Derby and Sandiacre Canal

Conservation Statement

Summary

The Derby and Sandiacre Canal (always referred to as the Derby Canal until recent restoration proposals) was opened in 1796 linking Derby to the emerging national network of canals. It connected to the Erewash Canal to the east and the Trent and Mersey Canal to the south of the town, with a spur off to the north towards Little Eaton. The last known trade voyage took place in 1947; it was formally closed in 1964, since when sections have either been filled in and re-used for a range of purposes or left to naturalise.

This Conservation Statement provides an outline of the historical, industrial, architectural and environmental heritage that is embedded within the canal and its environs. It describes how the canal can be restored and the asset improved for the future enjoyment of local communities and visitors to the area.

It provides a brief for the writing of the Conservation Management Plan and proposes a structure for that plan. The Plan will define in more detail the canal's heritage and how that heritage will be protected and managed during both its restoration and subsequent operation.

Written: D A Hayes

Contents

1. Introduction

The Derby Canal was opened in 1796 linking Derby to the emerging national network of canals. It connected to the Erewash Canal to the east of the town and the Trent and Mersey Canal to the south, with a spur off to the north towards Little Eaton. The Little Eaton Branch was closed in 1936 with the main line formally closing in 1964. Even before that time and increasingly since, sections have either been filled in and re-used for a range of purposes, or left to naturalise.

The concept of restoring the Derby Canal to full navigation standards was developed in the early 1990's. Since then much work has been done in the form of feasibility, engineering and ecological studies to demonstrate the viability of the concept.

This Conservation Statement has been written as the first step in producing a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for the restoration of the canal. It is not the first document written to describe the heritage value of the canal. "The Heritage Value of Restoring the Derby and Sandiacre Canal" (reference 1) was written in 1997 and updated in 2004. It has been used as a source for much of this document which aims to address the requirements of the Heritage Lottery Fund as defined in "Conservation Management Plans – helping your application" (reference 2).

Figures 1 and 2 show the route of the original 14 mile (22km) canal. Figure 1 is by the designer of the canal Benjamin Outram and is dated 1794. Figure 2 is by John Carey and dated 1801.

The way the canal route has evolved since its closure, with some sections filled in and some left to naturalise, has left most of it readily accessible. Only in Derby city centre has any substantial building occurred on the canal bed. As a result much of the route is used by the various communities along its length as recreational space with Erewash and Derby Councils carrying out maintenance of such areas.

Figure 1
The Original Route of the Derby Canal
Benjamin Outram 1794
(taken from a copy in Derby Local Studies Library)

Figure 2

John Carey's Map of Derby 1801
(taken from www.freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com)

2. A Brief History of the Derby Canal

The south-eastern corner of Southern Derbyshire, comprising the confluence of the lower River Derwent, lower River Erewash and River Trent valleys has been an important trade route since antiquity. The Romans used the area to transport troops as well as lead and the unique Derbyshire fluorspar 'blue John', both mined in northern Derbyshire. The Saxons, Vikings and Normans followed suit, also establishing a packhorse trail above the valley.

In the late 18th century it was largely an agricultural area and Derby was a small town straddling the River Derwent. Early industry had developed in lead products, iron and textiles; the most notable being the waterwheel powered Silk Mill (reputed to be the world's first purpose built factory). South of the city fine alabaster was produced and brick making carried out, while to the east from Derby to the River Erewash industry included brick making, iron working, flax growing and processing and a large cottage industry producing hosiery using wooden 'stocking frames'.

After the great Derbyshire engineer, James Brindley, built the Trent and Mersey Canal, followed by others with the Erewash and Cromford Canals, bulk quantities of high quality Erewash Valley coal, ironstone and limestone suddenly became available. Butterley Ironworks, Stanton Ironworks and Arkwright's Mills at Cromford were able to rapidly expand and Derbyshire's role in the Industrial Revolution gathered pace.

Unfortunately while all of these canals were local, none of them served Derby, while the tiny village of Shardlow (eventually to become one of the country's largest inland ports) situated on the new Trent and Mersey Canal, was growing rapidly and in danger of taking away Derby's trade. The River Derwent was made navigable by a series of weirs but the river was prone to sudden and rapid changes of level and navigation proved unreliable.

