

Ref: FP2021-DP-01\_20200111ns

11<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Administrative Officer,  
Review of the County Development Plan  
Forward Planning Department  
Aras An Chontae  
Great Water Street  
Longford  
N39 NH56

By email: [cdp@longfordcoco.ie](mailto:cdp@longfordcoco.ie)

**RE: Submission or Observations Regarding the Draft Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027**

**Reinstatement of the Royal Canal Basin and Spur**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Co Longford please find Submission under the Second Stage Public Consultation period of the Draft Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027

The Proposal is for restoration and reinstatement of the Royal Canal Basin and Spur to be included as objective of the new development plan

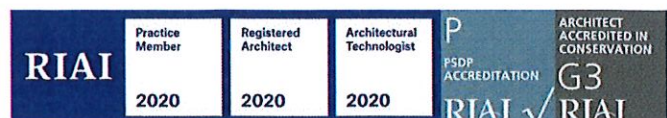
Trusting all is order, if you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

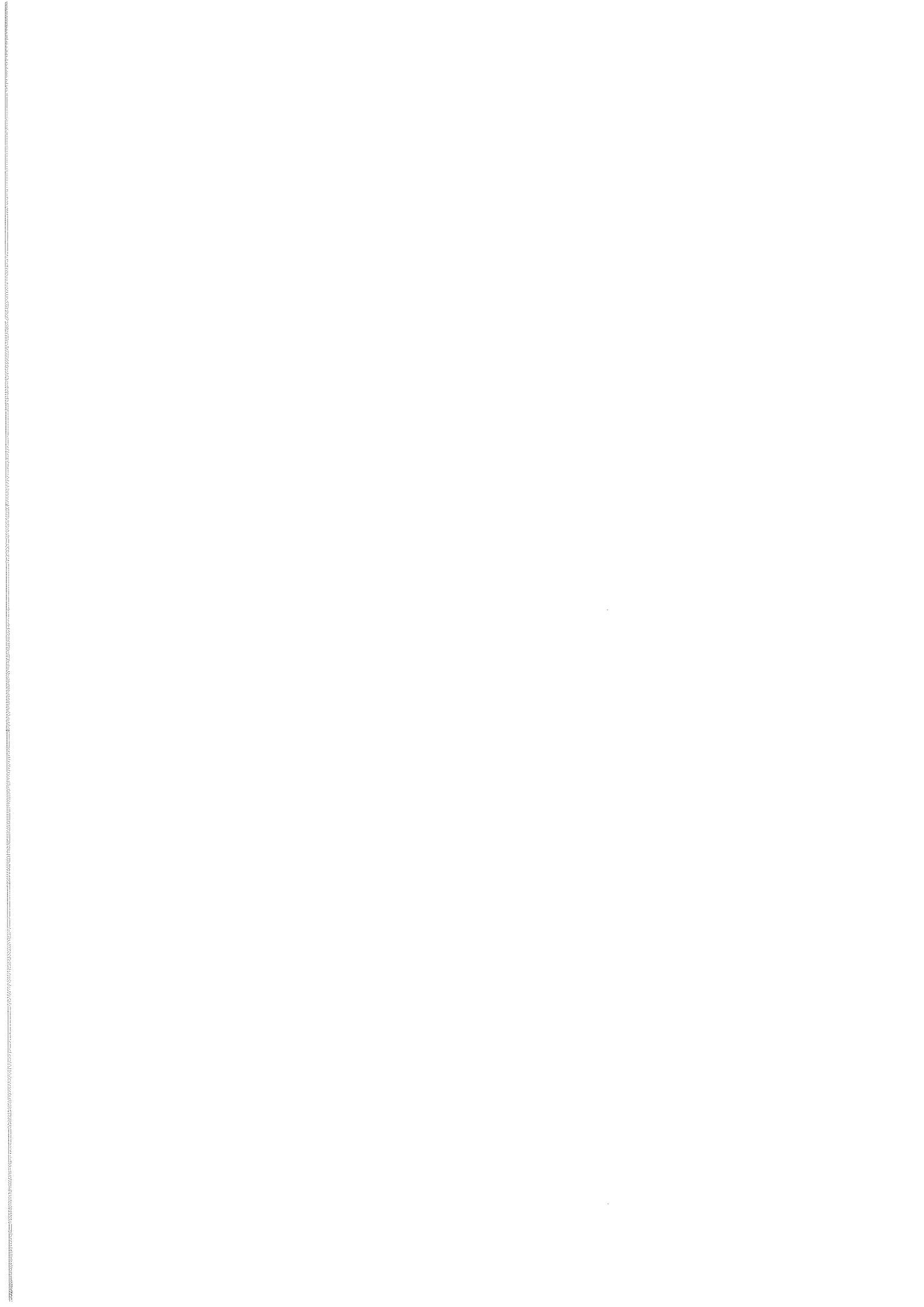
Yours sincerely,



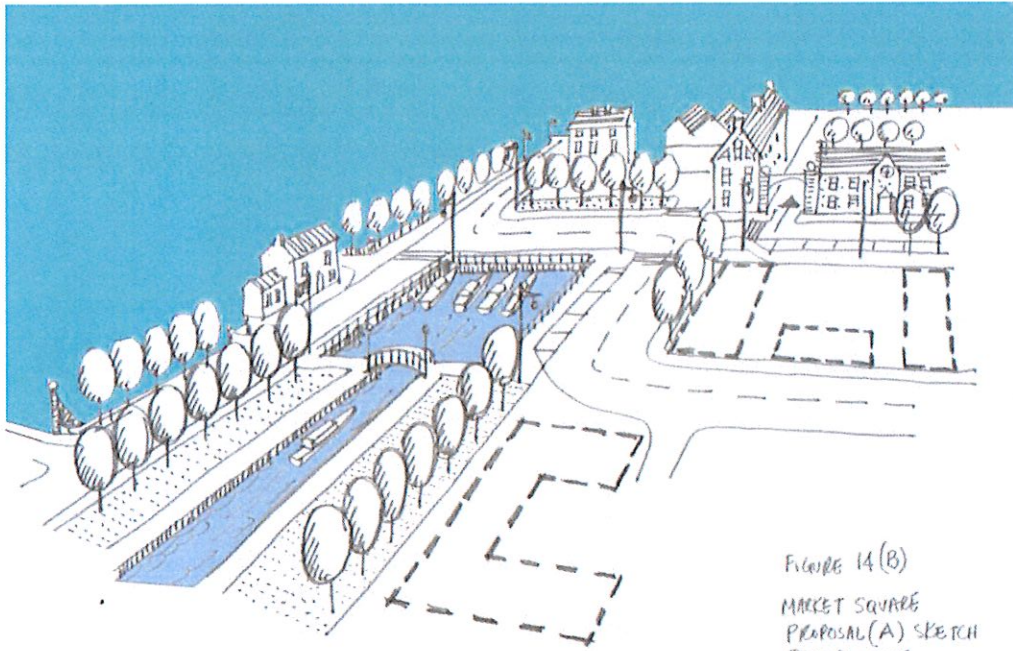
Nicholas Sweeney MRIAI Dip. Arch Sc., B Arch Sc., Dip. Physical Planning, Dip. Project Management, Dip Applied Conservation & Repair  
**Sweeney Architects**

Directors: Nicholas Sweeney, Ursula Hegarty  
Sweeney Architects Ltd, Registered in Dublin, Ireland  
Registered Office: Garvagh, Longford  
Registration No: 428008 Vat Registration No: 9501496F





**SUBMISSION FOR REINSTATEMENT OF CANAL  
BASIN AND REWATERING OF CANAL SPUR  
at  
LONGFORD TOWN**



<b>Project</b>	Feasibility of Reinstatement of Royal Canal Spur	
<b>Location</b>	Townsparks, Farranyhoogan, Cartronagerragh/Mullaghavorneen & Knockanboy	
<b>Client</b>	Issued by Sweeney Architects	
<b>Issue</b>	By email: <a href="mailto:cdp@longfordcoco.ie">cdp@longfordcoco.ie</a>	<b>1</b>
<b>Date</b>	Monday 2021.01.11	<b>NS</b>
<b>Scope</b>	Feasibility of Reinstatement of Royal Canal Spur	

