

Signage Application: Coedlan Goffa Hafod y Bwch Commemorative Woodland

Applicant: Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol National Trust



Site Location: Hafod y Bwch Commemorative Woodland, Hafod Road, Ruabon, Wrexham, LL14 6HF

PLANNING STATEMENT

JULY 2023

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Approver / Reviewer: John Pearson – National Trust

1. Introduction

a. The Proposed Development

This planning statement provides the Local Planning Authority (LPA) with background information and specific detail of the proposed interpretation signage brought forward for the Hafod y Bwch Commemorative Woodland at Erddig. The Hafod y Bwch Commemorative Woodland is one of three Welsh Government funded national schemes. The 9.5ha woodland site is in a peri-urban location, being situated on the eastern edge of Johnstown and to the south-west of Wrexham. The map in Figure 1 indicates the red line boundary of the site within its wider spatial context.



Figure 1 – Map indicating the red line site boundary within its wider spatial context.

This application for advertising planning consent is submitted by the National Trust on land within the ownership of both the National Trust and Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC). This application seeks to bring forward interpretation signage for people who live and work in the local area and for visitors (including families of victims to COVID-19) to the woodland. The proposed interpretation signage will undertake an increasingly important role as the woodland establishes and consequently, 'line of sight' is lost for people moving through the site.

b. National Trust and the Erddig Estate

National Trust is a leading conservation charity with nearly 6 million members. Established over 120 years ago, our primary statutory purpose is to promote the preservation of special places for the benefit of the nation. To achieve this aim, we manage over a quarter of a million hectares of land, more than 700 miles of unspoilt coastline and estuary, several hundred historic houses, gardens and parks, and 6 World Heritage Sites. More than 100 million visits are made every year to the properties in our care.

The site of the 9.5ha Commemorative woodland is on the southern boundary of the National Trust's 486ha Erddig estate. The Erddig estate consists of beautiful meadows, lakes, ponds, rivers, veteran trees and woodland, and home to a range of habitats. The site borders the Bonc yr Hafod Country Park (owned by WCBC) and visitors to the woodland will share its car park. The woodland is also adjacent to a proposed residential development on the disused Johnstown brickworks site. It is expected that there will be visits to the new woodland from the families of COVID victims, users of the Country Park and Erddig estate, and from both existing and new local communities. Interpretation signage will be important to all these user groups. The map in Figure 2 shows the relationship of the site to its immediate surrounding landscape and the land use. The dotted redline boundary in Figure 2 is land owned by the Trust but is not subject to this application.

