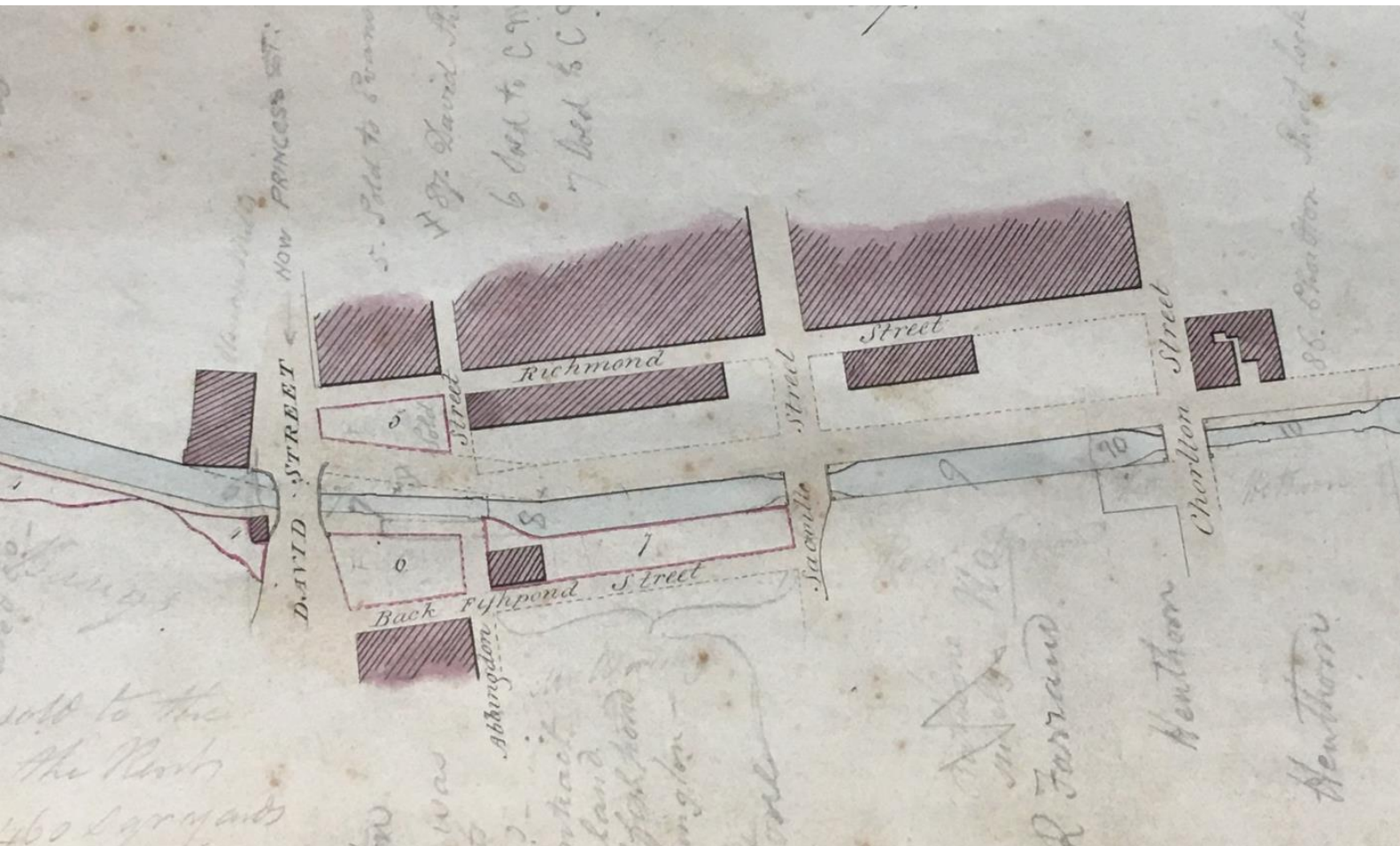




**Canal &
River Trust**

Making life better by water

Lock 87, Rochdale Canal Heritage Statement



Lock 87, Rochdale Canal

Heritage Statement

Issue	Date	Prepared by
1	October 2025	William Froggatt BA(Hons), MA Heritage Advisor Canal & River Trust, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire, CH65 4FW. Telephone: 07584 006 156 Email: william.froggatt@canalrivertrust.org.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

