

9.0 RESTORATION STRATEGY

The works necessary to restore the St Helens Canal have been identified in previous sections and, so, it is possible to identify a strategy to implement and progress the restoration. Such a strategy needs to take account of a number of factors. These include the tendency for restoration projects to start gradually and then pick up speed; an early reliance on volunteers; the need for the first restored sections to have some function and a water supply; and for initial schemes to be visible and easy to undertake so as to enable the whole restoration process to gather momentum.

9.1 Restoration in Sections

There are three major obstacles to restoring the St Helens Canal that would be likely to be last to be overcome. This is because it will take time to raise the funds necessary to clear them and the level of expenditure would be more easily justified when these are the only obstacles preventing full restoration. These are:

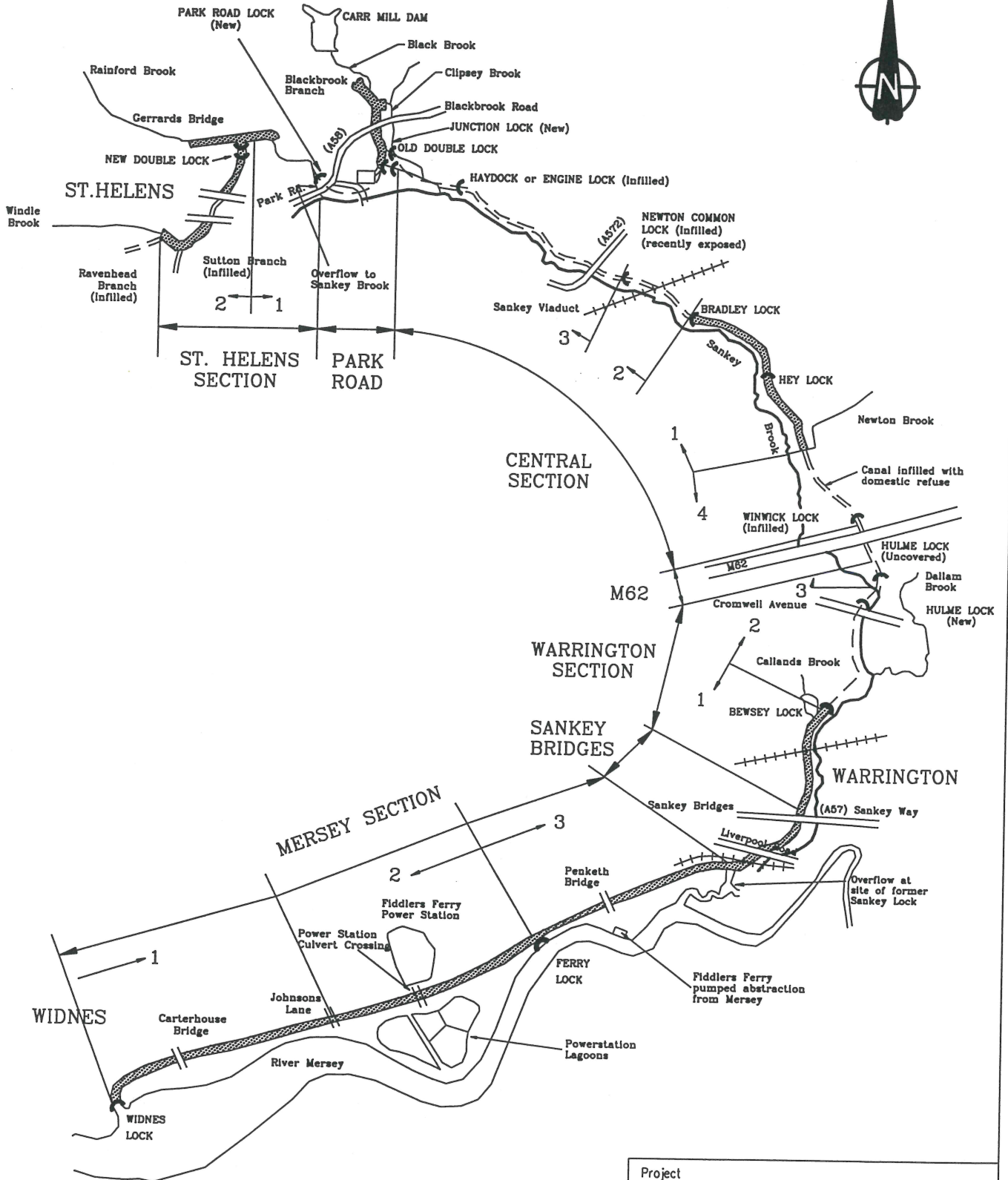
- Park Road to Old Double Lock Section
- M62 Crossing
- Sankey Bridges/Sankey Way

This leaves four lengths, as shown on Figure 9.1, available for intermediate restoration:

- Central Section - M62 to Old Double Lock
- Mersey Section - Spike Island to Sankey Bridges
- Warrington Section - Sankey Way to M62
- St Helens Section - Park Road to "The Hotties"

The sections are listed above in the proposed order of priority, based on the use that could be made for each section, the ease of restoration and the need to provide water for each section. However, there is no implicit need for one section to be finished before another is started. In fact, restoration could be proceeding on all four lengths at once.

