

Trent Lock Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Draft for Consultation



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1 Introduction

Section 69 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”.

Under Section 69(1) of the 1990 Act, the Local Planning Authority has a duty to determine periodically which parts of their area meet the statutory definition of a conservation area, and to designate those areas accordingly. The purpose of this rapid appraisal is to determine whether Trent Lock meets the statutory definition of a conservation area.

2 Definition of Special Interest

Trent Lock appears to satisfy two of the three criteria in the adopted *Criteria for Local Heritage Designation* – i.e. ‘age and rarity’ and ‘historic interest’. On this basis, the site appears to meet the statutory definition of a conservation area and should be considered for designation.

Age and rarity

Our adopted criteria document asks whether an area “predates an era of mass production and mass transportation”. In this respect the DCMS document *Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings* sets a threshold at the year 1840. The adopted criteria document asks whether an area contains “a concentration of buildings that possess qualities of age and rarity”.



The former Erewash Navigation Inn (built 1791)

Structures at Trent Lock that are contemporary with the canal network (i.e. the 1770s to 1790s) have qualities of age and rarity, both singly and as a group, that would justify designation.

Historic interest

The adopted criteria document asks whether an area “illustrates an important aspect of local economic history”. Subsidiary questions include whether it has “a close historic association with a locally important person, company or organisation” and whether there is an account of the area in (e.g.) a “gazetteer of industrial archaeology”.

There are accounts of Trent Lock in Nixon's *Industrial Archaeology of Derbyshire* (1965) and in Palmer's *Industrial Landscapes of the East Midlands* (1992). Nixon described Trent Lock as "an unchanged area" where "some-thing can still be recaptured of the original atmosphere of the eighteenth century". Palmer refers specifically to the "remains of a toll house" and a "dry dock that once served as a weighing lock" (right).



The Erewash Canal Company may be considered a locally important company, not just for their patronage of six lock chambers and six canal bridges in the borough, but also for the profound effect that the Erewash Canal had on the industrial development of the Erewash valley. On the basis of the above, the site illustrates an important aspect of local economic history and thus exhibits qualities of historic interest that would justify designation.

3 Location and Setting

Trent Lock is in the parish of Sawley in Derbyshire. The site is at the east end of Lock Lane, about 1¼ miles east of the centre of Old Sawley and about 2 miles south of the centre of Long Eaton. The site is within the Nottingham and Derby green belt.

Trent Lock is situated adjacent to the River Trent, about a third of a mile upstream of its confluence with the River Soar (Loughborough Navigation).

Trent Lock is situated on generally flat terrain at about 30m AOD. The geology here is superficial, being composed of alluvium. The Red Hill escarpment is about half a mile to the south-east of the site, rising sharply from 30m AOD to 60m AOD within 100 metres.

4 Historic Development

Loughborough Navigation

The River Soar between the River Trent and Loughborough was made navigable by an Act of Parliament obtained in 1776. The engineer was John Smith. The Loughborough Navigation was completed in about 1778.

Erewash Canal

The Erewash Canal was authorised by an Act of Parliament obtained in 1777. The engineer was John Varley. The canal was completed in 1779. A lock chamber was constructed at Trent Lock.

In 1791 the Erewash Navigation Inn¹ was built for the canal company. It was sold to Warwick & Richardson's brewery in November 1939.



The Lock House (right) and adjoining toll booth

Several structures appear to be contemporary with the Erewash Canal:

- Lock House (1794)² and adjoining toll booth;
- A single-storey store on the east canal bank;
- A dry dock on the west canal bank.

Trent Navigation

The River Trent downstream of the Trent & Mersey Canal was made navigable by an Act of Parliament obtained in 1783. The engineer was William Jessop. The works, including the construction of a towpath, were completed in 1787. Sawley Cut was built in 1789-93.

The Trent Navigation was improved by an Act of Parliament obtained in 1794. Again the engineer was William Jessop. As part of these improvement works, the Cranfleet Cut was completed in 1797.

The Trent Navigation Inn appears to be contemporary with the works to make the River Trent navigable. The inn was later acquired by the Home Brewery Co, which was founded in 1875.

