

## Wayfinding and Signage Strategy

### 6.5 ~ Further Design Guidance...

Section 6.5 provides further design guidance relevant to both wayfinding and interpretation signage.

#### General Issues on Siting

- The core elements of the system are intended to be developed as ground fixed, stand-alone components. Opportunities should be sought to fix signage elements to street furniture and on walls where it does not compromise the signs effectiveness, in order to minimise street clutter.
- Generally signage should be installed at back of footways to reduce clutter and minimise obstruction. If this compromises visibility then signs should be positioned along the kerb, no closer than 500mm to the kerb edge.
- It is important to consider the number of people likely to want to access a sign at any one time and try to provide space for this to occur. Busy areas with restricted space are likely to require smaller units that can be quickly read.
- The dual function of the vertical wayfinding signage elements in being able to accommodate interpretative information to the rear should be exploited in order to reduce the number of signs required at any one location.

#### Choice of Materials

Consideration of the signage suite used outside the city centre is beyond the remit of this strategy. However, it is proposed that cost effective alternatives are explored for signs located outside the city centre, such as replacement of sandstone base and stainless steel frames with powder coated steel. Although materials may vary, the signage outside the city centre should conform in every other aspect, so that it is recognised as part of the Chester signage style.

#### Vitreous Enamel Graphic Panels

In general, vitreous enamel panels are proposed for all the vertical signage elements. This relatively expensive but highly durable and colour fast finish is considered appropriate for use in Chester city centre and will convey an image of quality and reliability. Unlike cheaper and less robust materials, vitreous enamel is more costly to update, and so where regular changes to information are expected designs should allow for the incorporation of smaller panel units which can be updated without having to replace the whole sign (as shown in the wayfinding signage suite presented on pages 246-247).

#### Glass Reinforced Plastic Graphic Panels

Glass Reinforced Plastic (GRP) panels are proposed for use in free-standing lectern interpretation panels. This will allow the display of high quality, full colour images. As the lectern style interpretation panels will take up more room within the public realm, they are more likely to be located away from the busy pedestrian flows of the core area and therefore the use of more robust and higher quality vitreous enamel panels is considered less important.

#### Cast Metal Graphic Panels/Waymarker Plaques

The PORTICO project proposes that cast zinc could be retained as the material for wall mounted interpretation panels on the City Walls. In addition, cast zinc should be used for other wall mounted interpretation panels, blue plaques and for some wall mounted trail waymarkers. This is a traditional and very robust material which is relatively cost effective and is considered appropriate to Chester. Cast zinc panels are limited as to their size and can be painted with a limited colour palette. They would therefore be subtle in appearance and less likely to inspire readers.

It is suggested that plain cast bronze panels be used for floor mounted waymarkers to trail routes. This is a robust choice with a quality finish.

### Reverse Applied Acrylic Graphic Panels

The PORTICO project proposes reverse applied acrylic as an alternative and more versatile material (compared to cast zinc) for the interpretation panels on the City Walls. Reverse applied acrylic would allow for full colour images/illustrations and signage would appear as a more 'contemporary' intervention that stands out from the historic setting. This type of production would also offer the flexibility of a range of sizes and formats. However, they would be more costly to produce and less robust than cast zinc.

### Enamelled LavaStone

The Portico project has identified enamelled lava stone as a potential alternative to reverse applied acrylic. This is a more long-lasting robust alternative, as it is highly UV, salt, frost and scratch resistant and graffiti can easily be removed. The stone is quarried and the graphic content applied to the surface prior to it being enamelled and kiln fired. The process offers flexibility in the size and thickness of panels and graphic style/colours that can be used. In addition, the finished stone has a natural feel with its own unique patina which would be in keeping with the setting of the City Walls.

### Sandstone bases

The St Bees red sandstone bases proposed for the vertical signage elements and free standing lectern interpretation panel would be shot blasted to include decorative motifs pertinent to the sign's location. Illustrative examples are shown opposite.



