

Snapshot character summary:

5. River (River Avon) Frontage, Saltford

5.1 Introduction

5.5.1 This landscape is mixed, consisting of open land, built-up areas and agricultural land. Due to the length of area under review, consisting of land next to the river, as it progresses from upstream to downstream from agricultural to built and back to agricultural and due to the varied nature of the land, it has been found useful to divide it into numerous sectors for the purpose of this study. The area relevant to the river frontage contains and includes four Grade II listed buildings, a conservation area, one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), one unique linear geological feature and is bounded and by the busy GWR Bristol Temple Meads to London Paddington railway line and traversed by the Bristol-Bath Railway Path that is used by pedestrians and cyclists. Much of the land bounding the river is within the flood plain and indeed floods often. Most of it is also Green Belt and the river is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. Therefore there is no scope for any further development within this area.

5.2 Characterisation

5.5.1 The sectors, moving downstream, are characterised as follows:

Sector 1: Path along river, next to Network Rail railway: recreational amenity with some wooded areas. (Agricultural fields on the other side of the railway line).



View downstream across to where Saltford Parish begins (left) and across (right)



View of footpath (left) and where it joins Sector 2 (right)

Sector 2: Open land next to railway and moored narrow boats: brownfield site in Green Belt and flood plain (site of derelict brick and concrete boathouse destroyed by fire - long since cleared and tidied).



Land next to (Network Rail) railway line and moored narrow boats

Sector 3: The site of two former boathouses is currently a building site for a new boathouse; recreational, sporting facilities, large mature trees, greenbelt, Duchy land.



Green corrugated iron boathouse (left), new boathouse under construction (right)



Boathouse construction site with trees

Sector 4: Land between the former boathouses and marina: public footpath leading to marina, private land behind path (with weekend holiday huts - some vandalised/destroyed).

(No image available)

Sector 5: Marina, Riverside Inn and associated area: recreational, commercial, leisure including pub and restaurant facilities.



View of Marina, Riverside Inn with weir, Kelston Lock and Brass Mill Island.

Sector 6: Weir to Brass Mill: industrial heritage, recreational, some small craft mooring, residential, Grade II listed buildings (Brass Mill, Mill Cottage), two modern residential buildings (River View and Mill Lodge). The original Brass Mill site is also a scheduled ancient monument. This sector is in the flood plain and subject to flooding. It is also in the Conservation Area. Another Grade II listed building entry is recorded for property (Mill Cottages) behind the public highway.



Boats and trees on Brass Mill Island (Brass Mill hidden by pine trees)

Sector 7: From Brass Mill to The Outlook and Picnic area: recreational (along the river bank and between the river bank and the road) with trees and shrubs along the bank and the bank eroded in places where canoeists gain access to the river, narrow strip of car parking for residential properties (from Riverside to Fairview/Rotherslade) across the road. Most of the residential properties associated with this sector are Victorian (The Chapel and terraces (Riverside to Rotherslade)). There is one modern property and one older, Grade II listed building (Willow Cottages). This sector is in the Conservation Area.



Boats and The Chapel



Riverside to Rotherslade 1



Riverside to Rotherslade 2



Willow Cottages

Sector 8: The Outlook and Picnic area: recreational, medium-sized car park and road. The site contains trees of varying ages, shrubs, and picnic benches/tables. This sector is subject to erosion in some places along the river bank where canoeists gain access to the river. An escarpment passes through this sector, but the underlying fault is not visible above ground though it does give some structure to the terrain, dividing it into a lower part and a higher part. There are footpaths along the top of and crossing The Outlook. Public toilets and an electricity substation are located at the north corner of this sector.



Park, riverbank and car park

Sector 9: Trimby's Field: private, uncultivated land with a permitted footpath near the river leading to the railway path and bridge. Access to the water is prevented by trees

and bushes, brambles and nettles. This field also contains a large access hatch for a sewage pump (Wessex Water). The western edge of this sector runs along the road behind which are two residential buildings, one of which is Victorian and Grade II listed (The Old Rectory).



View of Trimby's Field from under LMS bridge

Sector 9B: LMS steel (plate girder) and concrete bridge and land underneath next to river: Railway Heritage, Bath to Bristol Railway Path (used by cyclists and pedestrians).

(No image available)

Sector 10: a) uncultivated land, tree lined river bank.
b) paddock opposite East View and Kelston View: partly uncultivated
c) land at the foot of Spion Kop on the river side of Mead Lane. The stream from the medieval fish ponds enters the river at the downstream boundary of this land.
d) sub-divided area within the grounds of Spion Kop and at the foot of the site adjacent to Mead Lane a stone building. This sector is not in the Conservation Area.



