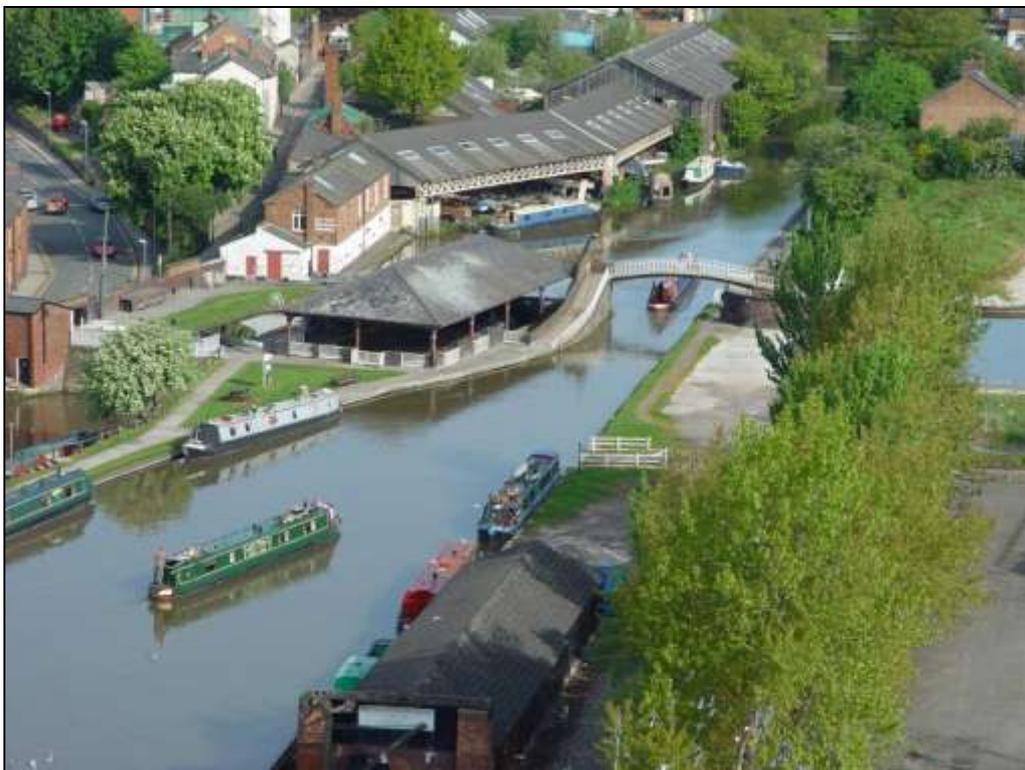




# Canal Conservation Area Character Appraisal

**Shropshire Union Canal**

**Ellesmere Port to Nantwich**



**March 2014**

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## Summary of Special Interest

Chester Canal Heritage Trust is proposing that the section of the Shropshire Union Canal from Ellesmere Port to the southern end of the canal embankment in Nantwich is designated as a Conservation Area. This includes the Wirral Line of the Ellesmere Canal (opened 1795), the Chester Canal (opened 1775-79) and a short stretch of the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal (opened 1835). The National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port is not included in this document as it is already within a designated Conservation Area.

This canal has many fine features which make it so special, including:

- It is one of the earliest main-line canals built as a broad canal with locks (for boats up to 14 feet wide)
- It has some of the first built broad staircase locks:
  - In Chester the original staircase was 5 locks and is now 3
  - At Bunbury there is a staircase of 2
- The arrival of the canal at Netherpool/Whitby was responsible for the founding of Ellesmere Port – the port for Ellesmere in Shropshire
- Tower Wharf in Chester was an important canal interchange with a large boat building yard which is still operational
- The North Basin in Chester was once a thriving wharf
- The link to the River Dee was very important historically and remains a vital and unusual stretch of canal
- Beeston Iron Lock is a Scheduled Monument and is unique in its construction
- Bunbury Locks (with the bridge and stables this is also a Scheduled Monument) with its large stable block was a busy place, exchanging horses to pull the boats. It also has a large warehouse
- Calveley was important for transhipment of cargoes, including cheese, between canal, railway and road until the 1960s when pleasure boats of up to 5 tons could still be transhipped
- Barbridge Junction with the Middlewich Branch had a significant transhipment warehouse and was a very busy place in the Canal Age
- At Hurleston Junction, the old Ellesmere Canal (now known as the Llangollen Canal) joins the Chester Canal
- Nantwich Basin was the terminus of the Chester Canal and had many warehouses part of which are extant
- Nantwich Aqueduct is a marvel of engineering
- There is an unusually large number of the original graceful bridges
- There are many rural mills which probably milled flour and used the canal for transport, for example Christleton and Waverton Mills
- There are some spectacular views from the canal, including:
  - St Lawrence's Church, Stoak
  - Delamere Forest
  - The Cheshire Sandstone Ridge – Frodsham and Helsby Hills
  - The Clwydian Hills from the top of Northgate Locks
  - Chester City Walls and Towers
  - St Peter's Church, Waverton
  - Beeston Castle

- Industry flourished alongside the canal using boats to take raw materials in and finished goods out:
  - Ellesmere Port – there are still the remains of wharves, for example the Billet Arm, that served local industry, although most of these industries have now disappeared
  - Chester – there is still evidence of the lead works, many mills and other canalside activities
  - Above Bunbury Locks – there is still evidence of the brick kilns

All of this preserved history and heritage, combined with the visually attractive setting makes this section of the Shropshire Union Canal worthy of preserving for current and future generations to enjoy, on boat, by foot or by bicycle.

Therefore, it is vital that any future developments adjacent to the canal are sympathetic to this unique heritage, and do not detract from the setting of the canal.

The Conservation Area Appraisal is dedicated to Howard Dickenson, former Conservation Officer for Chester City Council and good friend. Without his great support and encouragement this document would never have been completed.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Conservation Areas were introduced by the Civic Amenities Act of 1967, and are now an accepted part of Town and Country Planning legislation and practice. Local Authorities are required to identify “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. They are also under a duty to review existing designations from time to time.
- 1.2. It has been recognised that if the special interest, character, appearance and setting of a conservation area is to be retained, it must be managed. The first task in this process is to define and analyse the special characteristics that justify the designation of the conservation area. This is achieved by carrying out a Conservation Area Character Appraisal.
- 1.3. The character of an area depends upon its historic background, the architectural quality and interest of its buildings, their materials and detailing, the way they relate to each other, the line of the highway, the quality of the landscape, trees and open spaces and a variety of unique features.
- 1.4. A Conservation Area Character Appraisal provides a description of those elements that contribute to and define the character of the conservation area. It also provides the basis for development plan policies and development control decisions, both within and adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary. Subsequently the appraisal will provide the background for proposals to preserve or enhance the area. It may also identify development opportunities. Therefore the Government has stated that appraisals are considered to be essential for all existing and proposed conservation areas.
- 1.5. This Conservation Area Character Appraisal is for a section of the Shropshire Union Canal, comprising the original Chester Canal, along with the Wirral Line of the Ellesmere Canal and including the aqueduct at Nantwich, which was built as part of the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal. This section of canal lies principally in the unitary authority of Cheshire West and Chester (CW&C) and part of it is in the Cheshire East (CE) unitary authority.
- 1.6. This appraisal is believed to be correct at the time of writing and Chester Canal Heritage Trust cannot accept any responsibility for any omissions, errors or inaccuracies. It has been completed to the best of our ability and accuracy, and we would welcome any positive constructive feedback.
- 1.7. The aim is to identify key features which need to be protected or enhanced, in order to maintain the distinctive heritage and environment of the canal. This process has already been carried out for other sections of canal in England, for example the Shropshire Union Canal in Staffordshire, the Trent and Mersey Canal in Cheshire West and Chester, the Macclesfield Canal in Cheshire East, the Regents Canal in London and a section of the canal in Nottingham.
- 1.8. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal covers the canal, towpath, hedges and boundaries together with any buildings that are associated with the canal,

as well as any relevant adjacent sites, views and wildlife. The setting of the canal is important, so a notional buffer zone may need to be added as well. Where this Conservation Area overlaps with an existing designation, then the existing boundary is used. See Map in Appendix 3 for details.

- 1.9. Appendix 1 is a gazetteer for the whole length of canal showing important features, following the example of the document nominating Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal as a World Heritage Site (*Wrexham County Borough Council and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, 2008*). This is divided into Character Areas as in the Appraisal – see below. All listed buildings and structures are Grade II unless otherwise stated and listing numbers are given according to English Heritage’s National Heritage List for England.
  
- 1.10. This Appraisal is presented in sections (Character Areas) because the long, linear nature of the canal means that it is easier, and possibly clearer, to do it this way, rather than try to cover the whole length at once. Also, the canal crosses an administrative boundary, so this forms a natural break. Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council (now part of Cheshire West and Chester Council) have already completed a Conservation Area Appraisal for the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port as far as the M53 road bridge, so this Appraisal starts from that bridge. The Character Areas are as follows:
  - A. **Industrial Ellesmere Port** - Ellesmere Port, M53 bridge (146A) to New Stanney Bridge (140A)
  - B. **Rural Chester, North** - New Stanney Bridge (140A) to Mollington Bridge (130)
  - C. **Suburban Chester, North** - Mollington Bridge (130) to Cambrian Road Bridge (126E)
  - D. **Chester Basins and the Dee Branch** - Cambrian Road Bridge (126E) to the railway bridges (123K)
  - E. **Northgate Cutting and Locks** – Northgate Locks to Cow Lane Bridge (123E)
  - F. **Industrial Chester** - Cow Lane Bridge (123E) to A55 Bridge (122A)
  - G. **Suburban Chester, South East** - A55 Bridge (122A) to Waverton (Davies Bridge, 118)
  - H. **Rural CW&C** - Waverton (Davies Bridge, 118) to the spillweir above Tilstone Lock (Bridge 106)
  - I. **Rural Cheshire East** – Spillweir above Tilstone Lock (Bridge 106) to Basin End, Nantwich
  - J. **Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal** - Nantwich Junction Bridge (92) including Nantwich Aqueduct to Marsh Lane Bridge (91)
  
- 1.11. Following a discussion of the Historical Development of this whole length of canal, each Character Area is then covered in turn, as follows:
  - Any particular notes on the historical development of each area
  - Designations
  - Character of that Conservation Area
  - Major Features
  - Positive Elements
    - Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features
    - Local views

- Other significant buildings
- Landscape and wildlife
- Neutral Elements
- Negative Elements
- Recommendations for the future specific to that Character Area.

1.12. **Positive Elements** represent features within the Conservation Area that highlight why the character and appearance are special, **Neutral Elements** represent features that offer no strong positive or negative influence upon the area, while **Negative Elements** detract from the special character of an area and present the opportunity for change, which will enhance the character and appearance of an area.

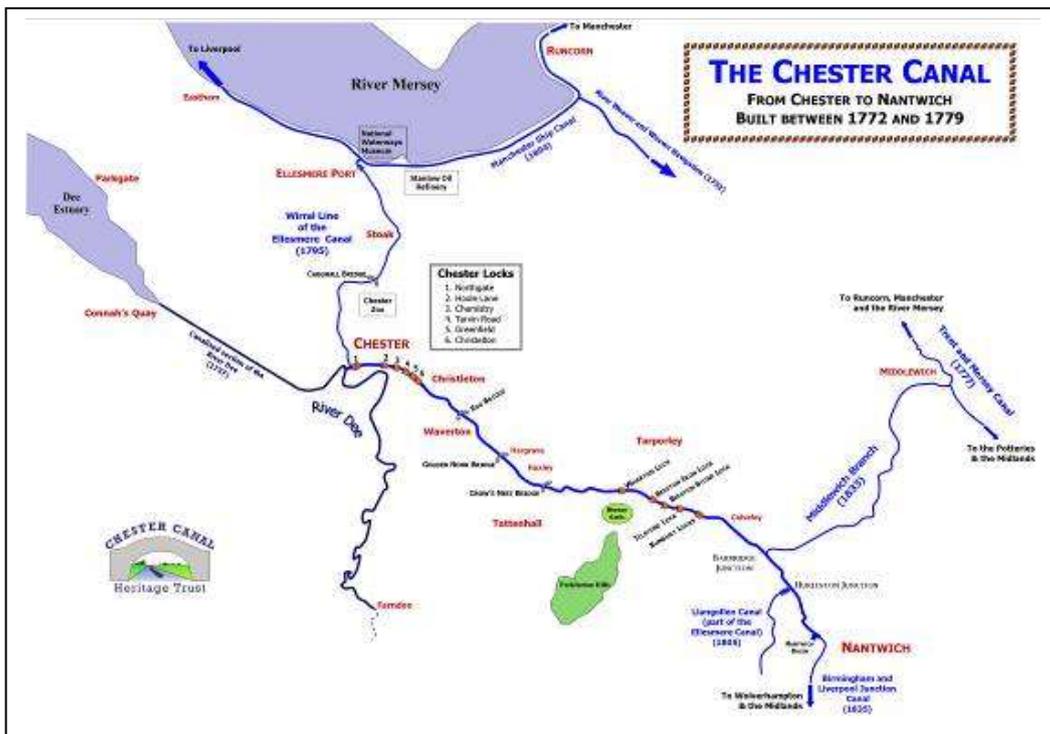
1.13. Recommendations appear in four distinct ways in this document:

- i. For specific buildings or sites – in the Gazetteers
- ii. For each Character Area of canal – at the end of the section for the Character Area
- iii. For the whole length of the canal – in Section 4 of this document
- iv. A summary of all the recommendations for the various sections appears in Appendix 2

1.14. The condition grades mentioned in the Gazetteers are purely subjective and do not relate to Canal and River Trust engineering asset condition grades in any way.

1.15. In July 2012, British Waterways became a charity called the Canal and River Trust (CRT) and so is referred to as CRT throughout.

1.16. References to “more research needed” are for Chester Canal Heritage Trust or other interested parties to follow up.



## 2. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANAL

- 2.1. Although Chester was still a regional metropolis, by the second half of the eighteenth century its position was under threat from more dynamic areas, particularly Liverpool, North-east Wales and the Cheshire salt field. The Port of Chester was in decline because of competition from Liverpool, and shipping activity became increasingly focussed on downstream locations along the Welsh shore. The building of the Grand Trunk (Trent and Mersey) Canal threatened to channel even more traffic to the Mersey. Chester's merchants therefore decided that they needed a canal to link the city to its hinterland and win back trade for the port. Despite stiff opposition from rival canals, such as the Trent & Mersey, the Chester Canal Act was passed in 1772 and construction work started in May of that year. The first traffic was carried in 1775, but business was poor, since the canal went only as far as Nantwich and there were major engineering and construction problems.
- 2.2. By the end of the 18th Century, the Chester Canal was facing ruin, but was saved by a link with the Ellesmere Canal Company, which had been set up in the 1790s to link Ellesmere in Shropshire, and the quarries and other industries of North Wales, to the Mersey at Netherpool/Whitby, now known as Ellesmere Port. In Chester, the company built the section of canal known as the Wirral Line, which runs north to Ellesmere Port and which was completed in 1795. Historically, this was of great significance and represented a major upturn in the fortunes of the owners of the Chester Canal Company, which would probably not otherwise have survived.
- 2.3. A further link between the Chester and Ellesmere Canals at Hurleston also meant that any problems over water supply were solved by the flow of water brought down from the Welsh Hills. By 1813, the partnership had been so successful that the two companies merged to create the Ellesmere and Chester Canal Company, which in turn later linked up with the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal at Nantwich to create the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company.
- 2.4. Today, the canal is largely used for pleasure boating, although many historic working boats gather in Chester every Easter prior to travelling to Ellesmere Port for a large gathering of boats. Many working boats would have regularly used the whole length of the canal until the 1950s.
- 2.5. The Shropshire Union Canal is owned and managed by the Canal and River Trust. Volunteer groups such as the Shropshire Union Canal Society, the Small Tasks Team Volunteers and Chester Canal Heritage Trust work with CRT to try to improve the condition of the canal for all users and also to try to encourage knowledge of and respect for the canal.

