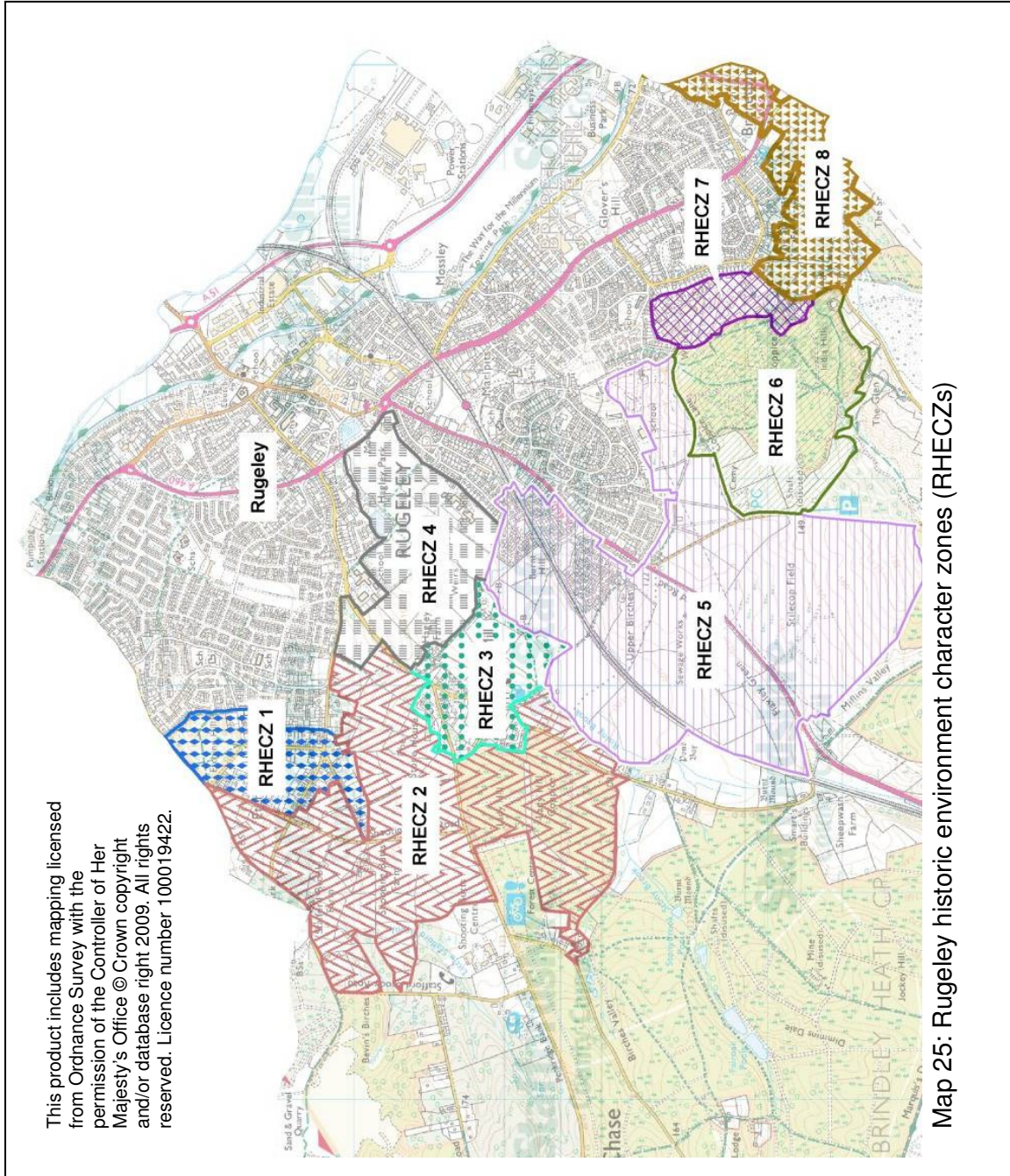


9. Rugeley project area

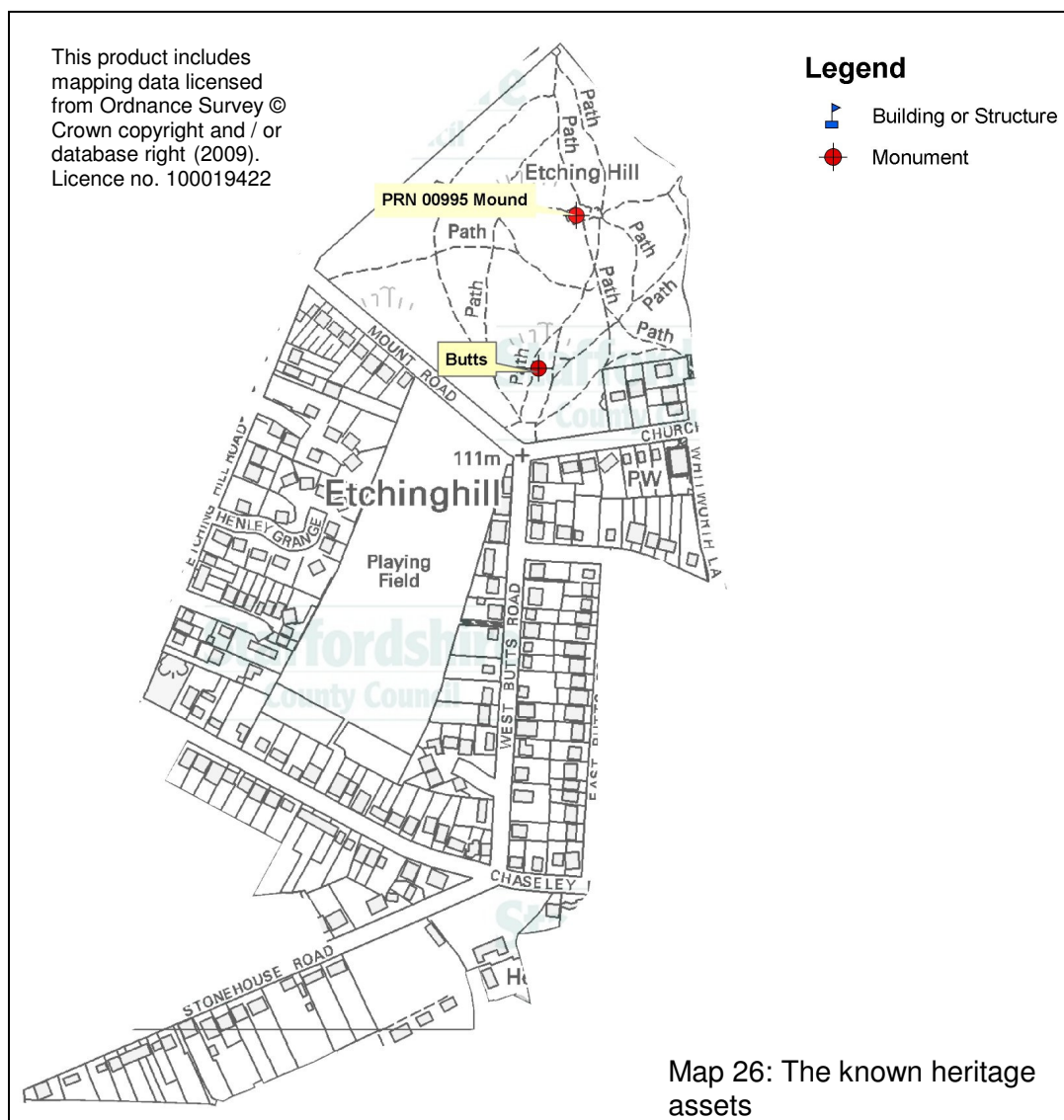


9.1 RHECZ 1 – Etchingill & Rugeley suburban growth

9.1.1 Summary on the historic environment

The zone is dominated by late 20th century housing and an associated playing field. Etchingill itself survives as an area of unenclosed land dotted with trees representing the remnants of a heath which once dominated this zone. Map 26 shows the known heritage assets within the zone including a mound which was once thought to be a Bronze Age mound, but is probably geological in origin¹¹⁸. Horse racing was taking place by 1834, although 17th century documents refer to ‘foot-racing’ over a three mile course at Etching Hill¹¹⁹. By the late 19th century a rifle range had been established within the zone and the butts may survive as an earthwork upon Etchingill.

The zone lies within the Cannock Chase AONB.



¹¹⁸ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00995

¹¹⁹ Greenslade 1959b: 152

9.1.2 Heritage Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has been extensively disturbed by development with the exception of Etchinghill.	1
Potential	The potential for surviving heritage assets has been reduced in the areas of the housing. However, there is greater potential upon Etchinghill itself where unknown below ground archaeology or earthworks could survive. The remains of the butts survive as an earthwork.	2
Documentation	HER data	1
Diversity	There are very few known heritage assets.	1
Group Association	The only known heritage assets are the earthwork rifle butts and the mound, which is likely to be geological rather than archaeological.	1
Amenity Value	Etchinghill is an area of publicly accessible land.	2
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for CCDC)	Large or medium scale development is unlikely to have an impact upon the historic environment of the zone.	1
Overall Score		Low

9.1.3 Statement of Significance

Few known heritage assets have been identified within the zone and the historic landscape character has largely been impacted by late 20th century development. The remains of the butts survive on Etchinghill which is of at least local importance.

