



Conservation
area statement



Regent's Canal

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REGENT'S CANAL

Conservation Area Statement

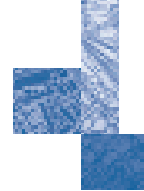
The aim of this statement is to provide a clear indication of the Council's approach to the preservation and enhancement of the Regent's Canal Conservation Area.

The statement is for the use of local residents, community groups, businesses, property owners, architects and developers as an aid to the formulation and design of development proposals and change in the area. The statement will be used by the Council in the assessment of all development proposals.

Camden has a duty under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate as conservation areas any "areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance." Designation provides the basis for policies designed to preserve or enhance the special interest of such an area. Designation also introduces a general control over the demolition of unlisted buildings. The Council's policies and guidance for Conservation Areas are contained in the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). This Statement is part of SPG and gives additional detailed guidance in support of UDP policies.

The Statement describes the character of the area, provides an outline of the key issues and identifies development pressures which are currently a cause of concern. The statement also sets out the key policy framework relevant to the Conservation Area and formulates specific guidance for it.

It is not the intention of the Statement to contain proposals for the enhancement of the public realm. The Council has produced a Streetscape Design manual for Camden and all public realm enhancement work will be undertaken in accordance with it. The manual identifies an overall image for the Borough in terms of appearance of the streetscape with respect to surfacing materials, furnishings and lighting and, where appropriate, identification of the special characteristics of smaller areas within it. There is a reference guide for the use of standard design details, surfacing materials, street furniture and street lighting to be used in engineering, traffic management and other environmental improvement schemes. This includes sample illustrations of best practice, e.g. for historical street settings, typical street settings within Conservation Areas.



INTRODUCTION

The Regent's Canal, part of the Grand Union Canal, winds its way through many London Boroughs before reaching the Thames, forming a corridor of unique character. It is an important feature of historic and visual interest in the townscape and following the decline of traditional canal-related commercial activities has been increasingly recognised as a valuable resource for water-based leisure activities, for its ecological value and its potential for transportation and informal recreation. It is the Council's aim to conserve and enhance the existing character of the canal and to improve its potential for recreation, transportation and wildlife propagation.

The ever changing vista, the variety and contrast of townscape elements and the informal relationship between buildings and canal contribute more than any other factors to the character of the canal. The sections of the canal vary considerably in the water level, width and direction and in the nature and use of adjacent buildings and landscape.



PLANNING HISTORY

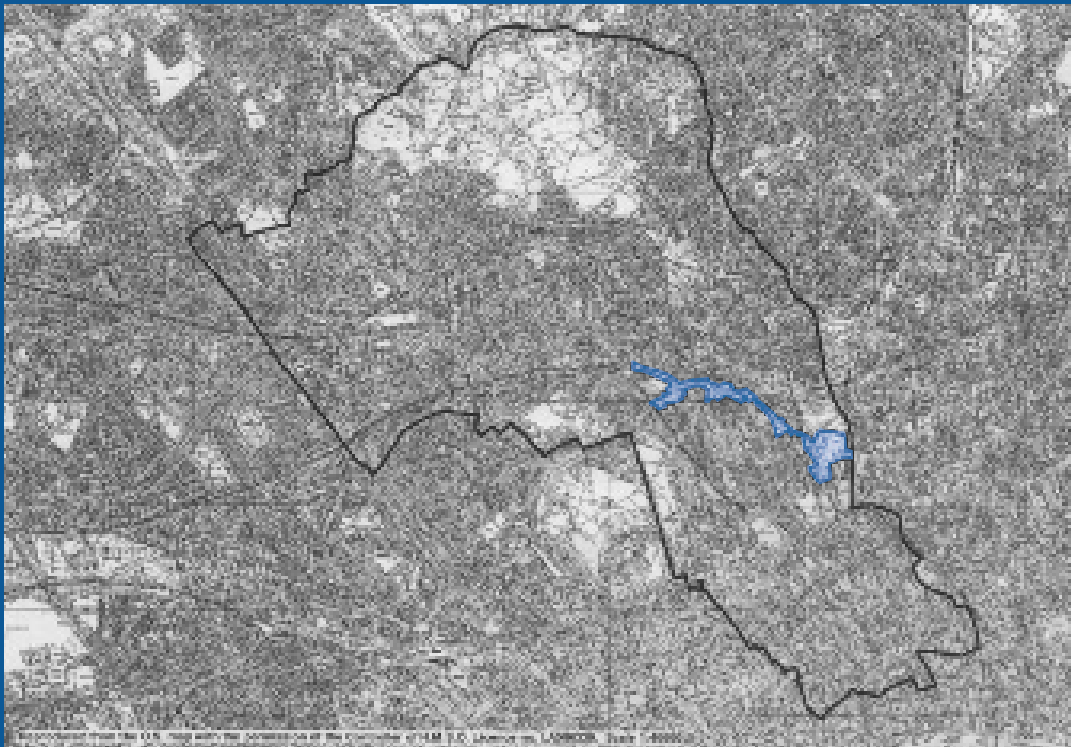
The canal was originally designated on 25th April 1974 and subsequently extended on 16th June 1981 (Stanley Sidings and Stable Buildings), 14th June 1983 (King's Cross Goods Yard), 20th March 1984 (part of Bonny Street, Camden Street, the Waterside Centre, Suffolk Wharf Jamestown Road, Wharf Road, Camley Street and Goods Way), 18th June 1985 (King's Cross Goods Yard).

The UDP has two sections of particular relevance to the Conservation Area; Chapter 15 Special Policy Areas (The Regent's Canal Area of Special Character) and Chapter 13 (King's Cross Opportunity Area). Appendix 1 of this Statement contains the UDP Canalside policies.

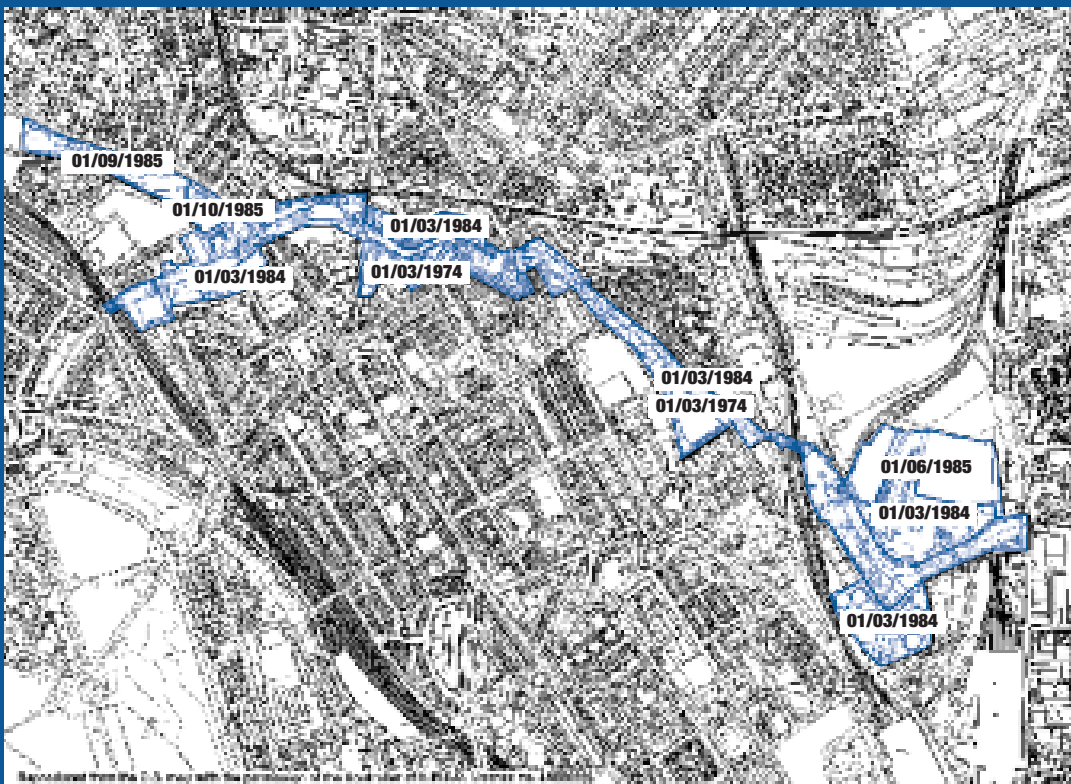
Reference can also be made to "The Regent's Canal in Camden" (1983) containing further guidance. In assessing development proposals that affect the Canal, the Council will also take into consideration the London Canals Committee "Standards for Canalside Committee "Standards for Canalside Development – Development Control Guidelines" (1993)

Of importance to the King's Cross section of the Statement is the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Act 1996 that gave authorisation for the demolition of various buildings within the Conservation Area including the three listed gas holders. (See CTRL Act Chapter 61, Schedule 7).

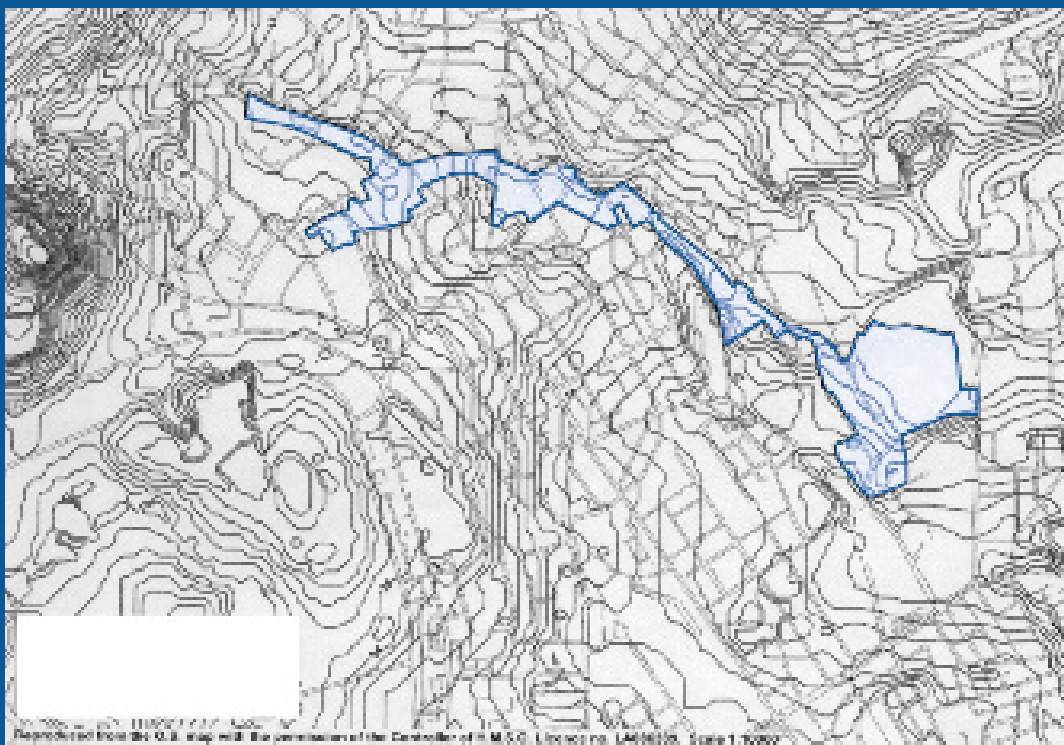
Location



Camden and location of Conservation Area



Boundary of area and designation date



Topography



Urban Grain

HISTORY

1801

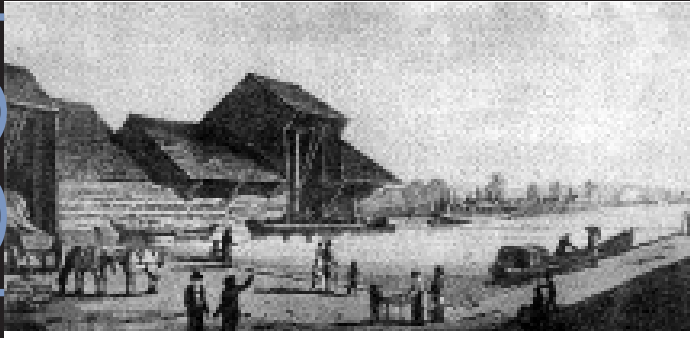


Illustration of Paddington Basin August 1801

The completion of the Paddington Basin to the Grand Junction Canal in 1801, linking London to the Midlands, led to a proposal to link the Paddington Basin to the West India Docks on the River Thames. The idea was initiated by John Homer, a barge owner based at Paddington and £400,000 was raised to fund the scheme, which subsequently foundered on the refusal of the Grand Junction Canal Company to supply water and the opposition of landowners on the route.

