OPDC
GRAND UNION CANAL
MASSING AND ENCLOSURE NOTE
April 2017

Grand Union Canal viewed west from Mitre Bridge



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1. Purpose of this note

1.1 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS NOTE?

The Grand Union Canal Massing and Enclosure Note sets out the analysis undertaken to inform Local Plan planning policy guidance for the height and massing of development facing the canal within Old Oak based on delivering an appropriate sense of enclosure.

The note provides information at a level of detail considered to be suitable for the strategic role of the OPDC's Local Plan. It considers appropriate enclosure of the canal while acknowledging other elements that will inform the implementation of policy. Particularly, these include the need to conserve and enhance the canal's designation as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and as a conservation area.

Further consideration will need to be given to other factors set out in section 2 and any proposal will need to accord with the wider policies of the Local Plan, London Plan and guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.

1.2 WHAT GEOGRAPHICAL AREA DOES IT COVER?

The analysis covers areas within the OPDC boundary outside of Strategic Industrial Locations. This includes the places of the Grand Union Canal, Old Oak North, Old Oak South, Scrubs Lane and Old Oak Lane and Old Oak Common Lane.

It does not set out information for Strategic Industrial Locations (including the places of Park Royal West and Channel Gate). Building heights and massing along the Grand Union Canal within Park Royal locations will be informed by the need to support industrial intensification alongside all other relevant guidance.



Grand Union Canal looking east

2. Analysis

2.1 WHAT METHODOLOGY HAS BEEN USED?

This note focuses on delivering an appropriate sense of enclosure, through building heights and massing, to the Grand Union Canal and associated publicly accessble open spaces.

In defining an approriate sense of enclosure, a review of published material has been carried out (section 2.2). Specific consideration has been given to delivering appropriate enclosure within an urban environment that reflects the envisaged scale of development proposed by the Local Plan.

To deliver this, three points along the Grand Union Canal within Old Oak have been identified (section 2.3). At these points illustrative diagrammatic sections are used to define indicative appropriate heights based on the building height to width ratios set out in section 2.2.

The width element of the ratio is based on the indicative movement network, publicly accessible open spaces and resultant development plots set out in the Local Plan and OPDC's Public Realm, Walking and Cycling Strategy.

2.2 WHAT IS AN APPROPRIATE ENCLOSURE?

The Urban Design Compendium (2000, 2013) defines enclosure as:

"the three dimensional mass of each building which defines the public realm".

Good enclosure is generally considered where buildings frame a space, providing good levels of natural surveillance while responding to local character, land use designations and optimising development. As such, the form of enclosure can vary to respond to local circumstances. This is demonstrated to be relevant to the Grand Union Canal in the sections set out in section 3.

What is considered to be appropriate enclosure for an urban environment?

The Urban Design Compendium and Manual for Streets (2007) provide information for measuring enclosure based on building height to street/space width.

These state that a range of height to width ratios are appropriate between 1:1 and 1:3 for streets.

OPDC considers that an appropriate ratio range is 1:1 to 1:1.5 to guide general building heights along the length of the Grand Union Canal outside of Strategic Industrial Locations, subject to the consideration of other elements detailed below. This reflects the unique context of the canal as an integral part of the UK's largest regeneration project, the envisaged surrounding high density development and the canal's many roles including a key local movement route, destination, conservation area and SINC.

What other elements need to be considered in addition to enclosure?

In addition to considering enclosure, a variety of other factors will need to be assessed to inform the height and massing of proposed development. These include, but are not limited to:

- Supporting local legibility through the potential use of taller buildings at key crossings and at destinations including Grand Union Square and Old Oak High Street.
- Optimising development, including delivering significant benefits for the wider community,
- Protecting the Grand Union Canal's designation as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. Conserving and enhancing the Grand Union Canal Conservation Area.
- Supporting and enhancing existing local and national walking and cycling routes along the southern towpath and new walking and cycling routes along the northern towpath.
- Meeting OPDC's environmental standards set out in OPDC's Environmental Standards Study and providing an appropriate level of amenity for canal waterspaces, canalside publicly accessible open spaces and permanent residential moorings.
- Site specific circumstances such as level changes and land remediation.

2.3 ANALYSING HEIGHT TO WIDTH RATIOS

As set out in section 2.1, three locations along the Grand Union Canal were selected representing the envisaged varied character along the canal. These are:

