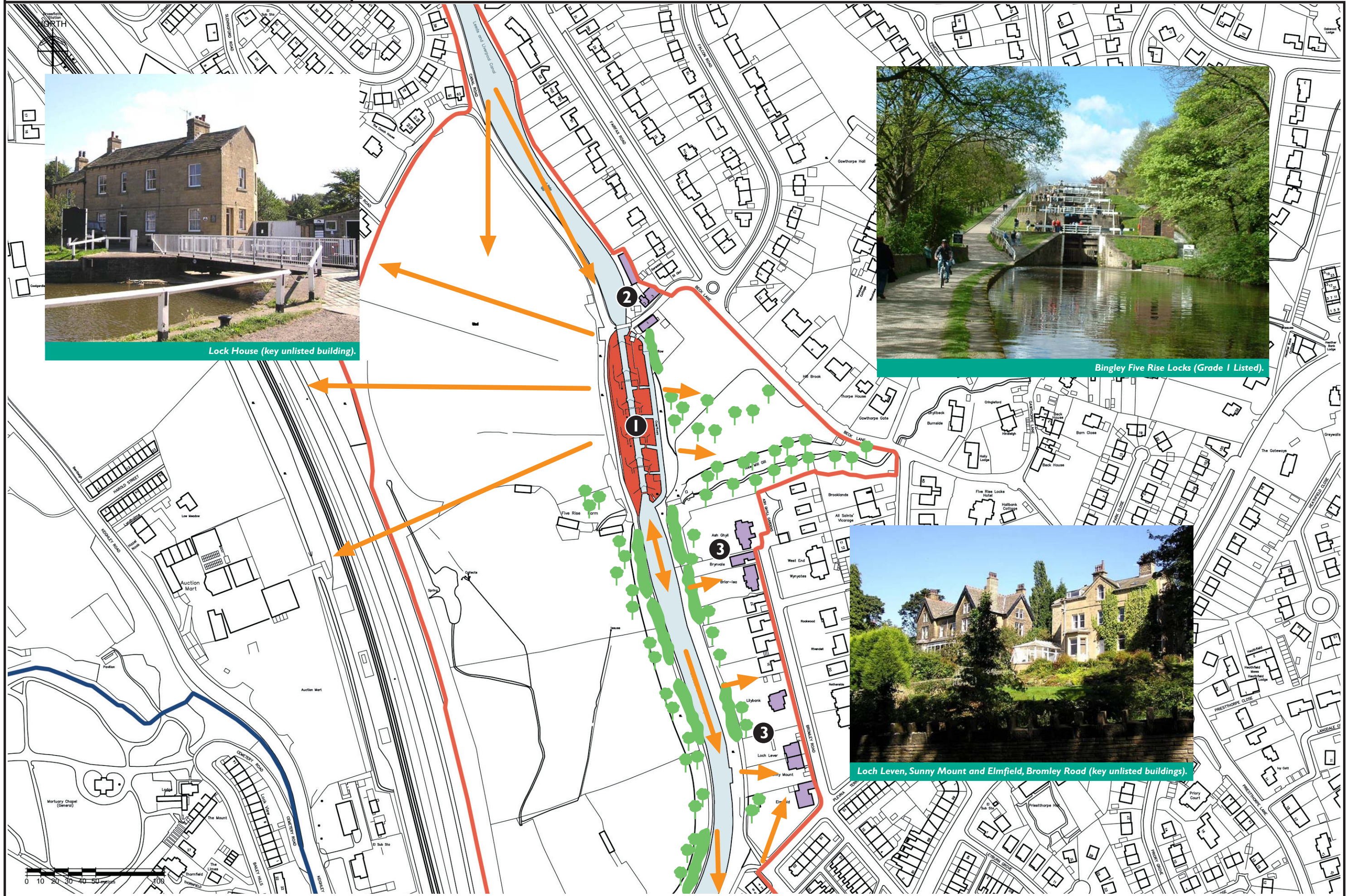


Map 14: Bingley Five Rise Locks



Lock House (key unlisted building).



Bingley Five Rise Locks (Grade I Listed).



Loch Leven, Sunny Mount and Elmfield, Bromley Road (key unlisted buildings).



Character of the Area

This section of canal includes the Five Rise Locks, which is perhaps the most well known and frequently visited canal structure on the Bradford section of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal. The setting of the canal in this section varies quite widely. On its northern approach to the locks the setting is quite suburban, with houses lining both sides of the canal. The towpath is wide, gravelled and mostly in good condition. Large numbers of boats tend to moor at the top of the locks and this makes a characterful contribution to the feel of the place. From the elevated position at the top of the locks there are excellent panoramic views across Bingley and the Aire valley.

To the northwest and west of the locks are open pastoral fields that drop away steeply to the valley bottom. From this vantage point the church tower in Bingley is discernable, as are Damart Mills to the south. To the east of the locks is New Mill Gill, an area of dense mature woodland that provides an attractive leafy backdrop to views of the locks. Vistas up the hillside to the east tend to be filtered by buildings and trees standing alongside the canal.

The traditional buildings standing at the top of the lock were historically associated with the canal and make an important contribution to the character and almost timeless quality that the locks possess.

