

2. What Remains Today

2.1 In order to allow comparison with costs presented elsewhere and to present the canal lengths in meaningful sections, the canal will be described in the following sequence:

◆ **The Shrewsbury & Newport Canal**

- Norbury Junction to Newport
- Newport to Wappenshall
- Wappenshall to Longdon-upon-Tern
- Longdon-upon-Tern to Berwick
- Berwick to Shrewsbury

◆ **The Trench Arm**

◆ **The Humber Arm**

2.2 The following descriptions are intended to give the reader an impression of the canals as they are today, including an indication of particular blockages. This does not constitute a formal engineering appraisal. For details of works required see Section Three 'Proposed Works and Costings'. Maps showing the historic route of the canal and significant structures can be seen in Fig's 2.1 to 2.3.

THE SHREWSBURY & NEWPORT CANAL

Norbury Junction to Newport

2.3 Between the Canal's beginning at Norbury Junction, the intersection with the Main Line of the Shropshire Union Canal and the town of Newport, the first major settlement the canal reaches; there are a several features although most of the canal has been filled in, locks buried and two bridges destroyed. There are very few of the original lock structures and canal bed visible or still in existence. Most of the bridges remain and most still carry roads or tracks.

2.4 Of note on this section of the canal route is the Forton Aqueduct and adjacent Skew Bridge by Thomas Telford. The Forton Aqueduct carries both the canal and a minor road over the River Meese. Thomas Telford's 'Skew Bridge' (B9) derives its name from the angle at which the road crosses the canal. The superstructure is not perpendicular to the substructure hence a skew angle is created. The canal at this point is well defined and in good condition, although the bed is dry and overgrown with vegetation.

2.5 The line of the canal crosses the A41 Newport By-pass between the settlements of Meretown and Islington. Very soon after crossing the A41, over one mile of canal remains fully in water through Newport from the site of "Meretown Lock" (L18) to the site of "Polly's Lock" (L22) and upon this length can be seen a number of structures. The Summerhouse Bridge (B12), a typical lock-side cottage at Fisher's Lock and the Newport Basin. Here the canal has been restored for leisure activities and the tow path is used as a footpath starting just east of Summerhouse Bridge and continuing roughly to Newport Baths.

- 2.6 Between B12 and B13, “Fishers Lock” (L19) and “Newport Wharf Lock” (L20) are capped with concrete but largely intact. At L20 there stands a warehouse that dates back to the beginnings of the canal and directly adjacent are “Cosy Hall” and “Victoria Park”.
- 2.7 Around B13 the line of the canal has been concreted over and forms part of a walkway. This was done to allow the Strine Valley Sewer to be routed along the bed, and also because the bed rose as a result of ground heave caused by adjacent loading. A small drainage channel still remains, which travel for approximately 100 metres west from the bridge before the canal bed is reinstated. The line of the canal is bordered mainly by trees to the north side and a small band of land containing the tow path on the south. “Tickethouse Lock” (L21), is intact. Immediately past L21 is an accommodation bridge used to access farm fields, this is now unused for that purpose. Between L21 and L22 the canal widens with weed lining its bed as it advances into more open countryside. Towards the end of this reinstated watered section there is a small basin on the north side roughly opposite the sewage works. Between the end of this section and L22 there is a short infilled length and a cut through culvert.

Newport to Wappenshall

- 2.8 Between Polly’s Lock (L22) just west of Newport and Wappenshall Junction the route heads roughly south west and apart from some remnants of the bed nothing substantial remains. It should be noted that at this point through to Shrewsbury the vast majority of the bridges have been destroyed with the exception of the roving bridge at Wappenshall and five others: one east of Wappenshall B22a; one at Rodington (B35) which is now unused; one near Withington (B40); one between Berwick Wharf and the Berwick Tunnel (B48); and one at Uffington (B51) which is in poor condition.
- 2.9 At the site of “Edgmond Lock” (L23) the canal route passes directly through a Severn Trent Pumping Station and the site of “Edgmond Bridge” (B15). Once past the pumping station the canal begins to curve to the south continuing through agricultural land and then through Longford Moors.
- 2.10 The aqueduct at Kynnersley, which is approximately 13km from Norbury Junction, has been destroyed and the embankment has been breached for access. Kynnersley Drive which crosses the canal has now become overgrown and is apparently unused. Approximately 0.4km past the site of the destroyed aqueduct is the junction with the Humber Arm. The junction is almost unrecognisable for the dense undergrowth and trees cover the intersection. The bed west of the junction has also become overgrown.
- 2.11 There are very few traces of canal between this point and Wappenshall and the route is virtually entirely open countryside having to cross a minor road and farm tracks.
- 2.12 Wappenshall Junction lies behind the village of Wappenshall, north of Telford and is approximately 10.5km from Newport. Original structures including the warehouse and roving bridge still exist and are largely intact. The canal and East Basin have been levelled to form a yard. A large pond exists where the west basin was and the whole area is now overgrown.

