

Appendix 3: Historic Environment Character Zones Assessments for Eccleshall

This appendix provides an assessment of the historic environment for each of the Historic Environment Character Zones (HECZs) which lies around the small town of Eccleshall.

It should be noted that the information and any recommendations contained within this appendix is subject to amendment should any new information become available.

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EHECZ 1 – South of Eccleshall (HECA 5g)

Summary

During the medieval period the zone was dominated by arable open fields which were farmed by the local inhabitants who probably largely resided in Eccleshall, to the north of the zone, and the small hamlets or farmstead clusters of Wootton and Horseley. The landscape was probably enclosed during the post medieval period, but with the intensification of agricultural production during the 20th century the legibility of the historic field pattern has been impacted through the removal of field boundaries. The historic dispersed settlement pattern survives with eight farmsteads scattered across the landscape. It is possible that many of their origins can be traced to the enclosure of the wider landscape.

Little is currently known about activity in the zone prior to the medieval period, although it is likely to have been settled by at least the Saxon period. There is some limited evidence suggesting human presence within the zone during the Roman period.

Medium to large scale development within the zone is unlikely to have a significant impact on the historic environment of the zone. Should development be planned within the zone it would need to address impacts upon and potential mitigation strategies for:

- The impact upon the Listed buildings.
- The surviving parkland features associated with Johnson Hall.
- The impact upon below ground archaeological deposits.

Early consultation with the Conservation Officer at Stafford Borough Council and the Cultural Heritage Team at Staffordshire County Council is advised.

Designations (map 1)

Two Listed buildings lie within the character zone.

Archaeological Character (map 2)

The current understanding of the later prehistoric landscape of the country suggests that it had mostly been heavily wooded until the Bronze Age. Some clearance may have begun to take place by this period to support a small scale pastoral economy when humans were settling down to farm specific landscapes. There are currently no known sites of Prehistoric date within the character zone, but this is likely to be due to lack of investigation.

The only evidence for Roman activity currently comes from stray finds comprising 13 sherds of pottery from near Wincote Lodge¹. A Roman coin and a brooch have also been recovered from within the zone².

Evidence for human activity in the Saxon period almost exclusively comes from references to entries in Domesday Book (1086). Wootton, part of which lies within this character zone, was recorded as belonging to the Bishop of Chester's manor of Sugnall. It does not indicate how many people may have been living in the area at this period, but it was clearly part of a farming community.

Historic Landscape (map 3)

The historic landscape of the character zone was heavily influenced during the medieval period by the presence of the market town of Eccleshall, which lies to the north. Other medieval settlement within the character zone, Wootton, mentioned above, and Horseley, first mentioned in documentary sources in the late 13th century, would also have had an influence in forming the medieval landscape through agricultural practices. Open field agriculture dominated at this period,³ which was probably in place by the late Saxon period. This was a pattern of arable agriculture, where two or more large fields were divided into individual strips whereby the local people held scattered strips among them. Evidence of this form of arable agriculture was identified on aerial photographs taken in the early 1960s in the form of ridge and furrow⁴ earthworks to the south east of Horseley Hall, east of the Newport Road near Wootton and south of Green Lane in Eccleshall⁵.

The open fields were often enclosed, within Staffordshire, from the late medieval period onwards in the form of piecemeal enclosure. This was a process which was carried out through a means of informal, verbal agreements between farmers who wished to consolidate their holdings into a block rather than being scattered across two or more fields.

The piecemeal enclosure within the character zone has been impacted during 20th century as a result of field boundary removal. However, these field systems may retain some legibility of their origins as medieval open fields within the surviving field boundaries.

The settlement pattern continues to be dispersed in nature with eight surviving historic farmsteads. Johnson Farm, which was located to the south east of Johnson Hall, was demolished during the 20th century. The wider character

¹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 01660

² Staffordshire HER: FST 4897 and FST 4898

³ 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 © 2009)

⁴ Ridge & 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 © 2009)

⁵ Staffordshire HER: PRN 20359; PRN 20360 and PRN 20361

area (HECA 5g) in which this zone lies was dominated by regular courtyard plan farmsteads; however, within the zone only three of the farmsteads are of this plan form, whilst four are loose courtyards. The regular courtyard plan appears to represent a deliberate development aimed at improving agricultural productivity being taken forward by wealthy landowners from the late 18th century⁶. Little Horseley Farm, Dairy House Farm and Wincote Farm all lie in the western half of the zone and their form may relate to the influence of the Johnson Hall estate (see below). Yates' map of Staffordshire (1775) suggests that at least two of these farmsteads existed in the late 18th century and it is possible that they represent a rebuilding of the farmsteads during the late 18th/19th century.

Loose courtyard farmsteads are not as easily dated; some examples across England have shown medieval origins although the majority appear to date between post medieval period and the 19th century. The plan form does, however, suggest incremental development over a number of years if not centuries. Acton Hill Farm is a large loose courtyard farmstead whose farmhouse dates to the early 19th century. It is possible that the whole farmstead dates to this period, however, earlier elements could survive indicating a longer history, particularly as this site is also named on Yates' map (1775)⁷.

The Johnson Hall estate had been established by the late 18th century, where it is marked on Yates' map (1775). Parkland was established around the hall and a few features survive notably the fishpond and at least one covert⁸. However, the majority of the area appears to have been divided into fields during the 20th century.

The landscape park surrounding Horseley Hall survives and was established in the late 19th century⁹.

Historic Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has moderate disturbance through ploughing activity. The historic field patterns have been largely impacted by boundary removal.	2
Potential	There are limited known historic environment assets (HEAs) in terms of the below ground potential, however the zone has not been significantly disturbed and the current lack of knowledge is probably the result of lack of investigation rather than poor preservation.	2
Documentation	HER data	1
Diversity	The zone consists of a range of HEAs, historic farmsteads, parkland and potential for	2

⁶ Lake 2009: 19

⁷ Staffordshire HER: PRN 07327

⁸ Staffordshire HER: PRN 40107

⁹ Staffordshire HER: PRN 40110

	earthworks.	
Group Association	It is likely that the farmsteads are related to the first enclosure of this landscape, but the legibility of the latter has been impacted during the 20 th century.	1
Amenity Value	The historic environment does not lend itself to display or visitor attraction. However, there is the potential to enhance the parkland associated with Johnson Hall.	1
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for SBC)	The historic environment of the zone could accommodate medium to large scale development; however specific HEAs may suffer adverse effects particularly the setting of the Listed buildings and the potential for below ground archaeology to survive. The surviving parkland features at Johnson Hall may also be compromised by development within the immediate area.	1
Overall Score		10

