



Canal &
River Trust

RAPID HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

Waterway: Lancaster Canal

Structure: Aldcliffe Road

Assessed Date: August 2012

**Assessed by: Audrey O'Connor
Rebecca Mason (Volunteer)**

| | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|----------------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|
| Listed Buildings | No | Scheduled Ancient Monument | No | Conservation Area | Yes |
| Locally Listed | No | Archaeological Interest | Yes | Local Interest | Yes |



**Property Address: Land adjacent to the Lancaster Canal and Aldcliffe Road, Lancaster, LA1
1WB**

1. Introduction

This assessment has been prepared at the request of the Property Team North in accordance with the *Canal & River Trust Approved Process: Heritage Management* (Development Property process 3). Due to time constraints a rapid heritage assessment has been carried out. The purpose of this document is to highlight any heritage features within the site that need retaining and or further investigation, this includes archaeological interest. A full heritage assessment will be required before any proposals are agreed (see recommendation no.5).

This report follows the guidance set down in National Planning Policy Framework (2012). It draws together information from a number of sources to consider the historic significance of the site. It is proposed that the information held within this document can support future decision making processes to ensure that any proposals protect and enhance the significance of the site. A range of sources were inspected during the preparation of this report, these include Canal & River Trust archive, Lancashire County archives and historical maps. A site visit also took place.

1.1 Proposal of Work

The scheme proposed by the residents includes the refurbishment of a former canal office building; demolition of the buildings attached to the bridge and a reduction in the height of the boundary wall adjacent the towpath. This is in response to residents wishing to address anti-social behaviour which occurs on the site through enhancement. At this stage the proposal is at an early stage and has only been presented verbally to the Canal & River Trust (the Trust). Formal plans will be drawn up and submitted to the Trust for approval.

The site falls within the Aldcliffe Road Conservation Area. A Conservation Area is defined as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Therefore demolition of any building on the site may require Conservation Area Consent.

2. Background History

The line of the Lancaster Canal was first surveyed by Robert Whitworth in 1772, with a final survey being carried out in 1791 by John Rennie. It was feared that the Leeds & Liverpool Canal's proposed expansion would be detrimental to existing business in the North-West and so promoters of a separate canal sought an Act of Parliament, which received royal

assent on 11 June 1792. The Lancaster Canal opened in sections from 1790s with the date of completion being given as 1826. The canal connects Preston to Kendal, with the southern section being incorporated into the Leeds & Liverpool Canal.

John Rennie was appointed as Chief Engineer in July 1792, with William Crossley the elder as his assistant and Archibald Millar as resident engineer and superintendent. En route, the canal passes through the industrial towns of South Lancashire and smaller settlements such as Bolton-le-Sands, Holme and Garstang. Buildings and structures on the canal are typically of good quality stonemasonry – bridges and broad locks are in good condition and a number of stone built buildings survive.

The Lancaster Canal runs 42 miles from Tewitfield to Preston and was from its opening detached from the main canal system although it had a connecting tram-way link from 1803 until 1860s. The opening of the Ribble Link in 2002 finally gave it a waterway connection to the main network.



