



Case Study:

Sowerby Bridge Wharf, West Yorkshire

Sowerby Bridge Wharf in West Yorkshire is located at the junction of the Rochdale Canal with the Calder and Hebble Navigation and was a major canal trans-shipment point in the 18th and 19th centuries. With the closure of the Rochdale canal and subsequent declining trade the Wharf closed in the 1950s and the buildings were left to fall into disuse and in some cases dereliction.

Case Study:

Sowerby Bridge Wharf (Sowerby Bridge, West Yorkshire)



Sowerby Bridge was a major transport hub in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Introduction to the project

Sowerby Bridge Wharf is a group of 18th century stone-built canal buildings. Situated at the junction of the Rochdale Canal and the Calder and Hebble Navigation, the Wharf was a major transport hub until it lost its role when the Rochdale arm closed. With its original role now gone businesses closed and the buildings fell into neglect, with the local Sea Scouts being the only group still making regular use of the site.

The site consists of four main warehouses; No. 1 Warehouse, No. 2 Warehouse, Salt Warehouse and No. 4 Warehouse. No. 4 Warehouse is Grade II* listed, and was on the Buildings At Risk Register, while the other Warehouses are listed Grade II. The site also contains ancillary buildings, such as the Gate House, which was the original weighing house for cargo, Wharf House, which was the entrance lodge, and the overlookers' Calder House, which dates from 1779.

The site was already in a bad state of repair when British Waterways acquired it in 1948 during nationalisation but was then left to continue to decay. It remained empty until 1973 when a local person took on the lease at 1/3rd of the open market value in return for a commitment to repair all the buildings.

Over time improvements were made by sub-tenants and the Salt Warehouse Trust but the site still remained decrepit and under-used. In the early 1990s British Waterways realised that the site leaseholder would never be able to repair all the buildings and made efforts to find a new way forward. The tenant decided to offer his lease for sale, attracting the interest of various developers, British Waterways and the sub-tenants.

The sub-tenants were anxious to protect their businesses which they had built up over the years but were uncertain about how to go about this and the steps to take.

The Prince's Regeneration Trust's Involvement



Regenerated No. 4 Warehouse, complete with wet dock and No. 4 and Salt Warehouses undergoing renovation

In 1996 The Prince's Regeneration Trust (PRT) was approached for help by some of the Wharf's sub-tenants. PRT adopted the Wharf as one of its projects and, together with the tenants, started to develop a strategy to regenerate the site.

PRT created a new body, the Sowerby Bridge Wharf Partnership, a non-legal but formal grouping of key stakeholders. This included local community and business groups, English Heritage, Yorkshire Forward, principal tenants, civic societies and PRT. All parties signed a non-legal agreement setting out shared objectives that the Wharf would be developed for purely commercial activity.

A Planning Day was then held to develop a vision for the entire Wharf. The Planning Day agreed that stakeholders wanted to keep the existing uses and utilise the vacant space to create new, high-value jobs. It also wanted to create a visitor destination so that others could share the beauty of the place.

A second Planning Day was held to further develop proposals for the two key buildings, Salt Warehouse and No. 4 Warehouse, both empty and seriously at risk. A mix of business uses, to include a restaurant, offices and workshops, was agreed and consultant proposals to develop the site for apartments and build a two-storey car park, were comprehensively rejected. Calderdale Council endorsed this approach, particularly as unemployment in Sowerby Bridge at the time was 10% and the area needed an employment boost.

However, the Partnership then struggled to develop a fundable project because of the requirement by British Waterways to secure rates of return on the site that were too high for a heritage building. PRT's Fred Taggart gave evidence to the Commons Select Committee on the Environment and Transport as to why this approach was unacceptable with the result that the Committee's chair, Gwyneth Dunwoody MP, took her committee to look at the site. The Committee accepted PRT's argument and made it clear that the government should be helping British Waterways to regenerate its historic buildings.

