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Camden Lock Village

Spatial and Character Analysis

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1 SPATIAL AND CHARACTER ANALYSIS OF THE SITE

1.1 The character and interrelationship of spaces within the area

The site partly falls within the Regent's Canal Conservation Area, a heritage corridor of unique character, but the elements which contribute towards the neighbourhood identity, are not necessarily confined to the Conservation Area or other boundaries.

The character of the environs developed over the years and, today largely derives from the presence of four distinct but interrelated elements: the Regent's Canal, Chalk Farm Road, the Railway viaduct and the market activities [Fig. 2].

The street pattern is almost unaltered from those established in the 1840's when the Hawley Estate was laid and Camden Town expanded following the opening of the Regent's Canal.

The arrangement of the buildings, the size of plots and links between spaces underwent changes in the second half 19th century, after the railway viaduct, depots and goods yards were introduced. In recent years, as for many other areas in London, large footprint buildings have replaced those of a small footprint.

The frontages along Chalk Farm Road and Regent's Canal present a different scale of buildings, from large-scale commercial-warehouse to terrace houses.

The streetscape of Hawley Road is of suburban character, with a regular frontage of early Victorian terraces on the south side and the contemporary, high density Council Housing on the north side.

Castlehaven Road at the site is characterised by buildings of mixed massing varying from 19th century terraces to light industrial forms.

The establishment of the Camden market, initiated in 1970's, brought economic and physical regeneration to the area. The conversion of wharves for the craft markets also contributes greatly to the present character of the area. The 2008 fire interrupted the activities of the Camden Canal Market; clearing and stabilising works to the remaining structures have been carried out since then.

1.2 The Regents Canal

The character of Regent's Canal changes dramatically along its course, ranging from enclosed spaces to wider open spaces; hard industrial townscapes to semi-rural sections; buildings against the Canal edge to those that are set back with landscaping adjacent to the Canal.

Following the decline of traditional related commercial activities, the Regent's Canal has been increasingly recognized as a valuable resource in terms of water-based tourism and leisure activities, informal recreation, biodiversity and transportation potential. Leisure boat trips are regularly available and the towpath is a well-used and appreciated amenity for residents and visitors.

The Canal traverses the area under consideration, from West to East, flowing gently through a series of locks, two of which are in the Conservation Area (Sub-area one).

The relationship with the canal is an important aspect of the historical development of the area. Today the early mercantile role of the Canal is superseded, but the environmental quality of the waterfront still plays a determinant part on the character of the area.

The continuity of the open space, the presence of the water, and the informal greenery and planting confer on the area a natural and picturesque quality. In this section of the Canal, the bridges as well as the passages below are important features and essential parts of the canal side experience.

The passage below Hampstead Bridge is a feature that was added with the construction of the new bridge in 1877, to allow continuity of the tow path. Prior to that, horses had to be unhitched and taken over the road, as the tow path changes sides.

The redevelopment of the underused Camden Lock site after the decline of canal-related activities for the craft markets started in the 1970s.



Fig. 1 View of the lock on the Grand Union Canal, Camden High Street.

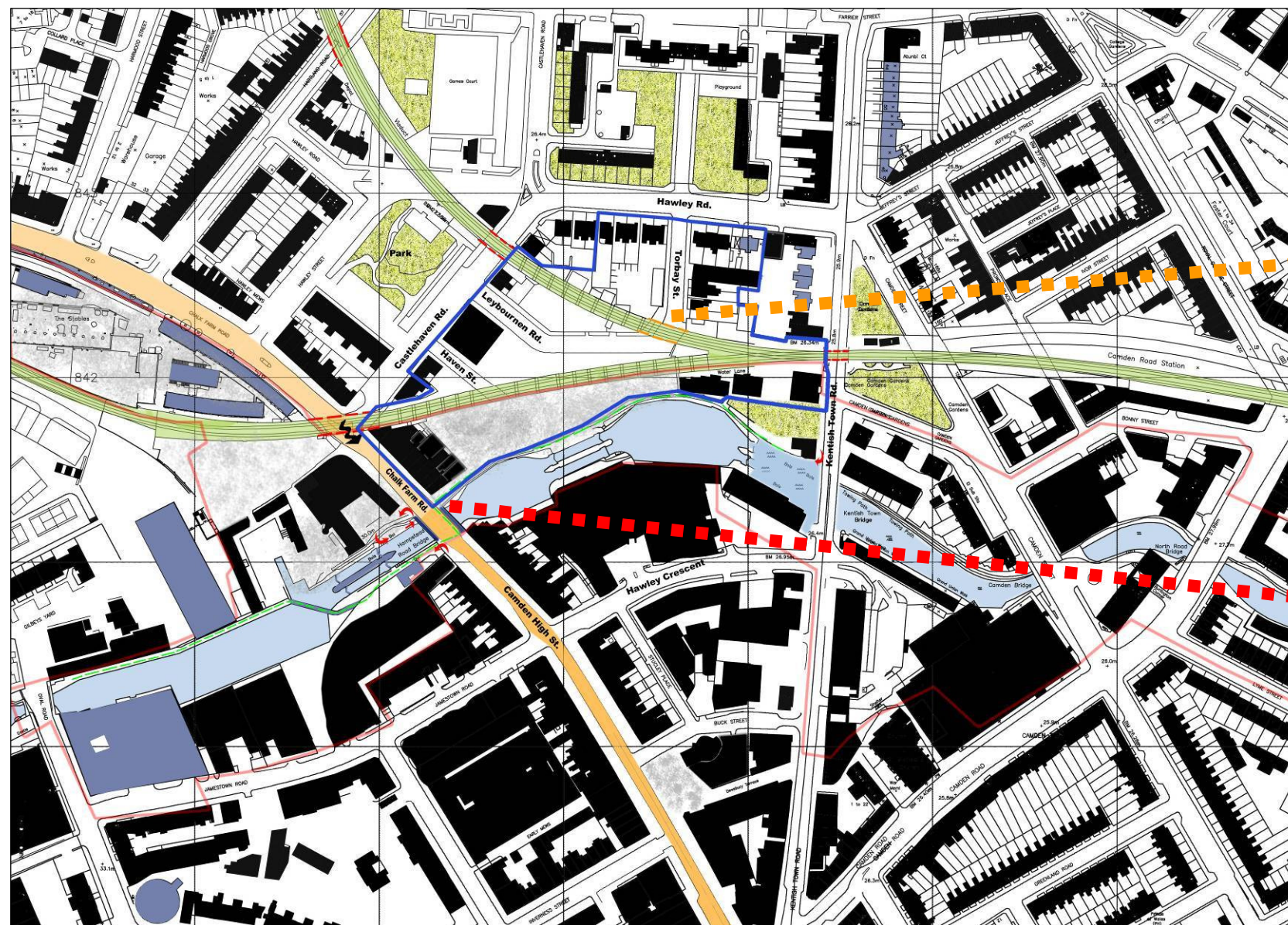


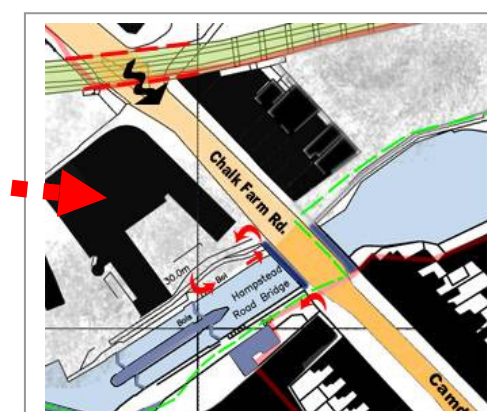
Fig. 2 Built up areas and identification of elements, which contribute to define the area. Based upon OS 2006.

