

# The Coventry Canal Conservation Area

## Conservation Area Appraisal



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## **1.0 Introduction**

The Coventry Canal between Hawkesbury Junction and the Canal Basin in the city centre was designated as a Conservation Area on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2012. This Conservation Area Appraisal document has been produced to support the designation and to define and record the special architectural and historical interest of the Coventry Canal and identify opportunities for enhancement.

This document satisfies the requirements of the legislation and provides a firm basis on which applications for development within the Coventry Canal Conservation Area can be assessed. This appraisal should be read in conjunction with the Management Plan which outlines the proposals and actions that will guide and manage future change.

## **1.1 Summary of Special Interest**

The special interest that justifies designation of the Coventry Canal as a Conservation Area derives from the following features:

- The canal is an example of an early pioneering contour canal that retains many of its original features including warehouses, bridges and mileposts.
- The canal's design was the work of the great canal engineer James Brindley.
- The canal was vitally important in the growth of the city in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- The buildings and structures adjacent to the canal reflect the industrial and social history of Coventry and include motor factories, ribbon-weaving mills, cycle factories, chemical works and munitions factories. Many of these buildings are of special architectural and historic importance and are nationally significant.
- The development and street layout of several areas such as at Longford has been dictated by the presence of the canal and it remains the focal point today.
- The curving course of the canal adds significant visual interest and provides constantly changing vistas of the city, progressing from rural fringe via the industrial heartland to the city centre.
- The canal is an important wildlife corridor and provides habitats for flora and fauna, including rare species such as water voles that are rarely found elsewhere in the city.
- The canal corridor provides both a green and blue infrastructure function of local and regional significance.
- The Coventry Canal Art Trail is the longest waterside art gallery in Britain.
- The canal is an important leisure resource for pleasure boats, cyclists, walkers and anglers.

## 1.2 Planning Policy Framework

### National Planning Policy

Conservation Areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A Conservation Area is defined as, '***an area of special architectural interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance***'.

Section 71 of the same Act requires Local Planning Authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their area which are Conservation Areas.

Section 72 specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a Conservation Area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

This Conservation Area Appraisal should be read in conjunction with the principles and policies set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework; *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*.

### Local Planning Policy

Coventry City Council adopted its Unitary Development Plan (UDP) on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2001. The Council is now working towards replacing the saved policies within the UDP with a Local Development Framework (LDF), following changes to the planning system introduced by the Planning and Compensation Act 2004. Conservation Area Appraisals are considered to be integral with the spatial planning approach of the Council to support and affirm the development plan documents within the forthcoming LDF.

The adopted 2001 UDP contains policies which relate to the preservation and enhancement of the City's built heritage. In the Adopted UDP (Chapter 8) the following policies are of particular relevance:

BE 5: The Canal Corridor

BE 8: Conservation Areas

BE: 9 Development in Conservation Areas

BE: 10: The Retention of Buildings in Conservation Areas

BE 11: Alteration or Extension of Listed Buildings

BE 12: Change of Use of Listed Buildings

BE 13: Demolition of Listed Buildings

BE 14: Locally Listed Buildings

BE 15: Archaeological Sites

The Council is committed to using the Development Control Process and Supplementary Planning Documents to achieve environmental improvements and to

protect and enhance its Conservation Areas. Currently UDP policies are supported by Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD). These include 'The Canal Corridor Study', published in 1993 which provides a basis for the management and enhancement of the Coventry Canal within the City.

### **Green Environment**

As well as consisting of significant built heritage, the canal plays an important role as a green corridor and in biodiversity, providing habitats for a range of species. National planning policy is contained within PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, while the Coventry UDP (Chapter 9) contains a number of relevant policies:

GE 1: Green Environment Strategy

GE 2: Green Space Enhancement Sites

GE 3: Green Space Corridors

GE 8: Control Over Development in Urban Green Space

GE 11: Protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and Coventry Nature Conservation Sites

GE 12: Protection of Other Sites of Nature Conservation Value

GE 13: Species Protection

GE 14: Protection of Landscape Features

GE 15: Designing New Development to Accommodate Wildlife

### **1.3 Location (Figure 1)**

The location of the proposed Conservation Area is the 5.5 miles of the Coventry Canal from Coventry Canal Basin on the edge of the City Centre, to the boundary of the existing Hawkesbury Junction Conservation Area. On leaving the Coventry Basin, the canal winds its way north close to the Foleshill Road before turning eastward and under the Stoney Stanton Road and towards Stoke Heath. The canal then turns north and runs parallel with the A444 for a mile passing through the areas of Paradise and Edgwick. The canal then passes through Little Heath and continues towards Longford, passing close to the Ricoh Arena and Arena Park development. The canal then goes through the centre of Longford, before being bridged by the M6 motorway and then through a rural area towards Hawkesbury Junction on the city's northernmost boundary.

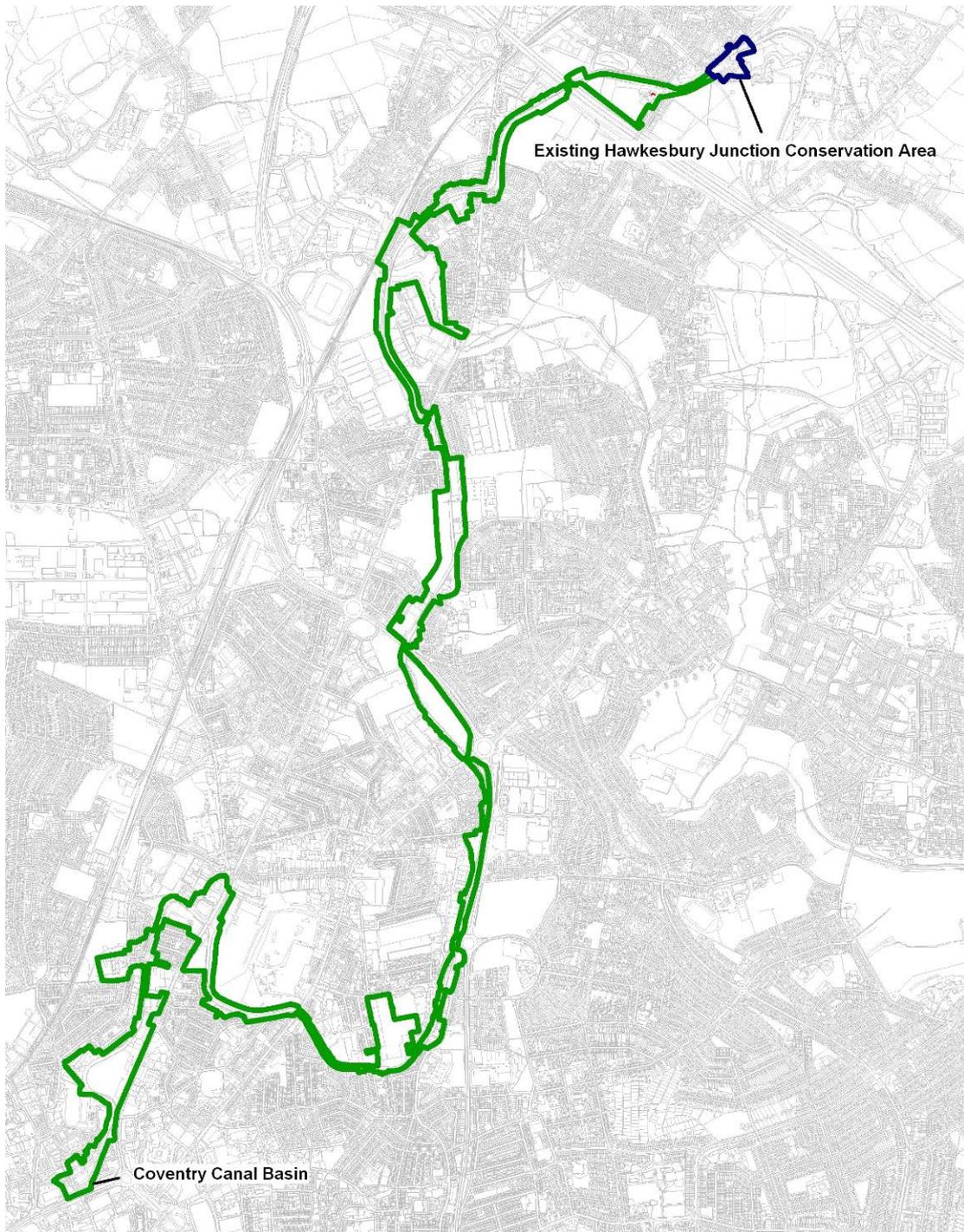


Figure 1: Plan showing proposed Conservation Area boundary.

#### 1.4 History

The Coventry Canal dates from the early pioneering days of canal building in Britain and was promoted by a group of local business men with the chief aim in enabling the export of coal from their mines in north Warwickshire. In 1767 the Coventry Canal Company committee engaged James Brindley, the foremost canal engineer of the day, to survey a 38.5 mile route from Fradley to Coventry via Tamworth, Atherstone, Nuneaton and Bedworth. The construction of the canal required an Act of Parliament,

which received Royal Assent on the 29<sup>th</sup> January 1768. The canal company appointed Brindley as engineer and surveyor and work began in Foleshill Parish, probably at Longford, in May 1768. The work proceeded in both directions and within six months coal was being transported from Bedworth to Longford. The canal reached the Coventry Basin on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 1769 where according to the Coventry Mercury newspaper;

*"two boats laden with coal were brought to this city from this side of Bedworth. Being the first ones, they were received with loud cheers by a number of people who had assembled to witness their arrival".*

James Brindley was also the engineer and surveyor of the Oxford Canal which was under construction at that time; Brindley anticipated that both canals would join together near Coventry to create a canal linking the Thames to the Mersey. The site of the junction was intended to be at Gosford Green to the east of Coventry City Centre, but the Oxford Canal Company decided that they wanted a junction at Bedworth instead. This would have saved the Coventry Canal Company the expense of building a branch to Gosford Green, but would also have deprived them of several miles of toll revenues. The dispute between the two companies dragged on and resulted in the Coventry Canal Company dismissing Brindley in September 1769 for his perceived clash of interests. A compromise was eventually agreed whereby the junction was built at Longford in 1777 with the canals running parallel alongside one another for a mile from Hawkesbury (Fig 2).

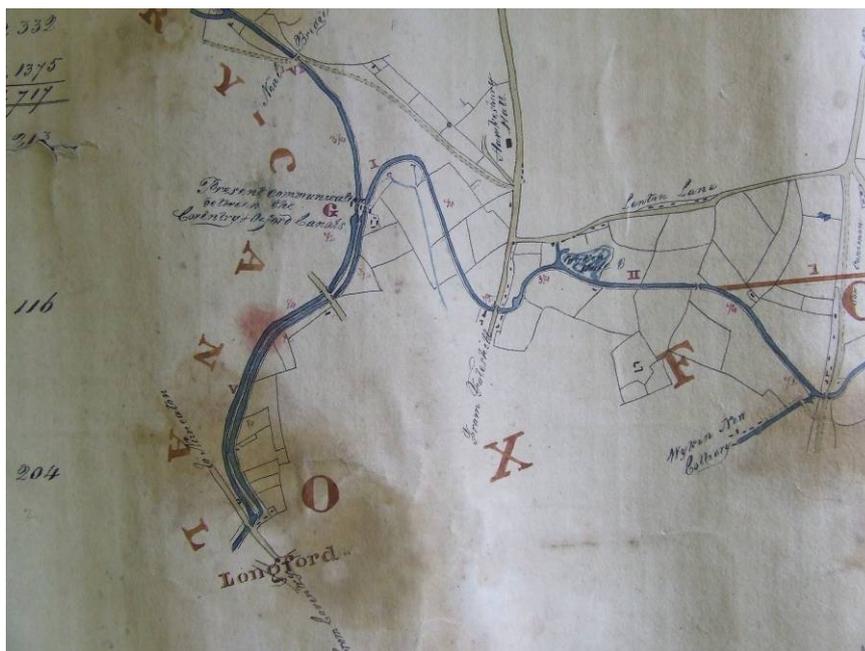


Figure 2. A plan of c1828 showing the layout of the canal junction at Longford (British Waterways Archive).

The Coventry Canal had reached Atherstone in 1772 but financial problems resulted in a lengthy break in construction and the final link to the Trent and Mersey Canal at Fradley was not completed until 1790. The completion of the link enabled goods traffic to travel from northern England to the south through Longford and meant that the four and a half miles from Longford to Coventry effectively become a branch serving the city.

The earliest mapping of the canal between Hawkesbury Junction and Coventry Basin is the Eagle Plan of 1809-10, which shows the canal snaking its way through an agricultural landscape of Foleshill Parish with Longford and Little Heath being the only intermediate settlements of any size. The parallel courses of the Oxford and Coventry Canals between Hawkesbury and Longford is clearly shown while other features of note are the series of wharves that are located where the canal intersected with a major road, such as at Prince William Henry Bridge. The only canal-side industrial site that is shown on the map is a bank of limekilns adjacent to the New Inn Bridge.

It was in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century with Coventry's growth as a major industrial centre that the city began to expand northwards changing the environment around the canal from a rural one to an urban one (Fig 3).