The Canal & River Trust (hereafter, “the Trust”) is a charity that looks after approximately 2,000 miles of canal and waterway throughout England and Wales. Its objectives are to maintain the canals, their unique historic and ecological value, and to engage local communities in volunteering, learning or physical activity opportunities, and in-so-doing improve their mental health and well-being.

The canals comprise more than 15,000 structures, bridges, aqueducts, tunnels etc and including 1,578 locks. Of these 15,000 structures more than 2,700 are listed. The Trust also maintains 46 scheduled monuments.

This statement has been prepared to support the application for listed building consent for works of maintenance at lock 87, a grade II listed building (list entry number: 1247580), on the Rochdale Canal in Manchester.

The statement has been prepared in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, published 2012, as amended, (hereafter, “NPPF”) paragraph 207 and Historic England Advice Note 12 Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets.

1.1. Location

Lock 87 is on the Rochdale Canal east of Princess Street. National Grid Coordinates 384298, 397753.

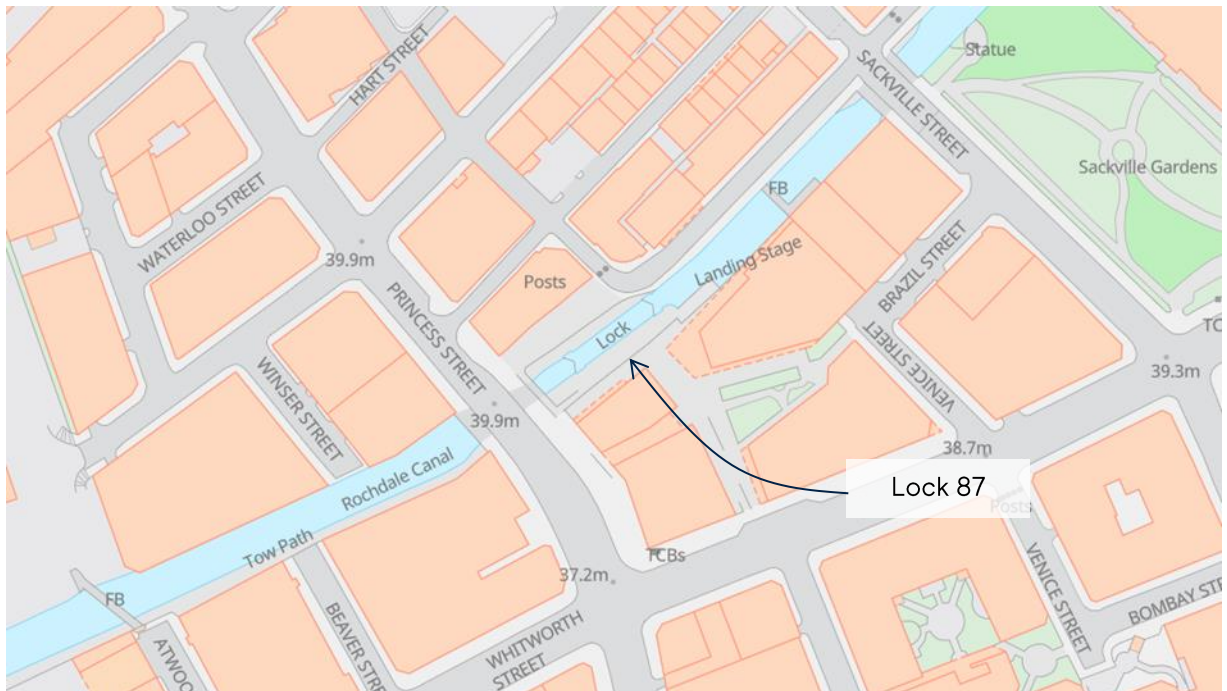


Figure 1 Location of lock 87 to east of Princess Street, Manchester

1.2. Proposal

- Replacement of bottom end lock gates
- Repairs to spalled and missing brickwork in the lock chamber and forebay
- Repositioning upstream heel grips
- Shortening of balance beam to reduce trapping hazard

A full description of the proposed works of maintenance can be seen in the accompanying design and access statement.