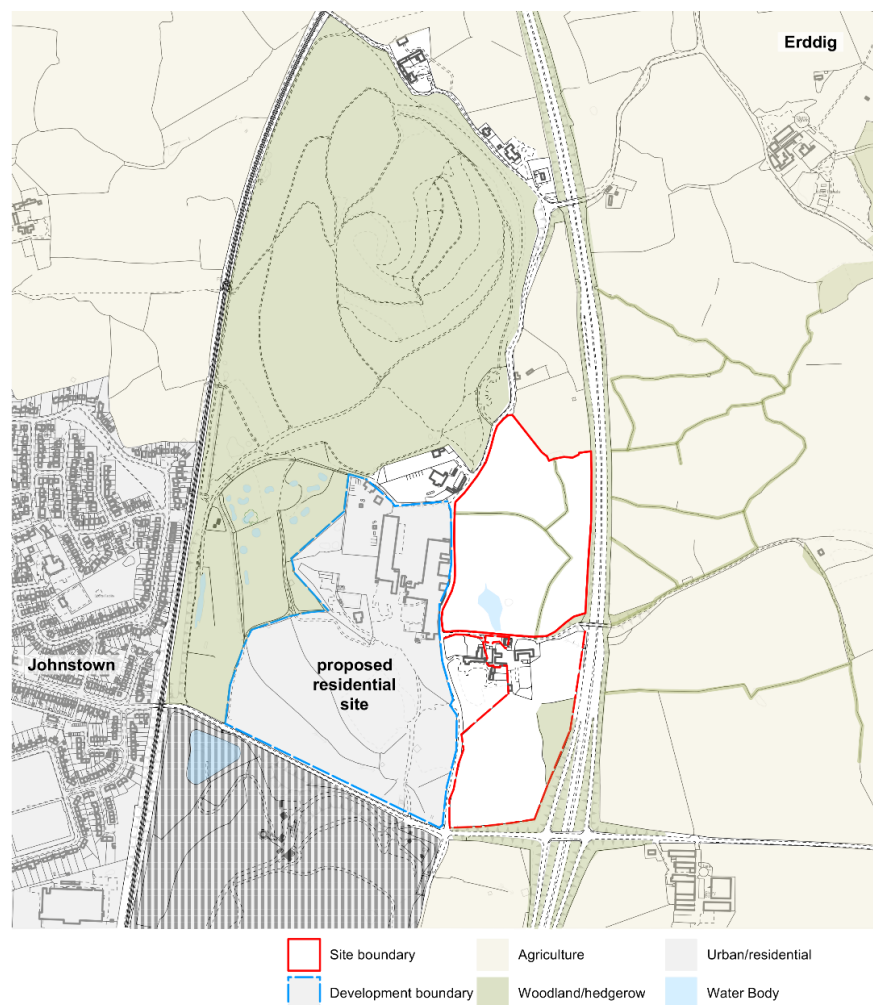


Figure 2 – map showing the site relative to its surrounding landscape and land use.

2. Design Principles and Concepts

- a. **Appearance, layout, scale, and characters** – adopting simple designs, lack of illumination, use of natural materials with muted subdued tones and simple graphics is considered appropriate for the woodland setting. The signage utilises simple bilingual text and the Trust's identifying logo (in some locations within the woodland).
- b. **Environmental sustainability** – all timber procured will be from sustainable sources which have FSE certification and/or the other standards listed in Section 4 (below).
- c. **Movement and wayfinding** – the signage location has been identified on important access and movement nodes and along pathways.
- d. **Community safety Design and Access Statements** for planning applications are required to address community safety issues. It is considered that there are none in this application.

3. Design Objectives

The Trust's objectives in bringing forward the scheme are four-fold:

- a. to bring forward Outdoor Welcome Signage at the woodland to inform visitors and enhance visitor experience.
- b. to bring forward a scheme that has minimal visual and landscape impact.
- c. to bring forward signage and interpretation without compromising highways safety.
- d. to bring forward a scheme that has accessibility central to design decisions.

4. Timber sourcing

The National Trust only accepts timber that is certified to one or more of the following standards. Chain of custody certificates will be requested from suppliers, verified, retained, and provided as evidence on request:

- A. Grown in Britain (GiB) includes Northern Ireland
- B. Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC)
- C. Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)
- D. Recycled with third party verification, such as FSC Recycled (all the forest-based materials in products or packaging bearing this label have been verified as being 100% recycled (either post-consumer or pre-consumer reclaimed materials).

5. Proposed Signage

There are only two types of sign (larger than 0.3 square metres in surface area) that the National Trust is seeking advertising planning consent – the Information and Map sign (Figure 5) and the Post Sign where the post is also used to display text (Figures 9,10 &11). However, the other 8 interpretation signs for the scheme have been shared with the LPA for information, so that the overall context of and relationship between the interpretative signage can be understood. All dimensions shown in the following drawings are in millimetres. None of the drawings within this document are to scale. The location of all signs within the site can be seen on drawings CCW_P13_Proposed Signage Locations and CCW_P14_Proposed Signage details.

- a. Modular message post sign (directional) – does not require planning permission

This post sign displays the core orientation information that visitors need to reassure them that they are heading in the correct direction after entering the car park. This post sign is within WCBC's car park and it indicates the location of the commemorative woodland. The sign is non-branded so that visitors do not think that the car park area is owned by the National Trust. This is the only sign that is not on National Trust land and it is not subject to planning consent – approval of this post sign has been given by WCBC's County Park Ranger (Alasdair Thomson).

