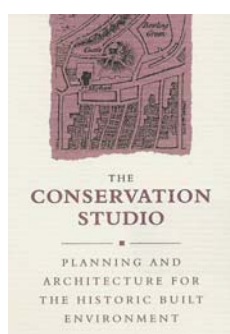


# CANALSIDE CONSERVATION AREA Character Appraisal



**MARCH 2008**



## THE CANALSIDE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

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## 1. Introduction

### *1.1. The definition and purpose of conservation areas*

According to Section 69 of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, a Conservation Area (CA) is an “area of special architectural or historic interest the character and the appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is the duty of Local Authorities to designate such areas and to use their legal powers to safeguard and enhance the special qualities of these areas within the framework of controlled and positive management of change.

### *1.2. The purpose and status of this appraisal*

The Canalside CA was designated in 1993 and extended in 1994 to include areas that had been taken within Ealing Borough as a result of changes made by the Boundary Commission.

The scope of this appraisal is summarised in the following points:

1. Assessment of the special interest of the architectural and natural heritage of the Canalside CA highlighting elements of special merit, which contribute to the character.
2. Assessment of the action needed to protect and enhance the special qualities of the CA.
3. Assessment of the need to revise the boundaries of the CA.

This document replaces the existing appraisal published in 1999. However, it is not intended to be comprehensive in its scope and content. Omission of any specific building, space or feature or aspect of its appearance or character should not be taken to imply that they have no significance.

The methodology of the CA Character Appraisal for Canalside follows the guidance provided by the Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994); the Guidance on CA Appraisals by English Heritage (2005); and the Guidance on Management of CAs by English Heritage (2005).

The analysis has been conducted on the basis of visits to the area, the involvement of local associations, and with consultation of primary and secondary sources on the local history and architecture.

### 1.3. Summary of Special Interest

The Canalside CA includes the whole length of the Grand Union Canal within Ealing, excepting a stretch between Norwood Top Lock and the Hanwell Locks, which are contained within the St Mark's Church and Canalside CA.

The Grand Union Canal, formed from several major canals built during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, is a nationally significant transport route, which provided a reliable and safe inland waterway linking the growing city of London with the industrial manufacturing towns and mining districts of the Midlands and north west England. It played a very significant role in the growth of London before and during the railway age, influencing the location of new industrial districts and transport hubs. This has continued to define the character of large areas of Ealing and surrounding boroughs.

The historic environment of the canal includes the waterway, its banks and towpath, as well as bridges crossing it and a number of adjoining spaces and buildings that contribute to its special historic character and interest.

The Canalside CA now provides quiet routes for walking, cycling and boating, which are of considerable amenity value. It also provides an interesting alternate space within diverse areas, including manufacturing districts, residential suburbs, parks and leisure spaces, as well as some agricultural areas. The character of the canal corridor is strongly influenced by these adjacent land uses, which can alternately provide enclosure to the spaces of the canal, or views across more open areas to prominent local landmarks.

The canal is increasingly providing residential opportunities for people living in canal boats; a strongly contrasting lifestyle to the areas of uniform terraced housing in the surrounding suburbs. The CA is also changing as a result of the trend for Canalside residential development, which makes use of the historic interest of the canal to provide a high quality environment to new housing areas.



Bridges and enclosed areas create and enhance spaces



Straight lengths of canal create dramatic views



Early 19<sup>th</sup> century bridges add special architectural interest to the CA



## 2. Location and setting

### 2.1. Location and context

The Canalside CA follows the course of the Grand Union Canal along the southern boundary of London Borough of Ealing, to Wolf Fields, from where it follows the north eastwards course of the canal into the Borough passing through Norwood Green to the boundary of the St Mark's Church and Canalside CA, just south west of Glade Lane Bridge and Norwood Top Lock.

A detached portion of the CA contains the remainder of the main line of the Grand Union Canal within Ealing, between the end of the St Mark's Church CA, approximately 300 metres east of the junction of the canal with the River Brent, up to the Borough's boundary just north of the M4 Motorway.

The Paddington Branch of the Grand Union Canal leaves the main channel at the point where the canal enters Ealing from the west, at Bull's Bridge, and is also within the Canalside CA where it lies within Ealing. From this junction the Paddington Branch and the CA follow the western boundary of the borough and, as a result only the east bank and the towpath are in the CA. The remainder of the canal and the west bank are in LB of Hillingdon. It passes under Uxbridge Road terminating where both banks of the canal and the towpath lie within neighbouring Hillingdon, adjacent to Spikes Bridge Park. The CA continues as a detached portion to the north where the Paddington Branch re-enters Ealing just over 300 metres south of Ruislip Road. From here the canal follows a meandering course, running between Northolt and Greenford, following the 30 metre contour gradually turning to follow a more direct course eastward. The Manor Farm Road Bridge marks the point where the Paddington Branch runs out of Ealing into London Borough of Brent. A final short section of the Paddington Branch, which lies in Ealing and is also within the Canalside CA, is located approximately three kilometres further to the east. This runs from west to east between Acton Lane and Old Oak Lane in North Acton.



Glade Lane Bridge



Entering the CA at Elthorne Park



Entering the CA at Old Oak Lane North Acton

## **2.2. General character and plan form**

The Grand Union Canal and the adjoining towpath is an historic man-made waterway, which was in commercial usage up until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their routes form long, narrow corridors, rarely more than 30 metres wide. The main channel of the canal and the southern part of the Paddington Branch are formed of long, straight sections with occasional bends, whilst the more northerly parts of the Paddington Branch tend to be more winding with regular bends creating foreshortened views.



Quiet areas for walking

The canal passes through a number of different areas including residential suburbs, industrial districts, parks and recreation grounds and some areas of farmland. The character of these surroundings has a very strong influence on the changing character of the CA.

The canal and towpath provide quiet areas with low footfall, which are only rarely addressed by the buildings in the immediate surroundings; although where they are addressed it is often by building with historic connections with the use and development of the canal. Bridges, and particularly a number of early 19<sup>th</sup> century examples, provide important stops to views along the canals. Mature tree lines and overgrown hedgerows often provide enclosure to the canal and footpath.

## **2.3. Landscape setting**

As mentioned above, the setting of the canal and towpath has an unusually strong influence on the character of the CA, particularly given its narrowness and the close proximity of much development, both modern and historic. The areas of different land use help to create a number of different character areas, which are described in greater detail below. These range from areas of large scale industry, dense sub-urban housing estates and areas of more built up residential development to green rural areas.

## **3. Historic development and archaeology**

### ***3.1. Historic development***

#### ***3.1.1 The building of the canal and the early 19<sup>th</sup> century***

The Grand Junction Canal received approval through an Act of Parliament in 1793 with the intention of providing a link between London and Birmingham and the rapidly developing industrial areas to the north and west. Its course avoided the difficulties of navigating the upper reaches of the Thames from Oxford and provided a more direct route than the Oxford Canal. The Grand Junction was to run from the Oxford Canal at Braunston, Northamptonshire to the River Thames at Brentford. Construction began immediately and by 1798 the stretch from Brentford to Uxbridge was already open.

The canal passed through Norwood and Hanwell in the south of modern LB of Ealing. In 1793 these were almost exclusively rural areas. The construction of the canal in Norwood, at that time part of Hayes parish, encouraged a rapid development of brick manufacturing, exploiting the good brick earth in the vicinity of the canal, the cheap coal being brought by the canal from South Wales and the West Midlands, and the opportunity of transporting large quantities of bricks by boat to London. The canal itself provided a significant use of bricks for construction of retaining walls. Although additional licences for brick making were granted in the 1850s, when Norwood was separated from Hayes, by 1864 many of the older brick pits had been worked out.

The canal crossed the lines of several older lanes linking small settlements in the surrounding countryside, including Norwood Road, North Hyde Lane/Regina Road, and Western Road, which were carried over it by brick or stone built arched bridges, a number of which survive. These crossings formed natural points for disembarking goods to be carried by road to settlements and a number of small wharfs, often accompanied by small public houses, developed along the route.

In 1801 construction of a branch canal to Paddington commenced. The Paddington Branch was opened from Bull's Bridge in 1805 and provided a more direct route to the city, making use of the new road built from Paddington to serve the 400 metre long terminus basin.

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The branch canal passed through Norwood and Greenford, an important agricultural area, and along the boundary of the ancient parish of Perivale. Perivale was noted as a sparsely populated area even as late as 1876. indeed, even in 1921 the population of the parish was no more than 114 people. Again, where older lanes crossed the line of the canal these were carried over by characteristic bridges, often with accompanying public houses, as at Oldfield Lane, Greenford and at Acton Lane, North Acton. By 1815 the meeting point of the Grand Junction Canal with the Paddington Branch had developed as a cluster of wharfs with a significant area of warehouses owned by the Grand Junction Canal Company.

