

Industrial Zone

Areas within this Zone

'Doncaster Valley Floor Industrial Area', 'Doncaster Railway Area', 'Balby Carr Bank'

Summary of Dominant Character

This zone comprises the major areas of traditional heavy industries in the Doncaster MBC area still active in 2003. The area excludes all areas related to mineral extraction (see 'Extractive Zone') in addition to those large scale landscapes characterised by the construction of leisure, retail and light industrial activity on former sites of heavy industry (see 'Post Industrial Zone').

The built landscape of this zone is characterised by large factory buildings, mostly dating to the mid 20th century and generally constructed from prefabricated materials such as steel and concrete, although pre-1919 examples generally feature brick walling with steel truss roofing. Massive shed like factories are the dominant built form, although most are surrounded by smaller ancillary buildings and offices. Buildings are set in generally flat, open landscapes. Open spaces in the zone are either open railway yards, characterised by multiple sidings interspersed with scrub; or they are rectilinear tarmaced areas used for car parking or the distribution or storage of raw materials and finished products. Road patterns in the area are straight and regular, especially in the 'Balby Bank' Character area. The industries of the area include locomotive and carriage manufacture, engineering and repair [Doncaster Plant Works est.1953 (Bayliss 1995, 40)]; agricultural machinery manufacture [Doncaster Works, International Harvester *later Case*, Wheatley Hall Lane est. 1939]; glass working [Pilkingtons, Kirk and Long Sandall est.1930 (Ashurst 1992,127)]; synthetic fibre manufacture [British Bemberg *later ICI and DuPont*, Wheatley Hall Road est.1929 (Bayliss 1995,55)] in striking modernist factory and office buildings by important architects Wallis Gilbert and Partners (Skinner 1997, 233-234); and sundry smaller concerns.

Relationships with Adjacent Character Zones

The most important relationship between this zone and those that surround it is with the large areas of housing built to accommodate the industrial workforce. In Kirk Sandall, where several thousand employees worked for this single employer (Davis and Morley 2006, 400-401), housing was provided on land owned by the Pilkington's company, who developed an entire model village community designed by influential planner Patrick Abercrombie (see 'Planned Industrial Settlements'). The growth of this zone also took place alongside the growth of terraced housing in the 'Wheatley', 'Bentley Rise', 'Balby', and 'Hexthorpe' character areas (see 'Grid Iron Terraced' Zone) as

well as further suburban housing expansion belonging to the 'Early to Mid 20th Century Suburbs' character zone. Later suburban development becomes harder to associate with particular industrial areas due to the rise of individual mobility in the later 20th century encouraged by greater car ownership.

Inherited Character

As with the industrial zones of Sheffield, Barnsley and Rotherham, this zone occupies a largely riverine location. However, the location of Doncaster's heavy industrial zone was not influenced by the presence of early water powered industrial predecessors or by the transport opportunities offered by the South Yorkshire Navigation. It grew up in this position to take advantage of the flat wide open spaces close to the railway line that was itself positioned along the level topography of the valley floor.

The pre-industrial character of this zone was largely rural, with 1850s OS mapping indicating 'ing meadows' along the sides of the Don. Ings are generally understood to have consisted of low lying riverside land, prone to flooding and used for the provision of winter feed for animals during the months when pasture grasslands (kept for grazing) were less productive (Rackham 1986, 332). At the edges of the alluvial plain, the 19th century landscape was characterised by the strip enclosure patterns commonly associated with land enclosed piecemeal from open fields. Very little legibility survives in this zone of either landscape.

A different pattern dominated in the 'Balby Bank' character area, where the current landscape pattern is still influenced by the earlier regular geometric Surveyed Enclosure patterns of the 'Hexthorpe with Balby and Long Sandall' 1785 (enactment date from English 1985, 69) enclosure award. Here the present alignment of factory buildings is set perpendicular to the main arterial road bisecting the area. This road, Balby Bank Road, dates to the enclosure award and is of typical enclosure period form. The positioning of the factories echoes the earlier pattern of the enclosures.

The earliest industrial development within this zone was the town Gas Works built in a meander of the river Don just north of the town centre some time prior to 1851. The original site lay to the west of the present gasholders (first depicted by the Ordnance Survey in 1894) and was demolished between 1972 and 1984. By 1948 industrial development in this area was still small, occupying between 5-10 hectares. Reused early 20th century industrial buildings survive from this phase around the junction between Mile Thorne Lane and Wharf Road and include a spinning mill, toffee factory and wallpaper factory.

The earliest phases of Doncaster's plant works include the long office block which can be seen from the platforms at Doncaster Station, and the machine shops that lie to its immediate west. The plant was enlarged in 1890 with a new larger erecting shop (Bayliss 1995, 40). The earliest

developments in the Balby Carr Bank Works also related to the railway, with early phases of the Carr Wagon Works surviving at SE585010 (ibid). Contemporary with the growth of the adjacent railway yards was the development of a substantial wire works to the east of Catherine Avenue producing wire rope for the collieries of the region. Much of the early phases of this complex survive within the present Carr Hill works of Bridon (formerly British Ropes).

Beyond the legibility of the surveyed enclosure of Balby Carr described above the vast majority of character units have no legibility of earlier character types.

Later Characteristics

As with the areas of heavy industrial character in Sheffield, Rotherham and Barnsley, the general character trajectory of much of this zone seems likely to move towards a 'Post Industrial' phase in the future. This trend is already visible in the newer developments to the south of Carr Road and Wheatley Hall Road, where the importance of the retail and distribution industries in South Yorkshire is already becoming apparent. Significant areas of the Pilkington's Glass factories at Kirk / Long Sandall have been decommissioned in the past two decades, as has the former British Bemberg facility on Wheatley Hall Road - its closure announced by owners DuPont in 1996 (New York Times 2008).

Bibliography

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