Other development to 1950

Trent Villa was built c.1889. Alan Heath supposes that the house was not “associated with the waterways”. The side wall of the house carries an advert by Thomas Rice, publican of the Erewash Navigation Inn, offering ‘boats for hire’ and ‘accommodation for visitors’.

To the west of the lock chamber, a warehouse was built in 1950.

¹ To avoid confusion the Erewash Navigation Inn and the Trent Navigation Inn will be referred to as such throughout this report. Both inns have changed their names.

² According to Keith Taylor.

Development after 1950

Commercial traffic on the Erewash Canal ceased in 1952. In that year the County Development Plan proposed “to develop the Trent Lock area as an inland waterway resort of regional significance”³. In March 1965 Long Eaton Urban District Council bought 0.4ha of land from the Home Brewery Co for use as a car park; it does not appear on the OS 1968 map.

In January 1953 permission was granted for an extension to “living accommodation” in an outbuilding at Trent Villa. By 1972 the outbuilding was described as a separate dwelling – ‘The Cabin’ – and permission was granted for a further extension in October of that year (LOE/0972/0011).

To the immediate west of the lock chamber, the British Waterways Board built a pump house c.1969-70. The board built a subterranean pumping station c.1984-85⁴. The former pump house is now a refuse building.

In about 1975 the Trent Navigation Inn (right) was altered and extended substantially by JW Wilcox & Partners of Long Eaton for the Home Brewery Co (ERE/0675/0037). The alterations included the installation of sash windows with glazing bars⁵.



The Erewash Navigation Inn was extended piecemeal c.1980-85⁶. In May 2001 permission was granted for two-storey and single storey rear extensions (ERE/0101/0057).

In November 1992 permission was granted to convert the 1950 warehouse to an office (ERE/0992/0015). In September 2009 permission was granted to convert the first floor of the toll booth to an office (ERE/0709/0059). A plaque on the building notes that refurbishment was completed in March 2010.

According to the British Waterways Board, the lockside surfacing and quadrants were replaced in brick in the mid-1990s.

³ See correspondence on our file P2591 (LOE/0752/0013).

⁴ Our file P2591 contains correspondence regarding the pump house and pumping station.

⁵ Photograph DCHQ501915 shows the inn prior to these alterations and extensions. See www.picturethepast.org.uk.

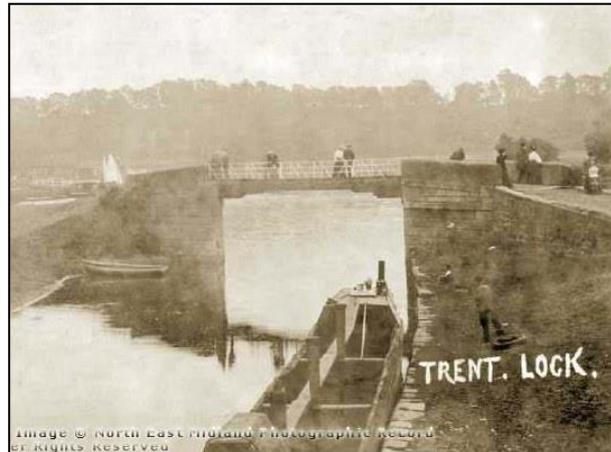
⁶ Planning applications permitted in January 1980 (ERE/1179/0033), July 1982 (ERE/0582/0036) and February 1985 (ERE/0384/0023).

5 Character Analysis

Uses of Buildings

The local canal network was built for freight transport. The lock house and adjoining toll booth were built to serve the Erewash Canal, while the two inns were built to serve the boatmen.

Trent Lock had begun to attract leisure uses long before the cessation of commercial traffic. A postcard dated c.1910 (above) shows courting couples on the Trent towpath footbridge and in 1932 Arthur Mee described Trent Lock as a “happy playground”.



The changing use of the canal network is reflected in the conversion of the Lock House to a tearoom and in the conversion of other buildings on the site to offices. Other buildings retain their original uses. The dry dock remains in use; the two inns are still in use as public houses and Trent Villa remains in use as a house.

Character of Development – Landscape, Layout and Density

Development at Trent Lock has an irregular layout. The Erewash Navigation Inn and the Lock House are aligned to the Erewash Canal. The Trent Navigation Inn and Trent Villa face south onto an irregular route (this route may have been the original Trent Navigation towpath before the 1794-97 “improvements”).

