WOLVERHAMPTON LOCKS

Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Proposals

May 2013

Wolverhampton City Council

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Conservation Area Character Appraisal

This document is the appraisal for the Wolverhampton Locks Conservation Area which the Council approved on 22nd May 2013

To find out more about appraisals for other conservation areas in the City see the Council's web site at:
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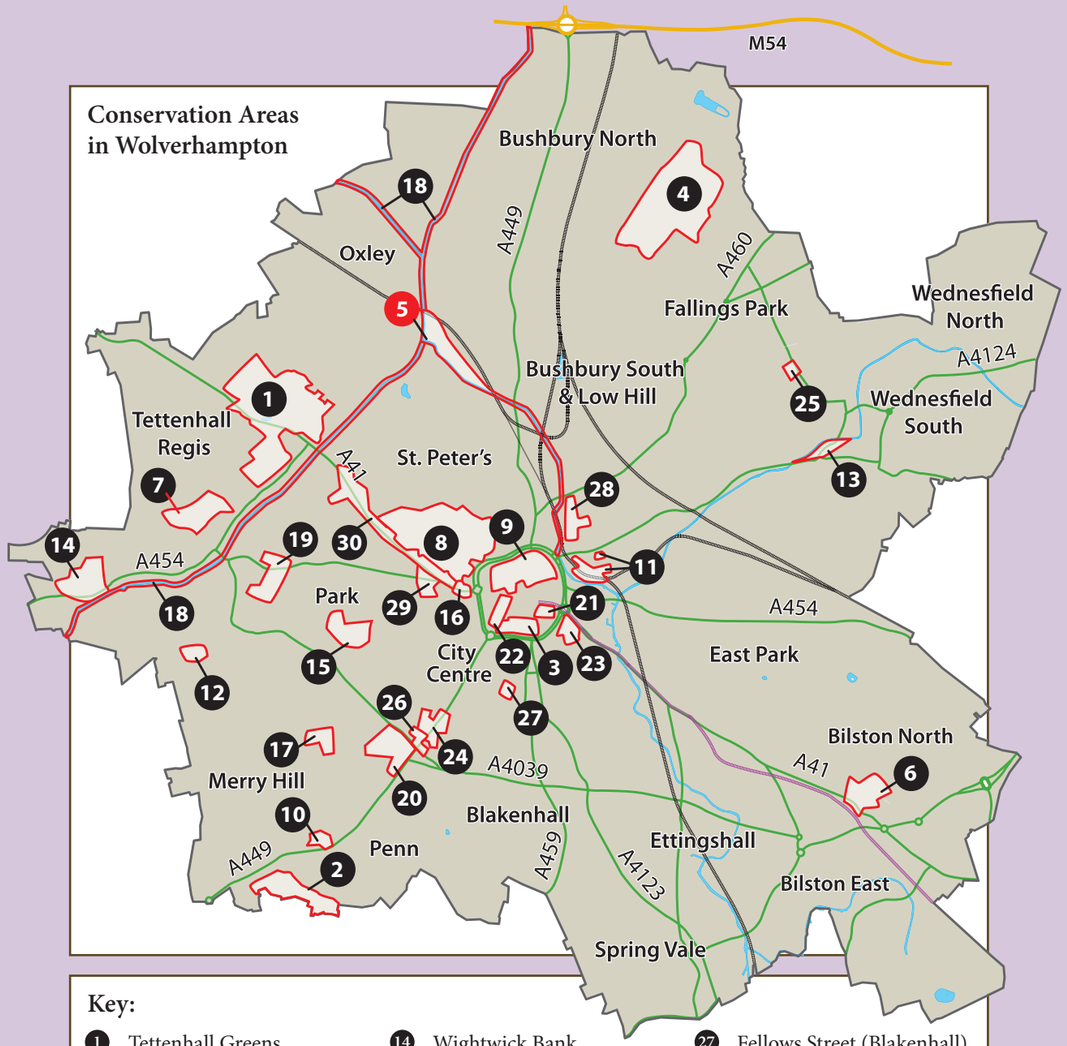

Key:

1. Tettenhall Greens
2. Vicarage Road, Penn
3. St John's Square
4. Bushbury Hill
5. Wolverhampton Locks
6. Bilston Town Centre
7. Tettenhall Wood
8. Park
9. Wolverhampton City Centre
10. The Woodlands
11. Union Mill
12. Castlecroft Gardens
13. Wednesfield
14. Wightwick Bank
15. Bantock House
16. Chapel Ash
17. St Philips (Penn Fields)
18. Staff and Worcs and Shrop Canal
19. Ash Hill
20. Penn Fields
21. Old Hall Street
22. Worcester Street
23. Cleveland Road
24. Penn Road (Graiseley)
25. Cedar Way
26. Copthorne Road
27. Fellows Street (Blakenhall)
28. Springfield Brewery
29. The Oaks (Merridale Road)
30. Tettenhall Road

Conservation Area Boundary
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Major Roads
Railway
Metro Line
Council Boundary
Waterways

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1. Introduction

The Wolverhampton Locks Conservation Area contains a wealth of canal and railways heritage.

The Wolverhampton Locks Conservation Area was designated by Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council on 25th September, 1975. This was an extension to an earlier designation of 24th July 1975, which covered the northern section of the conservation area at Dunstall Locks. Further minor amendments to the boundary of the conservation area were made on 27th March 2007 and 22nd May 2013.

This document defines and records the special architectural and historic interest of the Wolverhampton Locks Conservation Area and identifies opportunities for enhancement. The omission of a particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A Conservation Area is defined as "an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas.

Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This appraisal satisfies the requirements of the legislation and provides a firm basis on which applications for development within and in the setting of the Wolverhampton Locks Conservation Area can be assessed.

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2. Location and Setting

The Wolverhampton Locks Conservation Area forms the most northerly section of the Birmingham Canal Navigation's (BCN) Main Line. It contains the entire flight of locks that descend from the Wolverhampton Level on the north eastern edge of Wolverhampton City Centre running in an arc around to the north west, where it terminates in a junction with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal just north of Dunstall Park Racecourse and approximately 2.5 kilometres north of the City Centre and including approximately 3 kilometres of waterway and towpath.

Whilst the conservation area contains the structures and features that contribute to its historic and architectural interest, the surrounding landscape, or setting, makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area and contributes to creation of areas of changing character. Of particular importance both visually and historically is the relationship between the canal and the later railway network which criss-crosses the canal at various locations within the conservation area.

Canal bridge at the entrance to the Shropshire Union Wharf, just south of the Conservation Area.

In the south of the conservation area, the noisy environment of the Wolverhampton Ring Road and Wednesfield Road contribute to the feeling of the canal being part of the activity and bustle of the city centre. This changes very quickly as the canal passes under Little's Lane Bridge to an area where it is enclosed to the east by the West Coast Mainline Railway and to the west by the rear or side boundaries of the former Herbert Street Good's Station, now a large building supplies stock yard. The sense of the canal's role as an industrial waterway is preserved, although industry has now turned its back on the canal. After passing under the Mainline Railway, the canal and towpath are bounded by the disused land of the former railway sidings of the Springfield Brewery (a large industrial complex largely of late 19th century origin), which provides an excellent impression of the canal's historic industrial setting, although now in a sad state of dereliction.

North of Cannock Road, Fowlers Park provide an attractive green setting to the east of the conservation area with views from the canal and towpath across the green open space or into a thick tree belt along its western edge. They also include remains of the railway sidings, turntable and a platform with the potential for archaeological remains of an associated coaling stage or water tower, engine shed and canal basins, all of which help to illustrate the historic interaction between the canal and railways. A strip of land running through the park can be identified as the historic course of the railway, whilst the causeway leading up to two low level viaducts across the canal forms the northern edge of the park. Derelict industrial land off Crown Street and Cross Street lies to the west of the conservation area. The canal banks include evidence of in-filled basins running into this area and covered loading bays on the canal edge. The Wolverhampton Waste Incinerator is a

large industrial structure on the canal's western side, off Crown Street. Evidence of another in-filled basin in this area is preserved in the canal bank. The walls bounding the incinerator site were built of red brick to reflect the materials of the canalside. North of Fox's Lane, another industrial unit has been built next to the canal using red brick with brick arches to windows to reflect the traditional design of industrial buildings in the canal's setting.

Just to the north of Fowlers Park the canal passes under two railway bridges (one disused) and the Stour Valley Line Viaduct (now the West Coast Main Line Railway). Active industrial sites cover land west of the canal and north of the viaduct, including storage yards and low level buildings. These are generally screened from view from the canal and towpath by the slope of the canal cutting and greenery growing on its bank. Views out to the east of the canal are also generally screened by dense foliage. The land beyond this screen is semi-naturalised grass and scrub, managed as a nature reserve on the edge of the Wolverhampton Science Park. This changes to more managed grassed areas to the north, forming landscaping to the science park at its entrance from Stafford Road, where the grassed road verges provide access to the canalside towpath.

Houses on Jones Road overlooking the Canal.

Looking north from the canal into the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area.

North of Stafford Road, Jones Road provides the only residential frontage in the conservation area looking onto the canal. This includes a terrace of early 20th century houses, divided from the canal and towpath by the road and a low hedge and railings and tree line. To the west the canal is bounded by a number of small modern industrial units, including a small late 19th century wharf manager's house.

The canal passes under the Oxley Viaduct at the north end of Jones Road beyond which the character of the canal's environment changes significantly. A large area of railway sidings to the north east is divided from the towpath by a belt of small fields with rank grass and scrub, providing a green, naturalised setting to the canal. A small park to the south east of the canal provides further greenery and open views to modern housing at The Chase and Viaduct Drive. The fields to the north east of the canal increase in size towards Aldersley Junction, with the railway siding and sheds visible beyond the conservation area on the brow of the hill. The canal and towpath gradually descend into a tree lined cutting which encloses views out. The Dunstall Park Race Course occupies a large area on the south west side of the canal but

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is largely screened from view by the rising ground of the cutting. Although both the sidings and racecourse have the potential to be sites of noisy activity, for the majority of the time they are quiet areas helping to create tranquil atmosphere around the canal corridor.

North and south of Aldersley Junction the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal continues away from the conservation area within a wooded cutting within a separate conservation area. To the west the Aldersley Recreation Grounds provide further areas of green open space with boundaries of mature tree lines creating the horizon to views from the canalside.

The conservation area passes through three City Council wards: St Peter's, Bushbury South & Low Hill and Heath Town.

Fowlers Park is green lung in the heart of the city.

3. History of the Birmingham Mainline Canal

Whilst the development of the canal has created the landscape of the conservation area, the history of the landscape that forms its setting extends over a longer history of development both before and after the canal's construction. This includes the development of the town of Wolverhampton, as well as fields the canal cut through and the later factories and other land uses that grew up alongside it. To reflect the importance of many of these features, to the canal's historic interest, the history of this landscape includes features both in and outside the conservation area.

Wolverhampton before the canal

Wolverhampton is an ancient settlement established by the 10th century. A charter records the gift of land at 'Heantune' (or high town) from the king to Lady Wulfruna in 985. A minster church was consecrated there in 994. By the late 12th century there are records of a market held in the town and in the 14th and 15th centuries it was a 'staple town' for the wool trade. In the 16th and 17th centuries the town developed a reputation for producing high quality iron work, particularly fine work such as locks and buckles.

Yates' Map of Staffordshire, produced in 1775 records Wolverhampton as a hilltop town standing at the crossing of the ridge way route from Dudley and Sedgley to the south and Stafford to the north with routes from Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth to west and east to Willenhall, Walsall, Bilston and Birmingham. At one time Wolverhampton lay within open fields recorded as Quabbe Field or Windmill Field to the north, and Horseley Field to the east, with other fields named Wyndfield, Monmore Field, Ablow or Abbey Field and Broadmeadow in other directions. According to Mander's History of Wolverhampton (1960) the open fields were enclosed in the late 16th century, although it is likely that this was part of a longer process.

Yates' Map of Staffordshire in a later reproduction, showing roads converging on the town and the canal running around it.

Much of the farmland surrounding the town provided access to shallow deposits of coal and ironstone. Monmore and Horseley Fields are both notable as areas that were extensively exploited for collieries extending over large areas. During the seventeenth century experiments were conducted locally in the use of coal to produce iron in blast furnaces. The area served an important strategic role during the Civil Wars of the mid-17th century through the production of armaments. Coal was increasingly valued as a fuel for both industrial and domestic use at this time because of increasing demand on timber resources. By the late 17th century the South Staffordshire Coalfield had becoming a centre for metalworking. In 1686 Dr. Plot recorded that Wolverhampton had achieved the status of a centre of excellence for the fine craft of lock making, although manufacture of buckle and sword hilts among other small metal goods were also important trades.

