

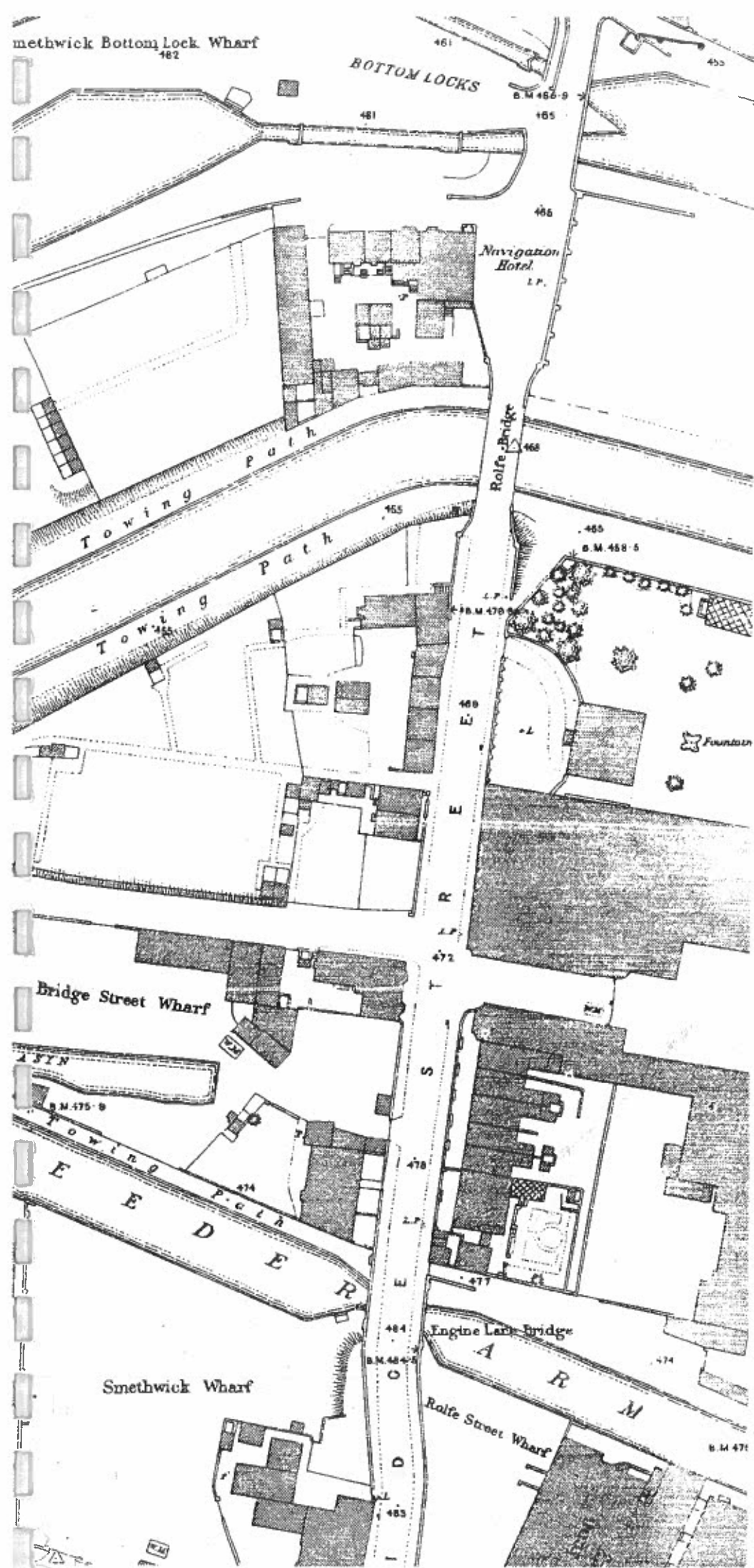
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SMETHWICK SUMMIT
GALTON VALLEY
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WEST MIDLANDS

CONSERVATION
AREA
APPRAISAL



APRIL 2002

A CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL OF

**SMETHWICK SUMMIT, GALTON VALLEY, SMETHWICK
SANDWELL, WEST MIDLANDS**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 The Smethwick Summit (Galton Valley) Conservation Area is one of six conservation areas within Sandwell Metropolitan Borough. It was designated as being an area of 'special architectural or historic interest' in July 1984.

1.1.2 In accordance with Section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the guidance provided by Planning Policy Guidance Note 15, *Planning and the historic environment* (PPG15) and other English Heritage guidance, Sandwell MBC is currently reviewing the boundary of the Smethwick Summit Conservation Area, to ensure that the area of designation is still appropriate.

1.1.3 Additionally, in order to provide a sound basis for future development control decisions, and to formulate appropriate policies for the preservation and enhancement of the special character and appearance of the conservation area, the Council has commissioned the preparation of a detailed Conservation Area Appraisal.

1.2 Location and general form of the conservation area

1.2.1 The conservation area is essentially a narrow linear corridor which, as currently designated, extends for a distance of almost 4km on a roughly WNW-ESE alignment to the north of Smethwick town centre (Fig. 1). It is set within a highly urban environment, dominated by older and modern industry and national and local transport links. Little remains of the former natural landscape of the area and the topography has been modified to accommodate intense development during the last two centuries.

1.2.2 The conservation area basically comprises the canal corridors of the Old Main Line (Wolverhampton level) and the New Main Line (Birmingham level) of the Birmingham Canal Navigations, which extend beyond the conservation area to east and west.

1.3 The conservation area boundary as currently designated

1.3.1 The conservation area as currently designated runs from Bromford Stop in the west to Smethwick Junction and the end of the Engine Arm canal in the east (Figs. 2a-2c).

1.3.2 Along most of its length, the boundary includes both the Old Main Line (OML) and New Main Line (NML) canals, and the land in-between them. The notable exception to this is the exclusion from the

designated area of the Spon Lane Industrial Estate which extends from Spon Lane in the west, to Roebuck Lane in the east (Fig. 2a-2b).

1.3.3 For much of its length, the boundary of the conservation area closely follows the outer line of the canal corridor, including those elements such as towpaths and embankments, but nothing beyond. Occasionally, the boundary offsets briefly from the canal corridor to include buildings or structures considered to be of significant historic or townscape value.

1.3.4 The main offsets of the conservation area boundary from the canal corridor have been made to include:

- the listed offices and clock tower of Archibald Kenrick and Sons on Hall Street South to the east of Spon Lane
- the Canal Heritage Centre on Brasshouse Lane and adjacent Community Gardens
- the former turnpike toll house on the High Street
- Millennium Basin/Smethwick Enterprise Centre on Rolfe Street
- the sites of Coal Wharf, Lime Wharf and the malthouse at the eastern end of the Engine Arm canal

1.4 Scope and structure of the appraisal

1.4.1 The initial aim of the study was to assess the existing Conservation Area boundary, and to consider, specifically, whether it should be extended to the Birmingham boundary.

1.4.2 The principal aim of the study was to define the special architectural or historic interest of the area which justifies its designation as a conservation area, and further, to identify those buildings, structures and landscape elements which contribute most significantly to the special character and appearance of the conservation area.

1.4.3 In order that an assessment could be made regarding the appropriateness of the current boundary of the designated area, an initial appraisal was carried out of the areas adjacent to the conservation area, in order to identify those which might appropriately be considered for future inclusion within the designated area. The same level of detailed analysis was then carried out of these areas, identified as zone 2a, 6a, 7a and 8 on Figure 13, as of the other zones of the existing conservation area.

- 1.4.4 Although the designation of conservation areas is made specifically on the basis of their being of special architectural or historic interest, it is now widely acknowledged that a significant contribution can often be made to their special character and appearance by their landscape setting and nature conservation value. In accordance with current best practice, therefore, a holistic approach was taken to the analysis of the area.
- 1.4.5 Current planning policy considered to be of greatest relevance to the conservation area is set out in section 2.0 of the report. This will provide the background for recommendations regarding the future management of the conservation area, set out in section 8.0 together with any suggested changes to existing policy considered necessary in order to better protect and enhance the special interest and character of the area.
- 1.4.6 A detailed analysis has been carried out of the historic landscape of the conservation area, its immediate environs and the relationship between the designated area and its wider landscape setting.
- 1.4.7 The early historic development of the general area is set out in section 3.0, together with a more detailed discussion of the development of the canal network which was so fundamental to the development of the Smethwick area.
- 1.4.8 The landscape context of the conservation area, set out in section 4.0 provides a brief description of the existing landform, setting and land use in and around the conservation area, identifies significant landscape elements including green and other open spaces, and identifies key views both within the designated area, and between it and its wider setting.
- 1.4.9 The conservation area, and those adjacent areas considered for possible inclusion within the designated area (see 1.4.3 above) were divided into distinct 'historic landscape character zones', the boundaries of which are shown on Figure 13. Section 5.0 of this document sets out a detailed assessment of each identified zone under the headings:
- Historic background
 - Architectural and historic character
 - Archaeological potential
 - Landscape character and nature conservation value
 - Negative factors and neutral areas
 - Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

- 1.4.10 Section 6.0 of the report defines the special interest, character and appearance of the conservation area as it survives today, and identifies those landscape features, historic buildings and other structures which are considered to contribute most significantly to this character and interest. (Baseline data on each of the heritage assets identified, including photographs, has been prepared in the form of individual 'Heritage Asset Data Sheets', which will be held at the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record where they can be consulted for additional information on individual buildings or features).
- 1.4.11 In the light of the definition of special interest and contributing factors, and based on a detailed analysis of adjacent landscape zones (see 1.4.3 above) section 7.0 sets out the proposed changes to the existing conservation area boundary.
- 1.4.12 Section 8.0 sets out some general recommendations for the future management of the conservation area, including an identification of opportunities for the enhancement of the special quality of the area, recommendations with regard to current planning policy and future conservation works, and a strategy for archaeological evaluation and building recording.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 The 1990 Act and Government Planning Policy Guidance

2.1.1 Section 69 (1) (a) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, defines a conservation area as "an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance".

2.1.2 Section 71 of the same act places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, to identify what it is about the character or appearance of the area which should be preserved or enhanced, and set out the means by which that objective is to be pursued.

2.1.3 Government policy on planning issues in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas is set out in Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG 15), issued jointly by the Departments of the Environment and National Heritage in 1994. This document provides guidance to local authorities on the operation of the planning system, and the preparation of appropriate development plan policies. Section 3 of the PPG deals with matters relating to the control of works to listed buildings, and section 4 deals with conservation areas.

2.2 English Heritage Guidance

2.2.1 Additionally, English Heritage, the government's statutory advisor on archaeology and the historic environment, have produced a number of guidance documents relating to development within the historic environment. *Conservation Area Practice* (English Heritage, 1995) provides guidance on the management of conservation areas, while *Conservation Area Appraisals* (English Heritage, 1997) provides a framework for the definition of the special architectural or historic interest of conservation areas.

2.3 Sandwell MBC and British Waterways Approved Policy Document

2.3.1 Following designation of the Galton Valley as a conservation area in 1984, a policy document detailing objectives, policies and proposals for the canals and surrounding land was drawn up in 1985 as a result of discussions between the former West Midlands County Council, Sandwell MBC and British Waterways, who own the canals and much of the canalside land. The Policy Document was approved by Sandwell MBC's Policy Committee in 1987.

- 2.3.2 The document contains a comprehensive set of policies relating to: the protection of the special character of the area; the preservation of the canal industrial heritage; recreation; access; management; interpretation and promotion; and implementation. It is understood, however, that the policies contained within this document are not currently used for development control purposes.

2.4 Sandwell Unitary Development Plan Policy

- 2.4.1 Planning policy relevant to the Smethwick Summit Conservation Area is currently provided by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council's Unitary Development Plan, Revised Deposit Plan (March, 2001).

- 2.4.2 Of the twelve policies set out under Conservation and Heritage, two are considered to be of greatest relevance in this case.

2.4.3 Policy C3. CONSERVATION AREAS

Planning applications made in Conservation Areas will be expected to show sufficient detail, so that the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area can be fully assessed. Consent to demolish a building in a Conservation Area will be granted only where it can be shown that its repair is not economically viable, that it is incapable of reasonable beneficial use, of inappropriate structure or design, or where its removal or replacement would benefit the appearance or character of the area. Demolition will only be permitted where there are approved detailed plans for redevelopment.

The Council will require development to respect the character of the existing architecture, in scale, grouping and materials.

Having regard to the special character and unique townscape qualities of individual Conservation Areas, the Council will consider whether it is appropriate to exercise control over detailed features of the Conservation Area by the making of Directions under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order, 1995, or Areas of Special Advertisement Control.

2.4.4 Policy C7. CANALS

The Council will seek to protect the Borough's canal heritage, including canalside buildings and associated structures and areas around the canal network that are of special interest. Where the opportunity exists, encouragement will be given to the use of canals as a feature to enhance the quality of development through appropriate layout and orientation.

The Council will assess all proposals for development adjacent to the canal network against the guidelines and criteria set out with the Development Control Policy DC4-Canals. In particular, the Council will seek to ensure that:

- The original scale, style, materials and character of the canals is not prejudiced or eroded and that its buildings, structures and artefacts are retained;
- The design, layout, boundary treatment and landscaping of canalside development takes full account of the opportunity created by its setting;
- The nature conservation value of the canal network is protected.

- 2.4.5 This section of the UDP also contains other policies relevant to the current appraisal:

Policy C2. BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

Policy C9. INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Policy C10. SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS

Policy C11. ARCHAEOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 2.4.6 The section of the UDP setting out Development Control Policies also contains two policies of direct relevance to the Smethwick Summit Conservation Area.

2.4.7 Policy DC4. CANALS

In considering proposals for development on, over or alongside the canals, the Council will require that every effort be made to retain and incorporate original buildings and structures where these form part of the canal history and character. New buildings and structures will use appropriate materials and styles to respect the history and character of the canals.

In exceptional circumstances, proposals for canal development which do not reflect canal history and vernacular style may be permitted. However, the proposals must exhibit a high quality of design and materials, and the design statement must demonstrate how the proposal makes a positive contribution to the canal environment.

When considering proposals for development along, or adjoining canals, the Council will have regard to their use as part of the cycleway network, linear open spaces and footpaths, and other nature conservation aspects.

In considering proposals for development on land adjoining a canal, the Council will give particular consideration to the visual impact on the canal environment. Opportunities to use the canal as a feature to enhance the quality of the development should be taken, wherever they arise, by appropriate layout and orientation. In other cases where the development has no direct link to the canalside, it will be necessary to ensure that buildings, materials, boundary treatment and landscaping have regard to their appearance from the canal, towpath and public places. Open storage areas should be screened.

2.4.8 Policy DC8. DEVELOPMENT IN CONSERVATION AREAS AND AREAS OF TOWNSCAPE VALUE (extract)

When assessing proposals for new development and redevelopment in Conservation Areas and Areas of Townscape Value, the Council will expect high quality architectural design, that is original and individual and will integrate the buildings with the public realm. All applications for new developments in designated areas will be determined in accordance with the urban design policies contained within the UDP, particularly Policy UD2 – Design Statements.

Buildings and features that make a significant contribution to the special interest of a Conservation Area... should be retained and reused rather than redeveloped.

- 2.4.9 The UDP contains eight policies relating to nature conservation. Of general relevance are:

Policy NC1. NATURE CONSERVATION AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

Policy NC2. THE NATURE CONSERVATION NETWORK

Of particular relevance to the designated SINC and SLINC within the conservation area (Fig. 14)

Policy NC3. SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION AND LOCAL NATURE RESERVES

Policy NC4. SITES OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION

The habitats of open water, unimproved and semi-improved grassland, woodland, heathland and hedgerows, all of which occur within the study area receive protection under:

Policy NC6. HABITATS

3.0 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Origins and early development of Smethwick

- 3.1.1 The earliest entry on the Black Country Sites and Monuments Record for the study area and its vicinity is a Roman coin found in Soho Street to the south-west of the study area. However, there is no other evidence to suggest any Roman settlement in the immediate vicinity, and this stray find must be accepted as such. The local environment during the Roman period is considered likely to have been of a *"wild open and unoccupied heathland"* (Hackwood, 1896/Vernon 2001).
- 3.1.2 The evidence for Saxon activity within the area is more compelling. The name Smethwick is now accepted to derive from the Anglo Saxon 'smethe' – a level field or plain, and 'wic' – a village, describing a 'village on the plain'.
- 3.1.3 Even in the 17th century the settlement was described as a *"discontinued"* village (Ogilby, 1675), or what we would call today, a 'scattered settlement'; a hamlet of farms and small groups of cottages scattered between tracts of woodland.
- 3.1.4 Throughout much of the history of the settlement Smethwick appears to have been very much a place which happened to be 'en route' between more important settlements. In the early 18th century there was reference to the road through Smethwick being in considerable disrepair, and that *"there was a better way from Birmingham to Shrewsbury than through Smethwick"*.
- 3.1.5 Smethwick began to establish its own identity following its separation from the manor of Harborne in 1710, and the endowment of a chapel, a vicarage and a charity school here by Dorothy Parkes in the early 18th century gave a real focus to the settlement. The main road through Smethwick became part of the Birmingham, Dudley and Wolverhampton turnpike in 1760, ensuring its maintenance, and thereby its use as a main transport route.
- 3.1.6 Although only sparsely populated, there were a few houses and farms in the area worthy of note; Holt Hall at the southern end of Brasshouse Lane; the 17th century Smethwick Hall, which became Rabone Hall in the later 18th century, situated to the north of Smethwick locks; and French Walls Farm, dating to at least the mid 17th century, which was sold in lots in 1815 and increasingly developed for industry.

3.1.7 However, it was the cutting of the first canal through the area in 1768-69 which changed Smethwick's fortunes so dramatically.

3.2 The development of the canal network

3.2.1 The history of the canal network through Smethwick, due to its complexity and particular interest, is well documented in secondary sources. Recent research has cleared up a number of previous erroneously held beliefs about the detailed construction of the canals; the most useful secondary source of information being Jim Andrew's paper in the Industrial Archaeology Review, Spring 1995 – *The Canal at Smethwick – under, over and finally through the high ground.*

3.2.2 The original canal, now known as the Birmingham Canal Old Main Line (OML) was designed to link Birmingham with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal north of Wolverhampton, thus connecting it to the developing national canal network, with a branch line built to bring coal from the Wednesbury collieries to Birmingham.

3.2.3 A survey was carried out for the line of the proposed canal in 1767 by the leading canal engineer of the day, James Brindley, on behalf of the Birmingham Canal Co.. His proposals for the line to West Bromwich favoured a level route, looping to the north of the high ground of the Smethwick summit, but he was also asked to prepare a plan for a route through Smethwick. This latter 'Upper Way' was chosen, and work started in April 1768.

3.2.4 The Old Main Line is a 'contour canal', typical of its day, whose course followed a natural contour of the land, meandering around minor topographic obstacles (Fig. 5a). Brindley's original intention had been to tunnel through the high ground of the summit, but found that the ground was insufficiently sound for such a method, and was forced to climb over the high ground by means of flights of locks, six at Spon Lane, and six at Smethwick, raising the level of the canal from its general level of 453 ft to 491 ft over the summit.

3.2.5 The main problem associated with these flights of locks was their requirement for large volumes of water to be returned to their heads, to retain the level in the stretch of canal over the summit. Brindley had foreseen this problem, which was partly alleviated with the construction of the higher route to Wolverhampton, bringing water into the system at a level of 473ft, above the third lock at Spon Lane. Several reservoirs were constructed, and pumping engines had to be installed at Spon Lane and Bridge Street in 1777/9.

- 3.2.6 While this style of 'contour' canal was acceptable in the early days of canal transport, their circuitous routes, and the need for long flights of locks which caused bottlenecks of traffic, quickly proved unacceptable. As the volume of traffic increased, as it did rapidly over the next 20 years, and it became clear that investment in canal building was economically sound, methods were explored to accommodate the increased volume of trade, and remove the bottlenecks caused at the locks.
- 3.2.7 John Smeaton carried out a detailed analysis of the water supply to the Birmingham Canal in 1782, and it is possible that he was responsible for suggesting the solution to both the water supply and traffic congestion problems by lowering the line of the canal through the summit, from 491 ft. to 473 ft., allowing the removal of six of the 12 locks. Although generally credited with engineering the 1788-90 scheme of improvements, he had retired from active engineering by the time the scheme was designed in detail, and it is now considered more probable that the work was planned and supervised by two of the (now) Birmingham and Birmingham and Fazeley Canal Company's own staff, the superintendent John Bough and the engineer Samuel Bull.
- 3.2.8 It would appear that the line of the canal was lowered in two stages, firstly by 12 ft and then by a further 6 ft. The first stage displaced the line to the north, while retaining the flow of traffic through the original canal and using it for the removal of spoil from the excavations. Once the temporary new line was operational, the original line was closed and lowered to the desired level of 473ft on the same line as it had originally run some 18ft higher.
- 3.2.9 The lowering of the summit level to that of the Wolverhampton branch, which was well supplied with water discharged from the mines, made the Spon Lane pumping engine redundant and it was removed. It also necessitated the rebuilding or modification of a number of bridges, including that carrying Roebuck Lane over the canal, resulting in the construction of the impressive Summit Bridge. To further ease congestion, a second flight of three locks were constructed immediately to the south of the three remaining Smethwick locks (Fig. 5b).
- 3.2.10 However, as more and more industry was attracted to the land adjacent to the canal, and the workshops of Birmingham required more raw materials to be brought from the Black Country, and more manufactured goods to be distributed to the rest of the country, by the 1820's traffic on the canal again became unmanageable, with fights breaking out as a result of hold-ups at the locks.

- 3.2.11 Again the canal company, by now the Birmingham Canal Navigations, looked to a leading engineer of the day to provide a solution to the problems, and appointed Thomas Telford. His 1824 report referred to the Old Main Line as "*little better than a crooked ditch, with scarcely the appearance of a towing path*", and in it he made two recommendations: to cut a straighter line through many of the earlier canal's meanders, and to maintain a constant level of 453ft between Tipton and Birmingham, thus avoiding the need for locks and the attendant problems of water loss and congestion.
- 3.2.12 The New Main Line which he created is an example of the new style of 'direct line' canals, sometimes referred to as the 'motorways of the canal age'. The wide straight canal had towpaths on either side, and the summit section, which opened in 1829, was a remarkably ambitious feat of engineering considering it had to be dug entirely by hand, requiring substantial financial investment by the canal company. Telford also improved water supply by the construction of the Rotton Park Reservoir with a canal feeder running parallel to the NML to join the Engine Arm canal (Fig. 6).
- 3.2.13 Not only was the design and route of the canal in marked contrast to that which had gone before, but the structures associated with it were of a completely different architectural vocabulary and palette of materials. The function of the humpbacked brick roving bridges, spanning narrowed channels and minimal towpaths gave way to the wide elegant elliptical arches of pre-fabricated cast iron bridges spanning, in places, a wide channel and two towpaths.
- 3.2.14 The most spectacular bridge to be constructed over the new canal was Galton Bridge, designed by Telford to carry Roebuck Lane over the deep cutting, immediately to the south of the Summit Bridge. Now listed Grade I, it was an engineering masterpiece which, at the time, was the longest single span cast iron bridge in the world.
- 3.2.15 The depth of the new cutting also necessitated the construction of two aqueducts; the Steward Aqueduct to carry the Wolverhampton branch over the NML near Spon Lane, and the Engine Arm Aqueduct to carry the canal feeder from the Smethwick pumping engine across the new cutting into the OML above Smethwick locks. This latter structure, of cast iron construction and interesting Gothic arcaded detail, was also designed by Telford, and its significance is indicated by its being a scheduled ancient monument.
- 3.2.16 Toll islands were constructed in the centre of the canal, allowing boats to pass either side, and a substantial indexing station was constructed at Smethwick in 1872. Other buildings such as lock

keepers huts or 'hovels', toll offices, canal offices, simple shelters and public houses were constructed at intervals along the route, providing the built infrastructure of the canal transport network.

3.3 Development of industry adjacent to the canals

- 3.3.1 It was in the late 18th century that industry first began to be attracted to the land adjacent to the canal through Smethwick. The canal provided an ideal method of transport both for the supply of raw materials, and the export of manufactured goods, and many early works had their own private canal basins, where goods could be loaded and unloaded, without impeding traffic on the main canal.
- 3.3.2 Three notable firms which established along the canal during the late 18th century were the Smethwick Brasshouse (1772), the foundry at the south-east end of the lane to which gave its name; Archibald Kenrick & Son. (1791), cast iron hollow-ware manufacturers at Spon Lane and the Soho Foundry (1796), the first purpose-built steam engine manufactory in the world, on a loop of the canal to the south-east of Rabone Lane.
- 3.3.3 By the late 1820's, a number of other notable industries had arrived in the area, to take advantage of the improved transport infrastructure (Fig. 4). Obviously, access to the canal side, and the opportunity to construct private basins onto the canal was only possible along the stretches to west and east of the high ground of the summit where the canals ran through cuttings and were therefore cut off from their potential industrial hinterland by steep embankments.
- 3.3.4 A glassworks had been established on the site between the OML and NML west of Spon Lane by 1814. This was bought by Robert Chance in 1822, who went into partnership with John Hartley in 1828. These works were of considerable national importance, notably for the supply of 1 million square feet of glass for the Crystal Palace in 1851, and for the international supply of specialist lenses for lighthouses. Over the following decades, it competed with Pilkington's to be the largest glass manufacturer in the country.
- 3.3.5 Beyond the summit, Hadley's iron works had been constructed adjacent to Smethwick top lock, and the French Walls site was developed, first as a gun barrel manufactory by c.1800, and then with a flour mill in 1815. It later became an iron and steel works before its conversion to Muntz's Metal Works.

- 3.3.6 Although development of the canalside was relatively slow to take off during the first seventy years following the construction of Brindley's first canal (Fig. 8), the next fifty years gradually saw virtually every available site developed, until by the turn of the century, the area must have reached very much the prime of its function (Fig. 9).
- 3.3.7 The industrial development of the area has been relatively well covered in the documentary record, notably by Steve Cemm's thesis dealing with the period after 1842 (Cemm, 1993), but also in a number of publications about specific firms.
- 3.3.8 While these industrial sites lie outside the boundary of the conservation area, their canalside buildings were once crucial to establishing its historic character and appearance, and the processes carried on within them dictated both the function of the canal, and much of the atmosphere along its borders.
- 3.4 The coming of the railways
- 3.4.1 The railways are often blamed for causing the decline of the canal system, yet in the Black Country this was not the case. Many industries had, by the mid 19th century, located on the canals which they relied on for transporting raw materials and goods, and these same canals created huge obstacles to railway building as their lines crossed across this busy area.
- 3.4.2 The first railway to be constructed through the area was the Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Stour Valley Railway, opened in 1852. This ran along the top of the southern embankment of the NML between Bromford Junction and Brasshouse Lane, and further east crossed the line of the canal at Merry Hill.
- 3.4.3 The Stourbridge Extension Railway, opened in 1867, crosses the lines of both canals immediately to the west of Galton and Summit Bridges, and now has a station whose platforms bridge the deep cutting.
- 3.4.4 The construction of the various railway lines through the area not only made a significant impact on the setting of the south side of the canal corridor, effectively cutting it off from the urban core of the town centre, but necessitated another programme of bridge building, to carry the various railway lines across the canal cuttings. Although of a relatively standard style of construction and materials, used across the region, several of them are relatively impressive structures.

3.4.5 Within the Black Country, there was a period of several decades during which the canal and railway networks operated successfully together, in fact the London and North-West Railway Co. became the new owners of the Birmingham Canal Navigations (BCN). The railways became predominant for long-distance transport, though the canal network remained vital to the local transport of materials to and from the industries established along its banks. Canal/railway interchange basins, or 'transshipment depots' became common, with 26 established along the BCN network, in addition to the 550 privately owned basins.

3.4.6 Despite roads and railways having become the dominant modes of commercial transport during the first decades of the 20th century, the decline of the canals was delayed by the wars, which created an increased demand for metals and their products, of particular relevance in the Black Country, and the rationing of petrol which made long distance road transport more difficult.

4.0 LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

4.1 Topography and landform

4.1.1 Smethwick lies on the southern edge of the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood Landscape Character Area 67 (Countryside Agency, 1999). It is typical of settlements in the southern urban part of the character area which have developed in a complex piecemeal fashion with weak sense of identity. Within this context the canals, as elsewhere, are a significant landscape feature. The area lies on sandstone (the Bunter Pebble Beds), with sandy heath soils, on low ground between the higher outlying hills at Oldbury and West Bromwich.

4.1.2 Although now considerably modified across the majority of the designated area, it was one particular element of the natural topography in this area which gave rise to those engineering features which now give the area its considerable significance; the Smethwick Summit, a natural area of high ground, and one which caused significant problems to the early canal builders (see 3.2 above).

4.1.3 The 500 ft (154m) contour, which generally runs roughly parallel and to the south of the study area, extends northwards immediately to the north-west of Smethwick, creating a small area of higher ground within an area more generally at 138 – 143m AOD.

4.1.4 Due to the nature of the geology and soils, there are no significant natural landforms in the area.

4.2 Landscape and townscape setting

4.2.1 The landscape and townscape character of the Conservation Area is in most parts very different to the character of its surroundings, and in many places the canal is largely divorced from its setting. However, for much of the area the surrounding townscape immediately abuts the conservation area, making a significant contribution, both negatively and positively, to the quality of the canal landscape.

4.2.2 The townscape setting is predominantly industrial and commercial (Fig. 11). The shopping core of Smethwick High Street lies to the immediate south but is separated from the conservation area by Tollhouse Way and the railway line. Elsewhere the area is mainly contained within extensive industrial estates, which vary from large and medium sized modern sites such as Kelvin Way Industrial Estate, to mixed industrial areas such as at Rolfe Street. Smaller housing estates do occasionally fringe the area, the most prominent being Brindley Urban Village. The conservation area is however greatly affected by other transport corridors which include the M5; the railway lines and sidings; and the dual carriageways of Tollhouse Way and Telford Way.

4.2.3 The quality of the surrounding urban fabric is not high. The townscape lacks cohesion, which is aggravated by the dominance of the road and rail network, and a great mixture of building form and scale of varying merit. It has largely turned its back on the canal corridor. Many parts of the surrounding area are in a poor condition with fly tipping, damaged paving, walls and fences, derelict or spoiled open areas. However, some features of the townscape setting provide a positive contribution to the character and quality of the conservation area; most notably the Soho Foundry and the Guru Nanak Gurdwara Temple.

4.3 Land use

4.3.1 The study area falls into three main land uses: waterways, vegetated embankments and heavy to medium industry, except for a few exceptions where the area includes part of the local and national transport corridors. These land uses are illustrated on Figure 11.

4.3.2 The boundaries of the area are dominated by large-scale heavy and medium industry and major rail and road transport routes. However, from Telford Way east to Smethwick Locks the area is bordered to the north by housing at Brindley Urban Village, which extends down to the Old Main Line. Limited open space adjacent to the area includes an open area under the M5, the bowling green and community gardens on Great Arthur Street, and the car parking area within the Smethwick Enterprise Centre.

4.4 Landscape elements

4.4.1 The manmade landform of the conservation area makes a major contribution to character of the area. Much of the canal is set within deep, and shallower, cuttings formed by embankments. These are generally of a uniform and engineered shape.

4.4.2 The vegetation of the conservation area is mainly formed by natural regeneration with little ornamental planting or management. The dominant vegetation is a mixed scrub of native shrubs and young trees which clothe large areas of the embankments and intermittently line the Conservation Area boundary. This is an important aspect of the character of the area providing interest and sense of wilderness, as well as nature conservation value.

4.4.3 Hard landscape elements include paving, boundary walls, fencing and railings, steps and ramps.

4.4.4 The paving is mainly a mixture of old traditional brick and modern gravel paths. In places the brick paving has been restored. Both materials contribute to the character of the area. However, in many areas traditional paving has been replaced unsympathetically and poorly with concrete and tarmac.

4.4.5 Many boundary walls are of traditional brick with some stone and 'slag' walls. Brick walls with sandstone copings are a feature of many bridges and ramps. However, much of the boundary of the conservation area, where it is not bound by buildings, is fenced with a wide variety of mostly very poor fencing which varies from corrugated iron to chain link and post and wire. Some ornamental fencing has been erected on Spon Lane and simple tubular railings constructed alongside ramps. These features make little contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

4.4.6 Ramps, paved in brick, are a distinctive landscape feature of the conservation area, much of which has been sensitively restored. There are a few flights of steps which are generally modern and of little landscape merit.

4.5 Green and other open spaces

4.5.1 The dominant open spaces in the area are the extensive deep embankments from Spon Lane to the Engine Arm Aqueduct and the shallower banks at Spon Locks, Smethwick Locks and east of Merry Hill (Fig. 12a-c)

4.5.2 The most significant landscape assets are:

- the attractive open space around and between the bridges at Bromford Stop and the Spon Lane locks
- the M5 under-storey and junction of Old Main Line's Birmingham and Wolverhampton Levels, which is in a poor condition but has significant potential
- the space contained by Galton tunnel entrance and Galton Bridge
- the former site of Galton House gardens
- the setting to the Smethwick New Pumping Station
- the setting of Smethwick Locks, the Engine Arm Aqueduct and yard within the Smethwick Enterprise Centre
- the open area which includes the canal feeder, toll island and bridge at Winson Green.

