

The canal passes into open countryside on leaving Barlaston. Barlaston Hall standing on a prominent hill with a backdrop of trees can be seen to the east. Attractive woodland is included in the Conservation Area just before it passes beneath the blue brick Old Road Bridge. A gentle tree lined curve takes the canal out of Stafford Borough.

Notable Features

Barlaston Hall

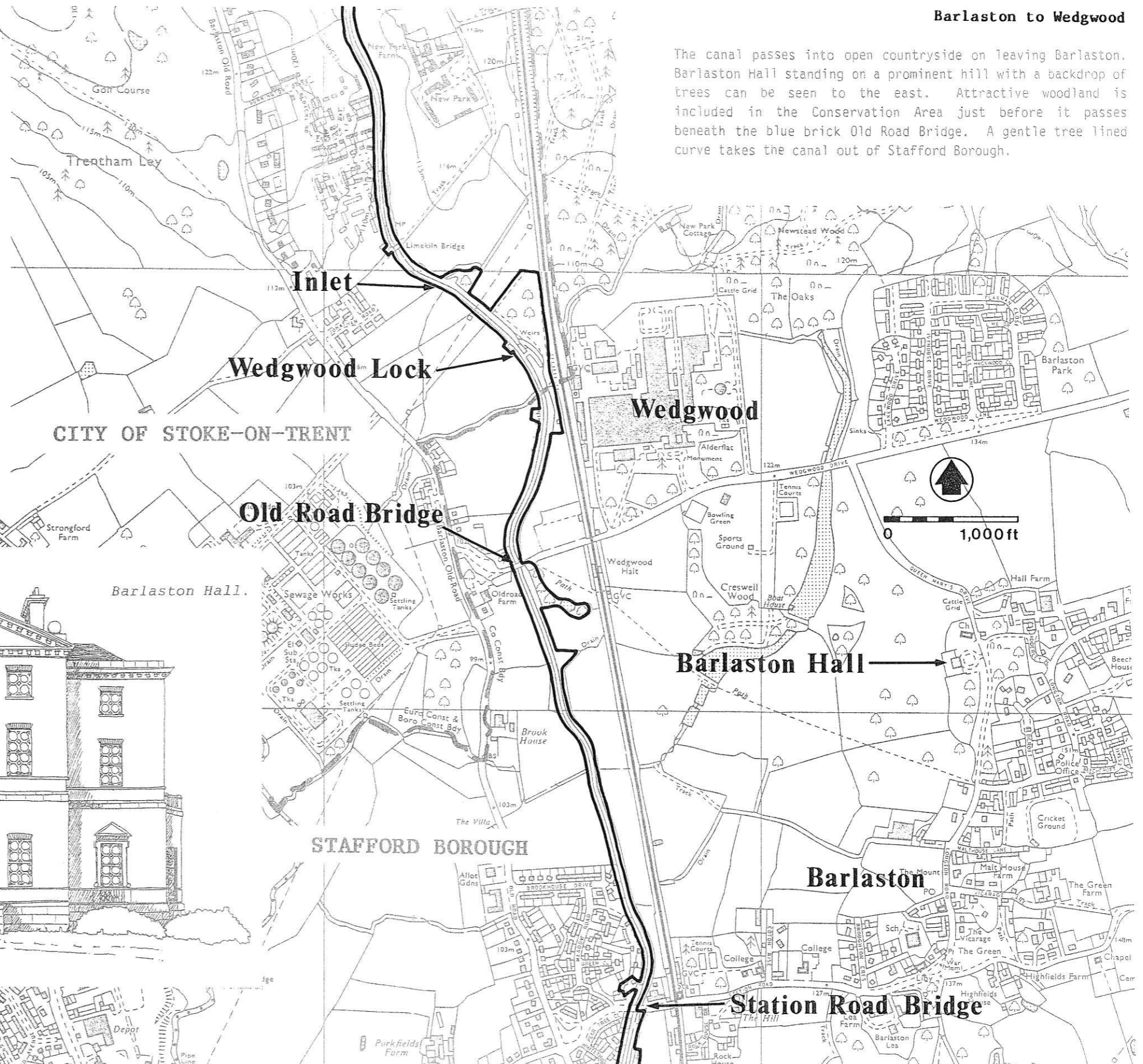
Barlaston Hall is a Grade I Listed Building in the Palladian style. It was built in 1756-58 and is attributed to Sir Robert Taylor. It was derelict for many years until SAVE Britain's Heritage acquired it from the Wedgwood Company in 1981 for £1, and passed it to the Barlaston Hall Trust. The exterior has been fully repaired, and restoration work is continuing.