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The coming of the canals

The mid 18th century saw improvement of the local roads through formation of turnpike trusts. Yates' map of Staffordshire in 1775 shows the extent of these emanating from Wolverhampton. Nevertheless, packhorses and wagons on these roads could not transport the weight of goods and materials required by the developing industries around the landlocked Staffordshire Coal Field. Following the success of canals in Cheshire and Lancashire, James Brindley, among others developed schemes for a national network of canals connecting the country's great sea ports at Liverpool, Hull and Bristol. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal formed part of Brindley's plan and received an Act of Parliament to allow the raising of finance and purchase of property in May 1766. In January 1767 a number of prominent Birmingham-based business men met at the White Swan, High Street, Birmingham to consider a scheme for a canal to connect Birmingham with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire via Wolverhampton. This would provide access for goods made in manufactories such as Matthew Boulton's Soho works, to the ports and markets in the north of England as well as transport for coal from the South Staffordshire Coal Field to urban and industrial centres such as Birmingham and Wolverhampton, to the North Staffordshire Potteries and to other markets beyond. James Brindley was appointed as surveyor for the new canal, which received its Act of Parliament in 1768.

The construction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal was completed in 1771, with an opening in 1772. The Birmingham Canal (only later referred to as the Main Line) was built in two stage. The first was completed to Smethwick with a side branch to collieries at Wednesbury by 1770. The second phase extended the canal to Wolverhampton and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal via Wednesbury Oak and Bradley and was opened in 1772. The canal was an immediate financial success, resulting in a dramatic reduction in the cost of coal and stimulating the growth of industry, particularly in the area of Bilston and Bradley. Brindley designed the canal to descend 132 feet through 20 locks from the Wolverhampton Level to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal's level at Aldersley Junction. This was found to be costly in water and so a twenty-first lock was added near the junction in 1784 to reduce the height of 'lifts' and the volume of water used with each passage through the locks.

Whilst the supply of water to the summit level of the canal was often a concern for the canal company one ingenious solution was to charge the surrounding mine owners for discharging water pumped from their mines into the canal and to sell water to the canal companies whose waterways connected with the BCN.

The locks lay to the north of the main industrial area of the canal until the second quarter of the 19th century. This changed as the railways began to make Wolverhampton a regional hub. The Grand Junction Railway was opened in 1837 as the county's first trunk railway running for 82 miles from Birmingham to the Liverpool and Manchester Railway via Wolverhampton. Others followed during the railway mania of the 1840s including the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway (opened in 1849), the Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Stour Valley Railway (operating from 1852), the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway (OWWR) and the Birmingham Snow Hill to Wolverhampton and Dudley Railway both opened in 1854. The latter line was operated by Great Western Railway (GWR) connecting to the OWWR at Priestfield and thence into Low Level Station. This was made

necessary since their rivals the London and North Western Railway Company would not allow other companies to use their station at High Level in the

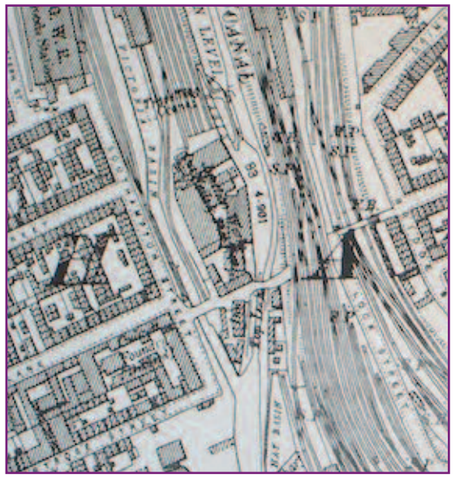
An extract from the Ordnance Survey 1 inch to the mile map of 1834 showing the canal, with railway lines added after 1850.

town. The competition between the major railway companies to gain control of these lines had wider effects on the transport landscape.

The arrival of the railways

The OWWR continued north from Low Level Station to join up with the Grand Junction Railway at Bushbury with a GWR line branching off at the Cannock Road Junction which ran parallel to them over the canal to their depot at Stafford Road. This line was subsequently extended across Stafford Road to connect to the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway just south of Oxley Viaduct at the Stafford Road Junction.

The Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway Company built the Victoria Basin in 1847-9 starting from just north of Wednesfield Road and extending almost as far as Cannock Road, forming the longest canal to rail interchange basin on the BCN. The same company also built the Oxley Viaduct, which was designed by Robert Stephenson (heir to the famous railway engineer George Stephenson). The Great Western Railway (GWR) Company merged the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway with their own company in 1854. The railway had set out a temporary goods station and locomotive depot, repair shop and carriage and wagon sheds on Dunstall Hill south of the Oxley Viaduct soon after or during its construction. Following the merger with the GWR further sidings and a locomotives works, which continued to manufacture locomotives until 1908, were constructed off the Stafford Road and this depot remained a major locomotive repair establishment until closure in 1964. The Stafford Road Works were second in importance on the GWR system only to those in Swindon.



An extract of the 1902 Edition Ordnance Survey map showing the canal and Victoria Basin with the Junction Iron Works between the two and a GWR Goods Station alongside the basin. Hay Basin, at the bottom of the map is now the site of a small park at Top Lock.

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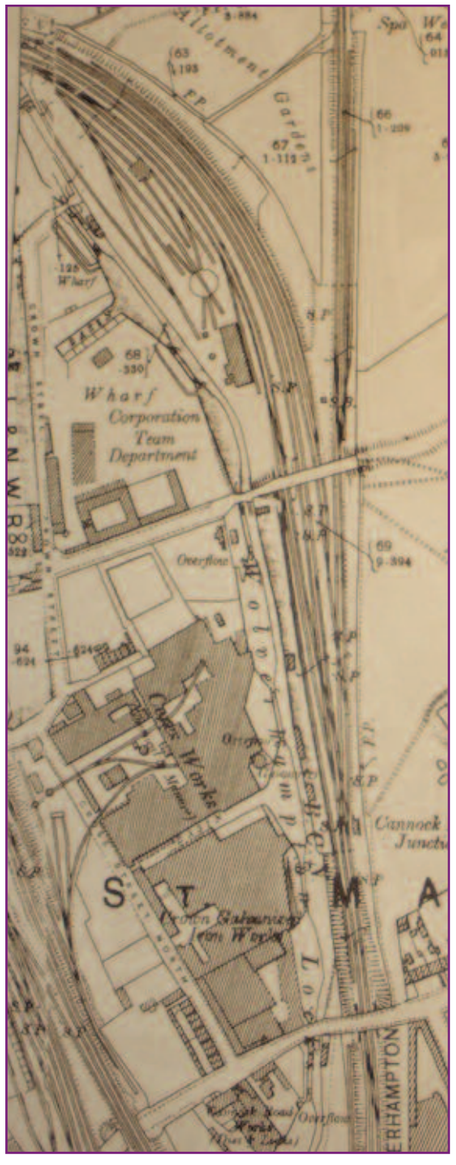
The Stour Valley Line (owned by the London and North Western Railway Company) also crossed the canal, with a second impressive viaduct built in 1849-51 and designed by Robert Stephenson and William Baker. As they approached the Wolverhampton High and Low Level Stations from the north, the rival LNWR and GWR lines were separated by the course of the canal.

Industrial development

One ironworks next to the canal preceded the construction of the railway lines. The Junction Ironworks was located next to the canal, north of Little's Lane by 1842. Its site was turned into a peninsular by the construction of the Victoria Basin where the Shrewsbury and Birmingham Railway built a transhipment point. The GWR developed this as a goods station in 1858, which they expanded cover the former basin in 1935 when the present buildings were constructed and the basin filled in. It fell into disuse in the early 20th century. An iron works was built at Cross Street in 1869 by Edward Davies, which may have been Wolverhampton's first galvanising works. A third ironworks was located south of Cannock Road in the 1890s, reusing the site of the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company's wharfs. This was the site of G. R. Smithson and Company who produce steel pressings until the 1980s.

Other industries that developed next to the canal included the Wolverhampton Gas Works, which manufactured 'town gas' from coal transported to the works by narrow boat. The gas works was established in 1849 south of Stafford Road, as an earlier works at Horseley Fields failed to meet demand. In 1900 the gas works was expanded eastwards across the canal. The site was in operation until 1967 and has now been redeveloped in parts for the Wolverhampton Science Park and for an industrial estate.



Extract of the 1902 Edition of the Ordnance Survey Map showing The Crown Galvanising Works, Ceres Works and Cannock Junction, among other features.

Dunstall Park racecourse in 1923 with Oxley Viaduct in the background.

A manure manufactory, processing various materials to create agricultural fertilisers, was set up at the Ceres Works in 1857, located between the canal and Crown Street. Their location made use of both the canal and railways to import their raw materials and export the finished product. The Ceres Works' loading bays are still seen on the side of the canal. Wolverhampton Corporation's Team Department bought land just to the north of the Ceres works in 1872. The Team Department was responsible for collecting and processing sewage from around the borough. Their choice of location next to the manure company can be no accident. The Ceres Works land was sold to the corporation in 1926 to expand the team department site.

Perhaps, more unusual in the landscape of the Black Country canals is the racecourse at Dunstall Park. A large park surrounding a country house occupied this land in the mid 19th century, which was owned by Sir Alexander Staveley Hill until he moved to Oxley House in 1872 (now a Grade II listed building at Leverton Rise just outside the conservation area). The park was sold in 1887 to a company called Wolverhampton Racecourse and Dunstall Park Limited, who developed the land into a racecourse. It has gone through several changes in ownership and was used for early aeroplane races as well as horseracing. It continues in use as a flat racing course and is now a major complex including grandstands, a conference centre and hotel. It was Britain's first floodlit race course and is the last major horse racing venue in the West Midlands.

The industries surrounding the canal and locks went through a series of declines in the later 20th century that matched the decline in canal transport. Town Gas was replaced by North Sea Gas in the 1960s, the railways were nationalised and rationalised, reducing the need for the competing railway lines and companies, sewage

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works were built elsewhere serving sewers. The canal companies were also nationalised resulting in the loss of tollhouses, such as those at Aldersley Junction. Nevertheless some of the canalside uses have persisted or influenced the present activity. The Oxley Sidings continue to provide maintenance for passenger trains, the former Team Department site has been redeveloped as the Wolverhampton Waste Incinerator and the former Victoria Basin and Herbert Street GWR Goods Station was closed in 1972 but the buildings continued in use as Carvers' Builders' and Timber Merchants until destroyed by a fire in 2012.

The conservation area today

A small part of the Victoria Basin continues to provide a number of berths for narrow boats on the edge of the city centre. Other land has been put to new uses, of which the Wolverhampton Science Park and Trading Estates on Stafford Road have maintained an industrial character but have involved the removal of many of the historic features. Modern industry has tended to turn its back on the canal, creating a relatively bland frontage. Other areas, such as the former railway platforms east of the canal at Cannock Road, have been redeveloped as public open space, in which remains of the railways continue to provide evidence of interaction between the railways and waterways. Sadly other sites, notably the former Ceres Works and Crown Iron Works Site and the Springfield Brewery have been long term disused sites with a negative impact on the environment of the canal.

Since the 1940s the canal has been used increasingly as a leisure cruising route. The locks are now maintained by the Canal and River Trust and are a well-known part of the national waterways network, providing access from the BCN to the attractive waterways of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire and the Shropshire Union canals. Since the 1970s the locks have been designated as a conservation area for their special historic and architectural interest and the lock structures and several other features have been protected as statutory listed buildings since 1992. There is now potential for regeneration of large sections of the canalside with the potential of reintegrating the waterway with surrounding communities and businesses.

4. Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

Summary of Special Interest

The character of the conservation area is notable for the following:

- A navigable canal of great historical significance both for the development of the region and the development of nationally significant industries;
- Evidence of the functional features of the canal, including the locks, wharves and one basin, with evidence of the openings for others;
- Buildings relating to the use of the canal and the people who operated it, including the former lock keeper's cottage and wharf manager's house, at Top Lock and bridges;
- Evidence of various forms of interaction between the canal and railways including shared routes, crossings at bridges and viaducts, areas of sidings, platforms, basins and remains of a railway turntable;
- Areas of green open space that are semi-naturalised providing opportunities for wildlife;
- The canal provides an ecological corridor through the area, providing areas of habitat and linking other habitat areas;
- Attractive views along the canal, which benefit from surrounding greenery and the activity of the waterway, as well as dramatic architecture of the of bridges and viaducts, and the interest of locks and activity of boats on the waterway.
- Views out from the canal to green open spaces and landmarks;
- A route between rapidly changing character areas.

The conservation area combines public green open space, the waterway, wildlife and both canal and railway heritage.

Present character: activities and uses

The waterway and towpath are well used for recreation by boaters, walkers, cyclists and anglers, providing a tranquil area away from the noisy urban environment. There is a marked change in character from the noisy area at Wednesfield Road to the tranquil enclosure of the canal north of Little's Lane Bridge, although the peace is regularly disturbed by the passing of trains. Both the crossings of the canal by Cannock Road and Stafford Road provide further areas of noise, although the high bridge parapets screen views of much of the passing traffic, between the roads the setting of the canal at Fowlers Fields and the Wolverhampton Science Park is, again tranquil, whilst to the north of the Oxley viaduct the canal enters a remote and rural character area that is far removed from the busy city centre environs of Wednesfield Road. Workers at the Oxley Sidings depot appear to be frequent users of the towpath as a means of getting to work.

