

Alton

Historic Character Assessment



Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey

Alrewas

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Executive Summary

The Project

The main aim of the Staffordshire EUS is to understand the development and the current historic character of the medieval towns within the county.

The project reports for the towns are divided into two sections. Section one covers the location and historical development of the towns. The history covers the earliest evidence for human activity through to the establishment of the town in the medieval period and through to the present day. Section two covers the characterisation of the town through the creation of Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs). The historical significance of each HUCA is assessed and recommendations are put forward.

Ten Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCAs) have been identified in this project (cf. map 13).

The Historical Development of Alton

There is evidence for human activity during the prehistoric period from around Alton. The earliest evidence may be of Mesolithic date and relates to a flint scatter found in the parish during 2003. Evidence for Bronze Age activity tends to concentrate to the north of the town within the moorlands in the form of burial mounds. The nearest Bronze Age barrow to Alton lies approximately 1.4km to the north west. The largest prehistoric monument known within the landscape is the remains of Bunbury Iron Age hillfort which occupies a spur of land on the opposite bank of the River Churnet. There is less evidence for Roman activity within the area, although it is assumed due to the presence of mineral resources and the location of Rocester approximately 5km to the south east. A number of Roman coins have been found on two separate occasions in the vicinity of Alton Castle. There is currently

no supporting evidence to suggest the nature of any activity within the EUS project area.

There is also currently little evidence for activity during the early medieval period, other than the entry in Domesday Book (1086) which may imply a settlement in the area prior to the Norman Conquest (1066) although in 1086 it was described as 'waste'.

Those manors, particularly in north Staffordshire, which are described as 'waste' in Domesday Book have been seen to relate to marginal lands which had not then been dispersed by the king to his followers. Alton was not granted away by the king until the early 12th century when it was given to the de Verdun family. It is possible that the de Verdun's effectively created a new town at Alton comprising a castle and attached borough; this may have been carried out by Bertram de Verdun (1153 to 1192) in the later 12th century. Bertram also founded Croxden Abbey, lying 2.6km south of Alton, in 1179.

The earliest fabric at Alton Castle dates to the later 12th century, but there is evidence of later rebuilding dating to the 13th and 14th centuries. The castle survived until it was largely destroyed on the orders of Parliament following the Civil War in the mid 17th century. The castle had ceased to be the main seat of the lords of the manor from the early 14th century onwards at which date the overlordship had passed firstly to the Furnival family and in the early 15th century to the Talbot family through various marriage alliances. The Talbots continued to hold Alton until the early 20th century. The Talbot family made Alton their main seat in the early 19th century, but focused their building scheme on the opposite side of the Churnet Valley building Alton Towers and laying out a landscape park across the area of the Iron Age hillfort. The gardens were opened to the public for a few decades in the later 19th century, but in the early 20th century Alton

Towers was sold and was developed as a major tourist attraction.

The Talbot family had a considerable impact upon the historic character of Alton following the establishment of their seat at Alton Towers. They employed the eminent architect, A. W. N. Pugin to build a new Alton Castle, which has become an emblem of the Churnet Valley, as well as a Roman Catholic church, school and convent all on the site of the medieval castle.

The documentary evidence for Alton as a town is first recorded in the early 13th century and the first reference to a market is made in 1293. However, it is likely that the town was created at the time the castle was built in the mid 12th century. Evidence for the medieval town plan is still legible within the modern townscape in the form of burgage plots along High Street and in the general street pattern. The church which lies centrally within the area of the medieval town also appears to date from the 12th century, first being mentioned in 1176. The later history of the town is unclear, although the area known as Town Head may never have been entirely settled or was subject to later contraction. However, expansion in other areas of the later settlement had occurred by at least the 16th century and certainly in the 17th century as is evidenced by surviving buildings lying in the area around Malthouse Road, Knight Lane and Horse Road. Outlying settlement at what is now Station Road in the Churnet Valley and at Tithebarn probably dates to the 18th century, whilst settlement at Gallow Green probably originates in the mid 19th century.

Further residential expansion has occurred during the 20th century partly as infill in the areas of earlier housing, usually on the site of paddocks, and as new estates lying to the south upon fields which had formerly separated Alton from Tithebarn and Gallow Green.

Characterisation and Assessment

- ◆ The legible historic character of the several settlement areas which make up modern Alton, including the planned medieval town, survives principally within **HUCA 1, HUCA 2, HUCA 3, HUCA 5, HUCA 7, HUCA 8** and **HUCA 10**. The principal components of the medieval town, including burgage plots, the Grade II* St Peter's Church and the planned street pattern, are still legible in **HUCA 2**. The evidence for the planned town extends into **HUCA 3**, although the extant settlement pattern and buildings suggests this may have been re-settled in a piecemeal fashion in the post medieval period. Further piecemeal development, perhaps indicating squatter settlement from at least the post medieval period is visible in **HUCA 8**. The origins of settlement in **HUCA 5** and **HUCA 10** probably dates to the 18th century where a high proportion of historic buildings survive. Historic buildings, indicating possible squatter settlement of mid 19th century origin dominates **HUCA 7** (Gallows Green). The historic properties in all three of these areas have seen housing infill during the 20th century.
- ◆ **HUCA 1** is dominated by the Grade II* mid 19th century buildings designed by A. W. N. Pugin for the Earl of Shrewsbury. These buildings were built upon the site of the de Verdun's 12th century castle. The ruins of the medieval castle, which exhibit several phases of construction, survive and are both Scheduled and Grade I Listed.
- ◆ **HUCA 9** is dominated by the woodland slopes which lead down from the town into the Churnet Valley. The woodland itself may be associated with planting known to have been carried out by the Earl of Shrewsbury in the 19th century. A paddock lies at the top of the hill, a rare

The Trent and Mersey Canal, constructed in the late 18th century, contributes to the historic survivor in a townscape where the remaining paddocks, characteristic of a squatter settlement, have been developed for housing.

- ◆ Modern development of various dates during the 20th century dominates the character of **HUCA 6**. The remaining 20th century development has generally been constructed as infill amongst older properties (**HUCA 3, HUCA 5, HUCA 7** and **HUCA 8**).
- ◆ The assessment has also identified a high potential for below ground archaeological remains to survive within **HUCA 1, HUCA 2, HUCA 3, HUCA 8** and **HUCA 10**. Further archaeological potential has been identified within **HUCA 7**. Other sites, currently unknown, also have the potential to survive within the EUS project area.

Introduction

The Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) Project forms part of the national programme of Extensive Urban Surveys initiated and supported by English Heritage. This Historic Character Assessment report for Eccleshall forms one of twenty-three such reports which make up the EUS for the towns of medieval origin within Staffordshire. The EUS project as a whole intends to increase and synthesise the knowledge and understanding of the heritage assets that contribute to the development and character of the towns in the county.

The term 'town' in the context of the EUS relates specifically to those settlements which were clearly established as towns during the medieval period. An assessment was carried out upon documentary sources and previous assessments by historians to establish which settlements within Staffordshire qualified as medieval towns¹. Some of the medieval towns are still clearly important economic centres in the modern landscape, including Stafford, Tamworth, Newcastle and Lichfield. Others, however, have reverted to villages some of which, like Church Eaton, merely comprise a handful of houses with few services. Of the nine criteria established for identifying the county's medieval towns Alton qualified on four counts in that there are medieval references to burgesses or burgages and it was identified as a town or borough by three eminent historians². The results of the EUS project also identified the presence and survival of burgage plots.

The project constitutes a progression of the Historic Landscape Character (HLC) project which was completed for Staffordshire in 2006. The HLC was undertaken principally using maps of 1:10,000 scale and the results reaffirmed Staffordshire as a predominantly rural county. However, the scale at which the HLC was produced has meant that the more

urban areas, where greater levels of change have tended to occur on a smaller scale, were not analysed in any great depth. In the HLC the central areas of the towns were described as 'Historic Core' or 'Pre 1880s Settlement' and the phases of development and their current character were not considered beyond this broad terminology. The EUS therefore aims to rectify these issues through a consideration of all the sources available on each of Staffordshire's historic towns to deepen the understanding of and to apply value to the historic character of these townscapes.

The information gained from the study can be used to support and inform a variety of planning policies from national objectives down to the individual Planning Authorities local plans.

Each of the Historic Character Assessment reports are statements of current knowledge and are not intended to be original research documents. Each report addresses the research questions laid out in the West Midlands Research Framework by synthesising the data gathered on each of the towns. The EUS thereby also provides a basis for future research into the towns.

Background

A pilot study for Newcastle-under-Lyme was carried out in January 2007. Following this an assessment was undertaken to determine which towns in Staffordshire would be eligible for an Extensive Urban Survey. As a result twenty-three towns were identified for study. The selection criteria were based upon three studies of Staffordshire towns by historians and historical geographers who identified the medieval or early post medieval characteristics determining how towns differ from rural settlements. Such criteria included the form of the settlement; the presence of burgage plots³ and formal market places whether physically

⁴ Hunt (nd.)

⁵ William Salt Library Contacts Web page:
<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/williamsalt/ContactDetails/home.aspx>

⁶ Extensive Urban Survey page on the Staffordshire County Council website:
<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/HistoricEnvironment/Projects/urban/eushomepage.aspx>

⁷ Archaeology Data Service website: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/>

surviving, referenced in historical documents or identifiable on historic mapping. It also took into account the references to medieval organisations such as guilds and to the construction of civic buildings such as town or market halls. The diversity and nature of the occupations of the inhabitants were also included; the greater the range and the less agricultural focussed the more likely to represent an urban settlement⁴.

Aim

The main aim of the Staffordshire EUS is to understand the development and the current historic character of the towns. The towns are evaluated to identify the nature and extent of surviving historic environment assets whether as standing structures, below ground archaeological deposits or in the surviving historic town plan.

Outputs

The results are to be held as part of the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) in a database and spatially in GIS.

The principal outputs are the Historic Character Assessment reports for each town. These are available as hard copies located at the William Salt Library⁵, but are also accessible through the Staffordshire County Council website⁶. The national programme is currently held on the ADS website⁷.

Part One: Background and Setting

Section Summary

There is evidence for human activity during the prehistoric period from around Alton. The earliest evidence may be of Mesolithic date and relates to a flint scatter found in the parish during 2003. Evidence for Bronze Age activity tends to concentrate to the north of the town within the moorlands in the form of burial mounds. The nearest Bronze Age barrow to Alton lies approximately 1.4km to the north west. The largest prehistoric monument known within the landscape is the remains of the Iron Age hillfort which occupies a spur of land on the opposite bank of the River Churnet to the town. There is less evidence for Roman activity within the area, although it is assumed due to the presence of mineral resources and the location of Rocester approximately 5km to the south east. A number of Roman coins have been found on two separate occasions in the vicinity of Alton Castle. Unfortunately there is currently no supporting evidence to suggest the nature of any activity within the EUS project area.

There is also currently little evidence for activity during the early medieval period, other than the entry in Domesday Book (1086) which may imply a settlement in the area prior to the Norman Conquest (1066) although in 1086 it was described as 'waste'.

Those manors, particularly in north Staffordshire, which are described as 'waste' in Domesday Book have been seen to relate to marginal lands which had not yet been dispersed by the king to his followers. Alton was not granted away by the king until the early 12th century when it was given to the de Verdun family. It is possible that the de Verdun's effectively created a new town at Alton comprising a castle and attached borough; this development may have been carried out by Bertram de Verdun (1153 to 1192) in the later 12th century. Bertram also

founded Croxden Abbey; a Cistercian monastery lying 2.6km south of Alton, in 1179.

The earliest fabric at Alton Castle dates to the later 12th century, but there is evidence of later rebuilding dating to the 13th and 14th centuries. It survived until it was largely destroyed on the orders of Parliament following the Civil War in the mid 17th century. The castle had ceased to be the main seat of the lords of the manor by the early 14th century onwards at which date the overlordship had passed firstly to the Furnival family and in the early 15th century to the Talbot family through various marriage alliances. The Talbots continued to hold Alton until the early 20th century. The Talbot family made Alton their main seat in the early 19th century, but largely focused their attention on the opposite side of the Churnet Valley building Alton Towers and laying out a landscape park across the area of the Iron Age hillfort. The gardens were opened to the public for a few decades in the later 19th century, but in the early 20th century Alton Towers was sold and developed as a major tourist attraction.

The Talbot family also had a considerable impact upon the historic character of Alton following the establishment of their seat at Alton Towers. They employed the eminent architect, A. W. N. Pugin to build a new Alton Castle, which has become an emblem of the Churnet Valley, as well as a Roman Catholic church, school and convent all on the site of the medieval castle.

The documentary evidence for Alton as a town is first recorded in the early 13th century and first reference to a market is made in 1293. However, it is likely that the town was created at the time the castle was built in the mid 12th century. The evidence of the medieval town plan is still legible within the modern townscape in the form of burgage plots along

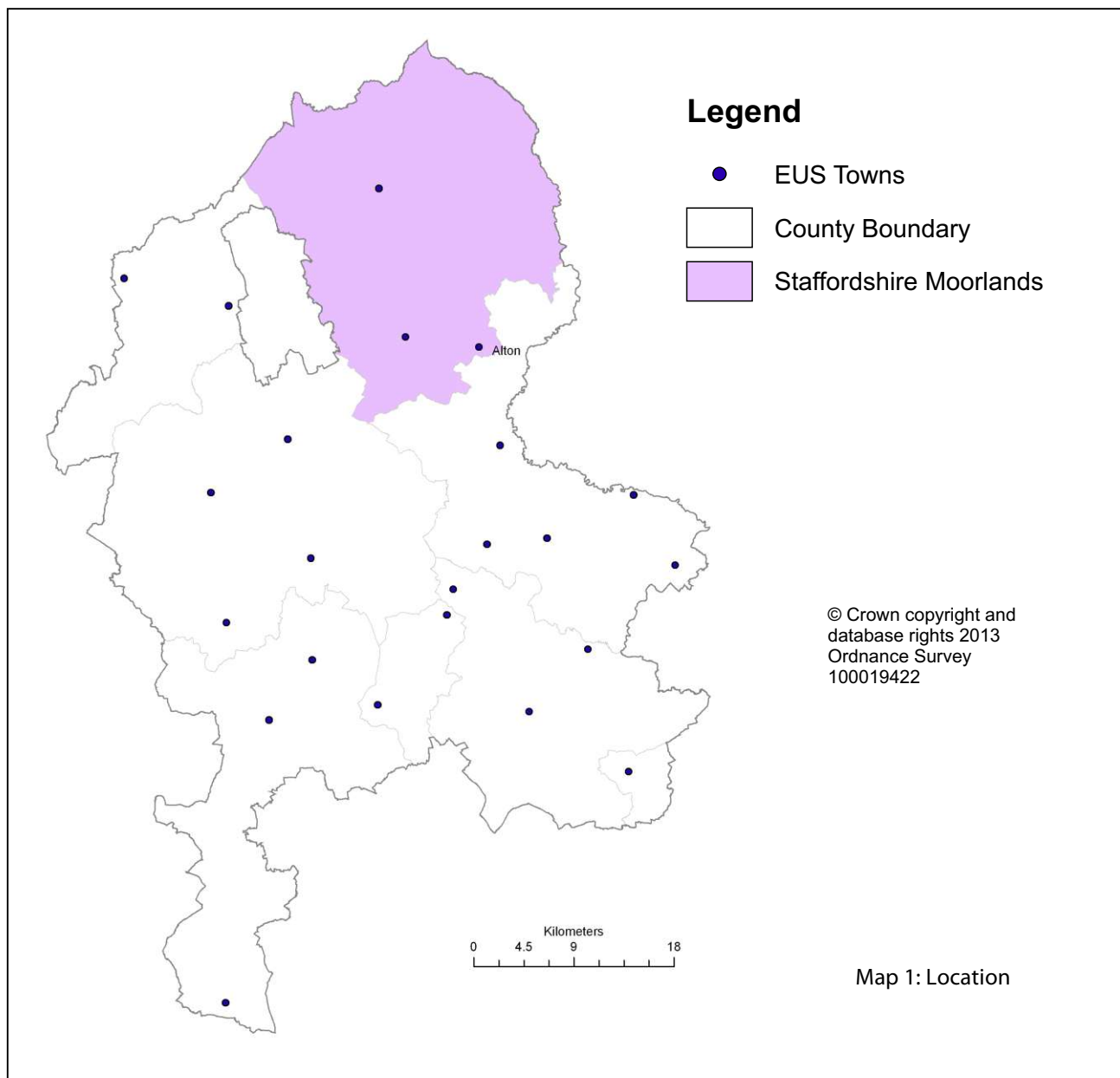
High Street and in the general street pattern. The church which lies centrally within the area of the medieval town also appears to date from the 12th century, first being mentioned in 1176. The later history of the area of the town is unclear, although Town Head may never have been entirely settled or was subject to later contraction. However, expansion in other areas of the later settlement had occurred by at least the 16th century and certainly in the 17th century as is evidenced by surviving buildings lying in the area around Malthouse Road, Knight Lane and Horse Road. Outlying settlement at what is now Station Road in the Churnet Valley and at Tithebarn probably dates to the 18th century, whilst settlement at Gallow Green probably originates in the mid 19th century.

Further housing expansion has occurred during the 20th century partly as infill in the areas of earlier housing, usually on the site of paddocks, and as new estates lying to the south upon fields which had formerly separated Alton from Tithebarn and Gallows Green.

1. Setting

1.1 Location

Alton lies in the north eastern area of Staffordshire within Staffordshire Moorlands District (cf. map 1)⁸. The settlement is situated within the southern foothills of the Pennines and lies on the southern side of the deep and wooded Churnet Valley across from Alton Towers, which lies in the adjacent Farley parish.



⁸ Speake 1996: 7

1.2 Geology and topography

Three bedrock geologies underlie the EUS project area. The northern point of the EUS project area (which comprises Station Road and lies within the Churnet Valley) is underlain by the Hawksmoor Formation (interbedded sandstone and conglomerate)⁹. The areas of earliest identified settlement including the area of the medieval town along High Street as well as settlement in Dimble Lane, Knight Lane and Malthouse Road all lie upon a bedrock geology of Bromsgrove Sandstone¹⁰. The remainder of the EUS project area concentrated to the south and east and including the small settlements of Tithe Barn and Gallows Green all lie on the Tarporley Siltstone Formation (comprised of siltstone and sandstone)¹¹.

The highest point within the EUS project area lies to the south east at Gallows Green which stands at around 173m AOD¹². A spur of high land to the east and south east of the EUS project area from Town Head (and part of the High Street) along Uttoxeter Road lies between 156m and 166m AOD. In general the land drops away to the north west towards the Churnet Valley. Dimble Lane, from its junction with Saltersford Road (in the south) to its junction with Lime Kiln Lane and Knight Lane (to the north), drops from 161m AOD to 148m AOD. Horse Road which skirts around the western portion of the EUS project area and links the main settlement with its outlier on Station Road in the Churnet Valley drops from 134m AOD (at its junction with Malthouse Road) to 99m AOD (where it meets Station Road). The castle stands at around 154m AOD above the Churnet Valley; to the south lies a deep cut trench separating it from the historic core of the town. The area of the medieval town is fairly level (the church to the south lying at around 153m AOD).

1.3 Sources

1.3.1 Historical

The principal secondary source consulted to provide a history for Alton was a collection of articles edited by R. Speake in 1996 of work carried out by the Alton Local History Class in association with the University of Keele¹³. Other disparate sources were also consulted from various volumes of the Victoria County History and historical directories accessed through Historical Directories Online¹⁴.

1.3.2 Cartographic

The earliest map consulted in the EUS project was the 1843 tithe map which was viewed on the Staffordshire Past-track webpages.¹⁵

The series of Ordnance Survey maps (both 6" and 25") which were published three times between circa 1880 and circa 1920 were also extensively consulted. Aerial photographs, taken in 1963, circa 2000 and circa 2006, were also used to identify change within the mid and late 20th century townscape.

1.3.3 Archaeological

Few archaeological interventions have been carried out within the EUS project area to date. Those that have taken place comprise three small-scale pieces of work. All were watching briefs carried out between 2002 and 2005 at the rear of a property in High Street, at The Malthouse, Malthouse Lane and at Alton Castle¹⁶.

2. Context and Historical Development

2.1 Prehistoric

There is sporadic evidence for human activity during the prehistoric period within the parishes immediately around Alton. The earliest evidence comes from a flint scatter found in Alton parish recovered during metal detecting in 2003. The finds were believed to date to the Mesolithic period and were therefore probably associated with a mobile hunting/gathering community who operated within the Alton area on a seasonal basis¹⁷. Further flint scatters have been found elsewhere including at Wardlow and Waterhouses (5km to the north of Alton), but none of the finds have been closely dated and consequently do not significantly contribute to our understanding of the utilisation of the landscape during the period¹⁸.

The majority of the evidence for prehistoric activity lies to the north of Alton within the upland area of the Staffordshire Moorlands. Most of this evidence dates to the Bronze Age, but also includes finds which may date to the Neolithic period including a flint scatter found in Alton parish in 2004 and a Neolithic/Bronze Age macehead found in 1892 near Ribden Farm in Farley (4.2km to the north of Alton)¹⁹. Other finds of Neolithic/Bronze Age date include a barbed and tanged arrowhead found near Gallows Green just to the south of Alton²⁰. A possible Neolithic standing stone, incised with four cup-marks and another, possibly contemporary, stone incised with a cup and ring mark were found at Ramshorn (3.4km north of Alton)²¹.

Within the parishes north of Alton seven Bronze Age barrows have been recorded and a further two are located approximately 7km to the south west of the town near Upper and

Lower Tean²². Many of the numerous barrows known to exist (or that once existed) in the landscape of the Staffordshire Moorlands were first recorded, and some excavated, in the mid 19th century by Thomas Bateman and Samuel Carrington. These include five barrows they excavated at Threelows in Farley parish (approximately 4km to the north of Alton)²⁴. Four of the barrows incorporated human remains both as cremations and inhumations. Of these five barrows only two are still known and are protected as Scheduled Monuments²⁵. The nearest known barrow to Alton, also Scheduled, lies approximately 1.4km to the north west near Threap Wood²⁶. The presence of the barrows implies that settlement and an agricultural economy were also present in the landscape during the period as barrows represented considerable investments in time and labour and may also have marked territories. However, to date there has been little recovered in the way of supporting physical evidence.

