

# The Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area Management Plan

## **Introduction to Management Plan**

The aim of this management plan is to complement existing national and local policies by providing further advice on the management of the conservation area. It sets out a possible management plan for the conservation area. The recommendations contained within the management plan are intended to put in place management measures to ensure that the character and appearance of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced, and assist in managing change by paying due regard to the area's special interest.

This management plan has been developed from, and should be considered in conjunction with the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

The management plan is divided into three sections. **Section A** sets out policies and controls in relation for the preservation of the special interest of the area; **Section B** highlights the identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the area; **Section C** relates to general proposals for the enhancement of the Conservation Area.

## **Section A: Policies and Statutory Controls**

This section deals with the following three areas:

- An overview of the planning legislation as it relates to the conservation area
- An interpretation of the existing planning policy framework
- An overview of the statutory powers of the Council

## **Legislative Background**

The designation of a conservation area and production of an appraisal document is not an end in itself. The character appraisal provides the basis for developing management proposals for the conservation area that fulfil the general duty placed on the Local Authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, now formalised into a national Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI 219c) to draw up and publish such proposals. The purpose of this document is to present draft proposals which seek to promote the preservation and enhancement of the special character of the conservation area, informed by the appraisal for internal consultation. The special qualities of the conservation area have been identified as part of the appraisal process in the first part of this document, and both will be subject to monitoring and review. The national legislative framework for guiding development in conservation areas is provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, this guidance draws on the themes identified in the appraisal, and satisfies the statutory requirement of section 71(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, namely:

*“It shall be the duty of the local planning authority from time to time to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are conservation areas”.*

This document reflects Government guidance set out in Planning Policy Guidance 15 “Planning and the Historic Environment”, English Heritage guidance set out in “Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas” published in February 2006, and policies within the Stockport Unitary Development Plan 2006.

## **Unitary Development Plan and Local Development Framework**

The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requires the Council to prepare a Unitary Development Plan (UDP) setting out the Council’s policies and proposals in respect of development and other use of land in the Borough. The UDP contains detailed planning policies relating to conservation areas, listed buildings and the protection of archaeological sites that guide and inform decision-making in respect of planning applications which affect the historic environment. The Council adopted the current Stockport UDP on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2006 to provide development guidance up to 2011.

### **Relevant UDP Policies:**

The proposals in this management plan reflect the policies in Stockport’s UDP, in particular those contained within Chapter 4, *Heritage Conservation*: HC1 (Conservation Areas); HC2 (Listed Buildings); HC3 (Protection of Archaeological Sites).

Other UDP policies which are relevant to the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area Conservation Area include those contained within:

- Chapter 1 *Design and Character of Development*: DCD1 (Character and Development)
- Chapter 2 *Landscape, Countryside and River Valleys*: LCR1 (Landscape, Countryside and River Valleys)
- Chapter 3 *Natural Environment*: NE3 (Green Chains)
- Chapter 6 *Green Belt and Agriculture*: GBA1 (Green Belt Protection)
- Chapter 7 *Urban Open Space*: USO1: UOS1.3 (Protection of Local Open Space)
- Chapter 8 *Leisure*: L1.5 (Countryside Recreation) L1.7 (Recreation Routes) L1.8 (Strategic Recreation Routes) L1.9 (Recreation Routes and New Development) L1.10 (Canals and Disused Railways) L1.11 (Development Related to Recreational Routes)
- Chapter 9 *Community and Tourism Facilities*: CTF2 (Tourism Development)
- Chapter 11 *Control of Development in Predominately Residential Areas*: CDH1 (Development in Predominately Residential Areas)
- Chapter 13 *Pattern of Shopping Development*: PSD1 (Hierarchy of Shopping Centres) PSD2 (Local Shopping Centres – OL16)
- Chapter 14 *Shopping and the Built Environment*: SE1 (Shopping and the Built Environment)
- Chapter 15 *Strategic and Sustainable Transport*: ST1.4 (Walking) ST1.5 (Cycling)
- Chapter 16 *Transport and Development*: TD2 (Urban Design and Streetscape)

The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 proposes new arrangements for the Planning system. This will involve the adoption of a Local Development Framework (LDF), which will in time replace the UDP. The LDF will consist of a combination of core strategies and policies supplemented by Supplementary Planning Documents on a range of topics. Where new policy is proposed to address particular issues identified in the Conservation Area, such documents will be incorporated in the LDF and a detailed programme for their development will be set.

The Government's Planning Policy Guidance Note, PPG15 paragraph 1.6 emphasises the key role of local authorities in the stewardship of the historic environment urges local authorities to:

*"...maintain and strengthen their commitment to stewardship of the historic environment, and to reflect it in their policies and their allocation of resources. It is important that, as planning authorities, they adopt suitable policies in development plans, and give practical effect to them through their development control function. As highway authorities too, their policies and activities should reflect the need to protect the historic environment and to promote sustainable economic growth, for roads can have a particular impact at all levels – not only through strategic decisions on the siting of new roads, but also through the more detailed aspects of road building and road maintenance, such as the quality of street furniture and surfaces. Above all, local authorities should ensure that they call on sufficient specialist conservation advice, whether individually or jointly, to inform their decision-making and to assist owners and other members of the public."*

## **Statutory Controls**

### ***Conservation Area Designation***

Designation as a conservation area brings with it a degree of additional statutory protection under planning legislation aimed at assisting the preservation or enhancement of the area. The main consequences of conservation area designation, as defined in the Planning Act (1990), are as follows:

- Conservation area consent is required for the demolition of listed and unlisted buildings
- Planning consent is required for the installation of satellite dishes visible from the public highway
- 6 week notice period for works to trees not already protected by Tree Preservation Orders
- Local planning authorities must publish detailed proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas and should show what weight will be attached to Supplementary Planning Guidance on individual conservation areas
- The desirability of preserving a conservation area is a material issue in determining a planning application
- The GPDO 1995 requires planning applications for certain types of development that do not require planning applications elsewhere and are 'permitted development'

- Local planning authorities can further restrict development rights on dwellings where the development fronts a public area through Article 4(2) Direction.
- Permitted Development Rights of non residential properties can be restricted using Article 4 (1) Directions which require approval of the Secretary of State

### ***Demolition of buildings***

Section 74 of the Act provides for control over the demolition of buildings in conservation areas, (subject to various exceptions). Paragraph 4.27 of PPG 15 – Planning and the Historic Environment indicates that, *“The general presumption should be in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area”*. It goes on to advise that proposals to demolish such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals to demolish listed buildings (paragraph 3.16 - 3.19 of PPG15). Conservation area consent for demolition would not be granted where it affects a building or other structure which makes a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. Permission for development involving the demolition or removal of such a building or structure will only be granted where it is beyond repair and incapable of beneficial use. In exceptional cases permission will be granted if the redevelopment or the result of the demolition would produce substantial benefits for that community (including the physical revitalisation of the conservation area) which would outweigh the loss resulting from demolition.

### ***Article 4 Directions***

Article 4(1) and 4(2) of the General Permitted Development Order (GPDO) enables local planning Authorities to make certain directions to withdraw permitted development rights given under the order. Article 4(2) Directions are most commonly in relation to conservation areas and apply only to parts of dwelling houses and associated buildings and structures fronting onto highways, waterways, or open spaces. The Local Authority can confirm Article 4(2) Directions once the Direction has been advertised locally and notice served on residents. They may be used to withdraw permitted development rights for a prescribed range of development which materially affects aspects of the external appearance of dwelling houses in conservation areas. Article 4(1) Directions can be used to withdraw permitted development rights on any type of land or building, whether or not fronting onto highways, waterways or open spaces and is the means for the Local Planning Authority to withdraw permitted development rights on non residential properties within a conservation area. An Article 4(1) Direction requires the approval of the First Secretary of State.

Government Guidance on the use of Article 4 Directions is set out in DoE Circular 9/95. It states that permitted development rights should only be withdrawn where there is firm evidence to suggest that permitted development, which could damage the character or appearance of the conservation area, is taking place or is likely to take place.

## ***Works to Trees***

If not already protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), anyone intending to lop or fell a tree within a conservation area greater than 75mm in diameter at 1m above ground level, is required to give the Council 6 weeks written notice before starting work. This provides the Council with an opportunity of assessing the tree to see if it makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area, in which case a TPO may be served.

## ***Urgent Works and Repairs Notices***

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural interest by affording the Local Planning Authority powers to take action in the following circumstances:

- Urgent Works

Where a historic building has deteriorated to the extent that its preservation may be at risk, the Act enables the Local Planning Authority (or English Heritage) to carry out urgent works for the preservation of listed buildings following notice to the owner. These powers can be used in respect of unoccupied parts of listed or unlisted buildings in conservation areas (in the case of the latter, only with the agreement of the Secretary of State, advised by English Heritage). The powers are confined to urgent works, such as emergency repairs for example to keep the building wind and water tight and safe from collapse. The LPA may recover the cost of such works from the owner.

- Repairs Notice

If the Local Planning Authority (or English Heritage) considers that a listed building is not being properly preserved it may serve a Repairs Notice on the owner. This Notice specifies the works, which the authority considers reasonably necessary for the proper preservation of the building and can only be served on statutorily listed buildings.

- Section 215 Notice

Local authorities have the power to serve a Section 215 Notice on the owner (or occupier) of any land or building whose condition is adversely affecting the amenity of the area, particularly a conservation area. This Notice requires the person responsible to clean up the site or building, or the authority may carry out works and reclaim the cost of such works.

## ***Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO)***

The Planning Act 1990 affords Local Planning Authorities the power to serve Compulsory Purchase Notices, with authorisation from the Secretary of state, on land or buildings that are required to secure development, re-development or improvement.

## **Section B: Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area SWOT Analysis**

This section of the management plan examines key characteristics of the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area following the designation and appraisal process carried out in 2008. It draws upon the findings of the character appraisal as well as comments received following the public consultation exercise. **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities** and **Threats**, are summarised below:

### **Strengths**

- Strong historical roots and local associations
- Retention of original building fabric
- Strong development patterns and rich architectural detailing
- Clear local identity with well established uses
- Quality of individual buildings reflected in the number of listed buildings and structures
- A number of locally important buildings
- Generally well maintained private buildings and land
- Visual harmony resulting from use of a limited palette of natural local building materials
- Strong retention of traditional canal side furniture and paving materials
- Value as a tourism destination
- Valuable leisure and recreation resource
- Ecological and wildlife conservation value recognised by SBI status
- Quality of views and vistas
- Quality of the surrounding landscape setting recognised as Landscape Character Area with UDP policies
- Diversity of offer due to changing environment along the length of the canal
- Potential as key commuter route