Key

— The site	— Conservation Area	
■ Regents Canal	■ Listed Buildings	■ Camden High St.
■ Railway	■ Green spaces	--- Passages under bridges
■ Market Areas	■ Chalk Farm Road	--- Passages through arches
		↪ Access to the canal



One open arch is indicated by the orange dashed line.



The red dashed line shows the bridge in Chalk Farm Road, the red arrows indicate the access to the canal (under the bridge). The original towing path is indicated by the green dashed line.



View of the railway arches from the south end of Torbay Street.



General View from Chalk Farm Road towards the Railway Bridge.

Views

From Hampstead Bridge the views towards Camden Lock Wharf and Hawley Wharf are dominated by the lock and the taller elements, historic and modern, behind it.

The changing relationship between water and buildings, and the different types of built forms facing the canal contribute to the variety of views.

The view from the Hampstead Bridge looking East [Fig. 3] towards the Hawley Lock reveals the steepest fall along the canal that drops considerably over the three flights of locks. The wharf and the basin have a slightly more open aspect, as the canal widens at this point and their height varies up to 3-4 storeys. Their relationship with the waterway is less formal and the frontages do not lie parallel to the canal. To the right, the view is dominated by the TV-AM buildings, converted in 1981-82 by Terry Farrell. The section with the round-headed windows in mirror glass is all that remains of the brewery, founded here in 1849.

Looking to the North-East, the view [Fig. 5] is dominated by the subject site and its stalls. In the background the railway viaduct is the main horizontal element, dominating the view. On the Southern bank of the canal stands the TV-AM building which rises up to three floor equivalent, positively enclosing this section of the canal [Fig. 4]. On the opposite side there are the offices developed in 1990 by Rosehaugh Co-Partnership Development Ltd. The site was originally occupied by coal merchants and later, after the construction of the railway, by the goods depot known as Camden Road or Locket's Coal depot.

The visual towards South-West is characterized by the 19th century Roving Bridge, which crosses the canal diagonally [Fig. 8], and the progression of large footprint buildings of similar scale (six to seven storeys) but of different age and appearance. On the right, the Interchange warehouse, refurbished in 1989 retains its robust mercantile character, while on the opposite site the white rendered buildings are a contrast to the pink brickwork of the Interchange.

The extension to Gilbey's warehouse in the Mendelsohn and Chermayeff's International Style, in particular, provides a contrast with its simplicity of design. Although the contribution of contemporary buildings is not always so positive, the views along the canal with its spontaneous greenery add a striking quality to the urban scene.

Approaching the site from the Kentish Town Bridge, the view towards West is characterised by the lock in the forefront and the sinuous layout of the canal, which has the towpath on the northern side. The railway viaduct is in the background. The vegetation on the edge of the canal bank, the height of the buildings, which are stepped back from the banks make this view different to those across the canal from the standpoint of Hampstead Bridge looking towards Oval Road. This testifies to the diversity of character along the canal. The wharf and basin have, in contrast, an open aspect and informal ambience at this point.

The view at towpath level looking towards the site is characterized by the water, the Hampstead Road cast-iron girder bridge, and the large-scale buildings in the background. Permeability from the towpath towards the site and Chalk Farm Road on this side of the canal is compromised by the changing levels. Daily usage confirms that there is a lower vitality and appreciation of the canal on this side compared to the bridge on the West.

Nearer to the subject site [Fig. 9], the back elevations of the terraced houses aligning Chalk Farm Road, come into view behind the fencing. The row of terraces which represent the earliest development, were conceived without any attempt to make connection with the canal. The waterways were then considered exclusively for their commercial purpose. Interactions with the canal were fully exploited some years later in the second half of the XIX century after the arrival of the railway. The subject site became a very busy depot first and an industrial site later.

The isolation of the residential uses from the canal has remained since their construction, while the interrelationship between the canal, the railway viaduct and the site has been lost completely.



Fig. 3 View of the Regent's Canal from the Hampstead Bridge looking North-East.



Fig. 4 View taken at towpath level looking north-east. The TV-AM building on the right. The trees are not indigenous to the original industrial ambience.



Fig. 5 Entrance to the market from Camden High Street.



Fig. 6 View of the canal from the Hampstead Bridge, on the South-West side of Chalk Farm Road.



Fig. 7 View of the site and the Grand Union Canal, from the Hampstead Road Bridge.



Fig. 8 View of the Roving Bridge over Grand Union Canal. The open space, the water, and greenery are essential parts of the character of the area.



Fig. 9 View towards the site taken from Regent's Canal towpath between Kentish Town Bridge and Hampstead Road Bridge. The elaborate fencing alienates the tow path from the immediate hinterland, denying its historic grain and form.



Fig. 10 View towards the site taken from Kentish Town Bridge. Viaduct and gantries form a major element of the view.

1.3 Chalk Farm Road

Chalk Farm Road is the principal thoroughfare of the area. The sequence of diverse views along Chalk Farm Road, defined by the built form and the curve of the road, prevents long distance views.

The built environment is defined on the East side by 19th century terraced buildings which have shops, café, and restaurants at the ground floor; and on the West side by predominant structures, such as the Roundhouse, the 'Camden Wall' and the railway bridge, which come into view on a northerly progression.

The Roundhouse is a major focus point, almost providing a gateway to the area from the north.

The terraced houses lining the East part of Chalk Farm Road, in the stretch between the northern point of the road and the railway bridge, benefit from a large pavement, giving a sense of spaciousness to the street.

The 'Camden Wall' confers to Chalk Farm Road a sense of continuity and calmness with its regular progression of openings, but it is also a distinct barrier with its non-active frontage. A strong change of character occurs behind the Stables market gate, where the original industrial buildings, stables and horse ramps still remain. This is enclosed and separated from the public realm by the impenetrable wall.

The railway bridge, crossing diagonally across Chalk Farm Road, is not a simple barrier. It creates a visual break, emphasised by the traffic island and one-way traffic system. It also frames with its portal structure the view behind that change again in character. In fact, the buildings aligned on this stretch of the street have a narrow pavement establishing a different relationship with the street.

The coexistence of different elements, plus the synergy between the railway bridge and the 'Camden Wall', makes this node one of the most interesting features of the area.

On the site frontage along Chalk Farm Road, the terraced buildings have been damaged by the fire. The stabilising works to the structures included the infill of basements, while roofs and floors are being completely replaced. Although they are not listed, this row of houses is considered as a positive contributor to the character of the area and consistent with the general scale and grain of the historic streetscape.

Views

The approach towards the site from the north-West of Chalk Farm Road is marked by the curved route of the street and the deep pavement which confers an open character to the views that changes while moving towards the Stables Market. The built environment is defined on the North-East by 19th century terraced buildings which have an active frontage of shops, café, and restaurants at the ground floor. This is contrasted by the impenetrable wall to the Stables that lines the South-West side of the street and the railway bridge, which comes into view as one progresses along the road. The market's activities are secluded behind the Camden wall, inside the Stables Market [Fig. 12].

