



THIS IS IMPORTANT

PLEASE READ IT

Marple's canal heritage

The Canal and River Trust (ex British Waterways) has just submitted a planning application to Stockport MBC to build seven new houses and convert the historic warehouse at Marple Wharf, the land they own at Top Lock. We believe that this is

WRONG for Marple
WRONG for Stockport
and even
WRONG for Canal & River Trust

We have very little time to act but if we can mobilise enough people we hope to make our feelings known to both the Planning Department and to our elected councillors. They are now the only people that can prevent this cultural vandalism. Please read this and, if you agree, write to the Planning Department with your objection.

Background

The Canal & River Trust (CRT) replaced British Waterways in 2012 because the government considered that it was run both inefficiently and wastefully. The new body was formed as a charitable trust with several guiding principles:

- +To develop and encourage the use of the canal network
- +To maintain the integrity and authenticity of its heritage assets
- +To work with local communities to secure conservation of the waterways
- +To operate a presumption in favour of the conservation of heritage assets
- +To maintain a financially sound operation.

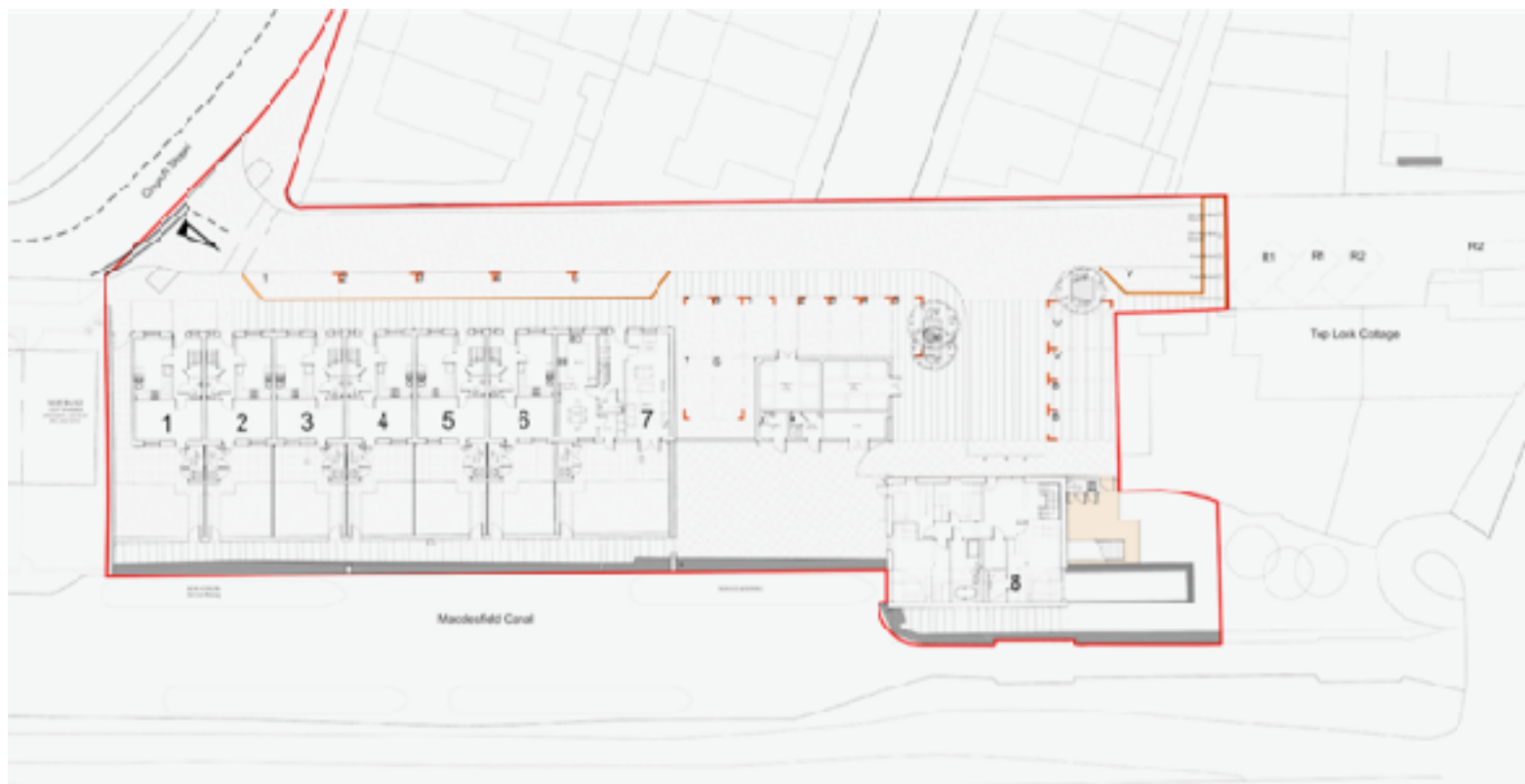
In order to develop its properties CRT has formed a joint venture with a property company, appropriately called H2O. It transferred to this joint venture all of its property assets which it believed to have development potential. Marple Wharf was part of this transfer. Another property developer owned the section of land at the other end of the wharf adjacent to the Church Lane Bridge and has recently built a block of five houses. Encouraged by this, H2O has now submitted an application to build seven town houses on their land and to convert the warehouse into a luxury dwelling. In addition, although not part of the current application, it is renovating the two existing houses on the site behind the small toll cottage.

For the past two years the Civic Society and other organisations have been in a lengthy dialogue with H2O to achieve the best possible outcome for both CRT and the community. We wanted them to take into account the Trust's guiding principles to conserve the heritage but we could not achieve a compromise. Regrettably we believe that H2O's proposal completely ignores these principles.

