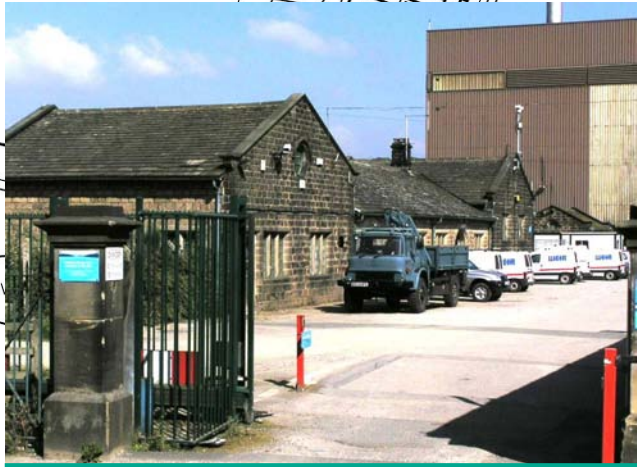


Map 26: Esholt Sewage Works



Esholt Sewage Works contains a diverse range of buildings constructed during the course of the 20th century.



Esholt Sewage Works; this canal-side building displays interesting Edwardian Neo-Baroque characteristics.



Carved stone gateposts at the entrance to Esholt Sewage Works.



Wooded section of canal alongside Buck Wood.



Map 26: Esholt Sewage Works



Top: Strangford Swing Bridge, Esholt.
Above: Dense woodland on the west side of the canal.
Bottom Right: The northern approach to Esholt Sewage Works and the Strangford Swing Bridge.

Character of the Area

The canal continues along a gently meandering course through dense woodland. Despite a fairly constant stream of passers by, this area feels quite secluded and very detached from the nearby urban areas. The broad towpath, which to the north of Strangford Swing Bridge is surfaced with compacted earth and to the south with white packed gravel, is flanked by rugged, clean grassed verges. The verge to the west has grown over the coping stones along the canal, apart from two long stretches by Esholt Sewage Works where the copings are clear of vegetation, and a stretch to the north where the canal is lined by metallic piling.

Esholt Sewage Works is a very large site which is mostly open space with densely wooded fringes. The majority of the buildings are clustered around the courtyard by Strangford Swing Bridge. Those which lie outside of the conservation area are modern and very functional in their appearance and are frequently a poor contrast to the historic buildings which lie within the conservation area. For long stretches the boundary of this site alongside the towpath is a chain link fence. As would be expected, the sewage works smells unpleasant and this stench pervades a fair stretch of the canal.

Features of the Area

1. Strangford or Esholt Swing Bridge (211b): Strangford Farm stood on the site of Esholt Sewage Treatment Works and this bridge allowed access from the farm to fields on the opposite side of the canal via Field Wood. Today, the bridge is used by vehicles travelling between the Sewage Works and the centre of Thackley along a modern roadway, Ainsbury Avenue. Esholt Bridge is one of the few genuinely traditional swing bridges in the conservation area; it is manually operated, and the iron structure with outward leaning iron railings carries a timber board surface which is held in place by iron straps. The turning area walls are stone with stone copings and traditional oil preserved timber railings with iron feet.

2. Esholt Sewage Works: The sewage works was established on this site in the first decades of the 20th century and this is very much reflected in the architecture of the buildings on the site which have been included in the Leeds-Liverpool Canal Conservation Area. The importance of the canal to the site is plain to see as the oldest buildings stand around a specially built stone lined basin which branches off the canal. When the sewage works was built, sewage was mixed with ashes and waste and was transported out of towns by canal boat. The towpath is

carried over the channel leading to the basin by an old iron bridge, while the disused basin is now stagnant and is fenced off on all sides.

The vehicle and pedestrian entrances to the sewage works are demarked by tall square ashlar gatepiers which are linked to sections of ashlar coped wall and the buildings, though the railings and gates are plain and modern.

The building on the northern side of the courtyard is of a vernacular revival style which was popular around the turn of the 20th century. The H-plan building has coped stone roofs, with the gables at either end of the long 10 bay elevation having shaped kneelers holding up the copings. Below the apexes of these gables are large oculi in chamfered ashlar reveals which are topped by a hoodmould. The glazing, as in all of the other windows, contains a number of small panes of glass separated by a timber lattice frame. The rest of the window openings are 3 light double chamfer mullion openings, while the doorways are recessed in vousoired semicircular arches. The building on the western side of the courtyard is also of a vernacular revival style. It has a hipped stone slate roof with corniced chimneys, and double chamfer mullioned windows set in chamfered, quoined reveals.

The building at the southern side of the courtyard is a much larger single storey warehouse-like building. Despite its functional use, the building is in a highly ornate Edwardian Neo-Baroque

style. The bays of the warehouse are separated by pulvinated rusticated pilasters which act as quoins at the corners. The tall arched cart openings have similarly pulvinated jambs and elongated voussoirs and keystones. Other bays contain blocked windows in architraved ashlar reveals with a projecting cill and, over the lintel, a frieze and moulded cornice. The pilasters carry a moulded cornice above which is an ashlar parapet with dies with raised panels. The parapet is interrupted at various points by round broken pediments over some of the archways which have swag reliefs carved on the tympani.

Issues

- ▶ The state of the basin which branches off the canal at Esholt Sewage Works.
- ▶ The chain link fence boundary of Esholt Sewage Works.
- ▶ The scale and appearance of the Sewage Works buildings which lie outside of the conservation area.
- ▶ The unpleasant smell around the Sewage Works.
- ▶ Overgrown copingstones in a few locations.