## PROJECT INFORMATION

Purpose of Report	This reports forms part of Submission for Second Stage (3) Public Consultation for Longford County Development Plan 2021-2027
Owner	Longford Local Authorities
Description	Restoration Works to Historical Royal Canal Basin and Spur
Coordinates	613161.775068 (ITM)
Planning Authority	Longford County Council
Site Location	Canal Basin- Townparks Canal Spur: Farranyhoogan, Cartronagerragh/Mullaghavorneen & Knockanboy

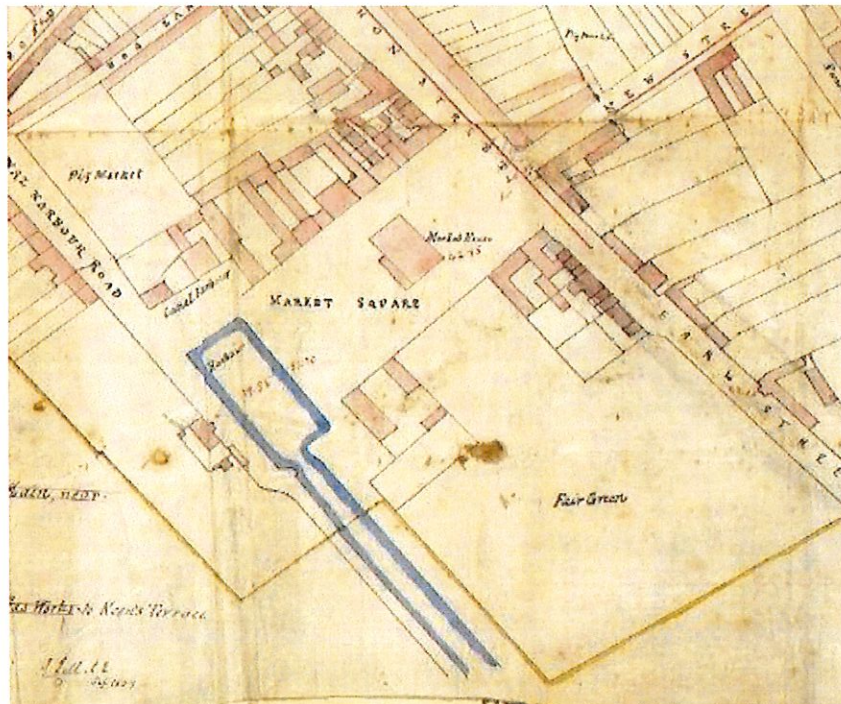


Fig 1: Historical map

## INTRODUCTION

An information evening was held in Longford Slashers with late Dick Warner and Fran McNulty as compere to discuss the prospects for the reinstatement of the Canal Spur back in 2011. The navigation of the main line had been recently re-introduced and Sweeney Architects presented proposal and methodology for the reinstatement of the Royal Canal basin and Spur at Longford Town.

A submission on behalf of Longford Tidy Towns was followed up to Longford Town Council, Nov 2011, to seek funding for culvert remedial works. As we understand the stumbling block was a report *Survey of the Aquatic Mollusca of the Grand and Royal Canals – 2010* which was later followed up with the *Feasibility Study into the Restoration of the Longford Branch of the Royal Canal* (Oct 2014.) Essentially the economic cost and the presence of protected species of snail was considered a risk to further development. By 2014 Waterways Ireland and Longford Local Authorities embarked on works to the towpaths

We submit that the Royal Canal Spur and Harbour is an important part of the Industrial Heritage of the County of Longford and every effort should be made to reinstate this important amenity as fully and as practically as possible.



Fig 2: Schematic of restored Canal Basin

## METHODOLOY

We have amended the methodology presented in 2011 in light of the Environmental Issues and Works to date.