In the first three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the canal was highly successful, providing London's most reliable transport link to the Midlands and the North West and Wales. In 1810 it is recorded that 343,560 tons of goods passed through London via the canal. In addition to carrying goods a packet service for passengers operated between Paddington and Uxbridge, which appears to have been popular for several years in the first decade of the nineteenth century.

### ***3.1.2 Later 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial development***

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Paddington Branch carried much heavy traffic, especially sand, gravel and building materials and contributed greatly to the early growth of north west London. However, there appears to have been little residential or even industrial development, other than the brickworks along the canal within the area of the CA in the early and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Those industrial developments recorded on the first edition of the Ordnance Survey Maps, produced in the mid 1860s, include chemical processes including Norwood Vitriol Works, an Oil Works on the Paddington Canal near Bull's Bridge, a 'Colour Factory' to the west of Oldfield Lane and a Naphtha Works on the north side of the canal in North Acton. These were conveniently placed away from centres of population and would have used the canal as a source of water for processing chemicals, as well as for transport.

The first gas-works in Norwood was built near the canal by a private company in 1865. This was dismantled in 1869 by the Brentford Gas Co., which built on the former gas-works site adjacent to the Paddington Branch and immediately north of the railway. Most of the installations were replaced in 1929-30.



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The site has recently been cleared of nearly all the gas works buildings, although three large gas holders remain.

The Colour Factory recorded on the Ordnance Survey map of 1866 is that opened by William Henry Perkin in 1857, the first factory built in Greenford. He built a research laboratory opposite it, although the factory ceased production of dyes in 1885. The site was re-used by a tallow manufacturers and in 1959 was occupied by Durasteel Ltd.. It has recently been redeveloped for a factory manufacturing Asian themed foods.

In 1877 the pottery firm of R. W. Martin moved to a derelict soap factory on the canal bank at Southall. The four Martin brothers built a kiln and produced their salt-glaze pottery there until the First World War. The last brother died in 1923 and a later attempt to revive the business met with no success. The kiln was destroyed by fire in 1942.

The Naphtha Works in North Acton was closed in 1885 and in 1894 a saw mills was opened on the same site. The Willesden Paper and Canvas Works opened an experimental factory in 1873 on the south side of the canal, opposite the sawmill, to produce waterproof paper, which was expanded in 1888. The works were converted to produce waterproof material for tents during the First World War and were reorganised as Willesden Dux Oriental Ltd. afterwards, although they were sold off in 1932.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the oil works at Norwood was turned over to chemicals and extended. A vast margarine factory on Margarine Road, afterwards Bridge Road, was opened by Otto Mönsted In 1893. This factory was served by a half mile branch to the canal named Maypole Dock. It later came under the Unilever group, and in 1961 the buildings were used by Thomas Wall's, a member of the Unilever combine, for storage. From the 1890s until the end of the 1910s, further factories were constructed in Southall in an enclave including Scott's Road, Johnston Street, Rubastic Road and Brent Road, which made use of the joint provision of canal and rail transport.

Suburban development started in Norwood Parish (now roughly equivalent to Southall) in the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1890 there were 960 inhabited houses in Norwood and 32 empty ones; by 1894 there were none vacant and a demand for cottages was anticipated. Southall Green was then the most densely populated area in the parish. Widespread development started in 1894. There was extensive building south of Havelock Road but little south of the Canal apart from a terrace at Frogmore Green and another nearly opposite the church on Tentelow Lane. In 1906 Norwood parish was described as 'a manufacturing district'.



Maypole Dock



Late 19<sup>th</sup> century housing next to the canal in Southall

### **3.1.3 Early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial and residential development**

A glass works was opened by W. A. Bailey in Greenford in 1900, specifically as a result of the canal's location. Not only did the canal provide transport for the bulk materials for glass making, it also provided smooth transport for the fragile goods produced. This was later incorporated within the Rockware Glass works which also redeveloped the site of an adjacent white lead works. The factory remained in production until 1973 and stood on the south side of the canal on Green Park Way and Rockware Avenue.

The industrial development of the Canalside in Greenford during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century may also have been a result of the lower business rates charged in this rural district compared to those in Ealing. A large munitions factory was built next to the canal in Greenford during the First World War and the site was later reused for a number of other industrial premises. In 1926 Greenford was included in the expanded Borough of Ealing and extensive new housing developments followed. In the same year Lyons and Co. Ltd. Established a factory on the north side of the canal at Oldfield Lane for the manufacture of tea, coffee and confectionaries. An ice cream factory was added in 1958. Other factories built by the canal at Greenford during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century included the British Bath Works on Long Drive (iron founding and enamelling), the Glaxo Works Research Laboratory built in 1935 on Greenford Road, located on the north side of the canal and still occupying this site.

The Canalside in Perivale also underwent a rapid development in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Between 1931 and 1932 nearly all the land between Western Avenue, Horsenden Lane and the Paddington Branch of the canal was developed. Industrial premises were built along Horsenden Lane and a very large planned housing development constructed stretching across to Manor Farm Lane. The land to the north of the canal in Perivale was retained as open land as the Sudbury Golf Course, which opened in 1920.

After the First World War suburban development in Southall proceeded more slowly. By 1940 the east end of Havelock Road, north of the canal, was developed, and there was also much building immediately north of Norwood Green, on the south side of the canal. By 1939 the local authority had erected 1,119 houses, and between 1945 and 1958 another 1,003 permanent dwellings were built.



View to the Glaxo laboratories,  
Greenford Road



Open spaces in Perivale

## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

In 1944 the overcrowding and congestion of Southall was described as 'acute' and no more industrial development was recommended.

Industry was almost wholly concentrated around Southall and Southall Green, while Norwood Green remained a comparatively open space, with Osterley Park extending on its eastern side.

In 1929 the Grand Junction Canal was amalgamated with the Regents Canal and the three Warwick Canals to form the Grand Union Canal system. Although the canals had been an extremely successful form of transport for both luxury and bulk goods during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, they had come under increasing pressure from railways by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and, as a result, went into a gradual and permanent decline. Despite measures to improve their competitiveness, including reductions of tolls and greater emphasis on transport of bulk goods, the canals struggled to compete with the combination of rail and, from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, road transport. In an attempt to increase their viability as a transport system, and with government funding, parts of the Grand Union Canal were widened to take wider barges, evidence of which is preserved in the dated concrete retaining wall sections seen throughout the CA. This work was also intended to provide employment for large numbers of labourers during the depression of the 1930s.

The 1930s saw the establishment of two more large firms by the canal, that of Taylor Woodrow, the building contractors, in 1930 and of Quaker Oats in 1936. Taylor Woodrow first came to the area with the building of an estate of over 1,000 houses at Grange Park, Hayes, and set up its headquarters in Adrienne Avenue, Southall, on the banks of the Paddington Canal, now located on Taywood Road. New buildings were opened on the same site in 1954, 1958, and 1960, and a staff of 1,300 was employed there in 1961. The site is currently part of a large redevelopment project for residential properties overlooking the canal. Quaker Oats, producing cereals, pig, and poultry foods, opened its works in 1936 in a building formerly belonging to the Maypole Dairy Co. Expansion after 1945 included a 20,000-ton grain silo, the grain being brought from the docks mainly by canal. In 1947 the canals were taken into National Ownership under the Transport Act and, since 1962, have been managed by British Waterways becoming increasingly popular for leisure use.



Concrete retaining walls



Taylor Woodrow HQ building on  
Taywood Road



### 3.2 Archaeology

The nature of the canal's construction means that it is likely to have removed archaeological remains of earlier activity within its course, although the course of the towpath may provide a strip of relatively undisturbed land with potential to preserve archaeological remains in areas that have otherwise been significantly disturbed by development for heavy industry and dense suburban housing. Prior to the construction of the canal the area was relatively sparsely populated farmland with dispersed settlement and this is likely to be the case through much of its history of human habitation. The presence of a scheduled moated site just to the north of the canal at Sudbury Golf Course, however, does suggest that its course might encounter a limited number of interesting sites of earlier settlement and other activity. Following the construction of the canal the initial development of surrounding land for brick fields is also likely to have resulted in the loss of archaeological remains as a result of the extractive processes. Further disturbance would have been caused by the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial and residential developments.

Remains of the early construction of the canal appear to have been at least partially removed as a result of widening in the 1920s and 1930s, although the alignment of the canal itself is a nationally important monument of Britain's Industrial Revolution. Elements of the earlier phase of construction that do survive include a number of road bridges over the canal and sections of historic retaining wall materials, noted particularly around these bridges.



19<sup>th</sup> century banks materials around bridge points



## 4 Spatial analysis

### 4.1 *The character and inter-relationship of spaces within the area*

The long corridor of the canal and adjoining towpath creates a series of narrow but often very long spaces. These are normally divided from each other by the occasional bridges that cross the canal, or by bends in its course, which both act as stops to views. The spaces of the canal and towpath are often lined with mature trees and tall hedges, which make them secluded and closed-off from the surroundings.