4.5.3 All these open areas are unfortunately spoilt by visually intrusive industrial elements.

4.6 Spatial analysis

- 4.6.1 A distinctive characteristic of the conservation area is that very little of it can be seen and enjoyed from the surrounding area. This is mainly due to the canal's location, often within deep cuttings and having long stretches enclosed by blank industrial walls and buildings.
- 4.6.2 The most open and significant public or semi-public views into the conservation area are to be found from the M5, Galton Bridge Station, the footbridge to Brasshouse Lane, the railway line and the new terraces of Brindley Urban Village (Fig. 12). Glimpses can be seen from a number of bridges crossing the canal, and a number of private residential and commercial properties adjacent to the canal will have short distance views. There are no long distance views into the conservation area.
- 4.6.3 Views from the conservation area out into its surroundings are limited by the long embankments and enclosing buildings and structures. However, there are significant open views from the canal east of Merry Hill towards the centre of Birmingham, from the Engine Arm Aqueduct to Smethwick Town Centre, and from Smethwick Locks over the industrial area to the east and to Brindley Urban Village.
- #### 4.7 Key views and viewpoints
- 4.7.1 A study has been undertaken to identify the main areas of inter-visibility, visually divisive elements and key views between parts of the canal corridor. These results are shown on Figure 12a-c.
- 4.7.2 The important areas of inter-visibility often coincide with the open spaces but may include buildings beyond the open space. These areas include the junction of the New Main Line with the Old Main Line at Bromford Stop; the canal space under the M5 with Chances Glassworks; the OML under the M5 with the offices and clock tower of Kenrick's; east and west sides of Galton Bridge; Old Main Line with former Galton House gardens; Smethwick Locks with the Smethwick Enterprise Centre; and the canal feeder with the canal.
- 4.7.3 Visual barriers are formed by the M5; Telford Way; Brasshouse Lane; Bridge Street; and Rabone Lane Bridge.
- 4.7.4 Within the conservation area, there are a number of key viewpoints from which the view is particularly attractive or interesting, and the character of the area can be best appreciated. These are shown on Figure 12a-c.

5.0 ANALYSIS AND ASSESSMENT OF HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ZONES

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The assessment of the special interest and character of the conservation area has, in general, been carried out in accordance with the framework provided by English Heritage in their guidance documents *Conservation Area Practice* (English Heritage, 1995) and *Conservation area appraisals* (English Heritage, 1997). However, the specific character and qualities of this canal-focused conservation area require that a flexible approach is taken to this framework devised primarily for the appraisal of more dense areas of settlement and townscape.

5.1.2 The study area has been sub-divided into discrete zones (Fig. 13a-13c) whose particular characters have been created by a combination of the natural landform, the form and scale of man made landscape features, their historic uses, the buildings and structures within them, and the results of more recent development.

5.1.3 Many elements within the study area, particularly details of hard landscaping, are common to many of the zones. These have been discussed in section 4.4 above, and will not be repeated within the description of different zones, unless of particular interest or significance.

5.2 Audit of heritage assets

5.2.1 The conservation area contains three scheduled ancient monuments and 26 listed buildings. Of these, one is listed Grade I, while all others are listed grade II. Of this latter group, the listed building entries for 21 of them note their listing is at least partly based on their having group value with other associated buildings or structures.

5.2.2 An audit has been carried out of the heritage assets surviving within the conservation area and its proposed eastern extension. The audit considered only those features and structures which survived extant, or partially extant, and did not include those with only buried archaeological potential (Fig. 10).

5.2.3 The audit classified the heritage assets according to an assessment of their relative architectural and/or historic significance, any increased significance due to group value, and the contribution they make to the special character and interest of the conservation area. The tabulated results of the audit are included here at Appendix One, and heritage asset numbers are identified in square brackets when mentioned in the text, and can be cross-referenced to Figures 10a-c.

5.3 Zone 1: From Bromford Stop to the M5 including Spon Lane Locks (Figs. 2a & 13a)

5.3.1 Historic background

This zone comprises sections of both Brindley's 1769 OML Birmingham level, and Telford's 1828 NML. Lock offices and/or bothy's at both the bottom lock and the surviving top lock where the Birmingham and Wolverhampton levels of the OML meet, are shown on the 1885 OS. Apart from these buildings, the area between the canals remained undeveloped until relatively recently.

The zone also contains the easternmost end of a former canal basin constructed in the 1840's, originally serving the Broadwell Colliery and Forge. It became known as the Parker Branch by 1904, and was owned by the BCN. It went out of use in 1936 and has since been in-filled, though the railway bridge which formerly spanned it has been retained. Other canal basins on the north side of the OML, now-infilled, served the Bromford and Spon Lane Collieries.

5.3.2 Architectural and historic character

This zone contains a high density of structures of architectural and historic interest, including five listed buildings – two roving bridges [002], [003] and three locks [004], [006], [007].

The three locks date to the original construction of the OML and are considered to be the oldest working locks in the country. This gives them very considerable historic significance though their industrial archaeological value is likely to have been eroded by the replacement of much of their fabric. The cast iron roving bridges each date to one of the two principal phases of such bridges provided along the Galton Valley stretch of the NML – 1828/9 and 1848. They are aesthetically pleasing and architecturally interesting, illustrating the major differences between the two phases of bridge design; the earlier phase being slightly more ornate.

The toll island at Bromford Stop [001] (Plate 1) originally had an octagonal toll office on it. Although this no longer survives, the island retains its original form and fabric, and several of its other features. Of greatest significance is the group value of this important collection of structures within such close proximity.

5.3.3 Archaeological potential

This zone is not considered to have below ground archaeological potential.

5.3.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

This section is dominated by grassy banks and attractive small scale canal structures including the locks, bridges and ramps. It is semi-enclosed by the railway line and a continuous frontage of a

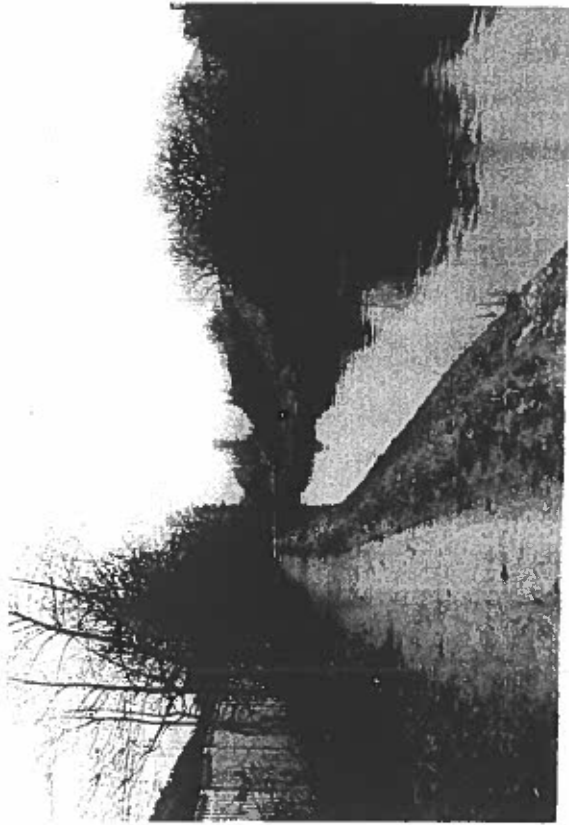


Plate 1 Looking west towards Bromford Stop toll island

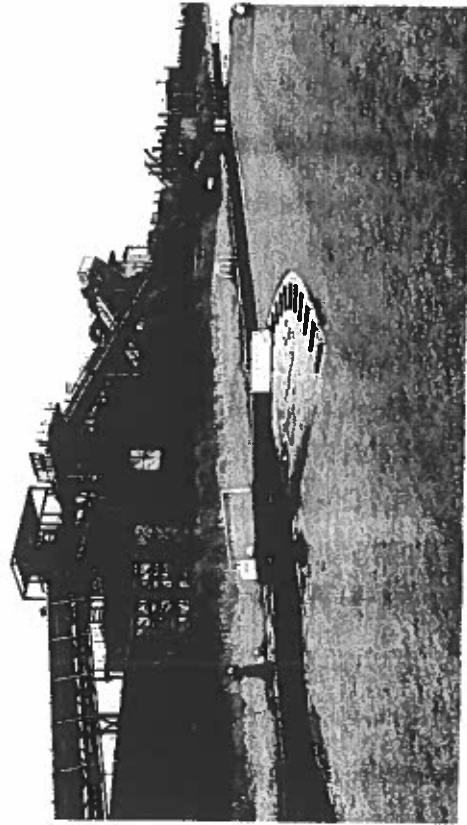


Plate 3 Spon Lane middle lock with industrial site beyond

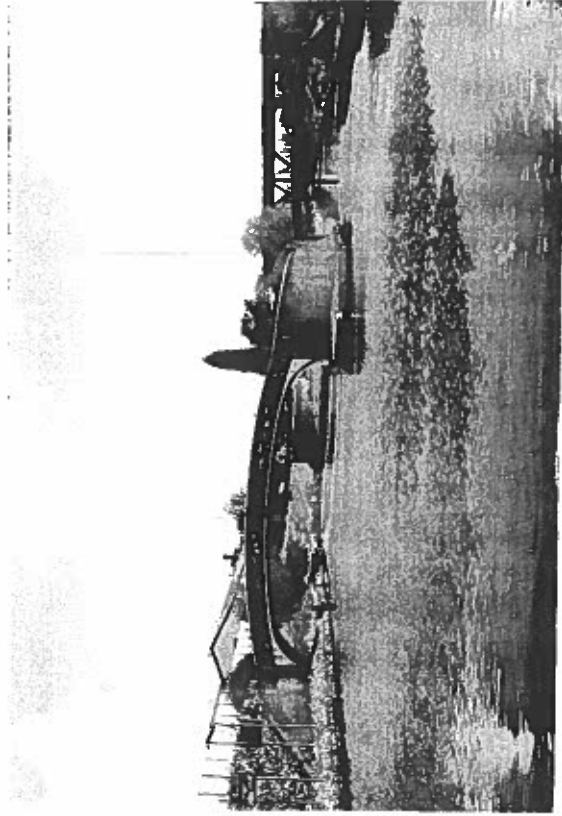


Plate 2 The junction of the OML and NML looking east towards Spon Lane locks and the M5

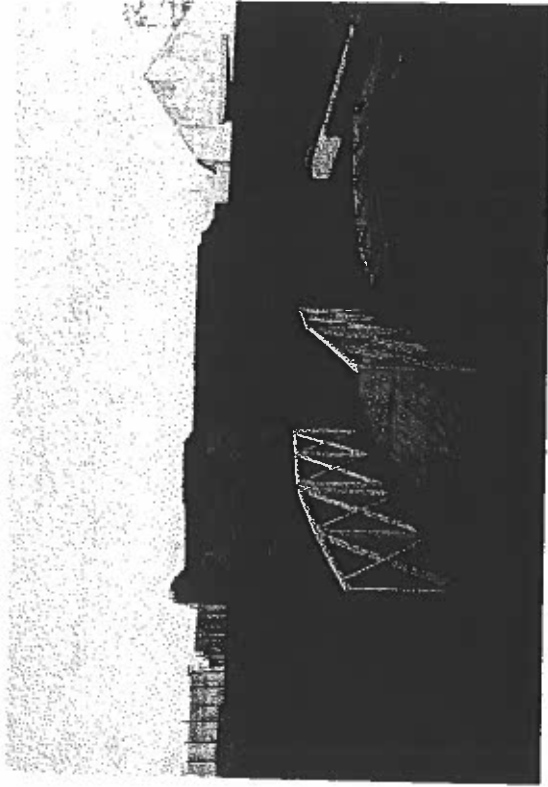


Plate 4 The cleared site of Spon Lane Foundry beyond the split bridge over Spon Lane top lock

mixture of unattractive industrial sites set above the embankments. A number of trees line the top of the embankments softening the industrial buildings.

The canals terminate visually at the western end where the canal swings to the north, and at the eastern end with the M5. There is a sense of isolation and semi-enclosure, relieved by a more 'rural' quality and the attractiveness of the canal structures. The canal bridges form a significant local landmark at the western end of the conservation area (Plate 2).

5.3.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

The setting of these nationally important listed locks has been severely compromised by the construction of the M5 motorway immediately to their east, and the scrap yard which occupies the north side of the OML and the island between the OML and NML, and is in poor condition (Plate 3).

The former site of the Spon Lane Foundry to the north of the top lock has recently been cleared and, although the boundary elevations are still currently *in situ* this has had a negative impact on the setting of this nationally important structure (Plate 4).

5.3.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

Zone 1 is particularly vulnerable to development which will result in the loss of its quasi-rural open character. Existing new development on the boundary of the zone is generally set back and low rise and less intrusive, with the exception of poor boundary treatment.

The island between the two canals is a particularly sensitive site and any development could impinge on the canals and Bromford Stop unless carefully designed. There is little existing landscaping to enable the island site to be easily screened. The island site is also very prominent and acts as a key gateway location at the western entrance to the Smethwick canal system.

5.4 Zone 2: Old Main Line beneath the M5 (Figs. 2a & 13a)

5.4.1 Historic background

This comprises the easternmost section of the Wolverhampton level of the OML where it joins the Birmingham level. This junction was originally located between the third and fourth lock of Brindley's flight of six which took the canal up over the summit.

The construction of the NML in 1828 necessitated the construction of the Steward Aqueduct [010] to carry the Wolverhampton level over the deeper cutting of the NML.

One of the canal/railway interchange basins, which became such an important feature of the BCN network during the second half of the 19th century, was situated to the south-west of the aqueduct.

The line of the canal appears to have been much altered to facilitate the construction of the M5 viaduct, in order that the support columns were founded on the bank rather than within the line of the canal. This also necessitated the demolition of the industrial works buildings formerly located between Houghton Street and the canal.

5.4.2 Architectural and historic character

Although little authentic historic detail survives in this zone, it contains one of the most impressive and instructive features within the conservation area; that is the vertical coincidence of four structures each relating to a major phase in the history of transport in this country; the cutting of the NML crossed by the Steward aqueduct carrying the OML, itself spanned by the mid 19th century railway bridge [065], spanned by the viaduct of the M5 motorway, whose support columns are founded on large concrete 'barrels' set into the NML canal (Plate 5). The Steward Aqueduct itself is a listed building. Spon Lane Bridge [021], though much altered, incorporates one of the few brick roving bridges over the OML.

The north walls of the demolished buildings of Chance's glassworks [020] survive to mark the former line of the canal, and the blocked entrances to the former canal basins provide some indication of the canal landscape prior to the construction of the M5.

5.4.3 Archaeological potential

Sections of the original line of the canal may survive. Similarly, evidence of the earliest buildings of Kenrick's hollow-ware works may survive beneath the motorway viaduct to the south of Houghton Street.

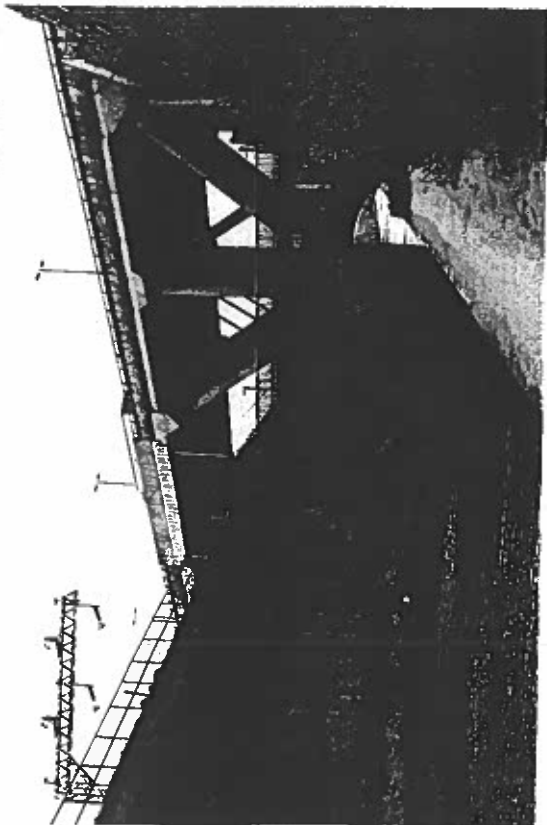


Plate 5 Steward Aqueduct, railway bridge and M5 viaduct

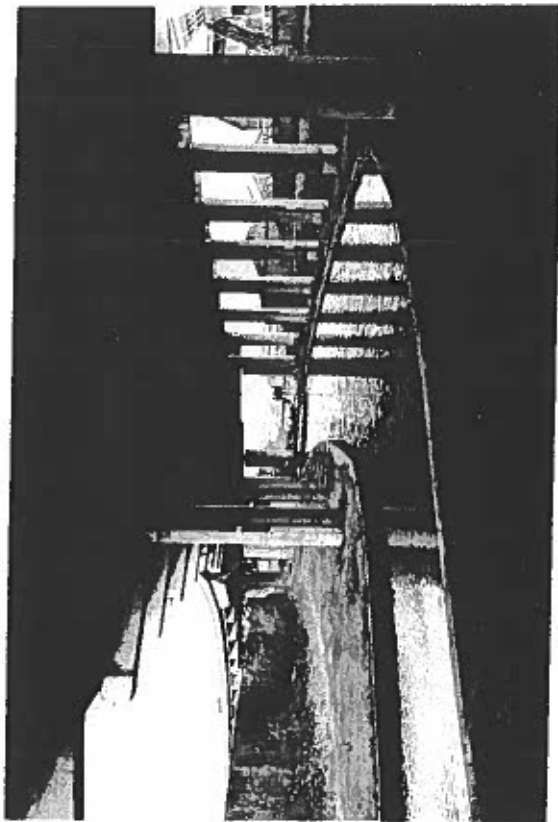


Plate 6 Under the M5 viaduct, looking west towards Spon Lane top lock

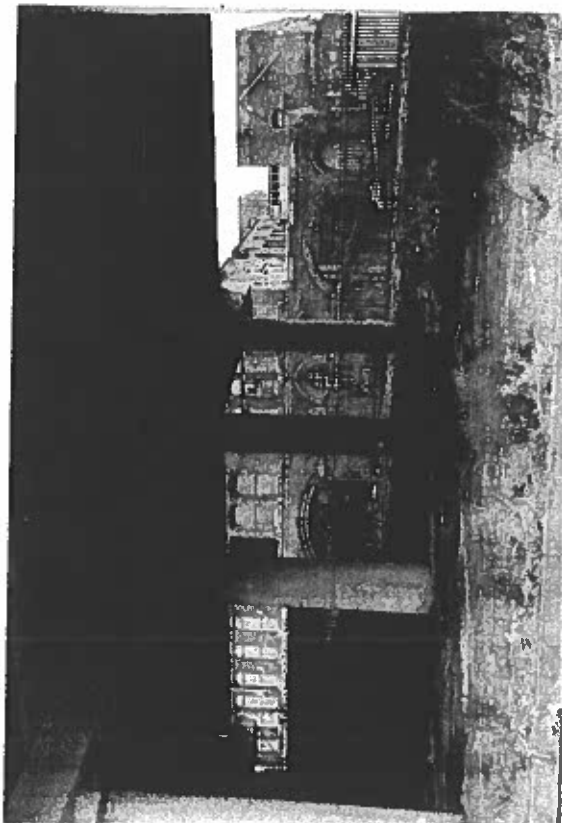


Plate 7 View from canal under M5 to Archibald Kenrick works

5.4.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

This section is dominated by the M5 as it flies overhead supported by huge piers which, in places, are set down into the canal (Plate 6). The zone is highly urban and largely degraded. (Major construction work to the M5 had closed and temporarily in-filled the canal at the time of survey). It is very enclosed by the M5 structures, poor high level fencing and walls and industrial buildings.

There is little or no vegetation and pavings and other hard landscape elements are generally in a poor condition with an air of dereliction. Views are shortened and the setting is dramatic but threatening. The offices and clock tower of Archibald Kenrick and Sons to the north of the canal forms a local landmark but it is separated from the canal by the M5 and an area of very poor space under the motorway (Plate 7).

5.4.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

The viaduct of the motorway detracts significantly from the setting of the canal and the Steward aqueduct, and creates a relatively hostile environment. Its construction has led to the realignment of the canal, and the loss of original fabric. New fencing, gates and functional rather than sensitive landscaping have all detracted from the setting of the listed Spon Lane Bridge (Plate 15).

5.4.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

Zone 2 is already materially affected by the modern structures of the M5, presenting an opportunity for bold adjacent redevelopment and good urban design provided that this is sympathetic to the key historic buildings in the zone. However, the zone has suffered from poor quality boundary treatment, urban clutter and neglect which has degraded the zone. This does not present an excuse for poor design of buildings and open spaces in the future.

This is a particularly enclosed section of the canal which could be adversely affected by further high enclosure within the existing more open areas which might result in a reduction of the visual significance of the historic elements.

The zone is particularly sensitive to any further work to the understructure of the M5. Considerable care must be taken to respect the canal character and the need to enhance the hard landscape around the canal.

5.5 Zone 2a: Area to north of OML bounded by Grice Street and Union Street (Figs. 2a & 13a)

5.5.1 Historic background

The area to the west of Spon Lane was largely occupied by the Stour Valley Works, with small properties lining both sides of Spon Lane itself, including the Cape Hotel at the north-east corner of the bridge. To the east of Spon Lane, Kenrick's established on the canalside in 1791 and subsequently expanded into the area to the north of Houghton Street. The Spon Lane Works also had premises on both sides of Houghton Street.

5.5.2 Architectural and historic character

The offices and clock tower of Archibald Kenrick [071], built in the 1870's in a 'Ruskinian' Gothic style (Plates 8 & 9), are grade II listed and have both intrinsic architectural interest, and present an important townscape feature. Other buildings within the reduced Kenrick works appear to be of interest, though external cladding makes an internal inspection desirable. The offices of the former Spon Lane Works [072], although less architecturally distinctive than Kenrick's offices, enhance the architectural character of the locality (Plate 10).

Certain 19th century buildings of the former Stour Valley works survive [073]. These are generally of banded brickwork, or have elaborate brickwork detail, and very cursory internal inspection indicates that original fixtures such as cast iron columns and brackets for line shafting survive (Plates 11-13).

Although there is only piecemeal survival of significant buildings within this zone, and no extant survival of the former canal basins which served the industrial works located here, the zone has historic interest within the study area as one of the few canalside areas where original buildings respecting the locations of former canal basins survive.

5.5.3 Archaeological potential

Although the canal basins are likely to survive in a buried context, as are the footings of early industrial buildings in this area, the processes carried out within this zone would not suggest the survival of significant industrial archaeological evidence. It is considered desirable that more detailed survey is carried out of the surviving buildings in this zone to identify the degree of survival of internal fixtures and fittings relating to original function.

5.5.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

The area to the west of Spon Lane is characterised by a mix of 19th and 20th century industrial buildings of varying quality, accessed from Grice Street which is poorly maintained. Gap sites detract from the visual character of the area, as do high level security fencing separating the adjacent sites

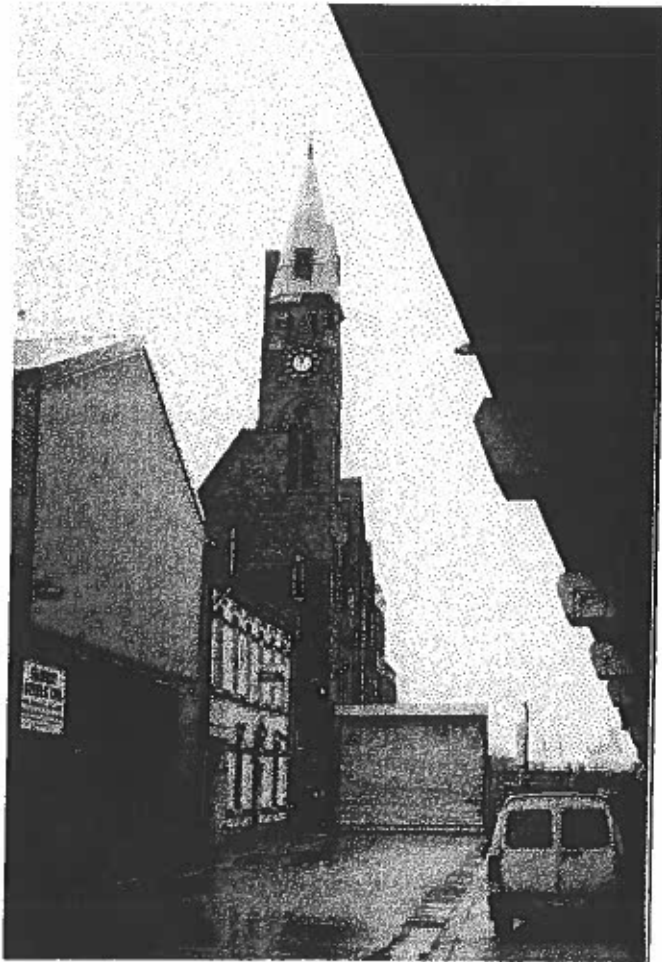


Plate 8 View eastwards along Houghton Street towards Archibald Kenrick works clock tower

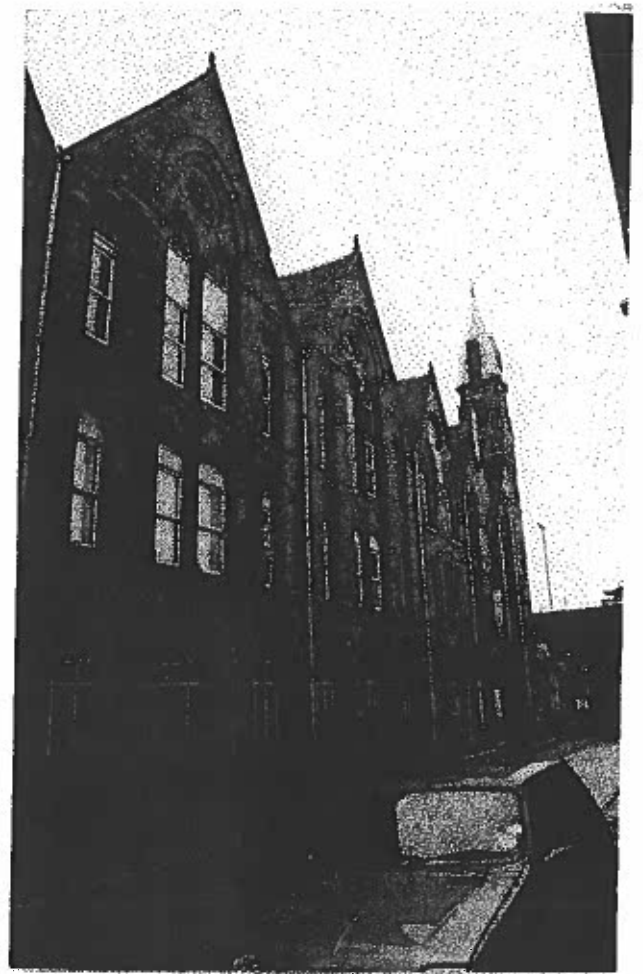


Plate 9 Archibald Kenrick gothic style screen wall to Hall Street South



Plate 10 Former offices of Spon Lane Works

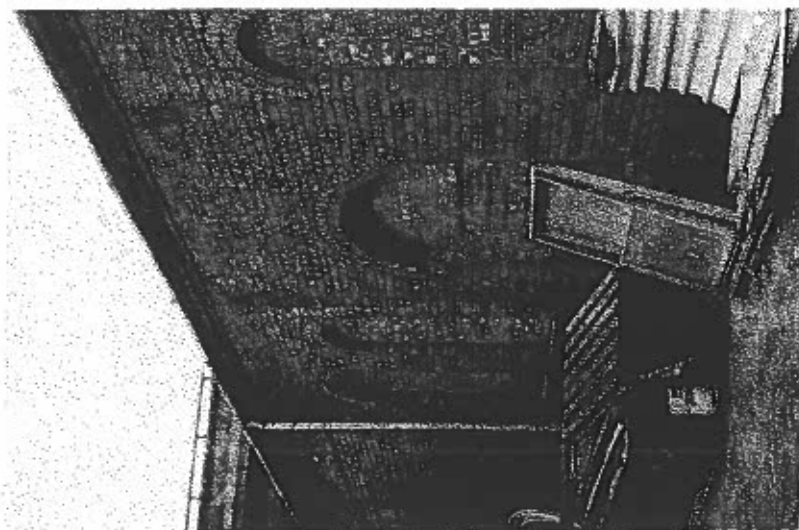


Plate 11 Former building of Stour Valley works (east)

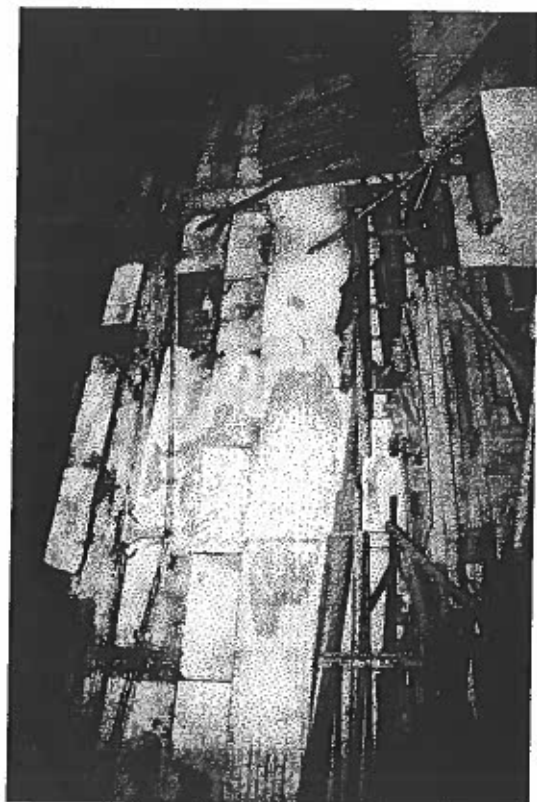


Plate 12 Former building of Stour Valley works (east) interior

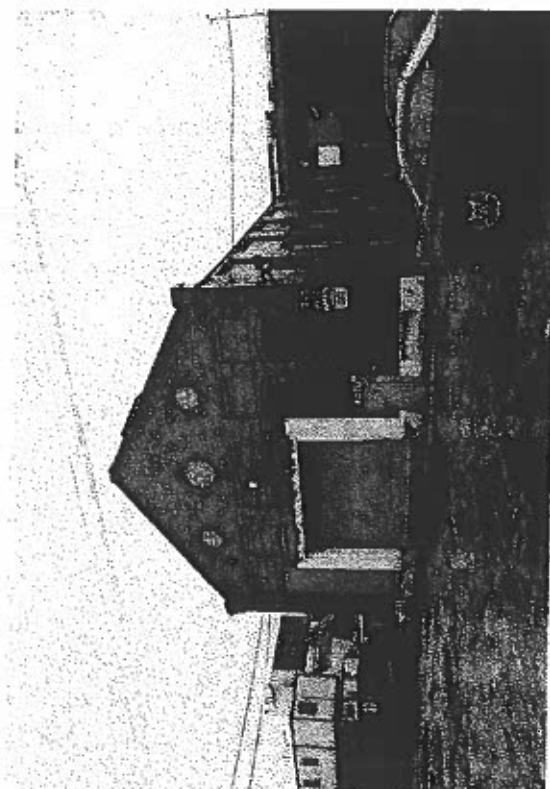


Plate 13 Former building of Stour Valley works (west)

from the canal zone. Surviving boundary walls of otherwise cleared sites form a backdrop to the canal features of the Spon Lane top lock (Plate 4).

The area to the east of Spon Lane though better maintained has been divorced from the canal by the M5 and its understorey, and secure compounds of poor quality high level fencing.

There is little or no vegetation and pavings and other hard landscape elements are generally in a poor condition with an air of dereliction.

This zone has no known nature conservation value, though the general recommendations of section 8.0 should be respected in the event of re-development.

5.5.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

As identified in 5.5.4 above, and the use of modern metal cladding which obscures the historic fabric of several of the Kenrick works buildings.

5.5.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

The piecemeal re-development of the area to the west of Spon Lane is likely to continue, with the potential loss of the remaining 19th century buildings. This will have a significant impact on the setting of Spon Lane top lock. Further development on the Kenrick site is also likely to result in the loss of further 19th century buildings, though the setting of the canal has already been impaired, and future development is unlikely to have a significant impact.

5.6 Zone 3: New Main Line from the M5 to Spon Lane and Chances Glass Works (Figs. 2a & 13a)

5.6.1 Historic background

The former Crown Window Glass Works, which were established on this site by Thomas Shutt in 1814, originally fronted the OML above Spon Lane top lock. They had been bought by Robert Chance by 1822, who, together with John Hartley began a programme of expansion. The works were divided in two by the cutting of the NML in 1828, creating a North Works and South Works, connected by two bridges [011], [012]. Although the south works have been cleared and a new industrial estate created, a number of the buildings of the north works survive. By the mid 19th century the works had three canal basins on the OML, which were gradually enclosed within buildings.

Chance's glassworks were of considerable national importance, not only as suppliers of the 1 million square feet of glass used for the Crystal Palace in 1851, and of the coloured glass for railway signals, but from the 1860's as suppliers of specialist lighthouse glass and optical equipment worldwide. At this time they were the country's largest glass producers, with over 1200 employees, having 12 cone furnaces in 1857, rising to 16 in the late 1870's. The increased production of rolled and sheet glass in the late 19th century introduced tank furnaces which came to replace cones, the last of which was removed in the 1930's.

One of the two pumping engines used to supply water to the head of the flight of locks from 1777 was situated to the west of Spon Lane, until the lowering of the OML and the increase in water supply via the Wolverhampton level made it redundant.

5.6.2 Architectural and historic character

All of the buildings currently surviving on the Chance's site are listed, as are the two bridges across the NML. Unfortunately, the majority of the surviving buildings were warehouses rather than those associated with the manufacturing processes, and therefore of lesser industrial archaeological interest.

The 1847 seven-storey warehouse[016] (Plate 17), though of a restrained architectural style, has considerable townscape value, and the southern elevations of the canalside warehouses [013-017] (Plate 16) on the NML are crucial to creating the special architectural and historic character of this zone of the canal corridor.

Hartley Bridge [011] is unusual within the conservation area, being the only surviving structure built predominantly of stone. It has the same distinctive 'pecked' rustication found also on Galton Bridge [024] and the towpath bridge [040] at the junction of the Engine Arm with the OML, indicating their contemporaneity.

