

# Stocker's Lock and Farm

## Conservation Area Appraisal

January 2013



**STOCKER'S LOCK AND FARM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL  
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## STOCKER'S LOCK AND FARM CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

### 1.0 Introduction and Executive Summary

- 1.1 Three Rivers District Council has a duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act) to designate as Conservation Areas any “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The designation of a Conservation Area brings additional protection of trees, control over demolition and development as well as a requirement for a decision maker, in exercising planning powers, to pay “special attention to the desirability of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the Conservation Area”.
- 1.2 The principles outlined by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 are reinforced in the National Planning Policy Framework (2012).
- 1.3 Three Rivers District Council (the Council) designated Stocker's Lock and Farm as a Conservation Area in 1993. The Conservation Area lies wholly in the Green Belt and exhibits 10 Grade II Listed Buildings. Stocker's Farm House and associated barns, along with Stocker's House and Stocker's Lock House make up the designated heritage assets within the southern section, whilst the development to the north is synonymous with the construction of the Grand Union Canal.
- 1.4 The aims of this appraisal are to:
  - (a) Set out the special architectural or historic interest of the Conservation Area and to describe the special character and appearance that it is desirable to preserve or enhance
  - (b) Examine the existing boundaries of the Conservation Area and consider the potential for other areas to be included and, if appropriate, where existing areas should be excluded and
  - (c) Identify areas subject to pressure for change that would be adverse to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area as a result of permitted development and identify any areas where the removal of permitted development rights would safeguard the essential character and appearance of the area.

***Please note:*** The Conservation Area Appraisal does not represent an exhaustive record of every building, feature or space within the Conservation Area and an omission should not be taken to imply that an element is of no interest.

## 2.0 History and Development

### 2.1 Location

2.2 The Stocker's Lock and Farm Conservation Area is accessed via Stocker's Farm Road, located to the south of Rickmansworth and to the east of Maple Cross, within the road network of the A404 and A412. The Conservation Area lies completely within the Metropolitan Green Belt,

2.3 The Conservation Area can be appreciated as 2 distinct character areas;

- Stocker's Farm House and associated buildings and
- Stocker's Lock House and buildings/structures.



The above aerial photograph shows the extent of the Conservation Area (outlined in red) and clearly shows the two clusters of Listed Buildings (dotted pink) which resemble different character areas

2.4 The Conservation Area possesses a high concentration of Listed Buildings, within a tranquil environment located in the Colne Valley Regional Park and the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Conservation Area is also home to a number of interesting features which are not Listed, such as a World War II pillbox and a series of anti-tank obstacles over the bridge. The surrounding agricultural land is laid to pasture, comprising low-lying flood meadows gradually rising to the south, away from the canal.

## 2.5 Stocker's Farm

- 2.6 Stocker's Farm House and related buildings were constructed in the 17th Century, prior to the intrusion of the canal and therefore representing a different era. The development of and around Stocker's Farm House reflects the early agricultural settlement here and the buildings remain largely unaltered. In 1919 Lord Ebury's estate was auctioned and the sale detailed the farm as follows;

*Lot 53: Stockers Farm: A capital agricultural and small sporting property situated about one mile from Rickmansworth, and together with the superior Farmhouse, Homesteading, two cottages and woodlands, extending to an area of about 197 acres, 3 rods and 14 perches. Underlying the lands between the River Colne and the Grand Junction Canal are believed to exist valuable and extensive beds of gravel, the canal affording most economical facilities for working the same and transit. Let to Mr Henry at a rent of £213 5s.*



Looking northwest across the agricultural plain from Stocker's Farm Road, with Stocker's Lock House to the left in the background