In some residential areas the canal is overlooked by the rear elevations of houses, although there is normally a margin of trees and self-seeded scrub between the gardens and canal edge or towpath. The disposition of the housing only rarely provides a relationship between the buildings and the spaces of the canal. The few cases where a positive relationship does exist include The Common and Bankside in Southall, where the towpath is adjoined by residential streets with houses and other buildings that have a main elevation overlooking the canal. The modern development on Tollgate Road in neighbouring Hillingdon, also provides an area of new housing, which overlooks the canal and CA, creating a positive relationship. In the more industrial parts of Greenford, North Acton and Southall the enclosure of the space is often created by the surrounding large industrial buildings or tall fences which screen views out of the CA. In a few cases the Canalside has access directly to more open land, which is generally managed as parkland or recreation grounds, including Elthorne Park, Hanwell and Marnham Fields, Greenford. Where the canal adjoins these spaces, they have been managed for wildlife value and are scrubby but, nonetheless, attractive. A small picnic area set amidst woodland adjoins the CA at Osterley Lock using part of the island between the canal and the loop of the River Brent.

In a few areas, particularly along the northern part of the Paddington Branch, the tree line on the northern bank breaks down to allow views out across the farmland, golf course and recreation grounds that lie on the southern slopes of Horsenden Hill. It is in these areas particularly that the canal has a more rural character, providing an escape from the otherwise urban surroundings. Marnham Fields, Greenford provides another similar area where the canal's surroundings have a more rural feel.



Along the canal from Glade Lane Bridge



Houses overlooking the canal

## 4.2 Key views and vistas

A number of views and vistas were identified during the appraisal of the CA that make an important contribution to its character. These are shown (numbered) on the accompanying townscape appraisal maps and are each described briefly below. Whilst these views have been identified as of particular interest, they do not represent an exclusive list of the important views in the CA and other views, not described here, might be identified as of importance.

### View 1: From the canal towpath north west to Osterley Lock

This view from the southern entrance to the detached portion of the CA looks towards the historic structure of Osterley Lock, the only lock in this CA, with mature oak woodland in the bend of the River Brent to the right and well greened banks running down to the canal, providing a soft, wild-life rich, edge to the left.

### View 2: From the canal towpath north east to Glade Lane Bridge

Looking from within the CA into the neighbouring St Mark's Church and Canalside CA, this view includes a number of historic structures including the listed buildings of Glade Lane Bridge and Lock 90. The neighbouring lock keepers cottage, which forms a group with the listed structures, is balanced by the historic buildings in the British Waterways compound on the south side of the canal.

### View 3: From the canal towpath south westwards along the canal

This is a general vista of a long straight section of the canal with relatively pleasant surroundings, including the small open space on the north side of the canal adjoining Havelock Road. A tall hedge on the north side of the towpath and the mature tree line on the south side of the canal make a significant contribution to the amenity of the view, giving it a slightly rural feel, despite the surrounding residential development.

### View 4: From the canal towpath north west across Bixley Field to Sikh Gurdwara

A gap in the hedgerow on the north side of the canal towpath allows views across this area of open land and allotments to the landmark of the Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, the largest Sikh temple outside India. This is a significant local landmark and the view to it helps to tie the Canalside into the cultural landscape of the borough.



View 1: North west to Osterley Lock



View 4: To Sikh Gurdwara

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### **View 5: From the canal towpath south west to Norwood Bridge**

The late 19<sup>th</sup> century Norwood Road Bridge provides a stop to views along the canal at this point, whilst the rear elevation of the historic Lamb Public House and space surrounding it, contributes to create a space of some moment. This spot is also notable as a common gathering place for a large flock of swans, which also contribute to the quality of the view.



View 5: South west to Norwood Bridge

### **View 6: From the canal towpath west to Old Oak Bridge, Regina Road**

The view to this early 19<sup>th</sup> century bridge, is framed by the tall hedgerow next to the towpath and the tree line on the south bank of the canal. Tall trees provide a backdrop to the bridge, creating a more rural setting for it, which is also improved by the small triangular green on the south side of Regina Road.

### **View 7: From the canal towpath northwards across Southall Recreation Grounds**

The more widely spaced trees on the side of the towpath allow views northwards across the Southall Recreation Grounds, which provide an area of well managed green open space with well maintained mature trees on the edge of the CA.



View 8: The Common, Southall

### **View 8: North westwards along the towpath and The Common taking in well spaced broad-leafed trees flanking the canal.**

This vista, looking along The Common, benefits from the interaction between the open water of the canal and its green towpath edge, with the more built up residential street overlooking it, to which the street trees add a pleasing rhythm.



View 9: Northwards from Bull's Bridge

### **View 9: From Bull's Bridge northwards along the Paddington Branch**

This first stretch of the Paddington Branch is used for residential moorings, which provide a cluster of boats along the historic wharfs. A number of historic canal related buildings are located on the Hillingdon side of the canal, including the cottage for the manager of the junction, although these are now derelict. The railway bridge crossing the canal provides a stop to this view northwards.

### **View 10: From the canal towpath across to the wildlife rich margin on opposite bank**

Along this stretch of the canal the wild and overgrown land on the west bank, all located in Hillingdon, provides an excellent vista across the canal and along its length from the towpath with plenty of wildlife interest.



View 10: Wildlife rich banks



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### **View 11: From the canal towpath looking north eastwards along the canal running between green spaces**

This view looks northwards from amidst the built up area of Southall and Yeading, where the canal runs off into greener open spaces, creating a tranquil vista. A slight bend in the canal creates a stop to the north.



View 11: Northwards past Spikes Bridge Road Park

### **View 12: From the canal towpath north eastwards across Marnham Fields to the Aladdin Lamp Factory (B&Q) Tower**

The more open canal banks which adjoin Marnham Fields allow views across to the landmark tower of the former Aladdin Lamp Factory (also known as the B&Q Tower).



View 12: The Aladdin Lamp Factory Tower

### **View 13: From the canal towpath south west along the canal to the railway viaduct crossing the canal between Greenford Station and Northolt Station**

This very long straight section of the canal creates an impressive vista along its length with well treed banks (that help to screen the surrounding industrial buildings from view) to the white painted lattice-work railway bridge, which acts as a stop.



View 13: South west to the Greenford Railway Viaduct

### **View 14: From the canal towpath north eastwards to playing fields and Horsenden Hill**

The breakdown of the tree line on the north bank of the canal creates views across well managed green open space of playing fields at Horsenden Hill to the wooded mass of the hill beyond, which forms a significant local landmark and is also a scheduled monument.

### **View 15: From the canal towpath across fields to Horsenden Hill**

Further to the east than view 14, this view looks across the canal and agricultural fields towards Horsenden Hill, providing a slightly more rural aspect. This part of the CA is notable for this change in aspect and contrasts with the otherwise urban surroundings of the rest of the CA.

### **View 16: From the canal towpath into Perivale Woods (Brent Valley Bird Sanctuary)**

Unfortunately the boundary between the canal towpath (and the CA) and Perivale Woods, is marked by tall steel railings, which mars the views into the woods slightly. There are, however, many good views into the area, which do allow some appreciation of the area's wildlife value.



View 14: North to Horsenden Hill



**View 17: From the canal towpath northwards across Sudbury Golf Course to Horsenden Hill**

There are several areas where the tree line on the north side of the canal allows views across it to the well managed green open space of Sudbury Golf Course and Horsenden Hill beyond. These views contribute to the rural tranquillity of this stretch of the canal despite its proximity to the suburban housing estates of Sudbury and Perivale.

**View 18: From the canal towpath north to a scheduled moated site in Sudbury Golf Course**

In addition to the vistas across the golf course, gaps in the tree line provide views of the scheduled moated site, to the north of the canal, which is a feature of particular historic interest, representing remains of an earlier landscape.

**View 19: From the canal towpath looking south west along the canal as it passes Sudbury Golf Course**

This is a long straight stretch of the canal providing an attractive vista along it, which is framed by the tree lines on both sides.

**View 20: From the canal towpath looking north east to Alperton Cemetery**

Looking across the canal from the towpath, the groups of trees and larger monuments or chapels provide an unusual view from the CA, although this is partially screened by the boats which are moored along this length of the canal.

**View 21: From the canal towpath looking south east to Manor Farm Lane Bridge and Wharf**

The view to the south east provides the typical grouping of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century brick built road bridge over the canal bridge and an adjacent wharf, illustrating the historical relationship between the canal and road transport systems.

**From Acton Lane Bridge to the Grand Junction Arms Public House (in Brent)**

The Grand Junction Arms public house in Acton Lane, provides a particularly good example of the Victorian public houses that grew up at the canal's crossing points. Acton Lane Bridge provides a good point to view it from within the CA.