Continuity of settlement within the landscape is implied by the presence of Bunbury hillfort lying 790m north of Alton across the Churnet Valley²⁷. The univallate hillfort, representing the only known example in this part of Staffordshire, lies on a naturally defensible spur of land above the Churnet Valley. It was defended to the north and east by the steep natural valley of Slain Hollow²⁸. Much of the evidence of the hillfort has been lost to the landscaping of the gardens associated with what is now known as Alton Towers from the early 19th century onwards.

¹⁷ Staffordshire HER: PRN 60848

¹⁸ Staffordshire HER: PRN 01675, PRN 03514, PRN 03767 and PRN 03509

¹⁹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 60500 and PRN 01676

²⁰ Staffordshire HER: PRN 04394

²¹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 05212 and PRN 52657 Cup and Ring Marked Stone: A stone, either in situ or part of a monument, bearing one or more small, roughly hemispherical depressions surrounded by a concentric arrangement of annular or pennanular grooves. More complex designs may also occur. (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2013 English Heritage).

²² Staffordshire HER: PRN 00271, PRN 00274, PRN 00117, PRN 00264, PRN 00275, PRN 03505, PRN 00078, PRN 00114 and PRN 04270

²³ Speake 1996: 27

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Staffordshire HER: PRN 000117 (English Heritage National Heritage No. 1009407) and PRN 00275 (English Heritage National Heritage No. 1009406)

²⁶ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00271; English Heritage National Heritage No. 1012540

²⁷ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00064; English Heritage National Heritage No. 1014686

²⁸ English Heritage National Heritage No. 1014686. Univallate Hillfort: A hilltop enclosure bounded by a single rampart, usually accompanied by a ditch. (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2013 English Heritage).

²⁹ Bell 1999 and Dark 1999

³⁰ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00272 and PRN 01764

³¹ Esmonde Cleary and Ferris 1996: 1

³² Ibid.

³³ Staffordshire HER: PRN 01227

³⁴ Hollins 2006 Stoke-on-Trent Archaeological Society web viewed 14/03/2013 http://www.stokearchaeologysociety.org.uk/html/fieldwork_and_trips.html

³⁵ Speake 1996: 33

³⁶ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00274 and PRN 000078; Speake 1980: 34

³⁷ Horovitz 2005: 84-5

Few archaeological excavations have been carried out to date and those small-scale works that have, have noted the impact of the landscaping works²⁹. Consequently the origins of the hillfort are unknown, although these monuments are mostly associated with the Iron Age archaeological work elsewhere in the country has identified earlier origins. The site suggests that at least one power base operated in the area, which would have been capable of directing labour in the construction of such a major building project and the hillfort would have provided a cultural, economic, defensive and administrative focus for a defined territory.

2.2 Roman (49AD to 409AD)

There is a general paucity of evidence for human activity within the surrounding parishes during the Roman period. A number of Roman coins were discovered near the castle in 1725 and again in the 1980s³⁰. However, this evidence does not, in itself, prove that settlement existed at Alton during this period.

Within the wider landscape evidence for Roman occupation is concentrated around Rocester (approximately 5km to the south east) where excavations have revealed evidence for three successive military forts dating between circa 140-160 AD to circa 200 AD³². This was followed by the establishment of a civilian settlement suggestive of a 'small town' active during the 3rd and 4th centuries. A Roman road which linked Littlechester, Derbyshire with ultimately Chester (via Chesterton near Newcastle-under-Lyme) passes approximately 3.4km to the south of Alton³³.

Recent work by the Stoke on Trent Museum Archaeology Society at Tollgate Farm, Rocester 1.2km to the southeast of Alton has recovered evidence of Romano-British activity site off

Nabb Lane³⁴. This site included a spur road off the Roman Road, a series of 'barn-like' buildings, a boundary ditch, a kiln/forge located within a metalled area and a deep clay lined well containing considerable quantities of waterlogged material (including wood and leather). Dating evidence suggests that the site may have functioned initially as a military mutatio (relay station) during the 1st century AD. However, it possibly continued into the 3rd century AD and may have been a production centre associated with the local agricultural economy or possible mineral extraction nearby.

It has been assumed that the Romans would have been attracted to the abundant mineral resources to be found within the Churnet Valley and its environs. However, to date there is no supporting physical evidence beyond the Tollgate Farm site outlined above³⁵.

2.3 Early Medieval (410 to 1065)

The earliest evidence for human activity during the period may relate to a secondary inhumation which had been inserted into two earlier (Bronze Age) barrows on Wredon Hill³⁶. Neither of the burials was associated with finds and so has not been closely dated.

2.3.1 Placename

The placename contains an unrecorded personal name 'Aelfa'; whilst the suffix 'tun' suggests a settlement³⁷.

2.3.2 Settlement

The placename and the evidence from Domesday Book (1086) where land for two ploughs is recorded suggests that Alton, or its landscape, was settled during this period (cf. 2.4.1.1). The location of such a settlement is currently unknown, but if the church proves to have early medieval origins it may have lain to the east where an irregular settlement pattern

³⁸ Staffordshire HER: PRN 06017; Speake 1980: 132

³⁹ Hawkins and Rumble 1976: 1, 54

⁴⁰ Studd 2000: 129. Hundred: an administrative division of land within a county originating in the early medieval period. 'Harrying of the north': documentary evidence following the rebellion of the English against the Normans in 1068 and 1069 King William destroyed lands in the northern counties including parts of Staffordshire.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Speake 1996: 41

⁴³ Studd 2000: 130 (in the case when Henry I rewarded his followers for helping him to seize the English crown from his older brother Robert of Normandy in 1100)

⁴⁴ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00092; English Heritage National Heritage No. 1013227; Cantor 1966: 42-3

⁴⁵ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00092; English Heritage National Heritage No. 1013227

⁴⁶ Ibid.

is still evident in the townscape (cf. HCT 'Other Settlement' on map 2 and map 3). However, the evidence to date does tend to suggest that Alton with the castle and church were created as a 'new town' in the later 12th century (cf. 2.4.1.2 and 2.4.1.3).

2.3.3 Economy

Domesday Book implies, with its reference to land for two ploughs, that arable had the potential to form an important part of the economy in the early medieval period as it did later (cf. 2.4.2.1).

2.3.4 Religion

The Grade II* St Peter's Church contains 12th century fabric, but it has been argued that the colonnade built in the Romanesque or Norman style could date from the early/mid 11th century³⁸.

2.4 Medieval (1066 to 1499)

2.4.1 Settlement

2.4.1.1 Domesday Book

'The King holds Alton land for two ploughs. Ivar held it. It is waste'³⁹

Robin Studd has argued that the number of manors owned by the King and recorded as 'waste' lying within the two north Staffordshire hundreds of Pirehill and Totmonslow are not the result of the 'harrying of the north'. Instead they appear to represent estates which, by 1086, were still awaiting redistribution to the King's followers⁴⁰. That this process was not complete by 1086 suggests the land in question, being mostly represented by upland, was not as desirable as land elsewhere in the country⁴¹.

2.4.1.2 Lordship and Alton Castle

Alton was probably retained as a royal manor until it was granted to the de Verdun family in the early 12th century by King Henry I⁴². This probably represents the final stage of the dispersal of royal lands to favoured followers which was initiated by King William following the Conquest (1066)⁴³. The precise origins of Alton Castle are unknown, but surviving medieval fabric suggests a 12th century date and it probably existed in some form by 1175⁴⁴. The 12th century remains comprise a gatehouse with further elements probably dating to the first quarter of the 13th century⁴⁵. There is also evidence of rebuilding work dating to the 14th century which includes an early 14th century gatehouse (plate 1)⁴⁶. Archaeological work at the castle also revealed evidence of the later phases of development which included a sandstone floor surface (probably representing a yard) which dated to the 13th or 14th century⁴⁷. The castle was therefore probably founded by Bertram de Verdun II (head of the family 1153-1192) who also founded the Cistercian monastery of Croxden Abbey (cf. 2.4.3.1)⁴⁸.

The de Verdun family held Alton manor until the early 14th century when its head, Theobald Verdun died leaving four daughters⁴⁹. The eldest daughter, Joan, married Thomas Furnival (whose main estates were around Sheffield and Worksop) in 1318 at which point the Alton estates passed to the Furnival family⁵⁰. The castle was described as worth nothing in 1317 and this may in part be compounded by the fact that the manor was no longer the focus of an estate from this period onwards⁵¹. The estates passed to the Talbot family through marriage in the early 15th century; the castle apparently being restored during this period⁵². In the 15th

⁴⁷ Goodwin 2002

⁴⁸ Speake 1996: 41 and 46

⁴⁹ Ibid: 51

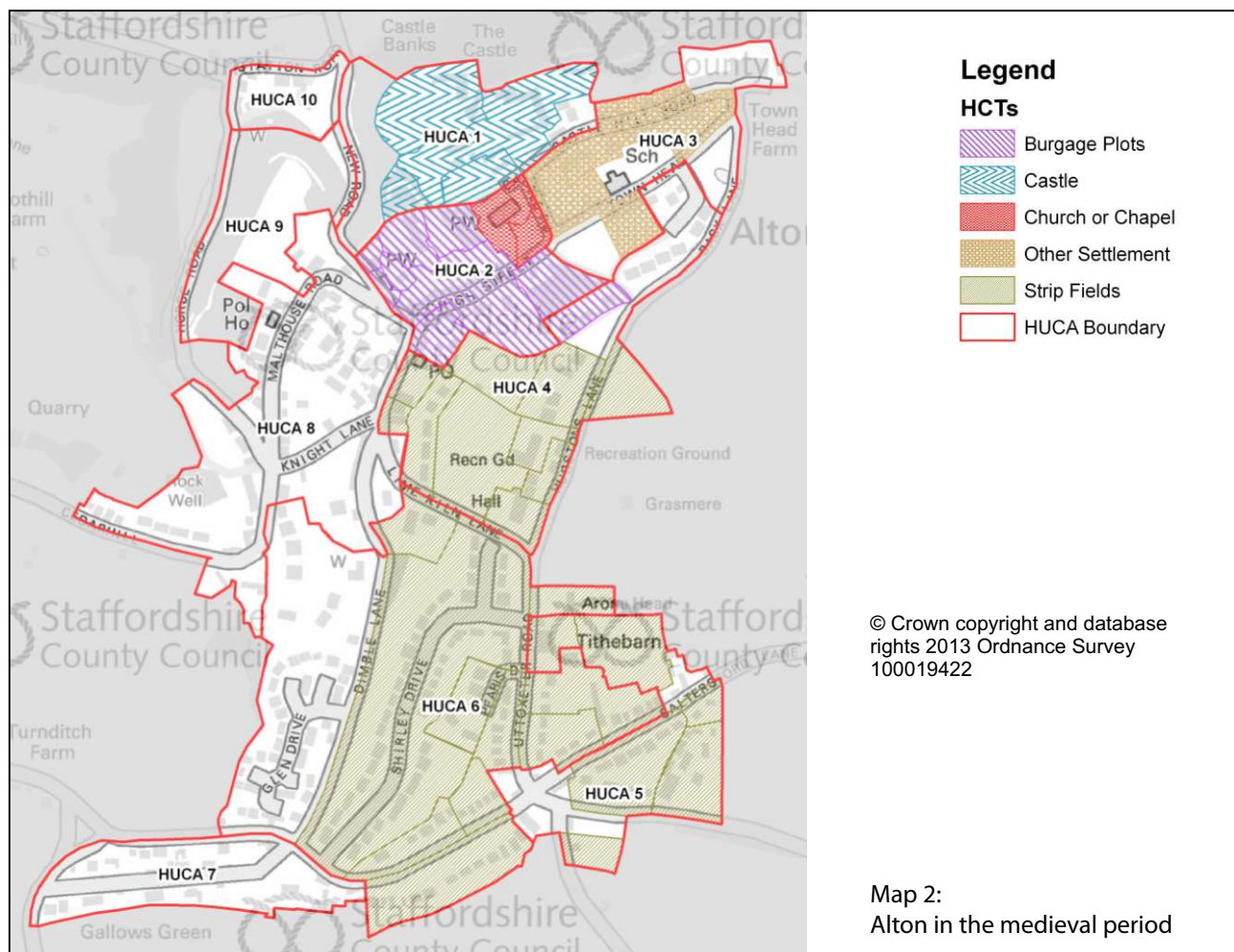
⁵⁰ Ibid: 51-2

⁵¹ Ibid: 53 and 188; Peck 1998: 2-4 and 5-2

⁵² Peck 1998: 5-2

⁵³ Ibid; Speake 1996: 65
⁵⁴ Palliser 1972: 68
⁵⁵ Palliser and Pinnock 1971: 52
⁵⁶ Speake 1996: 55
⁵⁷ Palliser 1972: 68
⁵⁸ Ibid.
⁵⁹ White 1851 Historical Directories Online viewed 23/01/2013 www.historicaldirectories.org
⁶⁰ White 1834 Historical Directories Online viewed 23/01/2013 www.historicaldirectories.org

century John Talbot was created Earl of Shrewsbury and the estates remained the property of the earldom into the 20th century⁵³.



2.4.1.3 Town plan and buildings

The earliest documentary reference which suggests that Alton was a borough dates to 1239 when the burgesses are recorded as making an agreement with Croxden Abbey⁵⁴. The market is not recorded until 1293, although it was probably established at the creation of the town⁵⁵. It seems likely given the concentration of development around Alton in the later 12th century in the form of the castle, the foundation of Croxden Abbey and the earliest architectural evidence in the church, that it was founded as a new town under Bertram de Verdun II (cf. 2.4.1.2 and 2.4.3)⁵⁶. There was a borough court by at least 1274 and references to burgesses in 1316, although they are not recorded in documents dated between 1327 and 1339⁵⁷. However, references to burgages and the privileges associated with the landholding still occurred into the early 18th century⁵⁸. In the mid 19th century an old 'Moot Hall' is recorded as standing on the site of the extant 'Old Police Station' on the southern side of the churchyard. The origins of the 'Moot Hall' are unknown, but it may have been built in the medieval period to host the manor court. By the late 17th century it was used to house a school (cf. 2.5.2.1)⁵⁹. The building was still hosting the manorial court for the earls of Shrewsbury in 1834⁶⁰.



Plate 1: ruins of medieval Alton castle

The townscape retains evidence of the planned medieval town in the form of surviving burgage plots laid out along High Street to the south of the castle, although there is no obvious market place (HCT 'Burgage Plots' on map 2 and map 3). There is evidence on historic mapping in the form of lanes and property boundaries which may relate to the extent of the town in the medieval period (cf. map 3). It creates a plan form of a linear street (High Street) flanked by two back lanes formed by Castle Hill Road to the north and Back Lane (and a curvilinear boundary) to the south. This projected area incorporates Town Head lying to the north east of the church (HCT 'Other Settlement' on map 3; HUCA 3). The earliest mapping, dating to the mid and late 19th century, does not suggest that this had formed part of the planned town, although early buildings (of post medieval date) survive here. However, documentary records suggest that Alton was a largely failed town, whose decline has been attributed both to its location close to Leek and Uttoxeter, and also to the failure of the de Verdun line in the early 14th century (cf. 2.4.1.2)⁶¹. It is possible that settlement in this area contracted following the decline of the town in the 14th century or that the take up of plots was never great and parts of the settlement became paddocks and were possibly re-ordered. Alternatively this may represent the area of the earliest settlement, which could have had early medieval origins (cf. 2.3.2). Only archaeological investigation could answer these questions.

⁶² Speake 1996: 83

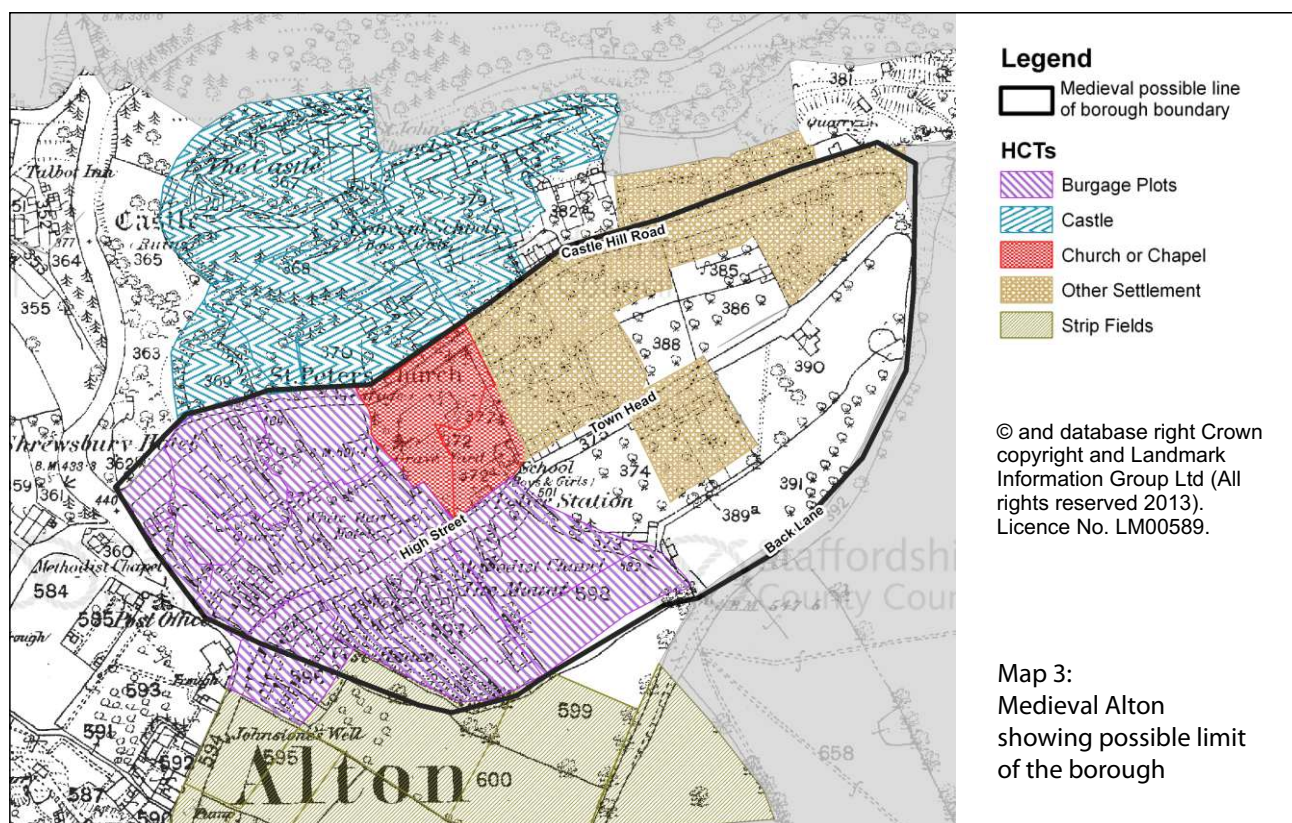
⁶³ Open Field: An area of arable land with common rights after harvest or while fallow. Usually without internal divisions (hedges, walls or fences) (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2012 English Heritage).

⁶⁴ Staffordshire HER: PRN 05125, PRN 53972 and PRN 53973. Ridge and Furrow: A series of long, raised ridges separated by ditches used to prepare the ground for arable cultivation. This was a technique, characteristic of the medieval period. (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2013 English Heritage).

2.4.2 Economy

2.4.2.1 Agriculture

Domesday Book implies that arable agriculture formed part of the economy by at least the later 11th century (cf. 2.4.1.1). There are few other records relating to the medieval agricultural economy associated with the settlement, although a 'towne field' is recorded in a will of 1570⁶². That Alton operated an open field system, where two or more fields were farmed on a rotation of different crops and fallow, is evident from the extant field systems to the east, south east and south of the town (map 2)⁶³. In these areas the field boundaries have preserved the distinctive pattern of the medieval ploughed landscape in the form of reverse 'S' curve boundaries (evidence of the route of the plough across the field) and ridge and furrow earthworks (particularly to the south east)⁶⁴.



2.4.2.2 Economy/Industry

One key indicator of the success of a borough during the medieval period is the number of non-agricultural occupations which can be identified within the settlement. Research on this by Chris Dyer has identified only two non-agricultural occupations recorded in the 15th century; shoemaker and glover⁶⁵. This apparent lack of diversity may in part be the result of the decline of the town in the 14th century, but the evidence also suggests that Alton had retained some sense of being a local trading centre at this later date. Early 14th century tax lists include people who appear to have settled in Alton from other settlements such as Madeley, Stone, Tean and Coton (all in Staffordshire) and one from as far away as Farnham in Surrey⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ Dyer 2003: 11

⁶⁶ Wrotesley 1889: 111-118; Wrotesley 1886: 215-223 both on British History Online viewed 23/01/2013 www.british-history.ac.uk

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Staffordshire HER: PRN 04292; Walford 1993

⁶⁹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00251; Harding 2004

⁷⁰ Speake 1996: 20

⁷¹ Ibid: 295; Staffordshire HER: PRN 04841

⁷² Speake 1996: 48; Staffordshire HER: PRN 00008; English Heritage National Heritage No. 1011448

⁷³ Ibid; Ibid; Ibid

⁷⁴ Staffordshire HER: PRN 20123, PRN 20126, PRN 20127, PRN 54773, PRN 55348, PRN 55350, PRN 55368, PRN 55396 and PRN 55397; Stuart 1984

⁷⁵ Duggan and Greenslade 1970: 226

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Speake 1996: 48

⁷⁸ Ibid: 142

⁷⁹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 06017

⁸⁰ Ibid; Speake 1996: 142

These same early 14th century tax lists also suggest further occupations at this period which included a smith and a collier although it is unclear whether these people actually lived in the town or in the wider Churnet Valley where such resources relating to (probably) charcoal making and iron working were more readily available⁶⁷. Croxden Abbey was involved in ironworking at Eastwall in the medieval period (approximately 5km north east of Alton and 6km north east of the abbey)⁶⁸. Archaeological work at Old Furnace (approximately 3.4km to the north west of Alton) found evidence for iron working pre-dating the documentary evidence relating to the establishment of a blast furnace in the late 16th century⁶⁹.

Evidence for the quarrying of limestone around Alton is evident in the stone buildings which date from the 12th century including Croxden Abbey and St Peter's Church⁷⁰.

2.4.2.3 Watermills

The earliest reference to Alton Mill (in Farley) occurs in the late 12th century and a 17th century document suggests that it was owned by Croxden Abbey⁷¹.