### **3. CONSERVATION APPRAISALS FOR EACH CHARACTER AREA**

#### **A. INDUSTRIAL ELLESMERE PORT - ELLESMERE PORT, M53 BRIDGE (146A) TO NEW STANNEY BRIDGE (140A)**

##### **A.1 Historical development - Sections A – C (The Wirral Line)**

- i. The 8 miles of canal that runs north from Chester towards the River Mersey is not the historic Chester Canal. It is the Wirral Line of the Ellesmere Canal, which was planned in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century by supporters of the industries growing up around North Wales and Shropshire. These were mostly owners of various iron, coal and limestone works, as well as millers, and they wanted a canal to transport goods to and from the River Mersey and also south to the River Severn at Shrewsbury. The Wirral Line was the first section to be built and was completed in 1795, joining up with the Chester Canal at a large basin close to the bottom of the Northgate Locks. Originally three locks took it down into the Mersey near the villages of Netherpool and Whitby, which now form part of the town of Ellesmere Port, named because of its connection with the Ellesmere Canal. About 100 years after the Wirral Line was opened, its direct link to the River Mersey was replaced by a connection to the Manchester Ship Canal which opened in 1894.
- ii. There are no locks on this section of the Ellesmere Canal and the ground conditions made the construction relatively easy, as the course of the canal followed the glacial overflow channel between the Mersey estuary and the River Dee. At Backford, this channel passes through a gap in the sandstone ridge that runs down the middle of the Wirral peninsula. When the canal reaches the village of Stoak, it turns sharply west in order to keep within the boulder clay and avoid the alluvium of the River Gowy valley. From the very beginning, the Wirral Line proved to be a great success carrying freight and passengers from Chester to the Mersey at Ellesmere Port from where they were taken across the estuary to Liverpool.
- iii. As the Wirral Line was built to connect the Chester Canal to the River Mersey, it was built to the same dimensions, as a wide canal for 14 feet wide Mersey Flats. Some of the modern motorway bridges are not wide enough for these boats, although it is understood that some were built such that the towpaths could be removed in the future to allow passage of wide boats. The narrowest motorway bridge is 146A at the start of the area covered by this appraisal.
- iv. When the M531 was proposed in 1966 by the Ministry of Transport, the plan was to culvert the Wirral Line under this new motorway (now the M53). The Inland Waterways Association (IWA) led a successful campaign from 1966-69, pointing out that the motorway was at a high level anyway and managed to retain a navigable culvert under the motorway. Unfortunately this is not wide

enough for the wide 14 foot boats for which the canal was originally built, but at least the route was maintained.

- v. Canal Trail signs have been installed at several points along the canal; there are 10 of these sculptures between Ellesmere Port and Chester and they give directions and distances between the two places. This was part of a European Project called CultMark. The Canal Trail Leaflet is out of print.
- vi. In 2011, more Cycle Trail signs were erected as part of the Chester Cycle City project.
- vii. The Wirral Line is a green finger extending from Chester towards Ellesmere Port. It is a very attractive corridor which needs to be protected and enhanced for the enjoyment of all.

## A.2 Designations

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Ellesmere Port Docks - directly north of this area
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Bewley's Bridge 144, 1138817 Weaver's Bridge 142, 1138816
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	Site of Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Works, the Billet Arm
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	None
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	None
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	None
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	None
<b>RIGgS</b>	None
<b>SSSI</b>	None
<b>Any other designations:</b> Site of Biological Interest (SBI) Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV) Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV) Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	None None None None
<b>Towpath designations</b>	Adopted highway Regional Cycle Route 70

### A.3 Character of the Conservation Area

- i. This section of the canal can be divided into two parts: that north of the M53 (Bridge 144A) and the southern section. The motorway corridor follows the canal, and despite much landscaping has been a dominant feature since its construction in the 1970s.



- ii. The northern length is part of the former industrialised zone of Ellesmere Port, initially developed to be served by the canal and railways. Its character remains an urbanised one, with bridges, wharves and remaining viable industry contributing to its industrial appearance. Although rundown, this area is of considerable historic interest.

- iii. The southern length was heavily affected by the development of the petrochemical industry from the 1940s, before which time it was largely rural. It provides a green corridor between the industrial area to the east and the motorway corridor to the west. The older bridges provide reminders of its rural past.



- iv. The whole of this section is on one level, running through flat country. Despite its intrusiveness, the motorway, with bridges at a higher level, divides the landscape and provides contrasting views by boat or on foot.

### A.4 Major Features

- i. There are no major features on this section of the canal.

### A.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area

#### A.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features

- i. The railway and road bridges on this section provide solidity and link to its past. The original bridges on this section are in keeping with the character of the canal, although somewhat patched. The 1930s bridges are characteristic of the industrialisation of this area.

- ii. The wharf wall for the former Burnells' Iron and Galvanising Works contains inbuilt mooring rings with bollards on the top.



- iii. Part of the structure over the locally listed Billet Arm has been retained so far. There are plans to demolish it for a new development (March 2014).



### **A.5.2 Local views**

- i. The views from the bridges of the canal are generally attractive.

### **A.5.3 Other significant buildings**

- i. There are none on this section of canal.

### **A.5.4 Landscape and wildlife**

- i. This section of canal runs through flat country.
- ii. There are formal and informal open spaces adjacent to both sides of the canal at various points, many linking through to local housing. These help to screen the motorway embankments and industrial installations. Hedges and trees contribute to the canal corridor's role in screening industry and the motorway. There are patches of reed beds to the offside all along this stretch, providing habitats for wildlife such as water birds and invertebrates.

## **A.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. Some landscaping of modern industrial units has taken place, which can help to screen them. Although there are no specialised designations along this section, there are large areas of green space around the motorway junctions.
- ii. There are substantial walls to the offside of the section north of the M53 (144A), representing former industrial uses. South of the M53 (144A) there are landscaped areas next to modern business units as well as areas of informal open space.
- iii. The towpath surface is mostly asphalted, as it forms part of a Cycle Route.

## **A.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The hedging and fencing to open spaces is in variable condition in places and should be rationalised. The use of chain link or palisade fencing is not appropriate to the canal setting.
- ii. Ramping and accesses to some bridges are inappropriate, for example Waring's Bridge, 142, Bewley's Bridge, 144, Stanlow Bridge, 145, and Pickering's Bridge, 146.



- iii. Some pipes through bridges and pipe bridges bear no relation to the canal's history or character.
- iv. The industrial units on the offside around Stanney Mill Bridge (141) and towards New Stanney Bridge (140A) are unattractive and turn their backs on the canal.

## **A.8 Recommendations**

1. Plans to redevelop the sites of the former Burnells' and Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Company works should retain the wharf walls and scale of the previous developments. The wharf walls should also be locally listed. The plans to demolish the remains of Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Works and the associated railway bridge must be rejected.
2. Any developments by the canal should be screened appropriately, avoiding the use of chain link or palisade fencing next to the towpath.
3. Offside industrial units which are unattractive from the canal should be considered for retrospective screening with a bund and planting.
4. Consideration should be given to finding alternative routes for the towpaths under the motorway bridges so that 14 foot wide boats can pass.

## B. RURAL CHESTER, NORTH - NEW STANNEY BRIDGE (140A) TO MOLLINGTON BRIDGE (130)

### B.1 Historical development

- i. See A.1 above.

### B.2 Designations

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	None
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Mason's Bridge 140, 1130649 Meadow Lane Bridge 139, 1130650 Dension's Bridge 138, 1139453 Stoak Bridge 137, 1330239 Picton Lane Bridge 136, 1330220 Croughton Bridge 135, 1115503 Railway Viaduct 132, 1278977 Knolls Bridge 131, 1229632
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	None
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	None
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	None
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	None
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	None
<b>RIGgS</b>	None
<b>SSSI</b>	None
<b>Any other designations:</b> Site of Biological Interest (SBI)  Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV)  Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV)  Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	SUC (Main Line), SJ414712, Grade B Viaduct Wood, SJ 391705, Grade C Gowy Meadows and Ditches, SJ 436737, Grade A Area north of canal at Collinge Wood East of canal from north of bridge 131 to bridge 130 Whole length of canal Area around motorway junctions Between canal and Wervin Chester Zoo and fields Area north of canal from bridge 134 to Collinge Wood South of canal from bridge 133 to 130 None
<b>Towpath designations</b>	Adopted highway National Cycle Route 56, from Caughall Bridge (134) to Backford Bridge (133) Regional Cycle Route 70, from New

	Stanney Bridge (140A) to Picton Lane Bridge (136) and south from Backford Bridge (133)
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**B.3 Character of the Conservation Area**

- i. This section of the canal runs through a rural area, but one with major contrasts. The northern section, between New Stanney Bridge (140A) and the motorway bridges(135A and B), includes a winding section through flat country, marred by pylons and the nearby M53, but with open views over the Gowy floodplain towards Helsby Hill.
- ii. This agricultural area is followed by another section, with a set of offside moorings, and the approach to the Backford Gap. There are pipes and a tank farm, and a length that will be affected by the planned expansion of the Chester Zoological Gardens. The canal passes through the Backford Gap, with an area to the south which is used for military training, and then a substantial railway viaduct (132). South of the latter is a section flanked by woods, and then an area of open agricultural land. The final section is becoming part of the northern suburban boundary of Chester, with a golf course and the proposed Countess of Chester Health Park; these replace areas used for landfill in the 1960s.
- iii. There are few historic wharves on this section, but a number of original bridges, lengths of substantial nature conservation value, and contrasting open and wooded areas. This largely rural section is used by walkers, cyclists and anglers as well as boaters. Motorways and the railway are close at hand.



**B.4 Major Features**

- i. The most significant feature is the Backford Gap, which is crossed by the A41 and the Chester & Birkenhead railway viaduct at high level.



## **B.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area**

### **B.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features**

- i. At Top Farm, Croughton, a building on the offside represents the place from which one of the earliest canal boat hiring operations took place from 1932. A building is shown at this site on maps from 1910, but the current building is much altered from this; more research needs to be done.



- ii. The numerous original bridges on this section are of considerable interest, and several are listed (140, 139, 138, 137, 136, 135, 132, 131). The original bridge at Caughall (134) was rebuilt 40 years after the canal, following incidents on passenger boats. There are reports of injuries to passengers, including losing their heads or being knocked off the boat, at this bridge.

### **B.5.2 Local views**

- i. There are attractive views of the church at Stoak from much of the section north of Stoak.
- ii. There are views across the Gowy Marshes to Helsby Hill and the Stanlow Oil Refinery.

### **B.5.3 Other significant buildings**

- i. There are none on this section of canal.

### **B.5.4 Landscape and wildlife**

- i. This area is largely flat and the southern section passes through generally attractive countryside and alongside a golf course. The hedgerows are mainly complete, and there is a belt of trees between the motorway bridges which provides effective screening.
- ii. Parts of the canal have recently been dredged and soft piling installed to protect the banks from erosion and stock poaching. IN time this will provide extra habitat for wildlife.
- iii. The canal links an important set of paths and open space adjacent to Knolls Bridge (131) encouraging use of the towpath for walking.
- iv. The whole section is an Area of Nature Conservation Value, and there are other designations, focusing on the central length between Backford Bridge (133) and Croughton Bridge (135). There are many reeded banks with associated wildlife and clumps of reed often break off forming floating islands.

## **B.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The golf course north of Knolls Bridge (131) has replaced a landfill site, and contributes to the open appearance of this section, but inappropriate development could damage this.
- ii. The trees to the railway embankment mask the trains, but also limit views of the substantial viaduct. The open space north of the viaduct provides attractive open space, but access is restricted by military use.
- iii. There are moorings, including a fairly substantial length at Croughton, to the offside. The Croughton mooring includes an area for winding (turning round) boats, and there is also a winding hole by Backford Bridge.

## **B.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The motorway and electricity pylons to the northern section are somewhat intrusive.
- ii. The general appearance of Stoak from the canal is unattractive with untidy horse fields and sheds detracting from the view of the church.
- iii. The links with the footpath network around Stoak are compromised by barbed wire across many paths.
- iv. The United Utilities waste water treatment works is visually unattractive, as is the (unrelated) pipe crossing the canal and the fencing adjacent to the towpath.
- v. The tank farm north of Caughall Bridge (134) appears to be little used, but it has a neglected appearance and intensified use would be obtrusive. This was probably to decentralise fuel storage away from the possibly vulnerable refinery, but may also may have been associated with the wartime PLUTO (Pipe Line Under The Ocean) project.
- vi. The palisade fencing near the Railway Viaduct (132) is unattractive and could be placed away from the canal towpath.
- vii. The redevelopment of the Countess of Chester Hospital is starting to encroach on the view over the site of the proposed Countess of Chester Health Park.
- viii. The laying of asphalt has destroyed or damaged the original towpath surface under some of the bridges and so detracts from the character and historic appearance of the canal.
- ix. There are many saplings between the canal and the towpath which would cause an obstruction for horse boating. This stretch is used for horse boating demonstrations between the National Waterways Museum and Chester.

- x. Opposite Top Farm, Croughton, there are streams and pools of water across the towpath causing problems for towpath users.

## **B.8 Recommendations**

1. Any opportunities to reduce or remove the impact of the motorways, pylons, waste water treatment works, tank farm and pipes should be taken.
2. Unattractive fencing, particularly at the waste water treatment works should be replaced by hedging.
3. The owners of the fields adjacent to the canal at Stoak should be encouraged to improve their appearance.
4. The barbed wire should be removed from the Public Footpaths around Stoak.
5. Developments that would restrict the views of Stoak Church, the appreciation of the Backford Gap, or further restrict the views of the railway viaduct should be resisted.
6. Enhancement of the moorings at Croughton should be encouraged, including protection for the historic wharf there – consider local listing if appropriate.
7. Caughall Bridge (134), locally known as Pretty Bridge, should be considered for listing.
8. Development for the expansion of Chester Zoo could add to amenities, but should not be allowed to adversely affect the open appearance of the corridor east of Backford Bridge (133) and the canal section adjacent to Zoo-owned land.
9. The palisade fencing at the Railway Viaduct (132) should be moved or hidden by hedging.
10. The proposed Countess of Chester Health Park between Mollington Road Bridge (130) and Knolls Bridge (131) is an opportunity for interpretation of the canal at this point, as well as attracting more people to appreciate the canal. It is important that the view of the extending hospital does not compromise this site.
11. Remove the saplings between the canal and the towpath before they get established to improve the route for horse boating. Keep the area free of such obstructions.
12. Investigate the streams and pools of water across the towpath opposite Top Farm and install drainage as necessary.

## C. SUBURBAN CHESTER, NORTH - MOLLINGTON BRIDGE (130) TO CAMBRIAN ROAD BRIDGE (126E)

### C.1 Historical development

- i. See A.1 above.

### C.2 Designations

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Chester City Conservation Area is directly to the south of this area
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	None
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	None
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	None
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	None
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	None
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	None
<b>RIGgS</b>	None
<b>SSSI</b>	None
<b>Any other designations:</b> Site of Biological Interest (SBI) Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV)  Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV) Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	Finchett's Triangle, SJ 385673, Grade C Around aqueduct, east along Finchett's Gutter Whole length of canal Several individual ones between Bridges 128 and 126E– see maps Group TPO NW of aqueduct Group TPO along bank, east of canal, north of Bridge 128 Need to add: Willow by Stone Bridge wharf 2 Scots pines and 3 or 4 beech trees by old house on corner opposite University
<b>Towpath designations</b>	Adopted highway National Cycle Route 5 Regional Cycle Routes 70 and 71 National Cycle Route 45 north to Bridge 128B

### C.3 Character of the Conservation Area

- i. This section of the canal shows the typical changes from rural to urban. The electric lighting from Chester as far as Blacon Avenue Bridge (129) means that it is used at all times of the day and night by people going to and from the city. The towpath is used by walkers, cyclists and fishermen as well as people travelling into the city for work or leisure.



- ii. There are houses along parts of this section, at first only on the towpath side, and then only on the offside, then on both sides as the canal reaches the more built up areas of the city. Some of the houses embrace the canal and have opened up their gardens to include the canal bank; building platforms, garden sheds, summerhouses and gazebos. Others ignore the canal and have tall fences, at others there is evidence of domestic rubbish scattered down embankments and into the canal.

- iii. In between the stretches of houses, particularly towards the northern end of this section there are fields on the towpath side (mainly pasture with horse grazing), a former school playing field between the canal and the Police Station, and the new crematorium at Blacon on the off side. This gives this area a very open feel.



