

CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

BULL'S BRIDGE



Hillingdon Council

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Contents

1 Introduction	1-3
2 Location and Setting	4-6
• Location	5
• Boundaries	5
• Topography and Landscape Setting	6
• Geology	6
• Archaeology	6
3 Historic Development of Area	7-12
4 Surviving Historical Features within the Conservation Area	13-14
• Summary of Historic Features	15
• Street pattern and building plots	16
5 The Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area	16-17
• Analysis	17
6 The Buildings of the Conservation Area	18-19
• Listed Buildings and Locally Listed Buildings	19
7 Negative Features and Issues	20-21
8 Boundary Review	22-23
Further Reading and Sources	24

Contents

Maps

Map 1. Bull's Bridge Conservation Area	2
Map 2. Ordnance Survey map, old series 1798-1878	6
Map 3. Ordnance Survey map, 1865	9
Map 4. Ordnance Survey map, 1974	11
Map 5. Listed Buildings and Locally listed Buildings Map	19

01.

Introduction

Background to Designation

In 1971 the London Borough of Ealing designated this as part of its wider Canalside Conservation Area which includes all of the Grand Union Canal within Ealing. Following boundary changes

the area became part of Hillingdon in 1981. The reasons for designation can be found in the Ealing Canalside Conservation Area Appraisal dating from 2008 on their website.

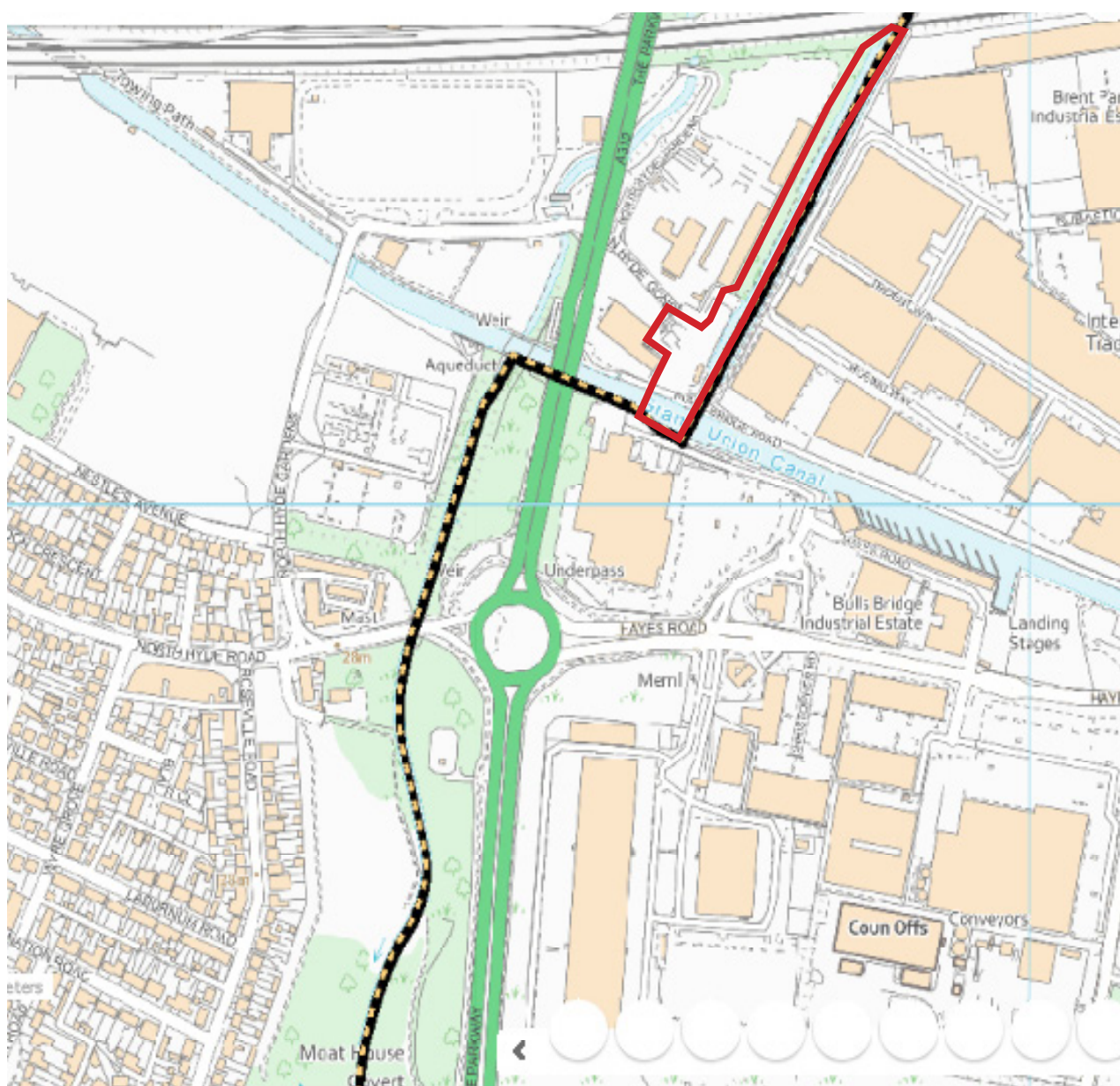
Key:



Conservation Area Boundary



Hillingdon Borough boundary



Map 1. Bull's Bridge Conservation Area

What does Designation Mean?

A conservation area is defined under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Local planning authorities have a duty to designate such areas as conservation areas. Section 71 of the Act requires local planning authorities '...to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement...' of these conservation areas. Once designated, proposals within a conservation area become subject to local conservation policies set out in the Council's Local Plan and national policies outlined in part 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF).

Our overarching duty which is set out in the Act is to preserve or enhance the historic or architectural character or appearance of the conservation area. A conservation area appraisal aims to describe the special historic and architectural character of an area.

A conservation area's character is defined by a combination of elements such as architecture, uses, materials and detailing as well as the relationship between buildings and their settings. Many other elements contribute to character and appearance such as the placing of buildings within their plots; views and vistas; the relationship between the street and the buildings and the presence of trees and green space.

This document has been produced using the guidance set out by Historic England in their document, Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management: Historic England Advice Note 1 (second edition) 2019. This appraisal will be a material consideration when assessing planning applications.

No appraisal can ever be completely comprehensive. The omission of any particular building, feature, view or space should not be taken to imply that it is of no interest.

02.

Location and
Setting



Aerial photo showing boundary of the Bull's Bridge Conservation Area

Location

Bulls Bridge Conservation Area is on low lying land at the junction of the grand union canal and the Paddington Arm of the canal. The town centre of Hayes is located to the west. Immediately to the west is a Truck/ Bus Garage site to the north and parts of the conservation area the aggregate facility/ recycling plant. and to the east over the canal is warehousing. Across the mainline canal to the south is a Tesco Supermarket. The borough boundary runs down the centre of the Paddington Arm of the Canal.

Boundaries

See map. The boundary Includes the bridge a small section of tow path then swings north to include the open area of the bus garage. It then moves north including a vegetation strip adjacent to the canal until it gets to the Mainline railway. It then returns south following the boundary of the borough to the bridge. As above it extends to cover the whole of the canal in Ealing.



View towards Bull's Bridge looking south along the canal



View towards Bull's Bridge looking south along the canal

Topography and Landscape Setting Archaeology

The conservation area is within the valley floor of the wider Thames Valley floodplain. It has a flat and low lying character.

Geology

The underlying geology of the area is formed by the sedimentary formation of London Clay. This results in the geology being a mixture of Brickearth and River terrace deposits.

There have been a number of nearby Mesolithic and Palaeolithic findspots in the local area including hand axes suggesting human activity since the last ice age. A bronze age axehead and iron age settlements have been found in Botwell although nothing is noted in the HER within the conservation area itself. The Saxon settlement of Botwell is thought to have been to the west of the conservation area on station road now known as Hayes Town. Remains of former buildings may still be located beneath the large works parking/ storage area.



Map 2. OS Old series 1798-1878

03.