2.4.3 Religion

2.4.3.1 Croxden Abbey

Croxden Abbey, lying 2.6km to the south of Alton, was established as a Cistercian monastery in 1179. It had initially been founded by Bertarm de Verdun II in 1176 on another site⁷². The construction of the abbey was initiated under the first abbot (in 1181) and was mostly complete by 1253 although further works continued into the 13th-15th centuries⁷³. The abbey had a significant impact upon the surrounding landscape being extensively involved in arable and particularly pastoral agriculture. The abbey also had access to a wide range of resources including

woodland (at Great Gate wood for example), water and mineral resources (cf. 2.4.2.2)⁷⁴. By 1291 the abbey had established six granges four in north Staffordshire, one in south Staffordshire and one in Derbyshire⁷⁵. Many of the granges were probably associated with sheep farming; Croxden became the principal exporter of wool to the continent among the Staffordshire monastic houses⁷⁶.

2.4.3.2 Church

The earliest reference to the church at Alton was in Croxden Abbey's foundation charter (1176)⁷⁷. The earliest fabric within the Grade II* St Peter's Church dates to the 12th century and it may be that it was constructed (or possibly rebuilt) in conjunction with the creation of the castle and the town (cf. 2.4.1.2 and 2.4.2.2; plate 2). The church appears to have been granted to Croxden Abbey during the medieval period, probably in the 13th century⁷⁸.

Whilst the core of the extant church dates to the 12th century further works were carried out in the 13th century including the construction of the west tower which may be associated with the granting of the church to the abbey⁷⁹. Of particular interest within the church are the remnants of a late 14th century painting depicting the story of the 'Three Quick and the Three Dead' above the north arcade⁸⁰.



Plate 2: St Peter's Church

2.4.4 Communications

Alton lies in a relatively isolated position on the southern side of the Churnet Valley. Yates' map suggests that a route led from the town first south west and then westwards over Alton Common to the small market town of Cheadle. A southern route (passing along the modern Uttoxeter Road) led to the larger and more successful medieval market town of Uttoxeter.

Saltersford Lane is believed to have originated as a saltway although the settlements it would have linked are currently unclear⁸¹.

2.5 Post Medieval (1500 to 1699)

2.5.1 Settlement

2.5.1.1 Lordship and Alton Castle

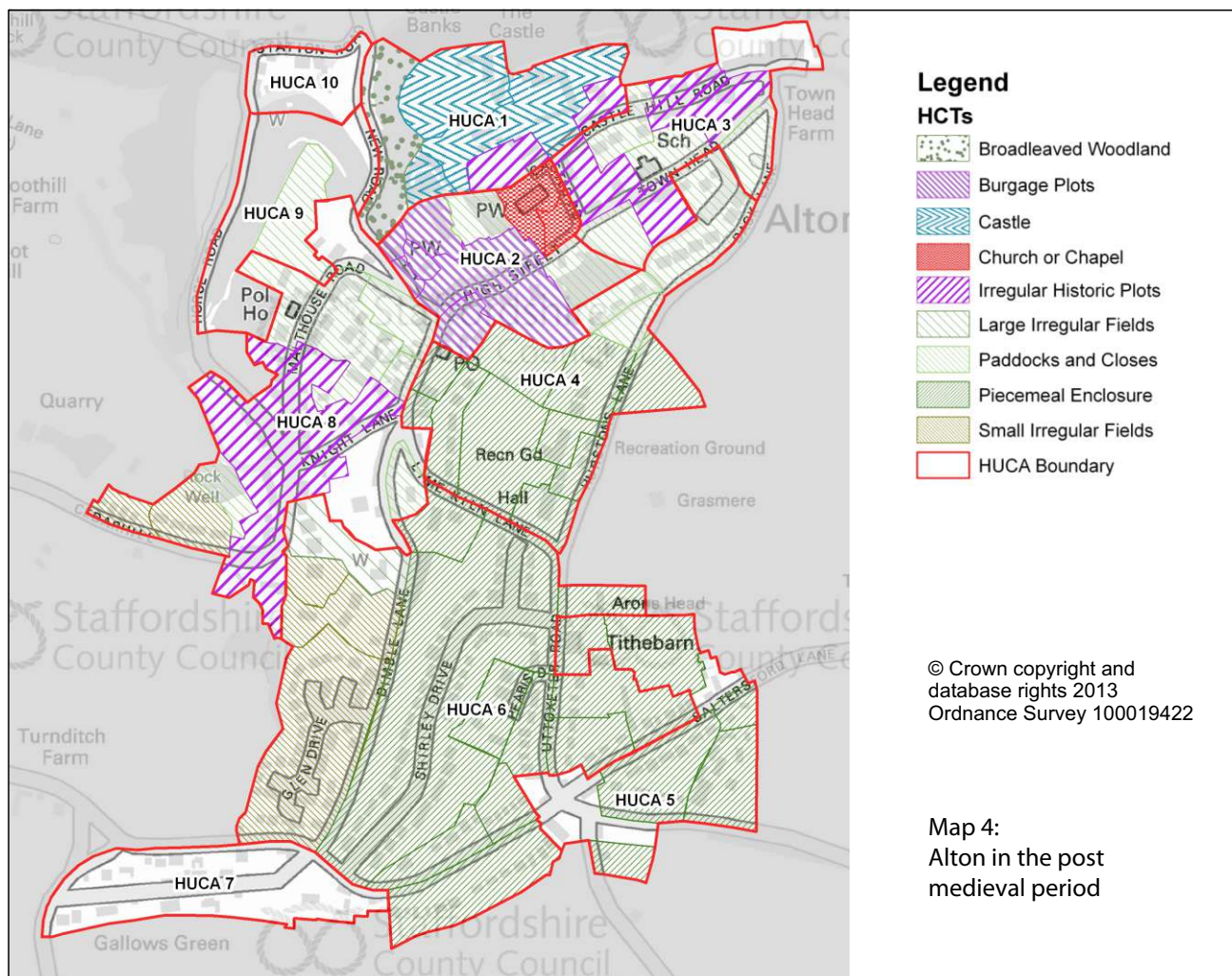
Whilst the lordship of Alton was for the most part held by the Earls of Shrewsbury, in the 17th century it briefly passed through marriage to the earl of Pembroke who was holding the manor and the castle at the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642⁸². There are few documentary references to Alton Castle during this period, except that the earl garrisoned it for the King against the Parliamentarians under the command of the governor of the castle, Thomas Salt⁸³.

It was following the end of the Civil War that an Order of Parliament was issued to demolish the castle thereby reducing it to a ruin (plate 1). Medieval fabric relating to the castle survives on the site (cf. 2.4.1.2)⁸⁴.

2.5.1.2 Settlement and buildings

The settlement experienced shrinkage and expansion at different points during this period. Continuity of settlement was identified in an archaeological investigation off the High Street within the medieval town where pottery, suggestive of domestic occupation, included 17th century material as well as medieval and later sherds⁸⁵.

If Town Head formed part of the medieval town (as suggested in 2.4.1.3) then settlement contraction may be indicated by the plan form which by the 19th century was dominated by paddocks devoid of buildings (if indeed it had ever been intensively settled). However, there are three known buildings lying within this plan form (HUCA 2) which have been dated to the 17th century all of which are Grade II Listed: 22 and 24 Town Head, Town Head Farmhouse and its barn (plate 3)⁸⁶. Other historic buildings survive within the area, some of which may date from similar or earlier periods. This may be indicative of a degree of continuity of occupation at Town Head.



Nine other buildings of post medieval date survive within the HUCA and in some cases may indicate the origins of settlement beyond the medieval core. The majority of these properties date to the 17th century, although the Grade II Listed 28 and 29 Horse Road (HUCA 8), despite

their early 19th century appearance, contain a cruck frame (within No. 29) which suggests a possible 16th century origin⁸⁷. Only one other building within Alton is known to retain evidence of timber framing. The 17th century Grade II Listed 'The Rock Cottage' standing on Malthouse Road (HUCA 8) is mostly stone built, but contemporary timber-framed square panels survive inside⁸⁸.



Plate 3:
22 and 24 Town Head

The remaining Grade II Listed 17th century properties (seven in total) are mostly built of stone, a characteristic building material in the Staffordshire Moorlands (cf. plate 3; plate 4 and plate 11). The 17th century Grade II* Listed 'The Malt House' is largely built of hand made brick although stone is employed for architectural details (plate 10). Rebuilding and remodelling has occurred in later centuries in brick as revealed at the Grade II Listed The Red Lion Cottage on Smithy Bank⁸⁹. A stone built house, The Nook, with an attached former barn standing on Cedarhill has also been identified as dating to the 17th or early 18th century⁹⁰.

2.5.2 Education and Welfare

2.5.2.1 Education

The earliest documentary reference to a school master occurs in 1631⁹¹. In the late 17th century a charity was established to fund a school which was housed in a building known as the Moot House which stood within St Peter's churchyard⁹².



Plate 4: Rock Cottage, Malthouse Lane

2.5.3 Economy

2.5.3.1 Agriculture

The field pattern surrounding Alton, which is well preserved within the modern landscape, suggests that the medieval open fields were enclosed through the agreement of the individual holders of the strips. This created discrete holdings and the resultant field pattern is identifiable through the reverse 'S' curve field boundaries (particularly clear to the west of Alton); the resulting field system being known as 'Piecemeal Enclosure'. It is currently unknown when this process occurred in Alton (and it could often take considerable time), but in general across Staffordshire the process was in hand between the 14th and 18th centuries⁹³.

2.5.3.2 Economy/Industry

Research into 17th century wills has revealed evidence of the types of trades being carried out in Alton. These include blacksmiths, tanners, weavers, a nailer, a cooper and a tailor, although it is not always clear where the people in question lived and worked⁹⁴.

Iron-working continued to be a feature of the wider landscape, particularly within the Churnet Valley, during the post medieval period. Old Furnace was developed as the first water-driven blast furnace in the area in 1593, although it ceased operation in 1608⁹⁵. It was operated with a forge at Oakamoor. The management of woodland to supply charcoal to the ironworks was also an important element in the economy of the local area; wood was supplied to Old Furnace from Alton Park in the late 16th century⁹⁶.

⁹⁷ Ibid: 292
⁹⁸ Speake 1996: 295
⁹⁹ Ibid: 136
¹⁰⁰ Speake 1996: 72; Peck 1998: 5-2 and 5-3
¹⁰¹ Ibid: 73; Ibid.
¹⁰² Ibid:75

¹⁰³ Peck 1998: 5-2; Staffordshire HER: PRN 06018
¹⁰⁴ Goodwin 2002
¹⁰⁵ White 1834 Historical Directories Online viewed 23/01/2013
www.historicaldirectories.org; Staffordshire HER: PRN 06031 and PRN 13053

Mineral extraction was also an important part of the economy of the wider environment during this period. This included the extraction of lead and copper ores, but also coal. Around Alton the mineral rights were held by the Earls of Shrewsbury⁹⁷.

2.5.3.3 Watermills

Documentary evidence shows that corn was still being ground at Alton Mill between the late 16th and early 18th centuries⁹⁸.

2.5.4 Religion

Croxden Abbey was dissolved in 1538⁹⁹. The impact of this upon the landholding and history of the landscape has not yet been studied in any depth.

2.6 18th and 19th century (1700 to 1899)

2.6.1 Settlement

2.6.1.1 Alton Castle and Alton Towers

The 15th Earl of Shrewsbury is responsible for the development of the country house and large landscape park which he established on the northern side of the River Churnet across from Alton and which was initially known as Alton Lodge, then Alton Abbey. In 1814 the family seat moved here from Heythrop, Oxfordshire and Alton once again became the centre of the Shrewsbury estates¹⁰⁰. The 16th earl inherited in 1827 and continued his uncles work on the estate by appointing the eminent architect A. W. N. Pugin to complete the house, which was subsequently renamed Alton Towers¹⁰¹. In the late 19th century (until 1900) the 19th earl opened the gardens at Alton Towers to the public who were brought to the estate along the North Staffordshire Railway (cf. 2.6.5.3) which had a station within the valley on the Alton Towers bank of the River Churnet opposite the town¹⁰². This may point

to the relative significance of both the town and the Alton Towers estate.

The site of the medieval Alton Castle was also transformed in this period when the 16th earl again appointed Pugin to construct the Grade II* house on its site in 1847 (HUCA 1; plate 5)¹⁰³. The house forms part of a larger Grade II* multi-purpose complex also constructed in the 1840s by Pugin which originally formed a hospital, schools and a guildhall (cf. 2.6.2.1, 2.6.2.2 and 2.6.4.3). The re-landscaping works within the medieval castle during this period were observed during an archaeological intervention¹⁰⁴.

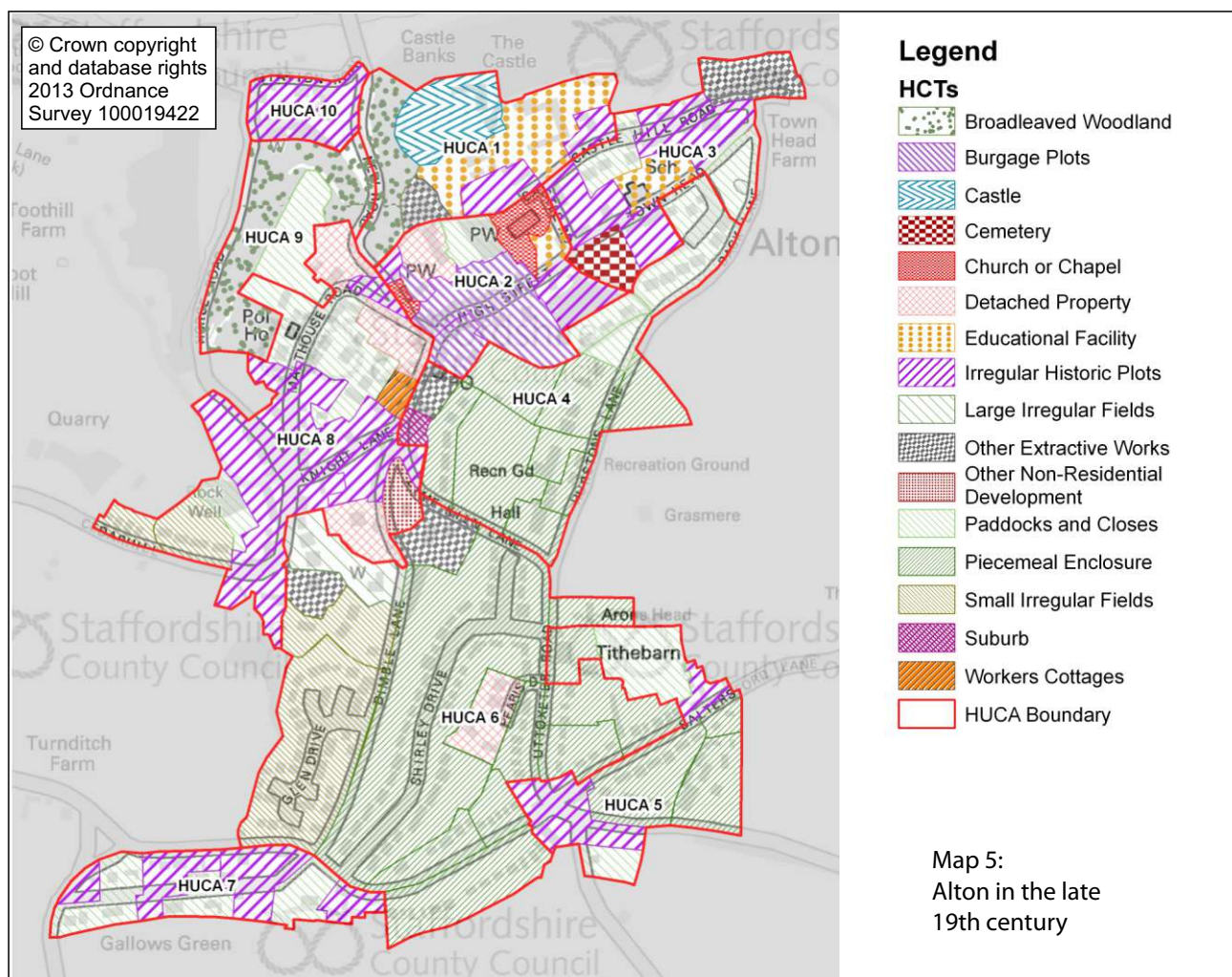


Plate 5: Alton Castle

2.6.1.2 Town and buildings

There do not appear to have been any significant changes to the medieval town plan during this period. Four Grade II Listed properties on High Street have been dated to the 18th century. 'The White Hart' and 'The Bull's Head' were operating as inns by the early 19th century, but had originated as houses in the early 18th century¹⁰⁵. Other historic buildings, of probable 19th century date, survive along the street. There is the potential that any of these properties could, however,

retain evidence of earlier fabric within their structures. The 19th century properties include a group of non-domestic purpose-built structures at the eastern end of the High Street including the Grade II Listed Old Police Station, the Grade II Listed National School and the former Wesleyan Methodist Chapel all of which were built in the mid 19th century¹⁰⁶. The extant 'Lord Shrewsbury Hotel' was probably constructed in the mid to late 19th century, within a quarry, which appears to have originally formed part of the burgage plots lying to the north of the High Street (HUCA 2; cf. 2.6.3.2)¹⁰⁷.



Other 18th and 19th century buildings can be found scattered across the EUS project area. Some are concentrated in those areas of irregular settlement possibly originating in the post medieval period and located to the west of the medieval town (cf. 2.5.1.2). These include a terrace of red brick houses which stand on Cheadle Road¹⁰⁸. Map 6 suggests areas of later expansion within Alton including along Dimble Lane where a row of Grade II Listed 18th and 19th century houses (plate 6) stand just to the north of the large detached former Vicarage built circa 1800¹⁰⁹.

The settlement lying beneath Alton on the River Churnet, which includes the Grade II Listed Talbot Inn (dated to the late 18th century) was probably established during the 18th century

¹¹⁰ Staffordshire HER: PRN 06053

¹¹¹ Speake 1996: 73

¹¹² Ibid: 253; Staffordshire HER: PRN 13061; White 1851 Historical Directories Online viewed 23/01/2013 www.historicaldirectories.org

¹¹³ Ibid: 295

¹¹⁴ White 1834 Historical Directories Online viewed 23/01/2013 www.historicaldirectories.org

¹¹⁵ White 1851 Historical Directories Online viewed 23/01/2013 www.historicaldirectories.org

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid: 274

¹¹⁸ Ibid: 281

(HUCA 10)¹¹⁰. The origins of settlement at Tithebarn to the south east of the EUS project area (HUCA 5) may also date to the 18th century (cf. map 6). Gallows Green, to the east of Tithebarn, however, was probably later possibly being established, piecemeal, in the mid 19th century (HUCA 7; cf. map 6).

2.6.2 Administration, Education and Welfare

2.6.2.1 Welfare

The 16th earl of Shrewsbury developed a hospital for aged people in conjunction with A. W. N. Pugin and Ambrose Philips on the site of the medieval castle. The complex also comprised a Roman Catholic school, guildhall and presbytery¹¹¹.

2.6.2.2 Education

The free school housed in the old Moot House, in the churchyard, was closed and a new (Grade II Listed) National School was built in 1845 at the corner of the churchyard¹¹². The extant St Peter's School on Town Head was opened in 1895¹¹³.

In 1834 there were four private academies operating within Alton¹¹⁴.

By 1851 a girls school had been established by the Earl of Shrewsbury at Alton Castle¹¹⁵. A boys school was operating out of the Guildhall at the castle by this date. The Guildhall was also the home of the Mechanic's Institute¹¹⁶. The nuns of the Convent at Cheadle came to Alton in 1855 to establish a girls boarding school within the buildings of Alton Castle¹¹⁷. A second school for boys was founded in 1898 at the castle which later (in the 20th century) became St John's Preparatory School¹¹⁸.



Plate 6: Lock-up and cottages in Dimbles Lane

2.6.2.3 Public Services

In 1849 the Earl of Shrewsbury funded the construction of a Police Station on the southern edge of the churchyard¹¹⁹. The Grade II Listed building has since been converted to domestic use and is of red brick with one storey and an attic.

The Scheduled and Grade II Listed round stone built lock-up was constructed by an earlier earl in 1819 at the junction of Smithy Bank, Knight Lane, Lime Kiln Lane and Dimble Lane (plate 6)¹²⁰.

2.6.3 Economy

2.6.3.1 Agriculture

In the early 19th century the Earl of Shrewsbury was granted an Act of Parliament to enclose the common lands of the parish which were located to the north at Farley, to the west of Alton along the southern side of the Churnet Valley and to the south east at Alton Common¹²¹.

