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Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre

Planning Statement

March 2025

Document Control Sheet

Project Name: Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre

Report title: Planning Statement

Date: March 2022

	Name	Position	Date
Report prepared by:	Iwan Evans	Planner	26.03.2025
Reviewed by:	Kathryn Williams	Managing Director	27.03.2025



Director signed.....

Kathryn Williams, Managing Director, KEW Planning BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

Telephone: (+44) 02921 690034

kathryn@kewplanning.co.uk

<https://kewplanning.co.uk>

KEW Property Consultants Limited Company Registration Number 9536960

Registered office: Suite 3, 11 Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9HA

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Appendix 1 – Application Document Schedule

Appendix 2 – Heritage Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – NCC LPA Pre-application Written Response



1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Planning Statement (PS) has been prepared by KEW Planning, on behalf of Newport City Council, to support the proposal for the demolition and reconstruction of a new Visitor Centre at Fourteen Locks, Newport.
- 1.2 This PS provides an assessment of the proposed development against the provisions of the statutory Local Development Plan, Planning Policy Wales and other material planning considerations.
- 1.3 The site address is Fourteen Locks Canal Centre, Newport, which falls within the administrative boundary of Newport City Council (NCC).

Figure 1: Site location Plan



Background

- 1.4 The site currently operates as a Visitor Centre, the centre is being leased and operated by the Monmouthshire, Brecon, and Abergavenny Canals Trust. The Visitor Centre includes a Shop, Museum and Dadford Tea Room, which are open 7 days a week 10am to 4pm.
- 1.5 The centre has been suffering from high maintenance costs, whilst the design of the existing building limits how the building can be utilized. As such, NCC is seeking to demolish the existing visitor centre, replacing it with an innovative ecological visitor centre, with improved and upgraded facilities.

The Proposal

- 1.6 The description of the proposed development is as follows:

“Demolition of existing Visitor Centre, construction of new improved Visitor Centre and associated works.”

Purpose of the Statement

- 1.7 This PS gives an overview of the proposal, the technical aspects, and assesses these against the statutory adopted Development Plan; Future Wales; Planning Policy Wales, and other material

planning considerations (such as Supplementary Planning Guidance).

Application Documents

- 1.8 A schedule of the submission documents has been set out within Appendix 1. A separate Conservation Area Consent (CAC) is submitted alongside this planning application. The Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) is provided within Appendix 2, which assesses the impact of the proposals upon both the Conservation Area and the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Planning Statement Structure

- 1.9 This PS is set out as follows:
- Section 2 – provides a description of the site and surrounding area;
 - Section 3 – sets out the relevant planning history for the site;
 - Section 4 – summarises the proposed development;
 - Section 5 - sets out pre-application advice received and community consultation undertaken;
 - Section 6 - summarises the relevant national and local planning policies, and other material considerations.

- Section 7 – sets out the considerations for the proposal;
and
- Section 7 –Outlines questions for the local planning
authority to address including relevant documents
required to support the application.



2. The Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 This section reviews the prevailing conditions of the existing site and the surrounding area, which are material considerations when assessing the suitability of the proposed development.

The Site and the Surrounding

- 2.2 The site comprises a visitor centre (shop/café), parking area, pond, and picnic area adjacent to the Crumlin Arm of the Monmouthshire-Brecon canal. The visitor centre provides a base and end point for cycle routes and hiking paths along the towpath but also the wider area.

- 2.3 Directly South-east of the canal basin sits Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks) itself, a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The Cadw description states:

“The monument consists of a series of fourteen locks, dating to the 18th century. A lock is a section of a water channel on a canal or river shut off above and below by lock gates provided with sluices to let the water out and in, and thus raise or lower boats from one level to another. The canal, constructed between 1792 and 1798, was connected by tramroad with Blaenavon ironworks and served to bring its products to the docks at Newport. The “staircase” of locks is on the Crumlin

branch of the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal, with a series of embanked ponds and elaborate sluices and weirs to service the locks. There is only one other example of this early method of creating a staircase of locks in existence.”

- 2.4 Vehicular access is currently gained to the West of the site via a junction off Cwm Lane which connects the site with the High Cross/Rogerstone area of Newport that has efficient and close access to the M4, bus routes and local centres.

- 2.5 The 14 Locks Visitor Centre is well placed just inside the boundary of Newport City Councils administrative area where the Towpath runs towards the Allt-yr-yn area of Newport but also in proximity to nearby villages and towns in the borough of Caerphilly, particularly further up the valley to where the 14 Locks Towpath travels through. As such, the Visitor Centre provides a destination point for those travelling locally along the towpath and tourists to the area.

Flood Risk Considerations

- 2.6 Figure 2 provides an extract of the Natural Resource Wales (NRW) Development Advice Map (Wales), confirming that the site falls within Flood Zone A, which are areas considered to be at little or no risk of fluvial or coastal/tidal flooding.

2.7 Figure 3 provides an extract from the new Flood Map for Planning, showing that the existing canal basin adjacent to the site is within Flood Zone 3 in relation to flooding from surface water and small watercourses.

Figure 2: NRW Development Advice Map (Wales)

