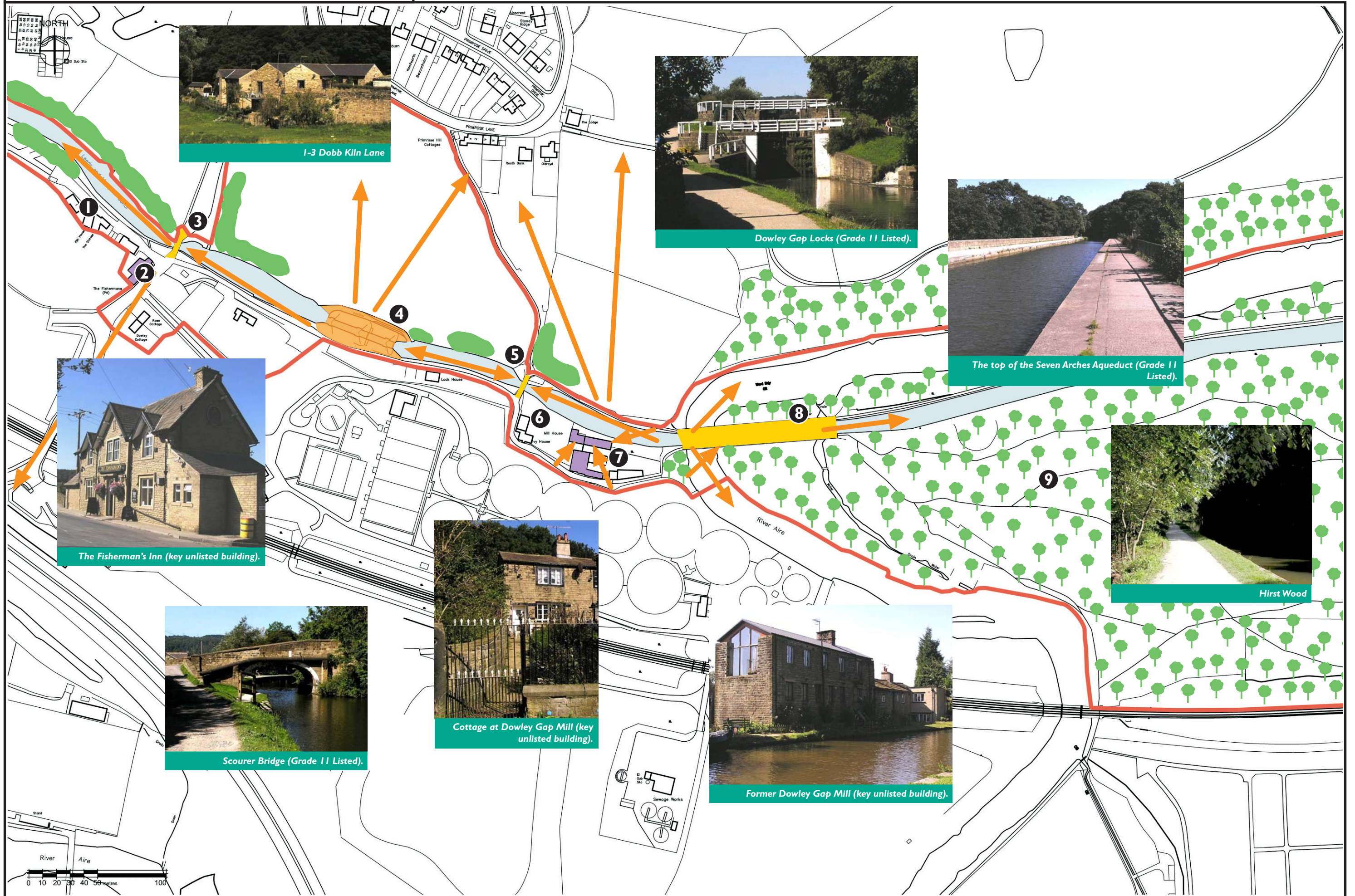


# Map 17: Dowley Gap and Hirst Wood



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### Character of the Area

The mixture of stone built buildings around Scourer Bridge stand in a small clearing, with the northern bank of the canal heavily wooded. There were once three wharves at Scourer Bridge, with the largest ones on the southern side

