

Trevor Basin Wharf – Heritage Impact Statement

Application Type

This Heritage Impact Statement has been prepared to support the application for Listed Building Consent in relation to the proposed installation of a security gate at the west aperture of Scotch Hall Bridge at Trevor Basin Wharf.

Context

The proposed installation of a security gate at this location is a condition (see below) of the planning consent (LLR P/2021/0560) relating to the relocation of the hire boat base at the terminus of Trevor Basin.

34. No part of the development shall be occupied until a timber security gate has been installed at the bridge arch to the south of the site, to match the existing timber gate currently in situ at the opposite side of the bridge arch (in both height, width and design). The timber security gate shall be finished with Sadolin wood stain to treat/protect the timber and darken the colour. The gate shall thereafter be kept closed and locked outside of the lawful hours of opening of the boat hire business.

Location

The location of the proposed installation is identified on the location plan below, which is at the west aperture on the south side of Scotch Hall Bridge.

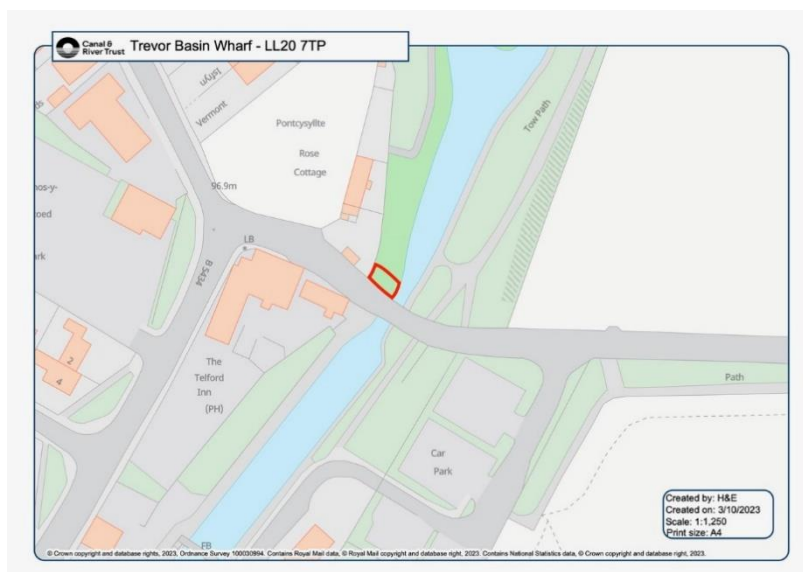


Figure 1: Location of the land leading to the west aperture of Scotch Hall bridge.

Date of Preparation

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Statutory Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Planning law relating to listed buildings and conservation areas is set out in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Section 66 of the Act deals with the responsibilities of local planning authorities – the decision makers - when dealing with planning applications that could impact on heritage assets and states that:

*‘In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’.*¹

Section 72 of the same Act states that, in relation to conservation areas:

*‘...with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area’.*²

Statutory Guidance

Planning Policy in Wales

Planning Policy in Wales (2021) provides the Welsh Government’s National Planning Policy for the conservation of the historic environment, in respect of information requirements it sets out that:

*‘Applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals, show why the alteration or demolition of a listed building is desirable or necessary and consider the impact of any change upon its significance. This must be included in a heritage impact statement, which will be proportionate both to the significance of the building and to the degree of change proposed.’*³

¹ Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 c.9 section 66

² Ibid (section 72)

³ Planning Policy in Wales, 2021, Edition 11 (section 6.1.13)

‘The setting of a historic asset includes the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Setting is not itself a historic asset, though land within a setting may contain other historic assets.’⁴

Non-statutory Guidance

The Setting of Historic Assets in Wales

Cadw also provide a similar but more detailed definition of setting...

‘The setting of a historic asset can include physical elements of its surroundings. These may be boundary walls, adjacent fields or functional and physical relationships with other historic assets or natural features.’⁵

Historic Information

Ellesmere Canal

The Ellesmere Canal was originally proposed and authorised through an Act of Parliament in 1793 and was designed to link the rich limestone and coal quarries to the wider the canal network and the major ports of Bristol and Liverpool. Principally engineered by two of the most important canal engineers of the 19th century (William Jessop and Thomas Telford), the canal was finally completed in 1805 with the opening of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and the adjoining trans-shipment wharf at Trevor Basin. The plan had originally been more ambitious in terms of expansion, with the canal travelling further north to Wrexham, however, only small branches from the basin were ever cut including the Llangollen branch, which provided a much-needed water source from the River Dee west of Llangollen at Horseshoe Falls.

