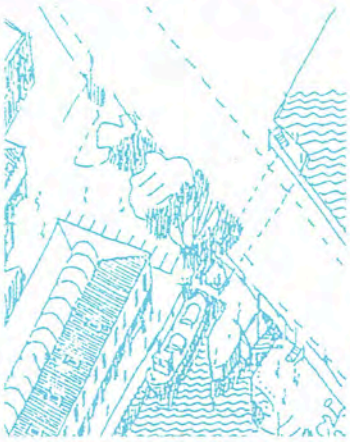
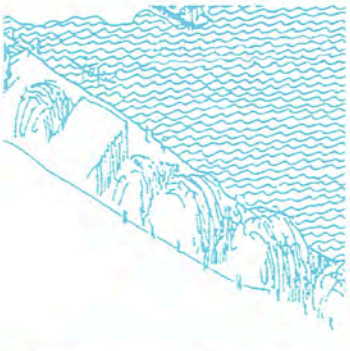
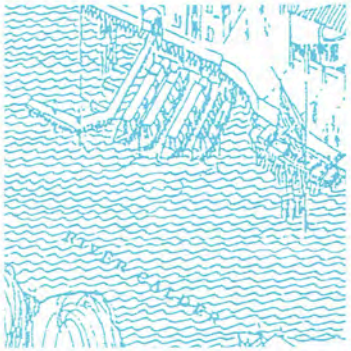
WAKEFIELD WATERFRONT

Building on the Past with a Vision for the Future



Report of an action planning event on 4 & 5 June 1997





Artist's impression of the regeneration area supplied by British Waterways. From Regeneration Brief, Wakefield Calder Waterfront Navigation Warehouse Revised Draft 1997, City of Wakefield MBC.

Wakefield Calder Waterfront Partnership

URBAN DESIGN GROUP

Public Participation Programme

INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

THE UNIVERSITY of York

BUSINESS *in the* COMMUNITY

REGENERATION THROUGH HERITAGE

Introduction

Major proposals for regenerating an area on the fringe of Wakefield City Centre alongside the Calder river are being developed by a partnership comprising Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, British Waterways Board, English Partnerships and the private sector.

As part of the process of firming up a strategy, a two day Action Planning event was held on 4th and 5th June 1997, based in Wakefield Arts Mill at the heart of the site. The event comprised briefings from key stakeholders, site investigations, workshop sessions, a brainstorming evening in the Town Hall, studio working and a final presentation of the ideas generated. Over 80 people took part including those working in the area, council officers and other interested parties. The event was facilitated by a team of professionals with experience of similar projects elsewhere, assisted by postgraduate students from the University of York.

This report summarises the main themes and proposals that emerged during the event and the recommendations of the facilitating Team. It is hoped that these will be helpful to all those taking the project forward and that the energy, enthusiasm, excitement and new contacts generated by the event will be built on over the coming months and years.

Main Themes

Four main themes emerged:

1. **Work With What Is There Already**
   Build on the many thriving businesses that already exist in the area and the fine complex of buildings that remains.

2. **Develop With The Wider Context In Mind**
   Consider the entire Wakefield river frontage and its relationship with the rest of Wakefield and beyond, ensuring that the gains of the initial regeneration are also used to improve the surrounding area.

3. **Focus On Process**
   Find mechanisms for allowing the development to evolve organically by involving all those who can contribute from the outset.

4. **Short As Well As Long-Term Action**
   Start immediately with a range of small initiatives as well as developing a common long- term vision for 2020.

Recommendations

Local Forum
Establish a local umbrella forum to allow all those individuals and organisations who wish to participate in the regeneration to do so. This might be called "Friends of Wakefield Waterfront."

Celebratory Event
Hold a festival or similar event within six months to promote the waterfront and the opportunities for Wakefield.

Conservation Strategy
A Conservation Plan should be required to establish the historical importance of the buildings and the site's cultural significance.

Local Office
Establish a local office on site to act as a focal point for information exchange and community involvement.

Action Planning Revisit - One Year On
Invite back selected members of the team in 1998 to review progress, assess proposals, and host an event to stimulate further activity.

Ideas and proposals

The main ideas and proposals identified, in no particular order, were:

Visibility
Make the area visible with flags, banners, signs and floodlighting.

Marketing
Secure publicity about the development possibilities to encourage interest and involvement before plans are firmed up. A theme might be 'Bringing the river back to the city'.

Image
Clean up the weir and other key areas including removing redundant signage to improve the image of the area.

