Rochdale Canal Lock No.89 (Tib Lock), on south side of Havelock Mills

Grade II listed

Heritage Statement



Introduction

Rochdale Canal Tib Lock No. 89 is an important city centre historic site closely adjoining the junction with the (now truncated) Manchester and Salford Junction Canal. Tib is a reference to the adjoining river. A programme of repair/refurbishment works are planned to properly preserve the listed building and ensure the lock's safe and continued navigability. It is suggested that much of this work does not affect the character or significance of the listed building but is included within the application for the Council's consideration.

Unfortunately, detailed records of canal restoration (acknowledged in the list description) have not been found. The movement of balance beam heel grips has the potential to compromise an understanding of canal lock operation and affect listed building character. However, the wear, patina and form of quadrant surfacing treatment (in comparison to original lock chamber coping stones) is noted; the heel grip unit/plate appears modern and the formal paving slabs appear to be a modern practical response

to the city centre location of the lock. It is also noted that gates (including timber balance beams) are regularly replaced (c. 25 years).

The Rochdale Canal (opened 1804) was the first trans-Pennine canal in the country. Spanning 32 miles with 91 locks, it connects Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, and Calderdale and played a pivotal role in the industrial revolution. The canal closed in 1952, with only a short section remaining active in central Manchester. However, volunteer restoration has breathed new life into this iconic waterway, reestablishing it as a vital part of the region's history and modern recreation.

'Rochdale Canal Lock Paddle Gear: Conservation Statement', Clarke M. (2004) discusses the history of the Rochdale Canal. It was built 1794-1804. Because it had virtually ceased to be used by the end of the Second World War, the canal was not included in those which were nationalised in 1948 and it remained independent until restoration was well under way.

The first proposal for a canal from Manchester to Sowerby Bridge came in 1766. James Brindley made two surveys, one as the canal was subsequently built and one for a line via Bury.

The Rochdale Canal Act passed in 1794; it was for a broad canal. William Jessop was retained as the Consulting Engineer, with William Crosley and Henry Taylor appointed Resident Engineers (Crosley died in 1796 and was replaced by Thomas Townshend, who in turn was replaced by William Crosley Junior in 1802). The first section of the canal, from Sowerby Bridge to Todmorden, opened on the 24 August 1798. In Manchester, the section from Castlefield to Piccadilly, opened at the end of 1799 with water supply from the newly opened Ashton Canal. The canal fully opened on the 21 December 1804 at a cost of c. £600,000.

The canal was successful, regularly producing a £4 dividend per share. By 1819 it was carrying 317,050 tons annually; coal, stone and corn being the main cargoes.

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.

The nine Rochdale Canal locks from Castlefield to Piccadilly were the link between the Bridgewater and Ashton Canals. The restoration of the Ashton Canal by volunteers in the 1960s and '70s, and subsequently by British Waterways, removed the possibility of the Manchester section of the Rochdale Canal being closed. It was the success of the

Ashton Canal restoration that led to similar plans for the Rochdale Canal, which subsequently reopened in 2002.

The list description for 'Rochdale Canal Lock No.89 (Tib Lock), on south side of Havelock Mills' identifies interest from building age, form, materials, association with the other locks in this section and its group value with 72-76 Great Bridgewater Street and Albion Street Bridge. It is also recognised that the lock has been 'restored':

SJ8397NE ROCHDALE CANAL 698-1/31/360 Lock No.89 (Tib Lock), on south side of Havelock Mills
GV II
Canal lock. 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 north side. Sixth 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 part of group with Havelock Mills (72-76 Great Bridgewater Street, q.v.) and with Albion Street Bridge to west (q.v.).

The site is within the functional/visual setting of the other listed locks in the Dale Street Basin – Caslefield Basin section and the 'canal-scape' setting of 13-17 Albion Street and The Ritz Dance Hall (both Grade II).

The site is within the functional/visual setting of the Whitworth Street and Princess Street and Castlefield Conservation Areas. The appraisal of the former on the Manchester City Council website identifies the historic importance of the Rochdale Canal to the cheap movement of cotton in all its stages of production and (following John Rennie's 1805 extension of the Rochdale Canal to connect with the 1760 built Bridgewater Canal) the cheap movement of coal to power cotton mill machinery. Whilst the canal is now only used for leisure traffic, it is an important ingredient in the regeneration efforts in this part of the city.