The towpath beside the locks is a well-used walking route between urban areas, away from the busy traffic routes of the main roads. However, there is a perception that it is not well used. Given the length of some sections of towpath between access points it can sometimes feel lonely. This is exacerbated by areas of abandonment and dereliction, the negative impact of graffiti and littering and the measures taken by businesses to counteract the threat of crime. Evidence of anti-social behaviour was also noted alongside the canal. These are associated with areas of denser undergrowth and abandoned areas with less surveillance. Bushes next to the canal at Fowlers Park, Wolverhampton Science Park and in the nature reserve near Aldersley Junction have been used for drug taking, with evidence including scattered needles, syringes and silver foil.

The small section of the Victoria Basin still in water is used for docking narrow boats and provides an area of interest next to Top Lock. The canal also includes a small number of seating areas that create a focus of activity.

Narrowboats docked at the Victoria Basin.

Development of street pattern

The canal's waterway and towpath provide a long sinuous route that gently descends the long slope to the north and is the main feature of its progress through the regeneration corridor. To descend to the level of Aldersley Junction the canal follows a gently curving line through the Smestow Valley whilst other sections of the canal in this area follow long, gentle curves that allow views along the waterway.

Long straight sections of the canal create interesting vistas, which focus on distant landmarks.

The small number of roads crossing the canal were all probably older than the waterway, either representing the historic links between Wolverhampton and surrounding towns such Stafford Road, Cannock Road and Broad Street or lanes into the fields such as those at Little's Lane and Fox's Lane and Jordan's Bridge. Fox's Lane retains the characteristic curving line of these lanes through the fields. Roads parallel to the canal, such as Crown Street, Cross Street and Great Western Street were constructed to provide access to canalside land for industrial development or for access to canalside railway infrastructure. These roads are characterised by short, straight courses, reflecting their formal planning.

Architectural and historic character

Whilst the areas of canalside on the BCN Main Line to the south of the conservation area are notable for the survival of highly distinctive canalside industrial buildings the most distinctive architectural features of the conservation area are

the locks, banks and bridges of the canal and the viaducts of the Birmingham and Shrewsbury Railway and the Stour Valley Line.

The canal cottages at Top Lock, numbered 109 and 110, are of interest as two of the BCN's best preserved canal cottages. Their low scale and brindled brickwork provide a strong contrast with the city centre scale of architecture across the ring road. They were designed as traditional vernacular cottages, with low brick arches to sash windows on two floors and a centrally placed front door. The inclusion of a bay window to No.109 may have been to allow viewing along the canal in both directions. Further cottages and stables were located either side of the BCN Main Line at Aldersley Junction but, were demolished in the later 20th century. The infilled arched doorways to the stables form part of the wall that supports the bank on the east side of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, which has recently been restored.

Lock Nos. 1 – 19 and 21 form part of the original construction of the canal, whilst Lock No. 20 was added just over a decade after the canal's opening. Nevertheless it is likely that all have been rebuilt to some extent as part of the process of ongoing repair and maintenance. Their visible parts all include a single wooden lock gate with long balance beams at the upper end and double gates to the lower, brick walls and either brick or stone copings, slots for the insertion of stop planks are located in the opening at the upper end. Most of the locks have brick-lined overflow channels running around the non-towpath side, although it appears that the channel at Lock 2 was converted into a basin, which survives albeit largely filled by vegetation.

Steps up to the lock gates were made of large sandstone blocks which have become dished through long term use, providing an indication of the weight of traffic and length of use of the canal.

Lock Nos. 5 and 15 include large date blocks with the dates in the 1860s recording a phase of rebuilding. Other features of the locks are dimpled footplates and rolled edge rubbing strips used to protect the edges of the locks from wear from boat ropes. The locks are often seen in groups running along the canal and provide rhythm and interest to views along it.

The Lock Keeper's Cottages at Top Lock are some of the BCN's best-preserved canal cottages.

The road bridges crossing the canal are another significant architectural feature of the conservation area. They are often located at the lower end of a lock where the narrowness of the canal and fall in ground level allowed the construction of a shorter arch. Several bridges are considered to date from the late 18th century, including Little's Lane Bridge, Fox's Lane Bridge, Jordan's Bridge, Dunstall Park Bridge and the BCN's Aldersley Junction Bridge. These narrow bridges would, at most, allow a single carriageway and are unlikely to be suitable for modern traffic. They are brick built, to a standard pattern that provides further uniformity to the character of the area with a small amount of detailing around the arch. Little's Lane also crosses the remains of the bridge over the Victoria Basin, which has been blocked but not removed. The bridges at Cannock Road and Stafford Road were

upgraded to take modern traffic and are of less architectural interest.

The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal bridge at the Aldersley Junction is a classic example of a roving bridge, designed to allow the boat horse and leader to cross the canal without detaching the boat rope. A small arch was included in the bridge to provide access to the canal stables.

Railway bridges and viaducts crossing the canal provide another important element of the transport landscape of the conservation area. Whereas the canal architecture dates from the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the railway structures date from the middle and later 19th century. Despite their functionalism, some traces of a restrained late classicism can be detected. The two viaducts are both massive structures crossing the line of the canal on high arches of dark blue brick and acting as landmarks in views. Other, lower bridges include the LNWR's bridge over the canal just south of Cannock Road, with a skewed elliptical arch reflecting the design of canal bridges and with large piers either side of the parapet providing a modest classical character. The GWRs bridges located just to the south of the Stour Valley viaduct are constructed of girders and riveted steel plates, springing from a causeway with masonry retaining walls.

Fox's Lane Bridge is one of the classic elliptical brick bridges of the BCN. On the left is an in-filled gateway that once controlled access to the towpath.

Lock No. 10 showing cast iron rubbing plate in the foreground, stone coping and rubbing stone with brick lock walls and timber gates.

Both the canal and railway bridges were strengthened with iron rubbing plates and rollers to prevent damage from boat ropes, although scoring from ropes is seen in the brickwork of some bridge arches. The rubbing strips and rollers however, bear deep scoring from ropes, which bears eloquent testimony of the busy traffic on the canal and its long period of use.

The buildings of the Springfield Brewery make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area in the spaces near to Cannock Road. Their late Victorian architecture is more elaborate than that seen in the conservation area, providing strong links to the architecture of the city centre.

Building materials

Handmade red brick is the most distinctive material of the conservation area used on the canal cottages, bridges, locks, banks and even as the towpath surface. However, it was rarely used in isolation from other materials. The oldest bridges have a keystone detail in the arches of a single sandstone block. The towpath edges have copings that vary from blue bull nosed brick, sometimes stamped with the makers' names to red brick or large sandstone blocks. Sandstone blocks are also a feature of the canal locks, providing a hardwearing material around the lock edges and openings possibly also of value for the individual weight of blocks, providing solidity to the structures.

The walls of the canal banks are supported by iron or steel bands that act as rubbing strips and iron is seen as a canalside material in the mechanisms of the lock paddles. Another material seen in walls rising from the offside of the canal are triangular section coping stones laid on edge to create dog-toothed pattern in the masonry.

The railway infrastructure provides examples of other materials, particularly blue engineering brick,

The grade II listed bridge over the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal is an excellent example of a roving bridge built to allow the boat man and his horse to cross the canal without having to uncouple the hauling line from the boat.

Bull nosed brick copings to the canal wall with the impressed makers name of Whitehouse Bloomfield.

used on the massive viaduct structures, as well as the LNWR bridge south of Cannock Road. The GWRs bridges have the more temporary steel framed construction that was the successor to their characteristic use of timber framing, whilst the sandstone blocks of the causeway approaching their bridges reflects GWR characteristic materials seen elsewhere in the country.

The walls of loading bays at the Ceres Works off Crown Street are an unusual surviving element of a structure associated with the industrial use of the canal, which could be enhanced as part of redevelopment of the canalside site.

Listed Buildings

A listed building is one that is included on the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings are protected by law and consent is required from the City Council before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out.

The Statutory List contains 26 entries within the conservation area, which are all listed Grade II, several of the canal bridges are listed jointly with the adjacent lock but are recorded here separately to provide clarity:

Wolverhampton Locks Conservation Area Appraisal

All of the 21 locks in the conservation area are listed grade II

Birmingham Canal Top Lock Cottages;

Birmingham Canal Wolverhampton Locks Nos. 1 – 21;

Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Aldersley Bridge;

Aldersley Junction Bridge;

Dunstall Park Bridge;

Jordan's Bridge (Crown Street)

Fox's Lane Bridge;

Little's Lane Bridge;

Oxley Viaduct; and

Stour Valley Line Viaduct.

The Wednesfield Road High Level Railway Bridge and retaining wall, the Springfield Brewery and the Broad Street Warehouse area all listed buildings located outside the conservation area which make a positive contribution to its setting.

Locally Listed Heritage Assets

As well as listed buildings, the Government has for many years encouraged local planning authorities to draw up lists of locally important buildings and to formulate local plan policies for their protection, through normal development control procedures. The English Heritage Good Practice Guide for Local Heritage Listing (2012) acknowledges that such lists have a key role in building and reinforcing a sense of local identity and distinctiveness and recommends extending local listing to all types of heritage asset to include sites, places, landscapes and archaeology. Works that require planning permission to a heritage asset included in the City of Wolverhampton Local List will be expected to take into account the special architectural and historic interest of the property

The following heritage assets are included in the Wolverhampton Local List:

- Aldersley Junction remains of 18th century buildings;
- Surviving wall of the covered loading bays of the Ceres Works just south of Crown Street;
- Remains of railway Turntable, Fowlers Park;
- Remains of Civil Engineers Platform, Fowlers Park;
- Boundary wall and 'Spike Island' fencing to former gas works site between locks 14 & 15.

Remains of the Civil Engineers Platform at Fowlers Park are now included on the Local List.

Remains of stables and lodging houses form part of the locally listed archaeological site at Aldersley Junction.

Buildings of Townscape Merit

In addition, marked on the Townscape Appraisal maps are a number of unlisted buildings which have been judged as making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This follows advice provided in English Heritage guidance on Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management, which stresses the importance of identifying such buildings.

The buildings are considered to be good, relatively unaltered examples, of their type where some original materials and details have survived in addition to the basic historic form of the building. Where a building has been adversely affected by modern changes and restoration is either impractical or, indeed, not possible, they are excluded. There is a general presumption in favour of retaining all Buildings of Townscape Merit.

Focal points, vistas and views

As a ribbon of green open space with features of interest spaced along its length, the conservation area provides a sequence of unfolding views and vistas of interest. Whilst some of the most significant are described here and illustrated on the Townscape Appraisal Maps, these should be considered as examples rather than an exhaustive list.

Throughout most of this conservation area views are well contained within the immediate corridor of the canal. The canal provides a number of views of interest. The grouping of canal cottages, lock, basin, narrow boats and canal bridge, with attractive trees and worn brick paving at Top Lock is one of the most photogenic scenes on the Birmingham Canal. It also provides evidence of many different facets of the canal's history.

At Cannock Road, views out of the conservation area include the Springfield Brewery buildings which are a feature of particular interest and include the long Butler's Ales mural that was, presumably, intended to be seen from the transport corridors.

Views along the canal benefit from the gradual fall in ground, providing more open vistas looking north, with the locks providing particular points of interest and activity. They also provide rhythm due to their spacing and the prominence of the projecting balance beams. The green surroundings of the canal, particularly in cuttings, help to enclose these views and add softening. Near Aldersley Junction the curve of the canal and denser foliage foreshortens views; creating more imitate sylvan areas in which features on the canal arrive unexpectedly.

The viaducts stand out as landmark features in views form the canal. At the Stour Valley Line viaduct the crossing lines of the former GWR railway bridges, canal and viaducts create a scene of particular interest. The scale of the Oxley viaduct is emphasised by the juxtaposition of two storey houses standing just north of it.

In the approach to Stafford Road from the south the buildings of the Wolverhampton Science Park

More a scene than a vista, the grouping of lock keeper's cottages, lock bridge and historic paving at Top Lock is one of the most memorable on the course of the BCN main line.

Wolverhampton Locks Conservation Area Appraisal

A view north from Lock 2 to Lock 3

have been design to address the canalside and one forms the focus of the view northward along the waterway from Lock Nos. 12, 13 and 14, where the canal bends sharply to the north west. This provides a positive relationship between the canal and new development.

Aldersley Junction, including the roving bridge on the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, provides particularly important views from many directions. At the northern edge of the conservation area, views north along the canal are framed by numerous road and rail bridges crossing the line of the canal up to a focus of activity near Autherley Junction (the start of the Shropshire Union Canal) in the distance.

The open space of the large nature reserve between the canal and Oxley Sidings provides further attractive views across a large wildflower meadow, including wild (or escaped) lupins, and fills a shallow valley or bowl which encloses the views.

