

29 November 2022

LW/Prop41,
Canal & River Trust acting as Trustee of the Waterways Infrastructure Trust,
National Waterways Museum Ellesmere Port,
South Pier Road,
Ellesmere Port,
Cheshire,
CH65 4FW

To Whom it May Concern

**Ref: LW/Prop41: Disposal of a parcel of land adjacent to Limehouse Basin,
Commercial Road, London E14**

IWA's Heritage Advisory Panel objects to this proposal from Canal and River Trust to dispose of the strip of land that abuts the western side of Commercial Road Lock. Disposal of this land threatens the canal's heritage setting and amenity value.

Taking Limehouse Basin as a meeting place for boats between the tidal Thames and the inland canals, this lock stands as a gateway to the canal system. The two lock chambers fit neatly into the space between two historic bridges, twin arches of the Commercial Road Bridge and the fine single arch of the docks railway, now DLR. This canalscape is very important to the character of the designated Regent's Canal Conservation Area, which describes the bridge as 'remarkable'. Anything built on the site would inevitably damage these views.

We feel it is inappropriate to dispose of any land that forms part of the operational environment for a canal lock even if not currently operational. The second chamber is an important heritage feature, and it deserves to be kept to show how the canal operated in its busy commercial days, including the circulating space where the lock beams would be swung. It is also important to make sure that restoring the second chamber is possible in the future, even if not currently an option.

If the selling off of this previously operational land is to facilitate development by others, it will then be beyond the control of the Canal and River Trust/the Waterways Infrastructure Trust. This is contrary to one of the Trust's Charitable Objects: 'to protect and conserve, for public benefit, sites, objects and buildings of archaeological, architectural, engineering or historic interest on, in the vicinity of, or otherwise associated with the infrastructure property'.

We also understand that the land is used by Moo Canoes to launch canoes for community litterpicks and other events. We feel it is very important that these groups have free access to the waterways, both for education and wellbeing. Losing access to this site would bring these events to an end.

Yours sincerely
Amy Tillson (Secretariat to IWA Heritage Advisory Panel)

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