Historic
Development

The Grand Junction Canal received approval through an Act of Parliament in 1793 with the intention of providing a link between London and Birmingham and the rapidly developing industrial areas to the north and west. Construction began immediately and by 1798 the stretch from Brentford to Uxbridge was completed. A branch canal to Paddington was surveyed in 1794 by Jessop and Barnes. It was authorised by an act of parliament in 1795. In 1801 construction of a branch canal to Paddington commenced and was opened from Bull's Bridge in 1805 .

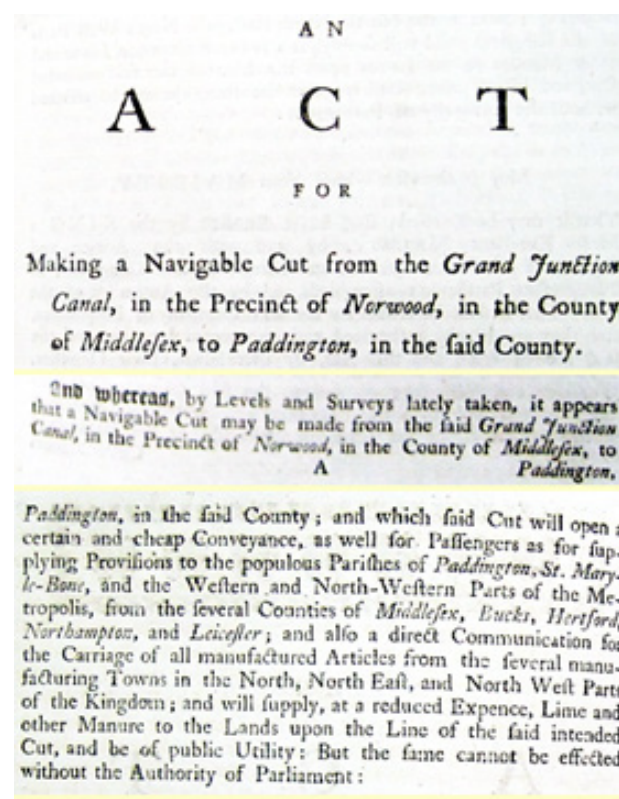
The opening of the canal was reported in the Morning Post 11th July 1801 as follows:

The canal to Paddington was opened yesterday morning for trade, with a grand procession along the Paddington Line to Bull's Bridge at Uxbridge. Exactly at nine o'clock the Committee, with their friends, in two pleasure boats, set sail, with colours and streamers flying, each vessel being towed by two horses. At twelve o'clock the company were met at Bull's Bridge by the city shallop (having on board the Subcommittee of the Thames navigation), and several pleasure boats, with large parties of Ladies. On meeting, a salute was fired, and then the procession returned in the following order:

1. The Committee and their friends, in two barges, with the Buckinghamshire band of music.
2. The city shallop.
3. Seven pleasure boats.

At half after five o'clock, the cavalcade reached the Great Dock. This was announced by the firing of cannon, on Westbourn-green-bridge, and a volley of musquerry from the town. After three huzzas, the company landed, and walked in procession to the Yorkshire Stinge, preceded by the Buckinghamshire band, playing God save the King. At half past six, the company sat down to an excellent dinner, and spent the evening with conviviality.

Blue and purple ribbands were worn by the ladies, gentlemen, and men employed in the concern, on which were written, The Marquis of Buckingham, and success to the Grand Union Canal.



Act of parliament



Image of the opening of the parade

There were various facilities at Bulls Bridge depot many of them opposite the bridge to the south bank of the canal a dry dock (Can still be seen under the HGV access bridge next to Tesco) various wharfage and servicing buildings which can be seen in the 19th century maps. Within the conservation area a number of cottages which

presumably dated to the early- mid 19th century were built (demolished 2009) and the Blue Anchor Inn (Demolished 1980s). The surviving Junction Masters House (Toll House) is locally listed and was built as part of the construction of the branch. This has recently been refurbished.



