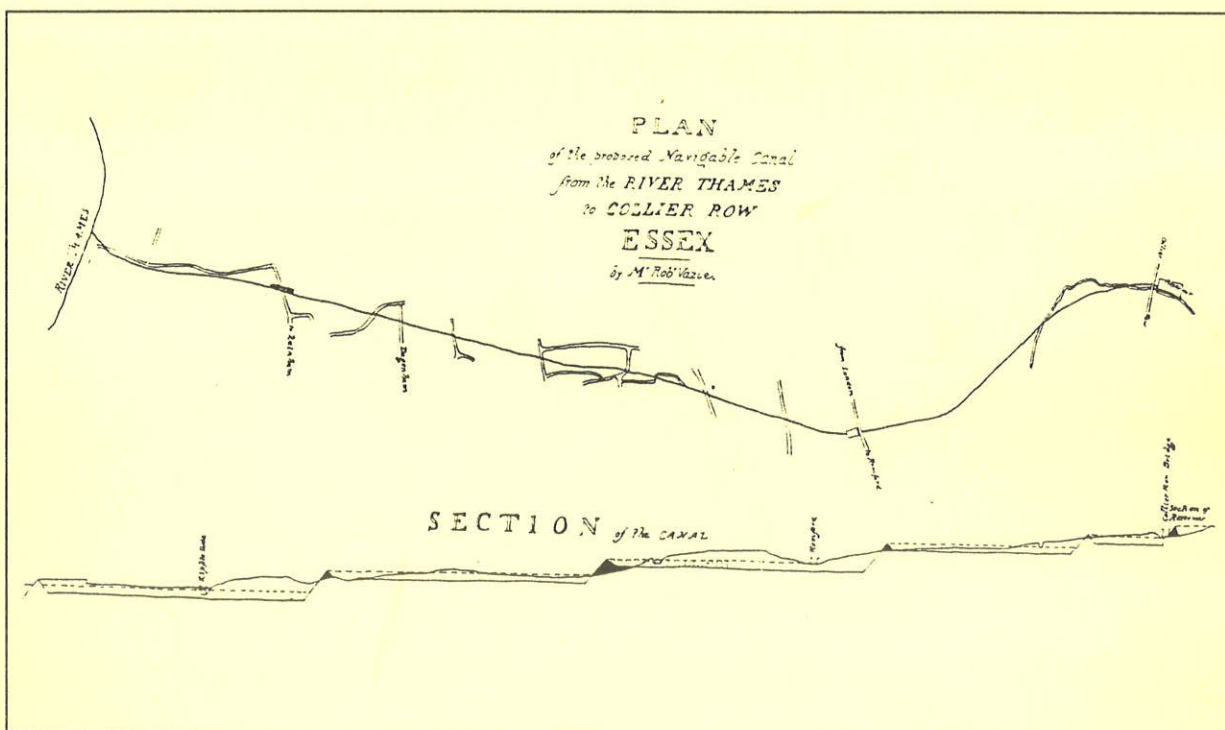


The Environment Agency

THE ROMFORD CANAL ESSEX

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW



Oxford Archaeological Unit
July 2001

THE ROMFORD CANAL, ESSEX HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

LIST OF CONTENTS

Summary

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Background
- 1.2 Aims and objectives
- 1.3 Methodology

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Early 19th-century proposals
- 2.2 1870s revival of canal proposal
- 2.3 Canal works undertaken

3 SURVIVING CANAL FEATURES

- 3.1 Surviving visible remains
- 3.2 Possible buried remains

4 CONCLUSION

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1 Site location
- Figure 2 Plan of 1812 proposal for canal from Romford to Rainham
- Figure 3 Plan of 1820 proposal for canal from River Thames to Collier Row
- Figure 4 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map (1898)
- Figure 5 Routes of early 19th-century Romford Canal proposals

- Appendix 1 Bibliography and sources

THE ROMFORD CANAL, ESSEX: HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Summary

In the first quarter of the 19th century there were five attempts to construct a canal from the Thames to Romford in Essex. At that time the area was a largely agricultural district and each proposal anticipated that the main carriage would be agricultural produce into London and manure on the return journey. Each proposal faced local opposition and was aborted before reaching the construction stage. The proposal was revived however in the mid 1870s, when the district was becoming more industrialised, in the hope of profiting from the greater returns of industrial-based trade. This time the opposition was limited and the southern half of the canal from the Thames to Dagenham including two locks, two bridges and a tunnel was constructed. However it appears that the company was unable to raise sufficient capital to complete the canal to Romford and the two mile stretch, which follows closely the course of the Beam River, remained isolated although in use. The Oxford Archaeological Unit was commissioned to undertake an assessment of the surviving physical evidence of the canal and an historical overview of the various attempts to construct the Romford Canal. The on site assessment found that only very limited evidence of the former canal survive and apparently none of the structures previously referred to.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) has been commissioned by the Environment Agency to undertake an historical study of the Romford Canal part of which formerly ran through land now owned by the Environment Agency. The report is based on documentary research and a field survey of the surviving evidence of the canal.

1.2 Aims and objectives

1.2.1 The main aims of the work were

- i) to determine what visible evidence of the canal survives on site
- ii) to assess what features may potentially survive below ground
- iii) to assess the significance of the features
- iv) to provide an historical background of the various 19th-century attempts to construct a canal from Romford to the Thames.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The assessment of the surviving physical evidence of the canal is based on an on-site walk-over survey undertaken along the length of the canal and

particularly along the section of the canal known to have been constructed and shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map dating to 1898. This on-site survey was undertaken on 31st May 2001.