## 2.7 Grand Union Canal

- 2.8 The construction of the Grand Union Canal in 1797 which cut through the original farm, dominates the development of the northern section of the Conservation Area. Here, Stocker's House, Stocker's Lock House, the lock, bridge and coal duty marker are sited.
- 2.9 Stocker's House was built in 1861 for the City of London Corporation as a residence for its collector of Coal and Wine Duties on the Grand Union Canal. The bridge is a Grade II Listed structure, as are the lock and coal duty marker.
- 2.10 There is still evidence in the landscape of the open drainage ditches from the Colne Valley high land south-east of Stockers Farmhouse running north-west to the Grand Union Canal and Stockers Lock House. These drainage ditches date back over 200 years because their presence and route presented a threat and a challenge for the Canal engineers in the late 18th Century when the Grand Junction Canal Company was building the Canal in the River Colne Valley here in the 1790's. The open drainage ditches flowed into the flood plain east of the farmhouse and marshland that is now Stockers Lake.
- 2.11 The canal engineers William Jessop and James Barnes devised a drainage culvert that went under the Canal just south of Stockers Bridge – once under the Canal the ditch becomes an open channel again just 5m from Stockers House draining away westwards parallel to the canal on the north side and south of the house and garden for several hundred metres till it eventually drains out into the River Colne at Springwell Lane.
- 2.12 During the extraction of the gravel pits, where the lakes stand today, barge boats would be loaded and use the Grand Union Canal as a transport route for export.

### 3.0 Character and Appearance

- 3.1 The appearance of an area derives from its physical and visual characteristics; materials, scale and form of buildings, relationships and built form. Furthermore, the character of an area is also defined by activities and patterns of land use, and therefore changes over time. The assessment of the character and appearance of the area is based on the present day situation.
- 3.2 A striking feature is the Grand Union Canal, which bisects the Conservation Area and is itself a significant historic characteristic that was key to the development of this cluster of buildings. The area has a quiet rural atmosphere and great visual interest. The two groups of buildings/structures, of which many are Listed, at Stocker's Farm Yard and at Stocker's Lock, are the principal foci. Their setting is formed by attractive open grazing land with backdrops of mature trees.
- 3.3 The traditional farm buildings form a very attractive grouping and are characterised by brick (the farmhouse) or timber clad (barns) construction with red plain clay tiled roofs. The one modern agricultural building is incongruous in size, form and cladding but is at least partly screened by a characteristic older building.



Looking south from the canal bridge, views of the Farm House are gained from between the associated barns

- 3.4 The lockside grouping features robust materials such as the stone coping to the bridge and canal retaining walls. The lock furniture is similarly substantial. The buildings here are functionally related to the canal. The very prominent coal duty collectors house and the lock keepers cottage are brick with shallow hipped slate roofs. Additional items of interest are the World War Two 'Pill Box' at farm end of the approach and the series of anti-tank obstacles (hairpins) on the southern end of the canal bridge.



There are many anti-tank obstacles across the Grade II Listed bridge



Pill boxes

- 3.5 The surrounding grassland contributes a high quality landscape setting to the character of the Conservation Area. In the north this comprises low lying land on the valley floor (in itself of historic interest for possible evidence it retains of a managed water meadow pre-dating the canal) varying to undulating to the south. This higher land affords extensive views across the Conservation Area from the public right of way. Similarly, the landscape is an important component of the scene around the farm viewed from points along the towpath.



A scenic view of Stocker's House, typifying the tranquillity one can expect from the Conservation Area

- 3.6 The canal, its towpath and the footpaths enable a high level of public access and enjoyment of the area. There is no public road to the farm or canal and existing levels of traffic to the farm which is primarily in equestrian use is low. Vehicular traffic is not currently intrusive in its effect upon the area.
- 3.7 The Conservation Area can be subdivided into 2 distinct regions within which there are 5 Listed Buildings in each, that of the Farm House and associated buildings towards the south, and to the north Stocker's House, Lock House and other Grade II Listed structures.



View of canal and barns.

## 4.0 Buildings

### 4.1 Stocker's Farm House and associated development

- 4.2 Located in the southern end of the Conservation Area is Stocker's Farm House and a series of barns and granaries. Stocker's Farm House is thought to have been constructed in the 17th Century, then rebuilt and extended in the 18th and 19th Centuries. Two externally visible bricks show the date 1753, which is likely to have been when much of the earlier timber frame was encased and faced with brickwork.



Stocker's Farm House



The dated '1753' bricks of Stocker's Farm House

- 4.3 The central gable contains exposed timber frames and there is burnt header decoration to some of the external walls. The roof of the original building and the subsequent extensions have tiled roofs. The additions and alterations cause the farmhouse to possess an orientation similar to an 'L' shape.
- 4.4 The main entrance to the farmhouse, served by a gabled canopy, is found on the eastern elevation of the property, the of views which are slightly obscured upon approaching from Stocker's Farm Road due to the presence of two barns. These barns, approximately 20m northeast of the farmhouse, are also Grade II Listed and were formerly listed as two separate entries on the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.
- 4.5 Estimated to have been constructed in the 18th Century, the two barns are perpendicular to one another. The timber-framed barns are weather-boarded and have tiled roofs. The southwest barn (nearer the farmhouse) has 4 bays, is higher and more prominent than its counterpart, also possessing a lean-to addition on the gable end near the farmhouse. The barn to the northwest which is slightly further away from the farmhouse also has 4 bays, with a gabled midstrey to the third bay.