Wappenshall to Longdon-upon-Tern

- 2.13 From Wappenshall the canal heads in a north-westerly direction towards Eyton-upon-the-Weald-Moors. The bed between Wappenshall Junction and Lock 25 has been adapted as a drainage water course called “Hurley Brook” and travels through a linear copse until Eyton Lower Lock (L25). The water course which uses the bed veers to the left just before L25. After L25, the line of the bed meanders north-easterly through arable land until bridge 25 and Long Lane.
- 2.14 Directly west of B25 to the A442 a short stretch of bed contains water. Sixty metres to the east of B25 is a junction to a disused wharf on the north side. B25 is approximately 3kms from Wappenshall Junction and is in good condition. It carries at Long Lane what was the original old A442, which now remains as a residential access road. This section of the canal appears to be in a potentially functional state, with bed and banks uncluttered and the towpath clear.
- 2.15 The bed west of the A442 passes through pasture land and a private garden prior to reaching Bratton Road and the site of B26. Beyond B26 the line of the canal proceeds north-east through another garden before proceeding into open countryside again. Past the garden towards the disused railway line the canal contains water as it curves to the left and proceeds south-east, through a mixture of arable and pasture land towards Longdon-upon-Tern.
- 2.16 As the canal route approaches the village it crosses the River Tern over the Longdon-Upon-Tern Aqueduct, the oldest surviving iron aqueduct in the world. It passes about 16 feet over the River Tern in the middle of open agricultural land. Both the brick and iron structure seem to be in sound condition but are becoming colonised with vegetation.

Longdon-upon-Tern to Berwick

- 2.17 The bed, west of the aqueduct, curves around, following a hedge line, and heads towards the centre of Longdon through arable land. On approach to the B5063 the line of the canal travels through a copse where a power line runs along it. The canal crosses the B5063 at the site of bridge 30, in a south-west direction. East of bridge B30 the line of the bed passes an original building that serviced the canal and then through private gardens before heading west through agricultural land to B31.
- 2.18 At the site of B31, at Marsh Green, the line of the canal crosses a narrow country lane that joins the settlements of Sugdon and Isombridge to Marsh Green. From there the line of the canal curves gently to the right and runs south-westerly through open agricultural land toward Rodington. The path of the canal continues westward, crossing the sites of destroyed bridges 32, 32a, 33 and 34 before passing just south of Rodington Hall. Immediately past Rodington Hall the bed travels along an embankment, lined with trees, towards the River Roden and the Rodington aqueduct, which has been destroyed.
- 2.19 Once across the River Roden the line passes through a private garden and under B35 which is used as a farmer’s access to the surrounding fields. The bridge is constructed of brick and in a dilapidated condition. After this point very few traces remain as the line of the canal meanders in a south-westerly direction, passing through a mixture of arable and pasture land before approaching Withington.
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- 2.20 The next significant remnant of the canal is B40 on the south western fringe of Withington. The bridge still stands and even has its original Shrewsbury Canal plate number but it is in poor condition.
- 2.21 After this point the dry bed becomes more noticeable and follows a tree line through agricultural land. Just east of B42 the dry bed has become colonised by vegetation and trees line the banks. On its approach the dry bed becomes more untidy with debris scattered along the line.
- 2.22 A major obstacle in the canal's path after this point is the railway line and A5 Trunk Road. After crossing the railway line. The route then continues towards Berwick Wharf.

