

# **Urban Conservation and Design**

## **St. Andrews Dock**

### **Conservation Area Character Statement**

#### **Introduction**

St. Andrew's Dock was declared a Conservation Area in 1990 largely on account of its historic connections with Hull's deep sea fishing industry. It consists of the lock entrance to the former dock, land and buildings on each side and at the eastern end of the dock and a small part of the silted-up dock.

It is predominantly visible from the main approach road to the city, Clive Sullivan Way. Though it has considerable potential to be an attractive area due to its riverside location and some of its remaining buildings, dock-side features and streetscape, it is in great need of repair and enhancement.

#### **History**

St. Andrew's Dock was originally designed for the coal trade but by the time it opened in 1883 it was earmarked solely for the use of the fishing industry which, with the development of steam powered trawlers and of the railway network, was undergoing a period of rapid expansion. The dock extension was opened in 1897. By the 1930s road transport was challenging rail and the last fish train ran in 1965. The last boom period in the industry was in the early 1970s, but by this time the fish market buildings on the north side of the dock were in need of repair. With the expansion of the freezer trawler fleet it was decided to move the fish docks to new buildings at Albert Dock in 1975 and St. Andrew's Dock was closed. This move unfortunately coincided with the declaration by Iceland of a 200 mile limit, the outbreak of the last Cod War, and a decline in the industry from which it has never recovered.

During the 1980s several factors led to changes in the use of land in the St. Andrews Dock and Dock extension areas, such as containerisation and the concentration of port activities in King George and Queen Elizabeth Docks to the east, the construction of Clive Sullivan Way as the major road into the city from the west and the sudden prominence that this gave to the western docks area, and the trend with increased car ownership towards out of town shopping and leisure uses previously concentrated in the City Centre. Filling of the dock itself began in the late 1980s.

The small dock-related industries located mainly on the south side of the dock either followed the fishing industry to Albert Dock or closed altogether, although a small nucleus of industries remained for some time at the eastern end of the dock, associated mainly with the ship-repair activities still taking place in William Wright Dock. As buildings become vacant they were quickly vandalised, tendering to encourage the remaining firms to move out.

As outlined above, the history of St. Andrew's Dock is very closely associated with the history of the deep-sea trawling industry, and as the dock itself began to disappear through the development of the site for retail and leisure uses, many Hull people felt that a part of their history was also disappearing, a history with which many of them had close family ties. A strong campaign was therefore launched to save something of the dock and its surroundings, both to explain to future generations what the industry was about and to preserve the memory of the many people who had sacrificed their lives to it.

In December 1990 the area in the vicinity of the lockpit was designated a Conservation Area. This was considered to be the part of the dock area which had retained the strongest links with the previous uses and where there was the best opportunity to preserve what remained of the buildings and features of interest.

#### **Special character of the area**

The area has managed to retain some of its former dockside character. The main positive elements are:-

- i. streetscape imparted by the massing and alignment of the Marr building and the buildings to the south astride the access road, the buildings along the side of the former lockpit, and the Lord Line building along the end of the former dock and the alleyway up from the Humber towards the Marr building;
- ii. the spatial enclosure at the eastern end of the former dock presented by the mass of the derelict Lord Line building and the Marr building;
- iii. the strong lines of the former lock pit and what remains of the walls of the former dock;
- iv. the vicinity of buildings, many small scale, their form being imparted by their original use with, for instance loading cranes over doors at first floor level and external staircases. None is particularly distinguished, apart from the tower of the former pumping station, which is a strong element in the view along the access road, but they read as a group;
- v. interesting views over the River Humber, from Clive Sullivan Way as well as from within the Conservation Area, including glimpses down alleyways as well as wide vistas from the riverside walkway and the vantage point at the entrance to the lock pit and of shipping activity in the nearby William Wright Dock: the bustle contrasting with the quiet desertion of St. Andrew's Dock with ships terminating the vista eastwards along the access road;
- vi. interesting evocative details including such as bollards, capstans and winding gear for the derelict lock gates; glimpses of railway lines within road surfacing, a small crane adjacent to a former engineering building and surfacing material including stone setts.

Only one building is listed as of architectural or historic interest, the hydraulic tower and pump house near the south east corner of the area [grade 2]. Built around 1870 it provided hydraulic power to operate the lock gates. The massive brick and ashlar tower formerly supported a tank to provide the head of water required.

As throughout most of Hull, brick is the predominant material, with stone used only where extra strength is required, with slate roofs and wooden details such as window and door cases and gutters. Structural steelwork and flat roofs are evident in the more modern industrial buildings and the Lord Line Building is predominantly reinforced concrete with steel windows. Attractive features are the oriel windows to buildings overlooking the dock entrance which must in the past have given a good view of approaching trawlers for the previous office users.

The setting of the buildings is still recognisably a dock-side one, with a former entrance lock, a silted up but not completely filled dock, former lockgates and detailing already referred to.

Attractively designed railings have increased safety for visitors to the river front, a necessary measure if more people are to be attracted to the area, though one inevitably reducing the exhilarating feeling of exposure and danger associated with docks and water. These will be removed when the National Rivers Authority installs flood walls, again a necessary protection to enable reuse of the area but one further reducing the area's character. It is intended that careful design of the wall should ensure that as far as possible it is a visible asset.

The south side of the entrance to the lock pit has in recent years become the site of annual service of remembrance for lost trawlermen, and a memorial plaque on a stone plinth is sited here.

### **Negative elements**

The main element detracting from the character of the area is undoubtedly the very poor condition of many of buildings. Most of the smaller buildings are derelict or semi-derelict and suffering from trespass, vandalism and arson. Others are in need of substantial repairs.

Only one of the cluster of small buildings adjacent to the lock pit is still in use, by a firm of photographers. A group of small engineering firms occupies the buildings adjacent to the hydraulic tower. Apart from these it is only the larger, more modern buildings which are occupied, by the Sea Fish Industry Authority (a 1970's building), Globe Engineering (Hull) Ltd. (1932) and J. Marr and Sons Ltd. adjacent to the Lord Line building on the former dockside.

Other negative elements include:

- i. the poor environmental quality and lack of upkeep of the floorscape, with patchy areas of stone, tarmac and concrete, and areas of missing setts;
- ii. dump of rubbish within buildings, in the dock itself and on neglected and overgrown land;
- iii. haphazard parking of vehicles in connection with the remaining businesses;
- iv. the derelict timber staithe on the Humber frontage. Its dangerous condition prevents access along the river front east of Globe Engineering's premises and detracts from the appearance of the area;
- v. the large gap to the west of the Sea Fish Industry building, occasioned by demolition;
- vi. the road across the former lock pit;
- vii. the silted up former dock.

### **Conclusion**

The special character of this area rests largely on three elements; (1) its historical connection with the fishing industry and those remaining features which are evidence of its previous use as a dock, (2) its remaining streetscape and building groups and (3) its riverside location with views out over the river and of remaining ship-related activities.

It is a potentially attractive area whose prominent location and close proximity to leisure uses in the 'St. Andrew's Quay' development mean that people could be encouraged to enjoy it but currently the very poor condition of the buildings and overall appearance are a deterrent to visitors.

It is of a considerable historic interest in the minds of local people but needs very substantial investment if its character is to be preserved and enhanced and its history interpreted to enable it to be understood by future generations. It is likely that this can only be achieved by redevelopment of the majority of the area in a manner reflecting the essence of the physical form of the area's special character.

Approved by the Planning & Design Committee, 23rd October, 1996