Examples of sand blasted red sandstone bases incorporating locally relevant motifs (Credit: Imagemakers)

### Lighting

The integration of lighting into signage elements has significant cost implications in terms of initial expenditure, as well as maintenance. Although it is possible to use solar technology, this tends to be at the expense of aesthetics as a large flat surface area will be required to accommodate photocells as well as battery storage. It is recommended that resources are concentrated on ambient light levels and that integral lighting of signage is only considered for the most important city centre locations. Even then, it is important that the council's conservation officers are consulted on any proposals for internally lit signs.

### Branding and graphic design

Figure 6.7 opposite provides details of the graphic design style developed by Iagemakers for the Chester signage suite. A consistent approach and simple palette has been prepared in order to create a distinctive ‘Chester’ style that can be easily recognised and understood.

#### Font/typeface and illustrative style

- ‘Exclusively Cheshire’ – used for sign heading place names (generally Chester followed by local name).
- ‘Myriad Pro’ – all other text (including fingerposts).
- Font sizes should be consistently used across each signage element (i.e headings, maps, general text).
- In general maps and images should be produced as simple line illustrations, using a restricted palette of colours (selected from the colour palette provided in Figure 6.7).

#### Colour palette

A limited palette of primary colours has been selected:

- Pantone colour 2965 (dark blue) has been selected as the background colour for the graphic panels and therefore the main colour for the city centre wayfinding signs. This provides strong contrast with the white font (see information on DDA compliance later in this section).

- Pantone colours 555 (dark green), 871 (bronze) and Warm Gray 5 have been selected as the principal colours for the map bases and will also be used as supporting colours for local identity symbols and graphics (see below and overleaf).
- The majority of text should be in white.

A wider selection of complementary secondary colours have been selected for use in the map and interpretation graphics. Some of these will also be used as main and supporting colours to distinguish particular visitor attractions/destinations (see Iagemakers proposals for City Walls signage and also proposal for local identity symbol/graphic below/on see below and overleaf).

Figure 6.7 – Fonts and colours proposed for Chester signage suite (Credit: Imagemakers)

Chester Signage  
colour swatches

FONTS

Exclusively  
Cheshire  
Myriad Pro

PRIMARY COLOURS

C : 100 M : 79 Y : 0 K : 73  PANTONE 2965	C : 13 M : 23 Y : 67 K : 42  PANTONE 871	
C : 82 M : 13 Y : 76 K : 45  PANTONE 555	C : 36 M : 33 Y : 37 K : 13  PANTONE Warm Gray 5	WHITE