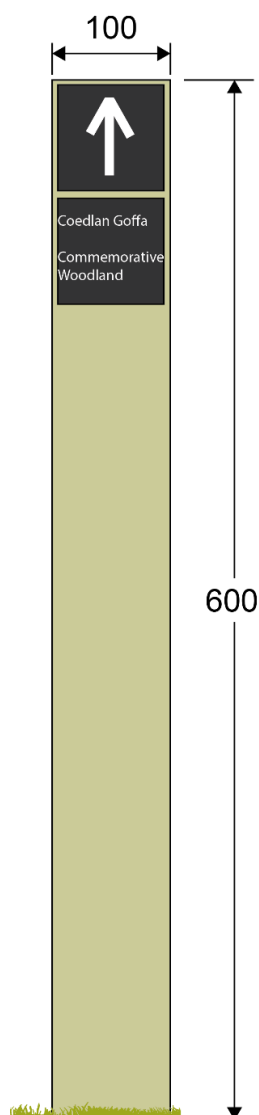


Figure 3 – Modular message post sign for the commemorative woodland (in Country Park car park area).

- b. Omega sign – does not require planning permission

The Omega sign is the Trust's oldest and arguably best-loved. The sign is instantly recognisable and can evoke feelings of reassurance and loyalty. In this context, it is used to indicate the main access point to the woodland. This branded bi-lingual sign (National Trust will also be displayed in Welsh) displays the commemorative woodland name to visitors for the first time.

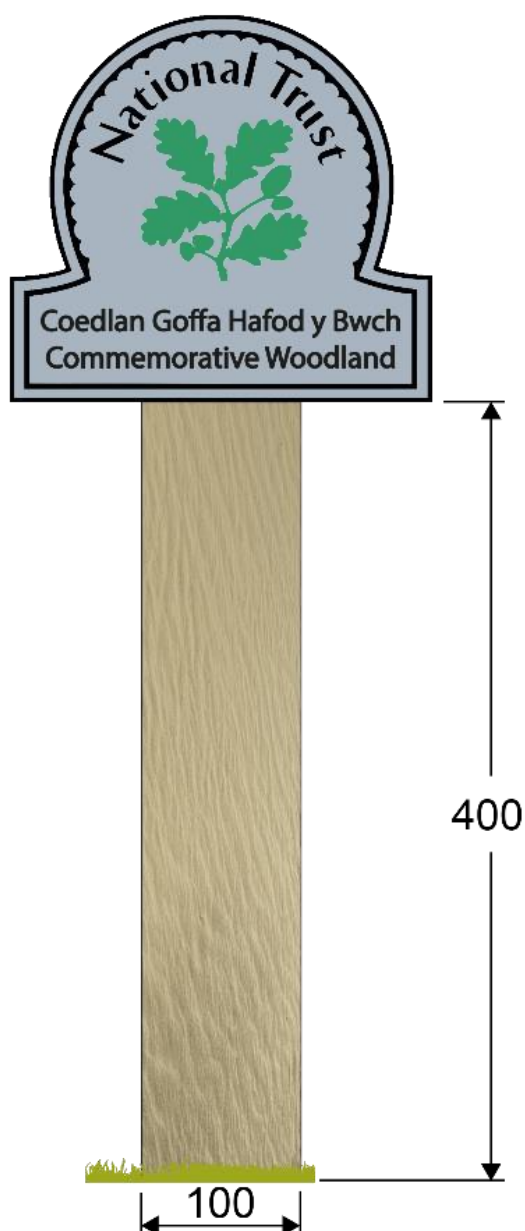


Figure 4 – Omega sign at woodland’s main entrance (adjacent to highways crossing)

- c. Site map and Information sign (large landscape style) - requires planning permission
- This branded bi-lingual sign provides visitors with an appreciation of the overall site layout, key elements / points of interest of the scheme, hazards, restrictions, and information to help guide their desired orientation through the woodland. The sign is designed to give people information that they need to enjoy their visit and walk in the woodland. The main element of the sign is the woodland map to help visitors see where they are and what they can do. A scaled version of this sign is contained within drawing 2023CWP-IMS01 that includes its installation details.