Development at Trent Lock is at a low density, with large areas of soft landscaping. The site is in a green belt context.

Character of Development – Scale, Height and Massing

Buildings at Trent Lock are only one or two storeys in height. The Erewash Navigation Inn and the Lock House present two-storey elevations to the canal, but they are built on substantial basement storeys that are only apparent from the rear. Most buildings at Trent Lock are simple gabled structures; Trent Villa has a hipped roof.

Building Materials

A hand-tinted photograph from the first decade of the twentieth century suggests that the Erewash Navigation Inn, the Lock House and the adjoining toll booth were faced originally in bare brick; by 1978 the Lock House had been painted while the Erewash Navigation Inn had been rendered⁷.

⁷ Compare images DCHQ501908, DCHQ500884 and DCHQ009583 at www.picturethepast.org.uk.

A photograph that appears to predate Trent Villa⁸ suggests that the Trent Navigation Inn has long been rendered. Other buildings on the site are still faced in bare brick.

While some buildings on the site retain plain tile or slate roof coverings, the Erewash Navigation Inn and the toll booth have concrete tile roofs while the 1950 warehouse has a sheet roof.

The lock bridge and the Trent towpath footbridge have stone abutments but concrete decks. The bridge over the by-wash outlet is also a stone structure. The greater part of the lock chamber (right) has been rebuilt in brick.



Designated Buildings

The Borough Council's adopted Local List includes the following buildings:

- Erewash Navigation Inn;
- Trent Navigation Inn;
- Lock House and adjoining toll booth;
- Single-storey store on the east bank of the Erewash Canal.

6 Key Views and Landmarks

About a quarter of a mile north of the site, Lock Lane bends sharply to the right. The lane beyond this point is an unmarked single-track road bounded by high hedges. The rural character of the lane contributes positively to the setting of Trent Lock. The entrance to Trent Lock is unremarkable, with views over the surface car parks toward the rear of the Trent Navigation Inn.

From the east, the entrance to Trent Lock is marked by the divergence of the Erewash Canal and Trent Navigation towpaths and by views of the Trent towpath footbridge. From the west, the entrance to Trent Lock is marked by the change from a natural embankment to a stepped concrete embankment. The caravan park and two residential moorings do not contribute to the significance of Trent Lock and are excluded from the proposed designation.

⁸ See DCER000341 at www.picturethepast.org.uk.

From the north, the entrance to Trent Lock is marked by the change from a bound gravel towpath to herringbone pavers; there is an access barrier here. The Trent towpath offers open views to the south, including views of the Trent Valley Sailing Club (1907). The view of the Red Hill escarpment is marred by the cooling towers of Ratcliffe-upon-Soar power station (1968, below).

7 Opportunities for Enhancement

Ratcliffe-upon-Soar power station has a substantial harmful effect upon the setting of Trent Lock. Beside the closure and demolition of the power station, there are limited opportunities to mitigate its harm⁹.

Otherwise there are opportunities to enhance the character of Trent Lock through the reinstatement of traditional facing materials – e.g. the replacement of concrete tile roofs with plain tile or slate roofs, or (where appropriate) the removal of paint from bare brick.



The protection and enhancement of this heritage asset is likely to have long term benefits with regard to tourism. Opportunities to enlarge the tourist offer at Trent Lock Conservation Area will be encouraged (where appropriate).

8 Problems and Pressures

For statistical purposes, neighbourhoods are divided into Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs). Trent Lock is in the Erewash 14F LSOA. It is one of the 50% least deprived LSOAs in England and Wales¹⁰.

No specific problems or pressures affecting the significance of Trent Lock have been identified.

⁹ In 2005 the cooling towers at Drakelow 'C' power station (1964) were demolished, following the closure of that power station in 2003. In 2012 the cooling towers at High Marnham power station (1962) were demolished, following the closure of that power station in 2003.

¹⁰ Erewash 14F includes the greater part of New Sawley south of Tamworth Road. The LSOA ranks 22,271 out of 34,378 LSOAs in England and Wales, where 1 is the most deprived.