SECONDARY COLOURS

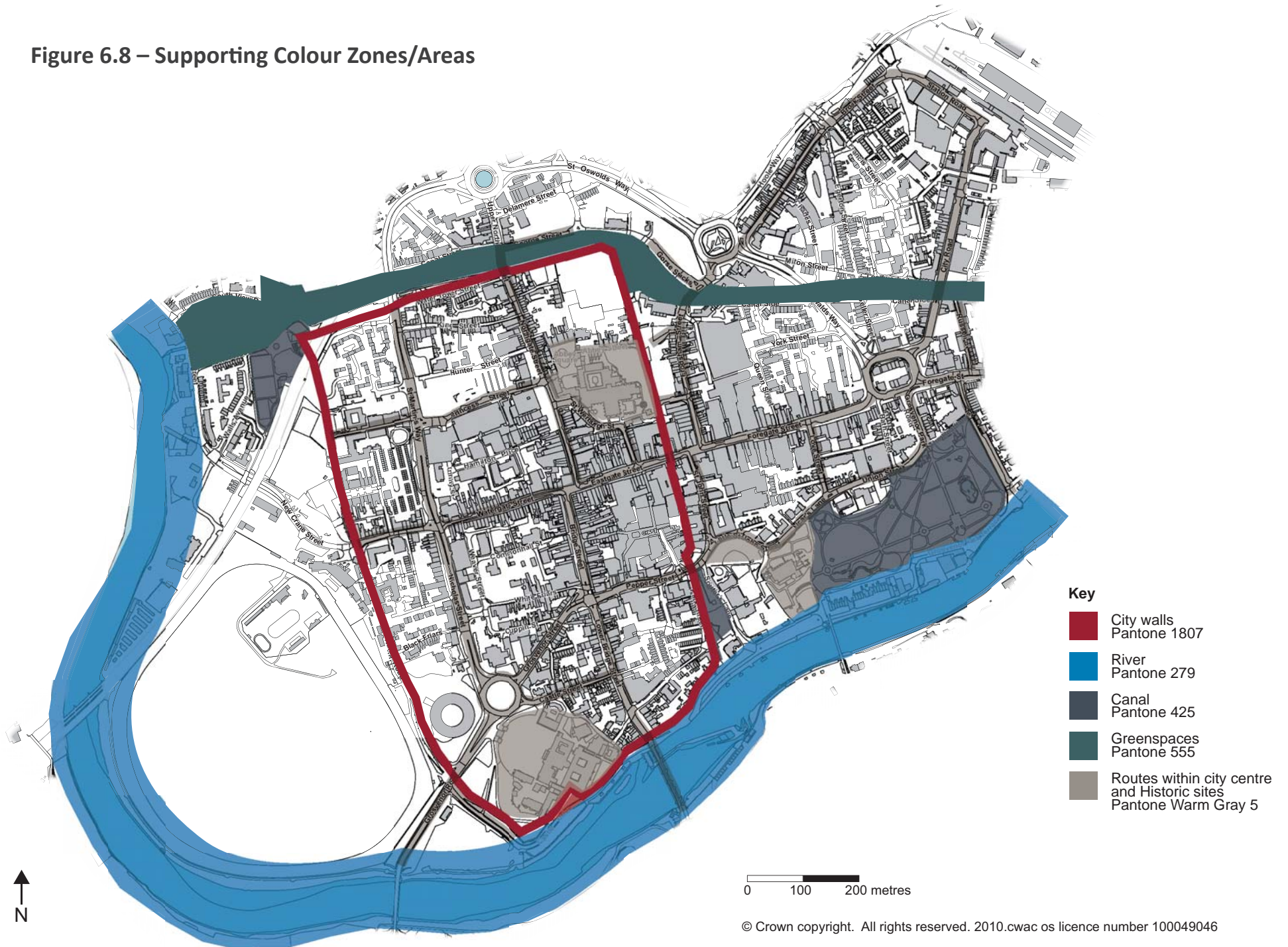
C : 0 M : 56 Y : 100 K : 43  PANTONE 1615	C : 0 M : 7 Y : 39 K : 17  PANTONE 4525	C : 90 M : 41 Y : 7 K : 1  PANTONE 279
C : 55 M : 49 Y : 51 K : 0  PANTONE Warm Gray 8	C : 69 M : 54 Y : 42 K : 39  PANTONE 425	C : 11 M : 95 Y : 71 K : 33  PANTONE 1807
C : 68 M : 23 Y : 85 K : 0  PANTONE 7489	C : 3 M : 14 Y : 79 K : 0  PANTONE 129	C : 0 M : 100 Y : 81 K : 4  PANTONE 185



Use of local natural materials  
eg: Sandstone

White Gold finish  
brushed steel

Figure 6.8 – Supporting Colour Zones/Areas



### Zone/Area supporting colour and use of local identity symbol/graphic

It is proposed that each signage element displays a supporting colour used in addition to the main colour background (generally Dark Blue - Pantone 2965). This colour will vary depending on the location of the sign and will help to reinforce orientation and wayfinding. Figure 6.8 prescribes supporting colours for use in different locations within the city centre.

Figure 6.9 below, which presents the detailed designs recently prepared for the Roman Amphitheatre, illustrates how the supporting colour can be used on vertical signage elements.