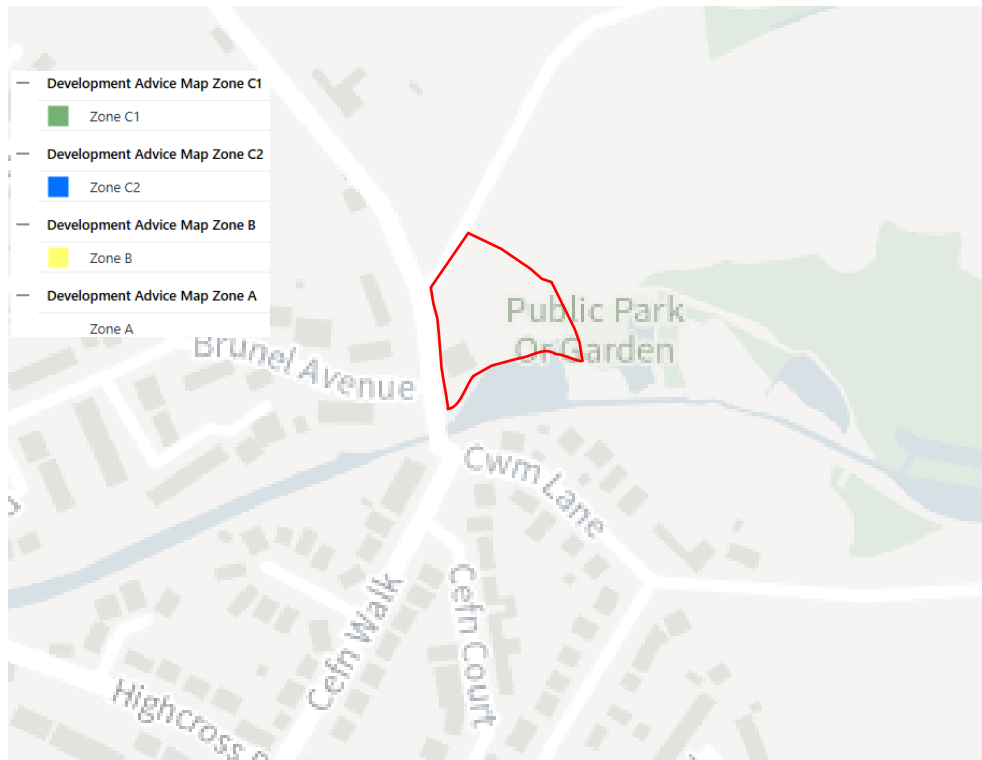


Figure 3: NRW New Flood Map for Planning (Wales)



3. Planning History

- 3.1 Desktop research on the statutory planning register reveals 8 planning application records for the site. The details of the planning application records of the site are set out in Table 1 in the over leaf.

Table 1 – Planning application records of the site

No.	Reference	Description	Decision	Decision date
1	21/0403	Partial discharge of Conditions 2 (Construction Environmental Management Plan), 3 (Construction Method Statement), 8 (Highways Details), 9 (Material Samples) and 10 (Access Ramp and Bridge Section) of planning permission 20/0726 for access to include linking the Fourteen Locks Canal Centre and Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Tow Path	Part-Approved and Part-Refused	26/08/2021
2	20/0726	Access improvements to include linking the Fourteen Locks Cancel Centre and Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Tow Path	Granted with Conditions	05/03/2021
3	07/5120	Partial discharge of Condition 4 (Details of Shutters) of planning permission 05/1516 for the extension to the visitor centre	Granted	04/01/2008
4	07/1373	Partial discharge of Condition 01 (Materials) and Condition 03 (Retaining Wall) of planning permission 05/1516 for extension to the visitor centre	Granted	23/11/2007
5	05/1516	Extension and alterations to visitor centre with associated works	Granted with Conditions	27/03/2006
6	05/0087	Erection of replacement footbridge	Granted with Conditions	08/03/2005

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7	00/0056	Installation of 'Dragon Fly' Sculpture within area of pond	Granted	31/03/2000
8	91/0499	Proposed siting of ice-cream van	Unknown	12/07/1991



4. Pre-application advice and Public Consultation

4.1 The proposals have been informed by several forms of consultation namely; Pre-Application advice received from Newport City Council, Public-consultation and the Designing out Crime Officer at Gwent Police. Where possible and feasible the application has sought to respond positively to feedback received from consultation.

Newport City Council Pre-Application Advice

4.2 Pre-application feedback for this proposal was received on 04 November 2024 and is in [Appendix 3](#).

4.3 The analysis of the proposal was based on the following material considerations:

- Principle of Development
- Design/Visual Impact
- Residential amenity
- Highways Safety/Parking
- Ecology
- Heritage Impacts

- Drainage

Principle of Development

4.4 The application site lies outside the defined settlement boundary, in open countryside where development is strictly controlled. However, the proposal to replace an existing visitor centre is considered acceptable due to the established use, limited alternative locations within the settlement, and the site's accessibility by non-car modes.

4.5 Any intensification of use must be fully justified, as it may conflict with Planning Policy Wales 12, Future Wales, and the Newport City LDP. Full details of the enhanced offering should be provided to demonstrate the extent of change.

4.6 LDP Policy R8 (Small Scale Retail Proposals) applies. Any planning application must show that:

- The scale is appropriate for the locality.
- It does not harm the viability or vitality of nearby centres.
- It does not adversely affect local amenities or character through noise, disturbance, or traffic.

4.7 Supporting information addressing these criteria is strongly recommended.

Design/Visual Impact

- 4.8 The proposed replacement facility features a simple, contemporary design inspired by boathouses, which is appropriate given its canal-side location. The scale and design are considered suitable for the setting, with an active frontage that aligns with placemaking principles in Planning Policy Wales.
- 4.9 External finish details should be included in the planning application to ensure full assessment of visual impact. The design supports a net-zero objective, incorporating solar PV panels on the south-facing roof. While there are no objections, panels must be recessed to avoid harming the character of the Conservation Area.

Residential amenity

- 4.10 The proposed development due to its scale, location and relationship with the closest residential properties is not considered to result in any unacceptable adverse impact upon the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers nor is it considered to result in an impact that is significantly greater than what is caused by the existing facility.

Highways Safety/Parking

- 4.11 The proposal retains existing vehicular and pedestrian access, which the Council's Highway Engineer considers acceptable. However, it results in a net loss of 7 parking spaces. A parking survey/assessment must accompany any application to justify this reduction and demonstrate no adverse impact on highway safety.
- 4.12 To meet Future Wales Policy 12, at least 10% of parking spaces must include EV charging points. Additionally, the current cycle parking provision is inadequate and will need to be enhanced in line with the Highway Engineer's recommendations.

Ecology

- 4.13 The site is ecologically sensitive, with the adjacent canal designated as a SINC and nearby woodlands holding ecological designations. Impacts on biodiversity must be carefully managed during construction and operation.
- 4.14 A Construction Environmental Management Plan should be submitted with the application to protect the SINC during construction. External lighting details must also be provided to avoid harm to protected species.

4.15 The Council's Ecologist does not require a PEA or Bat Survey unless tree felling is proposed, in which case further surveys will be needed.