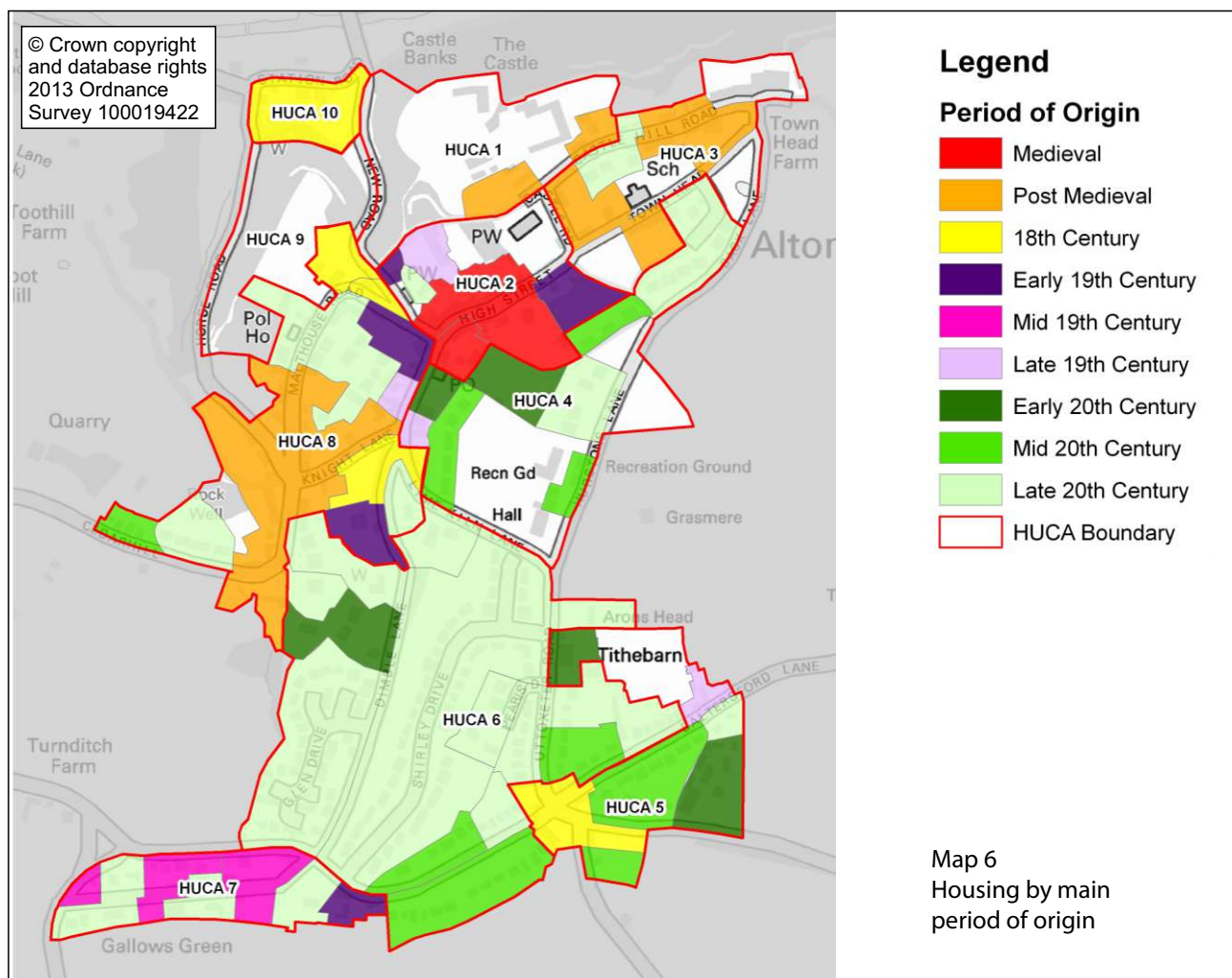
In the 19th century agriculture continued to be the predominant industry for the people of Alton. Improvements to roads and the construction of the railway all positively impacted upon the industry allowing surplus produce, including milk, to be sold at Uttoxeter market¹²².

2.6.3.2 Economy/Industry

An analysis of the occupations in Alton during the 19th century concluded that between 1841 and 1891 the numbers of nailers, tailors and shoemakers decreased, whilst industries related to the building industry and quarrying, including stone masons increased¹²³. There were 11 shoemakers operating in Alton in 1834¹²⁴. The expansion of the building industries may be associated with the presence of the Earl of Shrewsbury and his building projects not only at Alton Towers, but

also at Alton Castle and within the town. The importance of quarrying within the town is still identifiable from the number of former quarries noted on historic mapping including that into which the Lord Shrewsbury Hotel was constructed, between Knightly Lane and Malthouse Road and to the east of Dimble Lane (just south of its junction with Lime Kiln Lane). Other small scale industries (probably domestic in scale) include lace making recorded in the mid 19th century¹²⁵.

Tradesmen continued to form an important part of the working population; between 1841 and 1861 the number of shopkeepers increased and by 1891 there was even greater diversity including a gentleman's outfitter¹²⁶. The consistency of trade within the town suggests that it continued to act as a local commercial centre for the surrounding countryside. The diversity of trade at the end of the century may be associated in part with increasing numbers of visitors to the area encouraged by the opening of the Alton Towers gardens. The latter may also be responsible for the construction of the Lord Shrewsbury Hotel on land to the rear of the High Street accessed off New Road in the mid/late 19th century¹²⁷.



Map 6
Housing by main
period of origin

A malster by the name of Smith was recorded in 1834 and this family continued to be involved in malting during the mid 19th century¹²⁸. Archaeological work at a malthouse in Malthouse Lane situated in a cavern beneath a Grade II Listed farmhouse identified that it had been built about 1805-1810 possibly on the site of an earlier kiln and furnace¹²⁹. The early 19th century malthouse was quite large and it was considered that whilst the malt may have been used on site in the extant brewhouse it was possibly also sent to other brewhouses in the village¹³⁰.

In the wider landscape mining and metal working continued to contribute to the economy. Copper mining was carried out at Ribden in Farley until the early 1860s and a smelting mill had been established at Dimmingsdale in the mid 18th century¹³¹. At Alton Mill a brass wire factory was established by Thomas Patten and others in the early 18th century which continued to operate into the 1830s¹³². After this date the mill was converted to manufacture colour and paint and later became a paper mill¹³³. A cotton mill was built in the 1780s on the River Churnet approximately 760m to the north east of Alton¹³⁴. Both the Dimmingsdale smelting mill and the cotton mill had been converted to corn mills by the early 19th century¹³⁵.

2.6.4 Religion

2.6.4.1 Anglican Churches

In 1830 the Grade II* Listed St Peter's Church was restored, enlarged and partially rebuilt (plate 2)¹³⁶. The work included the raising of the floor, the replacement of the roof and the construction of the south aisle¹³⁷. Further extensions were carried out by J. R. Naylor in 1884 and 1885¹³⁸.

2.6.4.2 Non-Conformism

In 1834 two non-conformist chapels are recorded; an Independent Chapel, built in 1807 and a Primitive Methodist Chapel built in 1826. By 1851 a third chapel was present within Alton¹³⁹. Only two of the chapels survive within the townscape the Primitive Methodist Chapel built in 1826 along with the adjacent manse on New Road and the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on High Street built in 1859¹⁴⁰.

2.6.4.3 Roman Catholicism

The 16th earl of Shrewsbury was committed to the promotion and support of Catholicism in Alton. To this end he established the Grade II* St John's Hospital as well as the schools and Guildhall within the ruins of the medieval Alton Castle; all of which were designed by A. W. N. Pugin (cf. 2.6.2.2)¹⁴¹. In 1855 a convent was established at the site enabling nuns from Cheadle to run the schools¹⁴².

A Grade II* Roman Catholic chapel formed part of the complex, also designed by Pugin, in circa 1840¹⁴³.

2.6.5 Communications

2.6.5.1 Roads

In the late 18th century a turnpike road linking Rocester and Cheadle passed to the south of Alton through Gallows Green and Tithebarn¹⁴⁴.

2.6.5.2 Canals

In 1797 an Act of Parliament was passed to enact the construction of a canal along the Churnet Valley to link Froghall to Uttoxeter¹⁴⁵. The Trent and Mersey Canal Co. who promoted the scheme had no real financial incentive to construct it; work was not started until 1805 or 1807 and was completed circa 1811¹⁴⁶. The canal, however, was destined to only have a short life in 1846 the Trent and Mersey Canal Co. sold out to the North Staffordshire Railway Company¹⁴⁷. The section of the canal between Froghall and Uttoxeter was closed and the much of its alignment utilised for the Churnet Valley Line.

2.6.5.3 Railways

The Churnet Valley Line opened in 1849 and in 1851 linked Macclesfield and Uttoxeter with four trains travelling in each direction everyday¹⁴⁸. A railway station was opened to the north of Alton (beyond the EUS project area) and the two former Station buildings (both Grade II Listed) were built circa 1849 in the Italianate style¹⁴⁹. The station enabled members of the public to access Alton Towers gardens which were opened in the late 19th century. It has been recorded that 41,000 tourists used the line in 1869¹⁵⁰.

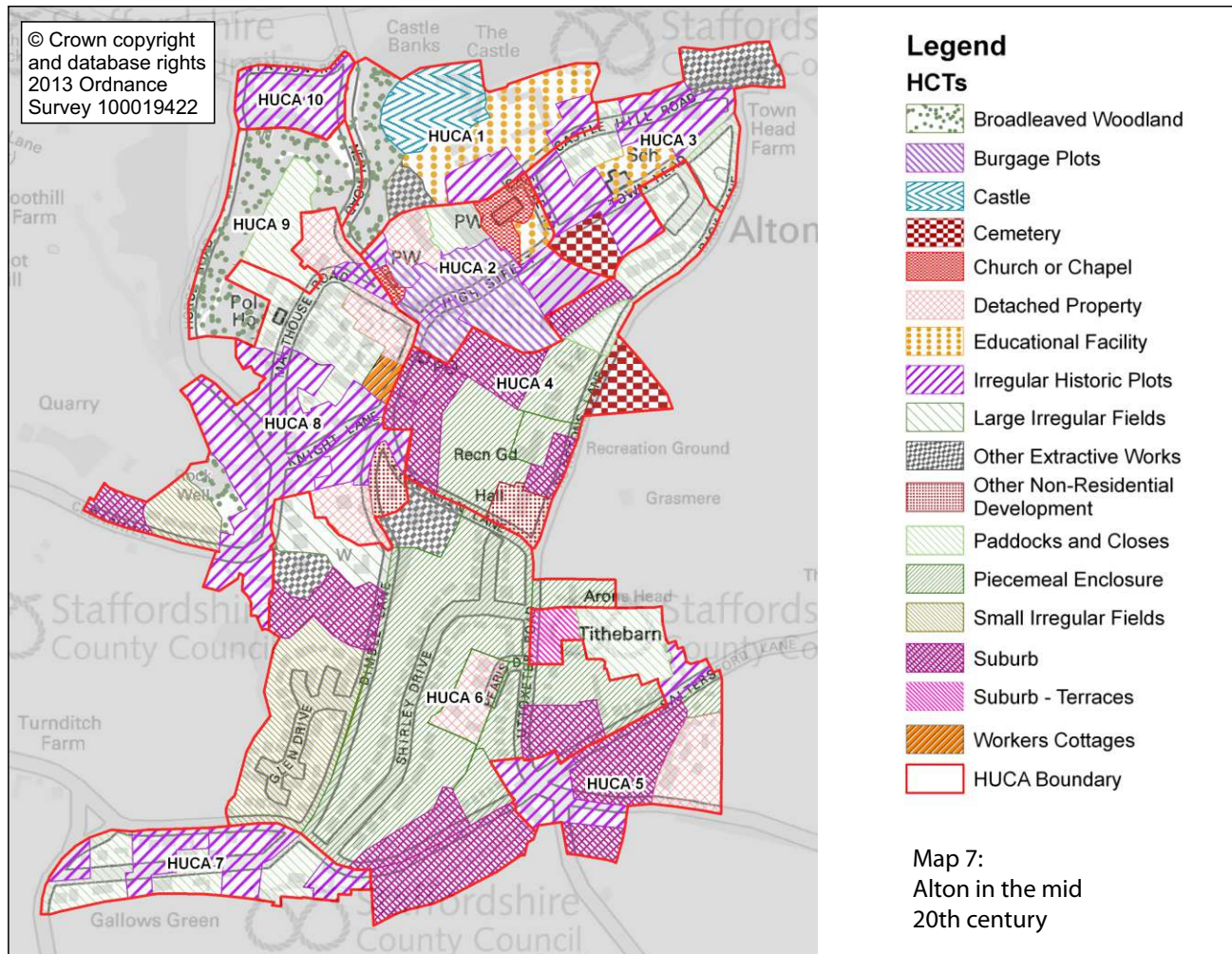
¹⁴⁰ Staffordshire HER: PRN 55379, PRN 55380 and PRN 55378; Manse: A non-conformist minister's house. (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2013 English Heritage).

¹⁴¹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 06020

¹⁴² Speake 1996: 274

¹⁴³ Staffordshire HER: PRN 06019

2.7 20th and 21st century (1900 to 2009)



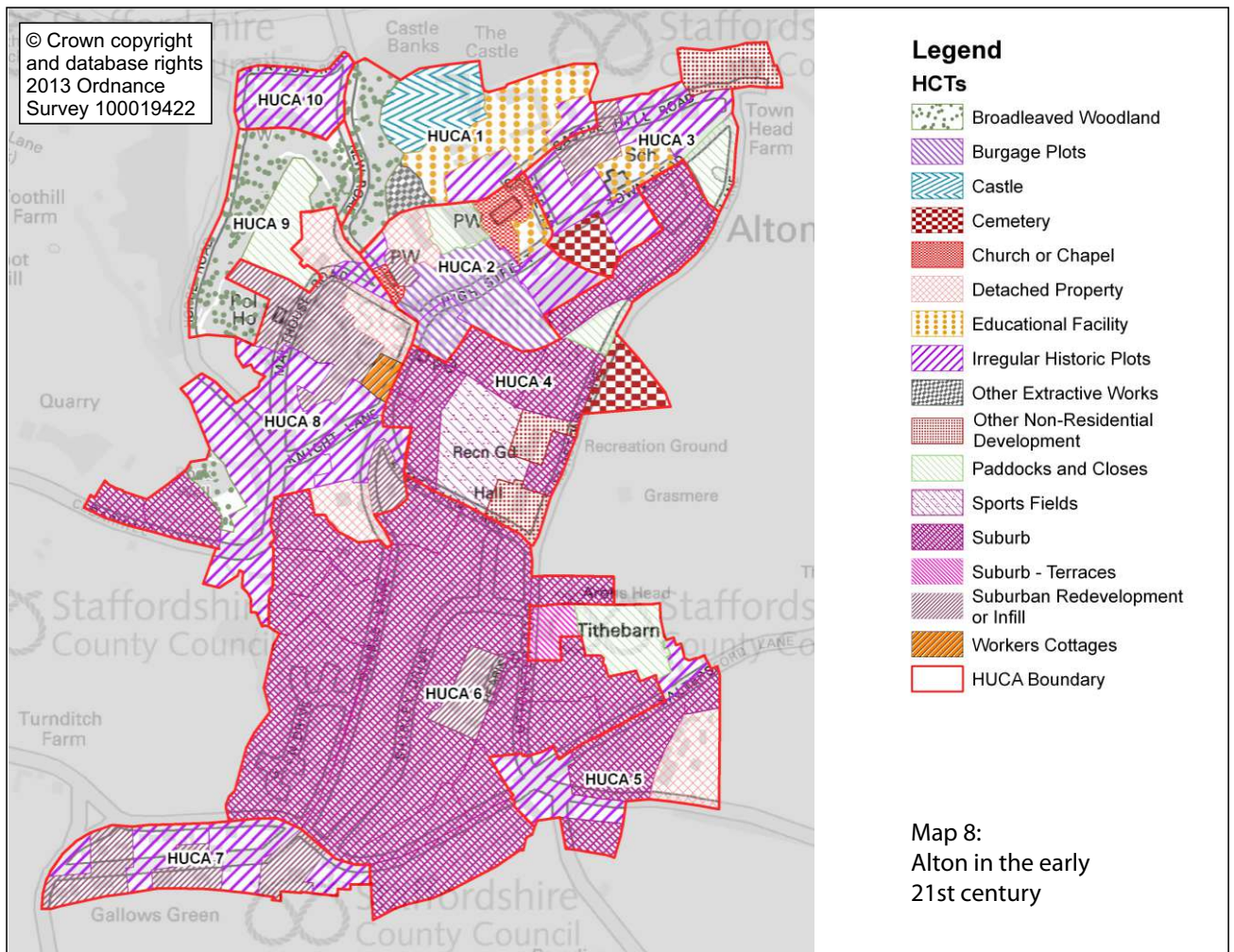
Alton has seen considerable residential expansion, particularly to the south of the historic core, during the period (map 6). The majority of this housing was constructed in the late 20th century extending either side of Dimble Lane, but further housing was constructed as infill within the areas of earlier settlement. Mid 20th century housing concentrates around Tithebarn (Saltersford Road).

During this period quarrying and mining continued to contribute to the local economy, although this had largely ended by the late 20th century¹⁵¹. The exceptions are a sandstone quarry at Hollington (to the south near Croxden) and a large sand and gravel quarry south of Threapwood (approximately 4km to the south west).

Tourism increased in the area during the period following the reopening of Alton Towers gardens to the public after the First World War¹⁵². In 1921 Alton Towers was sold and developed into a tourist attraction¹⁵³. At this point the numbers of visitors arriving at the site along the Churnet Valley Railway also increased with 20 trains being provided at weekends¹⁵⁴. In response to this demand the station platforms were lengthened in the 1930s¹⁵⁵. The railway line was closed in 1962 as part of a national programme of rail rationalisation¹⁵⁶.

The Earl's property at Alton Castle, comprising St John's Hospital and the two schools was purchased by the Roman Catholic Church¹⁵⁷.

Improvements to educational provision in the late 1940s saw the establishment of secondary schools. From this time the existing schools in Alton, including the Roman Catholic St John's Preparatory School at the castle, concentrated solely on primary education¹⁵⁸. St John's school was closed in 1989 and in 1995 it was bought by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham for use as a residential centre for young people¹⁵⁹.



Section Summary

- ◆ The legible historic character of the several settlement areas which make up modern Alton, including the planned medieval town, survives principally within **HUCA 1, HUCA 2, HUCA 3, HUCA 5, HUCA 7, HUCA 8** and **HUCA 10**. The principal components of the medieval town, including burgage plots, the Grade II* St Peter's Church and the planned street pattern, are still legible in **HUCA 2**. The evidence of a planned medieval street pattern extends into **HUCA 3**, although the extant settlement pattern and buildings suggest this may have been re-settled in a piecemeal fashion in the post medieval period. Further piecemeal development, perhaps indicating squatter settlement from at least the post medieval period is evidenced in **HUCA 8**. The origins of settlement in **HUCA 5** and **HUCA 10** probably date to the 18th century where a high proportion of historic buildings survive. Historic buildings, indicating possible squatter settlement of mid 19th century origin dominates **HUCA 7** (Gallows Green). The historic properties in all three of these areas have seen housing infill during the 20th century.
- ◆ **HUCA 1** is dominated by the Grade II* mid 19th century buildings designed by A. W. N. Pugin for the Earl of Shrewsbury. These buildings were built within the site of the de Verdun's 12th century castle. The ruins of the medieval castle, which exhibit several phases of construction, survive and are both Scheduled and Grade I Listed.
- ◆ **HUCA 9** is dominated by the woodland slopes which lead down from the town into the Churnet Valley. The woodland itself may be associated with planting known to have been carried out by the Earl of Shrewsbury in the 19th century. A paddock lies at the top of the hill, a rare survivor in a townscape where the remaining paddocks, characteristic of a squatter settlement, have been developed for housing.
- ◆ Modern development dating to various dates in the 20th century dominates the character of **HUCA 6**. The remaining 20th century development has generally been constructed as infill amongst the older houses (**HUCA 3, HUCA 5, HUCA 7** and **HUCA 8**).
- ◆ The assessment has also identified a high potential for below ground archaeological remains to survive within **HUCA 1, HUCA 2, HUCA 3, HUCA 8** and **HUCA 10**. Further archaeological potential has been identified within **HUCA 7**. Other sites, currently unknown, also have the potential to survive within the EUS project area.

3. Statement of Historic Urban Character

3.1 Definition of Historic Character Types (HCTs)

The HCTs used within the Extensive Urban Survey have been chosen to reflect the townscape character and consequently have differed from those chosen for the broader Historic Landscape Character (HLC). A list of the HCTs used within the EUS forms Appendix 1.

The HCTs were based upon the current character and upon an understanding of the development of the town as identified within the background summarised in Part One.

The HCTs are dated by period of origin and the over arching periods are broken down as follows:

Early Medieval	410 AD to 1065 AD
Medieval	1066 to 1485
Post Medieval	1486 to 1799
Early 19th century	1800 to 1834
Mid 19th century	1835 to 1864
Late 19th century	1865 to 1899
Early 20th century	1900 to 1934
Mid 20th century	1935 to 1964
Late 20th century	1965 to 1999
Early 21st century	2000 to 2009

Table 1: Periods

3.2 Statement of Historic Urban Character (HUC)

The Historic Urban Character Areas have been defined using the HCT's to identify areas of similar origin, development and character. Eleven HUCAs have identified for Tutbury.

Each of the statements of HUC is not static and may need to be enhanced or adapted as new information which alters our understanding and perception of each area becomes available¹⁶⁰.

This is followed by a table covering the Heritage values (which will have been outlined in the 'Statement of significance' paragraph') and a series of recommendations specific to each HUCA.

3.2.1 Heritage values

These values are based upon the guidelines produced by English Heritage in 'Conservation Principles: policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment' (2008) and identifies four areas for discussion. It should be noted that within each HUCA it is specifically the historic environment which is under consideration and that this judgement is based upon an interpretation of the available evidence. Other individuals or organisations may choose to ascribe alternate values to the historic environment of an area; key to this process of understanding is the degree of transparency by which these judgements are reached. The scope of this project precludes any analysis of non-heritage values which are equally valid in terms of valuing the character of historic towns.

¹⁶⁰ In line with English Heritage 2008: paragraph 38

<p>Evidential value*</p>	<p>The extent to which each HUCA can contribute to an understanding of past activities and how that can contribute to the town's wider history. This can be either legible or intangible within the townscape and as such covers the spectrum of heritage assets from historic buildings or structures to the potential for below ground archaeological deposits*. The extent to which the impacts of the removal or replacement of the heritage assets within each character area will be considered in terms of the effects on an ability for future generations to understand and interpret the evidence.</p>
<p>Historical value</p>	<p>The extent to which the heritage assets are legible within the townscape and how they interact – this can include townscapes/street patterns and individual buildings. Historical associations with events or persons can also add value to the ability of the public and community to engage with the heritage. The extent to which the legibility of the heritage assets has been concealed or altered will also be considered. The opportunities for the use and appropriate management of the heritage assets and their contribution to heritage-led regeneration will also be considered.</p>
<p>Aesthetic value</p>	<p>Addresses the ability to identify how a place has evolved whether by design or the 'fortuitous outcome of evolution and use'. It assesses the integrity and aesthetics of the place through the historic components of the townscape and their ability to enhance sensory stimulation. The aesthetic value also addresses whether the character areas may be amenable to restoration or enhancement to form part of a heritage-led regeneration of the town.</p>
<p>Communal value</p>	<p>Communal values can be commemorative/symbolic, social or spiritual. These values are not easily quantifiable within the scope of this project being subjective to groups and individuals. Consequently in the context of this project the value merely seeks to address the potential for the heritage assets to be used to engage the community/public with the heritage, not only of each HUCA, but also of the wider area. The potential for each zone to provide material for future interpretation is also considered.</p>

Table 2: Heritage values

3.2.2 Assessment of value

The aim of applying values of high, medium, low is to **indicate** the likely sensitivities of the historic environment within each zone. The assigned values reflect the current character of the areas and these will alter in response to change. This could include through the results of research contributing to an enhanced understanding of the historic environment; the conservation and enhancement of the environment through positive development and re-development as a result of heritage-led regeneration.

The definition of heritage assets incorporates buildings, monuments (above and below ground archaeology), place, areas, landscapes and townscapes¹⁶¹.