- 1.3.2 The documentary research was based on material held at a number of sources. The most substantial work was undertaken at the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford which holds a number of documents, including plans, of both the early 19th-century canal proposals on which construction never began and the later 19th-century proposal which was abandoned after the start of construction works. Research of primary sources has also been undertaken at the Public Record Office in Kew and all the main relevant secondary sources have been consulted (see bibliography).
- 1.3.3 The only other archive to hold any material on the Romford Canal appears to be the National Waterways Museum in Gloucester which holds the Romford Canal Company seal and further information on their canal gallery database. A print out from the database has been obtained. The archivists at both British Waterways and the Environment Agency have both been contacted and it has been confirmed that neither archive hold any material on the Romford Canal.
- 1.3.4 Due to access restrictions relating to foot and mouth disease the documentary research was undertaken at the time of the original commission (March 2001) but the on-site assessment was delayed until May.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 In the 19th century there were six attempts to construct a canal from the Thames to Romford and the area surrounding it. Five were in the first quarter of the century, after the major canal-building boom of the 1790s but before the advent of the railway age, and each foundered before the start of any construction works. The sixth attempt, later in the century, also failed but not before a section of the canal was built together with several canal structures.

2.2 Early 19th-century proposals

- 2.2.1 The first two attempts to build a Romford Canal, in 1809 and 1812 were effectively the same proposal, both initiated by Ralph Walker and following the same route (Figs. 2, 5). Each scheme proposed to utilise Rainham Creek for the southernmost section of the route between Rainham and the Thames. At Rainham there would have been a lock allowing access from the creek into a basin and a new canal travelling in a north-west direction beneath the New Road and towards the Beam River (called the River Rom in vicinity of Romford). The canal would then have continued north alongside the river, utilising the relatively flat river valley. The canal would have had a total of six locks: that previously referred to adjoining Rainham Creek and five on the northern half of the route in the area to the south of Romford. The canal

- would have terminated at a basin at the Ind Coope Brewery close to the centre of Romford. (Essex Record Office: QRUM 1/14; QRUM 1/20)
- 2.2.2 In the early 19th century this part of south-west Essex was still an important agricultural area, detached from the metropolitan sprawl, and it supplied London with significant quantities of potatoes and other agricultural produce transported largely by road. The proponents of both these two canal schemes and the other early 19th-century proposals envisaged the canal prospering by carrying this agricultural produce from the Romford area into London and manure on the return journey.
- 2.2.3 The 1809 and 1812 proposals both foundered before the start of any site works apparently due to problems with financing. A letter dated 11 September 1810 confirms that although the earlier plan had been postponed due to "gentlemen not being prepared with the estimate" it was intended to proceed with the scheme in the next sessions. A petition was presented to parliament on 18 December 1812 but the scheme then appears to have been abandoned (Boyes and Russell p.55). There appears to be no surviving evidence to show the level of opposition to the scheme, or whether it was instrumental in the scheme's collapse.
- 2.2.4 The next attempt to link Romford with the Thames via a canal was a scheme proposed by the engineer Robert Vazie in 1818 (Fig. 5). This proposal was for a navigable cut with its southern Thames-side end adjacent to Hyman's wall c.1 km to the west of the Beam River.
- 2.2.5 The canal was to travel in a straight line in a NNE direction roughly parallel with (and 1 km to the west of) the Beam River as far as the London to Chelmsford Turnpike Road close to Romford. From here it would continue NNW towards Collier Row. After crossing over the River Rom the canal was to terminate at a 20 acre reservoir on Collier Row Common which would have ensured a water supply in the summer months. The proposal was to include 11 locks in total including a tidal river lock allowing transfer to the Thames. It was to be level from the Thames to Dagenham with 5 locks up to Romford (each with a 6 ft rise) and a further 5 locks up to Collier Row. The canal was to be 36 ft wide at the surface, 21 ft wide at the bottom and 5 ft deep. (Public Record Office: CRES 2/270). The estimate for the canal was £46,053.
- 2.2.6 The canal promoters again hoped to profit largely from the carriage of manure and agricultural produce but there is also evidence to show that they anticipated revenue from the transport of timber to the Royal Dockyards along the Thames. A set of letters survives at the Public Record Office (CRES2/270) detailing the correspondence between EY Hancock, one of the canal's main backers, and the Commissioners of His Majesty's Woods and Forests. Mr Hancock initially approached the commissioners generally promoting the scheme and more specifically in the hope that the Crown might invest in the scheme or providing other financial assistance. Mr Hancock states that local people are generally in favour of the scheme and that it should increase the value of the Crown lands at Collier Row Common by opening a

“ready communication for the conveyance of timber from Hainault Forest to his majesty’s dock yards”.

- 2.2.7 The commissioners replied forwarded the letter to a firm of solicitors for comment and their reply that although they had no objections to the scheme and could see some local benefits that it may bring they could not see how it would be of financial benefit to themselves. Most significantly they added that they were highly doubtful of the profitability of the scheme and that they did not believe that it would be completed.
- 2.2.8 Again the 1818 scheme failed before reaching the construction stage but there is more surviving evidence of the opposition to the scheme than to the earlier proposals and this provides an indication of at least part of the reason why the canal failed. A meeting was held at Romford Town Hall in October 1818 at which the canal proposal was discussed. As a result of this meeting a local landholder who would have been affected by the canal prepared a poster/leaflet detailing his opposition. There were a number of grounds for his opposition including his belief that previous canals had not been profitable in agricultural areas such as this. The landholder believed that as local farmers already chose not to use the existing Essex rivers, preferring to cart their produce by road, that there was a limited need for a canal. The document also warned of the danger of the “vast influx of strangers” who would construct the canal and of the “permanent expense of maintaining paupers” when navvies died leaving unsupported women and children in the neighbourhood. The document particularly warned of the Irish labourers who he believed to be “troublesome and expensive”.
- 2.2.9 It is apparent from the article that one of the major concerns with this schemes, and of the other early 19th-century proposals was safety. The Thames embankment had been breached in 1707 and a large area of low-lying land as far north as Dagenham church had remained under water for 18 years (Booker 1974). The threat of repetition from forming a river lock to link the Thames with the canal was no doubt uppermost in the minds of opponents of each of the schemes and it was specifically referred to in the 1818 article.
- 2.2.10 Robert Vazie, the engineer for the 1818 proposal, was also behind two further proposals in 1820 and 1824, neither of which was any more successful (Figs. 3, 5). The 1820 proposal was to follow a similar route to that of the 1818 scheme but this time using six inclined planes rather than locks to negotiate the rise in level towards the north. Among the inclined planes was a double incline which was to link the Thames to the canal and which aimed to allay fears of inundation due to a breach in the Thames embankment. The inclined planes would have hauled canal boats up and down a slope, rather than forming pound locks, thus allowing the Thames embankment to remain intact. This plan appears to have failed due to the depressed state of agriculture at this time (Boyes & Russell, 1977).
- 2.2.11 The 1824 proposal was to follow a similar route to the two previous schemes but the use of locks rather than inclined planes was once again proposed. In order to counter the threat of breaching the Thames embankment it was

intended to construct two large embankments to accommodate a channel stretching inland from the Thames as far as Rippleside where the first lock would have been constructed (Booker, 1974). The scheme once again failed apparently partly due to the new argument used by the local opposition of competition from the new railways (Boyes and Russell, 1977).

