



Canal & River Trust – Restoring the Montgomery Canal

Aston Lock Nature Reserve, design,
installation and interpretation of
waterside wildlife watching & play
features

Design, construction & Interpretation Brief – October 2019



European Union
European Regional
Development Fund

1. Overview

The Canal & River Trust is seeking to commission a suitably experienced and creative contractor to design, build and install a number of interpreted wildlife watching features at its new wildlife site at Aston Locks on the Montgomery Canal, in Shropshire, England.

Aston Locks Wildlife Reserve is a series of three, irregularly shaped artificial ponds or small lakes. The site has been developed to mitigate against the potential disturbance of leisure boating to the Montgomery Canal's dominant population of Floating Water Plantain (*Luronium natans*). This plant is rare in lowland Britain and for this reason the canal has been designated a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This new site adds significantly to the already established wildlife pond site, at Lock 1, a short distance north east of the new reserve.

Since its creation the Trust has been working to manage the site to maximise its ecological diversity. As time passes, and with continued management, the site will flourish and become a haven for local and migrating wildlife. It will provide a valuable link to other wildlife sites in an area predominantly managed for farming. In addition, the site will provide an important recreational space for Shropshire residents and visitors, promoting health, well-being and an opportunity to interact with and learn from nature.

The site is adjacent to the canal within 10 minutes' walk of Queens Head Wharf.

See map of main site on following page.

2. Outline

We require the following structures to be designed and installed on site:

- Wildlife watching hide with living roof (Point 4 on map)
- Plantain Flower-shaped dipping platform (Point 13)
- Reedbed screened viewing platform (Point 6)
- Giant wooden dragonfly play feature (on woodland bank Point 3)

Each location will need to include interpretive media that communicates the site's themes (see appendix 2). Stated dimensions are to be used as a costing guide. Final dimensions and design to be developed and approved through the design stage of this contract.

Wildlife watching hide with living roof – 'The Burrow'

This is the main built feature of the site. Access to it will be via an all ability path and across the top of the woodland bank. It is intended that 'The Burrow' will be dug into the southern end of the earth bank, so that it's base can be close to the water level. It's anticipated that to facilitate this, the hide may need to be on short stilts/legs.

It's hoped that the building will be used by school groups and educational visits as well as birdwatchers and leisure visitors.

Option 1 Burrow full hide (lockable)

Approximate dimensions base 9,000 x 3,000mm, height 2,700mm sloping to 2,300mm towards lakeside, with an overhanging, turfed roof (sown with wildflower mix), rainwater guttering and safety glass

windows. The structure is to meet accessibility standards for all users. The building should be constructed from sustainably sourced (FSC approved) natural materials as far as possible.

Access to the building will be from the rear. The sturdy access door will include a keycode entry lock.

Option 2 Burrow 'half hide' (open access)

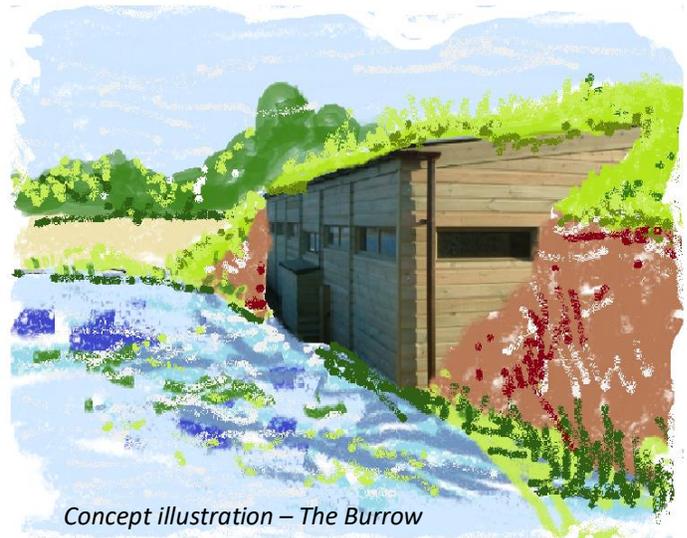
Approximate dimensions base 10,000 x 3,000mm, height 2,700mm sloping to 2,300mm towards lakeside, with an overhanging, turfed roof (sown with wildflower mix), rainwater guttering and safety glass windows. The structure is to meet accessibility standards for all users. The building should be constructed from sustainably sourced (FSC approved) natural materials as far as possible.