Berwick Wharf to Shrewsbury

- 2.23 At Berwick Wharf, approximately 15kms from Wappenshall Junction, there is a section of the canal in water. It crosses the Berwick to Upton Magna road at the site of B46, just outside the hamlet where there are cottages. Cutting the corner between the two roads that run through Berwick Wharf, the canal heads north-west behind the cottages on the *east* side of the Atcham to Uffington road. The bed east of B47 has been partly restored and contains water. Past the cottages the canal then crosses the Atcham to Uffington road. At this point the road has been straightened and widened since abandonment and the canal line now crosses the road on a shallow oblique angle at the site of bridge 47. West of B47 the canal advances through dense vegetation before the channel is reinstated.
- 2.24 A short distance past the site of B47 the canal passes under B48. The bridge which is still in existence was previously used to access the adjacent field and is not a through route. The structure is sound and the bed appears to be clear. The route then continues through a deep cutting with vegetation encroaching over the banks and into the canal towards the Berwick Tunnel
- 2.25 The approach to the tunnel has become unkempt and dilapidated. The banks are unclear due to the undergrowth encroaching into the channel. The south-west opening has been blocked off with brick and has become overgrown with overhanging vegetation. The tunnel is roughly 900 metres in length and is brick lined. There is a slight bend, roughly in the middle, that means that it is impossible to see through to the opposite entrance.
- 2.26 The tunnel entrance on the north side is in a poor condition. Both banks have become heavily overgrown and have slipped into the canal. The bed north of the tunnel, just north of Preston, is in a cutting. It contains water but the banks are covered with vegetation and the canal itself is beginning to become colonised. The water remains until the canal reaches the edge of the A5(T).
- 2.27 On the opposite side of the A5(T) the canal heads north to Uffington. First, it proceeds under a railway bridge through rough pasture land. The bed just north of the railway bridge is visible but covered in vegetation. It follows a tree line until bridge 49, where it crosses Church Road and become dry and unobtrusive. Once again the canal is noticeable but covered in vegetation.

- 2.28 The canal bed then curves around the east side of Uffington. As the canal approaches B51 the line of the bed travels along the path of three electricity pylons which are set on (or very near to) the bed. Other Canal restoration schemes (most notably the fully restored Huddersfield Canal) have been reinstated through the arch of electricity pylons where these straddle the route. Bridge 51 at Uffington although still standing is in poor condition and is used as an access to farmland. The bed north of B51 contains water but has become heavily overgrown. At the site of B52 at Uffington the line of the canal passes close to residential properties and further up there is an actual building built upon the line.
- 2.29 The bed between A49(T) and Uffington has been filled in and The Shropshire Way foot path and cycleway laid over it. At the A49 the foot path underpass is at a much lower level than the original bed level of the canal. From Bridge 53 at Pimley Manor, The Shropshire Way continues on the line of the bed west toward the A5112. West of the A5112 the line rejoins the path and continue west through park land. The canal then crosses Whitchurch Road and the site of B55.
- 2.30 Upon crossing Whitchurch Road the canal heads south-west through the Spring Gardens residential area and the current site of the Midland Red Social Club behind the Arriva Bus Depot, before reaching the Flax Mill. Past the Flax mill the line of the canal proceeds south across Whitchurch Road through a narrow gap between two residential properties. From there the line proceeds through parkland and onto a footpath until the Morris Depot. The canal then terminated at a small basin in the depot yard at the time of closure. Originally the canal terminated under the Butter Market but was altered when the railway warehouse and sidings were built.

THE HUMBER ARM

- 2.31 The line of the Humber Arm runs from its junction with the main canal line, just east of the site of the Kynnersley Aqueduct for 1.2km south to its terminus just short of the Humber Lane. The bed at the junction with the Shrewsbury and Newport Canal has become overgrown with trees and scrub. For half this length the line runs down a decreasing embankment which still exists. Over its final length the original water level was not far beneath ground level.

