

7th December 2022

Wrexham County Borough Council
Guildhall
Wrexham
LL11 1AY

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION FOR ADVERTISEMENT CONSENT FOR THE DISPLAY OF A NEW WELCOME SIGN AT THE TREVOR BASIN CAR PARK, OFF TOWER HILL, TREVOR, LLANGOLLEN LL20 7TU

Introduction

This letter has been prepared to support the above application for Advertisement Consent, which has been submitted on-line using Planning Portal Wales (Planning Portal reference number: PP-11748518).

Other plans and documents submitted with this pre-application enquiry are:

- The completed application forms;
- Location Plan at scale 1:1250;
- Site Plan at scale 1:200; and
- Elevation Plan at scale 1:20

Application Fee

In the 'Guide to the fees for Planning Applications in Wales (1st October 2015 onwards)', national fees for 'Advertising' - 'Relating to the business on the premises' or 'Advance signs which are not situated on or visible from the site, directing the public to a business' are £120.

About the Canal & River Trust

Canal & River Trust (the Trust) is the charity responsible for looking after and bringing to life 2000 miles of canals & river. Our waterways contribute to the health and wellbeing of local communities and economies, creating attractive and connected places to live, work, volunteer and spend leisure time.

These historic, natural, and cultural assets form part of the strategic and local green-blue infrastructure network, linking urban and rural communities as well as habitats. By caring for our waterways and promoting their use, the Trust believe we can improve the wellbeing of our nation.

In addition to the statutory functions of navigation, the Trust is also required to:

- Conserve waterway heritage
- Promote and enable rural and urban regeneration

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

- Maintain and enhance leisure, recreation, tourism, and education opportunities for the public
- Facilitate waterway transport

Site Description

The application site is located north of Trevor Basin, which contains the Grade I Listed Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. Trevor Basin and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct are located within a designated conservation area and within the 'buffer zone' of the 'Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site' (WHS).

Trevor Basin and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct comprise an important Trust destination for leisure, tourism and recreational activity. Trevor Basin and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct attract high footfall throughout the year with visitors enjoying water-based activities on the Llangollen Canal and use of the canal towpath and surrounding land.

The application site is in the car park serving Trevor Basin and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. The Trust secured planning permission from Wrexham County Borough Council for a new car park in this location in 2017, further details below.

The car park is well connected to Trevor Basin. There is an established footpath leading from the car park through to the Basin, Aqueduct and onward neighbouring destinations.

The Proposed Development

New signage at gateway locations to the WHS has been developed in partnership between Canal & River Trust, Shropshire Council, Wrexham County Borough Council and Clwydian Range & Dee Valley AONB (Denbighshire County Council). The work has been led by the Our Picturesque Landscape Partnership project (which sits under the AONB).

A new 'welcome' sign measuring 4.1 metres by 1.3 metres is proposed at the visitor car park entrance, which is suitably located adjacent to the main entrance for visibility and clear direction. The proposed new sign is to improve visitor directional information upon arrival to the car park/WHS, which consists of subtle imagery and clearly defined wording for the avoidance of doubt hesitation on arrival.

Relevant Planning History

There are two planning history records that are considered relevant. The first of which is relevant to existing signage in the area approved by Wrexham County Borough Council. The second relates to a planning permission granted by Wrexham County Borough Council for use of the land.

P/2021/0560. Planning permission granted on the 6th of July 2022 for; 'Redevelopment of canal basin for use as boat hire business including erection of 2 buildings and storage enclosure' at Trevor Basin, New Road, Trevor.

P/2018/0028. Advertisement Consent granted on the 13th of March 2018 for; 'Display of various advertisements (included as part of wider signage scheme across the site) at Trevor Basin, Off Station Road, Trevor.

P/2017/0888. Planning permission granted on the 14th of December 2017 for; 'temporary change of use of land for car parking' at Land North of Trevor Basin, Off Tower Hill, Trevor. It should be

noted that when granting planning permission Wrexham Country Borough Council did not impose a time limit restriction on the planning permission, which is now permanent.

Relevant Planning Policy

The Local Development Plan for Wrexham currently comprises the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan 1996-2011 (adopted 14 Feb 2005). However, Wrexham Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) 2013 to 2028 has recently undergone examination with a number of Matters Arising Changes, and it can be expected that this plan will be adopted within the next 12 months and would replace the UDP. Given the advanced stage of preparation of the LDP2, its policies would be a material consideration in the planning balance and would likely attract considerable weight.