The two barns 20m North East of the farmhouse



- 4.6 A granary is located approximately 15m to the west of the farmhouse, thought to have been constructed in the late 17th or early 18th Century. This building was considered to be acceptable for Grade II Listing for its group value with the farmhouse and barns.
- 4.7 The largest barn is located 25m to the northwest of the farmhouse and, similar to the other barns, is timber-framed and weatherboarded with a tiled roof.



The barn situated 25m north west of the farmhouse



Part of the barn and cartshed

## 4.8 Stocker's House, Stocker's Lock House and the Lock, Bridge and Coal Duty Marker

- 4.9 Located towards the northern end of the Conservation Area is Stocker's House, Stocker's Lock House and a number of other Grade II Listed Buildings. The development here is synonymous with the construction of the Grand Union Canal, when in 1793 the principal of building a canal from Brentford to Braunston emerged.
- 4.10 The development was completed in 1805 and divided the original farm in two. In 1861, Stocker's House was built for the Corporation of London to assist in the collection of duties, for in that same year the London Coal and Wine Duties Act was passed by Parliament. Subsequently, any goods entering the Metropolitan Police District of London by canal, railway or turnpike road were to be charged a toll. A Coal Duty Marker, sited 10m south east of Stocker's Lock remains today, and identifies the boundary of Hertfordshire and London Borough of Hillingdon.
- 4.11 Stocker's House comprises stock brick with a shallow hipped slate roof. The dwelling has an elevated central entrance, with three bays to each floor and a basement. To both the southeast and northwest elevations are extruded end stacks with offsets and oversailing caps, both flanked by sash windows. It was constructed on land belonging to Lord Ebury at a cost of £850. Charles Browton was the first and only collector to live here.



The southeast elevation of Stocker's House detailing an extruded end stack



The southwest elevation of Stocker's House

- 4.12 The bridge, known as no.175, that carries Stockers Farm Road over the Grand Union Canal is a Grade II Listed building that lies immediately downstream from Stocker's Lock. It is an early 19th Century structure comprising mixed brick and cambered humpback over a single round arch. The structure is recognised for its group value alongside Stocker's Lock and Coal Duty Marker.



Grade II listed Bridge No.175

- 4.13 The London Coal Duty Marker, erected in 1861, approximately half a century after the Grand Union Canal was constructed, is pictured right with Stocker's House in the background, where the Collector of Coal Duties resided. Cast by H. Grissell of Regents Canal Ironworks, it is a cast-iron square pier with chamfered corners and pyramid cap, bearing the City of London Crest. This made it clear that anyone crossing from Hertfordshire into Middlesex carrying coal or bottles of wine had to pay a levy to the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Common Councillors of the City of London in accordance with the provisions of the London Coal and Wine Duties Continuance Act of 1861.



Coal Duty Marker

- 4.14 Stocker's Lock, lock no.82 on the Grand Union Canal, is an early 19th Century construction comprising brick walls with ashlar coping. The lock gates are timber, and the latterly erected bollards are thought to have been erected in 1896 by the London and Lancashire Engineering Company.



Stocker's Lock House

- 4.15 Stocker's Lock House, formerly listed as Stocker's Lock House is situated at lock no.82 of the Grand Union Canal. It is an early 19th Century dwelling, front elevation of which stands prominently and is visible from the approach from Stocker's Farm Road towards the farmhouse. It's shallow hipped slate roof is akin to that of Stocker's House, and the property also possesses two chimney stacks, which afford the building a symmetry that is evident in views from further afield.
- 4.16 Whilst the dwelling would appear one storey from a distance, upon closer inspection one realises that the property does possess a floor below the level of the canal towpath. The rear garden of this property, therefore, is stepped down considerably from the main entrance of the front elevation.
- 4.17 The property was refurbished as an exemplary lock cottage by British Waterways in 2011 using traditional building materials of lime mortar and renders, slate roof and timber windows.