### **Weaknesses**

- Loss of character arising from inappropriate alterations
- Loss of character arising from inappropriate new development
- Loss of character arising from demolition of canal related structures
- Loss of traditional canal side features
- Areas suffering from anti-social behaviour issues
- Lack of provision of public amenities to aid enjoyment as leisure facility and tourist destination
- Poor linkages between the canal and adjacent areas
- Full potential for heritage interpretation not realised
- Areas suffering from litter and street-cleansing issues
- Sections of the towpath in poor condition
- Retaining and boundary walls in poor condition
- A number of key historic buildings currently unrecognised on Stockport's Local List
- Key buildings / structures in poor condition
- Vacant key building in need of appropriate new use and redevelopment

## **Opportunities**

- Improved access to design guidance, and advice on maintenance and repair for land and property owners
- Important gap site providing opportunity for high quality, sympathetic and appropriate redevelopment focusing on the development of Community, Recreation and Tourism
- Introduction of Article 4(2) Directions to control incremental change
- Review of buildings of local historic and architectural merit for inclusion on local list
- Enhancement and maintenance schemes involving improvements to towpaths and retaining walls
- Improved access to design guidance, and advice on maintenance and repair for home owners, developers, property owners and agents
- Improved access to design guidance, and advice on expectations for quality of new development within the area
- Enhanced provision of interpretation for the area
- Further development of tourism and leisure potential for the area
- Review of Tree Preservation Orders
- Enhancement of linkages between the canal and adjacent areas

## **Threats**

- Development pressure for alterations etc.
- Development pressure for redevelopment of key sites
- Further erosion of character through loss of historic fabric/original architectural details
- Further erosion of character through inappropriate modern development
- Further erosion of special character of the area through loss of important trees and green space
- Loss of historic fabric due to continuing decline of buildings and structures in poor condition
- Lack of investment to secure appropriate new use and restoration of vacant key building
- Loss of character through the introduction of insensitive public realm schemes including obtrusive markings, unnecessary clutter and poor quality paving schemes
- Alterations to historic development pattern
- Alteration of historic settings by the inappropriate redevelopment of sites in the surrounding area
- Decline in the quality of the environment as a result of lack of maintenance of open space
- Loss of traditional boundary treatments and retaining walls
- Damage to natural environment through insensitive new development or removal of important eco-systems

## **Section C: Enhancement Proposals for the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area**

This section of the management plan relates to proposals for the management and enhancement of the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area as identified within the character appraisal.

### **Listed Buildings**

Within the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area there are 15 Listed Buildings which includes a variety of buildings, structures and canalside features. Under Section 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990, listed building consent is required for demolition of a listed building, and for any works of alteration – internal and/or external - or extension which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Listed Building Consent is not normally required for maintenance and like for like repairs unless they would result in a loss of historic fabric or change to the appearance of the building. It is an offence to carry out unauthorised works to a listed building.

The requirement for listed building consent is distinct from the need for planning permission. Under Section 6(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the Council, when considering proposals involving works to listed buildings, has a statutory duty to pay “special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.”

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- Use of development control powers to ensure that proposals involving works to listed buildings or affecting their settings will be considered in the context of HC2: HC2.1 - 2.4 of the UDP and government guidance contained within PPG15
- Development of an Enforcement Strategy to identify and address unauthorised works effecting listed buildings in line with guidance contained within *Enforcement Guidance on Listed Building Prosecution* (Department for Communities and Local Government: London 2006)
- Continue to provide professional advice in relation to works to listed buildings to property owners / occupiers and Stakeholders (British Waterways)
- Further development of a pro-active strategy for maintenance and repair works with property owners / occupiers and Stakeholders (British Waterways)

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

Goyt Mill and High Lane Canal Warehouse are locally listed buildings which are recognised as being of particular architectural or historic distinction and as such contribute much to the special character and appearance of the area.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- Where buildings are identified as being of particular local interest and are included on the Borough Council's 'Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest' their retention, repair and renovation will be sought as far as possible and applications for works to such buildings will be subject to particular scrutiny in accordance with HC2.5 and other relevant UDP policies and Government Guidance contained within PPG15
- Conservation area consent for the demolition of any unlisted 'key historic building' (as identified within the Character Appraisal and on the relevant appraisal map) should only be granted where justified against the criteria specified in PPG 15 (paragraphs 3.16 – 3.19)
- Continue to provide up to date, accurate information and guidance with regard to buildings of local interest

### **Key Unlisted Buildings**

The conservation area character appraisal identifies a large number of key unlisted buildings of particular architectural or historic distinction which contribute significantly to the special character and appearance of the Macclesfield Canal. As such these building should be considered for inclusion on a local list of buildings of significance. It is recommended that the Council carry out a survey of any buildings within the conservation area, which make a positive contribution to the conservation area, in order to identify those for inclusion on a local list of buildings of significance.