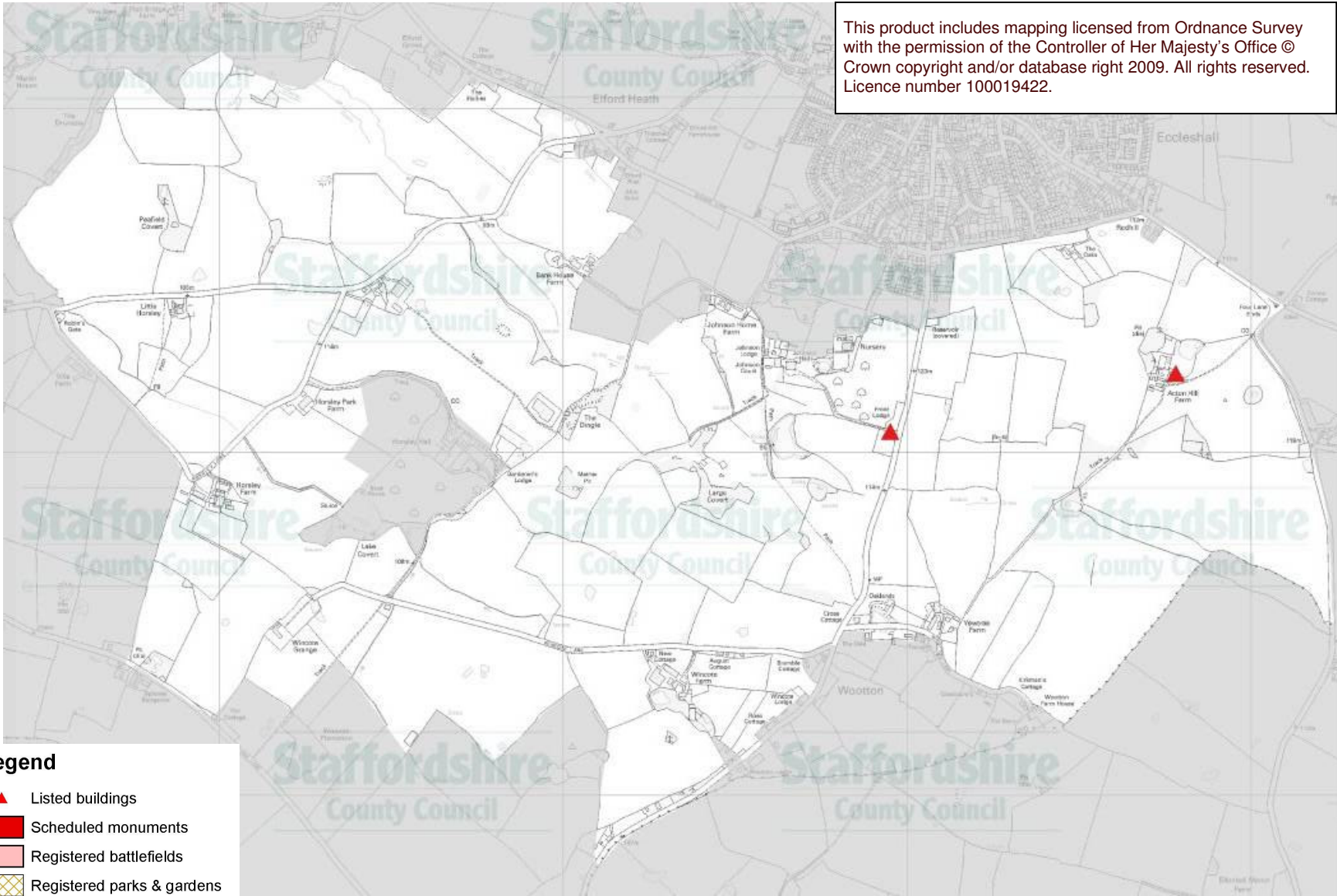
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Lake, J. 2009. 'Historic farmsteads: national context' in B. Edwards *Historic farmsteads & landscape character in Staffordshire*. Unpublished report.

Map 1: Designations

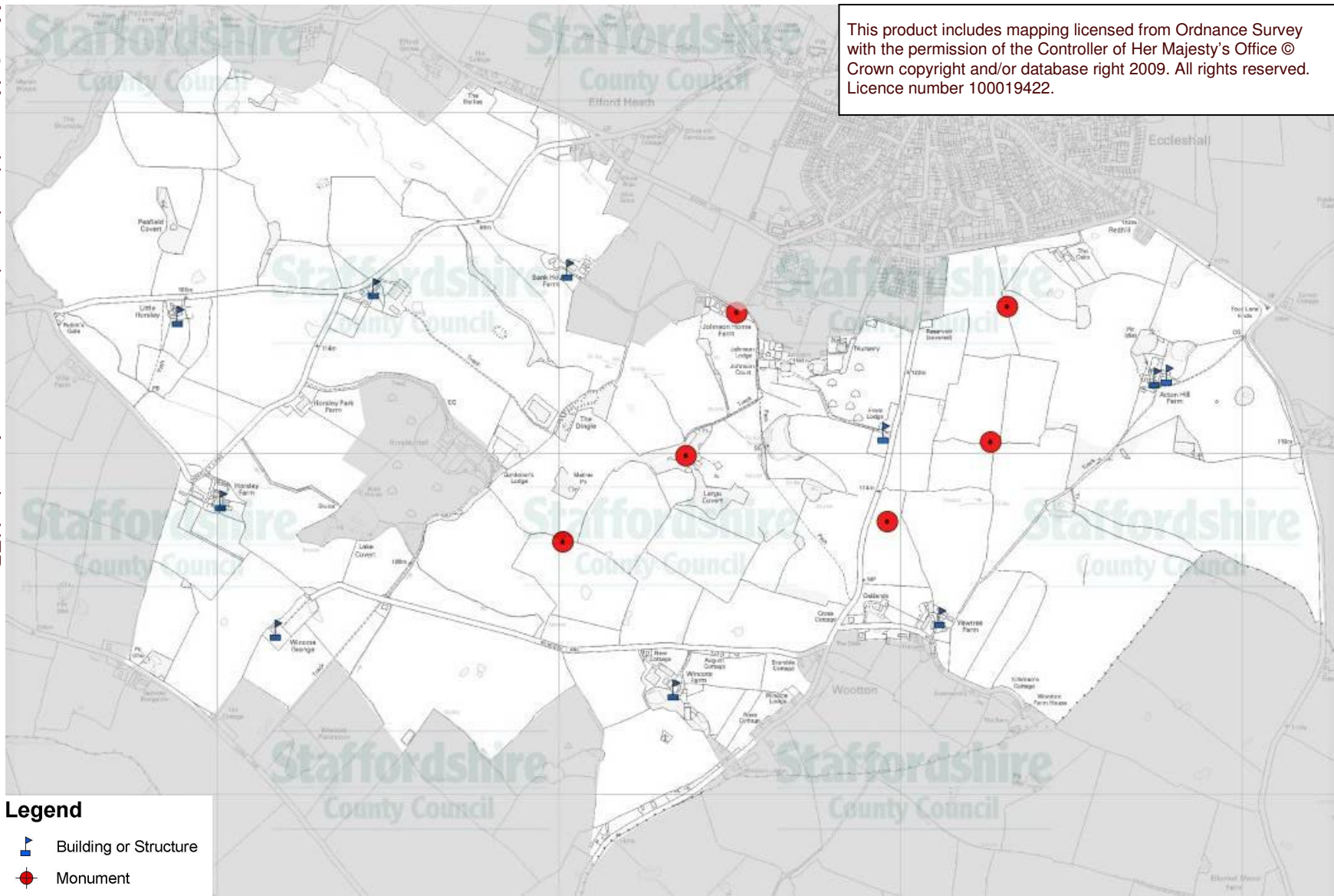
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Legend