The low score suggests that development is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the historic environment. However, there would be a need to address the following issues at an early stage in the development process:

- The impact upon the remains of the shooting butts.
- The potential for further surviving archaeological features can be decided upon a site-by-site basis and where deemed appropriate an archaeological condition will be attached to any resulting planning permission.

9.2 RHECZ 2 – Shooting Butts Road & Lady Hill Coppice

9.2.1 Summary on the historic environment

The zone had probably been dominated by heathland from at least the medieval period. There is some evidence for prehistoric activity within the zone which comprises two burnt mounds of probable Bronze Age date which were found along the Stafford Brook and shown on map 27¹²⁰. The function of these features has been widely debated, but their presence does not necessarily confirm that there was settlement within the immediate vicinity.

The heathland was enclosed following the passing of an Act of Parliament in 1885 and the resultant field system was laid out by surveyors creating the surviving planned enclosure which is typified by its straight field boundaries, to the north east of the zone as shown on map 27. The road system also appears to have been altered at this period and a linear cropmark shown on an aerial photograph to the east of the zone has been identified as part of a pre-1885 road¹²¹. A comparison of the first edition 1" OS map (1830s) with the first edition 6" OS map (1880s) suggests that other roads have also been lost or moved.

Two historic farmsteads survive within the zone, Shooting Butts Farm and Stafford Brook Farm. The former exhibits a regular courtyard plan form and probably dates to the 19th century¹²². Stafford Brook Farm has a loose courtyard plan, which may have developed incrementally over a long period of time. Both of the farms are marked on the first edition 1" OS map (1830s) and suggest that some form of enclosure had taken place prior to the passing of the Act in 1885.

Lady Hill Coppice, the extent of which is shown on map 27, has its origins in at least the late 18th century and is marked on 19th century maps as 'New Coppice'. It is possible that it was established to provide fuel to Cannock Wood forge, which existed by the late 17th century¹²³. The site of the forge lies further to the south, beyond the zone, on the Rising Brook. The coppice now comprises conifer plantation planted in the post war period, however, there is the potential for wood banks to survive relating to the earlier woodland management. One low earthwork bank has been identified lying on the eastern edge of the coppice, which has been tentatively suggested may represent the remains of a late 13th century deer park pale¹²⁴.

¹²⁰ Staffordshire HER: PRN 04183 and PRN 04052. Burnt mound: A mound of fire-cracked stones, normally accompanied by a trough or pit which may have been lined with wood, stone or clay. (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2009 English Heritage)

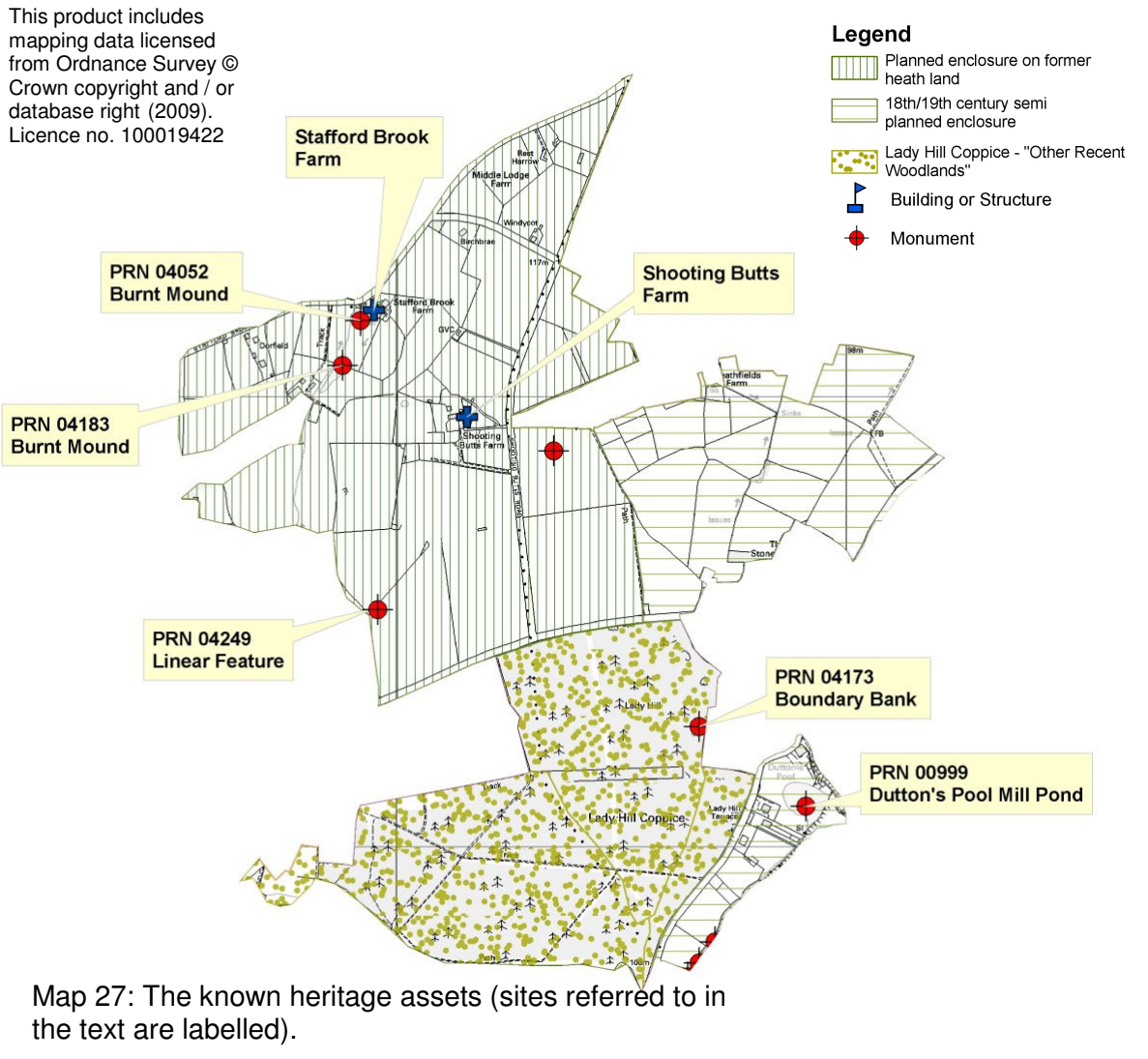
¹²¹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 04249

¹²² Lake 2009: 19

¹²³ Staffordshire HER: PRN 01003

¹²⁴ Staffordshire HER: PRN 04173

This product includes mapping data licensed from Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright and / or database right (2009). Licence no. 100019422



Map 27: The known heritage assets (sites referred to in the text are labelled).

Dutton's Pool survives to the south east of the zone and was probably constructed as a mill pond to power the slitting mill to the east of Slitting Mill hamlet and may have its origins in the early 17th century (see RHECZ 3)¹²⁵.

The zone lies within the Cannock Chase AONB.

9.2.2 Heritage Assets Summary Table

Survival	There has been little impact within the zone and only a few field boundaries have been removed. The 2000 aerial photographs suggest that most of the landscape is farmed as pasture.	3
Potential	The zone had formed heathland until at least the late 18 th century and there is therefore the potential for unknown archaeological deposits to survive, although there has currently been little archaeological or historic investigation.	2

¹²⁵ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00999

Documentation	HER data and results of the survey on the burnt mounds.	2
Diversity	There are a range of heritage assets including earthworks, cropmarks and the surviving historic field pattern and farmsteads.	2
Group Association	It is not clear to what extent the farmsteads are associated with the surviving field system.	1
Amenity Value	The historic environment does not lend itself to display or visitor attraction.	1
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for CCDC)	The historic field pattern is well preserved and the two farmsteads retain historic buildings. Consequently medium to large scale development is likely to have a significant impact upon the legibility of the historic landscape character in particular.	3
Overall Score		Moderate

9.2.3 Statement of Significance

The heritage assets identified within the zone are of at least local/regional significance and includes the surviving historic landscape character typified by the 18th/19th century planned enclosure, the extant mill pond and the historic buildings. There is the potential for archaeological remains to survive within Lady Hill Coppice relating to previous management regimes. The coppice is likely to have been associated with the post medieval iron working industry which existed within the wider area (see in particular RHECZ 3). There is also the potential for currently unknown prehistoric sites to survive as below ground archaeological deposits.