Proposed enhancement site

3. Aldcliffe

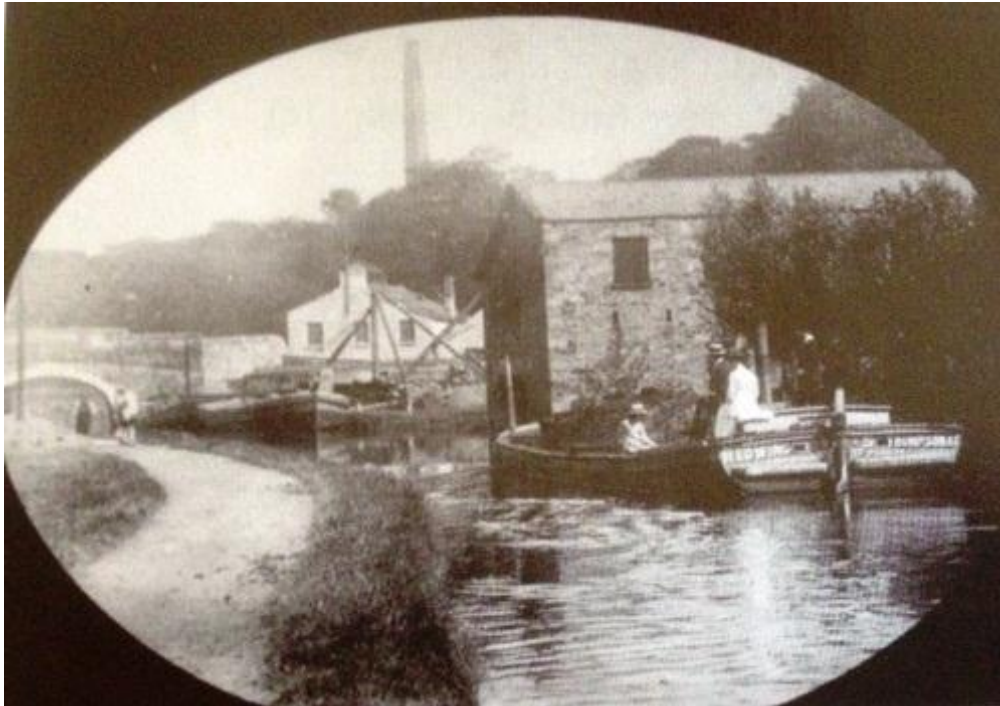
Aldcliffe itself is of medieval origin and is a small hamlet, now incorporated into the city of Lancaster, situated on the eastern bank of the River Lune, and one and a half miles South West of the city centre. The river hereabouts is flowing north - south and its widening estuary is salt marsh, making the river some half mile wide at high water.

From the marshes the land rises and within half a mile the 100 feet contour is crossed and then the land undulates in a pleasing fashion to a valley through which the Lancaster-Preston canal has been cut, and then rises again through Haverbreaks and on to the Ashton Road. It is from this ridge of high ground, stretching south from the old city boundary at Brookholrne, through Aldcliffe and on towards Stodday, that the village derives its name (Webster, N. 2006).

3. Site Location and Context

The Lancaster Canal runs through southern Lancaster, following the route of Aldcliffe Road. Although many of the industrial buildings that lined this section of the canal have been demolished, the Packet Boat house and Old Blacksmith Shop adjacent to the site survive along with a jib crane. Both buildings are Grade II listed and vacant, the former was refurbished in 1990 and the latter in 1991. The Grade II listed roving Basin Bridge designed by John Rennie connects the towpaths. Roving bridges were originally used to allow horses pulling boats to move unobstructed from one side of the towpath to the opposite side.

The canal basins on the north side of the bridge are still in use today for mooring modern leisure boats unlike their original use unloading and loading working boats to the adjacent wharves. This collection of buildings and structures depict a typical wharf and contribute to the historic significance of the site, they demonstrate the different types of canal related buildings and activities once seen in this location. Where once stood coal wharves now stands student accommodation.



The Packet Boat House and Basin Bridge at Aldcliffe Road. Date of image unknown possibly from the clothes worn by the people on the boat, estimate late 19th Century or early 20th Century (Rigby, 2007)

. 4. Significance of Heritage

The proposed enhancement site is located next to the Grade II listed Basin Bridge, a late 18th century structure, designed by John Rennie to carry the towpath from west to east. The bridge forms part of a wider historic group value which includes, Grade II listed Lancaster Canal Old Blacksmith Shop and dwelling (c. 1800), Packet Boat House (c. 1883) and jib crane. Grouped together these structures provide evidence of the history of the canal; how it was used, the industries that surrounded it and how they impacted on its surroundings. The significance of this site is reflected by its inclusion in the Aldcliffe Conservation Area. It is evident that this site would have been a busy area, where boats would have loaded or unloaded their cargo into and from the nearby coal wharves and saw mills once located on the north side of Basin Bridge and for them to come to be repaired in the Packet House. The area is now mainly used for residential purposes, with a few leisure activities.

The wall dividing the site from the canal has breaks in it, indicating movement of either people or cargo. This is the most reasonable explanation for the gaps, seeing as the canal office was located back from the canal. Metal work remains on one of these gaps,

suggesting that a gateway was once present. This again provides some evidence of what the site may have been previously used for.