- iv. To the south of the modern Deva Aqueduct which crosses the A5480, Chester University is adjacent to the towpath as far as Stone Bridge (128). The length of canal from the aqueduct to Northgate Locks had been adopted by a voluntary group from the University as part of the Waterways Action Squad initiative which has lapsed, but efforts are being made to start this up again.
- v. The whole length of the canal is designated as an Area of Nature Conservation Value, and, close to the aqueduct there is a more extensive green space which is designated as a Site of Nature Conservation Value. This is along the floodplain of Finchett's Gutter – the crossing of these two linear watercourses is important for wildlife movement and dispersal. Adding value to this, the former railway line which crosses the canal in this area is also designated as an Area of Nature Conservation Value. In 2010 a new link between the canal towpath, the Millennium Cycle Way and the Deva Link Road was constructed in this area. At Cambrian Road Bridge (126E) the canal meets the City Conservation Area.
- vi. There are no locks on the stretch, although the canal is on a slight embankment at the northern end of the section, between the houses after Mollington Bridge (130) and the former railway bridge, and in a small cutting in the Garden Lane area, with the gardens above the level of the towpath. The bends in the canal add to the pleasant nature of this section.

## **C.4 Major Features**

- i. There are no major features on this section of the canal.

## **C.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area**

### **C.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features**

- i. The bridges on this part of the canal are typical of an urban area, not the gracefully curved brick bridges more usually seen on the Shropshire Union Canal, however, they are in keeping with the character of the canal in this section. The former bridge to Blacon Hall is evident by a narrowing of the canal and a slope in the garden of the house close to the canal.
- ii. The attractive Deva Aqueduct over Deva Way was constructed in 1992.
- iii. Stone Bridge (128) carries Cheyney Road over the canal. This bridge has been sympathetically extended, probably in the 1930s, as the road was widened to take modern traffic. South of here, to Cambrian Road Bridge (126E) the off side bank appears to be protected with railway sleepers.
- iv. The raised bricks, and setts, under some of the bridges are contemporary with the canal and of historical and educational value as well as to assist when horses are pulling boats to and from the National Waterways Museum at Ellesmere Port.

### **C.5.2 Local views**

- i. When travelling along the canal towards the city, there are views across the fields to the old Deva Lunatic Asylum (the Water Tower Hospital), currently being redeveloped. This is an important focal point on this section of the canal.
- ii. From the site of Blacon Hall Bridge and the Deva Aqueduct it is possible to see the Cathedral and Town Hall, particularly in the winter months when there are no leaves on the trees. These views should be protected as important for attracting visitors into the city to explore.
- iii. The Welsh Hills are visible, on a clear day, over the houses of Balmoral Park; this open aspect is very attractive and should be retained.
- iv. The view of Chester University buildings by the bend in the canal is attractive and should be maintained.

### **C.5.3 Other significant buildings**

- i. Stone Bridge House, 26 Balmoral Park, was built prior to the canal and extended in 1869. Apparently the canal was diverted around it (*personal communication from Andrew Randall, former resident*), and it is very attractive.

- ii. The house at the site of Blacon Hall Bridge needs researching as it may have been a gate house for the Hall. The access ramp to the bridge is still evident in the garden.



#### **C.5.4 Landscape and wildlife**

- i. As this area of land is fairly flat, there are no locks on this section of the canal. Where the land does rise and fall, there are small cuttings and embankments. The back gardens of the houses to the northern end of Garden Lane have high walls to support and contain their gardens.
- ii. The canal and its towpath form an open space which is generally pleasant and accessible. The green spaces around the aqueduct are now largely taken up with the new link way between the canal towpath, the Deva Link Road and the Millennium Cycle Way, and Finchett's Gutter is a dredged ditch at this point, which does not encourage wildlife.
- iii. Along this whole section the natural environment consists of trees, hedges and some reed beds in the canal, these contribute to the distinctiveness of the canal. Vegetation adjacent to the canal is currently at a level suitable for horse boating.

- iv. There are several large trees which should be protected by Tree Preservation Orders such as the willow by Stone Bridge (128) and the fairly mature beech and Scots pine trees at Stone Bridge House, 26 Balmoral Park, opposite the Chester University.



- v. The trees planted on the bank next to the towpath, by the University Nursery, are attractive and have a Group TPO.
- vi. This stretch of the canal has most of the wildlife species generally associated with this type of waterway. There are usually mute swans, mallard, and moorhens, with the occasional heron, kingfisher or cormorant. There are obviously fish present by the number of fishermen on this stretch and the presence of fish eating birds. The reed beds will support populations of beetles, and other invertebrates, and dragonflies are sometimes seen flying. In the bank side vegetation, especially the areas of Japanese knotweed, there are usually numerous house sparrows.

#### **C.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. Some houses have embraced the canal bank and included it in their garden area, although some of the gazebos and summerhouses could become unattractive if not properly maintained.

- ii. The new crematorium has been built adjacent to the canal. The new landscaping needs to be monitored and a hedge planted adjacent to the canal.
- iii. The style of the electric lighting along the towpath is inoffensive and functional.

## **C.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. Some of the garden fencing, particularly at the rear of the houses on Parkgate Road, consists of corrugated iron and breeze blocks, which are unattractive in the canal setting.
- ii. Along most of the boundary with Chester University there is a tall metal fence, this is not in keeping with the canal.
- iii. The decking structure next to the canal at Stone Bridge House is unattractive and inappropriate to the situation.
- iv. There are disused wharves north of Stone Bridge (128) and Cambrian Road Bridge (126E) which are becoming very dilapidated.
- v. Cambrian Road Bridge (126E) is fairly modern and not in keeping with the canal. The detached pipe was apparently part of the hydraulic system in the city. The overhanging vegetation makes use of both the stepped and sloped accesses difficult.
- vi. The stone wall along the gardens on Garden Lane has, in places, been raised with unsuitable materials such as bricks and breeze blocks.
- vii. There are several clumps of Japanese knotweed on this section, which can be very damaging to canal banks.
- viii. Some of the points of access to the towpath are out of character with the heritage of the canal, for example at Blacon Avenue Bridge (129), Bridge 128b and Cheyney Road Bridge (128).
- ix. As this section of canal is part of several Cycle Routes, the towpath has been covered in asphalt, which has destroyed the original surface under some of the bridges and so detracts from the character and historic appearance of the canal.

## **C.8 Recommendations**

1. The views into the city, especially to the cathedral, across to the hospital and to the Welsh Hills should be retained and protected from development.
2. Currently there are houses being built in the grounds of the Water Tower Hospital (the former Deva Lunatic Asylum), and it is important that the main

building be retained and sympathetically converted, rather than being demolished.

3. The boundary between the new crematorium and the canal should be planted with a suitable hedge.
4. Stone Bridge House, 26 Balmoral Park, the house at the site of Blacon Hall Bridge and the tower of the Water Tower Hospital should be considered for local listing.
5. Trees at Stone Bridge House and the wharf by Stone Bridge (128) should have Tree Preservation Orders.
6. The University of Chester fence should be removed and the campus integrated with the towpath area. Any new developments by the University should properly address the waterscape.
7. The vegetation needs to be regularly trimmed by both the stepped and sloped accesses by Cambrian Road Bridge (126E).

## **D. CHESTER BASINS AND THE DEE BRANCH - CAMBRIAN ROAD BRIDGE (126E) TO THE RAILWAY BRIDGES (123K)**

### **D.1 Historical Development**

- i. Chester Canal Basins were once a busy and thriving centre of the canal trade, dealing with both cargo and passenger traffic. They lie at the bottom of Northgate Locks at the junction of the Chester Canal, and the Wirral Line of the Ellesmere Canal, both now part of the Shropshire Union Canal. The Basins and associated locks and Graving Dock (where boats are taken out of the water to “grave” or scrape and repair the bottom of the boat) were built to accommodate the 14 feet wide Mersey Flats.
- ii. By the end of the 18th century, the Chester Canal was facing ruin, but was saved by a link with the Ellesmere Canal Company, which had been set up in the 1790s to link Ellesmere in Shropshire and the quarries of North Wales to the Mersey at Netherpool/Whitby, now known as Ellesmere Port. In Chester, the company built the section of canal known as the Wirral Line, which runs up to Ellesmere Port and which was completed in 1795. When this section of canal was built, two of the locks in the original staircase were taken out and replaced by two new locks on the Dee Branch of the canal, separate from the main line. This is the section of canal just to the west of the main Canal Basin. The increase in trade resulting from the Wirral Line was of great significance and represented a major upturn in the fortunes of the owners of the Chester Canal Company, which would probably not otherwise have survived.
- iii. The Dee Branch drops the canal down into what was once the Dee Basin, extending almost to the edge of what is now Southview Road. It was surrounded by a variety of warehouses and other industrial buildings, including a boatyard and stables, all of which have since disappeared. Archaeological excavations of this area prior to its redevelopment in 1996 uncovered the remains of over 30 sunken boats including ‘Earl’, a flat built at Frodsham in 1802 for use on the Ellesmere and Chester Canal.
- iv. In the 1970s, the local canal supervisor, the late Philip Williams, instigated the creation of Williams Moorings.

## D.2 Designations

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Chester City Conservation Area
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Taylor's Boatyard (including Former Flat Shed, Narrowboat Shed, Former Steam Saw Mill, Blacksmith's Forge, Carpenter's Shed, Paint Shed, Stores, Warehouse/Office Range and Dry Dock), 1375715 Graving Lock, 1375932 Roving Bridge 126, 1375933 Bridge Lock, 1375930 Telford's Warehouse, 1375919 Raymond House 1375918 Water Tower, 1376129
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	None
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	Tin Tabernacle, Whipcord Lane
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	Water Tower, 1006785
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	None
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	None
<b>RIGgS</b>	None
<b>SSSI</b>	River Dee SSSI
<b>Any other designations:</b> Site of Biological Interest (SBI) Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV) Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV)  Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	None None Whole length of canal and area between main line and Williams Moorings 5 opposite Taylor's Boat Yard 1 close to Graving Dock 5 near to Bridge Lock
<b>Towpath designations</b>	Adopted highway National Cycle Route 5 Regional Cycle Routes 70 and 71 National Cycle Route 45

## D.3 Character of the Conservation Area

- i. The character of the canal basins and Dee Branch is dominated by the buildings associated with Chester as a canal port. Many of the canal buildings are typical of the style of those built by Thomas Telford, and the majority of them are Grade II listed. The whole of this section of the canal is within the Chester City Conservation Area. There is an interpretation board by the towpath in the basin.
- ii. The towpath is an adopted highway, and has been recently resurfaced. It is used by walkers, cyclists and fishermen and there is a Canal Trail sign



adjacent to the access slope near Cambrian Road Bridge.

- iii. The grassy areas, picnic tables and other benches attract many people to the area on warm sunny days. This whole area is designated an Area of Nature Conservation Value, and it attracts the usual collections of water birds including a pair of mute swans who usually nest somewhere around the basin.
- iv. The historic buildings, clearly visible in the area, attract many walkers and cyclists, as well as boaters.
- v. Taylor's Boat Yard was originally the boat maintenance and building yard for the Shropshire Union Railway and Canal Company Ltd, and it is being revived as a working boat yard of the modern age, whilst still retaining the heritage features of the canal age. The associated Graving Dock and Graving Lock are also being brought back into use. The Dock and Lock were used for taking boats out of the water for repair.
- vi. The elegant roving bridge carries the towpath over the canal; it was built to allow horses to tow boats along the canal without having to unhitch the rope when the towpath changes from one side of the canal to the other.
- vii. The character of the North Basin has been changed by the recent development of a range of houses, flats and retail/entertainment properties. These should be finished in June 2014 and seem to reflect some of the past life of the basin, and look something like the warehouses which used to be around it.
- viii. The Dee Branch has recently been dredged but access to the River Dee, through the River Lock, is still difficult. The tenants at the Boat Yard are taking over Williams Moorings, so that it is now full of boats, which greatly improves the appearance of the area. 
- ix. The much reduced Dee Basin is surrounded by tall wharf-like apartment blocks, and the 8<sup>th</sup> Scout Headquarters building, shaped like a boat.
- x. Raymond House was the offices for the Canal Packet Boat, which carried passengers to Ellesmere Port, and an inn, then living accommodation for canal workers (now empty offices), while Telford's Warehouse was a warehouse and is now a popular public house and live music venue.
- xi. The twin railway bridges, below Northgate Locks, together with the sweeping slope up to Raymond Street Bridge and the cantilevered road opposite Telford's Warehouse were all built around the same time and form a dramatic entrance to the main Chester Basin. Near to Raymond Street Bridge, there is a large hook on a ring mounted low down on the wall. This was apparently used to hook the towrope onto so that boats could be pulled straight out of the locks, so making it easier to negotiate the sharp turn into the basin. 

- xii. Just before Easter each year, the basin is usually full of historic boats on their way to Ellesmere Port for the Easter Gathering at the National Waterways Museum.



- xiii. The 3 locks on this stretch carry the canal from the main line down to the River Dee. The River Lock is one of the longest in the country as it was extended when Sealand Road Bridge was made into a fixed bridge when the road was upgraded. Passage through this lock is difficult and requires going under the bridge before the rising tidal river is too high.

## D.4 Major Features

- i. The major features on this stretch of the canal are:
- the complex of buildings forming Taylor's Boat Yard
  - the buildings associated with the former Chester to Ellesmere Port Packet Boat – Telford's Warehouse and Raymond House
  - the Dee Branch connecting the canal to the River Dee.

## D.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area

### D.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features

- i. The canal basins are a very good example of a canal port that has been preserved largely by neglect.
- ii. Around the main basin, the majority of the remaining buildings have been present since this was a thriving area for trade, and still practise similar trades. JP Marine now run the boat yard building and repairing boats, and Telford's Warehouse is a thriving public house and music venue next door to the old Canal Tavern (now part of Raymond House).
- iii. The area around the North Basin is being redeveloped and will hopefully reopen for mooring boats once all the work has been completed. As part of the development there will be a small sanitary station for use by boaters.



- iv. The roving bridge is a fine example of its kind, and has a plaque on it commemorating Tom Rolt, one of the founders of the Inland Waterways Association, who was born in Chester. The other bridges are in keeping with the area. Generally they are in good condition, although the surface of the roving bridge needs some attention.
- v. The water point and sluice paddle gear are maintained in the traditional way. There are traditional mooring rings on the towpath side of the main basin.

- vi. The sweeping slope near the railway bridges is attractive. Research needs to be done on the hook and ring adjacent to Raymond Street Bridge and it needs to be preserved and interpreted.

#### **D.5.2 Local views**

- i. Most of the important views in this area are into the Canal Basins from the bridges and surrounding area. The large expanse of water gives a very open feel to the area.
- ii. The views of the City Walls and Water Tower are also attractive, although they can be obscured by the trees when they are in leaf.



#### **D.5.3 Other significant buildings**

- i. The Tin Tabernacle on Whipcord Lane has been identified as being of Townscape Merit. This building is no longer being used as a church and is being sympathetically converted into a dwelling.

#### **D.5.4 Landscape and wildlife**

- i. Although this is a comparatively small area, there is a great deal of variety and interest.
- ii. There is a change in level from the mainline of the canal down the Dee Branch towards the River Dee. The Graving Lock takes the canal down to Williams Moorings, Bridge Lock drops it down to the formerly tidal Dee Basin, and then the River Lock goes out into the tidal river almost at sea level.
- iii. This very large open space is reducing with the increasing size of the new development around the North Basin. However, the area between the canal and the Dee Branch is grassy and pleasant. There are rings for visitor moorings here and most of the trees have TPOs.
- iv. Moorhens, mallard and mute swans all regularly nest in this area. Kingfishers, herons and cormorants are occasionally seen passing through or fishing. There are numerous pigeons which fly around the basin, settling on Telford's Warehouse or the Graving Dock. People are no longer allowed to feed the birds in this area.

#### **D.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. Most of the recent mixed use developments around this area are fairly massive, but as they are of a comparable size to traditional canal side warehouses, this is acceptable. There may, however, be a concern about the, as yet unbuilt, office block which will be adjacent to Telford's Warehouse, as it may be overpowering. This concern has been realised by the size of the building opposite Taylor's Boat Yard where there once were small cottages.

- ii. There are new plans for the development adjacent to Taylor's Boat Yard, it will be necessary to monitor the progress of this.

