

AINA CASE STUDY

PLACE MAKING AND SHAPING

Bradford Canal: rebuilding a lost waterway



Bold plans for city centre regeneration include linking a new canal to a major civic space

The Bradford Canal was built as a five kilometre spur off the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, but closed in 1922 due to dwindling traffic and unreliable water supply. Today, little evidence remains of its former route. In 2003 a masterplan prepared for Bradford city centre focussed on the use of water as a catalyst for the city's future regeneration, and a range of innovative proposals included the reintroduction of the canal.

Since then a great deal of progress has been made to determine a practical and deliverable route for the new waterway, using a route which would minimise costs whilst maximising the regeneration potential within the canal corridor. A new canal would extend the national network, though the prime aim would be to encourage large scale improvement within some of the more deprived parts of Bradford. The canal would form the physical thread to link a series of development sites and make them more attractive to developers and investors through increased land and development values.

Further development work has been undertaken to ensure connections with a series of water-based projects, including the new City Park, complete with lake, adjacent to City Hall. This project started on site in November 2009 and will be complete in summer 2011. It is believed to be the largest public realm regeneration project in Europe, and key to its success has been a detailed analysis of the hydrology and flood risk issues which will ensure practical connectivity of water supply between the park and the future canal.

One of the main drivers for a rebuilt Bradford Canal is the regeneration of Canal Road corridor, providing 5,000 new homes, together with associated social, transport and business infrastructure, across more than 80 hectares of derelict and underused brownfield land. A masterplan was prepared to show how the corridor could take advantage of the new canal, and the proposals also seek to create a high quality environment linking the Saltaire World Heritage Site with UNESCO's newly designated City of Film.

