

Chapter 4

Preservation & Enhancement Proposals



Above: Former Youth Club, Mornington Road, Bingley.
Opposite Page: One of the warehouses at Stockbridge Wharf, Riddlesden prior to its conversion to dwellings.
Bottom Right: Disused warehouses, Stockbridge Wharf.

CONSERVATION AREAS are complicated spaces in which many different components and factors come together to create a unique and definite character. Over time conservation areas change and evolve to meet the needs of the people that use them. This can sometimes result in the occurrence of less than sympathetic alterations to building, spaces and its setting, which can often undermine the special character of the place. Though the Leeds Liverpool Canal is very different to many of the other 58 conservation areas in the Bradford district, it still faces many similar issues in respect of threats to its setting, environmental decline and loss of historic character.

In order that the value of the place be preserved, both as a heritage asset and as a place in which people wish to live, invest and enjoy, it is important that the elements that contribute to its sense of place and special character are protected from inappropriate alteration. In order to achieve this the designation of a conservation area brings with it some legislative controls and these are complemented by further policies included within the Council's Unitary Development Plan. The intent of these policies is not to stifle an area or prevent change but to ensure that change and new developments preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the place.

The purpose of this document is to assess and identify the special qualities of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal conservation area. As part of this assessment, the document highlights areas that could be improved or enhanced and a number of proposals have been put forward that would ultimately help preserve and enhance the areas and buildings that do not contribute to the character of the conservation area. These proposals draw on and promote the overall need for a co-ordinated approach to the management and enhancement of the canal conservation area. A piecemeal approach will further interrupt the cohesive character and harmony of the conservation area and will ultimately undermine any enhancement works undertaken.

Preservation of the Character and Appearance of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal Conservation Area

As mentioned previously, the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council will make use of the powers afforded to it by national legislation and policies set in the Unitary Development Plan to control inappropriate change in the conservation area. However, the following basic principles (based upon advice set out in PPG15 - Planning and the Historic Environment) will be applied:

- ▶ *There will be a strong presumption in favour of preserving both listed and unlisted buildings and spaces that contribute to the special interest of the conservation area as well as important and intrinsic elements of its setting.*

- ▶ *In making decisions on proposed new developments within the conservation area and affecting its setting, special attention will be paid to the desirability of preserving its character and appearance.*

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport is responsible for the listing of historic buildings that are of special architectural or historic interest. Listed Building Consent is required from the local authority (in this instance the City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council) for any works that affect the special character or appearance of the listed building. This can apply to internal as well as external works. More information about listed buildings and the controls that apply to them is available from the local Planning Office in Bradford. The listing descriptions for buildings contained within the canal conservation area and some listed buildings just beyond the boundary of the conservation area are included in Appendix I of this document.



There are a number of other buildings and structures within the canal conservation area that, although not listed, contribute much to the character, setting and historic interest of the canal. Sadly a number of these buildings have been unsympathetically altered and replacement features, such as modern styles of windows and doors are common. However, where traditional windows and doors have been retained, these make an important contribution to not just the historic interest of the individual building but the wider area too. Other important features include natural roofing materials, such as stone or blue slates, boundary walls and chimneystacks. Generally many of the minor changes that can detrimentally affect the character of an area can be made to unlisted dwellings without the need for planning permission and therefore is beyond the control of the local authority.

New Development

As with many areas there will always be pressure for development, whether this be redevelopment of empty plots, existing sites or even the alteration and extension of existing buildings. It is important that when proposals are put forward for new development in the Leeds-Liverpool Canal conservation area that these take into account and respect the character and appearance of the established area and in particular the canal itself. It would not be desirable, however for new developments to attempt to mimic the old or for an assortment of historic details to be tacked onto a new building. It is important that scope be given for architectural innovation and the incorporation of new ideas, materials and means of detailing, providing that it reflects the scale, proportions and massing of the existing buildings in the conservation area and that it utilises high quality designs and materials.