Additionally, PPG 15 states that there should be a presumption in favour of the retention of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of a conservation area and advises that proposals that may involve the demolition of such buildings should be assessed against the same broad criteria as proposals for the demolition of a listed building.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- The Council will encourage all applications for extensions, alterations and change of use to these buildings to be particularly carefully considered. There is a presumption that all such buildings will be retained
- Undertake a survey to identify buildings of historic interest, which are not already statutorily or locally listed, for inclusion on the Local List or where appropriate the Statutory List
- Where buildings are identified as being of particular local interest and are included on any update to the Borough Council's 'Schedule of Buildings of Local Interest' their retention, repair and renovation will be sought as far as possible and applications for works to such buildings will be subject to particular scrutiny in accordance with HC2.5 and other relevant Policies of the UDP
- Conservation area consent for the demolition of any unlisted 'key historic building' (as identified within the Character Appraisal and on the relevant appraisal map) should only be granted where justified against the criteria specified in PPG 15 (paragraphs 3.16 – 3.19)

## **Minor Alterations**

The cumulative impact of minor alterations to buildings including fixtures and fittings has a negative impact on the character and appearance of an area and as such the special character of the conservation area could be eroded by the loss of these original materials and architectural details and canal related features – however small. All minor alterations should therefore be sympathetic to the architectural styles of the building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Certain minor works and alterations to unlisted buildings, in use as single family dwellings, can normally be carried out without planning permission from the Council. Development of this kind is called “Permitted Development” and falls into various classes which are listed in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995. These minor alterations can cumulatively have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of a conservation area. Powers exist for the Councils, known as Article 4 Directions, to withdraw some of these permitted development rights in the interests of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area. As the canal forms a waterway it can be treated as a relevant frontage, where such a direction can be utilised.

While some minor alterations may be carried out without the need to apply for planning permission under ‘permitted development rights’ or under advertisement regulations, permitted development rights are more restricted in conservation area. Flats, commercial and industrial buildings, and properties in mixed use enjoy only limited permitted development rights and planning permission will therefore be required for most development, including minor alterations to the exterior of buildings, the construction of hard surfaces etc.

Repairs to and the maintenance of existing historic structures must be undertaken sensitively to ensure that the appearance and condition of the fabric is not harmed. The regular maintenance of historic buildings and structures can help to avoid the costly repair work required to rescue them from dereliction. It is especially important to ensure that historic buildings are kept weather and water tight to prevent further deterioration and for this reason it is necessary to keep roofs, in particular, in a good state of repair. It is therefore the responsibility of the owners and occupiers to ensure that all minor works are sympathetic to the architectural style of the building or structure and the character and appearance of the wider area. The Council will work with owners / occupiers of buildings / structures in the area to encourage such sympathetic works and to provide guidance and advice.

### ***Recommendations for Action***

- Make available advisory notes for the owners and tenants of land and buildings within the Conservation Area and those affecting the setting of the Conservation Area to raise awareness of their role in preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- Consider the introduction of Article 4 Directions on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the special qualities of the canal’s edge and its boundaries of positive contribution are protected
- Continue to provide information and guidance as requested to property owners in respect require for works to properties

- Provide informal guidance and advice to the owners and tenants of land and buildings within the Conservation Area and those affecting the setting of the Conservation Area, as requested, in relation to sympathetic works
- Seek to procure funding to make grant assistance available to home owner for repair/restoration/reinstatement schemes
- Ensure all minor alterations are sympathetic to the architectural styles of the building and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- Development of an Enforcement Strategy to address issues of unsympathetic unauthorised works

#### *Relevant Documents / Guidance*

- Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (plus relevant amendments)

### **Satellite Dishes and Antennae**

Inappropriately sited satellite dishes are identified as a concern within certain areas of the conservation area. These have a negative impact on the special character and appearance of the conservation area as a result of being fixed in locations which are visible from the highway or waterway. In all areas, it is a condition of installing any antennae or dish that you must site it in such a way that minimises its impact on the external appearance of the building. In many circumstances, planning permission will be required for the installation of a satellite dish or antennae. Satellite dishes will therefore only be acceptable where they cannot be easily seen from public vantage points.

#### ***Recommendations for Action***

- Continue to provide advice and information on suitable locations for satellite dishes on buildings within the conservation area
- Ensure that where there is an application for consent for the erection of a satellite dish or antennae a suitable and unobtrusive location is sought
- Make available advisory notes for the owners and tenants of land and buildings within the Conservation Area and those affecting the setting of the Conservation Area to raise awareness of their role in preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area
- Undertake a review of satellite dishes in prominent locations on buildings within the conservation area
- Development of an enforcement strategy to address inappropriately sited satellite dishes and antennas

### **Commercial Buildings, Shopfronts and Signage**

Alterations to commercial premises in the conservation area or within its setting involving the insertion of new and replacement shop frontages, replacement windows, unsympathetic signage and advertisement boards are potentially very harmful to its special character and

appearance. It is essential therefore to ensure that these elements do not detract further from the character and appearance of the conservation area. Traditional frontages which survive in the area should be protected as far as possible and should be used to inform any reinstatement work to shop fronts in the area. Opportunities to reinstate original designs should be required whenever alterations are proposed. New or replacement shop fronts should be of high quality, sympathetic to the building and local architectural traditions and not detract from the character or appearance of the area as a whole.

There will be a presumption against projecting box signs, oversized fascias and internally illuminated signs. Formal policies contained within the Council's UDP, adopted SPGs and PPG19 should be adhered to in order to preserve or enhance the character of buildings and that of the Conservation Area. Opportunities to replace inappropriate signage will be taken as they arise.

The Council considers that advertisement hoardings are, by virtue of their scale and appearance, generally unsuited to a canal side setting. Accordingly, the Council will not usually give permission for the erection of new hoardings, which it may make use of its powers to secure the removal of advertisement displays where it considers them to impair local amenity. Provided they comply with best practice guidance, well-designed signs associated with canal side recreational and commercial facilities will, however, usually be permitted.