It is anticipated that certain early works will be carried out by volunteers, although contractors will be required for major structures and channel work. The nature of volunteer operations tends to raise the profile of the canal, partly through the publicity offered by working parties and partly by establishing limited navigation quickly, thus allowing a shallow draft "mini" trip boat or similar operation to promote



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FIGURE 9.1

the canal. It may be that contractors subsequently have to revisit the site, particularly if extensive dredging is involved. However, this does not undermine the basic philosophy of volunteers carrying out restoration as part of the early promotion of the scheme.

Each section can be sub-divided into a preferred sequence of restoration as described in the following paragraphs together, with comments on the implementation and specific interim benefits of each sub-section.

9.2 Central Section

Length	Implementation and Benefits
Newton Brook to Bradley Lock	Mainly volunteers. Section currently in-water allows establishment of mini-trip boat on 1.4km length with one lock
Bradley Lock to Newton Common Lock	Contractor required to construct channel. Possible volunteer involvement in Bradley Lock and stone 'heritage' walls. Extends navigable length and gives access to proposed canal depot at former sugar works
Newton Common Lock to Old Double Lock	Mainly contractors. Possible volunteer work in clearing and restoring Engine Lock. Extends navigable length and secures water supply from Carr Mill Dam
Newton Brook to M62 (Winwick Lock)	Contractors. Extends navigable length and carries water down to M62, where existing pipes could take water further, pending construction of new crossing. The levels for the M62 crossing must be determined before proceeding south of Winwick Lock

Restoration of the central section gives a 7.5km length with 5 locks. This would be appropriate for a day hire operation or larger trip boat.

It is suggested that the site of the former Sankey Sugar works would be a suitable location for a canal maintenance depot/ boatyard /base for hire boats and trip boats. In view of this site's environmental legacy, its redevelopment may yield additional funding to promote the removal of contamination. This area could then become a visitor 'destination' in its own right, particularly in view of the proximity of the Sankey Viaduct. A slipway could be provided for trailable cruisers and space for turning boats, particularly those prevented from travelling further North by the air draft restriction at Penkford Bridge.

Additional winding holes may be required if boats longer than the width of the canal are used on each section as they are opened to navigation.

9.3 Mersey Section

Length	Implementation and Benefits
Spike Island to Power Station (Johnsons' Lane)	Volunteer restoration of Spike Island and Carterhouse Bridges would allow shallow draft trip boat a 3.1km run from Spike Island. This would draw on existing visitors. Subsequent dredging required for full navigation
Fiddlers Ferry to Power Station (Johnsons' Lane)	Contractors. Restoration westwards allows existing moored boats a short run (for engine testing etc.) without using lock. Once complete allows use of Widnes Lock from Fiddlers Ferry moorings
Fiddlers Ferry to Sankey Bridges	Contractors. Extends navigation to first major obstacle

Restoration of this length gives an 8km run with 7 swing or lift bridges. The wildlife interest, plus the pub at Fiddlers Ferry makes this a suitable length for day hire or a longer boat trip. Slipways at Spike Island allow access for trailable cruisers.

Additional winding holes may be required if boats longer than the width of the canal are used on each section as they are opened to navigation.

9.4 Warrington Section

Length	Implementation and Benefits
Bewsey Lock to Sankey Way	Contractors. Rebuilding Swing Bridge at Bewsey will allow "mini" trip boat. Channel clearance will allow larger vessel
Bewsey Lock to New Hulme Lock	Contractors. Needs water supply from north of M62. Will extend trip boat operation through parkland and residential areas
New Hulme Lock to M62 (Winwick Quay)	Contractors. Extends navigable length. Provides water supply by connecting with pipes under M62

When restored, this length will be 4km with 2 locks. This is insufficient for day boat hire, although a slipway at Bewsey would attract some use. The continuous open space, with residential areas set back from it, would be attractive to some form of leisure "waterbus" service.

Additional winding holes may be required if boats longer than the width of the canal are used on each section as they are opened to navigation.