Map 2. 1865 OS Map

The Grand Union Canal Company carrying subsidiary was formed in 1934, and Bulls Bridge Junction became the location of its slipways, repair yard and traffic control office. (Area to south) A recess in the

canal bank of a couple of hundred yards in length, was built as a lay-by where boats awaiting instructions could tie up, end-on, without obstructing the channel.



Canal Area 1932 Britain from above

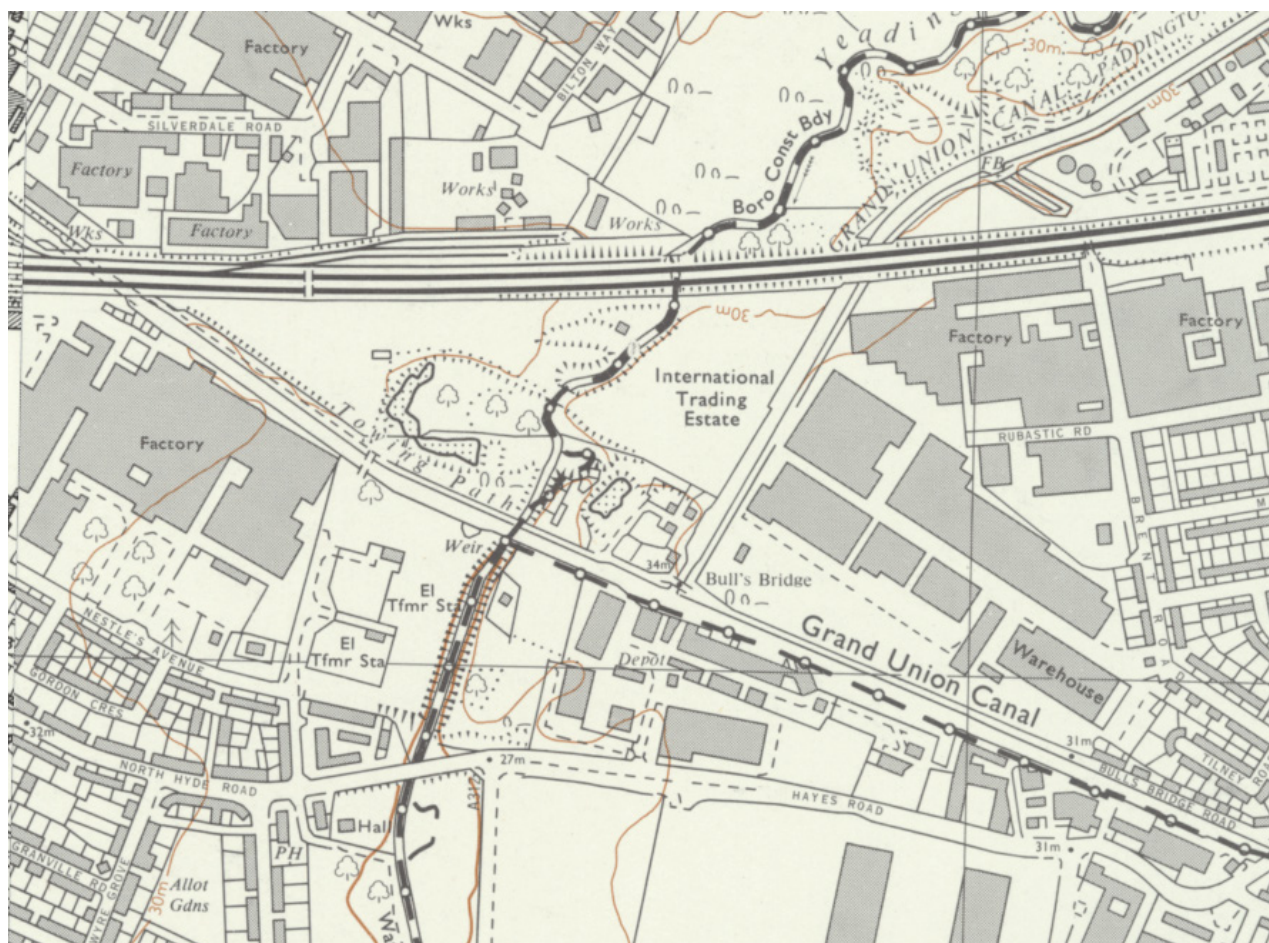


School barge Elsdale, (Courtesy of Tring local history society the Grand Junction Canal)