THE TRENCH ARM

- 2.32 The Trench Arm was not modified when the rest of the Canal was joined to the rest of the canal network via the Newport branch, meaning that only tub boats could access the branch. It is for this reason the warehouses were built at its junction with the main line at Wappenshall, for transfer of goods to narrow boats, from the narrower tub boats.
- 2.33 Since closure of the canal the subsequent development of Telford has totally destroyed most of the original route but it can still be traced from the area around the A518 and A442 Junction at Trench Lock as far as Wappenshall. During this 3km section the remains of some of the locks and structures can still be seen including Turnip Lock SL3 and Hadley Park Lock SL4 which still have the remains of the guillotine gates and as such are listed structures. However the first 850 metres from Trench Lock runs through the centre of the GKN Sankey Site (a significant employer) and the first 500 metres running south from Wappenshall Junction has been

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converted to form part of the Hurley Brook Storm Drain. From the drain to the Wheat Leasows road the line has been converted to agriculture but the stretch from this road to GKN boundary remains unblocked, with the exception of the crossing of the A442 and the Wheat Leasows road.

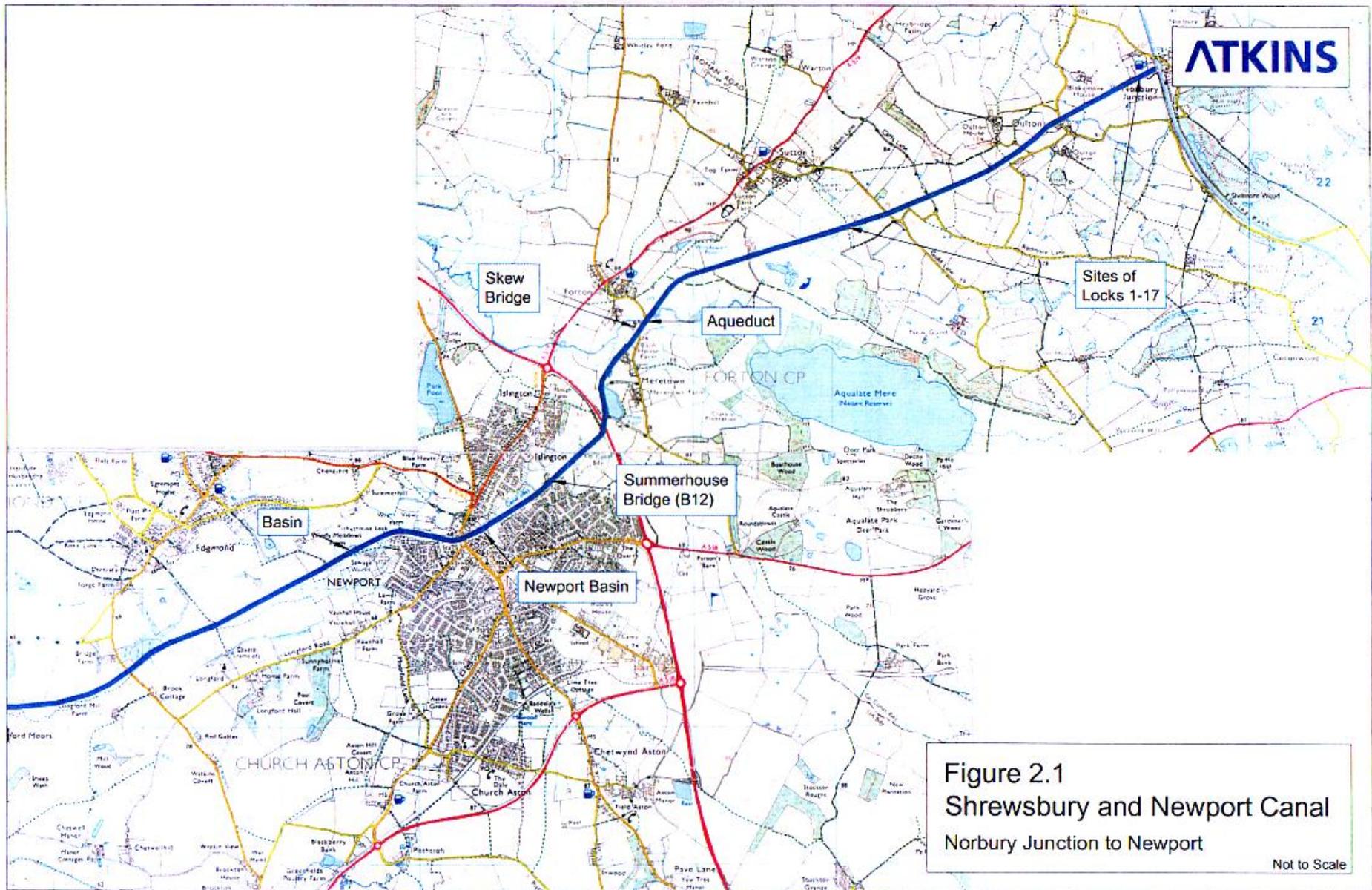


Figure 2.1
Shrewsbury and Newport Canal
 Norbury Junction to Newport
 Not to Scale