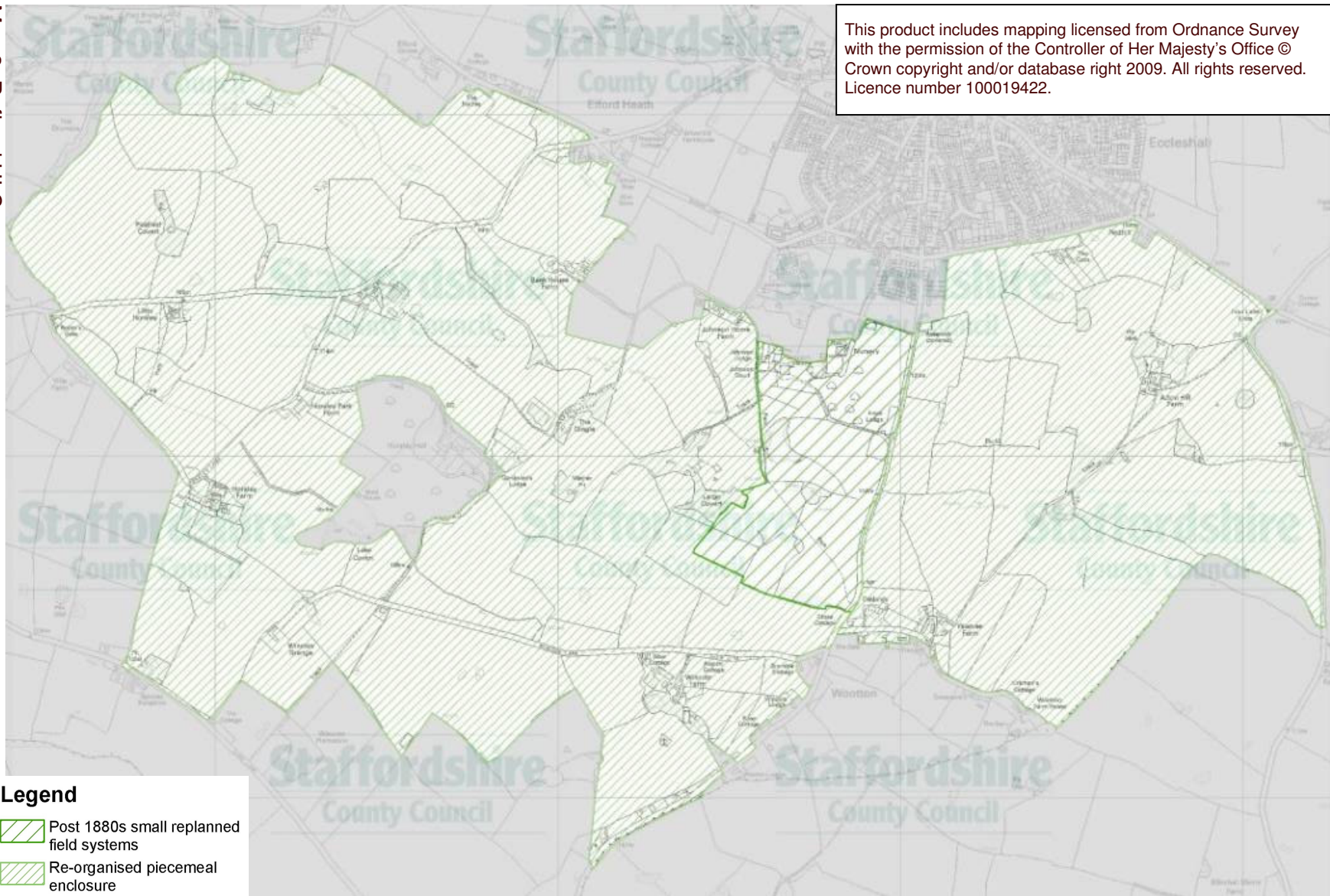
- ▲ Listed buildings
- Scheduled monuments
- Registered battlefields
- ▨ Registered parks & gardens
- ▨ Conservation areas

Map 2: Known historic environment assets from the HER





Map 3: Refined HLC

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Legend

-  Post 1880s small replanned field systems
-  Re-organised piecemeal enclosure

EHECZ 2 – Elford Heath (HECA 5f)

Summary

The extant historic landscape character mostly dates to the 18th/19th century when the field system was planned. It is not currently known for certain whether this area had previously been heath land or whether this enclosure represents the re-planning of an earlier field system. The small settlement of Elford Heath may have its origins in the medieval period; the earliest known building dates to the 17th century. It retains its historic character of a small dispersed hamlet.