stretching as far as Dowley Gap Locks to the east and a similar distance west. It appears that there was limited warehousing associated with the wharves, with 1 and 3 Dobb Kiln Lane the only possible former warehouses. The goods loaded and unloaded at these wharves related to agriculture. Until the second half of the 19th century, the only structures near Scourer Bridge were limekilns on the site of 1 Dobb Kiln Lane. It is probable that urban manure and sewage was shipped to this area and (on different boats) produce taken to the markets of nearby towns such as Bingley, Shipley and Bradford. All that remains of the wharves is a stretch of broad copingstones and mooring posts which are now the waterbus stop. At this point the sandy gravel towpath is broad and the grassed verges clean and well kept.

To the east of the original packhorse bridge over the canal (number 206) the canal area is briefly flanked by dense woodland before opening up at Dowley Gap Locks. To the south is a sewage works which is fairly visible over its boundary wall, while to the north is a rugged pastoral field which provides an important immediate setting for the locks and retains traditional boundary walls and old monolithic gateposts.

Past another old packhorse bridge (207), is a group of vernacular style buildings associated with the former Dowley Gap Mill. The mill itself is an excellent example of how modern interventions can enhance a historic building.

The gravel towpath turns to concrete as the canal is carried over the River Aire by the unsympathetically modernised Seven Arches aqueduct, one of the most substantial pieces of engineering along this early stretch of the canal. From here the canal is enclosed by the attractive landscape of Hirst Wood.

### Features of the Area

**1. 1-3 Dobb Kiln Lane:** 3 Dobb Kiln Lane stands on the site of the Dowley Gap limekilns, which are the only structures at Dobb Kiln Lane recorded in the 1852 Ordnance Survey. By the time of the 1893 Ordnance Survey, 1 and 3 Dobb Kiln Lane had been built, with number 2 presumably appearing shortly after. The buildings have been sensitively extended since and are built into the hillside, concealing their full 2-storey height. The buildings are architecturally plain, with nothing by way of ornament. The slate roofs lack chimneys, which suggest that the buildings were associated with the adjacent wharf and were not built as dwellings.

**2. The Fisherman's Inn:** Dating probably from the 1880s, this 3 bay purpose built public house has a mixture of vernacular revival and Arts and Crafts detailing. The building is faced with pitch-faced stone which contrasts with the ashlar dressings, which include quoins at the angles. The diminishing stone slate roof overhangs the walls and shaped timber brackets support its soffits. Each of the bays along the front elevation is gabled. The wider central bay breaks slightly forward. At first floor is a pair of mullioned 2 pane timber sash windows in plain ashlar reveals. Below this is the main doorway with projecting ashlar pilasters and shaped brackets carrying a plain cornice. At ground floor the flanking bays contain large window openings with modern glazing and hoodmoulds. The single first floor sash windows are surmounted by an unusual triangular area of glazing with diagonal glazing bars.

**3. Scourer Bridge or Fisherman's Bridge (205):** This Grade II Listed stone built bridge is very similar to its contemporary, Dowley Gap Changeline Bridge. It has an elliptical horse shoe arch which is lined with chamfered voussoirs, and parapets which are coped with gently sloping triangular stones. The northern end of this road bridge is higher owing to the topography.

**4. Dowley Gap Locks (20 & 21):** These 2 rise locks were built c.1773 and are Grade II\* Listed for their architectural and historic interest and group value with the other locks at Bingley. The locks raise the level of the canal a total of about 20 feet. Each lock is of wrought sandstone construction with large block copings. The lower lock (20) has vertical masonry to which the sides of the canal are linked via coped sloped walls. The upper lock (21) has curved masonry. Set against the masonry to either side of each lock are stone stairways with painted timber diamond railings attached to square posts with iron 'feet'. The same railings can be found along the top of the masonry to either side of the gates. The painted timber and iron gates and balance beams have iron gears attached to them. Below each balance beam is a quadrant of stone setts with raised stones to allow a better purchase. The stone walls of the locks are curved to follow the plan shape of the quadrants. Over the tail of each

lock is a timber plank bridge with painted timber railings, uprights and guardrails. To the north of the locks is an overgrown stone lined overflow channel. To the south is an ugly rolled metal container which is used as the lock keeper's hut.