The former canal office is located on the north west of the site and as part of the enhancement plans it is to be refurbished. The exact date of its original construction is unknown at this point; it does however appear to have been built according to the historic Ordnance Survey (OS) maps between 1848 and 1893. It is a standalone which has undergone a number of alterations and repairs. Its northern wall is included in the boundary wall which separates the site from Aldcliffe Road. Evidence suggests that it was originally built in stone with later repairs and alterations carried out in brick. The chimney is constructed of brick which on inspection looks to be a later repair. Attached to the building on the rear elevation is a timber framed car-port which was thought to be erected by the previous tenant approximately in the 1990's. Evidence of its original use as well as its aesthetic qualities makes this building of some historical significance as part of the wider group of canal related buildings and structures.



Former Canal Office: Brick porch front elevation Timber framed car-port rear elevation

The second building on the site is located to the east of the plot and is positioned against the Grade II Basin Bridge and plans are to demolish this building. It appears on the OS maps between 1848 and 1893 and may have been built around the same period as the former canal office. It has been built and later altered using a variety of materials at different periods in time. A previous extensions to the building has since been removed, the reasons

for which are unknown. The use of this building is unidentified, however due to its location it can be presumed that it may have been used for storage or shelter.



Second Building: Modern Brick Work to the front, older brick work to the rear



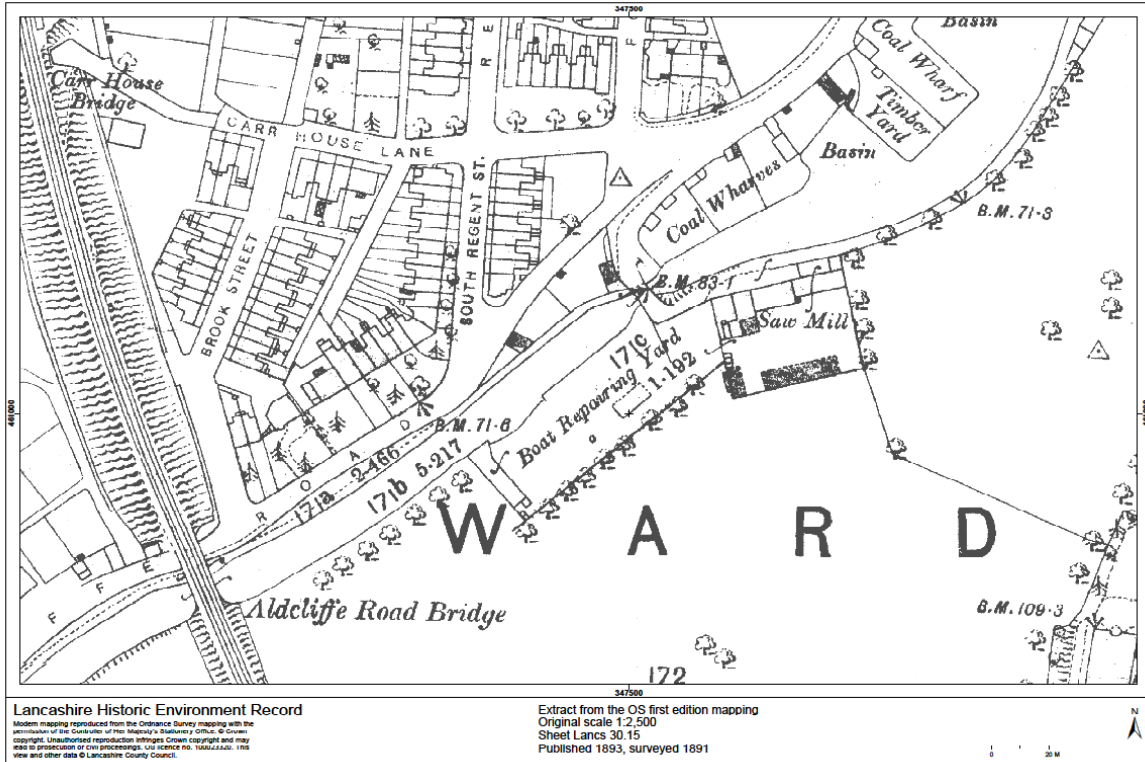
Side elevation built into the boundary wall