2. CURRENT POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES

The relevant legislative provisions relating to the historic environment are contained in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the NPPF, 2012, as amended.

2.1. Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the creation of a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest and sets out a framework for their protection.

In the case of the proposed works at lock 87 sections 7, 16, and 66, of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act are relevant:

- Section 7 prohibits works of alteration or extension to a listed structure without authorisation (listed building consent).
- Section 16 (2) makes it a statutory duty for a local planning authority, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works to a listed building, to; *'have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.'*
- Section 66 (1) sets out a similar duty for a local planning authority when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting.

Regard must therefore be had to both the desirability of preserving the fabric and character of the site's listed buildings, as well as the desirability of preserving their settings.

2.2. National Planning Policy Framework

National policy and guidance are set out in the Government's NPPF published in March 2012 and subsequently revised, the latest version being December 2024. The NPPF replaced the previous suite of national Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance Notes, and some circulars, including PPS5 which related to heritage and archaeology, with a single, more streamlined document.

The Framework is primarily aimed at guiding new and adaptive development rather than the repair of existing structures, however it establishes some relevant principles for managing the historic environment.

Paragraph 202 states that heritage assets are;

- ‘an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.’

Detailed policy on the historic environment is provided in section 16 *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*. The policies in this section refer to the concept of a ‘*heritage asset*’, which is defined as:

- ‘a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting considering in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’

Section 16 also places an emphasis on ‘*significance*’, defined as;

- ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting’.

Paragraph 203 states that;

- ‘Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account (*inter alia*):
 - The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;’

Paragraph 207 states that:

- ‘in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’.

This Statement sets out the significance of Lock 87 and should be used as the basis for the documentation required to be submitted in support of a formal application for listed building consent for the repair of this designated structure.

Paragraph 212 states that:

- ‘when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation’.

Paragraph 215 states that:

- 'where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use'.

2.3. Manchester's Local Development Framework

The Core Strategy, adopted in July 2012, sets out the strategy for preserving the historic environment (Policy EN 3).

The Strategy states 'Historic sites and areas of particular heritage value should be both safeguarded for the future and, where possible, enhanced both for their own heritage merits and as part of wider heritage regeneration proposals. Conservation areas . . . and buildings that are statutorily listed are protected under national legislation guidance.'

3. STATUTORY PROTECTION

Lock 87 is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act, 1990. Historic England record the following details:

- **Name:** Rochdale Canal Lock Number 87, to east of Princess Street, with Cast Iron Footbridge Beside Street
- **List entry Number:** 1247580
- **Grade:** II
- **Details:** Canal lock, including cast-iron footbridge over lower entry beside street. 1804-5, for Rochdale Canal Company; restored. Coursed squared sandstone, wooden gates. Chamber of 14-foot width with pairs of gates at both ends, ladder in centre of south side. Cast-iron footbridge crossing lower entry, with panelled sides. Fourth in series of 9 locks on extension linking former Rochdale Canal basin at Dale Street with Bridgewater Canal basin at Castlefield, all in working order. Forms group with boundary wall of Canal Street on north side (q.v.).

Boundary Wall to Rochdale Canal between Princess Street and Sackville Street

- **Name:** Boundary Wall to Rochdale Canal between Princess Street and Sackville Street Rochdale Canal
- **List entry Number:** 1247555
- **Grade:** II
- **Details:** Boundary wall between canal and street which served as towpath in this section. 1804. Millstone grit slabs, with rounded top.