This decision enabled PRT to help the business members of the Partnership to buy out the head lease from British Waterways on No. 1 and No. 2 Warehouses, as well as the ancillary buildings so that the majority of the site was in one ownership. The Partnership could then start the regeneration of this part of the Wharf which encouraged British Waterways to regenerate the Warehouses remaining in their possession.

PRT guided the Partnership through the complicated stages of developing a strategy for the site and then delivering it, which included carrying out feasibility studies, conservation studies, funding applications, negotiations with funders and statutory agencies, and marketing the vision.

Investment

In total the Wharf has attracted public and private sector investment totalling just over £3.8 million. As a result of this the Wharf has been transformed into a vibrant mixture of offices, workshops, retail outlets, canal boat wet-dock and restaurants.

Public Sector Investment

Up to 2007 public investment in the Wharf amounted to £2.7 million. This does not include the amount that British Waterways also invested in No. 4 and Salt Warehouses, the figures for which have never been released.

Public investment includes:

- £300,000 from Yorkshire Forward and Calderdale Council to construct a new stone-set access road with street lighting, drainage and cabling, which helped to open up the site.

- £56,000 from Yorkshire Forward, the local authority and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) for a feasibility study.

- £150,000 over 3 years from the Conservation Area Partnership, an English Heritage scheme, which enabled the land at the rear of the garage to be restored.

- Financial help from the Sports Lottery Fund for new premises for the Sea Scouts, formerly based in the Salt Warehouse.

- In December 2003 a £700,000 Heritage Lottery Fund Grant, together with British Waterways investment and £71,000 from English Heritage, raised the £2.1 million needed for the two warehouses.

Private Sector Investment

Following the public sector investment private investment started to flow in, demonstrating to the catalytic effect of the heritage scheme. This resulted in a further £1.16 million investment to regenerate the other heritage buildings on site including:

- £8000 into Wharf House
- £62,000 on repairs to No. 1 and No. 2 Warehouse
- £150,000 into No. 2 Warehouse
- £250,000 into Calder House
- £100,000 into the Moorings
- £100,000 into Temujin Restaurant
- £220,00 into 12.04 Restaurant
- £101,000 in buying the head-lease and adjacent freehold land
- £5,200 on repairs to the Gatehouse
- £4,350 on repairs to No. 4 Warehouse

There was a separate public subscription fund raising campaign for the Jack o'the Locks sculpture at the entrance to the Wharf. The sculpture was done by a local artist and gave the Wharf a landmark statue which subsequently became an icon for the Wharf.



The sculpture at the entrance to the Wharf and inside a regenerated Warehouse

Regeneration Outcomes

As a result of the project all the buildings on site have been regenerated and transformed into a mix of offices, workshops, restaurants, cafes and a canal boat wet-dock.

Some of the key regeneration outcomes are:

- **34,200 square feet** of vacant heritage building floorspace refurbished

- A new access road and street lighting, creating access to the Wharf to enable new development.

- The oldest building in Sowerby Bridge, the Wharf Garage which dates back to 1540, was restored and the area around it cleared of scrap and gas holders.

Before the project the Warehouses were substantially unused and derelict with no windows, drainage or heat and cement asbestos roofs. Now they are restored and home to thriving businesses.

All stakeholders have benefitted from the regeneration of the Wharf. British Waterways gained a long-term investment to generate income and has fulfilled its obligation to conserve important heritage buildings. The tenants have long-term security for their businesses. The local authority has regenerated the town, conserved buildings and improved facilities for leisure on the canal. English Heritage has helped save a Grade II* Building at Risk. Yorkshire Forward has facilitated and funded economic regeneration.

Regeneration has not just been limited to the Wharf site; the project has had a knock on effect to the wider area of Sowerby Bridge itself, regenerating the main high street and making it into a leisure and entertainment destination.

'Everyone we know, because we live locally, even a valley or two over, comes to Sowerby Bridge to go out now...I think the restaurants and things down there have really helped to make Sowerby Bridge actually have people come in to it from outside. And everybody comes now. ...it's had a knock-on effect on the whole street, the main road and everything...it's a real centre now for social stuff.'