## **D.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The towpath is an adopted highway and is now surfaced in a similar way to the rest of the towpaths in Chester. The raised horse bricks are not present under any of the bridges.
- ii. The locks are not well maintained and there is a real concern that navigation between the canal and the River Dee may become impossible.
- iii. The site of Tilston's Joinery Yard, adjacent to River Lock, is unsightly and not in keeping with the waterscape here.
- iv. The numbers painted onto the lock beams are incorrect and confusing.

## **D.8 Recommendations**

1. The vibrancy of the Canal Basins should be recreated through continued sympathetic development and active uses.
2. The Boat Yard should be supported and encouraged to be a viable and successful business.
3. The North Basin should be opened up for visiting boats.
4. The towpath should have suitable heritage lighting reinstated.
5. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.
6. The River Lock should be repaired and the possibility of a lock in the weir investigated.
7. Tilston's Joinery Yard should be redeveloped sympathetically.
8. The Tin Tabernacle on Whipcord Lane should be considered for local listing.

## **E. NORTHGATE CUTTING AND LOCKS – NORTHGATE LOCKS TO COW LANE BRIDGE (123E)**

### **E.1 Historical Development - Sections E – I (The Chester Canal)**

- i. Started in 1772, at the time of the Industrial Revolution, the Chester Canal was intended to link the City of Chester with growing centres of industry and trade, such as the Potteries and the Midlands. Opposition from the owners of the Trent & Mersey Canal to a junction with their waterway at Middlewich meant that the owners of the Chester Canal had to settle for Nantwich as the terminus for their venture but, because of a lack of funds, even that plan could not initially be achieved and Beeston became the initial terminus of the Canal with the first traffic being carried in 1775. This canal was designed to carry 14 feet wide Mersey Flats, so the canal and bridges are wide enough for this.
- ii. Even after the link to Nantwich was completed in 1779, Beeston was again the end of the canal for a considerable period at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, since the lock just to the east had collapsed and defied all attempts to repair it. Hence, a wharf and associated buildings were built here to deal with the limited amount of traffic still using the canal during that period. A short railway was also built to transport goods between the two sections of canal around the inoperative lock.
- iii. A deep cutting takes the canal under Chester City Walls, to Cow Lane Bridge. The original plan envisaged that this section would have to be a tunnel but, when the work started here in the 1770s, the remains of an old ditch, probably the Roman fossa external to the walls, were found. This made the excavation work easier and a cutting was made instead, although it was still necessary to remove large sections of the bedrock.
- iv. In 1846, the Shropshire Union Railways & Canal Company (SURCCo), represented an amalgamation of a number of earlier canal ventures. The oldest of these was the Chester Canal, and it was only through mutually beneficial links with the Ellesmere Canal and then the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal in the early 19th Century that commercial success was achieved and the SURCCo was formed, with a Head Office based in Chester in the buildings next to what is now Telford's Warehouse.
- v. As the name of the company suggests, it had links with the railways, which were beginning to revolutionise transport in ways even more far-reaching than those achieved by the canal network, and a year after it was formed, the SURCCo came under the control of the London and North Western Railway Company (LNWR). An extensive canal carrying business was soon established, largely in territories served by rival railway companies. To service this trade, a large fleet was required and Chester was chosen as the location for a boat yard, both to build and maintain the boats. The chosen site was in Chester Basin, sandwiched between the canal and Upper Cambrian Road.

- vi. With an annual turnover from carrying of nearly £200,000, the company appeared to be performing quite well and showed a profit in most years, but this was an illusion, since it was dependent on subsidies from both the parent company LNWR and, during the Great War, from the government. The withdrawal of these subsidies in 1920/21, combined with an attempt to restrict the boatmen's working day to 8 hours plunged the company into massive losses and the decision was taken, quite abruptly, to withdraw from carrying all together and sell off the fleet.

## E.2 Designations

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Within Chester City Conservation Area
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Northgate Locks and bridges, 1375934 Northgate Lock Cottage, 1375735 Holly House, 5 Canal Street, 1375734 Hospital of St John Almshouses, 1375965 Bluecoat Hospital, 1375966 The Northgate, Grade I, 1376370 Northgate House, 1 Upper Northgate Street, 1375958 2 and 4 Upper Northgate Street, 1375959 Northgate Bridge123G, 1375968 Bridge of Sighs, 1375967 City Walls, Grade I, 1376135 4,6,8,10,12,14,16,&18 George Street, 1375821
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	None
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	Former Temperance Hall, George Street 22 George Street, The Manse Penri Chapel, George Street
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	City Walls, 1006785
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	None
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	None
<b>RIGgS</b>	Northgate Cutting and Walls
<b>SSSI</b>	None
<b>Any other designations:</b> Site of Biological Interest (SBI) Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV) Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV) Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	None None Whole length of canal 13 individuals between locks and railway
<b>Towpath designations</b>	Adopted highway National Cycle Route 45

### E.3 Character of the Conservation Area

- i. From the basin the canal rises 33 feet at the Northgate Locks. This staircase of three locks has a dramatic setting under the City Walls and pleasant surroundings of trees and a small open space.

- ii. A deep cutting then takes the canal from the locks, under the City Walls, to Cow Lane Bridge (123E). This follows the line of an old ditch just outside the City Walls. Large sections of the bedrock had to be removed resulting in a cutting which is dramatic from all viewpoints but especially from the canal and towpath. The rock is typical of the Triassic sandstone of the area being largely Chester Pebble Beds which is noted for the cross bedding of sandstone showing dune structures.



- iii. The canal cutting is dominated on the south side by the City Walls. These are listed Grade I and are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Of particular interest along this length are the Water Tower, Bonewaldesthorpe's Tower, Morgan's Mount, Pemberton's Parlour, views of sections of the original Roman walls complete with their original cornice, and the Phoenix or King Charles' Tower. The views to and from the Walls are very important to the setting of the canal in this area.



- iv. Two important bridges cross the canal. The Northgate Bridge is high and reinforces the deepness of the cutting. There are interesting views of the canal from both sides of the bridge. The Bridge of Sighs is now unused; but used to take condemned prisoners from the Northgate Gaol (now replaced by the existing Northgate) to the chapel in the Bluecoat building across the canal.

- v. This length of the canal has many features associated with the operation of the canal, for example rings and rope marks.



- vi. There are also lines of holes in the rock face, 'pudlocks', which were to take the wooden joists, 'put-ups', used to support a platform for men quarrying the stone or perhaps for the roof of small lean-to structures.



- vii. This section of the canal forms part of the City Centre Conservation Area and is within the area covered by the Gorse Stacks Development Brief. Modern development along this stretch has been largely sympathetic but there are some exceptions.

- i. The towpath along this section is shared by pedestrians and cyclists being part of National Cycle Route 45 and is lit at night. Parts are narrow where the space is constrained by the rocks of the cutting. Considering that the towpath

along this stretch provides one of the best ‘walks’ in Chester it is surprisingly little used.

## **E.4 Major Features**

- i. The major features of this section are the Northgate Locks, the Northgate Cutting and the City Walls and its Towers.

## **E.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area**

### **E.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features**

- i. This section is very rich in interesting canal related buildings and features. The Northgate Locks with their associated buildings and green setting are a significant attraction in a historic city centre, unfortunately marred by the presence of the utilitarian bridge carrying the Ring Road. The original “barrel organ” paddle gear on one of the locks has been retained, although it is not always in use.
- ii. Above Northgate Locks there are several features associated with a former wharf. There are bollards on the off side, and horse steps (now covered by a metal plate) opposite in the towpath. Holly House and warehouses, 5 Canal Street, were probably built for the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company and could have been part of this wharf.
- iii. The Bridge of Sighs and Northgate Bridge both cross the canal at a high level and are important features in the cutting.
- iv. Other interesting features include several rings, possibly used for tethering horses, as well as rope marks left by horse-drawn boats on the rocks in the cutting. Close to Cow Lane Bridge (123E) there is a brick built structure alongside the towpath which used to form a bridge over a canal arm (now disused).



### **E.5.2 Other significant buildings**

- i. This length of canal is dominated by the City Walls which top the southern face of the cutting.
- ii. The south wing of the Bluecoat School is adjacent to the canal and contained the chapel which was connected to Northgate Gaol by the Bridge of Sighs.
- iii. The recent works to 2 Upper Northgate Street, to convert the building for use as a Dental Practice, have significantly enhanced this building and provided good views of the canal from its waiting room.

- iv. The terrace of small houses, 4-18 George Street, which are set at a high level in the cutting form an interesting boundary to the canal and close the view looking from the Northgate Bridge.
- v. The Temperance Hall in George Street is a Victorian building which was originally a Primitive Methodist Chapel. It is an impressive building viewed from George Street but, unfortunately, new additions to the rear spoil the view of it from the canal towpath. It is considered of Townscape Merit.
- vi. The Manse, 22 George Street is considered of Townscape Merit.
- vii. The Penri Chapel, George Street is considered of Townscape Merit.

### **E.5.3 Local views**

- i. There is an interesting view from the top of Northgate Locks, over the railway line, towards the Clwydian Hills.
- ii. The views down to the canal from the City Walls, and out of the cutting to both sides are some of the best in the City.
- iii. There are excellent views, too, down into and along the cutting in both directions from Northgate Bridge.

### **E.5.4 Landscape and wildlife**

- i. The most successful open space is probably the one between the City Walls and Northgate Locks. This forms part of a pleasant setting for the locks. There are 'natural sculptures' in the grassed area.
- ii. Trees, presumably self sown, populate most of the flatter areas in the cutting.
- iii. There is a good display of daffodils on the higher ledges on the rock faces in spring.

## **E.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. Examples of more recent developments alongside the canal which are acceptable, if unremarkable, are the group of houses to the rear of Canal Street which overlook the canal and the sheltered housing at 'Waterside View' which has attractive gardens on the canal side.
- ii. The 'green amphitheatre' open space is under used.

## **E.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The brick buildings on both sides of the canal by Cow Lane Bridge (123E) are unremarkable. The chapel is not used and neglected. The modern

extensions to the rear of the Temperance Hall detract from the building and its setting.

ii. There seems to be little management of the trees in the open spaces in the cutting.

iii. The open space between the canal and George Street is neglected and not accessible to the public, although there were once plans to make it into a Public Park with a new bridge across the canal.



iv. The Bridge of Sighs and the side of the Bluecoat School facing the canal are often covered in vegetation.

v. In the past there was a short length of fence under Northgate Bridge where the towpath is very narrow. There is now a feeling of vulnerability when walking this narrow section.

vi. Recent and proposed developments to the north of the canal and east of Northgate Bridge (for example the Travel Lodge, now student accommodation, and the new health centre) do not enhance the setting of the canal nor the view across the canal from the City Walls.

vii. The numbers painted onto the lock beams are incorrect and confusing.

## **E.8 Recommendations**

1. Any new developments should not compromise the character of the Northgate Cutting, nor interrupt the views which exist from the walls, out of the cutting or along the canal towpath. Particularly high standards of design should be demanded in this area.
2. The canal-related features which exist along this length, such as rings, original bollards, horse steps, original paddle gear on the locks, arch over filled-in canal arm, should be retained and interpreted where possible.
3. The trees and vegetation in the cutting need more active management to enhance the appearance and use of the open areas alongside the towpath.
4. The City Walls and cutting would benefit from sympathetic floodlighting.
5. A suitable guard rail should be reinstated on the edge of the towpath near Northgate Bridge.
6. The open space between the cutting and George Street should be developed as a small public 'park'.
7. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.

8. The Temperance Hall, the Penri Chapel and number 22, all George Street, should be considered for local listing.

## F. INDUSTRIAL CHESTER - COW LANE BRIDGE (123E) TO A55 BRIDGE (122A)

### F.1 Historical Development

- i. See E.1 above.

### F.2 Designations

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Chester City Boughton Canalside Chester Railway Lands Christleton
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Hoole Lane Lock, 1375740 Chemistry Lock and sluice, 1375738 Chemistry Lock Cottage, 1375739 Tarvin Road Lock, 1229365 Tarvin Road Lock Cottage, 1279055 Tarvin Road Lock Lengthsman's Hut, 1279062 Greenfield Lock, 1229360 Water tower, 1391536 Steam Mill, Canal Side, 1375732 Flour Mill and office, Steam Mill Street, 1375938 Lead works and shot tower, Grade II*, 1375860 65 & 65A Egerton Street, 1375789
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	None
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	The Mill Hotel Old Harkers Arms St Paul's Mission Church
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	None
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	None
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	None
<b>RIGgS</b>	None
<b>SSSI</b>	None
<b>Any other designations:</b> Site of Biological Interest (SBI) Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV)  Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV) Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	None Waterworks Boughton Hall and Cricket Ground Whole length of canal One near bridge123B 2 near The Holkham Group by Christleton Lock

<b>Towpath designations</b>	Adopted highway National Cycle Route 45
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### F.3 Character of the Conservation Area

- i. The area around the canal between Cow Lane Bridge (123E) and Chemistry Lock was the focus of significant industrial activity, served by the canal, in the nineteenth century. There were timber yards, brick and tile yards, chemical works and flour mills. A lead works together with shot tower was in use until 1986. Much of the historic fabric and street pattern of this area remains relatively intact. A number of former mills and warehouses have been redeveloped, or are being redeveloped, for a variety of uses. Beyond Hoole Lane the canal is dominated by Boughton Waterworks and its water tower. There are two interpretation boards providing information about these industries and the canal, one by Cow Lane Bridge and the other at Hoole Lane Lock.
- ii. The canal and much of the area adjacent to it in this area lies within existing Conservation Areas (Chester City Centre, Chester Railway Lands and Boughton Canalside) Most of this area is also covered by the Boughton Canal Corridor Development Brief (July 2001). The area has recently become part of the Commercial Business District policy of Chester Renaissance and there are approved development plans for the Shot Tower site (high rise housing) and the Boughton Business Park area (a new Waitrose store) with the two sites linked by a new footbridge across the canal. Work has started on the Waitrose store.
- iii. For part of this length the canal towpath runs alongside a road, Canalside. Posts prevent vehicles from straying on to the towpath; a variety of materials has been used including timber, similar to that from boats and ex-LNWR rails. The road surface varies but some of the recent stretches have successfully mimicked the original surface.



- iv. From Chemistry Lock to Christleton Lock the character of the canal changes. It runs through the residential areas of Boughton, Boughton Heath and Vicars Cross. At times it is sufficiently well screened from these to appear almost rural, particularly on the length between Tarvin Road Lock and Greenfield Lock, creating a 'green finger' stretching out of Chester. At the A41 (Bridge 122B) the canal enters 'green belt' and there is a break in development until Christleton is reached, although there is an application to build housing between the railway and the A55 bridge. Here the canal runs through the Christleton Conservation Area.

- v. This towpath is part of the National Cycle route 45 and so is shared by pedestrians and cyclists and is asphalted. This length is particularly well used by both, and is lit from Cow Lane Bridge (123E) to the bridge carrying the A55 over the canal (122A).

## F.4 Major Features

- i. The most important features on this section are the five wide locks which lift the canal from the city centre to the long pound extending from Christleton to Wharton's Lock. All except Christleton have lock cottages. Tarvin Road Lock has a lengthsman's hut too, one of only three remaining and unique to this canal.
- ii. There are several historic listed buildings which give the part of the canal below Hoole Lane Lock its industrial character; of these the lead shot tower is the most significant. There is a straight length of canal with good views, especially from Cow Lane Bridge (123E).



## F.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area

### F.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features

- i. Most of the historic buildings which line the canal between Cow Lane Bridge and Chemistry Lock relate in one way or another to the canal.
- ii. The gate paddle on Hoole Lane Lock is historic and probably original to the gate.
- iii. There are a number of interesting buildings worthy of note and preservation, for example the small corn mill below Tarvin Road Lock, and Tarvin Road Lock Cottage itself.
- iv. There are many features relating to the canal such as the Lengthsman's Hut at Tarvin Road Lock, the crane base at the pub by Cow Lane Bridge (123E), and original brick surfaces under bridges.



### F.5.2 Local views

- i. The most important view on this section is along the straight 'industrial' length from Cow Lane Bridge (123E) towards the waterworks at Boughton. There is an excellent view back into the city as well.
- ii. There is a pleasant view from Greenfield Lock towards Christleton Lock.

