

## Wayfinding and Signage Strategy

### 6.4 Interpretation and Trails...

#### Relevant Previous Commissions

#### **Chester Heritage Interpretation Masterplan (IMP), Imagemakers, March 2009**

The IMP developed conceptual designs for a suite of interpretation signage elements and proposed locations for specific interpretation panels to support interpretative themes (these are presented and developed further on pages 260-261).

The IMP set out a series of themes for interpretation under two main overarching themes:

- ‘Chester began, grew and flourished because of its position on the River Dee’
- ‘Same Space, Different Place: 2,000 years of colourful history and heritage can be seen, felt and heard in Chester’

These themes will provide the basis for the detailed design and development of the content of signage at specific sites. As well as the installation of the proposed interpretation signage suite, the IMP identifies and prioritises a wide range of other interpretive projects including proposals for the production of public art, publications, internet and digital multi-media and events.

#### **Chester’s City Walls and Towers – Competitiveness Study, Jura Consultants, January 2010**

This study was produced as part of the PORTICO project. The report identified the need to carry out the redesign and replacement of the interpretation plaques located on the walls and develop a mobile audio tour (in line with the proposals contained in the IMP). New interpretation signage should be designed to match the brand developed for city-wide signage.

#### **Portico: Chester City Walls and Towers Interpretation Plan, Imagemakers, Draft Report April 2010**

A brief summary of this report is also provided in the synopsis of recent studies in Part 2. The interpretation plan was commissioned through Portico, which is an ERDF funded project. The vision is for Chester’s city walls to become one of the best historic city trails in Europe. The interpretation plan proposes a number of interpretation projects, some of which could be funded by Portico (as priority

projects) and some are presented as aspirational proposals to be implemented as funding/opportunities are identified.



Newgate on the City Walls

The draft report sets out the overarching theme for interpretation of the City Walls as:

‘A Regional Stronghold: Chester is a regional capital and great place of strategic importance which is why the walls were built and have remained uniquely intact’.

Under this main theme, four further primary themes provide a framework for a series of subthemes, some of which are generic and some place specific:

- 1) Defence, protection, power and control;
- 2) Trade and taxation;
- 3) A living monument ; and
- 4) A route to explore.

The priority interpretation projects proposed to be funded by Portico are listed below:

#### 1. Website:

‘Explore the Walls’ dedicated website (will include interpretive information).

#### 2. Interpretation Panels:

These would replace the existing zinc etched panels and would either be fabricated from zinc or reverse applied acrylic (see further details on proposed materials in section 6.5). The panels should be designed to be used by all, but with a particular focus on those with a general interest in the heritage of the walls, local residents and families with children aged 7-11 years. The report provides provisional locations and themes for these panels.

#### 3. Smart phone – multi-media ‘app’ tour:

Available to download from the internet or from locations in the city (i.e. Tourist Information Centres, Museums etc) onto compatible mobile phones and would include audio clips providing a narrated tour of the walls.

#### 4. Other installations:

The draft report includes proposals for improved access, facilities and interpretation at King Charles Tower, Morgan’s Mount, Bonewaldesthorne’s Tower, Water Tower and Newgate. In addition, the report proposes a live webcam at Eastgate, a viewpoint at the Roodee and programme of live interpretation events.

The aspirational interpretation related projects that would require funding from other sources include augmentation of the dedicated website and multi-media ‘app’, feature lighting of the walls and towers and the creation of a visitor facility ‘pod’ to the rear of the Grosvenor Mall at walls level. This could include a café, toilets and interpretive display space and would improve the appearance of the exterior wall of the shopping centre.

The draft report also provides guidance on the writing style considered appropriate for the city walls interpretation.



Interpretation panel recently installed at Roman Amphitheatre (credit: Imagemakers)

### A Holistic Approach to Interpretation

As identified in the objectives in 6.2, a holistic approach to interpretation is required. It is suggested that the following range of design principles and elements be used to achieve this. Some of these are dealt with elsewhere in the PRDG (see cross references below).

#### Interpretive artworks, events and multimedia projects:

Projects and themes are identified in the IMP. These are taken forward in Part 4 – Public Arts Strategy.

#### Published and web-based interpretation information:

The graphic design and branding of this information should match the physical interpretation signage elements presented in this strategy. Proposals are contained within the IMP for an ‘Explore Chester’ trails booklet (incorporating the trails shown in figure 6.6)

#### Physical Interpretation Signage Elements:

These are presented on pages 260-261.