Liz and John Bolton, Calder House Dental Care

'When you talk to people outside of the area who know Sowerby Bridge of old and they talk about the old mill

days and textiles and one thing or another they say that it has been lifted and they are quite impressed by that....I think it [Sowerby Bridge Wharf project] started something, there's a momentum. it appears when you walk down to the town, things are improving.'

Gary Sifleet CMS Consultancy

'I just can't believe how vibrant Sowerby Bridge is now. When I was at school it was a really industrial sort of place, it was awful, really murky and horrible and I just think its vibrant now.'

Lisa Van Ges Tel, Warehouse 12.04 Restaurant

The Trust has shown that it is able to conserve and reuse some of our really wonderful redundant heritage buildings and at the same time make a massive contribution to wider social and economic regeneration.



The Wharf before and after regeneration

Sustainability Outcomes

Through the regeneration of the 34,200 sq ft of heritage buildings, **372,631.9kg of carbon** has been saved, compared to if the same floor area had been created through new-build. This is enough to:

- fly around the world 36 times
- fill the inside of 372 average homes
- fill 2235 double decker buses

Local materials have also been used on site wherever possible. For example, in No. 2 Warehouse 42 new windows and 6 new loading floors were all sourced locally. Recycled wood was also used for shutters, which were made by local tradesmen.

No. 1 and No. 2 Warehouses used the Green Business Network to get recycled carpet squares, which were second-hand from the land registry in Durham.

The buildings were also repointed using local lime mortar from an ecological building supplier and local companies were used to put the ceiling tiles in and supply all the ceiling lights and flood lights.

The landlords in No. 2 Warehouse are currently investigating installing low voltage lighting and individual thermostats for tenants.

Social Outcomes

The local community has benefitted from the regeneration of the Wharf through more job opportunities, more resources and the knock-on regeneration of the wider area. The project has regenerated the community of Sowerby Bridge, which previously had suffered from 10% unemployment. By January 2010, after the Wharf had been regenerated and despite the recession, unemployment was down to 5.6%.

Before the project the Wharf enjoyed one brief period of popularity in the 1970s with the opening of the Moorings Pub. However, this didn't help the rest of the Wharf or Sowerby Bridge itself. Many of the residents of Sowerby Bridge weren't even aware that the Wharf existed.

There is now visual evidence of the knock-on effect of the Wharf regeneration with a number of new businesses and enterprises opening up along the high street of Sowerby Bridge. These are being supported by the visitors who now come to the Wharf.

'It is a sought-after area now, whereas when I was here 11 years ago people used to ask me 'why are you opening a restaurant down on Sowerby Bridge for?'. But I could

see the development process going on.

The development here has knocked on into Sowerby Bridge and further on so we've created wealth, generated incomes and also jobs.'

David Johnson, Temujin Restaurant

As well as the knock-on regeneration other social outcomes include heritage boards around the site to explain the history of the Wharf. There are also plaques explaining how the project was funded and the public is able to access all areas of the site, use the businesses and enjoy the canal facilities.

Volunteers now also play a part in the Wharf. About twice a year 20 people come from the Calderdale Leisure Services Department to plant up the back car park. Calder Future, part of the Green Business Network, also cleans the canal and plants wildflowers along the canal.

Overall the Wharf regeneration has had many positive effects on the local community including the regeneration of Sowerby Bridge itself, improved the sense of community and access to leisure opportunities around the canal.



The regenerated canal and one of the heritage boards around the canal

Economic Outcomes



The lift on Warehouse 4, an example of combining new build with heritage buildings, and one of the refurbished business units

Economic outcomes of the regenerated Wharf include:

- 19 business units created.
- 270 jobs created.
- 7 start-up businesses started at the Wharf.
- Expansion of existing businesses; for example, Shire Cruisers' fleet expanded from 2 boats to 18.
- Total return to Her Majesty's Treasury from 2007 to 2010 in additional national insurance and income tax contributions (based on 270 employees) is **£4,895,802**, or £1,631,934 a year.
- Additional revenue for the local council from business rates between 2007 to 2010 was **£274,518.99**, or £91,506.33 a year.