Celebration
Hold a riverside party or Summer arts festival to generate interest. This might coincide with the opening of a new (possibly temporary) pedestrian bridge. 'Connecting Wakefield' could be the theme.

Conservation Plan
Prepare a conservation plan before or during the economic feasibility study to inform the planning and decision-making process. This will involve undertaking a study on the significance of what is an 'Industrial Honeypot': navigation, tramroads, fulling mills, flour mills, maltings, textiles. It will also require analysis of the buildings in the area (maps, context number, inventory, evaluation) to provide a basis for deciding which buildings might be retained.

Local office
Establish a local office on site as soon as possible to act as a focus for the evolution of the area. This might be called an 'action planning office' or a 'regeneration office' and could include a large model of the area, historical exhibits and information on proposals.

Site Animateur
Appoint an individual to begin to make things happen. He or she could be based in the local office and be supported by a reference group or members from similar regeneration projects elsewhere.

Participation
Expand involvement in the planning and implementation of the project by a variety of means including establishing forums for local businesses and focus groups on particular areas and issues. The Partnership could be expanded to include more members of the local business community, educational institutions and the arts community. The wider community of Wakefield should also be involved.

Distributing the Gains
Explore mechanisms for distributing the gains from the development of the Rutland area to a wider community.

Timing
Start activity as soon as possible and maintain pressure, but allow the development to evolve organically.

2020 Vision
Develop a common vision for Wakefield as it might be in 2020 as a way of creating energy and enthusiasm and a basis for a Masterplan for the waterfront area.

Quality Design
Ensure that restoration work and all new buildings are designed to the highest standards.

Entrepreneurs
Attract entrepreneurs to the area, particularly in knowledge- based and creative industries.

Training Activities
Establish training programmes to allow local people to secure maximum benefit from the regeneration process.

Hepworth Gallery
Pursue this possibility vigorously but locate it at the north end of the site.

Traffic
Reduce the impact of the main road by encouraging walking, boating and cycling.

Pedestrian Links
Create pleasant pedestrian links to the city centre, the station and Thornes Park.

Boating
Increase use of boats for both tourists and locals. Establish links with local boating organisations (such as the White Rose Boat Club).

Park and Boat
Encourage access by boat from the south, linked to a car park near Pugneys Cricket Ground.

New Bridges
Build two new pedestrian bridges, one just upstream from the weir and one just downstream of the lock.

River Focus
Focus on the river rather than the Rutland site and explore the possibility of development on both sides of the river to create a vibrant river basin.

Safeguard Existing Businesses
Encourage local businesses to stay locally wherever possible. Provide relocation packages for those who have to move.

Business Sandwich
Promote a strong, vibrant and enlarged business community with self -sustaining existing and new knowledge- based businesses to the north and south of the site to protect the light industrial in between.

Arts Focus
Encourage the development of a living community for the arts with a combination of travelling exhibitions and local artists.

Local Business
Encourage local business rather than big chains.

Rent Security
Explore ways of securing low rents for the local users in order to maintain the existing community.

Learning Process
Use the the regeneration of the area as a learning process. Develop through knowledge.

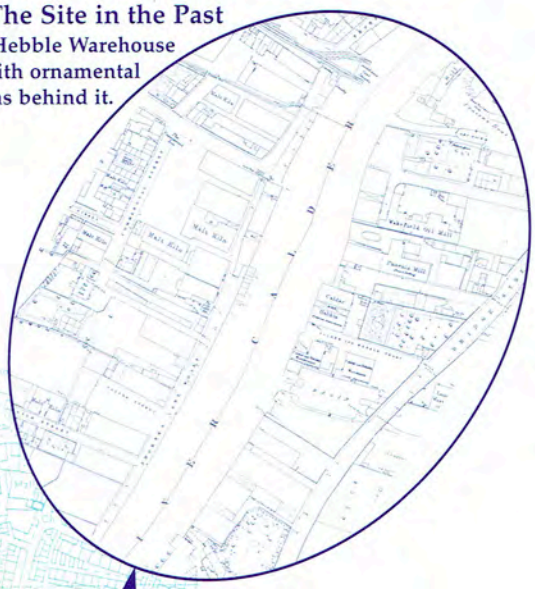
Wider Context
See the regeneration of the Rutland Mills area as part of wider regeneration of the southern quarter of Wakefield and Wakefield as a whole.

European Importance
Explore and develop the strategic role of Wakefield in a European context.

Copies of this report may be obtained from Allen Parks/Andrew Sheppard, Wakefield Calder Waterfront Partnership, City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, Regeneration Department (Development Services), Newton Bar, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF1 2TX.