Approaching the railway bridge, the view toward the South-East section of Chalk Farm Road changes considerably. The pavement is reduced and the terraced houses Nos.1-9 with their shop fronts form the

“street wall” on the left hand side, while the right hand side is taken over by the continuous façade of the 1980s Camden Lock building.

The traffic island and the bridge contribute to the change of character of this section of Chalk Farm Road, in addition to the market activities.

On the opposite side, the South-East approach towards the site is marked by the compact street frontage of the terraced houses on Camden High Street and the ‘trompe-l’oeil’ of the railway bridge. The colourful appearance of the buildings, shop frontages and exposed goods together with the proliferation of signage dominate the street scene. In the background the railway bridge is almost a landmark for the area.

The essential elements of the character emerge from the street frontages: small footprint buildings 3-4 storey, plain and basic architecture has now been enlivened with applied colours and embellishments [Fig. 11]. The vibrant shop fronts and displays present cosmopolitan ambience almost unique in London. The Avant Garde retailing and design has transformed the utilitarianism of the old industrial buildings and slum dwellings. The market ethos has been continued with the small scale terraced houses and more recent large footprint buildings.

Moving North-West and closer to the site, the Hampstead Road Bridge comes into view and the focal point becomes the railway bridge and the Camden Lock building, constructed in the late 1980’s in a pastiche of late Victorian warehouse style. The sequence of terraced houses on the West side of Camden Lock is interrupted, as well as the row of shop fronts. The view therefore changes dramatically and opens up each side. On the East side, the Francis Terrace, Nos.1-9 Chalk Farm Road, bounds the site and impedes the view through to the canal side [Fig.15].



Fig. 11 Camden High Street, towards the Camden Lock Market. The Camden Lock market and the railway bridge in the background.



Fig. 12 View of Chalk Farm Road looking North-West. The character of the area changes dramatically, now that the market activities are secluded behind the “Camden wall”.



Fig. 13 Junction between Hawley Street and Chalk Farm Road, the Railway Bridge in the centre.



Fig. 14 View towards the crossing Hampstead Road Bridge. The trees appear to be self seeded and inconsistent with the industrial nature of the canal. They are now regarded as elements of character.



Fig. 15 View towards the site and the railway viaduct.

1.4 The railway viaduct

The railway viaduct crosses Camden and passes over several streets. It is a visual barrier but contributes at the same time to the enclosed and compact character of the area.

The arches supporting the railway viaduct and the bridges over the street have strong and imposing identity which contributes to the legibility and vivid image of the area. They impose an industrial rhythm and monumental scale to the street scene. Their dramatic intervention, shown on the historic maps, typifies the Victorian dynamism in planning.

In the past the arches were used as storage for coal, but they also created a different kind of permeability and linkages between spaces although over time almost all the arches on the East side of Chalk Farm were closed, resulting in loss of connectivity.

The subject site has been marginalised from its immediate surroundings by the viaducts and intermediate land. This has been exacerbated by the lack of permeability of the arches which are used for garages and light industrial premises.

It was the arrival of the railway in mid. 19th century, which transformed Camden Town from the anonymity of fields into a major centre. The railway viaduct was superimposed onto an existing urban layout requiring demolition of comparatively recent dwellings, sacrificed for the greater public benefit of the railway. In certain areas, where commercial and logistic reasons made it feasible, redevelopment was designed to a new layout and the railway incorporated into it. This happened to the Stables area, which was redeveloped after the construction of the railway, and the result is a synergy between the viaducts, the wall and the building next to them.

On the north side of the site, the buildings along the railway track were residential. To make space for the viaducts they were partially demolished. Demolition left small irregularly shaped gap sites that were intentionally redeveloped to fill the breaches.

An example is visible on the subject site, where three terraced houses at the corner with Castlehaven Road were demolished to make space for the railway. The infilling of the gap between the railway and the remaining terraces was carried out without establishing a strong relationship with the railway so the junction between the two structure is less obvious. However the infilling building has an interesting façade in an attempt originally to give it some presence and status on the street. It also creates a synergy with the pub, being of similar date and style.

Views

The railway bridges on the subject site are scarcely visible from the canal, hidden behind the contemporary fence.

The views from the North-East, from the Castlehaven Open Space and along Castlehaven Road, are characterised by the imposing presence of the bridges at both ends of the block **[Error! Reference source not found.** and 17]. The brickwork arches are in some way disguised by the workshops and garages paraphernalia, and only visible when approaching the corners of Haven Street and Leybourne Road **[Error! Reference source not found.]**.

From the North, the viaduct is visible along Hawley Road only when approaching Castlehaven Road; the railway arches not being part of the streetscape until the junction with Torbay Street draws near.

Within the site, the arches are the main feature of the space, as the canal is reciprocally hidden from the internal views.



Fig. 16 View from Castlehaven Open Space towards Hawley Road.



Fig. 17 View from Castlehaven Open Space towards Leybourne Road. The vista terminated by the imposing horizontality of the viaduct and a gantry.



Fig. 18 View from Leybourne Road towards Castlehaven Road.



Fig. 19 Skewed brickwork arches within the subject site.



Fig. 20 The arches on the south end of Torbay Street.

1.5 The market and leisure activities

The area immediately to the North of the canal forms what is now the heart of the Camden Market. It was previously the Camden Town Goods Yard and most of it was occupied for much of its life by warehousing for the Gilbey's wines and spirits business. This complex comprises the industrial horse stables (known as the Stanley Sidings) and tightly enclosed courts leading off one another; their plan form being influenced by the horse towpath and stabling serving the vast railway goods yard and interchange traffic.

The redevelopment of the underused site after the decline of canal-related activities and the conversion of wharves for the craft markets in the 1970s, contributed greatly to the economic and physical regeneration of Camden and to the present character of the area.

The craft markets developed into one of London's top tourist attractions giving a new iconography to Camden. Today the place is mostly known for its famous market, restaurants, café and entertainment facilities but this was never part of any planned development policies.

This market attracts large numbers of Londoners and tourists because of the character and quality of the goods on sale, and because of the uniqueness of the location. Boat trips, walks along the canal,

and watching the barges pass through the lock gates from the Dingwall's beer garden, are important parts of the attraction of the Camden Lock area. Sunday trading was permitted on this private site while disallowed in many places elsewhere, and this also contributed to its success. Trading is now developing towards full 7-day opening.

Views

Next to the site, the old railway bridge over Chalk Farm Road was painted with a 'trompe-l'oeil' image, which has since become the icon for Camden Lock and the market.

The views of the market are characterised by the continuity of the 'Camden Wall' suggesting the presence of a different world beyond the brick mass through the gate and openings [Fig. 21].

The views on Market Place [Fig. 22] on the North end of the Hampstead Bridge are more expressive of the activities held within the market.



Fig. 21 The 'Camden Wall' confers to Chalk Farm Road a sense of continuity and calmness with its regular progression of openings.



Fig. 22 View from market place.

1.6 Castlehaven Road

Known as Grange Road up to mid 20th century, Castlehaven Road at the site is visually terminated on both sides by the railway viaducts. On the east side, the large, light industrial Cameron House causes disruption to the streetscape characterised by traditional terraced houses. The Hawley Arms on the south side of the street is a well know public house dating from the late 1800's, and recently refurbished after the 2008 fire.

The greenery of the Castlehaven Open Space dominates the east side of the road. Haven Street is currently the gated entrance to the now boarded up area of the Market Canal Market, with no constructions but the side elevations of No 6 Castlehaven Road and Cameron House.