View 17: Across Sudbury Golf Course to Horsenden Hill



View 21: South east to Manor Farm Lane Bridge

## 5 The character of the conservation area

Although the canal and towpath provide considerable consistency throughout the CA, a number of sub areas with different character have been identified. These are marked on the accompanying townscape Appraisal maps and are described individually below.

### 5.1 Character Areas and the quality of architecture

#### 5.1.1. Sub Area no. 1: Brent Valley

The short stretch of the canal and its towpath that forms this detached part of the CA forms a discrete character area, which differs markedly from the St Mark's Church and Canalside CA to the north west. Features that contribute positively to this character area include:

- A gradually winding section of canal with short distance views, which unfold around each bend;
- Mature woodland area adjoining the CA between the canal towpath and the River Brent Weir and Loop, including picnic area next to Osterley Lock;
- Scrubby open land adjacent to the tow path and running up into Elthorne Park, with interest as wildlife habitat and contributing to a rural feel;
- Undergrowth and trees on steep bank running down to the canal from the west, which also provide wildlife interest and a rural setting to the canal. These screen a scrap yard beyond;
- Some light industry around the north western end of the character area suggests the beginning of a more urban area. An historic factory building with brick built chimney and unusual green corrugated metal construction and wind-turned roof vents makes a positive contribution to this area.



Mature woodland



River Brent, Weir



Canal towpath at Elthorne Park



Historic factory with chimney at Boston Business Park



### 5.1.2. Sub Area no. 2: Norwood Green to Williams Road

To the west of the flight of locks at Hanwell this area's character is strongly influenced by the suburban surroundings. These include early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century development, as well as some more recent redevelopment of former industrial sites. Significant features of this character area include:

- Long, straight section of canal with long distance view punctuated by footbridges over side arms, which include the Maypole Dock and British Waterways Depot at Adelaide Dock. These areas of water, off the main channel of the canal, provide potential for creating better integration of the canal and surrounding residential areas;
- Suburban surroundings with housing on both sides of the canal, including pre-war housing to the south and later 20<sup>th</sup> century housing blocks to the north;
- Small area of green space between Havelock Road and the towpath that provides some connection between the canal and the later 20<sup>th</sup> century housing estate;
- Further to the southwest the hedgerow next to the towpath and the tree line on the south side of the canal enclose this space and frames views along the canal corridor;
- Areas of open space on the south side of the canal, including Wolf Fields and school playing fields help to break up the dense blocks of housing lining the bank of the canal;
- Housing does not address the canal directly. Many properties have gardens running down to the canal, some of which provide well maintained edges, although others are only sparingly managed, creating scruffy edges that detract from the character of the canal;
- The western limit of this character area is marked by a modern residential development, currently (January 2008) under construction, which has been designed to resemble the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century factory building that it replaces. It is hoped this will provide some opportunity for relating the surrounding housing with the Canalside.



Long Canalside views



Pre-war Canalside housing



Open spaces beside the canal



Adelaide Dock

### 5.1.3. Sub Area no. 3: Williams Road to Western Avenue

Throughout this character area the CA is limited to the canal and its northern bank and towpath. The southern bank lies in the neighbouring Borough of Hounslow.

This area is also surrounded by suburban residential development although its character is sufficiently different from the preceding sub area to be recognised as different. Positive features that characterise this character area include:

- Housing on both sides of the canal is consistently of two storeys and mostly of early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century construction with some terraces and groups of buildings of older date on the north side, including the terrace on the south side of Williams Road, the Old Oak Tree Public House and Industrious Cottages, The Common, which are of nineteenth century origin;
- A long straight section of canal with views along it stopped by prominent bridges and, in particular Old Oak Bridge, Regina Road and the Western Road Bridge;
- The Common (a residential street) follows the northern edge of the towpath for some 600 metres and for at least half this length has a residential frontage which overlooks the canal helping to integrate the canal and towpath with the residential area;
- The well-maintained open area of Southall Recreation Ground, on the north side of The Common, provides an attractive green open space adjacent to the CA. The park railings and line of well spaced park trees just within the recreation grounds create a park like feel that extends across to the Canalside;
- There is less division between the canal and the roadside due to the wider spacing of the Canalside trees along The Common, providing better connection between the two spaces.



The Old Oak Tree, The Common



Industrious Cottages, The Common



#### 5.1.4. Sub Area no. 4: Western Avenue to Bull's Bridge

Between Western Road and Bulls Bridge the CA has a more industrial feel than in the preceding areas. This reflects the historic development of industry in the area surrounding the Bulls Bridge Junction with the Paddington Branch as well as the redevelopment of the brick fields that were worked out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Key features of this character area include:

- The residential feel of the space gradually peters out along Bulls Bridge Road from the Western Road Bridge, although the King's Head Hotel and row of semi-detached houses on the north side of the road, which have frontages addressing the canal side include some good late 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings;
- The south bank of the canal, in London Borough of Hounslow has had some redevelopment for office buildings and warehousing, including one office block which sympathetically resembles a historic Canalside warehouse;
- The Hounslow side of the canal also retains an area of wharves, which currently serve residential moorings and included some docks covered by sheds for boat building and repairs. However, the buildings behind these wharves are generally scruffy, and several are disused and derelict, which has a negative impact on the appearance of the CA;
- A large industrial estate lies to the north of the CA. These are relatively modern and well maintained buildings. They are, in part screened from the CA by a line of trees which overhang the towpath, leaning over a tall fence of modern steel railings. Beyond these the grounds surrounding the industrial buildings are surfaced with well-maintained lawns;
- The towpath in this area is separated from the canal by a narrow grass verge and is raised above it slightly more than elsewhere;
- Where the towpath is flanked by Bull's Bridge Road there are no trees between the path and road, as found in the preceding character area, which creates a starker appearance that reflects the



Beside the Common looking towards Western Avenue



Modern Canalside office buildings



Residential moorings between Western Avenue and Bull's Bridge

## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

progressively more industrial nature of the surrounding land use.

### **5.1.5. Sub Area no. 5: The Paddington Branch from Bull's Bridge to Bankside**

This is a relatively isolated section of the Grand Union Canal's Paddington Branch running outside the residential areas through areas of disused industrial land and wasteland managed as a wildlife reserve. Its most important characteristics are:

- From Bull's Bridge the Paddington Branch of the canal is shared for some distance between Ealing and London Borough of Hillingdon. The Ealing side of the canal includes the towpath which adjoins the former site of the Southall Gas Works and the industrial land at the junction with the Grand Union Canal mainline;
- The area nearest the junction of the canals retains a number of Canalside buildings including an early 19<sup>th</sup> century house, presumably built for a manager of the junction, and a smaller cottage, which both make a positive contribution to the CA. Both buildings stand on the Hillingdon side and both are derelict and at risk of imminent loss;
- The junction of the canals retains the historic walling materials used in the canal's construction and 19<sup>th</sup> century repairs including brown brick and stone dressings;
- The Hillingdon side of the canal, near to the junction retains areas of historic stone copings along the wharf used for residential moorings;
- The land on the Hillingdon side of the canal, to the north of the viaduct, is covered with scrub land, which provides a rich wildlife habitat that can be appreciated from the towpath within the CA;
- This stretch of canal has long, straight sections, which provide good vistas, in relatively private areas.

### **5.1.6. Sub Area no. 6: Bankside to Spikes Bridge Park**

Within this character area the canal lies within surroundings of mixed suburban residential development and light industry (on the Hillingdon side). Key characteristics of the area include:

- Housing with a primary frontage facing the canal, including the late 19<sup>th</sup> century



Modern commercial developments in Hounslow overlook houses across the canal



Bull's Bridge



Derelict Junction Manager's house at Bull's Bridge



North east between Southall Gas Works and wildlife reserve



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

terrace at Bankside and modern development at Tollgate Road, Hillingdon;

- Areas of canal bank retaining historic stone copings;
- Good integration with the surrounding streets including the 'pocket park' leading up from the towpath to Uxbridge Road;
- Views across open spaces including Sports Fields in Hillingdon and Spikes Bridge Road Park;
- Surrounding development is mostly of two-storeys which provides a consistent and intimate feeling to the spaces and a balance between the scale of buildings and width of the open spaces of streets, towpath and canal.

### **5.1.7. Sub Area no. 7: Southall Avenue**

This section starts with a short, straight stretch of canal running between modern housing development and large-scale office buildings, with some new residential development currently (January 2008) under construction around a new canal basin. This is followed by a more winding section of canal which runs between a late 20<sup>th</sup> century housing development of large blocks of flats to the north west and lower, two-storey early 20<sup>th</sup> century housing to the south east. The space around the canal gradually opens out into the Marnham Fields community woodland, which includes areas of tree planting and grassland with Smiths Farm to the west. Key positive features of this character area include:

- The strong relationship of some new residential development to the Canalside and maintenance of open space on the canal edge;
- Good enclosure with trees along stretches of canal bank that otherwise adjoin unsympathetic modern development;
- Break down in division of the canal side from the surroundings in Marnham Fields with excellent woodland and grassland surroundings; and
- Views to surrounding landmarks including the Alladin Lamp Factory (B&Q) on Western Avenue.