2.3 1870s revival of canal proposal

2.3.1 After the successive failures of the early 19th-century proposals for a Romford Canal the scheme remained dormant for 50 years before it was surprisingly resurrected in the 1870s, well into the railway era and at a time when new canal building in this country was very unusual. In 1874 a notice was posted announcing the intention to apply for an act incorporating a company to construct a canal from Romford to the Thames and the Act was passed the following year with apparently little opposition. This allowed the Romford Canal Company to raise £80,000 in £10 shares, together with a further £19,000 by borrowing and a prospectus detailing the route of the canal together with its financing and anticipated returns was subsequently issued (ref: PRO - D/DU455/1).

2.3.2 The proposed route was slightly different to each of the earlier schemes with the southern half of the canal closely following the line of the River Beam and utilising the relatively flat river valley. The canal was to be linked to the Thames by a river lock immediately to the west of Havering Great Sluice where the Beam feeds into the Thames. It was then to continue in a NNE direction, remaining adjacent to the Beam for c.2 miles, before diverging from the river and heading due north into Romford where, similarly to the first two proposals, it was to terminate at a basin at the Ind Coope Brewery. Apart from the river lock there was to be one further lock on the southern half of the canal, immediately north of New Road (A1306), and four relatively closely spaced locks to the north of where the canal and river diverge. It was also proposed to form a collateral junction towards the southern end of the canal forming a link with Dagenham Docks to the west.

2.3.3 By the 1870s the area was becoming more of a manufacturing district and in contrast to the earlier proposals, which aimed exclusively at the carriage of agricultural materials, the promoters of the later canal aimed at attracting new manufactories to canal-side sites and carrying industrial produce as well as providing carriage for local farmers. This diversity of the proposed canal's intended market is reflected in the company prospectus which includes details of the canal's anticipated receipts. It was anticipated that 130 tons of goods would be carried each day to and from the canal basin at the Ind Coope Brewery and that this would raise £3000 per annum. It was hoped that the carriage of manure from London to the farms around Romford would be equally profitable, also raising £3000 per year as would the carriage of various agricultural produce such as hay, straw, grain, seeds and roots. It was hoped that carrying construction materials such as timber, stone, slate and bricks would raise £2500, coal would raise £2000, animals would raise £500 and various other activities such as the use of cranes and wharfs would raise

£2000. It was optimistically hoped that the canal's total annual revenue would be £16,000.

- 2.3.4 The total working expenses for the operation of the canal were estimated at £2,600 per year leaving nett profits of £13,400. The expenses included four lock keepers at £1 per week, salaries for the secretary and directors, rates, taxes, repairs and other expenses. It also included a 15 hp pumping engine working 200 days and consuming 118 tons of coal per year.
- 2.3.5 As referred to above it was also hoped that the revenue would increase by the canal attracting new manufactories to its banks. The prospectus makes several references to this particularly in relation to *The Nuisance Act* of 1844 which appears to have given varnish manufacturers and other unpleasant or toxic processes 30 years in which to relocate outside the metropolitan area. The directors of the Romford Canal clearly hoped to attract these manufacturers to its canal-side sites.
- 2.3.6 Unlike the earlier canal proposals construction of the 1870s Romford Canal did begin, apparently either late in 1875 or early 1876, soon after the passing of the Act and before the issue of the company prospectus. The prospectus states that contracts had been entered into, works were progressing rapidly and that it was hoped that the canal would be ready in 12 months.
- 2.3.7 Ordnance Survey maps (detailed below) show that almost the entire southern half of the projected canal was completed before works ceased, probably in 1877 (Boyes & Russell, 1977). A further Act was obtained in 1880 which renewed the company's compulsory purchase powers and extended the time for completion until 1883 but no further work appears to have been carried out (*Essex Countryside* Jan 1965). The 2-mile section of canal that was constructed remained in operation into the 20th century before the official liquidation of the company in 1910 and the auctioning of the company's lands in 1912 (PRO: RAIL 1005/345).
- 2.3.8 There appears to be no single reason why the plan failed and a letter in *The Essex Countryside* (from F Lewis of the Horncastle Historical Society, Jan 1965) suggests that the inability to acquire land, the difficulty over levels and a lack of capital were probably all contributory factors. Considering the relatively late date of the canal construction it is in many ways less surprising that the scheme failed than that it was started in the first place.

2.4 Canal works undertaken

- 2.4.1 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map dates from the early 1870s, shortly before the construction of the canal, and therefore the most useful document in determining exactly which section of the canal was constructed is the 2nd edition produced in 1897/8 (See Fig. 4). This shows the southernmost two miles of the projected canal, from a river lock (NGR: TQ4990 8152) adjacent to the Thames to a point just to the south-east of Dagenham, then a small village (TQ5090 8440). The map confirms that at that date the canal remained in use although to what extent is not known. Together with the river lock (A)

a further lock is shown (D), immediately to the north of New Road, and there appear to be three canal tunnels: beneath the Dagenham to Rainham Road (E), New Road (C) (A1306) and the London, Tilbury and Southend Railway (B). Construction of the canal is shown to have been abandoned just to the south of the four proposed closely spaced locks referred to above. It is interesting to note that although the southern half of the canal was built and was open 20 years after its construction there were no manufactories along its banks as the promoters had hoped, other than a candle manufactory at the junction between Thames and canal.