## 5.0 Considerations for Development

5.1 Development within the Stocker's Lock and Farm Conservation Area is controlled by National and Local Planning Policy covering the Historic Environment, Conservation Areas and Green Belt. The Three Rivers Local Plan and Core Strategy currently set out the planning policies for the District and it is recommended that anyone wishing to carry out any alterations can get guidance about procedures for applying for planning permission on the Council's web site at: <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/PlanningPolicy>

### 5.2 Historic Buildings

5.3 There are ten Nationally Listed Buildings within the Stocker's Lock and Farm Conservation Area (see Appendix 1) and any alterations to these buildings or structures (external or internal) requires Listed Building consent from the Council.

5.4 Other significant structures, though not associated with the original development of the farm or the later development of the canal, are recognised as making a positive contribution to the character of the area and have been outlined in this appraisal.

### 5.5 Conservation Areas and Permitted Development

5.6 'Permitted Development' rights normally mean that some domestic alterations may be carried out without requiring planning permission. However, these rights are more restricted in Conservation Areas. For example, permission is required for satellite dishes, dormer windows and other alterations to a roof as well as external cladding and works to trees.

5.7 No work is automatically ruled out by Conservation Area designation. However, it does impose an additional requirement on residents to apply to the Council for consent and permission for certain works, and in some cases a specific Conservation Area Consent is needed.

5.8 All applications for planning permission in a Conservation Area are considered from the conservation point of view and can be refused on conservation grounds alone. This also applies to development proposals in the vicinity of a Conservation Area. As with a planning application, an applicant has a right to appeal against a refusal or against any conditions attached to a permission or consent.

### 5.9 Green Belt

The whole of the Conservation Area lies within the Green Belt and there are therefore strict controls over new dwellings, new buildings and extensions to existing structures. It is likely that Green Belt policies rather than Conservation Area policies will limit the size of extensions or new structures.

### 5.10 Trees

5.11 Whilst the surrounding area of the Conservation Area is edged by mature trees and woods, there are no Tree Protection Order (TPO) designations within the area. The backdrop of this natural setting emphasises the natural and tranquil character of the Conservation Area.

## 6.0 Review of the Conservation Area

As part of this appraisal the existing boundaries of the Conservation Area have been examined to consider the potential for other areas to be included and, if appropriate, excluded. The boundaries of the Conservation Area have been carefully considered and it is not proposed to make alterations to withdraw any existing properties. In addition, no further properties have been identified that would justify extending the boundaries of the Conservation Area.

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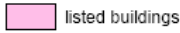
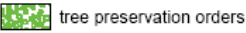
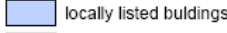
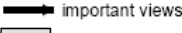
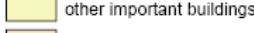
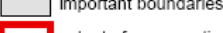
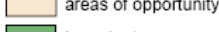
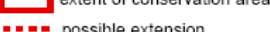
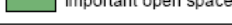