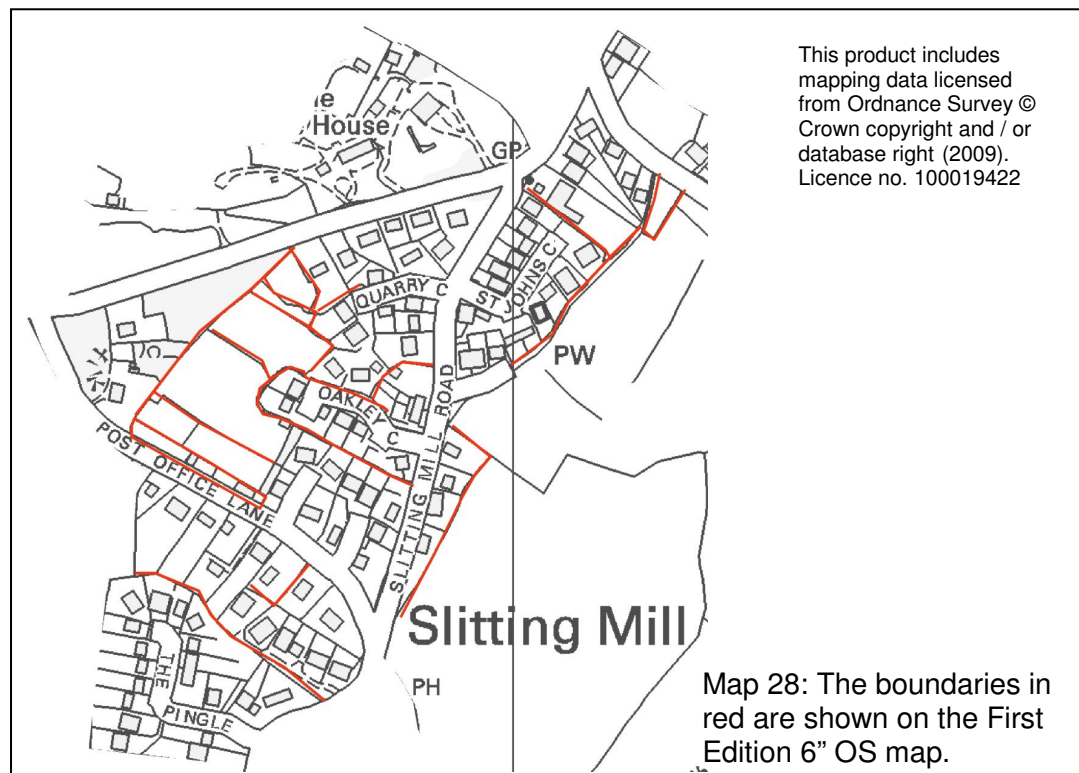
The moderate score suggests that development would have an impact upon the historic environment. Consequently, should development be planned within the zone there would be a need to address the following issues at an early stage in the process:

- The impact upon and mitigation strategies for the historic landscape character of the zone. Any development in this area would need to consider design strategies for retaining or reflecting the local distinctiveness of the zone.
- The impact upon and mitigation strategies for the surviving historic farmsteads.
- A strategy for assessing the potential impacts upon archaeological features, both known and unknown, and any consequent mitigation identified.

9.3 Rugeley HECZ 3 – Slitting Mill

9.3.1 Summary on the historic environment

The origins of the small settlement of Slitting Mill, shown on map 28, are currently obscure, although it is likely to have originated as a squatter settlement possibly as early as the late 16th/17th century. It is mostly dominated by late 20th century houses, but several earlier properties survive scattered along the lanes. The boundaries of the earlier squatter enclosures have also largely been retained and respected by the modern development, as depicted on map 28. Other than the cul-de-sacs serving a number of houses, the street pattern also survives intact. Further squatter enclosures survive between Post Office Lane and Penkridge Bank. The surviving early irregular enclosure, which dominates the remainder of the zone, may also have its origins as encroachment onto heathland possibly dating from the 16th or 17th century when the iron industry intensified on Cannock Chase.

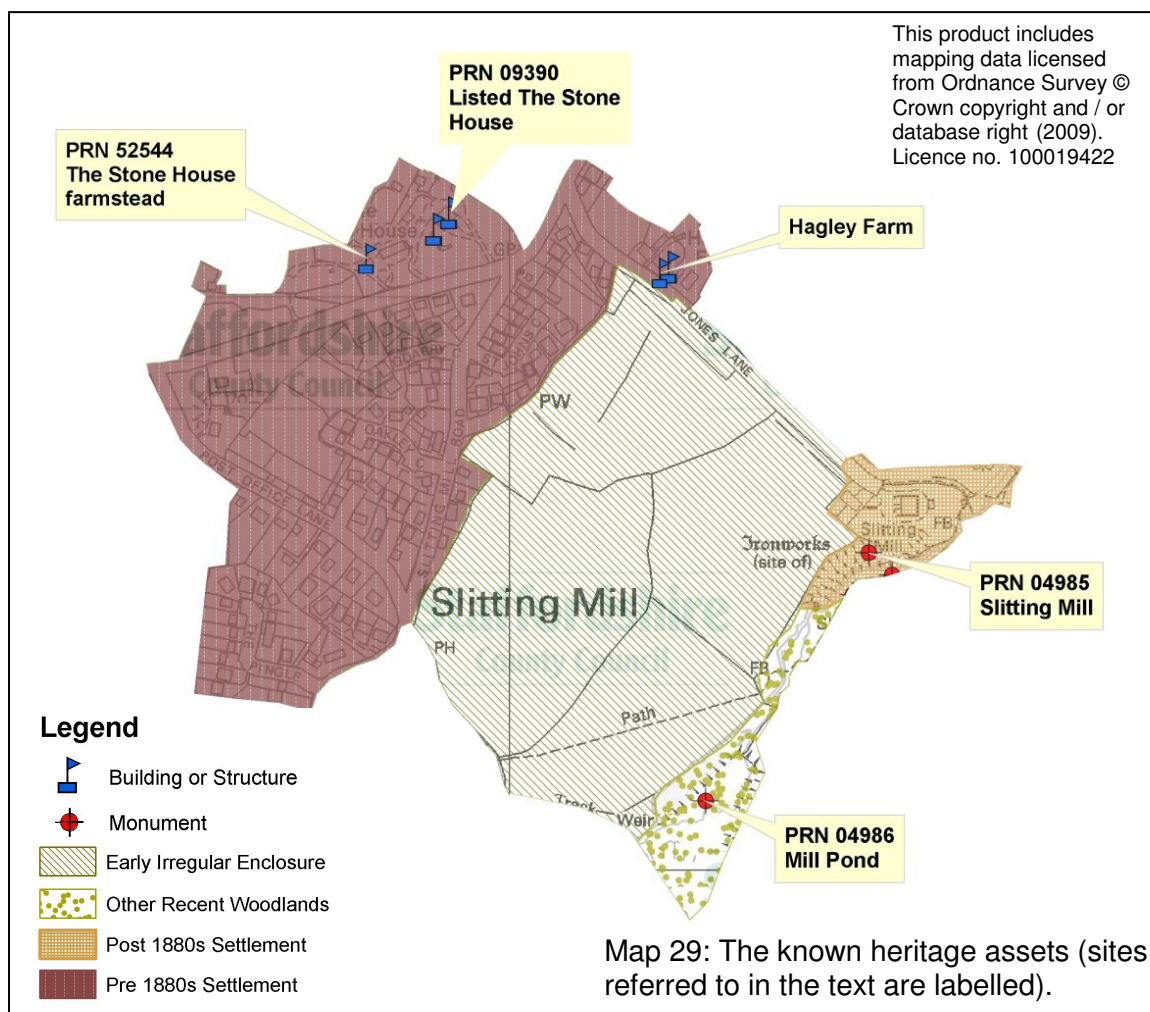


Map 29 shows the largest of the surviving historic buildings, Stone House, to the north of the zone; it been designated as a Grade II Listed building. The earliest phases of the property have been identified as being of 16th/17th century date, but it was greatly altered circa 1800¹²⁶. It is associated with a dispersed plan farmstead which probably developed incrementally¹²⁷. The property is believed to have been the home of some of the local iron masters, but at what point is unclear¹²⁸.

¹²⁶ Staffordshire HER: PRN09390

¹²⁷ Staffordshire HER: PRN52544

¹²⁸ Francis & Staffordshire Industrial Archaeology Society 1984



Just over 550m to the south east of Stone House lies the probable site of an early 17th century slitting mill¹²⁹. This is believed to be the earliest slitting mill in the Midlands and was probably built circa 1622 by Thomas Chetwynd (see [above](#) for wider history of iron working within Cannock Chase District). By the late 19th century the site was occupied by a disused rolling mill, which was demolished in 1921. The extant pumping station was constructed in 1932¹³⁰. However, the outlines of the mill pond and mill leats survive as earthworks and there is also the potential for below ground deposits to survive in the area of the pumping station. Downstream of the pumping station there are further earthworks associated with a second mill pond which fed the slitting mill¹³¹.