2.4.2 The Ordnance Survey edition of 1921 shows that at that date the canal was largely intact although the river lock is labelled as *lock disused* and the canal as *canal disused*. The southernmost half mile appears to have held water at this date together with a substantial section beneath the railway and New Road while the northernmost section (c.1000m) is shown dashed showing that it no longer held water, and with *Old Towing Path* marked. The next available OS map (Revision of 1915 with additions of 1938) shows that the canal in a similar condition as in 1921 but the river lock is no longer labelled.

2.4.3 Another useful source is a photograph of Ford's Dagenham car plant in 1949 which shows the Beam River and the southern section of the line of the Romford Canal (Plate 1). The car plant was established and laid out in the early 1940s and at this date its original eastern boundary was formed by the Beam River. By 1949 that part of the canal between the railway line and the river lock appears to have been in-filled and largely built over. To the north of this, between the rail line and New Road, the canal is visible although it had broken its banks (presumably due to infilling the southern section) and was a wide sprawling channel. To the north of the road the canal appears to have retained its form and a pool of water.

3 SURVIVING CANAL FEATURES

3.1 Surviving visible remains

3.1.1 As stated above it is known that a substantial section of the canal was constructed and that this included two locks (A, D) and three tunnels/bridges (B, C, E).

3.1.2 An on-site assessment of the line of the canal was undertaken concentrating particularly on the section to the south which is known to have been constructed and shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map but also continuing to the north where it is possible that some works were started but had already been lost before the OS map. Unfortunately, as previously referred to, the southern half of the section of canal known to have been built is now within (and beneath) Ford's Dagenham car plant and no access was possible to this area. This section of the canal included some of the more

significant canal features such as the river lock and the tunnel beneath the former London Tilbury and Southend Railway.

- 3.1.3 Limited visual access along the line of the canal from the edge of the car plant was possible and it is apparent that the former canal has been in-filled, the ground level raised and the area built over. Although it was not possible to inspect the southern end of the former canal, where it adjoined the Thames it appears unlikely that much if any of the former river lock would survive and both modern maps and the 1949 photograph referred to show a large building at the site of the former lock (Fig. 1, Pl. 1)
- 3.1.4 The northern extent of the car plant is formed by New Road which was also shown on the 2nd edition OS map and which passes over the Beam River and the adjacent line of the former canal immediately to the west. The 2nd edition OS map shows a single bridge carrying the road over both the river and the canal but the road has been widened in the 20th century after the abandonment of the canal and the original bridge has been replaced by a narrower culvert just carrying the river beneath the road. It is possible that some evidence of the former bridge may survive encased within the modern structure.
- 3.1.5 To either side of this bridge the line of the former canal has been entirely in-filled and there is no visible evidence of the canal. A road (Thames Avenue) extends to the south (within the car plant) running directly along the route of the former canal and for 250 metres immediately to the north the line is now within the grounds of a school (Pl. 3). The southern 100 m of this is overgrown with nettles and other vegetation while the northern part is a playing field and both sections have been in-filled. The area which is now overgrown includes the site of a former lock (D) but this appears to have been removed or buried. The photograph previously referred to shows that in 1949 the school had not yet been built and the canal extended through this area. It is likely that the lock survived at this stage although the quality of the photograph does not allow confirmation of this. The Beam River runs immediately to the east of the school grounds and is within land owned by the Environment Agency (Pl. 4).
- 3.1.6 At the northern end of the school grounds the land slopes down an embankment to an area of lower ground owned by the Environment Agency and to the Wantz Stream which adjoins the Beam River from the north-west and which appears to have formerly been carried beneath the Romford Canal. Immediately to the north of this Stream and to the west of the river is the southernmost end of the visible canal which has not been deliberately infilled although it is heavily silted and overgrown (Pl. 5). The line of the former canal remains visible as a clear depression extending c.900 m in a north-east direction. There is a small pool towards the southern end, which is full of reeds and several longer stretches of the former canal further north which retain substantial pools of water (Pl. 6). In the section without water the depression is c.10 m wide and c.1.5 m tall. There is no other visible evidence of the canal such as coping stones, brick lining, or clear towpath.

- 3.1.7 A short distance to the south of the Dagenham Beam Bridge the pool and depression is terminated by a concrete embankment or dam (Pl. 2, 7). The 2nd edition OS map shows a single bridge carrying the Dagenham Road over the Beam River and the canal but this has now been lost. A modern bridge carries the road over the river but there is now an embankment where the road was formerly carried over the canal. It is possible that the original bridge has been buried by and partially survives within the existing structure and embankment.
- 3.1.8 The 1897/8 map shows that immediately to the north-east of the Dagenham Beam Bridge the canal widened to apparently form a small wharf and possibly basin before terminating just to the north of this (Pl. 8). To the north of the bridge the west embankment of the canal remains visible but this part of the canal itself and the wharf is now within a light industrial yard beneath a concrete slab. The embankment ends in an L-shape indicating the end of the part of the canal actually constructed. To the north of this the proposed line of the canal is uneven and long grass would obscure any possible earthworks. A short distance further to the north is a large dried up pool which is not believed to relate to the canal.
- 3.1.9 From both the site inspection and the historic map analysis it appears unlikely that any significant works were started north of the end of the canal as shown on the 1897/8 OS map. It is apparent that work was halted immediately to the south of a proposed group of locks, presumably due to the extra outlay necessary for the construction of such a structure being too great for the already financially stretched company. It is possible (although unlikely) that some works may have started to the north of the proposed lock leaving a gap in the middle but the 1897/8 map shows no evidence of earthworks such as that. If any works were undertaken to the north they must have been so minor that no evidence would survive on the ground today. It is also unlikely that any works would have started on other sections of the route, such as at the north end, simply due to the logistical advantages of starting at one end and extending in a single direction rather than attempting to join different parts of the canal.