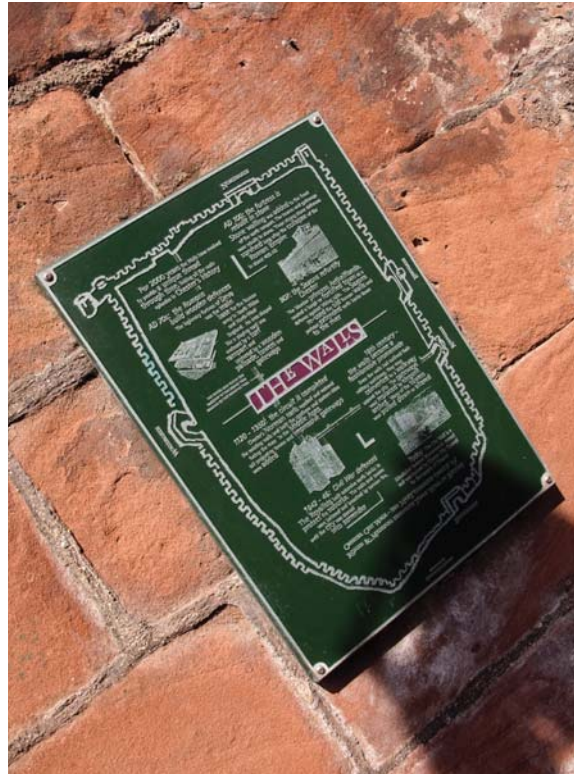
**Existing interpretation and trails signage:**

**City Walls:**

- The City Walls route is currently consistently signed and interpreted using a series of way markers and interpretation panels.



Timber and metal wayfinding posts along City Walls route. Consistently used, but do not successfully draw attention to the walls route.

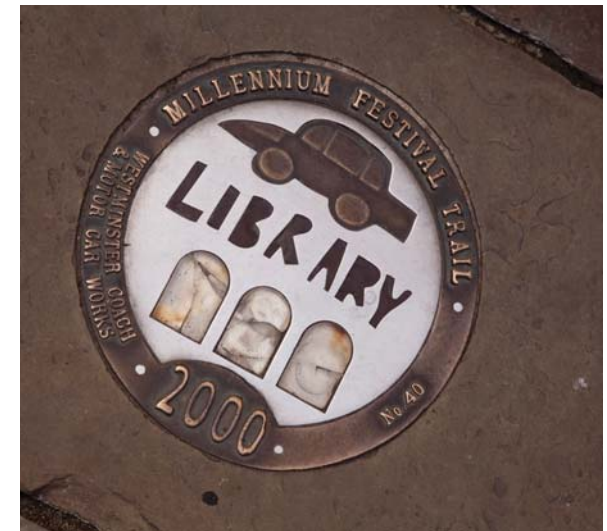


Existing zinc interpretation plaques on the City Walls are difficult to read and understand.

- Following public consultation, the IMP recommended that the style of the zinc interpretation panels be retained, but the panels redesigned to be legible and contain high quality interpretive text. The panels should also be mounted at an appropriate height. The City Walls Interpretation Plan has since been prepared in draft form and contains proposals for replacement panels (see relevant previous commissions).

**Millennium Festival Trail:**

- The Millennium Festival Trail was installed in 2000. It incorporates 40 buildings selected by local people as outstanding examples of Chester’s architectural development from Roman times to the present day.
- The trail is contained in a published leaflet and is waymarked using small arrows inset into surfacing. Each building is identified using a circular bronze and stainless steel floor plaque.
- Following public consultation, the IMP recommended that a shorter version of the trail be considered, a larger waymarking feature be used in surfacing and the design of the leaflet be revisited so that it appeals to a broader audience.



Millennium Festival Trail – distinctive and good quality floor mounted building plaque.





Millennium Festival Trail – floor mounted way marker arrows are small and difficult to follow.

#### The Riverside Promenade Trail:

- This has been established fairly recently and consists of a riverside route running between The Groves and the canal. A few identical interpretation boards are found along the route, which correspond with an interpretive leaflet produced.
- Following public consultation the IMP recommended that the design of these signs and leaflet should be revisited to conform to the future signage palette and graphic style. The IMP also recommended that more information be included on wildlife themes and that shorter/circular routes be considered.



Metal plate signs containing wayfinding and interpretation on Riverside Promenade Trail. The signs have limited visual appeal.

#### Interpretation panels:

A range of interpretation panels and some interpretive installations are found in Chester. Overall current provision lacks a distinctive and consistent design style or format. Many signs have been damaged or show signs of wear and tear.