4.16 In line with PPW12, the application must include a Green Infrastructure Statement demonstrating a net biodiversity benefit, following the DECCA principle and step-wise approach.

Heritage Impact

4.17 The site lies within the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Conservation Area. The Council's Heritage Officer raises no objection but recommends a Heritage Impact Assessment be submitted with any planning or conservation area application.

4.18 The proposed design is a visual improvement over the existing structure and meets the "preserve or enhance" test under Section 160 of the Historic Environment Wales Act 2023.

4.19 As the existing building likely exceeds 115 cubic metres, Conservation Area Consent will be required for its demolition, in line with Part 161 of the Historic Environment Wales Act 2023 and section 6.11 of TAN 24

Drainage

4.20 Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is a statutory consultee, and early engagement is encouraged through its pre-planning advisory service (available online for a fee) to address drainage issues.

4.21 Given the scale of the development, consent under Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 is likely required for a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS). This is separate from planning consent and must comply with National Standards. Approval from the SuDS Approving Body (SAB) is required before construction begins.

4.22 Any application must include details of the proposed SuDS to ensure compliance and adoption by the SAB where applicable.

Conclusions

4.23 There is no in-principal objection to the development, provided any increase in commercial activity is fully justified and does not conflict with national sustainability policies or harm nearby retail centres.

4.24 A planning application must justify the reduced parking provision, ensuring no adverse impact on highway safety. Adequate accessible, EV charging, and cycle parking must be provided.

4.25 The design is considered a visual improvement, aligning with placemaking goals in PPW, and has no negative impact on the countryside, Conservation Area, or nearby residents.

4.26 A Green Infrastructure Statement demonstrating a net biodiversity benefit (as per PPW12) and a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should accompany the application.

Gwent Police

4.27 As a result of known anti-social behaviour at the site outside of operating hours, an informal meeting was held with Designing out Crime Officer at Gwent Police where the team presented the scheme with the opportunity for the Officer to then provide feedback. A summary of the feedback received is provided:

- The placing and choice of CCTV cameras needs to be considered carefully. As a minimum they need to be located as highlighted below including all external doors – entrance /exits.
- Lighting should be used from dusk to dawn and be located on all walkways and at entrances & exits. Bollard lighting can be used for wayfinding but cannot be used for security.

- Bollards would be needed to protect the external façade of the building from cars crashing into the building, either from terrorism (very low level) or accidentally.
- The Pump housing and bin storage need to be designed so to that people cannot climb from these onto the roof.
- The current situation with the barrier over the car park entrance and crocodile teeth for exit only – seems acceptable for going forward.

Community Consultation

4.28 As part of the design process community consultation was undertaken at the existing Visitor Centre, where consultation boards were placed for public comment in relation to the below topics:

- What do you want from your Community Building?
- Building Place and Setting
- Building Materials

4.29 Comments received from public consultation indicated a desire for a larger café area and meeting spaces for community use; as well as orientation of the building towards the canal basin and a preference for natural materials, such as timber shingles, as

proposed. The material palette was changed to respond to these comments.

5. The Proposal

Overview and Design

- 5.1 The proposed development includes the demolition of the existing Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre and the construction of a new and improved Visitor Centre Facility fronting Fourteen Locks Canal Basin.
- 5.2 The new Visitor Centre will be single-storey, with a pitched and curved roof with the orientation toward Fourteen Locks Canal Basin. The buildings southern orientation will take advantage of the natural landscape and passive solar gain through its fenestration arrangement.
- 5.3 There will be a pitched roof with flush solar panels to help achieve the net zero aspirations of the proposal.
- 5.4 The material palette for the new Visitor Centre will primarily consist of timber shingles for the walls and roof, with vertical timber slats used to indicate the buildings entrance. The proposed material palette has been selected to directly respond to the community consultation and to blend the building into the natural surroundings.

Facilities

- 5.5 The new Visitor Centre will offer improved facilities that will help improve the vibrancy for people using this space. The proposed facilities are set out in [Table 2](#).

Table 2 – Facilities Net Internal Area (NIA)

Facilities	NIA m ²
Entrance & Museum	44
Cafe	104
Ancillary Retail	12
Meeting Rooms	70
WC	2
Disabled WC x 2	8
Plant	9
Circulation	12
Cleaners room	4
Total	265

Access and Parking

- 5.6 At present there are 3no accessible parking bays, 2no EV parking bays, 45no standard parking bays, including 6no dedicated staff bays and 7no cycle hoops.
- 5.7 The proposal includes a reduction in the number of parking bays onsite by 7 bays and will include 2 EV charging bays 3 accessible

bays and 38 standard bays resulting in the overall provision of 43 parking bays.

5.8 The existing Cycle parking onsite consists of 7no. cycle hoops. The proposal includes an uplift in the number of cycle parking spaces to include:

- 10 covered and secured cycle spaces – Long stay
- 6 Sheffield hoops (12 bike spaces) – Short stay

Landscape and Ecology

5.9 The landscape proposals have been developed to respect the natural surroundings of the Canal Centre.

5.10 The proposals include the introduction of a swale to the east of the proposed Canal Centre; with areas of shrubbery. No trees will be felled and there is a net gain of five trees across the site.

5.11 Where proposals encroach on root protection areas, mitigation measures in line with the findings of Tree Survey, Categorisation & Constraints Report and BS 5837 will be implemented.

5.12 In accordance with the findings of the PEA a series of bird boxes will be added to existing trees along Cwm Lane, including the introduction of a new bat box to the western elevation of the proposed building with a further bat box on tree T10.

5.13 Further detail regarding planting and Green Infrastructure measures can be found in the supporting Green Infrastructure Statement and Soft Landscaping Plan.



6. Planning Policy

6.1 This chapter summarises the national and local planning policy framework, which is relevant to the proposed development.

6.2 All development should be in accordance with the statutory development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise, as required by s36 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. In this context, the statutory development plan for NCC comprises the Newport City Council Local Development Plan adopted in January 2015.

6.3 National planning guidance (Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 and Technical Advice Notes) are material considerations. Other material considerations which should be taken into account are local Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPGs).