***Recommended Actions:***

- The Council will give special regard to applications to alter or develop commercial frontages within the conservation area and ensure proposals are high in overall quality and make a positive contribution to the conservation area
- Ensure high standards in the design of new shop fronts and in the design of alterations to existing shop fronts through the implementation of SE1, SE1.2 - 1.4 of the UDP in the determination of applications for development
- The Council will apply high standards when considering applications for Advertisement Consent in the Conservation Area
- Development of an Enforcement Strategy to identify and address inappropriate signage in the area in line with Planning Policy Guidance 19 *Outdoor Advertisements*
- Continue to provide design guidance in relation to appropriate signage and advertising in conservation area
- Seek to procure funding for the implementation of sympathetic shopfront enhancement schemes within the conservation area
- Undertake a photographic survey of all surviving traditional shopfronts and associated architectural and decorative detailing in the conservation area or within its setting

***Supplementary Guidance:***

- SPG: *Shopfronts and Related Advertisements* (Stockport MBC Adopted 2002)
- PPG 19: *Outdoor Advertisements*

## **New Development / Sustainability**

The built environment of the waterways represents a unique working heritage of industrial architecture, archaeology and engineering structures and is a valuable part of our national heritage, as well as an integral part of regional cultural heritage and local distinctiveness.

The special interest of the Conservation Area derives from its form, function and character, and the architectural quality of its buildings and structures. As identified and described within the conservation area's appraisal, the area's rich variety of architectural, townscape and landscape character is an essential element of its special character and appearance with the canal passing through a number of distinct and discernable character areas. The built environment is greatly enhanced by the countryside and the large number of attractive, well maintained public and private green spaces within the area. The conservation area exhibits a strong linear form focusing on the length of the canal and significant areas of canal side development or open areas. Along the canal buildings vary greatly in scale and height, with many of the industrial buildings rising to three or four storeys in height. Domestic buildings tend to be of a smaller scale, rarely rising above two-storeys in height. Key elements in establishing the character of the area are the contrasts in the often constrained and confined settings between the suburban/urban stretches and the openness of the rural stretches with their open views or glimpses of the surrounding countryside and hills. Local stone is the predominant building material used in canal related architecture and structures, with brick being used in a few of the canal side mill buildings and adjacent late 19<sup>th</sup> / early twentieth century development.

The significance of the area's natural environment is acknowledged through its Green Belt status and its designation as a Site of Biological Importance. In addition, the Macclesfield Canal runs through the Hazel Grove – High Lane Landscape Character Area, defined within Stockport's Unitary Development Plan. Any proposed development must therefore give due recognition to these additional levels of planning controls and associated policies within the UDP.

The conservation area character appraisal identifies areas of development, which are intrusive in the conservation area by virtue of their, scale, massing and materials and detailing. New development which pays minimal respect to local building traditions and which detracts from the special character and appearance of the conservation area such as inappropriate new housing developments and commercial and industrial properties, the construction of unsympathetic extensions, and the loss of open spaces, results in the loss of the special qualities that the designation is intended to protect. It is therefore critical that any development which occurs within the conservation area complements the qualities of its context defined within the Macclesfield Canal Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

Successful new developments respond sensitively to existing building forms, reinforcing the importance of group value and ensuring a positive relationship with the water. Opportunities should be taken to frame the waterspace, optimise views and exploit aspect. The unwelcome impact of cars at the waterside should be carefully considered and effectively controlled by reserving the waterside for higher-value uses, through the careful siting of buildings and by appropriately screening their impact. New buildings should not impinge on any significant open spaces, on publicly accessible areas, or necessitate the destruction of buildings that contribute to the character or appearance of the place.

The historic buildings and structures on the waterways are irreplaceable, and as such high standards of protection and conservation must be applied to prevent the character of the system from being eroded. It is particularly important that new waterside development, as well as improvement or restoration of the waterway itself, respects the historic fabric, and conserves and, if possible, enhances the waterway scene creating a worthwhile legacy.

The presumption will be for the retention of existing buildings which make a positive contribution to the conservation area. The creative reuse of historic buildings is inherently sustainable and contributes powerfully to the preservation of local distinctiveness along the waterway network. Adherence to accepted conservation principles helps protect the significance of places, whilst harnessing the creativity of architects and designers to promote sustainable new uses. In converting buildings for new uses, the most successful developments acknowledge local distinctiveness, ensuring the preservation of patina, or evidence of use, such as worn cobbles at the lockside, or rope markings on bridge parapets (a legacy of horse-drawn boats), with an approach that seeks to avoid over tidiness and gentrification.

The scale, massing, architectural detailing and pattern of development of any new development within the conservation area or affecting the setting of the conservation area will be expected to respect that of the existing built environment and its character. The materials and building techniques used should be as high quality as those used in the existing buildings and the care and skill with which these structures were erected, sets the benchmark for new development in the conservation area. Traditional materials typical of the conservation area, identified within the appraisal, will be expected to complement the local built heritage. Where modern materials are proposed these should be in harmony with traditional materials. Extensions and alterations to buildings will be expected to follow scale, proportions, features, detailing and materials of existing buildings. Boundary walls, hedge planting and trees are important features in defining public and private spaces in the area, providing visual continuity through the area and as such boundary treatments will be expected to reflect those identified as typical of the area.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- The Council will ensure that new development within the conservation area or affecting the setting of the conservation area preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the area through the implementation of HC1: HC1.1 - 1.3 and HC2: HC2.1 - 2.5, and CDH1: CDH1.1 - 1.2 of the UDP
- Production of guidance notes for applicants on expectations for submission of planning applications in conservation areas including the requirement for a Design and Access Statement in the validation of all planning applications which clearly demonstrates how the proposal fits the context of the site and its immediate surroundings.
- Continued production of design briefs and guidelines in relation to any specific development sites in the area
- Promote high standards of design of any new development within the conservation area, in accordance with national best practice and guidance (English Heritage and CABE)