Trevor Basin Wharf

As a result of the decision not to continue with the navigation north from Trevor to Wrexham, the basin at Trevor became the terminus point of the Ellesmere Canal when it was completed in 1805. However, short singular branches would eventually be cut from the basin to an ironworks at Plas Kynaston, as well as the lime kilns at Trevor. The unusual fork shape design supported wharfage on both sides of navigation, as well as on a central peninsula, eventually providing multiple sites of trans-shipment from narrow boat to rail through the Ruabon Brook Tramway. Limestone, coal and other raw materials would all be transferred through the site supporting a complex economy of manufacturing and trade.

Scotch Hall Bridge

Scotch Hall bridge (1804-05) is a multi-arched road bridge of largely masonry construction that was designed to provide a broader range of access points to the wharfage on the north side of Trevor Basin, whilst also carrying the roadway (New Road) over the canal navigation (see Figure 2 below).

⁴ Planning Policy Wales, 2017, *Technical Advice Note 24 – The Historic Environment* (Annex D: Glossary of Terms)

⁵ Cadw, 2017, *Setting of Historic Assets in Wales* (page 2)

Designed by Thomas Telford and Matthew Davidson, it incorporates, what would have been for the period, innovative elements (cast-iron girders) and bespoke apertures suited to different purposes. The smaller archway on the east side of the basin would have been designed to accommodate horses, whilst the west arch (added slightly later) was designed for larger tramway rolling stock. The flattened arch supported by the beams (providing suitable clearance for narrow boats and a more gentle road passing above) was a feature that Telford also exploited for Bridge 31 (at the beginning of the Llangollen branch) at the other end of basin (see Figure 3 below).



Figure 2: The view of the south elevation of Scotch Hall bridge.

Heritage Significance

The heritage significance of Scotch Hall bridge largely derives from its place with the heroic stage of canal building in that area during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This stage in canal building was dominated by engineers such as Thomas Telford, who was partly responsible for designing the early iteration of the bridge. His use of innovative design features and materials adds much to our understanding of how engineers were solving the problems of building unique inland waterways in environments that were considered to be both challenging and difficult. As the wharf developed in size, and new technologies emerged to support the transportation of raw materials more efficiently

(tramways etc.), the bridge was adapted to incorporate these technologies, which should be considered an evolution that also provides additional heritage significance.

Figure 3: Bridge 31 on the east side of Trevor Basin.



Proposed works

In order to fulfil the condition (No 34) of the awarded planning consent relating to the relocation of the hire boat base ((LLR P/2021/0560), it is proposed that a pair of security gates be installed to



Figure 4: Bridge 31 on the east side of Trevor Basin

accommodate the west aperture (on the north facing elevation) of Scotch Hall bridge. The aperture is currently open on one side with an historic pair of security gates located in the same aperture on

the south elevation (see Figure 4 above). Whilst the security gate has been designed to be independent of the bridge structure, the asset is currently designated at Grade II and therefore the installation will impact the setting of the bridge.