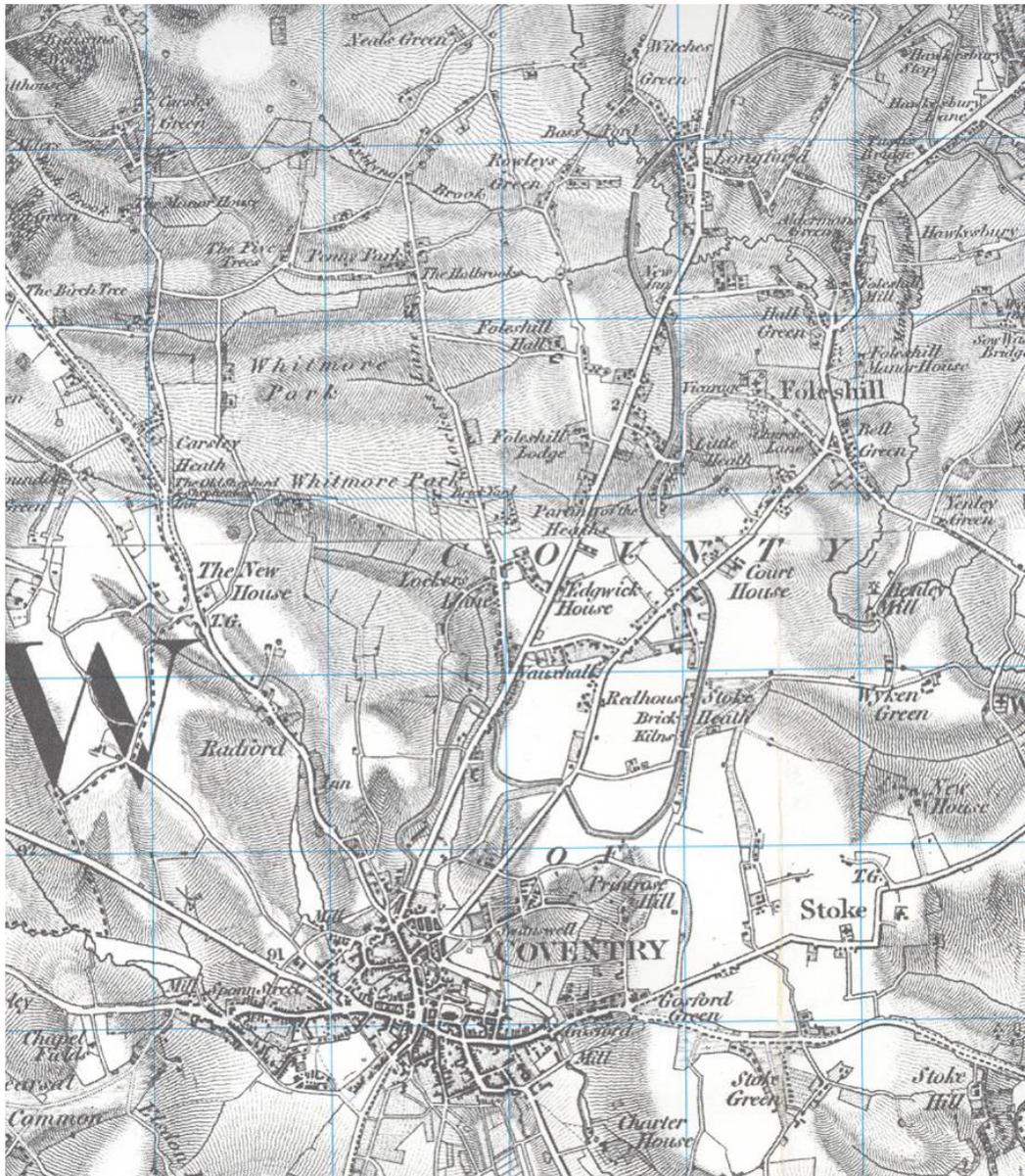


Figure 3. The 1835 Ordnance Survey map showing the course of the Coventry Canal (Ordnance Survey).

The 1888 Ordnance Survey Map shows brick yards and lime kilns at Stoke Heath and other locations, receiving coal supplies from the north via the canal and then

exporting building materials towards the growing city. The easy supply of coal led to many of Coventry's major 19<sup>th</sup> century industries being established in factories along the canal corridor and giving the area the industrial character it still retains. The earliest canal side factory was the weaving shops of J & J Cash on what is now Cash's Lane. The location was likely to have been chosen for its proximity to the canal as well as its rural environment, although the latter was under threat as early as the 1880s as terraces of houses spread along the nearby Foleshill Road.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw established industries such as brick making at Great Heath expand while other new industries established themselves alongside the canal such as the Coventry Ordnance Works on Red Lane (Fig 4) and Courtauld's Artificial Fibres on the Foleshill Road. Further north Coventry Corporation established its gasworks at Longford that was dependent on the regular deliveries of coal from the canal. The spread of industry was accompanied by a massive expansion in house building for the growing workforce with the remaining green fields left between the canal and factories being rapidly in-filled with streets of terraced houses. The expansion of the city's industry continued during the inter-war period with established Coventry firms like Courtaulds and Alfred Herbert machine tools erecting large new factories alongside the canal at Little Heath and Edgwick respectively.



*Figure 4. The interior of the Naval Gun Shop, Coventry Ordnance Works c1914 (Coventry History Centre).*

Although industry adjoining the canal was booming, the actual use of the canal for the transportation of goods had declined through the 20<sup>th</sup> century, mainly due the closure of the north Warwickshire collieries which the canal had been built to serve. The Coventry Canal Company was nationalised in 1948 and became part of British Waterways, but by the 1950s the canal had become neglected and there were discussions with the City Council about closing and draining the canal. This threat of closure led to the foundation of the Coventry Canal Society in 1957 with the objective of promoting the continued use and maintenance of the canal. The campaign to save the canal was successful and the society's efforts over the last 50 years, in partnership with the City Council and British Waterways, have seen the canal become an important leisure and environmental resource for Coventry.

The past thirty years has seen the decline of many of Coventry's traditional industries and most of the large canal side industrial plants like Courtaulds and Alfred Herbert's have closed and the sites have been cleared. Whilst some of these large sites have been redeveloped like the Ricoh Arena on the former Foleshill Gasworks site, many other sites lie empty awaiting regeneration.

## Archaeology

The archaeological potential of the proposed Canal Conservation Area can be divided into three main elements of interest;

- Archaeological remains that pre-date the construction of the canal, for example evidence for the medieval suburb of St Nicholas Street into which the canal basin was inserted in the 1760s.
- Archaeological remains associated with the construction and early operation of the canal, for example buried remains of the wharf and canal junction at Longford or archaeological evidence contained in surviving early structures such as bridges at Judd's Lane.
- Archaeological remains of canal side industries such as the banks of limekilns mapped in 1809 close to New Inn Bridge.

Archaeological interest can be both buried remains surviving below the ground or evidence for past activity that is contained within standing buildings and structures.

## 1.5 Ecology

As well as being of historical interest, the Coventry Canal is an important green corridor running through the heart of the city's most industrial area. In the autumn of 2007 an ecological survey of the canal was undertaken by Warwickshire Museum Field Services on behalf of the Habitat and Biodiversity Audit Partnership for Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull. The survey concluded that the areas of aquatic vegetation present on the canal banks along with the hedgerows and areas of grassland made up an important habitat for wildlife and recommended that the canal be designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). The stretches of canal between Hawkesbury Junction and Longford and from the New Inn Bridge to Stoke Heath were identified as being of particular importance.

In recent years the City Council and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust have been working in partnership on work focused on the conservation of water voles. The water vole is a rare species protected by law in the UK, which is known to be present in the area around Hawkesbury Junction and is also believed to be present along several other watercourses in the city including the Coventry Canal. The Warwickshire Wildlife Trust is currently working with landowners in Coventry to secure habitat improvements to watercourses to link water vole colonies and boost their numbers. Work is also ongoing to control invasive plant species like Himalayan Balsam and monitor for non-native American mink which contribute to the declining numbers of water voles.

## 1.6 Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure can be defined as a *strategic network of green spaces and the links between them*. It is a network of multi-functional greenspace both new and existing, both rural and urban, which supports the natural and ecological processes and is integral to the health and quality of life of sustainable communities. It is the network of green spaces and natural elements that intersperse and connect our cities, towns and villages - the open spaces, the blue spaces such as waterways,

towing paths and their environs, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage and open countryside.

Green Infrastructure provides multiple benefits for the economy, the environment and people. The fundamental principles of Green Infrastructure are multi-functionality and connectivity. The multi-functionality of Green Infrastructure is important to ensure the maximisation of public benefits, while the connectivity ensures that the network functions on a large scale and that its overall public benefit is greater than the sum of its parts.

Coventry has a draft study to provide high quality Green infrastructure in Coventry over the next 25-30 years, linked to the Coventry Green Space Strategy, and highlights the Coventry Canal as an integral part of the City's Green Infrastructure network, linking the city centre with the open countryside and the Sowe Valley Green Wedge. The Coventry Canal has also been included as an important strategic linear asset in the draft Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Regional Green Infrastructure Study, 2011. Coventry has a significant deficit in access to sub-regional resources, and the Coventry Canal provides an important area of protected greenspace that is ideally placed to help address this deficit in the future, by improving access, recreation and nature opportunities, and reconnecting local communities and people with the canal corridor.

## **1.7 Transport**

The canal is regularly used by leisure craft and is an important gateway to the city. A boat count that was undertaken by British Waterways in July 2011 observed 100 boats on the stretch between Hawkesbury Junction and the Canal Basin in a single day.

In addition to the boat traffic on the waterway, the tow path is well used by both pedestrians and cyclists. Surveys undertaken by British Waterways on the stretch of tow path between Foleshill Road and Stoney Stanton Road in 2008 indicated that there was an average of 5000 pedestrian movements per month. The canal tow path between Hawkesbury Junction and Stoney Stanton Road is also part of Route 52 of the National Cycleway.

## **1.9 The Canal Art Trail**

The Canal Art Trail was created between 1995 and 2000 with the objective of making a five and a half mile long waterside art gallery inspired by local history and contemporary culture. There are 39 individual art works by 31 different artists along the canal between the city centre Canal Basin and Hawkesbury Junction, many of the works fall within the boundary of the Coventry Canal Conservation Area. The works fall into five broad categories; community art, gateways, heritage markers, entry markers and sculptural seating and were designed to be safe, practical and durable. Further information on the art trail and the artists involved can be found at on the Coventry City Council website.

## 2.0 Localities

For the purposes of this document the five and half mile length of the canal will be divided into a series of localities and the character and significance of each will be discussed in turn. These localities are:

1. The Canal Basin and Drapers Fields
2. Electric Wharf and Bishopsgate Green
3. Cash's Lane
4. Courtaulds and Foleshill Road
5. Prince William Henry Bridge to Priestley's Bridge
6. Priestley's Bridge to Swanscroft Road Bridge
7. Swanscroft Road Bridge to Navigation Bridge
8. Navigation Bridge to Old Church Road Bridge
9. Old Church Road Bridge to New Inn Bridge
10. New Inn Bridge to Judd's Lane Bridge
11. Longford Village
12. Longford to Hawkesbury Junction

The appraisal will describe the route of the canal from south to north and identify Listed Buildings, Locally Listed Buildings and important views in each locality. The appraisal will also identify other buildings, features and areas of green space which are felt to make a positive contribution to the special character of the canal. It should be noted however that the omission of any particular building, feature or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.



## **2.1 The Canal Basin and Draper's Fields (Figures 5 and 6)**

### **Description**

The Coventry Canal Basin sits in an elevated position terraced into the hillside just to the north of the City Centre ring road. The basin locality contains the highest density of historic canal-side structures within the proposed Conservation Area and includes the Leicester Row Warehouses, the Weighbridge Office, the Coal Vaults, and the Canal House along with the Draper's Field Bridge. The only significant loss from the group is the Coventry Canal Company offices that would have stood at the top of Bishop Street, but which were demolished to allow for the construction of the ring road in the late 1950s.

The distinctiveness of the Canal Basin topography can be ascribed to the cut-and-fill earthmoving operation that was required for its construction. The slope to the north was cut away, creating an upper terrace retained by the brick wall which contains the coal vaults. Some of the earth was re-deposited down slope to extend the terminus of the canal which explains why the canal sits above the level of the neighbouring ring road

Thomas Yeoman House and John Sinclair House were built in the 1990s as part of a regeneration scheme for the basin. Both buildings are of brown brick and designed in a vernacular / industrial style and blend in well with the scale of the original canal buildings and make good use of the changes in level around the basin to add visual interest. The more recent block added in 2004 in a contemporary style is less successful because of its size and the materials used. The scale of the Canal Basin buildings is in stark contrast to the neighbouring high rise blocks that surround the basin. The historic and modern buildings along with good quality paving and street furniture combine well to give the basin a pleasant feeling of enclosure with views along the canal closed by the Draper's Field Bridge. The views looking out of the basin area to the west are less attractive with poor quality 1960s buildings along St Nicholas Street and St Columba's Close with the exception of the historic Admiral Codrington public house. There is, however, a very important vista of the City Centre and the spires from the basin entrance on St Nicholas Street.

Beyond the bridge is Draper's Fields, so-called as it is where Coventry's medieval drapers used to dry and stretch cloth after fulling. The tow path side has attractive boundary walls of Hartshill granite and of red brick which have a pleasing sinuous quality as they follow the bend of the canal. The non-tow path side has an attractive green space with a mix of native and ornamental trees fronting a recent residential development on the site of Widdrington Cotton Mill's canal arm and wharf.



*Left, view of the Canal Basin looking towards the Draper's Fields Bridge. Right, the Weighbridge.*

### Listed Buildings

- Warehouses on Leicester Row (Listed Grade II). The warehouses appear to have been built in four phases between 1790 and 1914.
- Canal House (Listed Grade II). The canal house was the home of the Canal Agent and Superintendent and probably dates from the 1850s.
- Draper's Field (No 1) Bridge and attached walls (Listed Grade II). This is likely to be an original bridge designed by James Brindley.



*Left, the Grade II Listed Warehouses. Right, Draper's Fields Bridge with Canal House beyond.*

### Locally Listed Buildings

- Weighbridge Office, built in 1830, the office is a brick-built wedge-shaped building with a weighing machine inside with two external weighbridges on either side.

### Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value

- The Admiral Codrington Public House, St Columba's Close is first mentioned in 1848 and the present building probably dates from this time. Admiral Sir Edward Codrington was a veteran of the Battle of Trafalgar and lived from 1770 to 1851.
- The Coal Vaults built in 1853 for the storage of coal for Coventry's gas works on Abbots Lane. The vaults have been converted into an arts venue.