A further historic farmstead, Hagley Farm, lies to the north of the zone which has been identified as having a loose courtyard and probably also developed incrementally over a period of time.

Slitting Mill hamlet lies within the Cannock Chase AONB.

¹²⁹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 04985

¹³⁰ Chambers 1980: 4

¹³¹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 04986

9.3.2 Heritage Assets Summary Table

Survival	The historic settlement around Slitting Mill has seen development, although the form of the Squatter Enclosure is still legible and historic buildings also survive. In the remainder of the zone there has been little disturbance and earthworks survive associated with the post medieval iron working site.	2
Potential	The current evidence suggests that archaeological earthworks survive associated with the post medieval iron working site and there is the potential for associated below-ground deposits to survive in this area. Within the settlement there may be the potential for archaeological deposits to survive associated with early squatter settlement. There is also potential for further Bronze Age burnt mounds to survive alongside Rising Brook (two were found along here in 1989 – see Rugeley HECZ 4 below).	3
Documentation	HER data and historic research on the post medieval iron working site.	2
Diversity	There are a range of historic environment assets (HEAs) within the zone. These include historic buildings, historic landscape character (including the fossilised squatter enclosure at Slitting Mill) as well as earthworks. The evolution of the settlement and former industrial has occurred over a number of centuries, but these features are likely to have origins of a similar period (circa 17 th century).	3
Group Association	The HEAs within the zone all of which are likely to have originated circa 17 th century as part of the development of the iron working industry and associated squatter enclosures.	3

Amenity Value	The historic environment could play a key role in the sense of place for the zone and for the Rugeley area more generally. The settlement and the iron working site are associated from the 17 th century through to the later 19 th century at least. The surviving earthworks could be promoted to tell the story of iron working around Rugeley. Some heritage interpretation has been carried out adjacent to the pumping station as part of the Chase Heritage Cycle Trail.	3
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for CCDC)	The zone is highly sensitive to medium/large scale development. The surviving historic landscape character, in the form of early irregular enclosure, but also the fossilised squatter enclosure boundaries within the settlement and surviving historic buildings. The relationship between the surviving earthworks along the Rising Brook relating to the ironworks and the settlement would also be eroded by development.	3
Overall Score		High

9.3.3 Statement of Significance

Stone House has been identified as being of national importance with its Grade II listed status and the remaining known heritage assets are of at least local/regional significance. These include the remains of what may well be the earliest slitting mill in the Midlands. The historic landscape character has post medieval origins and is comprised of a well preserved historic field system and the small settlement of Slitting Mill. The latter has surviving elements which identify its origins as a squatter settlement. There is the potential for archaeological remains to survive across the zone relating to the development of the iron working industry and associated settlement in the post medieval period, but also for prehistoric remains particularly associated with the Rising Brook.

Medium to large-scale development would clearly have a detrimental impact upon the legibility and stability of the historic environment of the zone. The following identify particular vulnerabilities and opportunities:

- The historic landscape character of the zone could be retained and enhanced. This would include the surviving historic property boundaries and the street pattern within Slitting Mill.
- The retention and enhancement of the historic buildings.
- The stability of above and below ground archaeological features, both known and unknown.

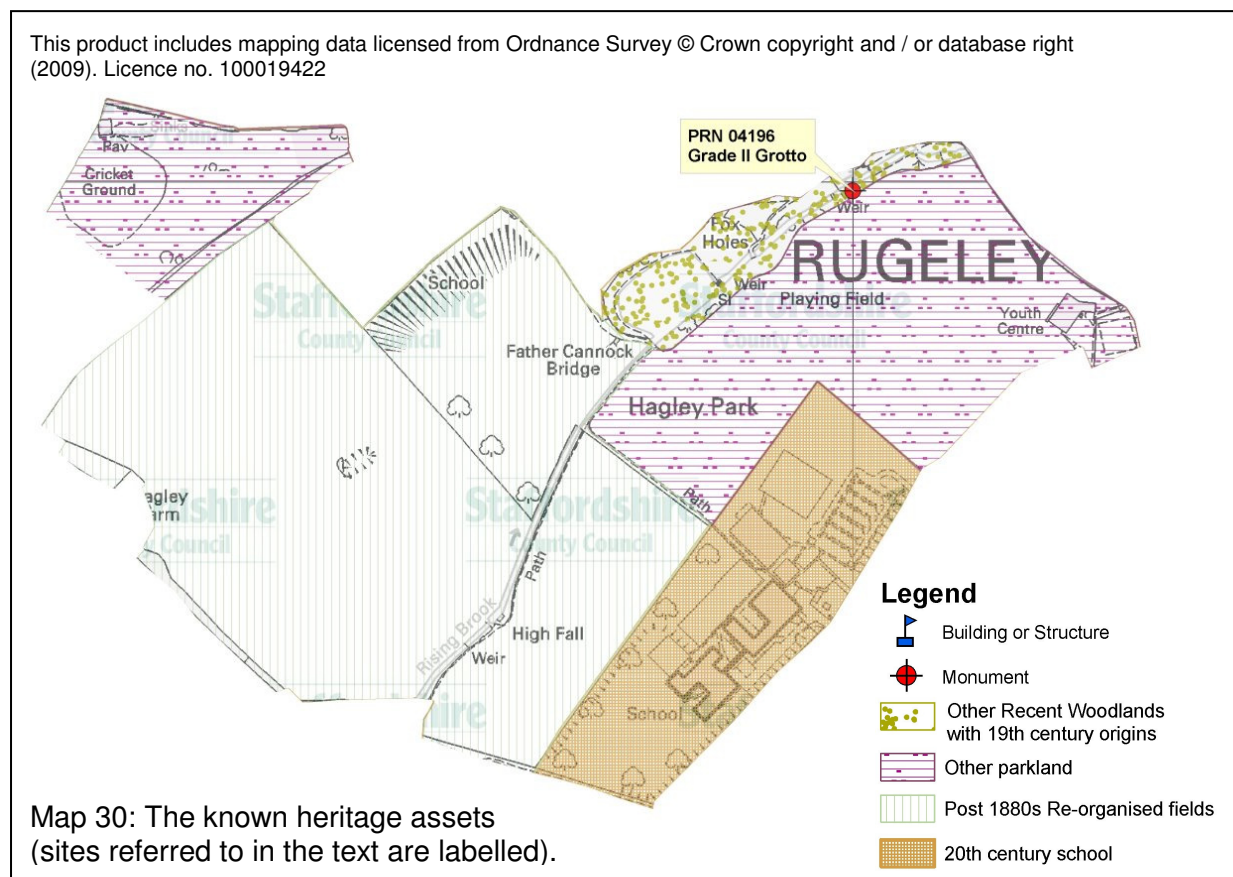
- How the surviving aspects of the early iron working site could be promoted to contribute to an understanding of the importance of the local area in the development of this industry during the 16th/17th century.

9.4 Rugeley HECZ 4 – Hagley Park

9.4.1 Summary on the historic environment

Map 30 shows the extent of a former landscape park which had been associated with Hagley Hall¹³². The hall, which stood just to the north of the grotto (beyond the zone) was demolished sometime after 1963¹³³, but is believed to have had 17th century origins. The landscape park existed by the late 18th century when the owner improved the grounds and planted shrubberies¹³⁴. The remainder of the landscape park has mostly been converted to agricultural usage. The historic character of the landscape park has been eroded during the 20th century when a school was built upon the western portion. The remainder of the park has since been converted to agricultural use. However, the extant woodland and fishpond known as Fox Holes was present by at least the late 19th century. Within this woodland there is a Grade II Listed underground grotto of late 18th century date, which has been carved into the sandstone cliff¹³⁵.

Other features may survive including the weir on Rising Brook which is shown on the first edition 6" OS map (1880s) and the footbridges. Two 18th century outbuildings, which lay within the parkland, have been demolished since the early 1960s¹³⁶.



¹³² Staffordshire HER: PRN 01881

¹³³ Hunting Surveys Ltd 1963: Run 21 no. 6450 (the house is shown on this AP)

¹³⁴ Staffordshire HER: PRN 40126; Greenslade 1959b: 156

¹³⁵ Staffordshire HER: PRN 04196

¹³⁶ Hunting Surveys Ltd 1963: Run 21 no. 6450 (both sets of outbuildings are shown on the AP)

There are opportunities to restore or recreate the landscape park, which would provide a valuable public amenity.

