

## 4. Key Projects

### FLAGSHIP SCHEMES

4.1 As part of the canal restoration we envisage a number of key schemes which will act as focal points for users and development hubs encouraging regeneration to a much wider area in the long term. For the purposes of this study we have envisaged several keynote schemes along the Canal which are illustrated in Fig's 6.1 to 6.6 centred around:

- ◆ The Town Lock and Basin at Newport;
- ◆ The Trench Arm & Junction at Wappenshall;
- ◆ The Flax Mill at Shrewsbury;
- ◆ The Wider Ditherington Area;
- ◆ The Buttermarket.

Below is a commentary providing explanation to the drawings:

### NEWPORT

- 4.2 There is a tremendous opportunity for a major canal focus at Newport which would boost the whole area adjacent to the canal and potentially have much greater benefits for the town as a whole. A possible future scheme is illustrated in Fig 4.1.
- 4.3 The town lock and original wharf warehouse provide exciting opportunities for restoration and a focus for visitors travelling along the canal and visitors to the town. The current car park adjacent to the town lock would provide an ideal location for a canal side piazza and with close attention paid to public realm design the area would provide a valuable and attractive asset to both the canal and the town.
- 4.4 The old warehouse provides enormous potential to be utilised as part of the canal once again. Potential canal uses could include a shop/café/boat hire/interpretation centre or a mixture of these. The warehouse would require sensitive treatment paying respect to its historic context with fixtures such as windows sympathetically added, supplemented by high quality lighting and fixtures within the building.
- 4.5 The historic wharf area around the Newport Basin provides an ideal mooring point for visiting boats including those requiring an overnight stay. Washing and waste disposal facilities should therefore be installed nearby.
- 4.6 There are very strong linkages with nearby facilities and there are very strong development possibilities within the surrounding area. The Cosy Hall community centre which faces the lock could benefit from the restoration as could the two nearby pubs – The Bridge and The Swan. The Swan in could particularly benefit from the development, with potential for a beer garden with canal views.
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- 4.7 There is also the possibility of associated canal-side development, brought about as a result of the restoration. The Water Lane area could particularly benefit as could Salter's Lane where there is currently a mix of commercial and light industrial units that appear to be under-utilised at present. The site of the present Shell filling station could also provide an ideal canal side development site if the owners were to consider relocation.

### **WAPPENSHALL JUNCTION**

- a) The proposal at Wappenshall comes in three parts:
- ◆ Potential Marina Development on Trench Arm;
  - ◆ Heritage Canal Focus at Basins and Warehouses.
  - ◆ Trench Arm restored as a Heritage feature and linked with Wappenshall.

### **Marina Development**

- 4.8 Wappenshall is now only a short distance from the edge of the Telford urban conurbation and could therefore potentially house a new Marina Village to act as a centre for canal activities as well providing an area of high class waterside housing. Such a development is illustrated in Fig 4.2.
- 4.9 It is suggested that a new marina development could be located in the current field to the south of the present Wappenshall settlement and the Marina could be accessed from the west basin via a short restored section of the Trench Arm through a restored Wappenshall Lock. Vehicular access could be provided from the A442 at Hurleybrook which would avoid traffic problems on the current Wappenshall access road (which is very narrow) and hence minimising disturbance to the existing settlement.
- 4.10 Such a development could be similar to the Braunston Marina on the Grand Union Canal which is a successful hub for canal activity as well as an attractive place to live. The construction of a Marina would give further emphasis to restoration of at least part of the Trench Arm, giving it a purpose as well as a reason to reinstate the junction at Wappenshall.

### **Wappenshall Heritage Canal Focus**

- 4.11 The warehouses and roving bridge at Wappenshall are arguably amongst the most interesting of the structures left from the days of the original canal and their refurbishment would provide a great asset to the whole project. The location is an ideal stopping point for boat users being roughly halfway between Norbury Junction and Shrewsbury and provides a focus in a pleasant rural setting. The Flaxmill (Flaxmill), Shrewsbury.
- 4.12 Our suggestion for the area (as illustrated in Fig 4.3) is that the two warehouses once restored could provide an ideal location for several new uses including canal interpretation, tourist information, boat hire and ancillary uses such as a pub/restaurant. The East and West basins, together with the above mentioned marina provide ample mooring space and locations for associated leisure activities such as angling and canoeing. The current yard also provides a suitable location for parking. It is important that any development is carried out sensitively to respect the

rural setting and adjoining residents in Wharf House and The Villa, together with other residences within the settlement.