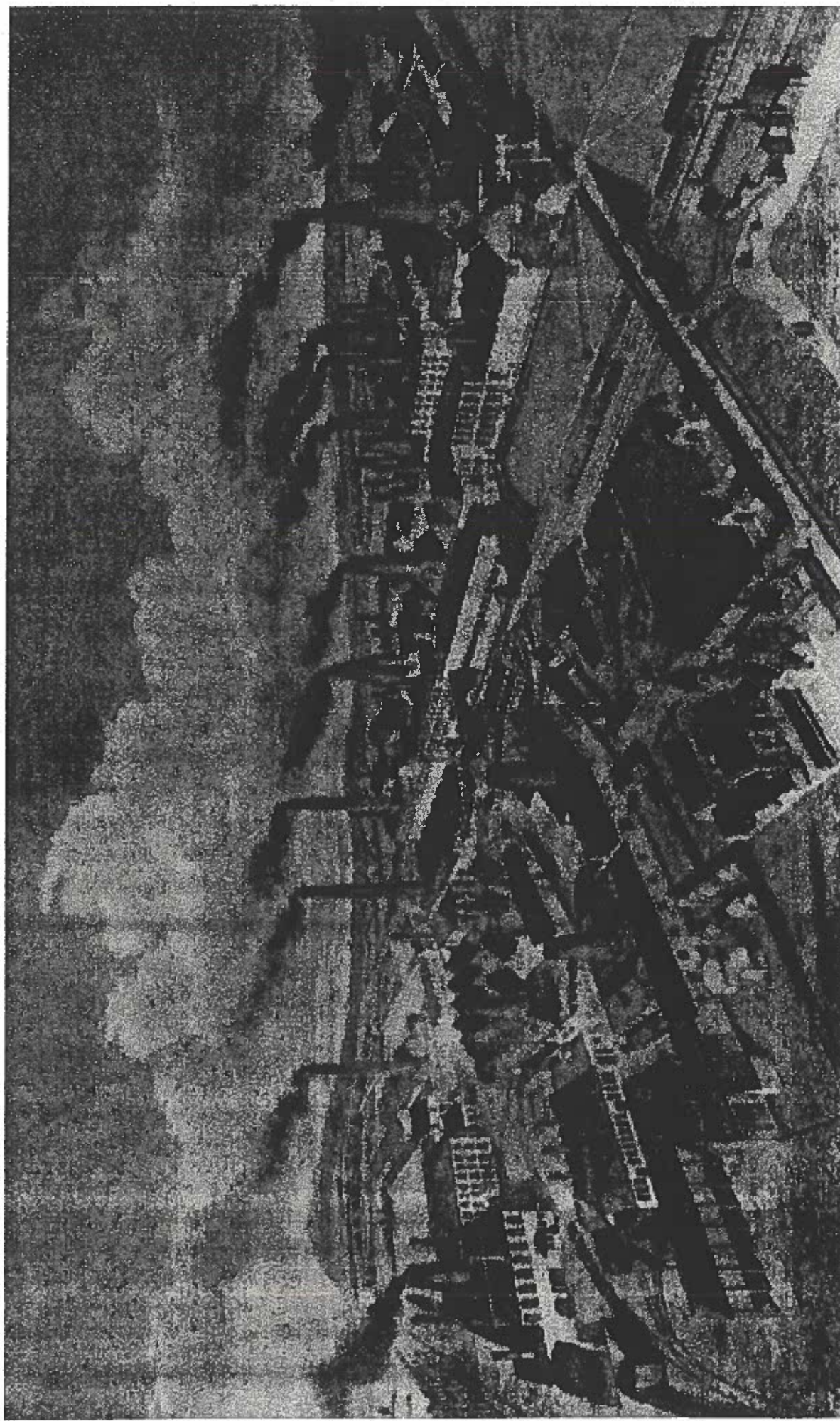


Plate 14 Aerial view of Chance's Glass Works in 1857 (Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, Smethwick)



Plate 15 View towards Spon Lane roving bridge and road bridge

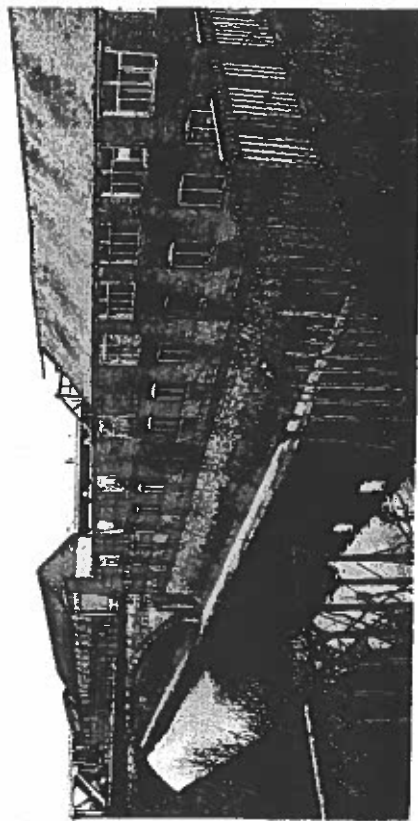


Plate 16 Chance's warehouses fronting NML, looking west towards Hartley bridge



Plate 17 Offices and 7-storey warehouse of Chance's Glassworks



Plate 18 Overgrown southern towpath and embankment to railway

5.6.3 Archaeological potential

The site of the glassworks is considered to have very significant archaeological potential. An aerial view of the works in 1857 (Plate 14) shows the density of manufacture on the site at that time, and there is high potential for the survival of significant industrial archaeological remains within a buried context. These are likely to include successive phases of structures associated with the various glass-making processes, in particular the bases of the early cone furnaces and their air supply tunnels.

Although there is no entry on the Black Country SMR for the site of the Spon Lane Engine, it is possible that traces of the engine base may survive in a buried context.

5.6.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

This zone is distinguished by the remains of the North Works of Chances Glassworks which abut the canal and extend northwards to Zone 2. The canal is enclosed by embankments and high walls with views shortened by the M5 bridge and Spon Lane Bridge. The banks are grassed with belts of scrub, with the towpath only reinstated along the north side. The relative isolation and inaccessibility of the south embankment, between the canal and the railway, creates an undisturbed wildlife habitat (Plate 18).

The railway line dominates the southern boundary accentuating the harder urban character of the zone. The setting to Chances Glassworks site is degraded and isolated with no visual relation to the canals on either side. The Chances Glassworks are a local and townscape landmark with the potential to make a far greater contribution to the townscape quality.

5.6.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

The cleared element of the glassworks site gives a semi-derelict appearance and seriously detracts from the setting of this important group of listed buildings and structures. The overhead gantries above the railway lines along the southern boundary of this zone also detract from its setting. The modern industrial units forming the frontage to Spon Lane both obscure the historic survival on the site, and detract from the setting of the listed buildings.

5.6.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

Due to its isolated position, Zone 3 has suffered relatively little from the effects of modern development, except for the impact of the M5 and the industrial units along the eastern boundary. Chances Glass Works is a prominent site and any future development will not only have a significant impact on Zone 3 but also on Zone 2.

Development of the vacant area of the Chance's glassworks site is unlikely to affect the character of the NML corridor which is largely built up, and of robust character. The west and north sides of the site are already detrimentally affected by the presence of the M5, and the line of the canal is not authentic. It is therefore primarily the setting of this important group of listed buildings which will need to be sensitively addressed.

5.7 Zone 4: New Main Line and Old Main Line eastwards to Brasshouse Lane (Figs. 2a, 2b, 13a & 13b)

5.7.1 Historic background

This zone contains the most significant section within the study area for canal history; where the three successive engineering solutions to the problem posed by the Smethwick Summit were implemented – the high level canal reached by long flights of locks, the lowering of the canal on the same line, and the excavation of the deep cutting to create a level route without the need for locks. (A more detailed description of the historic development of the canal network is set out in 3.2 above).

The date of construction of Galton House [029], which originally fronted Roebuck Lane and whose site now lies on a tongue of land between the two canals, is unclear. Certain documentary references indicate its construction prior to 1790, while others suggest it was built immediately following construction of the NML, c.1830. It became the BCN's agency offices in Smethwick; being named after Samuel Galton, one of the BCN's committee members, and was occupied by successive canal agents before, having become increasingly dilapidated, being demolished in 1916.

5.7.2 Architectural and historic character

This zone also contains some of the most significant structures within the conservation area, of which the only one relating to the OML is the scheduled ancient monument of Summit Bridge [027], constructed by Smeaton in 1790 to carry Roebuck Lane following the lowering of the canal. It is a massive brick structure, due to the increased depth of the cutting, and of a completely different scale and massing to other bridges within the conservation area. Unfortunately its eastern elevation has been totally obscured by the embankment of Telford Way, and the western elevation obscured by a railway bridge.

The grade I listed Galton Bridge [024] (Plate 25) is also unique, both within the conservation area, and the wider context. At the time of its construction in 1829, it was the longest single span iron bridge in the world, spanning the largest man-made cutting. In common with many of the cast iron towpath and roving bridges, the castings for this bridge were made at the nearby Horsely Iron Works in Tipton. It is stylistically connected to other structures within the conservation area, both in terms of its architectural detailing, such as the blind Gothic tracery of its stone piers and pilasters found also at the Engine Arm aqueduct [039], and its materials, including the distinctive pecked rustication of the stone quoins, found also on Hartley Bridge [011] and the towpath bridge at the Engine Arm Aqueduct [040].

Another notable structure is the grade II listed Smethwick New Pumping Station [033] (Plate 23) situated between the two canals immediately to the west of Brasshouse Lane. This 1892 building, which has now been comprehensively restored, is one of the few buildings specifically related to the

functioning of the canals to survive within the conservation area. Its location close to one of the main pedestrian routes between Smethwick town centre and the residential area to the north makes it enormously significant as a potential interpretation tool.

Of less intrinsic architectural merit, though indicative of the functional imperative of the canal system, the loading staithes of Sandwell Park Colliery survive on the north bank of the OML [025]. New concrete loading chutes were constructed in the 1930's, but the original brick parapets of the former tramway ramps survive in the dense vegetation behind (Plates 19-20).

The site of Galton House, though historically significant, currently makes a more positive contribution to the character of the conservation area through its landscape and nature conservation value.

5.7.3 Archaeological potential

The high embankments of the cuttings of both OML and NML within this zone make the general potential for below ground archaeological deposits extremely low. However, evidence of the intermediate channel excavated to the north of the OML through the summit during the 1788-90 lowering of the canal is likely to survive in the archaeological record, though the physical evidence may provide little further information than is known from the documentary record.

A detailed overlay of the 5 foot first edition of the Ordnance Survey showing Galton House [029] and its gardens [031], with the modern map base suggests that although much of the footprint of the house and the service buildings to its north-west now lie under the dual carriageway and embankment of Telford Way, there is some potential for the survival of the eastern (entrance) front of the house. The record of the layout of the gardens and pleasure grounds to the east of the house would allow their interpretation within the current proposals for the development of the canal landscape as a leisure amenity. The footings and wall bases of the canal workers cottage [032] to the east of the pumping station also survive.

5.7.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

Zone 4 is in marked contrast to Zones 2 and 3. The dominant characteristic is the scrubby and grassy embankments which are very high along the New Main Line. The surrounding townscape is often unobtrusive with the exception of the long façade to the Interlink Express warehouse on the Old Main Line (Plate 21).

This section is very well vegetated with groups of trees and scrub. There are long attractive views down the canals, enclosed by the banks and tree cover, however the construction of Telford Way has severed the continuity of this zone.

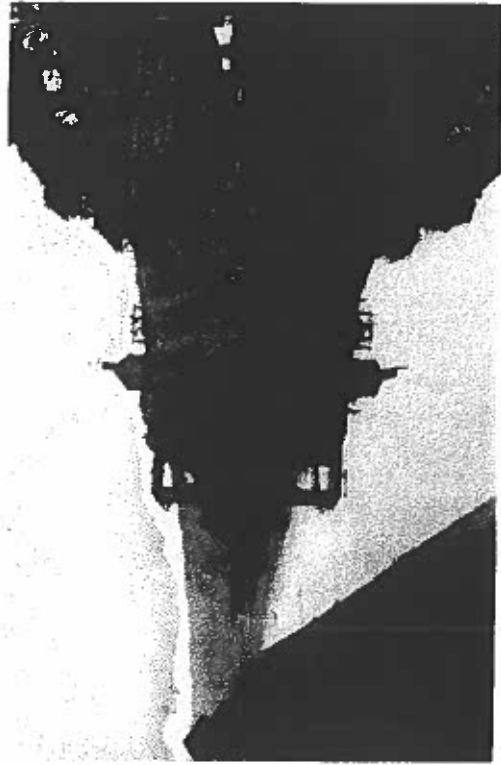


Plate 19 Sandwell Park Colliery loading staithes in 1932, looking west



Plate 20 Sandwell Park colliery loading staithes 2002, looking north-east



Plate 21 Interlink Express depot on north side of OML



Plate 22 Old Main Line looking west with slag wall to Galton House gardens to left, and Summit Bridge tunnel beyond



Plate 23 Looking west from Brasshouse Lane footbridge showing OML, NML and Smethwick New Pumping Station



Plate 24 View from Galton House gardens with Smethwick town centre beyond



Plate 25 Galton Bridge looking west from Telford Way embankment

The section has a strong sense of tranquillity, complemented by the number of very attractive historic buildings and structures. ^{East} West of Telford Way lie the remains of Galton House gardens, though these have been severely impacted by the construction of Telford Way and recent industrial development. However, several interesting features are extant and a group of mature trees dominate the eastern section of the zone.

The zone has a number of significant local and townscape landmarks which are currently difficult to view or appreciate. These include Summit Bridge, Galton Bridge, the platforms of Galton Bridge railway station, Galton House gardens, and the pumping station.

The entire area of this zone has a designation for its nature conservation value. It contains both a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC). The SINC boundary extends from Spon Lane South in the west to Brasshouse Lane in the east and comprises the canal and cutting of the NML (Birmingham level) to the west of Telford Way, and the canals and cuttings of both the OML and NML between Telford Way and Brasshouse Lane in the east (Fig. 14).

The southern arm of the SINC was upgraded from SLINC status following a field survey carried out in 1998, reported by Eco Record, which proposed the upgrading due to the value of its heather and acidic grassland habitat. The SLINC boundary includes the waterway and associated banks of the OML (Wolverhampton level) between the M5 in the west and Telford Way in the east.

The habitats present within this zone include:

mown footpaths; marginal wetland vegetation; grassland; tall herb and scrub; hedgerow; woodland at Galton House garden; acidic grassland and heather around Galton Bridge station; patches of heather on the NML west of Galton Bridge; cowberry south-east of Telford Way on NML.

Species of particular interest identified within and close to the conservation area include:

water vole recorded west of Brasshouse Lane

kingfisher to the west of Roebuck Lane

soprano pipistrelle near Telford Way Bridge

sparrowhawk breeding in the woodland of Galton House gardens

5.7.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

This zone has been affected by a number of negative features, and also contains some neutral elements. The large Interlink Express warehouse development off Everest Close is visually intrusive along the north side of the OML (Plate 21), and Telford Way and its embankments have had an extremely negative impact on some of the most significant features of the conservation area. The interface between the southern end of the grade I listed Galton Bridge and Tollhouse Way severely

detracts from its appearance and setting, and the scrap yard between Roebuck Lane and Telford Way impacts on the settings of both Summit and Galton Bridges. The tunnel portals beneath the Telford Way embankment are considered to have a neutral impact within the zone.

Fly tipping is also a serious problem within this zone, and occurs at various locations including in particular; both sides of Telford Way, affecting the setting of Galton Bridge and the embankment adjacent to the north side of Galton House Gardens; Roebuck Lane, affecting both north and south sides of Summit Bridge; and the north embankment of the OML to the rear of the houses on Great Arthur Street.

5.7.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

Zone 4 is very self contained in the main and therefore the historic assets and their landscape setting dominate. Where this is the case the zone would be able to accommodate appropriate development changes on its boundaries with little adverse impact provided that no damage or encroachment is incurred on the embankments. However there are significant exceptions to this general rule.

The higher level setting of Galton Bridge and Summit Bridge has been damaged by intrusive and inappropriate modern boundary treatment, highway detailing, land uses, poor maintenance and visual severance from the canal system itself. This whole area is very sensitive to adverse development and also is badly in need of major enhancement.

The new Interlink Express building on the north side of the OML is by far the most intrusive modern development along this zone by reason of its scale, form, materials and colour (Plate 21). It provides a clear example of how modern large scale development can be insensitive to the canal character and bring no positive benefit to the Conservation Area.

The Galton House former gardens is one of the most prominent sites of the Conservation Area but it is unlikely to be suitable for development. However, it is sensitive to the loss of what remains of the historic features and to long term management issues to ensure that the site remains as an important landscape feature.

5.8 Zone 5: New Main Line and Old Main Line from Brasshouse Lane to Bridge Street (Figs. 2b & 13b)

5.8.1 Historic background

The lines of the OML and NML run closely parallel through this zone. The zone contains the location of Brindley's original Smethwick locks [047], [048], together with the three parallel locks [041], [044], [045] added to ease congestion during the 1789-90 phase, when the summit section of the OML was lowered. A photograph dating to 1927 shows both sets of locks in use, together with the small lock office between them, and the brick roving bridge beyond (Plate 30). The Engine Arm Aqueduct [039] (Plate 27) had to be constructed over the NML when it was constructed in 1828-9, to carry the feeder arm which supplied water to the OML canal above the locks, and a new towpath bridge [040] was constructed at the same time.

The original toll island in the NML, which initially had a roving bridge crossing it, was altered and converted to a Boat Indexing Station in 1872 [049]. Following removal of the bridge, a building two boats in length was constructed on the widened and lengthened islands, with 4 hydraulic cranes supplied by the local firm Tangye Bros.

The area to the north of this zone was one of the first to be developed for industry in the 18th century and this intensive industrial use continued until relatively recently.

5.8.2 Architectural and historic character

This zone contains one of the highest densities of significant canal-related structures within the conservation area, and in particular of features relating to the earlier phases of canal building. One of the rare brick and stone roving bridges [043] relating to the 1789-90 phase of canal building survives in close association to the locks. This bridge indicates several phases of construction, though unfortunately the earliest phase of locks are no longer extant. A long stretch of wall following the towpath to the south of the locks contains a mix of materials including stone, brick, and the slag and clinker common in proximity to canals. Together these features of the OML have considerable group and aesthetic value.

The relationship between the OML and NML can be clearly seen in this zone, and the differences between them very evident; the dense group of canal-related structures of the OML is in clear contrast to the straight and relatively featureless stretch of the NML.

5.8.3 Archaeological potential

A notable area of archaeological potential is the known survival of Brindley's lower three locks at Smethwick, infilled only in the 1960's. Much of the fabric of Brindley's bottom three locks survives in-situ, and Andrews suggests (Andrews, 1995) that the lower courses of the fourth lock may also have

survived the lowering of the summit level canal. They survive, together with those at Spon Lane as some of the earliest locks in the country.

The first edition OS shows groups of buildings between the two canals both at the base of the ramp from Brasshouse Lane, and adjacent to the Smethwick Indexing Station [049]. The positions of the former, which included a public house and cottages are partially indicated by reconstructed wall bases, and surviving fabric of the latter, which included the canal offices and toll office is also evident. These buildings, however, are considered to be of only limited archaeological significance.

5.8.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

This section of the conservation area is more varied and intimate. The western end is still dominated by embankments which are particularly high along the New Main Line (Plate 26). The eastern end forms an interesting and attractive sequence of canal structures and canal related buildings (Plate 28). There is a balance of soft landscape and historic urban form which contrasts with the surrounding built area.

There is closer relationship between the adjoining development and the canal than elsewhere but in many cases the frontages do not make a positive contribution to the character of the zone. Brindley Urban Village (Plate 26) and Smethwick Enterprise centre dominate the landscape. From the Old Main Line views open out to the east and down into the New Main Line. The zone is generally in a good condition, although vulnerable to vandalism due its greater accessibility. There are a number of local landscape landmarks which include the Engine Arm Aqueduct, Smethwick Locks, the Brindley Urban Village terrace and Smethwick Enterprise Centre.

5.8.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

The frontage treatment of the Brindley Urban Village terracing is considered to have had a negative impact on the setting of the conservation area, though the residential development itself is considered to be a neutral element.

5.8.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

Zone 5 is one of the most visually sensitive sections of the Conservation Area. It is an attractive area despite the proximity of old and modern development due to its small scale character and the mix of historic assets, open landscape and extended views. It is therefore particularly vulnerable to inappropriate development on its boundaries. Much of the adjoining land is either soon to be developed or falls within the boundary of the proposed Soho Technology Park and has the potential to materially alter the setting to the zone.



Plate 26 Looking east from Brasshouse Lane footbridge with Brindley Urban village to left



Plate 28 Smethwick top lock with toll house reconstruction to left and brick roving bridge to right

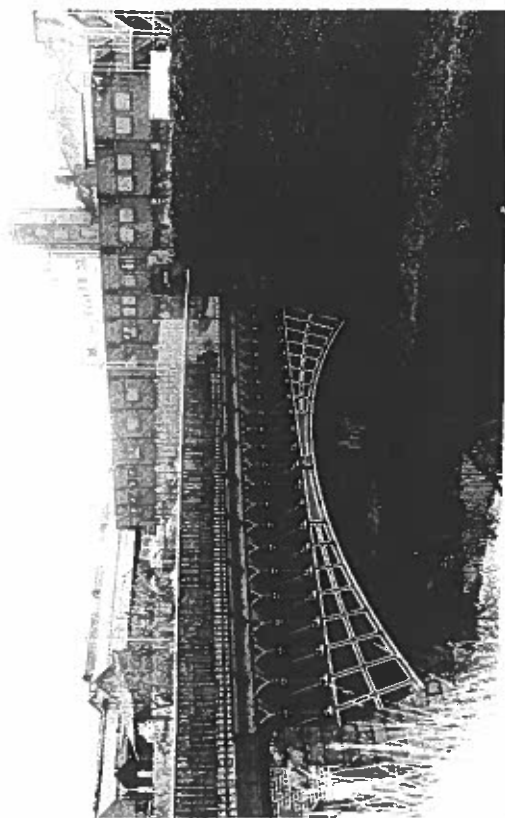


Plate 27 Engine Arm Aqueduct over NML with Smethwick Enterprise Centre beyond



Plate 29 Looking west from Smethwick middle lock with Smethwick town centre in distance

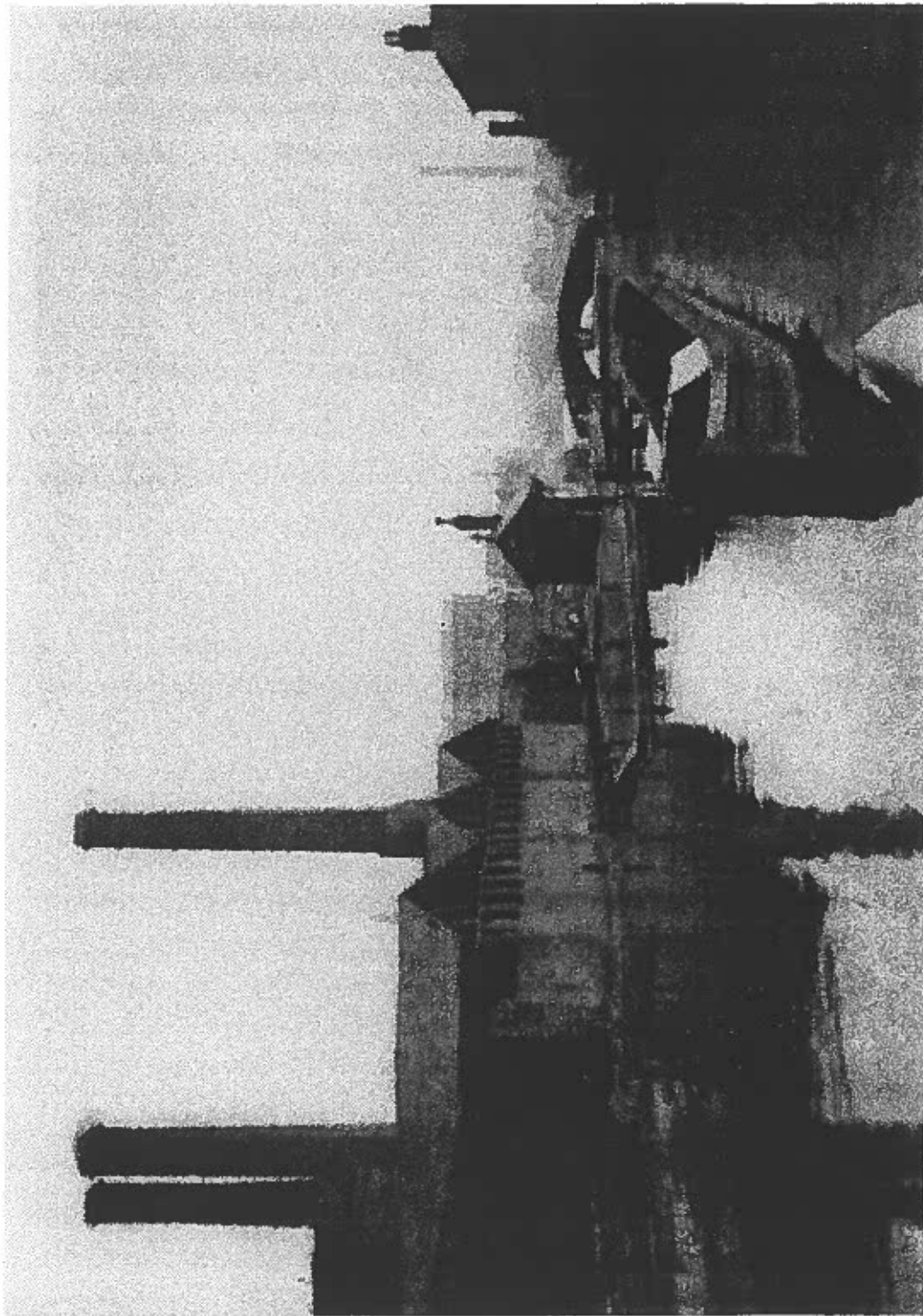


Plate 30 Smethwick locks in 1927 (Sandwell Community History and Archives Service, Smethwick)

Brindley Village has had both a positive and negative effect on the canal character. The introduction of modern well designed houses has upgraded the immediate townscape but little regard has been paid to local historic development patterns or to sympathetic treatment of the boundary to the canal in keeping with the architectural and landscape character of the Conservation Area.

Small minor developments, such as the beginnings of a car park on the Old Navigation pub site, have not been completed or maintained, thus devaluing the potential attractiveness and leisure benefit of the canal.

5.9 Zone 6: Engine Arm Canal (Figs. 2b & 13b)

5.9.1 Historic background

The Engine Arm Canal [038] was created in 1789-90 by the widening of an existing canal feeder to allow coal to be brought to the pumping engine on Bridge Street [052]. Cartographic evidence suggests that the sites adjacent to the canal arm remained undeveloped at 1828-30 (Fig. 4) though by 1842 (Fig. 8) were largely occupied, most notably by the Crown Forge at the southern end of the Engine Arm Aqueduct, and the Crown Glassworks on the north side of the canal arm, to the east of Bridge Street.

5.9.2 Architectural and historic character

The density of building on either side of the canal arm retains the authentic character and appearance of this section of the conservation area, and is considered to represent one of the few stretches within the designated area where the original character, enclosure and function of the canal network in its urban context can still be appreciated.

Although their structural openings are now mostly blocked, a number of premises fronting the south side of the canal arm, particularly on the former Smethwick Foundry site (Plates 32, 37-38), retain the original articulation of their dark red-brown brick canalside elevations, and in cases even their original windows and other fixtures.

The Engine Bridge which carries Bridge Street over the canal arm was widened early in the 20th century and is now an interesting composite structure with parallel arches in brick and an unusual profile of steel girder, though cannot be appreciated other than from the towpath.

5.9.3 Archaeological potential

This zone has no below-ground archaeological potential.

5.9.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

This section of the canal system is the most enclosed and in the poorest condition. It runs from the end of the Engine Arm Aqueduct eastwards to terminate just west of the junction of Rolfe Street and Rabone Lane in a narrow corridor flanked by old industrial buildings. The single towpath is in poor condition and access to the canal arm is difficult. Views into the zone are very restricted, except from within the Smethwick Enterprise Centre at the western end (Plate 31). Modern changes of use to open air storage and demolition on some sites have contributed to loss of character and air of neglect.

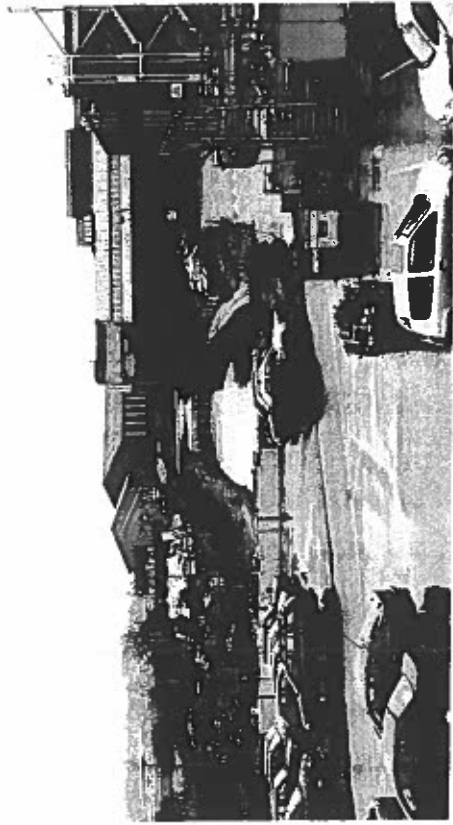


Plate 31 West end of Engine Arm Canal looking east

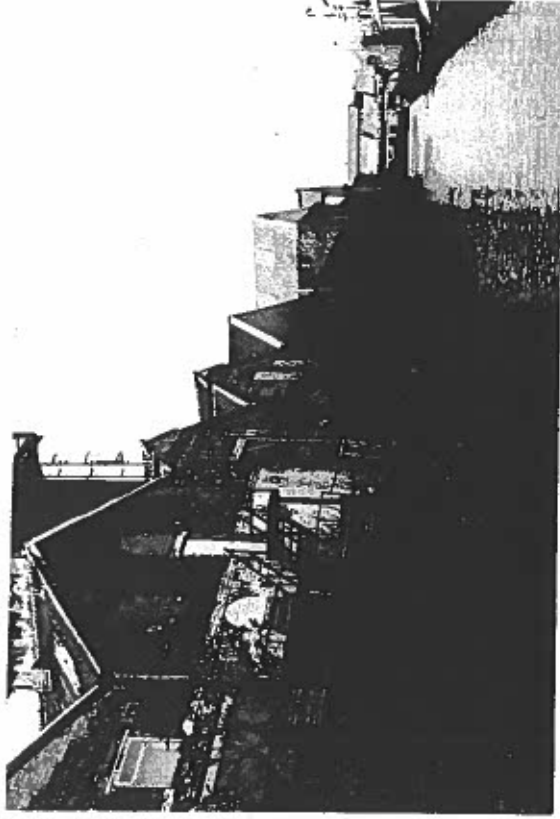


Plate 32 Engine Arm canal elevations of works buildings fronting Rolfe Street



Plate 33 Eastern end of Engine Arm canal, looking west

5.9.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

The open storage area between the NML and the Engine Arm at its western end, surrounded by high security fencing detracts visually from the architectural character of this zone.

5.9.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

The authentic character and appearance of the majority of this zone, with its high level of enclosure and intimacy, is considered to be extremely sensitive to change.

5.10 Zone 6a: Industrial zone between Rolfe Street and Engine Arm Canal (Figs. 2b & 13b)

5.10.1 Historic background

Only the Smethwick engine [052] appears within this zone on Henry Jacob's map of c.1828 (Fig. 4). Manufactured at Boulton and Watts nearby Soho Foundry, the engine started work in 1779, and pumped water back to the head of the Smethwick locks until it was de-commissioned in 1891.

It therefore appears that the area was largely developed during the 1830's, following the creation of Rolfe Street. The lack of earlier development adjacent to the feeder arm which had been made navigable in 1789-90 suggests that the canal network was no longer the primary focus of industrial development, though still an important factor in location.

The relatively shallow sites between the road and the canal appears to have attracted small to medium sized industries, almost exclusively in the metals trades, each initially having their own canal wharf.

The Crown Forge site at the west end of the Engine Arm became a Corporation yard at the beginning of the 20th century. When the yard was extended westwards in 1910 a new retaining wall was constructed, which was of particular note, being in the relatively new material of concrete reinforced with metal bars (The Builder, 1910), allowing a far less massive structure to retain the 25ft difference in level between the yard and the towpath to the NML.

Much of the land to the west was under-developed for a time. To the east, along the canal arm, infill development gradually created a more continuous built boundary to the canal corridor with private wharves being lost to create larger works premises. These works were generally associated with the metal trades, such as foundries, bedstead works, sheet metal works etc. with the exception of a soap works, and two malhouses, the eastern of which still stands [076]. A photograph dating to 1957 indicates that the western malthouse, complete with kilns was still standing at this time, though it also shows that the area was already suffering from disuse and dereliction (Plate 35), despite surviving the second world war unscathed by bombing.

It is understood, however, that the houses, stables, loading canopy and paved yard surfaces of Lime Wharf at the eastern end of the canal arm survived until relatively recently.