9.4.2 Heritage Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has seen at least moderate disturbance mostly through agricultural and development activities which have eroded the historic landscape character.	2
Potential	There are a limited number of known heritage assets which relate to the parkland.	2
Documentation	HER data & historic source.	1
Diversity	There are a range of HEAs including the grotto, woodland and fish pond.	2
Group Association	The above mentioned features are associated with the historic landscape park.	2
Amenity Value	There is the potential to restore or recreate historic parkland features to provide a public amenity.	2
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for CCDG)	Medium to large scale development would have at least a moderate impact upon those surviving landscape park features.	2
Overall Score		Moderate

9.4.3 Statement of Significance

The heritage assets identified within the zone are of at least local/regional significance, although the Grade II Listed grotto has been designated as being of national importance. The overall historic landscape character has been impacted by 20th century changes including development and agricultural intensification. There has been a lack of investigation into the historic environment of the zone and it is possible that currently unknown archaeological remains are present.

The moderate score suggests that development would impact upon aspects of the historic environment, but within this zone there are opportunities to enhance the historic landscape character and the associated parkland structures. However, should further development be planned within the zone it is recommended that the following issues be addressed at an early stage in the process:

- The impact upon and mitigation strategies for the surviving parkland features.
- Early consultation with CCDG's Conservation Officer concerning impacts upon the Listed grotto.
- The potential for further surviving archaeological features can be decided upon a site-by-site basis and where deemed appropriate an archaeological condition will be attached to any resulting planning permission.

9.5 Rugeley HECZ 5 – Stilecop Field and environs

9.5.1 Summary on the historic environment

Map 31 reveals that the overall historic landscape of the zone has been impacted by change implemented in the 20th and early 21st centuries. Housing development completed since 2000 now dominates the northern part of the zone. This area had formed part of the wider field system at the heart of which lay the historic farmstead of Lower Birches. The farmstead had at least 19th century origins¹³⁷.

The field system to the west of the Hednesford Road has seen considerable field boundary removal during the second half of the 20th century. These fields appear to have originated in the 18th/19th century as planned enclosure which has obscured the earlier history. The field pattern was cut by the construction of the London & North Western Railway (LNWR) during the 19th century. One historic farmstead, Upper Birches Farm, survives on this side of Hednesford Road. It has been identified as having a regular courtyard plan. Nationally these farmstead plans are seen to date from the late 18th century and are associated with the agricultural improvements which began at this period¹³⁸. It is likely that the farmstead was planned or re-planned at a similar period to the planned enclosure. A number of outfarms were also identified within this field system, but they have since been demolished.

Stilecop Field, to the east of Hednesford Road is likely to have formed heath land until the late 19th century when an Act of Parliament was passed to enclose this landscape. However, Stilecop Field does not appear to have ever been formerly enclosed; the extant field boundaries to the north of the field are probably late 20th century in origin. One account suggests that the land was owned by a colliery company by the end of the 19th century, but there is no cartographic evidence that mining ever occurred here, although the land is depicted as being “rough ground”¹³⁹. During the Second World War a prisoner of war camp was erected on the field known as Flaxley Camp¹⁴⁰. The site of the camp is largely covered by trees and aerial photographs (taken circa 2000) suggest that several of the huts bases survive and others may be present under the trees.

To the east of Ravenhill the historic landscape character appears to be in the process of returning to common land with scrub and rough grassland dominating. This area had formed part of Brereton Heath at the end of the 18th century¹⁴¹. By the early 19th century squatter enclosures were being made upon the heath by people probably attracted to the area by the industrial opportunities particularly the small scale coal workings¹⁴². At the time of the First Edition 6” OS map (1880s) the squatter enclosures encompassed the entire area of Brereton Heath although no properties were then present. However, by the early 20th century these small enclosures had been removed and larger fields dominated suggesting they were

¹³⁷ Staffordshire HER: PRN 51078

¹³⁸ Lake 2009: 19

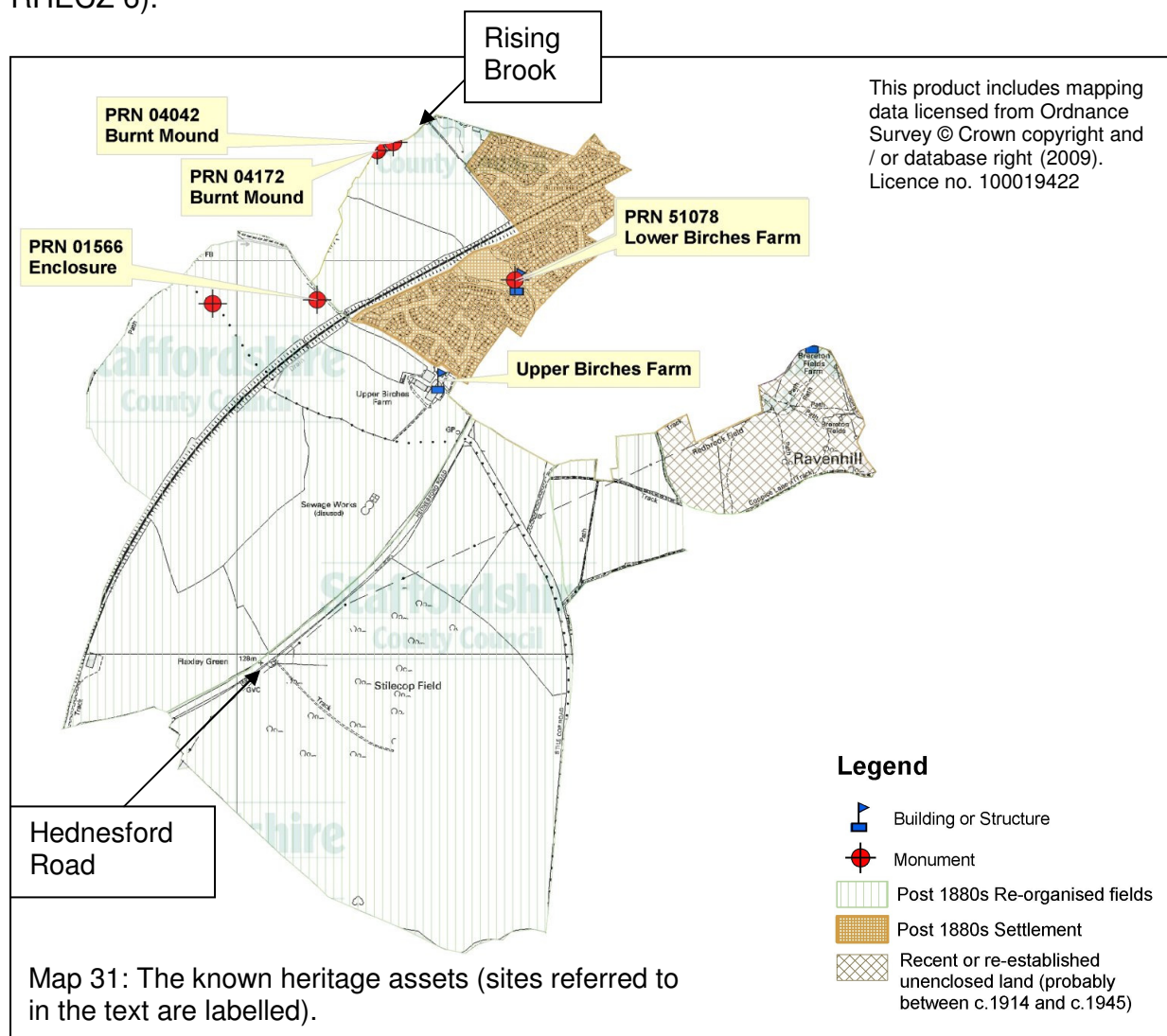
¹³⁹ Compare the second to fourth edition 6” OS maps

¹⁴⁰ Staffordshire HER: PRN 20002

¹⁴¹ WSL 112/57/41 plan of the boundaries of the Manors of Hansacre & Armitage and of Brereton 1796.

¹⁴² Staffordshire HER: PRN 20536

being exploited as part of a larger agricultural concern. Associated with the early 19th century industrial expansion is the line of the Hays plateway which was built to serve the Brereton coal pits which lay to the south of Chetwynd Coppice (see RHECZ 6).



An undated enclosure, shown on map 31, was identified on aerial photographs taken in 1963¹⁴³. The enclosure pre dates the railway (which was constructed in the mid 19th century) and therefore could suggest human activity within the zone from the prehistoric period onwards. Further evidence for activity during the Bronze Age lies along the Rising Brook to the north east of the zone where two burnt mounds were identified during a field survey¹⁴⁴. A Neolithic/Bronze Age stone axe head was discovered, possibly to the west of the Hednesford Road, although this probably represents casual loss and does not add significantly to our understanding of the exploitation of this landscape during the prehistoric period.

The majority of the zone lies within the Cannock Chase AONB with the exception of the 21st century housing development.

¹⁴³ Staffordshire HER: PRN 01566

¹⁴⁴ Staffordshire HER: PRNs 04042 and 04172. Burnt mound: A mound of fire-cracked stones, normally accompanied by a trough or pit which may have been lined with wood, stone or clay.