The Derby Canal was opened in 1796 as part of the accelerated second phase of canal building (the era known as 'canal mania'). Designed by Benjamin Outram, a contemporary of James Brindley, and a partner in Butterley Ironworks, it was built as a wide canal for boats with a beam of up to 14ft (9.3m), and followed the standard pattern. It was completed in four years and constructed to join the Erewash Canal at Sandiacre, dug westwards to Derby then turned south to join the Trent and Mersey Canal at Swarkestone. It also incorporated a further line northwards from Derby to the coal, ironstone and limestone producing areas around Denby and the Bottlebrook valley. As part of the new canal network, it quickly played its part in the bulk transport revolution which in turn kick-started the Industrial Revolution locally, and ensured Derby's future as an industrial centre.

3. The Heritage

3.1 The Scope of the Heritage

The heritage embedded with the canal and its surroundings includes historical, architectural, industrial, ecological and social aspects.

a) Historical

Having been completed in 1796 the canal provides its own contribution to the history of the area. In certain areas it adds to the local transport history, for example it runs adjacent to a Roman road along part of the Derwent valley and it itself was realigned in the 1838 to accommodate the building of the Midland Counties Railway.

Its northern feed-water link to the River Derwent in the centre of Derby, took it to within a few yards (metres) of the Silk Mill at the southern end of the Derwent Valley World Heritage site. This connection to the river enabled traffic to service both the Silk Mill and Darley Abbey Mills upstream. Traffic crossed the river just south of the Silk Mill along the Longbridge and weir, adjacent to today's Council House. Close by it crossed Markeaton Brook in a cast iron aqueduct, believed to be the first example of such a construction in the world, probably made by the Butterley Company (subsequently the makers of St Pancras Station's ironwork arches).

b) Architectural

The locks, lock gates, bridges, towpaths and the cast iron aqueduct all form part of the canal's architectural heritage, albeit that few are at present visible.

c) Industrial

The canal was the infrastructure of part of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' transport industry. Its existence enabled the developing industries of the industrial revolution locally, to be supplied with raw materials and fuel.

d) Environmental

As a substantial tract of slow moving water the canal provided a home to a wide range of flora and fauna. It was renowned for its hawthorn hedges, being known as the "May canal", many of which still survive.

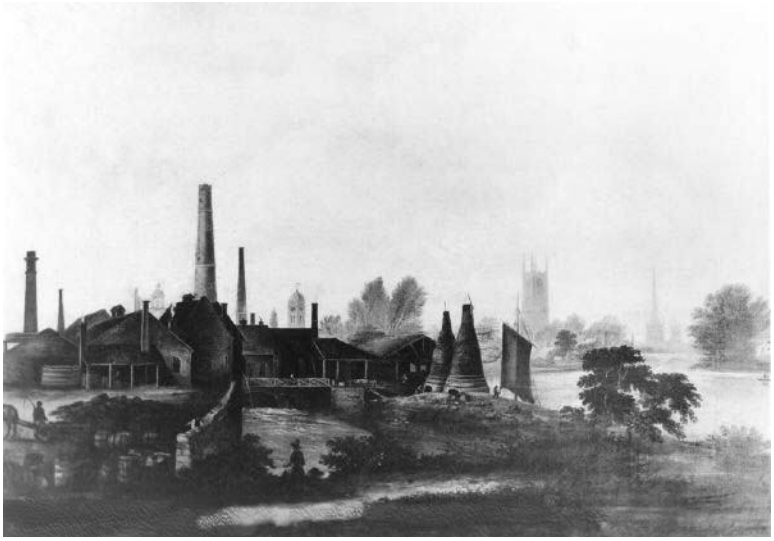
Today, whilst only a very limited stretches contain water, the canal corridor has a rich diversity of habitats. Those areas that have been left to naturalise have attracted a wide range of species. Those areas that have been filled in, grassed over and planted and now function as footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, also contribute to the local green space.