### *Supplementary Documents/Guidance:*

- *SPD Sustainable Design and Construction (SMBC 2006)*
- *SPG Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings (SMBC 2001)*
- *SPG Design of Residential Development (SMBC 2007)*
- *Buildings in Context: New Development in Historic Areas (CABE & English Heritage 2001)*
- *Waterways & Development Plans (British Waterways February 2003)*
- *Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)*

### **Connectivity and Legibility**

The nature and character of the conservation area which focuses on a 3 mile stretch of waterway means that many different areas are taken into its boundaries. Many areas share a distinct relationship, both visual and physical with the canal while for others this relationship is more remote. Through careful and appropriate design and planning, the value and character of the waterside can be extended into the surrounding neighbourhoods, strengthening links between adjacent local areas and the canal. This can be achieved through the consistent use of visual references and landscape details to establish a sense of place. Opportunities to sensitively improve interaction with the waterspace and widening its appeal will be encouraged.

### **Boundary Treatments**

Boundaries in the canal conservation area are defined by sections of stone walling, hedges and trees. These boundary features are very important, providing a strong link to the historic layout of the conservation area and the development of the canals. The majority of drystone walling, especially at rural / semi-rural locations provide a habitat that supports a variety of flora and fauna, invertebrates and other wildlife. As such the demolition, unsympathetic alteration and lack of / inappropriate maintenance of these important elements would have a detrimental impact on the special character and appearance of the area and alter the important demarcation of spaces.

Unfortunately, in some isolated areas, later development has added less appropriate boundaries between the canal corridors and adjoining sites and properties with inappropriately designed walls and fencing, and overgrown and ill maintained trees and hedging, which encourage litter and anti-social behaviour in some cases. It is important that materials and detailing found in the locality are used to help fit new development into its context and provide examples for new boundary treatments.

The Councils will seek to retain existing features such as walls, hedges or trees and resist proposals to remove traditional boundaries or promote new boundary treatments which fail to respect the form and materials of traditional boundary treatments in the canal conservation area. Opportunities to restore boundaries in poor condition or to replace inappropriate boundaries will be encouraged.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- Introduction of Article 4(2) Directions to protect against unsympathetic alteration to domestic boundary treatments in the conservation area
- Work with property owners, land owners and stakeholders to seek opportunities for the sensitive restoration / replacement / maintenance of boundary features in the conservation area
- Undertake a comprehensive photographic survey of boundary treatments in the area
- Continue to provide design guidance/advice to owners/occupiers in the area with regard to appropriate boundary treatments

## **Public Realm**

### **Canalside and Towpaths**

The appraisal identifies a number of small public realm features of real interest within the conservation area, directly related to the canal. These include cobbled pathways, mooring bollards and rings, kickers alongside locks, milestones, quarter milestones, and the various types of bridges, many of which are listed. These important should be retained or incorporated in new landscaping wherever possible. Proposals for the removal of such features and materials will be resisted.

Further opportunities exist to enhance towpaths to the conservation area, including interpretation panels, signage, seating, bound surfaces and other measures in a manner consistent with the character of the area. 'Off-the-peg' heritage solutions for such features should be avoided and existing or photographic evidence utilised to inform designs for new insertions, which would be distinctive and reflect the character of the various canals. Such opportunities could be realised through appropriate measures, such as contributions through s106 agreements from adjoining developments to the canal.

The character appraisal also identifies certain sections of the towpath which is in poor condition and/or has been insensitively altered. The design, materials and detailing of towpath access points, surfacing, canalside furniture / features should respect the established character of the conservation area. Any improvements to / maintenance of the towpath area should be appropriate to its character and be visually harmonious, ensuring that it is neither run down in its appearance nor completely sanitised. The reinstatement of the stone canal banks, and copings where they are missing or in need of repair should be considered and the regular clearing of vegetation from between the stones. Where the canal bank is traditionally unmade, such as at the edges of fields, no action is necessary. The vegetation along the towpath and the canal banks should be managed to ensure that it is suitably rugged, without looking overgrown and neglected. The complete removal of vegetation or 'over-maintained' banks and verges are both inappropriate to the traditional character of the Conservation Area. The growth of vegetation along and within the canal must also be managed in a way which respects the canal's status as a Site of Biological Importance.

## Adjacent Areas

The canal conservation area widens at a number of points to include some areas of urban and industrial development. Most of the streets and roads in these parts of the conservation area are highly engineered to meet modern requirements and most of the road surfaces and pavements are surfaced with tarmac or concrete slabs. Poor quality surfacing combined with unsympathetic street furniture has a considerable impact on the character and visual quality of the conservation area. In some areas this has provided an uneasy juxtaposition between historic buildings and modern, uncoordinated streetscapes. Opportunities to enhance these areas should be sought.

## Illumination

The lack of illumination throughout much of the area assists in retaining the character of the Area. Poor quality lighting, whether on development sites, or on highways, will have a detrimental impact on the character, setting and appearance of the Area, and should be considered carefully prior to any implementation of lighting schemes.