Canal Lighting- section of canal completed (Tidy Towns/Sweeney Architects 2011)

Further lighting completed 2019

Old Swimming Pool removed 2017

N63 previous passing the market square alternative access added (N5 bypass)

The north-eastern end (facing new street) plaza added (c. 2010)

## Basin Area/Market Square

Remaining Buildings associated with Canal Basin:

Ticket office

Harbour Masters office

Original wall with the sluice gate is possibly there.

Further the ashlar limestone walls to the basin are to some unknown degree intact as are the base flags;

#### Other issues

the neck of the basin was altered over the years

the relationship with the railway is embedded with the canal. The old sidings building was an area where stout barrels were shunted.

When overlaid buried canal basin has been encroached since being filled in in 1961 but this is not critical.

The line of the current N63 to the north oversails the edge of the basin. The road is particularly wide at that point and could be reduced or a shared surface could be proposed or the basin could be shortened. At this point I wouldn't see the basin as something that reduces traffic rather as something that is part of the urban grain

The northern exit of the Townsparks Industrial Estate and the various dwellings and dwelling access points are next to considered. Some of the dwellings offer little to the urban grain however in other places opportunities exist for new urban spaces

The railway line was originally built with a winch and pivot. It has now become an embankment. This is an opportunity for a creative solution. There are various potential solutions, rarely a new one. The old boarded Victorian railing siding building as one of the potential gems in the towns heritage and the linking of this building to the walk with a new use is very much a potential future project.

Primarily the aim is to open the entire spur, to have visitors to the town arriving over water. In terms of phasing of construction works we would expect the following sequence to occur:

#### Phase I

- Demolition of the old pool building- now complete
- Trial digs in the area of the basin to identify perimeter and to ascertain state of walls (works generally confined to car park and would not affect traffic)
- Hoarding of basin area removal of fill and repair of walls, diversion of services if required and fitting of sluice/temporary water source. Fitting of bollards, pavement stones and street furniture

- It is likely the new layout of the canal Basin would be slightly shorter (at northern end) to accommodate the National Roadway at this end – this would not affect the overall effect of the basin
- A water source would be needed to fill the basin, the traditional sluice to west end is gone
- The existing drainage would need to be diverted- we understand this is minor in nature
- New route to link to Townsparks Industrial Estate- note this access road may have occurred in piecemeal fashion

## Phase II

Extension of canal to railway embankment.

- Demolition of dwellings, new feeder roads and towpaths
- Discussions with Railway company to provide pivot bridge

## Phase III

New lifting bridge to railway line and dredging of canal as far as Churchland Bridge (Athlone Road)

- Alternative habitat to be sourced for protected species ideally c. 3 acres- this garden could be a great amenity
- It is noted that the *Feasibility Study into the Restoration of the Longford Branch of the Royal Canal* (Oct 2014.) did not rule out the rewatering of the spur but pointed to the risk or relocation of the protected species which has been successfully carried out elsewhere.
- The recommendation of that feasibility study was that given the financial climate and because of the associated costs, environmental issues and uncertainty regarding planning approval, the project would not be pursued any further at that time. Both the backdrop of the previous recession has passed and a certain amount of the anticipated works has already been completed
- Further assessment of Rights of Way and escape as well as emergency access to be considered on the canal line is required

## Phase 4

Reconstruction of road bridges to allow navigation (*note that the churchland and knockaboy bridges could be used for temporary traffic while the works are underway*)