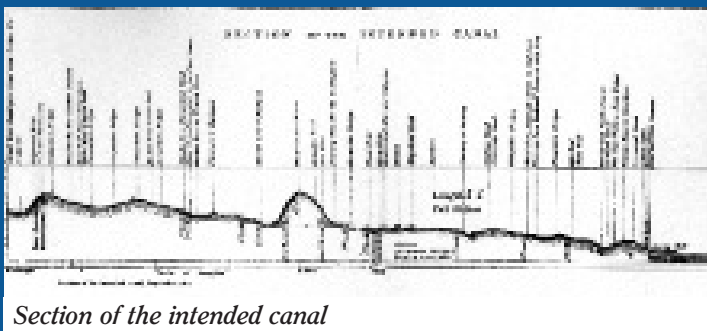
Homer revived the scheme in 1810 and the canal engineer James Tate undertook a survey of a canal linking the Paddington Basin to the Limehouse Cut. Homer then approached John Nash, at the time drawing up plans for Regent's Park. Nash recognised the potential of incorporating a canal into his plans and a further survey diverting the route through the middle of the new park was arranged by Homer.

The new canal company was subsequently founded on 31st May 1811 at a meeting held at a Percy Street coffeehouse. Later in the year £260,000 was raised to finance the project and on 7th August 1811 the Prince Regent agreed it should be called "The Regent's Canal". The Canal Bill received royal assent in July 1812 and work began on the eight-mile stretch of canal in October 1812.

Canal Construction From its beginnings the canal route was determined largely as a result of conflicts with land owners, whilst technical problems with tunnel construction and lock design led to considerable delays and escalation in costs.

The canal's route had been surveyed by James Tate, however, at the initial meeting of the company it was decided to appoint Nash's associate James Morgan as chief engineer. This had consequences for the progress of the work caused by Morgan's lack of experience in canal construction. The route of the Maida Hill Tunnel was altered at its eastern end in order to avoid the Portman Estate which had refused the canal passage over its land and extra costs were incurred by the relocation of Thomas Lord's cricket ground.

By mid 1815 the canal was largely finished up to Hampstead Road Locks (Camden Lock) but at this point it encountered its first financial crisis. Capital resources had been exhausted by rising costs mainly due to the tunnel works at Maida Hill and Islington. In addition Thomas Homer had been found to be embezzling funds from the canal to pay off his own debts and was subsequently convicted and given 7 years transportation. Work came to a halt until Government intervention provided an additional £200,000 capital. Further shares were issued and the final stretch of tunnelling at Islington was completed in September 1818 (960 yards long).



Section of the intended canal

The last part of the canal to be completed within the Conservation Area lies between Maiden Lane Bridge (York Way) and Hampstead Road Locks (Camden High Street).

Problems were once again caused by a dispute with a landowner, William Agar, who contested the right of the company to pass through his land in a series of court cases, and it was not until mid 1818 that work on this section of the canal finally began. The bridges at Maiden Lane and Caledonian Road were completed in 1818 and the building of St Pancras Lock in 1819. The canal was finally finished in 1820.

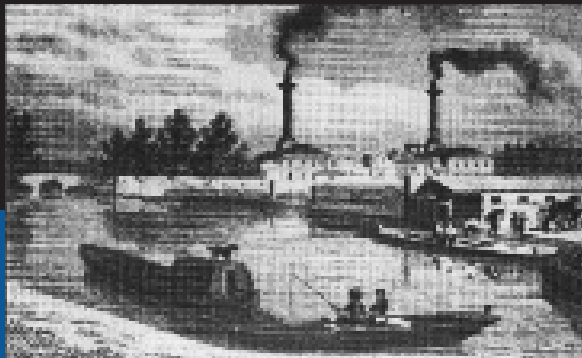
Trade on the Canal By 1830 the canal was carrying 0.5m tons of goods per annum rising to 1.0m tons by 1850 and staying fairly constant at this level until the late 19th century. The main carriers were Pickfords until 1847, who

then transferred their entire business to the railways, followed by the Grand Junction Canal Company Carrying Establishment until 1876 and Fellowes Morton and Clayton Ltd until the 1930's. By the 1840's the canal was carrying coal, bricks, glass, stone piping, grain, cheese, chemicals and beer. From the 1870's tonnage declined slightly but was still 0.7m tons in 1927. It was only after the Second World War that the canal business went into irreversible decline. As late as the 1930's a substantial modernisation scheme was completed to the canal between London and Birmingham. But by the mid 1960's the last commercial traffic passed on the canal, although it remained in use for leisure purposes.



Illustration of view along the canal by H.F.Pelerin 1824.

Once the canal was complete the gas companies were the first major industries to utilise it. In May 1824 the Imperial Gas Light and Coke Company completed a gas works and wharf in St Pancras opposite Maiden Lane Bridge. The main legacy of the works is the gas holders which dominate the south bank of the canal.

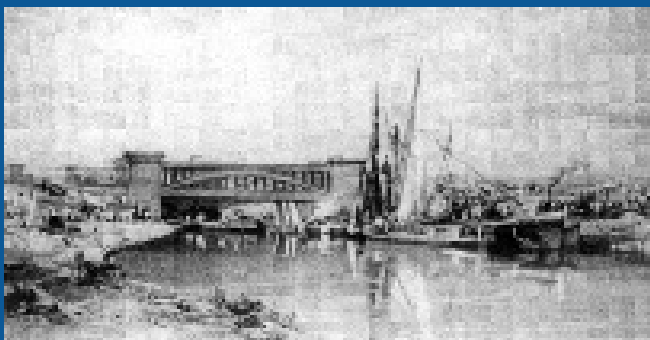


The Gas Works

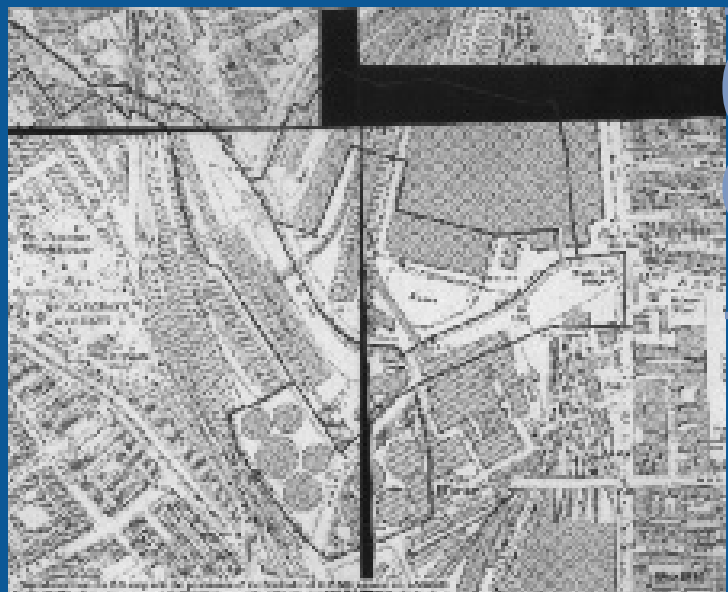
The gas works ceased production in 1904 following the opening of the Beckton Gas Works. They generated substantial trade in coal on the canal, brought up from the Limehouse Basin as before the railways most coal from the North East of England was transported by ship. The coal trade however was maintained on the canal as a result of the opening of small electricity generating stations at St Pancras and also at St John's Wood in the early 20th century. These remained in operation until the opening of Battersea Power Station in the 1930's.

Railways and the Canal The challenge from the railways was immediate with early schemes in 1840 to purchase

the new canal and change it into a railway. Initially the two transportation modes co-existed, and the canals were certainly useful in the construction of both King's Cross and St Pancras in terms of shipping building materials to the site. The railway goods terminals were developed with trans-shipping facilities for the canal goods which has produced some unique industrial architecture. The first, in 1841, was the London and Birmingham Railway's depot to the north of Camden Lock. This was followed by the Great Northern Railway's development of King's Cross Station in 1852 and the concurrent construction of the goods yard to the north of the station, including Lewis Cubitt's Granary Building. During the 19th century the main impact of railway competition on the canals was to drive down the tolls that could be charged for carrying freight thus reducing the monies generated in profit by the canal.



The London and Birmingham Railway bridge at Camden Town under construction (1838, drawn in the vicinity of Oval Road)



OS map of 1894/96

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS.



Horse lift

The canal is a broad canal up to 16 feet (5m) in width with a minimum width in the locks and the bridges of 14 feet (4.3m). The canal originally had earth banks but these were lined with rag stone walls in 1832, which increased the cross section of the canal, partially in response to the need to increase the efficient operation of the canal in response to competition from the railways. The stone banking is still in place in certain locations, in others it has been replaced by steel caissons with concrete copings.

Water for the canal was originally to have been provided from a pumping station on the banks of the River Thames at Chelsea, but instead, water was supplied directly from the Welsh Harp Reservoir.

The canal has a series of double locks along its length, which can take either a broad boat or two narrow boats linked side to side. The lock system adopted was in part a water saving device with water being transferred between locks when in operation rather than all being lost to the next lower level. Because of the complexity of the lock operation and the potential for flooding the lower reaches of the canal, all the locks were manned. At its peak, lock keepers would work a continuous shift system. As the use of the canal declined, continuous manning was no longer provided and the canal effectively closed at weekends as the locks were padlocked. As the leisure use of the canal began to increase, this problem was overcome in the early 1980's by the installation of concrete weirs and spillways to one of each pair of locks, removing the necessity for supervision (with the exception of Hampstead Road Lock.)

There are two tunnels along the route of the canal; The Maida Hill Tunnel, which is located in Westminster and the Islington Tunnel. Within the Conservation Area there are 4 sets of locks, 12 road bridges, 3 foot bridges and one aqueduct that passes over the mainline track to King's Cross.

Adjacent to the canal under the towpath runs a 400,000 volt electrical cable. The cable is water cooled with various pumping stations located adjacent to the canal including one at Maiden Bridge.