- The wharf crane that was originally situated on the side of the canal at Draper's Field and was moved to the basin in the 1990s.
- The swing bridge
- James Brindley statue by James Butler.
- The Canal Basin mosaic by Rosalind Waits.
- Thomas Yeoman House and John Sinclair House.
- Coping stones around the edge of the basin and other canal trim.
- Good quality paving and groundscape.
- Retaining walls in blue engineering brick behind John Sinclair House.
- Granite wall beyond Draper's Field Bridge.
- The Journeyman sculpture by Stephen Hitchen.
- The Wave Seat by Michael Grevatte.
- Green space on former wharf site adjacent to Drapers Fields with attractive mixed planting of ornamental and native species including Crack and Weeping Willow, Lombardy Poplar, Sliver Birch and Sycamore.



*Left, the Admiral Codrington public house. Right, the tow path boundary wall, Draper's Fields.*

### **Views and Vistas**

- Vista down Bishop Street towards the spires from the entrance to the Canal Basin.
- View of the basin looking towards the Drapers Fields Bridge.
- View from the Drapers Fields Bridge looking towards the weighbridge
- There are important views looking along Leicester Row looking at the exterior of the Listed warehouses



*Left, vista towards the spires. Right, the view across the Canal Basin.*



*Left, the view out of the Canal Basin towards St Nicholas Street. Right, the view along Leicester Row.*

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- Potential for the remains of the medieval suburb along St Nicholas Street and St Columba's Close.
- The site of the Toll House adjacent to Draper's Field Bridge.

### **Negative features**

- Poor quality post-war buildings on St Nicholas Street and St Columba's Close.
- Spray-painted graffiti on the non-basin side of the Drapers Field Bridge and on the warehouses.
- Unoccupied retail units in the canal basin.
- Poor environment and un-kept gardens around the Canal House.
- Advertising hoardings along the Foleshill Road overshadowing the adjacent canal.



*Left, graffiti on Draper's Fields Bridge. Right, poor quality buildings on St Nicholas Street.*



*Left, empty retail units in the Canal Basin. Right, advertising hoardings on the Foleshill Road.*

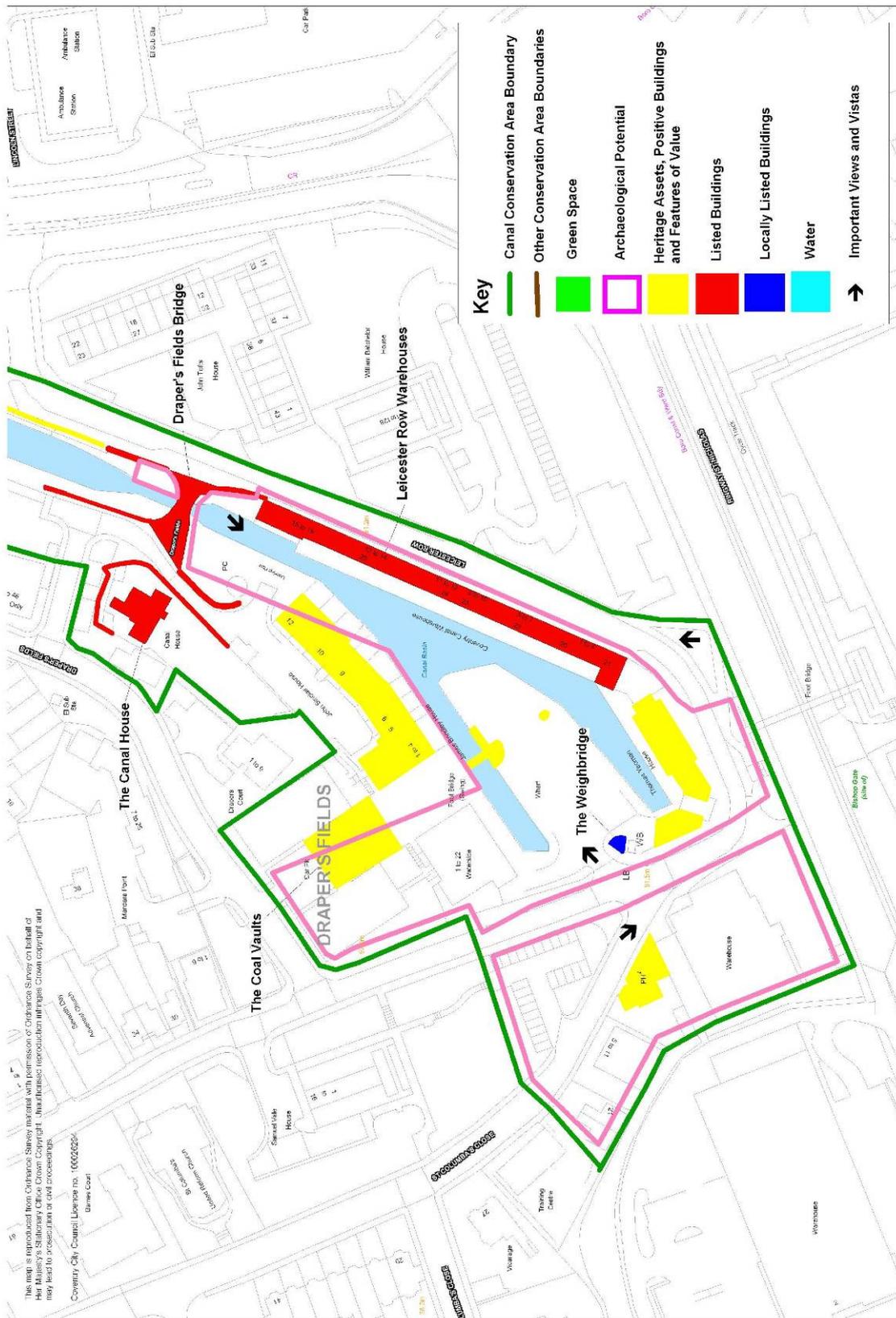


Figure 5: The Canal Basin Locality.

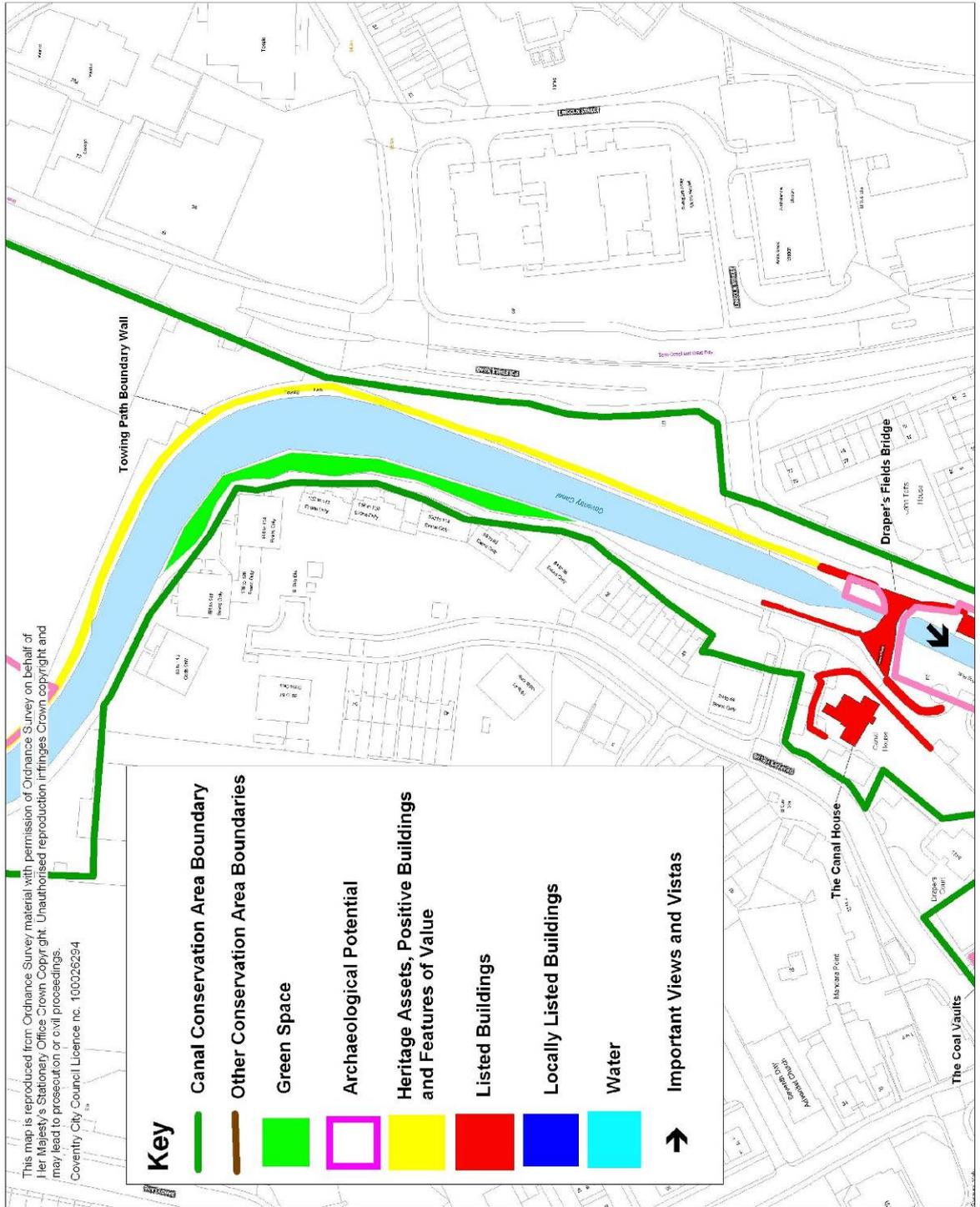


Figure 6: Draper's Fields Locality.

## **2.2 Electric Wharf and the Bishopsgate Green Locality (Figs 7)**

### **Description**

The locality is industrial in character and with various operational and disused factories sited along the canal side, with a large area of derelict land on the tow path side that was once Coventry City Council's Central Depot. The canal here follows a curving path as it follows the contours of the topography, a common feature of early canals to avoid the need for locks; this gives the locality extensive lengths of visually interesting canal frontage. Electric Wharf is an exemplar canal side development completed in 2006, which utilised the disused buildings of Coventry's electricity works that had been established on the site in the 1900s. The development has successfully created a modern sustainable living environment, but has also preserved the industrial character of the area.

Next to Electric Wharf is the Daimler Powerhouse that once provided electricity to the company's factory that was formally sited in the former Widdrington Cotton Mill to the south. The Powerhouse was built in 1907 and, along with an office building on Sandy Lane, is the last surviving element of the factory where motor cars were first built in Britain. The remainder of the plant was destroyed by bombing during World War II.

Beyond Electric Wharf are the former offices of the engine maker, Coventry Climax, which date from the late 1930s. They have also been converted into a residential development. Opposite on the tow path side is a range of brick-built north-light sheds with a boiler house and chimney, which is one of the principal landmarks on this stretch of the canal. The building is described as a former cycle works on the 1903 Ordnance Survey Map and is, therefore, one of the last Victorian cycle factories left in the city. Further along and facing the Foleshill Road is the office block of the former Challenge Cycle Works built in 1906. It is a high quality building with a symmetrical frontage with classical detailing and still displays the Challenge Cycle Company's insignia on the end bays. Of particular historical interest are four World War II public air raid shelters on the street frontage, which are amongst the last known ones in the city.

The boundary treatment along the tow path side is particularly poor in this area. Some attractive brick walling does survive, but it has mostly been replaced by steel palisade panels.

### **Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

- The Daimler Powerhouse, a surviving part of Britain's first motor car factory.
- The Challenge Cycle Works Office Block and air raid shelters, Foleshill Road.



*Left, the Challenge Cycle Works. Right, air raid shelters in front of the Challenge Works on the Foleshill Road.*

### **Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value**

- Brick boundary walls along the tow path.
- The Daimler Heritage marker by Robert Crutchley.
- The Electric Wharf Development.
- The new Canal footbridge and electricity cable bridge.
- The converted former Coventry Climax Works.
- The former cycle factory at 177 Foleshill Road with north-light roof and chimney.

### **Views and Vistas**

- Views of Electric Wharf development and the Daimler Powerhouse from the tow path.
- View of factory chimney and Coventry Climax Works.



*Left, Electric Wharf and cable bridge. Right, Electric Wharf.*



*Left, the Daimler Power House. Right, the Coventry Climax Works and the landmark chimney.*

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- The site of the Navigation Coffee House which is shown on the 1809-10 Eagle Map of the canal at Bishopsgate Green close to the tow path.
- The site of the historic Bishopsgate Green settlement.

### **Negative Features**

- The derelict former council depot site.
- Poor quality buildings in the strip of land between the canal and the Foleshill Road.
- Poor quality boundary treatments and steel palisade fencing along the tow path.
- Poorly screened electrical sub-station close to Cash's Lane.



