grey shed, the principal public benefit to take into consideration is the desirability of

removing a life expired asset of limited historic significance, which has a negative visual impact upon the aesthetic qualities of the World Heritage Site and the conservation area, and its replacement with a high quality, purpose built facility which makes reference to the original structure through proportion and materiality and will support the development of local school children.'

'Overall, it is considered that the new education centre on the site of the existing grey shed will bring substantial benefits to the site, and the surrounding area, and that the potential impacts of the development on the high significance of the site will be low to neutral and outweighed by the public benefits. As such, the proposals would appear to accord with both national and local planning policy.'

Ecology

8.22 The proposed development is taking place on previously developed land, which is currently occupied with an existing structure used for storage. Land around the existing building is a mixture of hardstanding and a grass surface finish. There is an established hedgerow/tree group to the rear of the site and other individual trees in situ, which are largely unaffected by the proposals. However, the site is located within a designated Site of Nature Conservation and Geological Importance.

8.23 Therefore, UDP Policy EC6 (Biodiversity Conservation) is relevant to the proposed development in this location, in which it is stated that:

'Development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where such development is permitted, damage should be kept to a minimum, and compensatory measures should be provided. Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves, will be supported.'

8.24 Policy in PPW is also relevant to new development in this location, in paragraph 6.4.11 it is stated that:

'Planning authorities must follow a step- wise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for. Enhancement must be secured by delivering a biodiversity benefit primarily on site or immediately adjacent to the site, over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact.'

8.25 WCBC Local Guidance Note 32 (Biodiversity and Development) is also a relevant material consideration in the determination of planning applications when assessing proposed external environments and landscaping as part of a scheme.

8.26 In Local Guidance Note 32, it is stated that:

'The planning system has a central role to play through resisting development proposals that may irreversibly damage important habitats or species, by enhancing biodiversity through incorporating mitigation and enhancements and by securing long-term favourable management of biodiversity rich sites. Whilst protecting priority species is

important, if biodiversity is to be genuinely enhanced, the conservation of all wildlife and habitats needs to be at the centre of development and planning decision making.

Whilst protecting priority species is important, if biodiversity is to be genuinely enhanced, the conservation of all wildlife and habitats needs to be at the centre of development and planning decision making.

Establishing a good evidence base is essential when determining planning applications. This is achieved through the submission of an ecological assessment. An ecological assessment will be required to accompany planning applications that:

Affect:

- *Woodland, hedgerow and/or trees;*
- *Areas of open green space (including scrub land);*
- *Water courses and bodies (including ponds, ditches, rivers);*
- *Any site or building with a known protected species, or with a likelihood of presence;*
- *Any site of nature conservation importance such as County Wildlife Sites;*
- *Industrial archaeology - lime kilns, chimneys etc.'*

8.27 To address the baseline ecological conditions on site, assess any impact as a result of the proposed and consider biodiversity benefits, an Ecological Assessment and a Green Infrastructure and Net Biodiversity Benefit Plan have been prepared and are submitted in full as part of this planning application.

8.28 In summary, it is concluded in the Ecological Assessment, that:

'Overall, the proposed development will result in no net loss of habitats and any potential risks of harm to designated sites, habitats, and protected/notable species has either been avoided or mitigated. The scheme will result in an overall long term biodiversity benefit, as well as the provision of an education centre of benefit to the local community and visitors to the site.'

8.29 In the Green Infrastructure and Net Biodiversity Benefit Plan it describes each component of green infrastructure within and surrounding the site and how the step-wise approach has been applied in the design of the project and approach to implementation and biodiversity net benefit. It also describes how protection, mitigation and restoration measures will be carried out within the site and surrounding areas within Trust ownership, Enhancement measures will be limited to Trust-owned land, to ensure success of implementation and longevity of management.

8.30 In summary, it is concluded in the Green Infrastructure and Net Biodiversity Benefit Plan that:

'This report defines the measures required to protect and enhance GI and biodiversity within the site and to achieve a net biodiversity benefit as a result of the proposed works. The measures proposed are proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed works and will ensure the ecological continuity of the habitats and species within the site and surrounding area.'