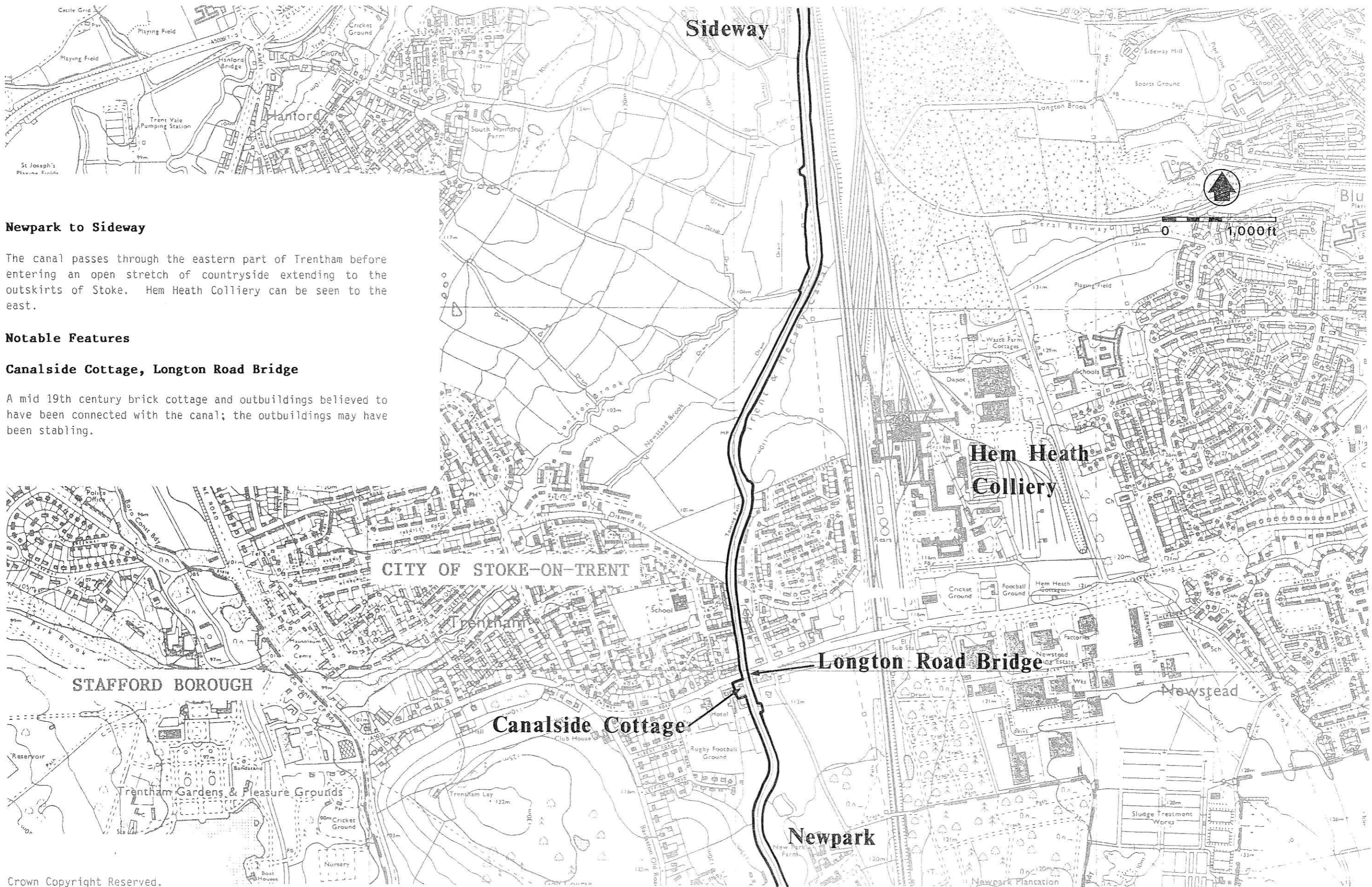
Wedgwood Works and Lock

The modern Wedgwood works lie close to the canal, and are a reminder of the canal's instigator Josiah Wedgwood. There is also a lock at this point.

Inlet North East of Wedgwood Lock

This may have been a wharf or turning point.





Newpark to Sideway

The canal passes through the eastern part of Trentham before entering an open stretch of countryside extending to the outskirts of Stoke. Hem Heath Colliery can be seen to the east.

Notable Features

Canalside Cottage, Longton Road Bridge

A mid 19th century brick cottage and outbuildings believed to have been connected with the canal; the outbuildings may have been stabling.