Open spaces, green areas and trees

The canal forms a long, linear public open space, which is often green. In many areas the canal runs through a green setting with thick foliage often running down into the off-side (away from the towpath) with the towpath itself often running between grass verges. Reeds and flag irises growing

within the canal provide additional greenery whilst many trees line the canalside or appear in views looking out from it, rising above the surrounding built environment.

The canalside has been landscaped at several key sites to provide more open spaces for walkers, boaters and cyclists to rest. A notable area is on the site of the former office and lodgings at Aldersley Junction, where benches provide views over the junction. Or into naturalised woodland surroundings. A long stretch of the canal parallel to Oxley Sidings has a wide green edge, which is used by anglers. Just to the south, the large public open space off Viaduct Drive runs up to the canal's edge and is well integrated with the canalside. Provision for the canalside has included a small footbridge to allow crossing to the towpath side from the green open space.

The green space of the nature reserve between the canal and Oxley Sidings

Just to the south of Stafford Road canalside green open space has been created between the towpath and Coxwell Avenue. To the north, at Jones Road, a gap in the towpath wall has been created and an area with benches and tree planting has been created to provide further green open space next to the canal, which also provides a pedestrian or cyclist link to Stafford Road.

The curving line of the canal near Aldersley Junction

Fowlers Park provides a well managed and attractive green open space which runs alongside the canal for a considerable distance. It provides an attractive green setting to the canal, which is in strong contrast to the derelict post-industrial landscape of the land on the other (western) canal bank between Cannock Road and Crown Street. In the south, the canal and towpath are well integrated with the park, particularly where the long railway platform structure runs alongside the towpath. However, in other areas a thick tree belt at the edge of the parkland forms a significant barrier between the two areas, with access via a narrow path. The park has a history of a mixture of uses, including allotment gardens in the early 20th century and contains the former route of the Great Western Railway northward from Wolverhampton's Low Level Station. This includes the lines of two railways that were taken over by the GWR, converging at a meeting point that was formerly known as Cannock Road Junction. They included the Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway, running up off to a junction with the Grand Junction Railway at Bushbury and a Great Western Railway branch line that curved around to the west and over the canal initially to provide access to their locomotive sheds at Stafford Road.

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The green open space at Fowlers Park provides an attractive setting to the canal and contains remains of railway heritage.

The site of a former signal box has been identified on historic maps at this junction, whilst visible remains of the trackbed and the fence of reused railway sleepers are tangible evidence of the former route that was used by Queen Victoria's Royal Train from Scotland to Windsor or Gosport. The railway platform next to the canal on the western edge of the park was used by the Wolverhampton Divisional Civil Engineer for storage of materials and equipment and possibly may also have been used for transhipment across the towpath. This also marks the edge of the former railway line and helped to define its former route. To the north a large bridge abutment, now overgrown with ivy, marks the former route of a lane running eastwards from Jordan's Bridge. In its present condition it provides a picturesque ruin commemorating the passed age of railway travel. Just to the north of this the remains of a former railway turntable constructed by 1902, have been exposed at the edge of the park. Whilst a recent archaeological study suggested that this was formerly connected with a coaling stage or water tower and a small engine shed alongside the canal it was in fact the turntable that served the large and important Stafford Road Engine sheds located beyond the canal on the site of the current Wulfrun Trading Estate. The northern edge of the park is marked by the wooded course of a long railway embankment for a line running from the Shrewsbury Line to Bushbury Junction, which is still in use. At its western end this forms a part of the canalside and has a substantial stone retaining wall rising from the towpath's edge. A low, stone-lined tunnel provides a pedestrian route under the embankment from the towpath and is an architecturally appealing feature but, given its low roof level and absence of lighting, is a very dangerous feeling space with evidence of recent use for drug taking.

On the south side of Cannock Road seating areas have been set out on both sides of the canal

including robustly constructed brick tables and benches, using the red brick and blue brick copings seen as a distinctive material along the canal.

At Top Lock the open space between the canal and Wednesfield Road has been set out as an attractive pocket park with mown grass and several unexceptional benches, litter bins and paths leading down to the towpath, as well as areas of seasonal bedding. The offside of the canal has been covered by shrubbery running up to the ring-road. The bridge carrying Wednesfield Road over the canal has been clad in a carefully chosen brick, reflecting the colour of traditional materials found on the canal, and is topped with blue painted railings. This green space and the trees within it frame views south to the listed canal depot buildings in the Union Mill Conservation Area. The trees also frame views north along the canal within the present conservation area, including those of the lock keepers' cottages.

Looking south towards Top Lock. Note the motorcycle barriers and mooring bollards on the towpath.

Public realm

Both the canal towpath and the waterway form elements of the public realm, although the waterway has the obvious limit to public access of requiring a boat. Travelling by narrow boat provides a very different experience of the waterway.

The towpath retains areas of historic brick paving which has been worn by the passage of numerous feet and hooves to resemble cobbles. The most notable areas are located at Top Lock, where this contributes to the setting of the listed lock, cottages and bridge, under Fox's Lane Bridge and at Aldersley Junction, alongside Lock No. 21.

Past programmes of maintenance and improvement around the locks have resulted in areas of new brick paving, which still have a raw modern feel. This should be seen as a part of the continual process of maintenance and renewal of the canal infrastructure and, in time, these surfaces will be weathered in.

Elsewhere the towpath is surfaced in tarmacadam as far north as Lock No. 17 and is a less formal group of gravel paths thereafter.

Several motorcycle barriers located along the route of the canal are necessary to prevent antisocial misuse of the towpath but are an unfortunately intrusive element in views along it. British Waterways have been careful to paint these barriers in the same livery colours (black and white) that are used on all their other canal furniture.

Way finding posts were noted along the canal, particularly at Fowlers Park. These might be improved in their frequency, design and the locations they direct towpath users to and thereby encourage use of the towpath for short journeys. This would need to form part of a wider strategy of signage and routing for pedestrians and cyclists.

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Mooring bollards provide opportunities for short term mooring of boats alongside the towpath and are notable at various locations along the canal. The British Waterways colour scheme is helpful in raising the visibility of these features, which might otherwise constitute a trip hazard. British Waterways black and white name plates on each of the bridges, helps to provide a hint at the historic pattern of the lanes after which the structures are named.

Boundary posts, marking the limits of canal company property were once a notable feature of the canalside. Only one surviving post was recorded in the conservation area, which is located at Top Lock.

Boundaries to the public realm are formed in various materials and include walls, fences and hedges, as well as the retaining walls of embankments or cuttings. A distinctive material

Worn and patched paving at Top Lock.

A fence of reused railway sleepers just south of Cannock Road enclose the towpath and mark the former site of Cannock Junction

used just to the north of Fowlers Park are the timber sleepers of the former railway line set on end to form a fence, which are presumed to have been reused in situ. This reuse of industrial materials provides a valuable indication of past activity, which enhances local character. Another material used in this way is the foundry waste or clinker used in large blocks to build retaining walls, which are a distinctive local feature. One example is seen next to the towpath just north of Fox's Lane Bridge.

The use of chain link and palisade fencing has a negative impact on the character of the conservation area, although it may be necessary to provide security or public safety in some areas (such as the embankment of the Main Line railway). In other areas, such as the long section between the Stour Valley line Viaduct and Stafford road it may even be obsolete and its removal could help to enhance the character of the towpath and canal.

A locally distinctive wall of foundry slag near Fox's Lane bridge

Local identity

The canal is an important symbol of the industries, labour and resources that were combined to enable the industrial development that fuelled the growth of Wolverhampton and its surrounding towns. It is a part of the cherished scene and has been the subject of artwork and film making (see for example the work of Arthur Arrowsmith - artist - or Phillip Donnellan – film maker). It provides routes between local communities, particularly those established through development over the former industrial land in the early and mid-20th century. The canalside factories and industrial sites are now a rapidly vanishing element of the local landscape, but at one time were the pride of the region's business community. As an attractive area including evidence of both canal engineering and the development of Wolverhampton as a regional hub for the railways, the conservation area contributes to the local identity of Wolverhampton as a nationally significant centre of the industrial revolution.

Archaeological potential

The area contains a number of sites of buried archaeological deposits of importance, particularly those relating to its early industrial history. The buried remains of the toll houses and stables at Aldersley Junction have been identified as a locally listed heritage asset in recognition of the archaeological potential. Remains of the railway infrastructure at Fowlers Park also have archaeological interest, whilst their inclusion in the modern open space provides an excellent opportunity for interpretation and positive use. These sites need further investigation and definition in order that they may be managed and protected.

Remains of the railway turntable in Fowlers Park are of archaeological significance.

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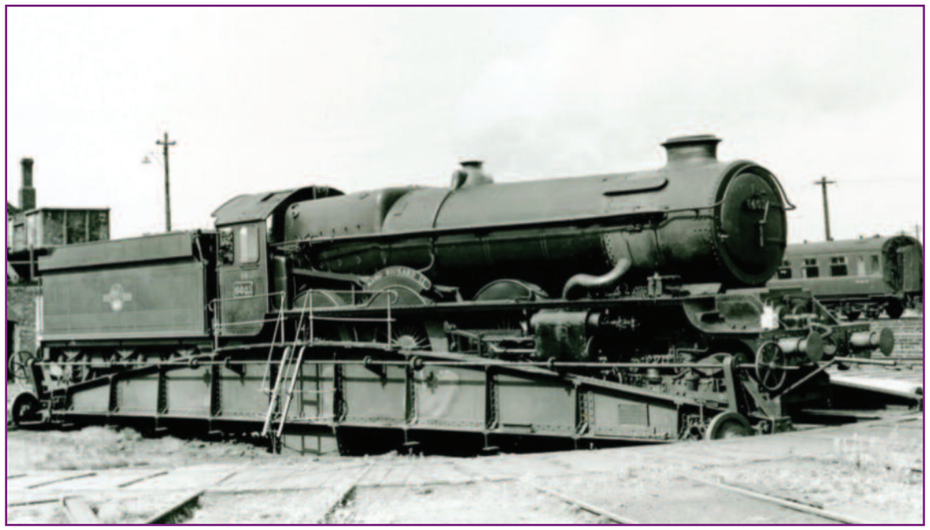


Photograph taken in the early 20th century of the railway turntable in use at Fowlers Park.

Introduction to Character Areas

The main line of the canal varies along its course as it runs from the area of activity at Top Lock to the green setting of Aldersley Junction in the north.

From south to north the mainline can be divided into, at least, three areas of changing character as it passes from the setting of Wolverhampton City Centre, through areas of past and present industrial land to the greener and more rural setting in the north. These character areas comprise:

Area 1 Top Lock to Cannock Road

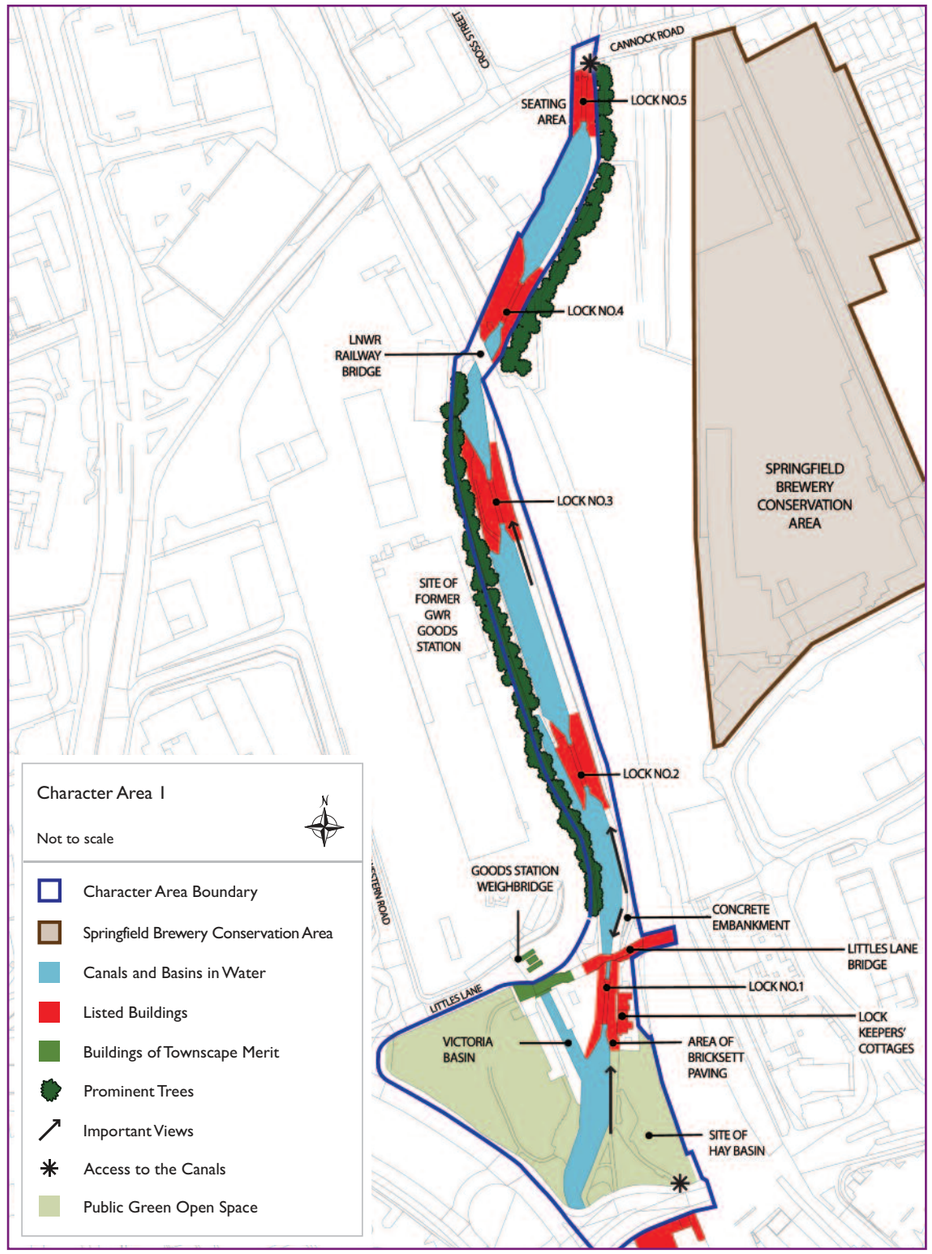
Area 2 Fowlers Park to Oxley Viaduct

Area 3 Oxley Viaduct to Aldersley Junction

These character areas have been defined based on the changing character of the canal and its setting, including the buildings, urban and green landscape and activities on the canalside.