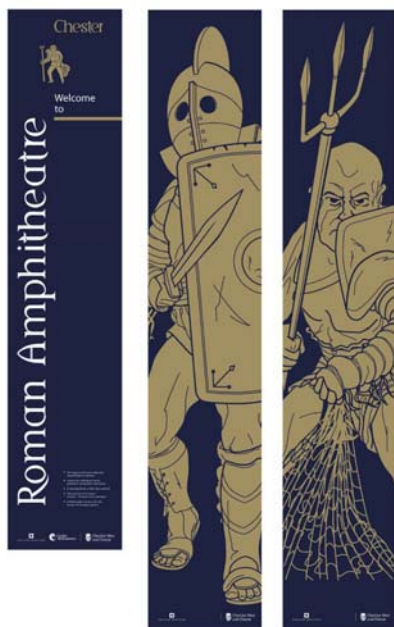


Figure 6.9 – Examples of local identity symbols and graphics, as well as use of consistent secondary colour (Credit: Imagemakers)

The supporting colour could be used on vertical signs for:

- The header and local identity motif to front.
- Local identity graphic emblem to rear.

On fingerposts the supporting colour could be used for:

- Arrows at end of each finger.
- Underlining the key or local destination name.

Figure 6.9 also shows how the local identity motif and graphic emblem could vary depending on the location. This will help to reinforce the individual brand of particular visitor destinations (i.e. City Walls and The Rows), reflecting local identity as well as conveying interpretive themes. This approach has been developed by Imagemakers for the City Walls (see further detail in the Imagemaker's PORTICO report), using a distinct colour palette taken from the swatch presented in Figure 6.7 and an 'Explore the Walls' motif/brand that would be used on all City Walls related signage.

The majority of signage will also incorporate a local identity motif in the sandstone base (see previous examples).

### Use of Cheshire West and Chester and Partner Logos

Detailed guidance on the use of the council's and partner logos is provided in the Cheshire West and Chester Council's 'Brand Identity Guide'. The following provides a summary of this information in relation to signage elements.

- The Cheshire West and Chester logo should be used in its entirety (as shown below) on the bottom right corner of all graphic signage panels.
- The logo must always appear in its own clear space. As the image below shows the clear space/exclusion zone can easily be calculated using the 'C' from the 'Cheshire' or 'Chester' as a guide.
- The minimum size the logo should be produced at is 35x10mm.



Cheshire West and Chester logotype with exclusion zone shown around it

- The Brand Identity Guide provides guidelines for four different colourways. For public realm signage elements it is proposed that a Single Colour (white) should be used on a single dark colour background, as shown below.



Single colour dark background  
Logotype reversed out

Cheshire West and Chester logotype in single colour (white) with a dark background

- The Brand Identity Guide also provides guidance on the use of partner logos. These should begin on the bottom left corner of the graphic signage panels (the requirement to display partner logos is likely to vary on a site by site basis). Any subsequent partner logos should be positioned moving from left to right. A short vertical line should be used to separate partner logos from the council's logo.



Example of how partner logos should be laid out in relation to the council's logo

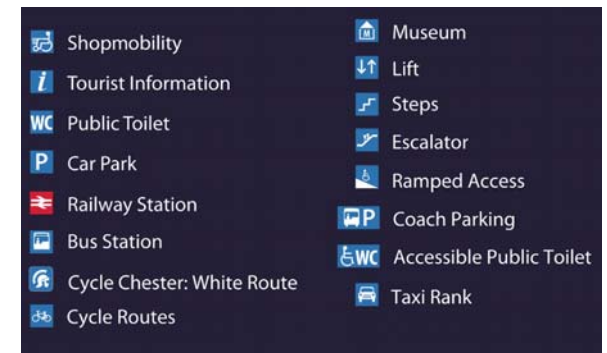
The Head of Marketing and Communications at the council should be contacted with any queries regarding the use of logos or requests for further information.

### Legibility and DDA compliance

Signage must be designed so that it can be used and understood by all, including those with mobility impairments, visual impairments and learning difficulties. The following principles should be applied to designs in order to ensure that this is achieved:

#### Font/Type Face

- Sans Serif fonts should be used.
- Sentence case lettering (i.e Public Toilet) should be used as this is more readily distinguishable than just lowercase or uppercase (capital) lettering.
- Arabic numbers should be used.
- Symbols should be used as a quick and effective way of communicating information but only where they are universally recognisable. Symbols proposed for wayfinding in Chester are shown below.