Bulls Bridge depot also hosted a five-bed maternity unit and a school. The school was opened at Rickmansworth in 1930 for the benefit of boatmen's children, but later moved to West Drayton and finally to Bulls Bridge. Housed on a barge provided by the Company, the Elsdale could take about 40 children who were provided with brief periods of education while their parents were awaiting orders. By 1939 the Elsdale had become unsound and was hoisted onto the canal bank where schooling

continued alongside the depot buildings until the 1950s.

By the end of WWII canal carrying was in terminal decline. The business's financial losses coupled the harsh winter of 1962-3, when the canal system was iced over for many weeks, caused British Waterways to cease its carrying operations. The yards can still be seen in 1962 OS map. The site was cleared and redeveloped as a Tesco Super Market with car parking.



Map 3. 1974 OS Map

The canal buildings (apart from the junction masters house and the bridge) within the conservation area were demolished in 2009/10 to provide Bat hard surfacing for the aggregate works site.

The conservation area also features at the End of the 1960s the Joseph Losey Plm The Criminal starring Sir Stanley Baker and Sam Wanamaker as the End of the Road for the protagonist.



Bull's Bridge, note the depot can be partly seen in the background



Shows the bridge, Junction masters house and historic cottages/ buildings on the site.



Images from Reelstreets.

04.

Surviving Historical
Features within the
Conservation Area

Summary of Historic Features

- *The surviving features in the area are the canal itself*
- *The Grade II Listed Bulls Bridge*
- *Swan and Bottle Pub*
- *The junction Masters House including wall to the canal*
- *Adjacent to the Junction Masters house and to the south of the bridge are a number of iron bollards for barges to tie up to. In addition a metal signpost giving distances to Brentford 6 miles, Paddington 13 miles and Braunston 87.5 miles.*

Street pattern and building plots

The Junction Masters house survives as a prominent building to the canal side. Otherwise there is the tow path to the grand union canal.



Photo of masters house and existing buildings on the site.



View towards Bull's Bridge looking south along the canal

05.

The Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

Analysis

This should be reviewed from the Ealing Canalside Conservation Area Appraisal document which describes the wider conservation area and should be taken into account with any application.

The character of this area is the junction of a branch canal to the mainline with tow paths surrounded by industrial development. The paths rise to cross the bridge. To the banks there remains some greenery. Important views of the conservation area can be seen from the bridge and looking up and down the canal. The tow paths have relatively recently been resurfaced. There are no other surviving

historic streetscapes. The Junction Masters House (Toll House) forms a landmark within the area. The inset to the bank and the dry dock opposite are remnants of its important former use as a servicing and works depot during the industrial uses of the canal.

06.