#### **THE FLAXMILL (FLAXMILL) SHREWSBURY**

- 4.13 The Ditherington Flaxmill is a nationally important Grade I listed building and is currently classed as being “at risk” by conservation groups. The Flaxmill was built in 1797 and was one of the first iron framed buildings in the world (a forerunner to the modern skyscraper). The route of the canal passes in front of the structure before carrying on towards its original terminus close to the Severn. However as we have seen in our Engineering section, modern development has made following the original route past the Flaxmill likely to be very difficult so it is suggested that a new terminal basin could be constructed in front of the building providing a major tourist and development hub that could be the building’s saviour. This is illustrated in Fig 4.4.
- 4.14 Although any possible uses of the Flaxmill are subject to much wider considerations (for example its present ownership), it is suggested that the new basin could be constructed between the Flaxmill and A5191 where various light industrial and commercial uses are currently situated. This would provide a stopping point for visiting boats wishing to visit Shrewsbury as well as an attractive setting to carry out further regeneration to an area that is currently in need of rejuvenation.
- 4.15 The Flaxmill itself could provide an exciting new mixed use development that would not only be significant to Shrewsbury, but to national heritage bringing a great symbol of the industrial revolution in Britain back into everyday use. The Flaxmill could provide a number of sustainable uses including residential “loft” apartments, commercial units, together with a setting for canal related activities such as boat hire, chandlery, catering, heritage, interpretation etc.
- 4.16 A major development such as this would inevitably bring investment to the surrounding area and there is the future prospect and potential for relocation of the bus depot site for redevelopment and the rejuvenation of other sites in the Spring Gardens / Ditherington Road area to provide further residential and commercial uses exploiting the canal setting.
- 4.17 It is important that attention is paid to providing high quality public domain within the area and linkages with the town centre are improved in order to maximise tourist potential. However it is assumed that the Flaxmill and Canal Basin would become a valuable tourist attraction in its own right bringing massive direct and indirect benefits to the local economy.

#### **THE WIDER DITHERINGTON AREA**

- 4.18 As well as the Flaxmill, the reinstatement of the canal could bring much needed physical regeneration to the wider Ditherington area as illustrated in Fig 4.5, which shows a further marina and associated development on the current industrial land to the east of the A5191 and north of the Flaxmill.

- 4.19 A marina at this location could act as supplementary or alternative to the suggested marina in front of the nearby Flaxmill and will provide an invaluable catalyst to the regeneration of this currently run-down and under-utilised site.
- 4.20 Mixed uses could be housed in new buildings around the Marina providing a location for tourism, commerce, retail as well as residential accommodation. A degree of affordable and social housing could be provided in order to meet government objectives as well as provide replacement housing for any possible displacement from the current Spring Gardens Estate.
- 4.21 On the western side of the A5191 the canal could bring about immense regeneration benefits, with possible redevelopment of the current poor stock of 1970's housing, currently fronting the route of the canal. The nearby Comet Public House would also inevitably gain from passing tourist trade and additional numbers of patrons living and working in the locality.

#### **THE BUTTERMARKE AREA**

- 4.22 Should the reinstatement of the original Canal past the Flaxmill and onto the River Severn via Shrewsbury prove practical a great opportunity will be provided to improve a large urban area that is currently of poor landscape and aesthetic quality. One area that will particularly benefit is the Beacall's Lane area to the north of the Buttermarket as illustrated in Fig 4.6.
- 4.23 This site is currently occupied by a car park sandwiched between the prison to the south east and the Royal Mail sorting office to the North West. The site is currently a fairly undesirable redevelopment prospect; however with the presence of the canal this is likely to change with the opportunity to facilitate increased activity and residential development.
- 4.24 The site is large enough to accommodate a canal basin for mooring and would provide a good location for canal users to stop and visit Shrewsbury. Between this point and the River Severn there is a requirement for a tunnel and several locks, this area could therefore become a place for boats to wait until it is their turn to pass. The area could also house facilities for canal users as well as provide commercial operations to cater for visitors.
- 4.25 As well as a hub for visitors, this location also has the potential for housing development, the site ideally suited to high density urban style living arrangements consisting of town houses or apartments. The canal presence would boost land values in this location immensely in turn adding to the local economy.