5.10.2 Architectural and historic character

The architectural character of the canal frontage of this zone, to the east of the Engine Arm aqueduct has been discussed in 5.9.2 above, and constitutes the most important aspect of this zone. The more general historic character of this part of the zone is of premises gradually enlarged to occupy their entire plots between Rolfe Street and the canal arm, though there are now a number of vacant plots. The two principal exceptions are Smethwick Wharf, which remained as a largely open area throughout its history, and Lime Wharf, which retained its small scale buildings. Whereas this zone was,

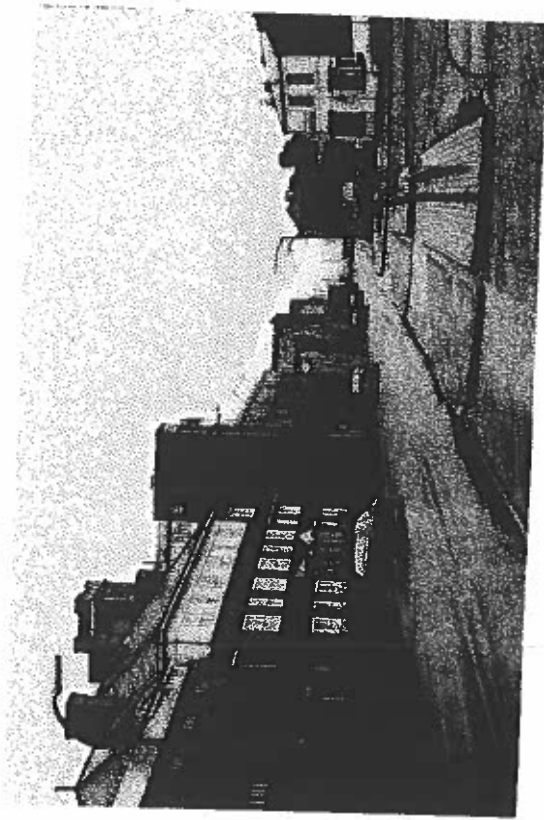


Plate 34 Roffe Street looking east from Smethwick Enterprise Centre

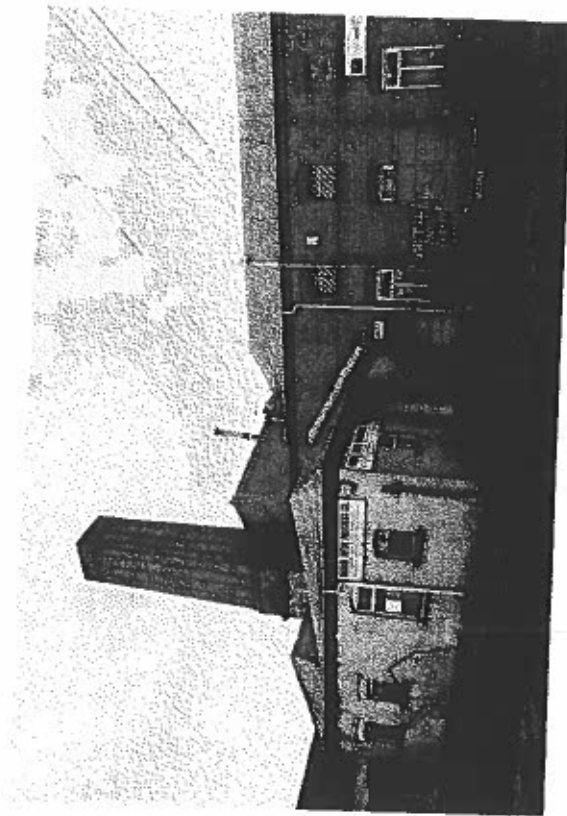


Plate 36 Malthouse at east end of Engine Arm

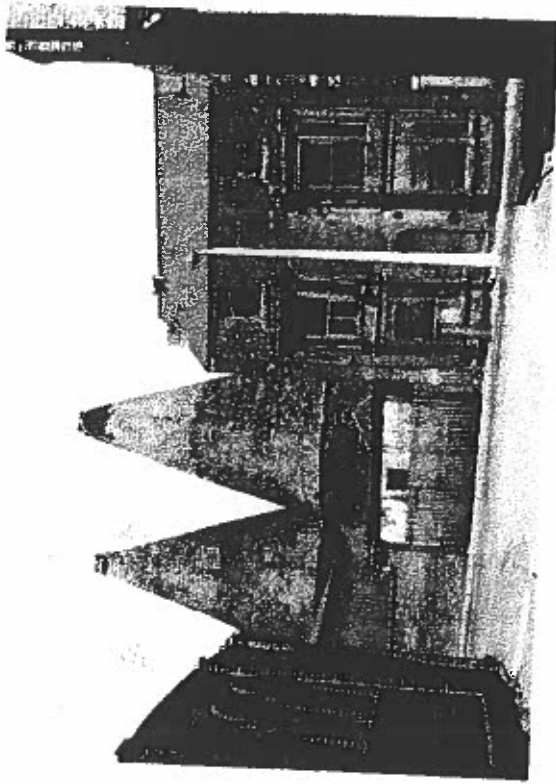


Plate 35 Malthouse on Roffe Street, from Engine Street, 1957
(Sandwell Library and Information Service)

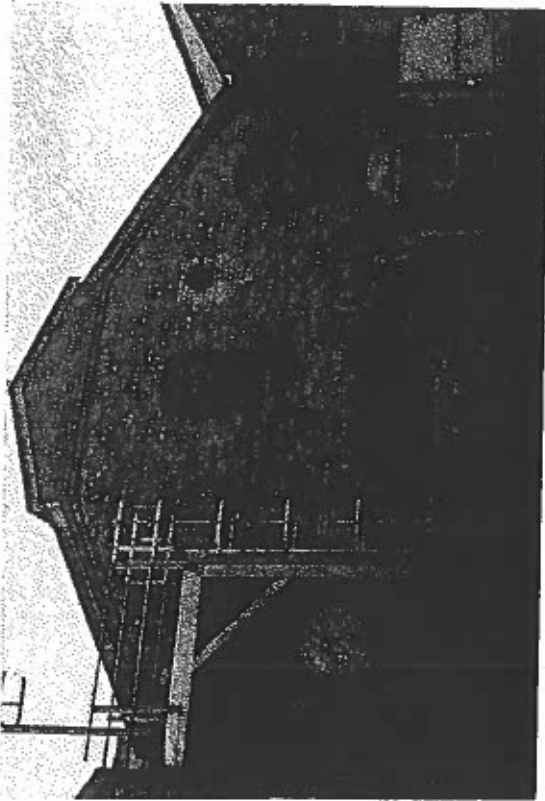


Plate 37 Perimeter wall to Engine Arm canal to west of Engine Bridge

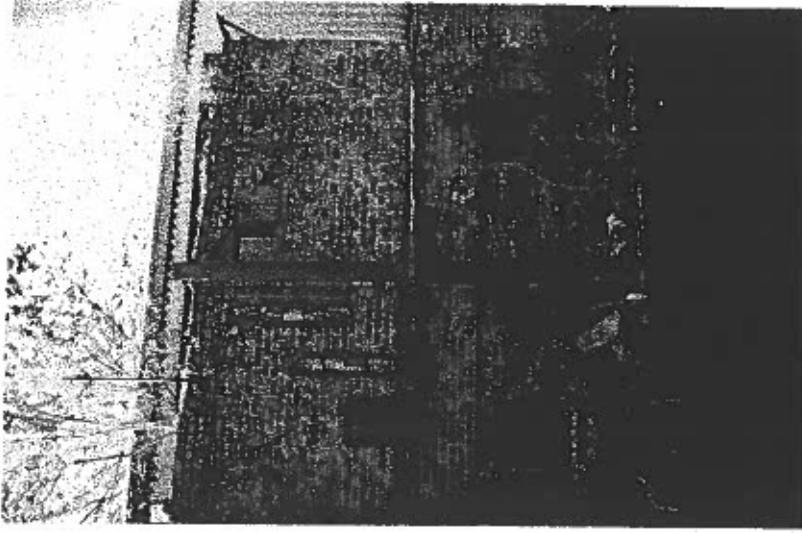


Plate 39 Perimeter wall to Engine Arm canal to east of Engine Bridge

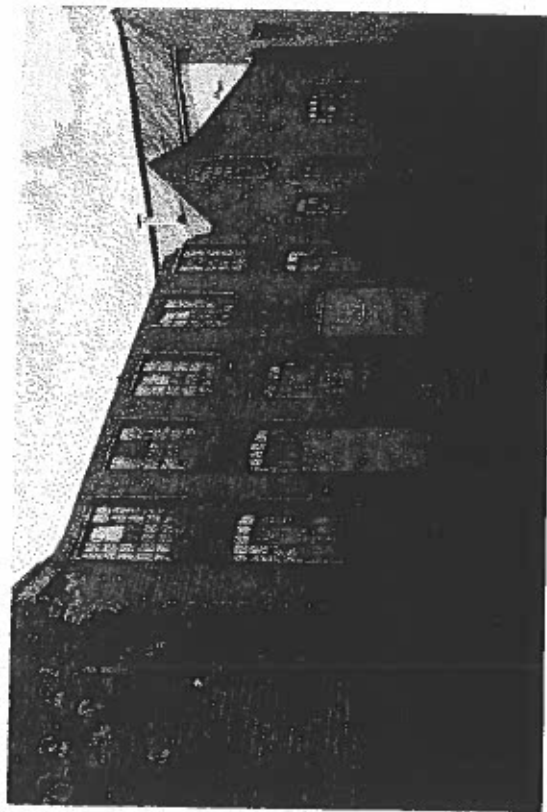


Plate 38 Perimeter wall to former Smethwick Iron Foundry buildings

historically, in sharp contrast to the residential areas to the south of Rolfe Street, the increasingly industrial development of the southern area has broken down this sharp differential. The area to the west of the canal arm is characterised by early 20th century public buildings.

5.10.3 Archaeological potential

The site of Crown Forge, which was one of the earliest 19th century industries in the area, has considerable archaeological potential, though its survival will depend on the scale of ground disturbance in the creation of the corporation yard. Similarly, the site of the Smethwick Foundry has both below-ground and extant industrial archaeological potential. The site of the malthouse and kilns shown in Plate 35 is also considered to have potential.

The excavated site of the Smethwick Engine close to the junction of Bridge Street and Rolfe Street is a scheduled ancient monument, indicating its considerable national importance, though its potential has now been realised through full archaeological excavation. However, the wharf to its west appears to have been little developed over time and it is possible that some of the feeder channels related to the engine survive in a buried context. The recently cleared Lime Wharf retains the paved surfaces and footings of its buildings, but below-ground investigation is considered unlikely to reveal significant new information.

5.10.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

Zone 6a, and its frontage to Rolfe Street, play a significant role as a transition area between the canal Zones 5 and 6 and the industrial and mixed small scale townscape south of Rolfe Street.

This area of the proposed Soho Technological Park has the closest links with the canal corridor and is of the same, more intimate, character as the Engine Arm. Buildings are smaller in scale than those found in Zone 7a, with little open space, except for where property has been cleared. The historic close knit character has been damaged in places through clearance and modern open industrial uses but there is the potential to restore this area into a distinctive townscape reflecting its links with the canal system. There are no landscape features of note or important areas of green space, but the semi-derelict structures and hard landscaping of this zone provide the ideal habitat for the nationally protected black redstart, recorded at the nearby Soho Foundry.

5.10.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

The recent clearance of Lime Wharf means that in its present condition it is unable to make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, and the semi-derelict and overgrown appearance of the former Smethwick Wharf is a similarly neutral area.

5.10.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

This zone falls within the proposed Soho Technology Park with its implications for redevelopment. However, inappropriate redevelopment here would have a serious impact on the special character and interest of the zone. As the canal side elevations of the buildings of the former Smethwick Foundry and adjacent site constitute one of the few areas within the conservation area where a real sense of the authentic character of industry adjacent to the canal during the late 19th century can be gained, it is considered highly desirable that efforts are made to retain them. It is also important to maintain a strong historically appropriate northern frontage to Rolfe Street and only allow modern development in keeping with the scale, pattern and materials of this zone. The new housing association development goes a long way to achieving this.

5.11 Zone 7: New Main Line and Old Main Line from Bridge Street to Merry Hill (Figs. 2b, 2c, 13b & 13c)

5.11.1 Historic background

The two lines of canal meet at the west end of this zone, to the east of Smethwick locks which bring the OML down from the 'summit' to the Birmingham level. The canal eastwards now comprises the direct line of the NML which was created in 1828-30, cutting off the meandering loops of Brindley's canal, leaving them to function as basins within the adjacent sites. The zone is bounded at the east end by the stone skew arches of the Soho railway bridge [67], constructed in 1851.

It appears from cartographic sources that the island between the two canals to the west of Smethwick junction has never been developed, and has only recently been used for storage.

5.11.2 Architectural and historic character

Zone 7 has relatively few significant structures along its length. Pope's Bridge [046] at its west end clearly shows the two phases of construction, with parallel arches of brick and steel girders, and the blocked northern arch over the lost Brindley lock [047]. The west end also contains two BCN standard design cast iron roving bridges of Smethwick junction [055], [056] in close proximity to the more unusual brick and cast iron towpath bridge over the canal basin and sluice at the former Woodford Iron Works [054] (Plate 41). The 19th and early 20th century brick buildings and boundary walls which survive in Zone 7a to the north of Smethwick junction give the canal a more authentic character than along much of its urban length, and provide a localised nucleus of great interest (Plate 40).

The single surviving heritage asset in the eastern part of this zone is the towpath bridge over the Soho Foundry basin [057] (Plate 42), though here again, the survival of the early brick buildings and boundary walls retain some of the original character of this zone.

5.11.3 Archaeological potential

This zone of the conservation area is confined to the canal corridor and therefore has no below-ground archaeological potential.

5.11.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

The New Main Line and Old Main Line converge 180m east of Bridge Street and continue as a single canal to the end of the proposed extension of the conservation area, at the Birmingham boundary. Zone 7 is characterised by the close proximity of large-scale old and modern industrial buildings which include the high walls of Soho Foundry. These buildings dominate and enclose the canal corridor along the full length of this section, with little open space or vegetation except for patches of grass and clumps of scrub. Sections of the northern towpath have been resurfaced and are well-maintained,

though the towpath of the Old Main Line remains un-surfaced and muddy, and a small area of reeds has colonised the area immediately to the east of the blocked channel of Pope's Bridge. There are no public views into the zone except for oblique views on passing over the bridges. This section is in sharp contrast to Zone 5 and brings interest and variety to the canal townscape.

5.11.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

The setting of the NML at the west end of this zone has been adversely affected by insensitive industrial warehouse development on its southern boundary (Plate 43) which fails to address its canalside location, and to the east of Rabone Lane by further large scale warehouse units.

5.11.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

Zone 7 is heavily dominated by large scale old and new industry and is thus better able to accommodate new industry than other zones of the conservation area. However the zone is sensitive to further loss of the relationship between the canal and adjoining buildings and their immediate setting. Many new developments have created a blank wall to the canal, further isolating the zone from the wider townscape.

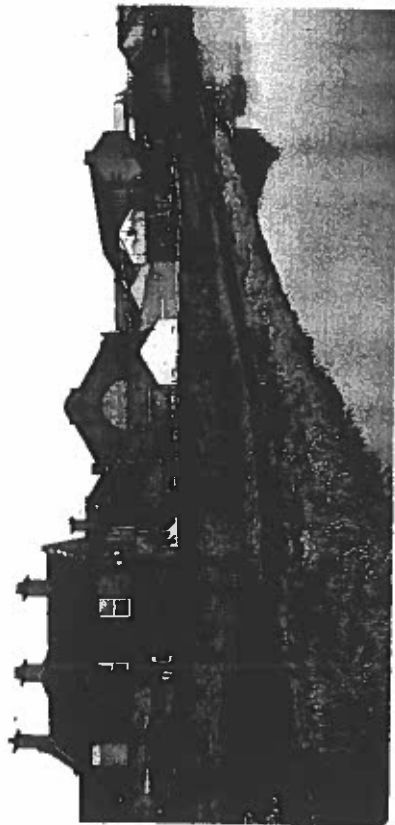


Plate 40 Buildings to north-east of Pope's Bridge

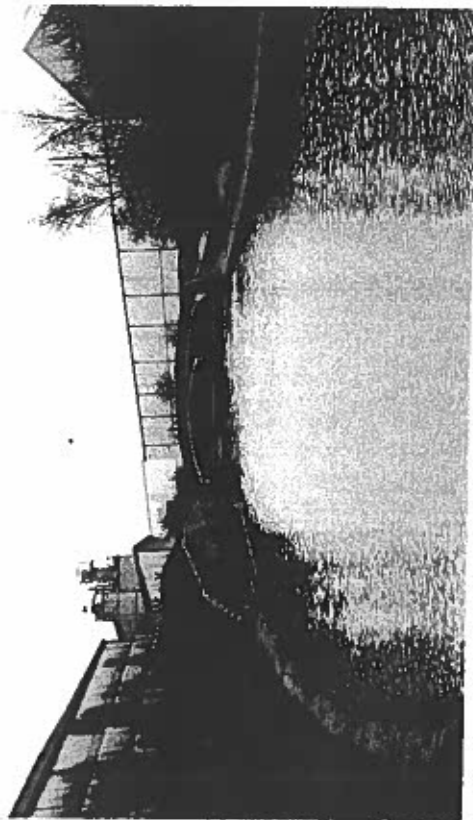


Plate 41 Towpath bridge to former Woodford Iron Works basin
with Smethwick junction rowing bridges

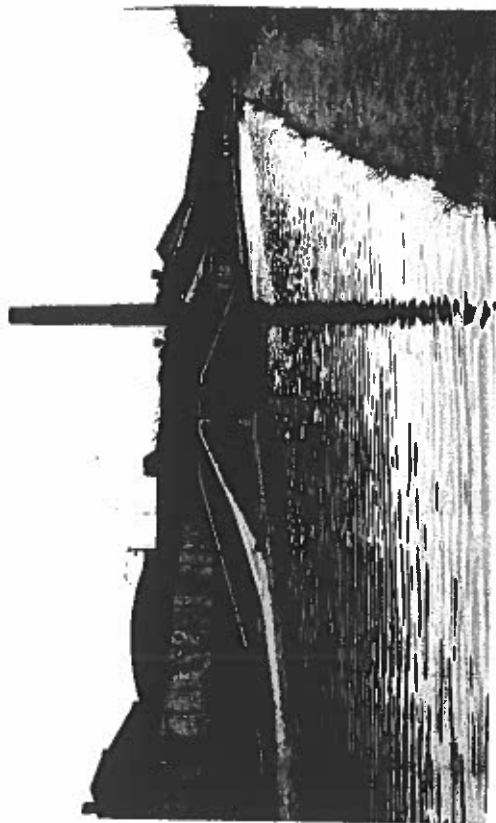


Plate 42 Towpath bridge to Soho Foundry basin

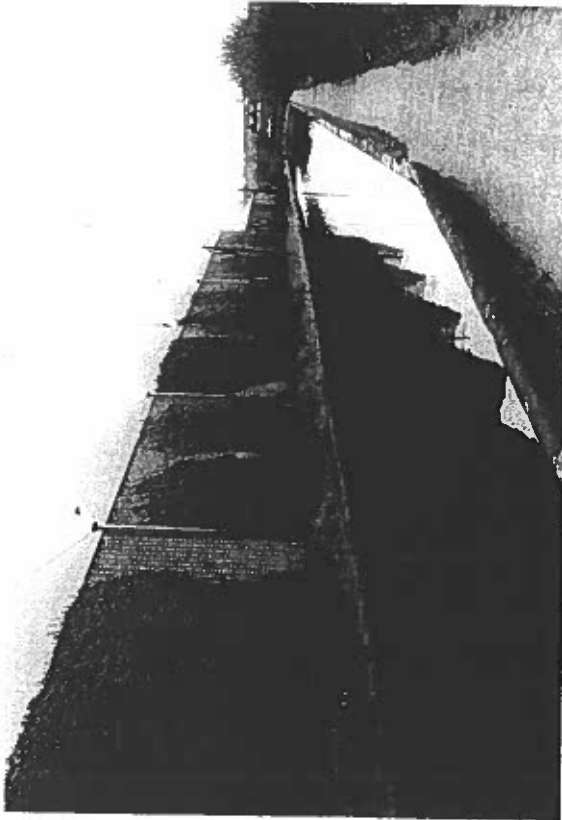


Plate 43 Insensitive development of industrial buildings on south bank of NML

5.12 Zone 7a: Area north of Pope's Bridge and industrial area eastwards to Soho Foundry

(Figs. 2b, 2c, 13b & 13c)

5.12.1 Historic background

Much of this area was first occupied by Smethwick Hall and its grounds, first mentioned in 1660, and home of the Rabone family in the 18th century. It was known as Rabone Hall until the mid 19th century, when it became Smethwick Old Hall.

The first industry to locate here was Boulton and Watt's Soho Foundry, in 1796. It was conceived as the very first integrated engineering works dedicated to the manufacture of steam engines, and was a pioneering venture of fundamental importance to the early development of the engineering industry (Demidowicz, 2002). The works are also associated with the very earliest experiments in gas lighting, and it was the first factory in the world to be lit with gas from a fixed retort, in 1798.

Following the construction of the OML, a lock office was constructed at the junction of Ruck of Stones Lane at the north end of Pope's Bridge, removed by 1857, and the Navigation PH was built behind it in due course, to serve the men working the canal at Smethwick locks. This was joined by the New Navigation PH by 1830.

By 1857 a gasometer works had been established in the angle of the OML and Rabone Lane, developed as the Etna works (iron) by 1885, and a Tramway generating station before 1917.

In 1862 Smethwick Old Hall and 3a. grounds were bought by Tangye Bros., where they established their Cornwall Works, originally specialising in the manufacture of hydraulic engineering gear, of which they supplied the 4 hydraulic cranes for the Smethwick boat indexing station in 1873. Like its neighbour, the Woodford Iron Works, the Cornwall works had a private canal basin, and a third ran along its western boundary to serve the Phoenix works to the north.

5.12.2 Architectural and historic character

Although a similarly important canalside industrial zone to Zone 6a, the historic character of this zone is entirely different. Whereas in Zone 6a the works buildings extended along the entire canal frontage, and loading was carried out directly from the canal, in Zone 7 the works buildings are set back from the frontage, behind boundary walls. The canal entered into the works via basins, and thereby the focus of activity lay away from the canal itself.

A former canal loop provided a basin to the Soho Foundry, and together with the former Woodford Iron Works and Cornwall Works, and the former Smethwick gas works site which also had a private basin, this pattern of works and basins comprised a typical 19th century canalside industrial area. Unfortunately, these basins have all been in-filled and this historic grain lost. The built survival is piecemeal, with notable buildings such as the tramway power station and offices surviving at the west

end of the zone, and the important Grade II and II* listed Soho Foundry at the east end, but separated by a mixed collection of large and small scale buildings of little merit. Although unlisted, the entrance range of Soho Foundry provides an impressive frontage, though at too great a distance from the existing conservation area to make a positive contribution.

5.12.3 Archaeological potential

This zone has some significant archaeological potential, which will be discussed in detail within Section 6.0 of the Soho Technology Park Historic Landscape Appraisal (Upson, May 2002).

5.12.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

Zone 7a is an older industrial area dominated by large scale mixed age buildings used for mainly manufacturing and engineering purposes. Open spaces are of poor quality and hard surfaced and used for storage, parking and scrap. High and blank faced walls face the canal corridor with no remaining integration between Zone 7 and 7a. There are no landscape features of note or important areas of green space. There is the potential to recreate spatial links with the canal corridor and to extend the canalside landscape character into Zone 7a.

A male black redstart has been recorded at the Soho Foundry, the canalside area of which currently provides the semi-derelict buildings and hard landscape that this species requires, though otherwise the zone contains little of nature conservation value.

5.12.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

The high blank-faced walls which front the south bank of the OML and the new monolithic industrial units which continue eastwards along the NML to Rabone Lane (Plate 43) have a negative impact on the setting of the canal. The scrap yard currently occupying the former gas works site, with its crusher set behind poor quality security fencing is visually intrusive, and has a very negative impact on the setting of the important listed buildings of the Soho Foundry.

5.12.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

The area at the north end of Pope's Bridge is considered to be very sensitive to development impact. It is visually extremely prominent when approached from the south and, in particular, the setting of the public house needs to be given careful consideration in the design of development in its vicinity. The setting of Brindley's original bottom lock, and its relationship to Pope's Bridge will also need to be treated with great sensitivity.

Re-development of the former gas works site will be extremely sensitive as it forms an important part of the setting of the nationally important grade II and II* listed buildings of the Soho Foundry, and the setting of the significant group of listed bridges at Smethwick junction will also require sensitive treatment.

The general vulnerability of this zone is indicated by the negative impact of recent development along the southern boundary of the canal. Historic precedent within Zone 7a indicates a pattern of relatively open sites, such as the generating station and the gas works, alternating with industries presenting more continuous facades to the canal, with numerous canal basins entering the zone. It is considered that the monolithic treatment of the southern boundary would be inappropriate here, and that a more discontinuous boundary treatment should be adopted, with the former relationship between canal and adjacent sites reinstated.

5.13 Zone 8: Merry Hill to the Birmingham boundary at Winson Green stop (Figs. 2c & 13c)

5.13.1 Historic background

This zone is similar to Zone 7 in that it represents the straightening of the canal route carried out in 1828-30. It also incorporates the feeder channel which was extended by Telford at the same time.

5.13.2 Architectural and historic character

The nature of the 'direct line' canal, with its wide channel and towpaths on either side can be clearly appreciated within this zone, though the presence of the feeder channel along the top of the southern embankment is not clear.

There are two groups of canal structures of interest within this zone; the towpath bridge over the former soapworks basin [058] opposite the tunnels through the embankment to the Cape Arm and Imperial Mills basin [059] (Plate 44); and the cast iron roving bridges and toll island at Winson Green stop [062], [063] (Plate 46).

The Cape Arm (Plate 45) has an enclosed character similar to the Engine Arm canal, with the elevations of adjacent industrial buildings forming one side of the canal, and a single towpath on the other. Although the flanking buildings are of little intrinsic individual merit, they combine to create a special character to this former loop in Brindley's original contour canal in stark contrast to the adjacent semi-rural feel of the NML.

5.13.3 Archaeological potential

The boundary of this zone extends to include only the canal corridor and therefore there is no below-ground archaeological potential.

5.13.4 Landscape character and nature conservation value

This last easterly section of the canal route in Sandwell Borough is separated from Zone 7 by the railway bridge at Merry Hill and is in marked contrast to Zone 7.

The landscape of the canal opens up, with the canal openings and a small bridge forming a focal point (Plate 44). The last stretch opens up with panoramic views towards Birmingham (Plate 46). Industrial buildings to the south of the area are screened and divorced from the canal by the canal feeder embankment, a significant feature of this landscape. There are no views into the section, except from the canal itself to the east, however the views out are the most dramatic of the study area. Grass, scrub and clumps of trees soften the canal setting and contribute to a more well-maintained environment.

5.13.5 Negative factors and neutral areas

The western end is somewhat degraded by a landfill site on its northern boundary and factories to the south.

5.13.6 Vulnerability/sensitivity to development impact

Zone 8, like Zone 1, is also vulnerable to development which will result in the loss of its quasi-rural open character. Existing new development on the boundary of the zone is generally well set back, medium rise and less intrusive, with the exception of the poor boundary treatment.

The current landfill site is however very intrusive and little care has been taken to protect or screen the canal boundary. Fill material has been allowed to slip onto the canal embankment. This is a prominent gateway site at the entrance to the proposed extension to the Smethwick Conservation Area and has a key role, along with the Soho Regeneration Area, in determining any future perception of the Smethwick canal system. There are important panoramic views from this zone towards Birmingham which should be retained where possible.

6.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL CHARACTER AND INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

6.1 Canals and associated structures

- 6.1.1 This is an unusually complex stretch of canal landscape, and one which has been studied in some detail. The various phases of canal construction and alteration are relatively well documented which adds considerably to their historic interest (Fig. 7a-c).
- 6.1.2 This special interest, though manifesting itself today in some of the most important man-made landscape in the region, results directly from a feature of the natural topography of the area, the Smethwick summit. The consecutive engineering solutions adopted to solve the problems presented by the high ground of the summit serve both as a concise history of the developments in canal building, and provide the area with a historically significant and aesthetically interesting network of waterways, locks and associated structures. While the two canals run side by side for some of their length, providing easily comparable evidence of the two main types of canal – the ‘contour’ canal and the ‘direct line’ canal – the loss of the major loops in Brindley’s canal between Smethwick junction and Birmingham boundary has dissipated this comparison.
- 6.1.3 Of further considerable historic significance is the involvement of three of the major canal engineers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries in the various schemes of canal construction and modification. Although it is now clear that John Smeaton’s involvement in the alterations to the Old Main Line in the late 1780’s has previously been overstated (Andrew, 1995), the scope of James Brindley’s input into the survey and design of the Old Main Line in the 1760’s, and Thomas Telford’s into the design and construction of the New Main Line and many of its associated structures in the 1820’s is in little doubt.
- 6.1.4 The enormous man-made landscape features created by the cutting of the canals into and through the natural topography, make a fundamental contribution to the special character and interest of the conservation area. The planted and natural vegetation which has colonised these banks has softened the appearance of the cuttings which, even in the 1920’s appear to have still been relatively bare, and they now have significant nature conservation value.
- 6.1.5 The early brick bridges, though reduced in numbers and mostly much altered, are important to the re-creation of a sense of the canal landscape before the cutting of the NML. The narrow blocked arches allow one to appreciate the problems of traffic congestion caused by the narrowing of the canal to a

single boat width, and the signs of wear from the tow ropes in the fabric of their sides also adds to the understanding of the early practices of canal transport.

- 6.1.6 A very significant contribution to the aesthetic character and appearance of the conservation area is made by the two main phases of cast iron towpath and roving bridges associated with the construction and subsequent upgrading of the New Main Line. The earlier phase of 1828 & 1829, with their white painted spandrels, their attractive bands of quatrefoils below the handrails, and their moulded cover plates over the junctions between their two castings are particularly fine, though the simpler 1848 bridges, also painted black and white make a similarly important contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and their use elsewhere along the Birmingham Canal Navigations lends an air of uniformity, tying together stretches of canal of very different landscape character. Their group value, combined with their having been mostly produced at the nearby Horseley Iron Works in Tipton further enhances their local and regional significance.
- 6.1.7 Despite being of less aesthetic merit, the blocked openings in perimeter walls adjacent to certain stretches of the OML - which mark the locations of former private works basins, the potential for which was the very reason that many industries located here - are considered to make a positive contribution to the special historic interest and character of the conservation area. In some ways, these ephemeral relics are more evocative of the past use of the canal as a busy transport route, essential to the industries along its bank and therefore to the economic prosperity of the area, than the more 'polite' and picturesque cast iron roving bridges which look wholly in keeping with the new use of the canal network as a leisure amenity.
- 6.1.8 There are a large number of nationally important structures along the canals within the Galton Valley, though many appear to have been listed for their contribution to a group value. Of those which have considerable intrinsic architectural and/or historic merit, the most notable are Smeaton's Summit Bridge, which is a scheduled ancient monument, Telford's Galton Bridge, a grade I listed structure, and Telford's Engine Arm Aqueduct, which is also a scheduled ancient monument.
- 6.1.9 Whilst these are of significant national importance as individual structures, and of great architectural and historic significance, their contribution to what is considered to be the essential special character and appearance of the conservation area is in some ways less positive than that made by the more mundane structures which are more evocative of the former atmosphere of life on the canals.

6.1.10 Further historic significance is derived from the fact that most of the materials used in the construction and function of the canal system were produced locally. The cast iron roving bridges from the Horseley Iron Works in Tipton, the Smethwick engine supplied by Boulton and Watt's Soho Foundry, and the hydraulic cranes of the Smethwick boat indexing station supplied by Tangye's all add to the regional significance of the system as a whole.

6.2 Landscape character and views

6.2.1 Although of a fundamentally man-made nature, the landscape of the conservation area is becoming increasingly naturalised, with nationally important wildlife habitats developing along its banks.

6.2.2 The character of the landscape changes considerably along the length of the conservation area, providing a variety of appearance and atmosphere, from the open, semi-rural feel of the canal corridor close to the Birmingham boundary; through the industrial hinterlands to the north of Smethwick town centre; the vegetated embankments of the deep cuttings through the summit; the wooded former gardens of Galton House; the highly structured and urban channel of Chance's glassworks site; beneath the brooding flyover of the M5 and again out in the more open rural feel of the junction at Bromford Stop.

6.2.3 While making it difficult to identify a single 'essential' landscape character of the conservation area, they provide a wealth of variety, most of which makes its own important contribution to one aspect of the special character of the area.

6.2.4 There are considered to be four locations within the conservation area which are of prime significance to its special interest, character and appearance; all where a number of significant structures and features occur within close proximity, the group value of which cannot be overestimated. These will be considered from west to east.

6.2.5 The first is Bromford Stop in Zone 1, where the remains of the toll island and two phases of roving bridge set the backdrop for the flight of locks beyond.

6.2.6 The second is the vicinity of the Steward Aqueduct in Zone 2, where four stages in the history of the transport infrastructure of Britain can be seen in direct coincidence; the 'direct line' NML canal, the aqueduct carrying the earlier Wolverhampton level 'contour' canal over the cut of the NML, the bridge

carrying the railway over the aqueduct, and the deck of the M5 motorway flying over the top, supported on huge concrete 'barrels' set into the canal.

6.2.7 The third is the area of Zone 5 where the Engine Arm Aqueduct over the NML, its junction with the OML, Smethwick locks and indexing station, and an early brick roving bridge all occur within a short distance of one another. The reconstruction of an octagonal toll office in this location, though without strict historic precedent, adds significantly to the special character and interest of this central, and most publicly accessible section of the conservation area.

6.2.8 The last area, in Zone 7 is Smethwick junction where the OML and NML rejoin, with cast iron roving bridges, entrances to works basins, and the survivors of 19th century works buildings and perimeter walls, evoking the historic atmosphere of this section of the canal corridor.

6.2.9 In addition to these areas of significant historic landscape value, particularly good views can be gained in both directions from Brasshouse Lane Bridge, from which one can see two stretches of canal corridor of distinctly different, but equally significant landscape character.