A recent publication by CABI (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) and English Heritage (2001), entitled 'Building in Context: New Development in Historic Areas' sets down some useful guidelines as to what constitutes good new design in conservation areas. Generally:

▶ *New development should relate to the geography and history of the place and the lie of the land and should be based on a careful evaluation of the site. This ensures that new development would respect the context provided by the canal and its setting and could therefore be regarded as a progression rather than an intrusion.*

▶ *New buildings or extensions should sit happily in the pattern of existing developments and routes through and around it.*

▶ *Important views and vistas within, across, into and out of the conservation area should be respected. This is particularly important in keeping key buildings and landscape features visible.*



▶ *The scale of neighbouring buildings should be respected. Along the canal buildings vary greatly in scale and height, with many of the industrial buildings rising to three or four storeys in height. Domestic buildings tend to be of a smaller scale, rarely rising above two storeys in height. New development should not be conspicuous by ignoring the general scale of the buildings around it.*

▶ *The materials and building techniques used should be as high quality as those used in the existing buildings. Stone buildings, stone boundary walls, iron gates and railings and stone slates and blue roof slates unite the buildings and enclosures despite the differences in style, mass, age and function of the buildings. This, coupled with the care and skill with which these structures were erected, sets the benchmark for new development in the conservation area.*

▶ *New buildings should not impinge on any significant open spaces, or necessitate the destruction of buildings that contribute to the character or appearance of the place. These spaces have been identified in preparing this draft assessment.*

Positive and imaginative response development will be encouraged, especially that which makes a particularly positive contribution to the public realm. Pastiche, the replication of historic features in an unimaginative way should be avoided.

Enhancement Proposals

As with any area, there are some elements and features within the Leeds-Liverpool Canal conservation area that do not contribute to the character and feel of the place. These elements vary widely and are set out in the following table, which identifies problems affecting the conservation area and sets out proposals as to how the quality and identity of the place could be strengthened with the co-operation of the Council, developers and the local community. These proposals are long-term goals for the enhancement of the conservation area and will only succeed if a co-ordinated approach to the management of the canal is reached.




Above: Old warehouse, Stockbridge Wharf.

Top Left: The Locks, Bingley, a successful high quality modern development.


Bottom Left: Park Road, Bingley. Traditional materials and high quality craftsmanship set a high standard.

Enhancement Proposals

Issue / Negative Factor	Enhancement Proposal
 <p>Sections of the towpath area which are poorly maintained and/or have been insensitively altered.</p> <p>Even where the towpath is suitably wide and appropriately surfaced, the quality of the towpath area can be and has been undermined by factors such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunken or missing copingstones. • Overgrown copingstones. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Litter and dog fouling. • Visually poor or difficult to use barriers. • Inappropriate, neglected or damaged railings. • Verges to the towpath which have been colonised by self sown scrub such as shrubs and young trees. • Vegetation such as reeds and rushes which break through the surface of the water in the canal. • A complete lack of vegetation. 	<p>Environmental Improvements</p> <p>In places the towpath area along the canal should be improved in a manner which is sensitive to its historic character. Any improvements and the maintenance of the towpath area should ensure that it is neither run down in its appearance nor completely sanitised. Some of the following suggested improvements are applicable at numerous places in the conservation area, while others are specific to certain locations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reinstatement of the stone canal banks, and copings where they are missing or in need of repair and the regular clearing of vegetation from between the stones. Where the canal bank is traditionally unmade, such as at the edges of fields, no action is necessary. • A regular and co-ordinated approach to the clearing of litter from the towpath area and adjacent land. More should be done to encourage owners to clean up after their dogs. • Traditional towpath 'furniture' such as moorings, railings and more recent interventions such as barriers along the towpath need to be made of materials and finishes which are appropriate to this historic area. The quality of design should be high and the positioning of furniture should ensure the safe and easy passage of prams, wheelchairs and cycles. The physical deterioration of towpath 'furniture' should be minimised through a diligent maintenance regime. • The vegetation along the towpath and the canal banks should be managed to ensure that it is suitably rugged, without looking overgrown and neglected. The complete removal of vegetation or 'over-maintained' banks and verges are both inappropriate to the traditional character of the Conservation Area. The growth of vegetation along and within the canal must also be managed in a way which respects the canal's status as a Site of Ecological Importance.
<p>Variation in Quality of Towpath Surfacing</p> <p>At present the treatment of the canal towpath varies between areas where maintenance is minimal and the path has been overgrown and access difficult through to areas of over maintenance, where natural vegetation has been totally removed and the character of the towpath thus diminished.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area to the west of Silsden is a good example of an area of under maintenance - the towpath has been almost entirely overgrown with grass and shrubs from the verge closest to the boundary wall. The actual width of the towpath has been limited to mere centimetres and most walkers/cyclists choose to use the grass verge for passage. The hidden rocks and ruts beneath the grass surface provide trip and slip hazards, particularly when wet. • Around Three Rise Locks, Bingley and Shipley Bridge, Shipley the towpath has been totally cleared of vegetation and the surface replaced with concrete and tarmac. This has created a hard and unsympathetic setting to the canal and one that is at odds with the historic character of the canal conservation area. • Poor quality surfacing not only has a visual impact but can also impair access. Several parts of the canal are completely inaccessible to those in wheelchairs, with pushchairs or with some kind of mobility impairment. Barriers across the towpath are intended to restrict motorcycle access but if badly designed, can also restrict access to people who are less mobile. 	<p>Improvements to Towpath Surfacing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be desirable to strike a balance between no maintenance at all and over maintenance of the towpath. Vegetation should be cleared from the towpath itself only with grass and herbs allowed to grow on the verges to either side of the footway. Problem weeds, such as nettles and thistles should be cut back regularly and grass verges trimmed. • Where the towpath requires resurfacing, the use of informal and visually sympathetic surfacing materials is best. Concrete and even white limestone based gravel is visually intrusive. The use of natural hued, small gravel has been used successfully on the towpath between Field Lock and Apperley Bridge. • Inappropriate barriers across the towpath, such as the metal barrier at Thackley Canal Bridge should be replaced. Though intended to stop motorcycle access to the canal, the barrier impedes access to wheelchair users and pushchairs. Access for these users along the towpath should be encouraged and the replacement of these barriers with visually sympathetic versions that effectively stop motorcycles, not genuine users of the towpath.