National Planning Policy

6.4 Regard has been had to the Government's Planning Policy Wales framework (PPW) and to the relevant Technical Advice Notes (TAN):

- Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 2024
 - Paragraphs 3.9 - 3.10 (Character)
 - Paragraphs 3.15 - 3.16 (Considering Design Issues)

- Paragraphs 5.5.2 – 5.5.7 (Tourism)
- Paragraph 6.1.4 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment and its Assets)
- Paragraph 6.1.14 – 6.1.17 (Conservation areas)
- Technical advice notes:
 - TAN 12: design
 - TAN 13: tourism
 - TAN 24: the historic environment

Local Planning Policy

6.5 The following policies are considered relevant:

- Newport Local Development Plan (LDP, adopted 28th January 2015)
 - SP3 (Flood Risk)
 - SP5 (Countryside)
 - SP9 (Conservation of the Natural, Historic and Built Environment)
 - CE2 (Waterfront Development)
 - CE6 (Archaeology)
 - CE7 (Conservation Areas)
 - CF3 (Water Based Recreation)
 - CF8 (Tourism)

6.6 Other material considerations include:

- Newport City Council Supplementary Planning Guidance Archaeology & Archaeologically Sensitive Areas (August 2015)
- Newport City Council Supplementary Planning Guidance Parking Standards (August 2015)

Site designations

6.7 Figure 5 is an extract from the constraints and proposals map of Newport LDP, which shows the relevant designations of the site and its surroundings. Policy CE7 identifies the site as being located within the Mon & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area. Whilst directly South-east of the canal basin sits Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks), a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Figure 5: Newport LDP Proposal and Constraints Map Extract



7. Planning Considerations

- 7.1 This section provides an assessment of the scheme against the NCC Local Plan and explains the considerations in the design of the project.

Principle of development

- 7.2 The principle of development on the site is already established by the existing Visitor Centre and is further supported by LDP Policy CF8 (Tourism) which states:

“NEW AND IMPROVED TOURISM RELATED DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING HOTEL AND OTHER VISITOR ACCOMMODATION, CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION FACILITIES, HERITAGE INTERPRETATION FACILITIES, RURAL TOURISM AND ACTIVITY TOURISM IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WILL BE PERMITTED, PARTICULARLY WHERE REGENERATION OBJECTIVES WILL BE COMPLEMENTED.”

The Proposed Design

- 7.3 NCC LDP Proposals map identifies the site as being located outside the settlement boundary. **Policy SP5** explains that development in the countryside *“will only be permitted where the use is appropriate in the countryside, respects the landscape*

character and biodiversity of the immediate and surrounding area and is appropriate in scale and design...”

- 7.4 Whilst it is recognised that the proposal is of a greater scale than the existing Visitor Centre, the proposals allow for a more dynamic use of the Visitor Centre than currently exists. Whilst the proposal is a vast improvement on the outdated abrupt features of the existing Visitor Centre and is intended to have a natural material palette that is sympathetic to the rural landscape and character of Fourteen Locks Canal Basin.
- 7.5 The proposed Visitor Centre has a curved south facing frontage providing views onto Fourteen Locks Canal basin, which seeks to respect and enhance the setting of the Canal Basin whilst also improving the public realm and amenity offering of the site.
- 7.6 The material palette for the new Visitor Centre will primarily consist of timber shingles for the walls and roof, with vertical timber slats used to mark the buildings entrance. The proposed material palette has been selected as a result of community consultation and as a reflection of the buildings natural surroundings.

- 7.7 The proposal includes two entrances into a main reception area and one facing north addressing the parking area and one south towards the canal basin.
- 7.8 The design of the proposals have evolved as a direct result of Pre-application feedback received from Newport City Council, Gwent Police Designing out Crime Officer and public consultation. The outcomes of these discussions have been set out in section 4 above.
- 7.9 As such, it is considered that the scheme is carefully designed to respond appropriately and respectfully to its countryside location in accordance with LSP **Policy SP5 Countryside** by virtue of the proposal respectful nature whilst also following the principles of LDP **Policy GP6 General Development Principles – Quality of Design**

Access and Parking

- 7.10 Access arrangements to the site remain unchanged, with access gained via a junction onto Cwm Lane to the west of the site.
- 7.11 The Council's Parking SPG does not specify a parking standard for visitor centres.
- 7.12 As such, car parking provision has been informed by a Parking Survey and accompanying Transport Note which found that maximum car parking occupancy is between 20 to 25 spaces on a weekday and 27 spaces on a Saturday.
- 7.13 However, due to the nature of the scheme it has been estimated that the proposals could see an uplift in visitor numbers by 20%, which in its busiest month is likely to see car parking occupancy at the centre to range from 23 to 30 spaces on a weekday and 30 spaces on a Saturday.
- 7.14 The proposal includes a reduction in the number of parking bays onsite by 7 bays and will include 2 EV charging bays; 3 accessible bays and 38 standard bays, resulting in the overall provision of 43 parking bays. As demonstrated by the Transport Note submitted with this application, this level of provision adequately accommodates visitor parking numbers at the site. A Parking Survey has been commissioned and is submitted, which robustly demonstrates these figures. As there is capacity within the provision, the loss of 7 bays can still be absorbed with no impact on parking.
- 7.15 There is also an expected uplift in cycle trips due to the site's location along National Cycle Network Route 47.
- 7.16 The existing Cycle parking onsite consists of 7no cycle hoops. The proposal includes an uplift in the number of cycle parking spaces to include:

- 10 covered and secured cycle spaces – Long stay
- 6 Sheffield hoops (12 bike spaces) – Short stay

7.17 The application is also supported by a Travel Plan which demonstrates NCC's (as the applicant) commitment to reducing car dependency, enhancing accessibility, and encouraging staff and visitors to utilise active and public transport modes, thereby supporting the wider sustainability objectives of NCC.

7.18 As such, the proposals are considered to provide appropriate levels of cycle and car parking in accordance with **Policies T4 (Parking) and T5 (Walking and Cycling)** of Newport Local Development Plan.