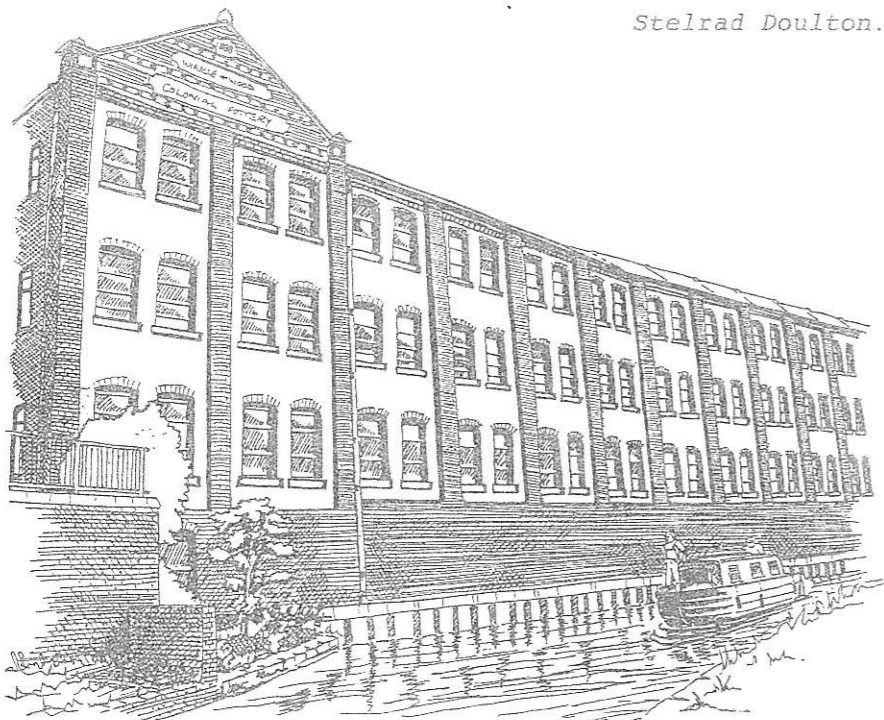
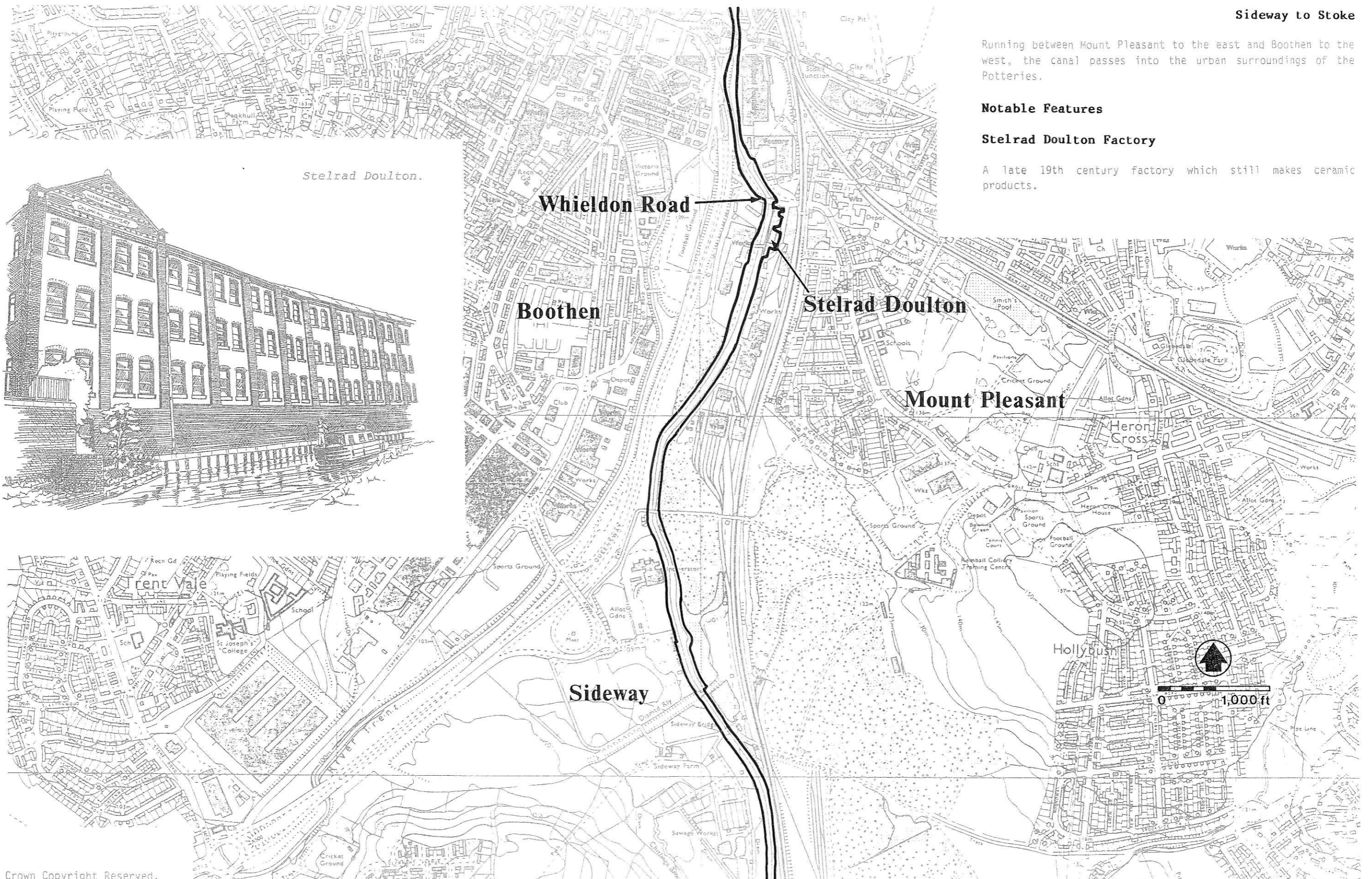
Sideway to Stoke

Running between Mount Pleasant to the east and Boothen to the west, the canal passes into the urban surroundings of the Potteries.

Notable Features

Stelrad Doulton Factory

A late 19th century factory which still makes ceramic products.



As the canal passes through Stoke it is fringed by industrial buildings to the east, and the A500 to the west. Beyond the open expanse of Hanley Cemetery is the junction with the Caldon Canal at Etruria Locks.

Notable Features

Cliff Vale Pottery (Twyfords Factory) Bottlekilns. The pottery with its pair of bottlekilns beside the canal was built in 1887. The kilns are listed as structures of special architectural and historic interest.