At various points along its course the canal widens to form "winding holes" or turning spaces for canal boats.

At the side of the canal at regular intervals are small indents and ramps, or horse lifts which as the name suggests were used to get horses out of the canal after they had fallen in.



Plan of Regent's Canal 1820

LIST OF BRIDGES AND THE STREETS THAT PASS OVER THEM.

Bridge	Street
Euston mainline railway bridge	-
Southampton Bridge	Oval Road
Roving Bridge (footbridge)	-
Hampstead Road Bridge	Camden High Street
Kentish Town Bridge	Kentish Town Road
Camden Bridge	Camden Street
North Road Bridge	Camden Road
College Street Bridge	Royal College Street
Gray's Inn Bridge	St Pancras Way
Oblique Bridge	Camley Street
St Pancras Station mainline railway bridge	-
Road bridge from Goods Way to Wharf Road	-
Maiden Lane Bridge	York Way

LIST OF LOCKS.

- Hampstead Road Lock (Camden High Street)
- Hawley Lock (Camden High Street)
- Kentish Town Lock (Kentish Town Road)
- St Pancras Lock (Camley Street)



Character

CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE AREA

INTRODUCTION

The special character of the area is largely derived from the almost hidden nature of the canal. The surrounding townscape largely turns its back on the canal creating a quiet tranquil space distinct from the business of the surrounding city. This character has in part arisen from the topography of the canal located as it is in shallow cuttings along part of its length and partly as a result of canal side development forming an effective barrier, cutting off views towards the canal.



The historic industrial use of the canal meant that the warehouse buildings on the canal edge had to be secure, so the ground floors often comprise solid brick structures. These add to the sense of enclosure of the canal and are an important part of its historic character. The change in use of the canal from industrial to leisure will be reflected in new approaches to the treatment of the canal edge, and this can be

accommodated without necessarily losing the mercantile quality of the area.

The Regent's Canal is classified as a Public Open Space, and a site of Nature Conservation Interest. It also provides a link between other Open Spaces, some within its Conservation Area designation, and others adjoining it. This is recognized by its classification in the UDP as a Green Chain. It stretches in Camden from Regent's Park, through the Conservation Area of Primrose Hill, linking to Camley Street Nature Reserve, and Goods Way Open Space, through the heart of King's Cross, and beyond into Islington. Immediately adjoining it, or very close to it are Canal Land (Baynes Street to St Pancras Way) Open Space, St Pancras Gardens Open Space, Elm Village Open Space, Camden Gardens Open Space, and Hawley Street Open Space.

Although the canal is a single open space it is not perceived as such because of its twisting route. The canal open space has a picturesque quality with small stretches being visible at any one time and views partly curtailed by the bends in the canal and the bridges which cross it and frame distant views.

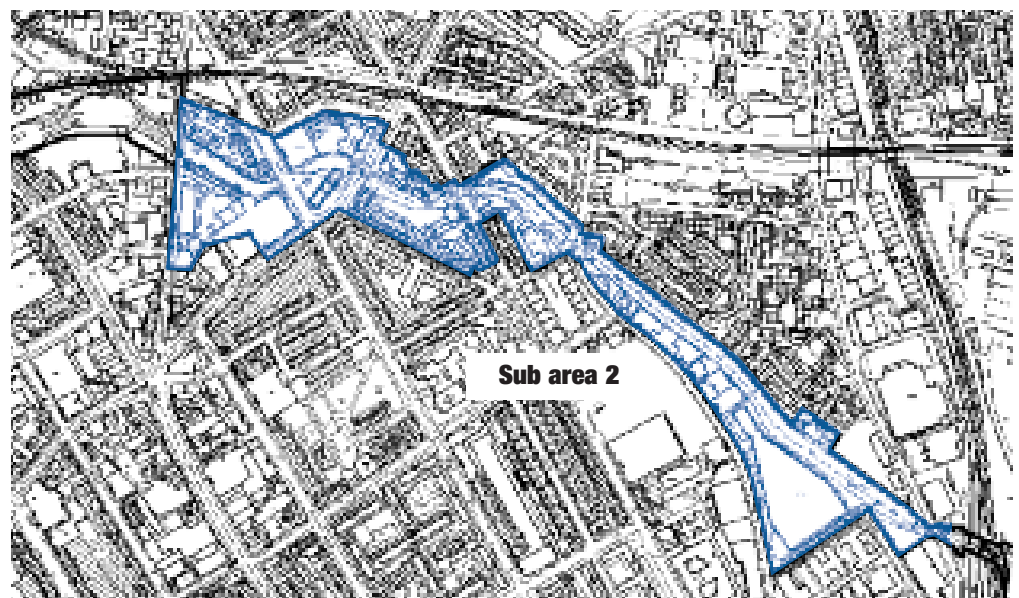
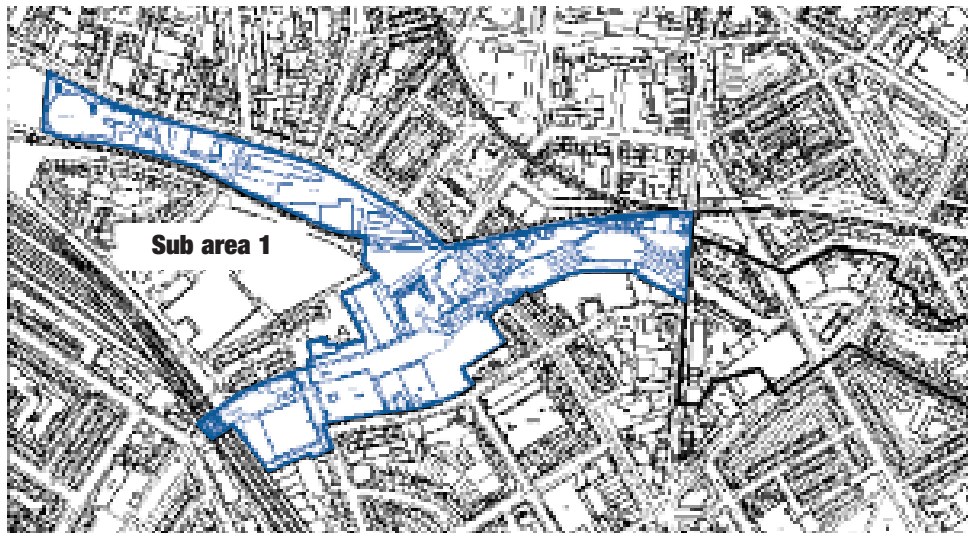
Partly by accident and partly by planning the canal side has become planted with shrubs and trees often along very narrow strips, which give a soft edge to it and contrasts with the hard edge formed by its various retaining walls. The planting is informal and this compliments the picturesque nature of the space as well as providing important wildlife habitats. Its unmanaged appearance adds to the air of a quiet backwater. However, where it is allowed to get out of hand, it also encourages tipping and littering. This can transform the character into neglect. The main tree species are Ash, Sycamore and Willow.

There is generally a narrow strip of vegetation between the towpath and the surrounding wall, and often some vegetation on the opposite side to the towpath. Small blocks of vegetation also form next to bridge abutments, in the triangular space formed between the wall, the bridge and the towpath.



The section describing the Regent's Canal Area of Special Character in the UDP (Chapter 15) refers to 17 sub-sections. For the purposes of this Statement the Conservation Area is separated into three sub

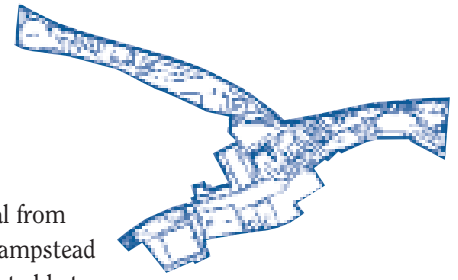
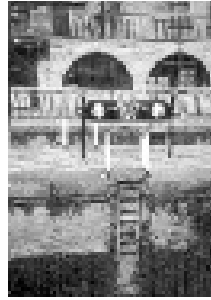
areas; one centred on Camden Lock, one from Kentish Town Bridge to Gray's Inn Road Bridge, and one at Kings Cross. These areas are intended to broadly reflect the changing character of the canal as it passes through Camden.



Map of sub areas

SUB AREA ONE

CAMDEN LOCK (HAMPSTEAD ROAD LOCKS)



The section of the canal from Paddington Basin to Hampstead Road Locks was completed between 1812 and 1816. The locks form the natural focus to the area and are unusual in being clearly visible from the Hampstead Road Bridge. They have a more open and accessible character as a result of being located opposite the open area of the Camden Lock Wharf and having a towpath on both sides of the canal. The lock was

completed in 1816 and is the only original double lock still operating on the canal, the others having been converted to single locks by the insertion of weirs to the second lock chamber. The original Hampstead Road Bridge was completed at the same time but was subsequently demolished and replaced by the existing grade II listed bridge in 1876. The bridge has brick abutments and stone copings, a detail found on other historic bridges along the length of the canal. The other bridge in this section is Southampton Bridge at Oval Road, also a rebuilt structure. The abutments of earlier bridges can be seen below the existing steel span. The passage below these bridges forms an essential part of the canal side experience with the bridges framing views to successive lengths of the canal, and forming boundaries between sections of differing character. The edge of the

Conservation Area is marked by the Euston mainline railway, beyond this bridge the canal's character changes into the leafy suburb of Primrose Hill (see Primrose Hill Conservation Area Statement.)

Southampton Bridge to Hampstead Road Bridge The combination of lock and the mid 19th century Roving Bridge which crosses the canal diagonally create a picturesque progression of industrial architecture along this length of the waterway.

The view west from the lock is in the words of Pevsner a "fine industrial landscape, framed by the LNW Railway warehouse and Gilbey's and culminating in a distant accumulator tower." The London and North Western Railway warehouse or Interchange House has a canal basin underneath the entrance which is spanned by a cast iron bridge dating from c.1856 and predates the warehouse by 30 years. The Interchange warehouse was successfully refurbished in 1989 retaining its robust mercantile character. The buildings to the south side of the canal are of a similar scale of six to seven storeys but have different materials, their white rendered finishes contrasting with the yellowed stock brick associated with much of the canal and the glowing pink brickwork of Interchange House.

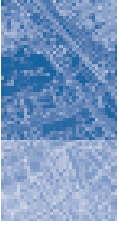


Of the buildings on the south bank, Mendelsohn and Chermayeff's 1937 extension to Gilbey's warehouse provides a contrast in style to the surrounding Victorian industrial buildings with the stripped simplicity of its design in the International Modern Idiom.

The wharves to the south bank of the canal were originally far more extensive with three separate bays opening out towards James Street, now Jamestown Road, all of which have subsequently been infilled. Two ice wells are also located on this site, the largest being almost 30m deep. The ice wells date from the mid 19th century and were part of the extensive ice trade which was based on the canal. The ice wells form an important part of the industrial archaeology of the area, which it would be desirable to retain in any redevelopment.

The granite set floor finish to the ramps of the cast iron bridges on this section of the canal were restored in 1978, and the side of the locks and its central island paved with brick, all of which complement its industrial character. The locks themselves are fenced off with ornate railings, unfortunately replaced by more utilitarian





railings at the southern end. Their replacement would enhance the appearance of the locks. The towpath between Southampton Bridge and the mainline railway bridge has blue engineering bricks set into the margins between the National Grid electricity cables and the canal side coping. This finish is found along the entire length of the canal back to the Maida Hill tunnel and provides an important visual continuity to the canal side.