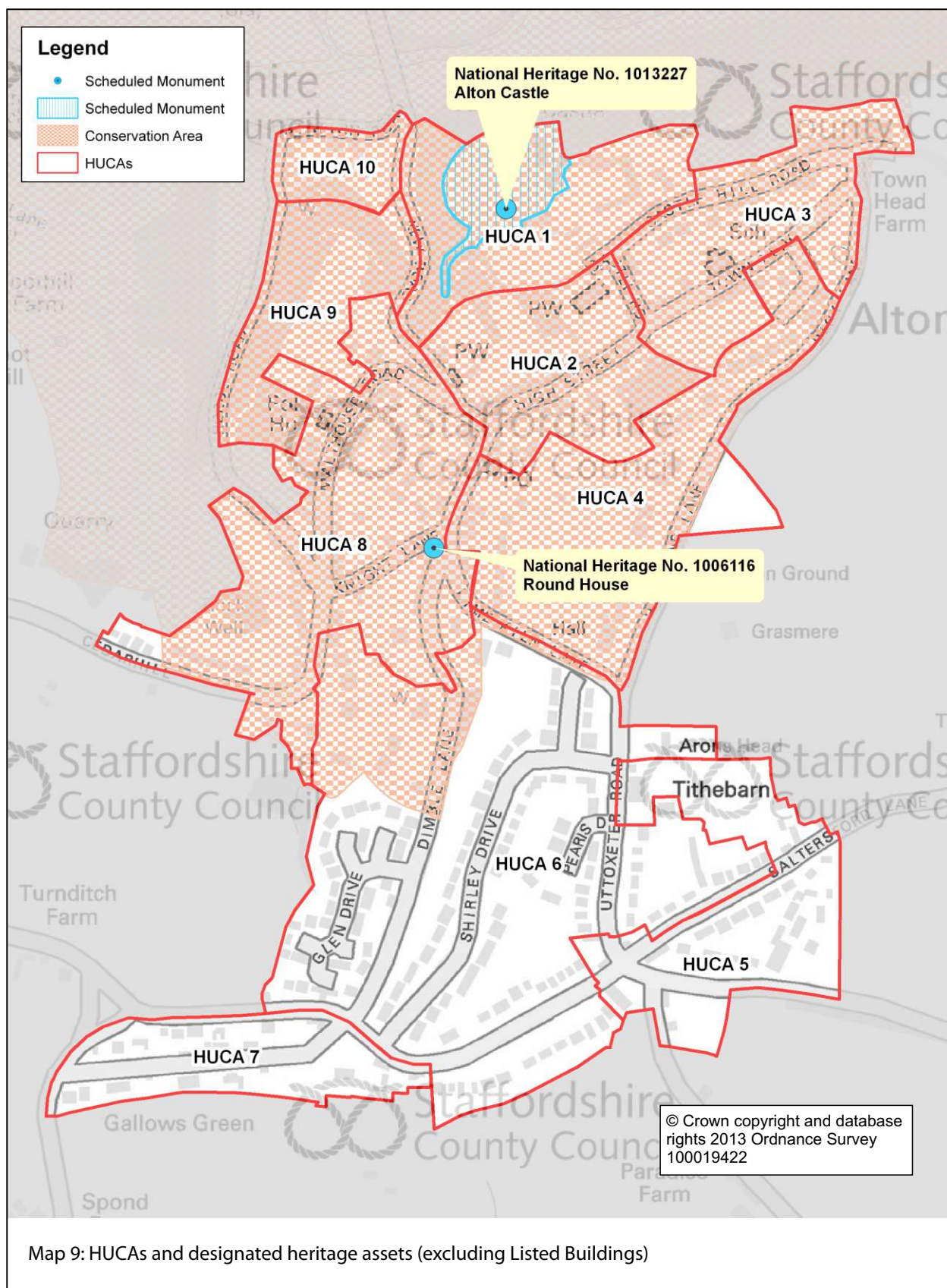
<p>Evidential value (see * below for regarding archaeological potential)</p>	<p>High</p>	<p>There is a high potential for the heritage assets with the HUCA to contribute to an understanding of the history of the town. Archaeological sites are likely to survive (both below ground and above ground fossilised within the townscape) and for new research relating to the nature and origins of the built heritage to enhance the understanding of the development of the town. New insights into the history of the town can contribute to an understanding of the development of towns from the medieval period onwards both within Staffordshire and more widely.</p>
	<p>Medium</p>	<p>There is the potential for heritage assets to contribute to an understanding of the history of the town, but there may be fewer opportunities for new insights to be deduced due to the nature of the heritage assets in question or subsequent changes to the historic character of the HUCA. The potential for archaeological deposits to contribute to an understanding of the development of the town may currently be unclear due to the current level of understanding of the origins of the HUCA. The potential may also be impacted by levels of development.</p>
	<p>Low</p>	<p>There are no or very few known heritage assets. The understanding for the potential for above and below ground archaeological deposits to survive may be affected by the current lack of research within the wider area. Mitigation may still be required dependent upon an assessment of both the nature of any prospective new development and the potential of the individual sites being developed.</p>

Historical value	High	The legible heritage assets either dominate or significantly contribute to the historic character of each HUCA. There are strong associations between the heritage assets (both tangible and intangible) within the HUCA that are potentially demonstrable and/or the heritage assets make an important contribution to the history of the wider area. There are often designated sites within or lying adjacent to the HUCA and in some cases these may comprise or include portions of Conservation Areas. The high value is not precluded by some degree of 20th/21st century alterations to the historic character.
	Medium	Legible heritage assets are present within the HUCA, but are not necessarily predominant or they have undergone some form of alteration. Their presence, however, may contribute to an understanding of the development of the character area and/or there are potential associations between assets. Further research may clarify these associations and elucidate the contribution of these assets to the history of the wider area. Even in their present form they do enable the public and community to visualise the development of the area over time.
	Low	There are no or very few known legible heritage assets; where they exist their associations are not clearly understood.
Aesthetic value	High	The completeness or integrity of the extant heritage townscape and its contribution to the aesthetics of the zone is significant. There are opportunities to enhance or restore the historic fabric of the HUCA. The HUCAs will often form part of or form the setting to Conservation Areas.
	Medium	The components of the townscape are legible, but there may have been considerable impact by 20th or 21st century re-development of elements of the historic character. It is not possible within this project to discuss whether the modern alterations have positive, neutral or negative impacts upon overall aesthetics.

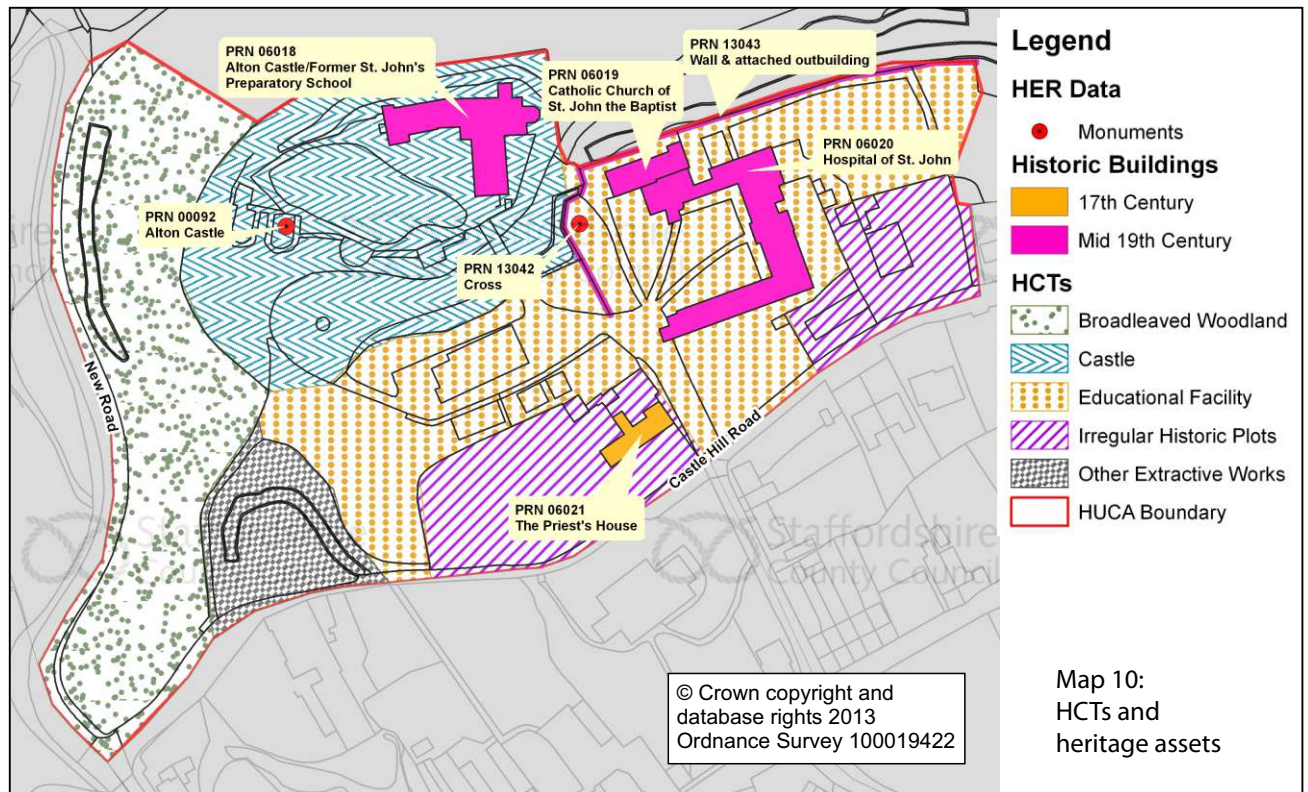
	Low	The aesthetics of the historic character have been significantly impacted by 20th or 21st century development. It is not within the scope of this project to discuss whether their contributions are positive, neutral or negative within the wider townscape.
Communal value	High	Contains numerous heritage assets which could be used to engage the community through interpretation. The heritage assets clearly form part of a wider history of an area which can be drawn into a narrative. There may already have been a degree of interpretation and/or the community/public already has access to at least some of the heritage assets within the zone.
	Medium	The ability for the heritage assets to contribute to the history of the town may be limited by the current understanding, their legibility within the townscape or through limited access.
	Low	There are few known heritage assets which make it difficult to elucidate their history or apply it to a wider interpretation. There is no access or the legibility of the heritage assets is negligible.

*The potential for below ground archaeological remains to survive will not be comprehensively addressed within the EUS project. Due to the nature of the project and its time constraints it will not be possible to model archaeological deposits based upon probability and impacts of current development therefore this project must be seen as a guide to potential but that ultimately the decision as to whether archaeological mitigation is an appropriate measure will be decided as part of the planning process.

4. Assessment of Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCA)



4.1 HUCA 1: Alton Castle



4.1.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The earliest evidence for occupation on this site is the remains of the 12th century castle built by the de Verdun family (cf. 2.4.1.2). The medieval structural remains include 12th century and early 14th century gatehouses and possible evidence for associated bridges, as well as the outer wall, a wall tower, a massive rock-cut ditch and a small oval bailey all of which forms part of the Scheduled Monument (and is Grade I Listed) (cf. plate 1). The potential for the survival of significant below ground archaeological remains associated with the construction of the castle, developments and the changing function of the castle and its eventual slighting and reuse should be considered throughout this HUCA (cf. map 9). The castle was largely destroyed, leaving the present remains, during the mid 17th century Civil War (cf. 2.5.1.1).

It is currently unclear whether those areas marked on map 10 as 'Irregular Historic Plots' had formed part of the castle site in the medieval period. The Grade II Listed 'Priest's House' standing on Castle Hill Road has been dated to the 17th century, although altered by A. W. N Pugin circa 1843 to form a presbytery. Its presence may indicate that these plots represent encroachment on lands formerly part of the castle from the later 17th century, following the Civil War.

The HUCA comprises the mid 19th century buildings constructed by the eminent architect A. W. N. Pugin for the Earl of Shrewsbury who was promoting Roman Catholicism in the wider area during this period. All of Pugin's buildings are Grade II* Listed to reflect the important contribution, not only of the career of the architect, but of the buildings themselves to the wider landscape. The most prominent of these is 'The Castle', overlooking the Churnet Valley, which

was originally intended as a private residence, but was later converted to a school (plate 5). It is also likely that it was constructed as an 'eye-catcher' from Alton Towers. Its highly visible position means that it has become an emblem of the character of the Churnet Valley itself (plate 7). The remaining buildings were originally constructed for several uses, but were mostly educational (cf. 2.6.1.1, 2.6.2.1 and 2.6.2.2; HCT 'Educational Facility' on map 10). The Grade II* St John's Chapel, also designed by Pugin, forms part of the complex¹⁶².



Plate 7: Alton Castle from across the Churnet Valley

The woodland which cloaks the slopes below Alton Castle may have been planted in the 19th century as part of wider landscaping within the valley. This was particularly associated with works being carried out by the earls of Shrewsbury in and around Alton Towers lying across the valley.

4.1.2 Heritage Values

<p>Evidential value: There is the potential for below ground archaeological remains to survive associated with the medieval castle. This potential extends to Castle Hill Road as it is currently unclear as to the full extent of the castle in the medieval period.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Historical value: The medieval castle makes an important contribution to understanding not only Alton's history, but that of the wider landscape and of castle boroughs more generally. The mid 19th century buildings form an important component in understanding the contribution of the earls of Shrewsbury to promoting Roman Catholicism in the locality during the period and his relationship with the landscape of Alton and with the architect Pugin.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Aesthetic value: The buildings of the HUCA, including the medieval remains, and the mid 19th century Alton Castle along with the woodland make an important contribution to the historic landscape character not only of Alton, but also of the wider Churnet Valley.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Communal value: Whilst Alton Castle is in private ownership the visual impact of the buildings from the Churnet Valley enable the community and visitors to enjoy its contribution to the historic character of the area.</p>	<p>Medium</p>

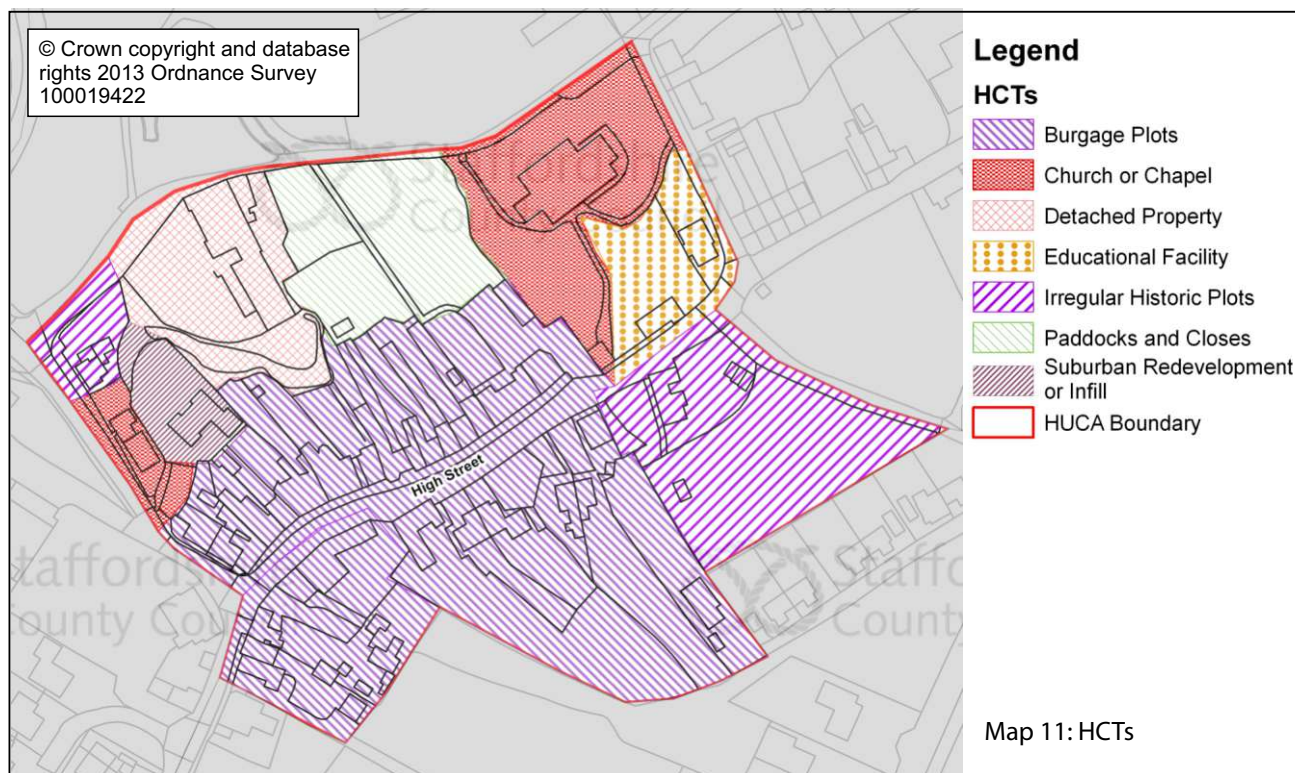
4.1.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA to an understanding and appreciation of Alton's history and historic character.

- ◆ A statement of significance will be required to assess the impact of proposed development upon the historic environment as part of any planning application to be made within this HUCA (cf. para. 128 of NPPF)¹⁶³.
- ◆ There are numerous designated heritage assets within the HUCA. Any works on or within the vicinity of the Scheduled Monument and the Grade I and Grade II* Listed building should consult English Heritage in advance of any proposals being drawn up. Where alterations or changes are proposed to the historic buildings within the Conservation Area the applicant should consult Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Conservation Team in the first instance¹⁶⁴. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF¹⁶⁵.
- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA. Where development may result in the loss of these heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance; this is supported in paras. 128 and 141 of NPPF¹⁶⁶.

- ◆ Any development proposed within the boundaries of the Scheduled Monument of Alton Castle may require Scheduled Monument Consent in order to proceed. The Secretary of State is advised in such matters by English Heritage. It is therefore advised that where such works are proposed, the applicant consult with English Heritage as early as is practicably possible to discuss the scheme, its impacts and possible mitigation measures.

4.2 HUCA 2: High Street



4.2.1 Statement of heritage significance

The HUCA represents the medieval historic core of Alton where evidence for the creation of the borough is legible in the survival of the burgage plots (map 11). The creation of the town, like the castle, was instituted by the de Verdun family as lords of the manor probably at a similar date in the later 12th century (cf. 2.4.1.3). The Grade II* St Peter's Church, which forms an important component within the HUCA, may also have been founded by the de Verdun's in the 12th century; its earliest fabric certainly dates to this period (cf. 2.4.3.2; plate 2)¹⁶⁷.

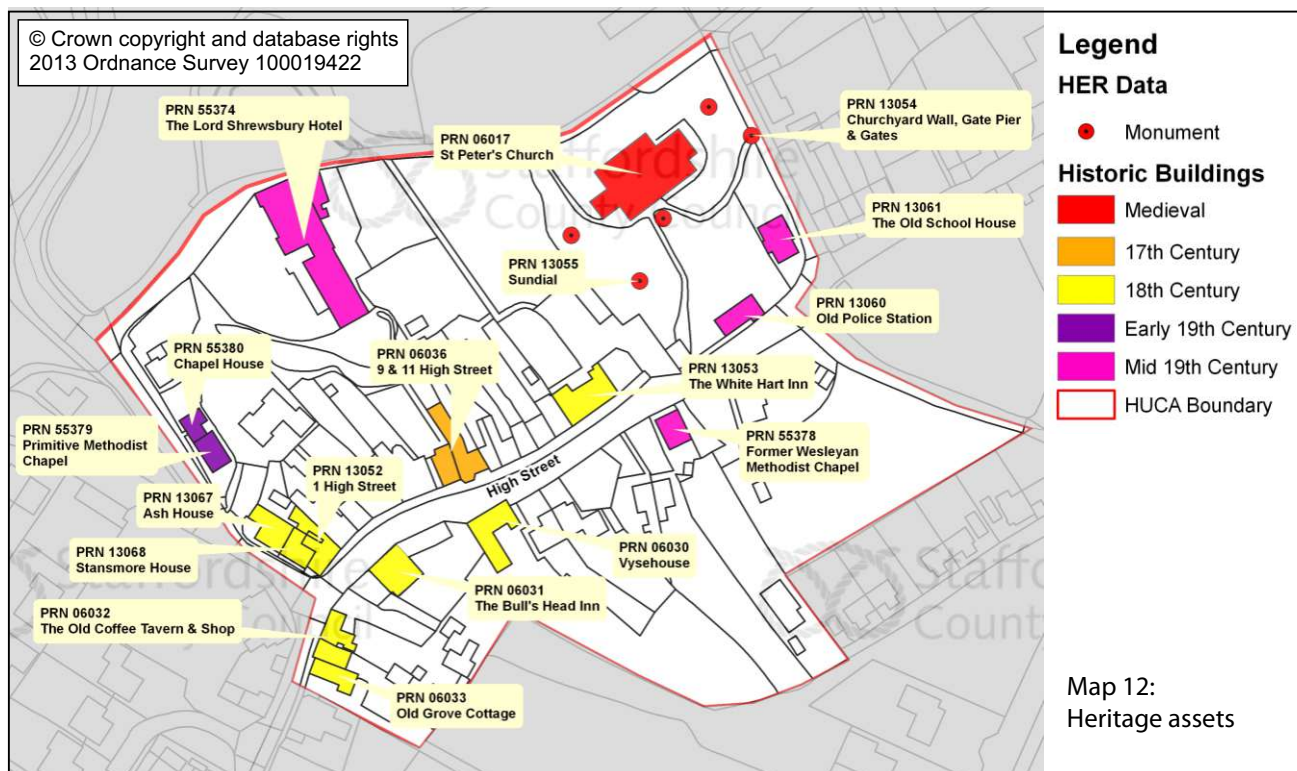
Map 11 suggests that change had occurred within the HUCA in the centuries following the medieval period, which may in part relate to the failure of Alton to retain its market town status (cf. 2.4.1.3 and 2.5.1.2). The street system within the HUCA suggests that Castle Hill Road may have originated as a back lane in the medieval period. Thus the paddocks and The Shrewsbury Hotel stand on land that had probably originally comprised medieval burgage plots (cf. map 3). The Hotel itself was built during the mid/late 19th century partly within an earlier quarry, which in itself is characteristic of Alton (cf. map 11). The construction of the hotel is probably associated with the growth of tourism during this period associated with the opening of Alton Tower's gardens to the public until they were closed between 1900 and circa 1919 (cf. 2.6.1.1 and 2.7).