### **5.1.8. Sub Area no. 8: Western Avenue to Greenford Road**

In this character area the canal passes through Greenford's historic industrial area, which was largely



Canalside 19<sup>th</sup> century housing at Bankside



Pocket park at Uxbridge Road



New Canalside residential development



Across Marnham Fields from the towpath

## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

developed from farmland during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, exploiting the combination of canal and rail links, as well as proximity to London's markets. Parts of the surroundings have now been redeveloped, some for new industrial premises, whilst other uses include the newly built Northolt Mosque or Masjid Al-Husaini. Key positive features of this area's character include:

- Historic road and railway bridges crossing the line of the canal and adding interest to views along it;
- Survival of a number of historic industrial buildings;
- Survival of areas of historic wharves, which are crossed by the towpath;
- Long straight stretches of canal, which provide extensive views;
- Survival of Canalside docks, including Lyons Dock, which served the former factory of Lyons and Co. Ltd., and demonstrates the historic use of the canal within the historic industrial landscape;
- Survival of historic public houses at bridging points on the canal (The Black Horse public house, Oldfield Lane);
- Modern use of the Canalside for residential moorings, providing activity and interest, as well as positive management of the canal bank;
- Use of the Canalside as a location for Northolt Mosque – a modern landmark building.

### **5.1.9. Sub Area no. 9: Greenford Road to Horsenden Lane**

In this character area the canal runs through more rural surroundings, although industrial development is often not far away. The site of the former Rockware Glass works has now been redeveloped for a modern industrial estate and other small industrial premises are located on the north side of the canal at Horsenden Lane. Key positive features of this area include:

- Tranquil rural surroundings;
- Large areas of open space on both sides of the canal, some of which is publicly accessible, and including former farmland and Perivale Woods managed for wildlife value;
- Tree lines provide enclosure to the canal and towpath, whilst winding stretches have additional enclosure through foreshortened views, creating short, secluded areas;



Former wharves at Greenford



Northolt Mosque



Open land by the canal in Perivale



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- Bridges provide structural interest, including the historic structure of Ballot Box Bridge on Horsenden Lane;
- Rich wildlife habitat on the north bank of the canal;
- Tree lines contribute to the enclosure of the spaces of the canal but there are regular openings in the tree line affording views across the sports fields, nature reserves and agricultural land to the landmark of Horsenden Hill.

### **5.1.10. Sub Area no. 10: Horsenden Lane to Manor Farm Road**

This character area retains the semi rural aspect to the north, with views across the canal to the green open space of Sudbury Golf Course and Horsenden Hill beyond, although increasingly the taller buildings of Sudbury Town are seen to the east on the high ground beyond the Golf Course. The suburban housing development to the south of the towpath makes a strong impression on the character of the space. The housing is not well related to the canal, whilst the rear ends of the gardens running up to the footpath provide a variety of treatments to the edge of the CA. Particular problems with dumping of building waste and other refuse in the tree line on the edge of the tow path was noted here. Key positive features of this area include:

- Views through the tree line to the green spaces of the golf course, allotment gardens and Alperton Cemetery;
- Long views along straight canal sections;
- Good tree lines and hedges providing enclosure to the canal and towpath with screening from residential development to the south;
- Investment in public realm for the towpath;
- Historic canal infrastructure including the wharf and bridge at Manor Farm Lane;
- Use of the north side of the canal near Manor Farm Lane for residential moorings, which provides activity and interest, as well as ensuring good maintenance of the canal bank.



Curving areas of canal with views foreshortened by trees



Wharf area at Manor Farm Lane



Acton Lane Bridge and National Grid station buildings



Historic industrial buildings contribute positively to character

### **5.1.11. Sub Area no. 11: North Acton**

This detached portion of the CA is characterised by heavy industry along the canal associated with the major transport infrastructure surrounding Willesden Junction. Several of the large scale industrial buildings run right up to the canal edge and include a Grid Power Station as well as warehousing. A steep embankment, creating significant enclosure on this side of the CA overshadows the southern edge of the towpath. Key positive features of this character area include:

- The survival of historic canal wharves along a great part of this stretch of the towpath;
- The contribution of interesting historic bridges crossing the canal, including Acton Lane Bridge and the Acton Central to Neasden Railway Bridge;
- Although it lies in neighbouring LB Brent, the Grand Junction Arms public house also makes an important contribution to the character of this CA with its association with the Acton Lane Bridge;
- Despite the proximity of the industrial buildings and vehicle yards, the north bank of the canal has some stretches of tree and shrub growth that represent good wildlife habitat and provide an element of tranquillity to this space. There is also much scrub alongside the towpath, although this tends to impinge on the quality of the space through its scruffy appearance and by trapping windblown litter.



Area of wharves at Old Oak Lane

## 5.2 Key positive buildings

At present the CA contains few buildings or structures other than the canal banks and the bridges crossing the canal. However, a number of buildings that make a positive contribution to the spaces of the CA, either through their association with the historic use of the canal, or through their contribution to the quality of the space surrounding it, have been identified. In some cases it is proposed that the CA should be expanded to include these (see below), whilst in others it is sufficient to recognise their contribution to the CA's setting.

Bull's Bridge is the only listed building within the CA and has been designated Grade II. It is of early 19<sup>th</sup> century construction, probably built between 1801 and 1805 during the construction of the Paddington Branch. It is built of brick with a simple, depressed arch and a single string course at the base of the parapet and has been painted white. It carries the towpath alongside the canal's main channel over the junction.

The Old Oak Bridge, at the crossing of Regina Road over the canal, is of very similar design and probably of late 18<sup>th</sup> century construction, although it has escaped being painted white. It has been designated as a locally listed building, but given the pressure for upgrading of bridges to accommodate greater transport flows it should now be considered for designation as a statutory listed building. Ballot Box Bridge, at Horsenden Lane is also of similar design and date. It has already been designated as a locally listed building and should also be considered for designation as a statutory listed building. This is also of red brick, with blue brick dressings to the single arch, but has been painted white, although the paintwork is now rather dirty and flaking. The surroundings of these bridges also retain areas of 19<sup>th</sup> century stone copings, which provide a contrast with the early 20<sup>th</sup> century piling of the canal walls resulting from the canal's maintenance and widening in the late 1920s and 1930s. Manor Farm Road Bridge is another of these early 19<sup>th</sup> century bridges and of the same design. It is in a good state of preservation and has not been painted. It lies partly within Ealing Borough and partly in LB Brent but should also be considered for listing either locally or nationally.

Railway bridges crossing the canal also include examples of interesting historic structures particularly the two lattice-framed steel bridges crossing the canal between Greenford Station and Northolt, which are both painted white and make an important contribution to views along the canal. The polychromatic brick railway bridge between Acton Central and Harlesden/Neasden provides another interesting structure of 19<sup>th</sup> century



Old Oak Bridge



Ballot Box Bridge



Manor Farm Road Bridge



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date. Unfortunately it is currently surrounded by a number of other structures which prevent it appearing to its best effect.

Several other road and rail bridges crossing the canal are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA which are illustrated on the accompanying townscape appraisal maps.

Two canal basins, with access to the canal, were identified as making an important contribution to the context of the canal by illustrating its relationship with the surrounding industrial sites. These include the former Lyons Dock in Greenford and the Adelaide Dock in Southall. Both retain traditional brick and stone walling and have footbridges carrying the towpath over the mouth of the basin. The Adelaide Dock also retains some cobbled surfaces around the dock edges. The Adelaide Dock's footbridge has brick abutments of yellow stock brick with red brick parapets and metal handrails over the span. The canal side of the span retains some traditional sign-writing advertising 'Adelaide Dock Fire and Gas Services'.

A number of 19<sup>th</sup> century public houses, which were built at crossing points on the canal lie immediately adjacent to the CA and make a positive contribution to its appearance, as well as providing some indication of the waterway's social history. These include The Lamb on Norwood Road and the King's Head Hotel on Bull's Bridge Road, which are both locally listed buildings. The Lamb is a low building of two storeys with a symmetrical frontage of four windows and door at ground floor and two windows above with a hipped roof of red ceramic tiles, probably of early 19<sup>th</sup> century construction. This has a large flat-roofed extension to the right. It currently stands within the Norwood Green CA. The Kings Head Hotel has an Arts and Crafts style frontage in red and white painted brick with prominent brick chimney stacks either side of a gable return. Although the current building has a late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century appearance, a public house of the same name is recorded in this location on the 1868 Ordnance Survey map.

Other significant public houses include the Old Oak Tree, The Common, which is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century public house with a well-preserved frontage including false timber framing and tripartite sliding sash windows to the first floor. The building makes a strong contribution to the space of The Common adjoining the canal towpath.

