

# The Coventry Canal Conservation Area

## Management Plan



## **Coventry Canal Conservation Area Management Plan**

The Coventry Canal Conservation Area with its industrial heritage, historic buildings, views, vistas, trees and green spaces makes a unique contribution to the character of the city, while also offering important opportunities for regeneration and growth.

The special qualities of the Canal Conservation Area have been identified in the Character Appraisal. The purpose of this Management Plan is to present Proposals and Actions to guide and manage the future changes that are anticipated in the area. These will seek to preserve and enhance the character of the Conservation Area and encourage good quality new development with designs that respond sympathetically to the historic context. The Proposals and Actions are based upon the themes identified in the 'Key Issues' section of the Character Appraisal and are divided into four areas;

- 1.0 The Protection of the Historic Environment
- 2.0 The Design of New Development
- 3.0 The Public Realm
- 4.0 The Green Environment

The Coventry Canal Conservation Area Proposals and Actions have been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (2005) and Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (2005) produced by English Heritage and the Planning Advisory Service. The policies should be read in conjunction with The Coventry Development Plan (2001) and the Canal Corridor SPD (1993).

## 1.0 The Protection of the Historic Environment.

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Issue being addressed</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>1.1: Extensions and alterations to historic buildings and structures in the Conservation Area must be sympathetic to the existing building in scale, proportion, materials and detailing.</p>	<p>Some buildings along the canal have been unsympathetically altered in ways that detract from their character and appearance.</p>	<p>All additions and alterations to existing buildings and structures in the Conservation Area must be sympathetic to the existing building in scale, proportion, materials and detailing. There will be a presumption against additions and alterations to buildings which adversely affect their character and appearance, or that of the Conservation Area.</p>
<p>1.2: The retention of historic architectural features on traditional buildings will be encouraged where they contribute to the character of the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>The character of many buildings of historic and architectural interest have suffered from the fitting of inappropriate uPVC windows and doors, concrete roof tiles and the gravel dashing of brick walls</p>	<p>The retention of traditional style windows and doors and other features in historic buildings will be encouraged, as will the reinstatement of architectural features that had previously been removed. The fitting of inappropriate roof materials and wall coverings will be discouraged.</p>
<p>1.3: It is proposed that buildings and structures which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area are retained.</p>	<p>Many buildings and structures that contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area have been lost in recent years.</p>	<p>There will be a presumption in favour of retaining buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This will include buildings of contextual or group value.</p>

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Issue being addressed</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>1.4: Historic and architecturally significant buildings and structures should not be allowed to deteriorate.</p>	<p>Historically and architecturally significant buildings and structures are sometimes neglected by their owners and it becomes necessary for Local Authorities to intervene to secure the preservation of the building or structure.</p>	<p>The City Council will use its statutory powers to secure the preservation of threatened buildings in the Canal Conservation Area. In the case of a Statutorily Listed Building, these powers include Urgent Works and Repairs Notices and as a last resort, compulsory acquisition. The City Council also has the power to secure the preservation of unlisted buildings where it is important for maintaining the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.</p>
<p>1.5: It is proposed that vacant buildings which contribute positively to the Conservation Area are re-used in a manner that preserves their character.</p>	<p>Several buildings which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area are currently empty and there is a risk that their condition will deteriorate.</p>	<p>Beneficial and creative new uses for vacant buildings will be actively encouraged, where these respect the character of the building and the Conservation Area. Uses that will adversely affect their character and appearance, or that of the Conservation Area, will not be permitted. Where buildings are unoccupied and await a long term use, appropriate temporary uses will be encouraged. Such uses should not require significant internal or external alterations, particularly where these would reduce the flexibility of the building in the future.</p>

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Issue being addressed</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>1.6: Buildings should only be demolished where it can be demonstrated that they make little or no contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The proposed replacement development must enhance the area.</p>	<p>Good quality, usable buildings along the canal have been demolished and replaced with low quality buildings, or have not been replaced at all, leaving empty sites and a poor environment.</p>	<p>The City Council will expect the developer to justify the grounds for demolition and demonstrate that the building in question makes little or no contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The developer must also submit detailed plans for redevelopment which must preserve or enhance the character of the Conservation Area. In the absence of satisfactory proposals, consent for demolition will not be granted.</p>
<p>1.7: It is proposed that traditional canal side boundary treatments such as brick walls and hedges should be retained and maintained.</p>	<p>In many locations the canal suffers from poor boundary treatments such as steel palisade fencing, while historic brick walls suffer from a lack of maintenance or are removed completely.</p>	<p>The demolition of any canal boundary walls, canal retaining walls or bridge walls, and parapets which contribute to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area by reason of age, materials and historical significance, will not be allowed. The removal of historic hedgerows will also be discouraged.</p>
<p>1.8: Buildings and structures that are thought to be of historical or architectural significance will be proposed for Statutory Listing or Local Listing.</p>	<p>The canal corridor contains many buildings and structures that are of historical and architectural significance but which are currently undesignated.</p>	<p>Non-designated buildings that are judged by the City Council to be of special historic or architectural interest are to be added to the Coventry City Council Local List or proposed to English Heritage for inclusion on the Statutory List.</p>