3.2 Possible buried remains

- 3.2.1 Although there remains only relatively limited visible evidence of the Romford Canal it is likely that more substantial features remain buried beneath the car plant, the school and encased within later bridges. The former channel now within the car plant and school has been largely or entirely in-filled, rather than removed, and it is likely that evidence of its construction such as its canal lining, puddled clay, coping, tow path and other features will survive. Of particular interest is the site of the in-filled lock within the school grounds. Again it is likely that the lock chamber was in-filled rather than removed and thus the lock probably survives at least partially intact within the school grounds.
- 3.2.2 As it has not been possible to inspect the site of the river lock, which appears to have now been built over, it is not known what likelihood there is that it may partially survive in-situ beneath the Ford building. Each of the three

bridges which formerly carried two roads and a railway over the canal have been replaced by new structures just spanning the Beam River. Again it is likely that at least some evidence of the earlier structures over the canal would survive either in the form of footings buried beneath embankments for the existing bridge or more substantial remains encased within the current structures.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1.1 The Romford Canal provides a case study of a number of failed attempts to construct a canal between Romford and the Thames. It covers both schemes which were aborted at the early planning stage and a scheme which was abandoned after substantial construction works had been completed. As well as providing physical remains of the canal the story of the attempts to construct the canal reflect a number of issues of interest in relation to canals and to the locality. Among these issues are the strong local opposition to the early canal proposals, problems with raising finance, over optimism of canal protagonists and the later 19th-century industrialisation of the region.
- 4.1.2 In a national context the canal proposals are of some interest due to their relatively late date. The various schemes proposed between 1810 and 1824 were all some years after the canal-building boom of the mid 1790s and construction of the later 1870s scheme started decades after the construction of new canals had all but died out in much of Britain. The decline in importance of canals towards the middle of the 19th century is largely due to competition from railways and it is not coincidence that the last of the earlier Romford Canal schemes was proposed just before the start of the railway age. Among the points of opposition raised to the 1824 Romford Canal proposal was that once railways became established canals would become obsolete. However the fact that it was possible in the 1870s to raise sufficient capital to at least start construction works on a new canal shows that the railways did not totally replace canals and that canals remained a viable system of freight transport. Indeed although in Britain the waterways network declined in importance in the 19th century the significance of canals and waterways for the transport of raw materials and industrial goods remained in many other industrialised countries and coexisted with railways well into the 20th century.
- 4.1.3 Although substantial works on the canal were started and a two mile section was opened only relatively limited visible evidence of this survives. The northern half (within the Environment Agency's land) survives as a clear depression, most of the length of which retains water, but the southern half has been infilled and is beneath Ford's Dagenham car plant. Although various canal structures were constructed including a river lock, a pound lock, two road bridges and a short tunnel beneath a railway none of these appears to survive although some evidence of them may survive buried.

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July 2001

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APPENDIX 1: Bibliography and sources

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| Boyes JH | | <i>Scheme for a Romford Canal Came to Nothing</i> 'The Essex Countryside' No 127 (1967) p.42-43 |
| Hudson K | 1984 | <i>Industrial History From the Air</i> |
| | | 'The Essex Countryside' 1965 No. 96 p.173 (letter regarding Romford Canal) |
| Tomlinson EP | 1993 | <i>The Illustrated History of Canal and River Navigations</i> |

Ordnance Survey Maps

- 1st edition 6" Ordnance Survey, Essex sheets 74SE, 82NE, 74NE (1872-3)
- 2nd edition 6" Ordnance Survey. Essex Sheets 74SE, 82NE, 74NE (1897-8)
- Ordnance Survey 6" edition of 1921
- Ordnance Survey provisional edition (revision of 1915 with additions of 1938)

Essex Record Office, Chelmsford

- QRUm 2/233 Romford Canal Book of reference 1874-5
- QRUm 1/14 Larger version of 1809 plan (D D/Cm P30) and book of reference showing land owners and occupiers to be affected by proposed canal.
- QRUm 1/20 Plan and section of intended canal from Romford to Rainham Sept 3rd 1812. Also book of reference relating to 1812 plan showing land owners and occupiers.
- D/DCmP30 Impressive large plan showing c.1809 plan
- Q/SBb 421/9 letter regarding abandonment of earliest proposals for Romford Canal
- D/DU455/1 Prospectus for Romford Canal Company (1876)

Public Record Office, Kew

- CRES 2/270 Bundle of several documents (letters, pamphlets, prospectus etc) relating to 1818 proposal of Romford Canal
- RAIL 1005/345 Statement/letter from LC Johnson