6.3 Summary of significance

6.3.1 The Smethwick Summit Conservation Area comprises a linear industrial landscape of considerable national, and potentially international importance. It is understood that consideration was relatively recently given to an application being made for World Heritage status for the entire Birmingham Canal Navigations network (Crowe, 2002, pers comm.). Due primarily to the fact that the major phases of its construction spanned such an extremely long period, from virtually the beginning of the history of canal building, to the end, the BCN network is considered to be unique nationally, and possibly internationally.

6.3.2 The section of the BCN network which is included within the conservation area is one of the most complex, well-researched and interesting stretches of the network, including all major phases of the BCN development, thereby itself spanning almost the entire major period of canal building in this country, and involving three of its most prominent exponents.

6.3.3 The 1984 conservation area designation acknowledged the most significant elements of the canal system in this locality, yet whilst the conservation area contains a large body of structures considered to be of national importance, and the variety of landscape features and built structures discussed

above are considered to make a very positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the conservation area as it is now, there is little surviving evidence which manages to convey a real sense of the former atmosphere of the canals; of the harshness of life on the canal boats; of the volume of traffic and resulting frustration with congestion at the locks which occasionally broke out into fights; of the everyday use of the canal by adjacent industry, into which the canal flowed via private arms and basins.

- 6.3.4 Interestingly, this is not an uncommon problem. There are c.500 miles of canal network now lying within designated conservation areas, yet it is understood that along much of this length the area of designation is drawn tight to the canal corridor, and excludes the industrial hinterland that the canals were constructed to serve (Crowe, 2002, pers comm.). It is likely that elsewhere, as along the Galton Valley, re-development, subsequent disuse and dereliction followed by further re-development has gradually degraded the industrial hinterland to a degree where it no longer satisfies the criteria necessary to merit designation as an '*area of special architectural or historic interest*', such that only the tight canal corridor, where redevelopment is not physically possible, is able to meet those criteria.
- 6.3.5 The present relative tranquillity of the canal corridor through this densely urban industrial area appears slightly incongruous, with only small signs, such as the deep grooves cut into the fabric of the bridges by the tow ropes, and the evidence of blocked canal basins to suggest a former, busier atmosphere. While it is acknowledged that the life of the canals as a fundamental feature of the transport infrastructure of this industrial heartland can never be restored, it is considered imperative that new life is brought to the canal network such that it not only survives as one of the foremost industrial landscapes in Britain, but can again play a significant role in the daily life of Smethwick.

7.0 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY

- 7.1 Section 5.0 of this report has sought to identify the special architectural and historic interest, and the character of the individual zones of the conservation area, while section 6.0 has set out the more general special interest of the conservation as a whole. These provide a set of parameters against which the appropriateness of the existing conservation area boundary can be assessed, and the case made for any proposed changes to the designated area.
- 7.2 Section 1.3 of the report identified a number of locations at which the conservation area boundary offsets from the canal corridor to include individual buildings of historic interest. However, both PPG15 and English Heritage guidance stress that *"it is the quality and interest of areas rather than that of individual buildings which should be the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas"* (PPG 15, para. 4.2), and it is necessary to identify whether they individually make a positive contribution to the special character and interest of the zone of the conservation area in which they lie. Each proposed amendment to the boundary of the area is shown on Figure 2a-2c, and will be discussed in order from west to east.
- 7.3 An initial assessment from documentary sources identified that Zone 2a was of potential significance due to its historically prime location adjacent to the canal, and to the location of early industry here. A number of late 19th century buildings survive in this area, including, most significantly, the listed offices and works of Archibald Kenrick, and the office of the former Spon Lane works, which are currently included in the designated area, and the former buildings of the Stour Valley Works.
- 7.4 The two buildings situated within the designated area, however, originally lay some distance to the north of the canal, and never had a direct relationship with it. Only now that the line of the canal has been moved northwards to accommodate the support structure of the M5 are they the closest buildings to it. This is not true of the few surviving buildings of the Stour Valley Works and Spon Lane Foundry to the west of Spon Lane, which were originally served by three canal basins. However, survival is poor, and their relationship with the canal severely impacted by the construction of the M5, and it is not considered that these buildings would make a positive contribution to the conservation area. It is therefore not proposed to recommend inclusion of the area of Zone 2a within the designated area.

- 7.5 While the buildings of the Kenrick and Spon Lane works are of architectural interest, and make a significant contribution to the townscape of their vicinity, their lack of relationship with the canal, either historically or in the present, makes their inclusion within an essentially canal-based conservation area inappropriate, and it is not considered that they make a positive contribution to the identified character of Zone 2 (see 5.4 above). As the Kenrick offices are listed, they enjoy the level of protection implicit in that designation, and it is therefore recommended that they be excluded from the conservation area.
- 7.6 The former toll house on the Birmingham to Dudley turnpike, on the north side of the High Street, is related neither in function or appearance to those features which give the conservation area its special interest, and due to its divorced location, separated from the rest of the conservation area by the dual carriageway of Tollhouse Way and the railway line, it is unable to make a positive contribution to its special character or appearance. It is therefore recommended that it is removed from within the designated area. As it is a listed building it does not need the additional level of development control afforded by inclusion within the conservation area.
- 7.7 The Canal Heritage Centre on Brasshouse Lane (Fig. 2b) together with the community gardens to its west are currently included in the designated area. However, the former public house in which the heritage centre is located considerably post-dates the main period of canal transport in this area, was not directly associated with the canal, and has no visual relationship with it. The community gardens are situated at the very top of the embankment of the OML, and similarly have no direct relationship with the canal. It is therefore considered that neither of these features make a positive contribution to the conservation area, and should be omitted from it.
- 7.8 The conservation area currently includes four sites in Zone 6a; the former corporation depot, now the Smethwick Enterprise centre, the site of the Smethwick Engine, Lime Wharf and the malthouse at the eastern end of the Engine Arm. Limited site investigation has indicated that not only do a number of early industrial buildings survive to the east of the Enterprise Centre, but that their canal elevations are fundamental to creating the special character and interest of this part of the conservation area. The study has also indicated that Zones 6 & 6a combine to form one of the very few areas surviving within the conservation area where a real sense of the authentic character of the canal system through this urban area can still be appreciated, and for this reason it is recommended that the section of Zone 6a between the Enterprise Centre and Lime Wharf is added to the designated area.

- 7.9 It is also recommended that the eastern end of the Sandwell section of the Birmingham Canal, from Smethwick junction at the eastern end of the conservation area as currently designated, to the Birmingham boundary, is included within the Conservation Area. The landscape analysis identified two zones of differing character within this stretch of canal; Zone 7, flanked by large-scale old and modern industry, and the more open, semi-rural Zone 8, with its well-vegetated feeder embankment and distant views to Birmingham.
- 7.10 This section of historic landscape is considered to be of a similar level of interest and character as other zones currently within the designated area. Both zones contain many of those landscape features and structures which are considered to contribute most significantly to the special character and interest of the conservation area, including vegetated embankments, towpath bridges, cast iron roving bridges, and relict canal loops such as the Cape Arm (Plate 45) and the special character of Winson Green stop, with its bridges and toll island is an echo of Bromford stop which marks the western end of the conservation area.
- 7.11 It is also recommended that the extant section of the Cape Arm is included within the designated area due to its special character and interest, similar to that of Zone 6a, and the contribution that this would make to the special interest of the conservation area as a whole.
- 7.12 Consideration was also given to the inclusion of all or part of Zone 7a (Figs 13b & 13c). In the light of concerns about the relative absence of areas of industrial hinterland to the canals from designated conservation areas (see 6.3.4 above), this zone appeared to represent a real opportunity to address this problem. Being beyond the high ground of the Smethwick Summit, this area provided prime development land adjacent to the canal, and was therefore one of the first areas to be developed in the late 18th century by the industries which went on to occupy the majority of available building land by the mid 19th century. Significant buildings and remains survive of some of these early industries, most notably at the Soho Foundry, and provide a rapidly disappearing example of the former historic character of the wider area. Additionally, this zone includes the site of Brindley's original bottom lock, and the Old Navigation, a public house shown on the c.1828 map (Fig. 4), and an integral part of canal life around the Smethwick locks.
- 7.12 Although the area to the east of the Ruck of Stones junction is historically significant, and contains some significant buildings including the Tramway Generating Station and offices, the internationally important Soho Foundry, and a number of in-filled canal basins, the general quality of this area has

been considerably degraded by large industrial sheds and unsympathetic uses, and it is considered that its wholesale inclusion within the conservation area would be difficult to support on appeal. However, consideration might be given to the creation of a small conservation area specific to the Soho Foundry site.

- 7.13 As the currently designated area includes Brindley's middle and top locks, it is recommended that the site of the bottom lock is also included as it survives *in-situ*, albeit in a buried context. It is also considered appropriate that the Old Navigation P.H is included, due to its close association with life on the canal.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE MANAGEMENT

8.1 Opportunities for Enhancement

8.1.1 Increased use of the canal corridors would improve the present isolated and sometimes hostile atmosphere along some stretches, and all proposals for increased visitor use, and developments which would result in increased use of the canal frontage should be encouraged.

8.1.2 Circular walking and cycle routes from the town centre, railway stations and nearby car parks should be created, and on-site interpretation of the more significant heritage assets should be undertaken.

8.1.3 Wherever possible, existing historically significant frontages to the canal should be restored, and new boundary treatments using traditional materials should be encouraged.

8.1.4 Existing significant views of principal historic assets should be opened up; for example the view from the tow path access off Galton Bridge to the eastern elevation of Galton Bridge should be improved through selective tree and shrub thinning.

8.1.5 Wherever possible, land uses such as landfill and scrap yards, which are incompatible with the area's conservation area status, and materially affect the setting of significant listed buildings and ancient monuments, should be re-located.

8.1.6 The historical character of Galton House gardens could be strengthened through appropriate construction of paths, management and maintenance of extant landscape features and sympathetic new planting.

8.1.7 Areas of vegetation could be managed to protect and enhance nature conservation value, encourage tree and shrub screening of intrusive elements, maintain a green corridor through Zones 1, 4, 5 and 8.

8.2 Recommendations re. planning policy and guidance

8.2.1 Unlike many conservation areas where there is a considerable threat from new development within the designated area, and therefore a need to identify appropriate building styles, massing and materials, this is not the case here, where the tight boundaries of the conservation area result in there being few opportunities for re-development within the area, but where development on sites adjacent to some zones of the designated area would have a significant impact on its character and appearance.

- 8.2.2 It is therefore recommended that consideration be given to the amendment of existing conservation area policy within the Sandwell Unitary Development Plan to include reference to 'setting', in order to apply an additional level of control to works on sites which form the boundary of the conservation area.
- 8.2.3 The Conservation Area Appraisal should form the basis of assessment of all development proposals within the Conservation Area and along the boundaries of the Conservation Area. Special regard should be given to the individual characteristics of the historic landscape zones.
- 8.2.4 An Environmental Impact Assessment should be considered as a requirement for any significant developments which might affect historic assets of the Conservation Area or its character. All significant developments should be subject to an Environmental Scoping Report and scoping decision by Sandwell Borough Council.
- 8.2.5 In order to assess the potential impact of future development proposals on both the character and setting of the Conservation Area, the developer should be required to produce plans, elevations, information regarding proposed materials and an urban design scheme and supporting report to demonstrate how the proposed development is in accordance with Conservation Area Appraisal and meets Conservation Area policy and guidance. These documents should be supported by an EIA where required by Sandwell Borough Council.
- 8.2.6 Development should assist in recreating a dynamic relationship between the canal frontage and adjoining built form, and should respect, maintain and recreate historic development patterns within the Conservation Area and adjoining townscape setting.
- 8.2.7 Additional views of the Conservation Area should be opened up to increase inter-visibility with the surrounding townscape and increase public awareness of the canal and its Conservation Area.
- 8.2.8 Open green areas should be managed primarily to protect and enhance their nature conservation value. Significant tree and woodland groups identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal are to be protected and managed to ensure their continued contribution to the character of the area. The loss of these features will only be considered where adequate and appropriate alternative replacement planting proposals are agreed.

- 8.2.9 Any landscape works along the canal banks should follow the suggested management proposals agreed between the Urban Wildlife Trust and officers of Sandwell MBC to protect important habitats, particularly acid grassland and heath, and emerging marginal wetland. Hedgerow layering should continue and the open embankments maintained as a mosaic of grassland, tall herb and scrub by selective cutting. Works within the woodland of Galton House gardens should take account of breeding birds.
- 8.2.10 Before works are carried out on any of the buildings, a survey for black redstarts should be carried out, and mitigation measures taken if present. Specific landscaping for this species should avoid the provision of trees and scrub to avoid competition from robins etc. and allow for the retention or creation of an open, hard-surface landscape with rock features, grass patches and sedums.
- 8.2.11 Surveys should be carried out during the summer months of buildings and bridges where development or conservation works are proposed for the presence of breeding bats, and mitigation measures implemented. A licensed bat ecologist should check for hibernating bats prior to any building works undertaken during October to March. Consideration should be given to the provision of roost sites within renovated buildings.
- 8.2.12 Proposed open spaces along the canal or leading off the canal should be designed to ensure the conservation or re-creation of traditional historic patterns and form. Landscape proposals should be designed to reflect and reinforce the historic landscape character. New public and private access arrangements for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists should be of a high standard and in keeping with the historic and landscape character of the Conservation Area.
- 8.2.13 The Council should take into account the cumulative effect of developments on the character and setting of the Conservation Area on a five year cycle.
- 8.3 Recommendations re. restoration and repairs
- 8.3.1 All historic structures identified as being of more than one phase of construction should be archaeologically recorded as a first stage of any proposed programme of repairs to ensure that their chronological development is fully understood, and in order to inform the method and materials of repair.

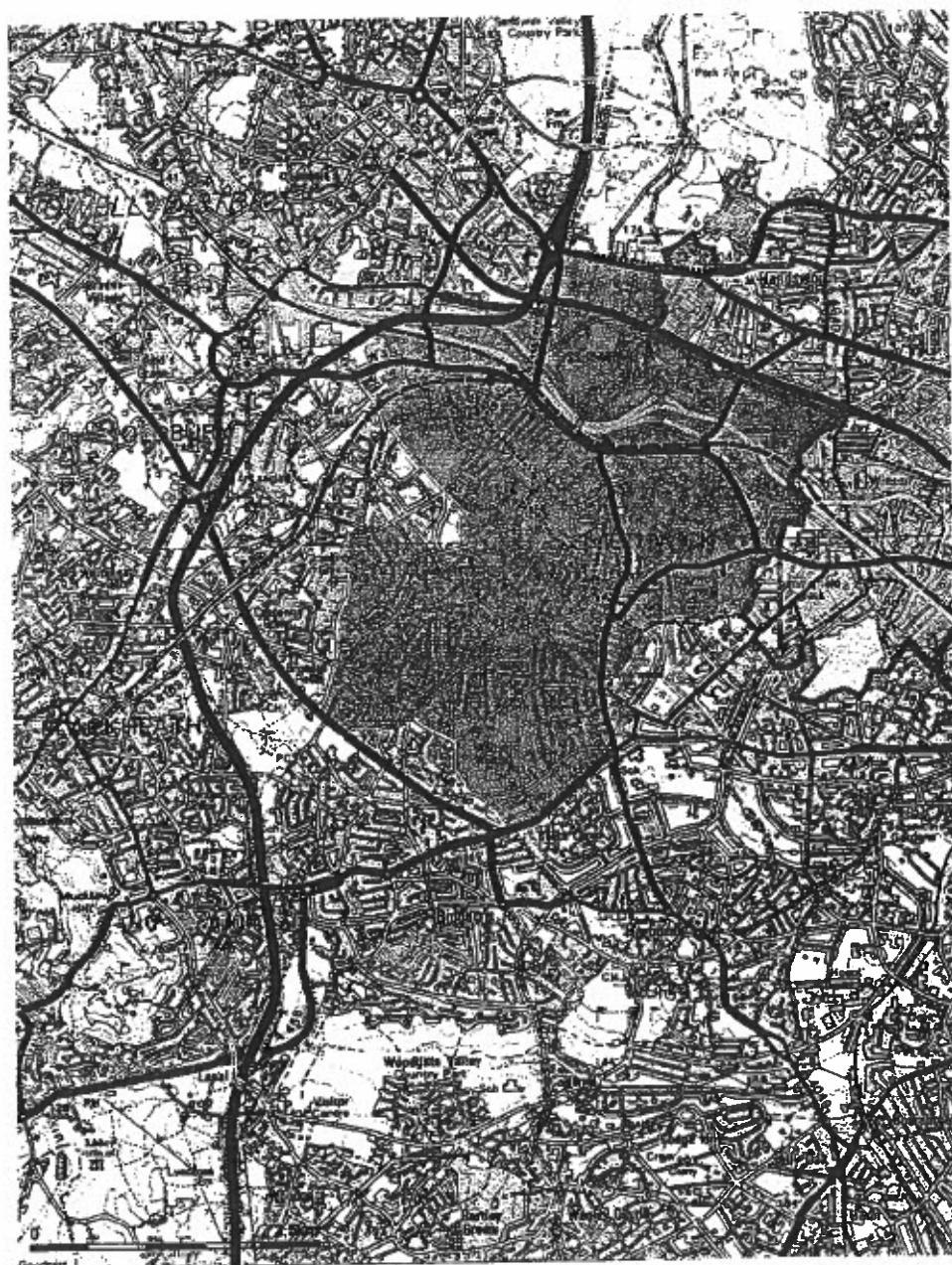
- 8.3.2 Wherever possible, materials used in the restoration of identified heritage assets should closely match the original, however, where this is not possible, through prohibitive cost or lack of availability, appropriate alternatives should be identified by a suitably qualified conservation architect.
- 8.3.3 Restoration of the towpath, ramps, canal bridges, and other traditional hard landscape features should be planned in a co-ordinated way and in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. A palette of materials and specification of acceptable construction methods should be agreed and provided as design guidance.
- 8.3.4 Consideration should be given to the restoration of Galton House gardens to provide a focal point for walks within Zone 4 and enable views down to the Pump House and beyond.
- 8.4 Research strategy for archaeological evaluation and historic building recording
- 8.4.1 This appraisal has identified few sites within the conservation area with significant below-ground archaeological potential, primarily due to the designated area following the boundaries of the canal corridors so closely along much of its length.
- 8.4.2 The sites with buried archaeological potential identified within Zones 6a and 7a are currently outside the designated boundary of the conservation area, but are situated within the proposed Soho Technology Park, which is the subject of a separate historic landscape appraisal. Proposals for the further assessment and field evaluation of the archaeological potential of these sites will be discussed as part of the archaeological research strategy for the Soho Technology Park (Upson, May 2002).
- 8.4.3 A more detailed assessment will need to be carried out of certain standing buildings within these two zones prior to any development likely to affect them, in order that appropriate programmes of building recording can be implemented. The buildings where additional assessment and/or recording is required will be identified in the general assessment of the Soho Technology Park.
- 8.4.4 There are only three sites considered to have significant buried archaeological potential which lie within the present conservation area, but outside the proposed area of the Soho Technology Park; Chance's North Works and the site of the Spon Lane pumping engine in Zone 3; and Brindley's Smethwick locks in Zone 5.

- 8.4.5 As the locations of the latter are well-known, and still visible in parts, they will not require field evaluation, though any redevelopment of the adjacent site will need to ensure their preservation *in-situ*.
- 8.4.6 A detailed archaeological desk-based assessment will need to be carried out for the Chance's glassworks site prior to the consideration of any proposals for re-development. It is understood that a reasonable assemblage of documentary evidence survives within the company archive, and this should allow a well-targeted strategy to be designed for the evaluation of the buried archaeological resource of the site.
- 8.4.7 Prior to any re-development affecting the surviving buildings of the Chance's glassworks, a detailed record should be made of the buildings as they currently survive. This record should be carried out in accordance with an approved specification, the scope of which should take into account the recording work previously undertaken by the former Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME).

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Figure 1 Location of Conservation Area



Plate 44 Junction of Cape Arm and Soap Works basin with canal feeder on crest of embankment

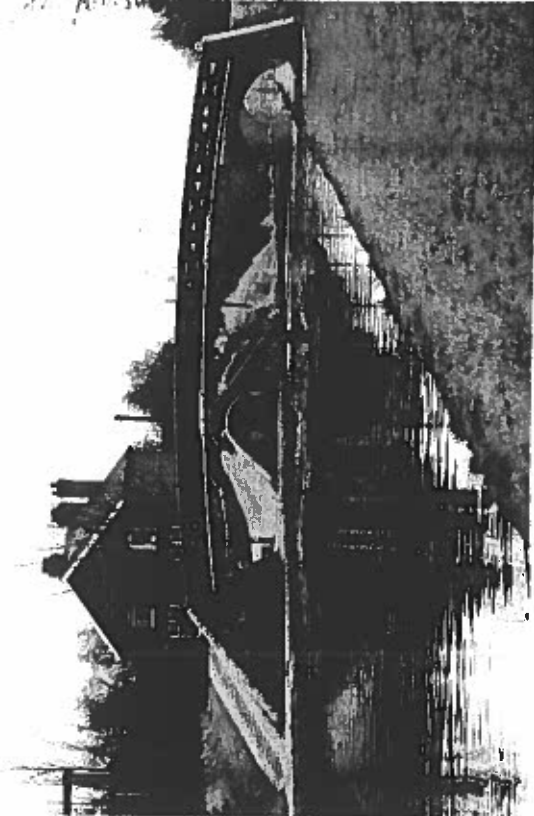


Plate 46 Winson Green junction and toll island, looking east



Plate 45 Cape Arm, looking south-west from canal feeder embankment

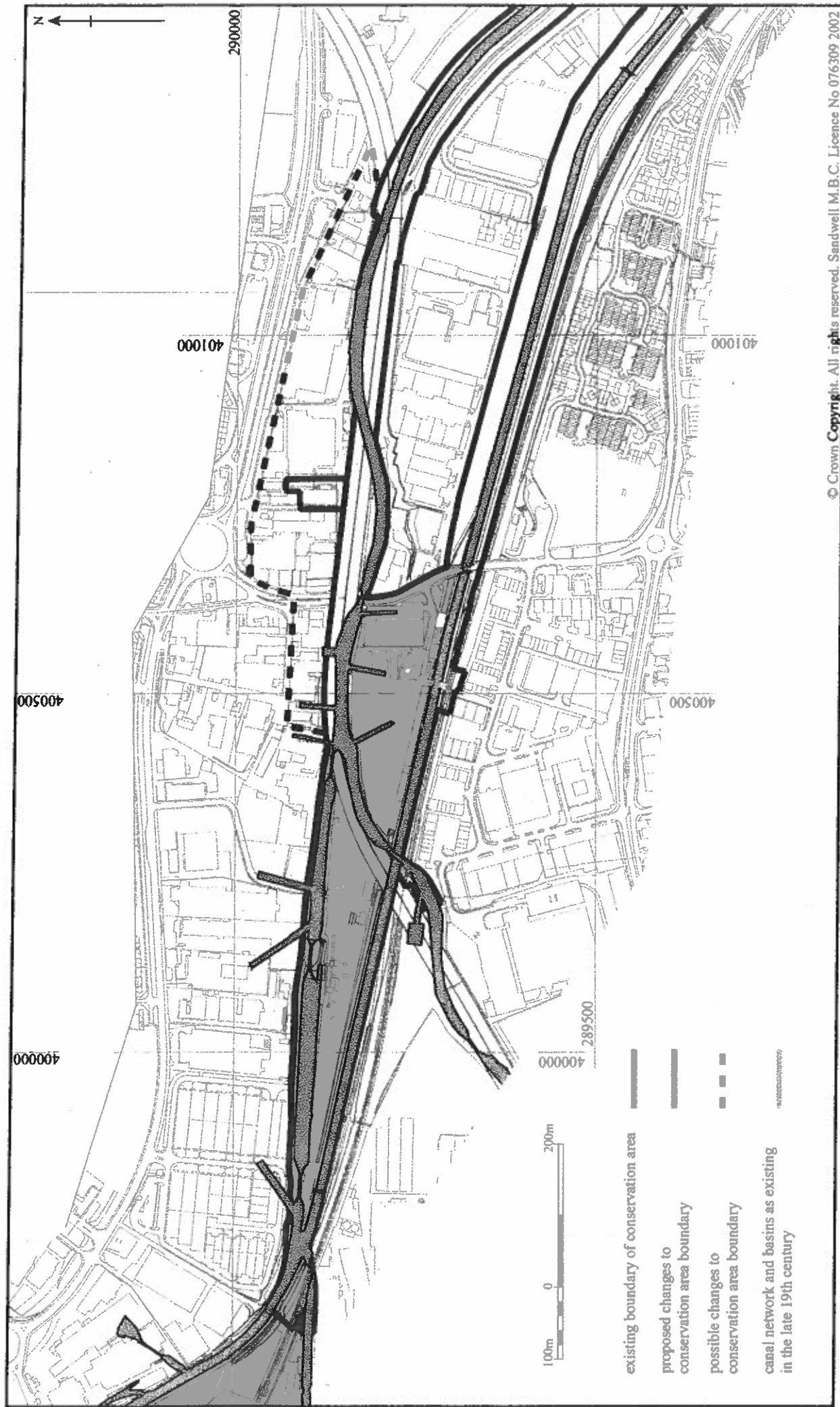
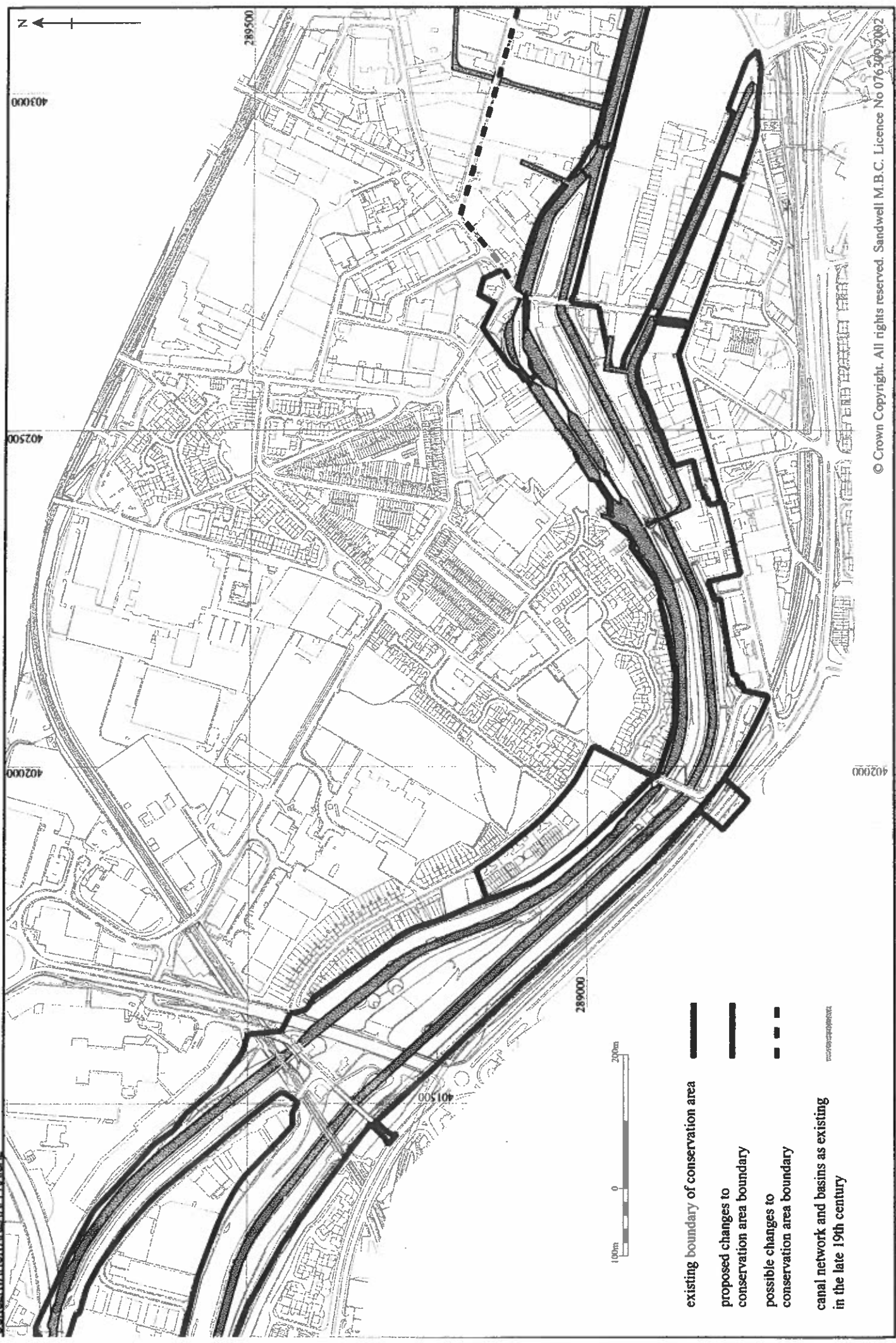


Figure 2a: Boundary of Conservation Area as Existing and Proposed (Western Section)



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Figure 2b: Boundary of Conservation Area as Existing and Proposed (Central Section)

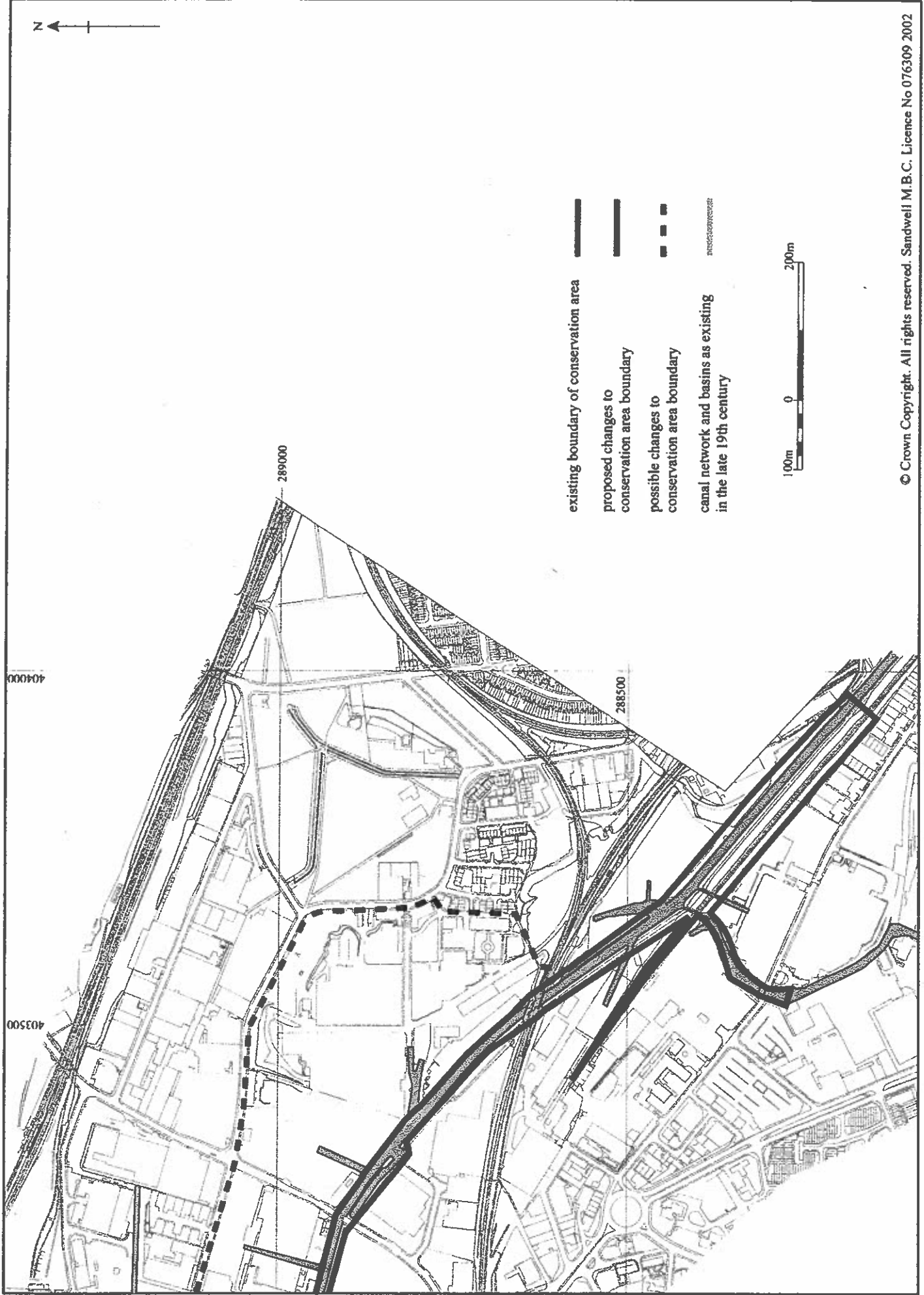


Figure 2c: Boundary of Conservation Area as Existing and Proposed (Eastern Section)