Rows of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses at Bankside, and Industrious Cottages, have primary frontages overlooking the canal and contribute positively to the historic character of the CA.



Central Acton to Harlesden/Neasden  
Railway Bridge



Greenford to Northolt Railway Bridge



Footbridge over the entrance to the  
Adelaide Dock



The Old Oak Tree Public House



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

The Black Horse public house, on Oldfield Road has green faience tile cladding to the ground floor and steeply pitched pantile roofs and also makes use of applied timbering to achieve a 'traditional' appearance. It has good sliding sash timber framed windows throughout including an unusually large tripartite sash to the rear elevation, which overlooks the canal towpath. It has had extensive late 20<sup>th</sup> century extensions although these do not detract significantly from the historic character of the building or the CA.

A number of industrial buildings that relate to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century use of the canal as an industrial waterway address the canal space and make a positive contribution to the CA, although they all currently stand outside it. These include a corrugated metal clad factory building with an accompanying red brick engine house and chimney at Boston Business Park (shown on Map 1), red brick industrial buildings with saw tooth roof lines and a second engine house and chimney at Rowdell Road (see Map 9) and buildings to the rear of the Glaxo Wellcome laboratories at Greenford Road, which include storage buildings with clerestory roofs and an early factory block with north-light roofing and a hipped roofed rear extension.



The Black Horse Public House



Rear of the Black Horse Public House



Early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial building at the Glaxo Laboratories, Greenford Road

### **5.3 Building materials and local details**

The banks of the canal throughout the CA are principally formed of the concrete pilings used in the 1920s and 30s, which are connected just above the waterline by long metal rails. In a small number of places, normally historic wharfs or around the abutments of road bridges, the older red brick walling with stone copings survives. This makes an important contribution to the historic character of the canal although the utilitarian early 20<sup>th</sup> century materials do provide a record of the government funded work creation schemes to widen the canal during the economic turmoil of the 1920s and 1930s.

The older canal bridges, Bull's Bridge, Old Oak Bridge, Ballot Box Bridge and Manor Farm Road Bridge are all built of red brick, although Ballot Box Bridge and Bull's Bridge have both been painted white. Ballot Box Bridge and Old Oak Bridge stand out as a result of the use of blue brick dressing to their arches. Other Canalside features of note are the occasional black and white metal bollards used for tying up or warping boats and a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century black painted iron mile posts beside the canal, which retain the initials of the Grand Junction Canal Company.

Many of the buildings identified as positive structures on the edges of the CA have retained traditional timber doors and sliding sash windows of various styles. The rows of 19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses are built of London stock bricks with pitched roofs, whilst the industrial buildings are of a mixture of red brick and London stocks with metal framed windows.

### **5.4 Contribution of open spaces, trees and landscape**

The contribution of trees to the enclosure of spaces within the CA has been mentioned previously. Few trees stand out individually as significant, although the trees running along both side of The Common, which are well spaced and provide pleasant shading to the road and towpath, are considered to make a particularly important contribution to the character of the area, which might be improved further by regular maintenance of the trees and their surroundings. Trees surrounding Old Oak Bridge and Ballot Box Bridge are also considered to add to the settings of these structures. The trees lining the canal in the more industrial areas help to screen the intrusive modern industrial buildings from views from within the



Grand Junction Canal company milepost



Tree lines create tranquil secluded areas in many parts of the CA



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

CA, whilst in the more rural parts they add to the general character of the surroundings.

The canal borders on a number of publicly accessible green open spaces both large and small, which include Horsenden Hill Recreation Grounds, Paradise Fields and Marnham Fields and benefits particularly from the access to the areas which are managed for their wildlife interest, creating a rural setting for the canal in an otherwise densely built up urban area. Ideally the interconnection between the canal towpath and these green spaces could be further improved in future.

The rear gardens of residential properties which run up to the canal edge make an important contribution to the greenery in the area surrounding the canal where they are well maintained.

Within the CA the canal passes through changing areas of rural seclusion, and industrial or suburban development. This changing landscape setting provides continuing change and interest to the character of the CA.

### **5.5 The extent of intrusion or damage (Negative Factors)**

Within the current boundaries of the CA there appears to have been very little change, except perhaps for the rebuilding of road bridges, during the past sixty years. However, developments in the canal's surroundings have affected its value, particularly through the changing relationship of industrial development with the Canalside. All of the modern industrial estates are inward-facing, addressing frontages on road access that does not include the canal. As such the CA, in places, is located in the back-lands of these estates, which are generally poorly managed, neglected with encroaching scrub growth. The Canalside is often faced with featureless walls or impenetrable security fencing to the rear or side elevations of large industrial buildings, which detract from the feeling of activity and increase the sense of isolation, which in these industrial areas can be intimidating.

Areas of the Canalside that border on both industrial and residential areas have been affected by dumping of rubbish including building waste, discarded safety clothing and all manner of other detritus. This has a significant impact on the quality of the Canalside environment and could be relatively easily resolved through clearance followed by better enforcement in future.



Public spaces beside the canal



Industrial back land on the canal edge



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Some uses of land immediately adjoining the canal do detract from its character; these include the small scrap yard located near to Osterley Lock. The appearance of areas of underused industrial land, as at Hayes Road, Hounslow, or the former Southall Gas Works site, next to the Paddington Branch of the canal, has also had a negative impact on the CA's character. There is a sense in these areas that the canal is not contributing positively to the quality of the urban environment as it does elsewhere.

Stretches of the canal adjoining residential areas, where gardens back onto the canal, appear to be particularly affected by variation in the management of the canal edge. Some properties have taken particular care of the margin between the ends of gardens and the canal, whilst other have neglected them as outside the property curtilage. There appears to be confusion as to who owns and has responsibility for this land. This has created a very unsatisfactory appearance for the canal edge, particularly noted along the Norwood Green and Hounslow edges of the canal.

### **5.6 Public realm and street furniture**

Ealing Council and British Waterways, as well as a number of other organisations, have been working to encourage better use of the canal and its towpath for recreation, leisure and transport. This has provided funds for a limited amount of improvement to the towpath surfaces. However, for a substantial length within the CA the towpath surface is a mixture of grass and earth, which forms mud in wet weather. This is not conducive to increasing the use of the canal corridor, prevents the towpath being accessible to some less able bodied users, and should be regarded as a priority for improvement. As a related issue the development of scrubby growth on the side of the towpath requires regular control. At the time of the survey for this appraisal (December 2007/January 2008) the Canalside was considerably overgrown, which detracted slightly from its appearance. The towpath also lacks any provision of seats or benches for users to stop and rest. This may reflect its historic development but a number of sensitively sited resting points might be created to help encourage people to use the canal for exercise.

As mentioned above, the surface of the towpath is generally a mixture of grass and earth, or mud in wet weather. Small areas of other materials were noted including a stretch of tarmac surfacing leading up to Bull's Bridge, whilst a longer stretch of compacted gravel path runs through Character Areas 9 and 10.



Intrusion of modern industrial buildings opposite Elthorne Park



Illegal rubbish dumping beside the canal

## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Within character Areas 8 and 10 a significant part of the towpath is made of the concrete surfaces to wharves which formerly served the industrial premises adjacent to the towpath.

There are no public benches, litterbins or other significant street furniture within the CA. A number of schemes have included provision of public works of art relating to the historic use of the canal and its current use and value as a wildlife corridor. In general these make a positive contribution to the character of the CA by helping to provide interpretation of the canal's use and development. However, most of these have been vandalised to some extent and now require some maintenance or renewal.

### 5.7 General condition

In general the CA has a somewhat run down and neglected feel resulting from the varied treatment of the canal banks along the rear edges of gardens and around industrial estates where the canal forms an unused backland. Although it is difficult to assess, it does not appear that all sections of the towpath of the CA are well used by walkers. The use of unsympathetic boundary materials on the edge of the CA has a considerable negative impact on the appearance of the CA in places. This includes use of rusting corrugated metal sheet and poorly maintained fences along the boundary of the former Southall Gas Works and at other locations

Some investment in public realm through resurfacing of the towpath in Character Areas 9 and 10 provides a positive impression of renewal, whilst some works to unite the canal edge with adjoining areas of public open space have also had a positive impact.

Much of the surrounding early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century housing fails to address the canal, although several of the new developments make greater use of the Canalside space, helping to create greater vibrancy within the CA.

The development of the canal as a new form of residential area, with provision of several long term mooring sites throughout the CA, is also a notable and, it is hoped, a positive development.