Issue / Negative Factor		Enhancement Proposal
<p>The value of the historic features and details of buildings to the conservation area</p> <p>Where houses have retained traditional features such as a stone slate roof, unpainted stonework, corniced chimneys, panelled timber doors, timber sash windows, or stone boundary walls, it enhances the appearance of the conservation area and maintains a vital element of consistency as well as upholding the integrity and interest of the individual buildings or small groups of buildings. Unfortunately many of the buildings in the conservation area already lack some details such as timber sash windows, while some external stonework has been cleaned or painted.</p>		<p>The retention of historic features and details</p> <p>Article 4 (2) Directions can be introduced to protect the remaining significant traditional features and details on dwellings that enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas. The Council has powers under Article 4 of the Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 1995 to control development which would normally be allowed without the need for planning permission, but which would lead to an erosion of the character and appearance of the conservation area. Article 4 (2) Directions work by removing permitted development rights from specific buildings thus allowing control over changes to elevations, boundaries, roofline or materials where they contribute to the local character. If introduced, an Article 4 (2) direction would mean that planning permission may be required for all or some of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of a new window or door opening. • Removal or replacement of any window or door. • The replacement of painted finishes with stains on woodwork or joinery. • The addition of renders or claddings. • Painting previously unpainted stonework. • Installation of satellite dish antennae. • Addition of porches, carports and sheds. • Changes of roof materials. • Installation of roof lights. • Demolition of, or alteration to front boundary walls or railings. <p>The traditional features and appearance of Listed Buildings are protected through Listed Building Legislation. Listed Building Consent is required for any works which affect the appearance or character of a listed building.</p> <p>The appearance of non-domestic unlisted buildings (such as shops and industrial premises) is controlled through the development control planning. Planning permission is required for any works to a non-domestic building and there should be a presumption in favour of protecting the historic features and details of these buildings.</p>
<p>Insensitive alterations and loss of original features</p> <p>There are a considerable number of historic and traditional buildings along the canal that have had their original features repaired or replaced in such a way that comprises the historic qualities and appearance of the building. The effect of this is particularly detrimental where it has impacted upon traditional canal buildings such as warehouses, industrial buildings and canal-side dwellings.</p>		<p>Guidance for the Upkeep of Historic Buildings</p> <p>Original features are an irreplaceable part of a building's character and historic interest and therefore it is vital that owners and occupiers of properties are provided with guidance and advice regarding the upkeep, repair and restoration of their properties. This guidance could take the form of technical advice leaflets covering important features such as roofs and chimneys, windows and doors, stonework and pointing etc. In the instance of unauthorised work to listed buildings, the Council could consider using its statutory duties to enforce the preservation of the appearance of listed buildings.</p>
<p>Boundary Walls</p> <p>The demolition of, unsympathetic alteration and lack of maintenance to boundary walls and/or the introduction of inappropriate, non-traditional boundary features to residential, industrial and commercial properties can give the canal area and the streets within the conservation area an incongruous or disjointed appearance and have an overall negative impact on views and vistas.</p>		<p>Boundary Walls</p> <p>The stone boundary walls to properties need to be reinstated and out of character alterations removed. In the least planning controls should be used to prevent or undo unpermitted demolition of, alteration to and replacement of traditional boundary features in the case of non-domestic buildings. The character and appearance of the boundary features of Listed Buildings are protected through Listed Building legislation.</p>