Standard wayfinding symbols for use in Chester

- Letters and numbers should have a width to height ratio of between 3:5 and 1:1.
- Letters and numbers should have a stroke width to height ratio between 1:5 and 1:10, and should preferably be between 1:6 and 1:8.
- The horizontal spacing between characters should be 25 to 50% of the characters' width and 75 to 100% between words.
- The vertical spacing between lines should be at least 50% of character height.
- Text should not be justified.

#### Font and symbol sizes

Size of letters should be related to the distance from which the sign will usually be read. As a general rule it is suggested that the letter height should be at least 1% of the distance at which the message will usually be read, subject to a minimum height of 22mm. For example, if the sign is to be read at a distance of 3000mm, the font height should be at least 30mm. If space permits, letter height should be greater than the one per cent rule.

The following provides guidance on the size of symbols in relation to the viewing distance, taken from the DfT's 'Inclusive Mobility' guidance (see references on overleaf):

Viewing Distance	Symbol Size
3-6m	40mm
6-9m	60mm
9-12m	80mm
12-15m	100mm
15-18m	120mm
18-24m	160mm
24-30m	200mm
30-36m	240mm
36-48m	320mm
38-60m	400mm
60-72m	480mm
72-90m	600mm

#### Colour contrast

- It is important that text and other characters on signs contrast with the background of the sign.
- Signs should have a matt finish as reflective surfaces are difficult to read.
- Signs should be well and evenly lit with uniform lighting over the surface of the sign of between 100 and 300 lux.
- Where vertical signage elements are proposed, 'visibility' dots should be incorporated down narrow edge of vertical signage elements to ensure that they are visible.

#### Information/Content

- Signage should provide information on distances/ travel times.
- Signage should incorporate information on any facilities for disabled people, such as accessible toilets, buses or Shopmobility services, as well as information on the location of steps and alternative accessible routes.



### Height of elements

- Important information should be located between 900mm and 1800mm above the ground so it can be easily read by most people.
- The best viewing angle for signs mounted on walls or other vertical surfaces is  $\pm 30^\circ$  in the vertical plane (from eye level) and up to  $20^\circ$  either side of a  $90^\circ$  line to the sign in the horizontal plane.
- Surfacing around signage elements must be designed to allow ease of access for wheelchair users.
- Where a sign may be obscured by pedestrians it should be placed at a height of not less than 2000mm. Where a directional or information sign is suspended over a pedestrian area there should be a 2100mm minimum clear space from the bottom edge of the sign to the floor.