Access to the building will be from the side, via an open screened wildlife viewing area. Instead of a door, the side of the building will include a curved aperture. The screens will include slots at various heights to allow views out to the lake for adults and children.

Design Style

Although essentially a standard hide structure, we would like to explore creative ideas to realise the vision for this building feeling like the burrow of a bank side animal such as a vole, brown rat, otter, sand martin or kingfisher.

The siting of the building could include the extension of the earth bank around hide to create an artificial bank suitable for use by these animals.



Concept illustration – The Burrow



Floating Water Plantain

Plantain Flower-shaped Dipping Platform (Point 13)

The intention of this structure is to allow safe access to the water for pond dipping activities. This will be a low to water, wooden/recycled plastic-dipping platform, with safety rails, a water safety floatation aid, bench seating and interpretive features. It is hoped that the structure will resemble the shape of the [Floating Water Plantain](#) or other water plant associated with the site. Approximate dimensions for this structure: minimum width 2,500mm x length 4000mm, with railed access ramp from the bank width 1,500mm

Reedbed Screened viewing platform (Point 6)

This lake is not part of the main site, and only accessible via a permissive track. A screened viewing platform will allow observation of reed nesting and feeding birds, with views out over the lake where possible. The structure is envisioned to be a 4,000 x 2,500mm wooden or recycled plastic raised base with a hurdle or overlapping lath screen on three sides. It should include bench seating to allow seated

observation and lift up viewing slots at suitable heights. Potentially, this feature could have a half-roof to provide some shelter from the elements.

Giant dragonfly play feature (Point 3)

Located on the bank and screened by trees, this feature will encourage play and exploration of the bank and play, without disturbing the wildlife on the lakes. This giant feature should be approximately 3,000 metres long with four carved wooden wings. It needs to be robust and may include carved, tactile features within its structure. Although wooden in concept it may include other materials to accentuate the design.

3. Interpretation

All of the features are intended to have an interpretive purpose. It is important therefore that this is considered during the design process. We want to engage our audiences through fun, accessible enjoyable and interactive media experiences. One element of this will include the provision of an augmented reality experience. This will be a separate contract, but one that will be developed in tandem with the design of the features described above. Through augmented reality, it will be possible to have otters playing in the burrow, their virtual images triggered by artwork or mural work within the building. This is one of a number of concepts that we are exploring. It will be important therefore that the chosen contractor allows time in their schedule to work with us and other contractors in the development of the interpretive media. We see this as a collaborative creative process, not a series of modular delivery projects.

The site is on the Welsh border and it is anticipated that many of its visitors will be Welsh language speakers. As a result, we will apply Welsh language guidelines to all media produced. The costs of translation will be separate to the budget described in this project, as all copy will be supplied.

An additional brief will follow this piece of work that will describe the manufacture and installation of interpretive and visitor orientation panels at key points along the canal. There maybe some overlap in these two pieces of work and we are open to suppliers bidding for both work packages. For more information on this see contact details in section 11. The graphic design and illustration element of this additional media will be contracted separately to C&RT's preferred contractors.

The themes for the interpretation are provided in the appendices.

4. Our Team

Project Management

The overall project is managed by David Hennessey, who will be responsible for the fulfilment of this contract on behalf of the Canal & River Trust. David will also project manage the installation of all access improvements associated with the delivery of this project.

Interpretation

The Canal & River Trust has contracted a specialist interpretive planner to work with the consultants through the build project. Their role is to support the project's contractors and oversee their delivery of the interpretive elements of the project. This role will also coordinate the other interpretation contractors working on the other aspects of the project such as augmented reality.

Community engagement

The project team also includes a community engagement officer who has been working with the community to develop the project. Her name is Sylvia Edwards, and she will be available to support the development of the interpretation and visitor facilities as appropriate.

Environment and wildlife

The Trust has a specialist ecologist who will work with us to ensure that the content of any interpretive media correctly explains the wildlife and habitats of the site.

Corporate branding

The Trust have a comprehensive set of brand guidelines that will be applicable to all media produced for this site. The application of the brand will be the responsibility of the project managers.

5. What is required

The following describes the services that are required:

Procurement

We wish to procure a suitable contractor who can fulfil all aspects of this brief. **For procurement details see '9. How your response will be assessed'**

Design

We require the chosen contractor to design all of the features described above within the budget and timetable described. We would like to see provisional design sketches for approval before the finished design plans are created.

