

Map 09: Stockbridge Wharf and Banks Bridge



This iron upright is a remnant of a crane which stood on the former Wharf near Bank's Bridge.



This warehouse (1) at Stockbridge Wharf has recently been converted into apartments.



The old warehouse by Warehouse Bridge, with the much later red brick warehouse (4) in the background.



Vista towards the early 20th century warehouse (4) from the east.



Marquis of Granby and No 1 Hospital Road (key unlisted building) with Oldfield's Coal Yard in the foreground.



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Character of the Area

This section of canal runs through an area of mixed residential and industrial development and therefore enjoys a varied setting. To the west of Warehouse Bridge the setting of the canal remains quite green and leafy, with trees standing in the grounds of West Riddlesden Hall and in the gardens of houses and buildings along Scott Lane making an important contribution. On the south side of the canal is an area of mostly 20th century red brick residential development. Views are mostly contained to the canal but there are some long distance views across the Aire valley to the south.

Around Stockbridge Wharf the setting of the canal takes on a distinctly industrial feel, with tall warehouses standing on the south side of the waterway. These are currently under conversion to residential use and the subsequent impact on the character and sense of place in this part of the conservation area has yet to be seen. On the north side of the canal many of the houses have gardens extending down to the water's edge.

Stockbridge Wharf and its large warehouses were constructed to allow goods and materials to be transported by canal to and from Keighley, which is not directly served by the Leeds-Liverpool Canal.

By Banks Bridge the setting of the conservation area becomes more green and leafy. Alongside the overflow area immediately adjacent to the bridge is an small area of green open space that appears to be a favourite nesting place for geese and swans. The combination of the old coal yard and the vernacular public house on the north side of the canal gives this area a very traditional and characterful feel. A steel upright standing in the middle of the towpath, the remnants of an old winching machine adds to the visual and historic interest of the area.

Features of the Area

1. Warehouse on west side of Warehouse Bridge: Immediately abutting the towpath on the south side of the canal is a four-storey, red brick warehouse that is currently undergoing residential conversion. The elevation overlooking the canal has six bays of ashlar-headed windows to either side of a central gabled bay that has a doorway at its base and larger openings recessed into the building. These openings would have once been used as

loading bays through which goods would have been winched directly off and onto boats. Unfortunately the lifting mechanisms and timber hoods have been removed and the plank doors have been replaced with french windows and Juliet balconies.

The warehouse, which was probably built around the start of the 20th century stands slightly away from the main group of industrial buildings on the opposite side of the bridge but makes an important contribution to the feel and character of this part of the canal conservation area.

2. Old warehouse, Stockbridge Wharf: Standing on the eastern side of the canal bridge is a long, stone warehouse that was probably built in the first half of the 19th century. The building displays typical vernacular features and appears to have been constructed in more than one phase, with the eastern most section being the oldest. This long range is built of hammer-dressed stone and is a single storey in height beneath a stone slate roof. The elevation onto the canal is sparsely fenestrated, having two gabled bays containing a planked loading door and a ventilator to one side. The south elevation faces onto a yard and unmade track and displays similar gabled bays inset with loading doors. Adjoining the western end of the building is a later extension comprising of stone built offices and a timber storage/garaging area. This section may have been added around the end of the 19th/start of the 20th century. Sadly the building is currently empty and the windows boarded and appears to have been so for some time. Skipton Properties have acquired the property, which was formerly owned by British Waterways with the intention of developing the site for residential use.

Though the later extension to the west of the building is of limited architectural or historic interest, the main body of the warehouse is a fine example of a surviving early 19th century industrial building associated with the commercial use of the canal.

3. Warehouse Bridge (Stockbridge Swing 197): Warehouse Bridge is a modern swing bridge constructed with a swing mechanism that pivots on the northern side of the canal. The bridge is of mostly metal construction, with a black-painted metal base plate and white handrails. The carriageway of the bridge, which provides passage for a relatively high volume of cars along Bar Lane has been covered with a thin layer of tarmac. Signs at either end of the bridge control the traffic, giving priority to those travelling up hill. A red and white striped barrier and flashing crossing lights are triggered when the bridge is moved to allow canal boats through. The abutments to either side of the bridge are constructed of coursed stone.