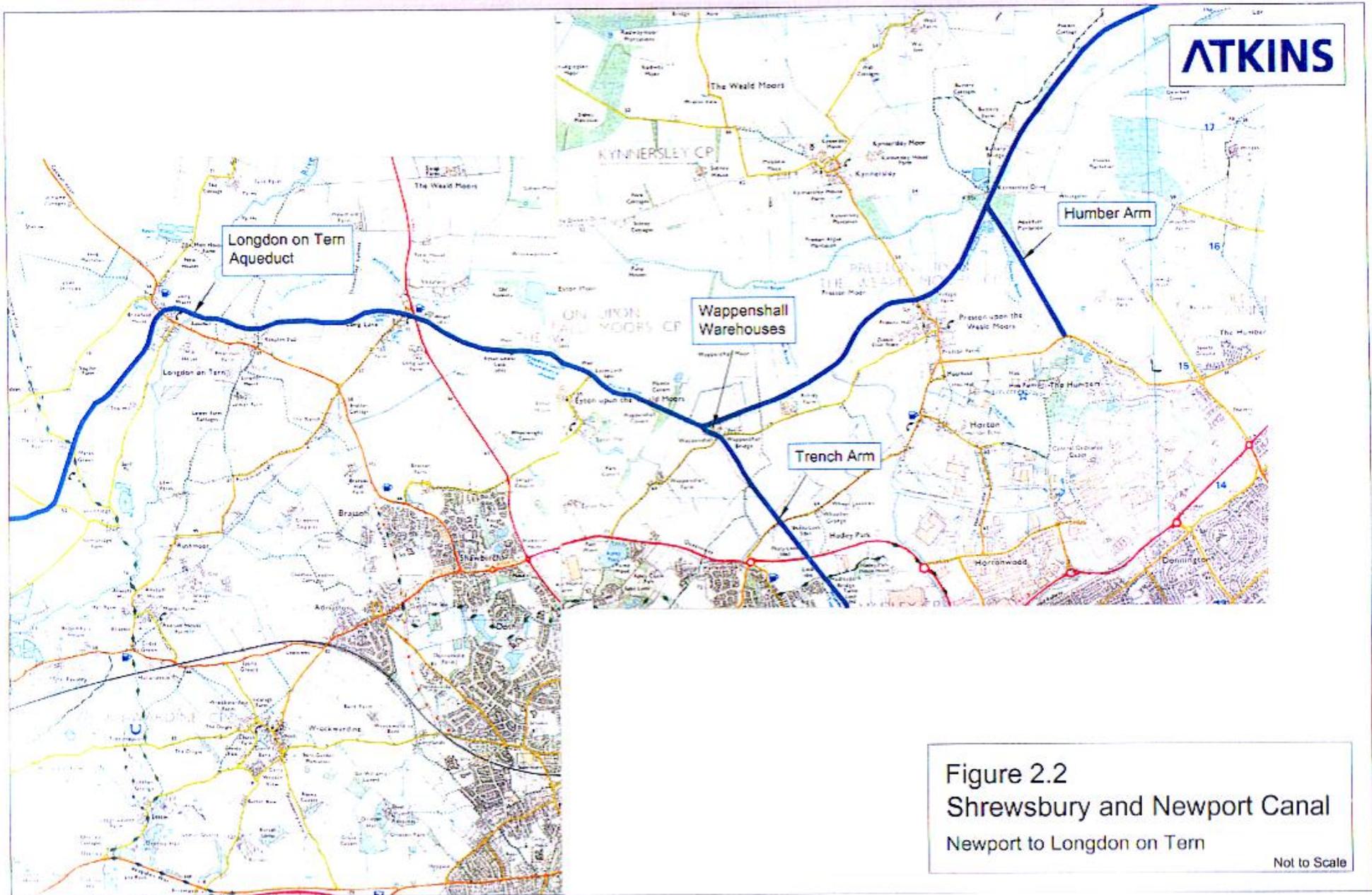


Figure 2.2
 Shrewsbury and Newport Canal
 Newport to Longdon on Tern
 Not to Scale