The project also catalysed private sector investment in the surrounding area. There has been a significant increase in the number of tourists and also major investment in housing, restaurants and shops in Sowerby Bridge. The local authority estimates this additional investment to be around **£28 million**, creating a further 350 jobs and an uplift in property values.

Awards

The scheme won the 2005 Waterways Trust and British Urban Regeneration Association (BURA) Historic Environment Award. This was due to the end to end approach taken, with the warehouses being conserved and regenerated in a way that retained their character, whilst incorporating the advancements and resulting benefits of modern design.

The project also won a Civic Trust Award for environmental innovation.

People Case Study:

Liz and John Bolton - Calder House Dental Care, Sowerby Bridge Wharf



Names:
Liz and John Bolton

Job
Dentist and
Practice Manager

Company
Calder House
Dental Care

Staff
10

Calder House Dental Care was a new private dental practice set up in Calder House in Sowerby Bridge Wharf in 2007 by Liz and John Bolton. Liz has been a dentist for nearly 15 years, moving from the NHS to a mixed practice before deciding to open her own private practice. John, her husband, is the practice manager.

At the start Liz began by working 3 days a week before increasing to 4.5 days a week a few months later. After 18 months they recruited an associate dentist to join the practice and they are now on 6 full dental days with a chiropractor operating from the surgery as well. The Practice now has 2,300 patients and 10 staff.

Liz and John found Calder House while it was still being renovated so they were able to work with the landlord to get all the services needed for a dental surgery, such as suctions and airlines, tucked away into the fabric of the building.

Liz and John say:

'We were looking for somewhere nice to work and easy to get to...there was no contest! When we came here we were like - that's it!

It feels nice and you can look out and see the views and there's lots going on down [on the Wharf] and all the patients walk in and just go 'wow!', but they all want it to be their house! They also look out the window and go 'I didn't know all this was down here' and they spend a lot of time looking round afterwards

We get all sorts of stories from patients [about the Wharf] and all sorts of folklore..there is a lot of feedback and it makes people more attached to us as a business

Patients would like to know more about [the heritage importance of the site]...we were trying to compile a file on it....apparently there was a dentist here in the 1800s before dentists had to be registered professional. He was pre the dental registry - about 1856!

People Case Study:

Lisa Van Ges Tel - Warehouse 12.04, Sowerby Bridge



Name
Lisa Van Ges Tel

Job
Owner

Organisation
Warehouse 12.04
Restaurant

Staff
20

Lisa Van Ges Tel runs Warehouse 12.04 Restaurant, which opened in August 2010, with her husband David and business partners Lee and Sarah. Lee and Sarah already have a company called Blue Moon Pubs and own four other pub restaurants, but this is Lisa and David's first restaurant venture, despite both having worked in the hospitality sector for years.

Lisa says:

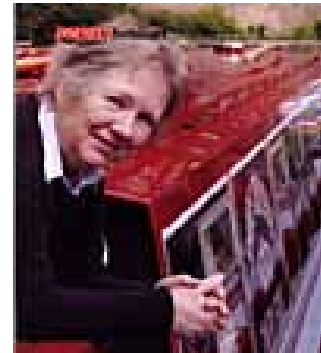
'It's an absolutely gorgeous place to work. I find it so tranquil down here....we're by the water and the water's quite soothing. I just think it's a really, really lovely place to work; I love the building, I love the environment, I love the surroundings, I love the other business people, they come in and eat here frequently, and it's just a really nice place to be. I've always liked it, I liked it before we even came along really.'

People think it's a stunning business. But it is, isn't it? I think it's been actually refurbished just so beautifully and they have just kept all the, sort of the ornate pieces, the beams and the floor.