A second possible back lane, lying parallel and to the south of the High Street has been observed (cf. map 3). Within the HUCA this lane curves round to the north west and possibly defines the earliest limits of the settlement and which could have been extended southwards at a later date. Further changes to the medieval pattern appear to have occurred at the north eastern end of

High Street where an irregular pattern dominates. However, this may well have originally formed part of the medieval town given its location opposite the church (HCT 'Irregular Historic Plots' on map 11).

The origins of New Road are currently unclear, but it had been cut by the early 19th century when the Primitive Methodist Chapel was built¹⁶⁸.

4.2.2 Built character



The HUCA contains eleven Grade II Listed buildings, the earliest of which has been dated to the 17th century (cf. map 12). The majority of the remaining buildings appear to be of 18th and 19th century date. One large semi-detached property lying to the south of High Street and off the road side has a plate of "1906". While this may reflect the properties date of construction, it may equally reflect an extension or alteration date or the commemoration of some other occasion. It should therefore be considered that there is the potential for any of the buildings of 18th/19th century date to retain earlier fabric within their extant structures.



Plate 8: Old Coffee Tavern and Old Grove Cottage (stone built to right)

The majority of the buildings are of two storeys although there are a number which are of three storeys including the 17th century 11 High Street and the 18th century Old Coffee Tavern and Old Grove Cottage lying on the east side of Smithy Bank (plate 8)¹⁶⁹.

The largest building within the HUCA is the Grade II* Listed St Peter's Church, which retains 12th century fabric, although it was restored and partially rebuilt in the 1830s (plate 2)¹⁷⁰. It is also the largest surviving stone building within Alton and forms one of three important stone structures of medieval origin associated with the de Verdun family (comprising Alton Castle and Croxden Abbey). The remaining buildings within are either of brick or stone (sometimes both). However, some of the properties including the stone built Grade II Listed 17th century 11 High Street have been rendered in the 20th century.

A number of other non-residential buildings exist within the HUCA including two 19th century Methodist Chapels, one of brick and the other of stone (cf. 2.6.4.2) as well as a mid 19th century school and a police station¹⁷¹. The latter was erected by the Earl of Shrewsbury in 1849.

4.2.3 Heritage values

<p>Evidential value: There is the potential for below ground deposits to survive across the HUCA associated with medieval and later settlement. These deposits may also enable phasing for the settlement to be established, particularly relating to its earliest phases and the relationship of the southern 'back lane' and its curve to this development of the town. The historic buildings also have the potential to reveal earlier origins. Such information reveals an understanding of the earliest character of the town as well as enhancing the wider social and economic history.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Historical value: The HUCA is dominated by the legible heritage assets particularly in the number of surviving historic buildings, both Listed and unlisted. The medieval street pattern and the burgage plots are well preserved.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Aesthetic value: The integrity of the historic character of the planned medieval town is particularly well preserved within the HUCA, especially in the survival of the burgage plots. The other integral components of the historic character are the historic buildings and street pattern. Overall the historic environment contributes strongly to the aesthetics of the HUCA and this is complemented by several designations including the Alton Conservation Area and the 11 Listed buildings.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Communal value: The HUCA forms part of the historic core and as such enables the community to directly engage with the heritage assets which are highly visible within the character area. The experience and understanding of Alton's heritage could be promoted to the community and visitors' through interpretation and encourage heritage-led sustainable tourism.</p>	<p>High</p>

4.2.4 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA to not only in its contribution to an understanding of Alton's history, but also to the sense of place for the community and visitors.

- ◆ A statement of significance will be required to assess the impact of any proposed development upon the historic environment as part of any planning application to be made within this HUCA (cf. para. 128 of NPPF)¹⁷².
- ◆ The sympathetic restoration or enhancement of the historic buildings, both Listed and unlisted, would strengthen the historic character and the quality of the wider townscape and the Conservation Area for the benefit of this and future generations (Bullet Point 10 of para 17 (Core planning principles) of NPPF¹⁷³). The heritage assets also make a positive contribution to the tourist economy of the town. Locally important buildings should be considered for local

¹⁷⁵ Staffordshire Borough Council. 2001. Web: <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/eccleshall-conservation-area>

¹⁷⁶ Department for Communities and Local Government 2012.

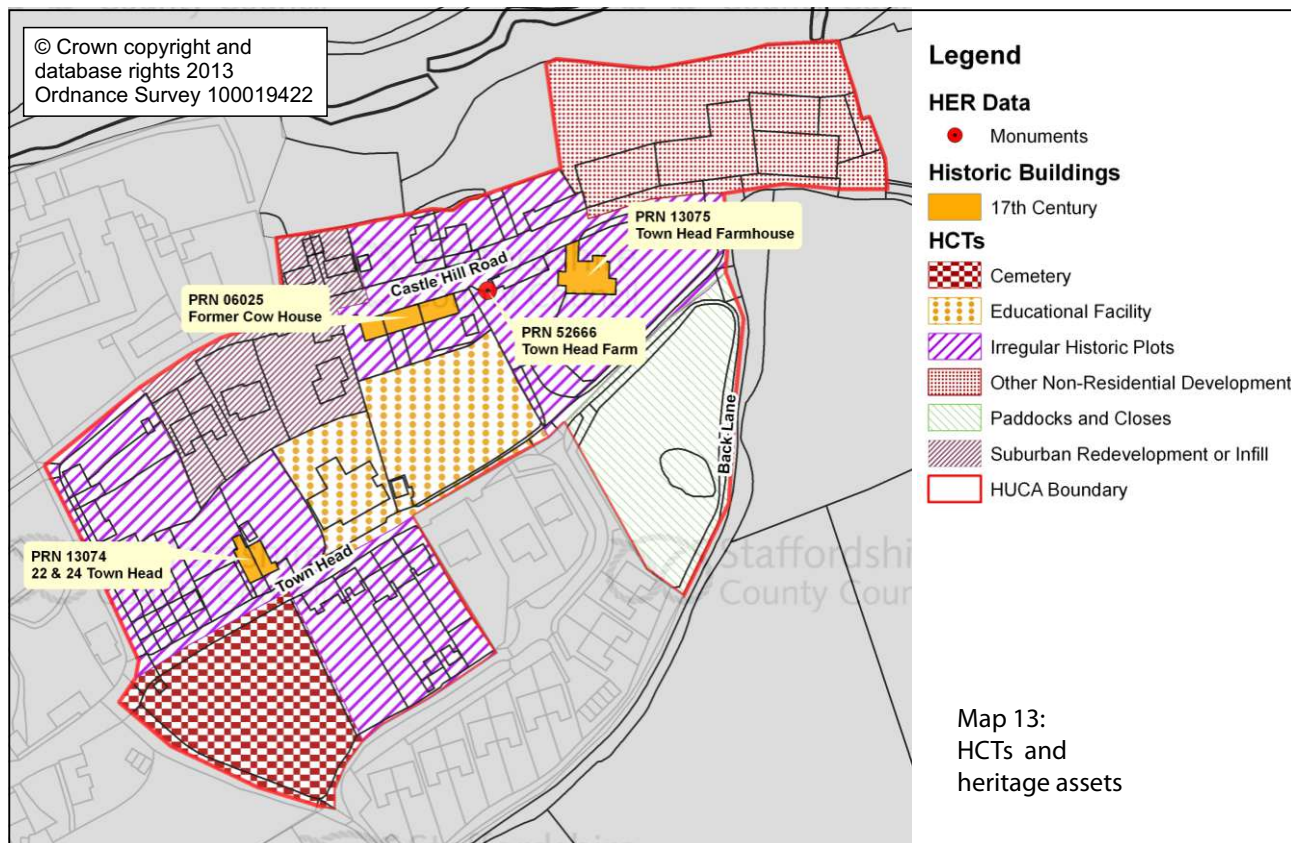
¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ English Heritage HELM web: <http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/nav.19643>
Staffordshire County Council. 2011. Web: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk>

listing in line with the recent English Heritage guidance document entitled '*Good practice for local heritage listing*' (2012)¹⁷⁴.

- ◆ There are numerous designated heritage assets within the HUCA. Any works on or within the vicinity of the Grade II* Listed building should consult English Heritage in advance of any works. Where alterations or changes are proposed to the buildings, whether Listed or not, within the Conservation Area the applicant should consult with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Conservation Team in the first instance¹⁷⁵. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF¹⁷⁶.
- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA. There is also the potential for historic buildings to retain earlier architectural elements which could inform their origins, development and function as has been shown by previous building recording. Where development may result in the loss of these heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance; this is supported in paras. 128 and 141 of NPPF¹⁷⁷.
- ◆ Change within the HUCA should be sympathetic to the town's historic character. In particular the promotion of the re-use of historic buildings to contribute to sustainable development is recommended (paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF). High quality design which is sympathetic to the historic built fabric is the key to retaining the local character of the area as identified in Bullet Point 4 of para. 17 (Core planning principles) and Bullet Point 4 of para. 58 in NPPF.
- ◆ Any appropriate development within this HUCA should look to improve the historic character and sense of place within the nearby public realm. Where this concerns work within a Conservation Area this may be achieved through consultation with East Staffordshire Borough Council's Planning Department. Outside of designated Conservation Areas the SCC Historic Environment Team should be consulted. Reference should also be made to the joint English Heritage and Department of Transport volume entitled '*Streets for All: West Midlands*' and where appropriate to the SCC '*Conservation in the Highways*' document¹⁷⁸.

4.3 HUCA 3: Town Head



4.3.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The origins of the HUCA are currently uncertain and it has been suggested that it once comprised the earliest settlement at Alton (cf. 2.3.2). However, to date there is no archaeological evidence to support this hypothesis.

While the HUCA's origins remain uncertain, the street layout does suggest that this area could have formed part of the medieval planned town. The continuation of the High Street within the HUCA, known as Town Head, forms the principal street flanked by two back lanes to the north (Castle Hill Road) and south (Back Lane) which appear to support a medieval planned layout. Such a layout placed the church (cf. HUCA 2) at the heart of the settlement (cf. map 3). To date there is little other evidence to suggest medieval origins for this area, partly because little archaeological work has been carried out. The earliest known buildings date to the 17th century (cf. map 13; plate 3) suggesting settlement by at least this date. The lack of evidence for burgage plots may suggest that medieval settlement in this area had failed or was perhaps not taken up and that the area was later reorganised or re-settled in a piecemeal fashion (HCT 'Irregular Historic Plots' on map 13).

The HUCA is dominated by historic buildings and includes three Grade II Listed buildings of 17th century date. All three properties, which include Town Head Farm and its former cow house, are built of ashlar¹⁷⁹. Along Town Head on both sides of the road further ashlar cottages survive

(plate 3). The red brick primary school was built within the street in the late 19th century. Stone buildings also dominate the narrow Castle Hill Road and include the modern farm buildings to the north of the lane (HCT 'Other Non-Domestic Development' on map 13). Further west along the lane housing infill, constructed upon paddocks, has been constructed in the form of detached houses in the late 20th century (HCT 'Suburban Redevelopment or Infill' on map 13). A possible building platform set back from Town Head was identified in a small paddock immediately to the east of St.Peter's School during work for this study.

4.3.2 Heritage values:

<p>Evidential value: There is the potential for below ground archaeological remains to survive which could inform our understanding of the settlement history of this portion of Alton. It could provide information concerning its potential for early medieval settlement or whether Alton was essentially a 'new town' in the 12th century. The historic buildings also have the potential to reveal earlier origins. Such information reveals an understanding of the earliest character of the town as well as enhancing the wider social and economic history.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Historical value: The HUCA is dominated by legible heritage assets which include the Listed and unlisted historic buildings as well as the street pattern.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Aesthetic value: There is a high degree of integrity of the historic character in the form of the relationship between the buildings, their plots and the street pattern. The importance of the HUCA is further emphasised by the Listed buildings and by its inclusion in the Alton Conservation Area.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Communal value: The HUCA is largely comprised of private housing, however, it makes an important contribution to the history Alton for the benefit of the community, visitors and future generations.</p>	<p>Low</p>

4.3.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have highlighted the contribution of this HUCA to the history and character of Alton.

- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within HUCA. There is also the potential for historic buildings to retain earlier architectural elements which could inform their development, function and role within the social and economic history of Alton. Where development may result in the loss of these heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance; this is supported in paras. 128 and 141 of NPPF¹⁸⁰.
- ◆ The sympathetic restoration or enhancement of the historic buildings would strengthen the historic character and the quality of the wider townscape and the Conservation Area for the

¹⁸¹ Department for Communities and Local Government 2012. Web: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115939.pdf>

¹⁸² English Heritage 2012: <http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/good-practice-local-heritage-listing/>

¹⁸³ Staffordshire Borough Council. 2001. Web: <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/eccleshall-conservation-area>

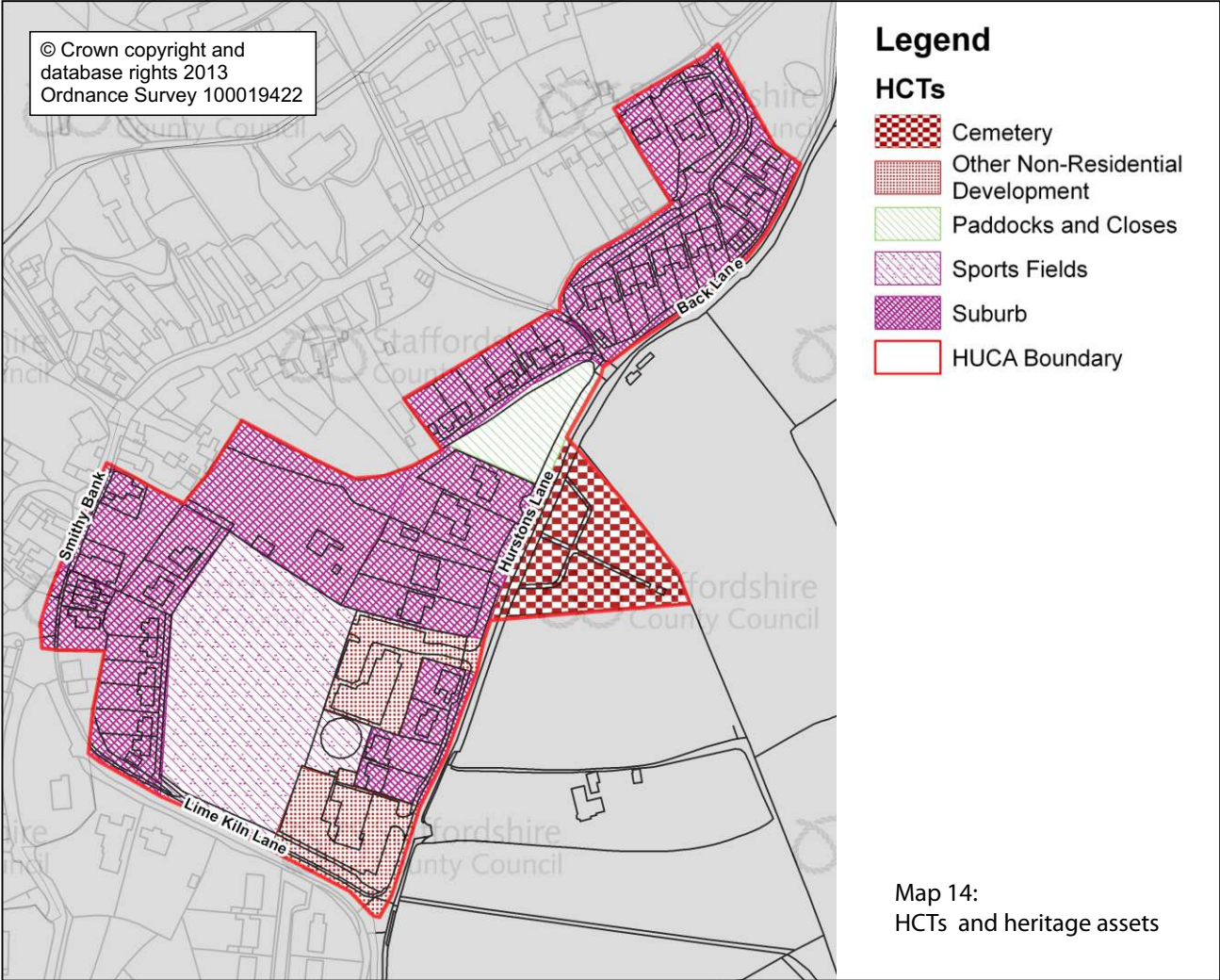
¹⁸⁴ Department for Communities and Local Government 2012. Web: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115939.pdf>

benefit of this and future generations (Bullet Point 10 of para 17 (Core planning principles) of NPPF¹⁸¹. The heritage assets also make a positive contribution to the tourist economy of the town. Locally important buildings should be considered for local listing in line with the recent English Heritage guidance document entitled '*Good Practice for local heritage listing*' (2012)¹⁸².

- ◆ Where alterations or changes are proposed to the buildings, whether Listed or not, within the Conservation Area the applicant should contact Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Conservation Team in the first instance¹⁸³. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF¹⁸⁴.
- ◆ The heritage assets could make a positive contribution to economic regeneration of the town. In particular the promotion of the re-use of historic buildings to contribute to sustainable development is recommended (paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF). High quality design which is sympathetic to the historic built fabric is the key to retaining the local character of the area as identified in Bullet Point 4 of para. 17 (Core planning principles) and Bullet Point 4 of para. 58 in NPPF.
- ◆ Any appropriate development within this HUCA should look to improve the historic character and sense of place within the nearby public realm. Where this concerns work within a Conservation Area this may be achieved through consultation with East Staffordshire Borough Council Planning Department. Outside of designated Conservation Areas the SCC Historic Environment Team should be consulted. Reference should also be made to the joint English Heritage and Department of Transport volume entitled '*Streets for All: West Midlands*' and where appropriate to the SCC '*Conservation in the Highways*' document¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸⁵ English Heritage HELM web: <http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/nav.19643>
Staffordshire County Council. 2011. Web: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/HistoricEnvironment/BuiltEnvironment/ConservationintheHighwayGuidanceDocument2011.pdf>

4.4 HUCA 4: Hurstons Lane and Lime Kiln Lane



Map 14:
HCTs and heritage assets

4.4.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA comprises suburban development of several periods and includes the large playing field created in the late 20th century to provide public space for Alton's expanding population.

The earliest surviving development within the HUCA is represented by three late 19th century houses standing at the junction with Smithy Bank and Lime Kiln Lane, at the western end of the HUCA. Development here expanded to the north in the early 20th century when further houses were built, of which only two survive (cf. map 6). Further houses were built in the mid 20th century, some along existing lanes to form ribbon development such as the detached properties on Hurstons Lane and the semi-detached properties on the north side of Back Lane. The latter were constructed on part of the medieval burgrave plots associated with HUCA 1. Further mid-20th century houses were built along a purpose-built cul-de-sac to the south of the HUCA. The final phase of suburban expansion occurred in the late 20th century and included further development along Back Lane, which may have been constructed in an area forming part of the medieval town.

Other development within the HUCA includes the mid 20th century village hall and the early 21st century health centre, both lying off Hurstons Lane and comprising relatively large-scale development. The cemetery, laid out in the mid 20th century lies on the opposite side of Hurstons Lane where fields (lying outside of the EUS project area) still dominate the historic character.

Other than those houses lying off Back Lane identified as probably having been built within what was once part of the historic town, the remainder of the HUCA lies within an area of land which had formed part of the medieval open field system (cf. map 2, 2.4.2.1 and 2.5.3.1).

4.4.2 Heritage values

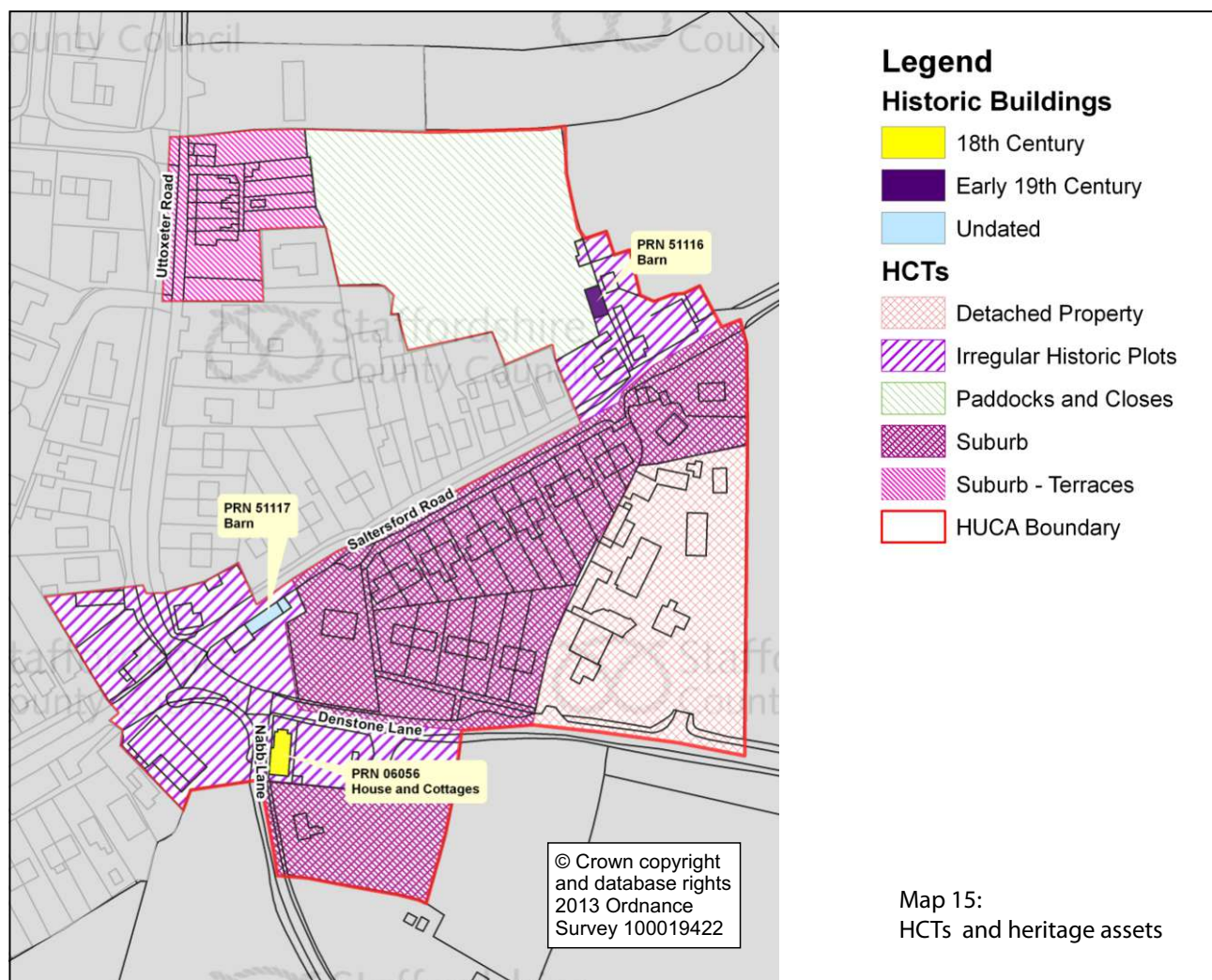
Evidential value: The majority of the HUCA lies beyond the probable area of the medieval borough within the open fields. The exceptions relate to the mid and late 20th century housing lying on the north side of Back Lane, although this development may have had an impact upon the survival of deposits.	Low
Historical value: The HUCA is dominated housing relating to several phases of development from the late 19th to the late 20th century.	Medium
Aesthetic value: On the whole the character of the HUCA is eclectic in that it represents several phases of housing development as well as non-residential development and areas of playing fields and the cemetery. Along Smithy Bank the late 19th and early 20th century houses contribute to the wider historic character of Alton.	Medium
Communal value: The development of the HUCA contributes to an overall understanding of Alton's history.	Low

4.4.3 Recommendations

The late 19th and early 20th century houses contribute to Alton's wider historic character.