Issue / Negative Factor	Enhancement Proposal
<p>Poor Quality New Development alongside the Canal</p> <p>Much of the character of the canal conservation area is derived from the varied and interesting setting of the waterway. In some areas the setting of the canal is rural and open but in others it takes on a more industrial or residential feel. Buildings standing around the canal make an important contribution to the character and sense of place of the conservation area. In recent decades some canal-side developments have ignored the historical context of the canal and the resultant buildings are inappropriate for their location. These developments are either bland designs that are a poorly detailed imitation of existing historic buildings or are inappropriate in terms of style, massing and materials.</p>	<p>Design Guidance for New Development</p> <p>Design guidance for new buildings, conversions or extensions to existing buildings and development within the curtilage of buildings within the conservation area or affecting the setting of the canal would help ensure that new development would be sympathetic to its surrounds. The guidelines given in the previous section should be used as a guideline.</p>
<p>Vacant, underused and neglected buildings</p> <p>There is a significant number of vacant industrial and commercial buildings in the conservation area whose lack of maintenance and poor condition has implications for their long-term future as well as the aesthetic appearance of the conservation area. Several of the larger mill complexes in the conservation area are either entirely vacant or have large areas of unused or underused floorspace.</p> <p>Historic buildings are more difficult and costly to improve or maintain due to factors such as the need for more skilled labour, the more labour intensive nature of work to historic buildings and/or the more scarce (and therefore more expensive) materials required.</p> <p>The combination of economic forces and the costs associated with historic buildings has led to there being a number of buildings falling into a less than satisfactory condition with little hope for lasting improvement. This lack of investment in the buildings has clear implications for their long-term future and their lasting contribution to the character of the conservation area.</p>	<p>Inward Investment</p> <p>Investment needs to be encouraged into the Leeds-Liverpool Canal Conservation Area. This would revitalise the area and provide for the upkeep of buildings. The vacant and obsolete buildings must be found economically sustainable new uses which are in keeping with the overall character of the conservation area.</p> <p>An application to English Heritage to establish a Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme (HERS) in the conservation area could be used to channel resources into the area. Grant assistance may then be made available for the heritage-led regeneration of the canal area, with an emphasis placed on employment-generating activities and general environmental improvements. Partnership funding from English Heritage, the Council and possibly other stakeholders would provide the resources for such a scheme, if the application were successful.</p>
<p>Lack of visitor information and facilities</p> <p>At present there are many sections of the canal that though well used by both visitors and local residents, have little in the way of visitor information and facilities. Though it would be undesirable to over develop many sections of the canal, in some areas, such as around Five and Three Rise Locks, Saltaire, Shipley, Apperley Bridge and Silsden visitor numbers are high and there is potential for greater use of the waterway and the towpath. Whilst some visitor facilities are already provided in these areas there is a general lack of interpretation of canal features and history. Facilities such as toilets, short stay mooring spaces and seating are also in short supply.</p>	<p>Interpretation and improved visitor facilities</p> <p>The provision of interpretation boards could have a dual use and not only stimulate interest in the canal and canal heritage but could provide safety information and be educational for young people. Better provision, in areas where it would be appropriate, for facilities such as short stay mooring facilities, seating and so on could encourage more visitors to stop and enjoy destinations such as Saltaire, Shipley, and Silsden.</p> <p>Some areas of the canal would be suitable for increased provision of visitor facilities and the open, rural character of these sections would suffer if such facilities were provided. In these areas effective and regular maintenance of the towpath and existing moorings would be sufficient.</p>
<p>Lack of lighting to the canal area</p> <p>The towpath and canal area is lit by daylight only, with the conservation area in darkness or poorly lit between dusk and dawn. Nonetheless, the canal area is still in use in the evening and early morning by pleasure cruisers who visit the town or village they are moored in, joggers, dog walkers and other pedestrians. The lack of lighting has implications in terms of safety and can deter people from travelling along the canal, particularly outside of summer when days are shorter.</p>	<p>Lighting</p> <p>The introduction of sensitively designed lighting in certain locations along the canal would make the area more safe to pass through and would encourage more people to pass through the area outside of daylight hours. It is not necessary or desirable to light the entire length of the canal as it passes through the Bradford District or to clutter the towpath area with lampposts or other intrusive lighting installations. Lighting would be limited to urban areas, particularly where boats are moored. Lighting should be limited to the towpath area and could be motion sensitive so that no areas are lit unnecessarily.</p>