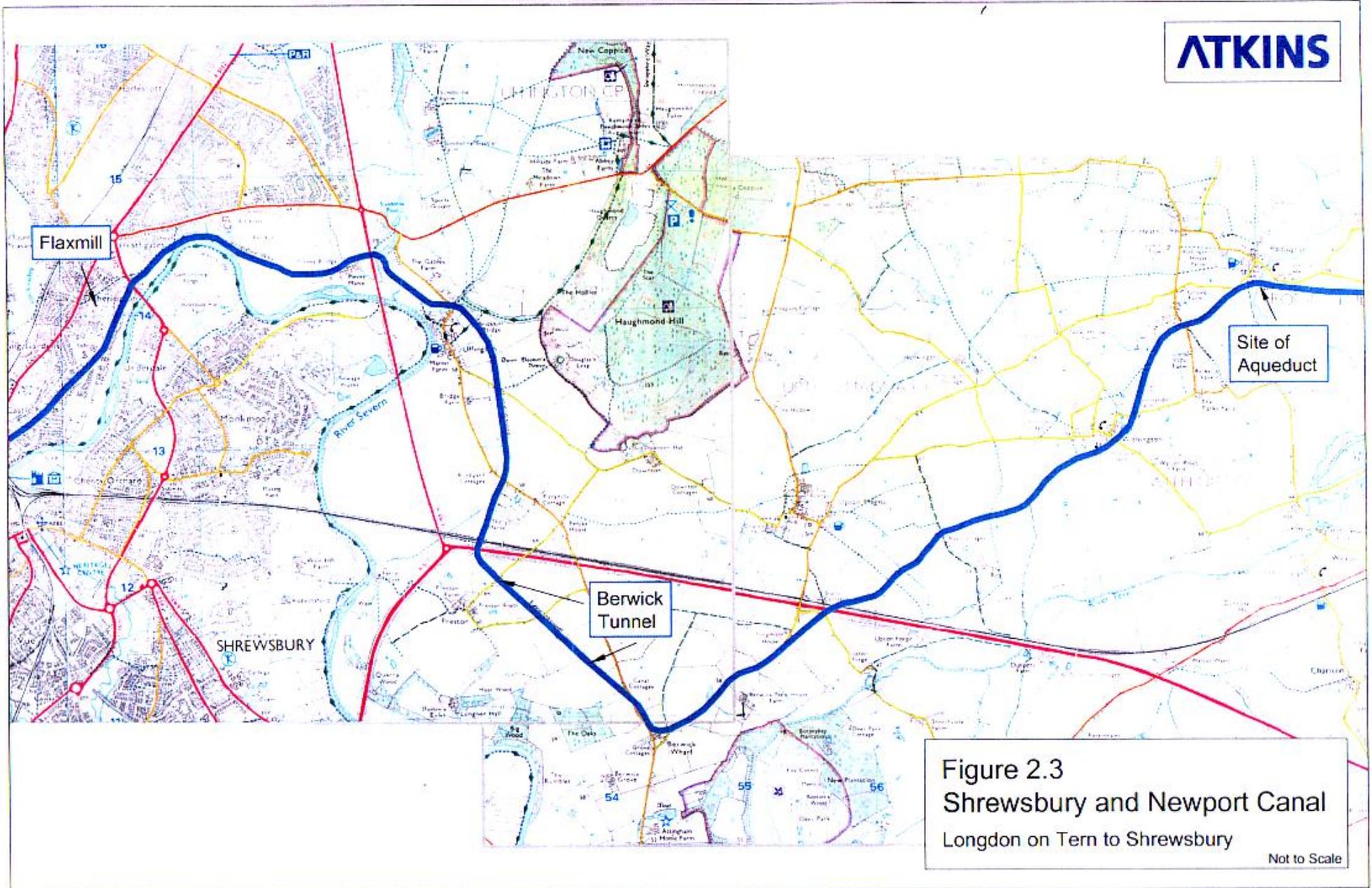


Figure 2.3
Shrewsbury and Newport Canal
London on Tern to Shrewsbury
Not to Scale