5. Map Regression

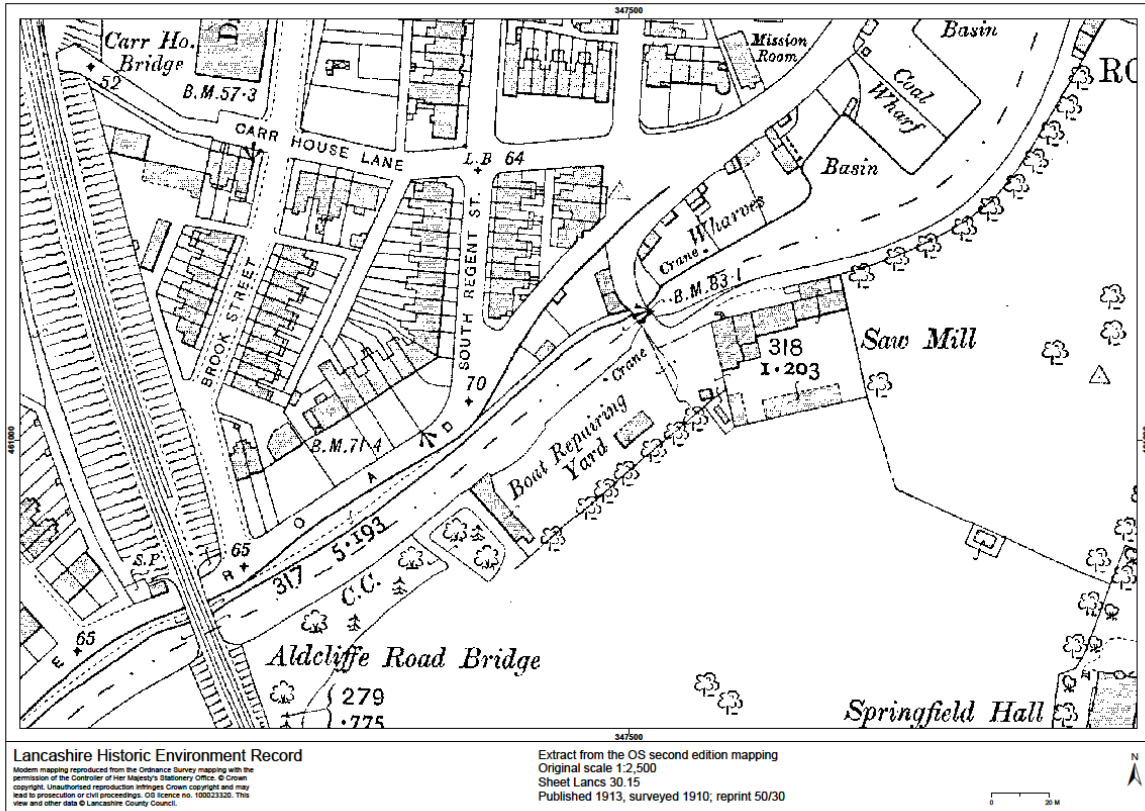
Map regression involves analysing and comparing maps drawn up at different dates, to understand changes over time. Map regression in this instance is used to understand and determine those features that have changed and those that have not. Due to limited availability of historic maps the following Ordnance Survey maps were used 1848, 1893, 1913 and 1939.



