

Re. Application number: 131621/FO/2021

Proposal: Temporary change of use to an urban park (F2(c)) for a period of 20 months.

Re. Application number: 131622/LO/2021

Proposal: Listed Building Consent for works associated with temporary change of use to urban park for a period of 20 months.

Location: Castlefield Viaduct, Manchester,

Date of application: 9 September 2021

In relation to the above planning application, National Trust are applying for Listed Building and Advertising Consent for display items relating to the visitor activation of the Castlefield Viaduct during the temporary Phase One pilot scheme (12 months).

Summary

We are seeking advertising consent and, where required, listed building consent for the following elements:

- 1. Approach Signage:** fingerpost signage and chalk spray paint stencils directing visitors to the site at certain key points in the city.
- 2. Arrival Signage:** This includes graphic panels affixed to the staircase, a lightbox providing guidance to pedestrians from the adjacent tram stop across the car park, and temporary banners on the lift shaft to demarcate the scheme at the lower level.
- 3. Engagement Signage:** This includes the entrance signage, the treatment to our temporary toilets and welcome kiosk, and safety hoardings.

We believe these temporary and fully removable elements, professionally designed with the character and heritage fabric of the site in mind, will enhance the visitor experience and help to safeguard a long-term future for the listed structure that delivers public benefit.

As part of the full planning application above, we submitted our '1892 Castlefield Viaduct Heritage Impact Assessment, Issue 02, September 2021' completed by Purcell Architecture Ltd. This assessed the impact of the proposals to utilise the currently vacant structure as a temporary urban park against the significance of the listed structure. This document was commissioned in addition to the '1892 Castlefield Viaduct: Statement of Heritage Significance' by Purcell, dated June 2021, which gave a full historic background, statement of significance and archaeological gazetteer for the structure, also submitted with the application above.

The Heritage Impact Assessment made the following conclusions:

'This testing phase will help develop a better understanding of what works from a design perspective and materials angle but also critically what has worked in terms of visitor engagement. (p9)

The proposals for the viaduct cumulatively will have a negligible impact upon the significance of the structure. There are small instances of harm to significance

relating to... the visual impact of new additions. However, all new additions are reversible, including the structural interventions, meaning should this temporary use not continue beyond the pilot then the viaduct could be returned to its extant state.'
(p22)

The Heritage Impact Assessment concluded that in summary:

- *The project overall will result in a far better understanding of the structure's significance to the public.*
- *The new use will hopefully be the ignition point for long term use which will sustain the structure and invigorate the conservation area.*
- *Beyond the physical impacts outlined above, by increasing access and furthering the knowledge and understanding of the structure, this in itself increases the communal value and enhances significance.*
- *The proposals will have a negligible impact on the significance of the structure with significant public benefits.*

(p22)

Furthermore, our curatorial advice picks up on the conclusions above about negligible impact and reiterates that the structure operates at a macro scale, in contrast to the micro detail of these design proposals. It is worth recognising that colourful rolling stock regularly thunder past in the form of the adjacent Metrolink trams and historically always have on site, so the setting of the viaduct is intrinsically colourful and noisy. Architecturally the significance of the asset isn't at the ranges or scales which are impacted by the more minor and temporary signage proposals. Existing modern (stairwell) and historic cast iron have brightly coloured livery. Brightly coloured rolling stock are now absent from the asset – but were a constant, fundamental feature. Also, to note that the engineering significances aren't the same as aesthetic significances and aren't impacted significantly by the minor proposals.

Our Building and Landscape Cultural Heritage Design Advisor states that none of the component parts obscure design features or elements of heritage significance, and none of the proposals dissect key views of vistas, noted in the statement of significance. They also strongly make the case for the vinyl wraps to screen the graffiti, as in addition to the enhancement of the visitor experience these protect the site from the risk of more graffiti during the pilot scheme's lifetime.

It is also worth reemphasising that we are in consultation mode and this design approach is a starting point and will need some flexibility as the design moves forward as a piece of public consultation and research.

Whilst we respect the listed structure, we also are creating a new temporary urban park, therefore will need to introduce new elements to enhance the visitor experience, including sensitive and selective application of colour and graphics. We ask the visitor experience and other regenerative benefits of the scheme are considered on balance and in the round with any perceived negative impact on heritage and in accordance with our heritage impact assessment can perceive the potential positive benefits such an activation will bring to the site.

Design and Access Statement for Proposed Interpretation Signage for the Castlefield Viaduct Project

This design and access statement has been prepared in support of an application to build on the scope of a previous application in relation to Castlefield Viaduct – with the development of creative designs for elements on site within the red line – as well as to introduce some additional elements in the approach to the Viaduct beyond the red line.

The items proposed beyond the red line will help audiences find the Viaduct. This is especially important for this project due to the difficulties navigating below the Viaduct, across canals and under bridges. This helps create a recognisable journey to the arrival signage, which will help reassure visitors that they are in the right place. On Beaufort Street this includes external banners on the lift shaft and graphic signage on the staircase up to the viaduct, as well as a lightbox at the top of the staircase. Within a 10-minute walk of the Viaduct, we propose an addition to existing finger post signage to signpost people towards the Viaduct.

The signage and interpretation for this year-long programme of activity is, in its widest sense, intended to enable a deep and thorough public engagement programme to proof-test a longer-term project which will see this iconic and valuable Manchester landmark conserved and treasured for the future.

Design decisions have taken into consideration the industrial heritage of the Viaduct and surrounding area. The colour palette brings an energy and identity to the Castlefield Viaduct communications, whilst tying into the local area. A dark grey reflects the grey brick of the viaduct itself, whilst a lighter off-white reflects the sky. A rust red is chosen from the National Trust Colour Palette as a nod to the local architecture - reflecting the Cheshire red brick, corten steel and the stairwell structure adjacent to the Viaduct itself. Finally, the addition of a bright teal creates a vibrant contrast to the rust red and also references the stairwell adjacent to the Viaduct, as well as the historical Manchester Tram liveries.

This colour palette has been applied to a set of core illustrations which will feature across the Viaduct experience. We have worked with an illustrator who specialises in celebrating connections between nature, heritage and biodiversity in urban environments. These collage style illustrations include a variety of elements that capture structural forms of the local architecture alongside the botanical planting that will feature on the Viaduct.

This consistent visual identity will help visitors transition between each interpretation zone, creating a rich experience that connects them to nature and the historical significance of the Viaduct.

Due to the short-term nature of this project, all campaign applications are temporary, and will not require any demolition. Materials such as vinyl have been chosen to cause minimal impact on the structures. We will carry out a risk assessment for each item within our design, including the wind and fire risk.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions.

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