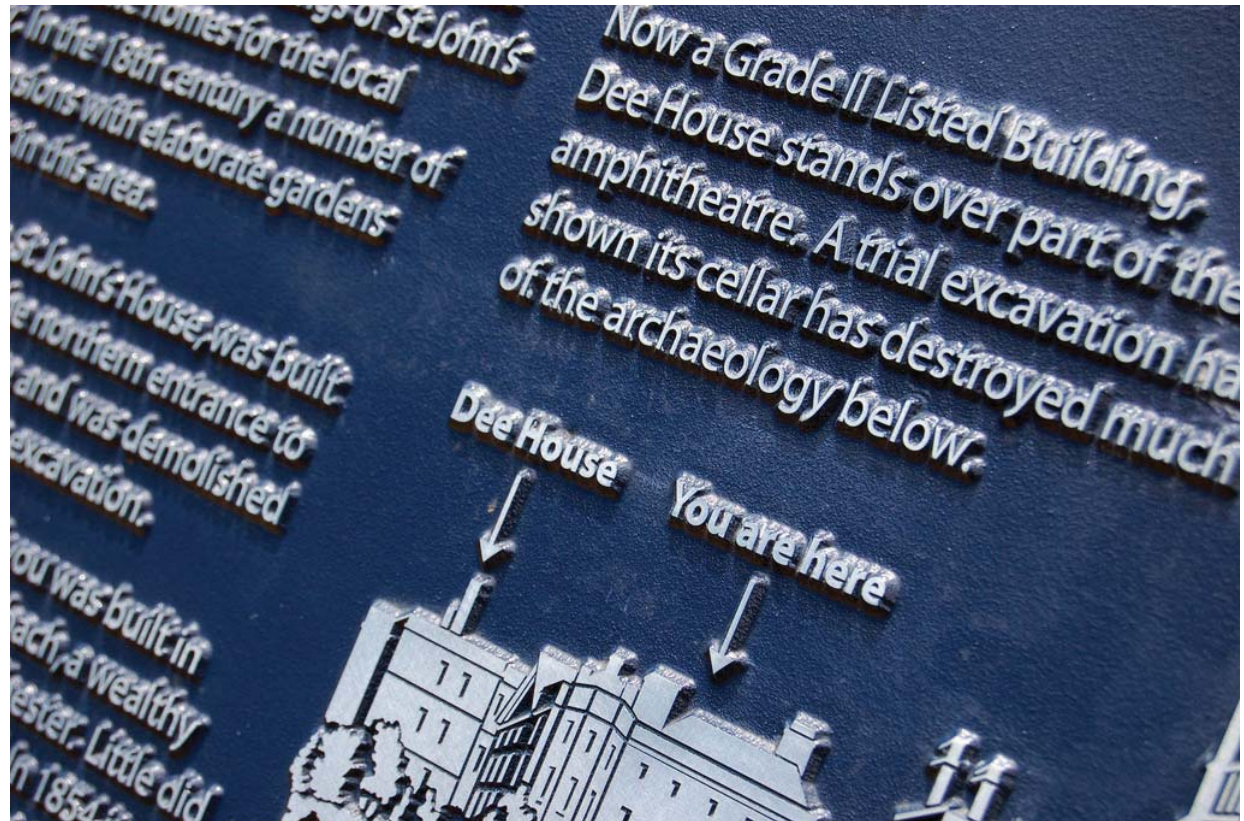
### Consultation on prototype designs

It is recommended that consultation exercises are carried out to test the public's perception of prototype designs for wayfinding and interpretive material. This should include a proportion of representatives from local accessibility groups. This will allow adjustments to be made prior to the final production of signage and publications.

### Further guidance

The following publications provide more detailed design guidelines:

- The Informability Manual (COI)
- Inclusive Mobility (DfT)
- Sign Design Guide (JMU and SDS)
- BT Countryside Access For All Design Standards
- See it Right (RNIB)



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

### Maintenance:

The materials detailed in this strategy have been chosen with the need for longevity and maintenance in mind:

- The material palette of stainless steel, cast metals and natural stone, as well predominant use of vitreous enamel are all materials that will weather well in a city centre environment.
- Designs have minimised the use of blank surfaces and have incorporated textures to make fly posting and graffiti more difficult.
- The designs that have been developed have a contemporary but timeless feel, which is appropriate to Chester and will continue to be relevant for years to come.

The various graphic panels specified do vary in their robustness and colour fastness. Their anticipated lifecycles and maintenance considerations are provided in the table opposite:

As previously identified flexibility in design is important, in order to allow for the updating of information and repair without the need to replace the whole unit.

However robust and high quality the signage, the signage suite will deteriorate if it is not regularly maintained. It is therefore vital that there is a clear responsibility for every piece of signage, including those produced in partnership. A programme should be developed for routine inspection and maintenance. This will ensure the regular removal

of any fly-posting or graffiti, preventing the spread of potentially 'contagious' behaviour. Maintenance costs should allow for the replacement of pieces using the anticipated lifecycles given below.

Panel Material	Lifecycle	Maintenance considerations
GRP	Up to 5 years	Surface can tend to 'star'.
Reverse Applied Acrylic	5-10 years	Less resistant to vandalism than some options
Cast Zinc	Up to 10 years	Very robust but textured relief makes it difficult to clean
Cast Bronze	10 years +	Very robust but textured relief makes it difficult to clean
Vitreous Enamel	10 years +	Very robust (cannot be shattered) and easy to clean
Enamelled Lava Stone	30 years + (manufacturer guaranteed for 10 years)	Very robust. UV, salt, frost and scratch resistant