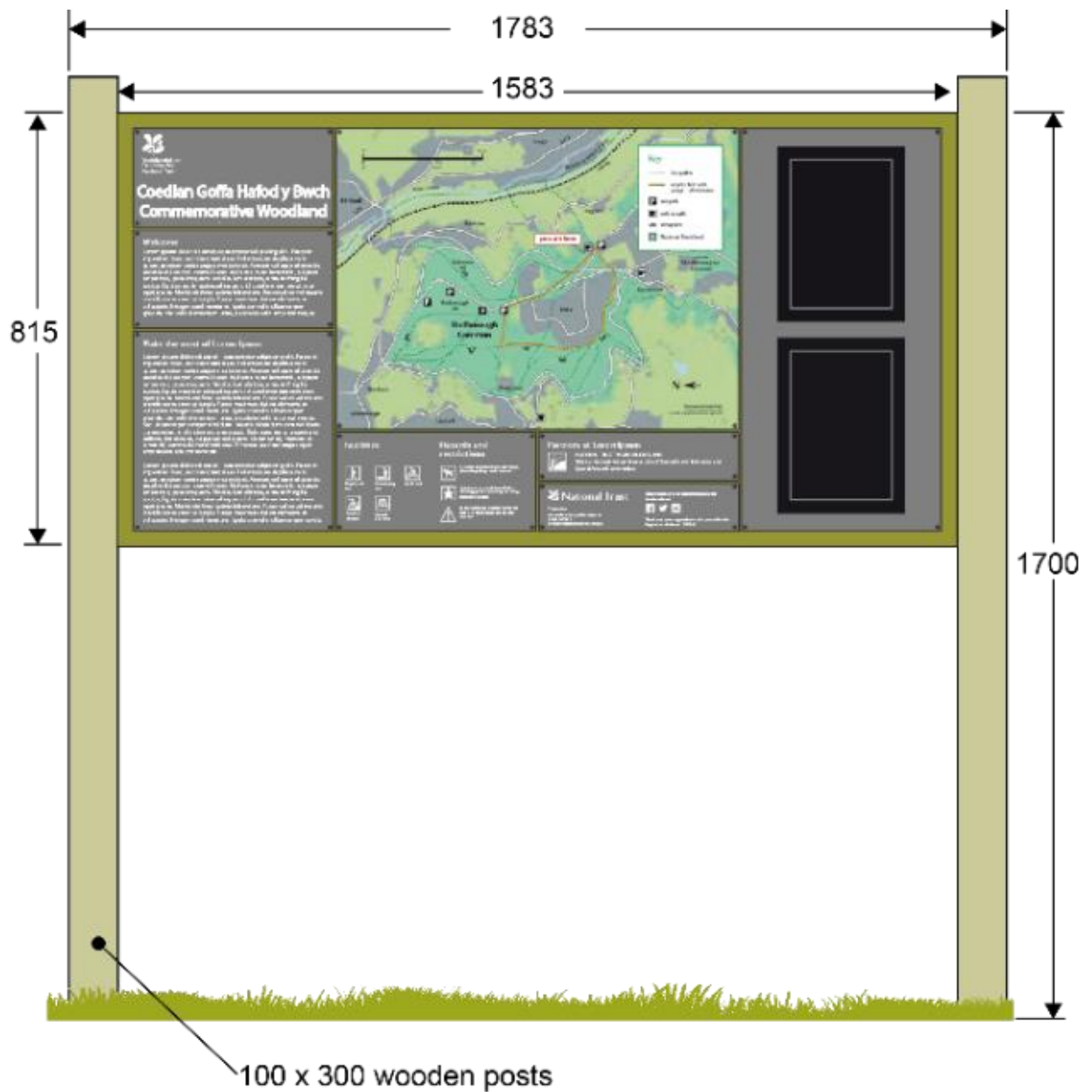


Figure 5 – site map and information sign for the whole woodland scheme.