From the bottom of the locks the views and vistas of the structure itself are quite spectacular - the continuity and quality of the stone locks climbing the hillside combined with the quality of the setting is quite exceptional. The general area appears well kept and the towpath in good condition. The area is well visited and used by anglers, walkers and cyclists.

To the south of the locks the canal continues its course southwards towards Bingley through an almost continuous tunnel of tree canopies. The mature trees standing in the gardens of the houses on Bromley Road and in the open land to the west make an important contribution to the sense of place and character of this part of the canal conservation area.

Features of the Area

1. Bingley Five Rise Locks: The Five Rise Locks are a Grade I listed structure and generally considered to be one of the finest feats of canal engineering in the country. Built c. 1774 to the designs of engineer John Longbotham, the lock is comprised of five locks in a stairway series that is preserved in a virtually unaltered condition and still in use to this day.

The series of locks raise the level of the canal 60ft and each lock holds 80,000-90,000 gallons of water. The locks are principally constructed of large dressed stones that form the retaining walls and rebates for the gates. The first (bottom) lock has widely splayed sloping wall to either side to allow the water to channel outwards. The other four locks have ramped walls with curving platforms accessed via flights of stone steps on either side.

The locks themselves are constructed from huge, heavy lengths of treated timber and iron and are operated manually from timber balance beams and through a series of gears that open sluice doors. Set into the ground beneath the balance beams are stone setts that allow better grip. Extending across the end of each lock is a narrow pedestrian bridge with a timber deck and handrails. The woodwork, which includes the handrails, pedestrian bridges, balance beams and locks are all painted in a distinctive black and white colour scheme. Iron ladders allow access down to the bottom of each lock for emergency or repair. Running off at right angles from each lock is an overflow channel that runs down the slope parallel with the canal before re-entering the waterway just beyond the first lock.

To the north of the locks are is a mooring area with stone copings and iron mooring points on both sides of the waterway. The locks are well maintained and the grass bank well kept. Several boats a day come through the locks, each needing assistance from the full-time lock keeper. As a piece of living heritage, the locks are quite exceptional.

2. Lock cottages, Lock House and former stables at top of Five Rise Locks: Lock House (no. 1 Beck Lane) stands immediately adjacent to the swing bridge and was reputedly built in 1885 from a dismantled Liverpool warehouse, which was brought stone by stone along the canal (Firth, 1999). The building does indeed have a slightly industrial appearance, having a chamfered corner to the canal and a tall north-facing elevation that is fenestrated with single and two-pane sash windows. The south facing elevation is similarly fenestrated and the building has a good stone slate roof with stone copings to the west gable, corniced chimneystacks and a subservient extension to the east gable.

Opposite Lock House are two small semi-detached stone cottages, nos. 2 and 3 Lock Cottages, Beck Lane. These cottages probably date to the first half of the 19th century. They



Top: 2-3 Lock Cottages.
Middle: Ash Ghyll, Bromley Road (key unlisted building).
Lower: The former stables at the top of Five Rise Locks are now a cafe.

Map 14: Bingley Five Rise Locks

appear to be present on the first O.S. map of the area, published in 1852 and display some typical vernacular architectural detailing. The cottages are constructed from dressed, well coursed stone and have a stone slate roof, gable stacks and windows with stone heads and sills. Sadly the houses have been much altered, with render applied to the gable end, the addition of a modern rain shelter over the door and replacement windows and doors. On the western gable end of the cottages is a smaller, single storey stone building that may have been a carpenter's workshop around the start of the 20th century (Firth, 1999)

The Café located on the eastern side of the canal is situated in a long, low building that faces onto the stone coped moorings and canal. The building is constructed from dressed stone with a good, long stone slate roof but appears to have been substantially reconstructed in recent years. This building was formerly used as the Canal Company's stables where towing hoses were fed and rested. Now in use as a café for visitors to the locks, the building has a regular series of windows and doors that may have formed the original, now altered stable door openings. Though the appearance of the building indicates that it may have been built around the middle of the 19th century, it does not appear on local maps until after 1892.

3. Bromley Road, Bingley: This group of houses standing on the western side of Bromley Road face westwards across long sloping gardens onto the canal. The houses themselves are substantial in size and range from architecturally interesting examples of Victorian and Arts and Crafts influenced designs dating from the late 19th century through to several mid/late 20th century additions to the group that are less historically interesting. The traditional properties, principally Ash Ghyll, Elmfield, Suny Mount, Lilybank and Loch Leven mostly have high front elevations incorporating gabled attic rooms into their two-storey frontages. These houses generally retain a high degree of original features, such as stained glass stair lights, sash windows, tall corniced chimneystacks and openwork verandas. Though only partially visible from the canal and towpath, these houses are complementary to the natural setting of the canal and are part of the historical development of Bingley as a thriving mill town. The long gardens to these houses contain a number of good mature trees and these make a strong positive contribution to the setting of the canal and the conservation area.

Issues

- ▶ Lack of interpretation for visitors and users of the locks.
- ▶ Loss of traditional details e.g. windows, doors to the lock cottages and former stables.
- ▶ Some areas of potholing and poor quality surfacing on the canal towpath to the north of the locks.