This appraisal provides a fine grain of character description and is focused on the specific environment of the canal, which may not follow the character changes of the wider environment as experienced from surrounding roads. The character areas described here are intended to assist in the management of the canal and its setting. Nevertheless it should be recognised that many character areas have only notional boundaries and that features of character change more gradually than a hard line on a map might suggest, whilst other characteristics may be common throughout several areas.

CHARACTER AREA 1 – TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL MAP



Area 1 Top lock

Top Lock looking towards Broad Street and the City Centre

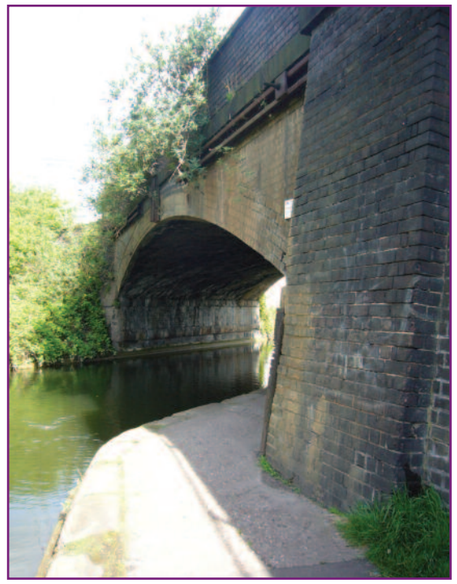
Principal features

- **The BCN Main Line;**
- **Group of listed buildings comprising lock keepers' cottages, Little's Lane Bridge and No. 1 Lock;**
- **High Level Bridge Lock Street (listed Grade II);**
- **Worn brick paving;**
- **Pair of listed canal locks (Nos. 2 and 3) including canal basin for the former Junction Iron Works;**
- **Mid 19th century railway bridge;**
- **Pair of listed canal locks (Nos. 4 and 5);**
- **View to listed Broad Street Warehouse (in Union Mill Conservation Area);**
- **Enclosed areas within cuttings enhanced by greenery and wildlife.**

General character and townscape

Top Lock is one of the most distinctive locations on the BCN Main Line as it travels through the city. The grouping of cottages lock and bridge, next to a still active canal basin and within the landscape of historic brick paved towpath and parkland (including the ubiquitous waterside weeping willows); creates a microcosm of canal landscape features, as well as a focus of activity and interest. This is supported by the proximity of the Broad Street Canal Depot (in Union Mill Conservation Area) and listed railway bridge directly to the east. It is a relatively open area with no enclosure to the west of a large part, although the lock cottages and walls around the basin create an entry to the more enclosed area to the north.

A route from the lock side area to Little's Lane is controlled by a gate which was locked during the survey period, preventing access. The flat roofed building adjacent stands on the site of the former boatmans' mission room. The bridge creates an



The LNWR bridge crossing the canal. Note the deeply scored cast iron roller to protect the railway bridge from boat ropes.

by boats where the canal turns sharply to pass under the bridge.

North east of the railway bridge the canal follows a gently curving line providing unfolding views. The low wall on the towpath edge allows greenery on the bank beyond to spill over to the canalside. On the west side greenery runs down the bank to the canal's edge. The blocked entrances to canal basins are visible in the canal bank. The seating area noted above is located next to Lock No. 5 and Cannock Road Bridge and has mown grass on the offside of the canal, with a large area of modern brick paving on the towpath and ramp under the bridge. The bridge is a large girder bridge of cast iron-plates and is not particularly attractive, whilst the steps up to Cannock Road pass through a narrow gap that is not inviting.

Approaching Cannock Road bridge and the green open space at Lock 5.

important pinch point and is a focal feature in views looking south along the canal.

North of Little's Lane Bridge the area is much more enclosed with green foliage to the west and a substantial embankment becoming higher as the canal and towpath level descends through Lock Nos. 2 and 3. The site of of the former Herbert Street Goods Station (dating from the 1930s) is to the west and the embankment for the main line railway forms the east side of the towpath. This is supported by an unattractive long, curving concrete wall, which gives way to a chain link fence to the north. The railway bridge forms another pinch point, making this part of the canal an enclosed space. As it approaches the bridge the canal bank has large stone copings and an iron reinforcing band to protect the bank from impacts

Local features

- Worn cast iron rope rollers on arch to the railway bridge;
- Cast iron BCN boundary post with company initials at Top Lock;
- Entrances to infilled basins at former Cannock Road Wharves;
- Views to Springfield Brewery;
- Cowslips growing on the lock side at No. 4 Lock;
- Canalside greenery, including low trees on cutting edge;
- Low brick wall to towpath edge at Lock No. 5;
- Seating area with trees, and brick tables and benches at Lock No. 5.

Springfield Brewery

Negative features

- Overhead wires to canal keeper's cottage;
- Overbearing presence of the Victoria Halls tower block;
- Litter trapped between railway embankment and fence;
- Negative impression created by disused and derelict land adjacent to the canal at Springfield Brewery;
- Graffiti on railway bridge;
- Buddleia growing from the brickwork of the railway bridge;
- Lack of signage to canal and destinations from Top Lock or Cannock Road entrances;
- Lack of permeability between the canal and surrounding areas due to dominance of large industrial premises to their side including the disused brewery and railway line;
- Poor access from Cannock Road;
- Barbed wire along the top of a wall at the side of Lock Keeper's Cottage No. 110.

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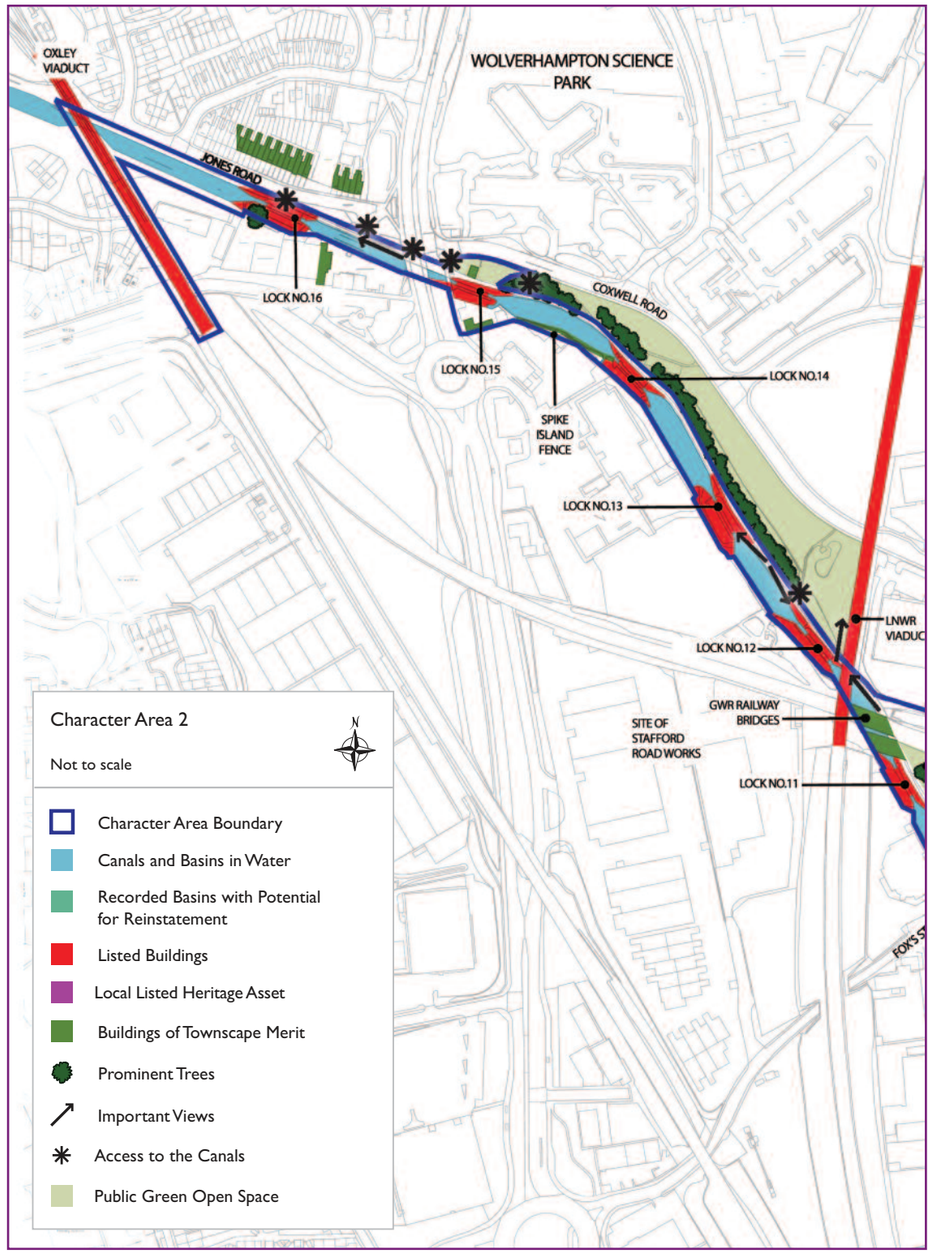
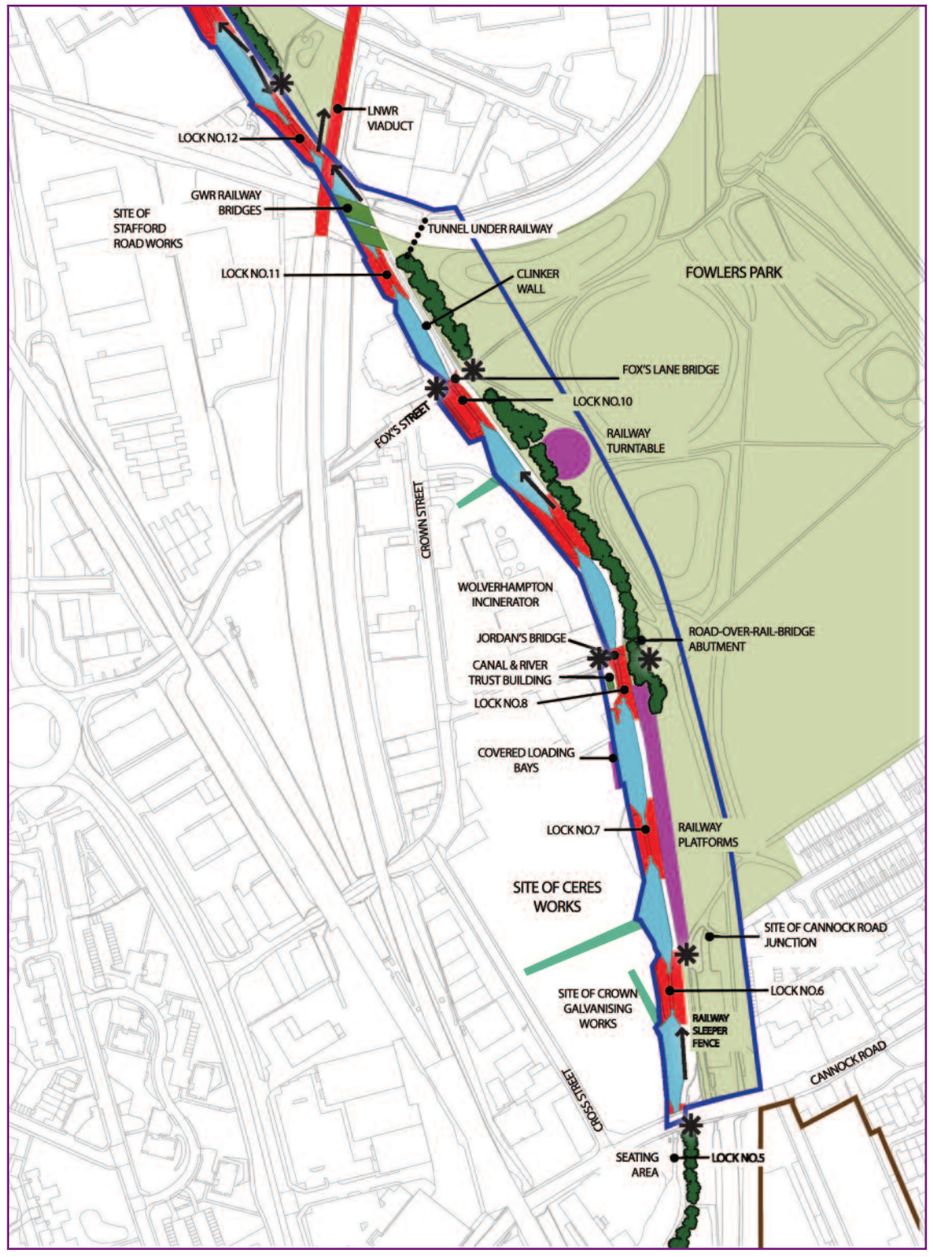
CHARACTER AREA 2 – TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL MAP





Area 2 Fowlers Park to Oxley Viaduct

View north from Lock No. 6 with the Wolverhampton Municipal Incinerator in the distance and the sites of the former Crown Galvanising Works and Ceres Works to the left.