Friends of Stocker's Lake Issue No.26 March 2000

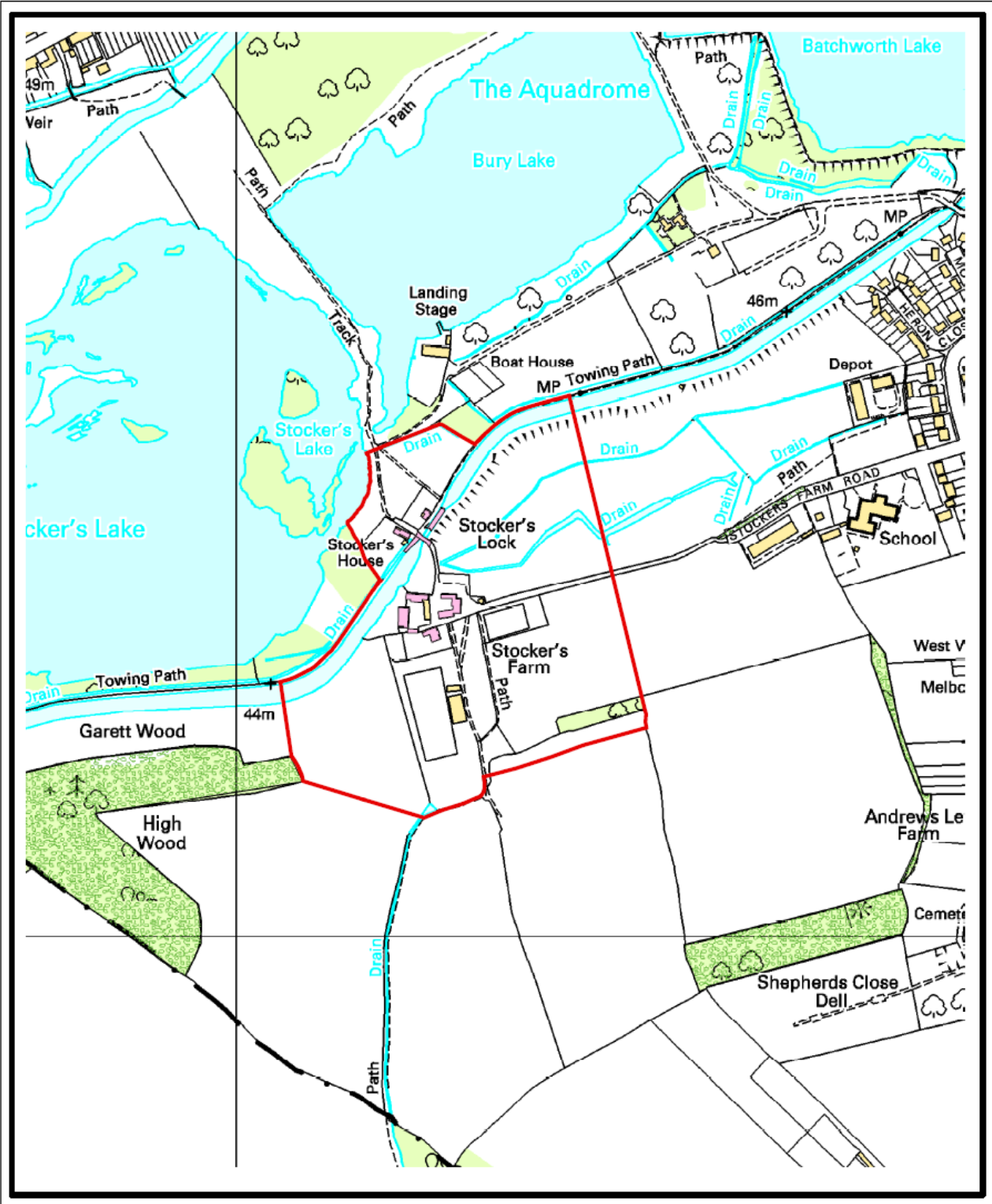
# APPENDIX 1

## Stockers Lock

Based on the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Three River

Legend

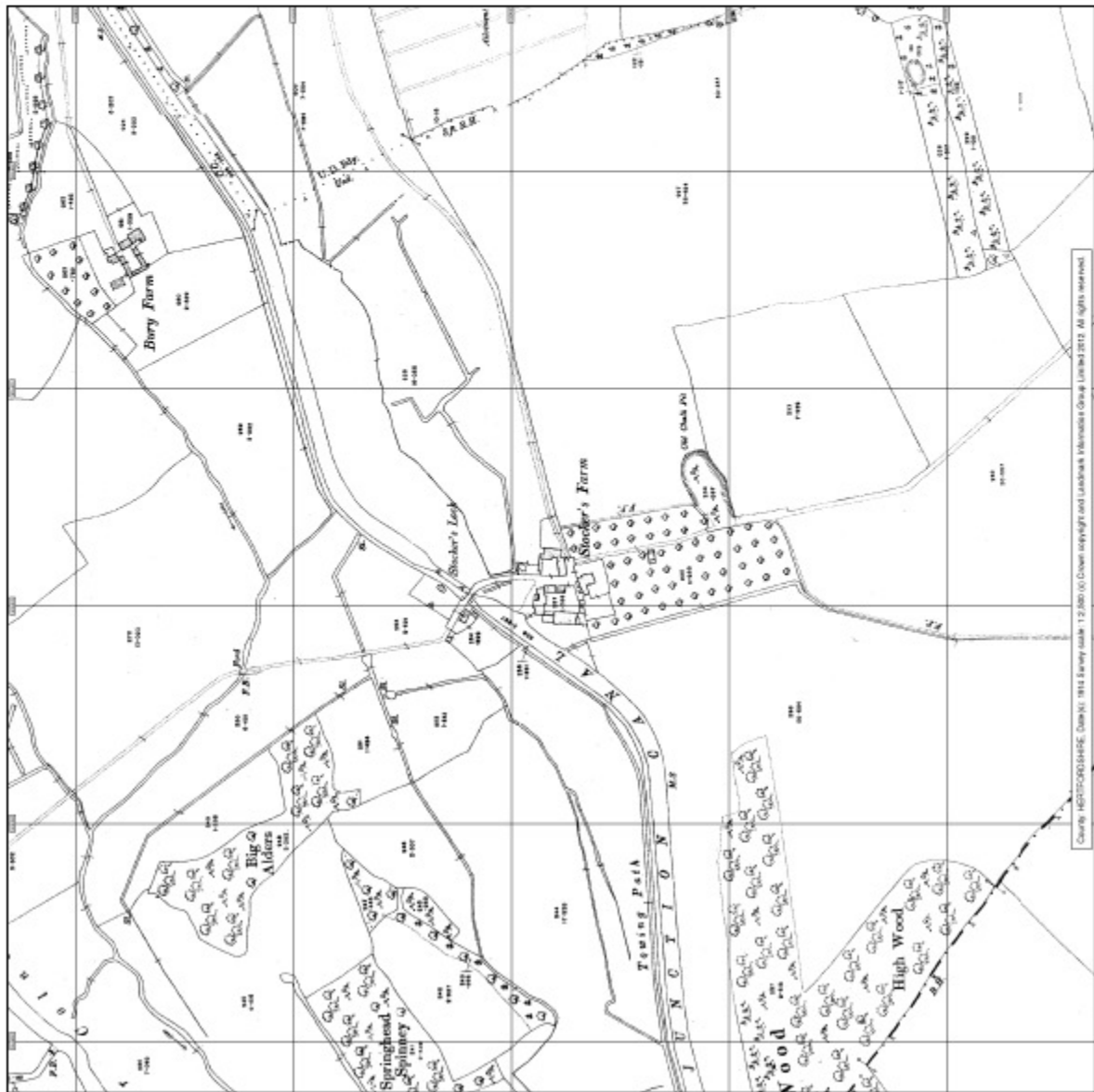
	listed buildings		tree preservation orders
	locally listed buildings		important views
	other important buildings		important boundaries
	areas of opportunity		extent of conservation area
	important open space		possible extension



# APPENDIX 2



Landmark Historical Map  
County: HERTFORDSHIRE  
Published Date(s): 1914  
Originally plotted at: 1:2,500



## APPENDIX 3

### List of Buildings of Special Architectural Interest or Historic Merit

There are ten Grade II Listed Buildings in the Stocker's Lock and Farm Conservation Area, the listed details of which are contained below;

#### **Stocker's Farm House**

House. Probably C17, rebuilt, cased and extended in C18 and C19. Some exposed timber frame in gables, walls appear to be of brick construction, red with burnt headers and later stock. Tiled roofs. A rectangular multi-gabled block with a wing to form an L. Original plan obscure. 2 storeys. 3 bay front with slightly projecting central entrance bay. Later gabled timber porch above which is a glazing bar sash in a box frame and a gable with exposed tie beam, queen struts to collar clasping purlin. Left bay has a C19 canted bay on ground floor, first floor glazing bar sash and exposed purlins and plates in a broader gable with a taller ridge. Right bay has 4 light casements with leaded panes, ground floor cambered head. Burnt brick vertical strips. Projecting brick course at eaves. Continuous brick plinth. Right return: burnt brick vertical strips and exposed framing in 2 gables. A first floor single light near front. Ground floor rectangular bay and first floor tripartite sash towards rear. To rear and set back is a part stock brick wing with an entrance under a raked hood. Ground floor 5 light casement and 2 first floor sashes in reveals. Ridge stack towards front and rear gable end stack. Left return from front has 2 stacks, 1 window on each floor and a projecting brick course at eaves level. To rear: wing to left has red brick ground floor and stock brick first floor, stock brick gable end to short wing to right which has a ground floor rectangular bay and a first floor 16 pane sash. Ridge line broken to centre. Centre right has a first floor sash and dentilled brick eaves. Centre left has a horizontal sliding sash. Ground floor additions. Interior not inspected. (Pevsner 1977).