Medium to large scale development within the zone would have at least a moderate impact upon the historic environment of the zone. Should development be planned within the zone it would need to address impacts upon and potential mitigation strategies for:

- The impact upon the Listed building and Conservation Area.
- The impact upon the legibility of the extant historic field pattern.
- The impact upon the dispersed nature of settlement within the zone
- The impact upon below ground archaeological deposits.

Early consultation with the Conservation Officer at Stafford Borough Council and the Cultural Heritage Team at Staffordshire County Council is advised.

Designations (map 4)

A part of the Eccleshall Conservation Area (005) falls within the north eastern corner of the zone. One Listed building is also present.

Archaeological Character (map 5)

The current understanding of the later prehistoric landscape of the country suggests that it had mostly been heavily wooded until the Bronze Age. Some clearance may have begun to take place by this period to support a small scale pastoral economy when humans were settling down to farm specific landscapes. As part of a survey of the wetlands of Shropshire and Staffordshire a site near Eccleshall was briefly investigated. The results suggested grassland and some arable agriculture occurring close to the site probably during the Iron Age or possibly the Roman period, suggesting activity in the wider area¹⁰. Otherwise there are currently no known sites of Prehistoric date within the character zone, but this is likely to be due to lack of investigation.

¹⁰ Leah et al 1998: 205-6

Historic Landscape (map 6)

The zone lies just to the east of the small town of Eccleshall. The latter had formed a large estate owned by the Bishop of Chester by the time of the Domesday Book (1086), which had belonged to St Chad's in Lichfield during the reign of King Edward the Confessor (1042 – 1066). It is possible that the estate had its origins much earlier than this and it has also been speculated that it may have Roman origins¹¹. The proximity of this settlement is likely to have had a direct impact upon the management of the landscape of the zone from at least the Saxon period.

The surviving historic landscape character is dominated by 18th/19th century planned enclosure which was enclosed by surveyors using straight field boundaries and so creating fields and road systems with strong geometric patterns. The earlier history of this landscape has been obscured by the laying out of this field system. The nearby placename of Elford Heath may imply that this area had formed heathland from at least the medieval period, but it appears that the second element 'Heath' only dates to the early 19th century¹². A number of field boundaries have been removed from this enclosure pattern during the 20th century.

However, the settlement at Elford Heath may have first been recorded in mid 14th century. The earliest building within the zone, which lies within this scattered hamlet, dates to the 17th century. The settlement has seen some new buildings in the 20th century, but on the whole retains its historic dispersed nature.

Two historic farmsteads lie within the zone, which are suggestive of small holdings whose origins are not currently clear. However, they may pre-date the 18th/19th century enclosure of this landscape and represent an earlier phase of enclosure, which was later re-planned.

Historic Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has been moderately impacted by 20 th century agricultural practices. The historic field pattern is legible within the landscape, although there has been some field boundary removal.	2
Potential	There are a limited number of historic environment assets (HEAs) within the zone, although the landscape has not been significantly disturbed. This is probably the result of lack of investigation rather than poor preservation.	2
Documentation	HER data	1

¹¹ Palliser 1976: 47

¹² Horowitz 2005: 246

Diversity	The HEAs are dominated by historic buildings and the surviving field pattern.	2
Group Association	The farmsteads have not been closely dated but it is possible that the historic buildings are of a similar period.	2
Amenity Value	The historic environment does not lend itself to display or visitor attraction.	1
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for SBC)	Medium to large scale development is likely to have at least a moderate impact upon the historic environment in terms of the legible historic field pattern and dispersed settlement pattern.	2
Overall Score		12