Impact of the new proposal's impact on the Conservation Area and Scheduled Ancient Monument

7.19 **LDP Policy CE7** identifies the site as being located within the Mon & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area. Whilst the site is also located directly adjacent to Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks) scheduled ancient monument.

7.20 **Policy CE7** sets out a criterion based policy for developments in Conservation Areas:

- Be designed to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area, having regard to the conservation area appraisal where appropriate.*
- Avoid the removal of existing historic features, including traditional shopfronts and joinery. use materials which are traditional, or appropriate to their context.*
- Complement or reflect the architectural qualities of nearby buildings which make a positive contribution to the character of the area.*
- Pay special attention to the settings of buildings and avoid the loss of any existing domestic gardens and open spaces which contribute to the character of the area.*
- Avoid adverse impact on any significant views, within, towards and outwards from the conservation area.*

7.21 The proposal has been designed by way of orientation to pay respect and provide a positive contribution through improved viewpoints of Fourteen Locks Canal Basin itself.

7.22 Whilst the natural material palette will provide a notable improvement to the setting of the Conservation Area itself, through the removal of the existing Visitor Centre, which could be described as unsightly when viewed in the context of the wider conservation area.

7.23 The comments from NCC's Conservation Officer at pre-application were:

“Timber is proposed as the main external material, as well as the glazing, which is supported. This would give the structure a more naturalistic aesthetic, and blend in well with the surrounding environment. It is relatively common for this type of external finish to be seen within areas such as nature reserves, so it would fit this narrative well... Overall, I am generally supportive of these proposals subject to further details and plans at full application stage.”

7.24 The proposals are also supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment, refer to [Appendix 2](#), which demonstrates a neutral impact of the proposal on the conservation area as a result of the demolition of the existing visitor centre, which has little quality both architecturally and historically.

7.25 As the proposal is located directly adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument it is understood that any forthcoming permission is likely to come forward with a condition for a watching brief, including the need to obtain Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent post planning permission.

7.26 Engagement with relevant parties on such matters through the determination of the proposals is welcomed.

Flood Risk

7.27 The site itself is not located within an area identified as at risk to flooding by either NRW Development Advice Map or the Flood Map for Planning.

7.28 However, directly adjacent to the site sits Fourteen Locks Canal Basin which is identified as being within Flood Zone 3 by NRW Flood Map for Planning. As such, a Flood Consequence Statement will be commissioned to support the application.

7.29 The proposal is supported by a Drainage Strategy which seeks to follow sustainable urban drainage principles with the introduction of a Swale and utilising an existing surface water drainage outfall. As a result, the proposal accords with **Policy SP3 Flood Risk**.

Retail Provision

7.30 LDP Policy R8 Small Scale Retail proposals sets out a criterion based approach. Relevant policy wording is set out:

“Proposals for new local retail facilities, extension of floorspace of existing retail outlets or the change of use of existing buildings to retailing outside the city and district centres, will be permitted only where:

- ii) the proposal is of a scale appropriate to the locality;*

- iii) *there would be no adverse effects on the viability and vitality of any defined centre;*
- iv) *there would be no unacceptable effect on the local residential amenities or the general character of the area in terms of noise and disturbance or extra traffic generated.”*

- 7.31 The existing level of retail space within the visitor centre equates to 32m² and is ancillary to the main café use of the Visitor Centre, which is operated by Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust (MBACT). The Fourteen Locks Canal Centre, Shop, Museum and Dadford Tea Room is open 7 days a week 10am to 4pm.
- 7.32 The proposals include a net reduction of ancillary retail floor space of 20m², with the proposed provision within the new visitor centre being a total of 12m².
- 7.33 As such, due to its ancillary nature and reduction in floor space, the proposal is considered to be in accordance with LDP Policy S8 Small Retail Proposals, by being appropriate to its countryside location, and would not impact upon the vitality and viability of any designated centre, being insignificant in its size and function.

Ecology and Biodiversity

- 7.34 No part of the site is within an ecological statutory designated site of conservation value (SSSI, SAC, SPA or NNR). Approximately 1 mile East of the site along the towpath sits Allt-yr-yn Nature Reserve.
- 7.35 The PEA identifies a number of non-statutory designated sites in close proximity to the proposal, these include:
- Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) - less than 20m Fourteen Locks Fields SINC - less than 50m from
 - Other Wildlife/SINC (Adopted) sites were identified within the search area including Ynys-y-fro Reservoir (West) (506m from site), Ynys-y-fro Reservoir (East) (381m), Allt-yr-yn (806m), Cefn Wood (West) (695m), Cefn Wood (East) (462m), and Mescoed Mawr/Mescoed Bach (964m from site).
- 7.36 Due to the relatively small-scale nature of the proposals, with suitable pollution prevention measures, no adverse effects to the SINC sites are anticipated. As noted by NCC Ecology Officer during pre-application, a Construction Environmental Management Plan could be secured by condition to address any

concerns regarding polluted surface water run off during construction.

7.37 Pre-application advice received from Newport City Council suggested that a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal was not necessary. However, the applicant has taken a cautionary approach and commissioned a PEA to inform green infrastructure and landscape interventions onsite.

7.38 Having undertaken a site walk over on 13th December 2024, the PEA did not find any evidence of bat or bird use within the building. However, the existing building has been identified to have a moderate potential to support roosting bats and nesting birds.

7.39 The habitats on or adjacent to site have also been identified as having potential for use by individual foraging/roosting bats and foraging/nesting birds, whilst the site could also offer foraging opportunities for hedge hogs, frogs, toads, insects.

7.40 As such, in accordance with the PEA, the proposals include the provision of bird boxes along the tree line with Cwm Lane and bat boxes on the western elevation of the proposed new building and the retained T10 tree.

7.41 Finally, due to the building being identified as having potential for roosting bats, two further emergence surveys have been commissioned.

7.42 These measures are set out and detailed in the supporting Green Infrastructure Statement and Soft Landscaping Plan, which provides further detail on green infrastructure and biodiversity interventions.

7.43 Due to the light touch and precautionary approach taken to the proposals it is considered that proposals are in accordance with LDP Policies **SP5 Countryside** and **GP5 General Development Principles – Natural Environment**.