Leybourne Road is at present a sequence of workshops and car repair premises dislodged from the residential characteristics of Castlehaven and Hawley Roads, while holding no connexion to the retail sectors of the area.

Views

The section of Castlehaven Road at the subject site has visual termination in the railway viaducts to both ends of the street [Fig. 23].

The Castlehaven Open Space, dating from the late 1960's, opens the views reinforcing the urban presence characterised by regular heights and brickwork buildings towards South and East and the railway arches to the North.

Haven Street holds no interesting visuals at present, with no constructions but the gated entrance to the site.

The views of Leybourne Road are a succession of poor quality constructions fitted under the railway arches, with a general ambience of industrial or commercial uses keeping no relation to the residential character of Castlehaven Road.



Fig. 23 Castlehaven Road from Hawley Road junction.



Fig. 24 Leybourne Road and the rear of Cameron House.

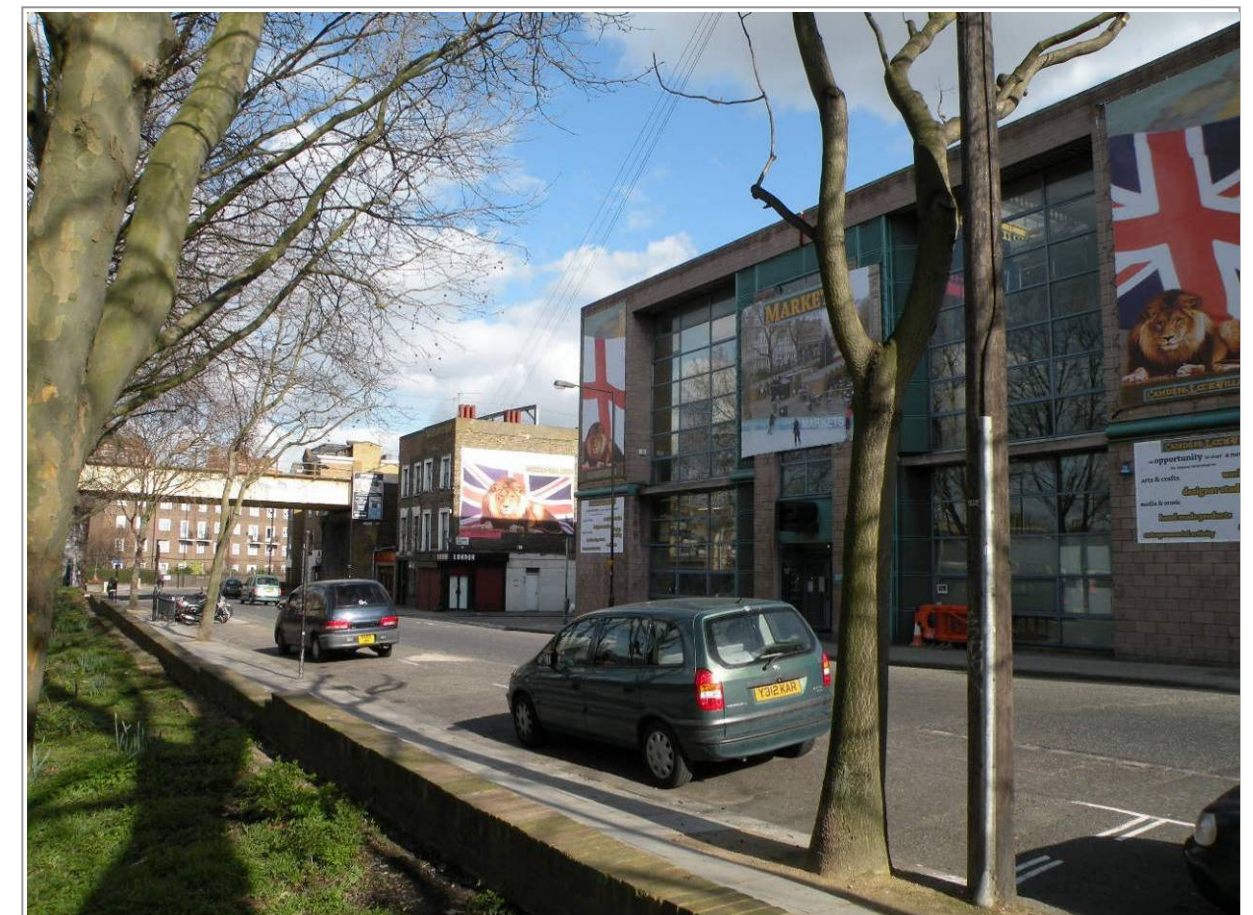


Fig. 25 View towards North, Cameron House on the right.

1.7 Hawley Road

The scale and grain of Hawley Road is that of a suburban residential area. The 2 and 3 storey Victorian terraces on the south side and the northern end of Torbay Street are confronted with a 5 to 8 storey brick Council Housing and a busy street containing two lanes. The density of traffic from the market area to Kentish High Road is considerable, as is the speed.

Towards Kentish Town Road, the single story motorcycle shop forms an uncharacteristic gap in the regularity of the terraces on the south side of the street. No1 Hawley Road is the only listed building in this part of the street, standing between the retail premises and a group of colourful terraced houses on the West side. The listed house is included in the Heritage Risk Registry, in very poor condition and with considerable loss of features mainly in the ground floor.

The area is predominantly residential, with no indication of the presence of a significant urban centre in close proximity. The historic grain of the immediate environs of the site is apparent, particularly in the relationship of the Victorian buildings frontage on the South side of the street and the railway arches on the southern end of Torbay Street.

Torbay Street is mix of residential housing and retail premises, with a regrettable misuse of the appealing characteristics of the brickwork arches of the railway.

Views

Hawley Road is a quite wide traffic artery linking Kentish Town and the Camden Market retail areas. The historic form of the built environment is strong on its south side, with the regular features and heights of the Victorian terraces.

The northern side view is that of an imposing mass of high density residential buildings, their setting enhanced by a considerable green area in front of Torbay Street which alleviates the otherwise compact massing of the Council Housing [Fig. 31].

The views across Torbay Street are relatively poor; the southern end of the road producing a substantial change to the residential ambience of Hawley Road. The horizontality of the viaduct provides visual termination to a mixture of uses holding no attractive approach or enhancement of the traditional brickwork structures [Fig. 30].



Fig. 26 Hawley Road view towards East.

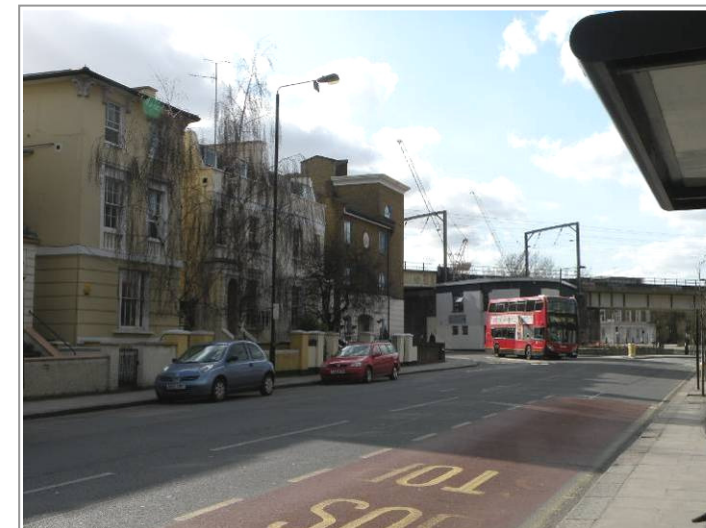


Fig. 27 Hawley Road towards Castlehaven Road.