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Issue being addressed</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>1.9: Buildings and structures which are felt to be of historic, architectural or archaeological interest will be recorded prior to them being significantly altered.</p>	<p>In the past, many historic and architecturally significant buildings along the canal have been altered or demolished without any record being made.</p>	<p>Where consent is granted for the significant or alteration of a heritage asset, whether designated or not, an accurate archive record must be made prior to the commencement of any works. This will include photographs and/or where appropriate, measured survey drawings, provided at the expense of the applicant.</p>
<p>1.10: Sites of archaeological potential will be investigated prior to any development taking place.</p>	<p>In the past, sites of archaeological potential along the canal have been damaged or destroyed without any archaeological investigation taking place.</p>	<p>Sites which are deemed to be of archaeological potential will be evaluated prior to any development taking place and an appropriate scheme of mitigation implemented if archaeological remains are present.</p>
<p>1.11 Advice should be provided to help property owners, residents and developers achieve the objectives of the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>The conservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area is likely to require specialist advice which may not be widely accessible in the community.</p>	<p>The City Council will provide expert help and guidance free of charge to residents on the repair and maintenance of traditional buildings in the Conservation Area.</p>

## 2.0 The Design of New Development

Proposal	Issue being addressed	Action
<p>2.1: New development within the Conservation Area will acknowledge the canal and maximise the potential of the waterside location. All developments should recognise the canal as a positive asset.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>All new development within the Canal Conservation Area shall recognise the canal, and the waterside location as a positive asset. New developments should recognise the presence and value of the canal as a feature within their site planning and layout. Housing should be designed to take advantage of waterside views and aspects. New design should be both innovative and sensitive to the positive features of a particular location. Developments which lie adjacent to historic buildings should respect the scale, massing and materials of the historic structures.</p>
<p>2.2 New developments should enhance the amenity value of the canal.</p>	<p>Past developments along the canal have often failed to maximise the potential of the canal for recreation and leisure uses.</p>	<p>Development of derelict or redundant sites adjacent to the canal should include proposals to enhance its amenity value, to provide opportunities for recreation and leisure use. Canal side development should aim to create attractive and purposeful waterside spaces, for both public and private use.</p>

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Issue being addressed</b>	<b>Action</b>
2.3: New developments alongside the canal should avoid positioning car parks and service yards adjacent to the canal in a way which is detrimental to its setting.	Service yards and car parks are frequently sited so that they are visible from the canal and often have a negative impact on the setting of the canal.	Site layouts must be carefully planned to avoid unattractive service yards, storage areas, waste disposal areas, car parks and lorry parks being sited immediately adjacent to the canal.
2.4: New developments should maximise the opportunities to generate natural surveillance of the canal, its tow path and other areas of the public realm.	Many people are discouraged from using the tow path for leisure purposes as they feel isolated and vulnerable.	Developments must be carefully planned to maximise opportunities for natural surveillance of the canal, the tow path and other areas of the public realm in order to improve security
2.5: New developments alongside the canal should include secure moorings to encourage more boaters to visit the city.	The canal currently has a lack of secure moorings for boats and many boat owners are reluctant to stay overnight in the urban area. Secure moorings would encourage greater use of the canal by boats and give it a more vibrant feel. The provision of moorings on the non-tow path side is particularly important.	Designs for new developments adjacent to the canal should include the provision of secure short-term moorings for visiting boats.

### 3.0 The Public Realm

Proposals	Issues being addressed	Action
3.1: The many important views and vistas from the canal will be maintained.	There are many important views and vistas looking both from the Conservation Area and into the Conservation Area, which should be maintained.	All new developments will preserve and enhance important views and vistas that are visible looking both from the canal and also looking in towards the Conservation Area.
3.2: The public need to easily and safely access the canal and the tow path.	There is poor pedestrian and cycle 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.	The City Council will seek to ensure that current physical and visual access to the canal is maintained. This will include measures to upgrade the tow path along certain lengths of the canal to ensure that it is safe and suitable for use by all members of the community and encourage the provision of new access points to the tow path from new developments
3.3: To ensure that either a strip of soft landscaping for mooring pins or mooring rings are provided to enable boat owners to tie up safely.	In some locations the tow path has a hard surface which extends to the edge of the canal. This prevents boat owners from using mooring pins to secure their craft and discourages boats from visiting the canal.	Where the tow path is to be upgraded, a strip of soft landscaping is to be provided at the water's edge to enable boaters to use mooring pins. Where there is insufficient space for a soft strip, mooring rings should be installed as an alternative.