- ◆ The sympathetic restoration or enhancement of the historic buildings would strengthen the historic character and the quality of the wider townscape and the Conservation Area for the benefit of this and future generations (Bullet Point 10 of para 17 (Core planning principles) of NPPF¹⁸⁶. The heritage assets also make a positive contribution to the tourist economy of the town. Locally important buildings should be considered for local listing in line with the recent English Heritage guidance document entitled 'Good Practice for local heritage listing' (2012)¹⁸⁷.
- ◆ Overall there is a low potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA. However, further research may alter our understanding of this potential and where development may be deemed to result in the loss of heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance. This is supported in para. 141 of NPPF¹⁸⁸.

4.5 HUCA 5: Tithebarn and Saltersford Lane



4.5.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA incorporates the small subsidiary settlement of Tithebarn as well as later development along Saltersford Lane. Tithebarn, represented by HCT 'Irregular Historic Plots' on map 15, was a dispersed settlement which possibly originated in the 18th century (cf. 2.6.1.2). The earliest known buildings, the Grade II Listed house and cottages on Nabb Lane, have been dated to the 18th century. Other historic buildings are also present although they have not yet been closely dated¹⁸⁹. The majority of these historic buildings are stone built, although one has been painted, and the Blacksmiths Arms is principally a red brick property (much enlarged in the late 20th century) with stone-facing to the principal elevation.

The earliest expansion within the HUCA occurred when a row of terraces was built on Ultoxeter Road in the early 20th century (HCT 'Suburb – Terraces' on map 15). These houses are of red brick, although two stone built cottages survive to the north. The HUCA became incorporated into Alton in the mid 20th century when the semi-detached houses were built as ribbon development along Saltersford Road and Denstone Lane.

¹⁹⁰ Staffordshire Borough Council. 2001. Web: <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/eccleshall-conservation-area>

¹⁹¹ Department for Communities and Local Government 2012. Web: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115939.pdf>

¹⁹² Department for Communities and Local Government 2012. Web: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115939.pdf>

¹⁹³ English Heritage 2012: <http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/good-practice-local-heritage-listing/>

The field morphology on historic mapping suggests that this area had mostly formed part of Alton's open fields in the medieval period, until their enclosure probably in the post medieval period (cf. map 2, 2.4.2.1 and 2.5.3.1).

4.5.2 Heritage values

<p>Evidential value: The HUCA had probably formed part of the open fields from the medieval period, but the precise origins of the historic settlement are currently unknown. It is possible that below ground archaeological deposits may survive within the HUCA. The historic buildings may also contain earlier fabric which could elucidate their origins and function.</p>	<p>Low</p>
<p>Historical value: The legible heritage assets are prominent within the HUCA particularly around the road junction. The origins of the settlement are currently unclear, but have the potential to contribute to an understanding of the wider social and economic history, not only of Alton, but also of the Churnet Valley.</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Aesthetic value: The irregular settlement pattern, comprised by the mostly stone built houses, makes an important contribution to the historic character of the wider EUS project area.</p>	<p>Medium</p>
<p>Communal value: The HUCA is largely comprised of private housing, however, it makes an important contribution to the history Alton for the benefit of the community, visitors and future generations.</p>	<p>Low</p>

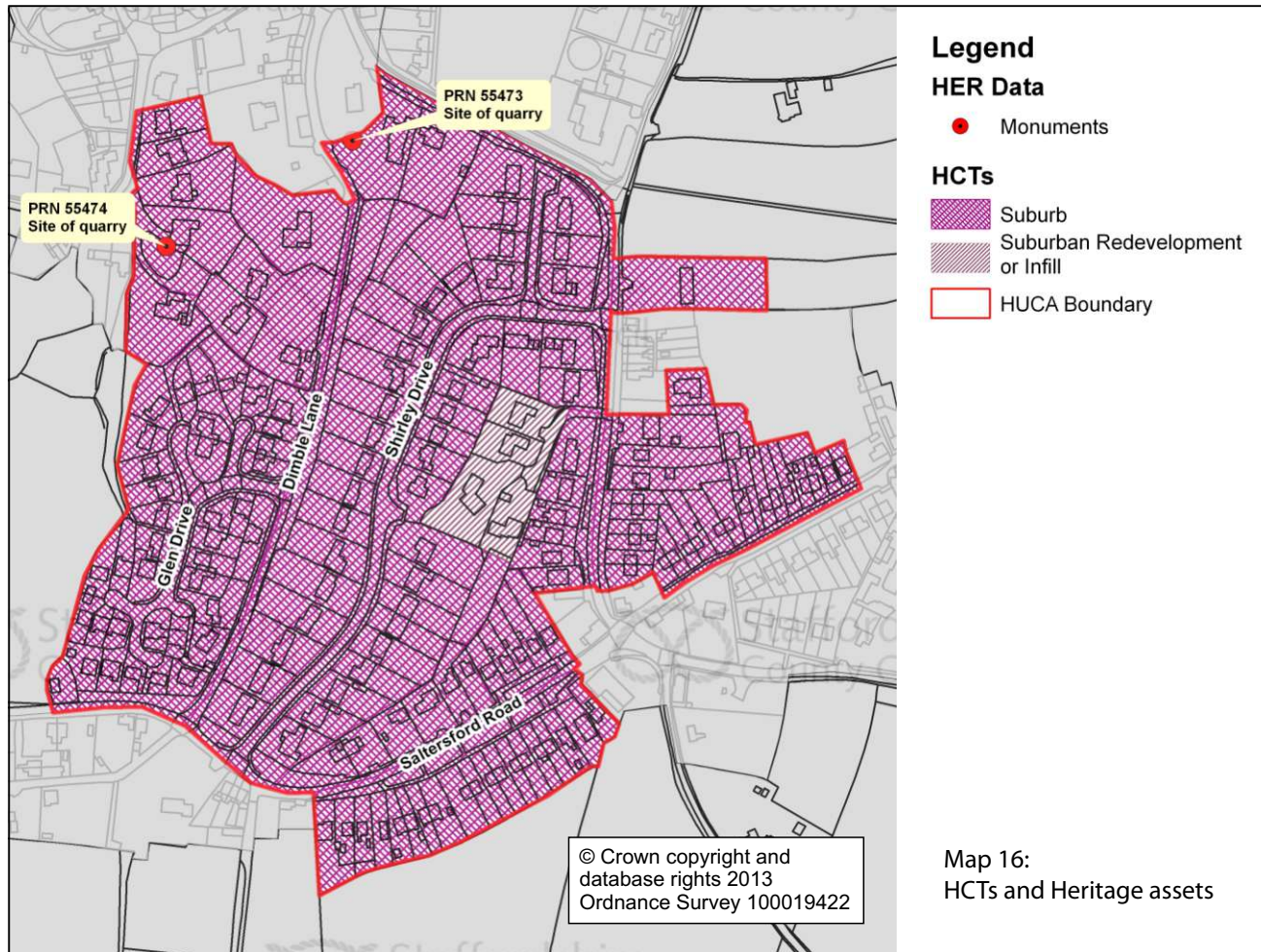
4.5.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values recognised the importance of the irregular settlement pattern and the historic buildings to Alton's historic character.

- ◆ Where alterations or changes are proposed to the Listed building the applicant should contact Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Conservation Team in the first instance¹⁹⁰. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF¹⁹¹.
- ◆ The sympathetic restoration or enhancement of the historic buildings would strengthen the historic character and the quality of the wider townscape and the Conservation Area for the benefit of this and future generations (Bullet Point 10 of para 17 (Core planning principles) of NPPF¹⁹². The heritage assets also make a positive contribution to the tourist economy of the town. Locally important buildings should be considered for local listing in line with the recent English Heritage guidance document entitled '*Good Practice for local heritage listing*' (2012)¹⁹³.
- ◆ There is the potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within HUCA. There is also the potential for historic buildings to retain earlier architectural elements which could inform their development, function and role within the social and economic history of

Alton. Where development may result in the loss of these heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance; this is supported in paras. 128 and 141 of NPPF¹⁹⁴.

4.6 HUCA 6: Dimble Lane and Saltersford Lane



4.6.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA is dominated by suburban expansion, all of which dates to various periods of the 20th century. Map 6 shows that the earliest houses date to the early 20th century and lie to the east of the HUCA where they seem to form an irregular extension to the settlement in HUCA 8. Mid 20th century ribbon development, in the form of both detached and semi-detached houses, was built to the south of the HUCA along Saltersford Lane and the eastern side of Uttoxeter Road (cf. map 6).

The late 20th century housing was built between the earlier areas of development much of it along purpose-built roads like Shirley Drive and Glen Drive.

The earlier history of the HUCA was predominantly agricultural in character. The morphology of the field systems lying to the east of Dimble Lane, as depicted on historic maps, suggests that this area had formed part of Alton's open fields in the medieval period, until their enclosure probably in the post medieval period (cf. map 2, 2.4.2.1 and 2.5.3.1). Two quarries, probably of 19th century date and evidence of a once important local industry, existed to the north of the HUCA, although both sites have since been developed (cf. 2.6.3.2)¹⁹⁵.

4.6.2 Heritage values

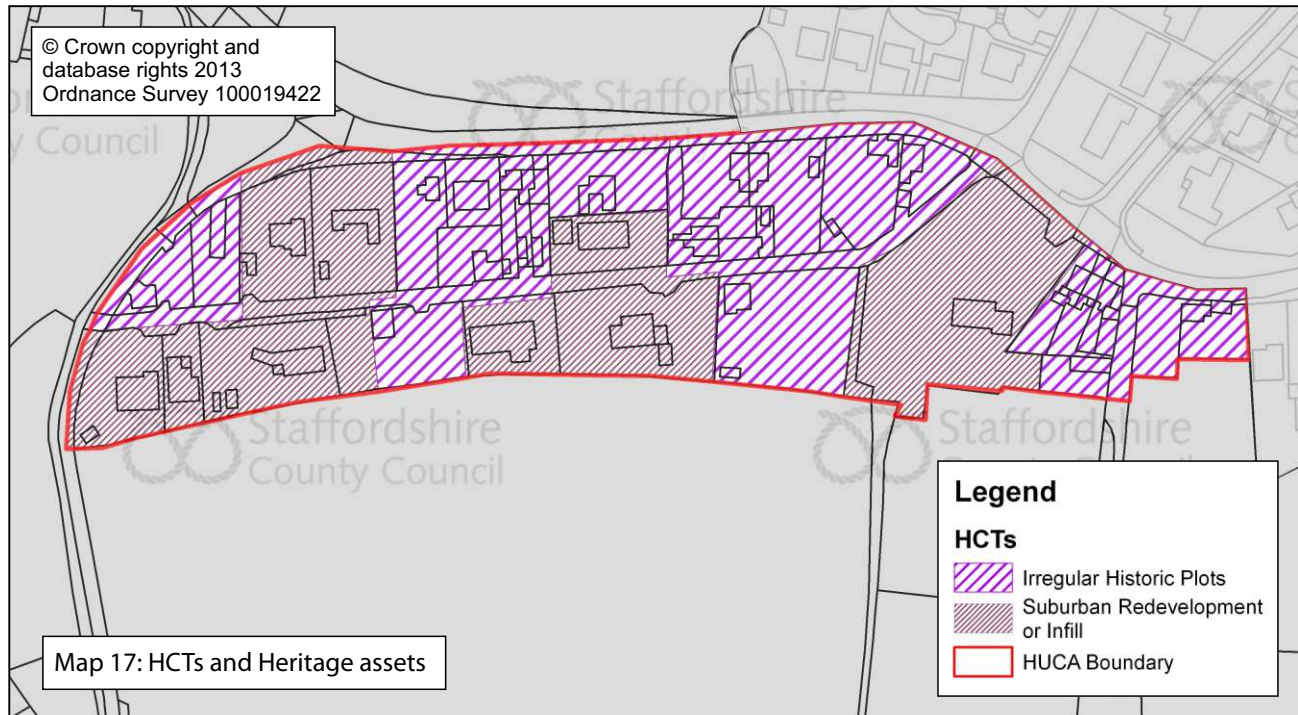
Evidential value: The HUCA lies beyond the area of known historic settlement as depicted on historic mapping. The field pattern suggests that the eastern half of the HUCA had formed part of the medieval open fields.	Low
Historical value: The HUCA is dominated by 20th century housing development.	Low
Aesthetic value: The HUCA comprises housing development dating from the early to late 20th century.	Low
Communal value: From a heritage perspective the value is low.	Low

4.6.3 Recommendations

The HUCA principally comprises mid to late 20th century housing development beyond the area defined as the medieval borough.

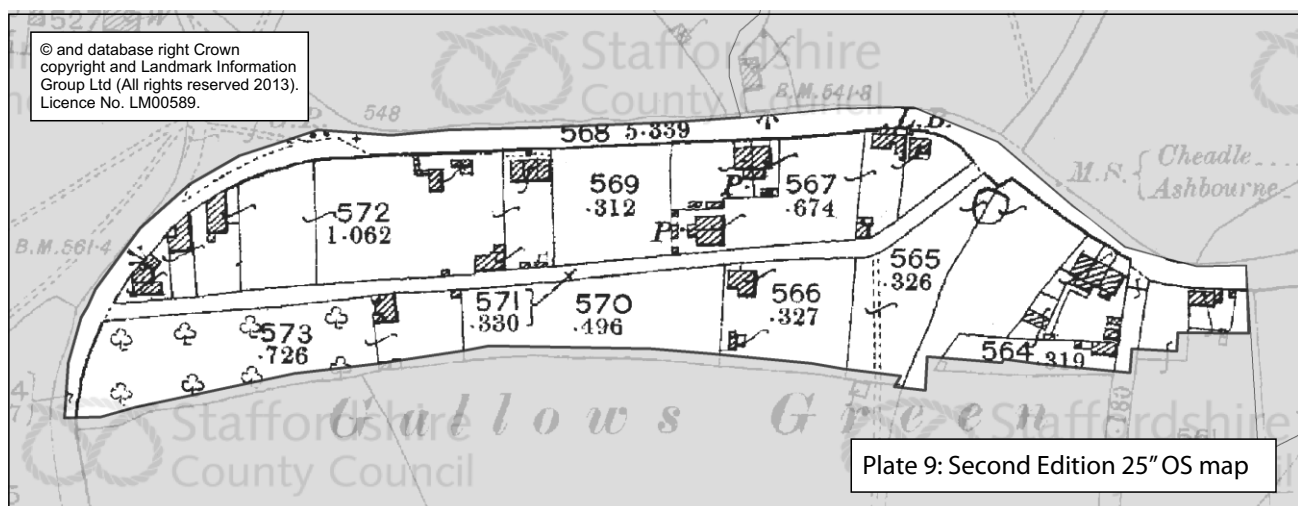
- ◆ Overall there is a low potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA. However, further research may alter our understanding of this potential and where development may be deemed to result in the loss of heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance. This is supported in para. 141 of NPPF¹⁹⁶.

4.7 HUCA 7: Gallows Green



4.7.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA represents the small settlement of Gallows Green, which historic mapping suggests did not exist prior to the mid 19th century (cf. 2.6.1.2). However, the earliest houses, lying to the far east of the HUCA, may date to at least the early 19th century and possibly provided the focus for expansion in this area relating to an increase in quarrying activity during this period (cf. 2.6.3.2). The majority of the remaining historic buildings were mostly present by circa 1880, although development appears to have been piecemeal in nature and possibly represents squatter settlement (HCT 'Irregular Historic Plots' on map 17; plate 9). The earliest properties are constructed of stone, but a few red brick houses are also present.



The infilling of paddocks between the earlier cottages (as depicted on plate 9) occurred in the late 20th century where large detached houses have been constructed (HCT 'Suburban Redevelopment and Infill' on map 17).

The earlier history of the HUCA is currently unknown, but it lies adjacent to an irregular field system (to the south beyond the EUS project area) which may have originated as medieval assarting¹⁹⁷.

4.7.2 Heritage values

Evidential value: The HUCA lies beyond the known area of medieval settlement. There is the potential for archaeological deposits and the fabric of the historic buildings to contribute to an understanding of the development and function of Gallows Green.	Medium
Historical value: The legible heritage assets, comprising the scattered historic buildings, contribute to an understanding of the development of Gallows Green and its role in Alton's social and economic history.	Medium
Aesthetic value: The historic character of the HUCA is represented by the scattered and piecemeal development of the cottages comprising the settlement of Gallows Green. The legibility of this historic settlement has been compromised to a degree by later infilling.	Medium
Communal value: The HUCA is largely comprised of private housing, however, it could make an important contribution to the history Alton for the benefit of the community, visitors and future generations.	Low

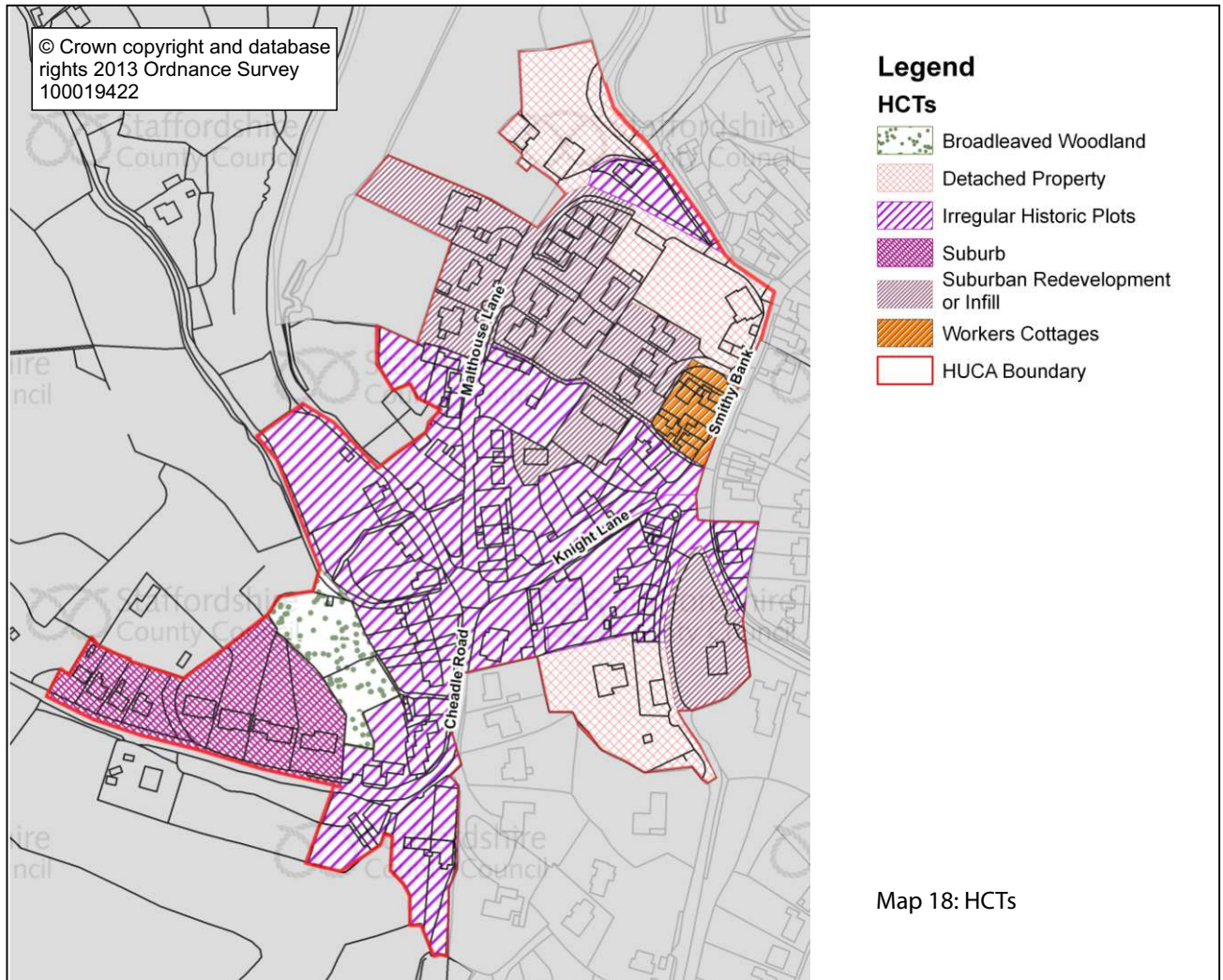
4.7.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have identified the importance of the settlement to Alton's history and historic character

- ◆ The sympathetic restoration or enhancement of the historic buildings would strengthen the historic character and the quality of the wider townscape and the Conservation Area for the benefit of this and future generations (Bullet Point 10 of para 17 (Core planning principles) of NPPF¹⁹⁸. The heritage assets also make a positive contribution to the tourist economy of the town. Locally important buildings should be considered for local listing in line with the recent English Heritage guidance document entitled 'Good Practice for local heritage listing' (2012)¹⁹⁹.
- ◆ There is the potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within HUCA. There is also the potential for historic buildings to retain earlier architectural elements which could inform their development, function and role within the social and economic history of

Alton. Where development may result in the loss of these heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance; this is supported in paras. 128 and 141 of NPPF²⁰⁰.