### 5.8 Problems, pressures and capacity for change

The decline of the traditional large-scale industries in this part of London is resulting in the redevelopment of some considerable areas of land next to the canal. Whereas the older industrial sites addressed the Canalside as an



Public works of art damaged by vandalism



Unsympathetic boundary treatments



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

integrated part of the transport infrastructure, there is potential for the modern redevelopment to fail to address this space. Any further loss of connection between the canal and its industrial or commercial surroundings would be detrimental to the character of the CA. Ideally new developments should recognise the national importance of the historic canal landscape and use it to create a positive surrounding environment.

The CA benefits from running through several areas that retain attractive green open spaces, including particularly rural areas. The economic viability of agricultural use of these pockets of farmland is under considerable pressure, whilst the economic incentives for their development for housing or commercial use are considerable. Such change in the setting of the CA would be regarded as highly detrimental to its character and appearance and should be resisted.

As a result of the repair and widening of the canal in the early and mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the canal has lost most of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century materials that were used in its construction. Where sections of brick walling with stone copings survive as the material used to retain the canal bank these should be conserved. Alternatively, as the 20<sup>th</sup> century concrete piling is well represented throughout the CA, it would be acceptable for some sections of this to be replaced with alternative treatments, which might include brick and stone or more modern (but sensitively chosen) materials.

The value of the canal and immediately surrounding area as a wildlife habitat has developed considerably since the end of its use as an industrial waterway. Indeed, the canal has been identified as a Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation. The level of sunlight reaching areas of the canal and bank plays an important role in its ability to support an ecosystem and act as a wildlife corridor. As such, it would be detrimental to the value of the CA as an area of interest for nature conservation if new development in the surroundings of the canal caused significant overshadowing of the canal or the towpath. Small areas of overshadowing, such as under bridges, is unlikely to have a significant negative impact.

The course of the canal cuts across many road and rail routes. Increasing use of these transport routes may require upgrading of the crossing points, including alteration or replacement of bridges across the canal. The four late 18<sup>th</sup> /early 19<sup>th</sup> century bridges identified (Bull's Bridge, Old Oak Bridge, Ballot Box Bridge and Manor Farm Lane Bridge) should be preserved and their settings conserved or enhance if at all possible.



Recent industrial development does not address the canal



Open land by the canal under pressure for redevelopment



The narrowness of the carriageway over Old Oak Bridge may create pressure for replacement



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Ideally the two railway bridges identified as important buildings should receive a similar level of protection. Consideration should be given to the impact on the character and appearance of the CA in determining applications to alter or replace other bridges in the CA.

For some sections of considerable length the CA lies along London Borough of Ealing's boundaries and either part of the canal or the far bank lie within an adjacent borough. Along these stretches it is possible that new developments in neighbouring boroughs might have an impact on the character and appearance of the CA. Ealing Council will have to work in partnership with neighbouring boroughs to ensure that new development contributes positively to the setting of the CA. Examples of good development in adjoining boroughs that have benefited the Canalside CA include the office development at Western Road, Hounslow and the residential development on Tollgate Road, Hillingdon.



Tollgate Road development Hillingdon

## 6 Suggested boundary changes

As part of the appraisal process the boundaries of the CA were reviewed to ensure that they continue to mark the correct boundary of the area that should be protected. The boundaries of the CA are drawn tightly around the canal and towpath and this is considered to largely represent the area of special historic and architectural interest. There are therefore no proposals to remove any areas from the CA, but a small number of extensions to the CA are proposed as follows:

- Add the Canalside docks and basins that relate to the past industrial use of the canal and form an important part of its context, specifically Adelaide Dock, Southall and Lyons Dock, Greenford;
- Add houses and streets with significant historic interest, which address the spaces within the CA or otherwise contribute to their character and appearance including parts of Bankside, Southall The Common, Southall and Williams Road, Southall;
- Add a number of public houses which stand next to historic bridges over the canal, including The Black Horse, Oldfield Road, The Kings Arms Hotel, Bull's Bridge Road, The Old Oak Tree, The Common and The Lamb, Norwood Road (currently in the Norwood Green CA);
- Add areas of significant open space that contribute to the setting of the CA to such an extent that they should be protected, including part of Elthorne Park, Paradise Fields, Perivale and part of Horsenden Recreation Grounds – all of which contribute significantly to the rural character of specific stretches of the canal;
- Add small areas of well maintained public open space that are related to the canal and contribute positively to its setting, including the small green on the south side of Havelock Road (see Map 2), the small green next to Old Oak Bridge, Regina Road (see Map 3) and a 'pocket park' leading from Uxbridge Road down to the Canalside

The above proposed extensions will be considered during the review of the next five years and will be subject to the relevant consultation process.



Lyons Dock, Greenford



19<sup>th</sup> century terraced houses, Bankside, Southall



Canalside picnic area, Elthorne Park

## 7 Community involvement

In accordance with English Heritage guidance, the Council has involved key stakeholders during the appraisal process, a list of whom is appended. This initial consultation process has been undertaken through correspondence with representatives of local amenity groups and in the form of a questionnaire sent to key stakeholders based in and around the CA and including British Waterways as the principle landowner within the CA. Responses to this questionnaire have been taken into consideration during the preparation of this text.



Canal towpath is in poor condition in some areas

## 8 Summary of issues

In summary, the appraisal has identified the following issues affecting the CA:

- The canal towpath is in poor condition and potentially inaccessible to some users – its resurfacing and provision of appropriate additional public realm should be a priority for the improvement of the CA;
- The poor relationship of modern and historic residential areas to the canal as public open space;
- Recent industrial developments have been poorly related to the spaces of the canal and its towpath;
- There is considerable pressure for the redevelopment of industrial land in the surroundings of the CA;
- There is considerable pressure for the development of agricultural land in the immediate vicinity of the CA. Preserving the rural setting of the CA, where this survives, should be a priority for its future management;
- Use of the canal edge and edge of the towpath for casual waste disposal in both residential and industrial areas should be stopped;
- Areas of untidy canal banks in residential areas where there is confusion regarding ownership, leading to a general lack of maintenance;
- Insensitive land uses next to the CA detract from its appearance;
- Poor quality boundary treatments include areas of fences, hoardings and walls surrounding the CA in specific locations;



Disposal of building waste next to the towpath



Buildings at risk at Bull's Bridge



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- The presence of industrial buildings that are disused, derelict or poorly maintained detracts from the vibrancy of the CA;
- Historic buildings, relating to the former use and management of the canal, are derelict and at risk of imminent loss (these are located in the LB of Hillingdon);
- Three historic canal bridges require consideration for protection through statutory listing;
- 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century canal building materials are rare in the CA and their importance needs to be recognised to ensure their protection;
- Public art makes a small but important contribution to the character and appearance of the CA. However, much of what has been provided has been vandalised and defaced;
- Preventing overshadowing of the CA by new development will be required to preserve its value as wildlife habitat;
- The Council will need to collaborate with neighbouring boroughs to preserve the character and appearance of the CA and its setting.



Intrusive modern development in neighbouring boroughs.

## 9 Planning and Policy framework

A summary of the principal legislation and policy guidance applicable to Canalside CA is set out below:

*The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* sets out the process of assessment, definition, or revision of boundaries and formulation of proposals for CAs as well as the identification and protection of Listed Buildings. Authorities are required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA, or in case of Listed Buildings, to have special regard for their preservation in the exercise of their powers under the Planning Acts.

*Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) Note 15*, for local and other public authorities, property owners, developers, amenity bodies and public, sets out Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, CAs, and other elements of the historic environment. *Ealing Council's Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* or *Local Development Framework (LDF)* includes its statutory policies for implementing the Acts and apply the PPG. This Appraisal should be taken into account when considering planning or listed building applications within the CA.

The prime objective of the relevant legislation and guidance is the preservation and/or enhancement of character or appearance of CAs. Any proposed developments which conflict with that objective should be normally expected to be refused. PPG 15 and local policy also support a presumption in favour of preservation of any buildings or objects which are considered to make a positive contribution to the character of a CA. At the same time, it is recognised the need to accommodate changes which respect or reinforce the character of the area in order to maintain its vitality.

Many local planning policies – not only those for design and conservation – can affect the developments in a CA. For instance policies on sustainable development, meeting housing needs, affordable housing, landscape, biodiversity, energy efficiency, transport, people with disabilities, employment and town centres can all influence development and the quality of the environment in CA. However, policies concerned with design quality and character generally take greater importance in CAs. The adopted UDP's section on Urban Design includes policies dealing with:

- Design of Development (4.1)
- Mixed Use (4.2)

## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- Landscaping, Tree Protection and Planting (4.5)
- Statutory Listed Buildings (4.7)
- Conservation Areas (4.8)
- Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Interest Areas (4.9)
- Commercial Frontage and Advertising Signs (4.10)

Throughout the Urban Design section, references are made after each policy to further relevant documents and policies, including:

- *SPG 5: How to Prepare an Urban Design Statement*
- *SGP 12: Greening Your Home*
- *Ealing LA21: Keeping Your Front Garden Alive*
- *PPG 15: Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*
- *PPG16: Archaeology and Planning*
- *PPG 19: Outdoor Advertisement Control*
- "By Design - Urban Design in the Planning System: towards a better Practice"(CABE & DETR, 2000)
- "By Design – Better Places to Live: A Companion Guide to PPG 3" (CABE, 2001)
- *The London Plan*, Policy 4B.5, 4B10, 4B11, 4B12, 4B14

Policy 4.8 for CA states:

- The Council will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of CAs and their setting.
- New developments, built or otherwise within or adjacent to the CA, will be permitted provided that they are well related to the existing character of the area in terms of its historic and architectural quality and green setting. The Council requires that any development proposal adhere to the Council's specific CA guidelines.
- The council will refuse planning permission and CA consent for development of existing buildings, unless the proposed replacement development will preserve or enhance the character of the CA. Where appropriate, the Council will also make Article 4 Directions that restrict development rights granted by the General Permitted Development Order.
- It is the Council's intention to create new and extended CAs in the Borough, in areas which merit this status, having regard to the individual quality of the area as a whole.