Building/installation

The chosen contractor will be responsible for the sourcing of all materials required to build the agreed structures. They will be responsible for the build and any site security required during the build. They will also need to provide all plant and equipment, although the Canal & River Trust may be able to assist with specialised machinery. The site is accessible via field edge paths and from the canal. **The Trust may be able to help with transporting bulky materials and equipment by using canal barges.**

We want the contractor to provide well designed, high-quality, robust and environmentally friendly, low maintenance structures, that will last a minimum of 25 years.

Planning Permission

The Trust will be responsible for securing planning permission for the site. Planning applications will be supported by design drawings and specifications provided by the chosen contractor.

Interpretation

The chosen contractor will be responsible for the planning, design, build and installation of all interpretive media. The budget for this is inclusive within the overall fixed contract value. The Trust's interpretation specialist will provide support for this, including the provision/editorial of any written copy/scripts.

The completed interpretation of the hide structure needs to be fun, engaging, interactive and robust. We do not see this as just a series of themed panels. We are looking for contractors with innovative ideas to help us fulfil this aspiration.

6. Project budget

	<i>Design & Build</i>	<i>Interpret</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Wildlife watching hide with living roof</i>	£ 60,000.00	£ 20,000.00	£ 80,000.00
<i>Plantain Flower-shaped dipping platform</i>	£ 8,000.00	£ 2,000.00	£ 10,000.00
<i>Reedbed screened viewing platform</i>	£ 3,500.00	£ 1,500.00	£ 5,000.00
<i>Giant wooden dragonfly play feature</i>	£ 2,000.00	£ 500.00	£ 2,500.00
	£ 73,500.00	£ 24,000.00	£ 97,500.00

A suggested budget has been allocated to each feature to fit within the fixed **£97,500 + VAT** budget

The budget must cover **all** contractor costs, including contingency.

7. Project timetable

The proposed design and construction timetable is flexible to allow amendment through the design, construction and installation phases if required.

		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
		2019			2020											
Brief issued	NM/DH	■	■													
Response to Brief	CON		■	■												
Selection of contractors	NMDH			■												
Design development	CON/NM/DH				■	■										
Planning permission	DH/NM					■	■	■								
Ground prep	C&RT						■	■	■							
Construction	CON								■	■	■	■	■	■		
Interpretive development	CON/NM/DH			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Interpretation installation	CON											■	■	■	■	
Care and maintenance agreement	C&RT				■										■	
dragonfly play structure design	CON						■	■	■							
dragonfly play structure installation	CON								■							

CON – Supplier, C&RT – groundworks team, NM/DH Nigel McDonald/David Hennessey

8. How to respond to this brief

Please provide a written response to the brief. See 9 for more detail. Submissions and site visits will be at the respondent’s expense.

- Business details and background
- Details of your staff/delivery team, including their roles, what they bring to the project, experience and Linked In profiles (where applicable) etc
- Details of any subcontractors and how/why you have selected them
- Case studies of up to three similar previous projects, including budgets, approach, concepts and completed work. Please provide contact details and locations.
- A creative response to the brief - this may include outline concept drawings of the described features. This is not mandatory but may help us visualise your ideas. You will retain copyright for all submitted drawings and concepts.
- A method statement detailing your approach to the project
- A client list for the last two years
- Two suitable references

- Details of your insurance including satisfactory levels of cover for public liability, professional indemnity insurance
- A costed breakdown showing how you will allocate the budget to the various elements described in the brief. Please show project management as a percentage of the total budget.

9. How your response will be assessed

The following evaluation criteria (with their respective weightings) will be used to evaluate tenders: The award of this contract will be awarded on the basis of **Price, cost breakdown and Value for Money 25% (Criteria 1) and 75% Quality (Criteria 2 – 7)**.

		Score Breakdown	Total
Criteria 1	Financial & Fee Proposal	25%	25%
Criteria 2	Experience & Track Record in Delivery	20%	}75%
Criteria 3	Technical Knowledge & Ability	15%	
Criteria 4	Creativity & Inspiration	15%	
Criteria 5	Communication & Team Working	10%	
Criteria 6	Additionality	10%	
Criteria 7	Support and Administration	5%	
		100%	100%

Each “**criteria**” element should have its **own individual heading** within your tender proposal and have sufficient supporting information to undertake a comprehensive evaluation. A maximum of three top scoring respondents will be taken forward to interview if the procurement group are unable to decide based on responses received.

9.1 Financial & Fee Proposal

Please show your project management costs as a percentage of the overall budget. Please also break down the budget, showing how you would allocate it to the different elements.