Fig. 28 No1 Hawley Road between the retail premises and the terraced houses.



Fig. 29 Torbay Street looking South.



Fig. 30 Torbay Street from Hawley Road.



Fig. 31 North side of Hawley Road at the junction with Torbay Street



Fig. 32 The back of No 11 and 13 Hawley Road from Torbay Street.



Fig. 33 The railway arches on Torbay Street.

2 GREEN SPACES AND WATER FRONTS

Within the Conservation Area, the green spaces are limited to strips of vegetation between the towpath and the surrounding wall and sometimes between the towpath and the water; small areas of vegetation next to bridge abutments in the triangular space formed between the wall, the bridge and the towpath; and a spontaneous grass field which grew after the demolition of some houses in the late XX century.

The continuity of the open space, the presence of the water, and the informal planting confer a natural and picturesque quality to the canal views and are partly spontaneous and partly planned. The canal side has a soft edge to it due to shrubs and trees often along very narrow strips. These contrast with the hard edge formed by its various retaining wall and wharves. The planting is informal and self-seeded and this complements the picturesque nature of the space and provides important wildlife habitat.

There are a number of trees planted recently along Chalk Farm Road but their stature does not yet contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.

Outside the Conservation Area, but within short distance, there are two main green spaces that contribute to the character of the environs however they are not visually or physically connected to the canal.

One is Camden Gardens, a triangular patch between Kentish Town Road and Camden Street ('D' in Fig. 34), which was originally laid out as ornamental gardens for neighbouring households, and now an attractive little park with the railway viaduct crossing it.

The other is a small park located between Castleheaven Road and Hawley Street. It was formed in the late 1960's after the demolition of a court of terraced houses of the Hawley Estate ('A' in Fig. 34).

Substantial green areas are also located within the courts of residential blocks particularly along Hawley Road.

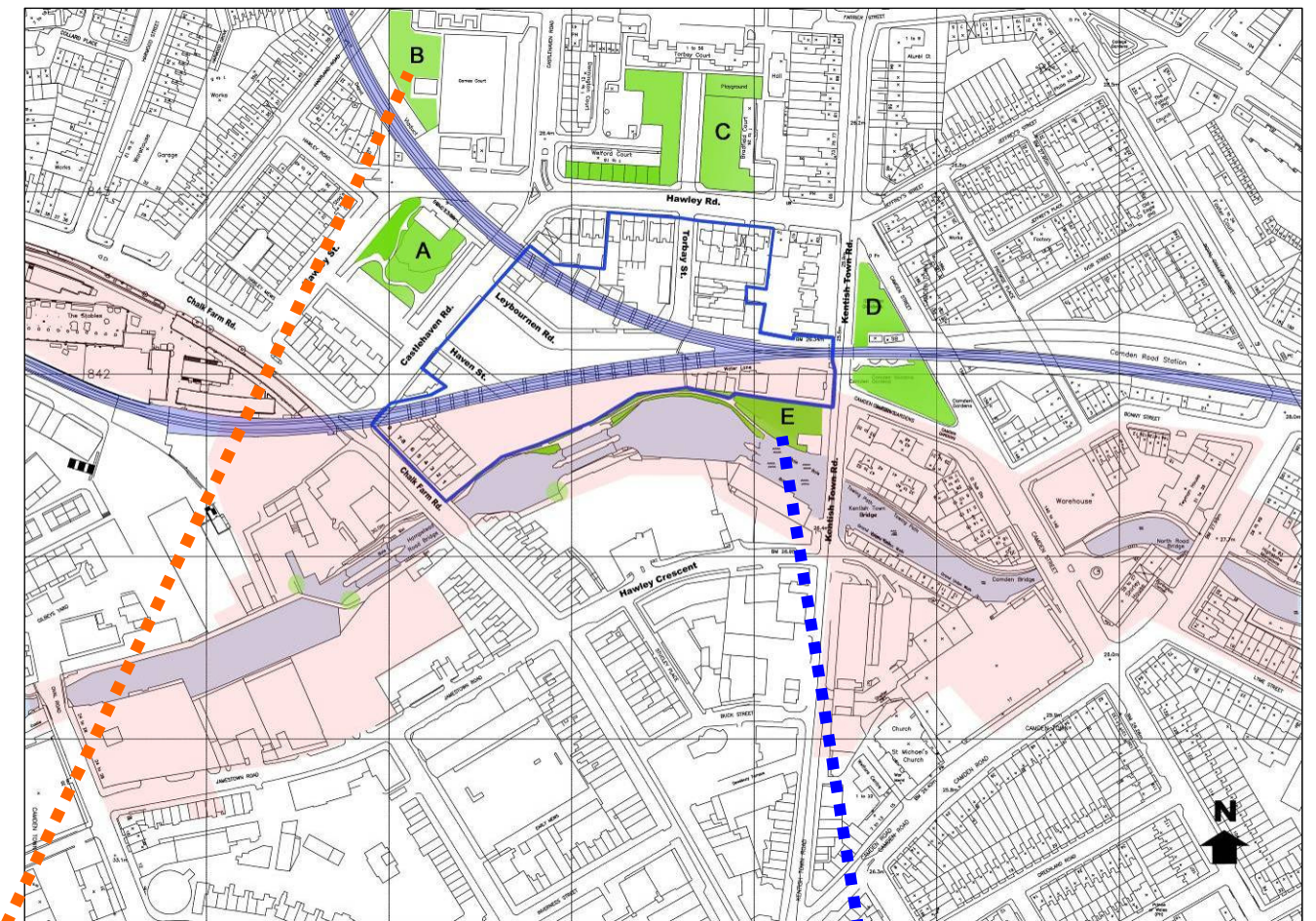


Fig. 34 Based upon 2005 OS map. Map showing green areas, in pink the Regent's Canal Conservation Area, in purple the Railway viaduct and the site in blue.



Fig. 35 Greenery at Castleheaven Road.



Fig. 36 Strips of vegetation between the towpath and the canal section between the Hampstead Bridge and the Kentish Town Bridge.



Fig. 37 Spontaneous green field after demolition of houses.

3 BUILDING USES AND MATERIALS

3.1 Prevalent and traditional building materials and the public realm

The prevalent building materials vary considerably both along the canal and Chalk Farm Road, reflecting the different type, technology and age of the buildings.

Along Chalk Farm Road, the predominant building materials are brick walls of various characteristics and bonding as used in the terraced houses and the industrial buildings in the Goods Yard. The majority of the terraces are rendered and the shop fronts are late XX century replacements.

Generally slate is used to roof the buildings, though many are concealed by parapets. Windows are predominantly of the vertical sliding-sash type of different periods and materials. Entrances to the upper floors are located between shop windows and are almost unnoticeable.

Along the canal between Southampton Bridge and Hampstead Road Bridge, the buildings have very different materials though in to a similar scale to six-seven storey buildings. They range from white rendered finish to yellow stock bricks and pink brickwork.