Principal features

- The BCN Main Line;
- Group of listed locks Nos. 6 – 8 with Jordan's Bridge;
- Remains of covered loading bays at Ceres Chemical Manure Works;
- Listed Locks No. 9-11;
- Grouping of listed Viaduct (Stour Valley Line) and lock No. 12 with GWR railway girder bridges creating a notable scene;
- Railway platform next to towpath at Fowlers Park and evidence of former GWR Railway lines;
- Brick base of a railway turntable.

General character and townscape

Throughout this area there is a mixed character of green open space (often accessible to the public) with used and disused industrial land. North of Cannock Road a long straight section of the canal allows views north along its course over Lock Nos. 6, 7 and 8. A large area of vacant land covers the sites of the Crown Galvanized Iron Works and the Ceres Chemical Manure Works. From the canal this is seen as a large area of levelled rubble with self-seeded scrub and an unattractive chain link fence controlling access from the canal. Self-seeded trees line this canal bank, often screening views west and including willow and alders. They provide greenery and softening, although it is likely they will weaken the canal walls and damage the brickwork of former wharfs. This area also contains the remains of at least two basins which can be seen in the canal bank.

On the east side of the canal the bank running down to the towpath is covered in scrub and brambles with a fence of reused railway sleepers at the top. The end of this fence allows views into Fowlers Park with a mixture of well mown lawns, woodland areas and paths crossing on numerous routes. A modern, narrow footpath or cycleway follows the course of the former railway lines, passing the site of a railway turntable built to serve the large and important Stafford Road Works engine sheds. This feature is now marked by remains of the circular brick base of the turntable with blue brick stable paviours as a coping. The pit for the turning mechanism is located in the centre and various other pits and tunnels are visible.

Further to the south the park contains the remains of a platform that has been interpreted as a "Civil Engineers Platform" served by a siding back from near Stafford Road shed's coaling stage / turntable area and terminating just to the north of Cannock Road bridge. The platform was unlikely to have been used as a passenger station as previously thought. Modern footpaths follow the course of the railway line and with a little interpretation the identity of this route as a great historic railway route could be made even more evident. The survival of railway infrastructure in a municipal parkland landscape provides the potential to enhance understanding of the relationship between the canal and railway infrastructure, as well as the significance of the industrial transport systems to the city's historic prosperity. This area is less intensively managed than other areas of grassland in the park, but has been used for illegal drug taking.

One abutment of a bridge survives just to the west of Jordan's Bridge, which would have carried Crown Street over the GWR railway line in the past. The abutment, built of blue brick with shallow recessed panels within arches, is now overgrown and has the air of a partially forgotten ruin.

The canalside wall of the Ceres Works covered loading bays.

The wall of the covered loading bays of the Ceres Works can be seen on the canal edge running up to Lock No. 8 and forming the side boundary to a number of industrial units facing onto Crown Street. The northern section of this wall has been affected by development of scrub and is partially collapsed. An area of canalside between the former

The canalside building at Lock No. 8.

loading bays and Jordan's Bridge is currently enclosed by painted hoardings, but contains two small historic canalside buildings, the earliest of which, appears to be shown on the 2nd Edition 6" to the mile Ordnance Survey map of 1903. Although the use of this building is uncertain it has the appearance of an industrial structure, including an arch headed window in its north facing gable, and may have been used by the canal company as a workshop or a small pumping house, recycling water on the lock flight.

An area of woodland forms part of the boundary of the playing fields from south of Jordan's Bridge up to the railway bridges with a gap where paths from Fox's Lane enter through to the fields. To the west, the Wolverhampton Waste Incinerator forms a substantial canalside structure. Its chimney is prominent in views along the canal from both north and south and the site is now closed off from the canalside by a brick wall topped with railings and with gaps (filled by railings) to allow views through. The wall is built of red and blue brick with various decorative features. This treatment provides an interesting solution to provide a barrier that is secure whilst protecting the character of the canalside. In the circumstances (providing a

boundary to a large waste processing facility) its design should be considered a success, although it would not be desirable to provide all employment land uses with similar boundaries.

North of Fox's Lane a large plot on Crown Street is occupied by a new building built to resemble a large industrial unit of late 19th century origin. This has various industrial features and a boundary treatment with some similarities to the waste incinerators but with railings to the canalside allowing views into the site.

Green open space joins the canalside to the modern streetscape at the Wolverhampton Science Park.

View looking over Lock 11 to the grouping of the GWR girder bridge and the LNWR viaduct. The sandstone wall to the right is the GWR embankment. (Early 20th century photograph reproduced with the permission of of Simon Dewey, photographer Fred Braybrook.)

The grouping of the Stour Valley Line Viaduct at high level with the GWR girder bridges, which carried tracks into the Stafford Road Works, at lower level and the line of the canal below provides another very distinctive point on the canal the character of which is strongly affected by changes in light. From the north these are seen together with the listed Lock No. 12. The paint used on the steel plates of the northern girder bridge adds some brightness and colour to the scene. In the approach to this group from the south the arched head to a tunnel under the GWR line could be easily missed but is an interesting feature. The tunnel would probably not meet modern design guidelines but is an interesting historic feature. This is another location used for illegal drug taking.

North of the viaduct another long, straight section of the canal allows views along the waterway and over Lock Nos. 12, 13 and 14 with an endpoint marked at the turn in the canal by a building in the Wolverhampton Science Park and with a 'big sky' beyond. The greenery of the towpath and foliage to either side of the canal add to the attractiveness of the waterway and canal locks. The chain link fence to the side of the canal however detracts from the visual amenity of this section of the canal and is

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currently unnecessary. It should also be noted that this section of the canal was constructed through the cut and fill method along the side of a hill and that the creation of some breaks in the hedgerow on the east side would allow views out to appreciate the views across the valley to the north east. Between the viaduct and Stafford Road land on the west side of the canal is in employment uses that do not provide an active frontage to the canal. The small canalside green open space just south of Stafford Road has been described above and represents a positive integration of the canalside with surrounding roads and spaces. It includes a small brick building, which may represent a small pumping engine house.

North of Stafford Road is the site of a former smithy, wharf and former wharf manager's house, which is a simple structure but has some historic interest. To the east, the towpath is separated from Jones Road by a low fence with a hedgerow or tree

View towards the Oxley Viaduct from Stafford Road Bridge.

line. A gap, just north of Stafford Road provides a link between the two and access to a small shop or newsagents (the only shop next to the canal in the entire length of the BCN mainline through Wolverhampton) via a landscaped area with seats.

A section of the towpath has been paved with blue brick paviours here, whilst larger trees next to Lock No. 16 herald some of the more rural parts in the character area to the north. Views out from the towpath include the terrace of early 20th century houses, some of which retain distinctive historic architectural features. The Oxley Viaduct provides a dramatic focal feature to the north.

Local features

- Entrances to infilled basins of Crown Iron Works;
- Towpath side walls of clinker blocks and fence of reused railway sleepers;
- Canalside wall of reused copings surmounted by 'Spike Island' metal tube fencing;
- Blue brick bull nosed copings to canal bank;
- Massive sandstone masonry of GWR railway bridge causeway including low, arch-roofed tunnel under causeway;
- Building materials of former railway platforms include locally produced brick and reused ironworks clinker, a locally distinctive material;
- Archaeological potential of railway structures in Fowlers Park including an early engine shed with associated coaling stage or water tower;
- Views across Fowlers Park to surrounding residential areas;
- Bridge abutment just east of Jordan's Bridge to road-over-rail bridge which formerly continued the route of Crown Street over the railway line;
- Overlooking from early 20th century terraced housing at Jones Road;
- Small wharf manager's house at Gorsebrook Road.

Spike Island fencing on top of a wall constructed using wall copings giving a 'dog's tooth' effect facing the canal.

Negative features

- The Cannock Road Bridge was rebuilt to carry modern road traffic over the canal but is an unattractive structure with high brick parapets that prevent views down to the canal from the road. The long tunnel underneath is an intimidating area;
- Large area of derelict industrial land with unattractive boundary to the canal at Crown Street;
- Use of bushes next to the canal at Fowlers Park and Wolverhampton Science Park for drug taking including scattered syringes and needles;
- Loss of structural fabric from former loading bays at Ceres Chemical Manure Works;
- Unnecessary and unattractive palisade fence alongside the canal at Coxwell Avenue;
- Unattractive hoarding around small industrial unit next to Lock No. 8 and Jordan's Bridge;
- Damage to parapet and loss of material from Jordan's Bridge;
- Barbed wire to towpath side fence south of Stour Valley Railway viaduct;
- The bridge at Stafford Road was widened to accommodate the modern dual carriageway. The long dark space, with a low roof and narrow path, is an intimidating space. The west facing parapet and railings are particularly unattractive, detracting from the effort to make the adjacent area an accessible canalside green open space;
- Neither the railway turntable or platforms are clearly identified for their historic purposes, whilst both require remedial work to prevent loss of further fabric through weathering or colonisation by vegetation;
- Poor condition of maintenance, low ceiling and lack of lighting in tunnel under railway embankment.

Unattractive metal hoarding around disused buildings at Jordan's Bridge.

Area 3 Oxley Viaduct to Aldersley Junction

The surroundings of the canal in character area 3 are more rural than the rest of the conservation area with green space either side.

Principal features

- The BCN Main Line;
- The listed Oxley Viaduct
- Aldersley Junction
- The listed Birmingham Canal Locks Nos. 17 - 21;
- The listed Birmingham Canal bridges at Dunstall Park, and Aldersley Junction
- The listed Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Aldersley Junction Bridge.

General character and townscape

West of Oxley Viaduct there is a distinct change in character to a series of more open green spaces. The gravel surface of the towpath with green verges, a hedgerow boundary and small fields to the east and north of the canal contribute to a rural character. Looking south along the canal and the waterway, Oxley Viaduct is an imposing structure.

Immediately to the west of the viaduct, the area is relatively open with views across mown grass to the south at the public open space off Viaduct Drive. This open edge gradually becomes more overgrown and with a tree line developing well before the canal reaches Dunstall Park Race Course. In addition to the view east to the Viaduct, which has been noted above, there is a fine view west along the canal over Lock No. 17 and along the canal to Lock No. 18 where a bend leads the canal out of view. On the north side an access road is separated from the towpath by a low wire fence. This provides access to the entrance to the land of the railway maintenance depots at Oxley Sidings, although there is little evidence of their presence other than a formal security gate and road. The road also provides access to a small vehicle maintenance workshop in simple single-storey sheds in a compound surrounded by a wire fence.

The lower stretch of the canal has a sylvan character.

The access road is separated from the towpath up to Lock No. 18 by a hedgerow and forms a grassed track that is open to the small fields to the north. At Lock 18 the road runs alongside the towpath and both are seen as gravel paths snaking alongside the canal with grass verges. Both are divided from the fields to the north by a mature hedgerow. At Lock No. 19 the road and towpath diverge again with the former running above the level of the towpath on a bank that has a brick re-enforcing wall. The bank also supports a mature hedgerow and tree line with branches arching over the towpath and canal. On the off-side bank a similar tree line forms the boundary with Dunstall Park Race Course. Together the two walls of greenery enclose the canal corridor tightly. The curving line of the canal allows only short view lines and so both Locks No. 20 and No. 21 appear unexpectedly. The tranquillity of this area is remarkable given the location within a city, although this must be broken on race days or during busy activity in the railway depot.