National Waterways Museum, Gloucester

Gallery database

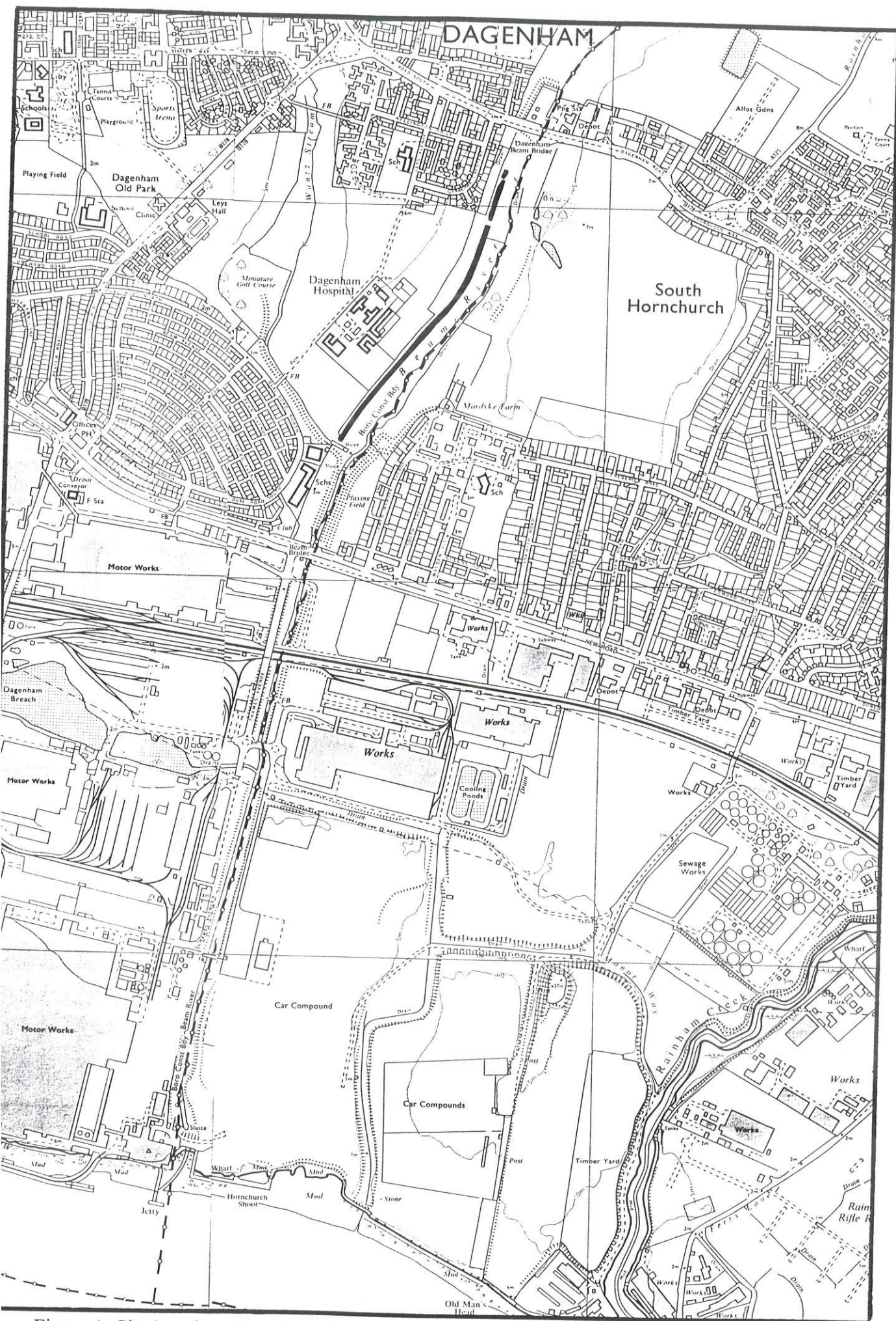


Figure 1: Site location. Remains of canal shown black

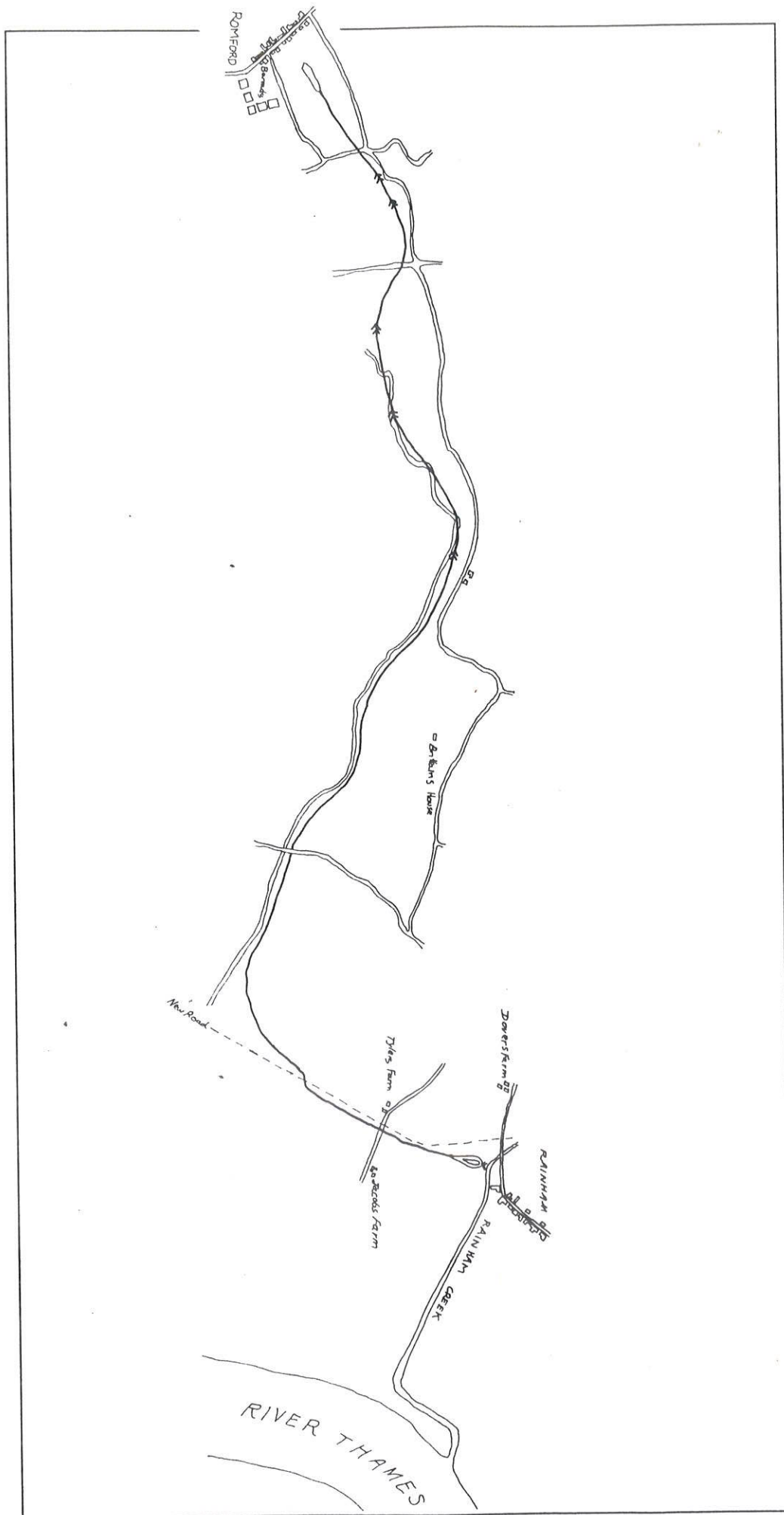


Figure 2: Plan of 1812 proposal for canal from Romford to Rainham (QRUm 1/20)

PLAN
of the proposed Navigable Canal
from the RIVER THAMES
to COLLIER ROW
ESSEX
By M^r Rob^t Vazie.