- d. Cycle and multi-use trail marker – does not require planning permission

This post sign directs cyclists and pedestrians (who do not want to take the woodland walk) to the active trail that runs parallel to the Hafod road.

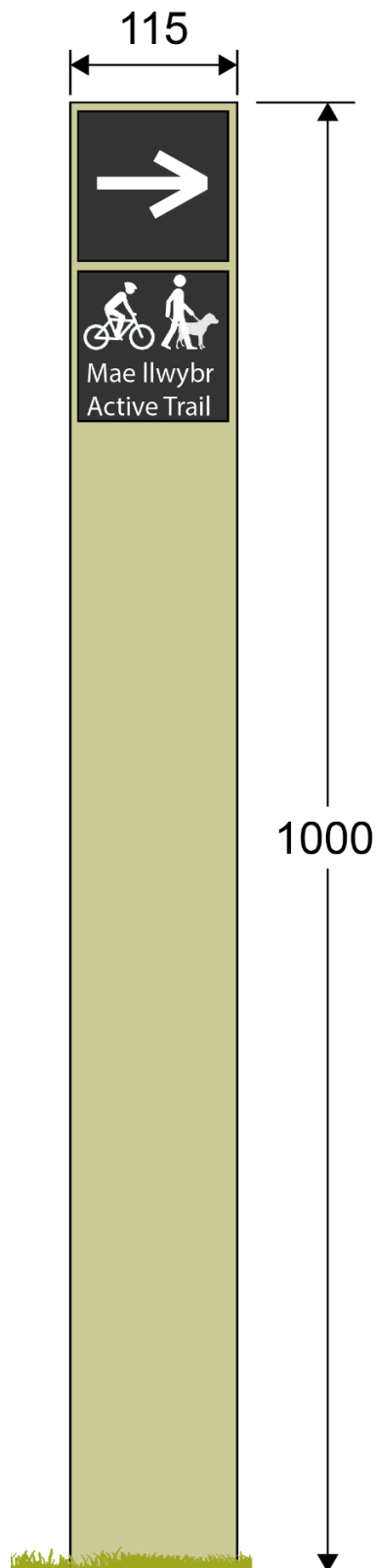


Figure 6 – Cycle and multi-use trail marker adjacent to the entrance for the active trail

- e. Bespoke Slate sign – does not require planning permission

This slate sign is being provided by Welsh Government and the same design is being used for the other two national commemorative woodland projects. It will be mounted in a bespoke low-level frame in the memorial / reflective area of the woodland. The sign is approximately A3 (297mm x 420 mm) in size.