9.5.2 Heritage Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has been impacted by agricultural processes during the 20 th century, although it has been established that heritage assets do survive within Stilecop Field.	2
Potential	There are otherwise limited known heritage assets, although the current lack of knowledge is probably the result of lack of investigation rather than poor preservation. There is the potential for further archaeological deposits to survive as suggested by the presence of the enclosure and burnt mounds.	2
Documentation	HER data	1
Diversity	There are a range of heritage assets including the cropmark enclosure; the structural and earthwork remains of the prisoner of war camp and the surviving historic buildings at Upper Birches Farm.	2
Group Association	The surviving farmstead (Upper Birches) was probably planned or re-planned as part of the wider improvements to the landscape typified by the contemporary planned enclosure. However, the field system has been impacted by field boundary removal during the 20 th century.	1
Amenity Value	The prisoner of war camp could be promoted to help define a sense of place within the landscape.	2
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for CCDC)	The zone could accommodate medium to large scale development in terms of the impact upon the historic landscape character. However, specific HEAs may suffer adverse effects and mitigation strategies may be required.	1
Overall Score		Low/moderate

9.5.3 Statement of Significance

The heritage assets identified within the zone are of at least local/regional significance, although the historic landscape character has been impacted by 20th century changes including development and agricultural intensification. There is the potential for archaeological remains to survive particularly to the west Hednesford Road. The remains of the Prisoner of War camp are potentially of national importance, although the extent of its survival is currently unknown.

The low/moderate score suggests that development may have at least a marginal impact upon the historic environment. Consequently there would be a need to address the following issues at an early stage in the development process:

- Early consultation with SCC's Cultural Heritage Team to discuss strategies for assessing the condition and survival of the Prisoner of War Camp.
- The retention of the surviving historic buildings within the farmstead.
- A strategy for assessing the potential impacts upon archaeological features, both known and unknown, and any consequent mitigation identified.

9.6 Rugeley HECZ 6 – Chetwynd’s Coppice

9.6.1 Summary

The historic landscape character of the zone is dominated by Chetwynd’s Coppice a large area of woodland which was probably re-planted during the 20th century. However, woodland has been present here since at least the late 18th century and the name may imply a link to the Chetwynd family who were operating a forge in the manor of Rugeley by 1555. This is probably the same family who rented most of the ironworks on Cannock Chase, from Lord Paget, during the 17th century¹⁴⁵. Timber from ‘Chetwin’ recorded in a Paget accounts document may have come from the area of Chetwynd’s Coppice¹⁴⁶. Earthwork banks have been recorded within and around the coppice, which probably relate to previous woodland management practices¹⁴⁷. It is possible that further earthwork features survive within the woodland.

Map 32 shows a field system ‘Planned clearance’ in the north east of the zone and it is likely that this area had once formed part of the coppice. It was probably cleared of trees during the post medieval period. The cemetery located in this portion of the zone dates to the 20th century.

To the far east of the zone Brereton Colliery was in operation from the late 18th century. The main concentration of mine shafts, as shown on map 32, was located to the south east and the remains are under woodland¹⁴⁸. To the north east stood the Coppice Pit colliery which opened in 1848 with associated buildings, but closed during the first decade of the 20th century¹⁴⁹. A new coal pit appears to have been sunk during the early 20th century on the western edge of the zone, which is currently the site of a car park and picnic area¹⁵⁰.

The zone lies within Cannock Chase AONB.

¹⁴⁵ Johnson 1967: 109; King 1999: 59

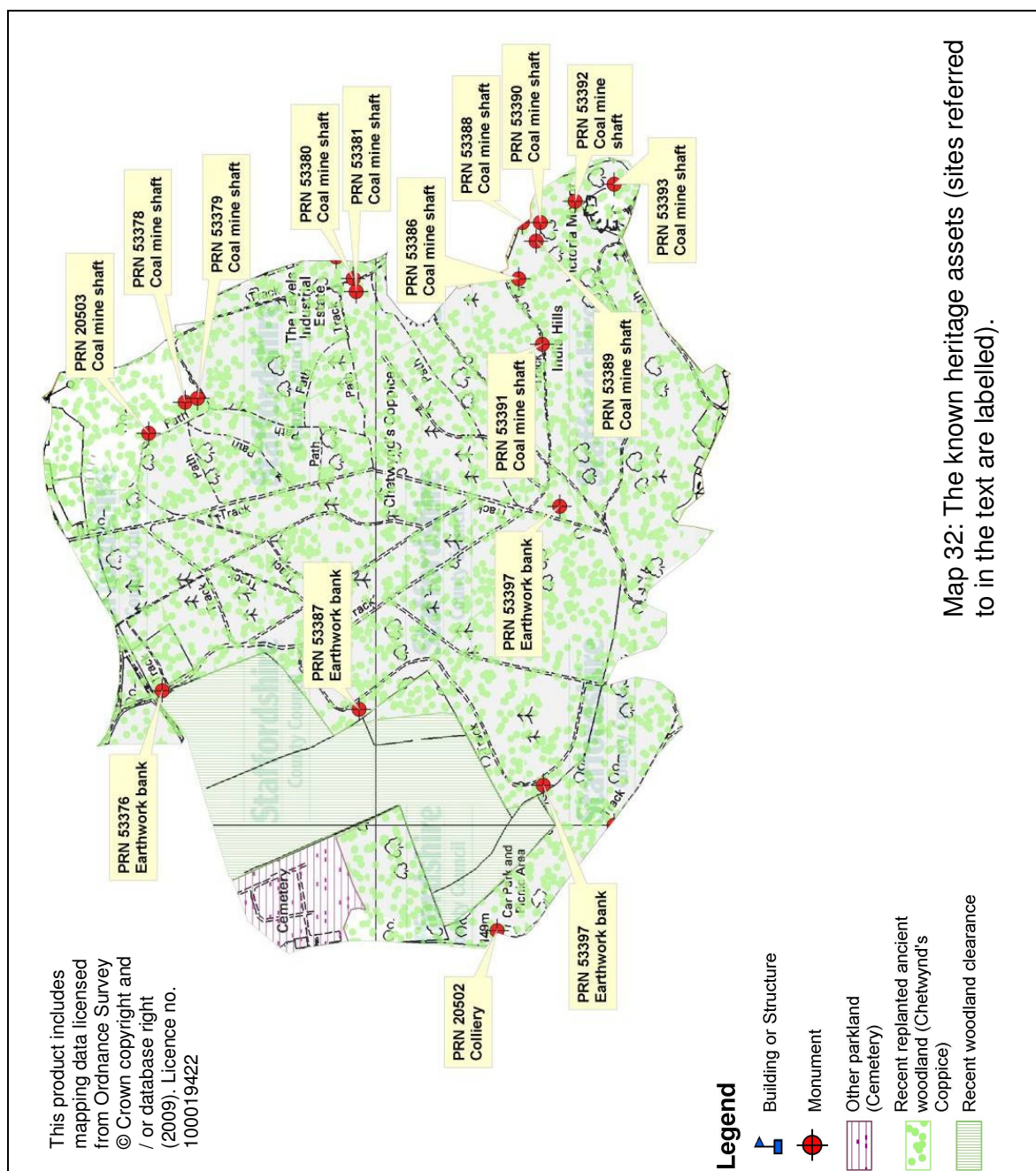
¹⁴⁶ Welch 2000:68, Table 2 (p.37) and Fig. 3 (p.45)

¹⁴⁷ Staffordshire HER: PRNs 53387 and 53376

¹⁴⁸ Staffordshire HER: PRNs 53380, 53381, 53386, 53388 to 53393

¹⁴⁹ Staffordshire HER: PRNs 20503, 53378 and 53379

¹⁵⁰ Staffordshire HER: PRN 20502



9.6.2 Heritage Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has seen at least moderate disturbance from 20 th century forestry.	2
Potential	The mining features and earthwork banks within the zone survive. However, there has been little investigation in terms of the potential for features of different periods or forms. There is the potential for further earthworks and potentially below ground features to survive.	2

Documentation	HER data, mining survey and earthworks survey.	2
Diversity	There are features of different character in the form of earthworks and below ground features relating to mining. These features are probably of different date.	2
Group Association	The known heritage assets are unlikely to be closely associated although they probably relate to different periods of industrial activity within the zone.	1
Amenity Value	The historic environment does not currently lend itself to display or visitor attraction. However, there is already public access to parts of the zone and interpretation on the history of mining could be made available at the car park and picnic area.	1
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for CCDC)	The character of the zone has been impacted by forestry plantation although the form of the woodland appears to be little changed from the 19 th century. Development would potentially impact upon the known heritage assets.	2
Overall Score		Low/moderate

9.6.3 Statement of Significance

The heritage assets identified within the zone are of at least local/regional significance, although the historic landscape character has been impacted by 20th century forestry plantation. The overall outline of Chetwynd's Coppice survives and the earthwork banks probably relate to previous management regimes which could date back to at least the late 16th century. There is further potential for archaeological remains to survive, both above and below ground, particularly associated with historic industrial activities.