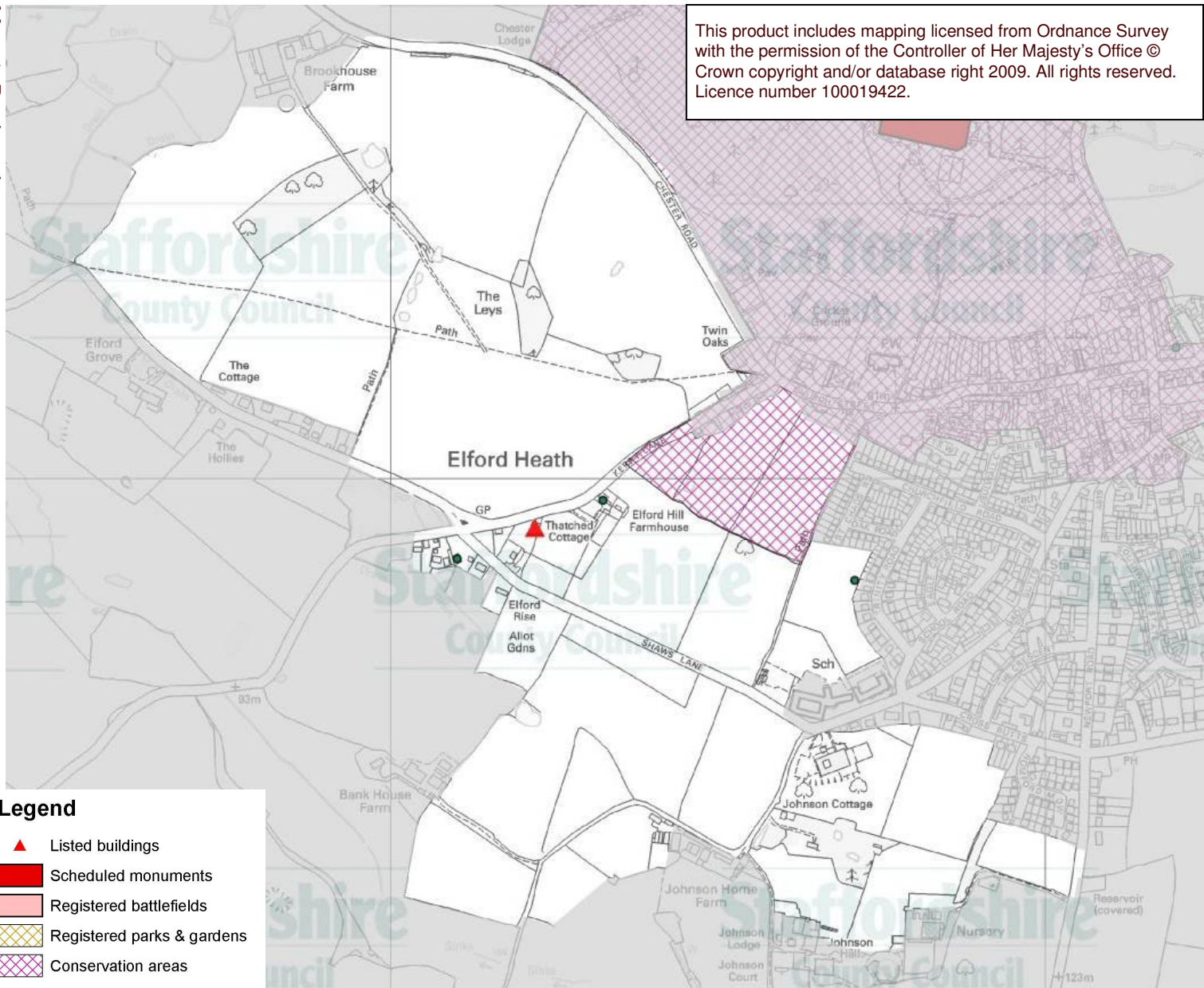
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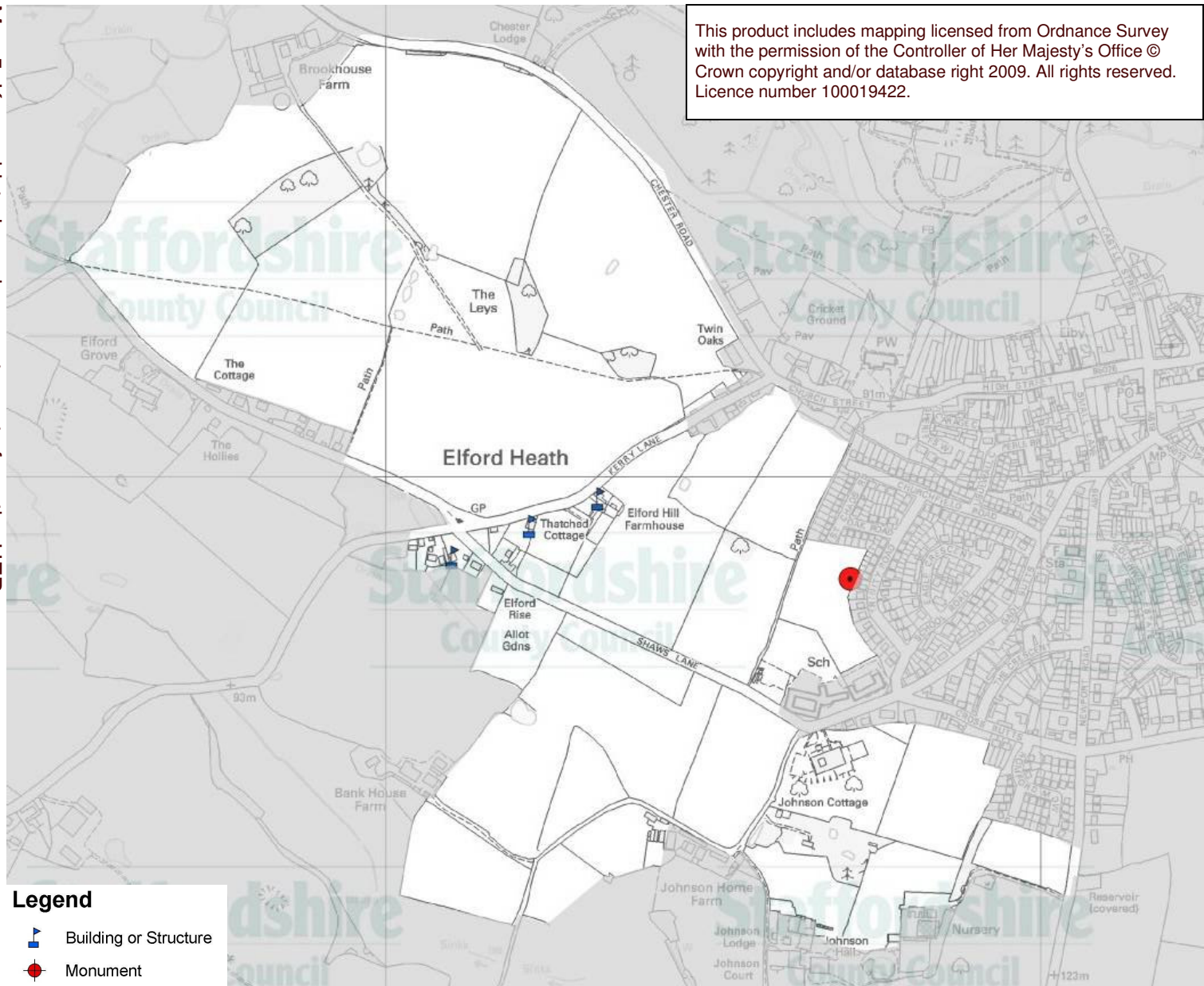
Leah, M. D. et al. 1998. *North west wetlands survey 5: the wetlands of Shropshire and Staffordshire*. Lancaster Imprints (Lancaster).

Palliser, D. M. 1976. *The making of the English landscape: the Staffordshire landscape*. Hodder & Stoughton (London)