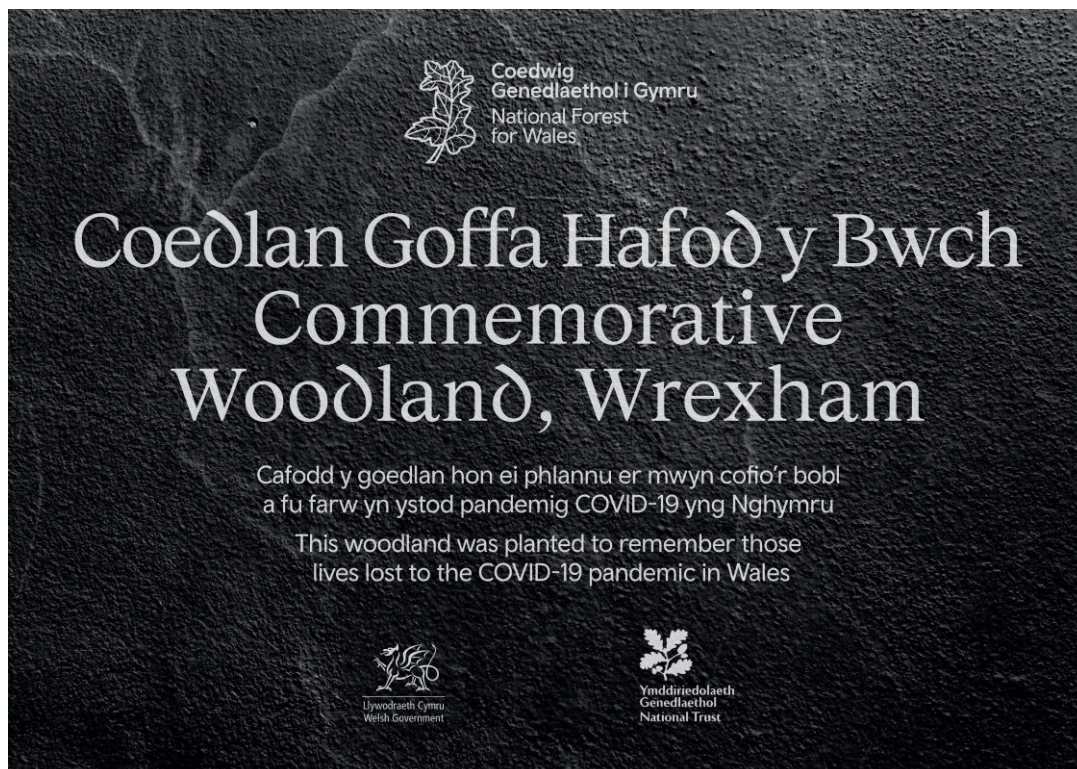


Figure 7 – commemorative woodland sign made from Welsh slate

- f. Modular message post sign (directional) – does not require planning permission

This unbranded sign will direct people back to the entrance and car park from the main junction within the circular path network.

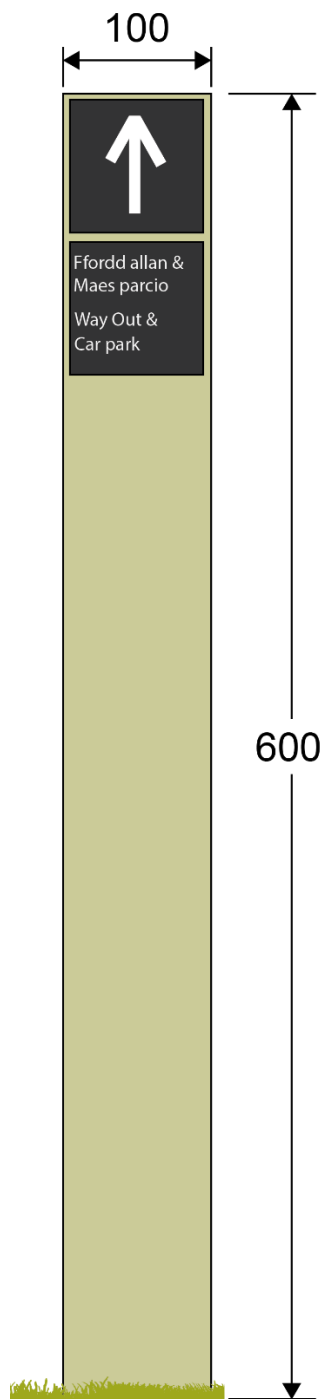


Figure 8 – Modular message post sign at junction of the smaller circular woodland path network

g. Special Site Features post signs

i. Ridge and Furrow Meadow – requires planning permission

This bi-lingual post sign indicates the location of the Ridge and Furrow meadow which is an important archaeological feature of the site. The sign will include a simple description of the meadow. The QR code will enable visitors to access online information about Ridge and Furrow meadows. A scaled version of this post sign is included within drawing 2023CWP-PS01.



Figure 9 – post sign for the Ridge & Furrow meadow

ii. Ephemeral Pool – requires planning permission

Post sign that indicates the location of and provides information about the ephemeral pool. The sign includes a QR code to access online information about the pool and its main functions.



Figure 10 – post sign for the Ephemeral pool

iii. Pontfadog oak tree – requires planning permission

This post sign provides information about the woodland's Pontfadog oak tree (thought to be one of the largest and oldest oak trees in the world). The sign includes a QR code to access online information about this historic oak tree.



