

# Map 28: Apperley Bridge - Milman Bridge and Dobson Locks







### Character of the Area

To the south of Bottom Farm, the canal runs through open pastoral countryside with pleasant views to the west and east, with Apperley

Bridge visible in the distance. The western side of the canal has a loose grassed bank, while the eastern bank is lined with stone with overgrown copings. Those at Dobson Locks are free from vegetation and are surmounted by mushroom shaped mooring posts.

Dobson Locks are well kept and retain traditional features such as setted surfaces and timber railings. With the vernacular style British Waterways offices and nearby cottages, they form an attractive and characterful group.

Between Dobson Locks and Milman Bridge the towpath is surfaced with loose gravel and is edged by the copingstones of the canal which are surmounted by traditional timber railings with iron 'feet'. At Dobson Locks and to the north the towpath is surfaced with a tarmac surface which is potholed in places.

At Milman Bridge there is a pronounced shift from the open countryside to the village-like feel around the crossing. There is a good group of mostly Grade II Listed vernacular style cottages and Classical style houses which were built for Canal Company employees. Historically there were 3 wharves at Milman Bridge, which was also the site of 1 of only 4 Canal Company maintenance yards along the entire canal. The wharves have largely disappeared and the sites of most of them have been redeveloped.

As part of the development of The Moorings (suburban housing) and Calder Valley Marina, a new walkway has been constructed between Apperley Road and the marina. This walkway incorporates some stone setts and iron railings. The centrepiece is a setted area into which an iron support of one of the cranes associated with the wharfs has been set. This is a small reminder of past activity in this now tranquil spot.

Far right: This c.1776 barn was built by the Canal Company. This Grade II Listed Building is now semi-derelict and has an uncertain future.

### Features of the Area

**1. British Waterways Offices at Dobson Locks:** The offices were built as a Canal Company warehouse around 1800. This Grade II Listed building is now used as offices by British Waterways, but retains much of its industrial character. At the centre of the 2 storey 5 bay element are loading doors with quoined jambs and vertical timber board doors at both floors. These large openings are flanked by 8 over 8 pane timber sash windows. Attached to the southern end of the former works is what was originally the office to the works. Like the larger block, the single storey element has plain dentils carrying the gutters, a coped stone slate roof and a corniced stone chimney.

Attached to the northern end of the offices is a low rise single storey shed made out of vertical timber boards with a corrugated roof and large sliding timber board doors. This structure was probably built in the early 20th century and it was probably used to store loose goods such as coal or horse fodder and might possibly have contained stabling. Attached to the northern end of this shed is a smaller structure which contains facilities for boaters. This building has been rebuilt with little thought as to its traditional appearance, as the stonework is randomly coursed and the extensive use of unsuitable modern materials.

**2. Cottages adjacent to Dobson Locks:** This attractive row of three former Canal Company cottages is Grade II Listed and dates from c.1810-1820. Attached to the northernmost cottage are two later single storey extensions with stone roofs and single window openings. Each cottage has plain stone surrounds to the doors and square mullioned pairs of windows. Most houses retain traditional timber sash windows and all houses retain the original 5 panel doors which appear to have been purpose made for this row. The timber gutters are carried by paired dentils and at the northern cottage the stone slates have been replaced with blue slates.

**3. Dobson Locks (14 & 15):** These 2 rise locks were built c.1777 and are Grade II Listed for their architectural and historic interest. The locks raise the level of the canal a total of 20 feet. Each lock is of wrought sandstone construction with large block copings which are frequently held together by iron staples. Shaped iron mooring posts are attached to some of the copings. The lower lock (14) has vertical masonry to which the sides of the canal are linked via coped sloped walls which are topped with setted surfaces. The upper lock (15) has curved masonry walls. 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 heel grips to allow a better purchase. Over the tail of each lock is a timber plank bridge with painted timber

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railings, uprights and guardrails. To the west of the locks is a stone lined overflow channel which drains the pound above and between the locks.

**4. 289 Apperley Road:** Standing adjacent to Milman Bridge and at the centre of the wharf with a Canal Company boatyard to the south, this large 3 bay house was probably built to accommodate the Area Inspector (who was responsible for managing this stretch of canal). The house is Grade II Listed and its rear garden was previously a wharf (complete with a crane), which contained a large building alongside the canal which might have been a warehouse. 289 Apperley Road is fronted by a good flat coped stone boundary wall with curved sections and iron railings running between piers and the gateposts. The house has an austere 3 bay front elevation made of tooled ashlar 'bricks', indicating its high status compared to nearby buildings. Projecting cill bands link the 6 over 6 pane timber sash windows at first and ground floors. The moulding of the ashlar gutter shelf is repeated in the cornices of the chimneys which stand at either end of the coped stone slate roof.

**5. 287 Apperley Road:** This Grade II Listed house was built c.1820-30 in association with the canal. The house has a Classically influenced symmetrical 3 bay elevation.

**6. Milman Bridge (214):** This swing bridge is of a modern steel construction and is fully automated, with steel swing gates to Apperley Road and large warning signals to either side of each stretch of road.

**7. 291-293 Apperley Road and barn:** These buildings possibly date from 1776, and are all Listed Grade II. The cottages housed Canal Company employees while the barn was used as stabling. The rear gardens to the cottages were originally a wharf.

The cottages have a symmetrical front elevation and are very much in the local vernacular style. The quoined angles of the walls frame central pairs of side hung timber casement windows in plain stone surrounds with slightly recessed square stone mullions. The windows are flanked by the squat plain stone doorway to each cottage. On the gable overlooking the canal is a 3 light mullioned plain stone window at first floor level.

The barn is in a very poor condition as its stone slate roof was removed c.1995, leaving the

roof timbers exposed to the elements. The uncovered wall tops have vegetation sprouting from them, while the stonework is badly weathered. This ruinous barn has quoined angles, a large cart entrance with a timber lintel on the southern side and various other small window and vent openings.

**8. Field House (300 Apperley Road):** This Grade II Listed Building was built in 1776 as a canal toll house, with the main 2 storey body of the building being rebuilt c.1840. The oldest section is the single storey offshot which is in the local vernacular style with a stone slate roof. The 2 storey 1840 element has a symmetrical 3 bay front elevation with corniced chimneys at either apex of the stone slate roof. This Classical style frontage has a central plain stone tie jamb doorway with an astragal rectangular fanlight over the door. The windows are all 2 pane timber sash windows. The most decorative feature of this austere elevation is the entablature with shaped dentils carrying a moulded stone gutter shelf. The plain rear elevation of the 2-storey element overlooks the canal and was probably never rebuilt (unlike the front elevation) as it retains small irregularly spaced sash openings plus a more recent 3 light mullioned window.

### Issues

- ▶ Overgrown and neglected stonework at Mitchell Bridge and to the south.
- ▶ Patchy tarmac towpath at Dobson Locks and to north.
- ▶ The painting and rendering of the stonework of the buildings.
- ▶ Non-traditional door and window details to the non-listed buildings.
- ▶ The modern street furniture and appearance of Milman Bridge.
- ▶ The poor condition and uncertain future of the barn at 293 Apperley Road.