Map 4: Designations

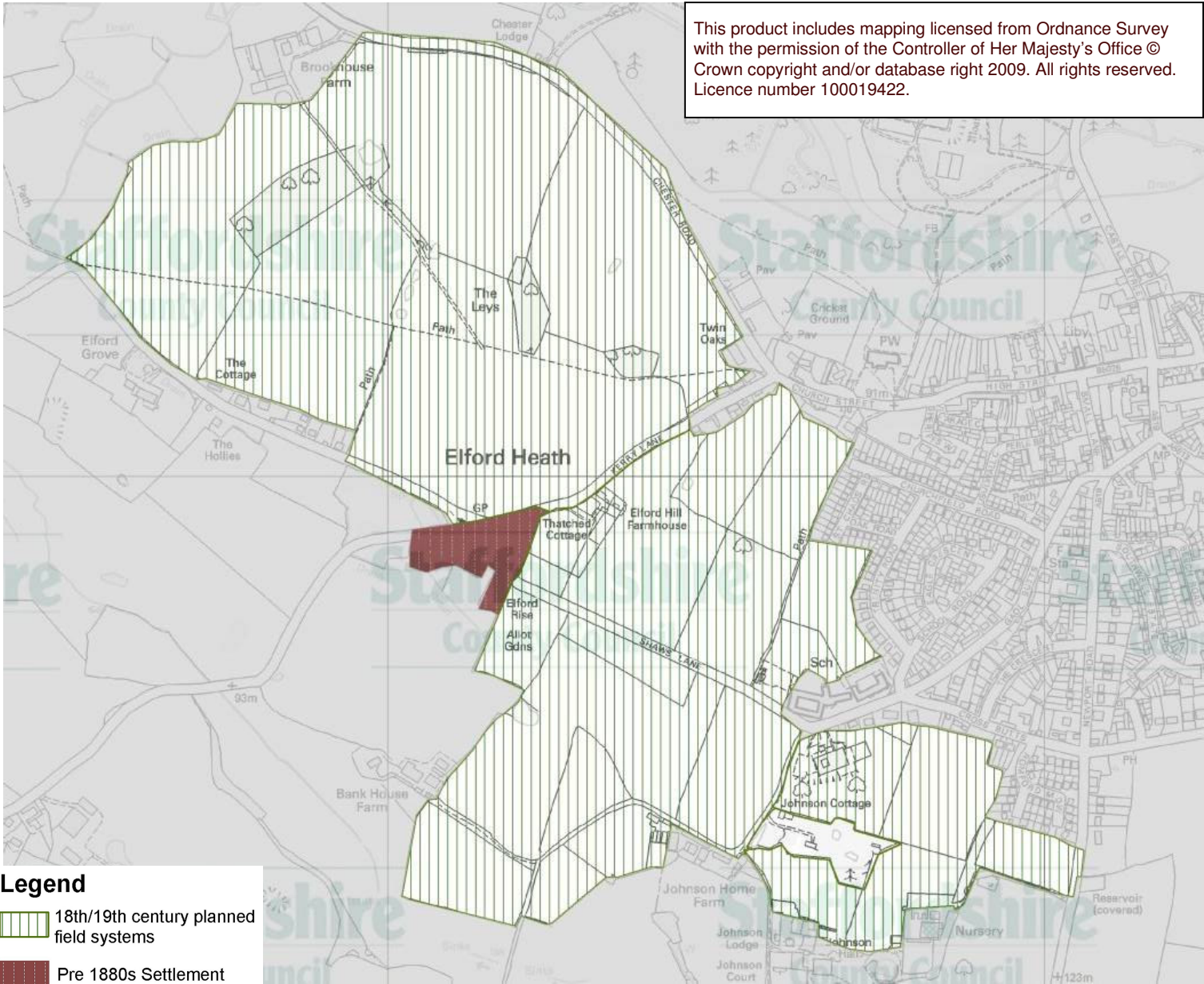


Map 5: Known historic environment assets from the HER





Map 6: Refined HLC

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Legend

-  18th/19th century planned field systems
-  Pre 1880s Settlement

EHECZ 3 – Sow Valley north of Eccleshall (HECA 5f)

Summary

The historic character of the zone is dominated by watermeadows which were probably developed by a bishop of Lichfield during the mid 18th century. The zone lies adjacent to the former bishops' palace of Eccleshall Castle, a Scheduled Monument, and the watermeadows are likely to have been an important part of the setting of the castle from the mid 18th century onwards. Two surviving historic farmsteads may have been deliberately constructed to farm this landscape from the mid-late 18th century.

The location of the zone in the Sow Valley suggests there is a high potential for below ground archaeology to survive beneath the alluvium. There is some evidence for human activity dating to the Neolithic and Iron Age.

Medium to large scale development within the zone would have more than a moderate impact upon the historic environment of the zone. Should development be planned within the zone it would need to address impacts upon and potential mitigation strategies for:

- The impact upon the adjacent Conservation Area.
- The surviving watermeadow features.
- The zone provides an important setting for the Scheduled Monument, Eccleshall Castle. It is likely that the watermeadows were an important aspect of the setting of the castle from the mid 18th century.
- The impact upon below ground archaeological deposits.

Early consultation with the Conservation Officer at Stafford Borough Council, English Heritage and the Cultural Heritage Team at Staffordshire County Council is advised.

Designations

There are currently no designated sites lying within the character zone, however, the Eccleshall Conservation Area (005) lies adjacent to the south. Also to the south lies the Scheduled Monument, Eccleshall Castle¹³.

Archaeological Character (map 7)

The current understanding of the later prehistoric landscape of the country suggests that it had mostly been heavily wooded until the Bronze Age. Some clearance may have begun to take place by this period to support a small scale pastoral economy when humans were settling down to farm specific landscapes. The only current evidence for a human presence is a Neolithic

¹³ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00213; English Heritage SM no. 21522

flint arrowhead found circa 1938¹⁴, although this probably represents a casual loss. A small-scale environmental investigation carried out to the north of Eccleshall suggests that a pastoral and arable economy was present in the area around Eccleshall by the Iron Age or Roman period¹⁵. On this evidence it is likely that the lack of evidence for human activity during the prehistoric and Roman periods is likely to be due to limited investigation. Despite this lack of study there remains a high potential for archaeological deposits to survive sealed beneath the alluvium of the river valley.

Historic Landscape (map 8)

The zone lies to the north of the Scheduled Eccleshall Castle, which was built upon a raised shingle bed above the River Sow, which runs through this HECZ¹⁶. The first reference to the castle dates to c.1200 when a licence was granted to the Bishop of Lichfield to fortify his manor and it was held by the bishops as a palace until the late 19th century. The wetland setting of the castle, which included this zone, may have been as much about aesthetics as defence. It is not currently known whether the wetland setting was being deliberately enhanced during the medieval period as is likely to have been the case for the setting of the castle at Newcastle-under-Lyme. Two watermills are recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) entry for Eccleshall, which may also have been located within this zone¹⁷. Consequently there is the potential for archaeological evidence relating to possible medieval landscaping works may survive as below ground deposits within this area.

The zone was beginning to be drained during the mid 18th century by one of the bishops. This probably included the establishment of watermeadows across the zone. The development of water meadows during this period meant that the landowners could control the flooding of the land and ensure an early crop of grass and subsequent multiple crops for fodder. This enabled them to over-winter larger numbers of animals. The watermeadows were overlooked by the castle and it is possible that their location adjacent was partly aesthetic highlighting the bishops' high status. The watermeadows in this zone have partial survival particularly the drains. Other features associated with the watermeadow system, including sluices and bridges may also be likely to survive.