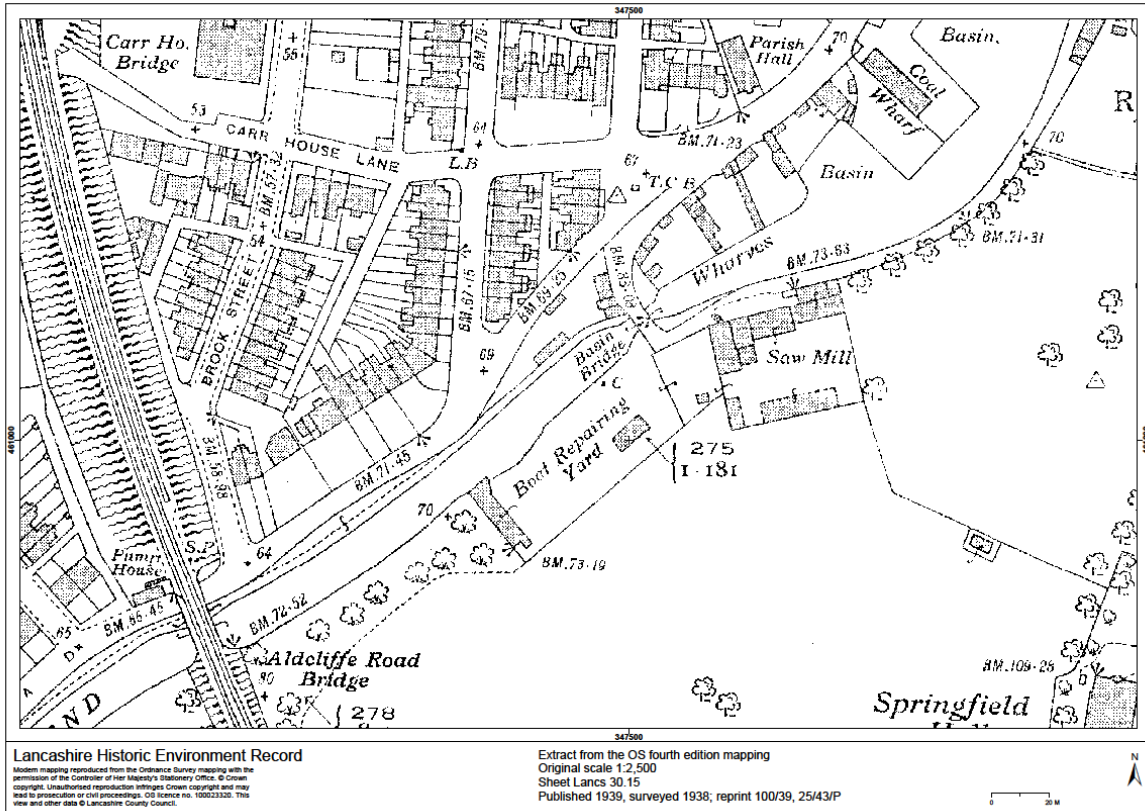
The 1848 OS map shows Basin Bridge before any buildings were built on the proposal site. North of the bridge are signs a wharf development. Not clearly shown on this copy is the location of a sandpit on the proposed site. On the opposite to the north of the proposal site is evidence of the Old Blacksmiths shop which was constructed in 1800. Also directly opposite the Aldcliffe Road site is evidence of the Packet Boat House built in 1833.



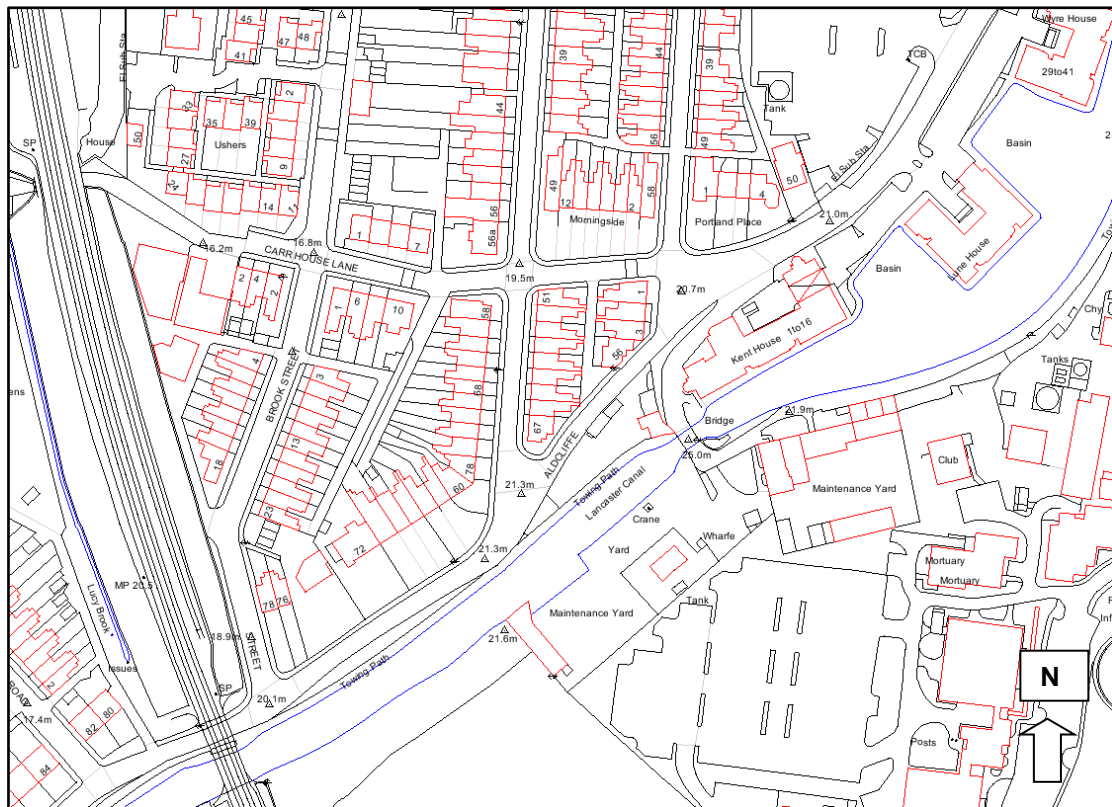
The 1893 OS map shows the proposal site is divided into two plots with one of the plots containing the former canal office and a building against the bridge. The second plot shows a now demolished third structure.