<b>Proposals</b>	<b>Issue being addressed</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>3.4: Historic floor surfaces will be retained and maintained and any new paving schemes should use traditional materials where appropriate.</p>	<p>The paving and surfaces that are present in several locations within the Conservation Area are important and provide an appropriate setting for its buildings and structures</p>	<p>Where historic surfaces such as brick paving, granite kerbstones, stone sets and surfaces containing features such as railway tracks, still exist, great care should be taken to ensure that these are retained and accurately repaired. If new paving schemes are proposed the design and materials should use traditional materials such as brick-paving, cobbles, sets and gravel.</p>
<p>3.5: To improve the boundary treatments along the tow path and the non-tow path side of the canal.</p>	<p>Currently there are many locations along the canal, where there are ugly boundary treatments that have a negative impact upon its appearance.</p>	<p>The use of hedges, brick walls and railings for canal side boundary treatments will be encouraged. The use of palisade fencing, corrugated steel sheets, chain-link fencing and barbed wire is not appropriate.</p>
<p>3.5: All street furniture should be sympathetic to the character of the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>Street furniture within the Conservation Area should be sympathetic to the setting of the canal and the buildings and structures within it and avoid street clutter.</p>	<p>New street furniture, including lighting columns, should be simple and functional, reflecting the predominantly industrial character of the Conservation Area. New furniture within the public realm should be carefully sited to avoid intrusion on views and vistas and the settings of buildings. A co-ordinated effort should be made to avoid street clutter through good design and careful siting. Thought needs to be given to the long term maintenance of any new installations.</p>

<p>3.6: Advertisements should be sited in a way that does not detract from the character of the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>In several locations along the canal, large advertising hoardings frequently intrude on the setting of historic buildings and structures, to the detriment of important views and vistas along the canal.</p>	<p>Where signage is considered acceptable, it should be designed to suit the proportions, design and materials of the host building and the immediate streetscape. Over-large, unsympathetic and visually intrusive signage will not be allowed. The Council will also pursue the removal of existing inappropriate advertising hoardings.</p>
<p>3.7: Structures within the Conservation Area should be kept free from graffiti and vandalism.</p>	<p>Many historic canal structures have been affected by graffiti which detracts from the attractiveness of the canal and creates an atmosphere of neglect.</p>	<p>The City Council will work with partner organisations to ensure that graffiti is removed and that regular inspections take place to ensure this happens promptly. The walls of new developments and boundary treatments should, where possible, use materials that are resistant to graffiti or surfaced in a way that graffiti can be easily removed.</p>
<p>3.8: The Art Trail and other heritage interpretation material will be retained and maintained and new material should be installed where appropriate.</p>	<p>The Art Trail is an important feature which contributes to the character of the canal and is enjoyed by users of the canal and tow path. The canal would also benefit from the installation of new heritage interpretation features to increase the public appreciation of its history and significance.</p>	<p>The Art Trail will be retained and maintained while opportunities will be taken to maximise heritage interpretation in the Conservation Area to assist the public's appreciation of the canal's history.</p>

<p>3.9 It is proposed that trees, woods, hedges and green spaces which contribute in a positive way to the character of the Conservation Area will be retained and enhanced.</p>	<p>The canal is an important green corridor running through one of the most densely populated and industrial areas of the city. Trees, woods, hedges and green areas make an important contribution to the character of the Conservation Area.</p>	<p>The Council will ensure that trees, woods, hedges and green spaces which make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area are retained and enhanced where appropriate with the planting of native species.</p>
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#### 4.0 The Green Environment

<b>Proposals</b>	<b>Issues being addressed</b>	<b>Action</b>
<p>4.1: The biodiversity of the canal corridor will be preserved and enhanced.</p>	<p>The canal corridor plays an important role in the city's biodiversity providing habitats for a range of species. The canal corridor has been recommended for designation as a Local Wildlife Site.</p>	<p>Trees, areas of woodland and vegetation which provide habitats for wildlife will be retained and enhanced. Proposals which adversely affect the ecological interest of the Conservation Area will not be permitted.</p>
<p>4.2: It is proposed to reduce habitat fragmentation and improve the role of the canal as a wildlife corridor by establishing vegetation along lengths of the banks which are currently concrete or steel piles.</p>	<p>In many places the edge of the canal is built of concrete or steel piles. The potential of the canal as a wildlife corridor for water voles and other species could be improved by naturalising the banks with marginal vegetation using measures such as coir rolls. This would also enhance the appearance of the canal in many areas.</p>	<p>Opportunities should be taken to naturalise lengths of the canal bank with the installation of coir roll in order to establish marginal vegetation which would improve habitats and help the canal achieve its potential as a wildlife corridor.</p>