Three historic farmsteads survive within the zone. Two of the farmsteads, Brook House Farm and Pool House which lie within the area of the watermeadows, have been identified as having a regular courtyard plan. The regular courtyard plan appears to represent a deliberate development aimed at improving agricultural productivity being taken forward by wealthy landowners from the late 18th century¹⁸. Their location therefore strongly suggests that they were probably constructed to farm this newly drained area

¹⁴ Staffordshire HER: PRN 01661

¹⁵ Leah et al 1998: 205-6

¹⁶ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00213; English Heritage SM no. 21525; Griffiths & Saunders 1988:

2

¹⁷ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00812

¹⁸ Lake 2009: 19

of the Sow Valley by at least the early 19th century¹⁹. The third farmstead, Springfields Farm, lies on the northern edge of the zone. It displays a dispersed plan bisected by a trackway; these farmstead plans are relatively rare in Staffordshire. Such farmsteads are likely to have been held by farmers with a small holding who probably did not have the finance during the period of agricultural improvements in the late 18th/19th century to completely re-build to form regular courtyard farm. It is therefore possible that any surviving historic farm buildings may retain elements which pre-date the 19th century.

A bridge taking the road between Pershall and Eccleshall crossed the tributary from Cop Mere to the River Sow in the 17th century, although the current bridge probably dates to the 19th or early 20th century²⁰.

Historic Assets Summary Table

Survival	The drains associated with the watermeadows survive well as does the scattered nature of settlement. There has probably been a moderate impact from modern farming practices.	2
Potential	There is the potential for earthworks to survive associated with the 18 th century watermeadow system. There are currently few known below-ground archaeological, but this is due to a lack of investigation rather than poor preservation. Furthermore the location of this zone within the river valley would suggest that there is a high potential for deposits to survive beneath the alluvium.	3
Documentation	HER data	1
Diversity	There are a range of historic environment assets of differing character from the built environment to the surviving watermeadow features.	2
Group Association	It is likely that two of the farmsteads were constructed in order to exploit the watermeadows. The watermeadows were also closely associated with the site of the castle and form an important part of the setting of this site.	3
Amenity Value	The historic environment could help to define a sense of place for the area. The relationship of the relationship between the farmsteads and the surviving watermeadow features the latter of which provides the setting of the castle could be promoted.	2

¹⁹ Both of the farmsteads are marked on the first edition 1" OS map (c.1830s)

²⁰ Staffordshire HER: PRN 00811

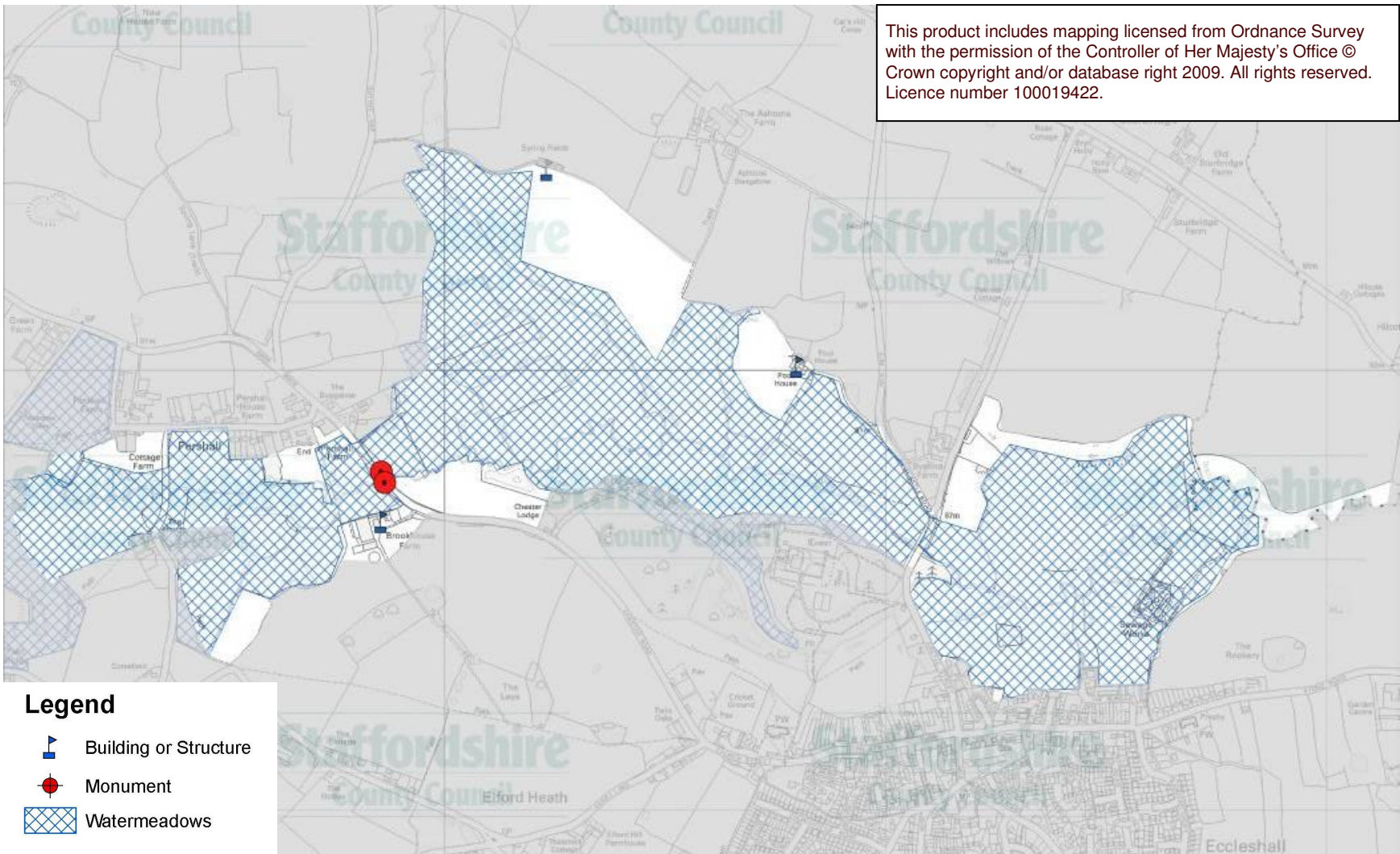
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for SBC)	The historic environment of the zone is highly sensitive to medium to large scale development. The zone forms an important part of the setting of the castle, which forms a Scheduled Monument. There is also a high potential for below ground archaeological remains to survive sealed beneath the alluvium of the river valley. Further structures and earthworks may survive within the area of the watermeadows.	3
Overall Score		16