*Left, the former Central Depot site. Right, poor quality buildings and general environment on the Foleshill Road, Electric Wharf is visible behind.*

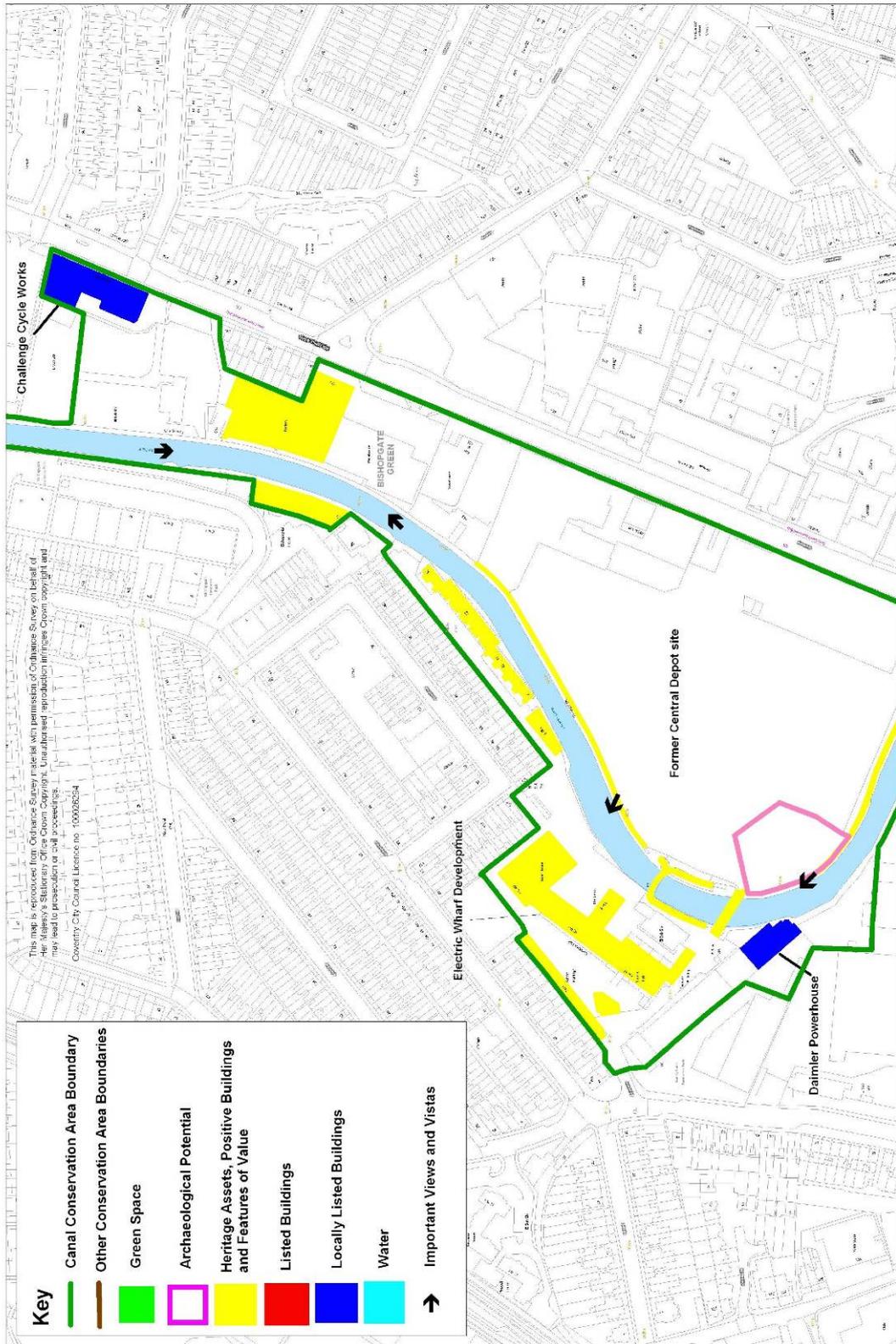


Figure 7: Electric Wharf and Bishopsgate Green Locality.

## 2.3 Cash's Lane Locality (Figure 8)

### Description

The Cash's Lane locality has a green and leafy character that contrasts with the industrial character of the stretches of canal to the north and south. The most significant building of the locality are Cash's Hundred Houses, a cottage factory which was built by Quakers John and Joseph Cash in 1856-57 in an attempt to halt the decline of the city's ribbon weaving industry caused by cheap foreign imports. The idea of the scheme was to improve the efficiency the city's ribbon weavers by grouping them together but allowing them to continue to work independently. The factory was in effect terraces of ribbon weaver's cottages with two-storeys of accommodation and double height weaving top shops above that housed the looms, which were powered by a central steam engine. This arrangement was, however, unsuccessful and Cash's was converted to a conventional factory with the weavers as employees in 1860. The factory remained in operation until the early 1980s when the factory sheds to the rear Kingfield Road were demolished and the Hundred Houses themselves converted into flats. Wartime bomb damage means that the Hundred House's are now two ranges of buildings rather one L-shaped block as originally constructed. One range fronts on to Cash's Lane while the other overlooks the canal. Both are built of red brick with mock-timber gables and tall double-arched, multi-pane windows on the second storey indicating the locations of the weaving top shops. Number 249 Kingfield Road is a late 19<sup>th</sup> century two-storey brick house that was also once part of the Cash's factory.

The building's elevated location with the drop in level to the east mean that the factory rises impressively over the canal dominating the view from Brooklyn Road or as you emerge from under Cash's Lane Bridge. The verticality of the building is further enhanced by the rows of chimney breasts and the tall windows of the top shops. There are other important views of the building from looking along Cash's Lane from the Foleshill Road end, although this is marred by the large billboards and the vacant site adjacent to the canal bridge. The canal bridge is arched and built in a blue engineering brick with a cast iron rubbing post on the north side that has been heavily grooved by tow ropes.

Cash's Lane and Kingfield Road are both lined with attractive red brick boundary walls of varying heights topped with terracotta coping stones. Of particular interest are the surviving factory walls along Kingfield Road with their arched recesses.

On Kingfield Road are Newfield House and its Lodge, which are both built of brick in an 'Arts and Crafts' style with substantial later extensions. The house is closely related to Cash's Hundred Houses as they were built in around 1900 for the then factory owner Thomas Arnold Cash. Despite the extensions the house still retains its large mature gardens which are heavily wooded. Adjacent to Newfield House is a residence that was formerly an infant's school.

The buildings and structures in the Cash's Lane locality are of historic and architectural interest and have an added group value as an example of a Victorian factory, with workers accommodation and the owner's residence which is unique in the city.

### Listed Buildings

- Cash's Hundred Houses (Listed Grade II)

## Locally Listed Buildings

- 249 Kingfield Road
- Newfield Lodge, Kingfield Road.
- Newfield House, Kingfield Road.

## Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value

- Cash's Lane (No 2) Bridge.
- Rubbing post adjacent to the bridge.
- Boundary walls along Cash's Lane and Kingfield Road.
- Trees in the grounds of Newfield House and Cash's Hundred Houses give Kingfield Road a green and leafy environment.



*Left, the walls of the former Cash's factory on the left-hand side of Kingfield Road. Right, a cast iron rubbing post adjacent to Cash's Bridge.*

## Views and Vistas

- Views of Cash's Hundred Houses from the canal tow path and Cash's Lane.
- Views along Kingfield Road towards Newfield Lodge.
- Vistas from the tow path looking down and along Brooklyn Road and Matlock Road.



*Left, the view of Cash's Hundred Houses from the tow path. Right, the view of Cash's Hundred Houses from Brooklyn Road.*

## Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest

- The Cash's factory site.

## Negative Features

- Vacant site and advertising hoardings on Cash's Lane next to the bridge.
- Cable bridge over the canal obscuring the view of Cash's Lane bridge from the south.
- Inappropriate painting of former community centre / infant's school.
- Poor quality buildings at Cash's Business Centre on Cash's Lane and Bishopsgate Industrial Estate on the Foleshill Road.
- Satellite dishes on the front elevations of the Listed Buildings.



*Left, advertising hoardings and vacant land on Cash's Lane. Right, satellite dishes attached to the frontage of Cash's Hundred Houses.*



## **2.4 Courtauld's and Foleshill Road Locality (Figure 9)**

### **Description**

The canal performs an almost 180 degree turn through the site of the former Courtaulds Factory before passing under the Foleshill Road and heading south. The curving course of the canal again illustrates James Brindley's desire to reduce engineering costs by letting the canal follow the natural contours of the landscape. This length of canal has several important features including one of the 18<sup>th</sup> century stone mile posts, the Springfield Brook culvert and the remains of Courtaulds Wharf.

Many of the Courtaulds factory buildings were demolished after the factory closed in the 1980s, which has left the canal side areas occupied by surface car parks with poor boundary treatments. The only recent building is the Kingfield Technical Centre, which unfortunately turns its back to the canal. Some of the Courtauld's factory buildings along the Foleshill Road have been retained; Tower Court, Enterprise House and The Surgery have been attractively refurbished for commercial use, while number 256 on the opposite side of the Foleshill road is currently empty. Tower Court with its impressive clock tower dates from c1912, while the other buildings are slightly later but would have been completed by 1936. All of them are built of a deep red brick with classical detailing in red terracotta, with number 256 having a later rear extension in a buff coloured brick. The surviving Courtauld's buildings along with their boundary walls and railings form an impressive group and are an important landmark on the Foleshill Road. There are important views of the buildings from The Prince William Henry Bridge with the clock tower as a particularly important landmark contributing to attractive vistas from the canal.

Sutherland House on the southern side of the canal was also built as part of the Courtaulds plant in the early 1930s. It has been heavily altered and would originally have been red brick like the other Courtauld's buildings, but has now been rendered and painted in a beige colour.

The Prince William Henry public house to the south of the bridge probably dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century and originated as a row of separate cottages that were knocked-through to form a single property. The pub was named after the younger brother of King George III who lived between 1743 and 1805. This fact along with map evidence suggests that its building was contemporary with that of the canal and was probably related to the presence of a wharf where the canal crossed the turnpike road. The pub closed in 2005 and the building is currently used as a builder's merchant although the pub name panel still survives over the door.

### **Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

- Foleshill House / Tower Court.
- Enterprise House.
- The Surgery.
- Boundary railings along Foleshill Road.
- The Prince William Henry public house.



*Left, Tower Court. Right, decorative railings along the Foleshill Road.*

### **Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value**

- 256 Foleshill Road and boundary railings close to the bridge.
- The Prince William Henry Bridge, built of blue engineering brick and dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century.
- Cast-iron rubbing post next to the bridge.
- Original 18<sup>th</sup> century stone canal milepost.
- Springfield Brook Culvert.
- Remains of Courtaulds wharf.
- Gates to Courtaulds Factory leading off Matlock Road.



*Left, 256 Foleshill Road. Right, the locally listed Surgery building.*

### **Views and Vistas**

- View of the former Courtaulds buildings looking north from the Prince William Henry bridge



*A view of the Courtaulds buildings looking north from the Prince William Henry Bridge.*

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- The site of the wharf adjacent to the Prince William Henry Bridge.

### **Negatives**

- Poor boundary treatments on both sides of the canal.
- The tow path is narrow and in poor condition in some places.
- Recent buildings relate poorly to the canal.
- Poor environment around The Prince William Henry.
- Advertising hoardings on the Foleshill Road close to the Prince William Henry Bridge.
- Graffiti on the historic stone mile post.



*Left, the former Prince William Henry public house. Right, poor boundary treatment at the site of the Courtaulds Wharf*



*Graffiti on an 18<sup>th</sup> century stone milepost.*



## **2.5 Prince William Henry Bridge to Priestley's Bridge (Figure 10)**

### **Description**

From the Prince William Henry Bridge, the canal passes a winding hole and the site of the wharf before heading south on a relatively straight course and turning east to cross under the Stoney Stanton Road at Priestley's Bridge. The tow path side is predominantly bounded by the back gardens of residential properties and a long straight section that runs parallel with Leicester Causeway. In contrast, the non-tow path side is mostly disused industrial land, which has been partially reclaimed by nature forming an attractive belt of native woodland that effectively screens a scrap yard and the derelict land beyond. The woodland along with the waterside vegetation on the tow path side frames the vista of the Courtaulds clock tower and gives the canal a tranquil character.

The derelict land was previously occupied by part of the Courtaulds factory and prior to that by the Midland Lime and Brickworks. Brick making was the dominant industry in this area of Coventry from the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a brick works still survives today. In addition to the canal, the industries in the area were also served by the Foleshill Railway; a privately owned industrial line that ran parallel with the non-tow path side of the canal. The link was extended eastward until it eventually linked the Coventry to Nuneaton line with the Coventry Loop line.

Leicester Causeway is one of the few places in Coventry where the residential properties face on to the canal. The views between the street and the canal are restricted by the high railings along the edge of the tow path, which also restricts pedestrian access to the canal side.

### **Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value**

- Winding hole adjacent to the Prince William Henry Bridge.
- The Coil sculpture by Frank Triggs.
- Brick boundary wall to the rear of Lewis Road.
- Extensive and attractive green woodland boundary along the non-tow path side and marginal vegetation along the tow path side.
- The Perch Seats and Waterwall Mural by Kate Turner.
- Priestley's Bridge and Reflections mural by Bhajan Hunjan and Naida Hussein.



*Left, tow path wall behind Lewis Road. Right, greenery along the tow path.*

### **Views and Vistas**

- Vista from the tow path looking north towards Tower Court.
- Views of Leicester Causeway.



*Left, vista towards Tower Court. Right, a view of Leicester Causeway.*

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- The site of the wharf adjacent to the Prince William Henry Bridge.
- Bank of 19<sup>th</sup> century lime kilns on the non-tow path side under the woodland and the scrap yard.