Arboriculture

7.44 The proposal does not include the felling of any trees and proposes a net gain of an additional five trees distributed across the site. Whilst the proposal does not propose to fell any trees the proposal development has the potential to encroach on identified root protection areas, notably T10 (Category C).

Measures to limit harm to identified RPA's will be implemented in accordance with the submitted Tree Survey, Categorisation & Constraints Report and BS 5837 and could be secured by an appropriately worded condition if necessary.

8. Summary

- 8.1 This PS has been prepared to support the demolition and redevelopment of Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre, Newport.
- 8.2 The statement provides an overview of the proposal, accompanied by site and surrounding details and background to the proposal. It sets out the planning justification for the scheme including how pre-application and community consultation have formed part of the design process for the proposals.
- 8.3 In summary, the proposals seek to create a betterment to the existing Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre. providing a new café and modern community spaces.
- 8.4 The new Visitor Centre has been orientated to bring a renewed focus on the canal basin with a glass frontage, which is orientated towards the canal basin itself. The chosen material palette primarily consists of timber, which has been chosen as a reflection of the Visitors Centres countryside and natural setting.
- 8.5 The landscaping scheme takes a light touch approach, with the retention of all trees and further planting of five trees and the introduction of a swale. The scheme also includes 2 bat boxes (western façade and T10) and a series of bird boxes to be installed on existing trees.

- 8.6 The proposal is also supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment ([Appendix 2](#)), which considers the proposed developments impact upon Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks) Scheduled Ancient Monument and Mon & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area. The Assessment has a neutral impact on identified heritage assets with proposals offering a sympathetic structure, with a natural material palette that reflects the surrounding landscape, creating a renewed focus on the canal basin.
- 8.7 In conclusion, the proposed development is considered to be in accordance with the adopted planning policy framework whilst also offering an exciting opportunity for improved facilities for local residents and visitors alike. Consequently, we consider that the development aligns with the objectives of the development plan and should be approved.

Appendix 1 Document Schedule

Ecology, Arboriculture & Landscaping

- Fourteen Lock Canal Centre, Newport PEA Report ISSUED
- 24-075_14 Locks_BS5837 Tree Survey & TCP. DEC_2024. AMBLER.SJ
- 24-075 Fourteen Locks, Rogerstone TCP
- 079_Fourteen Locks Green Infrastructure Statement
- FLVC-AHR-S1-XX-DR-A-09410_P01 - Soft Landscape Layout
- FLVC-AHR-S1-XX-DR-A-09420-Hard Landscape Layout

Architecture

- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-RF-DR-A-08202-Existing Ground Floor
- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-RF-DR-A-08203-Existing Elevations
- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-00-DR-A-08202-Existing Roof Plan
- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-08501_P01 - Visualisations Sheet 2
- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-08401_P01 - Proposed Elevations Sheet 2 - Planning
- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-08500_P01 - Visualisations Sheet 1
- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-08400_P01 - Proposed Elevations Sheet 1 - Planning
- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-ZZ-DR-A-08300_P01 - Proposed Sections - Planning

- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-RF-DR-A-08201_P01 - Proposed Roof Plan - Planning
- FLVC-AHR-ZZ-00-DR-A-08200_P01 - Proposed Ground Floor Plan - Planning
- FLVC-AHR-XX-XX-RP-A-08700-P02 Fourteen Locks Design & Access Statement
- FLVC-AHR-S1-XX-DR-A-09100_P02 - Existing Topographical Survey
- FLVC-AHR-S1-XX-DR-A-08102_P01 - Proposed Site Plan Planning
- FLVC-AHR-S1-XX-DR-A-08101_P01 - Block Plans - Planning

Drainage

- 13483-0050 Proposed Drainage Layout

Highways

- 25-520 - Transport Note - March 2025
- 25-520 - Travel Plan (Rev C) - March 2025

Appendix 2

Heritage Impact Assessment

Introduction

The section provides an assessment of the impact on the heritage assets. It identifies the significance of heritage assets in the vicinity of the site; the proposals impact on them and the mitigation measures used to limit these impacts.

Planning Policy and Guidance

National and local planning documents have been taken into consideration as part of this proposal. This section summarises the policy framework that is relevant for the consideration of this planning application.

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 1990 Act), as amended by the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (the 2016 Act)

The 1990 Act, as amended by the 2016 Act, provides the statutory framework for the protection and management of the Welsh historic environment, alongside the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973.

Section 66 concerns development that affects a listed building or its setting. It states that special regard must be given by the relevant

authority to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Section 72 relates to preserving and enhancing conservation areas.

National Planning Policy - Planning Policy Wales (2024)

Paragraph 6.1.7 sets out the Welsh Government's objectives to *“to protect, conserve and enhance the significance of historic assets. This will include consideration of the setting of an historic asset which might extend beyond its curtilage. Any change that impacts on an historic asset or its setting should be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way.”*

Paragraph 6.1.9 explains that *“Any decisions made through the planning system must fully consider the impact on the historic environment and on the significance and heritage values of individual historic assets and their contribution to the character of place”*.

Technical Advice Note 24 ‘The Historic Environment’ (TAN 24), 2017

Paragraph 1.7 defines a historic asset as *“an identifiable component of the historic environment. It may consist or be a combination of an archaeological site, a historic building or area, historic park and garden or a parcel of historic landscape”*.

Paragraph 1.15 explains that Heritage Impact Assessments are expected to be proportionate both to the significance of the historic

asset and to the degree of change proposed and should include sufficient information to enable both the significance of the asset and the impact of change to be understood.