The Camden Lock Wharf, was last used as a timber yard before becoming a crafts market.

Hampstead Road Bridge to Kentish Town Bridge The view east from the bridge towards Hawley Lock and Kentish Town Lock reveals the steepest fall along the canal with the waterway dropping significantly over the three flights of lock adjacent to the TV-AM buildings. The Hawley Wharf site is currently vacant awaiting redevelopment. The wharf and the adjacent basin have an open aspect, which is framed to the north by the railway viaduct and to the south by the TV-AM building, which sits on the canal edge. A further vacant site is located next to Kentish Town Road and this presents an opportunity to repair the street frontage adjacent to Kentish Town Bridge and to address the Kentish Town Lock. The existing buildings at Nos.49-51 Kentish Town Road positively contribute to the character of the area and their modest two storey scale would have to be respected by any new development.



Stanley Sidings and the Roundhouse. 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 by warehousing for W.A.Gilbey's wines and spirits business, this enormous complex being serviced by the London & North Western Railway. The remaining buildings on the site comprise the industrial horse stables, known as Stanley Sidings, completed in 1855-70 with a later block in 1883-85 and the surviving bonded warehouse, Gilbey's No.2 Bond, which was built in 1885. The site between the arm of the railway viaduct and Commercial Place was originally occupied by a bonded store, which was destroyed by fire in 1985. The buildings are generally of two and three storeys and finished in yellow stock brick with slate roofs. The complex comprises a series of tightly enclosed courts leading one into the other, their plan form influenced by the railway viaducts which they were built to serve. 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. Beneath the site a tunnel of arched brick construction formerly linked the horse hospital with the Interchange Warehouse. A plan of the underground structures on the site was made by the Greater London Industrial Archaeological Group (GLIAS) and shows the position in 1990. The entire area has a patina of age and wear which adds to the bohemian character of the market. There are proposals to redevelop the site retaining the listed buildings and market and some of the underground vaulting.

This area has some small sections of designed planting. The shrub areas work well dividing the space, and a few of the trees also contribute positively to the amenity of the area. There are however several trees that are poor specimens or of such a diminutive stature as to be detrimental. Planting in this area would work best as logically located, sizeable and robust specimens, but well spaced to maintain the courtyard character.

Views within the site are necessarily constrained and it is the progression of spaces and views through those spaces, which give the area its character. The exception being the "Camden Wall" or boundary wall to the Stanley Sidings which curves gently along the vista of Chalk Farm Road terminating with the Roundhouse engine shed at its northern most point. At present this wall is partly clad with advertising hoardings, masking the wall and detracting from the Conservation Area.

The Roundhouse is a major point of focus in architectural and townscape terms, although the view to it from the south on Chalk Farm Road is not its best aspect. A better view is obtained from outside the Conservation Area on Regent's Park Road and Haverstock Hill. The building was originally constructed in 1846-7 as a locomotive shed but by the 1860's had become a liquor store for W & A Gilbey's as the engines had become too long for it.

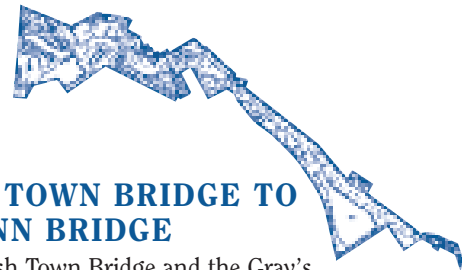
Paving along Chalk Farm Road varies considerably, ranging from new York stone paving outside the Roundhouse, through 400 x 400 mm grey pre-cast concrete slabs, to asphalt. The non public paving outside the Roundhouse is also a mixture of old York stone slabs, with a crossover made from 75 x 75 mm square yellow blocks. Where York stone slabs are missing, some have been replaced with bricks, and some with in-situ concrete.

Townscape The towpath and lock sides have hard material surface finishes comprising granite sets to the ramps and blue engineering bricks to the lockside, with original grit stone copings to both the lock and canal side. The sub area canal side is largely devoid of planting save for three weeping willows planted either side of the Roving Bridge (all subject to Tree Preservation Orders) and this suits its hard industrial character.

There are a number of street trees planted along Chalk Farm Road (London Planes). However these are not yet of an age or stature to make a great contribution to the Conservation Area. They also seem to be suffering from the stresses associated with being adjacent to a major traffic route.

NEGATIVE FEATURES

Some of the more recent leisure related developments of the canal side have detracted from the character and appearance of the area. The part infill of the Camden Lock wharf with a scaffolding structure was completed without planning permission, and its reinstatement would be a great gain to the area. The proliferation of signage on the Chalk Farm Road elevation of the Dingwalls development detracts from the appearance of the building and Conservation Area. The new window openings adjacent to the lock gates appear overly large and out of character.



SUB AREA TWO



KENTISH TOWN BRIDGE TO GRAY'S INN BRIDGE

Between Kentish Town Bridge and the Gray's Inn Bridge the canal takes on a quieter and more introspective character. The uses which bound the canal are either residential or commercial including; builder's yards, a post office sorting depot and light industrial units. The towpath itself tends to be bounded by sheer enclosing

walls and steep tree lined embankments with few openings. Access points onto this part of the canal are limited. Unlike Camden Lock there is no physical or use focus providing a surprisingly quiet oasis from the noise and bustle of the surrounding city, a characteristic unique to the canal.

Within this overall introverted character there is considerable variation in the townscape. The canal initially twists and turns down from Kentish Town Bridge and is crossed by four road bridges in a relatively short space, three of them dating from the original completion of this section of the canal between 1816 and 1820. The result is that views and vistas are curtailed with only small sections being visible at any one time. Each of the four sections bracketed by the bridges has its own distinct appearance.

Kentish Town Bridge to Camden Bridge The canal is flanked on one side by Nicholas Grimshaw's canal side terrace in an uncompromising high tech style. On the other is Jestico and Whiles housing scheme, equally contemporary but in a more restrained idiom, and with less of an impact on the canal itself as it is set behind a retaining wall. The rear gardens of these buildings with their trees and vegetation provide a feeling of greater space, although this is also tempered by a feeling of intruding into peoples private domain. The small area between the rear gardens and the towpath allows tipping and litter to build up on this section of the towpath, a problem that could be addressed through re-landscaping.

Camden Bridge to North Road Bridge The canal turns under Camden Bridge, which still retains its brick arch but has concrete extensions forming part of the car park to the rear of Shirley House. This very short section of the canal to North Road Bridge is flanked by some rather undistinguished 1950's and 60's office developments. Those on the north bank of the canal at least have a reasonably defined edge, whilst Shirley House pays no regard to the canal at all, leaving an ill defined edge and a rather perfunctory and unused viewing platform hiding the attractive brick arched bridge below. A low brick wall surmounted by chain link fencing forms one section of this



boundary on the northern side. This has been completely smothered by Virginia Creeper, forming a spectacular screen.



North Road Bridge to College Street Bridge The character of the canal changes again as it passes through North Road Bridge (Camden Road) and skirts the high wall of Lyme Terrace on the towpath side. The canal edge opens out on the builder's yard side, the closure of the canal space being completed by the rear of the buildings on Lyme Street. The site is to be developed but a sense of its existing open nature will be maintained by breaking the canal side buildings on the site into two separate blocks, maintaining views through to the listed Lawford's Cottages to the rear of the site.



College Street Bridge to Gray's Inn Bridge Beyond College Street Bridge (Royal College Street) is one of the largest informal open planted sections to the canal, the steep bank rising up from the towpath with trees at the top of the bank forming a valuable visual containment. On the opposite bank is an excellent example of the reinstatement of a historic canal-side warehouse building at Eagle Wharf, whilst the depot site adjacent at Bangor Wharf provides an excellent opportunity for enhancement. The latter's yard area retains extensive areas of granite setts which should be retained or re-used in any development.



Access steps in this section link the canal to the street level. However, the steps themselves are constructed from a reddish London Stock brick. This does not blend with the canal materials, which would suggest a very robust design with capping to the walls of blue double bullnose engineering brick, with a double bullnosed stop end. This section is also one of the few lengths of the canal to offer ramped access.

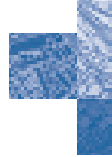
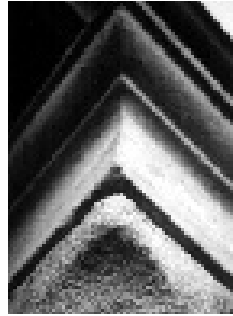
Gray's Inn Bridge to the Oblique Bridge The canal then passes under Gray's Inn Bridge with its recently reconstructed balustrade an example of sympathetic bridge maintenance. A date stone at the base of the bridge identifies that it was reconstructed in 1897. There is an entrance onto the canal at this point and then no further entrance until the Oblique Bridge at Camley Street. This is the longest stretch without an access point and it has a rather isolated and threatening feel, reinforced by the continuous run of retaining wall along the towpath. The buildings which flank the canal on the towpath side are not visible beyond the parapet of the retaining wall, whilst those on the opposite bank are largely undistinguished and some, including the Post Office sorting building, have a particularly poor relationship to the canal. The listed Constitution pub at Gray's Inn Bridge positively contributes to the Conservation Area although more could be made of its link to the canal towpath. Similarly the listed Jubilee Waterside Centre could have a greater connection to the canal.



Townscape In contrast to the hard industrial character of the Camden Lock this section of the canal is considerably softened by sections of informal planting. The towpath has maintained a grass margin along the water edge and the general impression is of a less managed environment. The abutments to the bridges opposite the towpath have become areas of informal planting. There is a large area of open planting opposite Eagle Wharf and such spaces have important wildlife habitats. The buildings and streets form the enclosure to the canal and create its introspective nature. Although less formal than the front elevations of the building most of these rear elevations have maintained their historic pattern of window openings, roof profiles and rear wings and give an attractive architectural rhythm to this typical London terrace and connect the canal to the wider urban grain.



The massive masonry embankment walls which line the canal south of Gray's Inn Bridge retained the extensive Midland Railway coal sidings, now redeveloped as housing and an industrial estate. The abutment of the bridge, which used to link the goods yard to the Ale and Porter store on the site of the existing Post Office sorting building, is clearly visible in the wall. The wall itself has a tremendous patina of age and is generally constructed in stock bricks with lime mortar pointing.



NEGATIVE FEATURES

The poor access onto the canal and the poor design of some of the existing access points detract from the appearance of the area and discourage to an extent the use of the canal. The brick walls

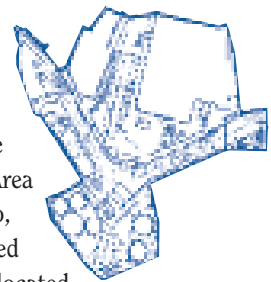
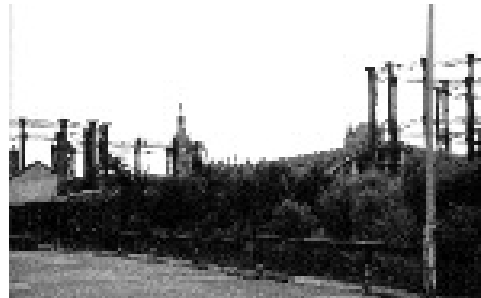
to the access point at College Street Bridge lack the copingstone detail typical to the remainder of the canal and the same situation exists at Gray's Inn Bridge and the Oblique Bridge. These access points also lack facilities for disabled access and offer an opportunity for improved design and access to the canal. The signage at access points is also limited and dated; a consistent more obvious style of signage would benefit greatly, although care would have to be taken to ensure that they complimented the industrial character of the canal and that the number of signs was limited. A proliferation of signage even of an appropriate design would be likely to harm the character of the canal.