To the immediate north west of lock 87 is the listed New Union Public House

- **Name:** New Union Public House
- **List entry Number:** 1247444
- **Grade:** II
- **Details:** Public house. Early C19, altered. Red brick, with painted render to ground floor, slate roof. Rectangular plan on island site, at right-angles to street. Two storeys and 3

windows, symmetrical; plinth, 1st-floor sill-band; segmental-headed doorway with set-in doorcase and panelled door; altered casement windows on both floors; inn sign on bracket at right-hand end of 1st floor. Long and slightly concave right-hand return wall with similar openings; back extension. Interior altered but contains some stained glass. Included for group value.

Lock 87 is within the Whitworth Street/Princess Street Conservation Area.

4. HISTORY OF THE SITE

The lock is situated on the Rochdale Canal. The Rochdale Canal is a trans-Pennine waterway, opened in sections between 1799 and 1804, with several eminent canal engineers involved in the design and construction process including William Crosley (Snr), John Rennie, and William Jessop, and numerous assistants.

In 1766, a group of businessmen met in the Union Flag Inn in Rochdale to propose a shorter route between Manchester and Leeds via Rochdale. James Brindley was commissioned to survey two routes: one via Bury and one more directly via Heywood. However, nothing came from this original exploration. It wasn't until 1790 that a meeting was called in Hebden Bridge to discuss extending the Calder and Hebble Navigation westwards that momentum started to gather again. The Duke of Bridgewater agreed for a junction between the Rochdale and the Bridgewater at Castlefield to compete with other trans-Pennine traffic. A revised Rochdale Canal Bill was passed in 1794 and construction began. By 1799 the canal was open between Sowerby Bridge and Todmorden and from Manchester to Rochdale. A proposed 1.6 mile tunnel between Walsden and Sladen was replaced by more locks and a higher summit level at 600 feet. The resulting shorter summit level meant that many reservoirs were required to prevent the summit level drying up and to maintain an available supply of water for the 92 locks.

The canal opened through to Manchester in 1804. This made it the first trans-Pennine canal route, as the Huddersfield, experiencing much difficulty in the Standedge Tunnel construction, did not open until 1811. The Leeds and Liverpool Canal, with a much longer route, was not fully opened until 1816.

In 1830 a railway surveyed by George Stephenson was proposed, following closely the route of the canal. When the Manchester and Leeds Railway opened in 1841, the canal company had to reduce tolls to retain business. The company resisted take-over bids from railway companies but leased the canal to a consortium of railway companies in 1855. The canal remained profitable for some time but by the twentieth century the tonnage being carried was in sharp decline. In 1937 the last boat made the through journey across the Pennines on the Rochdale Canal.

In 1952, the canal was closed apart from the short section between Castlefield and the Ashton Canal junction at Piccadilly. The Ashton was abandoned in 1962 and by 1965 the nine locks on the Rochdale through Manchester city centre were almost unusable. Enthusiastic supporters re-opened the Ashton in 1974 and the Rochdale Canal in Manchester was made good. The Rochdale Canal Society was formed to promote the restoration of the canal and in the 1980s and 1990s small scale work began to re-open stretches of the canal between Todmorden and Sowerby Bridge. This involved restoring bridges and locks to navigable condition.

The most major project was the construction of the new Tuel Lane lock and tunnel in Sowerby Bridge. The lock replaced two locks in an infilled section and, with a fall of almost 20 feet, is the deepest lock on the inland waterways system. In 1996 the canal was opened to navigation once again between Sowerby Bridge and the summit level. In 2000, the canal was transferred from the Rochdale Canal Company to the Waterways Trust. Funding of 23 million pounds was announced, mostly from the Millennium Commission and English Partnerships that would enable the remaining obstacles to be removed. In July 2002, the whole canal became navigable once again, almost 200 years after its original opening.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF LOCK 87

The lock is part of an industrial age transport system that remind us of the former industrial nature of Manchester during the nineteenth century. The lock provides historical value whilst its simple design using local materials provides architectural and aesthetic value.

The lock is largely unchanged in design and therefore it provides evidence as to how the challenge of moving boats up and down inclines was met in the late eighteenth century. In this respect the lock has evidential value. It is one of many locks on the Rochdale Canal in Manchester and therefore is not unique in providing this evidence.