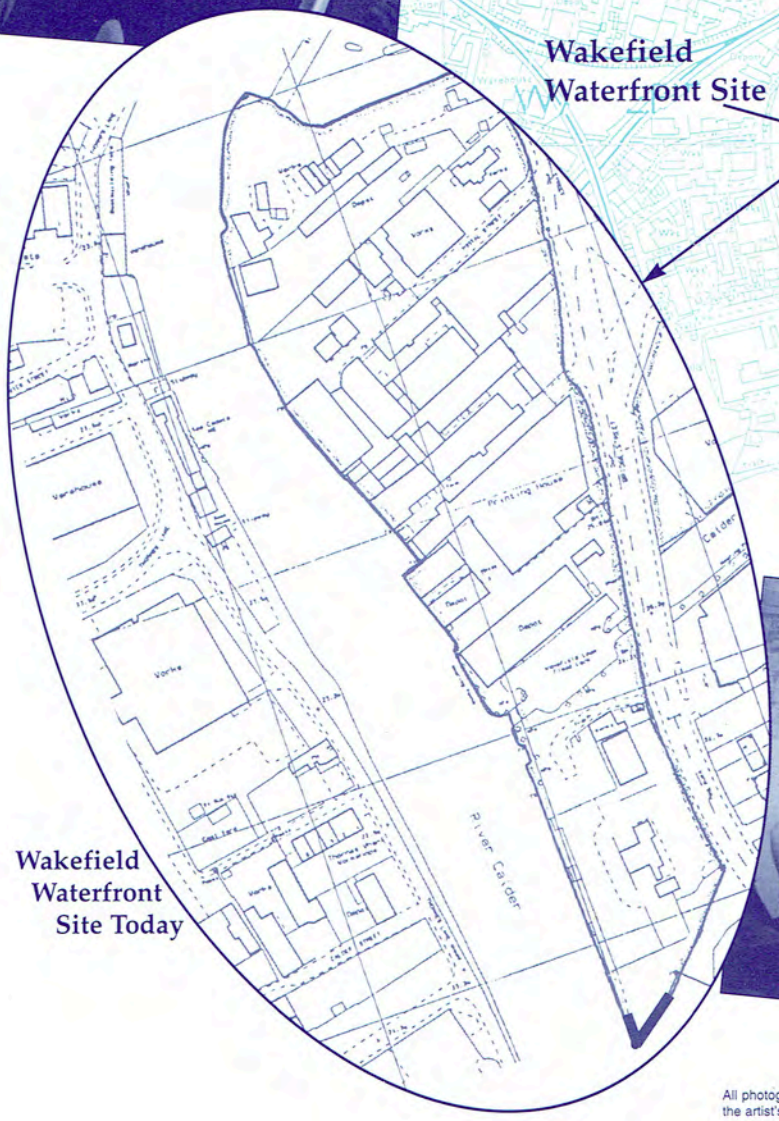
The Site in the Past

Calder & Hebble Warehouse in 1848 with ornamental gardens behind it.



Wakefield City Centre

Wakefield Waterfront Site



Wakefield Waterfront Site Today

All photographs and diagrams used in this report were taken or drawn during the Action Planning Day apart from the artist's impression of the regenerated Wakefield Waterfront on the cover which is from British Waterways.

Wakefield Calder Waterfront Action Planning Event

4 & 5 June 1997

Hosted by the Wakefield Calder Waterfront Partnership. Organised by the City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Regeneration Department. Facilitated and supported by the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, the Urban Design Group Public Participation Programme*, and Business in the Community Regeneration Through Heritage.

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Kate Wilson	*Project Development Manager, English Heritage*

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Terry Hodgkinson	*Wakefield City Centre Partnership*
Christine Johnstone	*Wakefield Museum*
Peter Yates	*Chief Executive, Smurfit Labels*
David Wright	*Wakefield Arts Mill*
Roger Wainwright	*Caddies Wainwright*
Shirley Beresford	*Wakefield City Centre Manager*
Gordon Watson	*Wakefield Museums and Galleries*
Stuart Bear	*Wakefield West Riding Bus Company*
Allen Parks	*Wakefield Calder Waterfront Partnership*

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Trevor Pittaway	*Wakefield Arts Mill*
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This report was produced and published by the IoAAS, The King's Manor, York in association with the Urban Design Group, 6 Ashbrook Courtyard, Westbrook Street, Blewbury, Oxon, OX11 9QA (Tel 01235 851415). *The Urban Design Group Public Participation Programme is an initiative to promote more effective public involvement in urban design and is supported by the Department of the Environment. + For some or all of the event.