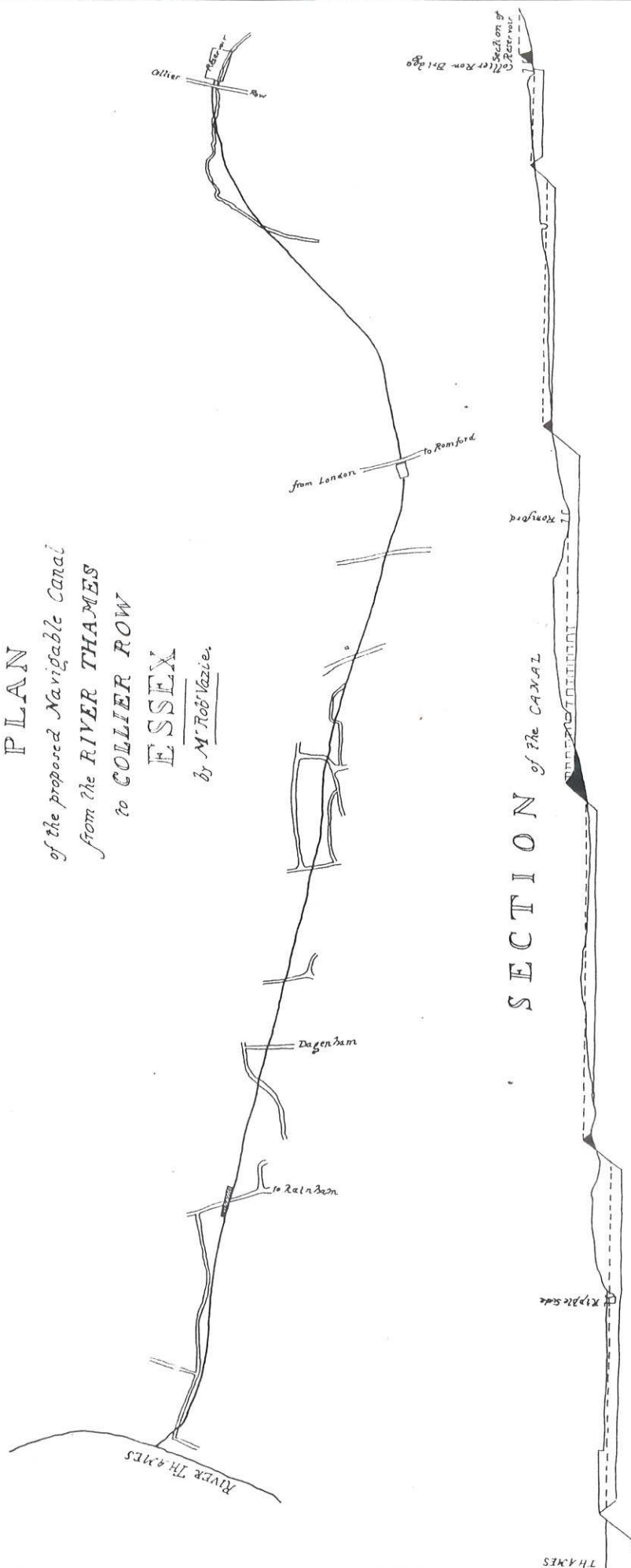


Figure 3: Plan of 1820 proposal for canal from Thames to Collier Row

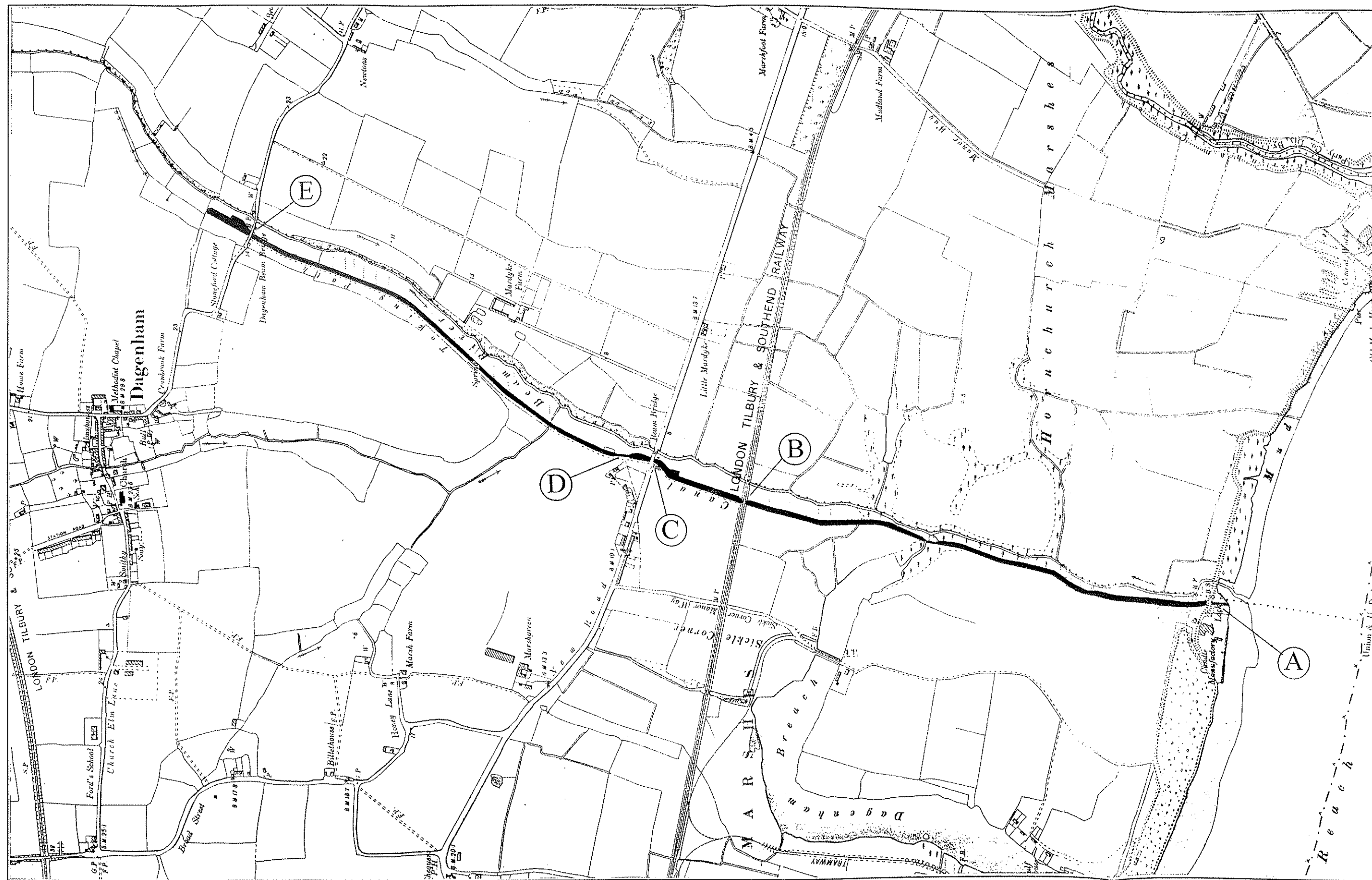


Figure 4 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map (1898)

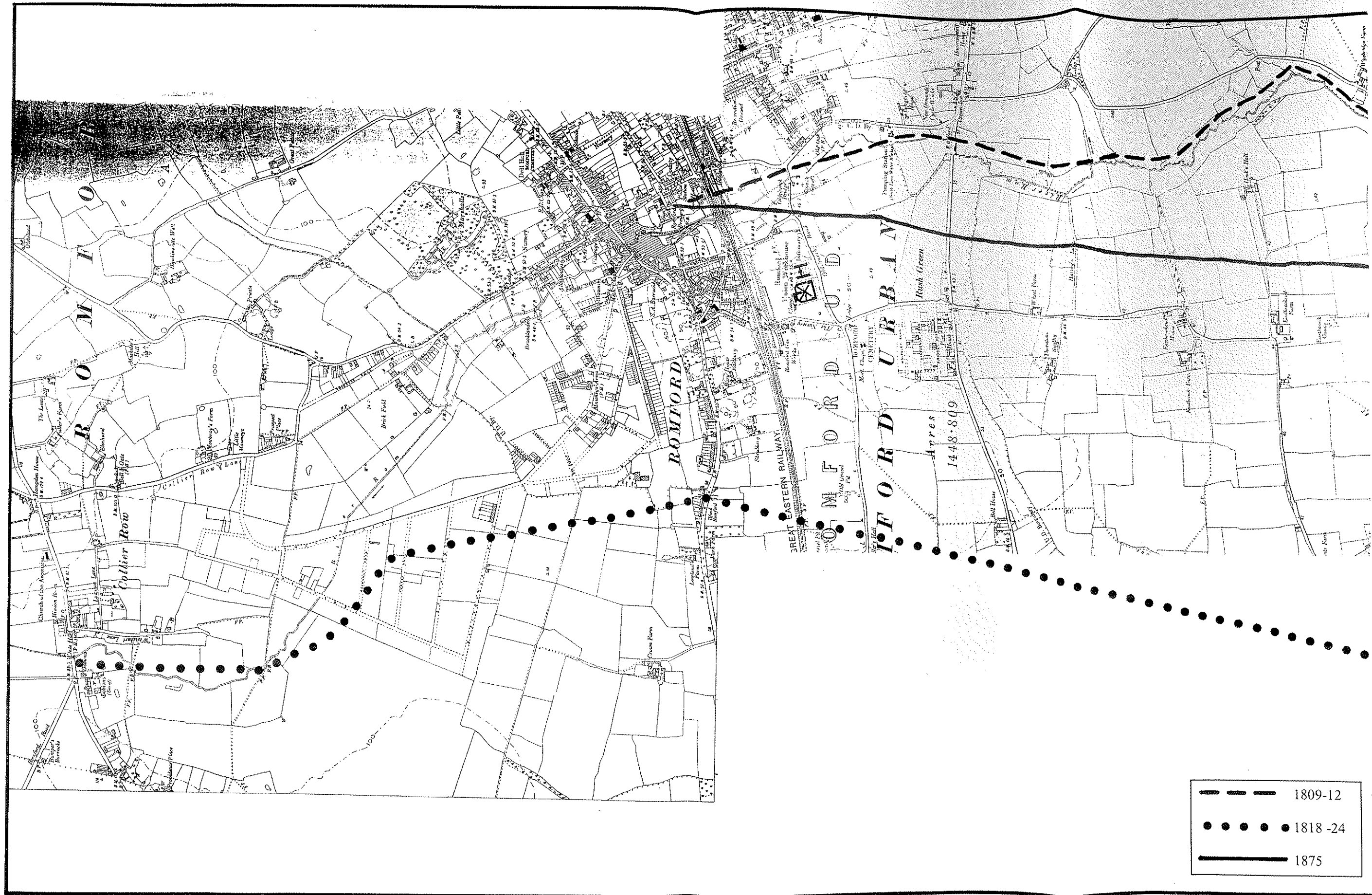


Figure 5a Routes of early 19th-century Romford Canal proposals



Plate 1: The Ford car plant at Dagenham in 1949 (from *Industrial History from the Air* Hudson K, 1994). Beam River visible to right and line of canal (in-filled) to left of this. Rail line and New Road towards top of image with remains of canal between them. Winding canal just visible towards upper right corner adjacent to river.



Plate 2: North end of surviving section of canal. Viewed from north



Plate 3: line of canal (now in-filled) through school field



Plate 4: View from Beam Bridge looking north. Beam River to right. Line of former canal to left of path.



Plate 5: Southern end of surviving canal immediately north of Wantz Stream



Plate 6: Surviving pool of former canal



Plate 7: North end of surviving canal to south-west of Dagenham Beam Bridge



Plate 8: Depression of former canal at north end, to north-east of Dagenham Beam Bridge.



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