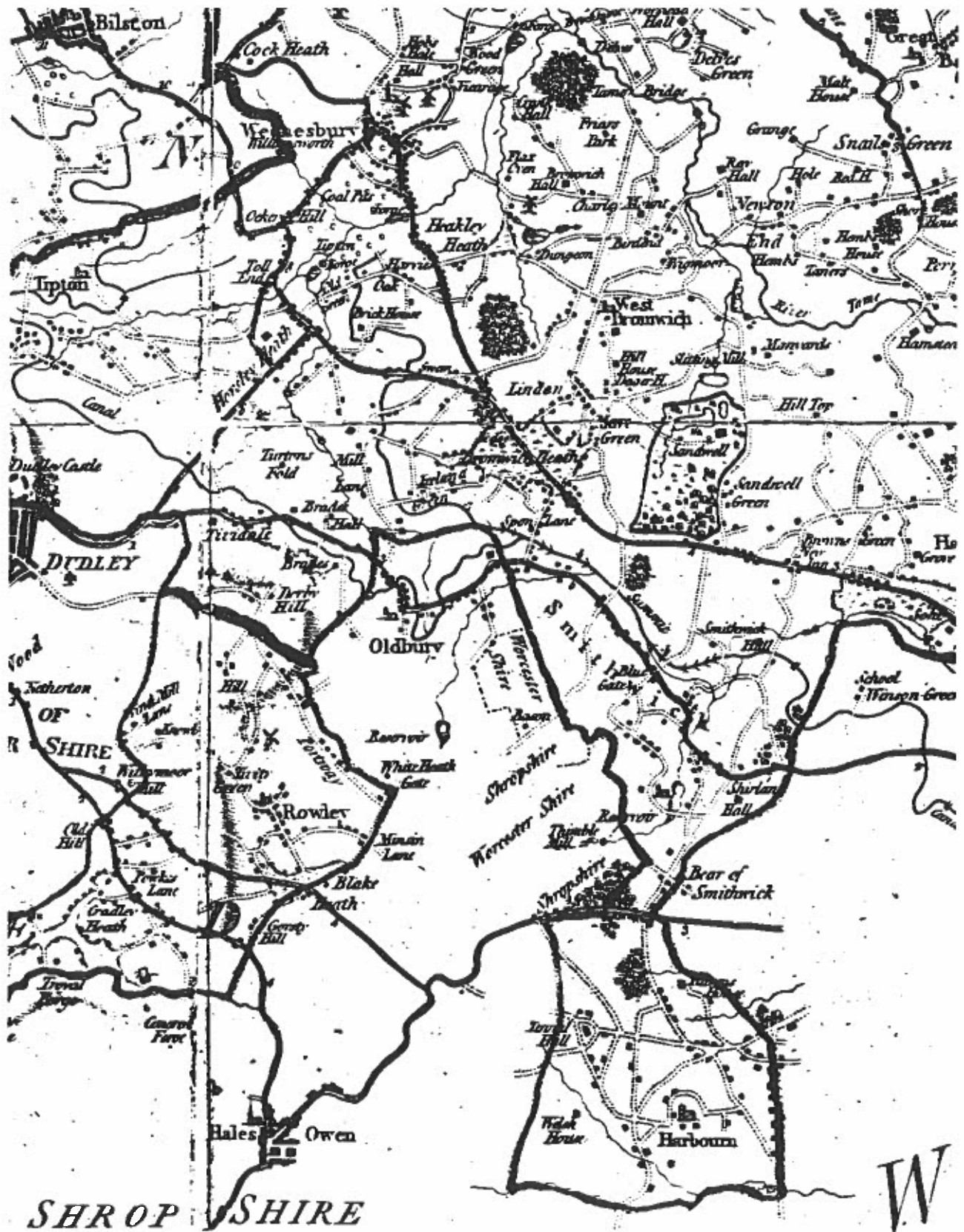


Figure 3 Map of the County of Staffordshire, 1775

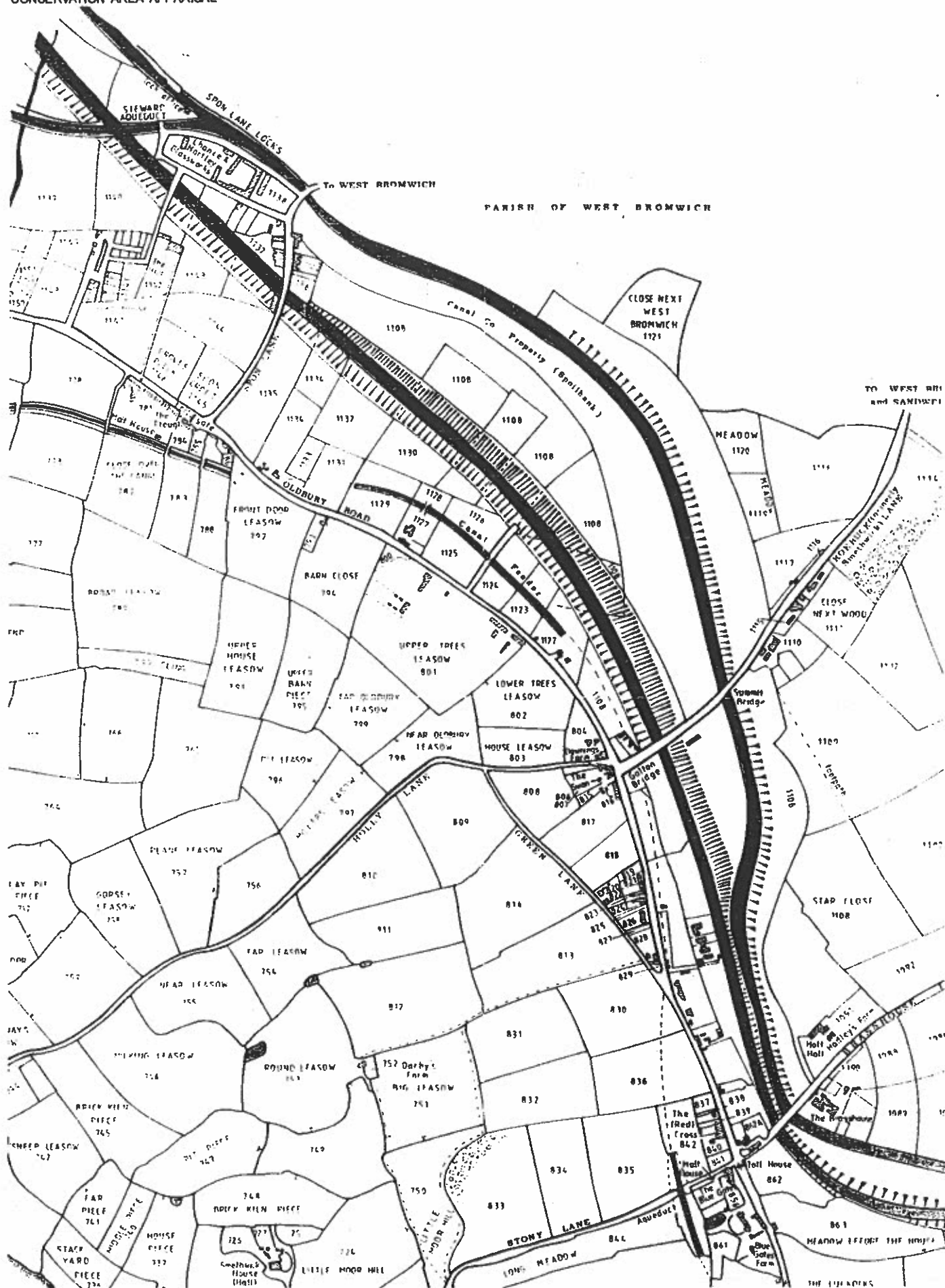


Figure 4a The township of Smethwick in the Parish of Harborne and the County of Staffordshire c.1828-30 (western section)
(From the survey of Henry Jacob of Birmingham with additional details researched by Smethwick Local History Society)

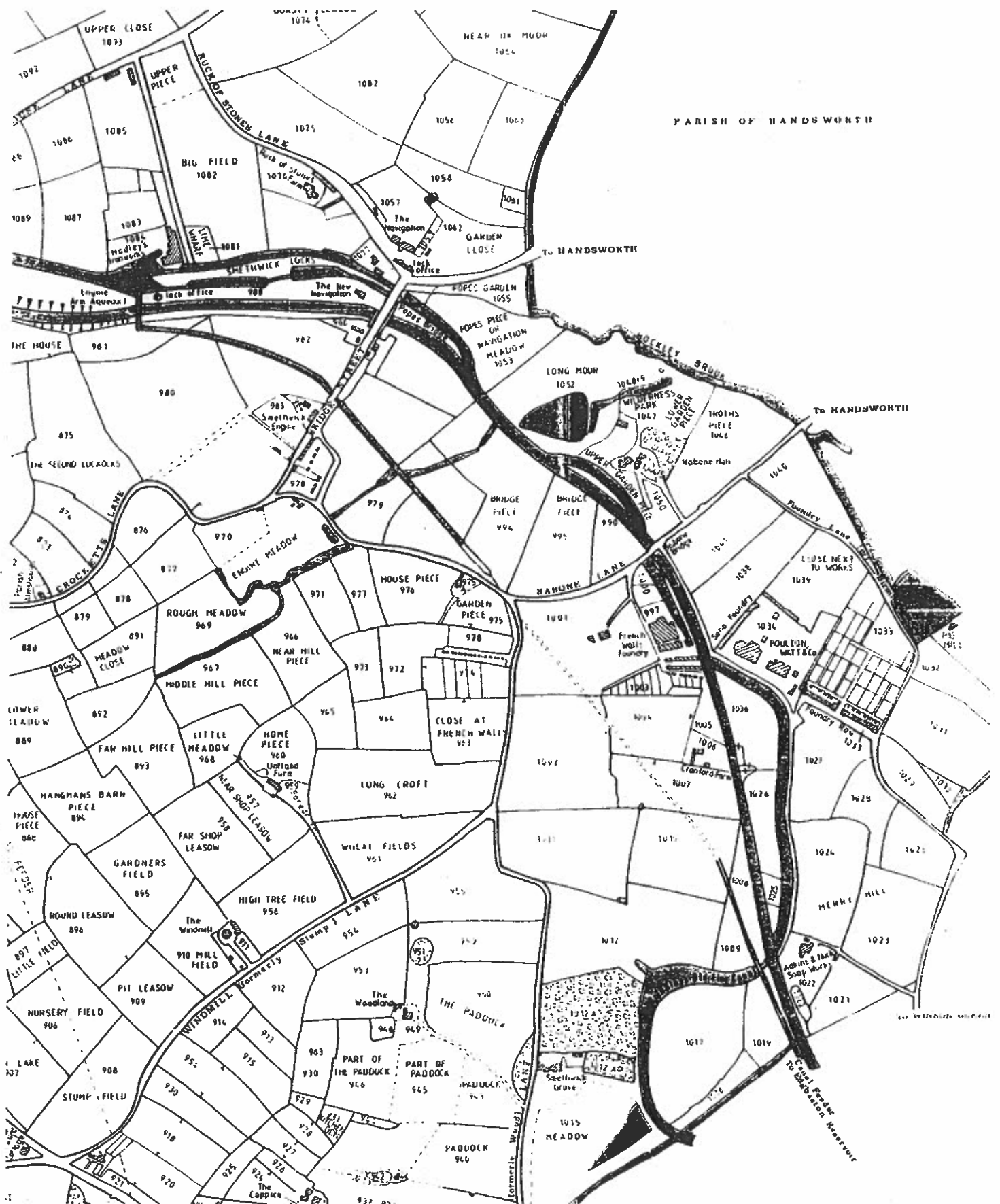
SMETHWICK SUMMIT, GALTON VALLEY, SMETHWICK
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Figure 4b The township of Smethwick in the Parish of Harborne and the County of Staffordshire c.1828-30 (eastern section)
(From the survey of Henry Jacob of Birmingham with additional details researched by Smethwick Local History Society)

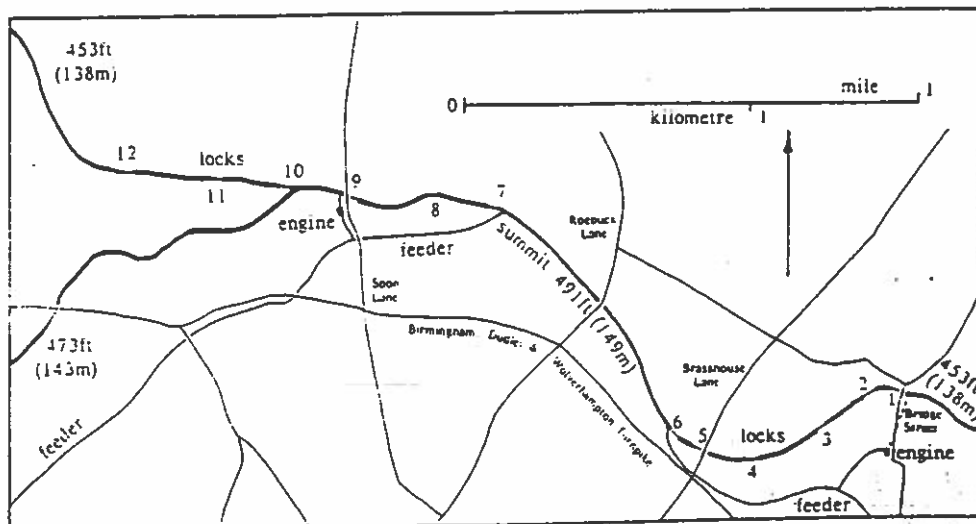


Figure 5a The canal through Smethwick in 1780 (from Andrew, 1995)

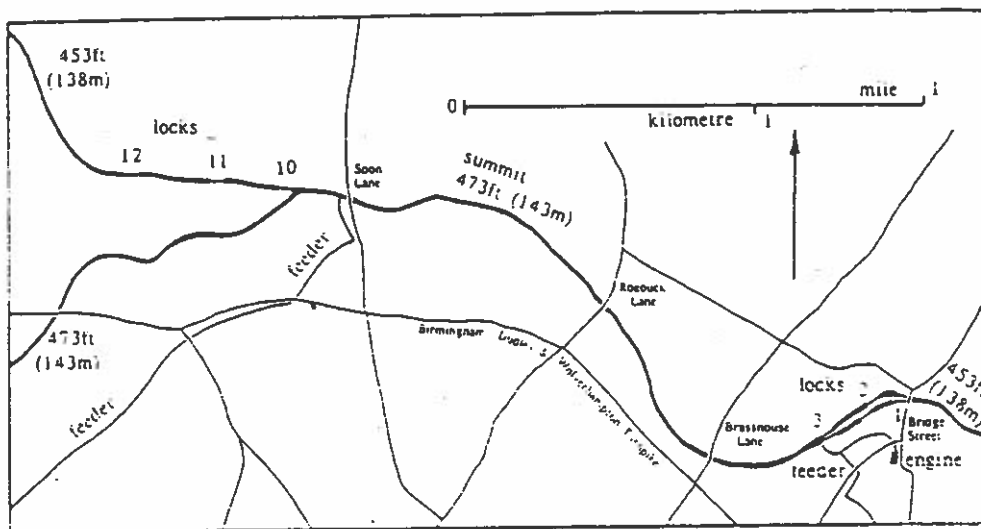


Figure 5b The canal through Smethwick in 1795 (from Andrew, 1995)

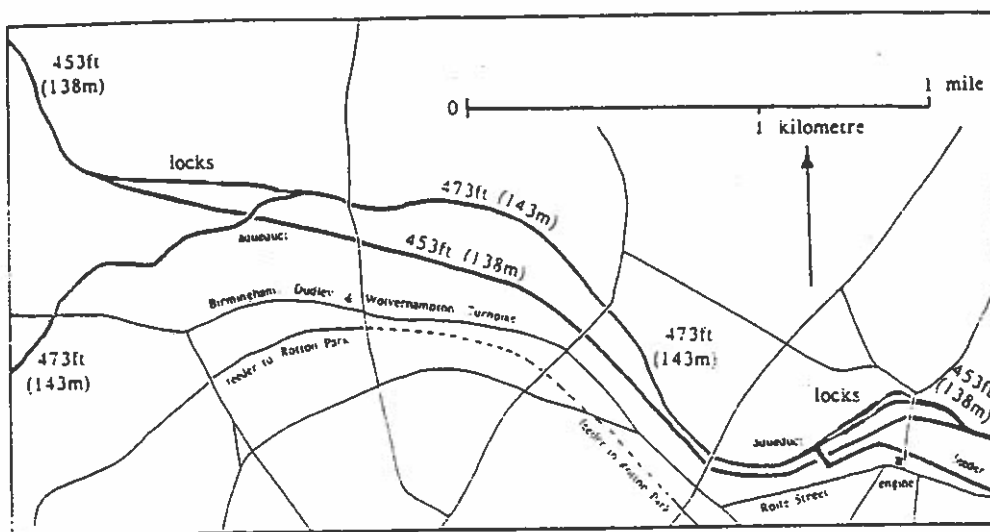


Figure 5c The canal through Smethwick in 1830 (from Andrew, 1995)

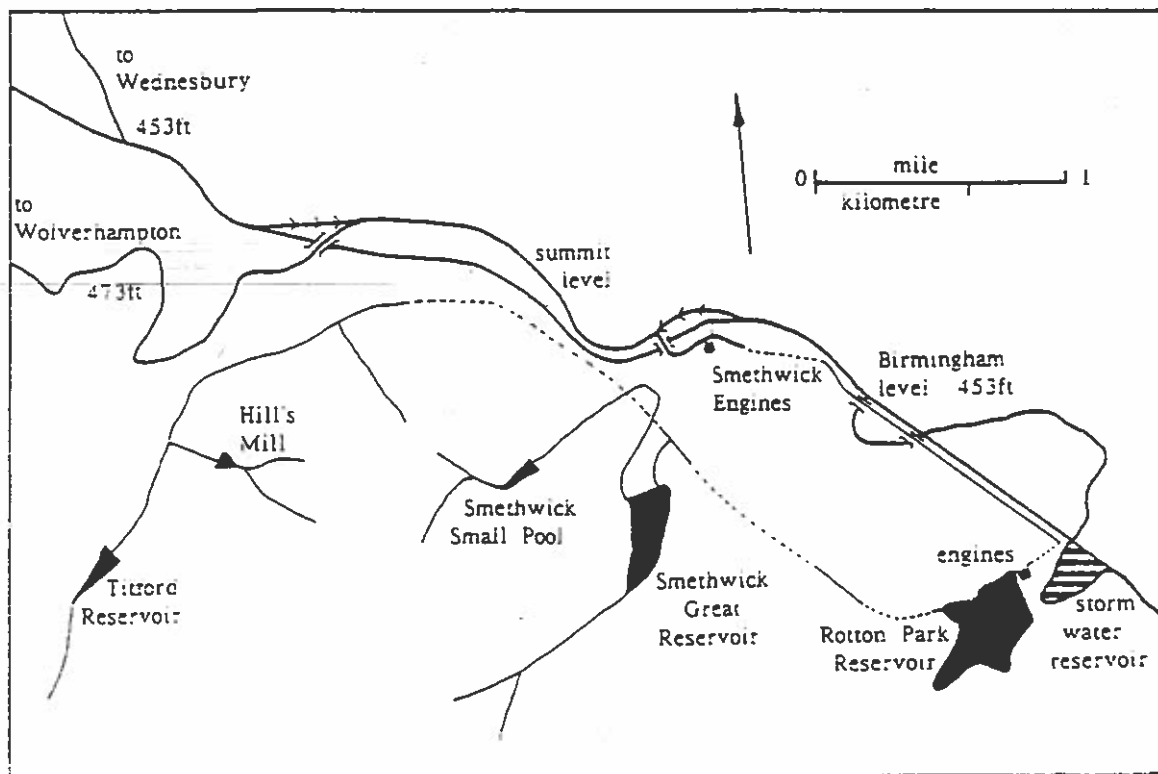
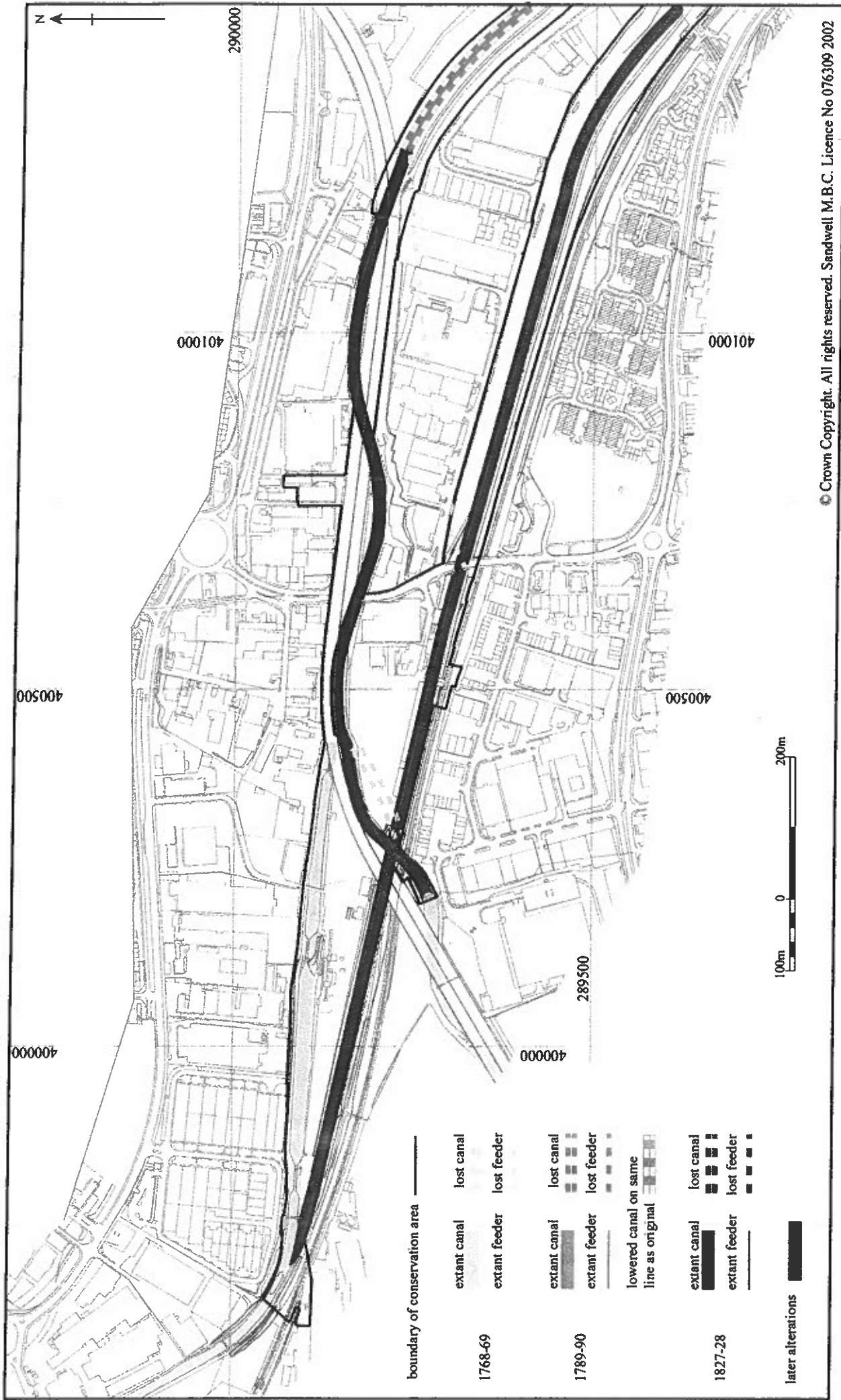


Figure 6 The Smethwick canal water supply system after 1835 (from Andrew, 1995)



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Figure 7a: Principal Phases of Canal Construction (Western Section)

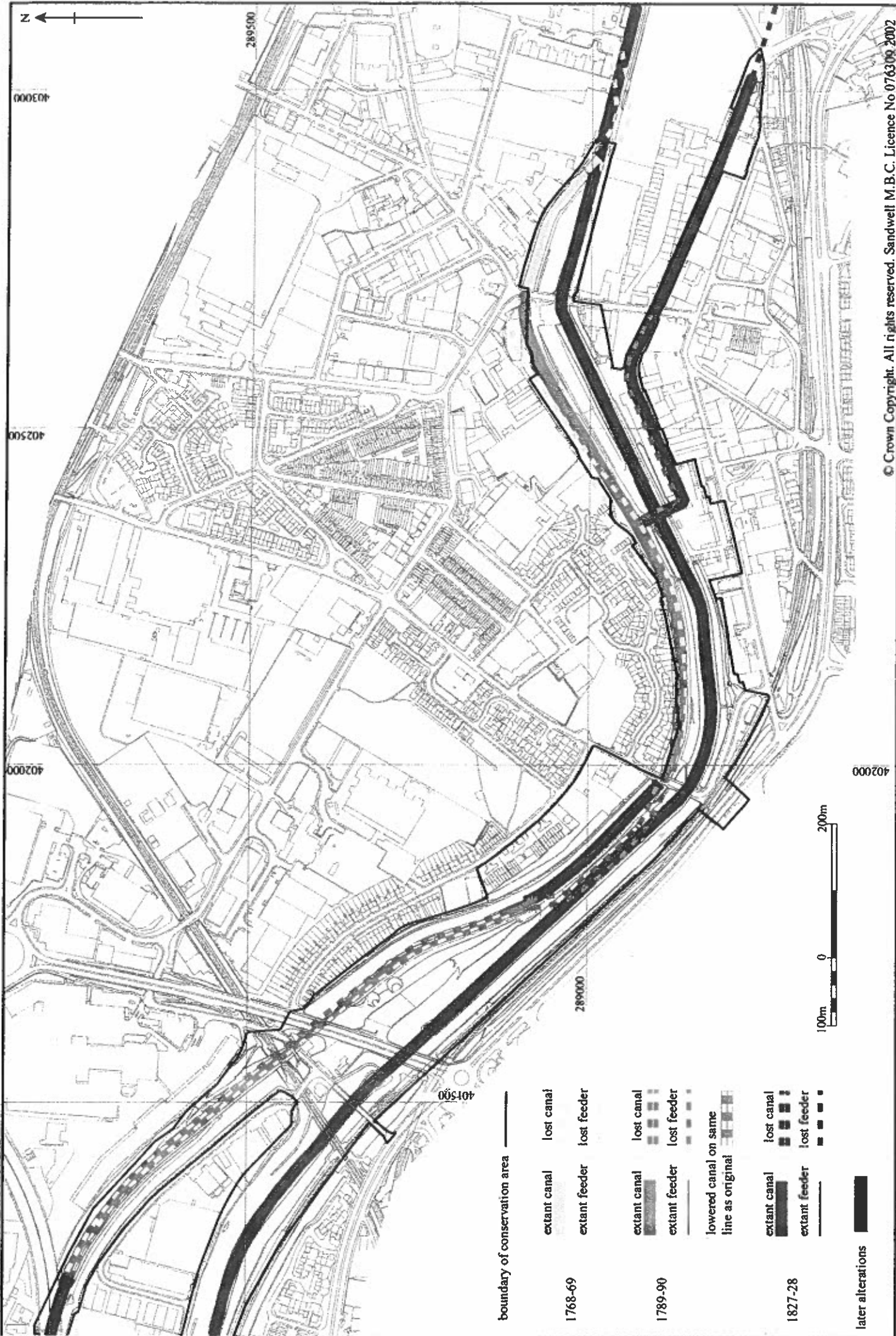


Figure 7b: Principal Phases of Canal Construction (Central Section)

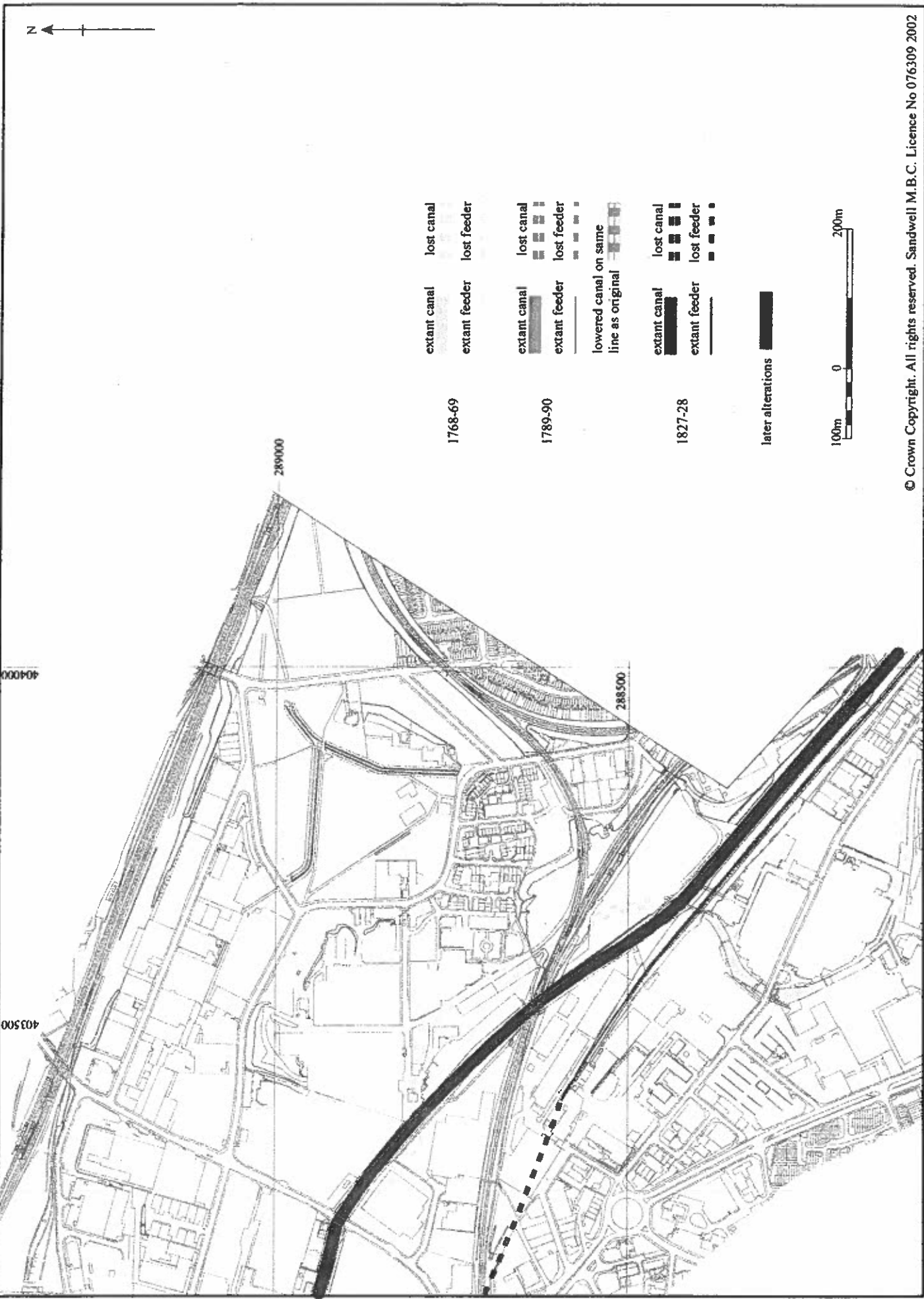


Figure 7c: Principal Phases of Canal Construction (Eastern Section)