## ***Recommended Actions***

- The Councils will seek to work with partners to ensure the retention of existing or the reinsertion of historic features and that any new canalside and towpath related works and other related features bring a positive improvement to the canal conservation area. It will also work to with partners of adjoining developments through s106 agreements to contribute funding to such enhancements.
- Continue to work with British waterways in all matters relating to the condition of towpaths and canalside furniture
- Seek opportunities for appropriate enhancement and maintenance schemes and continue to provide guidance for public realm enhancement works
- Seek to procure a co-ordinated approach to public realm works via consultation between all relevant Council Departments and Stakeholders
- Seek to procure funding for the implementation of sympathetic environmental enhancement schemes within the conservation area
- Liaison between Planning, Conservation/Regeneration and Highways should be further developed, with an agreed approach to new surfacing within public areas
- Street and canalside furniture should be co-ordinated as part of new highway and development schemes, and the addition of clutter should be avoided in order to reduce obstacles to pedestrians / canal users
- The Council will seek to ensure the retention of any surviving historic streetscape features
- Any future highway / towpath works should bring a positive improvement to the character and appearance of the conservation area in line with best practice recommendations
- Undertake a comprehensive photographic audit of street and canal side furniture in the Conservation Area and within the setting of the Conservation Area.
- Seek to develop specific guidance for public realm works within Conservation Areas which addresses reinstatement/repair works

- Seek to develop a strategy for the development of traffic management within the conservation area via consultation with all relevant Council Departments and stakeholders
- The Council will seek to work with the Council's Area Conditions Officers, Stakeholders and local residents and groups to maintain the environment of the canal and address litter and environmental cleansing regimes
- Where public lighting is proposed for new developments within or abutting the conservation area, consideration must be given to the impact of lighting on the Area. The Council will ensure the quality of any such schemes, through the Planning process
- Consideration must be given to the preservation and enhancement of the special character and appearance of the conservation area through the appropriate use and design of highway's street lighting, as and when this is to be replaced

#### *Supplementary Documents/Guidance*

- Transport and Highways in Residential Areas – (SMBC 2007)
- Footways Policy (SMBC 2005)
- Traffic Management in Historic Areas (Department for Transport)
- *Streets for All* (North West) - English Heritage Publication (2005)
- *Manual for Streets* (CABE March 2007)
- *Save Our Streets* (English Heritage October 2004)
- New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (c. 22)
- Managing Works on the Street (Department for Transport 2007)
- Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 (with respect to litter)

#### **Setting and View and Open Spaces**

The setting of the conservation area is very important and development which impacts in a detrimental way upon the immediate setting and longer views into and from the conservation area will be resisted. Important views are identified on the appraisal maps but these are in no way exhaustive and consideration must be given to both long distance and short views and vistas, and glimpses which characterise the views both to and from the conservation area. The Councils will seek to ensure that all development serves to respect these important views. In particular, the green open spaces within and adjoining the canal should be preserved. Many vistas are identified along the canals as a result of changes of height (from bridges etc.) or direction and should also be given regard to in any proposals for future change.

#### ***Recommended Actions:***

- The Councils will seek to ensure that all development respects the important views within, into and from and their associated open spaces to the conservation areas, as identified in the appraisals. The Councils will seek to ensure that these remain protected from inappropriate forms of development and that due regard is paid to these views and open spaces in the formulation of redevelopment or enhancement schemes in accordance with policy HC1.3 of Stockport's UDP

## **The Natural Environment**

The conservation area makes a valuable contribution to the quality of the landscape and provides a rich and diverse environmental resource. It provides a sanctuary for a wide variety of wildlife, flora and fauna. Much of the wildlife value is due to the combination of different habitats within a narrow strip of land, which gives the waterway a unique biodiversity while strongly influencing the character of areas adjacent to the canal corridor. This is reflected in the SBI status that the Council has placed on the full length of the canal and a number and the policies contained within the UDP for their continued recognition and protection. As such, it is essential that the waterway is managed in a way that conserves and, where possible, enhances its environmental value.

Additionally, British Waterways has introduced an environmental code of practice to help ensure that both environmental and heritage issues are fully considered before any work is carried out and The Environment Agency also operates a stringent environmental code of practice (*Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation*) which provides advice on measures to protect wildlife from harmful effects of canal side or navigation activities.

## **Green Belt and Landscape Character Areas**

Much of the land through which the canal passes is designated Green Belt. Additionally the Macclesfield Canal passes through the Hazel Grove-High Lane Landscape Character Area. The special character and appearance of the area is described within Stockport's Unitary Development Plan. Proposed development in these areas is strictly controlled and is subject to guidance under policy LCR1.1 of Stockport's Unitary Development Plan.

## ***Recommended Actions***

- The Council will continue to ensure that the area's Green Belt, SBI and Landscape Character Area status is given due recognition through the implementation of all relevant UDP policies contained within NE1 & NE2 and GBA1 & GBA2 & LCR1
- Ensure all proposed development respects the important contribution the canal and its surrounding areas makes to the natural environment
- The Council will seek to work with stakeholders to secure the continued contribution of the canal as an ecological resource, as a defining characteristic of the canal, through encouraging appropriate ongoing maintenance regimes
- The Council will seek to work with Stakeholders and local residents and groups to maintain the environment of the canal and address litter and environmental cleansing regimes

## ***Supplementary Documents***

- Stockport Council's Strategic Plan 2007-2010 'Greener, Safer, Stronger'
- Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
- Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts (January 1995, Amended March 2001)
- Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas (2004)

- Countryside Act 1949
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996
- Environmental Protection Act 1990 (with respect to litter)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
- Waterways for Tomorrow (DEFRA 2000)
- Guidance for Freshwater Habitats Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Canals (The Joint Nature Conservation Committee - March 2005)
- The Environment Agency Code of Practice on Conservation, Access and Recreation

### **Trees & Hedgerows**

Trees and hedgerows are fundamental to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Along rural stretches of the canal mature trees and hedgerows are a key component of the areas special interest while in more developed locations they make an essential contribution to the setting of buildings, the screening of areas and in the framing of views. As well as adding colour variation and interest to the Area throughout the year they assist in softening the urban landscape and maintaining the rural character of the Area.