The IMP recognised that significant improvements should be made to the subject coverage, quality of writing, legibility and visual appeal. In addition, all interpretation should have a clear theme/take-away message targeted at a general audience and should also encourage visitors to explore further.



Existing interpretation panel at Roodee in poor condition.



Zinc plate interpretation panel mounted on granite base in Roman Gardens. Good quality materials, but content difficult to read.



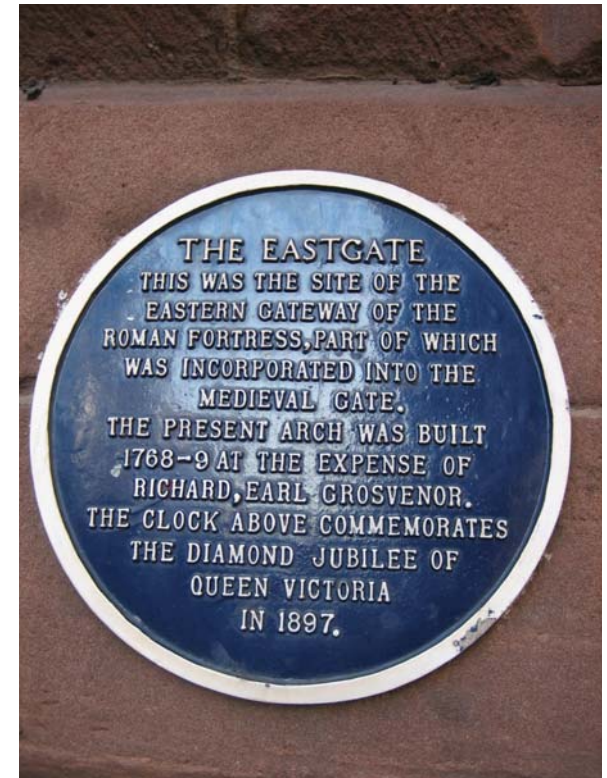
Zinc plate interpretation panel at Parker's Buildings – sign has limited visual appeal.



Recent interpretation installation to front of HQ building uses a more imaginative approach with artefacts displayed in a sandstone wall.

**Blue Plaques:**

- A series of cast metal blue plaques are found commemorating buildings around the city. It is understood that Chester's blue plaque scheme is in the process of being reviewed and developed, and will focus on people and events in the future (rather than buildings).
- The IMP report proposes that the existing blue plaques, relating to buildings, be replaced with new zinc etched panels matching the revised City Wall plaques in style.



Existing blue plaques used to commemorate buildings.





2-4  
KINGS BUILDINGS  
RESTORED  
1984-1985

THIS PLAQUE COMMEMORATES  
THE VISIT OF  
HRH THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER  
25TH NOVEMBER  
1985



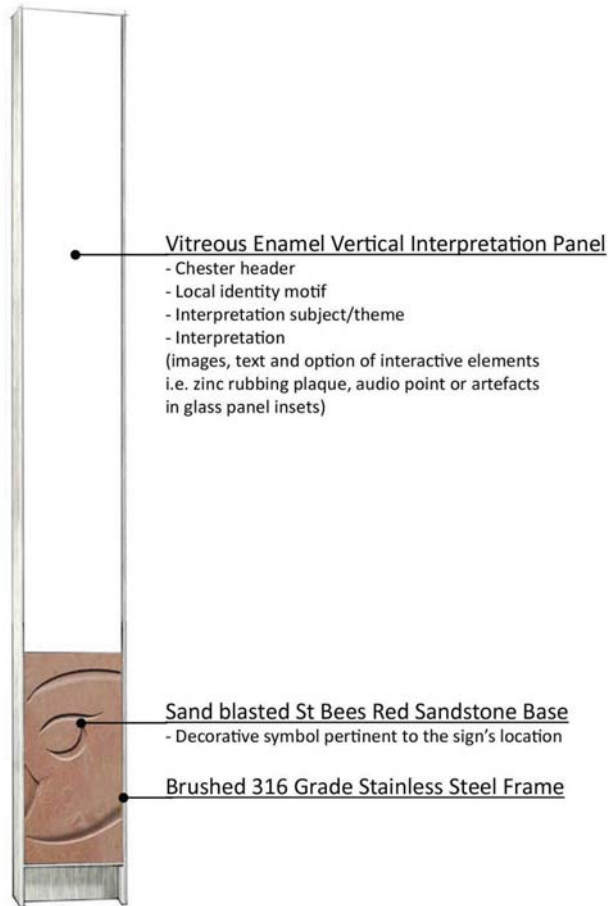
**Proposed Suite of Interpretation Signage:**

A range of interpretation signage elements are needed to support interpretive themes and trails. The information below sets out a suite of signage

elements along with details of materials to be used and information content. Further details on materials and design are provided in 6.5 – Further Design Guidance.