The Buildings of the
Conservation Area

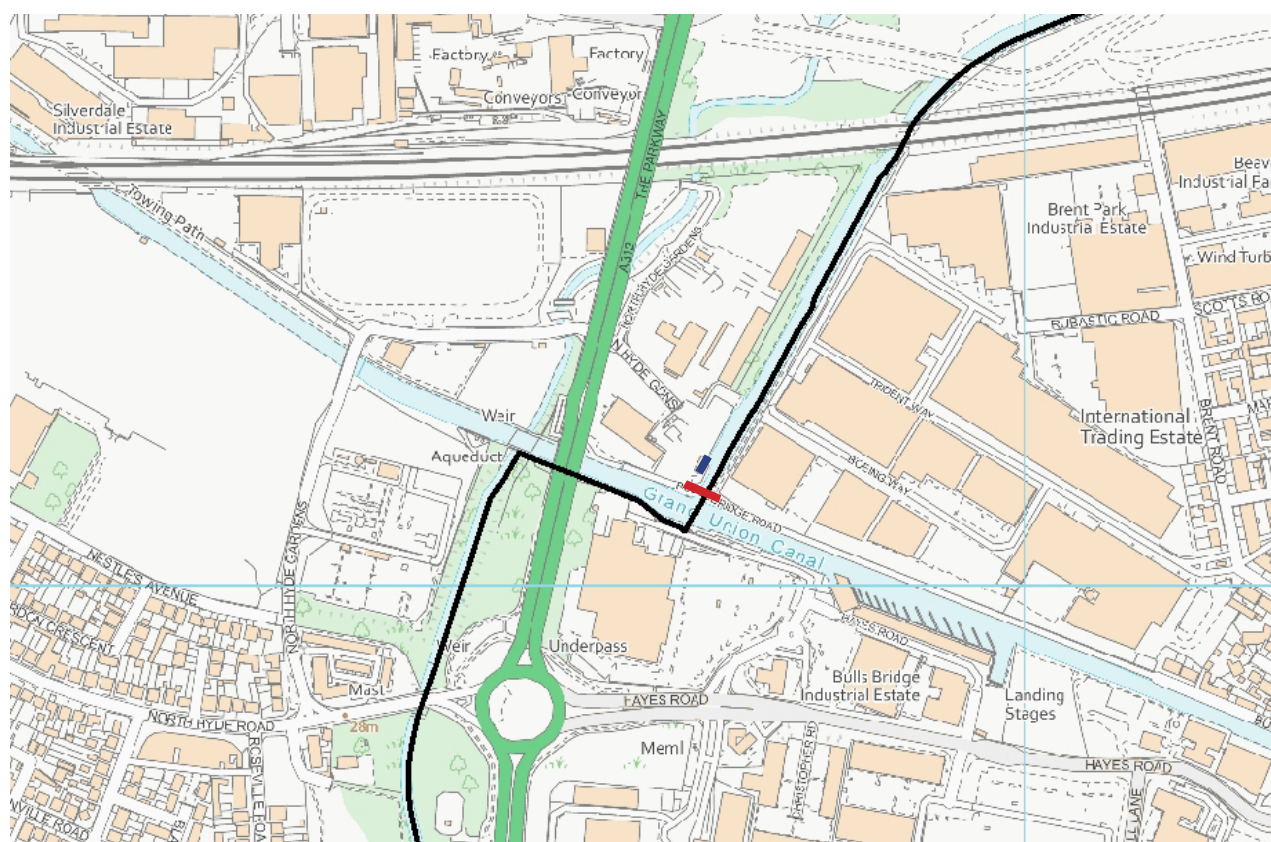
Listed buildings and locally listed buildings

Listed Building

Grade II Listed Southall Bull's Bridge No 21 over Grand Union Canal and Grand Union Canal (Paddington Branch) Junction Late C18 or early C19 canal bridge in painted brick. Single depressed arch with some blue engineering brick repairs at base. Band course at base of parapet. Some multi-coloured stock brick repairs.

Locally List

Junction Master House (listed as Toll House) Mid 19th century 3 bay two storey house with a projecting wing to the east. White rendered with shallow hipped slate roof. This features as does the bridge at the end of the 1960s film The Criminal.



- Listed buildings
- Locally listed buildings

07.

Negative
Features and
Issues

Problems and pressures in the area include:

- *The aggregate/ recycling works and bus works detract from the area. The Tesco delivery access road over the dry dock opposite also fails to preserve the wider setting of the canal depot area.*
- *It would be recommended that should the aggregates site/ bus garage come forward for redevelopment greening be added to better reflect the character of the conservation area when designated.*


08.