Hanley Cemetery

The cemetery was opened by the Borough Council in 1860, and was extended in 1876 and again early this century. It provides a significant break in the built-up frontages along this stretch of the canal.

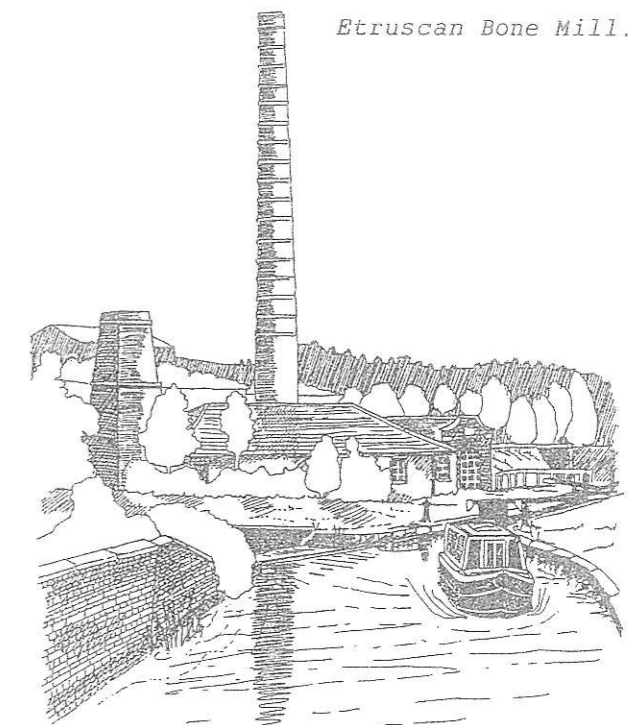
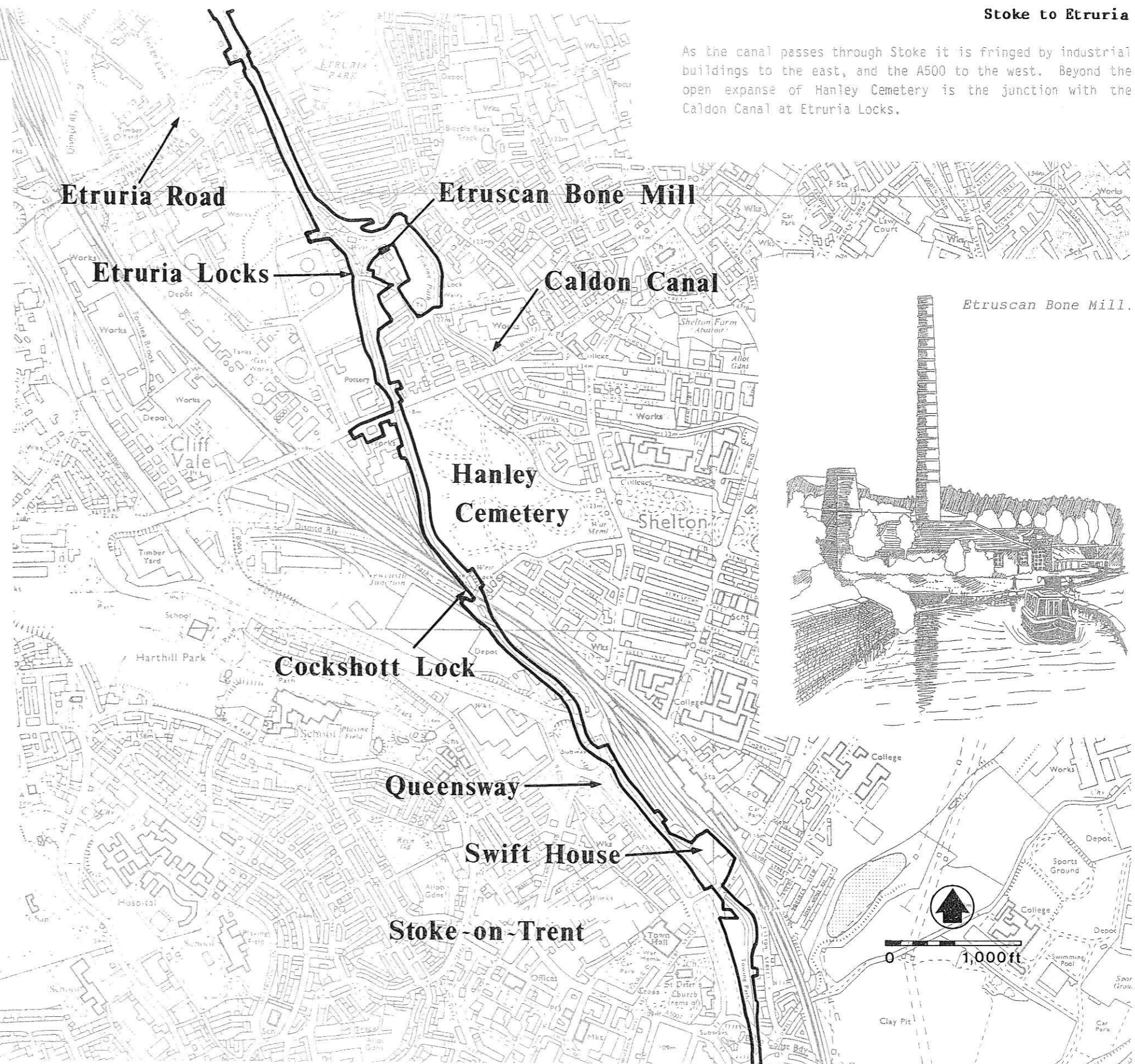
Caldon Canal Junction and Etruria Locks

The Caldon Canal to Froghall was among the first branch canals planned by Brindley. It was completed about 1777, providing the limestone quarries at Caldon with access to the Trent and Mersey Canal.