It is important to note that there is also scope for interpretive information to be included on some of the wayfinding signage elements set out below.

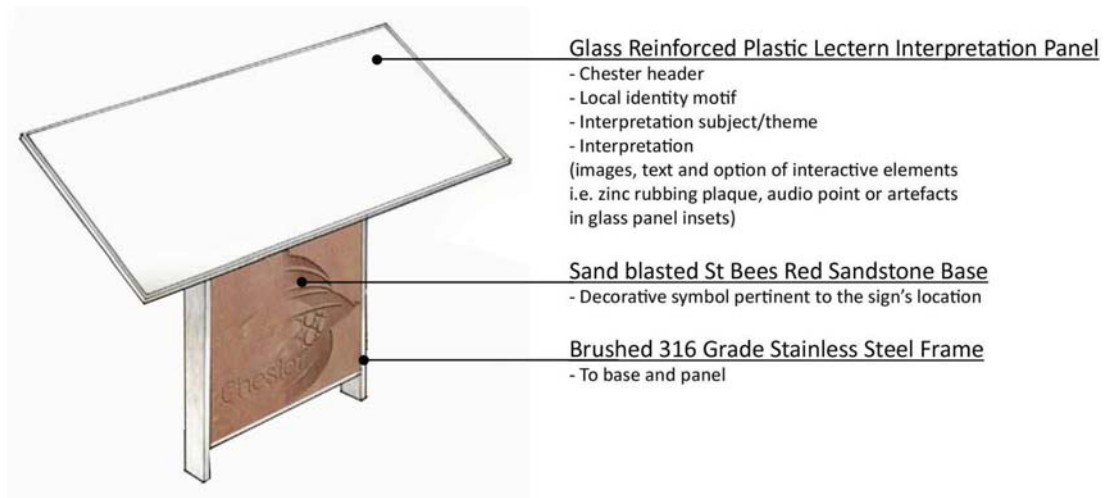
**1. Vertical Interpretation Panel**



**Reverse Side:**

Could accommodate local identity graphic emblem (see 6.5 - Further Design Guidance for more information) or additional interpretation.

**2. Lectern Interpretation panel**



### 3. City wall interpretation Panels



#### Option 1 - Cast Zinc Panel

- City Walls icon and local place name
- Interpretation subject/theme
- Interpretation (text and simple line illustrations with coloured infill)
- Location on city walls route
- Smart phone multi-media tour icon/details

### 4. Historic Monument Panel



#### Cast Zinc Historic Monument Panel

- Location/local name
- Interpretation subject/theme
- Interpretation (text and simple line illustrations with coloured infill)



#### Option 2 - Reverse Applied Acrylic or Enamelled Lava Stone (with steel frame/posts)

- Size/format could vary
- City Walls icon and local place name
- Interpretation subject/theme
- Interpretation (full colour illustrations)
- Location on city walls route
- Smart phone multi-media tour icon/details
- Children's interpretation/activity (rubbing plate/peep hole)

### 5. Blue Plaques



#### Cast Painted Metal Blue Plaques

- Name and dates of person commemorated
- Dates they lived at this address
- Pertinent details of their achievements/life

### 6. Floor / Wall Mounted Waymarkers on trail Routes



#### Cast Bronze/Zinc Floor/Wall Mounted Waymarkers on Trail Routes

- Floor or wall mounted way markers with name of trail or recognisable logo
- Waymarkers support city trails leaflet
- Cast bronze where floor mounted, cast zinc where wall mounted

Proposed Suite of Interpretation Signage (Credit: Imagemakers)



**Figure 6.6 – Proposed Locations of Interpretation Signage Elements and Trails**

**Primary Interpretation Themes as listed in Chester's IMP:  
(see Part 3 of IMP for detail of sub themes)**

- NPT - Naturally Chester
- PPT - A Place of Power and Influence
- MPT - A Mercantile City
- WPT - A Place of Worship and Conflicting Beliefs
- FPT - Having Fun
- DPT - A Distinctive Place
- JPT - Joining Past and Present