On the high level, the road passes the southern edge of the large triangle of green open space of fields, including extensive wildflower meadows. Part of this land is a reclaimed sewage works, although it was also used for allotments at an earlier date. Views across the fields take in swaying long grass but, rather unfortunately, have the modern sheds of the maintenance depot as an end-stop. The road reaches Aldersley Junction within a small woodland that has developed over the remains of the canal company buildings, which have been locally listed as a heritage asset. These have been landscaped to create a viewing platform looking down on the water, with railings around the top edge and benches that provide an ideal spot to watch wild birds in the surrounding trees.

Lock No. 21 forms the terminus of the BCN Main Line. The worn brick paving alongside the lock is similar to that at Top Lock, binding the two sites together. The footbridge over the lower end of the lock currently leads nowhere, although it marks the site of the former tollhouse at the entrance to the canal. The bridge is narrower than any of the others, only wide enough for pedestrians or possibly horses. The copings of the bridge's parapet retain the holes to mount lamps to light the junction.

The grouping of Lock No. 21 with an area of historic paving and a roving bridge marks the end of the canal at Aldersley Junction.

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The junction is a broad water space surrounded by mature tree lines and lying within a cutting, creating a strong sense of enclosure. This is emphasised by the pinch points created by the bridges and the walls of former stable buildings. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal's bridge provides access to the Aldersley Recreation Grounds, another large and green open area. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal continues in both directions with a relatively straight course and is also designated a conservation area. The views to the north are particularly noteworthy and have been described above.

Local features

- Archaeological remains of lock keepers cottages, stables and lodgings at Aldersley Junction;
- Green fields and meadows;
- Links to public green open space;
- Brickwork of banks and retaining walls;
- Important area of tranquil green space.

Negative features

- Use of bushes within the Nature Reserve as a site for taking illegal drugs – evidence includes scattered syringes and tin foil;
- Whilst the fields to the north of the canal are in a condition of 'beautiful neglect' it would be deleterious to allow these to become totally scrub covered and revert to woodland, their interest as small fields is a rare survival of the former agricultural landscape of the area;
- Some parts of the nature reserve were used for fly tipping in the past, or demolition rubble from the former sewage works was left on site and in some areas may be dangerous.

Old brick wall retaining the bank beside the towpath as the canal descends in a cutting

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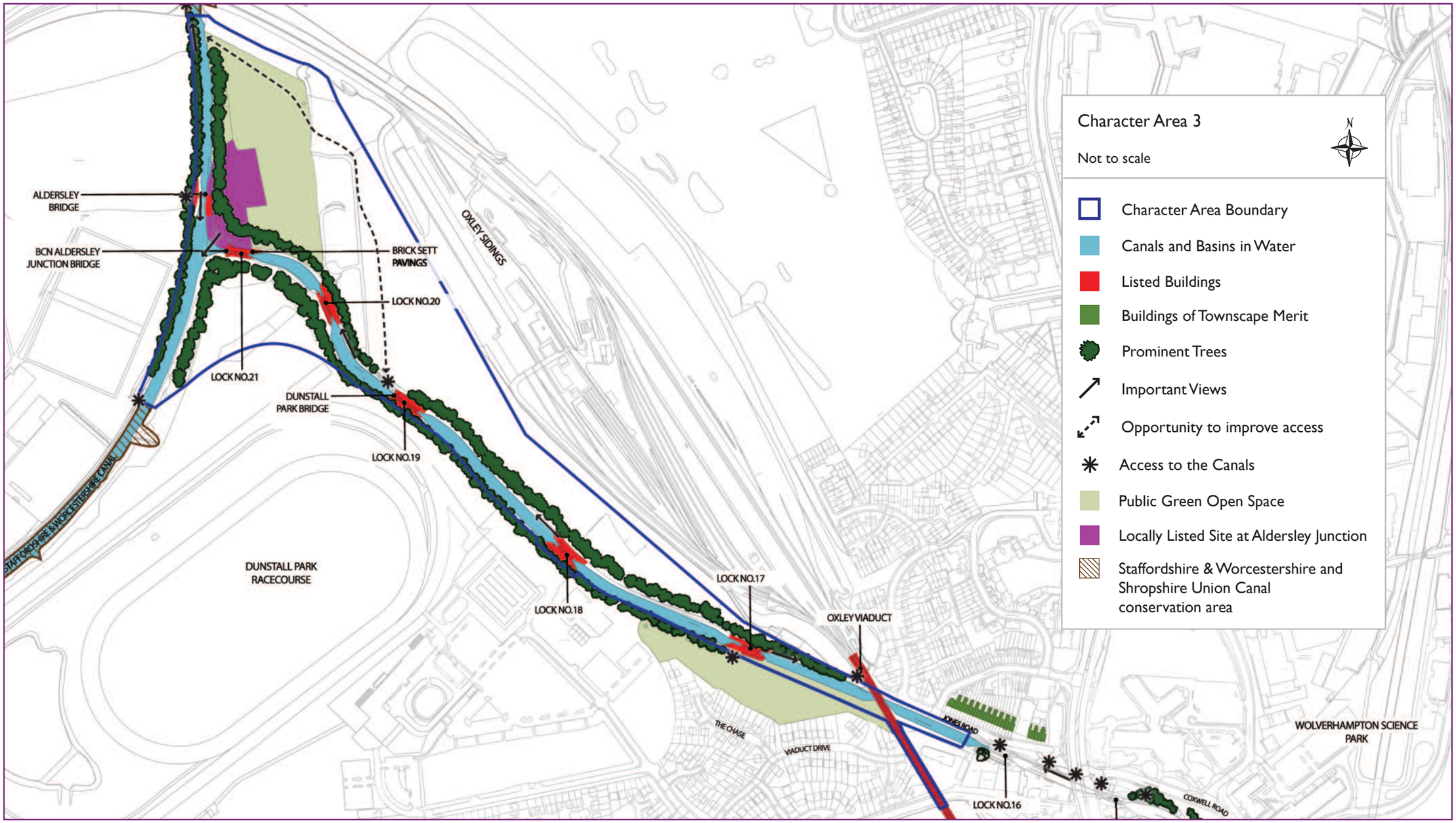
CHARACTER AREA 3 – TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL MAP



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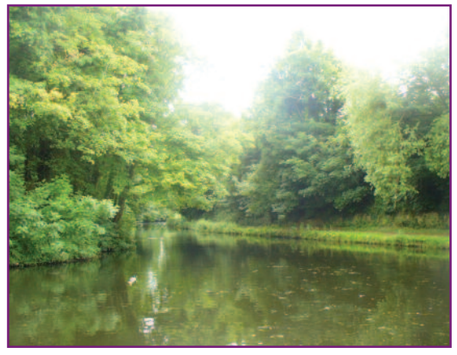
5. Issues

Positives

- Historic interest of the canal and canalside industries supported by buildings and structures reflecting the construction and development of both the canal and surrounding works and transport infrastructure;
- An area of tranquillity providing alternative movement corridors with access points to surrounding roads and paths;
- Views along the canal and out to the surrounding landscape;
- A linear green space with waterside greenery of the towpath and on the canal's off-side, including areas with ecological value;
- Green open space on former industrial land next to the canal;
- Surviving canal basins and wharfs illustrating use of the waterway;
- Archaeological potential of surrounding industrial sites, railway structures and former canal basins;
- Leisure opportunities – boating, walking, cycling, fishing;
- Links to the wider canal system.



The canal can be a beautiful location but is sometimes lonely or intimidating.

Negatives

- Derelict condition of canalside land, particularly cleared site at Cross Street;
- Loss of structural fabric from a listed canal bridge at Jordan's Bridge;
- Loss of locally distinctive industrial buildings, including frontage buildings and works' boundary walls;
- Lack of vegetation control on canalside structures, including wharfs, railway bridges and former covered loading bays;
- Lack of active frontages and overlooking creating bland sections of canal and uncomfortable areas, this is exacerbated by evidence of vandalism, waste dumping and other crime;
- Loss of activity to the canalside through security measures (e.g. closing up canalside doors and windows);
- Insensitive development adjacent to the canal or sterilising nearby areas due to neighbour issues;
- Lack of opportunities for interaction between the canal and surrounding area, such as moorings or basins;
- Areas of canalside with an isolated and intimidating atmosphere, partially due to low levels of activity and distance between access points;
- Lack of promotion and interpretation of important canal and railway heritage;
- Evidence of regular use of several canalside sites for illegal drug taking;
- Intimidating and dark area under Stafford Road and Cannock Road Bridge and poor appearance of bridge parapets;
- Lack of access to the canalside particularly between Little's Lane and Cannock Road.

Threats

- Lack of maintenance of canalside structures resulting in further loss of fabric, and potentially total loss of structures;
- Buildings/features at risk:
  - Former Ceres Works Covered Loading Bays
  - 'Spike Island' fencing near Lock 14
- Redevelopment that fails to integrate the canal as an area of activity with high quality landscaping, resulting in further areas of inactive frontage and negative impacts to views from the canal corridor;
- Redevelopment that fails to enhance access to the canalside;
- Dereliction of the waterway, including lack of vegetation control on canal, banks, towpath and bridges, littering and pollution;
- Loss of viability of the waterway and loss of remaining basins and wharfs;
- Loss of variety in the canalside as a result of new development that does not provide an active and varied frontage of high quality design to the towpath and waterway;
- Spread of invasive species, such as Japanese Knot Weed seen at Fowlers Park.

6. Management proposals

Conservation Area review 2012

The conservation area was reviewed and a new appraisal prepared during 2012 in the context of preparing evidence to inform the Stafford Road Corridor Area Action Plan. Public consultation too place between 19th September and 19th October that year. The results of the consultation were reported back to councillors on 22nd May 2013 when amendments to the appraisal, changes to the conservation area boundary and additions to the Local List were approved.

In general the conservation area boundary is tightly drawn to include the features of the canal and its associated historical infrastructure that contribute to the historical and architectural interest of the waterway, along with features of the railway lines that intersect its course. A number of very small extensions were made to rationalise the boundary so that it included all of features such as canal locks and their overflow channels. A small canalside building just south of Stafford Road, with its surrounding green space, and another small building just to the south of Jordan's Bridge were also included within the revised boundary.

A more substantial extension was designated to include land at Fowlers Park containing the platform and railway engine turntable that lie on the western edge of the green parkland which forms the setting of the canal making a particularly positive contribution to the character and appearance of the canal in sharp contrast to the negative impact of the derelict former industrial land on the west side of the waterway.

The Surviving wall of the covered loading bays of the Ceres Works just south of Crown Street and the Railway Turntable and Civic Engineers Platform at Fowlers Park and the former gas works boundary wall and 'Spike Island' tube fencing between locks 14 and 15 were added to the Local List of heritage assets.

Canalside building at Stafford Road

Guidelines for new development

The adopted Black Country Core Strategy contains policies ENV2 and ENV 4 that require new development to protect and enhance the character and distinctiveness of the canals. The following guidance should be followed when designing new development that has the potential to change the character of the canal and its local environment, including opportunities to enhance its setting. Thoughtful use of the canal could provide opportunities to make new developments distinctive and provides other opportunities to add value to the development.

Scale and positioning of new buildings

The scale of buildings surrounding the canal makes a significant contribution to the character of the area, whilst their positioning strongly influences the enclosed or open nature of the canal. Some guidelines for the positioning of buildings relative to canalside areas in new development are set out in the Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Design Guidelines (pages 34-37).

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It is recommended that the scale of new buildings reflect the changing character of the development in the setting of the canal; from large scale industrial buildings in the south to more domestic scale buildings further to the north and, particularly, north of Stafford Road. North of Oxley Viaduct it would be desirable for any new development to be set well back from the canal in order to maintain the green setting of the waterway and towpath. This reflects the historic pattern of industrial development and provides opportunities to provide denser development near to the urban core of the city. Where development lies on the off-side of the canal, it may be possible for new buildings to run up to the water's edge and this provides the opportunity to create some dramatic townscape in views along the canal, as well as providing interaction between the waterway and new development. In most cases it will be more appropriate to set new development back from the canal with intervening areas occupied by highways, footpaths or cycle-ways and landscaped open space, although development at the water's edge should be used to provide points of interest and activity.

New developments should avoid creating long, monotonous frontages to the canalside, instead providing blocks with numerous gaps providing permeability to spaces beyond. Nevertheless it is a characteristic of historic canalside buildings that they have a horizontal emphasis with ordered schemes of fenestration and this may be used as an inspiration for the design of new buildings.

Redevelopment of the larger former manufacturing sites could reflect the history of industrial development by adopting formal grid patterns for new development.

The public realm, public open space and green open space

- Enhancing access to the canal and towpath as a distinctive feature of the public realm with multiple sustainable benefits should be a key consideration of new development proposals.
- It is not desirable to construct a waterways 'theme park', however, areas of public realm within new development should be designed with consideration for their impact on the canal's setting.
- Traditionally the canalside environment used robust, locally produced materials; paving of footpaths was kept to a minimum normally with only a narrow beaten gravel or cinder paths between grass verges with brick paving restricted to key areas that required reinforcing, This restrained use of materials should be born in mind when designing new public realm schemes.
- Towpaths often have a gently sinuous quality where they are kept free of grass by pedestrians (and historically horses) this should be reflected in canalside paths.
- Wharf areas featured larger areas of hard standing, with strongly defined edging to the canal, typically in bull-nosed brick or stone. Simple blue or red brick paviours would represent a good quality, local material for larger areas of paving on the canalside.
- New open space next to the canal should be designed with the security of users in mind, including provision of passive surveillance through overlooking from nearby properties and should avoid creation of potential hiding places. They should also have clearly defined points of access to the canalside.