### **F.5.3 Other significant buildings**

- i. The most important buildings along this length of canal are the historic 'industrial' buildings. Of these the lead shot tower is the most significant but the buildings associated with it are of less value and falling into disrepair.



- ii. The various mill buildings are all very important and help to retain the character of the area, as do the converted chapel (St Paul's Mission Church) above Hoole Lane Lock and the Water Tower. The Mill Hotel, Old Harkers Arms and St Paul's Mission Church are all considered to be of Townscape Merit.
- iii. The apartment block adjacent to the lead works site is a good example of a modern building in this historic industrial setting.

### **F.5.4 Landscape and wildlife**

- i. Boughton Hall Cricket Club has the most extensive open space along this section of the canal but there is no access to the towpath.
- ii. The section between Tarvin Road Lock and Greenfield Lock is particularly attractive - mature trees and shrubs almost hide the new housing developments to the north of the canal whereas, on the towpath side the gardens of the rather older houses have mature trees and hedges to the canal. There is access to the towpath from most of these houses which are generally well kept.
- iii. There is an attractive small area of woodland with some fine beech trees alongside Christleton Lock.
- iv. There are usually many mallards on this stretch as children are often brought here to feed them. Sometimes swans nest along here too.

### **F.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The variety of suburban housing ranging from traditional red brick terraces to modern detached dwellings are typical of this sort of area and are in keeping with the canal setting.
- ii. The Bridge Inn has a large outdoor seating area which covers most of the former car park.
- iii. The new Waitrose development will hopefully improve the appearance of the former Boughton Retail Park.

## F.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area

- i. There are a number of negative elements. These include: the large HBOS car park adjacent to the canal below Hoole Lane Lock, the Bingo Hall and adjacent redbrick buildings by Cow Lane Bridge (123E), the inappropriate trees (non native conifers) planted on the off side of the canal at the new Aldi store (formerly Focus DIY) and the prevalence of Japanese knotweed (particularly a large stand to the west of Aldi).
- ii. The service entrance to the rear of Tesco and the Lock Keeper pub is shabby.
- iii. Pedestrian access along the north side of the canal from Cow Lane Bridge is limited and unattractive.
- iv. The security fencing to the Waterworks is grim.
- v. There are some unattractive concrete walls adjacent to the towpath and some very basic fencing in the Churton Street area of Boughton. The fence between the towpath and road, at Hoole Lane Lock, is dilapidated and needs repair. The edge of the towpath is also collapsing, despite recent repairs.
- vi. The sanitary station at Hoole Lane Lock is no longer serviceable and the elsan disposal has been blocked off.
- vii. Hoole Lane Lock Cottage has been rendered and the original windows have been removed. It would be more in keeping with the canal setting if it was returned to a more original state.
- viii. Chemistry Lock Cottage is falling into disrepair.
- ix. The former Focus DIY store, now Aldi, west of Tarvin Road Bridge (123) is an unremarkable building which does not relate well to the canal.
- x. The towpath between Tarvin Road Lock and Greenfield Lock was asphalted a number of years ago and now the surface is in poor condition.
- xi. The raised brick surface under the A41 Bridge (122B) has been partially covered with asphalt.
- xii. Between Greenfield Lock and Christleton Lock there is a short, isolated, abandoned section of canal. This was built to divert the canal while the

railway tunnel was being built. Vegetation is now damaging this structure and local residents are starting to fill it in with garden and other rubbish as well as extending their garden fences towards it.

- xiii. There is a planning application to build houses on the land adjacent to Christleton Lock, known as Trooper's Field. If built, this will remove the break in housing between Chester and Christleton.
- xiv. The numbers painted onto the lock beams are incorrect and confusing.

## **F.8 Recommendations**

1. Between Cow Lane Bridge (123E) and Hoole Lane Lock every effort should be made to preserve the 'industrial' feel of the area. Four storey red brick buildings which directly front the canal should be preferred to lower buildings set further back. This area is suited to a variety of uses – residential, retail, offices, community facilities, pubs and restaurants. Buildings should make the most of their frontage to the canal and not turn their back to it. Access to all public buildings should be easy from the canal side and mooring rings should be provided where appropriate.
2. A priority should be to improve the area around the Cow Lane Bridge (123E) winding hole. This is a prime site and an important entrance to the City, not only for boaters but for people walking to the centre from the station and Gorse Stacks car parks. There is a need for information on Chester and its facilities to be available at the popular mooring site near Cow Lane Bridge (123E).
3. The narrow streets which lead to the canal, for example Russell Street and Steam Mill Street, help to give the area its character. They should be preserved and appropriate street surfaces used.
4. The existing posts between the towpath and Canalside should be retained and replaced with similar structures when necessary.
5. Hoole Lane Lock Cottage should be treated more sympathetically to its original design and be considered for local listing.
6. The fence above Hoole Lane Lock should be repaired.
7. The edge of the towpath above Hoole Lane Lock should be repaired, again.
8. Chemistry Lock Cottage needs urgent repairs.
9. The new Aldi store at the former Focus DIY site should include a suitable waterfront with mooring rings.
10. The towpath surface should be improved between Tarvin Road and Greenfield Locks.

11. The short, isolated section of canal, above Greenfield Lock, should be protected from further damage. It could be developed as an off line nature reserve.
12. Christleton Lock should be listed.
13. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.
14. The Mill Hotel, Old Harkers Arms and St Paul's Mission Church should all be considered for local listing.

**G. SUBURBAN CHESTER, SOUTH EAST - A55 BRIDGE (122A) TO WAVERTON (118 DAVIES BRIDGE)**

**G.1 Historical Development**

i. See E.1 above.

**G.2 Designations**

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Christleton Conservation Area from A55 Bridge (122A), to Rowton Bridge (120)
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Christleton Bridge 122, 1130668 Quarry Bridge 121, 1187373 Hydraulic Sewage Lift, 1330232 Rowton Bridge 120, 1298829 Field Hospital, 1130640 Victoria Mill, Waverton, 1330259 Davies Bridge 118, 1130608
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	None
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	None
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	None
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	None
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	None
<b>RIGgS</b>	None
<b>SSSI</b>	None
<b>Any other designations:</b> Site of Biological Interest (SBI) Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV) Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV)  Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	None None Whole length of canal and the field opposite The Old Trooper Group TPOs between bridges 122 and 121 Several individual TPOs opposite The Old Trooper, SE of Bridge 121, SE of Bridge 120 and both sides of Bridge 119
<b>Towpath designations</b>	Adopted highway National Cycle Routes 45 and 56, and Regional Cycle Routes 70 and 71 to Egg Bridge, 119 Public Right of Way south of Egg Bridge, 119

### G.3 Character of the Conservation Area

- i. From the A55 Bridge (122A) to Rowton Bridge (120) the canal is included in the Christleton Conservation Area. All but one of the bridges on this stretch are contemporary with the canal and are the graceful arched type typical of the Chester Canal. Christleton Bridge (122) and Quarry Bridge (121) have stone wall approaches alongside the road which are unusual.



- ii. The small wooded area near Christleton Lock is probably the remains of the Deer Park associated with Christleton Hall. This and the fields below the lock give an important green break between the city and suburbia.
- iii. This stretch of the canal shows the transition from suburban Chester to rural Cheshire West and Chester. As the towpath from Bridge 122a (A55) to Egg Bridge (119) is a multiuse path it is covered in asphalt, and then it reverts to a grassy towpath to Davies Bridge (118). Also, the surface under Bridge 121 has been replaced with cobbles/setts, whereas under 122, 120 and 118 it is concrete (degraded under 118). Egg Bridge (119) however, has retained the raised bricks, but asphalt covers the half nearest the bridge. Many cyclists and walkers as well as fishermen and families with children feeding the ducks use this section to get to and from Chester.
- iv. The villages of Christleton and Waverton show the suburban character of Chester, while the 2 canal side pubs attract people to go onto the towpath to see the canal. Most of the development of these villages is on the offside, with many well kept gardens which abut the canal, as well as the fields in between areas of housing. This makes the towpath the edge of a green space, giving a very open feel to the canal.
- v. Christleton Mill, previously Butler's Mill, has been sympathetically converted into flats and the surrounding former mill cottages are also well kept and attractive. South of Quarry Bridge (121) the adjacent house and garden make a feature of the wider canal here, a winding hole for turning boats. One of the houses with a canal side garden has built an attractive shed which looks like a boathouse.



- vi. The modern development of houses close to Egg Bridge is settling in to the character of the canal in this area. Their gardens are developing into wharves and some have small boats moored outside. The former Victoria Corn Mill at Waverton has been sympathetically converted into flats, with an extension which has been built in a similar style. The mill itself, now known as Waverton Mill, is a Grade II listed structure with an associated wharf which is now part of the garden of one of the flats.

- vii. There have been three boatyards in this area in the past. Dean's Boat Yard is still in existence west of Rowton Bridge (120), with moored boats and a slipway, although there are plans to redevelop the site with very modern housing. On the east side of this bridge was Wain's Boat Yard, and north of Egg Bridge (119), was another Boat Yard with a slipway, on a former coal wharf which is now a private dwelling. These were some of the earliest hire boat fleets on the canal system. There was an even earlier one on the Wirral Line near Croughton (see Section 2).
- viii. Between Christleton and Waverton, there is a small caravan park on the towpath side which does not detract from the character of the canal as it is neatly fenced and has trees bordering it. There is an access gate through the fence. Approaching Waverton from the north, the open aspect of the canal is retained by the fields on the offside and the grassy area between the towpath houses and the canal. This area is well maintained with gates through many of the fences.
- ix. There is a change in character around Egg Bridge (119). The original bridge was replaced with a flat decked structure with a concrete parapet in 1937, so that it could meet the needs of the heavier traffic going into Waverton village. There is a car park here which is well used by walkers, fishermen and families with children feeding the ducks. This is the end of the asphalt surface to the towpath, so the whole feeling is rather more rural towards Davies Bridge (118). The houses on the offside again have attractive gardens running down to the canal, many of which are developing paved wharf type areas adjacent to the canal. These are replaced by fields just before reaching Davies Bridge.
 
- x. Away from the houses, the towpath hedge has a number of gaps which, together with some of the overhanging willows, gives a neglected feel to parts of this stretch of canal.

## **G.4 Major Features**

- i. There are no major features on this section of canal.

## **G.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area**

### **G.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features**

- i. Most of the bridges are contemporary with the canal and Grade II listed, except Egg Bridge (119) which was rebuilt in 1937. These elegant bridges were once painted white, but have been repaired with a mixture of blue and red brick. There are rope marks on the corners of the bridges – a legacy from when the boats were pulled by horses.

- ii. Christleton Bridge (122) and Quarry Bridge (121) have substantial and attractive walled approaches, adjacent to the road on the offside of the canal.
- iii. Christleton and Waverton Mills were both previously corn mills and still show features associated with this occupation. The sympathetic conversion and extension at Waverton Mill is attractive.
- iv. The towpath is more attractive after Egg Bridge (119), when it becomes a Public Right of Way, rather than an Adopted Highway, and is more natural.

### **G.5.2 Local views**

- i. Between Bridges 121 and 120, near the road access to the Cheshire Cat public house, there is what looks like a beacon on a stout pole. This, a hydraulic sewage lift, is a Grade II listed structure.
- ii. From Rowton Bridge (120) there is a view of a building reported to be a field hospital, used during the Battle of Rowton Moor in 1645. This is a Grade II listed building.

### **G.5.3 Other significant buildings**

- i. The Cheshire Cat public house is a converted old manor house and the outbuildings have been well converted into accommodation which is an attractive use of this site.

### **G.5.4 Landscape and wildlife**

- i. This part of the Cheshire Plain is flat, so there are no locks on this section. There is a small embankment to the north of Waverton, but otherwise the gardens and fields are at canal level. There are few tall buildings, and most of the housing is set back from the canal, so there is generally an open feel to most of the canal and towpath, which is very pleasant.
- ii. Much of this stretch of canal has private gardens on the off side; many have wharf structures, a few with boats and most are attractive. Some of the field hedgerows are gappy, and many of the trees have either individual or group Tree Protection Orders. There is a hedge for most of the length of the towpath.
 
- iii. Some sections of the canal bank have quite extensive reed beds, others have overhanging willows. Parts of the canal have recently been dredged and soft piling has been installed to protect the banks from erosion and stock poaching. In time this will provide extra habitat for wildlife. The reed beds will support beetles and other invertebrates which will in turn provide food for ducks.

- iv. Mallards and moorhens often nest along this stretch; many people walk the towpath with children to feed the ducks – especially at the pubs. There is also a pair of mute swans which usually nest here, and kingfishers are sometimes spotted.
- v. There is a selection of coarse fish in the canal as evidenced by the presence of fishermen.

## **G.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The two canal side pubs are fairly typical with gardens, and other outdoor seating areas, allowing customers views of the canal and access to the towpath.
- ii. There is a development of new houses in the grounds of the Cheshire Cat pub which are almost invisible from the canal.
- iii. The access to the towpath at Christleton Bridge (122) is stepped and sloped with wooden post and rail fencing and is acceptable.

## **G.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The towpath access at Rowton Bridge (120) consists of a few steps and a slope. The fence is made of wooden posts and scaffolding poles, with a dilapidated short brick wall supporting the slope. There is a wooden fence and gate, painted black and white, to the road. This is unattractive and detracts from the canal setting.
- ii. Access at Davies Bridge (118) is to a Public Footpath and consists of a steep flight of wooden steps with wooden post and rail guard rails. It is between the bridge and the structure holding the stop planks. This access is unattractive and detracts from the canal setting.
- iii. Adjacent to Rowton Bridge (120) on the towpath side, the house has erected a large overpowering solid wooden fence which detracts from the attractive canal setting.
- iv. At Dean's Boat Yard there is a complex of offices and associated buildings which are not attractive next to the canal. It does not reflect the historic nature of the area. There are plans to redevelop the boatyard, remove the slipway and build very modern houses which will be even worse.
- v. In places the towpath hedge is intermittent which gives a neglected feel to parts of this stretch of canal.



- vi. The canal edging has collapsed outside the Old Trooper pub. As well as being a hazard to pedestrians, cyclists and boaters, this is very unattractive.
- vii. As most of the towpath forms part of several Cycle Routes, it is covered in asphalt, so most of the horse bricks have been lost from under the bridges.
- viii. There is a CRT water point near to Christleton Bridge (122), but there are no mooring rings for boats to tie up to. This is a hazard to boaters and other towpath users. Rings will be installed by STTV in March 2014.

## **G.8 Recommendations**

1. The canal bank outside the Old Trooper pub should be repaired as a matter of urgency.
2. The proposed development at Dean's Boat Yard should be completely redesigned to be sympathetic to the heritage of the canal and its surroundings.
3. The Cheshire Cat pub should be considered for local listing.
4. Interpretation boards could be installed for the former boat yards, the hydraulic sewage lift, the Battle of Rowton Moor and the former corn mills.

## H. RURAL CW&C - WAVERTON (118 DAVIES BRIDGE) TO SPILLWEIR ABOVE TILSTONE LOCK BRIDGE (106)

### H.1 Historical Development

- i. See E.1 above.