8.31 In light of the conclusions set out in the Ecological Assessment and the Green Infrastructure and Net Biodiversity Benefit Plan, including the implementation of any established recommendations, it is considered that the proposed development is compliant with the objectives of all relevant local and national planning policies referenced above.

8.32 The site is also located close to the River Dee 'Site of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI) and is within the buffer zone of the River Dee 'Special Area of Conservation' (SAC), which are located on land to the south along the river corridor.

8.33 Therefore, UDP Policy E6 (Biodiversity Conservation) is similarly relevant to new development in this location.

8.34 A Stage 1 Habitat Regulations Assessment 'screening' process has been carried out, to establish whether the project is likely to have a significant effect on any European/Ramsar site either alone or in combination with any other project. The Stage 1 Habitat Regulations Assessment is submitted in full with this application. In the summary it is concluded that:

'There are no impact pathways identified as having a risk of a significant adverse effect on the conservation objectives for the FOI, therefore Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment is not required.'

8.35 In light of this conclusion and the implementation of any recommendations set out in the assessment report, it is considered that the proposed development is compliant with the objectives of the relevant local planning policy context referenced above.

Visual Amenity

8.36 The proposed development is considered to be a significant improvement in visual terms when compared to the existing appearance of the site. The existing mid-20th Century structure, which is in poor visual condition, will be replaced with the new carefully designed education centre structure.

8.37 In terms of visual amenity, it is considered that UDP Policy GDP1 (Development Objectives) is relevant to new development proposals, in which it is stated that, new development should.....

Ensure that built development in its scale, design and layout, and in its use of materials and landscaping, accords with the character of the site and makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality'

8.38 National planning policy in PPW is also relevant to this proposal, in paragraph 3.10 it is stated that:

'In areas recognised for their particular landscape, townscape, cultural or historic character and value it can be appropriate to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. It is of particular importance that in those areas, the impact of development on the existing character, the scale and siting of new development, and the use of appropriate building materials (including where possible sustainably produced materials from local sources) is considered.'

8.39 It is proposed that the new education centre will be constructed over the same footprint as the existing storage building in situ and will be of similar dimensions to remain consistent and have no greater impact in terms of the scale, bulk and mass of the current built form visible on site.

8.40 In terms of external facing materials, a corrugated metal finish in black is proposed to maintain a rough texture and industrial heritage appearance but introducing a significant upgrade in the quality of the finished materials.

8.41 Hard and soft landscaping proposals are also included as part of the scheme to compliment the external appearance of the site in visual terms.

8.42 All of which is considered to have a substantial improvement upon the overall appearance of the site in context with the wider surroundings within this sensitive location, which complies with the objectives of the relevant local and national planning policies referenced above.

Trees & Landscaping

8.43 The site has a mainly open frontage but does include an established hedgerow/tree groups along the rear boundary, some timber fencing in situ to other parts of the boundary with adjacent land. There are six individual trees located on the site and one other tree located on adjacent land, which overhangs into the site. Surfacing around the existing structure consists of a grass surface finish with some hardstanding in situ for pedestrian and vehicular access.

8.44 The proposed development involves new landscaping proposals within the curtilage of the site to create a high quality and usable curtilage associated with the Education Centre building.

8.45 Therefore, UDP Policy EC4 (Trees) is relevant to any development proposals in this location, in which it is stated that:

'Development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees and orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscapes and water features, and include new planting in order to enhance the character of the landscape and townscape. Development which results in the loss or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted.'

8.46 WCBC Local Guidance Note 7 (Landscape and Development) is also a relevant material consideration in the determination of planning applications when assessing proposed external environments and landscaping as part of a scheme.

8.47 In Local Guidance Note 7, it is stated that:

'*Careful and early consideration of design issues, and the provision of adequate landscape information, as described in this leaflet, can help to avoid costly delays at a later stage. In assessing the landscape implications of planning applications the site context, proposed layout, future uses and maintenance all need to be taken into account.*

There is a diverse landscape character and settlement pattern within the County Borough, with rural landscapes of particularly high quality or special historic landscape interest designated as Special Landscape Areas in Wrexham's Unitary Development

Plan. In these areas it is especially important for any development to fit in with its surroundings. Planning officers can advise applicants on appropriate and acceptable solutions for any rural or urban situation before an application is submitted.'