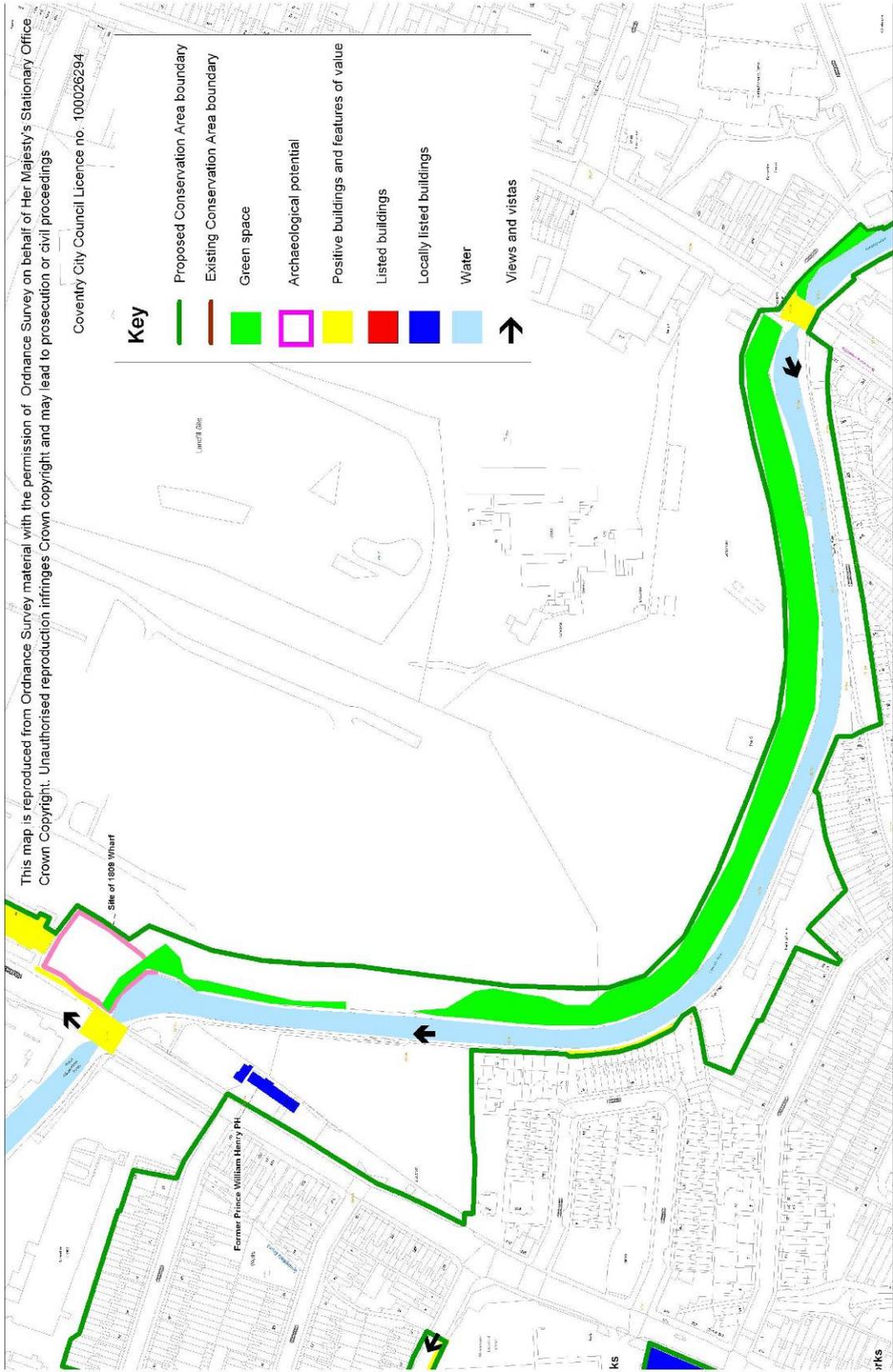
### **Negatives**

- Vandalism of the The Coil sculpture and area adjacent to the Prince William Henry Bridge.

- The tow path is narrow and in poor condition.
- The derelict former Courtaulds factory site.
- Graffiti on brick boundary walls on the tow path side.
- Properties along Leicester Causeway have lost all of their historic timber doors and windows.
- Boundary railings along Leicester Causeway.
- Limited access to the tow path between Stoney Stanton Road and Foleshill Road.
- Proximity of scrap yard.
- Anti-motorcycle barrier in poor condition close to Priestley's Bridge.



*Left, Vandalised sculpture adjacent to the Prince William Henry Bridge. Right, railings along Leicester Causeway.*



**Figure 10: Prince William Henry Bridge to Priestley's Bridge**

## 2.6 Priestley's Bridge to Swancroft Road Bridge (Figure 11)

### Description

The canal continues to follow a curving course beyond Priestley's Bridge heading southeast before gradually turning northwards. The broader tow path and fewer trees give this length of canal a more open feel. The curving course also creates interest as new views are revealed as one progresses along the canal. The slightly elevated position of the canal also gives views to the south down Freehold Street and Trentham Road, adding to the interest. The greater number of access points along this length make the tow path seem more inviting and therefore more used than the lengths of the canal to the west.

The tow path side is almost entirely bounded by the back gardens of residential properties dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century, with some later post-war infilling. The non-tow path side is industrial in character with the exception of an attractive row of terraces on Ordnance Road that were built for the foremen at the Ordnance Works. The works opened in around 1900 and expanded considerably during the First World War, manufacturing equipment including tanks, aeroplanes and naval guns. The works closed in the 1920s and later became a gunnery depot for the Royal Navy until it closed in the 1970s. Many of the Ordnance Works buildings alongside the canal have been demolished, but the massive Naval Gun Shop survives with its southern gable end dominating the adjacent canal. The shed measures 283m long and 60m wide and when it was built in 1906 it was the largest industrial building in Europe. The building has a steel frame and is mostly clad in steel sheets with high windows just below the eaves. It originally contained a series of massive lathes that were used for the manufacture of naval guns. The completed guns were then loaded on to railway trucks and exported by rail. The railway tracks are still in situ in and around the building and survive in the stone setts of the carriageway of Wharf Road.

The Naval Gun Shop is one of Coventry's last surviving iconic industrial buildings and it is likely to be the only building of its kind in Britain. It is therefore of high historic and architectural interest. The site is now part of the Central City Industrial Estate and a series of small industrial units have been built alongside the canal. The backs of the units are positioned close to the edge of the canal but are fairly well screened by a narrow belt of woodland.

On the tow path side is another 18<sup>th</sup> century stone mile post and beyond that is Stoke Heath Basin. It is a rare example of a small urban basin with an attractive blue brick bridge with curving ramps carrying the tow path over the entrance mouth. The basin was probably built for the coal trade, with other goods such as bricks from the kilns on Stoke Heath being exported. The basin is shown on the 1809-10 Eagle Map of the canal and was perhaps the intended location for the junction of the branch to Gosford Green. The basin retains many of its attractive historic features such as the worn coping stones around the edge and is currently used by a canal boat hire firm.

Beyond the canal basin on the non-tow path side are some boat moorings with a dense belt of woodland screening them from the industrial estate behind.

### Listed Buildings

None.

## Locally Listed Buildings

None.

## Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value

- The Ordnance Works 1906 Naval Gun Shed.
- Railway lines set into cobbled and concrete surfaces around the Ordnance Works.
- Railings and trees along Ordnance Road.
- Stoke Heath Basin.
- Stoke Heath Basin Bridge (No 4a).
- 18<sup>th</sup> century Coventry Canal stone milepost.
- Swancroft Road Bridge.
- Green space and the Snake in the Grass sculpture and Fish Railings close to Freehold Street.
- Seats by the Water and Traveller and the Stream sculptures by Avtarjeet Dhanjal.
- Dense green boundary along non-tow path side.
- Lady Scurrying sculpture by Mark Tilley.



*Left, the former Naval Gun Shop. Right, railway tracks on the Ordnance Works site.*



*Left, 18<sup>th</sup> century stone milepost close to Stoke Basin. Right, a view of Stoke Basin from the tow path bridge.*

## Views and Vistas

- View from tow path of the Ordnance Works shed.
- Vista along canal towards Webster's Brickworks chimneys.
- Views from tow path down Freehold Street and Trentham Road.
- Views of the canal and basin from the basin bridge.
- View along the canal from Swancroft Road Bridge towards Stoke Heath Wharf.



*Left, vista of the Webster's chimneys. Right, a view of canal side moorings from Swancroft Road Bridge.*



*Left, a view looking down Freehold Street from the tow path. Right, a view of the tow path and green space close to Freehold Street.*

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- Stoke Heath Wharf.

### **Negatives**

- Use of steel palisade fencing around the industrial estate.
- Poorly positioned industrial units turning their back to the canal.
- Vacant sites on non-tow path side.
- Graffiti on the historic canal bridges.
- Use of barbed wire along the tops of walls.



*Left, poorly screened industrial units opposite Stoke Basin. Right, unattractive barbed wire close to Stoke Basin.*

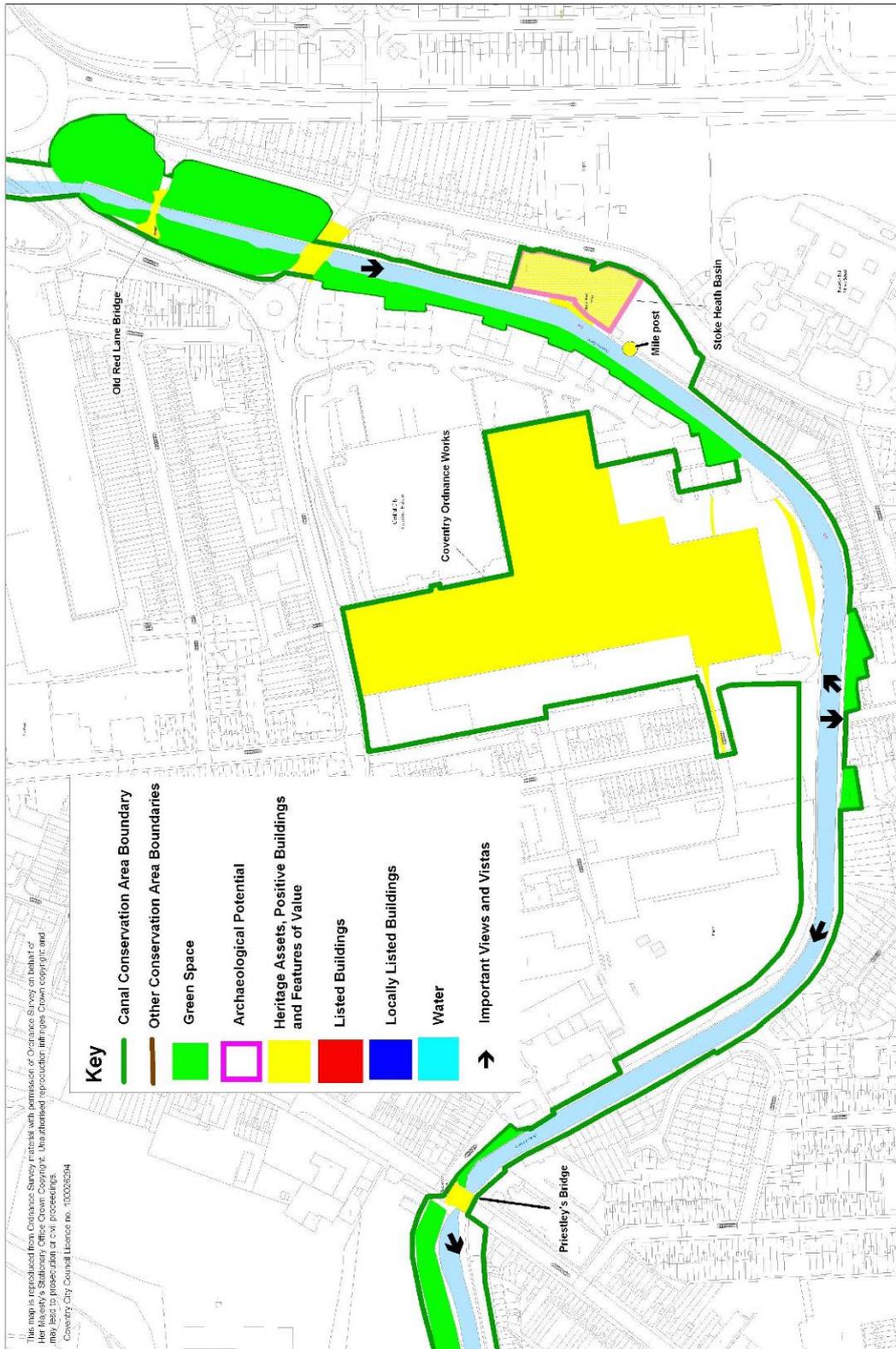


Figure 11: Priestley's Bridge to Swanscroft Road Bridge.

## 2.7 Swancroft Road Bridge to Navigation Bridge (Figure 12)

### Description

The canal between Swancroft Road Bridge and the Navigation Bridge is one of the greenest and most attractive lengths. The canal passes under three bridges in the space of approximately 300m; Swancroft Road Bridge, Old Red Lane Bridge and Waterman Road Bridge, with areas of amenity grassland between them. Old Red Lane Bridge is the most significant of the three and is thought to be one of the original 18<sup>th</sup> century, James Brindley era bridges.

The canal emerges from under Waterman Road Bridge into a long, straight shallow cutting with high Hawthorn and Blackthorn hedges along both sides creating a strong sense of enclosure and an almost rural atmosphere. The sense of enclosure is only broken by the area of allotments on the non-tow path side that gives some views out to the houses beyond.

The waters edge on the tow path side is lined with beds of Pendulous Sedge extending along most of the length which has been identified in the ecological report as providing an important habitat for Water Voles. The A444 Phoenix Way runs within metres of the tow path but the noise is barely discernible and only the tall brick chimney on the non-tow path, side gives any indication of the factories there. The chimney was built for the powerhouse of the Rover car factory. The chimney is the principal focal point along this stretch of the canal and casts its shadow on the water below. The canal curves to the northwest as it approaches the Navigation Bridge, which is built of blue brick with a cast iron rubbing post on the south side.



*Left, canal side greenery. Right, tow path looking towards Old Red Lane Bridge.*

### Listed Buildings

None.

### Locally Listed Buildings

None.

### Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value

- Old Red Lane Bridge.
- Extensive dense green boundaries giving a tranquil, rural atmosphere.
- Allotment gardens bordering the canal.

- The chimney on the non-tow path side.
- Navigation Bridge and rubbing post.



*Left, Old Red Lane Bridge. Right, allotments in Paradise.*



*Left, landmark chimney on the non-tow path side. Right, cast iron rubbing post adjacent to the Navigation Bridge.*

### **Views and Vistas**

- Views from Waterman Road bridge towards chimney
- Views looking south towards the chimney



*Left, vista looking from Waterman Road Bridge. Right, view of the tow path looking south.*

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

None known at the time of writing.

### **Negatives**

- Heavy graffiti and general poor environment under the Waterman Road Bridge.