Paragraph 1.26 sets out that *“For any development within the setting of an historic asset, some of the factors to consider and weigh in the assessment include:*

- *“The significance of the asset and the contribution the setting makes to that significance*
- *the prominence of the historic asset*
- *the expected lifespan of the proposed development*
- *the extent of tree cover and its likely longevity*
- *non-visual factors affecting the setting of the historic asset such as noise.”*

Paragraph 1.29 confirms that *“the local planning authority will need to make its own assessment of the impact within the setting of an historic asset, having considered the responses received from consultees as part of this process. A judgement has to be made by the consenting authority, on a case-by-case basis, over whether a proposed development may be damaging to the setting of the historic asset, or may enhance or have a neutral impact on the setting by the removal of existing inappropriate development or land use”.*

Cadw Heritage Impact Assessment in Wales, 2017

Section 3 explains that *“the basic stages of heritage impact assessment, whatever the size and scope of the project, are should contain:*

1. *“explain your objective and why changes are desirable or necessary*
2. *understanding the significance of your historic asset*
3. *identifying your proposed changes*
4. *assessing the impact of your proposals*
5. *setting out the reasoning behind your preferred option, including your design concepts and principles, in the light of the assessment process”*

Section 4.2 relates to understanding significance. It explains that in order to analyse an asset’s value, it is important to understand its heritage value which can be divided in:

- Evidential value
- Historical value
- Aesthetic value
- Communal value

Setting of Historic Assets in Wales, 2017

This document highlights the definition of ‘setting’ set out in TAN24, adding that setting may include a range of factors:

- *“Functional and physical relationships with other structures/historic assets and how these have changed over time*

- *topographic features that influenced its location*
- *physical character of the surrounding landscape or townscape, including any formal design or land use*
- *the original layout of the historic asset and how this has changed*
- *potential buried or archaeological elements surrounding the historic asset*
- *views to, from and across the historic asset or place*
- *formal or planned vistas*
- *the prominence of the historic asset in views throughout the surrounding area*
- *views associated with the aesthetic, functional or ceremonial purpose of the asset; for example, defensive sites, beacons or designed landscapes*
- *historical, artistic, literary, place name, cultural or scenic associations might all contribute to the significance of a historic asset*
- *other sensory elements – noise or smell associated with the historic asset*
- *tranquillity, remoteness, ‘wildness’.*

Section 4 explains that the assessment of the impact of a proposed change or development within the setting of historic assets should be carried out in four stages:

- *Stage 1: Identify the historic assets that might be affected by a proposed change or development.*
- *Stage 2: Define and analyse the settings to understand how they contribute to the significance of the historic assets and, in particular, the ways in which the assets are understood, appreciated and experienced*

- *Stage 3: Evaluate the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.*
- *Stage 4: If necessary, consider options to mitigate or improve the potential impact of a proposed change or development on that significance.*

Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales, 2011

This document informs “Cadw’s approach to the protection and management of the historic environment as a whole”. It sets out six conservation principles which should guide Cadw in the development and management of historic sites, and that should also be used by local authorities, property owners, developers and consultants in the decision making process:

1. *Historic assets will be managed to sustain their values.*
2. *Understanding the significance of historic assets is vital.*
3. *The historic environment is a shared resource.*
4. *Everyone will be able to participate in sustaining the historic environment.*
5. *Decisions about change must be reasonable, transparent and consistent.*
6. *Documenting and learning from decisions is essential.*

Local Planning Policy – Adopted Newport Local Development Plan (LDP, adopted 28th January 2015)

- SP9 (Conservation of the Natural, Historic and Built Environment)
- CE7 (Conservation Areas)

Objective & Proposed Development

The objective is to demolish the existing Visitor Centre at Fourteen Locks, Newport and reconstruct a new Visitor Centre. The proposal seeks to construct a new visitor centre, to replace the existing Centre which is suffering from high maintenance costs. Additionally, the design of the existing building limits how the building can be utilised.

The assessment considers the impact to both the heritage asset (Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area) and the setting of other heritage assets, identified in [Figure 21](#).

Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre in Context

[Figure 21](#) identifies the site boundary within the context of designated heritage assets that might be impacted by the proposal, as identified within the pre-application response:

1. Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks) Scheduled Ancient Monument
2. Mon & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area

Other relevant heritage assets that are in proximity to the proposal site but are not considered to be impacted upon due to their proximity, location and the limited scale of the proposals, include:

3. Grade II – Cefn Canal Bridge over Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal

4. Grade II – Canal marker on Crumlin branch of Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal
5. Grade II – Milepost on Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal



5. Grade II – Milepost
4. Grade II – Canal marker
3. Grade II – Cefn Canal Bridge
2. Mon & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area
1. Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks) Scheduled Ancient Monument

Fourteen Locks Visitor Centre Planning Statement – March 2025



Analysis of Significance

Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks) Scheduled Ancient Monument

The monument consists of a series of fourteen locks, dating to the 18th century. A lock is a section of a water channel on a canal or river shut off above and below by lock gates provided with sluices to let the water out and in and thus raise or lower boats from one level to another. The canal, constructed between 1792 and 1798, was connected by tramroad with Blaenavon ironworks and served to bring its products to the docks at Newport. The "staircase" of locks is on the Crumlin branch of the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal, with a series of embanked ponds and elaborate sluices and weirs to service the locks. There is only one other example of this early method of creating a staircase of locks in existence.

The monument is of national importance for its potential to enhance our knowledge of 18th and 19th century transport systems. It retains significant archaeological potential, with a strong probability of the presence of associated archaeological features and deposits. A lock may be part of a larger cluster of industrial monuments and their importance can further enhanced by their group value. The scheduled area comprises the remains described and areas around them within which related evidence may be expected to survive.

The Scheduled Ancient Monument of 14 Locks is situated directly sits directly south-east of the site.

Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area

The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, particularly the section running through the Crumlin area, is a historically significant structure, reflecting the industrial heritage of South Wales. The canal was originally constructed between 1793 and 1812, with the Monmouthshire Canal and the Brecon & Abergavenny Canal merging in 1865 to form the continuous Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, stretching approximately 45.5 miles (73 km) from Newport in the south to Brecon in the north.

The canal played a pivotal role in the industrial revolution by enabling the transport of coal, iron, and other materials crucial to the region's economic growth.

By 1998, Newport City Council designated the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal within its boundary as a Conservation Area to protect its historical and architectural significance. However, sections of the canal in neighbouring Torfaen County Borough, including the Crumlin Arm, have not yet been formally designated. The canal remains an important element of local heritage and continues to be a valued recreational resource, with efforts underway to restore and preserve it. The conservation area designation ensures that any future development in the surrounding area takes into account the canal's unique historical and architectural value, with a focus on sustainable management and

regeneration. The following tables provide an analysis of each of the heritage assets, together with the way in which the proposed development responds to that asset and the resultant level of impact upon the heritage asset. The net heritage impact assessment is considered to be less than substantial harm, having a neutral impact following this detailed assessment.