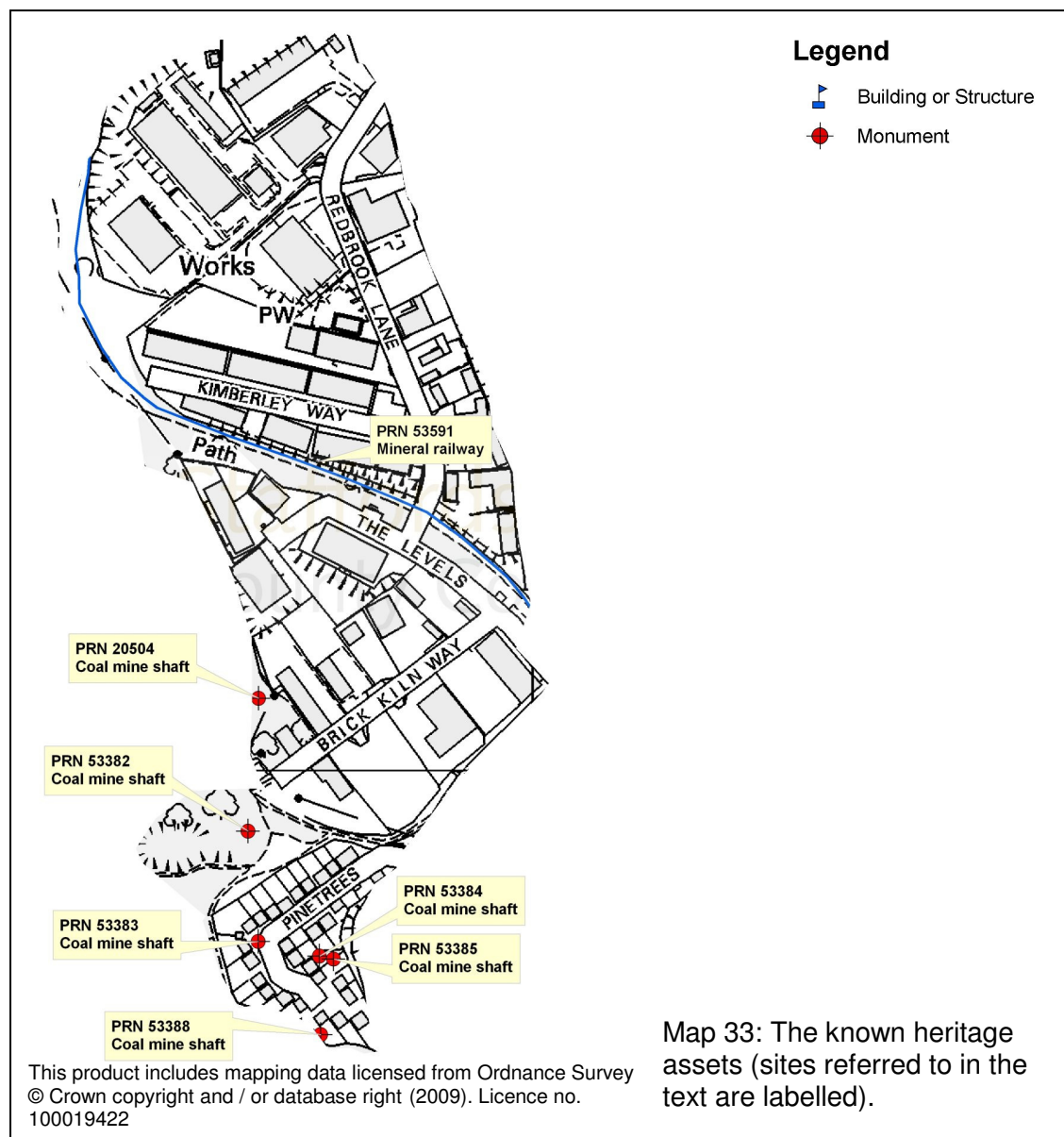
The low/moderate score suggests that development may have at least a marginal impact upon the historic environment. Consequently there would be a need to address the following issues at an early stage in the development process:

- The impact upon and mitigation strategies for the surviving earthwork banks and the potential for further earthworks to survive.
- A strategy for assessing the potential impacts upon archaeological features, both known and unknown, and any consequent mitigation identified.

9.7 Rugeley HECZ 7 – Industrial estates, Brereton

9.7.1 Summary

The historic landscape character of this zone is dominated by late 20th century industrial estates. The Levels Industrial Estate and the early 21st century housing, to the south of the zone, were constructed upon the site of Brereton Colliery. The earliest shafts, marked on map 33, had probably been sunk in the late 18th century and it was worked throughout the 19th century, but had been abandoned by the early 1920s¹⁵¹. The south western corner of the zone has not been re-developed since the colliery was abandoned and it is possible that above and below ground archaeology associated with the 19th century coal mining activity survive. The line of the Brereton Colliery mineral railway crossed the northern half the zone on an approximate north east-south west alignment. The railway was constructed probably constructed after 1877; it is no longer in use but survives within the zone as an earthwork and forms part of the Brereton & Ravenhill Way (a footpath/cycleway).



¹⁵¹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 20498, 53382 to 53385 & 53388

The railway was constructed across a field system which probably had its origins in the 18th/19th century as planned enclosure.

9.7.2 Heritage Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has been extensively disturbed by development during the 20 th century.	1
Potential	The potential for surviving heritage assets has been reduced by development. However, there is the potential for features, particularly the remains of pit shafts, to survive to the south.	2
Documentation	HER data; mine shaft survey	2
Diversity	There are a limited range of known heritage assets. The line of the colliery railway is the most readily legible within the zone.	1
Group Association	The remains of the colliery, where there are surviving elements, is clearly associated with the surviving line of the railway.	2
Amenity Value	The historic environment does not lend itself to display or visitor attraction.	1
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for CCDC)	Re-development of the zone is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the historic environment. However, it is recommended that the line of the colliery railway be preserved.	1
Overall Score		Low

9.7.3 Statement of Significance

The line of the colliery railway and any surviving mining features to the south of the zone are of local/regional significance. The current historic landscape character is dominated by late 20th century industrial development. There is the potential for further mining features to survive in the south western corner of the zone.

The low score suggests that development would not have a significant impact upon the historic environment. However, there would be a need to address the following issues at an early stage in the development process:

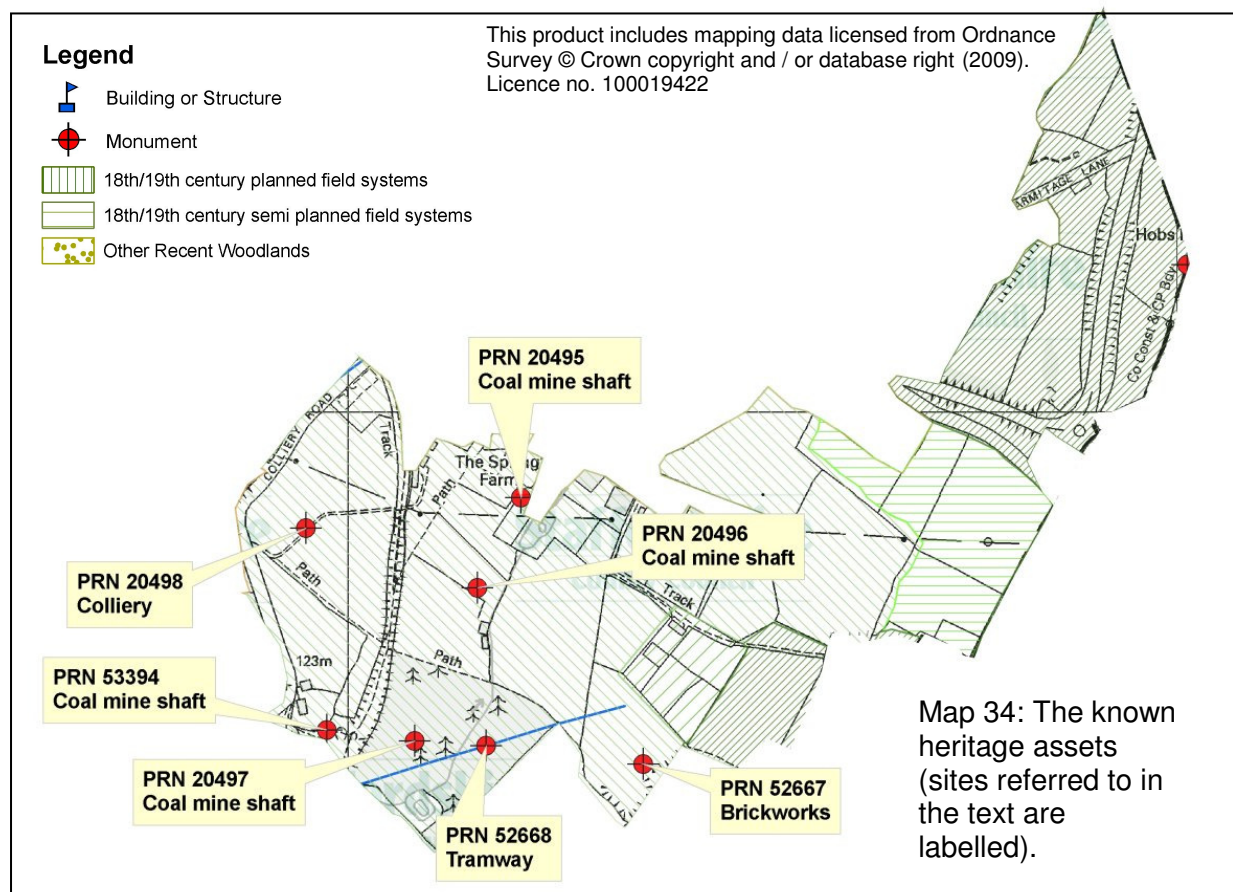
- A strategy for assessing the potential impacts upon archaeological features, both known and unknown, and any consequent mitigation identified. These considerations include, but are not limited to, the potential for surviving activity associated with the coal mining industry.
- The retention of the line of the Brereton Colliery railway.