Map regression. The lock is shown in outline on the 'Plan of the Rochdale Canal from Manchester in the County of Lancaster to its Junction with the Calder and Hebble Navigation at Sowerby Bridge in the County of York: Surveyed in 1805 by W. Crossley'. A small square building is shown on the offside immediately to the east; the canal arm to the east is not shown; the reservoir to the south shown on later maps appears to be shown in outline.

The 1845 OS map shows the lock in outline, the canal arm, unidentified building complexes to the north and south and the reservoir; the small square building is not shown.

The 1888 OS map shows the lock in outline and identifies the buildings shown to the north and south on the 1845 OS map to be Havelock Mills (Braid & Umbrellas) and Gaythorn Dye Works. The canal arm is identified as the Manchester and Salford Junction Canal. Immediately adjoining the lock to the south is a 'Post' and 'Tib Lock House'.

Assessment of significance

NPPF (August 2026) HE5 identifies the importance of heritage asset significance assessment in decision making.

NPPF Annex B: Glossary identifies that significance is the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

• Archaeological interest: the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity;

• Historical interest: the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present – illustrative or associative; a material record of our nation's history; can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

• Architectural and artistic interest: design and aesthetics. The art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings (architectural); other human creative skill (artistic).

The Rochdale Canal has historical and communal value, illustrating the early development of the national canal network and was instrumental to the C19 industrialisation and urbanisation of inland Manchester and its satellite towns. Its continued use and operation (albeit recreational) reinforces historic significance.

The survival of much of Lock 89's traditional and mostly locally sourced materials and evidence of original construction techniques together with the distinctions of the Rochdale Canal has Archaeological and Architectural value. Proposed works have been designed to retain significance through minimum intervention to historic fabric and like for like repair/necessary replacement. This includes lock gates which typically have a lifespan of 25 years and are not considered historic fabric.

The relatively undocumented restoration of this lock, and the wear, patina and form of quadrant surfacing and treatment (including heel grip unit/plate) in comparison to original lock chamber coping stones, makes an assessment of retained fabric and design significance difficult.

The juxtaposition of the canal lock with other elements of the city's industrial past (including the Manchester and Salford Junction Canal arm) reinforces the significance of setting.

Nature of works

Proposed movement of towpath-side top gate cast iron heel grips to align with the end of the gate balance beam. It is suspected that the current misalignment is due to modern heel grips having been installed in the wrong location.

Movement of towpath-side and offside bottom gate cast iron heel grips to align with the end of gate balance beams if found to be necessary following gate replacement.

General repairs or necessary like for like replacement including:

replacement of the downstream gates, cill beams, quoins and pots;

reduce leakage through the headgates, looking at the mitre, cill and quoins as well as the gate.

masonry repairs and pointing in the chamber, particularly the downstream gate recesses (replace missing bricks around low water level) and the chamber walls below low water level;

inspect and repair/replace the ground paddles where necessary;

repair the offside ground paddle Pawl catch which is out of line;

check corrosion to lock ladders and fixings and replace if necessary;

bent handrail to be repaired;

whilst it is not expected, the engineer is to be called to site if a timber floor is found around the downstream gates (possible repair).

Conclusions

Works to the heel grips are required for public safety (lock gate operation); the continued use of the canal by boaters retains historic significance. The need for minimum intervention to the historic fabric has informed scheme design - particularly important as the extent of fabric and design significance is not known.

Therefore, whilst the scheme has positive (NPPF August 2026) elements, it is considered that there is the potential for harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building from alteration to heel grip locations (possible historic design). Therefore, some consideration has been made to the retention of a 'memory' of existing heel grip locations by the 'making good' of existing locations with stone setts

rather than slabs. However, this would appear to impact the simplicity and benefit of large unit stone slab paving in a city centre location and has been discounted. Furthermore, the recent acceptability of similar works at Lock 87 is noted (see Condition 4 of 144183/LO/2025).

The works do not impact the character or appearance (in setting or views) of adjoining conservation areas or the setting of nearby listed buildings.

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