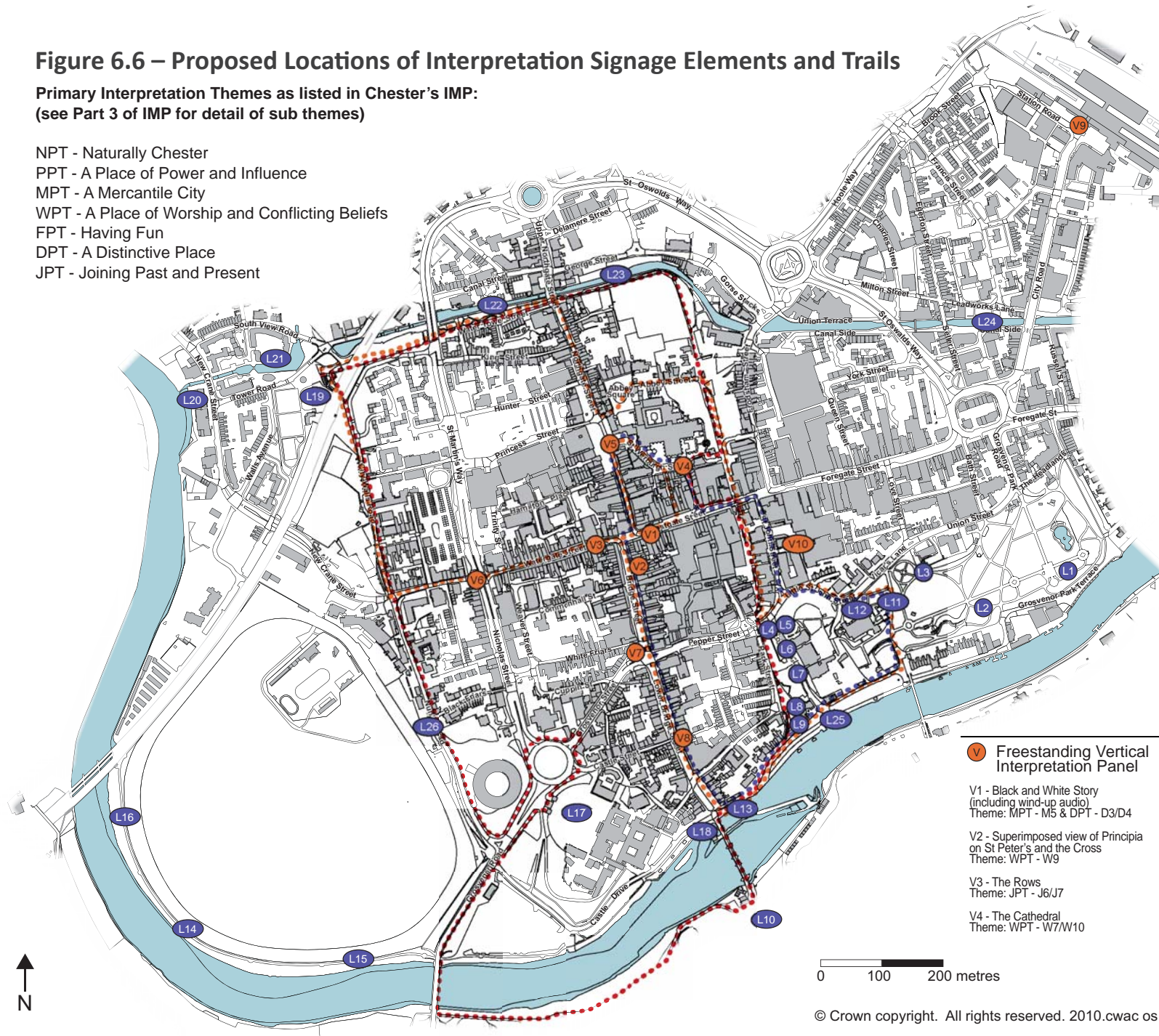
**Key**

- Millennium Festival Trail
- Geological Trail
- Three Churches Trail
- L Freestanding Lectern Interpretation Panel