The section of the canal between Hampstead Road Bridge and Kentish Town Bridge is mainly dominated by the light rendered TV-AM building and its glass fibre egg-cup finials on the saw-toothed factory roof line.

The towpath and lock sides have different hard material surfaces: the ramps of the cast iron bridges are made of granite, while the side of the locks as well as its central island are paved with brick, which contributes to the industrial character of the area.

Within the Conservation Area, the public routes and spaces are mainly concentrated along Chalk Farm Road, the Stables Market, the towpath and Camden Lock Market. The latter has developed an animated and strong relationship with the canal, resulting in a vibrant and active use of the towpath between Hampstead Road Bridge and Southampton Bridge.

The canal towpath is well used all year round especially at weekends and weekdays during summer months. The towpath passes three locks over a short distance. The towpath generally runs along a single side of the canal providing an important pedestrian route that makes a significant contribution to the urban environment. The towpath also contributes to visual amenity and urban quality, which contributes to the promotion of health and well-being and favours biodiversity. British Waterways Board still requires that the towpath remain suitable and accessible to towing horses.

The section of Castlehaven Road at the site is characterised by brickwork housing and the light industrial Cameron House, with the greenery of the Castlehaven Open Space adding perspective to the tight brickwork massing.

The materiality on the South side of Hawley Road between Kentish Town Road and Castlehaven Road is predominantly stuccoed frontages, while the North side of the Road is again brickwork.

3.2 Prevailing or former uses within the area and the influence of these on the plan form and building type

The plan form of the site reflects the mixed, light industrial and residential use that occurred during the last century. The street pattern was established in the 1840s when the Hawley Estate was laid out and Camden Town expanded following the opening of the Regent's Canal.

The arrangement of the buildings, the size of the plots and linkages between spaces underwent changes in the second half of the 19th century when the railway viaducts were constructed.

Since then the site has been occupied mainly by light industrial activities due to its closeness to the canal and the railway. It lost the residential neighbourhood character, which it had in the mid XIX century, although this character is prevalent immediately beyond the canal "corridor".

The workshops and canal-railway facilities buildings, which were built on the site in the second half of the 19th century were expanded during the first 50 years of the 20th century. In the late 1980's they were partly demolished and replaced by the temporary structures of the Canal Market, which still occupies the site.

The context has been retained with the light industrial character of several garages and workshops that occupy the area between the two railway viaducts.

The former uses of the old industrial buildings in the immediate area and their plan form led to adaptive reuse for small craft workshops and market stalls. That in turn led to the regeneration of the old shops into similar retail uses, restaurants and bars, etc.



Fig. 38 The granite flooring surface of the cast iron bridge.

3.3 The architectural and historic qualities of the buildings and the contribution they make to the special interest of the area

The combination of the statutory designated buildings, the traditional domestic architecture of the terraced houses which line Chalk Farm Road, and the assorted typology of structures facing the Regent's Canal, creates a rich and diverse architectural character. For details about the listed buildings and structures in the area refer to the Appendix 7.1

The frontages along Chalk Farm Road and Regent's Canal present different scales of buildings, reflecting the diverse typology and usage.

The buildings along the North-East and South-West sides of Chalk Farm Road differ considerably. On the North-East side there are the three-storey terraced houses built in the mid XIX century with shops at the ground floor and interspaced by Victorian public houses, each of which underwent recent change of name and/or purpose.

On the South-West side there are a series of listed buildings, which all belong to the era of the railways and form what is now the heart of the Camden Market. The remaining buildings of the Camden Town Good Yards once occupied mainly by warehousing for Gilbey's wines and spirits business, are comprised of the industrial horse stables, known as the 'Horse Hospital' and the four industrial blocks of the Stanley Sidings. The buildings are generally of two and three storeys and finished in yellow stock brick with slate roofs. The complex is made of tightly enclosed courts leading one into the other, their plan form influenced by the railway viaducts. The floor finishes are a rich collection of worn granite sets which add greatly to the character and patina of the spaces between the buildings.

Views within the site are necessarily constrained and it is the progression of spaces and views through those spaces, which gave the area its character. Today the buildings occupy the largest and most colourful of the London markets. The structures provide a seemingly endless maze of cobbled alleyways, converted warehouses and covered outdoor eating areas - everything from cyberpunk to vintage clothing, esoteric record stores and unusual furniture. A recent addition to the market is a glazed building with a maze of small shops on the ground floor level and restaurant above, situated between Camden Lock Place and the stables. This is an important contemporary reinterpretation of the market ethos, and possibly unique in its concept.

The Roundhouse is a major point of focus with its rounded form and conical slated roof. However, the view to it from the South is not attractive, as the adjacent 1970's recording studios designed by Richard Seifert (now occupied by offices) is detrimental to the setting of the Roundhouse.

The stretch of Chalk Farm Road between the Hampstead Road Bridge and the railway bridge is dominated by the continuous and uniform façade of a recent building, Nos. 200-212 built on the large footprint revival of Victorian warehousing.

Along the Regent's Canal the height and typology of the buildings varies considerably, depending on whether the development related to the mercantile activities or recent residential development. However, the majority of the structures are large footprint warehouses, office buildings and residential blocks.

The most significant building on the North side of Regent's canal is the Grade II Interchange Warehouse, now on the western edge of the Camden Lock Market. The warehouse, of multi-coloured

stock brick with blue engineering brick dressings was converted to offices in 1896, and then refurbished in 1989 c.a.

The most characteristic and atmospheric structures along the canal are the locks and the important survivals of the industrial age and immediately evocative of the origins and history of the lock structures.

The Roving Bridge, West of Hampstead Road Lock, is a cast-iron single span skew cross-over bridge built in the early/mid XIX century, which originally had wrought-iron tension stays but was restored with steel tension cables. Decking was renewed in the XX century. The approaches on the both sides are by steep ramps with granite sets and stone parapets scored by many rope markings. This bridge is one of the most recognizable structures in Camden Town, due to its view from Hampstead Road Bridge, a slightly cambered cast-iron girder bridge with cast-iron panelled parapets. It allowed the towing horses to cross the canal at that point due to the discontinuation of the towpath at the entrance to the basins.

Another distinguishable feature is the towpath bridge, situated between Southampton Bridge and the Roving Bridge, a carrying path over the canal inlet to the private dock within the Interchange.

Within the area there are three canal locks (Kentish Town Lock, Hawley Lock and Camden Lock built between 1818 and 1820) which have brick chambers with stone coping, a central island platform, two sets of double wooden gates and wood-steel balance beams. Together they are an important contribution to the character. An atypical building is the lock keeper's cottage, now the Regent's Canal Information Centre, built in the early XIX century and extensively altered in the 1970s. Outside the Conservation Area, there are few other significant buildings which are statutorily listed - in particular the detached, double fronted villa, with a central Doric style portico in Hawley Road, the two pair of semi-detached villas stucco rendered and the yellow stock brick detached villa with stucco pilasters and pitched dormers along Kentish Town Road.