Etruscan Bone Mill

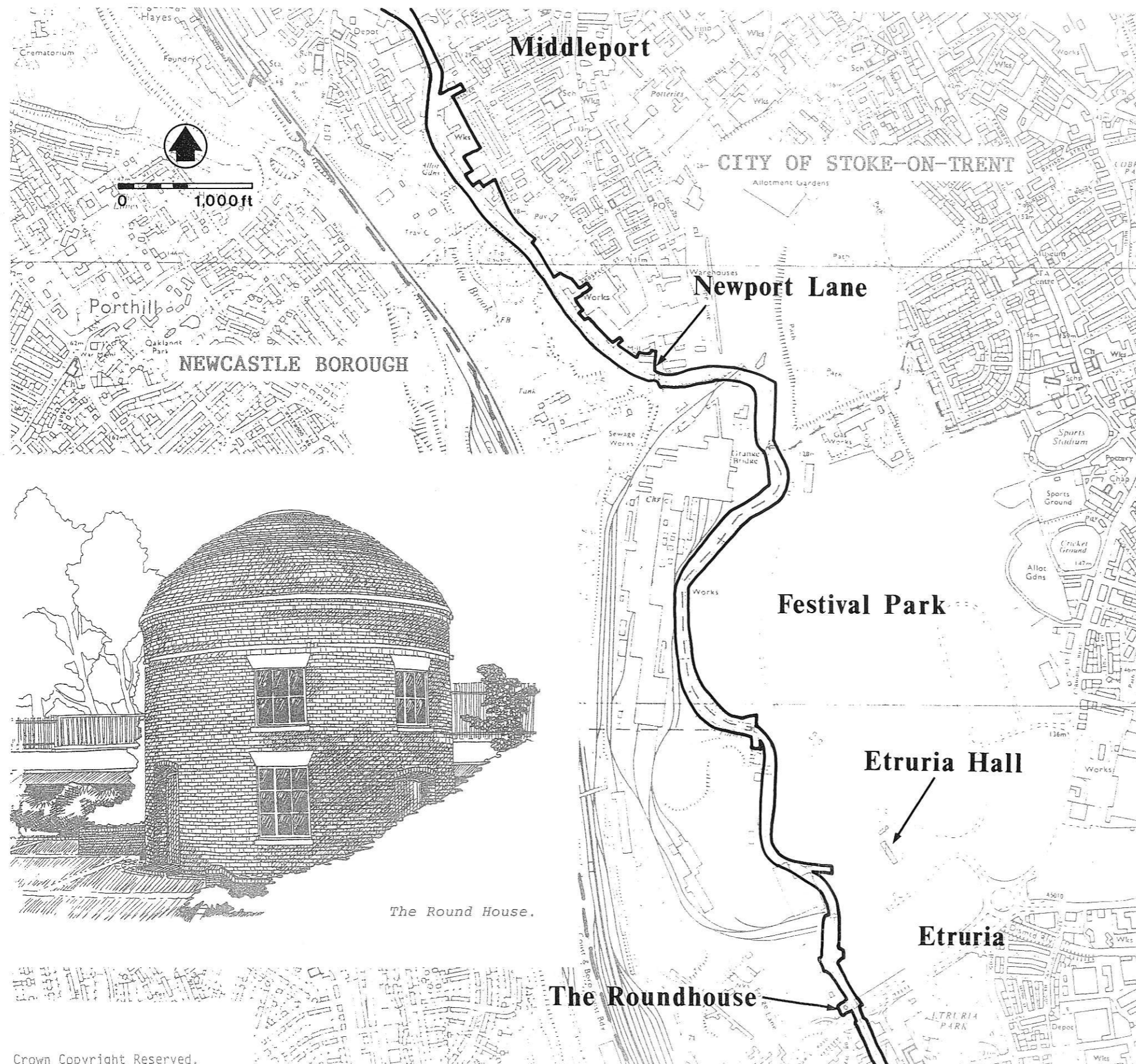
An arm of the canal at Etruria Locks leads to the wharf of Messrs Bourne and Hudson Bone Works. This is one of the earliest industrial sites along the canal. The mill was established in 1820 on the site of Ball's Chemical Works, but the present buildings were erected in 1857 by George Kirk under the direction of Jesse Shirley, who took over on the death of John Bourne in 1852. The site now comprises a calcining kiln, pan room, gear room, engine room and boiler house; there were originally also drying beds, bone boilers and more extensive grinding works. This is now a museum open to the public.

Bone and flint were important materials for the manufacture of pottery. Bone was boiled, calcined and ground and used to whiten the body, the clay from which pottery is made. Flint was burned and crushed, and used to harden the body. Raw bone, flint and stone were brought up the canal, unloaded at the wharf and processed in the mill. Stone was ground for talcum powder.