4.8 HUCA 8: Knight Lane and Malthouse Road



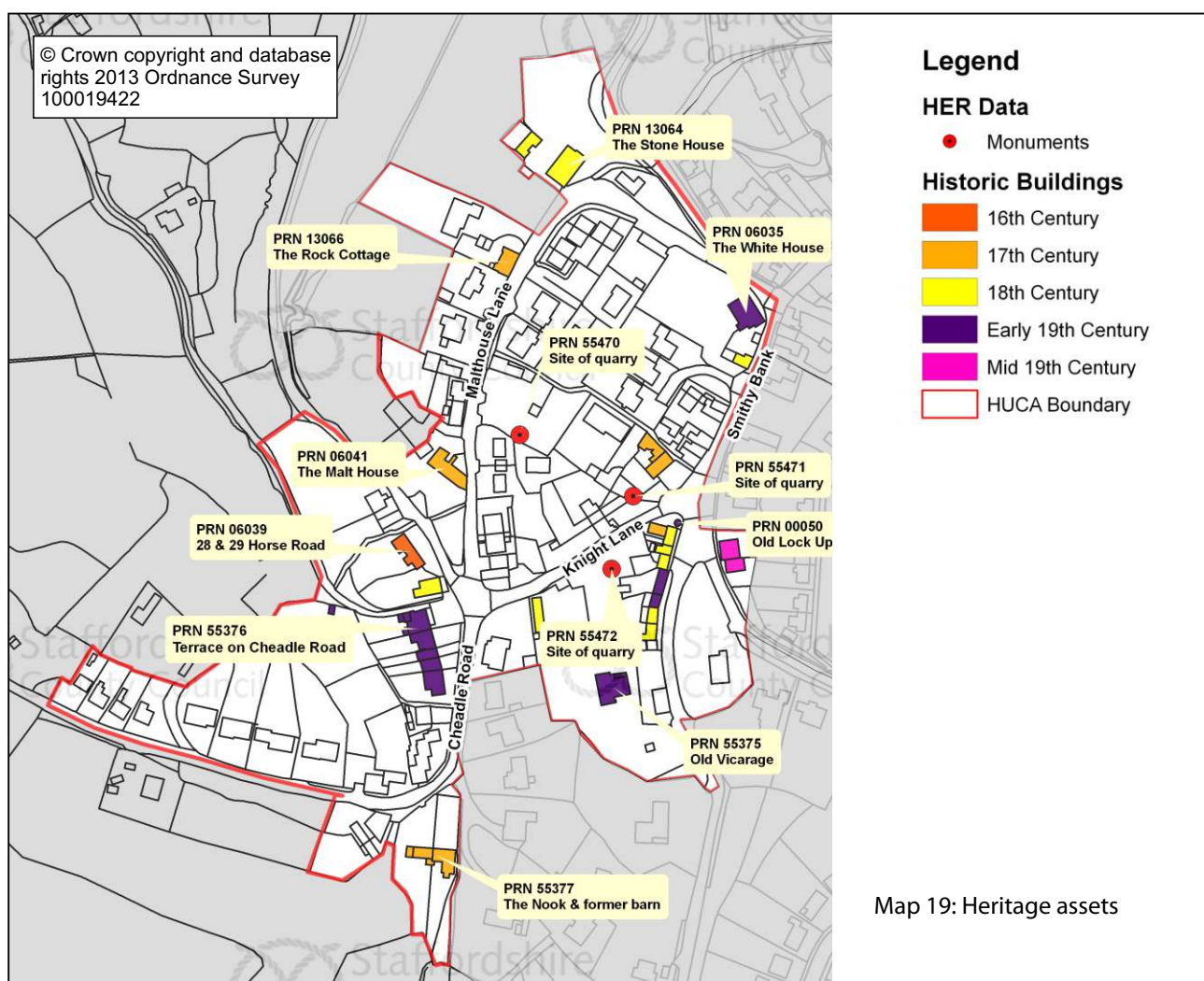
Map 18: HCTs

4.8.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

This HUCA lies to the south west of the identified medieval town and the origins of settlement in this area is not entirely clear. The earliest building identified to date is the Grade II Listed 29 Horse Road where a timber cruck frame survives which, whilst scientific dating failed, has been suggested to date to the 16th century²⁰¹. Such cruck framed buildings, elsewhere, have been dated to the medieval period and it is possible that settlement in this area may have earlier origins than the post medieval period.

The irregular pattern of settlement may be due to the topography of the area or of later (post medieval) squatter settlement possibly associated with the increase in industrial production in the wider Churnet Valley during this period (cf. 2.5.3.2). Stone quarrying occurred in the HUCA in the late 19th century as indicated by the three quarries shown on the first edition 25" OS map. This may have also occurred at an earlier date.

The Grade II* Listed Malthouse dates from the 17th century, although it was substantially remodelled in the early 19th century, and is associated with an early 19th century malthouse lying below the property (cf. 2.6.3.2; plate 10)²⁰². Archaeological work at the malthouse suggested that malting had occurred there at an earlier date possibly further evidence of post medieval or at least 18th century industrial activity within the HUCA²⁰³.



Map 19: Heritage assets

Historic buildings dominate the historic character of the HUCA and include 19 Listed buildings (all except one being Grade II; cf. above). The settlement pattern is characteristic of piecemeal development with properties not all being aligned onto the narrow lanes (cf. HCT 'Irregular Historic Plots' and 'Workers Cottages' on map 18; map 6). This is further enforced by the form, scale and origins of the surviving historic buildings. These include stone buildings such as a 17th century house (The Nook) with attached former barn to the south. Along Malthouse Lane (on its eastern side), Kirk House, a stone-built structure, retains evidence of a blocked stone mullioned window of a style similar to 'The Rock Cottage' (plate 4). This may provide further evidence for 17th century expansion in this area of Alton. Brick cottages, which include a terrace dated to the 19th century are also present within this HUCA (one house of which has a stone frontage and another has been rendered)²⁰⁴. There are three larger detached houses: the Grade II Listed 18th

century Stone House; the Grade II Listed early 19th century The White House and the early 19th century former Vicarage (cf. map 19)²⁰⁵.

Plate 10: Malthouse, Malthouse Lane



Further houses were built in the late 20th century partly as infill on paddocks (HCT 'Suburban Rdevelopment and Infill' on map 18) and as new development along Cedarhill (HCT 'Suburb').

4.8.2 Heritage values

Evidential value: There is the potential for below ground archaeological remains to survive associated with the origins, function and development of settlement within this part of Alton. This could elucidate whether medieval settlement was present within the area or whether it originated in the post medieval period. The historic buildings also have the potential to elucidate their origins and function and may contain evidence of earlier phases of construction. Such information would contribute to an understanding of Alton's social and economic history.

High

Historical value: The legible heritage assets comprising the diverse historic buildings, irregular settlement and street pattern, are well preserved and contribute to an understanding of the history of Alton

High

<p>Aesthetic value: The legibility of the historic character of the settlement, dominated by an irregular pattern and narrow lanes, is well preserved. The importance of the HUCA is further emphasised by the number of Listed buildings (including one which is Grade II*) and by its inclusion in the Alton Conservation Area.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Communal value: The HUCA is largely comprised of private housing, however, it makes an important contribution to the history of Alton for the benefit of the community, visitors and future generations.</p>	<p>Medium</p>

4.8.3 Recommendations

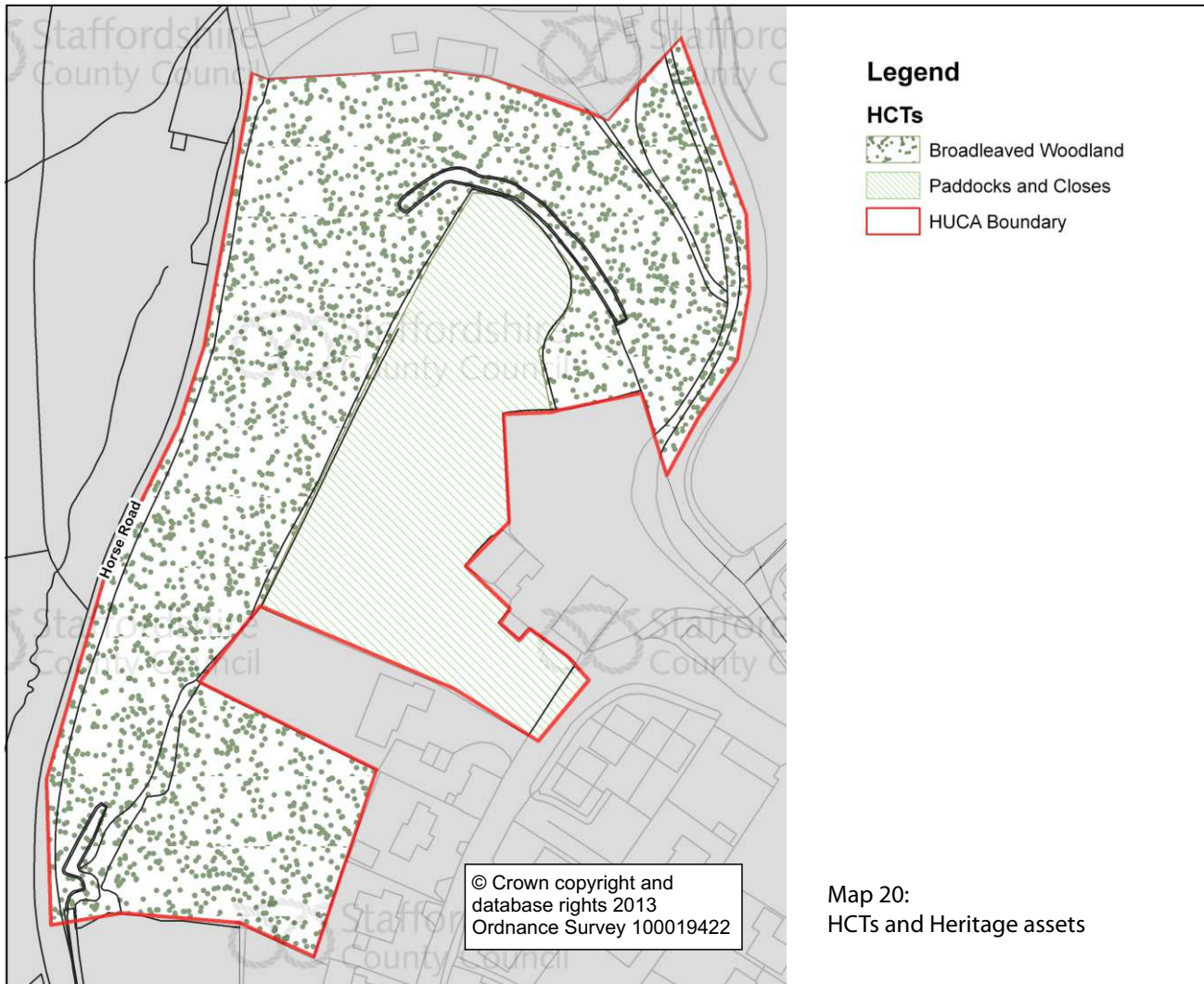
The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA not only in its contribution to an understanding of Alton's history, but also to the sense of place for the community and visitors.

- ◆ A statement of significance will be required to assess the impact of any proposed development upon the historic environment as part of any planning application to be made within this HUCA (cf. para. 128 of NPPF)²⁰⁶.
- ◆ The sympathetic restoration or enhancement of the historic buildings, both Listed and unlisted, would strengthen the historic character and the quality of the wider townscape and the Conservation Area for the benefit of this and future generations (Bullet Point 10 of para 17 (Core planning principles) of NPPF²⁰⁷. The heritage assets also make a positive contribution to the tourist economy of the town. Locally important buildings should be considered for local listing in line with the recent English Heritage guidance document entitled '*Good Practice for local heritage listing*' (2012)²⁰⁸.
- ◆ There are numerous designated heritage assets within the HUCA. Any works on or within the vicinity of the Grade II* Listed building should consult English Heritage in advance of any works. Where alterations or changes are proposed to the buildings, whether Listed or not, within the Conservation Area the applicant should consult with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Conservation Team in the first instance²⁰⁹. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF²¹⁰.
- ◆ There is the potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA. There is also the potential for historic buildings to retain earlier architectural elements which could inform their origins, development and function as has been shown by previous building recording. Where development may result in the loss of these heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance; this is supported in paras. 128 and 141 of NPPF²¹¹.

²¹⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government 2012. Web: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115939.pdf>
²¹¹ *ibid.*

- ◆ Change within the HUCA should be sympathetic to the town's historic character. In particular the promotion of the re-use of historic buildings to contribute to sustainable development is recommended (paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF). High quality design which is sympathetic to the historic built fabric is the key to retaining the local character of the area as identified in Bullet Point 4 of para. 17 (Core planning principles) and Bullet Point 4 of para. 58 in NPPF.
- ◆ Any appropriate development within this HUCA should look to improve the historic character and sense of place within the nearby public realm. Where this concerns work within a Conservation Area this may be achieved through consultation with East Staffordshire Borough Council's Planning Department. Outside of designated Conservation Areas the SCC Historic Environment Team should be consulted. Reference should also be made to the joint English Heritage and Department of Transport volume entitled 'Streets for All: West Midlands' and where appropriate to the SCC 'Conservation in the Highways' document²¹².

4.9 HUCA 9: Horse Road and New Road



4.9.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA is dominated by wooded slopes which form part of the historic character of the wider Churnet Valley. The origins of the woodland within this particular HUCA is unclear, but it possibly formed part of the landscaping carried out by the earls of Shrewsbury during the 19th century.

A paddock lies at the top of the hill adjacent to the settlement within HUCA 8. The paddock may have originated with the settlement to the south and east possibly from the post medieval period. It represents a rare survival in Alton where the majority of the other paddocks have been used for housing infill during the 20th century.

4.9.2 Heritage values

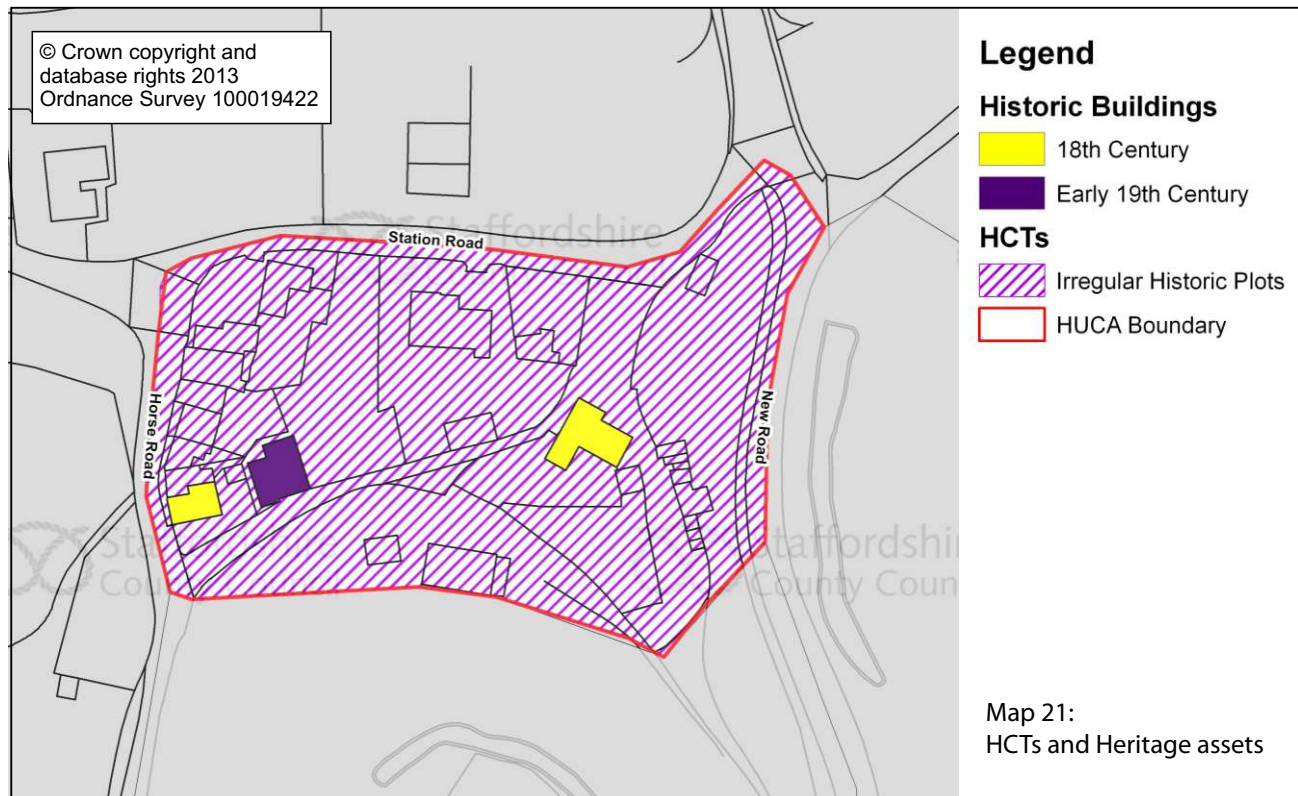
Evidential value: The HUCA lies beyond the area of known settlement.	Low
Historical value: The heritage assets comprise the woodland and the paddock, which both make important contributions to understanding Alton's social and economic history.	High
Aesthetic value: The woodland is particularly characteristic of the wider historic landscape of the Churnet Valley. The paddock also makes a contribution to the historic character in being one of few surviving paddocks which had formed an important characteristic of this part of the development of Alton.	High
Communal value: It is presumed that both the woodland and the paddock are in private ownership with no public access. The woodland in particular makes an important contribution to the wider aesthetics and history of Alton, which can be appreciated by the public and visitors passing through the area.	Low

4.9.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA to not only in its contribution to an understanding of Alton's history, but also to the sense of place for the community and visitors.

- ◆ Overall there is a low potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA. However, further research may alter our understanding of this potential and where development may be deemed to result in the loss of heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance. This is supported in para. 141 of NPPF²¹³.

4.10 HUCA 10: Station Road



4.10.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA lies within the Churnet Valley, at the bottom of Horse Road and New Road, below the main area of settlement at Alton. The small settlement which clusters here appears to have had its origins in the 18th century (cf. 2.6.1.2). Two Grade II Listed buildings of this date are present as well as a detached house which has been identified as dating to circa 1800 (cf. map 21; plate 11)²¹¹. The remaining historic buildings were certainly present by the late 19th century, but their precise origins are currently unknown. The buildings form a mix of stone and brick built cottages; of these the Grade II Listed Talbot Inn is of three storeys²¹⁵.

4.9.2 Heritage values

<p>Evidential value: The settlement appears to date from the 18th century, but there remains the potential for archaeological deposits to survive which could provide a clearer understanding of its origins. There is also the potential for the historic buildings to retain architectural detailing which could also enhance our understanding of the settlement.</p>	<p>High</p>
<p>Historical value: The HUCA is dominated by legible heritage assets which contribute to an understanding and appreciation of Alton's history.</p>	<p>High</p>

Aesthetic value: The legibility of the historic character of this small settlement is well preserved. The importance of the HUCA is further emphasised by the Listed buildings and by its inclusion in the Alton Conservation Area.	High
Communal value: The buildings include commercial properties allowing a degree of access for the public and visitors. The HUCA makes an important contribution to the history Alton for the benefit of the community, visitors and future generations.	Medium



Plate 11: Settlement in Churnet Valley

4.10.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA to not only in its contribution to an understanding of Alton's history, but also to the sense of place for the community and visitors.

- ◆ A statement of significance will be required to assess the impact of any proposed development upon the historic environment as part of any planning application to be made within this HUCA (cf. para. 128 of NPPF)²¹⁶.

²¹⁷ Department for Communities and Local Government 2012. Web: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115939.pdf>

²¹⁸ English Heritage 2012: <http://www.helm.org.uk/>

²¹⁹ Staffordshire Borough Council. 2001. Web: <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/eccleshall-conservation-area>

²²⁰ Department for Communities and Local Government 2012. Web: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115939.pdf>

²²¹ Ibid.

- ◆ The sympathetic restoration or enhancement of the historic buildings, both Listed and unlisted, would strengthen the historic character and the quality of the wider townscape and the Conservation Area for the benefit of this and future generations (Bullet Point 10 of para 17 (Core planning principles) of NPPF²¹⁷). The heritage assets also make a positive contribution to the tourist economy of the town. Locally important buildings should be considered for local listing in line with the recent English Heritage guidance document entitled 'Good Practice for local heritage listing' (2012)²¹⁸.
- ◆ Where alterations or changes are proposed to the buildings, whether Listed or not, within the Conservation Area the applicant should consult with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Conservation Team in the first instance²¹⁹. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF²²⁰.
- ◆ There is the potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA. There is also the potential for historic buildings to retain earlier architectural elements which could inform their origins, development and function as has been shown by previous building recording. Where development may result in the loss of these heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance; this is supported in paras. 128 and 141 of NPPF²²¹.
- ◆ Change within the HUCA should be sympathetic to the town's historic character. In particular the promotion of the re-use of historic buildings to contribute to sustainable development is recommended (paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF). High quality design which is sympathetic to the historic built fabric is the key to retaining the local character of the area as identified in Bullet Point 4 of para. 17 (Core planning principles) and Bullet Point 4 of para. 58 in NPPF.
- ◆ Any appropriate development within this HUCA should look to improve the historic character and sense of place within the nearby public realm. Where this concerns work within a Conservation Area this may be achieved through consultation with East Staffordshire Borough Council's Planning Department. Outside of designated Conservation Areas the SCC Historic Environment Team should be consulted. Reference should also be made to the joint English Heritage and Department of Transport volume entitled 'Streets for All: West Midlands' and where appropriate to the SCC 'Conservation in the Highways' document²²².

²²² English Heritage HELM web: <http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/nav.19643>
Staffordshire County Council. 2011. Web: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/HistoricEnvironment/BuiltEnvironment/ConservationintheHighwayGuidanceDocument2011.pdf>

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Staffordshire Extensive
Urban Survey

Alton

Historic Character Assessment



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