**5. Dowley Gap Changeline Bridge (206):** This Grade II Listed stone built bridge is contemporary with the canal (c.1773). The towpath crosses to the opposite bank across this bridge. The arch over the waterway is elliptical and has chamfered voussoirs. The parapets have shallow triangular copings which are held together by iron staples.

**6. Cottages at Dowley Gap Mill:** Built as 3 cottages, it appears that they are now a single dwelling called Mill House. These vernacular style cottages are probably contemporary with (if not earlier than) the attached mill of 1818. The cottages are each 2 bays with the timber board doors recessed in plain stone openings. Next to each door is a pair of mullioned windows with plain stone surrounds, with identical openings at first floor. The side hung casement windows add to the traditional appearance of the cottages. The roof is stone. To the rear is an out of scale and out of character rendered and painted 2 storey flat roofed modern extension which is unfortunately highly visible along the canal. The cottages have large gardens with traditional flat and chamfer coped boundary walls.

**7. Dowley Gap Mill:** Built as a worsted mill in 1818 by Matthew and Thomas Walker (Firth, 1999), by c.1890 Dowley Gap Mill was disused. In the mid-1990s the building was converted to at least one dwelling and a lot of effort has gone into the design of this conversion to make sure that the modern interventions are of a high quality and sufficiently strong character such that they enhance the appearance of the mill. The 2 storey, 6 bay traditional stone elevation of the mill remains in place alongside the canal, but at its gable is a recessed large modern window with timber work which carries a rolled metal roof which surrounds the remains of the old chimney and has the appearance of floating over the building. On the yard side of the mill, one of the bays has been replaced with a modern metal-sided bay which juts out of the façade at a sharp angle. This projection contains the main timber board door to the building and the upper floors have large areas of glazing which mimic the appearance of the old loading bays further along the elevation. This side of the mill is 3 storeys in height owing to the fall of the land away from the canal.

To the south of the converted part of the mill, and forming two sides of the mill yard, is an L-plan 2 storey industrial building which is probably contemporary with the mill shed. The building appears to be disused, as many of its openings are blocked and the building has a general air of neglect. The main body of the building is 6 bays long and has an undulating corrugated roof. There are plain window openings, a stone gutter shelf and at the

southernmost bay is a first floor loading door with metal hoist in place. The blocked small square window openings are almost exclusively at first floor level.

**8. Seven Arches Aqueduct:** Engineered by John Longbotham to the plan of James Brindley, the Seven Arches Aqueduct was built c.1773 with James Rhodes of Shipley a contractor. The Grade II Listed Building carries the Leeds-Liverpool Canal 30ft over the River Aire. The voussoired segmental arches have a stone string above them. Along its northern side, the aqueduct is topped by a parapet with a shallow triangular coping and at its foot and another stone string, but the northern side is topped with inappropriate railings. Along the viaduct, the towpath is surfaced with concrete, which is also used for the remaining copings.

**9. Hirst Wood:** Dating from ancient times, Hirst Wood is a picturesque oak and birch woodland. Today the wood is crossed by a number of footpaths and its use as a leisure destination dates back at least to the early 20th century, when the stretch of the canal alongside the wood was a popular spot for swimming (Firth, 1999). The dense woodland forms a peaceful setting for the canal and emphasises the gap between Bingley and Shipley/Saltaire. At the western end of Hirst Wood is a long disused sandstone quarry, the stone from which would have been loaded straight onto a canal boat.

### Issues

- ▶ Concrete towpaths and plain modern railings at Seven Arches Aqueduct.
- ▶ Potholed towpath east of Scourer Bridge.
- ▶ Inappropriate modern door and window details to some of the unlisted buildings.
- ▶ Vacant and underused buildings near Dowley Gap Mill.
- ▶ Inappropriate boundary features to some properties.
- ▶ Poor condition of track and footpaths by Dowley Gap Mill.