Increased usage of the level pound between Bewsey and Widnes will increase the demand for water making it desirable to obtain a water supply from the head of the canal to Bewsey at the earliest opportunity. If the new channel linking Bewsey to the south of M62 is delayed, it may be necessary to install a temporary pipe connection.

9.5 St Helens Section

Length	Implementation and Benefits
New Double Lock to Park Road	Contractors. Dredging this length would allow a low air draught "mini" trip boat to use this length of canal, pending raising of Merton Bank Bridge
New Double to The Hotties	Contractors. Removing obstacles nearest New Double lock first would extend navigable length. Alternatively, if a developer is found for the land east of Central Station early on in the restoration process, a short length from the Hotties could then be easily extended to New Double Lock

At 3km with two locks, this length is too short to attract pleasure cruisers generally, although a slip way at some point would be advantageous. Once completed a trip boat starting from the Hotties could offer trips of 1-1½ hours duration through one of the most historic sections of the canal and through New Double Lock.

Additional winding holes may be required if boats longer than the width of the canal are used on each section as they are opened to navigation.

9.6 Major Obstacles

In terms of the overall benefits, the removal of the major blockages have equal priority, as each is an obstacle to through navigation. However, there are clear benefits to uniting the two shorter sections, ie the St Helens and the Warrington sections with one of the longer ones as early as possible, to allow them to benefit from day hire boats and to form part of a longer cruising length. This is particularly true in the case of the St Helens section, which is shortest of the intermediate sections.

Against this, the Old Double Lock to Park Road length within the St Helens section is one of the most complex and expensive features of the restoration, although St Helens Borough Council's European Objective 1 status may help in raising funds. Even with this, land purchase (including the IMO car wash) and negotiation with adjacent properties may delay proceedings.

By contrast, the other obstacles are largely a matter of raising enough money and negotiating with relevant authorities. Once the canal is navigable to each side of an obstruction, it is much easier to bring political pressure to bear on the various bodies involved.

The planned widening of the M62 motorway, currently programmed for 1998/999 may influence the implementation of this strategy. Although there would be little point in completing the crossing long before canal restoration on either side there would be engineering merit and potential cost savings if the new canal crossing structure could be constructed at the same time as the motorway widening.

9.7 Conclusions

The above strategy will allow restoration to proceed with limited resources and volunteer labour in the first instance, with increasing involvement from Contractors to extend navigation as funding permits before finally removing the largest obstacles to complete restoration and give maximum benefits.

The cost for restoring each section of the canal to navigable standards based on the suggested restoration strategy is illustrated in Table 9.1.

CAPITAL COST SUMMARY FOR RESTORATION							
Canal Section	Chainage Approx m	Rest'n Seq	Navigable Channel £000's	Structures £000's	Services Diversion £000's	Water Supply/ Flood Alleviation £000's	Total £000's
Chalon Court to New Double Lock	24450 to 22750	4B	364	1569	1071	-	3004
New Double Lock to Park Road	22750 to 21550	4A	1586	179	535	-	2300
Park Road to Old Double Lock	21550 to 20695	5C	2122	1579	590	-	4291
Old Double Lock to Newton Common Lock	20695 to 17225	1C	3559	436	1245	45	5285
Newton Common Lock to Bradley Lock	17225 to 16375	1B	1549	63	275	-	1887
Bradley Lock to Newton Brook	16375 to 14635	1A	738	347	426	-	1511
Newton Brook to Winwick Lock	14635 to 12950	1D	5669	448	105	-	6222
Winwick Lock to Winwick Quay	12950 to 12645	5A	445	2381	33	-	2859
Winwick Quay to New Hulme Lock	12645 to 12055	3C	597	720	-	-	1317
New Hulme Lock to Bewsey Lock	12055 to 10460	3B	1290	374	155	330	2149
Bewsey Lock to Sankey Way	10460 to 8855	3A	487	403	16	123	1029
Sankey Way to Sankey Bridges	8855 to 8035	5B	245	1267	313	-	1825
Sankey Bridges to Fiddlers Ferry	8035 to 5440	2C	1459	573	85	133	2250

CAPITAL COST SUMMARY FOR RESTORATION							
Canal Section	Chainage Approx	Rest'n Seq	Navigable Channel	Structures	Services Diversion	Water Supply/ Flood Alleviation	Total
	m		£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Fiddlers Ferry to Power Station	5440 to 3180	2B	1793	400	46	-	2239
Power Station to Spike Island	3180 to 0	2A	2720	272	66	153	3211
Total £000's	-		24623	11011	4962	784	41380

Table 9.1