Figure 8 Tithe map of 1842

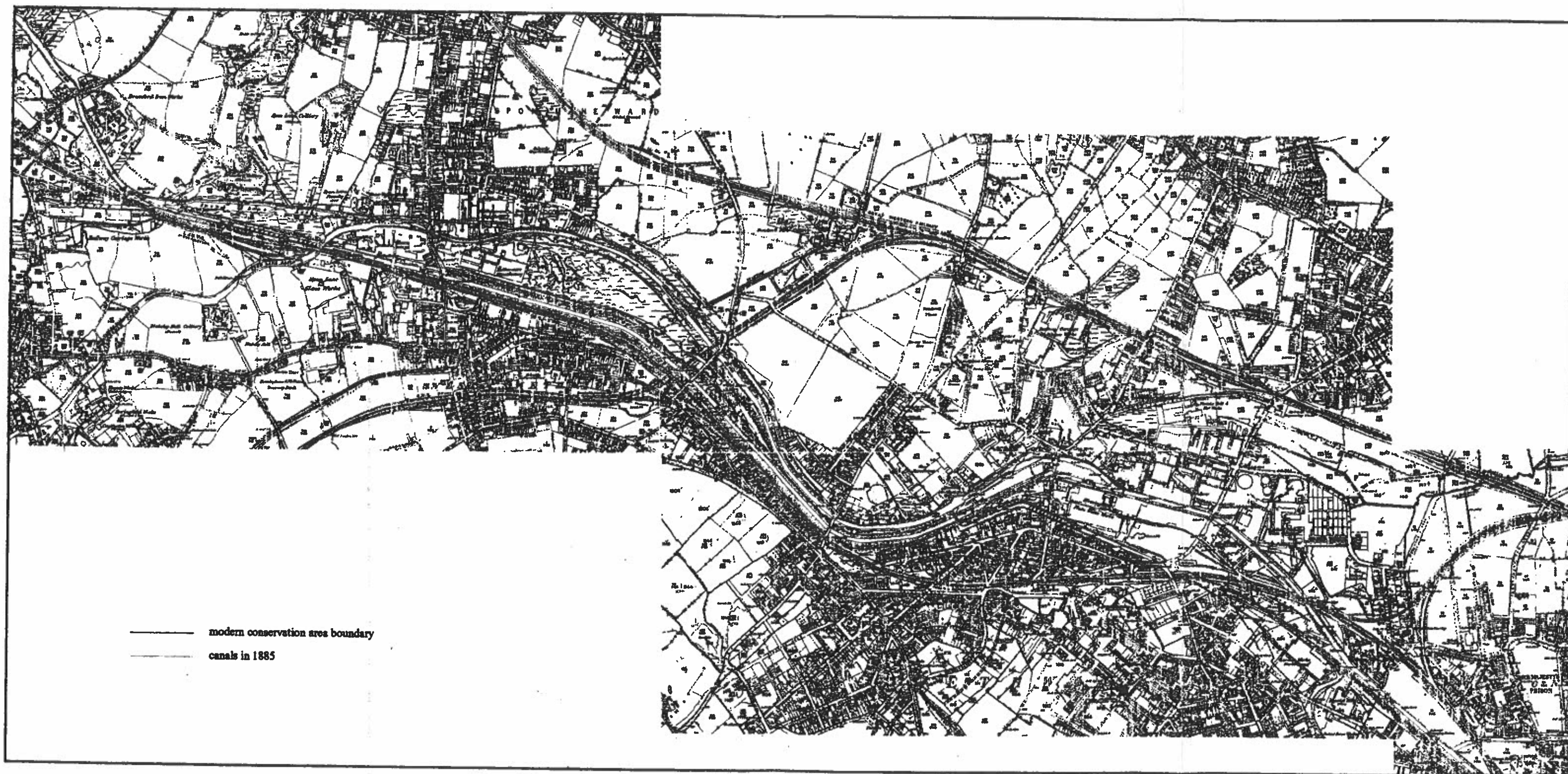
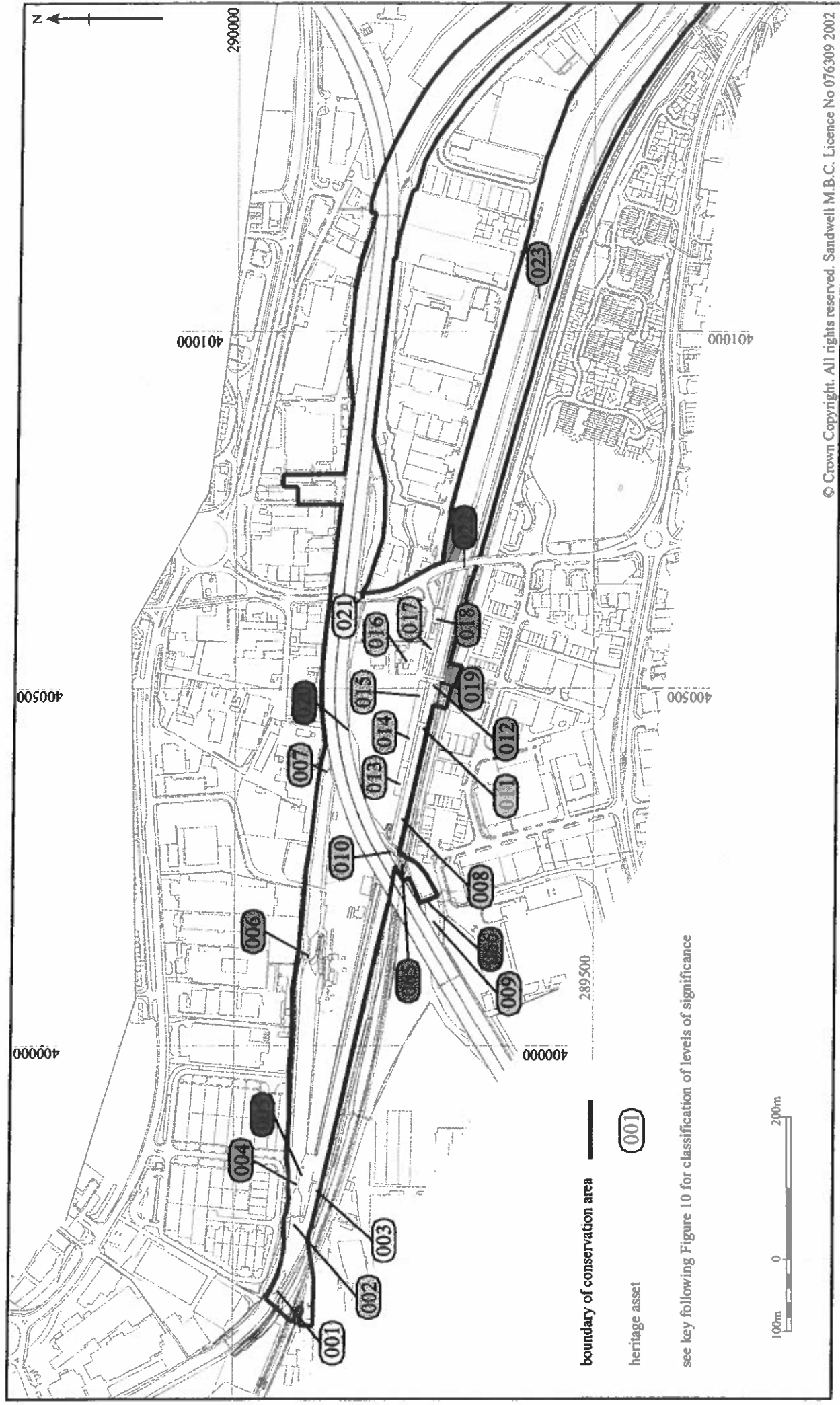


Figure 9 First edition Ordnance Survey, 1885



see key following Figure 10 for classification of levels of significance

Figure 10a: Audit of Heritage Assets (Western Section)

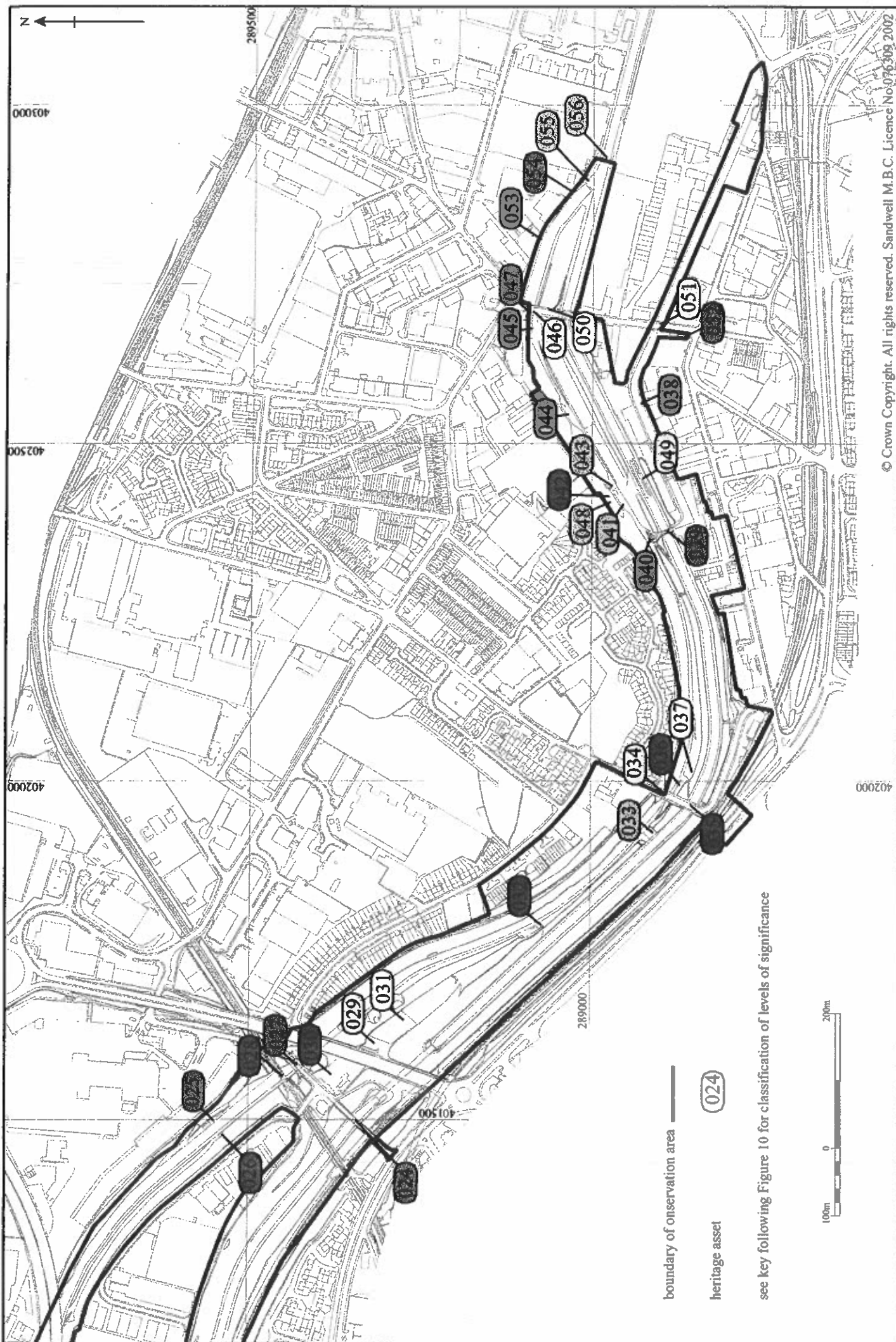


Figure 10b: Audit of Heritage Assets (Central Section)

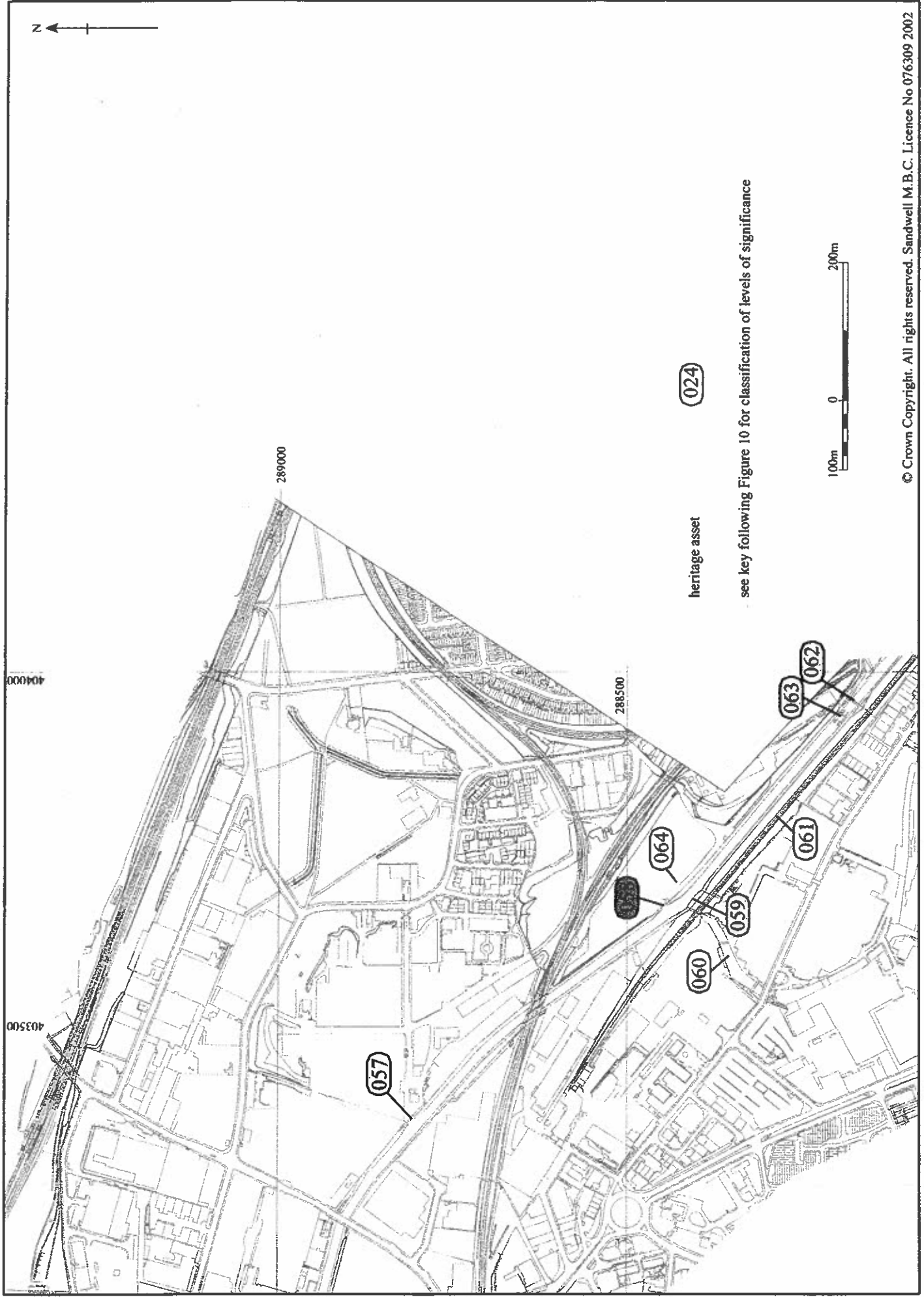


Figure 10c: Audit of Heritage Assets (Eastern Section)

AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN PROPOSED REVISED BOUNDARY OF SMETHWICK SUMMIT CONSERVATION AREA

KEY TO FIGURES 10a – 10c

Classification of levels of significance:

- 1  - buildings and structures of very high intrinsic architectural or historic interest giving them considerable national significance
- 2  - buildings and structures of high intrinsic architectural or historic interest and of national significance, and features of fundamental importance to the special interest and character of the conservation area
- 3  - buildings and structures of moderate intrinsic architectural or historic interest given greater significance by their being part of a group of structures of similar date, form and function resulting in their being of national significance
- 4  - individual buildings and structures of moderate intrinsic architectural or historic interest, and those of lesser intrinsic interest given greater significance by their being part of a group of structures of similar date, form and function resulting in their being of high regional significance
- 5  - buildings and structures of lesser intrinsic architectural or historic interest, which individually, or as part of a group make a very positive contribution to the special interest and character of the conservation area
- 6  - structures and features of little intrinsic architectural or historic interest, but which make a positive contribution to the special interest and character of the conservation area
- 7  - structures and features which currently make little contribution to the special interest and character of the conservation area

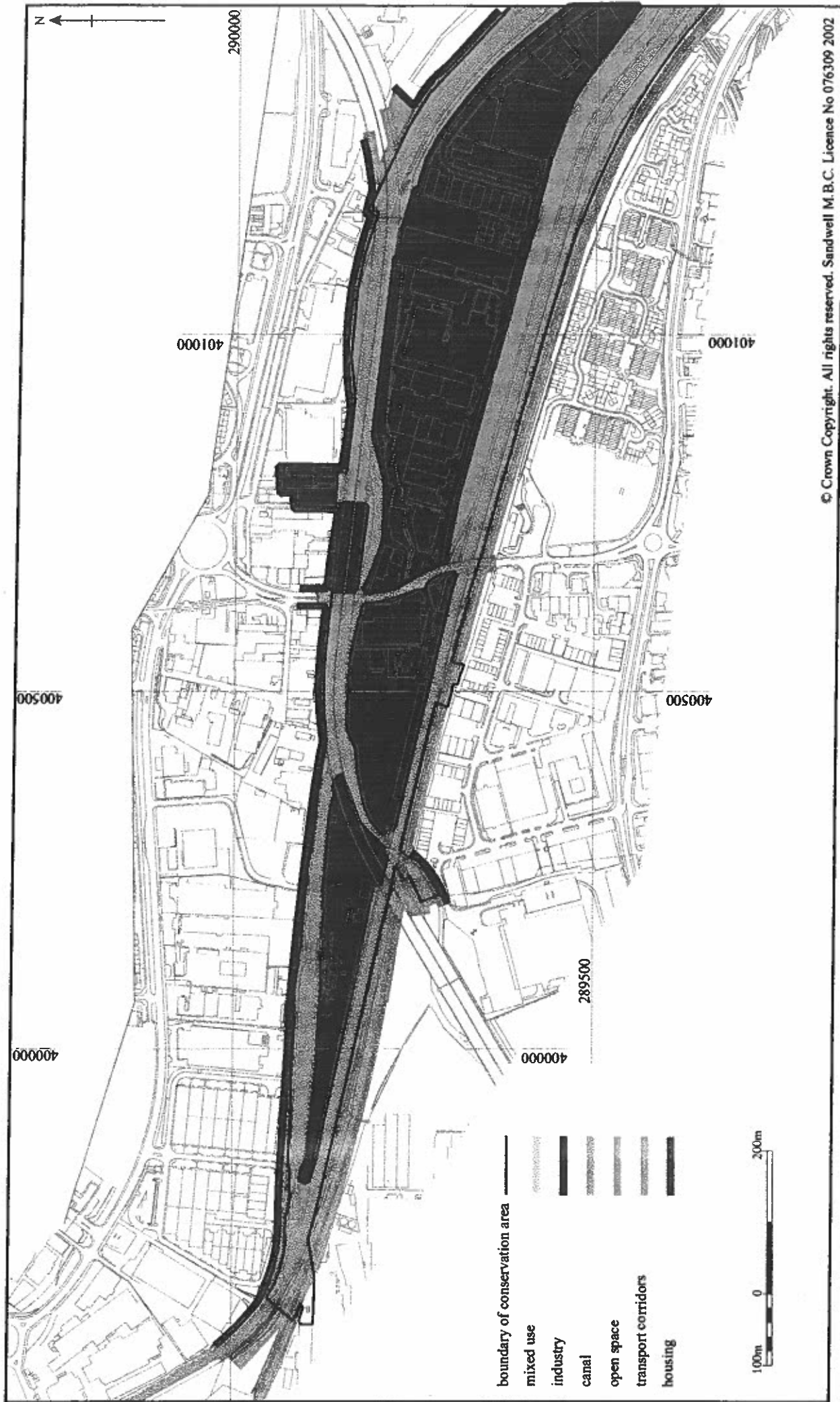


Figure 11a: Land Use (Western Section)

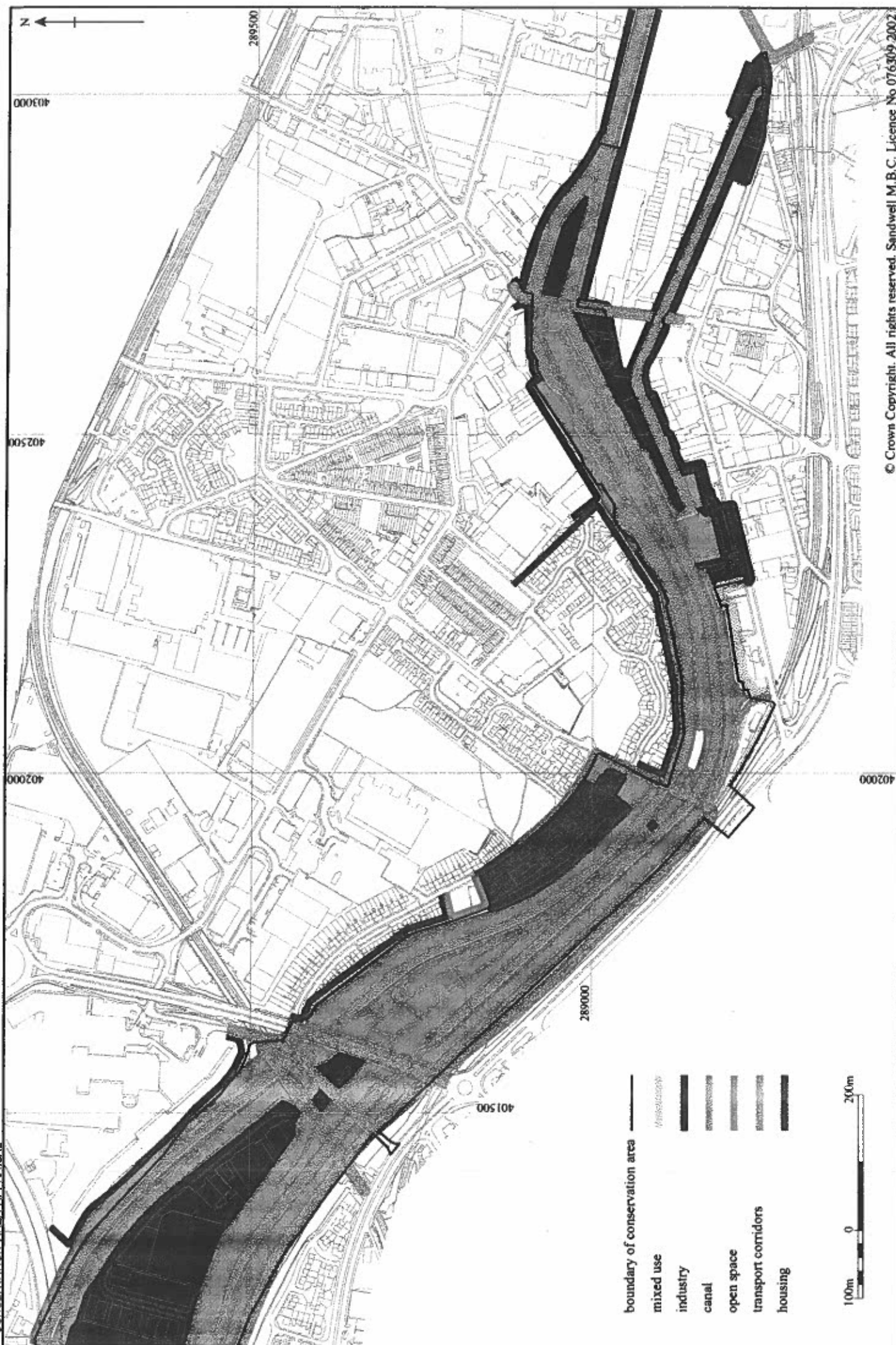


Figure 11b: Land Use (Central Section)

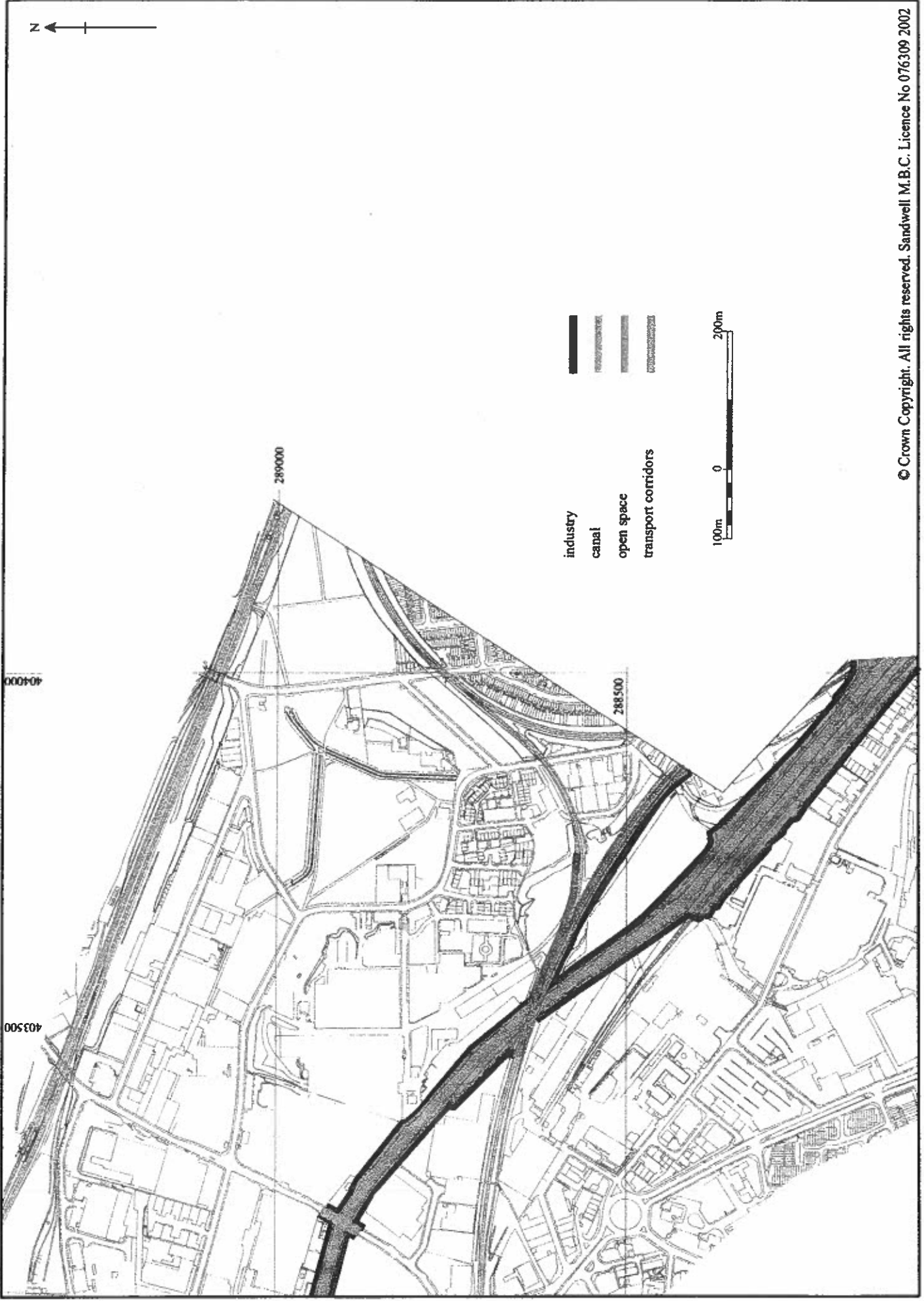


Figure 11c: Land Use (Eastern Section)

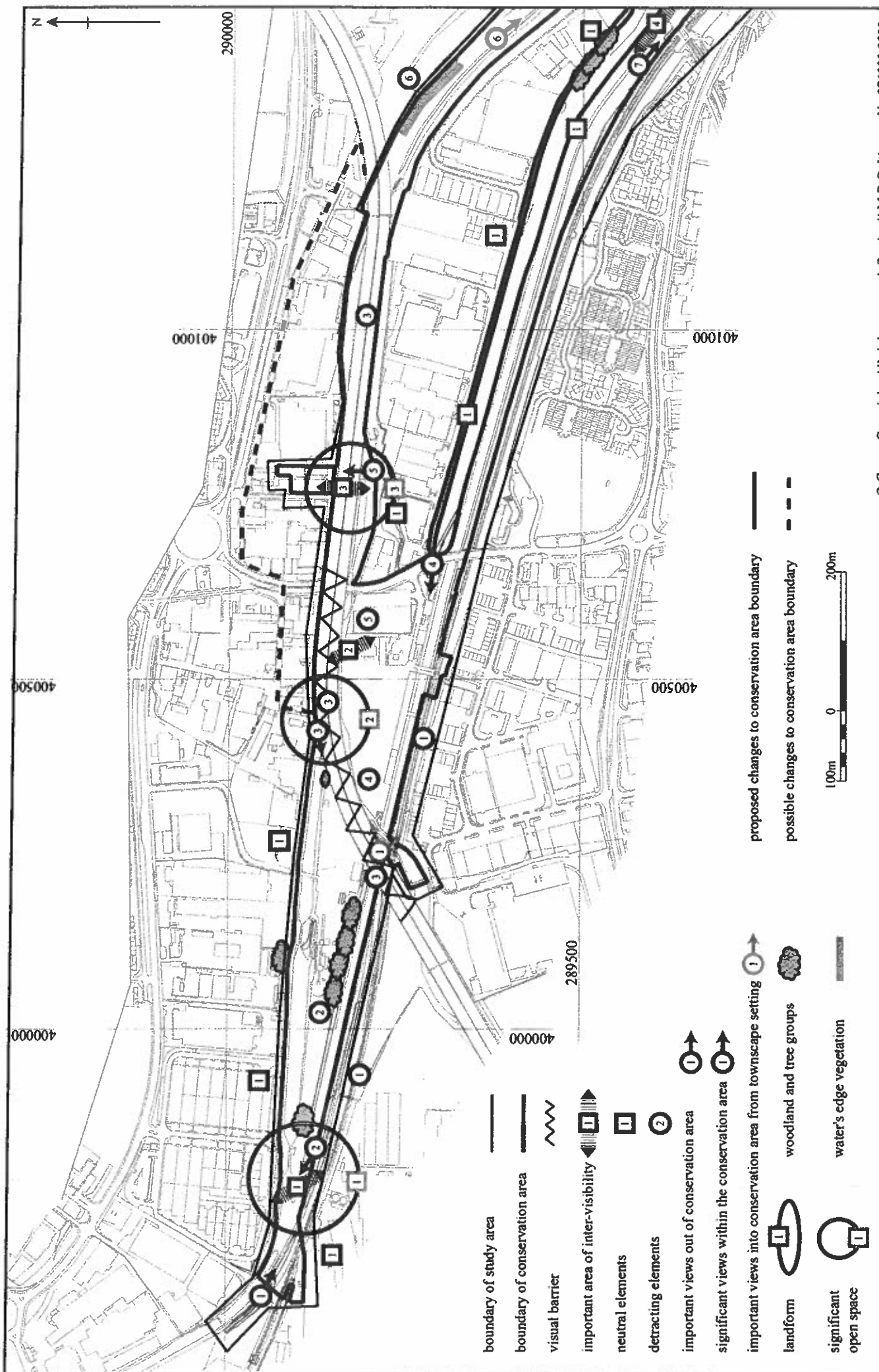


Figure 12a: Landscape Analysis (Western Section) (See key following Fig. 12 for details of landscape analysis)

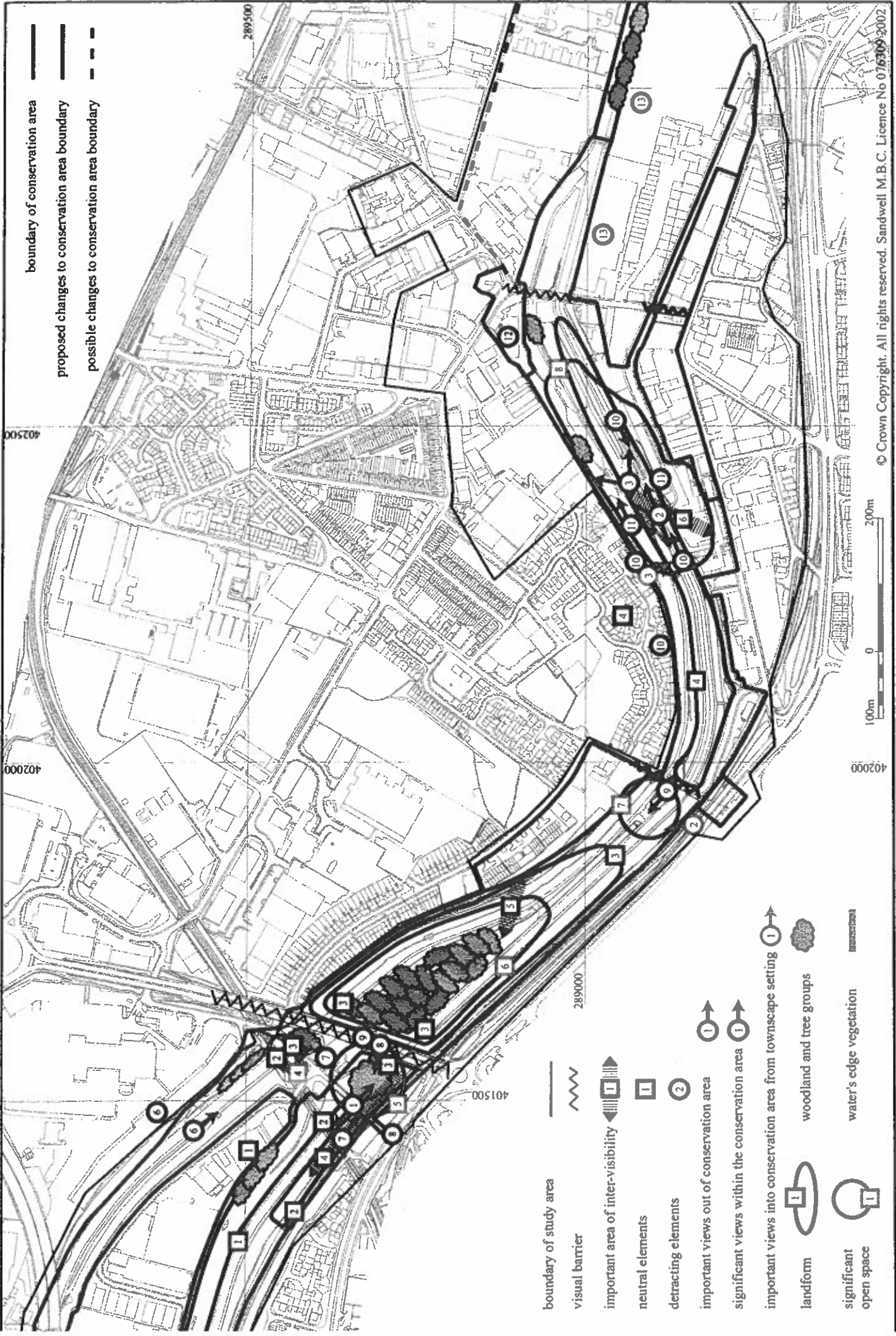


Figure 12b: Landscape Analysis (Central Section) (See key following Fig. 12 for details of landscape analysis)

404000

403500

289000

288500

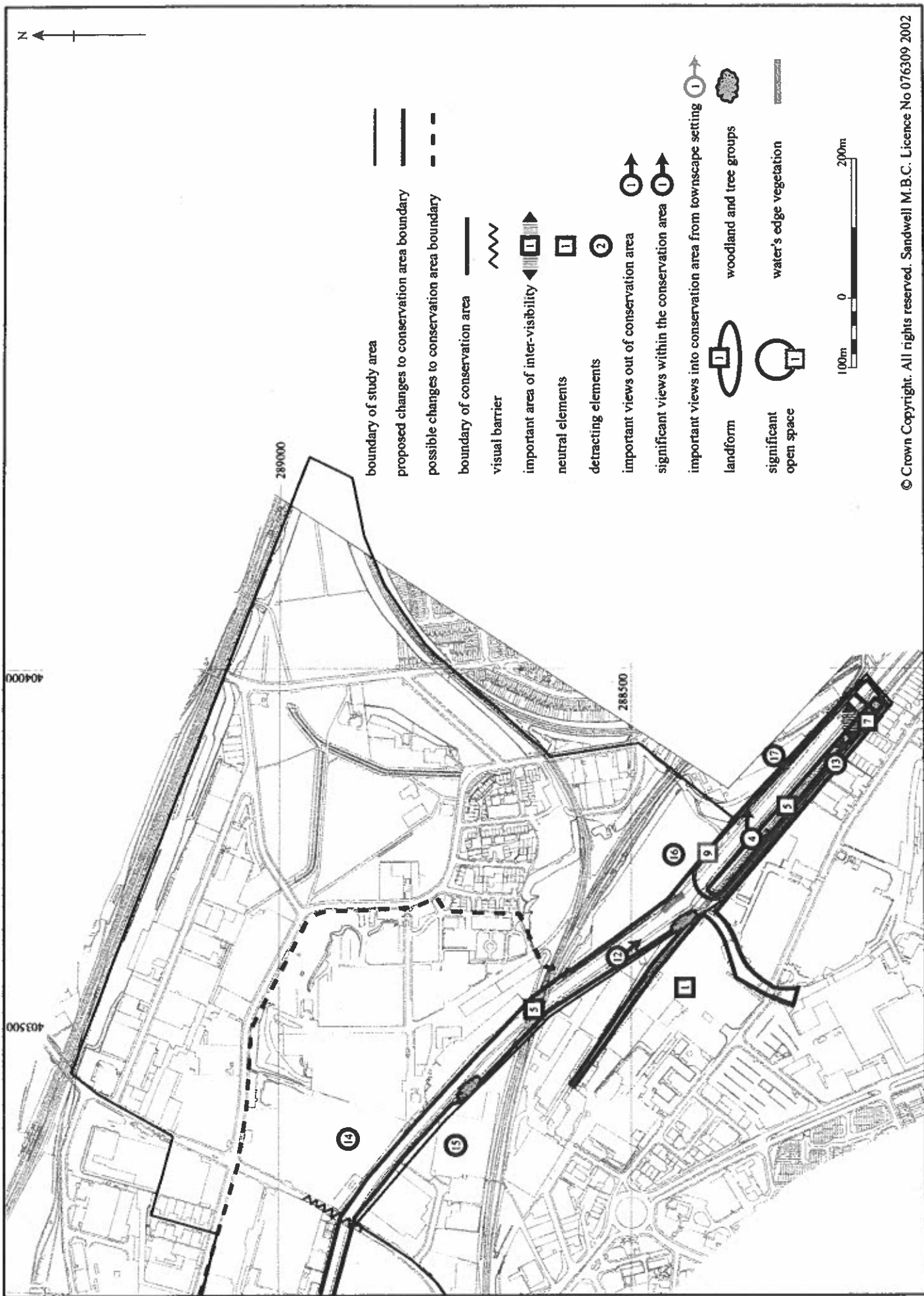


Figure 12c: Landscape Analysis (Eastern Section) (See key following Fig. 12 for details of landscape analysis)