An ecological survey (ref. 4) has been carried out by the University of Derby and will be used for conservation planning.

e) Social

The social heritage of the canal spans a range of topics from the people who, as navigators, dug it two centuries ago and gave their name to that trade, the people who earned their living on it, people who learnt to swim in it, to the people who now use it for recreation and exercise.

The photographs below illustrate some facets of this heritage.



Central Derby 1850

Shelton Lock

4. The Stakeholders

The stakeholders in the canal consist of various groups of people and organisations, they are:

- communities who live adjacent to the canal
- boat users, local, national and international, who want to sail along a restored canal
- anglers
- cyclists
- horse riders
- schools
- businesses such as shops, cafes and public houses
- local councils
- restoration societies
- utilities

Each of these groups will be involved in the development of the plans for the future management of the canal. Reference to specific groups will be made in the Parts of the Conservation Management Plan relating to the particular restoration sections of the canal.

5. Restoration

5.1 The Current State

As stated briefly in the introduction most of the route of the Derby Canal has not been built on since its closure. Much of it has been filled in and converted either to agricultural or recreational use. The unfilled sections have naturalised; in those areas which continue to hold water they have tended to fill up with reed and then trees such as willow; those areas from which water leaked away stayed more open but still with substantial tree growth.

In a number of instances highway developments have impacted on the canal route. In some cases new roads have been driven across the line of the canal. In other cases, roads that previously crossed the canal by bridge, now run across the canal route on the level, because the bridges have been demolished.

The section of the canal that runs into and out of the centre of Derby is the part upon which most building development has taken place. It is still possible to identify the route of the canal in this area, where it took its feed-water from the River Derwent and where boats crossed the river along the Longbridge. A similar state of affairs exits for the spur that runs north to Little Eaton, its line is apparent in places but it has been much built over with offices and highways.

5.2 Proposed Restoration

It is proposed to restore the canal from its junction with the Erewash Canal to the east of Derby up to the A5111 (Derby ring road , Raynesway) , then from the A6 (London Road) to its junction with the Trent and Mersey Canal to the south, albeit with some realignment near to the A50.

The two restored sections will then be connected by a new section taking a more direct line across the River Derwent from Spondon to Wilmorton than the original line into the city centre. A longer term objective is to create a navigable spur into the city centre by making use of the river with the target being to get boats moored alongside the Council House (Derby's Town Hall).

Figure 3 shows the route of the restored canal.

