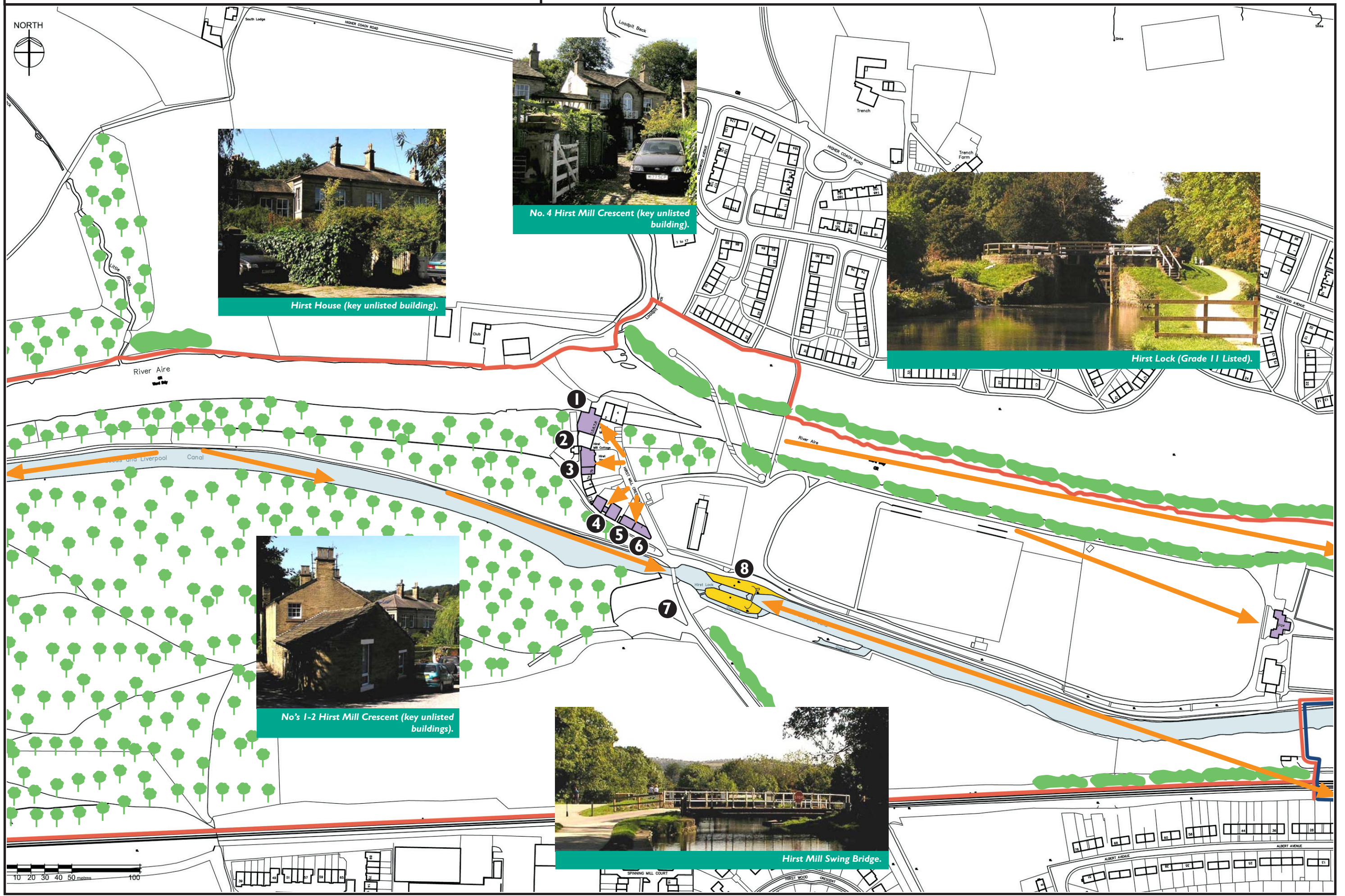


# Map 18: West of Saltaire - Hirst Mill and Hirst Lock



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### Character of the Area

The enclosed, tranquil and leafy atmosphere of Hirst Wood and the wooded southern bank of the River Aire continues for some distance and belies the fact that the surrounding area is principally urban. The neatly kept grass verge between the canal and broad white gravel towpath tapers to a point so that the towpath adjoins the coped bank of the canal into which mooring posts are set. By this point, Hirst Mill Bridge is visible in the distance, with more trees visible beyond it.

The dense woodland at either side of the canal ends at Hirst Mill Bridge, here, vistas open up to the south and southeast as far as the railway embankment, which conceals the suburban housing to the south, while the trees around the grounds of Salts Sports Association and the banks of the River Aire at the edge of the field of vision to the north. The tower of Saltaire United Reform Church is just visible above the canopy of the trees to the east. The mill, cottages, houses and coach houses at Hirst Mill Crescent form an attractive group of traditional buildings which mostly retain their traditional character. The character of the area is enhanced by features such as stone setted drives and entrances, coped boundary walls and monolithic gateposts. This is juxtaposed with the potholed gravel/broken tarmac surface of the private road in front of the houses. The lack of development in the vicinity and the abundance of trees makes these buildings feel like an industrial hamlet in an enviable location, with the Hirst Lock and the canal and River Aire on either side.

### Features of the Area

**1. Hirst Mill:** Hirst Mill is known to have been in existence prior to 1700 as a corn mill, using the water of the River Aire to turn a water wheel and grind corn. Paper was later made there in addition to corn grinding (the 1852 Ordnance Survey records this), but by 1893 the mill was used for manufacturing 'Machine Towels' but it is unclear what this means. The mill buildings standing today were built in the second half of the



19th century with some development and alteration associated with their conversion to flats which has been done with a minimal impact on the character of the mill. The main mill shed is 3 storeys in height and is 4 bays wide with a north light roof. A coped parapet conceals the north lights and the upper floors have traditional industrial style 12 pane casement windows. The ground floor contains a number of garage openings, but this has been sensitively done as the doorways stand under broad segmental arches and the doors painted vertical board double doors which are recessed in their openings. The lower building, which straddles a channel of the River Aire, has a modern tile roof but otherwise retains its character.