*Graffiti under the Waterman Road Bridge.*

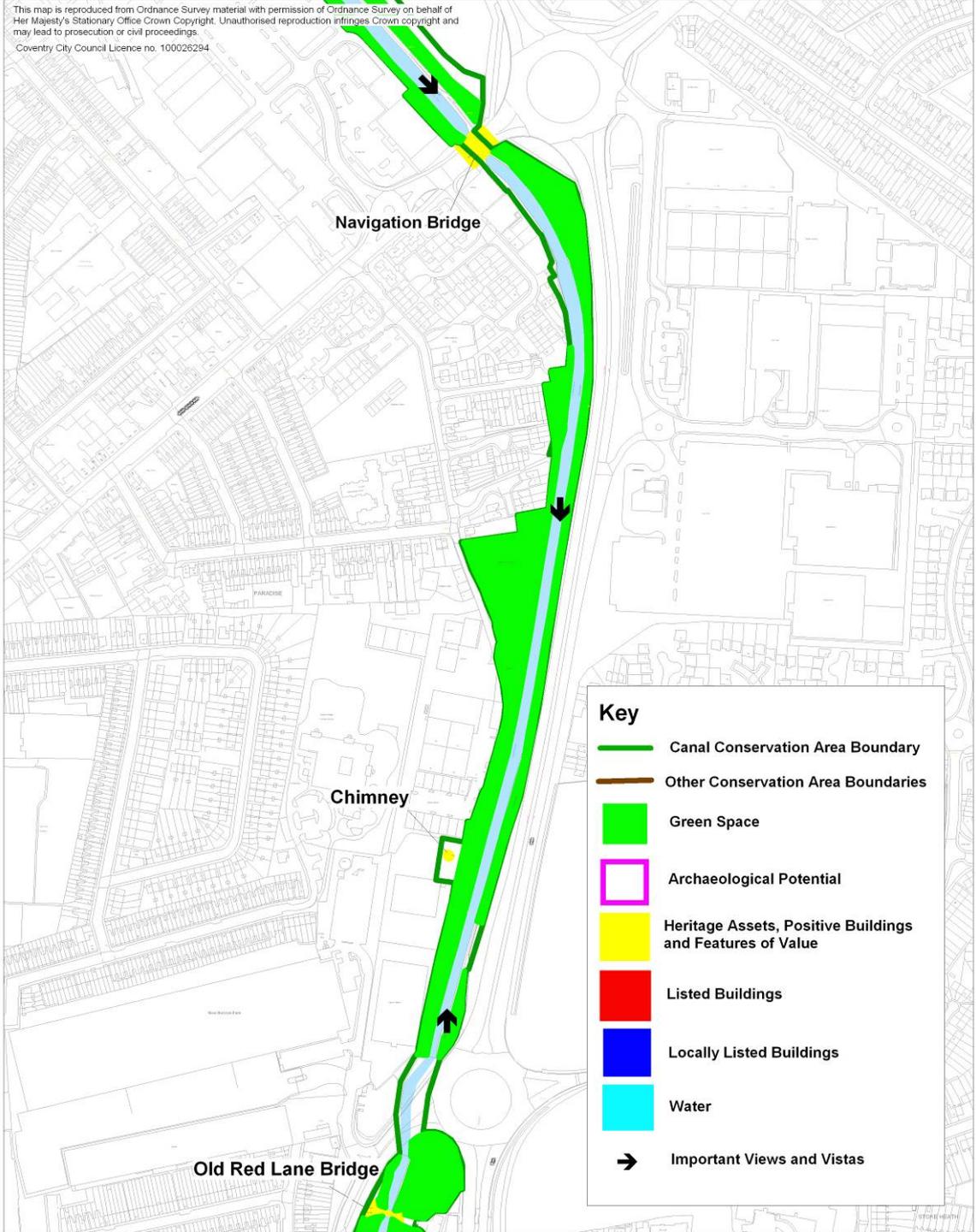


Figure 12: Swancroft Road Bridge to Navigation Bridge.

## **2.8 Navigation Bridge to Old Church Road Bridge (Figure 13)**

### **Description**

On the non-tow path side immediately after the Navigation Bridge lies the Gallagher Retail Park, which occupies the site of the former Alfred Herbert machine tool factory. The retail park is well screened by a dense band of mixed shrub planting and all that is visible from the tow path are two tall advertising columns. The tow path adjoins the high, sloping bank of the former Bell Green Goods Yard that was used as a tip by British Rail in the 1960s; known as 'Beeching's Tip'. The bank is covered by a high Hawthorn hedge that overhangs the tow path and gives a strong sense of enclosure. Partially buried in the bank is another of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century stone milestones.

Beyond Gallagher Retail Park is the Godiva Trading Estate, whose buildings and plant are pushed tightly against the edge of the canal, giving a comparatively rare view of industrial activity. Beyond this is an unattractive derelict site, as the canal approaches the A444 bridge.

Through the bridge the canal widens to form a winding hole for turning boats, which is probably related to a timber yard and wharf that existed there in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, on the non-tow path side off Old Church Road. The winding hole gives the canal a spacious feel that contrasts with the feeling of enclosure along the previous stretch. On the far side is a former weaving mill with a chimney that acts as an interesting focal point for the view across the water. The tow path side is bounded by the rear gardens of the properties along Spring Road that would have formed the historic settlement of Little Heath as shown on the 1809-10 Eagle Map of the canal.

### **Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value**

- Original stone Coventry Canal milepost.
- Winding hole close to Spring Road.
- Former weaving mill with chimney on Carlton Road.
- Green boundary of Gallagher Retail Park.
- Extensive green area on the former Bell Green Goods Yard site.
- Children Playing sculpture by Mark Tilley.



*Left, a view of the tow path looking south. Right, the winding hole and chimney close to Spring Road.*



*An 18<sup>th</sup> century stone milepost.*

### **Views and Vistas**

- View looking south along the canal towards the Navigation Bridge.
- Views from tow path looking across the winding hole towards the former weaving mill and its chimney.



*Left, view of the winding hole and chimney. Right, the Navigation Bridge.*

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- Site of the wharf close to Old Church Road.

### **Negatives**

- Poor boundary treatment along non-tow path side close to Godiva Industrial Estate and Blue Ribbon Park.
- Intruding advertising signage close to Navigation Bridge.
- Graffiti on the Navigation Bridge.



*Left, a vacant site close to the A444 bridge. Right, advertising signs at the Gallagher Retail Park close to the Navigation Bridge.*

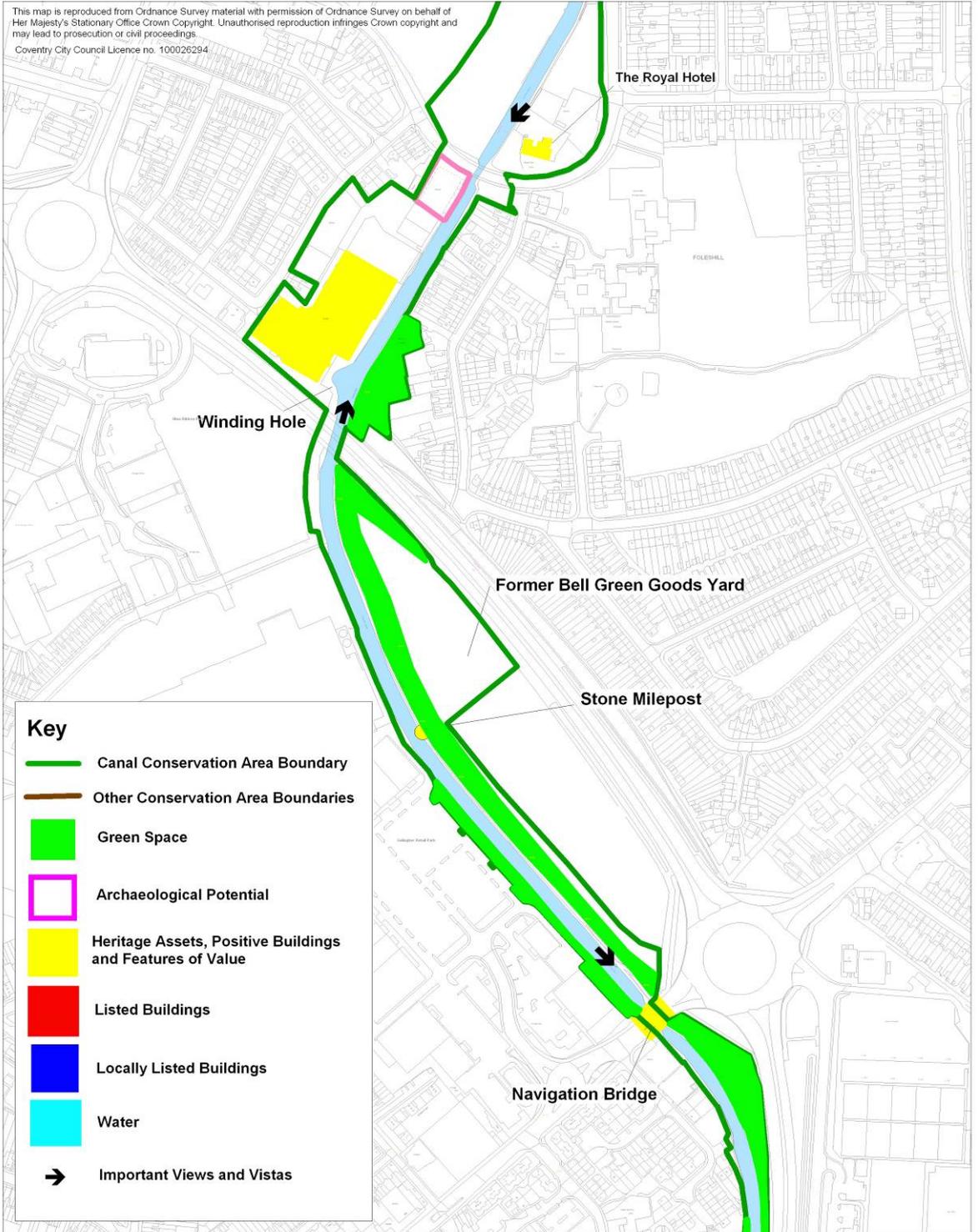


Figure 13: Navigation Bridge to Old Church Road Bridge.

## 2.9 Old Church Road Bridge to New Inn Bridge (Figure 14)

### Description

The present Old Church Road Bridge was built in 1973 to replace an earlier brick bridge. Beyond the bridge on the tow path side is the Royal Hotel public house which has a large early 20<sup>th</sup> century single-storey extension encasing an earlier two storey building. The earlier building looks to date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century and could well be the building shown on the 1809-10 Eagle Map of the canal. The area around the junction of Old Church Road and Spring Road was the historic core of Little Heath which was one of several areas of settlement in the dispersed Parish of Foleshill and is likely to have medieval origins.

The canal continues northwards with derelict land on either side that was formally occupied by the Courtaulds Acetate Works. The large factory complex was demolished in 2008 and the only remaining feature is a concrete bridge over the canal. The tow path side has a tall mixed hedge along its edge, which later gives way to corrugated steel panels topped with barbed wire. There is also an art installation in poor condition. The non-tow path side has a wire fence with extensive areas of Buddleia, the demolition of the buildings mean that there are views across a large area of concrete slab towards Foleshill Road. The area feels exposed and neglected. The fact that the site spans the canal, means that it is particularly important that the canal is the centre piece of any future development plans here.

The approach to the New Inn Bridge is much greener with gardens backing on to both sides of the canal. However, this greenery is interspersed with lengths of unattractive steel palisade fencing and industrial buildings close to the bridge.



*Left, the Royal Hotel. Right, a view of the tow path looking south towards the Old Church Road Bridge.*



*A view of the canal and the site of the former Courtaulds Little Heath Works.*

### **Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value**

- The Royal Hotel public house.
- Green boundary along tow path edge.
- The Foxy mural below Old Church Road Bridge.
- The Pipework Bench by Mary Jane Oppie.

### **Views and Vistas**

- View from tow path towards Old Church Road bridge.

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- Potential medieval settlement site close to Old Church Road.
- Bank of limekilns and wharf site close to the New Inn Bridge.

### **Negatives**

- Large vacant sites of former Acetate works.
- Graffiti covered, corrugated steel sheet fencing along tow path edge.

- Poor condition of the Pipework Bench art work.
- Modern industrial units turning their backs to the canal close to New Inn Bridge.



*Left, deteriorating art installation. Right, poor boundary treatment close to New Inn Bridge.*

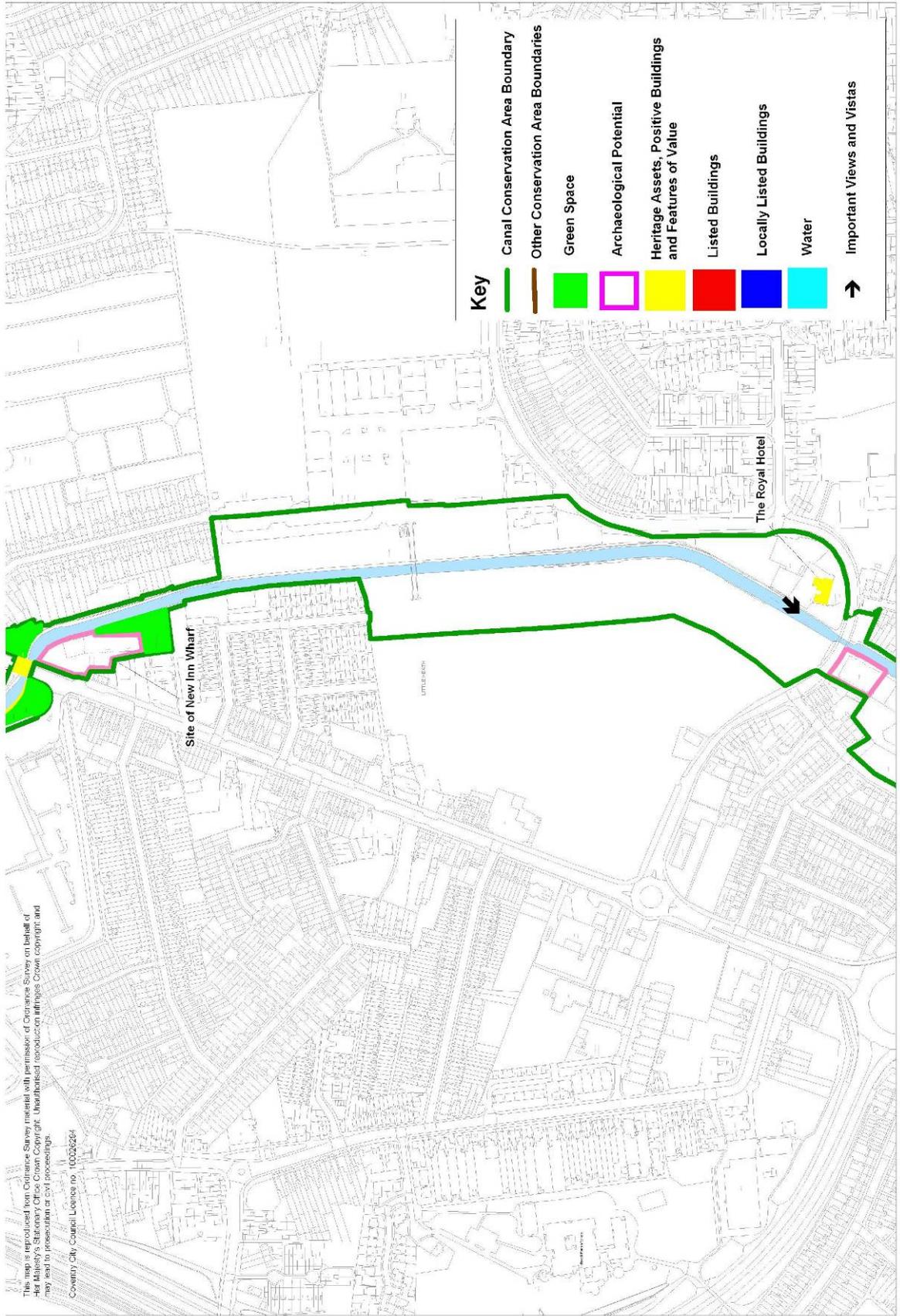


Figure 14: Old Church Road Bridge to New Inn Bridge.