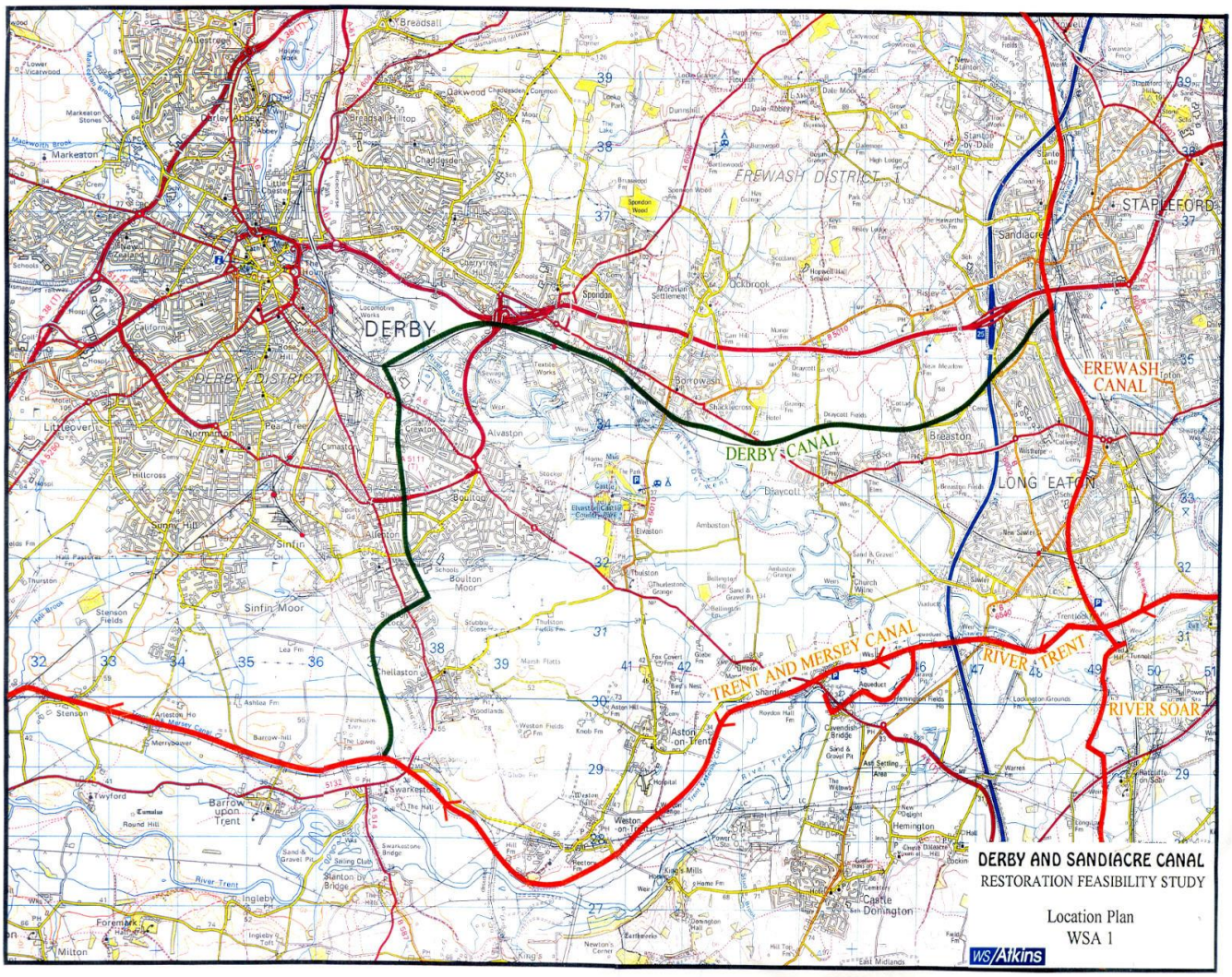


Figure 3 - The Route of the Restored Canal

5.3 Phasing of the Restoration

It has been decided that the most practical way to restore the Derby Canal is to do so in sections. A variety of factors influence this decision:

- what has happened to a particular stretch since closure: been filled in, left to naturalise, converted to recreational use, had a road built across it or returned to farmland.
- location within one local authority boundary.
- identification with a local community.
- availability of funding.

Initial thoughts divide the 20km of the restored canal into eight sections:

1. Erewash Canal to the M1
2. M1 to A6005 (Derby Road,Draycott)
3. A6005 to the Derby/Erewash (Spondon/Borrowash) boundary
4. Derby/Erewash boundary to A5111(Derby Ring Road, Raynesway)
5. A5111 toA6 (this is the new section bypassing Derby city centre)
6. A6 toA514 (Shelton Lock)
7. A514 to the A50 (Stoke /Derby Link Road)
8. A50 to the Trent and Mersey canal.

It is important to note that the above list is provisional. It is presented here to illustrate the concept of canal restoration by sections. It is, none the less, based on an assessment of the practical issues which will determine what will happen in practice.

6. Issues

6.1 Structure of the Conservation Management Plan

As a result of the decision to restore the canal in phases, it has to be decided how the structure of the Conservation Management Plan should reflect this phasing.

It is proposed that the plan is written in a series of parts. Part 1 will deal with those aspects that apply to the canal as a whole, such as its history, the operation of the canal in its entirety etc. Subsequent parts will be written for each of the separate restoration sections of the canal, at the time a CMP is required to support a bid for funding that section's restoration. Each part will have a common structure and will deal with all aspects required of a CMP but will cover specific aspects of the canal section in question.

Appendix 2 illustrates the intended structure of the CMP in detail.

6.2 Land Ownership

Considering the length of the restored canal there are relatively few landowners involved, with much of it being held by local authorities. Where land is in private hands discussions have taken place over the last ten years; many issues have been resolved with a few remaining to be sorted out.

6.3 Planning Permissions

Each of the planning authorities through whose domains the canal runs, have the route protected and designated in their Local Plans. The principle of restoration is thereby accepted in planning terms.