- L1 to L3 - Grosvenor Park  
Themes: NPT - N8 & DPT - D5
- L4 to L9 - Roman Gardens  
Themes: PPT - P5/P6 & JPT - J3/J5  
(replacement of existing in new format)
- L10 - Minerva Panel in Edgar's Field Park  
Theme: WPT - W2/W3
- L11 to L12 - St John's Church  
Theme: WPT - W4 & PPT  
(replacement of existing in new format)
- L13 - Chester Weir  
Theme: MPT - M3
- L14 - The Roodee Roman Port  
Theme: FPT - F2
- L15 - L16 - River Dee  
Themes: NPT - N5/N6 and PPT - P1/P4
- L17 - The Castle  
Themes: PPT - P14 and DPT - D2
- L18 - Crossing the Dee  
Theme: MPT - M14
- L19 - Water Tower  
Theme: MPT - M8
- L20 - Port and Trade  
Theme: MPT - M6/M7/M12
- L21 and L22 - Canal  
Themes: NPT - N7 and MPT - M9
- L23 - Sandstone  
Theme: NPT - N3/N4
- L24 - Leadworks  
Theme: MPT - M11
- L25 - The Groves Promenade  
Themes: FPT - F3/F5/F9 and DPT - D1
- L26 - Roman Quay Wall  
Theme: MPT - M2

**V Freestanding Vertical Interpretation Panel**

- V1 - Black and White Story (including wind-up audio)  
Theme: MPT - M5 & DPT - D3/D4
- V2 - Superimposed view of Principia on St Peter's and the Cross  
Theme: WPT - W9
- V3 - The Rows  
Theme: JPT - J6/J7
- V4 - The Cathedral  
Theme: WPT - W7/W10
- V5 - Town Hall Square  
Theme: JPT - J3
- V6 - Georgian Chester  
Theme: MPT - M10
- V7 - Building Conservation  
Theme: DPT - D6
- V8 - St Olave Street  
Theme: WPT - W5
- V9 - The Railway  
Theme: MPT - M13
- V10 - Chapels  
Theme: WPT - W11



## Locations for Interpretation Signage Elements and Trails.

Figure 6.6 (opposite) proposes locations for the majority of the interpretation signage elements identified on pages 260-261. The following provides a commentary on and explanation of the locations chosen.

### 1. Vertical Interpretation Panel

- These should be located at key interpretation points in city centre core locations where space is more limited and more robust signage required.
- Figure 6.6 shows the locations proposed for this signage element along with the interpretative theme (taken from the IMP) that each one would support. These locations include the proposals contained within the IMP, as well as additional proposed locations.

### 2. Lectern Interpretation Panel

- These should be located at key interpretation points outside the city centre core, where a more cost effective design is appropriate and more space is available.
- Figure 6.6 shows the locations proposed for this signage element along with the interpretative theme (taken from the IMP) that each one would support. These locations include the proposals contained within the IMP, as well as additional proposed locations.

### 3. City Walls Interpretation Panels (not shown in Figure 6.6)

- These redesigned panels would be used to replace the existing panels located on the city walls (12 panels proposed in Imagemakers Draft Portico Report - see report for exact locations and interpretation messages/themes).
- A sample of Imagemakers concept designs are shown on page 261. Panels could be wall mounted (or if reverse applied acrylic/enamelled lava stone post mounted).

### 4. Historic Monument Panel (not shown in Figure 6.6)

- These redesigned panels would be used to replace the existing panels located at St John's Church and ruins.
- These panels could be used on other historic structures where other forms of interpretation are not provided (i.e. millennium trail buildings and to replace blue plaques that currently commemorate buildings).
- Panels would be wall mounted, wherever possible.

### 5. Blue Plaques (not shown in Figure 6.6)

- These are commemorative plaques to be located on buildings that have at one time been lived in by noteworthy individuals.
- A scheme is currently being developed where locations will be chosen.

### 6. Floor/Wall Mounted Waymarkers on Trail Routes

- Floor or wall mounted waymarkers should be located at approximately 100m intervals to define particular trail routes. So as not to clutter streetscapes with numerous different waymarkers not every trail should be marked by waymarkers, some can be identified just by using a trails leaflet (see point below). It is suggested that trails designed for children to use should incorporate waymarkers as these are fun elements to find en route.
- Waymarked trails will be supported by the 'Explore Chester' trails booklet (proposed in the IMP).
- Wherever possible, all trails should start from The Cross. The trails identified in the IMP that would require waymarkers are:
  - Millennium Festival Trail (see route shown on Figure 6.6)
  - Geological Trail (see route shown on Figure 6.6 which starts from Grosvenor Museum)
  - Three Churches Trail (see route shown on Figure 6.6)
  - Ports and Wharves Trail (route to be defined)
- The City Walls Trail and Scenic Waterways Route (Cycle Chester Blue Route) are defined using other types of waymarking and interpretation signage and do not require the use of waymarkers.