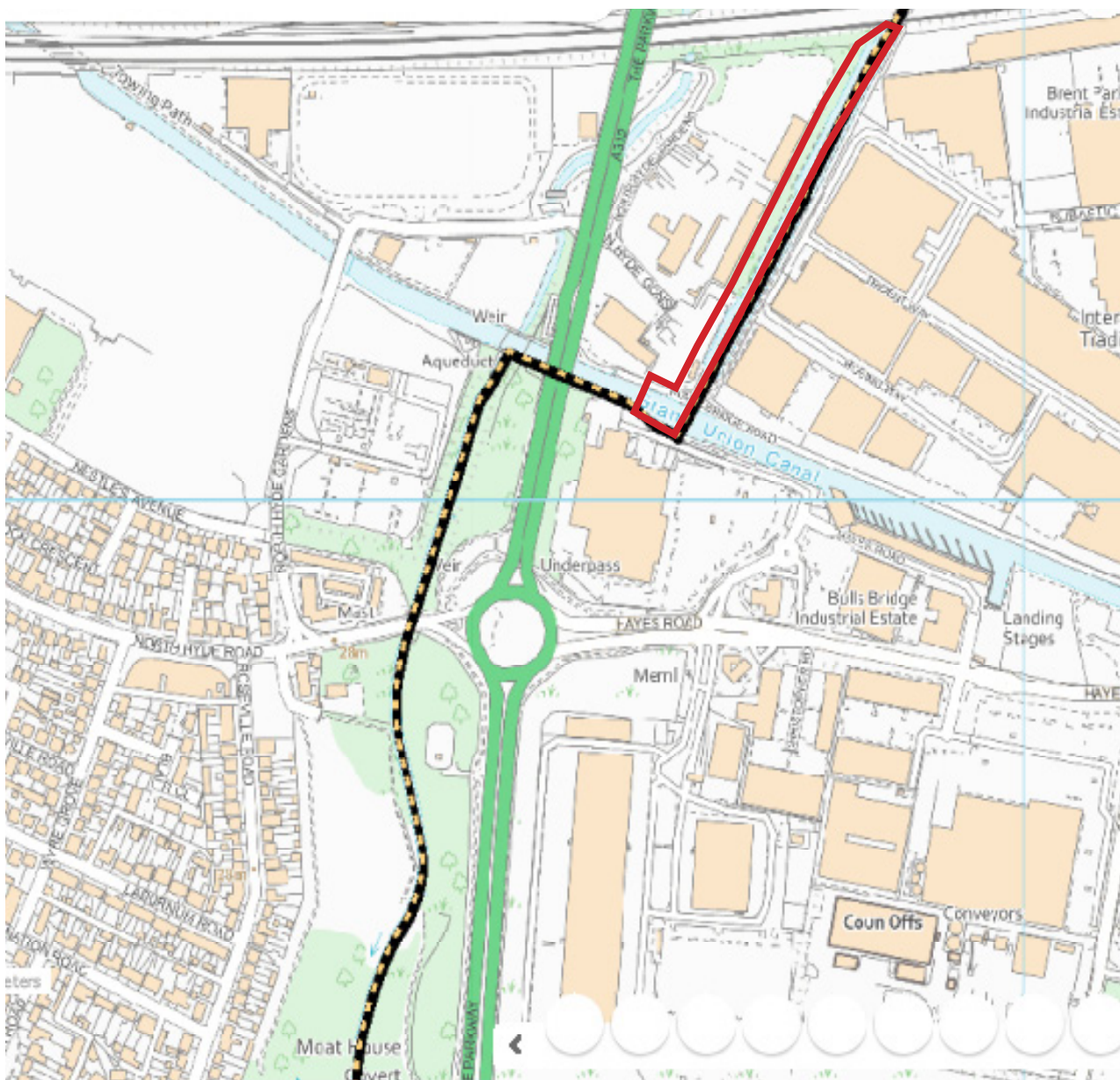
Boundary
Review

It would be recommended that the aggregate works/ recycling centre be removed from the conservation area and after junction masters house the boundary follows the canal edge north to the railway bridge.

Key:

 Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

 Hillingdon Borough boundary



Map 1. Bull's Bridge Proposed boundary change to Conservation Area

Further Reading

Tring Local History Museum History. The Grand Junction Canal, A Highway Laid with water, see link: https://tringhistory.tringlocalhistorymuseum.org.uk/Canal/c_chapter_10.htm

The Grand Union Canal from Brentford to Braunston by Ian J Wilson

Grand Union Canal - Milton Keynes to London, with the London and East London Ringss (Waterways Series) by Heron Maps