8.48 Furthermore, WCBC Local Guidance Note 17 (Trees and Development) is also a relevant material consideration in the determination of planning applications, which impact on trees, in which it is stated that:

'A) Development which would result in damage and/or inappropriate felling of significant trees (i.e. BS 5837 Category A & B trees) and hedgerows will not normally be permitted. Planning conditions and Tree Preservation Orders will be used to safeguard trees in appropriate cases.

B) Development proposed near to existing trees, woodlands or hedgerows must be in accordance with the design and protection principles set out in this Local Planning Guidance Note and British Standard 5837: 2012 "Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction" (or any subsequent revisions).'

8.49 National planning policy in PPW is also relevant to this proposal, in paragraph 6.4.39 it is stated that:

'Protection should be given to trees and hedgerows where they have ecological value and contribute to the character or amenity of a particular locality.'

8.50 In terms of hard landscaping treatment, new pedestrian surfacing will be created in parts for access around the building and other useable surfaces within the curtilage of the site. Reclaimed brick paving that is currently stored in the existing building will be utilised as the finish material for proposed pedestrian surfacing to the north east. Other hard standing surfaces within the site include a resin-bound permeable surface suitable for pedestrians along the main frontage, paved edge along the rear boundary for maintenance access and a self-binding gravel surface for other outdoor assembly space.

8.51 Other hard landscaping features include proposed new timber fencing with access gates for security at currently open sections of the site boundary. Also, a new 1:21 gradient access ramp is proposed to achieve 'access for all' across a small split level ground surface within the site.

8.52 In terms of soft landscaping treatment, the majority of the site will remain as a grass finish as existing, which will be reseeded where necessary to improve the quality. A new hedgerow will be introduced along the main, currently open, frontage of the site New soft landscaping includes native hedgerow species, bulbs, woodland understorey plants, perennials, and shrubs that are attractive to insects and pollinators and increase the biodiversity of the site.

8.53 From the six individual trees and two tree groups (forming a hedgerow) located on site and the single individual tree located on land adjacent to the site, there is mixture of B1 and C1 category trees identified in the Tree Schedule.

8.54 It is established in the Arboricultural Appraisal that only one single tree will need to be removed as part of the proposed development, which is located up against the north east elevation of the existing storage building on site. It is shown referenced as tree T4 (Ash Tree) on the Tree Constraints Plan. The Tree Schedule includes tree T4 within the C1

category, which is for lower quality trees. Information in the WCBC Local Guidance Note 17 (Trees and Development) advises that any development that would have a harmful impact on either category A or B trees should 'not normally be permitted' but does not similarly impose such constraints upon development affecting trees within the C1 category.

8.55 The Arboricutural Appraisal also identifies that the proposed development has the scope to impact upon the tree 'Root Protection Areas' (RPA) of trees 2T & 3T. The use of a Cellular Confinement System and a 'no-dig' construction methodology is proposed to mitigate any impact that could occur, which will be adopted as a construction standard. Furthermore, the Arboricultural Appraisal also identifies that the proposed development could encroach within parts of the RPA of trees 2T, 3T & 7T and tree groups 5G & 6G. It is recommended that a 'hand-dig' construction methodology will be sufficient to mitigate any potential impact, which will similarly be adopted as a construction standard as part of delivering the scheme.

8.56 It is considered that the overall approach to landscaping, including the retention and protection of the existing features and the proposed new hard and soft landscaping demonstrates a comprehensive method to provide suitable external space for use against the backdrop of the Education Centre building. This approach reflets the objectives of local and national planning policies through a balance of preservation, enhancement and protection of the natural environment.

Vehicular Access

8.57 The proposal is to provide a new indoor space by way of an improvement to the current facilities available for the education and learning group visitors at Trevor Basin, which are well-established existing visitors to the area but unfortunately do not have any indoor assembly space on site.

8.58 As this proposal aims to improve the facilities available for established visitor groups, it will not generate any additional vehicular traffic movements to and from Trevor Basin and the surrounding public highway network over and above the current baseline vehicular activity.