Etruscan Bone Mill.

Etruria to Middleport



The canal winds its way through Etruria past the site of Josiah Wedgwood's factory through a large area that was formerly occupied by the Shelton Steelworks complex; part of it still remains to the west of the canal. On the east side it became the site of the 1986 National Garden Festival, one of the major reclamation projects of the City of Stoke-on-Trent. It is currently being developed as a leisure and retail park.

Notable Features

Etruria Works: the Roundhouse

In 1766 Josiah Wedgwood purchased the Ridge House estate at Cobridge. He renamed it Etruria, deliberately alluding to the contemporary Neo-classical taste for the so-called Etruscan style inspired by classical sources such as Greek and Roman architecture and decorated pottery.

In anticipation of the construction of the canal which would provide transport for raw materials and finished wares, Wedgwood built his potbanks and Etruria Works, a village for his workforce and Etruria Hall for himself. It was a complete industrial community served by the canal Wedgwood did so much to promote. The factory was built in 1767-1769, and remained in production until 1938. In 1965 it was almost totally demolished.

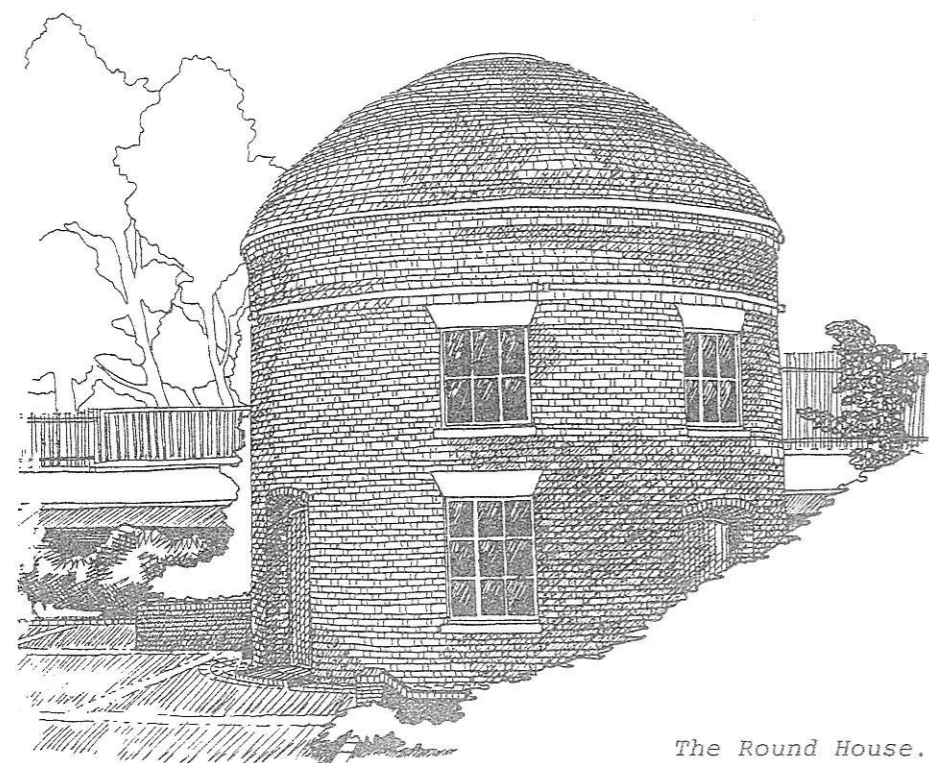
All that remains today is the Roundhouse, a Grade II Listed building on the western side of the canal next to Etruria Road. This formed the southern end of the long facade to the canal. It now houses a private printing museum for The Sentinel newspaper.

Etruria Hall

Etruria Hall, on the eastern side of the canal, was Wedgwood's country house, and once stood in its own park with a view to the canal. It was designed by Joseph Pickford and initially completed in 1770, but was extended a few years later; it was remodelled in the 19th century. It is now a Grade II Listed building. The house later became part of the steelworks.