Figure 11 – post sign for the Pontfadog oak tree

- h. Cycle and multi-use trail marker (southern boundary of site)
 - i. Post sign for Active Trail – does not require planning permission

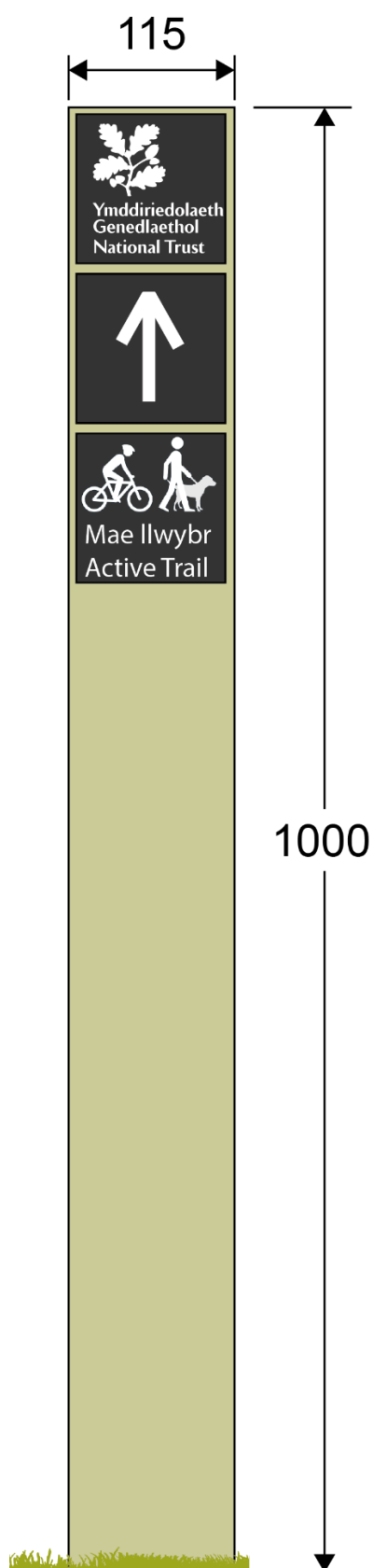


Figure 12 – Cycle and multi-use trail marker on southern entrance / exit for the active trail

- ii. Modular message post sign for woodland path (x2) – does not require planning permission

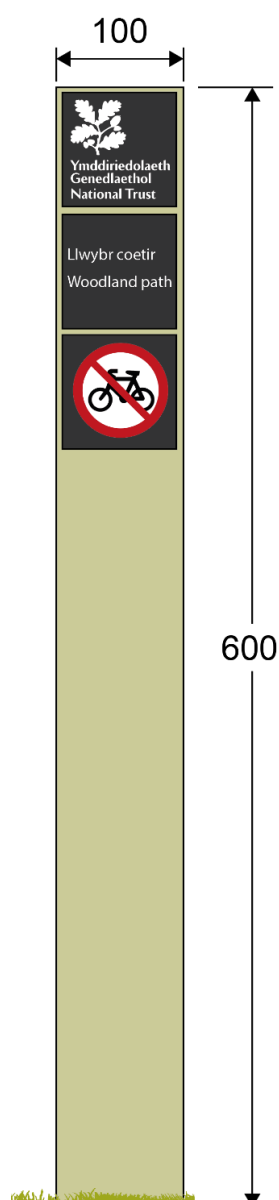


Figure 13 – Modular message post sign for the entrance/exits on southern boundary

i. Conclusions

This application seeks Advertisement planning consent for bringing forward a modest scale of interpretation signage at a significant woodland, having visitors from national (families of COVID-19 victims), regional (Wrexham County), and local levels (existing and new communities). The application is considered to meet the requirements of the policy and has been designed to be appropriate for the location and context. Please contact Mark Brett at the National Trust should you require further information or clarification of any matter within the application. It is hoped the application can proceed successfully to positive determination. The proposed signage is considered as an essential element to the woodland scheme in assisting visitors interpretation, helping to develop its identity, and to make the scheme accessible to all people.