Issue / Negative Factor	Enhancement Proposal
<p>Inappropriate Shopfronts and Signage</p> <p>The Leeds-Liverpool Canal Conservation Area contains a number of purpose built shops and a small number of properties which have been converted to commercial or retail use. The shopfronts and signs to these properties are frequently modern in character due to the materials used, the lack of finer detailing and the proportioning of windows and signage means that these elements appear incongruous with the buildings to which they are attached and detract from the traditional character of the scene.</p>	<p>Design Guidance for Shopfronts and Signage</p> <p>Design guidance for the new or replacement shopfronts and signs could be provided by the Conservation Team and the planning system used to better effect in order to ensure that changes are in keeping with the area.</p> <p>Shop security is another issue as unattractive, inappropriate roller shutters are frequently used instead of other methods which would ensure security with a minimal impact on the character of the street.</p>
<p>Poor quality Streetscape</p> <p>The canal conservation area widens at a number of points to include some areas of urban and industrial development. These areas include parts of the settlements of Silsden, Bingley, Shipley and Apperley Bridge. Most of the streets and roads in these parts of the conservation area are highly engineered to meet modern requirements and most of the road surfaces and pavements are surfaced with tarmac or concrete slabs. Poor quality surfacing combined with unsympathetic street furniture has a considerable impact on the character and visual quality of the conservation area. In some areas this has provided an uneasy juxtaposition between historic buildings and modern, uncoordinated streetscapes.</p>	<p>Improved Highway Surfacing and Treatment</p> <p>Wherever practical, it would be desirable to remove modern street surfacing to expose the stone setts and cobbles beneath. This would vastly enhance the historic appearance of the conservation area. At present this option is financially unviable but could be considered whenever major work is proposed to the streetscape. Elsewhere the replacement of concrete kerbs with stone could be considered.</p> <p>There are some small areas of stone surfacing remaining in the conservation area, these tend to be along unadopted streets, pavements and around locks. It is important that these areas of natural stone surfacing are retained and are well maintained as even in small areas, stone setts and flags make an important contribution to the character of the area.</p> <p>A sensitive and co-ordinated approach to ensuring the efficient movement of traffic and safety of road users and pedestrians is needed. A successful scheme should also help maintain and enhance the quality and character of the conservation area.</p>
<p>Unattractive Metal Swing Bridges</p> <p>There are numerous modern, metal swing bridges along the Leeds Liverpool Canal. These tended to replace the original timber swing bridges that often provided passage over the canal for minor roads or private access. Many of these timber bridges were replaced between 1940-1990 with metal version, with either timber or steel decking. Some are mechanised, with electrical controls while others still rely on the old style of operation via a lever from a pivot point on the offside.</p> <p>Unfortunately many of the swing bridges are beginning to look scruffy with rusting paintwork to the bridge and guardrails and poorly detailed, standardised highway signs tacked onto the railings.</p> 	<p>Visual Enhancement of Swing Bridges</p> <p>Many of the swing bridges would be vastly improved through more regular maintenance. The repainting of metalwork in the traditional British Waterways colours of black and white would vastly enhance many of the bridges as would the replacement of old, battered and rusting signage with something more appropriate to the historic character of the canal conservation area. Traffic barriers, lights and electrical control boxes would also benefit from updating and a more sensitive, co-ordinated approach. In the longer term, it would be beneficial to replace the quieter bridges with ones with timber railings and flooring accurately based on traditional details. The metal swing bridges should have a more traditional design.</p> 