Impact Assessment

Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks) Scheduled Ancient Monument		
Assessment	Proposed Development Mitigation	Level of Impact on the Heritage Asset
The site lies to the southeast of the Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks), which are designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument due to their historical and archaeological significance. The locks, constructed between 1792 and 1798, represent a key element of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, serving as a pioneering engineering feature in the region's transport infrastructure during the Industrial Revolution. The monument consists of a series of locks and associated structures. The existing Visitor Centre is located at a distance from the locks but due to its abrupt design and materiality, it currently detracts from the countryside and rural setting surrounding the monument. Whilst the proposed development seeks to replace the existing Visitor Centre with a new facility both larger in size and in a closer proximity to the Scheduled Ancient Monument.	The design of the new Visitor Centre is specifically orientated to ensure that the Scheduled Ancient Monument remains the dominant feature in its setting. The building's height and massing are carefully considered to ensure it does not compete with or overshadow the monument but instead brings it into focus. In terms of materials, the natural palette of timber has been chosen to compliment the surrounding landscape, avoiding elements that could distract from the setting of the scheduled ancient monument. The layout of the site ensures that the monument's setting, including its open spaces, is preserved and left largely unaltered with a light touch approach to design and landscaping chosen.	The level of impact on the Cefn Flight Locks (14 Locks) Scheduled Ancient Monument is considered to be <i>neutral</i>. While the new Visitor Centre will be located in closer proximity to the monument, its design ensures that there will be no adverse effects on the physical or visual integrity of the monument. The careful site layout will ensure that the development will not interfere with the monument's visual prominence or historical context but instead create a renewed focus on the scheduled ancient. Additionally, the monument's open setting will be preserved, and the new Visitor Centre will not obstruct any key views of the monument, allowing it to retain its status as a key feature in the landscape. The overall impact is neutral, as the proposed development respects the significance of the Scheduled Ancient Monument while enhancing the

This orientation will help to preserve the open views and visual integrity of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, ensuring it remains the focal point in the surrounding landscape. The new Visitor Centre will not encroach on or obscure views of the monument from the canal basin or surrounding areas providing a renewed perspective that puts a focus on the scheduled ancient monument and the canal basin.		public experience and accessibility of the surrounding area.
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Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area		
Assessment	Mitigations	Level of Impact
The site is situated within the designated Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area, a historically important feature of South Wales's industrial heritage. The Conservation Area comprises a stretch of canal that played a pivotal role in the transportation of goods during the Industrial Revolution, facilitating the movement of coal, iron, and other vital materials. The current Visitor Centre, which is of a later and incongruent design, stands within this context,	The new Visitor Centre has been specifically designed to enhance the visual and contextual relationship with the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area. The building's curvature mirrors the natural form of the canal basin, reducing its visual mass and allowing for better integration within the landscape. The building chosen primary material of timber shingles are selected to harmonise with the	The level of impact on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area is considered to be <i>neutral</i>. The new Visitor Centre will contribute positively to the area by providing an architectural design that respects the historic and industrial character of the canal. The proposed building's form, materials, and orientation are carefully considered to ensure the proposal enhances the setting of the canal, without overwhelming or overshadowing it.

detracting from the aesthetic and historical value of the canal and surrounding landscape due to its abrupt architectural features and material palette (red brick, render, a varying arrangement of roof forms and security shuttering's). The proposed development involves demolishing the existing Visitor Centre and constructing a new facility and will be sympathetic to the area's heritage, both in terms of architectural design and spatial integration with the canal basin. The new Visitor Centre will be single-storey with a curved, south-facing façade, which is designed to reflect and enhance the form and setting of the canal basin, providing a more respectful interaction with the Conservation Area.	surrounding environment. Additionally, the Visitor Centre is oriented to provide improved views of the canal, enhancing the visual connection between the building and the waterway. By removing the outdated and unsightly existing structure, the proposal will provide a more aesthetically pleasing and contextually appropriate design that will positively contribute to the area's historical integrity seeking to be a beneficial improvement to the setting of the conservation area.	The new Visitor Centre will impact the overall aesthetic quality of the Conservation Area but ensures that the area's historical significance is respected. The new design provides an improvement over the existing Visitor Centre, which is out of character with the Conservation Area's historical importance and natural setting.
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Heritage Conclusion

There will be no negative impact on the identified heritage assets as a result of the proposed development. The Fourteen Locks Scheduled Ancient Monument and the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal (Crumlin Arm) Conservation Area will remain physically unaffected, and no alterations will be made that would be detrimental to the character and setting of identified heritage assets.

Cadw's HIA guidance (2017) defines a neutral impact as:

“Neutral — such as where proposals are sympathetically designed, or change is accommodated in part of the building or site that is less sensitive.”

The proposed development has been carefully designed to avoid adverse effects on the setting of these heritage assets. The new Visitor Centre will be set back from the canal basin, and while it will be visible from certain viewpoints, its visual impact will be limited by the careful positioning and design, which respects the surrounding landscape and historic features. As a result, the development would allow for an improved public experience of the canal, the scheduled monument and the conservation area.

The existing Visitor Centre, which is considered unsightly in its current form, will be removed. This will result in a neutral impact on the setting

of the scheduled monument and a positive impact on the setting of the conservation area.

The proposed development takes into account the specific context of the Scheduled Ancient Monument and the Conservation Area. The new design enhances the site by offering a more sympathetic structure, with a natural material palette that reflects the surrounding landscape, creating a renewed focus on the canal basin.

In line with the objectives of the Conservation Area Appraisal, the proposed development does not disrupt any key views or vistas, nor does it harm any significant features of the historic assets. The impact of the development is considered neutral, as it sympathetically integrates into the existing context without causing harm to the scheduled monument or the conservation area.

Consequently, the impact on these heritage assets is determined to be neutral.

Appendix 3 – Pre-application Advice