Relevant Adopted Plan Policies

UDP Policy GDP1 sets out the development objectives for Wrexham, providing all new development should *'(a) 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, (b) Take account of personal and community safety and (f) Ensure the safety and amenity of the public...'*

UDP Policy CLF7 provides that: *'The development of countryside and water resources for informal recreation will be permitted provided that it does not harm visual amenity or nature conservation interests...'*

Relevant Emerging Plan Policies

Emerging LDP2 Policy BE1 provides that: *'Development will only be permitted where it would not harm the attributes which justified the inscription of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal as a World Heritage Site and the site's Outstanding Universal Value...'* The text accompanying BE1 states (para 6.43) that *Bilingual signage and interpretation is expected.'*

LPD2 Policy BE2 identifies land for: *'mixed use tourism led regeneration... Development proposals which contribute to the delivery of the Trevor Basin Masterplan, and which have no adverse impact upon the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site or its setting, will be supported...'*

LPD2 Policy SP16 provides that: *'Development will only be supported where it conserves, protects and enhances... Conservation Areas; Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site... Scheduled Ancient Monuments... and, where appropriate, their settings...'*

Relevant Local Planning Guidance Notes

Wrexham has also adopted relevant Local Planning Guidance Notes, intended to *'amplify'* development plan policies. Local Planning Guidance Notes are not part of the adopted development plan. The Welsh Government has confirmed that following public consultation and subsequent LPA approval, they can be treated as a material planning consideration.

Local Planning guidance Note No.1 Advertisements (adopted 1993, updated 2000) states that: *'In dealing with applications for new signage the Council will expect applicants to agree to a reduction or rationalisation of existing signs to avoid advertisement clutter.'*

In addition, Local Guidance Note 33 was adopted in June 2012. It is jointly produced by three local authorities, Wrexham Council, Denbighshire County Council and Shropshire Council. This Local Guidance Note is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications within the WHS and its Buffer Zone.

In Table 1 (Typical Development Scenarios) below, Note 33 sets out typical examples of possible developments and guidance criteria in relation to development in the WHS.

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.

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11)

Paragraph 6.1.15 states that: *'There is a strong presumption against the granting of planning permission for developments, including advertisements, which damage the character or appearance of a conservation area or its setting to an unacceptable level. In exceptional cases, the presumption may be overridden in favour of development considered desirable on public interest grounds.'*

Paragraph 6.1.22 states that: *'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.'*

Technical Advice Note 7 – Outdoor advertisement control

Paragraph 16 states that: *'Where an area is designated as a conservation area '... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area' in the exercise of any of the provisions of the Planning Acts.'* This includes the control of outdoor advertisements.

Paragraph 18 provides that: *'Almost all advertisements on listed buildings or scheduled monuments will constitute an alteration to the building or the monument and, therefore, require listed Welsh Office Circular, Planning and the Historic building or scheduled monument consent in addition to any advertisement consent. Special care is essential to ensure that any advertisement displayed on, or close to, a listed building or scheduled monument does not detract from the integrity of the building's design, historical character or structure, and does not spoil or compromise its setting.'*

Planning Analysis

In determining applications for advertisement consent, Local Planning Authorities only consider two matters: amenity and public safety, considering the provisions of the development plan, in so far as they are material, and any other relevant factors.

'Amenity' encompasses the effects of the development on visual amenity near each proposed sign, considering the characteristics of the neighbourhood including scenic, historical, architectural, or cultural features and the scale of each advertisement in relation to the context of its surroundings.

'Public safety' considerations include road safety and any matters relevant to the safe use and operation of any form of traffic or transport on land, such pedestrians and cyclists on the canal towpath or boats in the water.

The Trust is committed to establish ways in which to improve the site for its visitors. Signage improvements are a direct response to upgrading the quality of this important destination and the visitor experience. The Trust and its partners have been working to achieve a suitable upgrade to old and tired looking signage across gateway location around the WHS and in doing so have avoided any 'cluttering'. Many of the signs provide an enhancement by providing interesting historical and cultural information relating to the canal.

The proposed signage is not attached to or within the curtilage of a listed building or scheduled monument and is not within a designated conservation area, it is however, within the 'buffer zone' of the WHS.

As far as possible, it has been sought to adopt a proportionate approach towards the visual impact of the proposed sign within the established surroundings, which is achieved through careful siting and design. As a result, the proposed sign appears visually subservient in scale to its landscape backdrop.

The main safety issue here is conflict between pedestrians and vehicles manoeuvring in the car park. The proposed sign is located to the edge of the car park adjacent to a designated pedestrian area. It is in a position that encourages people to stop and read in a safe part of the car park away from moving vehicles.

It is considered that the proposed signage accords with the identified relevant planning policy context in the Wrexham County Borough Council 'development plan' and Planning Policy Wales.

The Canal & River Trust respectfully requests that Advertisement Consent is granted in this instance.

If any additional information is required to assist in the assessment of this application, then please do not hesitate to contact the Trust.

I hope this is sufficient information. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nick Wild

Nick Wild MA MRTPI
Senior Delivery Planner