The criteria for further designation or extension of CAs are sets out as:

- The area concerned must be the setting for one or more of the following:



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

- Listed Buildings, or a group of buildings of good design from any period especially when they create an attractive townscape.
  - Urban open spaces or historic village greens.
  - Features of historic or archaeological interest including industrial or transport heritage.
  - Landscape features including, water, trees, and gardens of value for their plant, wildlife or their amenity of the surrounding area.
  - An historic street pattern.
1. The area should have some cohesion of character worthy of preservation.
  2. The benefit of preserving that character must be considered to be greater than the loss of certain permitted development rights having regard to the financial and resource implications of such action.

Detailed advice on policies contained in the UDP, on restrictions on listed buildings, residential and commercial properties in Conservation Areas, and for guidance on the procedure to apply for permission, can be obtained from the London Borough of Ealing, Planning and Surveying Services, Perceval House, 14-16 Uxbridge Road, London, W5 2HL, Tel 020 8825 6600, email: [planning@ealing.gov.uk](mailto:planning@ealing.gov.uk), or, alternatively, from the Council's website at [www.ealing.gov.uk](http://www.ealing.gov.uk)

## 10 Glossary

**Ashlar** hewn blocks of masonry neatened and laid in horizontal courses

**Arch** the spanning of an opening by means other than a lintel. Most commonly arches are curved and made up of wedge shaped blocks. Numerous variations exist e.g. Blind, Triumphant, Vernacular

**Band** an unmoulded, projecting string course, often delineating a floor/storey

**Bargeboards** projecting boards set against the incline of the gable of a building

**Bay** the vertical division of the exterior, (or interior) of a building marked by a window opening. They may be Round, (or Canted) or Square

**Bond** style of laying Headers, (bricks laid with the long side at right angles to the face of a wall), and Stretchers, (bricks laid with the long side along the face of the wall), within masonry courses. Flemish Bond is where alternate Headers and Stretchers are used in the face of the wall. English Bond is where alternate courses of bricks in the facing wall are either Headers or Stretchers

**Buttress** a mass of masonry or brickwork projecting from or built against a wall to give additional strength

**Capitals** the top or head of a column, pier or pilaster, which relate to Classical architecture

**Casement** window a window hinged vertically to open like a door

**Cladding** an external covering applied to a structure for protective/aesthetic purposes

**Coade Stone** an artificial cast stone used from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century for decorative keystones

**Column** an upright, often supporting, structure either, round, square or rectangular in form

**Coping** a capping or covering found on top of a wall. They can be flat or sloping to discharge water

**Cornice** a projecting, decorative moulding found along the top of a building refers to a cornice made up of a series of small square blocks **Dentil Cornice**

## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

**Corbel** a projecting block, usually stone, supporting a horizontal beam

**Course** a continuous layer of stones or bricks found in a wall. Referred to as String, (horizontal) or Soldier (vertical)

**Cupola** a dome that crowns a roof or turret

**Curtilage** the available space attached to a property which forms a singular enclosure

**Door hood** a projected moulding above an exterior door designed to through off the rain

**Dormer window** a projecting window placed vertically in a sloping roof with a roof of its own

**Dressings** a decorative feature made of stones, most commonly set around windows

**Eaves** the underpart of a sloping roof overhanging a wall, (Oversailing), or flush with it

**Elevation** the external wall or face of a building

**Façade** commonly the front face of a building

**Fanlights** a window, often semi-circular with radiating glazing panels, found over a door in Georgian buildings

**Fenestration** the arrangement of windows in a building

**Finial** a formal ornament, (usually in Fleur-de-Lis) at the top of a gable, pinnacle or canopy

**Footprint** the total area over which a building is situated

**Gable** the triangular upper part of a wall found at the end of a ridged roof

**Grain** refers to the arrangement and size of buildings in the urban context

**Hardstanding** an area of hard material used for parking cars within the cartilage, (often front garden space) of a house

**Hipped roof** a shallowish pitch with sloping at the vertical ends

**Keystone** central wedge-shaped stone at the crown of an arch



## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

**Mortar** mixture of cement, (or lime), sand and water laid between bricks as an adhesive

**Lintel** a horizontal supporting element of timber, metal or stone found across the top of a door or window

**Mansard** roof has a double slope where the lower part is steeper than the upper part

**Moulding** a continuous projection or groove used decoratively to throw shadow or rain water off a wall

**Mullion** a vertical element (glazing bar) that divides a window into two or more lights

**Pantile** a roofing tile with a curved S shape designed to interlock

**Parapet** a low wall used as a safety device where a drop or edge exists

**Pediment** a low pitched Gable above a Portico

**Pier** a solid vertical masonry support (or mass) found in buildings and walls

**Pilaster** a shallow pier projecting slightly from a wall

**Pinnacle** a small pyramidal or conical shaped crowing element

**Pitched** roof the most common type. Gables exist at each end of the pitch

**Plinth** the projecting base of a wall or column

**Pointing** the exposed mortar finish to brick or masonry joints

**Polychromatic** multi-coloured brickwork

**Portico** a roofspace open or partly enclosed

**Quatrefoil** a set of decorative openings, often leaf shaped cut into an arch

**Quoins** dressed bricks found at the corners of buildings, usually laid so that the brick faces are alternately large and small

**Ragstone** rubble masonry, rough building stones or flints, generally laid in irregular courses

**Recess** space set back in a wall, often the setting for an entrance porch

## Canalside Conservation Area Character Appraisal

**Render** plaster or stucco applied to a wall

**Rooflight** a window set flush into the slope of a roof

**Rusticated** masonry cut in huge blocks, often in its original hewn state, that is normally found on the lower half of buildings

**Sash window** a window that is double hung with wooden frames (sashes) that slide up and down with pulleys

**Sepulchre** a recess with Tombchest designed to receive an effigy of Christ

**Sett** paving slabs

**Sills** the horizontal element found at the base of a window or door frame

**Stucco** a form of plaster used internally or externally to decorate or protect

**Transom** a horizontal bar of stone or wood across a window

## 11 Bibliography

English Heritage, *Guidance on Conservation Area Management Plans*, 2005

English Heritage, *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals*, 2005

Ealing Borough Council, *Adopted 2004 Plan for the Environment*, 2004

Pevsner, N., *The Buildings of England. London 3: North West*, 2002



## 12 Stakeholder Consultation

### *12.1 List of stakeholders consulted*

- **Ealing Civic Society**
- **British Waterways Representatives – Anna Chapman, Planner and Florence Salberter, Heritage Advisor**
- **Relevant Ward Councillors**

### *12.2 Canalside Conservation Area Appraisal: Questionnaire sent to stakeholders*

1. Please list any special qualities, distinctive features or areas, which you consider make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area.
2. Can you identify any key features – within the built or natural environment – that you feel have been eroded over time?
3. Can you identify any development that has taken place since designation, which you feel has had a negative impact on the character of the Conservation Area? If yes, why?
4. Can you identify any areas on the attached map that you consider should be included or excluded from the Conservation Area? Please give your reason.
5. How effective do you consider the present controls over development to be? Please explain.
6. Apart from the Listed Buildings within the Conservation Area, are there any buildings or structures that you consider are of architectural or historical significance? Please give details.
7. Can you identify any open spaces, significant trees or hedges that you feel make a significant contribution to the special character of Conservation Area? Please list
8. What would you say were the most significant views, vistas or panoramas, either within, into or from the Conservation Area? Please give details.

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9. In your opinion, what impact does road traffic have upon the Conservation Area?
10. Do you think there are any areas that would benefit from being car-free? If so please describe.
11. Are the streets and public areas generally appealing and easy to use? Please comment.
12. Do you think that street furniture is in character with the Conservation Area? If not, what improvements could you suggest?
13. Do you have any concerns about personal safety within the area? Please give details.
14. Do you feel that sufficient Conservation Area guidance exists to guide development proposals? Please give details.