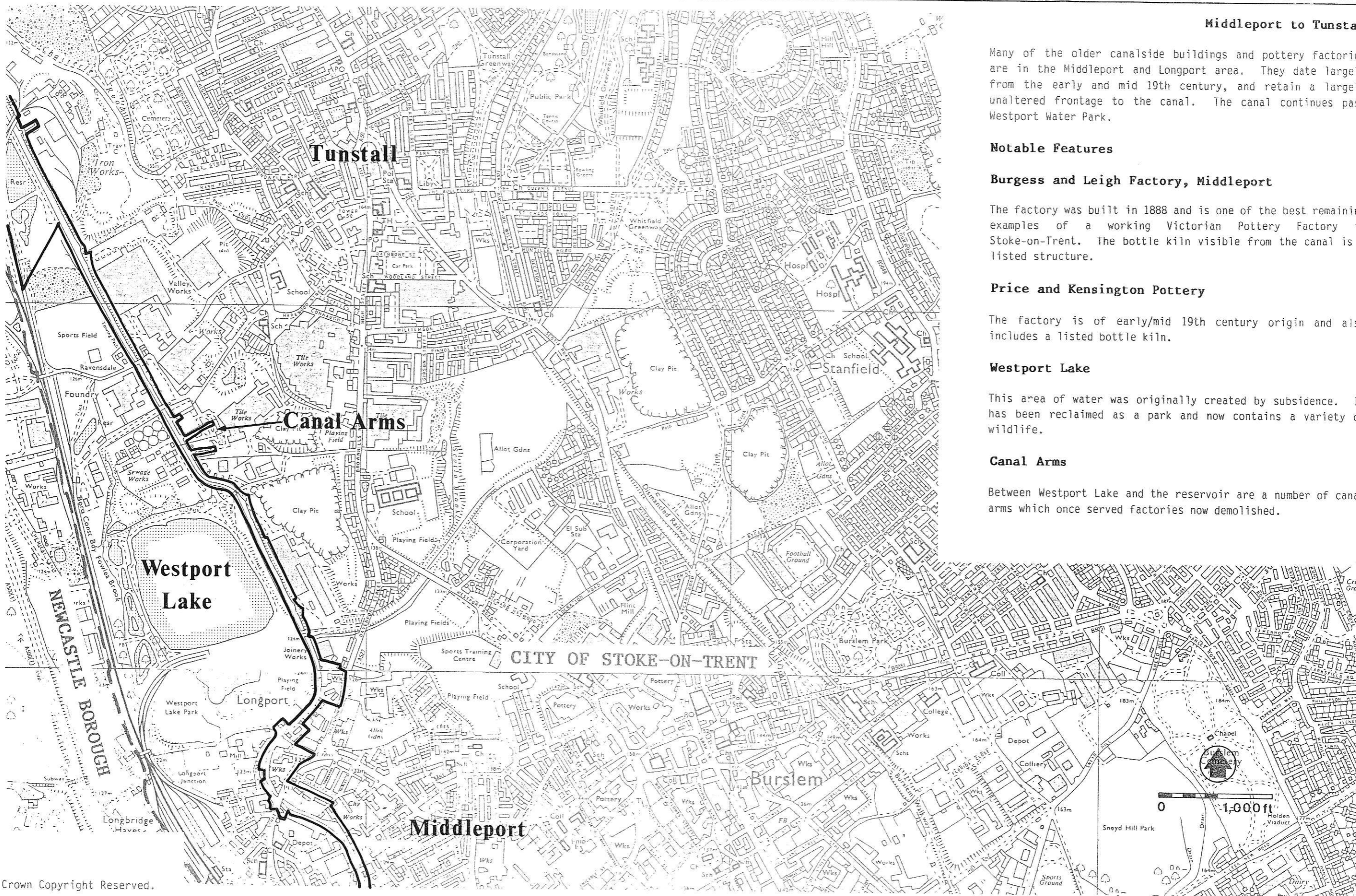
Shelton Iron and Steel Works

In 1839 the Earl Granville built Etruria Ironworks. About 1850 a forge and mills were erected, and by 1860 the Shelton Bar Iron Company had eight blast furnaces on the site, as well as coal mines. In 1886 the Shelton Iron and Steel Company was formed. Most of the operation was closed by British Steel in the late 1970s, and the site has been very largely cleared, and reclaimed for the National Garden Festival



The Round House.

Middleport to Tunstall



Many of the older canalside buildings and pottery factories are in the Middleport and Longport area. They date largely from the early and mid 19th century, and retain a largely unaltered frontage to the canal. The canal continues past Westport Water Park.

Notable Features

Burgess and Leigh Factory, Middleport

The factory was built in 1888 and is one of the best remaining examples of a working Victorian Pottery Factory in Stoke-on-Trent. The bottle kiln visible from the canal is a listed structure.

Price and Kensington Pottery

The factory is of early/mid 19th century origin and also includes a listed bottle kiln.