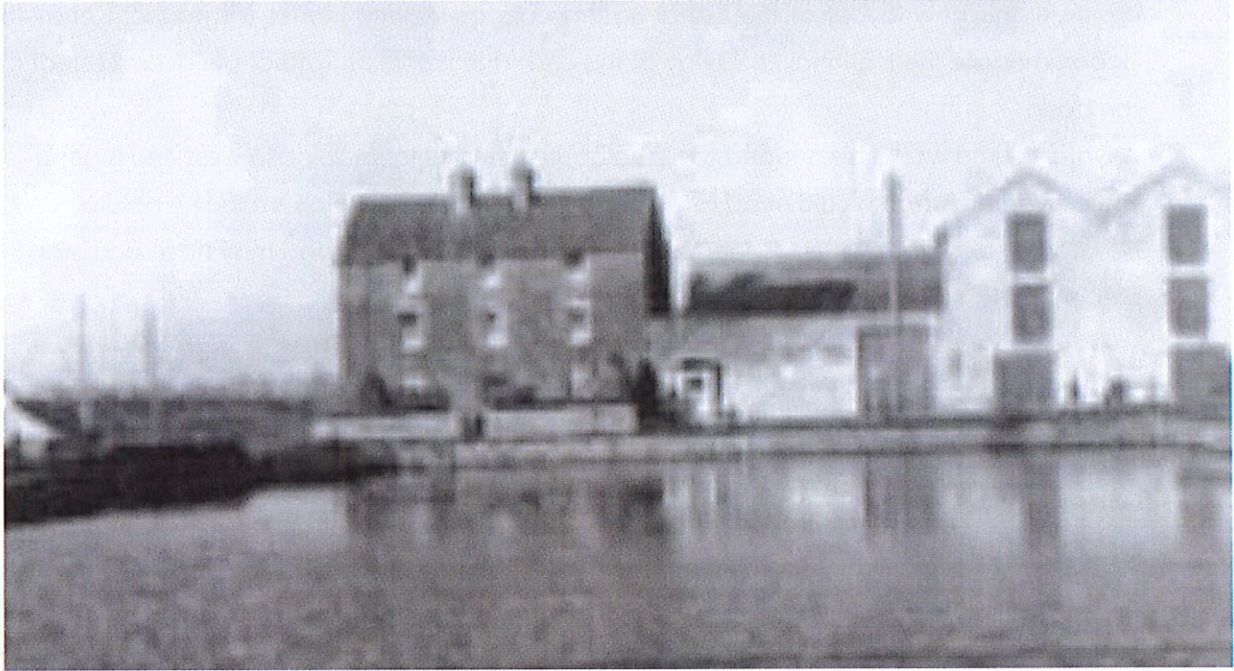


Fig 3: Historical Photograph of Basin

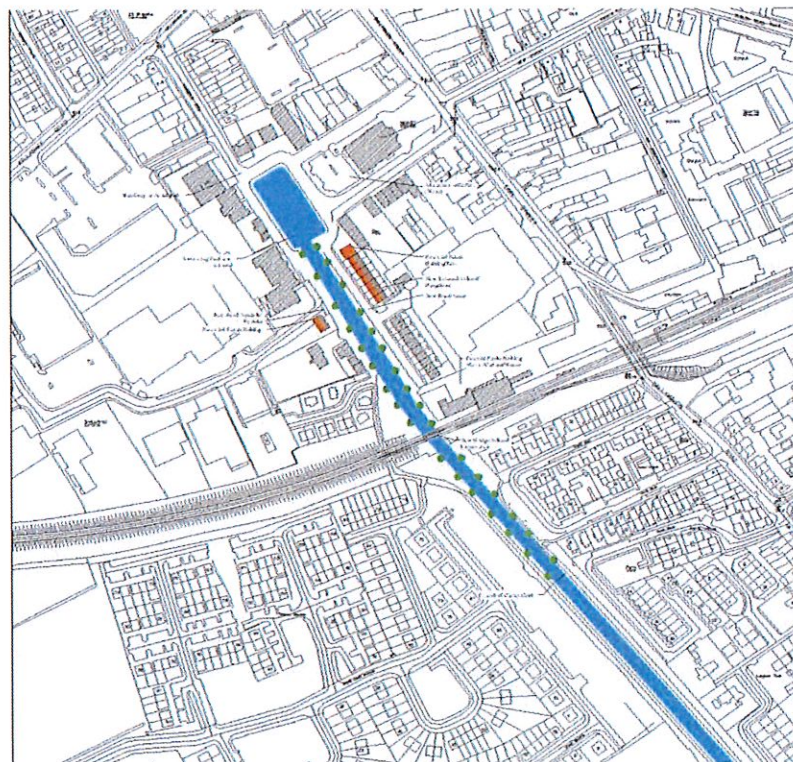


Fig 3: Schematic of restored basin