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Eich cyfeirnod
Your reference

Ein cyfeirnod
Our reference

Dyddiad
Date

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P/2018/0898

10 December 2018

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Dear Sir / Madam,

P/2018/0898

Thank you for your letter of 29 October 2018 inviting our comments on the above planning application. I apologise for the delay in replying.

I can confirm that we have no objection but recommend that you consider whether the scheme layout should be adjusted to continue the line of the restored bank of Wat's Dyke to the north as an undeveloped strip of land.

I attached a copy of our assessment.

Yours sincerely

Nichola Davies
Casework Manager

Mae Gwasanaeth Amgylchedd Hanesyddol Llywodraeth Cymru (Cadw) yn hyrwyddo gwaith cadwraeth ar gyfer amgylchedd hanesyddol Cymru a gwerthfawrogiad ohono.

The Welsh Government Historic Environment Service (Cadw) promotes the conservation and appreciation of Wales's historic environment.

Rydym yn croesawu gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg ac yn Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in both English and Welsh.



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



Cadw Assessment - P/2018/0898**Wat's Dyke: Section SSW of Wrexham Station (DE191)****Background**

The monument consists of the remains of a length of the early medieval boundary earthwork Wat's Dyke, assumed to have defined a border zone between Saxon Mercia and Welsh Kingdoms to the west, running from modern Basingwerk in the north to the valley of the Morda near Oswestry in the south. Fieldwork has identified 62 km (38.6 miles) of earthworks set out in a series of straight lines broken by watercourses, the earthwork surviving intermittently and in varying degrees of preservation. The extant sections comprise a large linear bank between 0.5 and 2.5m high and 5-8m wide at its base, and a substantial V-shaped western ditch between 2-4 m deep and 4-8 m wide. After nearby Offa's Dyke it is one of the largest earthworks in Britain and is of national importance as one of the largest upstanding relics of the early medieval period in Britain and one of the earliest surviving expressions of statehood, representing a remarkable feat of organisation and engineering. The physical attributes of each scheduled section of the Dyke vary according to differing topography, construction and preservation, each drawing significance from and contributing to the significance of the monument as a whole.

The monument within the development area has been removed above ground level by a combination of railway construction, quarrying and later landscaping associated with the construction and use of a now demolished breakers yard across the entire site. The original scheduling was based upon the observation of a substantial irregular bank running along the assumed line of the Dyke as depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey. Archaeological evaluation of this line in 2002 demonstrated that the upstanding earthworks within the development were almost entirely modern but identified the vestigial and mutilated remains of the base of the bank with the possible edge of the ditch a few metres to the north of the development site boundary. This was confirmed by further evaluations in 2015 as part of the Premier Inn development and the bank subsequently restored to a more substantial earthwork, extended along an assumed line to the north to indicate the original line and presence of the monument. The 2002 and 2015 excavations demonstrated that this fragment of bank did not extend to the south having been removed by quarrying, the 2002 evaluation indicating that no remains of the bank survived above ground within the development area, concluding that it was likely that quarrying had removed most if not all of the monument. Whilst the intermittent remains of the ditch may survive within the development site it is likely that these will have been heavily truncated by quarrying and may not survive in a recognisable state. It should be noted that the alignment of the scheduled area deviates from that of the section of restored bank defined by excavations immediately to the north and its across the development site

Impact

The proposed development will see several elements of the housing scheme built over and across the line of scheduled area including 6 semi-detached houses and their associated drives. Section 5.2 of the Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA)

provided with this application (summarised in section 4.3.4 of the Planning, Design and Access Statement) suggests that *'potentially important deposits may survive within the Development Area, possibly including the basal deposits associated with the bank or, more probably, the remains of the ditch'* noting that *'extensive quarrying has taken place within the area which may have already had a significant impact on the dyke. Nevertheless, should archaeological deposits survive; the groundworks have the potential for a **moderate** impact on this high value asset, the significance of which would be **moderate/large**'*.

Cadw disagrees with this assessment, which should be '**very large**' if the author believes that there will be an impact on a nationally important scheduled monument. However, previous evaluation of the development site and to a lesser degree the HIA itself indicate limited, if any survival. The HIA also fails to note the offset relationship of the 'restored' alignment of the Dyke to north with the scheduled area to the south. Based upon the evidence of the 2002 and 2015 evaluations Cadw is minded to de-schedule the area within the development site as the remains of the Dyke are at this point no longer likely to meet the statutory criteria for scheduling.

However, the setting of the monument is a material consideration. The site is presently waste ground adjacent to a railway with the restored bank of the Dyke running behind the four-storey Premier Inn to the north. Both the HIA and DAS draw attention to a pre-application meeting with Cadw's regional inspector in September 2016, when the possibility of perpetuating the line of the Dyke on the alignment of that restored adjacent to the Premier Inn was discussed. On site interpretation has also been proposed. Whilst I agree that these present appropriate mitigation measures in explaining and preserving the projected line of the monument and therefore enhancing and preserving the current setting of restored section, this discussion was in relation an earlier scheme, where the configuration of houses did not cross this line. The local planning authority will therefore wish to consider whether it is appropriate for the scheme layout to be adjusted to continue the line of the restored bank to the north as an undeveloped strip.

Will Davies
Regional Inspector Ancient Monuments and Archeology
Cadw