Respondents should explain to what extent they can meet our requirements and should note any savings made in any areas due to experience or expertise, and how this would benefit other areas of the brief. Respondent’s business turnover is expected to be at least double the expected value of the contract. Respondents should possess and evidence the appropriate insurances. Any requirements for subcontracting any part of the work should be included in detail with justifications for why you have selected these services. Details of subcontractor’s experience should be included.

9.2 Experience & Track Record in Delivery

Respondents should demonstrate experience and expertise of delivering specific to this brief. This should include details of experience of working with any of subcontractor and their track record in delivery.

9.3 Technical Knowledge & Ability

Respondents should possess and evidence the necessary skills to undertake this contract. This should include details of experience of working with any of subcontractor and their track record in delivery.

9.4 Creativity & inspiration

At the heart of it, this is a creative brief. We are looking for a creative response that will sell us on your ideas. This may require that you provide concepts and ideas. There will be no fee payment for these proposals and any ideas put forward will be confirmed during the project delivery stages i.e. they may need to be adapted as circumstances dictate. However, they should be deliverable within the fixed budget agreed and you will be expected to deliver them (within acceptable margins) as described. Examples of previous similar work will help support your proposals. Throughout the procurement process, all ideas/concepts/drawing submitted will remain the property of the respondent and be dealt with in confidence, not shared with any competitor. If two respondents propose similar ideas, this will be made apparent to both parties once the contract has been awarded.

9.5 Ability to communicate & work with people

We want to work with people with excellent people skills. Good communications throughout the project will be essential. As a creative project as clients, we want to be involved in the creative process. We will do what we can to make communications as easy as possible. Please show evidence in your submission of where good communications has delivered better projects.

9.6 Additionality

See '5. What is required' What do you bring to this project that will improve on what is required? What added value can you bring to this project? Please give us your thoughts.

9.7 Support & Administration

How good is your support and administration? Can you quickly provide answers, resolve problems and have provide information as and when needed? Please evidence how you approach this within your projects.

10. Submission deadline

Please send responses electronically to David Hennessey (David.Hennessey@canalrivertrust.org.uk) by **12pm Thursday November 28th 2019**. You will receive an email response confirming receipt of your proposal. If mailing large files, please use We Transfer or similar large file transfer service. The Trust reserves the right not to consider late applications.

11. Support

Potential contractors are invited to visit the site with a representative of the project team on the following dates November 8th 11th 15th 18th. A complete assessment of the site will take 2 hours. Please contact Nigel McDonald to arrange a site visit and location details.

To discuss the project, contact Project Manager, David Hennessey 07500 606 030 David.Hennessey@canalrivertrust.org.uk or Interpretation specialist Nigel McDonald 07805 378 795 nigel@thesproutworks.co.uk

12. Appendix 1 Site Plan



2. Appendix 2 Overarching themes and messages

We want to communicate the following themes to visitors to the nature reserve through our use of media and site features.

Why these ponds are important

1. Essential to life – Aston Locks Nature Reserve is adding to a global need for wetlands to support wildlife across the Globe

- Globally wildlife is under huge threat from climate change and habitat loss. Fresh water ponds like these are essential habitats.
- Water supports a huge variety of plants and animals.
- These man-made ponds have been made to work like natural ponds. Different parts of these ponds provide the right conditions for different plants and animals to live. These are called habitats.
- Many different plants and animals live in each habitat, their role or job in that habitat is called their niche.
- All these habitats and niches combine to create a wetland that is rich in wildlife

2. Getting richer everyday - Over time these ponds will teem with nature, becoming home to hundreds of plants and animals.

- This is a new area for wildlife. Everyday new plants and animals are moving in.
- The Canal and River Trust has introduced a nationally rare water plant called Floating Water Plantain (*Luronium natans*). It is hoped it will thrive in these new ponds because they recreate the conditions this water plant needs to survive.

3. 'Islands' in a sea of green - These ponds are like a cluster of 'islands' in a sea of green fields, all but empty of wildlife. They are a small but increasingly important link in a network of other wildlife 'islands' in this area and across the World.

4. Make a difference - You can make a huge difference to the wildlife in your garden by creating a pond; a small but increasingly important link in the network of wildlife sites in your area.

5. Follow the Canal – The Montgomery Canal is a special place for wildlife. You will see lots of different plants and animals when you follow the canal on foot, kayak, bike or boat.