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

KEY TO FIGURES 12a-12c



Open Spaces

- 1 New Main Line & Old Main Line canals within grassland fringed by scrub
- 2 Open paved area under M5 motorway; in poor condition
- 3 Canal and paved area alongside and under M5 motorway; in poor condition
- 4 Small enclosed space between bridges, with native tree growth
- 5 Wide embankment enclosed by Galton Bridge and Telford Way with native trees
- 6 New Main Line and Old Main Line canals and former gardens of Galton House with native trees
- 7 New Main Line and Old Main Line canals with pumping station
- 8 Junction of Engine Arm canal and New Main Line and Old Main Lines within grassland with scrub and tree groups
- 9 Open stretch of canal within grassland



Land Form

- 1 Straight high embankment
- 2 High embankment and tunnel entrance embankment
- 3 High embankments and former gardens of Galton House
- 4 Cutting to NML and landform south of Smethwick Locks
- 5 Canal feeder embankment

② Landscape Detracting Elements:

- 1 Overhead gantries along railway line
- 2 Heavy industrial site in poor condition
- 3 Motorway structures
- 4 Semi-derelict industrial area in poor condition between Wolverhampton level and Chance's Glassworks
- 5 Frontage to Spon Lane adjacent to Chance's Glassworks
- 6 Large warehouse development off Everest Close
- 7 Scrap yard between Galton Bridge and Telford Way
- 8 Interface between road over Galton Bridge and Tollhouse Way
- 9 Telford Way and its embankment
- 10 Frontage treatment to Brindley Village and terracing
- 11 Scrap and storage yard between Engine Arm canal and NML
- 12 Warehousing west of Bridge Street
- 13 Large scale warehousing
- 14 - Scrap yard adjacent to Soho Foundry
- 15 Large scale warehousing
- 16 Landfill tip
- 17 Large scale industrial shed

③ Landscape Neutral Elements

- 1 Modern warehousing bordering the conservation area
- 2 Railway bridge and station
- 3 Tunnel portals
- 4 Brindley Village
- 5 Railway bridge

④ Important Areas of inter-visibility:

- 1 Junction of Old and New Main Line canals
- 2 Old Main Line and Chance's Glassworks site
- 3 Old Main Line and clock tower and offices of Kenrick and Sons
- 4 West and east of Galton Bridge on New Main Line
- 5 Old Main Line and former gardens of Galton House
- 6 Smethwick Locks, Engine Arm and Smethwick Enterprise Centre
- 7 Main Line canal and canal feeder embankment

① → Significant views within Conservation Area

- 1 From bend in canal: to bridges, locks and two arms of the canal
- 2 From New Main Line : to bridges and junction of two canal arms
- 3 From top of lock: down Old Main Line and Wolverhampton level canal
- 4 From Spon Lane into Chance's Glassworks site
- 5 From Old Main Line: to Sandwell colliery staithes and Summit Bridge
- 6 From Old Main Line: to Galton Bridge and tunnel
- 7 From New Main Line: to Galton Bridge and tunnel
- 8 From access ramp to Galton Bridge and along New Main Line
- 9 From path off Brasshouse Lane to pumping station and former Galton House gardens
- 10 From New Main Line: to Engine Arm Aqueduct from east and west
- 11 From junction of Engine Arm and Old Main Line: down Smethwick Locks
- 12 From canal to entrance tunnels to canal basins through canal feeder embankment
- 13 From canal feeder embankment to bridge and remains of toll island

① → Important views into Conservation Area from townscape setting:

- 1 From M5 motorway down into canal corridor and Chance's Glassworks
- 2 From railway footbridge along canal corridor with pumping station and former gardens to Galton House
- 3 From Brindley village terrace to Engine Arm Aqueduct, Smethwick Locks and Smethwick Enterprise Centre

① → Important views out from Conservation Area:

- 1 - From Galton Bridge to surrounding townscape
- 2 - From Engine Arm Aqueduct to Smethwick Town Centre and Guru Nanak Gurdwara Temple
- 3 From Smethwick locks eastwards over townscape
- 4 From canal: panorama view eastwards towards Birmingham centre

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Heritage Asset No.	Name of structure/site	Type/Description	Status/designations	Assessment of Significance
068	Slag wall to Galton House gardens	Wall predominantly comprising slag/clinker		This type of walling relatively common in canal-side locations using local waste products
069	Wall to south of Smethwick locks	Wall of mixed materials -- stone, brick, slag/clinker		As 068
070	'Clay pot' revetment	Low revetment between canal and railway comprising the clay pots used for the melting of materials in the glass-making process		Of interest as waste product from Chance's
071	Works & offices of Archibald Kenrick & Co.	1870's works buildings, offices and clock tower in 'Ruskinian' gothic style	LB - II RCHME - A	Architecturally the most distinguished industrial buildings in the area
072	Former Spon Lane works	Offices and erecting shop of Spon Lane works, shown already disused by 1885. Office building has decorative pressed brick detailing	RCHME - B	Of some local interest and contributes to the setting of the listed Kenrick works
073	Former Stour Valley works	Surviving 19th century buildings of banded brickwork with cast iron columns and brackets for line shafting		Of some local interest as a rare survivor of canal side works buildings, originally adjacent to basin
074	Elevations to Engine Arm canal	19th and v. early 20th century brick elevations forming south side of Engine Arm canal, mostly semi-detached with blocked openings		Of vital importance to the character and appearance of the Engine Arm
075	Retaining wall to former corporation yard	Early example of reinforced concrete retaining wall, published in The Builder 1910		Of considerable significance as an early example of the extensive use of this relatively new material
076	Malthouse	Brick malthouse with decorative brick detailing adjacent to Engine Arm canal, complete with chimney and loading hoist		Attractive building which retains relationship with canal including loading hoist.

* RCHME classifications are as follows:

A - Such buildings are of regional or national importance, by reason of their historical, technological or architectural significance

B - Such buildings are of local importance by the same criteria. These buildings include a high proportion of surviving canal structures, numbers of public houses, non-conformist and other places of worship, and others representative of the history and of the character of the buildings of the area.

C - These buildings are of less importance in themselves, but in association with others they make a significant architectural or social contribution to their immediate neighbourhood

SAM - scheduled ancient monument

LB II - listed building grade II

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CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL - AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

Heritage Asset No.	Name of structure/site	Type/Description	Status/designations	Assessment of Significance
054	Towpath bridge at Smethwick Junction	Brick towpath bridge formerly spanning basin to Woodford Ironworks, with 5 smaller arches of sluice to west. Recently re-paved.		Of some architectural interest
055	Footbridge over OML at Smethwick Junction	Shallow elliptical cast iron footbridge comprising two castings with coverplate at junction. Saltire cross design with, unusually, large quatrefoils at outer end of each casting and narrow band of small quatrefoils beneath handrail. 1828	LB - II	Part of early decorative group of Horseley footbridges together with 002 and 056
056	Footbridge at Smethwick Junction	As above	LB - II	As above
057	Towpath bridge over Soho Foundry Basin	Substantial brick abutments with stone copings and quoins and narrow cast iron span of single casting in simple saltire cross design. Entrance now gated.	LB - II	A 'variation on a theme' using standard components tying it collectively to other towpath and footbridges
058	Towpath bridge over former Soap Works basin	Cast iron bridge in saltire cross design. Newly-paved brick ramps with brick walls and stone copings		Similar to other towpath bridges
059	Towpath 'bridge' over tunnels to Cape Arm & basin	Continuous brick wall and parapet retaining towpath and forming entrance portals for two tunnels through embankment to Cape Arm and canal basin in the former Imperial Mills site.		Sinuous brick parapet wall contributes significantly to the appearance and character of the conservation area
060	Cape Arm of OML	One of the former loops of the original OML.		Within private site beyond embankment, therefore unable to make a visual contribution to character of the CA
061	Canal feeder	Narrow brick-edged feeder channel along crest of embankment to south of canal		Running along top of embankment and therefore hidden from towpath, preventing it from making a contribution to the character of the CA
062	Footbridge at Winson Green Junction	1848 standard Horseley cast iron footbridge design with brick wing walls and new brick paving of deck and approach ramps.	LB - II	One of the less decorative, later group of Horseley footbridges giving it group value
063	Winson Green Stop toll island/gauging station	H-shaped toll island which originally had an octagonal toll office shown in a 1940 photo.		The island retains some original features, but loss of the toll office makes understanding of its original function difficult
064	Ruin adjacent to Soap Works basin	Remains of south and west walls of building in banded brickwork immediately to north-east of towpath bridge (058)		Of unknown function or date but serving as a reminder of the early built up and enclosed character of this part of the CA
065	Railway bridge at Steward Aqueduct	Bridge constructed to carry Stour Valley Railway over Steward Aqueduct	RCHME - B	
066	Footbridge to SW Steward Aqueduct	Relatively late roving bridge across OML Wolverhampton level serving Spon Lane rail/canal interchange basin	RCHME - B	Of less architectural or group value than earlier cast iron footbridges
067	Soho Railway Bridge	Built in 1851 to carry Birmingham - Wolverhampton and Stour Valley Railway over NML. Comprising two substantial stone skew arches.		Unusual in being constructed of stone giving some architectural significance

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SMETHWICK SUMMIT, GALTON VALLEY, SMETHWICK
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL - AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

Heritage Asset No.	Name of structure/site	Type/Description	Status/designations	Assessment of Significance
041	Smethwick top lock	Top lock in a flight of 3 bringing the OML down from Smethwick summit. Constructed as part of 1790 lowering of summit.	LB - II	Of intrinsic interest and important group value within flight of 3 locks
042	Lock-keeper's lobby	This is a recent reconstruction of an octagonal toll house located on the site of a former small, square lock office/'lobby' shown in a 1930's photo.		The re-creation of this style of toll house, more commonly found on the toll islands, here in the former location of a simple square office, is misleading
043	Footbridge over Smethwick top lock	Part of 1790 scheme. Brick footbridge over lower end of lock chamber, giving access to lock office and Brindley's original three parallel locks, now lost. Elliptical arch with stone capped wing walls.	LB - II	A relatively little altered survivor of the brick bridges once common to the OML and evocatively bearing the signs of wear
044	Smethwick middle lock	Part of 1790 scheme to improve congestion by the addition of three locks parallel to Brindley's lower 3.	LB - II	As 041
045	Smethwick bottom lock	As above	LB - II	As 041
046	Pope's Bridge	Original bridge carried Bridge St over Brindley's bottom lock. Modified to accommodate parallel lock of 1790, with roving bridge attached to west side, and again to allow road widening.		Retains evidence of Brindley's bottom lock within much altered fabric which documents its history.
047	Remains of Brindley's bottom lock	The entrance to the original bottom lock can be traced in the evidence of the blocked northern arch of Pope's Bridge.		Potentially very significant, though relative to buried survival
048	Remains of Brindley's Smethwick lock no.3	Stone copings of the top lock which survived the 1790 scheme remain, and the shape of the lock entrance can be seen on the ground. Infilled 1960's.		As 047
049	Smethwick gauging station	Gauging and indexing station on New Main Line. Unlike toll islands at Bromford and Winson Green, the two 'prows' are dissimilar. 1857 survey shows a footbridge crossing above the islands, the 1890 OS shows a long building extending the length of the structure.		An interesting feature of the canal system though surviving remains unable to convey original form or function unaided
050	Rolfe Bridge	Originally constructed to carry Bridge St over the NML c.1829, the widened bridge has been recently rebuilt, though wing wall at south-east corner survives.		Little survival of original structure. Replacement bridge of little merit
051	Engine Bridge	Bridge carrying Bridge Street over Engine Arm canal. Original span of red brick, subject to later widening.		
052	Site of Smethwick Engine	Site of the oldest surviving example of Watt's first type of steam engine which began work here in 1779. Site excavated in 1984.	SAM	Of enormous historic significance despite the loss of superstructure
053	Cast iron sluice gear at SP 257 892	Standard BCN cast iron gearing operating sluice on north side Wolverhampton level canal.		Of little intrinsic significance, though gearing is of standard BCN design and contributes to group value

SMETHWICK SUMMIT, GALTON VALLEY, SMETHWICK
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL - AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

Heritage Asset No.	Name of structure/site	Type/Description	Status/designations	Assessment of Significance
027	Summit Bridge	Smeaton's 1790 bridge carrying Roebuck Lane over the OML canal. Of substantial brick construction, the east side is now obscured by the Telford Way embankment.	SAM	Most important structure associated with the OML in study area
028	GWR (Stourbridge Extension) railway bridge	Blue brick bridge built 1867 to carry railway over OML	LB - II RCHME - B	
029	Site of Galton House	House existed by 1790 and the layout of buildings and gardens is clearly shown on a plan of 1857. Part of the main house lies under Telford Way, though there may be some buried survival to the east.		One of few early grand houses in area, making potential survival of buried remains of some significance
030	Arch in grounds Galton House	Rusticated masonry arch surviving in scrap yard used to be the entrance into the service courtyard of Galton House		Only extant survival of 029 but clearly positions house
031	Former Gardens/pleasure grounds to Galton House	The layout of the gardens and pleasure grounds is clearly shown on a plan of 1857. Some landscape features survive.		Detailed plans of garden layout would allow its re-creation
032	Remains of pumping station worker's cottage	Cottage now demolished though floors and lower walls survive. Original form shown in 1932 photo.		Structural remains together with photos would allow some interpretation
033	Smethwick New Pumping Station	Constructed in 1892 to pump water from the NML into the OML to provide water to Smethwick Locks. Major refurbishment programme carried out.	LB - II RCHME - B	Although relatively late, it is unique within the study area and provides an important part of the functional history of the canal network
034	Brasshouse Lane Bridge over OML	Constructed in 1790 as part of Smeaton's major scheme to lower the OML over Smethwick Summit. The original span is of red brown brick shown clearly on OS 1 st ed. but has been widened.	RCHME - B	Much altered but retains evidence of its early manifestation
035	Brasshouse Lane Bridge over NML	Built 1826 over NML and widened in blue brick 1890's together with massive retaining wall to North Western Rd.		The widened structure is substantial but architecturally uninspired
036	Ramp from Brasshouse Lane	Long brick ramp to towpath, recently re-paved.		
037	Site of canalside Inn and cottages	Footprint of canalside P.H. has been retained in recent landscaping		Of historic interest as part of canal life, though insufficient survival to convey meaning
038	Engine Arm Canal	Also known as Birmingham Canal Feeder Arm, bringing water from the Rotton Park Reservoir to the summit level above Smethwick locks. Improved by Telford in 1830 to bring coal to the Smethwick engine.		Its association with the scheduled site of the Smethwick Engine and Telford's scheduled Engine Arm Aqueduct, makes this a very significant feature.
039	Engine Arm Aqueduct	Designed by Telford in 1825 to carry the Engine Arm Canal over the New Main Line Canal to continue supply to the Smethwick locks. Cast iron trough disguised by decorative cast iron Gothic arcading. Restored 1985.	SAM	Of great architectural, historic and engineering significance
040	Towpath bridge over Engine Arm at NML	Brick towpath bridge carrying the OML towpath over the north end of the Engine Arm Aqueduct, therefore 1825. Stone quoins have same pecked rustication as Hartley Bridge (011).	?included in scheduled area	Early masonry bridge with unusual tooling of stonework relating it to Hartley bridge within Chance's glassworks

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SMETHWICK SUMMIT, GALTON VALLEY, SMETHWICK
CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL - AUDIT OF HERITAGE ASSETS

Heritage Asset No.	Name of structure/site	Type/Description	Status/designations	Assessment of Significance
013	Warehouse at west end of canal frontage	Double range of red brick warehouse forming revetment to NML north towpath. c.1843-52	LB - II	These buildings, though of some architectural and structural interest derive much of their significance from their being survivors of a group of roughly contemporary buildings within a single works complex
014	Warehouse to west of Hartley Bridge		LB - II	
015	Warehouse between Hartley and Canal bridges		LB - II	
016	7-storey warehouse and offices	Constructed 1847. L-shaped 7-storey brick warehouse with timber belcote, and 3-storey office building attached at SW.	LB - II	A significant landmark building deriving further group value from associated warehouses
017	Warehouse to east Canal bridge	c.1853 pair of brick warehouses linked by low wall. Blocked openings of former loading bays on south elevation of 017.	LB - II	As 013
018	Warehouse at east end of canal frontage		LB - II	As 013
019	Railway bridge	c.1840-45 brick and cast iron bridge carrying Birmingham and Wolverhampton Railway. Spans 012.	LB - II	Significant as one of four 'strata' at this point in the conservation area demonstrating the history of transport
020	North wall of North Works	Surviving brick wall of northern boundary of Chance's North Works, retaining evidence of former canal basin entrances		This wall retains evidence of buildings and basins suggesting former layout of north side of works
021	Spon Lane Bridge	Originally single span brick road bridge, became double-span with roving bridge attached to west side and eventually widened.	RCHME - B	Much altered though retains evidence of its early history
022	Spon Lane South Bridge	Blue brick single span bridge constructed 1829 to carry Spon Lane over NML. Widened 1929 with reinforced concrete carriageway.		Much altered, but visually prominent and unusual within area
023	Deep cutting of New Main Line canal	Telford's massive engineering undertaking, up to 150ft wide and 70 ft deep, excavated 1826-1828 to by-pass the six remaining locks carrying the OML over the Smethwick Summit		Historically significant engineering feat and fundamental to the character of the central part of the conservation area
024	Galton Bridge	Telford's engineering masterpiece. When constructed in 1829 this shallow segmental cast iron structure was the longest single-span iron bridge in the world. Extended southwards to carry Roebuck Lane over the North-Western Railway.	LB - I RCHME - A	Both architecturally important and extremely significant in the history of 19th century engineering
025	Sandwell Colliery Loading Staithes	Established 1875 to serve Sandwell Colliery, the present structures date to c.1930.		Of some historic significance, though visually dominated by 1930's structure
026	Canalside shelter	Remains of ruined brick structure opposite the loading staithes, probably a simple shelter.		Of some significance due to the relatively rare survival of these modest structures

AUDIT OF EXTANT HERITAGE ASSETS WITHIN PROPOSED REVISED BOUNDARY OF SMETHWICK SUMMIT CONSERVATION AREA

Heritage Asset No.	Name of structure/site	Type/Description	Status/Designations (see below)	Assessment of Significance
001	Bromford Stop toll island	Toll island formerly had octagonal toll house, still extant 1910, platform survives. Retains some original features.		An interesting feature of the canal network though degraded by loss of toll office
002	Bromford Stop footbridge over OML	Roving bridge over Old Main Line, 1829. Shallow elliptical form of two cast iron sections with spandrels, and brick abutments. Relatively unusual due to band of quatrefoils under handrail. Ramps grassy and deck in poor condition.	LB - II RCHME - A	One of group of decorative early cast iron bridges from Horseley Iron Works having both architectural interest and considerable group value
003	Bromford Stop footbridge over NML	Cast iron roving bridge, 1848. Simpler form than 002. New brick-paving of ramps and concrete deck.	LB - II RCHME - A	One of later group of bridges cast at Horseley, of less architectural interest
004	Spon Lane bottom lock	Westernmost lock of original flight of 6 dating to 1768-9 raising OML Birmingham Level to summit level. If unaltered in 1790 scheme, which reduced locks to 3, they remain oldest working locks in country.	LB - II RCHME - B	One of the fundamental features of the Old Main Line and having group value
005	Lock-keeper's 'hovel'	Small square brick building, presumably a former lock office/hovel		Relatively rare survivor of these simple structures
006	Spon Lane middle lock	Central lock in flight of 3. (see 004 above)	LB - II RCHME - B	As 004
007	Spon Lane top lock	Eastern lock in flight of 3, with split footbridge across west end. (see 004 above)	LB - II RCHME - B	As 004
008	New Main Line canal	Telford's New Main Line canal constructed between 1826-1830.		Fundamental to forming the special character of the conservation area
009	Birmingham Canal - Wolverhampton level	Wolverhampton level of the Old Main Line canal.		
010	Steward Aqueduct	Aqueduct constructed 1828 to carry Wolverhampton level over New Main Line. Cast iron trough set on two brick elliptical skew arches with stone dressings.	LB - II RCHME - A	Of intrinsic architectural interest and a rare example within the study area
Items 011 - 020 are all part of Chance's glassworks				
011	Hartley Bridge	Private bridge formerly connecting Chance's North and South Works over New Main Line canal. Buff sandstone with pecked rustication of the voussoirs similar to 040. Appears to be c.1828-30.	LB - II RCHME - A	Significant stone structures rare in area. Detail of stonework same as 040, though one BCN, one private.
012	Canal Bridge	Private bridge between North and South Works c.1845 blue brick with stone dressings and iron railings.	LB - II	Substantial and of some architectural interest

APPENDIX ONE: Audit of Heritage Assets

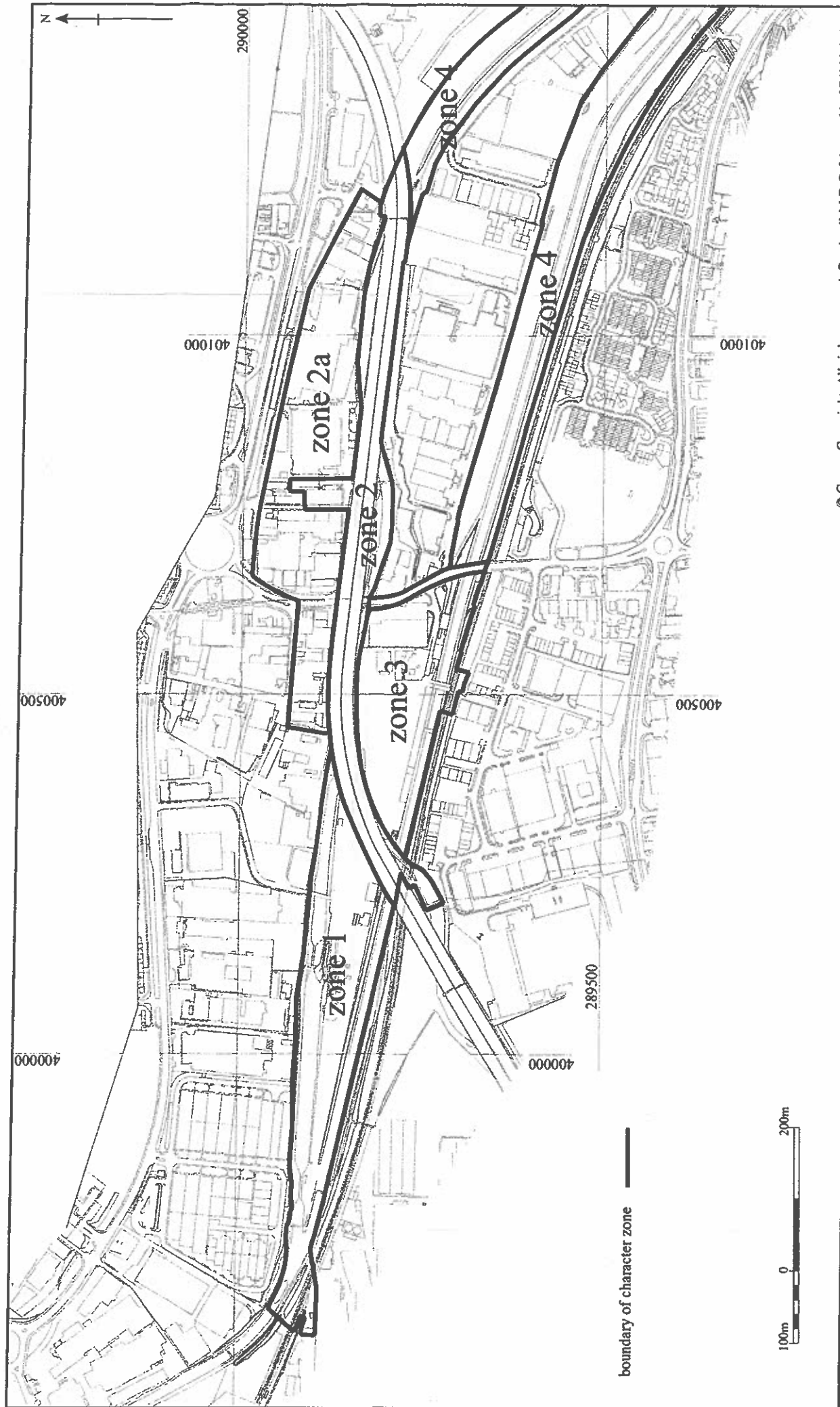
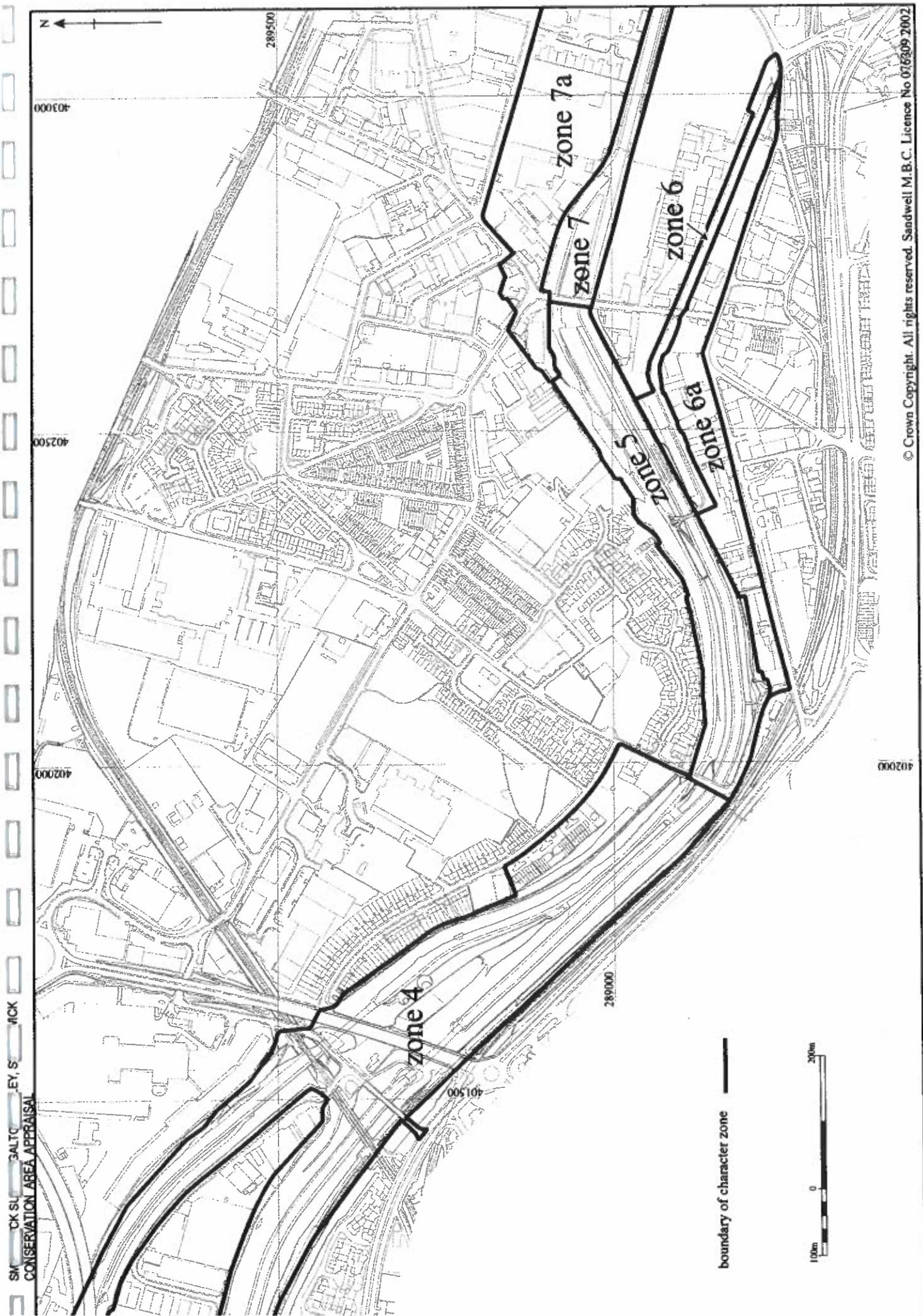


Figure 13a: Landscape Character Zones (Western Section)



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Figure 13b: Landscape Character Zones (Central Section)

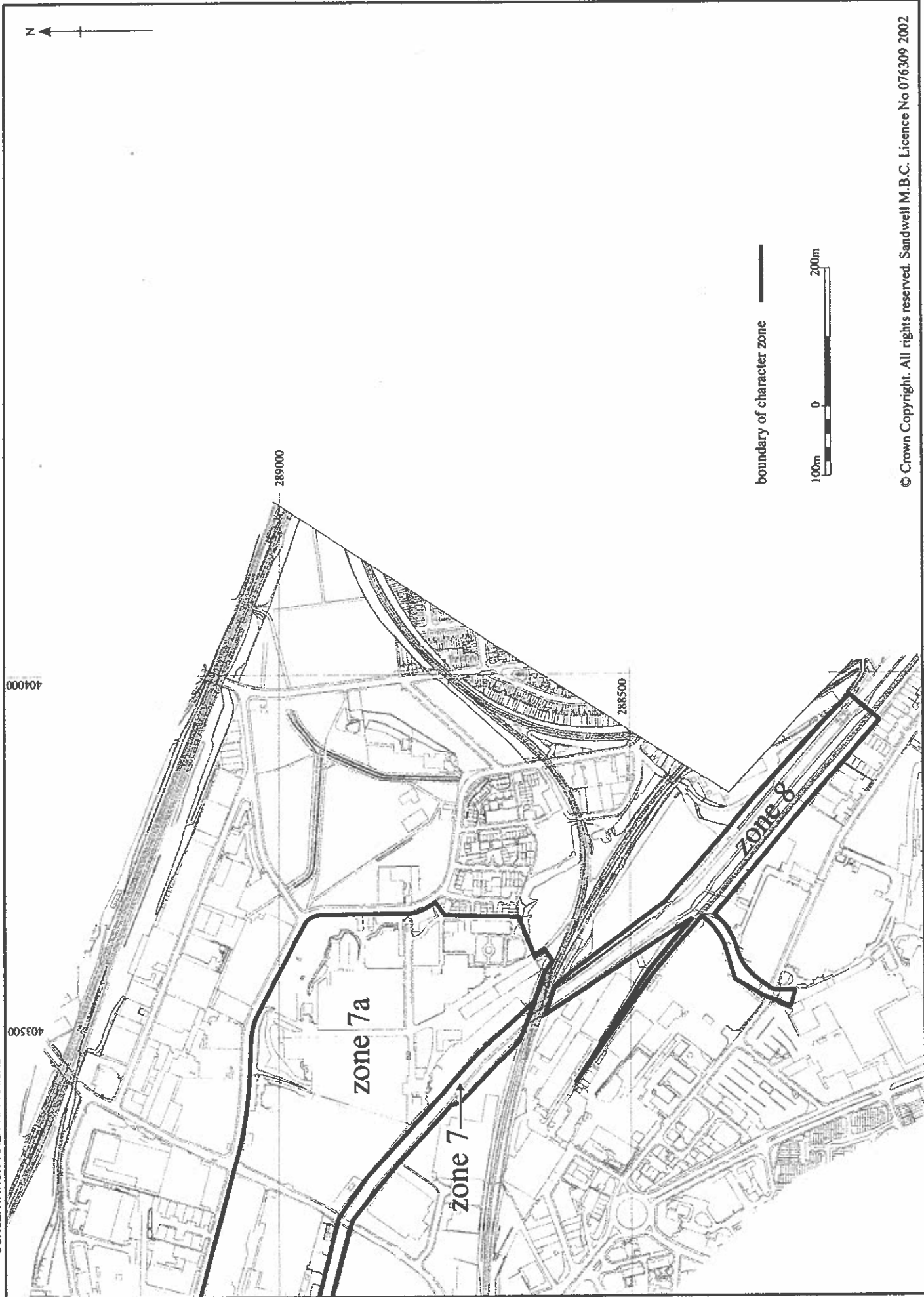


Figure 13c: Landscape Character Zones (Eastern Section)