Conservation Area designation automatically protects trees over a certain size. Additionally, some may already be specifically covered by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) which means that formal permission is required from the Council to fell or lop them. Many trees within the Conservation Area are protected by TPOs, however a formalised review and appraisal of trees in the area would indicate any need for increasing the number afforded this extra level of control.

The management of trees and hedgerows adjoining the canal is key to securing their continued contribution to the character and appearance of the area. Identified within the character appraisal are a number of significant trees and hedgerows throughout and adjoining the conservation area, although this is by no means exhaustive.

### ***Recommended Actions***

- Review of protection afforded to trees through Tree Preservation Orders
- Continue to provide professional advice on all tree matters as required
- Continued application of the Councils planning powers and policies contained within the UDP Review to protect trees and woodland which contribute positively to the character and appearance of the conservation area
- The Council will seek to consider tree planting and hedgerow laying as part of wider public realm improvements and enhancement schemes, in building upon the positive impact of existing notable trees and hedgerows within and adjoining the canal conservation area
- The Councils will seek to work with stakeholders to secure the continued contribution of trees and hedgerows, as a defining characteristic of the canal, through encouraging appropriate ongoing maintenance regimes

## **Domestic Gardens and the Creation of Moorings**

In places along the canal, private gardens to residential properties enhance the waterside environment. However in some areas, garden treatments are less successful in complementing the special character and appearance of the conservation area. Design guidance is needed for householders to be advised on good practice for such planting, hedge laying, boundary treatments, the erection of garden buildings, landscaping and their continued maintenance.

In addition there are a small number of private moorings created on the flank of private gardens and businesses along the canal. These can create barren hardstandings with fences, poor landscaping and adhoc features which harm the green vista along the canal corridor. Unfortunately, in other cases large and unsightly structures have sprung up on sites adjoining the canal, which detract from its setting.

It is important to understand the impact that canalside areas such as these can have on the wider character and appearance of the conservation area.

### ***Recommended Actions:***

- In consultation with British Waterways, the Councils will seek to produce design guidance on minor household canalside works and will seek to ensure that all development affecting the interface between domestic gardens and the canals accords with the advice given therein.
- The Councils will seek to liaise with British Waterways to ensure that private moorings and associated facilities are in keeping with the character and appearance of the canal and its setting.

## **Archaeology**

The enhanced Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for Stockport identifies a number of sites of archaeological significance within the conservation area. Inclusion of a site on the SMR gives it formal recognition in the planning system. The desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled. The conservation area therefore has archaeological potential both above and below ground which will require further consideration to be given to the affect of applications for any significant new development in the area.

### ***Recommended Actions***

- Continued application of the Councils planning powers and relevant policies contained within the UDP Review: HC3
- Guidance/advice or consultation should be sought from Greater Manchester Archaeology Unit (GMAU) where development involves sites identified on the SMR
- An archaeological assessment or field evaluation may be required where archaeology is known or thought likely to exist or where the indications are that remains are likely to prove important, prior to a decision on the planning application being made

- A Building Appraisal will be required where substantial alteration/demolition of key historic buildings is proposed

#### *Guidance*

- PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning

### **Monitoring Change**

Guidance from English Heritage in relation to the 'Management of Conservation Areas' (February 2006) recommends that arrangements for the monitoring of conservation areas should be considered. Changes in the appearance of conservation areas resulting from both the implementation of approved schemes and permitted or unauthorised alterations, as well as the condition of the areas' physical fabric, should be monitored regularly, the effects reviewed and policies modified, or specific action proposed as necessary, to deal with current issues. A review of the conservation area as a whole will also need to be undertaken on a regular basis in order for the character appraisal to be kept up to date in line with recommendations within the English Heritage publication *Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals* (February 2006) and in accordance with the requirement in BV219b for them to be up to date. Existing appraisals should ideally be reviewed on a five yearly basis. Where there is a comprehensive and up to date appraisal in place and in areas where little significant change has occurred a review is likely to result in a supplement to the existing appraisal which records any changes, confirming or redefining the special interest that warrants designation, setting out any new recommendations and revising the management strategy.

Detailed change can be monitored using initial audits and photographic records as a benchmark. The creation of a comprehensive photographic record of the conservation area will provide an invaluable aid to any later enforcement action. It will also provide an important baseline for measuring change in the appearance of the area and monitoring the physical condition of the buildings. Once established, such a record should be kept up to date to maintain its usefulness (enforcement action cannot be taken unless the unauthorised alteration can be shown to have been carried out within the previous four years). Where appropriate, the local community might be encouraged to help with creating a photographic record of the area and monitoring change.

#### ***Recommendations for Action:***

- Seek to engage the local community in the production of a comprehensive photographic survey/record of the area
- General monitoring of the area to inform updates to appraisal and management and enhancement proposals
- Development of an Enforcement Strategy