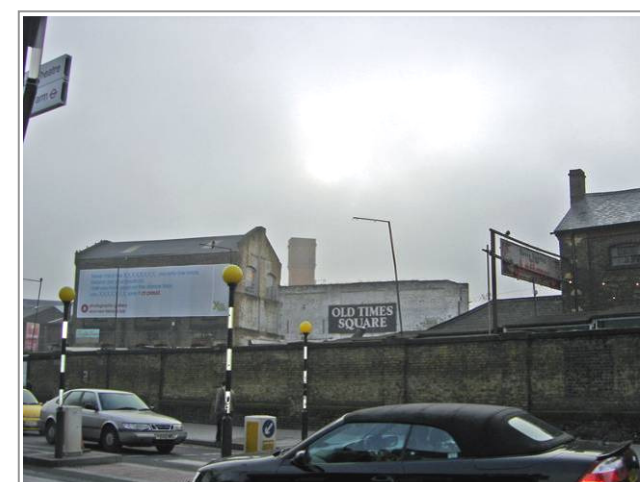


Fig. 39 View taken from Camden Farm Road looking towards the former Camden Goods Yard. The Horse Hospital on the right and the Gin House on the left.



Fig. 40 1990s extension to Gilbey House facing the Regent's Canal, on the opposite side of the listed Interchange Building.

4 SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

The character is largely derived from the presence of four distinct but interrelated elements: the Regent's Canal, Chalk Farm Road, the Railway viaduct and the market activities.

The street pattern is almost unaltered from the 1840s when the Hawley Estate was laid out and Camden Town expanded following the opening of the Regent's Canal.

The arrangement of the buildings, the size of plots and linkages between spaces underwent changes in the second half of the 19th century, after the railway viaduct, depots and goods yards were introduced. In recent years, as for many other areas in London, large footprint buildings have replaced small footprint construction.

The character of the Regent's Canal changes dramatically along its course, ranging from enclosed spaces to wider open spaces; hard industrial townscapes to semi-rural sections; buildings against the Canal edge to those that are set back with landscaping adjacent to the Canal.

Along the Regent's Canal the height of the buildings varies considerably, depending whether the developments are related to the mercantile activities or they are recent residential development. The majority of the structures are large footprint wharves and warehouses.

The continuity of open space, the presence of water, and greenery confer to the area a natural and picturesque quality. The bridges as well as the passages below are important and essential features of the canal side experience.

The sequence of diverse views along Chalk Farm Road confers a dense character to the area. This is defined by the built form and the curve of the road, which obscures long distance views.

The street frontages are defined by small footprint buildings of 3-4 storeys. They are plain, basic architecture but now enlivened with applied colours and embellishments. The vibrant shop fronts and displays present cosmopolitan ambience almost unique in London. The small scale terraced houses are combined with more recent large footprint buildings in which the market character has continued.

Within the terraces, the horizontality of the area is emphasised by the constant height of the single houses and continuity of the parapet which runs almost interrupted for several blocks. The other buildings express horizontality through the use of string courses, fenestration and detailing. Within this context verticality is expressed in smaller sub-dividing elements.

The railway viaduct functions as a visual barrier and emphasises the enclosed and compact character of the area.

The arches supporting the railway viaduct and the bridges over the street have a strong structure that imposes an industrial rhythm and monumental scale to the street scene. This contributes to the legibility and vivid image of the area

Views within the area are necessarily constrained and it is the progression of spaces and views through those spaces, which give the area its character.

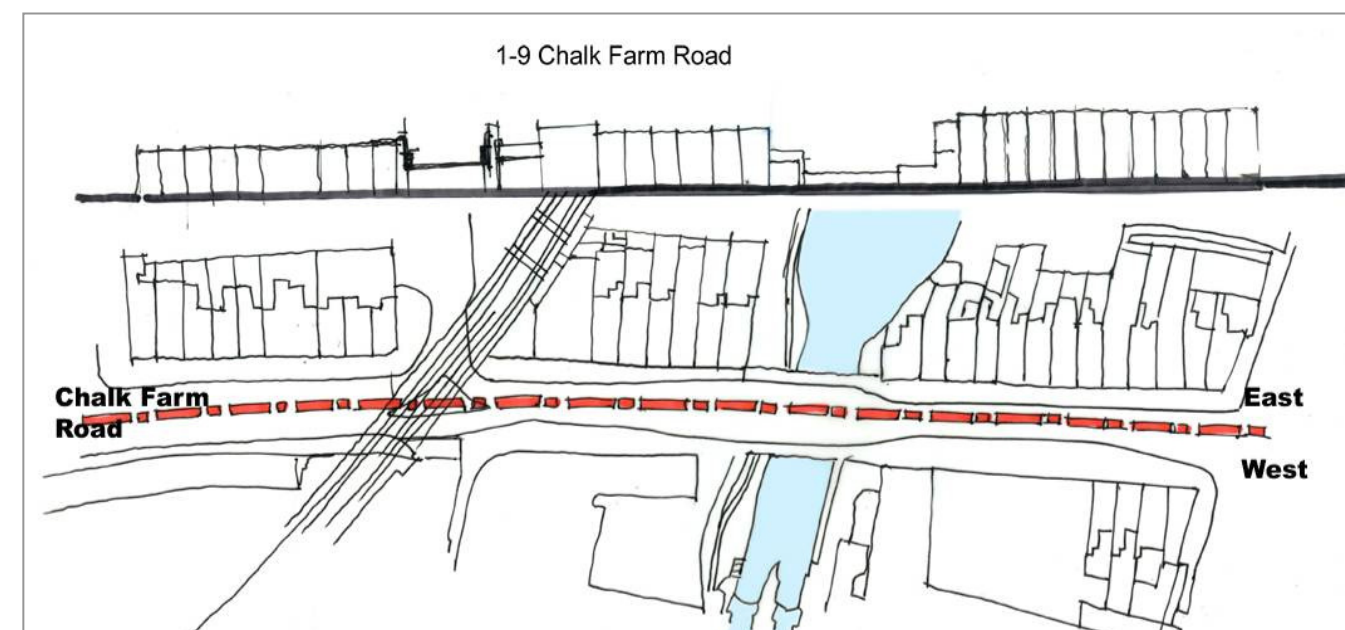


Fig. 41 Sketch illustrating the approximate massing of Chalk Farm Road, long section.

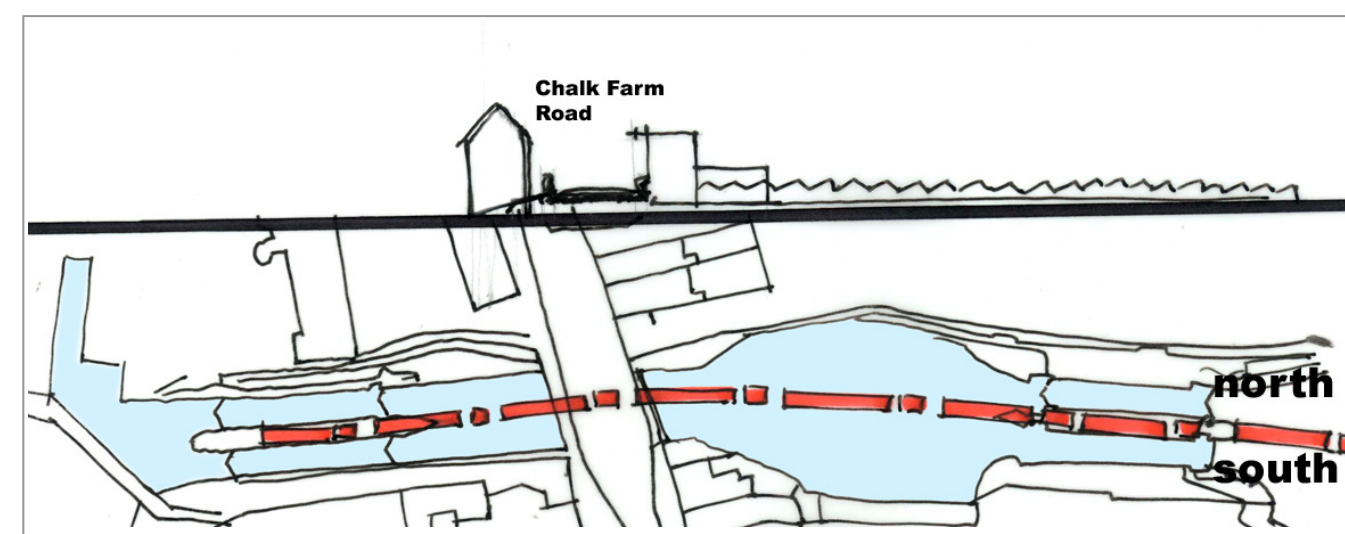


Fig. 42 Sketch illustrating the approximate massing of Chalk Farm Road, cross section.