8.59 UDP policies T8 (Parking) and T9 (Access) are relevant to the safe and efficient operation of the transport network. However, the proposed development is not going to generate any additional vehicle movement to and from the local area or result in any additional parking requirements. Therefore, it will not result in any additional pressure on the local highway network or local car parking facilities, which does not lead to any harmful impact on highway safety.

8.60 It is considered that the proposed development is compliant with the objectives of relevant local planning policies.

9.0 Conclusions

9.1 The location of the proposed development in a sustainable location, within an identified settlement limit and on previously developed land, which complies with UDP policies PS1 and PS3, also national planning policy in PPW, paragraph 3.41.

9.2 It is considered that the proposed development is compliant with UDP Policy CF7 (Informal Recreation) and the Trevor Basin Masterplan 2020 in that it will contribute towards enhancing the County Borough's tourism, culture and leisure offer by introducing an improved small-scale facility for visitors to Trevor Basin and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site, including an enhanced public realm and the repurposing of an existing previous developed space within Trevor Basin. The proposed development also complies with national planning policy in PPW, paragraphs 3.38 and 5.5.3 by providing an enhanced facility for visitors to the World Heritage Site.

9.3 Whilst it is recognised that the wider context in which the grey shed is situated, being designated both a World Heritage Site and a Conservation Area, is of extremely high heritage value, the grey shed itself and the immediate development site, is considered to have relatively low significance. In terms of the values that could be attributable to it in accordance with Cadw Conservation principles, it is considered to have low evidential value, low historic value, and negligible aesthetic or communal value. Due to its outward appearance, and state of decay, it is currently considered to make a negative contribution to the aesthetic quality of the Trevor Basin area and is considered unable to be repurposed into a sustainable use. The replacement of the building with a new structure, of improved appearance but similar proportion, and of similar materials that reference the original building is seen as a positive intervention that will improve the overall environment of Trevor Basin and contribute positively to the local community as well as the wider tourist attraction. Due to the mass, scale and appearance of the proposed building, the impacts upon the setting of the scheduled monument, and the listed structures nearby, will be negligible to positive.

9.4 In light of the conclusions set out in the Ecological Assessment and the Green Infrastructure and Net Biodiversity Benefit Plan, including the implementation of any established recommendations, it is considered that the proposed development is compliant with the objectives of UDP Policy EC6 (Biodiversity Conservation), Local Guidance Note 32 and national planning policy in PPW, paragraph 6.4.11.

9.5 Furthermore, in light of the conclusions and implementation of any recommendations set out in the Stage 1 Habitat Regulations Assessment 'screening' report, it is considered that the proposed development is compliant with UDP Policy EC6 regarding the protection of sites of international importance, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

9.6 The new education centre will be constructed over the same footprint as the existing storage building in situ and will be of similar dimensions to remain consistent and have no greater impact in terms of the scale, bulk and mass of the current built form visible on site. In terms of external facing materials, a corrugated metal finish in black is proposed to maintain a rough texture and industrial heritage appearance but introducing a significant upgrade in the quality of the finished materials. Hard and soft landscaping

proposals are also included as part of the scheme to compliment the external appearance of the site in visual terms. All of which is considered to have a substantial improvement upon the overall appearance of the site in context with the wider surroundings within this sensitive location, which complies with the objectives of UDP Policy GDP1 (Development Objectives) and national planning policy PPW, paragraph 3.10.

9.7 It is considered that the overall approach to landscaping, including the retention and protection of the existing trees/ features and the proposed new hard and soft landscaping demonstrates a comprehensive method to provide suitable external space for use against the backdrop of the Education Centre building. This approach reflets the objectives of UDP Policy EC4 (Trees), Local Guidance Notes 7 and 17, and national planning policy PPW, paragraph 6.4.39 through a balance of preservation, enhancement and protection of the natural environment.

9.8 The proposed development is not going to generate any additional vehicle movement to and from the local area or result in any additional parking requirements. Therefore, it will not result in any additional pressure on the local highway network or local car parking facilities, which does not lead to any harmful impact on highway safety. It is considered that the proposed development is compliant with the objectives of UDP policies T8 (Parking) and T9 (Access).

9.9 Having regard to the above analysis, the Trust respectfully requests that the WCBC grants planning permission for the proposed development.