The lock is situated in a busy part of the city close to places of work, residence and entertainment. It is on a busy pedestrian thoroughfare. It contributes much to the character of this part of the city and as such will have some communal value.

6. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1. Replacement of bottom end gates

Lock gates are a consumable fixture with an expected operational life span of approximately 25 years. The existing gates were installed in 2003 and are therefore nearing the end of their expected life-span. They have been inspected by an engineer as part of a routine maintenance programme and have been judged to be in poor condition.

The existing lock gates are not therefore part of the historic material. The lock gates are however fundamental to the operational lock and they must be replaced for the lock to remain operational.

The replacement gates will be of the same material and design of the existing gates. It is therefore judged that the replacement of the lock gates will have a neutral impact on the significance of the lock.

6.2. Repairs to spalled and missing brickwork in the lock chamber and forebay

The lock walls are a structural element which must be maintained in good condition. The walls are susceptible to damage caused by boat impact and adverse environmental conditions. It is necessary to replace the missing and unstable brickwork to ensure the continued integrity of the lock chamber.

Where possible the original bricks will be reused in the repair. Where there is a shortfall, a new brick has been chosen with advice from a brick specialist. The proposed brick matches in dimension and colour the existing bricks. The new bricks will be cleaner than the existing bricks that have stood in the canal for upwards of 200 years and they will therefore be more prominent until they have had a chance to discolour.

The repair of the brickwork is essential and is judged to have a neutral impact on the significance of the lock.

6.3. Repositioning upstream heel grips

Some lock gates can be heavy and require considerable effort to move. Heel grips are installed to reduce the likelihood of injury caused through manual handling. The location of the heel grips on this gate cannot contribute to safe operation as they are misaligned with the balance beam.

The Trust is committed to providing a safe environment for all the users of the canal, boaters, pedestrians and visitors alike.

The surfacing on this part of the lock comprises modern flag stones. They will be lifted and where possible reused. There will be no impact on original material of the lock. When the heel grips have been moved, there will be no alteration to the appearance of the lock. It is therefore judged that the impact on the significance of this proposal will be neutral.

6.4. Shortening of balance beam to reduce trapping hazard

The existing arrangement of the lock gate balance beam presents a significant trapping hazard at the wall. This could lead to serious injury should a pedestrian be stood at this position and an approaching boat strike a partially open gate closing the gate with force.

The Trust is committed to providing a safe environment for all the users of the canal, boaters, pedestrians and visitors alike.

The proposed change constitutes a minimum alteration to the appearance of the lock. As discussed earlier, the lock gates are regularly replaced; they are not part of the original material of the lock.

The warning signage is modestly sized and discreetly placed.

Neither of these proposals affect the original lock structure or original material and both can be undone in the future. Consequently these proposals to make the lock area safer are considered to have a neutral impact on the significance of the lock.

6.5. Impact on surrounding designated structures

The proposed works will result in a minimal change in the appearance of the lock that will be hardly noticeable. It is therefore judged that the proposed works will have a neutral impact on the setting of the listed wall and public house.

6.6. NPPF categories of harm

Paragraph 212 of the Framework identifies three categories of harm: less than substantial harm, substantial harm and total loss.

The works outlined in these proposals have been assessed as having a neutral impact on the significance of the listed structure. It is therefore judged that the proposed works will not cause harm to the significance of the listed lock.

7. JUSTIFICATION FOR WORKS

The proposed works can be categorised as:

- Maintenance to ensure the continued operation of the lock canal through Manchester;
- Works to ensure the safety of canal users.

The works of maintenance are essential to maintain an operational canal and have been specified so that there is minimal change to the appearance, design and to original material. The conservation of significance is based on appropriate routine maintenance.

This lock is close to a popular venue and on a busy pedestrian route and may therefore receive many visitors. The Trust is committed to providing a safe environment for all the users of the canal, boaters, pedestrians and visitors alike.