The combination of the statutory designated buildings, the traditional domestic architecture of the terraced houses of Chalk Farm Road, and the assorted typology of structures facing the Regent's canal, creates a rich and diverse architectural character.

The green spaces which contribute to the character of the environs are represented mainly by the following: strips of vegetation along the towpath, small clumps of vegetation next to bridge abutments; grassed areas that established themselves after the demolition of some houses in the late XX century, and two green spaces outside the Conservation Area.

The economic and physical regeneration due to market conditions in 1970's, is undeniable, and the conversion of wharves for the craft markets contributed greatly to the present character of the area.

The former uses of the old industrial buildings led to adaptive reuse for small craft workshops and market stalls. That in turn lead to the regeneration of old shops into similar retail uses and restaurants and bars, etc.

The public routes and spaces are mainly concentrated along Chalk Farm Road, the Stables Market, the towpath and Camden Lock Market, with a various road's traffic impact [Fig.43].

Camden Lock market has developed an animated and strong relationship with the canal, resulting in a vibrant and active use of the towpath between Hampstead Road Bridge and Southampton Bridge.

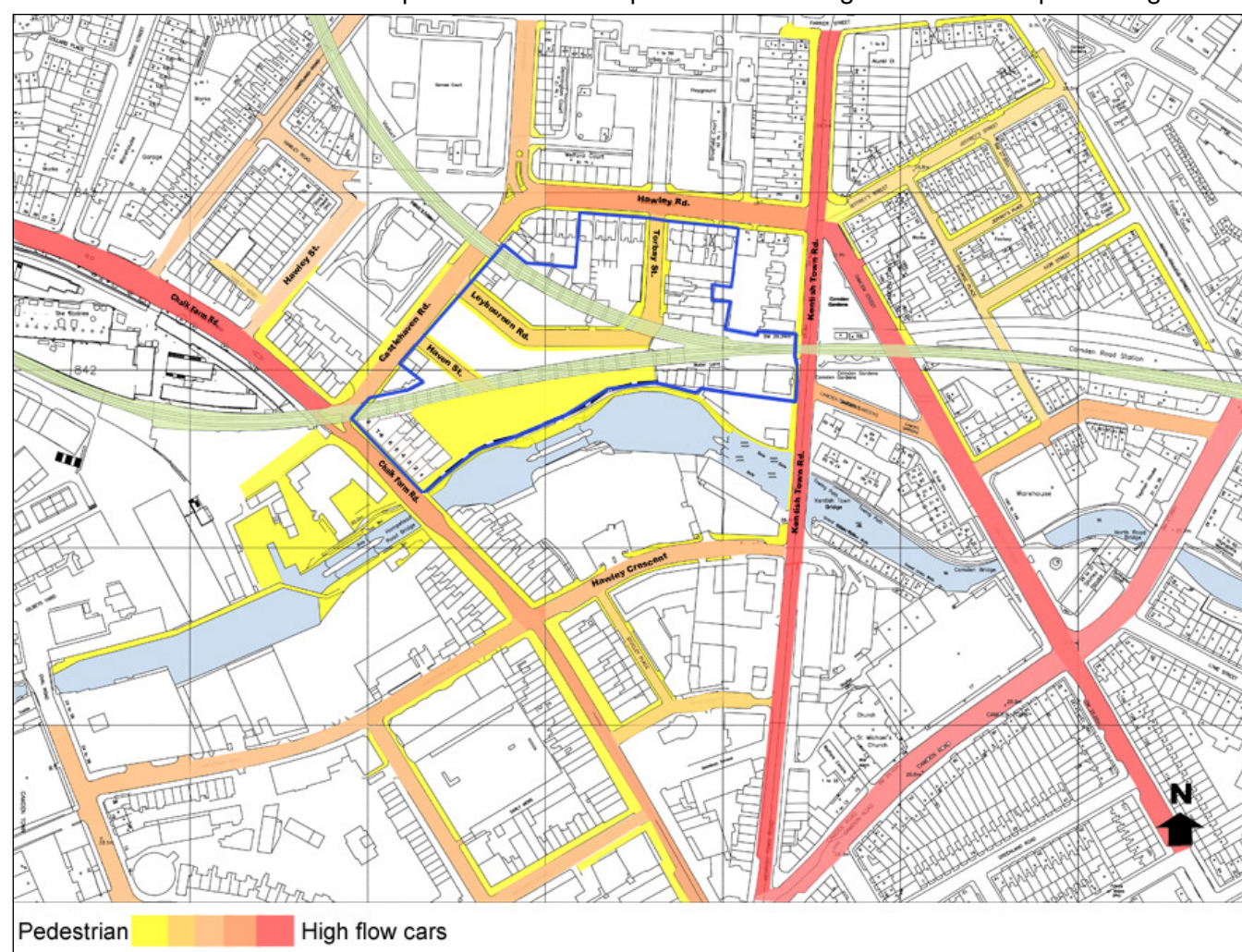


Fig. 43 Flow of traffic map, based upon the 2005 OS Map. The site in blue, the railway arches in green. The range of colours goes from yellow = pedestrian only to dark red = heavy flow of cars

Negative factors, problems, pressures and capacity for change

The Holiday Inn Hotel is illustrative of a prime intrusion along the canal. It is an example of recent leisure related developments which due to its poor quality design, detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

A threat to the character of the Conservation Area may be represented by the proliferation of signage applied to shop frontage and buildings facades. The bright embellishments, however, have become part of that vibrant and cosmopolitan ambience which is characteristic of Camden Town today.

The subject site, and to a certain extent the Conservation Area, lacks permeability. Not all parts of the Conservation Area are equally connected to the canal and the movements across the area rely mainly on Chalk Farm Road. Alternative routes or cross passages are not available. This characteristic detracts from the appearance of the Conservation Area and above all from the area's quality of life which varies considerably from place to place.

The site and the surrounding area has potentially a more attractive environmental setting to offer, and has the ability to sustain a higher level of connectivity, especially for residents and local users.

Among the problems and pressures are: overcrowding, transport congestion, concentration of visitors and shoppers in the markets and lack of development sites. The existing built environment provides for a limited demographic base –i.e. young people of a particular cultural predilection.

The capacity for change may rest on the opportunities of widening the demographic appeal that includes more all-week openings. The aim would be to relieve congestion by dispersing visitors to the additional places that need to be created in development sites.