The 1913 OS map shows the land is divided into three plots. The building attached to the bridge has been extended, no change to the former canal office. The growth of the surrounding area is evident.



The 1939 OS map shows the site is now one plot. The building attached to the bridge has been extended again, no change to the former canal office.



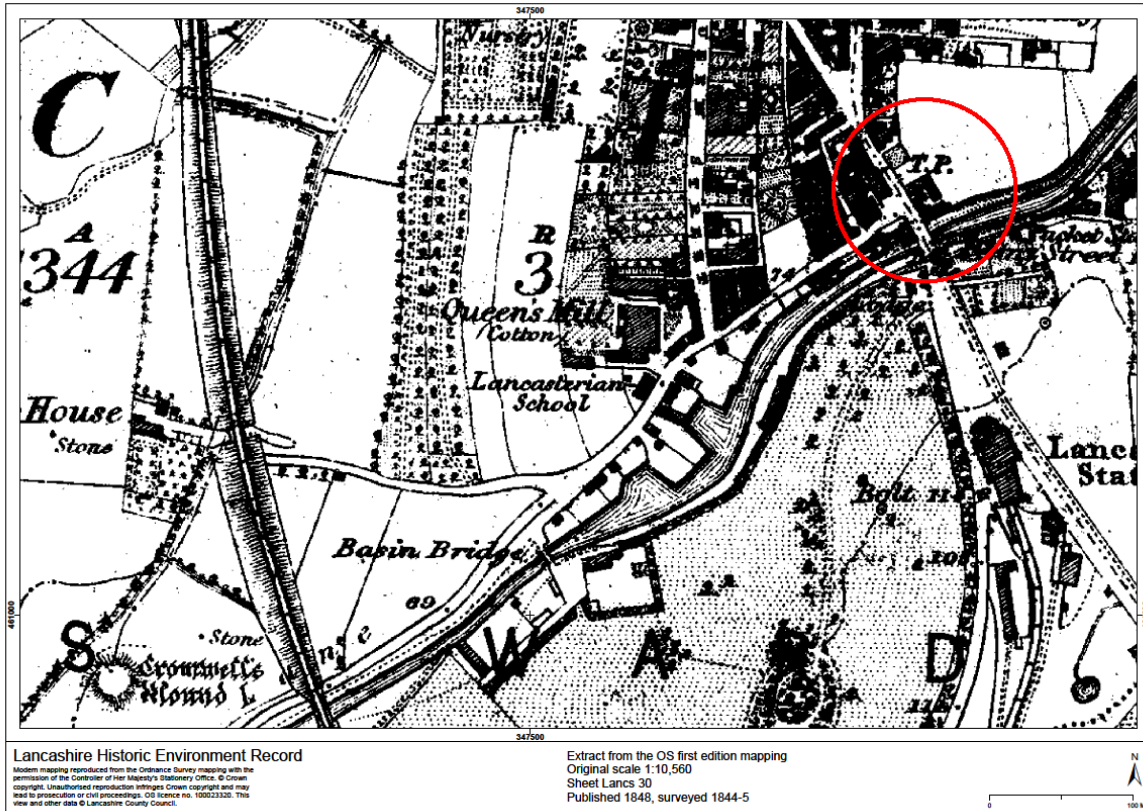
The GIS (2012) map outlines the buildings on the site; the former canal office has been extended with the construction of a timber framed porch. The structure adjacent to the towpath has been demolished. No change to the building attached to the Basin Bridge.

