

Stanley Dock Conservation Area

Conservation Area Description

Stanley Dock opened in 1848 and was designated a conservation area in 2002. It is a section of the North Liverpool Docks and includes the dock boundary wall, part of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, the Stanley, Collingwood and Salisbury Docks (all interlinked) and the Victoria Clock Tower. It is one of the key 6 areas making up the Liverpool Maritime Mercantile city World Heritage Site.

Stanley Dock was designed by Jesse Hartley and is unusual in Liverpool in that it was cut into the sandstone bedrock. The area contains numerous dockyard structures such as; the Hydraulic Pumping Station (1854), the North and South Warehouses (1855), the huge Tobacco Warehouse (1901 – then the largest brick structure in the world), Rum Warehouse (1953) and the Bascule Bridge (1932). All the buildings are characteristic of Liverpool docks - red brick with some sandstone and granite elements. The character of the area is further demonstrated by the scale of the buildings, the series of canal locks, dock gates, setted roads, bollards, capstans, bridges, watchman's huts, the large 6 sided Victoria Clock Tower and the remains of the many railway lines that crossed the area.

Many of the conservation area's remaining structures are listed at Grade II* or II and these, along with the aforementioned dock features and the water-filled the docks, create a memorable and distinctive urban industrial landscape.



Aerial view of the three main warehouses at Stanley Dock in Liverpool. © Historic England



Map of the Stanley Dock conservation area, Liverpool. © World Heritage Site Management Plan

Change Over Time

When built, the docks were the location for rum and tobacco imported mostly from the Americas, the Tobacco Warehouse for example could hold 70,000 hogsheads of tobacco, each weighing 453 kg. During World War 2, Liverpool was heavily bombed, with the docks being a particular target. Part of the North Warehouse at Stanley Dock was destroyed along with most of the dock buildings on Collingwood and Salisbury Docks. This destruction was followed by a dramatic downturn in the economic fortunes of the docks and the city, particularly during the 1970s and 80s. Stanley Dock and its warehouses laid empty for almost 30 years during which time the fabric of the buildings slowly decayed,

original building materials were lost and the whole area was blighted. Historic England placed the buildings on its Heritage at Risk Register and Liverpool City Council enforced some emergency repairs to prevent major collapse. However, the scale of the problem and size of the buildings meant huge repair costs. Finding the necessary investment was made more difficult by the location of the dock, north of the city centre, and therefore being the least visited part of the World Heritage Site.



The Stanley Dock part of the conservation area was bought in 2010 by Harcourt Developments, who saw the potential of the buildings and area. They began work on site in January 2013 with the conversion of the North Warehouse and the Rum Warehouse into a hotel and events venue, which opened for business in June 2014. A key to the success of the conversion of these buildings has been the retention of the maximum amount of historic fabric – it still looks and feels like the warehouse it was; and whilst the surrounding area has been cleaned up the original features have been conserved. Achieving this first successful project has been crucial to the changing fortunes of the conservation area, which for the first time in more than a generation now seems to have a positive future.

The Titanic Hotel in the North Warehouse, Stanley Dock, Liverpool. © Historic England

Encouraging ‘Good Growth’

The purchase of the Stanley Dock area by Harcourt Developments was itself a massive step forward towards achieving economic growth in an area that was, and still is, one of the poorest in the country. The first project – the conversion of the North and Rum Warehouses into the Titanic Hotel and conference centre has been a huge success with high occupancy and a series of commendations and awards. It is the first major urban regeneration project to be delivered in this northern part of the Liverpool World Heritage Site and has brought visitors and money into the area for the first time in ages. This has

led to the next phase of development – work on the conversion of the neighbouring Tobacco Warehouse into 538 apartments. A sales marketing campaign is already in place. Furthermore, its success has encouraged Liverpool City Council to develop wider strategic regeneration plans for the area.

The restoration of the dock is therefore acting as a catalyst for the regeneration of the wider neighbouring area - and helping to re-join this area to the city centre. This is being achieved by using the attraction of the significant listed heritage of the conservation area, finding sustainable solutions for ‘Buildings At Risk’ with one aim ultimately being the removal of the conservation area from the Historic England ‘Heritage At Risk’ register.



Work begins on the Tobacco Warehouse at Stanley Dock, Liverpool. © Historic England

Benefits of Conservation Area Designation

The designation of the Stanley Dock area as a conservation area, and its inclusion in the World Heritage Site inscription in 2004 has raised the profile of its’ significant heritage. This is one part of what attracted Harcourt Developments to the area. Re-use of the historic buildings and their setting is a major feature of the development work on the site, making it both unique and ensuring the hotel, conference centre and proposed housing has a clear sense of place and identity. The example of Stanley Dock demonstrates the role that heritage can play in sustainable ‘good’ growth.

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