9.8 Rugeley HECZ 8 – South of Brereton

9.8.1 Summary

The zone is dominated by field systems which probably have post medieval origins. Those to the north and south east, marked as piecemeal enclosure on map 34, had probably formed part of an open field during the medieval period. These open fields are likely to have been farmed by the inhabitants of Brereton. This settlement was first recorded in the late 13th century¹⁵². It is possible that the paddocks and closes to the south also originated as part of an open field system, but further research would be required to assess its origins.

The known heritage assets are concentrated to the south of the zone and relate to industrial activities which probably had their origins in the 19th century. These include a number of mine shafts which had been abandoned by the late 19th century, which may survive as earthwork or below ground structures¹⁵³. A brickworks and quarry had been established to the south west of the zone by the late 19th century, but this had ceased operation by the mid 20th century¹⁵⁴. The brick works was serviced by a tramway, the line of which may survive as a cropmark or earthwork¹⁵⁵.



¹⁵² Horowitz 2005: 146

¹⁵³ Staffordshire HER: PRNs 20495, 20496, 20497 and MST 17160

¹⁵⁴ Staffordshire HER: PRN 52667

¹⁵⁵ Staffordshire HER: PRN 52668

The western boundary borders the Cannock Chase AONB.

9.8.2 Heritage Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has probably seen moderate disturbance by agricultural practices, although the historic field pattern survives well particularly to the east of the zone.	2
Potential	There are surviving heritage assets in the form of the historic field pattern as well as the probable remains of 19 th century industrial activity. The earlier history of the zone is unknown due probably to a lack of investigation rather than poor preservation.	2
Documentation	HER data, mine shaft survey	2
Diversity	The assets within the zone range from the surviving historic landscape character and the potential for the industrial heritage assets to survive.	2
Group Association	There are few heritage assets which are closely associated within the zone. However, the field system is associated with the origins of Brereton as a medieval settlement.	2
Amenity Value	The historic environment does not lend itself to display or visitor attraction.	1
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for CCDC)	Development is likely to have a moderate impact upon the historic environment, particularly upon the legibility of the field systems.	2
Overall Score		Moderate

9.8.3 Statement of Significance

The HEAs identified within the zone are of at least local/regional significance. The historic landscape character is dominated by historic field patterns, which mostly survive. There is the potential for the survival of the industrial features, particularly the line of the tramway and the mine shafts.

The low/moderate score suggests that development would have some impact upon the historic environment. Consequently there would be a need to address the following issues at an early stage in the development process:

- The impact upon and mitigation strategies for the potential for the industrial features to survive as earthworks.
- The impact upon and mitigation strategies for the historic landscape character of the zone. Any development in this area would need to consider design strategies for retaining or reflecting the local distinctiveness of the zone.
- A strategy for assessing the potential impacts upon archaeological features, both known and unknown, and any consequent mitigation identified.

10. Contacts

Staffordshire County Council:

Cultural Environment Team
Environment and Countryside
Development Services Directorate
Staffordshire County Council
Riverway
Stafford
ST16 3TJ

Tel: 01785 277290/7285/7280

Email: her@staffordshire.gov.uk

Cannock Chase District Council:

Conservation Officer,
Cannock Chase Council,
Civic Centre,
P O Box 28,
Beecroft Road,
Cannock,
WS11 1BG

Tel: 01543 464517

Email: angelagrove@cannockchasedc.gov.uk

English Heritage:

Inspector of Ancient Monuments (Staffordshire)
English Heritage West Midlands Region,
The Axis,
10 Holliday Street,
Birmingham,
B1 1TG

Tel: 0121 625 6820

Email: westmidlands@english-heritage.org.uk

** A summary version of Staffordshire HER sites can be viewed online at <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/> or for more detailed information contact the Cultural Heritage Team directly.

11. Glossary

Anglo-Saxon	Period dating between 410 AD and 1065 AD
Assart	A piece of forest land converted into arable *
Barbed & tanged arrowhead	A triangular arrowhead retouched to form a central tang and lateral barbs. The sides may be straight or concave. *
Bloomery	A charcoal fired shaft furnace used for the direct reduction of iron ore to produce wrought iron*
Bronze Age	Period dating between 2350 BC to 701 BC
Burnt mound	A mound of fire-cracked stones, normally accompanied by a trough or pit which may have been lined with wood, stone or clay.* The function of these features has been debated.
Capital messuage	The principle dwelling house with outbuildings and attached land.
Coppice	A managed small wood or thicket of underwood grown to be periodically cut to encourage new growth providing smaller timber. *
Cropmark	Monument visible as a mark in standing crops, parchmarks or soilmarks, but where no subsurface deposits have been proven eg by excavation or other ground disturbance *
Earthwork	Monument existing as an upstanding earthwork, ditch or artificial watercourse, or as a low stone built feature *
Flake (flint)	A flake of stone struck from the core where the length is less than twice the width. *
Hay	Division or enclosure within a medieval forest
Heritage Asset	A place or asset which is assigned cultural value ¹⁵⁶ . This includes, but is not limited to, historic buildings, archaeological remains, monuments, parks and gardens, historic battlefields etc.
Inter-war period	The period between the end of the First World War (1918) and the beginning of the Second World War (1939).
Iron Age	Period dating between 800 BC to 42 AD
Staffordshire HER	Staffordshire Historic Environment Record (held by Staffordshire County Council)
Lodge	A small building, often inhabited by a

¹⁵⁶ English Heritage 2009: 36

	gatekeeper, gamekeeper or similar *
Mesolithic	Period dating between 10,000 BC to 4,001 BC
Messuage	A dwelling-house with outbuildings and land assigned to its use*
Moat	A wide ditch surrounding a building, usually filled with water *
Neolithic	Period dating between 4,000 BC to 2,351 BC
Open Field	An area of arable land with common rights after harvest or while fallow. Usually without internal divisions (hedges, walls or fences).*
Outfarm	Farm buildings detached from the main steading where processes such as the processing and storage of crops; the housing of animals and the production of manure; or tasks such as milking were performed (Lake & Edwards 2008:30)
Palaeolithic	Period dating between 500,000 BC to 10,001 BC
Piecemeal Enclosure	Piecemeal enclosure can be defined as those fields created out of the medieval open fields by means of informal, verbal agreements between farmers who wished to consolidate their holdings. Within Staffordshire this process appears to have been well under way by the late medieval period, and was probably largely enclosed by the 16 th century. These areas have field patterns comprised of small irregular or rectilinear fields. At least two boundaries will have 's-curve' or 'dog-leg' morphology, suggesting that they follow the boundaries of former medieval field strips.
Planned Enclosure	These areas are characterised by either small or large fields that share very straight boundaries, giving them a geometric, planned appearance. Laid out by surveyors, these field patterns result from late enclosure during the 18 th and 19 th centuries. This historic landscape character type, therefore, includes commons that were enclosed by Act of Parliament.
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.*
Roman	Period dating between 43 AD to 409 AD
Scraper (flint tool)	A flake or blade with retouch along one or more edges.*

Slitting Mill	A mill with machinery used to cut slabs of metal into rods, or thin sections, for use in nail making or wire drawing*
VCH	Victoria County History for Staffordshire – copies located within the Staffordshire HER
Warren	An area used for the breeding and rearing of rabbits *
Warrener	The keeper of the Warren
WSL	William Salt Library, Stafford
Wood bank	An earthen bank indicating the limit of a wood or coppice.*

* Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2009 English Heritage