6. Discussion

Due to the lack of information available on this site and time constraints the following discussion is based on observations, analysing historic maps, researching literature on canal and turnpike road buildings. It is not conclusive and with more time and resources further research would have been carried out on the proposed enhancement site and the buildings that occupy it now and previously.

Initially perceptions of the building located adjacent to Aldcliffe Road on the site seem to consider it to be a Toll Office for the canal or road. However, during the course of this research it is unlikely the building is a Toll Office for the following reasons. Firstly, the location of the building is set back in relation away from the canal and towpath. Toll Offices were situated at strategic locations on the canal, usually at the top of lock flights, islands in the centre of the canal or at junctions. This allowed the toll clerk to be best placed in order to monitor and collect tolls from passing boats. Therefore, this would suggest the building is not a canal Toll Office.

Secondly, the building appears to have been built between 1849 and 1893, which is considered too late for it to be a road Toll Office. Turnpike Trusts managed toll roads which were at their height during the 18th Century; they started to decline in the mid to late 1800's. Also, from the 1848 OS map of Lancaster below shows a Toll Office/House circled T.P. on map off Penny Street. This was the main route into the town from the south and the sort of location where you would expect a turnpike or town tolls would have been levied. Considering the above it is unlikely that the building is a road Toll Office.



1848 Ordnance Survey Map - Lancaster

The building and that of the structure attached to Basin Bridge are likely to form part the wharf located north of Basin Bridge. The 1893 OS map shows a wharf located along the canal on Aldcliffe Road. Once a canal was completed and trading every village or town would have a wharf along its route either next to an existing roadway or a newly built track. Canal Wharves serviced locally communities and industries. In rural areas some wharves were no more than a stone or brick wall. Town wharves would have had covered storage and offices.

The lay out of the site also contributes to the buildings being associated with the wharf. The canal office is strategically placed to monitor the movement of goods between the road and the canal. The evidence of gates and gaps on the boundary wall between the site and towpath suggests the management and controlling of goods leaving and entering the site. Therefore the building function was likely for selling and or settling accounts for coal, timber or stone, all of which were probably traded from the canal basins to the north east of this point. Whilst the structure attached to Basin Bridge may have been used for storage or shelter.

7. Recommendations

The site falls within the boundary of the Aldcliffe Road Conservation Area. The demolishing of buildings within such a historically sensitive area requires careful consideration by all stakeholders. Any proposal of demolishing buildings within a Conservation Area requires Conservation Area Consent. In principal the Trust has no objection to the proposed scheme which includes the refurbishment of a former canal office building; demolition of the buildings attached to the bridge and a reduction in the height of the boundary wall adjacent the towpath.

It is important that future decisions regarding the site are informed by knowledge of the historic canal system and therefore the Canal and Rivers Trust should continue to have a say in any future site development. As a result of this assessment the following conditions should be imposed:

1. Further information is required on how the buildings and site are connected to the canal. This includes investigating the use and development of the buildings, and the reason for the breaks in the wall. A full heritage assessment must be carried out which will include archaeological recording, surveying and photographing of the site, buildings and boundary wall. This should be carried out by IHBC accredited Conservation consultant.
2. The Canal and Rivers Trust is to be consulted about any future development on the proposed site. The Trust's agreement to any proposals for development must be obtained in writing before the commencement of any works on site.
3. A conservation architect should be employed to generate drawings and plans for the enhancement scheme. These should be submitted to the Trust for approval.
4. Due to the land being located within a conservation area any future proposed development (if permitted) must not affect the character of the surrounding historic buildings.
5. All Stakeholders to be consulted on proposed plans; this includes local residents, civic amenities groups, Lancaster Canal Society, Lancaster City Council and local businesses.

8. References

Crowe, N (1993/4) British Waterways Architectural Heritage Survey

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GIS Map 2012 accessed from Canal & River Trust -

<http://arcims/webgis/scadaFrameset.htm?&box=359511.203296703:421336:359695.796703297:421410&SITE=heritage> viewed on 16/08/2012

Hadfield, C. & Biddle, G. (1970) *The Canals of North West England Volume 1*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles.