Marple Wharf

When the Macclesfield Canal, designed by the renowned civil engineer Thomas Telford, was joined to the Peak Forest Canal in 1831 this short stretch of the canal side was developed as a transhipment point. Canal boats would split their cargoes, loads would be weighed and goods moved around the yard by crane. In addition a short arm of the canal was constructed passing into a warehouse to allow loading and unloading of goods under cover. Remnants of both the weighing machine and the crane are listed, together with the warehouse, because they are nationally significant. The proposed development will change the warehouse out of all recognition and prevent public access. Although a listed building, its integrity will be completely destroyed.

Canal & River Trust proposal



This plan has the Macclesfield Canal in the foreground. The current mooring for New Horizons has been reduced in size and moved nearer to the warehouse with very limited access for its disabled passengers.



This is an artist's impression of what the new development will look like from the street. It is rather misleading in that there is no public access to the view shown and there is a wall in the foreground which is not illustrated because it blocks the view.

The full details are available on:

<http://planning.stockport.gov.uk/PlanningData-live/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=OVJXKOPJGLT00>

If you click the documents tab it will bring up the 34 documents submitted. The ones of most interest are probably:

- 3 Proposed site plan
- 4, 5 & 6 Design and access statement
- 7 Heritage statement 2008
- 8 Heritage statement 2017
- 22 & 23 Detailed plans for warehouse

If this link doesn't work just google Stockport Council, click on planning applications and enter DC/067001

Our alternative

Although we don't like such high density development and the lack of public access, we recognise the need for CRT to capitalise on its assets. Therefore we reluctantly accept the current proposal for new build housing, even though we would prefer fewer houses but we believe that the warehouse should be retained as close to its original form as possible. In their own site appraisal CRT acknowledge that the warehouse, toll house and toll cottages form an important part of the historic canal corridor.



We would like to see the warehouse developed by CRT jointly with the community, into an information and tourist centre for the canal network and local area, providing a convivial place for both the community and visitors. The upper floor can be hired out to local groups for their regular use, bringing in additional revenue. The two historic artefacts (crane and weigh machine) could be moved to a place adjacent to the warehouse. A development such as this would preserve the key historic features of the site and it would even add value to the houses by providing a focus for them.

What you can do

The proposal by H2O has been submitted to the Planning Department of SMBC and they have to consider whether it meets government guidelines. We believe that the application falls short in several areas:

- * over-development of the site
- * inadequate provision for parking and waste disposal
- * inadequate access for disabled clients of New Horizons and
- * a complete disregard for the unique heritage of the site

H2O are using expensive lawyers and consultants to put their case and they will fight to overcome these deficiencies but there is one further requirement that they certainly can't meet - the agreement of the community.

The Planning Department has to be confident that it has the support of the local community. It would then be passed on to the Local Area Committee for the councillors to give final approval and they too must take this into account. The Civic Society broke off consultations with H2O several months ago as the developers were not prepared to listen. However, we need to demonstrate that there is widespread opposition within the community. This is where we need your help.

How to help

We want to demonstrate the strength of our feelings by asking as many people as possible to write to the Planning Department and the councillors suggesting that the warehouse should be taken out of the planning proposal and developed separately by Canal & River Trust. Send an email to Dominic Harvey of the Planning Department with a copy to Councillor Kenny Blair, the chairman of the Local Committee. In that way we can make our feelings known and there is some chance of saving this part of our heritage for our children.

However, the key to this is the number of letters that we can send and as quickly as possible. If you have any feeling at all for our heritage please write immediately to:

To. planning.dc@stockport.gov.uk
cc cllr.kenny.blair@stockport.gov.uk
Subject Marple Wharf DC/067001

Every letter counts so, please ask your partner to write a separate letter. Then pass this on to three to four of your friends in the local area and ask them to write as well. In this cause, quantity matters. Please make sure your letters are: sent **before 28th of September 2017.**

We don't want to write a standard letter, please compose your own, but some of the ideas and phrases shown below might help.

DO IT NOW!

PLEASE

Your letter to SMBC

Here are some ideas for your own letter. You are welcome to use any of these ideas put into your own words - the important thing is to make your own opinion and your own feelings known.

Start by saying why you are writing

I have lived in Marple/Compstall/Mellor etc for xx years

For me the most important thing about this area is:

the community spirit/
the friendliness/
the atmosphere/
the heritage etc

Say how you want it to develop

I want a mix of old and new

The most important thing is the easy access to the canal to get away from everyday life

We need visitors to keep the town vibrant

It is important to retain access to the canal, not fence it off with private property

Stockport should develop its tourist potential

Say what is wrong with the proposal

Inadequate facilities provided for New Horizons

Has not allowed any community use or access

Car parking inadequate

Too many houses. Putting a quart into a pint pot.

Say what you expect from Canal & River Trust

Surely CRT cannot ignore the fact that these are listed buildings

We have few relics from our past so it is important to preserve those we have

Why have CRT not taken our community needs into account?

Finally, if you still have the energy, why not drop a line to your local councillor(s) and let them know your feelings. They will have been sent a copy of your previous letter because they are all on the local area committee but it will do no harm to remind them

that they were voted into office and they can be voted out of office. Their responsibility is to the community, not to the benefit of developers.

Marple north councillors:

cllr.geoff.abell@stockport.gov.uk

cllr.malcolm.allan@stockport.gov.uk

cllr.annette.finnie@stockport.gov.uk

Marple south councillors (the wharf is in Marple south):

cllr.kenny.blair@stockport.gov.uk

cllr.susan.ingham@stockport.gov.uk

cllr.tom.dowse@stockport.gov.uk