### H.2 Designations

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	Tilstone Bank Conservation Area, from fishing pond to new spillweir
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Salmons Bridge 117, 1330258 Faulkners Bridge 116, 1330238 Nixons Bridge 114, 1130645 Duttons Bridge 112, 1230413 Williamsons Bridge 111, 1130647 Dales Bridge 110, 1130524 Bate's Mill Bridge 109, 1160267 Wharton's Bridge 108, 1160264 Tilstone Mill Bridge 106, 1130518 Wharton Lock, 1330296 Beeston Iron Lock, Grade II* listed, 1240680 Beeston Stone Lock, 1160260 Tilstone Lock, 1160222 Beeston Lengthsman's Hut, 1130523 Tilstone Lengthsman's Hut, 1330293 Tilstone Fearnall Mill, 1130519 Wild Boar Inn, 1130516 Peckforton Castle, 1135729
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	None
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	None
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	Beeston Iron Lock, 1006759 Beeston Castle, 1007900
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	None
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	None
<b>RIGgS</b>	Beeston Castle?
<b>SSSI</b>	Beeston Castle
<b>Any other designations:</b> Site of Biological Interest (SBI)	Brookhole/Gowy, SJ516603 (?509603), Grade A Nixon's Bridge Meadow and Canal, SJ489608, Grade A Tilstone Bank and Gowy Flushes, SJ 565595, Grade A

Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV)	Simpson's Rough and Foxey Wood, SJ546602, Grade B
Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV)	SUC (Main Line) SJ524603, Grade C
Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	Yes
<b>Towpath designations</b>	Public Right of Way

### H.3 Character of the Conservation Area

i. The canal is now out of suburbia and into the Cheshire Plain. Most of the surrounding fields are flat giving good views of Waverton Church initially, and then the Peckforton Hills, Peckforton Castle and the spectacular Beeston Castle. There are also views to the east of Kelsall Hill, Delamere Forest and the hills of Frodsham and Helsby. The canal rises 32 feet and 10 inches through the four locks as it approaches the foothills of the Peckforton Hills. The towpath is a Public Right of Way and the canal is crossed by the Sandstone Trail at Wharton's Lock and the Eddisbury Way at Brockholes.

ii. This open feel to the canal is cluttered by a two mile long stretch of moored boats on the offside either side of Golden Nook Bridge (115) as well as boats out on the bank at Golden Nook Farm. Near the farm, on the towpath side, there is an old brick hut (presumably once a lengthsman's hut) and a concrete structure in the field on the opposite side of the bridge, which is apparently a World War II strongpoint (there is another one in the field on the other side of Long Lane).



iii. Most of the bridges are the typical graceful brick built bridges of this part of the canal. They were all painted white in the past and have now been repaired to varying degrees in blue and red brick.

iv. There is a shallow cutting around Nixons Bridge (114) and then the site of a brickworks which is now a builders' merchants. After Crow's Nest Bridge (113) the site of a bone works is now largely occupied by an agricultural equipment company. Opposite here is the fairly recently built Tattenhall Marina which will hopefully blend into the canal scene rather better once the landscape planting matures.

v. Between Duttons Bridge (112) and Williamsons Bridge (111) an aqueduct carries the canal over the River Gowy and a footpath, the Eddisbury Way. This area is locally known as Brockholes. The spillweir takes excess water down to the river.



- vi. Beeston Castle is visible for much of this stretch of canal and at Wharton's Lock a footpath (part of the Sandstone Trail) takes walkers to it.
- vii. Approaching the Beeston Locks near Tiverton, there is a wooded hill on the offside, the small valley of the River Gowy, the railway line and the wartime PLUTO (Pipe Line Under The Ocean) Tanks on the towpath side. This gives the canal the feeling of being in a wide valley.
- viii. Near Beeston Brook Bridge (107), which was at one time the terminus of the canal, there is a wharf which is now a boatyard and opposite, on the towpath side, there are horse steps largely overgrown with reeds.
- ix. Woodland continues on both sides of the canal towards Tilstone Lock, which is within the Tilstone Bank Conservation Area. The settlement of Tilstone appears in the Domesday Book and was an important crossing point of the River Gowy and Chester Canal. The lower part of the village owes its development to the mill and canal activities essential until the Second World War for the rural economy of Tilstone and Bunbury.
- x. The new spillweir close by this lock is not in keeping with the character of the canal at this point. Much of the canal bank has been repaired using soft piling; this encourages reed growth which is present along most of this length of canal.

## **H.4 Major Features**

- i. The major features on this section are the four locks and the views of Beeston Castle. The original route of the canal, with its staircase locks can be seen from above Stone Lock Cottage.

## **H.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area**

### **H.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features**

- i. All but two of the bridges are contemporary with the canal and are the graceful arched brick structures typical of this canal, which were once painted white. They have grooves caused by the ropes from horseboating days with cast iron rope guards on the corners. Some of them have the raised bricks on the towpath as well. The accommodation bridges were all named after the local landowners at the time the canal was built.
- ii. The other two bridges are Crow's Nest Bridge and Beeston Brook Bridge which have been replaced with more modern structures, capable of coping with the extra weight of more modern traffic, but still fit well into the canal scene.

- iii. The lengthsman's huts at Tilstone and Stone Locks, together with another at Tarvin Road Lock, are unique to the Chester Canal. The one at Tilstone Lock has been restored by volunteers working with CRT Heritage staff.



- iv. The four locks on this section have a variety of bollards – some original wooden ones, some modern wooden replacements and some large old cast iron ones. Also at Tilstone Lock and Wharton's Lock there are large bollards (strapping posts) adjacent to the bridge by the towpath. At Wharton's Lock this is wooden, and at Tilstone it is cast iron. These would have been used to attach the boat rope to while the lock was being prepared for passage. Tilstone Lock still has the metal guard rails to protect the side of the lock from rope wear. There are attractive sweeping by-washes at all of the locks on this section.



- v. Beeston Iron Lock is Grade I listed and a Scheduled Monument. Many walkers and boaters stand and look at this structure in amazement.
- vi. The hut at Wharton's Lock is all that remains of the former lock keeper's cottage, and shows some evidence of the bomb blast which destroyed it.

- vii. For many years towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Beeston Brook was the terminus of the Chester Canal. The terminal wharf is now Chas Hardern's Boatyard, and boats used to transport both goods and passengers from here to Chester and back.



- viii. The Shady Oak was a historically popular canal side public house with both commercial traffic and pleasure boat users. It has a few moorings on the offside and there are lots of visitor moorings on the towpath side. It has had inappropriate extensions in the past, and is currently open (March 2014).
- ix. The towpath is natural here – as yet unimproved, and it is still used by many walkers and some cyclists (who need permits on this section).

### **H.5.2 Local views**

- i. Along most of this section there are clear views of Beeston Castle. The view of Waverton Church is also attractive, as are the views across the Cheshire Plain towards the Peckforton Hills and the rest of the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge towards Helsby and Frodsham.

### **H.5.3 Other significant buildings**

- i. Tilstone Mill and the views of other listed structures contribute to the historic significance and character of the canal.

- ii. Bate's Mill is an attractive building of merit and interest; it probably used the canal for transporting corn and flour, and the water from the River Gowy for power. It now uses the water wheel to generate electricity.
- iii. Beeston Brook House used to be a public house around the time when the canal terminated at Beeston Wharf.

#### H.5.4 Landscape and wildlife

- i. The canal rises up 32 feet and 10 inches through the four locks from the Cheshire Plain into the foothills of the Peckforton Hills. There is an old sand quarry in the field above Stone Lock which is now a rabbit warren. Tilstone Bank rises up to 60 metres above ground level below Tilstone Lock. The old mill pond is still visible on the opposite side of the road to Tilstone Mill. Below Iron Lock, the Pluto Tanks are an artificial hill with some imitation ruins and tree stumps, and farmed red deer are usually visible.
- ii. The River Gowy, and the Eddisbury Way, pass under the canal at Brockholes aqueduct, making it three levels.
- iii. This section of the canal is almost completely rural, so most of the length is open space. The views are expansive along a large stretch until the wooded sections are reached, but even here the canal feels very open with the valley of the River Gowy alongside. 
- iv. Much of this section of canal has hedgerows along both sides. There are wooded sections on the banks above Wharton's Lock, and also in the valley of the River Gowy. One tree near the Shady Oak public house has a Tree Preservation Order, and although there are many attractive trees on this section, they probably do not merit this protection.
- v. As there is a natural towpath, it is very good for wildlife with the many hedges and Eaton Golf Course, between Bridges 118 and 117, which has wildlife areas and a barn owl nesting box. There are several others spaced along the River Gowy, which itself is good for wildlife and there may be otters in this area.
- vi. The usual range of water birds is present on this stretch with a pair of mute swans usually nesting below Tilstone Lock or near the fishing pond. Kingfishers are often seen along the section adjacent to the River Gowy which probably provides nesting sites. Mallard and moorhen also nest and seem to raise many young. Swallows, house martins and swifts are present during the summer months.
- vii. As well as the rabbits in the old sand quarry, badgers are reported to live along here, adjacent to the canal. During summer evenings bats can be seen feeding around the trees.

- viii. The reeds and other bank side vegetation support many invertebrates including damselflies, dragonflies and banded demoiselles. The rotting wood which has been left in the valley of the River Gowy will support large populations of invertebrates as well as many fungi.

## **H.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The CRT Wharf and the new marina are areas which could be positive or negative for the canal depending on how they develop in the future.
- ii. Most of the access points to the towpath are acceptable.

## **H.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The most noticeable negative element on this stretch is the two mile long stretch of moored boats around Golden Nook Farm. This causes inconvenience for boaters who have to reduce their speed to go past, and as many of the boats and their landing stages are in various stages of decay it is not visually attractive to towpath users either.
- ii. An area of land south of Davies Bridge (118) is overgrown and collects rubbish. It detracts from the attractiveness of the canal setting.
- iii. The Agricultural Merchants, and associated buildings, near Crow's Nest Bridge (113) appear untidy and detract from the canal setting.
- iv. The access to the new marina at Tattenhall is unattractive and could be improved. Once the tree planting has grown, then the marina will probably blend into the surroundings better.
- v. The fences on the two spillweirs on this section, at Brockholes and above Tilstone Lock, are unattractive and not in keeping with the canal setting.
- vi. Where the Sandstone Trail crosses the canal at Wharton's Lock there are two unattractive kissing gates.
- vii. There is a modern playhouse in the woods between Wharton's Lock and Tilstone Lock which is unattractive in the winter months but which is largely hidden by trees when they are in leaf.
- viii. Iron Lock Cottage has installed PV (solar) panels on the whole of the roof facing the canal. They are unattractive in the canal setting, largely due to the pale colour of the frames.
- ix. The condition of Stone Lock Cottage is very poor. This is not attractive in its current state.



- x. Stone Lock Lengthsman's Hut is in extremely poor condition and in danger of collapsing.
- xi. The numbers painted onto the lock beams are incorrect and confusing.

## **H.8 Recommendations**

1. The area of land south of Davies Bridge (118) should be cleaned up and retained as a small nature area.
2. Any new development at the Agricultural Merchants near Crow's Nest Bridge should be more in keeping with the setting of the canal.
3. The number of boats moored on the offside of the canal should be reduced. This could perhaps be done by building a small marina in one of the canal side fields at Golden Nook Farm, and/or encouraging boaters to move to existing marinas.
4. The fences on the spillweirs should be painted in the traditional Shropshire Union colours of grey, black and white.
5. Stone Lock Cottage should be should be urgently and sympathetically repaired and considered for local listing.
6. Stone Lock Lengthsman's Hut should be repaired very urgently.
7. There are many features along this section of canal which would benefit from interpretation boards. These include the previous industry near Crow's Nest, Brockholes aqueduct, the locks and lengthsman's huts, the PLUTO tanks and the old route of the canal near the Beeston Locks, as well as Beeston Castle and the WWII strongpoints.
8. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.

# I. RURAL CHESHIRE EAST – SPILLWEIR ABOVE TILSTONE LOCK (BRIDGE 106) TO BASIN END, NANTWICH

## I.1 Historical Development

- i. See E.1 above.

## I.2 Designations

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	None
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Bunbury Lock Bridge 105, 1275369 Bunbury Locks, 1115812 Cottage at Bunbury Locks, 1115813 Bunbury Stable Block, 1320252 Black and White Cottage, Black and White House, Bunbury Locks Cottage, 1136074 Calveley Bridge 104, 1138652 Wardle Old Hall, Grade II* listed, 1312857 Barbridge Junction Bridge 1 (Middlewich Cut), 1312853 Canal House, Barbridge Junction, 1320254 Bremilow's Bridge 100, 1330145 2, Basin End, Nantwich, 1330140
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	None
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	None
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	Bunbury Locks, Bridge and Stables, 1006766
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	Battle of Nantwich, 1000022
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	None
<b>RIGgS</b>	None
<b>SSSI</b>	None
<b>Any other designations:</b> Site of Biological Interest (SBI)  Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV) Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV) Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	Bunbury Lock Meadow, SJ582588, Grade B Bunbury Brickworks, SJ582589, Grade B Hurleston Reservoir, SJ623554, Grade B Wardle Canal Banks, SJ607575, Grade C None None None known
<b>Towpath designations</b>	Public Right of Way

### I.3 Character of the Conservation Area

- i. The character of the canal changes through this section, from the more enclosed wooded hills below Bunbury Locks where the canal rises 15 feet 7 inches to its final level on the approach to Nantwich, to the open expanses of the Cheshire Plain above the locks. The A51 road is very close to the canal for much of the stretch.
- ii. As the railway approaches the canal north of Bunbury Locks, there is the roof of a house visible on the skyline. This would appear to be associated with the railway as possibly a station house, because it is very close to the line.
- iii. Around Bunbury Locks, there are often many hire boats having been returned, waiting to go out or being repaired. This can cause a hazard to navigation.
- iv. There are interesting buildings close to Bunbury Locks on both sides of the canal. Those near the small basin included stables and a beer house, although all of them have been rebuilt and refurbished so that there is no indication of their original use. On the towpath side there are some cottages which pre-date the canal and are Grade II listed, and a large traditional farmhouse with many large outbuildings.
- v. Evidence of the historic nature of the canal and its surroundings can be seen in the derelict brick kilns above Bunbury Locks, and at Calveley with the evidence of the transhipment between canal, road and railway (still operating until the 1960s when boats up to 5 tons could be transhipped), and the old cheese warehouse, now a Canal and River Trust Service Station and Yard. 
- vi. More recent industry is visible further along the canal with the former landfill site and the distribution depot of Boughey's and North West Farmers, all on a former airfield. The towpath edging is collapsing here, so a bus stop, to service Boughey's, has been built on substantial piling and the road has been strengthened for the large lorries.
- vii. Around Barbridge Junction there are still many buildings associated with the canal age. There used to be a covered warehouse over the narrows here, and there are the remains of this on both sides of the canal along with a large house possibly for the Canal Inspector of the time. Looking through the roving bridge over the junction, it is possible to see boats moored along the Middlewich Cut. 
- viii. In the village of Barbridge there are a few houses with gardens running down to the canal, although only the top storeys of some houses are visible as the canal passes over a short embankment. After the Old Barbridge Inn there are a couple of houses at canal level with attractive gardens.

- ix. The canal passes through flat farmland with hedges on both sides until it reaches the high banks of Hurleston Reservoir. This dominates the offside, until the magnificent view of the locks rising from Hurleston Junction taking boats on their way to Llangollen. An elegant roving bridge carries a section of the towpath onto the Llangollen Canal.
- x. Soon the canal passes through Henhull where there are permanent moorings on a wide section of the canal, and then there is more farmland with the farm buildings visible from the canal.
- xi. The towpath is covered in crushed gravel from Henhull Bridge (95) to Acton Bridge (93) probably for the large number of walkers who use this stretch. After Acton Bridge (93) the towpath is covered in asphalt all the way to Basin End (the terminus of the Chester Canal) and on towards Nantwich. This is part of a circular walk through Acton from Nantwich.
- xii. Around Acton there are views, up the hill on the offside towards the A51 road, of Acton Church and village, Hurleston Locks and Lock Cottage, and Car Transplants with cars stacked on shelves visible on the skyline.
- xiii. Approaching Nantwich there are small sections of embankment, with the moorings and club house for Nantwich and Border Counties Yacht Club. There is a short narrows before Basin End which was the terminus of the Chester Canal. Opposite the basin entrance is the start of the Nantwich Aqueduct Sculpture Trail (a Millennium Project) with a large horse made out of wood and metal from old lock gates.



## **I.4 Major Features**

- i. The major features on this stretch of the canal are the staircase locks and other buildings at Bunbury and the junctions at Barbridge and Hurleston.

## **I.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area**

### **I.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features**

- i. The complex of buildings around Bunbury Locks demonstrates the former uses of this area. The locks, bridge and stables are a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The warehouse, built after the other buildings, is now the offices, shop and cafe for the Anglo Welsh hire base, and it still shows signs of the hoist which would have lifted goods from boats into the warehouse. This building should be listed. The stable block is now used for boat building services, so most of the stalls have been removed, but the stable doors and roof vents remain. Although the lock cottage is listed (Grade II), the changes



which have been made mean that it does not have the appearance of being the same age. The buildings beside the basin were originally associated with the canal. The horse bricks are retained down the slope by the locks and under the bridge. There are very few bollards at these locks, and a metal post and rail fence between the top lock and the path adjacent to the lock cottage.