Each restoration section will none the less, require detailed planning permission to be granted. Within the process of obtaining such permission it will be necessary to deal with numerous issues such as environmental impact, employment, access for all, traffic, crime prevention design, car parking and listed buildings amongst others.

6.4 Rights of Way

Since the closure of the canal, public rights of way have either been established or continued along much of its length. In addition at a number of places along the route, rights of way cross it. Restoration may require some minor rerouting, but the basic philosophy behind the project is that the restored canal will be a multi-user route so that no conflict should occur in terms of rights of way.

6.5 Access

The equal opportunities policy of the Canal Trust will ensure that the restored canal will be accessible to all the community, the details of this being covered within the planning permission for each section.

Two other aspects of access will need resolving, firstly access for traffic involved in the restoration process and secondly launching access for boat users. The original design of the canal was for industrial craft. The restored canal will cater for a wide range of predominantly leisure users with a wide variety of craft. This will lead to a need for more launch points than existed originally.

6.6 Relocation of flora and fauna

Particularly in those parts of the canal that have not been filled in since closure, flora and fauna have established themselves. Restoration of the canal will change these habitats. Where it is feasible, arrangements will need to be made to relocate plants and animals that have colonised the canal bed, into compensatory enclosures. This will require discussion with interested groups.

6.7 Exit Strategy

The Derby Canal was not retained as part of the British Waterways estate on closure. Once the restoration project has been completed by the Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust, it is the Trust's intention to hand over the operation of the canal to British Waterways for inclusion in the national network. Arrangements for this transfer will need to be agreed.

6.8 Sources of Water

The primary source of water for the original canal was the River Derwent, supplemented by various streams along the canal route. Whilst the restored canal will be close to and eventually pass across the river, there will not be such a direct connection as originally when the canal linked into the river in the centre of Derby. Agreement will need to be reached about the use of both river and stream waters to feed the canal.

6.9 Utilities

Following the filling in of much of the canal, utility suppliers such as water, sewerage and possibly gas and electricity, have installed services across the canal route. In many cases the utility organisations do not have records of where they, or their predecessors, laid their services. It will be necessary to identify where such services are located and to plan to realign them.

6.10 Funding

Last but not least in the list of issues is funding. The level of funding required to restore even one section of the canal is beyond the means of the Spring Fair/Christmas Raffle approach. It is the intention of the Trust to apply for grant aid to fund the project. A variety of grant awarding bodies will be approached to obtain the money required

7. Gaps in our knowledge

7.1 Utilities' services

Where are all the water pipes, sewers, gas lines , electricity cables that have been run across the canal route since closure?

7.2 Buried archaeology

There may be items of industrial archaeology buried in the filled in sections of the canal. In some cases folklore suggests the possible locations of such items. In such cases studies will be required to confirm or otherwise the validity of the ideas.

7.3 Ecological issues

Whist various studies have been carried out into the natural history of the canal route there may be as yet unidentified species of plants of animals living along the route.

7.4 Phases of restoration

The current concept is that the canal will be restored in a number of phased sections. Depending on funding availability the number of such phases may change. This may influence the way in which the overall programme is project managed.

8. References

1. The Heritage Value of Restoring the Derby and Sandiacre Canal. *The Derby and Sandiacre Canal Trust. 1997 with 2004 update.*

2. Conservation Management Plans – helping with your application. *Heritage Lottery Fund. Undated.*

3. Conservation Management Plans Checklists. *Heritage Lottery Fund. Sept. 2004.*

4. Ecological Survey. *University of Derby. 200?*

Appendix 1

A Brief for writing a Conservation Management Plan

1.Introduction

The purpose of this brief is to set out what an author needs to do when producing a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) for any section of the Derby Canal. The aim of the plan is to help retain the significance of the heritage asset in any management, repair, alteration or new development project.

The brief has been prepared by David Hayes in consultation with Judy Flack, Chair of D&S Canal Society, and Alan Jefferies, Project Manager.