## **2.10 New Inn Bridge to Judd's Lane Bridge (Figure 15)**

### **Description**

After passing under the New Inn Bridge the canal follows a gently curving course towards Longford. The non-tow path side is dominated by the Arena Park shopping development which has been built on the site of Foleshill Gas Works. The Gas Works was built in 1909 with the proximity of the canal as one of the major factors in the choice of location. Thousands of tons of coal were delivered here by boat each year while coke and tar were taken away. Some of the remains of the wharf can still be seen.

The Arena Park development turns its back to the canal but the combination of the buildings being set back from the canal side and the canal being in a shallow cutting mean that the views of the buildings from the canal are truncated and so they are not as dominant as might be expected. The canal banks along this section are covered with extensive areas of bracken which is unusual in an urban area and very attractive. The industrial units on the tow path side are also at a higher level and can not be easily seen from the canal, although some lengths of wire and steel palisade fencing are visible towards New Inn Bridge.

As the canal approaches Judd's Lane Bridge, the sense of enclosure increases with banks of woodland present on both sides screening off the derelict land on the non-tow path side and the industrial sites on the other.

Close to the Judd's Lane Bridge on the tow path side is Longford Nature Park, which is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS). The park is located on the site of Grimley's Tip, which gives the portion of the park closest to the canal its irregular undulating landscape. The park is well wooded and slopes down to the River Sowe providing an important public open space, as well as a valuable wildlife habitat.

Judd's Lane Bridge carries a footpath linking Rowley's Green to Longford Square over the canal. The bridge is built in a blue brick and despite some modern repairs to the parapet, is substantially an 18<sup>th</sup>-century structure.

### **Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Other Heritage Assets, Positive buildings and Features of Value**

- New Inn Bridge, built of blue engineering brick and dated 1924.
- Blue brick revetment wall on non-tow path side close to the bridge.
- Judd's Bridge, likely to be one of the few surviving original 18<sup>th</sup> century bridges.
- Woodland on the approach to Judd's Bridge.
- Bracken covered boundary on non-tow path side close to Arena Park.
- Longford Nature Park.



*Left Judd's Lane Bridge. Right, Longford Nature Park.*

### **Views and Vistas**

- Views from tow path looking across to the Ricoh Arena.
- Views from Judd's Bridge looking south along the canal.



*Left, a vista of the canal and the Ricoh Arena. Right, a view of the canal close to Judd's Lane Bridge.*

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- Nothing identified at the time of writing.

### **Negatives**

- Poor boundary treatment along tow path edge towards the New Inn Bridge.
- The Arena Park Development turns its back on the canal.
- Steel palisade fencing close to Judd's Lane bridge.
- Graffiti on Judd's Lane Bridge.



*Left poor boundary treatment close to New Inn Bridge. Right, Tesco at Arena Park.*



*Graffiti on Judd's Lane Bridge*

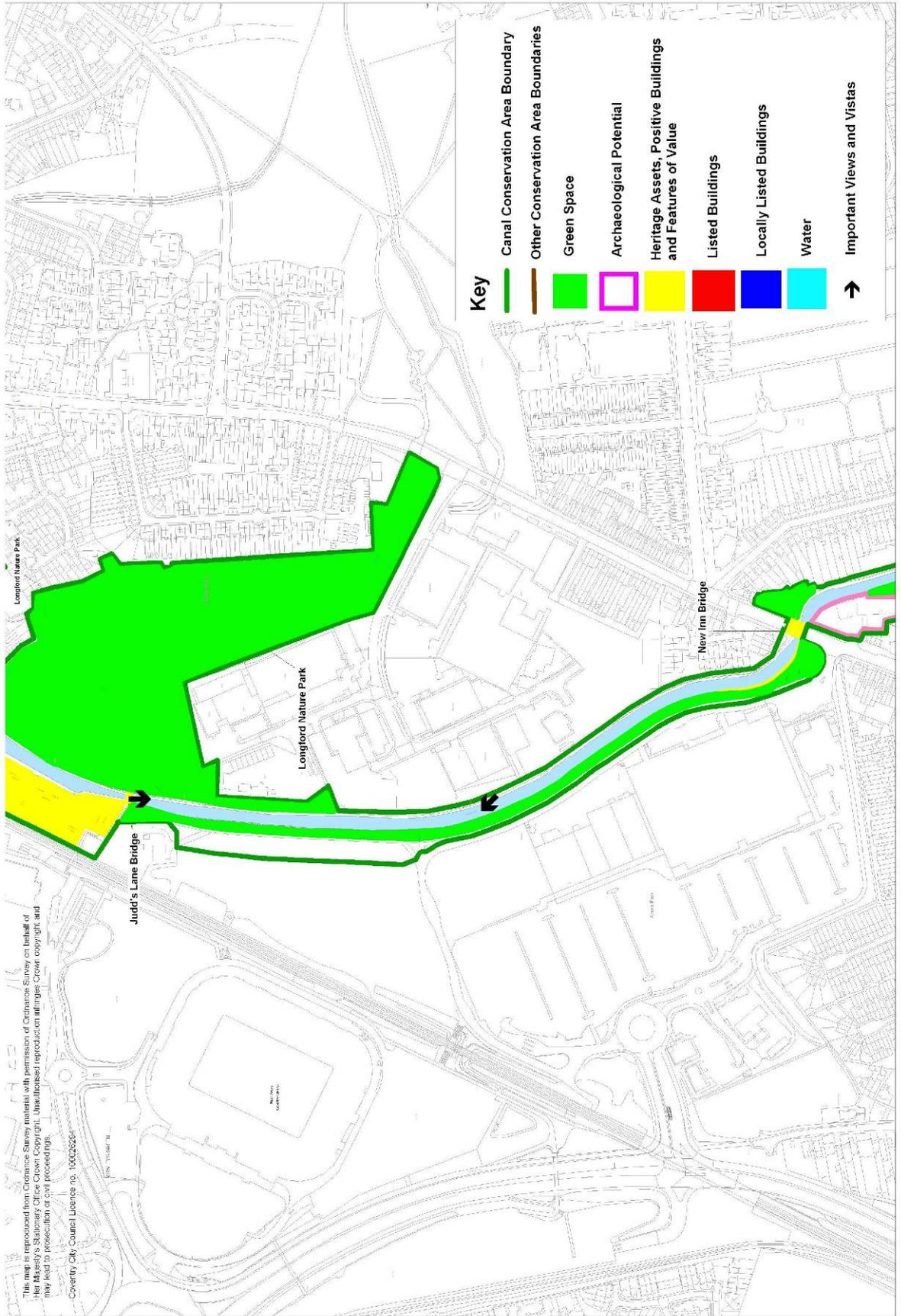


Figure 15: New Inn Bridge to Judd's Lane Bridge.

## 2.11 Longford Village (Figure 16)

### Description

From 1777 until the opening of Hawkesbury Junction in 1802, the junction of the Coventry Canal and the Oxford Canal was located at Longford. A lengthy dispute over tolls between the two companies resulted in the Oxford Canal Company building a canal cut, parallel to the existing Coventry Canal Company cut, to give them access to the lucrative turnpike road at Longford. The junction appears to have remained in use at Longford until the 1840s.

Prior to the construction of the canal, the focus of the village was towards Longford Square where the road from Exhall (Lady Lane) joined the road from Coventry to Bedworth (Longford Road). The arrival of the canal truncated Lady Lane and resulted in the construction of Sydnall Road, running parallel with the non-tow path side of the canal to divert the traffic on to the turnpike road. The canal became the focus of the northern area of the village away from the historic core and dictated the settlement pattern which remains today, with small houses clustered around the canal and its tow path. The elevated position of the Longford Road / Bedworth Road, gives the canal area a degree of separation where it is hidden from the traffic noise and vibration.

From Judd's Lane Bridge the canal curves north-eastwards toward Longford. On the non-tow path side is a good example of a new residential development on the site of the former Keresley Colliery Wharf. The blocks of flats are orientated so they address the canal with communal green space and a waterside walkway lining the water edge. Car parking is located to the rear and away from the canal. The neighbouring housing development on Amy Close is less successful with the houses turning away from the canal and hidden behind tall fences that are tight to the waters edge.

The canal narrows as it approaches Lady Lane and the view into Longford is closed by the terrace of cottages at 57-61 Lady Lane, which stand gable end on to the canal. The cottages with their chequer board brickwork are early 19<sup>th</sup> century and date from some time after 1810, as they do not appear on the Eagle Map. Lady Lane ceased to be a through route with the building of the canal, but a narrowing of the canal depicted on the 1775 Foleshill Enclosure Map seems to show a possible crossing site. The footbridge linking Lady Lane to Sydnall Road was erected in 1973 and it is a graceful steel structure with brick approach ramps. The bridge offers important views looking in both directions along the canal; the stretch towards Longford Bridge is particularly attractive with thick Hawthorn hedges lining both sides, with marginal vegetation along the waters edge. From the tow path there are truncated views of the properties on Sydnall Road, which are mainly mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The properties have a pleasing unity of scale and aspect, although some have suffered from unsympathetic modern alterations.

There is a large area of derelict land on the tow path side, which was previously occupied by small industrial premises. The site has been recently cleared of undergrowth and represents an important future development site with frontages to both the canal and to Lady Lane.

At the southern end of Lady Lane is the Salem Methodist Chapel and its burial ground. A chapel was first built here in 1765 but was rebuilt in 1807 and again in 1872 when the present building was erected. There is a strong tradition of non-conformist worship in the area and baptisms were reportedly carried out in the canal until the 1860's.

Further cottages are present abutting the back of the tow path, including number 243a Longford Road which appears to be present on the 1775 map and numbers 243-247 next to Longford Bridge which are early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Longford Bridge was rebuilt in 1918 after the original bridge was badly affected by mining subsidence. The approach to the bridge is steep and it closes the views north from Longford Road and south along the Bedworth Road. The bridge offers important views of the Sydnall Road area and of Hollybush Lane and the former canal junction to the east.

Hollybush Lane slopes down from the side of Longford Bridge and would once have given road access to the junction and the Oxford Canal Company's wharf. Today, the lane leads to a group of cottages whose arrangement suggests were positioned around the wharf. The course of the Oxford Canal has been filled in and is now a private grassed garden. Mapping suggests that the buildings which survive today, date approximately between 1810 and 1830.

On the non-towpath side was the site of the Coventry Canal Company's wharf, which is now used as a timber yard. The yard is fenced off from the canal with a green steel palisade fence and the narrow strip along the waterfront is used for moorings. The yard has an attractive blue brick wall fronting the Bedworth Road with a granite built length, and a small brick built hut at the northern end. Beyond this is the Longford Engine, an interwar public house built of brick in a Tudorbethan style. The pub is a rebuild of earlier premises and is the only one on this length of the canal with a beer garden that directly overlooks the water.

### **Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

- Salem Baptist Chapel, Lady Lane.
- 57 Lady Lane.
- 59 Lady Lane.
- 61 Lady Lane.
- 243 Longford Road.
- 243a Longford Road.
- 247 Longford Road.
- 1 Sydnall Road.
- 2 Sydnall Road.
- 3 Sydnall Road.
- 4 Sydnall Road.
- 6 Sydnall Road.
- 8 Sydnall Road.
- 18 Sydnall Road.
- 20 Sydnall Road.
- 22 Sydnall Road.
- 24 Sydnall Road.
- 26 Sydnall Road.
- 28 Sydnall Road.

- 30 Sydnall Road.
- 36 Sydnall Road.
- 38 Sydnall Road.
- 40 Sydnall Road.
- 42 Sydnall Road.
- 1 Union Place.



*Left, 36-42 Sydnall Road. Right, 57-59 Lady Lane.*

#### **Other Heritage Assets, positive buildings and features of value**

- Modern canal side development at Grindle Road.
- Houses at 1-5 Hollybush Lane.
- Stone boundary wall along Hollybush Lane.
- Houses at 12-16 Sydnall Road.
- Pleasure Craft (Stone Sofa) sculpture by Tim Shutter.
- Longford Bridge.
- Hedgerow boundaries along Sydnall Road and tow path.
- Green space along Lady Lane.
- Boundary walls and brick shed along Longford Road.
- The Engine Public House.
- Boatyard and canal side moorings.



*Left, a new development on Grindle Road. Right, The Salem Chapel, Lady Lane.*



*A view of the canal from Lady Lane footbridge.*

## **Views**

- View from the tow path towards the boatyard.
- View of the canal and Sydnall Road from Longford Bridge.
- View of the canal and Hollybush Lane from Longford Bridge.
- View of canal and tow path from Lady Lane Bridge.



*Left, a view of the canal from Longford Bridge. Right, a view of the canal looking towards Longford Bridge.*



*Left, Longford Bridge and Hollybush Lane. Right, Longford Wharf.*

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- Site of the Oxford Canal wharf and junction.
- Site of Longford Wharf.
- The former route of the Oxford Canal.