4. Red brick warehouse, east side of Warehouse Bridge: Standing a short distance to the east of Warehouse Bridge is an early 20th century red brick warehouse that is probably contemporary with the similarly detailed brick building on the opposite

side of the bridge. The warehouse is currently empty and in poor condition but is still an impressively substantial structure. The elevation facing onto the canal abuts the rear of the towpath and rises up to three storeys in height. Towards the western end of the building is a gabled bay inset with loading doors. Attached to the building over the loading bay was a projecting timber-planked hood with a pitched roof from which goods were winched into and out of the cargo boats. Sadly this structure, which is shown in a photograph of Stockbridge taken as recently as 1996, has since been removed and by doing so has much of the visual and historic interest of the building has been lost. At ground and first floor are a series of simple window openings with ashlar stone heads. High up beneath the eaves is a series of small square windows inset with multiple panes of glass. The south facing elevation is sparsely fenestrated and has a tall, mostly blank elevation. Set into the wide western gable end of the warehouse is an almost continuous opening from ground to apex that probably provided a link through to the now demolished adjoining building.

5. Riddlesden War Memorial Institute: The War Memorial Institute is a small, almost squat single storey red brick building with a heavy ashlar stone doorcase and hipped blue slate roof. Dating to the 1940s or 50s, the building is not of architectural interest in itself however its spacious, leafy grounds provide a pleasant green setting to the canal and contribute much to the natural quality of the conservation area.

6. Banks Bridge, Riddlesden (Granby Swing 197A): Banks Bridge is a modern, mostly metal structure that carries Granby Lane over the waterway. The bridge operates on an electric swing system that pivots on the north side of the canal. The abutments to either side of the bridge and the overflow on the north side of the canal are stone built, indicating that the crossing has been in situ for many years, probably in the form of a timber bridge until the middle of the 20th century. Today the bridge experiences high volumes of traffic, which is controlled by lights and barriers on both approaches to the canal.



7. Marquis of Granby public house and 1 Hospital Road: The Marquis of Granby public house is a building of considerable age and may have been built contemporarily with the canal. Built of dressed, deep coursed stone with a stone slate roof, the inn has been constructed in a typical local vernacular building style incorporating many traditional features. The three-bay front elevation has a centrally located doorway recessed in a simple stone surround. To either side of the door and at first floor are windows set in projecting stone surrounds. The timber guttering is supported on stone dentils and the building retains good corniced chimney-stacks. The building has, sadly lost some of its original character through the replacement of its original multi-pane sash windows with uPVC and the painting of the door and window surrounds.

Attached to the eastern end of the public house is no. 1 Hospital Road, a small single bay shop unit that was built post 1880 (photographic evidence). The shop is constructed of similarly coursed and dressed stone and has a traditional stone slate roof. At ground floor level is the shop front, a traditional timber frontage comprising a large window with doorway to one side and narrow fascia signage constructed from painted timber. Currently used by a green grocer, the shop retains much of its traditional appearance that complements the age and character of the property. At first floor level is a large window opening set in ashlar stone surrounds that may have once been divided by a stone mullion.

8. Oldfield's Coal Yard, Hospital Road: The coal yard occupies a canal-side location on the northern side of the waterway and is thought to have operated from this site since the early 19th century in the same family ownership. Originally the coal would have been transported to the yard by canal boat and though one modern pleasure boat still remains moored alongside the yard, coal is now carried to and from the yard by road. The presence of the still-operational coal yard is a rare survival of a traditional canal-side business and makes an interesting contribution to the character and heritage value of this part of the waterway.

Issues

- ▶ Loss of original details and fabric to the industrial buildings alongside Stockbridge Wharf.
- ▶ Litter accumulation around Warehouse Bridge.
- ▶ Unattractive highway signage at Warehouse Bridge.
- ▶ Loss of original window and door details to the Marquis of Granby public house and adjoining shop.
- ▶ Lack of co-ordination of boundary treatments along the section of canal between Warehouse Bridge and Banks Bridge.
- ▶ Badly damaged boundary wall to the coal yard.
- ▶ Dog fouling on the towpath.
- ▶ Overgrown vegetation alongside the towpath.