**2. Hirst Mill Cottage:** Classed as part of Hirst Mill on the 1893 Ordnance Survey, this mid-19th century house has a blue slate roof, and coped chimney, but its traditional appearance is compromised by the modern style windows and front conservatory extension which are both made out of unsuitable modern materials.

**3. Hirst House and 5-7 Hirst Mill Crescent:** The pair of houses (Hirst House and 7 Hirst Mill Crescent) and row of 3 cottages (5-7a Hirst Mill Crescent) were built together, probably in the 1860s. The houses and cottages stand behind long leafy gardens and features such as the setted drives and monolithic gatepiers contribute positively to the street scene. Hirst House and 7 Hirst Mill Crescent stand under a pavilion slate roof with 3 full height moulded cornice chimneystacks. Below this is a deep entablature with a moulded stone cornice gutter. Together, the houses do not form a symmetrical elevation, but Hirst House does have a symmetrical 3 bay frontage. The doorway is flanked by canted bay windows with a dentilled entablature and at first floor identical mullioned pairs of sash windows flank a single tall single pane timber sash window. A cill band links the first floor windows of Hirst house and 7 Hirst Mill Crescent. 7 Hirst Mill Crescent has a narrow 2 bay frontage which is less ornate than that of Hirst House but also retains traditional features and details such as the 2 pane timber sash windows. 5-7a Hirst Mill Crescent is an arc of 3 stone built stone roofed cottages. These cottages are much plainer in their architecture than Hirst Mill House and number 7, reflecting their original lower status. Some houses retain original door and window details while others have unsuitable style modern replacements.

**4. No's 3-4 Hirst Mill Crescent:** These former coach houses are dated 1861 and probably served Hirst House. There was probably originally a sweeping drive in front of the coach houses, the position of which is indicated by the gateways with traditional style timber gates, monolithic gatepiers with dentilled capitals and setted entrances. Prior to their conversion into dwellings, it appears that the coach house was a single long, barn-like building with Classical style decorations and that the central portion of the building was mostly demolished. 3-4 Hirst Mill Crescent are 3 bay houses which are linked by the rebuilt large semi-circular

archway of the demolished central portion of the building, forming an attractive and unique centrepiece to the houses. The arch is voussoired and the keystone is dated. Above the arch is a radiating timber frame which carries a small hipped stone roof over the archway and links the houses. The houses have stone roofs and corniced chimneys. The central bay of each house breaks forward slightly and is topped by a broken pediment which is carried by paired modillion dentil brackets. Below the pediment is a round-headed opening, possibly formerly a loading door, with a small stone balcony at its foot. The glazing of this opening is traditional in style, but is made of modern materials. Below the balcony is a plain stone doorway. The flanking bays retain plain window openings with Saltaire style 3 over 6 pane timber sash windows.



**5. No.2 Hirst Mill Crescent:** This 3 bay house is styled very much like 3-4 Hirst Mill Crescent. It has a stone roof and plain corniced chimneys, a stone gutter shelf and plain window openings with Saltaire style 3 over 6 pane timber sash windows. The original character of the house is compromised by the large stone built stone

roofed single storey lean-to extension to the front with a modern style door opening. Nonetheless, this is an important building and retains a good triangular coped boundary wall and traditional wrought iron gate at the foot of its attractive garden.

**6. No.1 Hirst Mill Crescent:** This stone roofed single storey cottage is shaped to follow the line of Hirst Mill Crescent and the canal towpath. The tall window opening in the gable end might have been a loading door, suggesting that the building was used as either a workshop or a small storage area for the Hirst Mill. The windows on the front elevation are early 20th century leaded and stained glass single pane timber sash windows with exuberant Art Nouveau style glazing.

**7. Hirst Mill Swing Bridge (207):** This manually opened swing bridge has plain modern metallic railings and a tarmac carriageway.

**8. Hirst Lock (19):** This single rise lock raises the canal 10' 2" to a height of 216ft above sea level (Firth, 1999). Up until the mid-20th century there was a 2 storey lock keeper's cottage between the lock and Hirst Mill Swing Bridge with another building which might have been stables to the south. Across Hirst Lane from the lock keeper's cottage was what might have been Hirst Farm, which in the early decades of the 20th century was a destination for working class families on the weekends and bank

holidays with horse rides, home made ice cream and a café (Firth, 1999). No trace of any of these buildings remains. The lock and its overflow channel have coped vertical stone walling throughout. The retaining walls underneath the quadrants under the balance beams of the lower gates follow the curved shape of the quadrant. A stone staircase with bevelled handrails on square posts with iron feet leads down from the tail bridge and quadrants to the towpath. The timber of the railings and the tail bridge has diamond section handrails and is a mixture of old painted joinery and oil preserved joinery, the latter being traditional along the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. The pound in between the gates has mushroom shaped mooring posts along its copings and stone surfacing with heel grips cover the quadrants underneath the balance beams of the upper gates.

### Issues

- ▶ The inappropriate character and appearance of modern development.
- ▶ The modern materials and style of Hirst Mill Bridge.
- ▶ The poor quality road surface of Hirst Mill Crescent.
- ▶ Inappropriate door and window details to some of the unlisted buildings.
- ▶ Some copingstones are missing along the canal bank.
- ▶ The low quality modern character of the footbridge over the Aire.
- ▶ Lack of maintenance to Hirst Lock.