- ii. The remains of the brick kilns, above Bunbury Locks, are disappearing into the vegetation and are also deteriorating. They will have used the canal for transporting finished bricks, and are easier to see in the winter months.
- iii. At Calveley, the station platform edging is still visible from the bridge over the railway. The open space between the railway line and the old cheese warehouse would have been the transshipment area. By the slipway, there are the bases of the cranes which would have transhipped goods between the canal and the road or railway. There are rope marks on the roof supports of the warehouse, showing where the boats would have been tied up. The modern extension forming the service block is in keeping with the style of the old building.
- iv. Very little remains of the large warehouse complex which was around Barbridge Junction, but the impressive canal house, Junction House, shows the typical style of those built by Thomas Telford.
- v. The Jolly Tar public house, with its quirky architecture, has been used by commercial and private boaters since the 1950s.
- vi. At Basin End, Nantwich, the old warehouse is now an antique shop. Nantwich Canal Centre uses most of the remaining buildings as workshops or stores for their day to day business needs, as well as a new wharf on the main line of the canal (in the next section).
- vii. Many of the bridges on this stretch are contemporary with the canal, but have been altered so much that they are not listed; some are now flat spans and have been strengthened to cope with heavy traffic. There are graceful roving bridges at Barbridge Junction (across the Middlewich Cut) and Hurleston Junction (across the Chester Canal). The stone turnover bridge at Calveley (104) is very attractive with its space for storing the stop planks. The main Chester to Crewe railway line crosses the canal below Bunbury Locks on a large flat span deck, and the A51 bridges crosses the canal near Barbridge and Henhull - these bridges are art deco concrete structures. Most of the bridges show rope marks from horse boating days.
- viii. At Barbridge there is a finger post indicating which way to go for Chester, Middlewich or Atherley Junction, and there is also an old wooden strapping post used to loop the tow rope around when turning right coming out of the Middlewich Cut. The finger post at Hurleston points to Llangollen, Chester and Birmingham. All that remains of the Junction House at Hurleston are elegant railings which would have enclosed the garden.



- ix. The towpath is natural, although overgrown in places, from below Bunbury Locks to Henhull Bridge (95) then it is gravelled to Acton Bridge (93) where there is asphalt surfacing all the way to Nantwich. This section has many walkers coming out of Nantwich and making a circular route through Acton.

### **I.5.2 Local views**

- i. After rising through Bunbury Locks, the canal crosses the Cheshire Plain, so there are extensive views in all directions. At the top of the locks, Lock Farm is visible behind the stable block. Other views of note include Hurleston Reservoir, the Locks and Cottage at Hurleston Junction, and the church and village of Acton.
- ii. From just north of Henhull Bridge (95) to Nantwich aqueduct the canal passes through the site of the Battle of Nantwich, 1644. The canal towpath provides a pleasant publicly accessible route through the battlefield area. In this flat landscape, the canal bridges provide good viewpoints.

### **I.5.3 Other significant buildings**

- i. Near Barbridge Junction, Wardle Old Hall (Grade II\* listed) is not directly connected with the canal, but is adjacent to Goodwin Bridge (101).
- ii. The house known as 2 Basin End, Nantwich has been a holiday cottage and is now in private ownership.

### **I.5.4 Landscape and wildlife**

- i. From the wooded hillsides below Bunbury Locks the Chester Canal rises through the locks to summit level and then is flat to Nantwich. The Llangollen Canal rises up from this canal adjacent to Hurleston Reservoir which forms a high steep bank on the offside. There are small embankments and cuttings along much of the length, but most are so small that they are not noticed by the majority of canal users. The flat nature of the landscape allows far reaching views and makes for a very open feel to the canal.
- ii. The hedge next to the extended dredgings disposal site, near Calveley, has been laid and looks very attractive. Many of the overhanging trees are being cut back (2011) and this helps to increase the apparent width of the canal which is much better for boating. There are no significant individual trees on this stretch, although there are some attractive groups of trees, particularly on the offside between Bridges 98 and 99.
- iii. This section of canal passes through mainly non-intensive farmland. Large stretches of the offside banks have the new type of soft piling where there has been erosion. This allows water edge plants to grow and so in time protects the bank even more. The waterside plants will support many invertebrates, so



the usual collection of water birds is present including mallard, mute swan and moorhen.

- iv. Around Calveley there are many swallows that make their nests under the overhang at the old warehouse. There is a lot of food for their young over the canal and surrounding fields.
- v. The plentiful fishermen indicate that there are coarse fish present in the canal and adjacent fishing ponds.

## **I.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. Apparently the owner of the fishing pond below Bunbury Locks has plans to include more leisure facilities on the site. Currently this area provides more sites for wildlife, but some other activities could have a negative impact on the canal scape here.
- ii. The buildings by the basin at Bunbury Locks have been rebuilt and renovated and fit into the canal scene.
- iii. The industrial developments on the old airfield site do not have an impact on the canal, except for the runoff of surface water from the buildings and roads of Boughey's, which has caused the unattractive new spillweir near Tilstone Lock to be built. There appears to be some form of bund or water treatment which ensures that pollutants, such as oil, do not enter the canal.

## **I.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The towpath edging which is collapsing, mainly where the A51 is adjacent to the canal, is unsightly and potentially dangerous to boaters and towpath users. It has been in poor condition for so long that reeds have started growing and hiding the gap between the concrete edging and the towpath, so increasing the potential hazard.
- ii. The lack of hedging to the A51 and screening to the Industrial Estate along this section is not in keeping with the canal setting.
- iii. The large poly-tunnel at Bunbury Locks is presumably supposed to be a temporary building. It is unsightly, and together with the large number of moored boats at the hire base, can cause a hazard to navigation. The locks themselves are not well preserved, and the stables roof is falling into disrepair.
- iv. There are visitor moorings between Barbridge Junction and Goodwin Bridge (101). From here there is a desire line through the hedge to the road – this gives access to the Jolly Tar public house. This is both unsightly and unsafe.

- v. There is a large amount of damage to the concrete edging opposite the entrance to the Middlewich Cut at Barbridge Junction, and on the offside at the junction with Basin End, Nantwich. Attempts have been made to rectify this, but more permanent solutions should be found.



- vi. The original sash windows have been removed from Junction House.
- vii. At Stoke Hall Bridge (99), a footpath crosses the canal and there is an unsightly kissing gate allowing access to the towpath. This is the same design as used at Wharton's Lock where the Sandstone Trail crosses the canal.
- viii. At Basin End, the house known as 2 Basin End is listed, but the repairs are not very sympathetic to the building.
- ix. The numbers painted onto the lock beams are incorrect and confusing.

## **I.8 Recommendations**

1. The listed buildings at Bunbury Locks should be monitored to ensure that they do not fall into disrepair, and sympathetically restored when necessary. This particularly applies to the stable roof.
2. The warehouse building at Bunbury Locks should be listed.
3. The poly tunnel at Bunbury Locks should be removed and, if necessary, replaced with something more appropriate.
4. Bunbury Locks should be sympathetically restored.
5. The old brick kilns would benefit from some restoration to at least halt their deterioration, as well as interpretation boards.
6. The collapsing towpath near the A51 should be repaired urgently.
7. Safe access should be provided through the hedge by the visitor moorings to the west of Barbridge Junction.
8. The windows of Junction House should be restored.
9. A solution needs to be found to prevent further damage to the concrete (and boats) at Barbridge Junction and at Nantwich Basin.
10. Basin End, Nantwich, should have interpretation boards showing that it is the end of the Chester Canal, and explaining why it is significant.

11. The remaining historic buildings at Basin End should be retained, and when necessary the owners should be encouraged to undertake sympathetic repairs.
12. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.

## J. BIRMINGHAM AND LIVERPOOL JUNCTION CANAL – NANTWICH JUNCTION BRIDGE (91) TO MARSH LANE BRIDGE (92)

### J.1 Historical development

- i. In 1824 the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal Act was passed authorising a link from Nantwich southwards to Atherley, near Wolverhampton, where it would meet with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal. It was not completed till 1835, and was built to carry only narrowboats, 7ft wide, by then the industry standard.
- ii. By the time this canal was built, more than 50 years after the Chester Canal, civil engineering had developed to such a degree that no longer was it necessary for canals to follow the contours of the land as far as possible. The complementary techniques of building up embankments and excavating cuttings meant that the newer canals could follow much straighter routes than their predecessors. One of the masters of this new technology was Thomas Telford, who was the main designer for the Birmingham & Liverpool Canal. But it was not only the lie of the land that could dictate the route of a canal. At Nantwich, the owners of Dorfold Park, just to the west, objected to the intended route, so the engineers Telford and Cubitt had to build the half mile Nantwich embankment to avoid the Park. The result is a magnificent piece of engineering, with its centrepiece the wonderful single-arched cast-iron aqueduct, spanning Chester Road: an English Heritage listed Grade II\* structure. But even this new section of the canal was not without its problems since parts of the embankment collapsed a few times just after it was first built and had to be strengthened. To this day it has to be carefully checked on a regular basis and repairs carried out from time to time.

### J.2 Designations

<b>Conservation Areas</b>	None
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	Mile Post by Nantwich Junction Bridge, 1138543 Stop Gate at Nantwich Junction Bridge, 1138542 Nantwich Junction Bridge 92, 1136456 Nantwich Aqueduct, Grade II*, 1330146 Marsh Lane Bridge 91, 1312780 Dorfold Hall, 1000641
<b>Locally listed buildings</b>	None
<b>Buildings of Townscape Merit</b>	None
<b>Scheduled Monuments</b>	None
<b>Registered Battlefields</b>	None
<b>Registered Parks and Gardens</b>	Dorfold Hall, 1000641

<b>RIGgS</b>	None
<b>SSSI</b>	None
<b>Any other designations:</b>	
Site of Biological Interest (SBI)	None
Site of Nature Conservation Value (SNCV)	None
Area of Nature Conservation Value (ANCV)	None
Tree Preservation Orders (TPO)	None
<b>Towpath designations</b>	Public Right of Way

### J.3 Character of the Conservation Area

- i. This section of canal was originally the start of the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal; and it is now part of the Shropshire Union Canal system. This is a narrow canal built to take boats up to 7 feet wide, so the character is rather different to the broad Chester Canal. Where there are rope guards on the bridges they are much larger than on the Chester Canal and they are painted black with the large securing nuts painted white.
- ii. All of this section is embankment and aqueduct as the canal passes around Dorfold Park, a registered Historic Park and Garden, with its Jacobean Grade I listed Dorfold Hall. Unfortunately this is largely obscured by the many trees on the west side of the embankment, probably planted to hide the view of the canal from the Hall.
- iii. There are stop gates at both ends of the embankment, those at the northern end are listed Grade II, while those at the southern end are not. Both have recently been restored. The towpath under Nantwich Junction Bridge (92) has recently been repaired. This brick bridge is a turnover bridge giving access to Basin End. The former brick built lengthsman’s hut is now a modern Sanitary Station, adjacent to an ex-hire base with boats jutting out into the line of the canal. This now forms part of a new wharf for the Nantwich Canal Centre. There is a spillweir on the offside which carries excess water down to a stream below.
 
- iv. There are usually boats moored all along this stretch either at visitor or permanent moorings as Nantwich is a very popular place for boaters to stop, there is easy access to the town down the sloping path next to the aqueduct.
- v. Nantwich has expanded right out to the embankment, with recent developments visible down the eastern side, at the bottom of the grassy slope. As the canal approaches Marsh Lane Bridge (91), the canal returns gradually to ground level and passes a former canal house, which was presumably for the person in charge of looking after the embankment.
- vi. There is a Millennium Sculpture Trail all along the towpath which is asphalted here.

## J.4 Major Features

- i. The major feature on this stretch of canal is the aqueduct which carries the canal over the A534, Chester Road, into Nantwich. This is a Grade II\* listed structure.

## J.5 Positive Elements within the Conservation Area

### J.5.1 Canal related buildings, canal furniture and features

- i. The canal embankment and aqueduct, built by Thomas Telford, are outstanding structures in Nantwich. The aqueduct railings show rope marks from the many horses that towed boats along this stretch of canal, and it retains the raised bricks associated with this time. However, it would benefit from some attention to improve its appearance, for example the apparent leaks which are visible from the road below.



- ii. Nantwich Junction Bridge (92) is the first narrow bridge on this section and carries the towpath into Basin End.
- iii. The former canal house near Marsh Lane Bridge (91) is attractive.
- iv. Marsh Lane Bridge (91), which carries the road from Nantwich to Wrenbury, is in good condition.

### J.5.2 Local views

- i. Views from the embankment down the bank or through the trees are reasonably attractive. There are limited views to Dorfold Hall.

### J.5.3 Other significant buildings

- i. Dorfold Hall (Grade I) is visible through the trees on the embankment in the winter.

### J.5.4 Landscape and wildlife

- i. The canal is on top of an embankment for most of this length with the surrounding area much below it. This gives the area a very open feel, with the towpath covered in asphalt and used as a cycle path as well as a footpath. There are benches along the length and easy access at each end.
- ii. There is a hedge near Nantwich Junction Bridge (92) on the towpath side; otherwise it is a grassy slope down to the houses below. On the offside, after the spillweir, the bank is wooded along the rest of the



length, the wood being part of Dorfold Park. This provides shelter, food and nest sites for many birds and is attractive.

- iii. Apart from the usual canal wildlife of water birds, invertebrates and fish, there are also woodland birds, such as woodpeckers, in the wooded area on the west of the embankment.

## **J.6 Neutral Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The sculpture trail along the embankment was part of a Community Millennium Project, including the horse and another sculpture on the opposite side of Nantwich Junction Bridge (92). Apart from the horse, which was made from wood and iron from old lock gates, the sculptures do not seem to have any relevance to the canal setting, and there does not seem to be an explanatory leaflet available any more.

## **J.7 Negative Elements within the Conservation Area**

- i. The former Empress Line Boat Hire base has boats sticking out into the line of the canal. This is unsightly and a hazard to navigation especially as it is so close to the Sanitary Station. It is now a new wharf for Nantwich Canal Centre.



## **J.8 Recommendations**

1. In order to make the sculpture trail meaningful, the leaflet should be reprinted and an indication given as to where it is available.
2. A maximum length needs to be imposed on the boats using the ex hire base so that they do not obstruct the canal.
3. Nantwich Aqueduct should be repaired and maintained to a high standard.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE WHOLE LENGTH OF THE CANAL

This Conservation Character Appraisal clearly demonstrates that this section of the Shropshire Union Canal has a fascinating and unique history. In order to preserve this for future generations it is vital to protect and enhance this heritage, including the setting of the canal in both its urban and rural sections.

The following recommendations have been formulated in order to achieve this aim.

### Principal recommendations:

Recommendation		Involving
1	Any development must not conflict with the canal setting and must enhance the canal and its heritage by taking account of its historic importance, its environmental value and its role as a public amenity.	CW&C and CE
2	Design and conservation should be of the highest possible standard and sensitive to the historic and environmental character of the canal and its environs.	CW&C and CE
3	A heritage design brief should be developed for all canal related features and furniture including bridge access, towpath access, locks, and historic bridges.	CRT Heritage Department with input from CCHT
4	A simple design guide should be developed for householders living beside the canal to avoid inappropriate features.	CW&C and CE with input from CCHT
5	A strategy should be developed to encourage boaters to visit Chester and Ellesmere Port, and provide improved facilities for them.	All interested groups
6	Existing heritage canal features must be retained, protected and maintained.	CW&C, CE and CRT
7	The wildlife corridor of the canal must be protected and enhanced.	CW&C, CE and CRT
8	An awareness of the canal, its history, heritage and environs should be promoted as widely as possible.	CCHT

## Specific recommendations:

In order to preserve and enhance the heritage, setting and environment of the canal there are more specific recommendations which should be implemented along the whole length of the canal.

<b>Trees, Hedges and Fencing</b>		<b>Involving</b>
9	Retain, and reinstate, towpath hedgerows by replanting and laying where necessary.	BTCV, SUCS and/or other voluntary groups
10	Plant species suitable to the location.	As above
11	Designate more Hedge and/or Tree Preservation Orders.	Council Tree Officers
12	All boundaries between adjoining properties and the canal must be appropriate on both the towpath and off side.	?
13	Property owners should be encouraged to relate their premises to the canal in a sympathetic manner.	?