#### **Two barns about 20m NE of Stocker's Farm House**

Two barns joined by a link building at right angles to one another. Probably C18. Timber frames, weatherboarded. Tiled roofs. Barn to SW nearer house 3 or 4 bays. Strap hinges to doors facing house. Lean-to addition on gable end near house. Interior: roof construction not visible. Barn to NE: 4 bays. Gabled midstrey in third bay from linked barn. Catslide roofs over lean-to outshuts flanking midstrey. Loft door over double doors on outer elevation. Interior not inspected. A C20 brick range to N with weatherboarding and timbering completes 3 sides of a small yard.

#### **Barn and Cart Shed about 35m NNW of Stocker's Farm House**

Barn. Probably C18. Timber frame, weatherboarded. Tiled roof. 5 bays. Gabled midstrey to yard in 2nd bay from E end with flanking brick and weatherboarded lean-to outshuts. Interior: curved braces to tie beams. Queen struts to collars clasping purlins. Attached to E at right angles and running towards house is lower cart shed. C19. 5 bays. 3 bays open to yard, further bays open to rear, curved braces from posts to plates. Roof hipped towards house. Clasped purlin roof.

#### **Granary about 15m WNW of Stocker's Farm House**

Granary. C17 or C18. Timber frame. Brick nogging. Pyramidal tiled roof. Staddle stones. Posts, sills, rails, studs and tension braces exposed. Entrance to yard. Included for group value.

#### **Barn about 25m NW of Stocker's Farm House**

Barn. Probably C18. Timber frame, weatherboarded. Tiled roofs. 5 or 6 bays. Gabled midstrey towards end away from house. Towards house a half-hip to roof and a lean-to 3 bay outshut, open with braces from posts. Lean-to to yard to left of midstrey. Interior: struts to collars clasping purlins.



## **Stocker's House**

House. 1861-2. Built for the City of London Corporation as a residence for its Collector of the Coal Dues on the Grand Union Junction Canal. Stock brick. Shallow hipped slate roof. 3 bays. Tall 2 storey front with steps up to central entrance with a panelled door and rectangular fanlight all in a rebated reveal. Large glazing bar sashes in reveals. Slightly cambered heads to all openings. Deep boxed eaves. Extruded end stacks with offsets and oversailing caps flanked by sashes on both storeys. Basement on right return and to rear with French windows and a conservatory and glazing bar sashes to upper storeys. 1 storey outbuildings to right and to rear left. Interior not inspected. (M. Bawtree 'The London Coal Duties and Their Boundary Marks', Rickmansworth Historian, Autumn 1964 and 'Stocker's House and the London Coal Duties Boundary Marks', Rickmansworth Historian, #10, 1966, Pevsner 1977). See London Coal Duty Markers.

## **Stocker's Lock House (formerly Listed as Stocker's Lock Cottage)**

Lock cottage on Grand Union Canal at Lock no.82. Early C19. Whitewashed brick. Shallow hipped slate roof. 1 storey. 1:3:1. Canted to centre with central entrance and outer 2 light cross glazed casements in reveals with slightly cambered heads. Plinth. Overhanging eaves. Ridge stacks over outer bays. Returns have large sashes in basement. To rear 2 storeys with upper window in slightly projecting central bay. Lean-to addition to rear right. Interior not inspected. Included for group value. (Pevsner 1977). See Stocker's Lock, GRAND UNION CANAL.

## **Stocker's Lock**

Lock no.82 on the Grand Union Canal. Early C19. Brick walls with ashlar coping. Timber lock gates. Bollards, some timber, some iron, probably cast 1896 by the London and Lancashire Engineering Co. Included for group value. See Stocker's Lock House, STOCKER'S FARM ROAD.

## **Bridge no.175 at Stocker's Lock**

Accommodation bridge carrying Stockers Farm Road over the Grand Union Canal to Stockers House, Stockers Farm Road (q.v.). Early C19. Mixed brick. Cambered humpback over a single round arch. Whitewashed below diagonally set courses to stone coped parapets. Splayed to rounded end piers. Included for group value.

Included for group value. See Stockers House, STOCKERS FARM ROAD.

## **London Coal Duty Marker on Towing Path about 10m SE of Stocker's House**

City of London Coal Duty Marker. 1861. Cast by H. Grissell, Regents Canal Ironworks. Cast-iron square pier, one and a half metres high, painted white. Chamfered corners. Pyramid cap. City of London crest on necking. Raised lettering on front face of shaft '24 and 25 Vict/Cap 42' nearly obscured. Placed outside house of Collector of the Coal Duties on the Grand Junction Canal