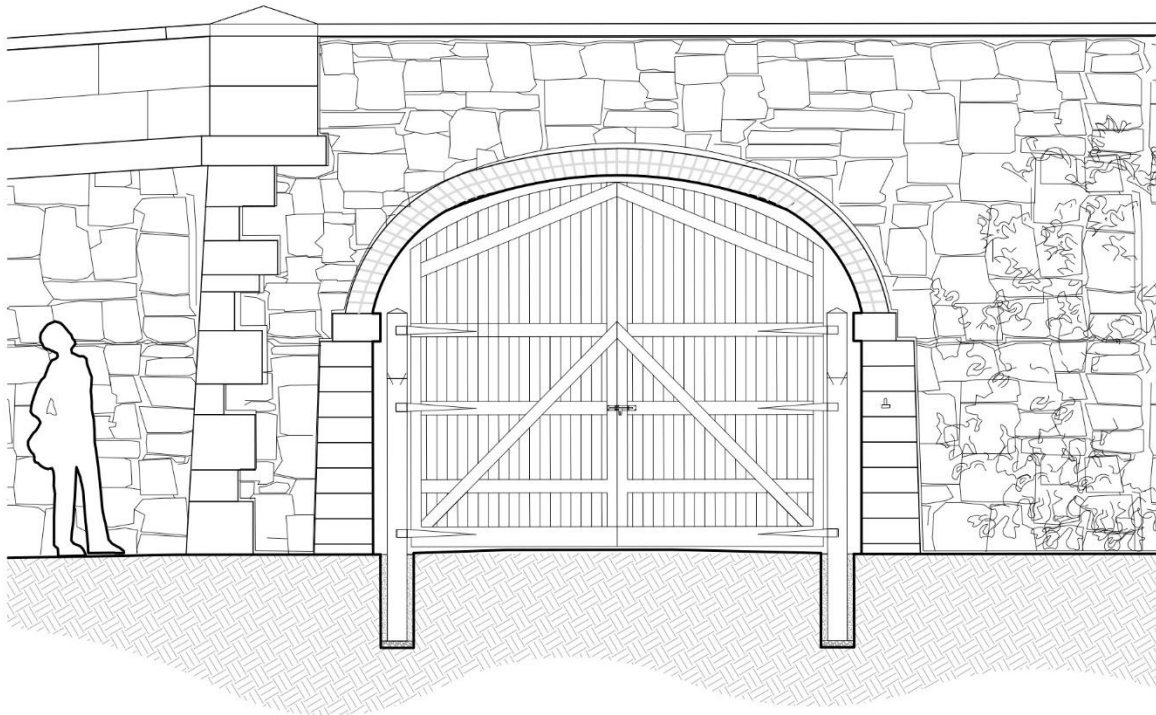


Figure 5: Proposed design and independent structure for security gate.

Heritage Impact Assessment

As Planning Policy Wales states in its definition of setting in relation to historic assets, 'The setting of a historic asset includes the surroundings in which it is understood, experienced and appreciated, embracing present and past relationships to the surrounding landscape. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.' This particular historic setting is currently in the process of evolving and well-timed interventions of this type present no long-term impact to the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, if well designed, maintained and used as instructed. In relation to the Conservation Area, this type of intervention should be viewed as an enhancement, especially if it serves a wider public benefit of discouraging the proliferation of anti-social behaviour that has historically occurred in and around the bridge structure.

Whilst a change of this type to the setting of a heritage asset will inevitably have some impact (with the aperture being currently open on one side), it is perceived that the impact of the additional security gate should be considered as neutral given that the west aperture on the south elevation is already gated and the addition of a secondary gate will provide a level of symmetry that is currently missing. However, if the wider public benefit of the installation is taken into account (the potential to reduce anti-social behaviour), then the addition of the gate should be considered to be positive. In both assessments, the overall impact on the significance of asset should be considered to be neutral, as due to both the independence of the design and the longer-term reversibility, no harm could be registered within the context of the bridge structure itself.

References

Cadw, Setting of Historic Assets in Wales, 2017

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11, 2021

Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note 24 – The Historic Environment, 2017

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Appendix

Listing Description

BRIDGE NEXT TO TELFORD INN

Reference Number: 19966

Grade II

History

Multi-arched canal bridge of c1795-1801 carrying New Road over canal. An Act to construct the Ellesmere Canal, linking the Dee, Mersey and Severn Rivers, was passed in 1793. In 1801, during construction, it was decided not to continue the canal northwards to Wrexham. Instead, a 9.656km long feeder canal was constructed in 1804-08 to supply water to the main canal, which it joined just below the bridge, and twin docks were built at Pontcysyllte to provide wharfage. The docks became the terminus of the main canal. The bridge was built in three adjoining sections, the central arch being the original bridge over the canal. The E arch was added later to bridge access to E wharfs. A gateway in the parapet W of the central arch which led to steps down to the House next to Telford Inn appears to have been destroyed during construction of W arch to provide access to W wharfs. In 1846 the canal became part of the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company, but in the following year was taken over by the London & North Western Railway. Transport on the canal diminished in later C19 with arrival of the railways and ceased by World War II. The canal was only kept open because of its importance as a supplier of water and has now become a major tourist asset.

Exterior

Seven cambered wrought-iron girders support ashlar-stone voussoirs of central bridge to form flattened arch carrying ashlar-stone parapets with sloping sills and capping. Parapet walls terminate in piers with pyramidal caps; twin piers with wrought-iron trellised arch on SW side to former gateway. Ashlar-stone voussoirs to arch of E bridge with roughly coursed and snecked rubble stone parapet, ashlar-stone sills, capping and terminating piers. Double row of brick

voussoirs to near semi-circular arch of W bridge with roughly coursed and snecked rubble stone parapets with ashlar-stone capping. Abutments to each bridge in rubble stone with ashlar quoins.

Reason for Designation

Listed as a distinctive feature of canal engineering and for its group value with other listed items on the Llangollen Canal.