<b>Towpaths</b>		<b>Involving</b>
14	The towpath should be free of obstructive structures and vegetation and remain suitable for horse boating.	CRT vegetation team
15	The towpath surface in urban areas should be suitable for intensive use and surfaced with materials in keeping with the canal's history and heritage.	CW&C/CE and/or CRT
16	The towpath in rural areas should be maintained in a condition suitable for general access and surfaced with materials in keeping with the canal's history and heritage.	CW&C/CE and/or CRT with BTCV/SUCS
17	The original towpath surface should, where possible, be retained or reinstated, particularly under bridges and around locks.	CRT with BTCV/SUCS
18	If fences or posts beside the canal towpath are replaced, they should be sympathetic to the area in which they are located, and in keeping with the canal's history and heritage.	CW&C/CE and/or CRT

<b>Bridges and other Canal Features</b>		<b>Involving</b>
19	Repairs to historic bridges should be carried out using original materials and techniques or suitable equivalents that fully respect the original structures.	CW&C/CE and/or CRT
20	Where historical evidence suggests that bridges were formerly lime washed, consideration should be given to reinstating this treatment.	Voluntary groups
21	Locks and other canal related structures should be painted in the combination of colours traditional to this canal.	Voluntary groups
22	Remove lock numbers as they are incorrect and confusing.	Voluntary groups
23	Reinstate or retain historic paddle gear.	CRT
24	Restore and maintain the Dee Branch to the River Dee.	CRT
25	Restore the lengthsman's huts	CCHT and CRT

<b>Interpretation</b>		<b>Involving</b>
26	A sequence of consistent and durable interpretation boards should be installed at appropriate locations along the canal.	CCHT
27	Signage should be installed to develop the Riverside park/circular river and canal walking route in Chester.	CW&C
28	The use of information technology to enhance the interpretation of the canal should be encouraged.	?

<b>Wildlife Considerations</b>		<b>Involving</b>
29	All policies relating to the canal should be considered with regard to their impact on wildlife, and should ensure that they maintain and encourage native wildlife.	?
30	A wildlife survey of the canal should be carried out.	CWT/volunteer groups
31	Better links should be created/maintained to other wildlife corridors.	?
32	All stands of Japanese knotweed, and other invasive non-native species, should be eradicated without delay.	CRT vegetation management team and adjoining owners

Suggestions of structures to be listed:

- Caughall (Pretty) Bridge, 134
- Christleton Lock
- Brockholes aqueduct
- Bunbury Locks Warehouse
- Stoke Hall Bridge, 99
- Stop gate at the southern end of Nantwich Embankment

Suggestions of buildings/structures to be locally listed:

- Wharf wall at Burnells' Iron and Galvanising Works, Ellesmere Port
- Wharf near Top Farm, Croughton – if research shows that it is historic
- Stone Bridge House, Chester
- House by former Blacon Hall Bridge, Parkgate Road, Chester
- Water Tower Hospital tower
- Tin Tabernacle, Whipcord Lane, Chester
- River Lock
- Former Temperance Hall, George Street , Chester
- 22 George Street, The Manse, Chester
- Penri Chapel, George Street, Chester
- Mill Hotel
- Old Harkers Arms, Canalside, Chester
- Hoole Lane Lock Cottage
- St Paul's Mission Church, Chester – now residential
- Cheshire Cat public house
- Bate's Mill
- Bate's Mill Cottage
- Shady Oak public house
- Chas Hardern's Castle Wharf, Tiverton
- Stone Lock Cottage
- Jolly Tar public house
- Avenue Cottage, 1 Basin End, Nantwich
- Shed, east of Avenue Cottage, Basin End, Nantwich
- Former Boat Shed, Basin End, Nantwich
- Canal Cottage, Marsh Lane, Nantwich

Suggestions for the Buildings at Risk Register

- Chemistry Lock Cottage
- Stone Lock Cottage
- Stone Lock Lengthsman's Hut
- Bunbury Locks Stable Block

## 5. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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## Appendix 1 – Gazetteers

The gazetteers are separately presented as spreadsheets.

The Recommendations refer to those in Section 4 and have an abbreviated form of the Recommendation in the text.

The Condition statements are purely subjective and do not relate to Canal and River Trust engineering asset condition grades.

The Grid References are as central to the site as possible.

- A. **Industrial Ellesmere Port** - Ellesmere Port, M53 bridge (146A) to New Stanney Bridge (140A)
- B. **Rural Chester, North** - New Stanney Bridge (140A) to Mollington Bridge (130)
- C. **Suburban Chester, North** - Mollington Bridge (130) to Cambrian Road Bridge (126E)
- D. **Chester Basins and the Dee Branch** - Cambrian Road Bridge (126E) to the railway bridges (123K)
- E. **Northgate Cutting and Locks** – Northgate Locks to Cow Lane Bridge (123E)
- F. **Industrial Chester** - Cow Lane Bridge (123E) to A55 Bridge (122A)
- G. **Suburban Chester, South East** - A55 Bridge (122A) to Waverton (Davies Bridge, 118)
- H. **Rural CW&C** - Waverton (Davies Bridge, 118) to the spillweir above Tilstone Lock (Bridge 106)
- I. **Rural Cheshire East** – Spillweir above Tilstone Lock (Bridge 106) to Basin End, Nantwich
- J. **Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal** - Nantwich Junction Bridge (92) including Nantwich Aqueduct to Marsh Lane Bridge (91)

## **Appendix 2 – Summary of Recommendations for the Sections**

### **A. Industrial Ellesmere Port - Ellesmere Port, M53 bridge (146A) to New Stanney Bridge (140A)**

1. Plans to redevelop the sites of the former Burnells' and Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Company works should retain the wharf walls and scale of the previous developments. The wharf walls should also be locally listed. The plans to demolish the remains of Wolverhampton Corrugated Iron Works and the associated railway bridge must be rejected.
2. Any developments by the canal should be screened appropriately, avoiding the use of chain link or palisade fencing next to the towpath.
3. Offside industrial units which are unattractive from the canal should be considered for retrospective screening with a bund and planting.
4. Consideration should be given to finding alternative routes for the towpaths under the motorway bridges so that 14 foot wide boats can pass.

### **B. Rural Chester, North - New Stanney Bridge (140A) to Mollington Bridge (130)**

1. Any opportunities to reduce or remove the impact of the motorways, pylons, waste water treatment works, tank farm and pipes should be taken.
2. Unattractive fencing, particularly at the waste water treatment works should be replaced by hedging.
3. The owners of the fields adjacent to the canal at Stoak should be encouraged to improve their appearance.
4. The barbed wire should be removed from the Public Footpaths around Stoak.
5. Developments that would restrict the views of Stoak Church, the appreciation of the Backford Gap, or further restrict the views of the railway viaduct should be resisted.
6. Enhancement of the moorings at Croughton should be encouraged, including protection for the historic wharf there – consider local listing if appropriate.
7. Caughall Bridge (134), locally known as Pretty Bridge, should be considered for listing.

8. Development for the expansion of Chester Zoo could add to amenities, but should not be allowed to adversely affect the open appearance of the corridor east of Backford Bridge (133) and the canal section adjacent to Zoo-owned land.
9. The palisade fencing at the Railway Viaduct (132) should be moved or hidden by hedging.
10. The proposed Countess of Chester Health Park between Mollington Road Bridge (130) and Knolls Bridge (131) is an opportunity for interpretation of the canal at this point, as well as attracting more people to appreciate the canal. It is important that the view of the extending hospital does not compromise this site.
11. Remove the saplings between the canal and the towpath before they get established to improve the route for horse boating. Keep the area free of such obstructions.
12. Investigate the streams and pools of water across the towpath opposite Top Farm and install drainage as necessary.

**C. Suburban Chester, North - Mollington Bridge (130) to Cambrian Road Bridge (126E)**

1. The views into the city, especially to the cathedral, across to the hospital and to the Welsh Hills should be retained and protected from development.
2. Currently there are houses being built in the grounds of the Water Tower Hospital (the former Deva Lunatic Asylum), and it is important that the main building be retained and sympathetically converted, rather than being demolished.
3. The boundary between the new crematorium and the canal should be planted with a suitable hedge.
4. Stone Bridge House, 26 Balmoral Park, the house at the site of Blacon Hall Bridge and the tower of the Water Tower Hospital should be considered for local listing.
5. Trees at Stone Bridge House and the wharf by Stone Bridge (128) should have Tree Preservation Orders.
6. The University of Chester fence should be removed and the campus integrated with the towpath area. Any new developments by the University should properly address the waterscape.
7. The vegetation needs to be regularly trimmed by both the stepped and sloped accesses by Cambrian Road Bridge (126E).

#### **D. Chester Basins and the Dee Branch - Cambrian Road Bridge (126E) to the railway bridges (123K)**

1. The vibrancy of the Canal Basins should be recreated through continued sympathetic development and active uses.
2. The Boat Yard should be supported and encouraged to be a viable and successful business.
3. The North Basin should be opened up for visiting boats.
4. The towpath should have suitable heritage lighting reinstated.
5. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.
6. The River Lock should be repaired and the possibility of a lock in the weir investigated.
7. Tilston's Joinery Yard should be redeveloped sympathetically.
8. The Tin Tabernacle on Whipcord Lane should be considered for local listing.

#### **E. Northgate Cutting and Locks – Northgate Locks to Cow Lane Bridge (123E)**

1. Any new developments should not compromise the character of the Northgate Cutting, nor interrupt the views which exist from the walls, out of the cutting or along the canal towpath. Particularly high standards of design should be demanded in this area.
2. The canal-related features which exist along this length, such as rings, original bollards, horse steps, original paddle gear on the locks, arch over filled-in canal arm, should be retained and interpreted where possible.
3. The trees and vegetation in the cutting need more active management to enhance the appearance and use of the open areas alongside the towpath.
4. The City Walls and cutting would benefit from sympathetic floodlighting.
5. A suitable guard rail should be reinstated on the edge of the towpath near Northgate Bridge.
6. The open space between the cutting and George Street should be developed as a small public 'park'.

7. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.
8. The Temperance Hall, the Penri Chapel and number 22, all George Street, should be considered for local listing.

#### **F. Industrial Chester - Cow Lane Bridge (123E) to A55 Bridge (122A)**

1. Between Cow Lane Bridge (123E) and Hoole Lane Lock every effort should be made to preserve the 'industrial' feel of the area. Four storey red brick buildings which directly front the canal should be preferred to lower buildings set further back. This area is suited to a variety of uses – residential, retail, offices, community facilities, pubs and restaurants. Buildings should make the most of their frontage to the canal and not turn their back to it. Access to all public buildings should be easy from the canal side and mooring rings should be provided where appropriate.
2. A priority should be to improve the area around the Cow Lane Bridge (123E) winding hole. This is a prime site and an important entrance to the City, not only for boaters but for people walking to the centre from the station and Gorse Stacks car parks. There is a need for information on Chester and its facilities to be available at the popular mooring site near Cow Lane Bridge (123E).
3. The narrow streets which lead to the canal, for example Russell Street and Steam Mill Street, help to give the area its character. They should be preserved and appropriate street surfaces used.
4. The existing posts between the towpath and Canalside should be retained and replaced with similar structures when necessary.
5. Hoole Lane Lock Cottage should be treated more sympathetically to its original design and be considered for local listing.
6. The fence above Hoole Lane Lock should be repaired.
7. The edge of the towpath above Hoole Lane Lock should be repaired.
8. Chemistry Lock Cottage needs urgent repairs.
9. The new Aldi store at the former Focus DIY site should include a suitable waterfront with mooring rings.
10. The towpath surface should be improved between Tarvin Road and Greenfield Locks.

11. The short, isolated section of canal, above Greenfield Lock, should be protected from further damage. It could be developed as an off line nature reserve.
12. Christleton Lock should be listed.
13. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.
14. The Mill Hotel, Old Harkers Arms and St Paul's Mission Church should all be considered for local listing.

**G. Suburban Chester, South East - A55 Bridge (122A) to Waverton (Davies Bridge, 118)**

1. The canal bank outside the Old Trooper pub should be repaired as a matter of urgency.
2. The proposed development at Dean's Boat Yard should be completely redesigned to be sympathetic to the heritage of the canal and its surroundings.
3. The Cheshire Cat pub should be considered for local listing.
4. Interpretation boards could be installed for the former boat yards, the hydraulic sewage lift, the Battle of Rowton Moor and the former corn mills.

**H. Rural CW&C - Waverton (Davies Bridge, 118) to the spillweir above Tilstone Lock (Bridge 106)**

1. The area of land south of Davies Bridge (118) should be cleaned up and retained as a small nature area.
2. Any new development at the Agricultural Merchants near Crow's Nest Bridge should be more in keeping with the canal.
3. The number of boats moored on the offside of the canal should be reduced. This could perhaps be done by building a small marina in one of the canal side fields at Golden Nook Farm, and/or encouraging boaters to move to existing marinas.
4. The fences on the spillweirs should be painted in the traditional Shropshire Union colours of grey, black and white.
5. Stone Lock Cottage should be should be sympathetically repaired and considered for local listing.

6. Stone Lock Lengthsman's Hut should be repaired urgently.
7. There are many features along this section of canal which would benefit from interpretation boards. These include the previous industry near Crow's Nest, Brockholes aqueduct, the locks and lengthsman's huts, the PLUTO tanks and the old route of the canal near the Beeston Locks, as well as Beeston Castle and the WWII strongpoints.
8. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.

I. **Rural Cheshire East** – Spillweir above Tilstone Lock (Bridge 106) to Basin End, Nantwich

1. The listed buildings at Bunbury Locks should be monitored to ensure that they do not fall into disrepair, and sympathetically restored when necessary. This particularly applies to the Stable Block.
2. The warehouse building at Bunbury Locks should be listed.
3. The poly tunnel at Bunbury Locks should be removed and, if necessary, replaced with something more appropriate.
4. Bunbury Locks should be sympathetically restored.
5. The old brick kilns would benefit from some restoration to at least halt their deterioration, as well as interpretation boards.
6. The collapsing towpath near the A51 should be repaired urgently.
7. Safe access should be provided through the hedge by the visitor moorings to the west of Barbridge Junction.
8. The windows of Junction House should be restored.
9. A solution needs to be found to prevent further damage to the concrete (and boats) at Barbridge Junction and at Nantwich Basin.
10. Basin End, Nantwich, should have interpretation boards showing that it is the end of the Chester Canal, and explaining why it is significant.
11. The remaining historic buildings at Basin End should be retained, and when necessary the owners should be encouraged to undertake sympathetic repairs.
12. The lock numbers should be removed and the lock name plates reinstated where necessary.

**J. Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal - Nantwich Junction Bridge (92) including Nantwich Aqueduct to Marsh Lane Bridge (91)**

1. In order to make the sculpture trail meaningful, the leaflet should be reprinted and an indication given as to where it is available.
2. A maximum length needs to be imposed on the boats using the ex hire base so that they do not obstruct the canal.
3. Nantwich Aqueduct should be repaired and maintained to a high standard.

# Appendix 3 - Recommended Conservation Area Map 1:2500

These need presenting properly and are here as a guide (March 2014).

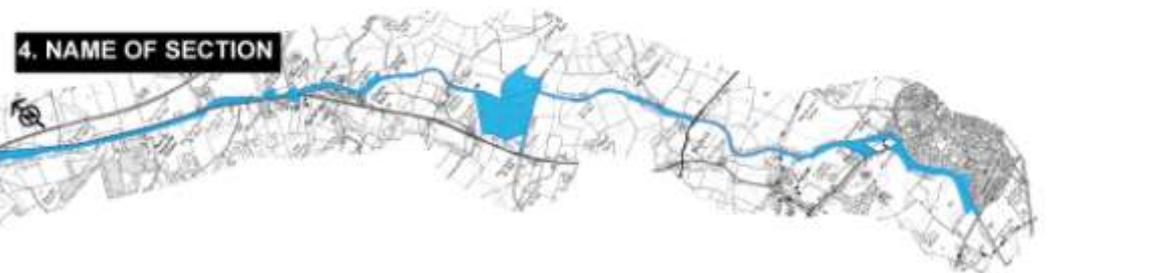
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**1. NAME OF SECTION**



**2. NAME OF SECTION**

**SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL  
CONSERVATION AREA**



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