- New development should maintain and enhance the mixture of character areas along the canalside, using areas of different building style and with changing relationships to the canal and towpath, including a mixture of varied step-backs, development at the water's edge and green and hard landscaped areas of public realm or open spaces, even within single developments.

Materials and style

Red brick is the pre-eminent local material used on both industrial buildings and local housing. However, historic canal buildings elsewhere on the BCN include examples with timber-boarding and steel framed construction, providing some possible variety.

Former industrial buildings often had detail added in contrasting colour (blue and white/buff) brick and featured iron framed windows with rounded arched heads and segmental brick arches above, often with smaller clerestory windows and vents above. These features might be reflected in the design of new buildings, albeit as a modern take on traditional forms and materials.

Traditional roofing of industrial buildings near the canal provides potential inspiration for new developments using combinations of different materials including natural slates, glazing, plain tile and sheet materials. They are normally pitched but might include several angled planes or clerestory, or north lighting providing further potential influences to new design.

Traditional canalside buildings generally have regularly ordered schemes of fenestration within long elevations, thereby providing rhythm in views. This could be used in new developments to create character and interest.

Character mix

Regular changes in character provide rhythm and vibrancy to journeys along the canal corridor. These include areas of green open space, residential frontages and industrial/commercial sites, as well as redundant former industrial and transport land. New development should aim to build on the vibrancy of this changing character in order to avoid the development of a monotonous environment along the canal. Areas of different canalside character may be provided within individual development sites, potentially providing contrasting areas of green open space, commercial and residential areas and other formal open spaces next to the canal.

New development should also reflect the general change in character along the regeneration corridor from the urban centre in the south to the greener, semi-rural surroundings as the canal approaches Aldersley Junction.

Active frontages

Where development has turned its back to the canal, the public access to the towpath has created security problems for businesses, requiring remedial measures such as installation of additional security fencing. Whilst this creates an unattractive canalside environment, it is often only partially successful in preventing unwanted access to premises. By incorporating the canal into the roadside environment and providing an active frontage to the canal, as has been achieved to some extent in the Wolverhampton Science Park or the more historic development at Jones Road.

New development can enhance the canal corridor by providing more activity on the canalside and an element of passive surveillance. In return development benefits from the tranquillity and unique character of the historic canal. By addressing the canal new development can also avoid creating security risks whilst helping to reduce the intimidating character of some of the canal's lonelier stretches. Avoiding the creation of side or rear boundaries alongside the canal should be a key design principle for new development.

New developments could also provide canalside activity by providing temporary or permanent residential moorings on the canalside. This might include opening infilled basins or reusing former canalside wharfs. Other former basins could be reused as locally distinctive features within public open space, potentially also providing wildlife habitat.

Cross Street Development Site

Looking from the towpath next to Lock 6 towards the Cross Street development site.

This section sets out principles that new development on the Cross Street redevelopment site should adopt in order to protect and benefit from the historic environment of the canal.

The site has been identified as an employment development opportunity site in the Stafford Road Area Action Plan and covers some 2.6 hectares between Cannock Road and Cross Street. It contains land formerly occupied by the Crown Iron Works and The Ceres Works and is adjacent to the Wolverhampton Civic Amenity Site. It also includes the sites of at least two former canal basins, as well as the surviving wall of the Ceres Works' former covered loading bays.

New development of this site should provide an active frontage to the canal by incorporating the canal into a high quality open space serving the employment uses. This should provide a broad buffer between the canalside and new built elements. This does not preclude buildings occasionally running up to the canal edge to create points of interest in views north along the canal. The spacing of such buildings should be considered to create rhythm in view along the waterway and to frame areas of open space.

This site has a long frontage to the canal, and without careful planning development could result in the creation of a monotonous frontage. To prevent this new development should be designed to create two or more distinctive frontages to the canalside by way of architectural style, varying materials or character of open space.

The design of public open space in this development site should reflect the hard surfacing of the former wharfs and yards preserving an idea of a working waterside that will stand in contrast to the green open space of Fowlers Park to the east. Generally within this site greenery should be limited to well defined areas, such as mown grass for seating areas or pavement planted trees. Ideally tree planting would be used to provide rhythm in views along the canal. A greater expanse of green open space would be expected as landscaping in the south east along the Cannock Road edge of the site.

New development should allow the opening of at least one of the former canal basins, for active use by canal boats, to encourage greater use of the waterway.

Open spaces should be located to protect any unopened canal basins to preserve their archaeological remains and the potential to reinstate them in future.

The design and materials of new buildings within the site should not aim to pastiche historical canalside buildings but could make use of distinctive local and canal related materials and details within a modern idiom. Ideally their design would emphasise the integration of transport systems and manufacturing in the past and future economy of the city.

Roof plant such as ventilation, air conditioning, solar panel arrays or radio frequency antennas should be planned as integral to structures or otherwise hidden in order to prevent the appearance of untidy rooflines.

New buildings should have an industrial scale, with a horizontal emphasis and detail added through the rhythm of schemes of fenestration or rooflines. Buildings facing the canal or Crown Street should be limited to three storeys in height to prevent an over powering impact on the pedestrian environment or the conservation area. One taller building could provide a landmark feature, but will need to be carefully designed to complement the surrounding landscape including the canalside. Ideally this would be located near the southern end of the site to provide articulation of new development to Cannock Road. The Wolverhampton Municipal Waste Incinerator provides a precedent for buildings up to five storeys to the north, although it would be important to avoid the creation of a street canyon at Crown Street.

The development site provides opportunities to improve access to the canalside from Cross Street, Cannock Road and Crown Street. Access to the canalside should be created from Cannock Road, whilst a minimum of two pedestrian and routes through to the canalside should be created from Cross Street.

Opportunities for enhancement

Promoting the identity of the canals

Proposals for new development should promote awareness of the canal as a distinctive feature of the local landscape. Proposals that include schemes that utilise the canalside in delivering the public art contribution will be encouraged subject to provision for future maintenance. A recent example of good practice is the art project by local schools to create plaques mounted on canal bridges

Recent canalside public are near Monmore Green outside the conservation area.

in the Monmore Green area of the city to highlight the historic role of the canal, whilst providing an attractive new feature in the landscape. Public art could be integral to buildings as decorative details contributing to the public realm or include the restoration and reinstatement of canalside infrastructure that provides interpretation of the canal's industrial history and communities, in addition to formal works of art. The deeply grooved cast iron rollers and rubbing plates on the bridge arches along the canal, or the remains of the

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railway turntable provide two potential sources of inspiration for public art.

Improved signage of routes using the canal and identification of former canal basins and wharves in the naming of new routes would help to raise awareness of the canal, which is often hidden from the surrounding townscape.

Improving access to the waterside

The canal was originally built to serve large industrial sites and further industrial developments were built along its course. Their access to the canalside was normally via their own wharfs and basins, rather than from surrounding roads and, as a result many nearby residential areas have little access to the canalside environment. Following the decline in use of the canal for industrial transport access to the canal has been considerably reduced. Proposals for new development should seek to create better access and views to the canal both for new developments and existing communities , including access to both the towpath and areas on the off-side.

Enhancing the tourism offer of the canals

The BCN Main Line has the potential to be a popular route for tourists on route from central Birmingham to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. There is potential for an attractive 'ring' route via Stourton, Kinver and the Stourbridge and Dudley Canals. However, it was noted during survey that there are few opportunities along the canal for boaters to stop and access local services within Wolverhampton or any of the other settlements along this part of its course. The Little's Lane moorings (in the former Victoria Basin) are the only readily accessible serviced moorings on the entire route of the BCN through Wolverhampton . New development provides an opportunity to restore access to the canal and use of the waterway, especially where former industrial sites with infilled basins are the subject of proposals. Proposals for new development should exploit opportunities to create secure short-term moorings and other services for boaters.

A cruise boat approaching Lock 8 and Jordan's Bridge

A market for more permanent residential moorings has developed elsewhere and can provide an, albeit limited, alternative source of affordable housing. Proposals for new canalside development should explore the potential for creating new, secure permanent moorings as a positive use of the canalside in partnership with the Canal and River Trust. There are sites with potential for creation of new residential moorings in or accessed from all three character areas. However, it will be necessary to combat the negative image of the canal and the potential for crime within unmonitored areas if these are to be successful. These include the greater length of the former Victoria Wharf, which now runs under the yard of warehousing at Great Western Street, the former Cannock Road Wharfs,

Canal area that has been defaced and spoilt through illegal graffiti activity.

Coxwell Avenue and the Nature Reserve at Aldersley Junction could help to reduce the potential for hidden activity in these areas. Clearly a wider solution is needed to prevent this issue.

Harnessing the creative urges of graffiti artists public art on the unattractive concrete embankment just north of Little Lane Bridge might help to reduce the urge to tag more interesting historic structures such as the nearby interesting historic bridge.

Removal of unattractive fencing

The Council will aim to work with property owners and the Canal and RIver Trust to remove unnecessary fencing and improve untidy boundary treatments alongside the towpath to enhance the appearance of the canalside.

basins on the former sites of the Crown Iron Works and the Ceres Works or the former wharf off Gorsebrook Road. Alternatively, these former wharfs present opportunities for establishing businesses benefitting from trade associated with the canal, including boat yards, boat provender suppliers, canal side restaurants or short term moorings.

Management of other issues in the conservation area

Preventing anti-social and illegal activity

Some of the more secluded areas bushes and thickets next to the canal have been used as concealed locations for illegal drug taking, whilst other areas have been negatively affected by graffiti. Creating active frontages with passive surveillance, as well reducing the screening influence of greenery will be essential to reduce the attraction of these areas for drug taking. Some clearance and management of bushes and scrub at Fowlers Park,

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7. Implications of conservation area designation

Designation as a Conservation Area brings a number of specific statutory provisions aimed at assisting the "preservation and enhancement" of the area. These are as follows:

- The local authority is under a general duty to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area, and has a particular duty to prepare proposals (such as Conservation Area Appraisals or grant schemes) to that end;
- In the exercise of any powers under the Planning Acts with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area, the Council must take into consideration the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area;
- Extra publicity is given to planning applications affecting Conservation Areas. This is usually achieved through the use of advertising in the local newspaper;
- Conservation Area Consent is required for the demolition of most unlisted buildings and boundary walls in a Conservation Area and the local authority or the Secretary of State may take enforcement action or institute a criminal prosecution if consent is not obtained;
- Written notice must be given to the Council before works are carried out to any tree in a Conservation Area;
- The display of advertisements may be somewhat more restricted than elsewhere;
- The Council or the Secretary of State may be able to take steps to ensure that a building in a Conservation Area is kept in good repair (similar to the powers which protect listed buildings);
- Limited financial assistance may be available for the upkeep of a building in the Conservation Area through grant schemes with English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund, (though these are usually targeted to areas of economic deprivation).

It is recommended that any proposals for new development or alterations of existing buildings in a Conservation Area should be discussed with a planning officer at the Council before commencing work on site. Telephone enquiries should be made to Planning (01902) 556026.

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With special thanks to Simon Dewey who provided numerous corrections and comments on the history of the railways contained in the consultation draft of the appraisal.

Wolverhampton Locks Conservation Area Appraisal

Other sources of information and advice

Historic Environment Service
Education & Enterprise
Wolverhampton City Council
Civic Centre
St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton WV1 1RP

Tel: 01902 555625 / 555622 / 555617

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/conservation

For information and advice about Conservation Areas in Wolverhampton.

English Heritage – West Midlands Region
The Axis
10 Holliday Street
Birmingham B1 1TG

Tel: 0121 625 6820

www.english-heritage.org.uk/

For further information relating to the protection of listed buildings and conservation areas in England.

The Victorian Society
1 Priory Gardens
Bedford Park
London W4 1TT

Tel: 020 8994 1019

www.victoriansociety.org.uk/

For the "Care for Victorian Houses" leaflet, etc.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
37 Spital Square
London E1 6DY

Tel: 020 7377 1644

www.spab.org.uk/

For an excellent range of technical advice leaflets.

Inland Waterways Association
Island House
Moor Road
Chesham
HP5 1WA

Tel: 01494 783453

www.waterways.org.uk/

An organisation who have campaigned for the use, maintenance and restoration of Britain's waterways since 1946.

Canal & River Trust
Peels Wharf
Lichfield Street
Fazeley
Tamworth
Staffordshire
B78 3QZ

Tel: 01827 252000

http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/

The organisation responsible for the management of many of the country's waterways. Recent publication England's Historic Waterway's provides guidance on designing high quality developments in canalside locations.