Westport Lake

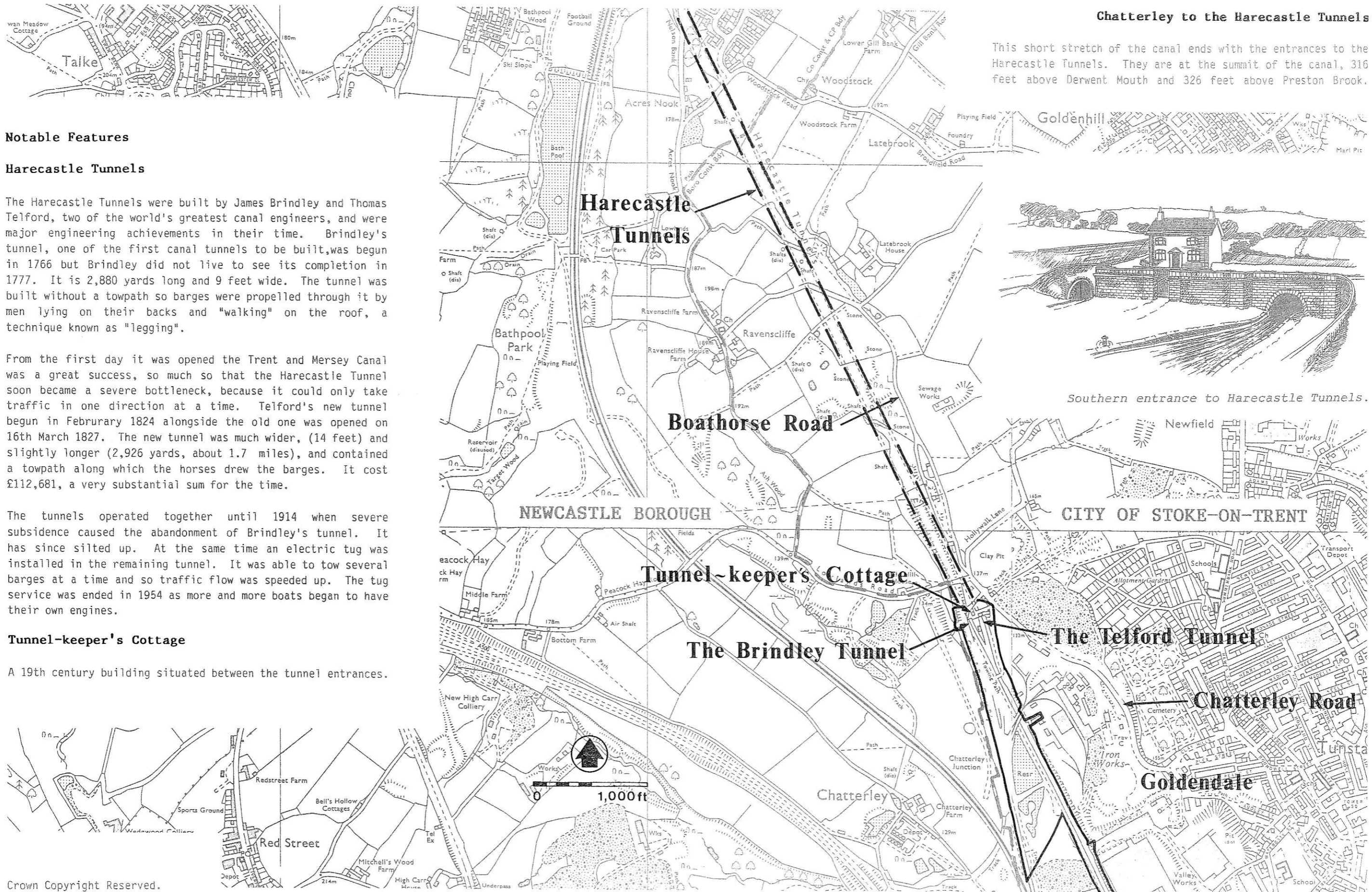
This area of water was originally created by subsidence. It has been reclaimed as a park and now contains a variety of wildlife.

Canal Arms

Between Westport Lake and the reservoir are a number of canal arms which once served factories now demolished.

Chatterley to the Harecastle Tunnels

This short stretch of the canal ends with the entrances to the Harecastle Tunnels. They are at the summit of the canal, 316 feet above Derwent Mouth and 326 feet above Preston Brook.



Notable Features

Harecastle Tunnels

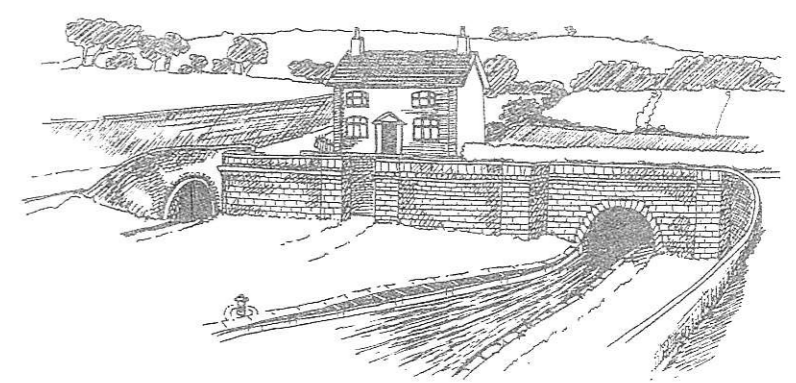
The Harecastle Tunnels were built by James Brindley and Thomas Telford, two of the world's greatest canal engineers, and were major engineering achievements in their time. Brindley's tunnel, one of the first canal tunnels to be built, was begun in 1766 but Brindley did not live to see its completion in 1777. It is 2,880 yards long and 9 feet wide. The tunnel was built without a towpath so barges were propelled through it by men lying on their backs and "walking" on the roof, a technique known as "legging".

From the first day it was opened the Trent and Mersey Canal was a great success, so much so that the Harecastle Tunnel soon became a severe bottleneck, because it could only take traffic in one direction at a time. Telford's new tunnel begun in February 1824 alongside the old one was opened on 16th March 1827. The new tunnel was much wider, (14 feet) and slightly longer (2,926 yards, about 1.7 miles), and contained a towpath along which the horses drew the barges. It cost £112,681, a very substantial sum for the time.

The tunnels operated together until 1914 when severe subsidence caused the abandonment of Brindley's tunnel. It has since silted up. At the same time an electric tug was installed in the remaining tunnel. It was able to tow several barges at a time and so traffic flow was speeded up. The tug service was ended in 1954 as more and more boats began to have their own engines.

Tunnel-keeper's Cottage

A 19th century building situated between the tunnel entrances.



Southern entrance to Harecastle Tunnels.