A couple of viewing platforms project over the towpath to the south of Gray's Inn Bridge and disrupt the sweep of the brick retaining wall, looking rather incongruous and out of keeping with the canal. The installation of similar platforms elsewhere along the canal towpath would be unlikely to enhance its character. Similarly the concrete platform at Camden Bridge is not only unsightly and unused but also obscures views of the original brick arched bridge below.

SUB AREA THREE

THE RAILWAY LANDS



This part of the Conservation Area is the closest to, yet most isolated from, the city, located behind the St Pancras and Kings Cross Stations. It is an area of surprising quiet, which contains some fine listed industrial artifacts in a setting akin to a

romantic ruin. This quality is reinforced by the vistas of the great train sheds from the railway lands and canal towards Euston Road framed by the intricate steelwork of the gasometers on the site of the old Imperial Gas Works. Providing one of the most striking London landscapes, (see reference to CTRL Act in Introduction). UDP policies KC1 and RC3 recognise the need to protect landmarks, views and skylines. The details of the features contributing to the character and appearance of the area are set out in the Inventory of Architectural and Industrial features (1988) by English Heritage.

Kings Cross North To the north of the canal are the Railway Lands, separated from the canal by a high retaining wall. This collection of buildings built to serve the Great Northern Railway is glimpsed only in part from the canal. The inlets to the basins which were once linked into this complex are visible along the towpath to the south of St Pancras Lock. Here the towpath rises over a bridge to the entrance to the infilled Stone Wharf. Further along the towpath the Coal and Fish offices comprise the only building fronting directly onto the canal. Beyond the Coal and Fish Offices is a brick-relieving arch set within the retaining wall, which marks out the inlet to the infilled Granary canal basin. The reopening of basins could provide linkages from the canal to the goods yard. Care would have to be taken not to compromise the massive masonry bulk of the retaining walls.



The Granary and Transit Shed Complex The site above the canal is dominated by Cubitts Granary Building of 1851. Built in the same functional form as Kings Cross terminal, which is its contemporary. The building had a series of basins incorporated into its basement for the trans-shipment of goods between the canal and the railway. The limited access in and around the site and in particular the lack of a direct link back towards the station contribute to the isolation of the site. Two 580 foot long sheds flank the Granary though they are slightly earlier in date. The two office buildings built in front of the sheds are later additions. The East and West Transit Sheds, Midlands Goods Shed and offices, and the Potato Market are regarded as being within the listed curtilage of the Granary.



The Midlands Goods Shed and Environs This was built as a carriage shed for the temporary GNR terminus at Maiden Lane. Under an agreement of 1858 its use was altered to provide separate accommodation for Midland Railway goods traffic. By 1862 the Midland Railway had completed its own depot to the west of King's Cross and the building reverted to the use of the GNR.

Between the shed and Granary Building is the Handyside Roof which was erected in 1888 as part of the improvement to the potato market which included the installation of the Potato Market Roof to the east of the Goods Shed. The goods office to the front of the site dates from 1850.



The Coal and Fish Offices The Coal and Fish Offices face the Granary Building and were constructed in phases dating from 1852. The different periods of each building are distinguished by their heights. The roofs to these buildings have been recently refurbished.

The Western Goods Shed This site was built abutting the Western Coal Drops in 1897-99 on the site of the original coal and stone handling basin.

The Eastern Coal Drops Built in 1851 this brick and cast iron structure originally carried four high-level railway tracks from which wagons discharged coal into storage bins on a mezzanine floor above cart-loading bays. Late in the 19th century the southern end was converted into a warehouse and survives today, whilst the remaining northern end was badly damaged by fire in 1985, although the cellular structure of the northern part of the coal drops is still discernible and evidence of its original use.



The Western Coal Drops The Western Coal Drops were built in 1859-60 and although only five years later than the Eastern Coal Drops incorporate a simplified method of carrying the high level railway line using substantial cast iron beams. They were converted to a general goods transit shed when the Western Goods Shed was built alongside in 1897-99.

The Oblique Bridge to Maiden Lane Bridge. There is a small cutting between the Oblique Bridge and the St Pancras mainline railway bridge which forms a wooded area, no development is envisaged on this site and it should be retained and enhanced as a wildlife habitat.

The south bank of the canal contains the St Pancras Yacht basin. Truncated iron stanchions are still visible on the west wall of the basin and marks the location of the triple track coal staithes, which used to run over the basin. Built in 1867 the coal staithes were used to transfer coal from bottom loading railway wagons into barges. The basin was also used to load ash from Midland Railway steam trains onto barges for disposal. Adjacent to the basin is a low range of prefabricated boatyard buildings and the single storey listed canal keepers





cottage to St.Pancras Lock. The prefabricated building has a negative impact on the character of

the Conservation Area and consent has been granted for its replacement with the relocated St.Pancras water point. The entire sweep of the south side of the canal is occupied by the Camley Street Nature Reserve, a managed wetland nature reserve, with a small single storey lodge building. The Camley Street Nature Reserve is a publicly owned open space, and classified as a Site of Nature Importance, and a Local Nature Reserve. It is a heavily vegetated area with controlled access, and provides a surprising haven of peace and nature amongst the bustling urban life that lies so close. The wrought iron gates to the reserve appear to have been salvaged from St.Pancras Station and make an impressive entrance into the area. The juxtaposition of this small informal park and the gasometers in the background is striking. A bridge, subsequently demolished, crossed the canal at this point linking the Eastern Coal Drops on the north of the canal to the Cambridge Street (now Camley Street) Coal Shoots on the south.

The canal finally passes over an aqueduct which spans the main line into Kings Cross station. It has an iron construction and gates are still visible east and west of the aqueduct, installed in the Second World War to stop flooding of the railway should the canal be bombed. A rather utilitarian inter-war concrete bridge crosses the canal at this point linking Goods Way to Wharf Road. The canal finally reaches the reconstructed Maiden Lane Bridge (York Way) in which the original bridge buttress stones with their characteristic rope marks, have been salvaged and reused. The south bank has a high embankment topped by a petrol filling station.



The three interlocking telescopic gasholders to the north of Goods Way were constructed in the 1880's, over tanks of 1861-4. The guide frames comprise cast iron columns of three vertical sections topped by classical capitals and braced together by three rows of lattice girders. To the north are two further holders dating from 1887, which have very early tapering lattice columns lacking any decoration. To the south of Goods Way is a further decorated telescopic holder dating from 1883 and one storey lower than the others, and to the south of that a further plain lattice gasholder.



Together this group forms "The most impressive array of gasholder frames anywhere." (Pevsner) Site constrictions made their construction relatively tall, causing their lasting impact on the urban environment beyond the immediate surroundings of the Conservation Area.



Two small 1930's cottages called Battlebridge Buildings have survived on Battlebridge Road. These Gas Board buildings were show houses for the Iron and Steel Foundation, demonstrating the use of iron and steel in housing.



TOWNSCAPE

The buildings and the spaces of the Goods Yard have survived remarkably intact and it is the totality of this historic urban grain, comprising both listed and unlisted structures, which contributes in large part to the unique character of the Conservation Area. Any significant erosion of part of this urban landscape would be likely to severely undermine the remainder. The structures and surfaces on site are of interest in themselves but it is the experience of them as a group that is the essence of the character of the Conservation Area.

The buildings on the railway lands are all goods sheds and ancillary offices which are broadly aligned on the fan form of the railway sidings which they serve. Contemporary illustrations of the Granary Building and Eastern Coal

Drops clearly show that the design of the buildings, though functional, incorporated an understanding of formal urban design with The Granary Buildings dominant stripped classical elevation providing a strong relationship with both the canal and the former basin in front of the building. The resultant site layout has created a defined space in front of the Granary enclosed by the Eastern Coal Drops and the Fish and Coal Offices akin to a city square.

The floor to the goods yard site is extensively finished in granite sets, which mark the industrial history of the site. To the front of the Granary Building the plan of the original canal basin is clearly visible as a concreted area surrounded by sets, which define its original edge. This hard floor treatment is an integral part of the character of this area, which is largely devoid of planting. The floor treatment being complimented by the striped utilitarian quality of the goods sheds. In addition to the setted surfaces there are a number of other features which contribute to the character of the former Goods Yard including cast iron and granite bollards, capstan bases, GNR manhole and fire hydrant covers and the remains of trackways.



The complexity of this space is added to by the ramps which access the lower yard areas below the eastern coal drops and by the elevated sections of railway which remain on the edge of the space. This adds a sculptural quality to the urban space between the existing buildings on the site and form a very important part of the character of the Goods Yard.

To the south of the canal the high stock brick walls of the gas works define views along Goods Way and are reminiscent of the high walls found around dockyard sites. The walls contribute to the strong industrial character of the area.

NEGATIVE FEATURES

The petrol filling station at the base of Maiden Lane Bridge detracts from the setting of the canal and is a wasteful use of a canal side setting. The absence of a publicly accessible link across the canal into the Goods Yard itself contributes to the isolation of the site from the station to the south. The detailing of the access point from York Way could be improved to reflect traditional building techniques and materials and to include items such as stone copings and to incorporate disabled access provision.