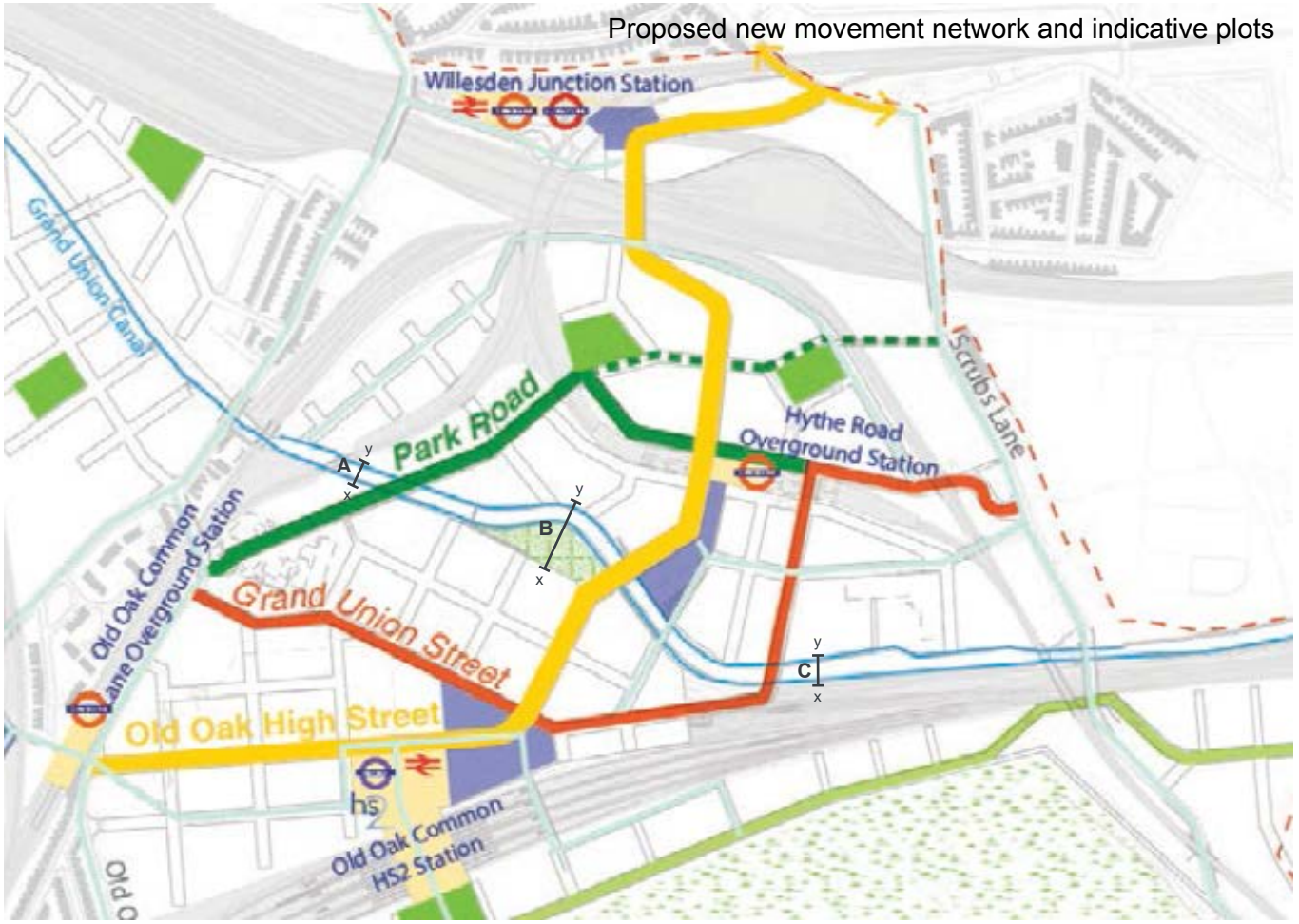
A: west of Park Road bridge.
B: across the Grand Union Canal Local Park.
C: east of Grand Union Street bridge.

Indicative cross sections have been defined with the following assumptions being made:

- Width of canal water space is unaltered.
- Width of cycle and walking routes are approximately 3.5 metres. On the south of the canal, these are seperate to the Local Park. On the north of the canal, these are integrated with the Local Park.
- Width of the Grand Union Canal Local Park is approximately 10 metres on both sides of the canal.

Widths for each of the sections are then used with the approprite height-to-width ratio to define general heights for development facing on to the canal (subject to the other elements set out in section 2.2). The 1:1 ratio has been used to represent the higher range of heights generated by this figure. In defining the general heights, the following assumptions have been made:

- Development is mixed use. Commercial uses are provided at ground floor with residential above.
- Residential storey floor to ceiling heights are 3 metres.
- Commercial storey floor to ceiling heights are 4 metres.



Proposed new movement network and indicative plots

Key

- Walking/cycling route
- Grand Union Canal
- Grand Union Canal Local Park

	Illustration of elements comprising the canal and specific widths	Full width	Building height range based on 1:1.5 ratio (metres)	Building height based on 1:1.5 ratio (storeys)	Commentary
A		25m	Up to approx. 17 m	Up to approx. 5	This section is located within a particulary constrained location. Building design and proximity to a key crossing could facilitate an greater range of heights.
B		41.5m	Up to approx. 28 m	Up to approx. 9	The increase in width allows for potential greater heights that other sections. The proximity to Old Oak High Street provides an opportunity for taller buildings.
C		32m	Up to approx. 21 m	Up to approx. 7	This section may not have development on the southern side of the canal (part x) due to railway infrastructure. This could facilitate a greater range of heights.

The above analysis demonstrates that the width of the Grand Union Canal will vary, responding to the width of the water space and adjacent uses and spaces. Consideration needs to be given to delivering a balanced approach to provide enclosure to spaces along the canal through building heights. Particularly, this will require building height policies to respond to the need to conserve and enhance Grand Union Canal Conservation Area and SINC designation and to support local legibility.

3. Recommendations

Considering enclosure is one element in guiding building heights. As set out in section 2.2 there are a range of elements that need to be considered and any proposal will need to accord with all relevant policies in the London Plan, Local Plan and guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.

The analysis set out in section 2 recognises the need for policy guidance to deliver a balanced sense of enclosure along the length of the Grand Union Canal outside of Strategic Industrial Locations.

To deliver this balanced approach to enclosure that recognises the change in character along the canal, the following policy approach is recommended:

A range of generally 6 to 8 storeys for sites facing on to the Grand Union Canal with increased heights and taller buildings at key crossing points.

This approach is considered to be sufficiently robust and flexible to respond to the canal's heritage, character, transport, biodiversity and amenity roles. Key crossings include Old Oak High Street, Grand Union Street, Park Road, Scrubs Lane and Old Oak Lane.



Grand Union Canal viewed east from Old Oak Lane bridge