### **Negatives**

- Inappropriate alterations to historic buildings; uPVC windows and doors gravel-dash renders, concrete roof tiles.
- Steel palisade fencing along the canal side close to Longford Bridge.
- Advertising hoardings in the timber yard close to Longford Bridge.
- Vacant site on Lady Lane which also fronts the canal.
- Unoccupied laundry premises close to Lady Lane Bridge.



*Left, unsympathetic alterations to a historic building. Right, poor boundary treatment at Longford Wharf.*



*Left, vacant land to the rear of the tow path. Right, unattractive premises on Sydnall Road.*

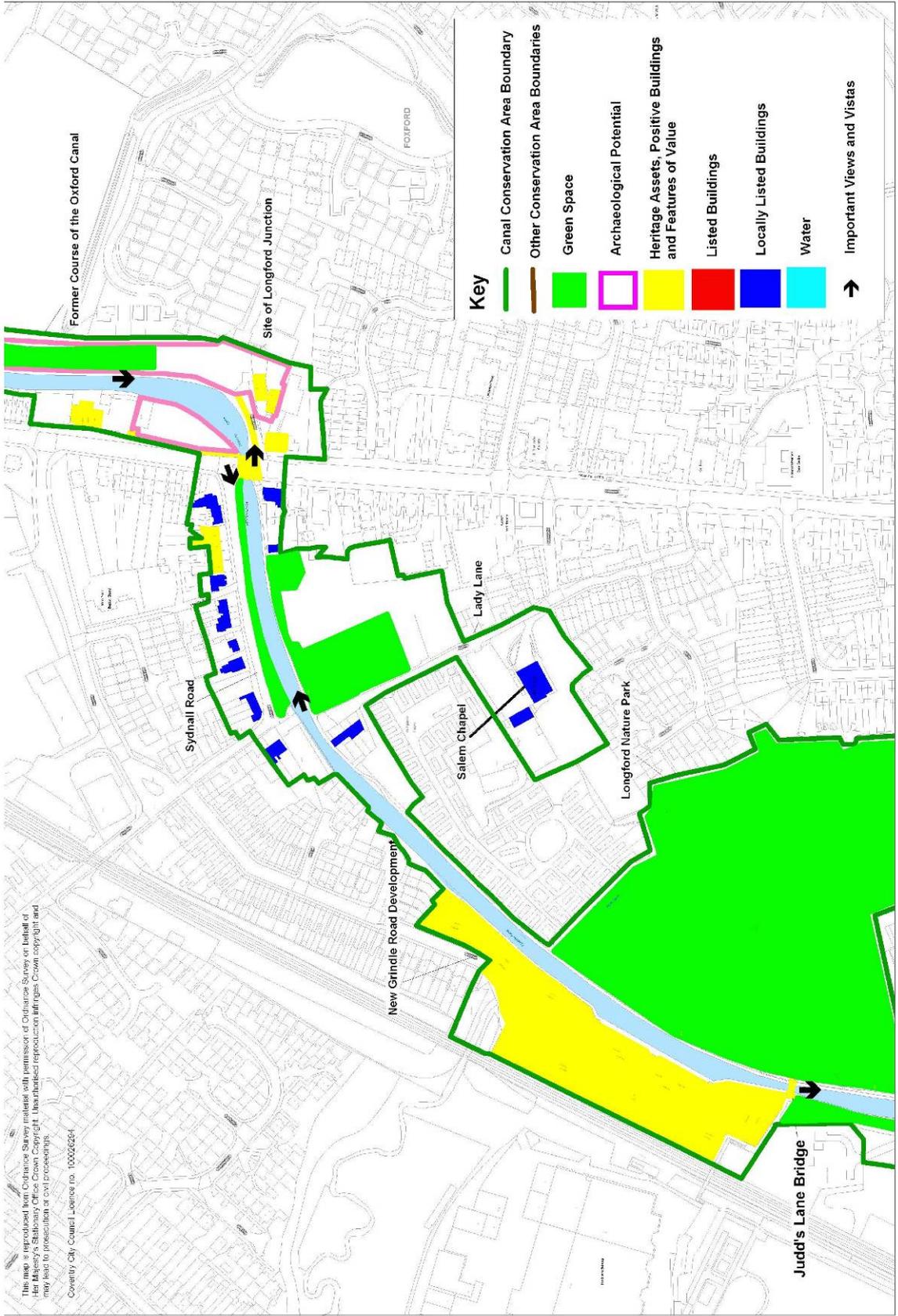


Figure 16: Longford Village Locality.

## 2.12 Longford to Hawkesbury Junction Conservation Area (Figure 17)

### Description

This final stretch of the canal sees the atmosphere changing from a suburban feel, to becoming distinctly more rural and this is particularly evident beyond the M6 motorway bridge.

As the canal heads north away from Longford, the non-tow path side is bounded by the gardens of houses on Bedworth Road and later by factory units, which are partially screened by trees and hedges. The tow path side is flanked by a tall Hawthorn hedge, beyond which is the former course of the Oxford Canal. The former canal cut was in-filled with thousands of tons of material dredged from the operational length of the Oxford Canal in 1980 and has been colonised by a dense band of woodland. The area contains Hawthorn, Ash and Crack Willow and is identified in the Canal Corridor Ecological Report as being an important wildlife habitat for nesting birds. Water voles are also thought to be present along this stretch of the canal.

The canal passes under the M6 motorway, which is carried by a high bridge supported by a forest of cylindrical concrete columns. On the non-tow path side is a scrap yard, which is very prominent and poorly screened.

Beyond the motorway bridge the canal begins to emerge into open countryside with Grange Farm to the south. The farm house is a very attractive two storey brick house, built on an L shaped plan and dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. To the south are a group of brick built agricultural buildings. The fields behind the farmyard are pasture and divided by dense high hawthorn hedges creating a sense of enclosure. The former course of the Oxford Canal has been filled in, but has not become overgrown and is still clearly discernible between two flanking Hawthorn hedges.

On Grange Road to the south of the farm is a pair of listed mid-19<sup>th</sup> century red brick cottages with slate roofs. The cottages are of historic significance as the pioneer Trade Unionist Tom Mann was born in number 177 in 1856. Mann worked in the Victoria Colliery from the age of 10 years and this link serves as an important reminder of the former character of the area when it was dominated by mining.

The present Grange Road Bridge replaced the earlier bridge that would have crossed both canals. The bridge is brick built and late-19<sup>th</sup> century in date; alongside it is a modern steel footbridge with brick abutments. Beyond the bridge lies an area of amenity grassland and a car park that extends over the former course of the Oxford Canal. There are moorings along this stretch of the canal that are well used and provide plenty of visual interest when they are occupied.

The proposed Conservation Area terminates where the Hawkesbury Junction Conservation Area begins; at the steel bridge that formally carried a mineral railway to Wyken Colliery.

### Listed Buildings

- Grange Farm, Grange Road.
- 175 & 177 Grange Road.



*Left, Grange Farm. Right, Tom Mann's cottage 177 Grange Road.*

### **Locally Listed Buildings**

None.

### **Other Heritage Assets, Positive Buildings and Features of Value**

- Grange Road Bridge.
- Fields and hedgerows of Grange Farm.
- Green space on the former course of the Oxford canal.
- Former railway bridge over canal.
- Wings Over the Water sculpture by Walenty Pytel.



*Left, former course of the Oxford Canal close to Grange Farm. Right, former railway bridge with the Wings Over the Water sculpture.*

### **Views**

- Views of Grange Farm from Grange Road.

### **Areas of Potential Archaeological Interest**

- Former course of Oxford Canal

### **Negatives**

- Noise from M6 motorway.

- Prominent electricity pylons.
- Poor boundary treatment on non-tow path side behind the Three Spires Industrial Estate.
- Proximity of scrap yard to canal, lack of screening.



*Left, the M6 bridge. Right, the scrap yard next to the M6.*

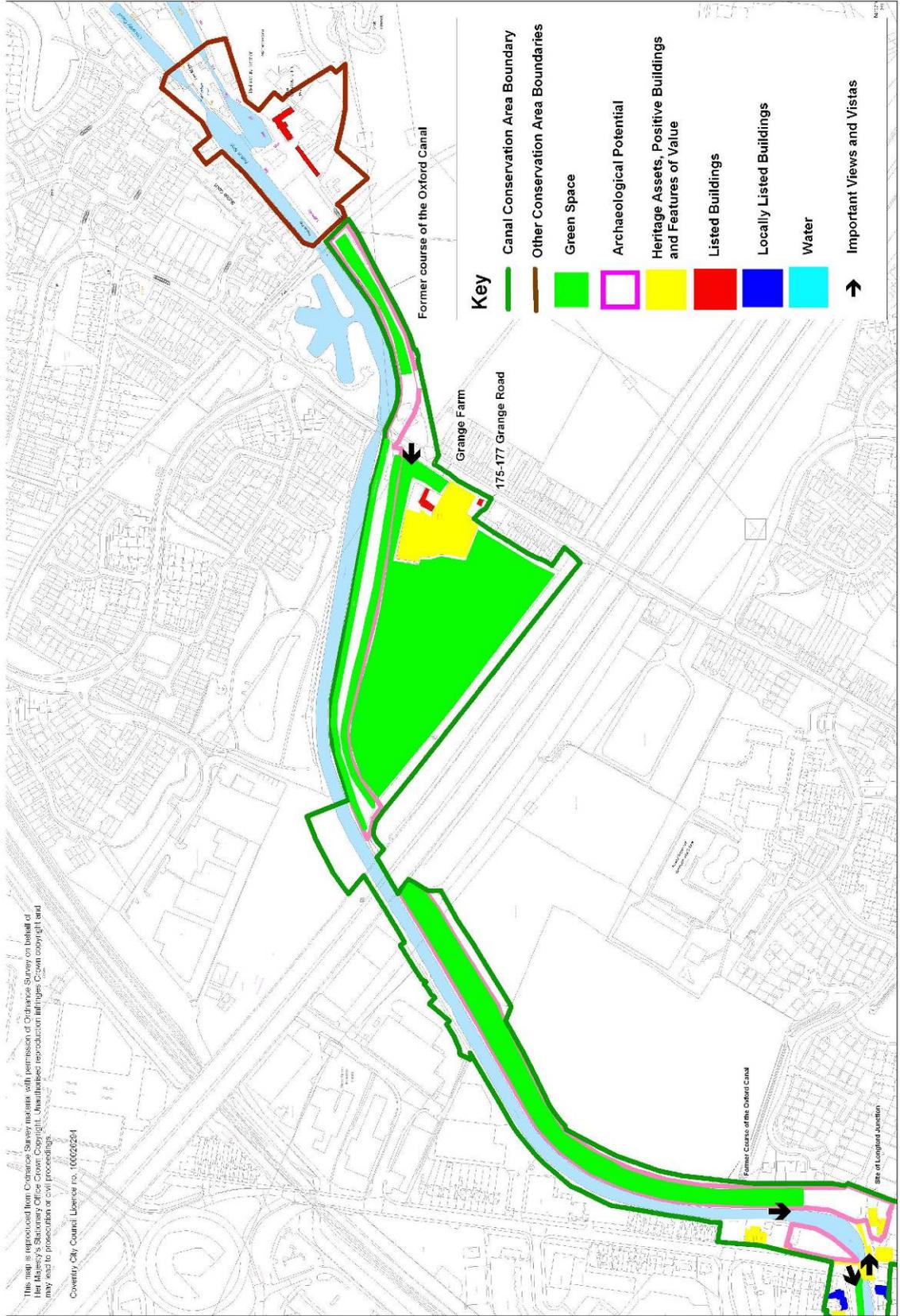


Figure 17: Longford to Hawkesbury Junction.

### 3.0 Key Issues

In light of the above appraisal and the identification of the positive and negative factors in each locality area, the following issues have been identified as being most relevant to the continuing preservation of the special historic character and appearance of the Coventry Canal Conservation Area.

- There is poor pedestrian access to some stretches of the canal particularly at the southern end closest to the city centre. The tow path needs to be safer and more accessible.
- There are many large vacant sites along the length of the canal, the former Central Depot site and the two former Courtaulds sites at Foleshill Road and Little Heath are the most prominent.
- There is a need for the canal to be fully integrated into all future developments that occur on adjacent sites. Some recent developments have failed to address the canal and there is often a lack of natural surveillance of the waterway and towing path.
- In some areas the canal suffers from poor boundary treatments, such as steel palisade fencing while historic brick walls suffer from a lack of maintenance.
- Large advertising hoardings frequently intrude on the setting of the canal and other Heritage Assets to the detriment of important views and vistas.
- Many buildings of historic and architectural interest have suffered from the loss of architectural details. This is principally due to the fitting of inappropriate uPVC windows and doors, concrete roof tiles and the gravel dashing of brick walls.
- Several buildings that would have contributed to the character of the Conservation Area have been demolished in recent years.
- Historic buildings and archaeological remains have often been lost without them being recorded beforehand.
- When buildings have been demolished, they have often not been replaced, leaving empty sites and a poor environment.
- Several buildings and structures along the canal which are historically and architecturally significant are neglected and are in a poor state of repair.
- Some buildings which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area are currently empty and in need of beneficial use.
- Local residents and landowners need to have access to advice and guidance to help them preserve and enhance the area.
- The canal would benefit from an improved heritage interpretation scheme to increase the public's appreciation of its history and significance.
- Some of the Art Trail art works that were installed in the 1990s have been vandalised in several locations and are in need of maintenance.

- There is an inconsistent approach to the inclusion of buildings of historic and architectural interest on the Statutory List and the Local List.
- Many historic canal structures have been affected by graffiti which detracts from the attractiveness of the canal and creates an atmosphere of neglect.
- There is a lack of suitable secure mooring sites for boaters and this discourages them from visiting this stretch of the canal.
- There are many important views and vistas looking from the canal and towards the canal from surrounding areas that need to be preserved.
- There is a need to protect and enhance wildlife habitats along the canal as they play an important role in the City's biodiversity.
- The trees and green spaces along the canal provide an important green corridor in the City which should be protected and enhanced.