AUDIT

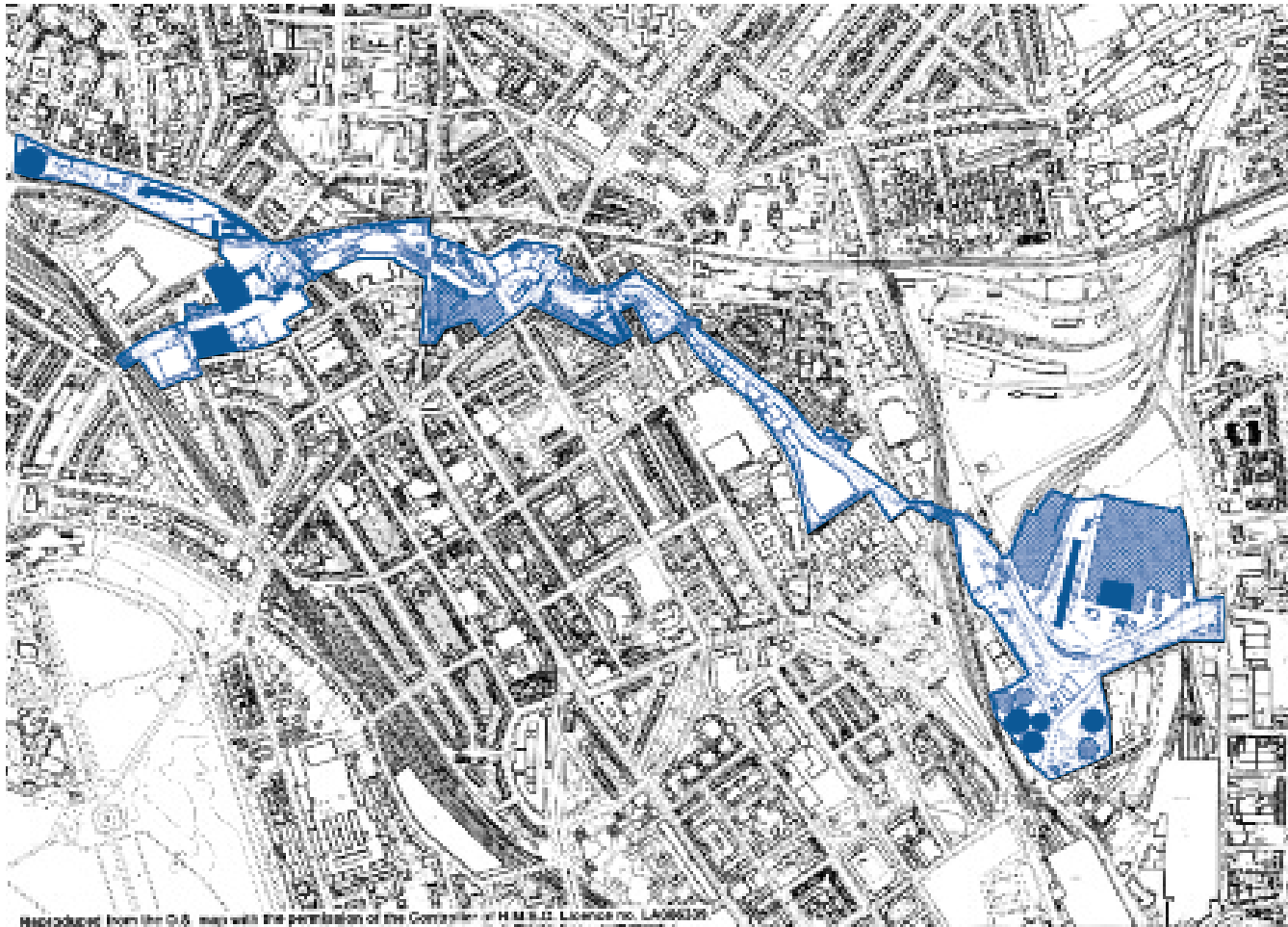
LISTED BUILDINGS



Those buildings currently on the statutory list of buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest, include:

Address	Description	Grade
Camden High Street	Hampstead Road Bridge over Grand Union Canal. NW1	II
Camden High Street	Hampstead Road Lock on the Grand Union Canal. NW1	II
Camden High Street	Roving Bridge over Grand Union Canal west of Hampstead Road Lock. NW1	II
Camden Road	North Road Bridge over the Grand Union Canal. NW1	II
Camden Street Nos.107-117 (odd)	Terrace of six early 19th century houses. NW1	II
Camley Street	Lock Keeper's Cottage on the Grand Union Canal NW1	II
Chalk Farm Road	Stanley Sidings, stables with ramp and boundary wall at north of site. NW1	II
Chalk Farm Road	Stanley Sidings, stables to east of Bonded Warehouse NW1	II
Chalk Farm Road	The Roundhouse NW1	II*
Chalk Farm Road	Cattle Trough opposite debouchment of Belmont Street, SE of the Roundhouse NW1	II
Chalk Farm Road	Drinking Fountain set in wall next to the Roundhouse NW1	II
Goods Way	Gas Holder NW1	II
Goods Way	Three linked gas holders NW1	II
Lyme Street Nos. 1-10 (Consecutive)	Ten semi-detached mid 19th century villas NW1	II
Lyme Street	Lawford's Wharf Cottage, Grand Union Canal NW1	II
Oval Road Nos.24,26,28	Factory, store and offices 1894 by William Hucks with addition 1937 by Mendelson and Chermayeff. Includes Nos.38-46 Jamestown Road NW1	II
Oval Road	Piano Factory Building NW1	II
Oval Road	The Interchange on north side of Grand Union Canal NW1	II
Oval Road	The Interchange canal towpath bridge over private canal entrance. NW1	II
Royal College Street Nos.165-181 (odd) And attached railings	Terrace of nine houses c1845 NW1	II

York Way	Eastern Coal Drops at Kings Cross Goods Yard	NW1	II
York Way	The Granary	NW1	II



Listed buildings and buildings which make a positive contribution. ■ Listed buildings ■ Positive Contribution

BUILDINGS WHICH MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

A number of buildings are notable because of their value as local landmarks, or as particularly good examples of the local building tradition. Such buildings, whilst not statutorily listed are nevertheless important local buildings in their own right and make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and may be considered suitable for future statutory listing.

A list of such buildings will be maintained by the Council and updated periodically. The buildings already identified by the Council as being of interest are as follows.

Bonny Street	2,4,6,8
Camden High Street	Hawley Lock, Kentish Town Lock
Camden Lock Place	The Camden Lock,23-40, 22, 41-43, 14-15
Camden Street	Camden Bridge
Camley Street	St.Pancras Lock, Oblique Bridge, St Pancras mainline Railway bridge
Chalk Farm Road	1-9 consecutive
Goods Way	Gas Holders with tapering trellis work, Workers Model Homes, boundary walls to Gas Works site

Kentish Town Road	2-12 Grand Union Wharf, Kentish Town Bridge, No 49 and 51
Lyme Street	11-19 consecutive
Lyme Terrace	1-6 consecutive
Oval Road	Southampton Bridge and Euston mainline railway Bridge, No.30, new canal side housing Development.
Royal College Street	148, 150
Royal College Street	College Street Bridge
St.Pancras Way	Grays Inn Bridge, 42 The Constitution Pub
Wharf Road	Eastern Coal Drops, Coal and Fish Offices, transit sheds adjacent to the Granary, Midland Goods Shed and Handyside roof, 1850 offices,
York Way	Maiden Lane Bridge

STREETSCAPE AUDIT

Traditional materials and features which enhance the Conservation Area.

All locks	Massive gritstone coping stones to the brick lined lock chambers, engineering brick floor finishes, with raised brick treads to the lock gate wood and steel balance beams
Bonny Street	Granite kerbs, cast iron area railings to original Terrace
Camden High Street (Hampstead Road Lock)	Granite sets to Roving Bridge and massive stone copings with rope abrasions.
Camden Lock Place, The Camden Lock	Use of granite sets and kerbs to floor surface
Chalk Farm Road, The Stanley Sidings	Use of granite sets and Kerbs to the floor surface.
Goods Way	Granite sets to road finish beneath tarmac.
Kentish Town Road	Inter war decorated lampposts
Lyme Street	Yorkstone paving to large sections of the street, granite sets, kerbs and wheel deflectors to the entrance to Lawfords Wharf, cast iron area railings and original coal holes set into Yorkstone paving
Lyme Terrace	Yorkstone paving, cast iron railings to the canal retaining wall and houses, cast iron gas lamps, and bollards to the entrances into the terrace.
Oblique Bridge to Maiden Lane Bridge (York Way)	Horse lifts, mooring bollards to towpath, brick floor finish to St.Pancras Lock, stop locks to Kings Cross aqueduct. Some sections of stone coping to the canal edge.
Oval Road	Granite sets and kerbs, weighbridge set into carriageway, brick walls and Stone copings to Southampton Bridge.
Canal side	
Mainline railway bridge to Southampton Bridge (Oval Road)	The towpath is set in sections with blue engineering brick in others with concrete over the electricity cables and there is a small section of granite sets mid way between the bridges. Horse lift.

Southampton Bridge to Hampstead Road Bridge(Camden High Street)	A winch c1856 originally used to open and close the Gates of the Lee navigation lock at Limehouse. A ramp with granite sets leads down into the Hawley Wharf site from Hampstead Bridge.
Hampstead Road Bridge to Kentish Town Bridge (Kentish Town Road)	Mooring bollards to towpath, horse lifts.
Kentish Town Bridge to Camden Bridge (Camden Street)	Mooring bollards to towpath.
Camden Bridge to North Road Bridge(Camden Road)	Mooring bollards to towpath.
North Road Bridge to College Street Bridge(Royal College Street)	Mooring bollards to towpath.
College Street Bridge to Grays Inn Bridge (St.Pancras Way)	Inscribed foundation stone to the abutment of Grays Inn Bridge, single cast iron bollard to south bank adjacent to the bridge abutment, mooring bollards to towpath. Extensive granite setts to depot at Bangor Wharf.
Grays Inn Bridge to Oblique Bridge (Camley Street)	Horse lifts, mooring bollards to towpath.
Wharf Road	Extensive use of granite sets and kerbs to the floor of the goods yard. Engineering brick retaining walls to the canal with stone copings. Enamelled railway signs to buildings advising “ Drive Slowly”

NEW MATERIALS AND STREET FEATURES WHICH ENHANCE THE CONSERVATION AREA

Grays Inn Bridge	Steel railing to the bridge parapet
Hampstead Road Lock	Decorative metal railings to lock chambers and painted metal sign to central island reading “Regents Canal Hampstead Road Lock”, metal finger posts with mileage’s indicated
Lyme Street	Traffic calming measures at the entrance to the street comprising granite sets and concrete block floor finishes and cast iron bollards
Maiden Lane Bridge	Reconstructed bridge parapet and abutments with retained
Towpath	Throughout the length of the towpath are a series of seats and litter bins all done in a consistent “traditional cast iron” design

OPPORTUNITY SITES

There are seven sites listed on the UDP proposals map, of these Suffolk Wharf is due to be redeveloped shortly.

Suffolk Wharf Jamestown Road

Hawley Wharf off Haven Street

Lawfords Yard Nos.10-11 Lyme Street

Roundhouse Chalk Farm Road

Chalk Farm Road Camden Lock Place and Stanley Sidings



Nos.34-36 Jamestown Road

Kings Cross Railway Lands

In addition to these sites there are buildings which are considered to neither preserve nor enhance the character of the Conservation Area and therefore there may be scope for redevelopment, subject to acceptable replacement. The following are considered possible opportunity sites.

Shirley House Nos.26-27 Camden Road

Nos.31-39 Camden Road

Bangor Wharf Depot, Georgiana Street

Post Office Sorting Office, No.6 St.Pancras Way

Nos.8 -14, 16, 18-20, 22-24 St.Pancras Way

Nos.84-92 Camden Road Flightstone House

Petrol Filling Station, Goods Way

Nos.26-34 Jamestown Road

No.35 Oval Road

CURRENT ISSUES


These sites raise issues about the future use of the canal and the types of canal side design which would reflect those uses whilst preserving its unique historic character. Much of the special character of the area is derived from its industrial past, which has produced an historic canal side building typology that tends to turn its back on the canal. The design of new buildings should positively address the canal side, whilst striking a balance with its established historic character. New uses are likely to be located on the canal to exploit the waterway and reconciling new development with the established character of the old will take skill and imagination.

Safety on the canal is an issue, which can be addressed through the development process. Certain sections of the canal have an intimidating character, and the council will support proposals for improving links and access to the canal side which complement its existing built heritage and character and improve the perceived sense of security for those using the canal.