1.1 Reason for commissioning the plan

The CMP is being prepared to support an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for restoration of one of the sections of the Derby Canal

The purpose of the CMP is to inform and shape our:

- long-term management strategy;
- proposals for repair or restoration;
- project development;
- access plan;
- training plan;
- audience development plan;
- maintenance plan;
- *delete or add others as required*

1.2 The project that the plan will shape

Derby and Sandiacre Canal Society are applying to HLF for funding to carry out the restoration of the Derby Canal. It is intended that the restoration will be done in a series of eight sections, some as short as a mile long, some as long as to two miles.

The project that this plan will shape is at

- *the project planning stage; or*
- *the project development stage.*

1.3 What the plan should cover

The complete plan should cover the whole length of the restored Derby Canal. As it is planned to restore the canal in a series of eight sections, including a replacement section to cross the River Derwent, it is proposed that the CMP be written in nine parts. Part 1 will cover the complete canal with parts 2 to 10 covering each of the restoration sections separately. Part 1 will provide an overview of the canal as a whole showing how the heritage of the completed canal will be managed. Parts 2 to 10 will deal with the specific aspects of each of the sections and are to be written as and when required to support funding bids.

The structure of each part will be common, addressing each element of a CMP as defined in the attached "Structure and Contents of the Derby Canal Conservation Management Plan" document. This aims to include all the heritage aspects that are embedded in the canal: historical, industrial, architectural, ecological and social. Archive material such as that held in Local Studies Libraries and reference to associated sites such as the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site should be included to provide a comprehensive description of the heritage.

The CMP should comply with the requirements of Conservation Management Plans – helping your application (ref. 2) and Conservation Management Plans Checklists (ref. 3).

Appendix 2

Structure and Content of the Derby and Sandiacre Canal Conservation Management Plan

Front Page including Summary
(*this will explain the basic structure of the CMP, describing the rationale behind its division into Parts and will state which Part had been added to the previous version to create the current one)*

Contents
(this will be simply a List of Parts and their status showing which Parts have been published to date)

Front Sheet to PART 1 *(this will describe Part 1as being the CMP for the canal as a whole, providing an overall perspective against which each of the subsequent Parts, each for a particular section of the canal, can be viewed)*

Contents List for PART 1

1. Introduction

1.1 The Derby Canal – its creation, use, demise and restoration in brief
1.2 The Purpose of this CMP
1.3 The Relationship of the CMP with other Plans

2. The Stakeholders

2.1 Who are the Stakeholders?
2.2 Involvement with the Project

3. The Derby Canal: A Heritage Asset

3.1 The Existing physical and ecological State
3.2 The history of the Canal: its creation, use and demise
3.3 A social history
3.4 Current management
3.5 Access
3.6 Gaps in knowledge and documentation

4. Assessment of Significance

4.1 Historical and Industrial *(include links to Derwent Valley World Heritage Site)*
4.2 Built environment and archaeology
4.3 Ecological
4.4 Social and Educational
4.5 Economic

5. Vulnerability, Opportunity and related issues

6. Policy Aims and Objectives *(Some of these exist already. We need to define a complete list; those in italics are suggested additions.)*

6.1 Biodiversity *and Sustainability*
6.2 Child Protection
6.3 Education and Training
6.4 Health and Safety
6.5 Employment
6.6 Volunteering
6.7 Equal Opportunities
6.8 Built Heritage and Archaeology
6.9 Archives and Artefacts
6.10 Water Resources
6.11 Access
6.12 Economic

7. Management and Maintenance

8. References for Part 1

Appendix 1 – Gazetteer *(this is database containing details of each notable element of the canal, e. g .Ullicker's Bridge, Spondon Winding Hole)*

Appendix 2 – Maps

Appendix 3 – Archives and Artefacts

Appendix 4 – Bibliography

Text of PART 1

PART 2
PART 3
PART 4 etc

(Each Part will have the same structure as Part 1, although it may not be necessary to have Appendices 3 and 4 in some Parts)

Notes:
1. The two documents:" HLF CMP Check Lists" (ref. 3) and "HLF CMPs – helping your application" (ref.2) provide more detailed guidance on the contents of each section

2.. It may be useful to produce a compliance list to check that what we write meets all HLF's needs.