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Construction Method Statement

Foundation Excavation and Concrete Placement

Site: Lockhouse, Canal Street, Littleborough, OL15 0HJ
Planning Application: 25/00718/HOUS

1. Introduction

This Construction Method Statement has been prepared to support the discharge of the planning condition relating to potential impacts on the adjacent canal embankment and lock infrastructure associated with the Rochdale Canal.

The statement sets out the proposed methodology for:

- excavation of foundations
- placement of concrete strip footings
- transportation of plant and materials to the site
- management of construction operations adjacent to canal infrastructure

The objective of this document is to demonstrate that the proposed works can be undertaken safely and without any adverse impact on the structural integrity of the canal embankment, lock walls or associated infrastructure.

2. Site Context

The application site comprises the Lockhouse property located immediately adjacent to the Rochdale Canal lock structure.

The proposed extension will be positioned approximately 4.7 metres from the canal lock retaining wall.

The property is located adjacent to the canal towpath, which runs between the site and Canal Street, the nearest point of vehicular access.

The distance between Canal Street and the site along the towpath is approximately 150 metres.

There is therefore no direct vehicular access to the property, and materials and plant must be transferred from Canal Street to the site along the existing towpath.

3. Existing Ground Conditions

Observations on site, together with discussions held with representatives of the Canal & River Trust, indicate that the site is underlain by competent clay soils typical of this area of Littleborough.

Clay soils provide suitable bearing capacity for shallow strip foundations and generally maintain stable trench faces when excavated.

During the site meeting, the Canal & River Trust advised that suitable foundation depth may be achievable at approximately 900 mm, subject to confirmation during excavation.

The proposed excavation depth of 1200 mm–1600 mm therefore provides an appropriate margin of safety and allows the contractor to reach suitable natural bearing strata where necessary.

Excavation will continue until firm natural ground is encountered.

4. Foundation Design

The proposed extension will be supported by traditional mass concrete strip foundations, which are appropriate for the scale of development and ground conditions present.

The foundations will comprise:

- 600 mm wide strip footing
- excavation depth typically between 1200 mm and 1600 mm below ground level
- minimum concrete thickness approximately 225 mm–300 mm

This form of construction is widely used for domestic extensions and results in minimal disturbance to surrounding ground conditions.

No piling, driven foundations or other intrusive ground engineering works are proposed.

5. Relationship to Canal Infrastructure

The proposed foundations are located approximately 4.7 m from the canal lock retaining wall.

Applying a conservative 45-degree load distribution line from the base of the strip footing, the theoretical load spread dissipates within the natural ground well before reaching the canal retaining wall or embankment structure.

This means that:

- the zone of structural influence from the foundations does not intersect the canal retaining wall, and
- the proposed extension will not transfer structural loads to the canal infrastructure.

The combination of separation distance, shallow foundation design and competent clay soils ensures that the stability of the canal structure will remain unaffected.

6. Excavation Methodology

Foundation trenches will be excavated using small mechanical plant, typically a 1.5–3 tonne mini excavator.

The excavation sequence will be as follows:

- Foundation lines set out by the contractor.
- Excavation undertaken in short sequential sections rather than the full foundation length.
- Excavation continued until suitable bearing strata is encountered.
- Formation level inspected prior to pouring concrete.
- Concrete placed immediately following excavation.
- Sequential excavation reduces the length of open trench and ensures that excavations remain stable.
- Excavation will be undertaken carefully to avoid unnecessary disturbance to surrounding ground conditions.
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7. Excavation Safety

All excavation works will be undertaken in accordance with standard site safety procedures and the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM).

Given the modest excavation depth and the presence of stable clay soils, trench excavation can be safely carried out using conventional methods.

Trench Stability

Trench faces in clay soils typically remain stable; however trench conditions will be monitored continuously.

If any instability is observed, appropriate temporary works will be introduced including:

- trench sheeting
- trench boxes
- timber shoring
- battering of trench sides where appropriate

Trenches will be kept as narrow as practicable to reduce the potential for collapse.

Safe Access

Where excavation depth exceeds 1.2 m, suitable access arrangements will be provided including secured ladders for safe entry and exit.

Open excavations will be protected using:

- temporary barriers
- warning signage
- controlled access to the working area

8. Transport of Plant and Materials

Clarification is provided regarding the transport of plant, equipment and materials to the site.

The nearest vehicular access point is located on Canal Street, approximately 150 m from the site along the canal towpath.

Construction materials and apparatus will therefore be delivered to Canal Street and transferred to the site from this location.

9. Use of the Canal Towpath

The canal towpath will be used only for limited access associated with the construction works.

Heavy construction vehicles will not travel along the towpath.

Instead, the following approach will be adopted:

- deliveries will arrive at Canal Street
- materials will be transferred to site using small tracked plant, pedestrian-controlled equipment or manual handling methods
- small mini excavators may be carefully walked along the towpath where necessary

The loads involved are relatively modest and are typical of small domestic construction projects.

10. Towpath Protection Measures

Where plant is required to travel along the towpath, the contractor will implement measures to protect the towpath surface and canal infrastructure.

These measures may include:

- use of lightweight mini excavators only
- careful tracking along the towpath under controlled conditions
- avoiding concentrated loading in any single location
- use of temporary ground protection mats where necessary

Plant movement will be limited and controlled to minimise disturbance to towpath users and canal infrastructure.

Pedestrian and cycle access along the towpath will remain available throughout the construction process.

11. Supply and Placement of Concrete

Concrete for the strip foundations will be supplied using small ready-mix or mini-mix concrete vehicles delivering to Canal Street.

Concrete will then be transported to the site via pumping using a small concrete line pump positioned at Canal Street, with pumping lines running along the towpath to the site.

Concrete will typically comprise C25/30 ready-mixed concrete, suitable for strip foundations.

Concrete will be placed as soon as possible following excavation to prevent deterioration of the clay formation.

12. Vibration Control

The proposed works involve only traditional trench excavation and concrete placement, which generate negligible vibration.

Importantly, the construction works will not involve:

- driven piling
- vibratory sheet piling
- heavy compaction adjacent to the canal structure

The use of small excavation plant produces vibration levels far below those capable of affecting masonry retaining walls or canal infrastructure.

Should any unusual movement or vibration be observed, works will cease and the situation will be assessed prior to continuation.

13. Control of Excavated Materials

Excavated spoil will be managed carefully to prevent any surcharge loading on the canal embankment.

Measures will include:

- storing excavated materials away from the canal edge
- avoiding stockpiles near the retaining wall
- removing surplus material from site where required

This prevents additional loading being imposed on canal infrastructure.

14. Weather Protection

Clay soils can soften if exposed to prolonged wet weather.

To mitigate this risk:

- excavations will be protected during periods of heavy rainfall
- trenches will not remain open longer than necessary
- concrete will be placed immediately following excavation

These measures maintain formation stability.

15. Conclusion

The proposed works involve small-scale domestic foundation construction located approximately 4.7 m from the canal lock structure.

Given the competent clay ground conditions, the separation distance from the canal infrastructure and the use of traditional strip foundations, the proposed works will not adversely affect the canal embankment or retaining walls.

The controlled excavation methodology, limited plant access along the towpath and careful management of construction activities ensure that the stability and operation of the Rochdale Canal infrastructure will remain unaffected.