Design and Alterations to buildings There are relatively few historic canal side buildings and of those the majority have remained in commercial use, predominantly B1 office, whilst those in the Kings Cross area are in light industrial/ storage uses pending the comprehensive development of the entire site. The majority of surviving industrial buildings within the Conservation Area are either listed or considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. There is therefore a general presumption in favour of their retention.

Changes of use in old buildings can lead to external alterations to buildings, particularly along the towpath, which impact on the character of the area. The ground floor walls of older industrial buildings tend to have few if any openings in them and the canals massive masonry retaining walls are similarly imperforate. Incremental change to these structures could dramatically alter the canal's character. Great care will therefore need to be taken in balancing the needs of new uses with the character of the historic built form.

Many of the canal buildings including the large railway sheds of the Goods Yard are good examples of adaptable "loose fit" architecture as referred to in the DETR's guidance, By Design (May 2000) and The Urban Task Force document "Towards an Urban Renaissance". The buildings offer tremendous scope for reuse within their existing envelopes.



Use Where appropriate and in accordance with other UDP policies the Council will seek to protect commercial uses and activities traditionally associated with the canal and retain buildings which contribute to its traditional character. On all other canalside sites the Council will seek a mix of uses which complement the character and function of the canal, appropriate to the character of the particular section.

There remains a significant commercial use of the canal side, which maintains important employment opportunities and contributes to the canals use character. Some of these uses are located within buildings, which in themselves make little physical contribution to the character of the area. The redevelopment of these sites whilst providing significant opportunities for improvement to the appearance of the area, should continue to contain a mix of uses which complement the character of the canal.

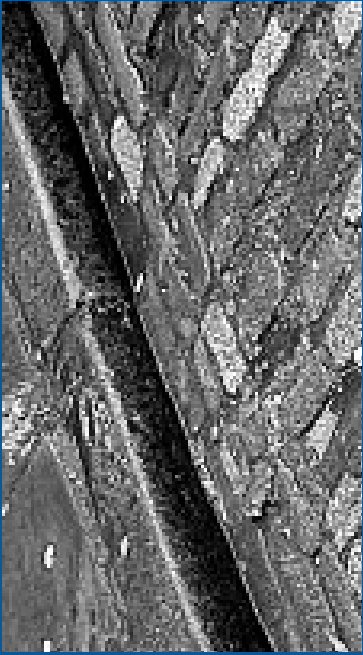
Restaurant/ Retail and associated uses could contribute to activity, vitality and security of the canal side environment. Their location will have to be determined with reference to the above use criteria and the character of particular sections of the canal.

Kings Cross Redevelopment This will involve the construction of a new high-speed link from the Channel tunnel to St Pancras. The route is currently safeguarded (refer to UDP Proposals Map), and includes a portion of the Conservation Area. Parliamentary approval was given for the new link by the CTRL Act 1996. Approval of the detailed designs for the route will be the subject of further consent from the Council.

As part of the works necessitated by the CTRL, the listed St Pancras water-point, which is currently outside the Conservation Area, will be relocated to St Pancras Lock.

The works will also involve the re-alignment of Pancras Road, Goods Way and York Way and the widening of Euston Road. The line of the new highways was approved by the CTRL Act 1996 and approval of the detailed design will also be subject of further consent from the Council.

The Council has produced a set of “Emerging Principles” as a means of starting discussion about what kind of form the Kings Cross development should take. These set out key themes and emphasise good design, employment, community benefits, heritage and accessibility within a vibrant new quarter. These “Emerging Principles” are to be further developed to provide a strategic urban framework, which will set out the infrastructure and other key elements that will shape the development proposals.



Guidelines

GUIDELINES

Designation of a conservation area gives the Council greater power to control and manage change. It is not, however, intended to prevent all new development. Some development to single family dwellings does not require permission from the Council under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GDPO), such as small extensions and changes to windows not in the roof. In addition some works carried out to the canal by British Waterways will not require consent. This is known as permitted development. The majority of works within the Conservation Area will require planning permission, and/or Conservation Area consent, and it is therefore advisable to check with the Planning officer whether permission is needed at an early stage of proposals.

The Borough's Principal Planning Policy document is the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which has recently been adopted and will be supported by Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). This statement will form part of the SPG and should be read with the policies of the UDP and further guidance contained within the SPG.

Within conservation areas the Council has certain additional duties and powers in relation to the conservation of the built environment, and the UDP Environment Chapter sets out the Council's policies and general approach. In this context UDP Policy EN31 states " The Council will seek to ensure that development in conservation areas preserves or enhances their special character or appearance, and is of high quality in terms of design, materials and execution. Applicants will be expected to provide sufficient information about the proposed development and its immediate setting to enable the Council to assess the potential effect of the proposal on the character or appearance of the conservation area."

A further guidance leaflet giving general advice on works and applications in conservation areas is available from this office, and additional guidance relating to specific problems within the Conservation Area may be produced from time-to-time for inclusion within this statement.

The canal is defined within the UDP as being an area of special character and the relevant policies particular to the canal are contained in Appendix 1 and those policies should be read in conjunction with the supplementary guidelines listed below.

NEW DEVELOPMENT

RCA1 Proposals should be guided by the UDP in terms of the appropriate uses. New development should be seen as an opportunity to enhance the Conservation Area and should respect the built form, scale and historic context of the particular section of canal in which they are located.

DESIGN


RCA2 The predominant architecture of the Conservation Area dates from the early to mid 19th century and many good examples remain primarily at Camden Lock and Kings Cross. In addition there are examples of successful refurbishments and modern design which have contributed positively to the character of the canal. The Conservation Area is varied in scale and new design should respect the scale of their particular location. Appropriate design for the Conservation Area should complement the appearance, character and setting of the existing buildings, the canal, and the environment as a whole. The enclosure or openness of particular sections of the canal should be respected as this quality contributes significantly to its varying character along its length. Building heights should not interfere with views to local landmarks. Developments should respect and where possible enhance central London panoramas and other views from within and outside the Conservation Area. A list of important views is contained in Appendix 1 of the Council's Community Planning Brief for the Kings Cross Railway Lands (November 1994).

LISTED BUILDINGS

- RCa3 Under Section 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, listed building consent is required for demolition of a listed building, and for any works of alteration or extension which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Even cleaning or repainting a facade may require listed building consent. The requirement for listed building consent is distinct from the need for planning permission and 'permitted development' rights do not apply to listed building consent.
- RCa4 Listed building consent is not normally required for maintenance and like for like repairs but, if repairs result in a significant loss of historic fabric or change to the appearance of the building, consent would be required.
- RCa5 It is an offence to carry out or ask for unauthorised works to be carried out to a listed building and the penalty can be severe – an unlimited fine or up to 12 months imprisonment, or both.
- RCa6 Advice on whether listed building consent is needed for works to listed buildings is available from the Conservation and Urban Design Team. You are advised to obtain written confirmation that repair work proposed does not require listed building consent. The Council's development policies relating to listed buildings are contained in the UDP. Additional guidance is included in Supplementary Planning Guidance and in the Governments Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment. A separate leaflet is available on listed buildings.

MATERIALS AND MAINTENANCE

- RCa7 In all cases, existing/original architectural features and detailing characteristic of the Conservation Area should be retained and kept in good repair, and only be replaced when there is no alternative, or to enhance the appearance of the building through the restoration of missing features. Original detailing such as, iron balustrades, timber framed sash windows, steel windows, doors, stone and brick copings (to both walls and the canal edge), bridge abutments and parapets where retained add to the visual interest of the canal and adjacent properties, and where removed in the past replacement with suitable copies will be encouraged. Where replacement materials are to be used it is advisable to consult with the Council's Conservation & Urban Design Team, to ensure appropriate choice and use. Original, traditional materials should be retained wherever possible and repaired if necessary.
- RCa8 The choice of materials in new work will be most important and will be the subject of control by the Council.
- RCa9 Generally routine and regular maintenance such as unblocking of gutters and rainwater pipes, the repair of damaged pointing, and the painting and repair of wood and metal work will prolong the life of a building and prevent unnecessary decay and damage. Where replacement is the only possible option, materials should be chosen to closely match the original. Generally the use of the original (or as similar as possible) natural materials will be required, and the use of materials such as concrete roof tiles, artificial slate and UPVC windows would not be acceptable.
- RCa10 Original stonework and brickwork should not be painted, rendered or clad unless this was the original treatment. Such new work, whilst seldom necessary, can have an unfortunate and undesirable effect on the appearance of the building and Conservation Area. This may lead to long term structural and decorative damage, and may be extremely difficult (if not impossible) to reverse once completed. The retaining walls and bridge parapets to the canal form an essential part of its character and their bonding patterns, pointing and mortar types should be either retained or repaired to match existing. Re-pointing if done badly can drastically alter the appearance of a building, and may be difficult to reverse.
- RCa11 Cleaning of buildings to make them look lighter should not normally be undertaken since it will involve the abrasive removal of the face of the brick or stone and can lead to problems due to water penetration. The patina of wear and weathering on canal side walls adds positively to the character of the area and



cleaning may harm that character. Some stone buildings cleaned for cosmetic reasons have then suffered much more serious damage due to corrosion of iron cramps connecting the stones. The cleaning of listed buildings may need listed building consent.

DEMOLITION

- RCa12 Within the Conservation Area total or substantial demolition of a building will require conservation area consent.
- RCa13 The Council will seek the retention of those buildings that are considered to make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, and will only grant consent for demolition where it can be shown that the building detracts from the character of the area. Consent will not be granted for demolition unless a redevelopment scheme has been approved which will preserve or enhance the Conservation Area (see SPG Demolition Guidelines).
- RCa14 All applications should show clearly the extent of demolition works proposed (including partial demolition).
- RCa15 The demolition of listed buildings will be resisted and the Council will seek to ensure that they are adequately maintained and in beneficial use.

ADVERTISEMENTS

- RCa16 The installation of signage along the canal, particularly illuminated signage will usually require advertisement consent. Some signage to identify the entrances to the canal will be required but this should be of an appropriate design, which respects the character of the canal. Signage on listed buildings may also require listed building consent and great care will have to be taken to ensure the special character of such buildings is not harmed. A proliferation of signage, even of an appropriate design, would be considered damaging to the character of the Conservation Area. This would include the proliferation of signage on street furniture.
- RCa17 Hoardings because of their size and scale are not considered acceptable forms of advertising within the Conservation Area. Similarly banners and flags are considered to be alien to the character of the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is currently hoarding free, however new development may increase pressure or more intensive advertising. This will be vigorously resisted where it is considered to detract from the character and appearance of the area.

In all cases guidance from the SPG should be referred to prior to making an application.

VENTILATION DUCTS/AIR HANDLING EQUIPMENT

- RCa18 The erection of all external ventilation ducts and air handling equipment will require planning permission from the Council. In assessing these applications the Council will have regard to their placement, particularly where in visually sensitive locations such as in views from the canal and in the proximity of residential accommodation, to ensure local amenity is protected. (refer UDP: EN7).

ROOF EXTENSIONS

- RCa19 The canal is framed along part of its length by terraces of housing the rear of, which are visible from the canal towpath. The terraces in general date from the early to mid 19th century and their rooflines and rear elevations form a very prominent characteristic of the Conservation Area. The roof forms of historic canal side buildings are visible in views and vistas along the canal and also contribute to the canals character. Roof extensions which fundamentally alter the roof form of buildings will not normally be permitted, although each proposal will be considered on its own merits.