'Everybody who walks in here just smiles...we're so lucky to work in somewhere that is just so stunning'

People Case Study:

Nigel and Susan Stevens - Shire Cruisers, Sowerby Bridge



Name
Nigel and Susan
Stevens

Job
Directors

Organisation
Shire Cruisers

Staff
7 full time
employees and 6
part time

Shire Cruisers, a canal boat rental company, was set up in 1973 with two boats. Nigel and Susan Stevens took over in 1980 and were some of the tenants who formed the original Salt Warehouse Trust.

Their business is based in Salt Warehouse and makes use of the original wet-dock. When they first moved into the Warehouse it was in a dilapidated state.

Nigel says:

'There was no heating, no lighting, holes in the windows...not much of a roof, there was an asbestos cement roof which had lots of holes in it and was fine except for when it was windy because bits blew away...so it was completely hopeless, the building was beyond knackered and it was very difficult existing in the bottom floor because rain would come in. What we've got now bears no comparison.'

As their business expanded the Stevens acquired other companies based at the Wharf including a boat builder, moorings operation and chandler. Now their main business is the hire fleet, which consists of 18 boats, but they also run the moorings, carry out boat repairs and repainting private boats as well as fitting out their own boats.

As well as being part of the Wharf Partnership the Stevens were also key in the campaign to restore the Rochdale canal and were thrilled when it was reconnected to the national network in Sowerby Bridge in 1995 and then all the way through in 2002.

On the Salt Warehouse Nigel says:

'We are very fond of [the building]. I can't imagine working anywhere else'

People Case Study:

Justine Stevenson & Cheryl Davies - Primo PR, Sowerby Bridge Wharf



Name
Justine Stevenson

Justine Stephenson is joint partner in Primo PR, a public relations agency.

Job
Partner

Primo moved to Sowerby Bridge Wharf in January 2010. They were previously based in the LCWhitely centre in Halifax, a serviced office which didn't give them the opportunity to show the individuality and personality of their business.

Organisation
Primo PR

Primo works with Digital Consortium and Totally Locally who are also based at the Wharf.

Staff
2

Justine says:

'It has opened up opportunities because a lot of the businesses [at the Wharf] want to work with somebody close by

This building is amazing...it's a really nice space. It's been really well done in terms of refurbishment and everything. But it's old and it's quirky. It's got fantastic features and it's centrally located. ...it's just in fantastic surroundings so what's not to love? It's just fabulous, we absolutely love being here...it's the best place I've worked, ever.

It's very inspiring. You know to just look out and see what there is, it's very inspiring, but it's also very grounding as well to know that you're here and this business is here and the building has been here for lots of years and it's just nice to be part of that really.

It's like a community really. And as part of that you can be as much a part of it or not, as you want to be.

We've had a couple of clients who have said 'we've got office envy'. They love it, and they think it really reflects us and our business, they just think it's the perfect place for us to be.'

People Case Study:

Chris Sands & Nigel Goddard - Totally Locally, Sowerby Bridge Wharf



Name
Chris Sands and
Nigel Goddard

Job
Directors

Organisation
Totally Locally

Staff
2

Totally Locally started as an initiative funded by Calderdale Council to help businesses through the recession, particularly small businesses and small shops. It encourages people to shop locally in order to encourage further growth in the local economy.

The directors, Chris Sands and Nigel Goddard, argue that if everyone spends an extra £5 a week in their local area it equates to an extra £40 million into the area each year. This is because local shops are usually connected to each other through supply chains. For example, Sowerby Bridge local post office has 29 local suppliers and a couple of them have another 20 local suppliers each. So, by supporting one local shop shoppers are supporting the entire network and local area.

Chris and Nigel moved to the Wharf in August 2010. They say:

'It's probably the most feel good place that we've worked....I think it's got a really good feeling. I love it

We're in a listed building, but that, there's something about that building that's magical...it sounds very spiritual doesn't it? The lady downstairs said that every day she comes here she feels like she's on holiday and that's what I feel like as well. I love coming to work!'