Narrow boats moored (Sector 10a)



Spion Kop

Sector 11: Land between Spion Kop and Avon Lea on Mead Lane: The riverbank here is accessible and lined by the occasional pollarded willow and is used by anglers. There is an interesting geological feature overlooking the river, consisting of a fault exposing to varying degrees a visible cliff of Lower Lias limestone. This is recorded as a Regionally Important Geological Site (BS6G; BRERC No. 66/185G) thus protected from development.



Mead Lane Regionally Important Geological Site exposed rock face (left).

Sector 12: Row of individual houses (Avon Lea to Havonall): Again, the riverbank is accessible, though here some willows have been allowed to grow to mature trees. Architecturally, the houses in this residential section are a mixed group ranging from quite small 1920/30s bungalows to quite large relatively modern mansionettes. The Regionally Important Geological Site (BS6G; BRERC No. 66/185G) continues here.



Mead Lane houses

Sector 13: Yacht club: recreational, sport and leisure facility of 1950/60s design with associated land for parking yachts on trailers, which are launched via the associated slipway over the road.



Yacht club

Sector 14: Boat yard to Jolly Sailor public house: light industrial, commercial, public house with restaurant, and some residential. The Jolly Sailor Inn is a Grade II listed building. This sector also includes Saltford Lock.



View downstream showing the boat yard, Jolly Sailor and Saltford Lock.



Boat yard (left), Jolly Sailor (right)

Sector 15: Downstream of weir: Jolly Sailor car park and one residential property, Copperlea. There are a number of mature trees around the Jolly Sailor car park.

Sector 16: Fields downstream of Copperlea, Swineford Lock to Avon Valley Railway bridge at landing stage: This sector largely consists of agricultural fields only interrupted by the wood by Swineford Lock. Further downstream, mid way between Swineford Lock and Avon Valley Railway bridge, Avon Farm overlooks a site of Anglo-Saxon burials. Just after the heritage railway bridge over the Avon there is a field recorded as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to the Pleistocene terrace-gravels present there.



View of fields from field behind Rivermead Farm



View of field with Wessex Water sewage works in the background



View of field just downstream of Swineford Lock



Riverbank with varying density of bushes. Fields with Avon Farm in the background.



View downstream across to Salford Parish showing LMS bridge with AVR heritage railway line and footpath/cycleway (near Riverside halt and the landing stage).



View of field which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest.



SSSI and parish boundary

5.3 Landscape

5.3.1 Like the river, this section meanders through open country, first fringed on the east by steeper slopes (Tenants Wood, rising in the background to Kelston Round Hill) then constricted at Kelston Lock and later again around the LMS bridge at the northern end of the Shallows, with much of Saltford occupying higher ground. It then heads Northeast along Mead Lane with the prominent backdrop of the Lower Lias cliffs between Spion Kop and Avon Lea. From Saltford Lock to the next LMS bridge over the Avon, at the landing stage, the landscape consists of gently rolling agricultural fields. Largely native trees and bushes line many parts of the river. There are also notable trees in Saltford within some gardens of large properties in the conservation area.

5.4 Notable Views and Landmarks

5.4.1 Many residents look out to views of Kelston Round Hill and the river. Other landmarks are Kelston Mills and Kelston Park.

5.5 Architecture

5.5.1 Whilst the built environment along Mead Lane is varied and not within the Conservation Area, buildings in the Shallows, which is within the Conservation Area, mainly have limestone masonry and clay tile or slate roofing (many of these buildings being Victorian). There is a local concentration of houses with slate roofing in the Shallows towards where the Shallows meets the High Street.

5.6 Sense of Place

5.6.1 The river frontage defines a rural sense of place for this area as it extends along the Parish boundary. The River Avon Trail footpath follows the river for the whole of this section.

5.7 Positive Features

5.7.1 This is a rural environment with character including sites of industrial, architectural and geological heritage. The river itself is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest and a popular leisure location for Saltford residents and visitors (walkers, cyclists, anglers, yachting and canoeing).

5.8 Negative features

5.8.1 The Shallows, the car park, and Mead Lane are on some days very busy, particularly in the summer. This can be associated with increased levels of noise and litter. There are a number of narrow boats moored on the river on what appears to be a residential basis, which is of concern to some residents. The riverbank has been eroded in places by leisure users accessing the water.