- RCa20 On the larger existing canal side buildings any plant should be contained within the existing roof form. In all cases guidance in the SPG should be considered before preparing roof extension schemes.

REAR EXTENSIONS

- RCa21 Rear extensions should be as unobtrusive as possible and should not adversely affect the character of the building or the Conservation Area. The proposals general effect on neighbouring properties, the setting of the canal and the Conservation Area will be the basis of its suitability.
- RCa22 Within the terrace or group of buildings what is permissible will depend on the original historic pattern of extensions. Rear extensions will not be acceptable where they would spoil a uniform rear elevation of an unspoilt terrace or group of buildings, particularly when the elevations concerned are clearly visible from the canal.

ARCHAEOLOGY

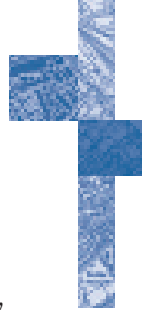
- RCa23 Proposals for new buildings or for excavation of basements may have some impact on important remains including industrial artefacts and the Council will follow the guidance in PPG16 and require a site evaluation. If desktop evaluation predicts the likelihood of significant remains then some trial excavation may be required to locate them. PPG16 advocates that remains are left in situ and development designed to fit around them. Only in exceptional circumstances would the removal of artefacts from the site be appropriate. Consultation with English Heritage London Region's Archaeological Advisor is undertaken on all sites where the possibility of archaeological remains is suspected. Policies EN48 and 49 apply.

TREES AND LANDSCAPING

- RCa24 The Council has a statutory responsibility for the protection of trees in Conservation Areas. The Council will consider the removal of existing trees only where necessary for safety or maintenance purposes or as part of a replanting/nature conservation programme and would normally expect a replacement tree.
- RCa25 All trees which contribute to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area should be retained and protected. Developers will be expected to incorporate any new trees sensitively into the design of any development, and demonstrate that no trees will be lost or damaged before, during or after development. BS 5837: 1991 shall be taken as the minimum required standard for protection of trees.
- RCa26 Most of the trees in this Conservation Area are located adjacent to the canal. The Council will wish to ensure their survival and may require their protection during works to nearby buildings and to the canal. The Council will seek the retention of informal areas of planting such as trees located adjacent to bridge abutments where they are considered to make a positive contribution to the appearance of the area.
- RCa27 Applications for development should take into account the possible impact on trees and other vegetation, and state clearly whether any damage/removal is likely and what protective measures are to be taken to ensure against damage during and after work. Excavation works can have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of a building and Conservation Area. The Council will normally only permit such works if the building will be restored by the action to its original condition, or it will contribute to the established character of the canal.

THE CANAL SIDE AND THE PUBLIC REALM

- RCa28 The retaining walls to the canal, and plinths to canal side buildings form an essential element of the character of the Conservation Area. There will be a general presumption in favour of their retention. There may be instances where in order to improve access to the towpath or to provide access and light to basement level areas within historic canal side buildings breaches within these walls may be justifiable. In some cases use will be able to be made of existing openings which have been wholly or part infilled in



the past. In all cases it will be essential to maintain the solid masonry character of these walls and the openings formed within them should be kept to a minimum. The openings should normally align with the openings found at higher level within the building. The detailing and materials used in forming the openings should have regard to existing details/materials found on historic canal side buildings, primarily comprising brick arches or exposed metal lintels, bull nosed engineering brick, and timber or metal framed window/door panels set into reveals which express the masonry structure.

- RCa29 There will be a general presumption against the use of external security shutters, grilles or meshes on new openings made into the canal side retaining wall. Part of the justification for such openings is to increase the senses of security for users of the towpath. The installation, particularly of solid shutters, would negate this benefit. Applicants would have to demonstrate that other methods are not feasible for external security shutters, grilles or meshes to be considered.
- RCa30 The towpath generally runs along a single side of the canal. The opposite side of the canal has buildings built directly onto edge in some instances and in others they are set slightly behind the canal edge. The approach taken will depend on the character of the particular section of canal and in particular its existing sense of enclosure or open aspect. Developments on the offside of the canal should have the canal edge incorporated within them to ensure no strips of land are left over which may compromise the amenity of the canal.
- RCa31 The Council Environment Committee agreed a policy for street maintenance/materials in July 95 which seeks to maintain a high level of quality for the street environment. It is important that the need to preserve and enhance the historic character of the Conservation Area is recognised in the design and siting of all street furniture, including statutory undertakers and other services equipment and paving material. The Council will make efforts to avoid any unnecessary visual clutter whilst seeking design solutions appropriate for the area in line with recommendations in PPG15 (paras. 5.13 -5.18) and English Heritage Guidance "Street Improvements in Historic Areas". The Council will also seek, through conditions or S.106 agreements, the retention and re-use of historic floor surfaces including the original stone copings to the canal edge and the granite floor finishes to re-development sites where these are considered to make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- RCa32 The Council will maintain a high standard of street furniture within the Conservation Area that takes into consideration the historic fabric of the area. The design of the seats used by Camden has been specially designed for the canal by the London Canals Committee and should be used in future installations.
- RCa33 Some opportunities exist for the widening of the towpath arising from re-development. Proposals for widening to improve pedestrian access will generally be welcomed. Great care will have to be taken to ensure that this does not have an adverse affect on either the established character of the canal or the wildlife and plant life of the canal. The mid section of the canal has a greener softer character part of which is due in part to the grassed margin on either side of the tow path. This is considered an important landscape element, which should be maintained.
- RCa34 The Council will encourage a sensitive design approach to the built environment which aims at reducing the opportunities for threatening and criminal behaviour and which promotes personal security and the safety of property. Lighting underneath bridges will be welcome subject to detailed design. Lighting to the canal side would also substantially improve personal safety and deter vandalism, but the use of solutions such as lampposts would clearly be at odds with the established character of the area. Lights fitted onto existing walls or within bollards are more likely to provide a suitable alternative. The provision of underwater lighting within canal locks has been used successfully on other canals. The impact of artificial lighting on wildlife habitats would also need to be considered. British Waterways and the Metropolitan Police have produced a document "Under Lock and Quay" on design to prevent crime.

SATELLITE DISHES

- RCa35 Dishes are not normally acceptable where they are positioned on the main facade of a building or in a prominent position easily seen from the canal. The smallest practical size should be chosen and the dish kept out of sight. Planning permission may be required. Advice from the Conservation and Urban Design Team should be sought before undertaking such works.

UDP PROPOSALS

- RCa36 The construction of a new high-speed link from the Channel tunnel to St.Pancras. The route is currently safeguarded (refer to UDP Proposals Map), and this includes a portion of the Conservation Area. Parliamentary approval was given by the CTRL Act 1996. Approval of detailed designs will be sought from the Council.
- Rca37 Re-alignment of Pancras Road, Goods Way and York Way and widening of Euston Road. The line of the new highways was approved by the CTRL Act 1996 and detailed approval will be sought from the City Council.

NATURE CONSERVATION

- Rca38 The Camley Street nature reserve is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance and a Local Nature Reserve, whilst the entire length of the canal is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. The Council will oppose development that would result in the destruction of, or damage to, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), or statutory Local Nature Reserve (LNR) as identified in the Proposals Map, unless damaging impacts on wildlife or important physical features can be prevented by the imposition of planning conditions in any permission granted.
- Rca39 The Council will oppose development that would result in the destruction of, or damage to sites of Metropolitan, Borough or Local Importance shown on the Proposals Map and listed on the Proposals Schedules, unless damaging impacts on wildlife or important physical features can be prevented by the imposition of planning conditions in any permission granted.

NEW SITES OF NATURE CONSERVATION IMPORTANCE

- Rca40 The Council will encourage the creation of new sites and habitats and will seek the enhancement and upgrading of nature conservation value of existing sites by sensitive design, appropriate planting and management. New sites and habitat creation will be targeted to areas deficient in wildlife interest and will receive the relevant protection described above. Local Nature reserves will be designated as appropriate.

APPENDIX 1

AREA OF SPECIAL CHARACTER

- RC1 The Canal is defined as an Area of Special Character and a number of additional policies apply which should be read in conjunction with those outlined above

VISUAL CHARACTER

- RC2 The Council will seek to preserve or enhance the diverse visual character of the canal by ensuring canalside development provides a variety in massing and a sense of either enclosure or rurality as appropriate to the particular canal section concerned.

SCALE

- RC3 The Council will seek to ensure that all new buildings maintain the established scale of the particular section of the canal. The height of buildings should reflect that of existing canalside buildings or as a general rule the height of buildings which frame the canal should not exceed four domestic storeys on either side of the canal as taken from towpath level.

VIEWS AND SKYLINE

- RC4 The Council will resist any development that has an adverse impact on the existing skyline, intrudes into important canalside views or obstructs views to familiar landmarks.

TRADITIONAL USES AND BUILDINGS

- RC5 The Council will seek to protect commercial uses and activities traditionally associated with the canal and retain buildings which contribute to its traditional character. On all other canalside sites the Council will seek a mix of uses which complement the character and function of the canal, appropriate to the character of the particular section.
- RC6 The Council will seek the retention and wherever possible the restoration of historic features and structures which contribute to the character of the canal. In the case of new development the Council will seek to ensure that the design and materials of any proposals for the towpath and banks, including landscaping, respect the traditional character of the canal.

RECREATION

- RC7 The Council will encourage the development of the recreational and leisure potential of the canal in so far as this does not adversely affect the nature conservation interest and is consistent with the capacity of the waterway and the amenity of the surrounding area. The Council will seek to ensure that existing water-based activities are not displaced by redevelopment or change of use.

ACCESS

- RC8 The Council will seek to improve public access to the canal. Wherever possible new access designed to disability standards should be incorporated into development proposals linking the towpath more closely with the local pedestrian network. The Council will encourage this provision where there are gaps between existing access points and in areas of intensive use.

GREEN CHAIN

- RC9 The Council will seek to protect and enhance the canal as a green chain to provide a habitat for wildlife and a pedestrian route in pleasant environments. The Council will promote the canal as part of the network of metropolitan walks and will seek to create circular routes to link the canal to other open spaces.



INFORMATION AND FACILITIES

RC10 In the interest of recreational and leisure enjoyment of the canal, the Council will work with British Waterways to promote the provision of appropriate signposting and informative and interpretative material and will encourage public art along the canal corridor. The design and siting of any such provision should respect the traditional appearance, character and setting of the canal. The Council will seek to secure the reopening of a Canal information centre, preferably at Camden Lock.

WATERSPACE

RC11 Generally no buildings will be permitted which would encroach on, cantilever or bridge over the waterspace or towpath. Where canal basins have been filled-in in the past, their reinstatement for water-based recreation will be encouraged.

MOORINGS

RC12 The Council will welcome the provision of moorings in locations where these will not hinder navigation of the waterway or adversely affect the amenities in the surrounding area. Moorings should be provided on the non-towpath bank and only in locations with good accessibility, and where adequate servicing facilities can be provided.

TRANSPORT

RC13 The Council will promote the use of the canal for passenger and freight transport provided the level of use remains compatible with its use for water-based recreation and there is no unacceptable adverse effect on amenity or the environment.

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