Historic Maps 1848, 1893, 1913, 1939 Ordnance Survey Maps, Supplied by Historic Environment Records: Lancaster Archives.

Pratt, D. (2005) *The Architecture of Canals*, Princes Risborough: Shire Publications Ltd.

Rigby, J. (2007) *The Lancaster Canal in Focus*, Accrington: Nayler Group Ltd.

Smith, P.L. (1997) *Canal Architecture*, Haverfordwest: Shire Publications Ltd.

Yorke, S. (2003) *English Canals Explained*, Newbury: Countryside Books.

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Appendix 1: Significance scale for CRT property

| Scale | Significance |
|-------|---|
| 1 | No heritage significance, very common or of average modern construction |
| 2 | Some limited heritage significance, perhaps more important because of a group of structures but not in itself rare, or highly altered. |
| 3 | Of a general significance with some rarity; perhaps of greater interest by association with event or individual. Local interest or local listing. |
| 4 | Of high significance, considerable interest and increasingly rarity. Most grade two listed structures would fall in this category. |
| 5 | Of exceptional significance, hugely interesting and very rare or unique. Most Grade 2* and 1 structures would fall into this category. |

Aldcliffe Road Proposal Enhancement Site Heritage Value: 2

Appendix 2: Listing Descriptions

Basin Bridge

Roving bridge. c1797. Designed by John Rennie (engineer). For the Lancaster Canal Company. Coursed squared sandstone. Concave on plan, with slightly battered abutments. Semi-elliptical arch with triple keystone, a band above, and parapets with rounded coping. The western parapet has been raised, and its central section stepped up. The north corner of the east side of the arch still retains a cast-iron rubbing strip to protect the masonry from erosion by tow-ropes. HISTORY: built to carry the towpath from the western to the eastern bank of the canal so as to avoid the coal wharves approx 100m to the east. Now the only unaltered roving bridge over the main Preston-Tewitfield section of the Lancaster Canal.

Blacksmith Shop

Blacksmith's shop and dwelling, now used as a store and office. c1800, extended C19 and restored 1991. Built to service traffic on the canal, for the Lancaster canal company. Coursed sandstone rubble, slate roof, and chimneys on the original gables. Rectangular plan parallel to the towpath, comprising (to the west) a blacksmith's shop with a dwelling house above it and a stable in an extension to the left, and (to the east) a single storey workshop or wagon house. The western portion has 2 storeys and 3 x 3 bays. The west gable wall has 3 windows on each floor with recent 36-pane top-hung casements and a doorway in the right hand corner. The front to the towpath has a window to the left and a doorway to the right on the ground floor and 2 windows with a central doorway on the first floor, the door approached up a prominent flight of stone steps, rectangular on plan and protected by iron bar railings. The extension contains a wide blocked doorway with concrete lintel: a new window opening was being made at the time of the survey. The lower eastern portion has 3 windows and a wagon entrance. Interior: Upper floor removed except for principal beams: 2 original fireplaces visible on the first floor.

The Packet Boat House

Boathouse and repair workshop, now roofless. c. 1833, restored c. 1991. Built for the Lancaster Canal Company. Roughly coursed sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings. Basically rectangular plan. 2 storeys and 7 bays, built at right angles to the canal around a narrow basin (now silted up). The bay nearest to the canal is splayed outwards to the left to facilitate the passage of boats through a wide full-height entry, off-set to the left. In both side

walls the ground-floor openings are irregular, but the 1st floor's have 7 windows, which originally had 42 panes. Both floors of the left-hand side wall have, in the middle bay, a doorway with a recess for a sliding door. Between the storeys in each side wall is a row of 13 narrow slots, through which beams were inserted to support boats and a working platform during repairs. History. Built for the accommodation and repair of the fast packet boats 'Waterwitch' and 'Swiftsure', which were supplemented in 1835 by 'Swallow' and in 1839 by 'Crewdson'. These operated a service between Preston and Kendal (fifty-seven miles in seven and a quarter hours) from 1833 to 1842, and from Lancaster to Kendal until 1846, in competition with the stage coach. This item is a unique feature of the Lancaster Canal.