Bibliography

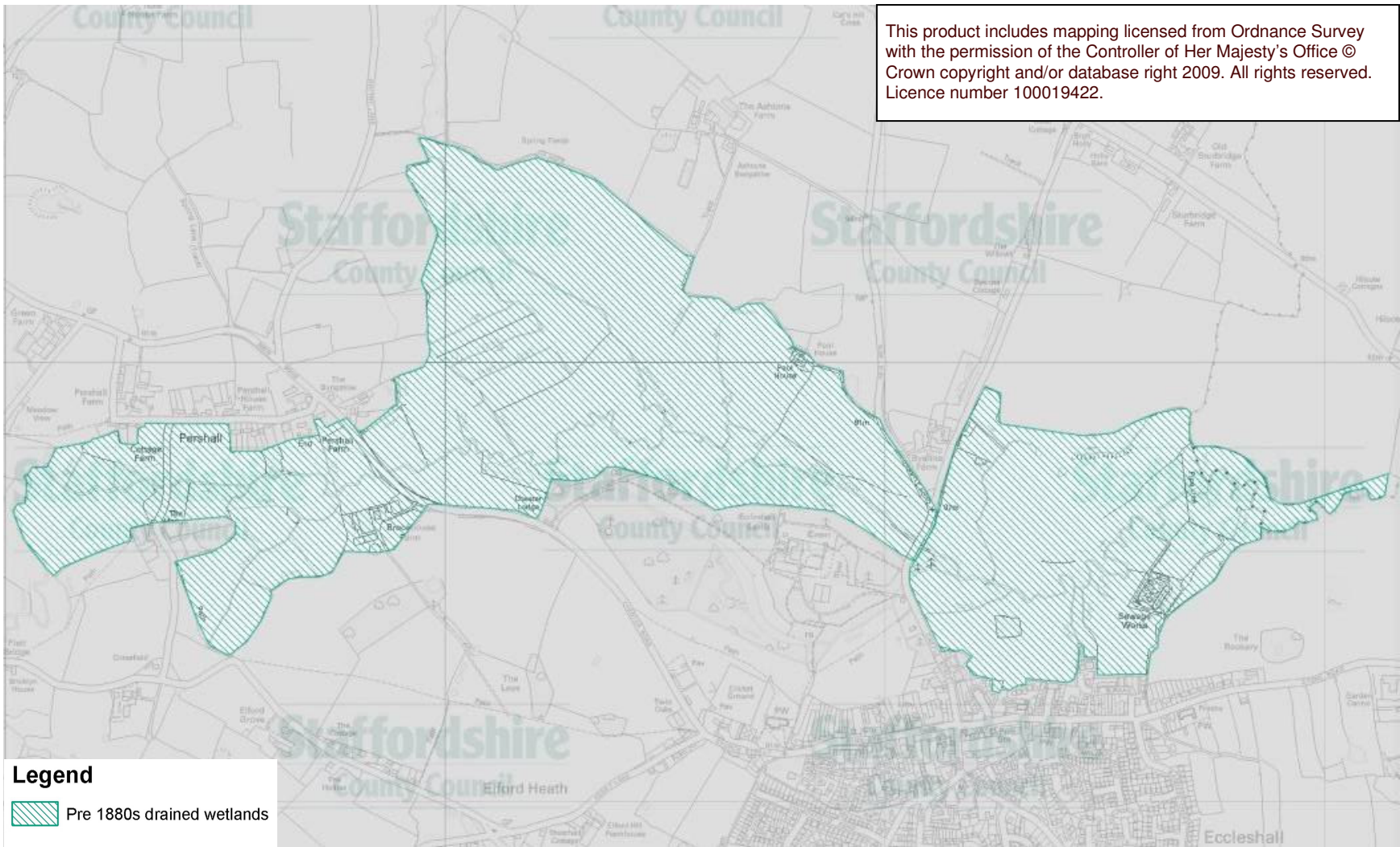
Griffiths, M & Saunders, A. 1988. *Eccleshall Castle: an introduction to its history and archaeology*. Unpublished document.

Leah, M. D. et al. 1998. *North west wetlands survey 5: the wetlands of Shropshire and Staffordshire*. Lancaster Imprints (Lancaster).

Map 7: Known historic environment assets from the HER



Map 8: Refined HLC



EHECZ 4 – East of Eccleshall (HECA 5f)

Summary

The zone is dominated by field patterns which have been impacted through the removal of field boundaries during the 20th century. The fields nearest to Eccleshall had probably formed part of an open field system worked by the local inhabitants of the town.

Medium to large scale development within the zone is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the historic environment of the zone. Should development be planned within the zone it would need to address impacts upon and potential mitigation strategies for:

- The impact upon potential below ground archaeological deposits.

Early consultation with the Conservation Officer at Stafford Borough Council and the Cultural Heritage Team at Staffordshire County Council is advised.

Designations

There are currently no designated sites lying within the HECZ.

Archaeological Character (map 9)

The current understanding of the later prehistoric landscape of the country suggests that it had mostly been heavily wooded until the Bronze Age. Some clearance may have begun to take place by this period to support a small scale pastoral economy when humans were settling down to farm specific landscapes. A small-scale environmental investigation carried out to the north of Eccleshall suggests that a pastoral and arable economy was present in the area around Eccleshall by the Iron Age or Roman period²¹. There is currently no evidence for human activity prior to the medieval period within the zone, although this is likely to be due to a lack of investigation as to poor preservation.

Historic Landscape (map 10)

The fields immediately east of the modern extent of the town had formed part of an arable open field system in the medieval period²². This was a pattern of arable agriculture, where two or more large fields were divided into individual strips whereby the local people, probably residing in Eccleshall, held scattered strips among them. This system was probably in place by the late Saxon period. Evidence of this form of arable agriculture was identified on aerial

²¹ Leah et al 1998: 205-6

²² 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 © 2009)

photographs taken in the early 1960s in the form of ridge and furrow²³ earthworks to the north of Bridge Farm and to the north west of Fieldhouse Farm²⁴.

The open fields were often enclosed, within Staffordshire, from the late medieval period onwards in the form of piecemeal enclosure. This was a process which was carried out through a means of informal, verbal agreements between farmers who wished to consolidate their holdings into a block rather than being scattered across two or more fields.

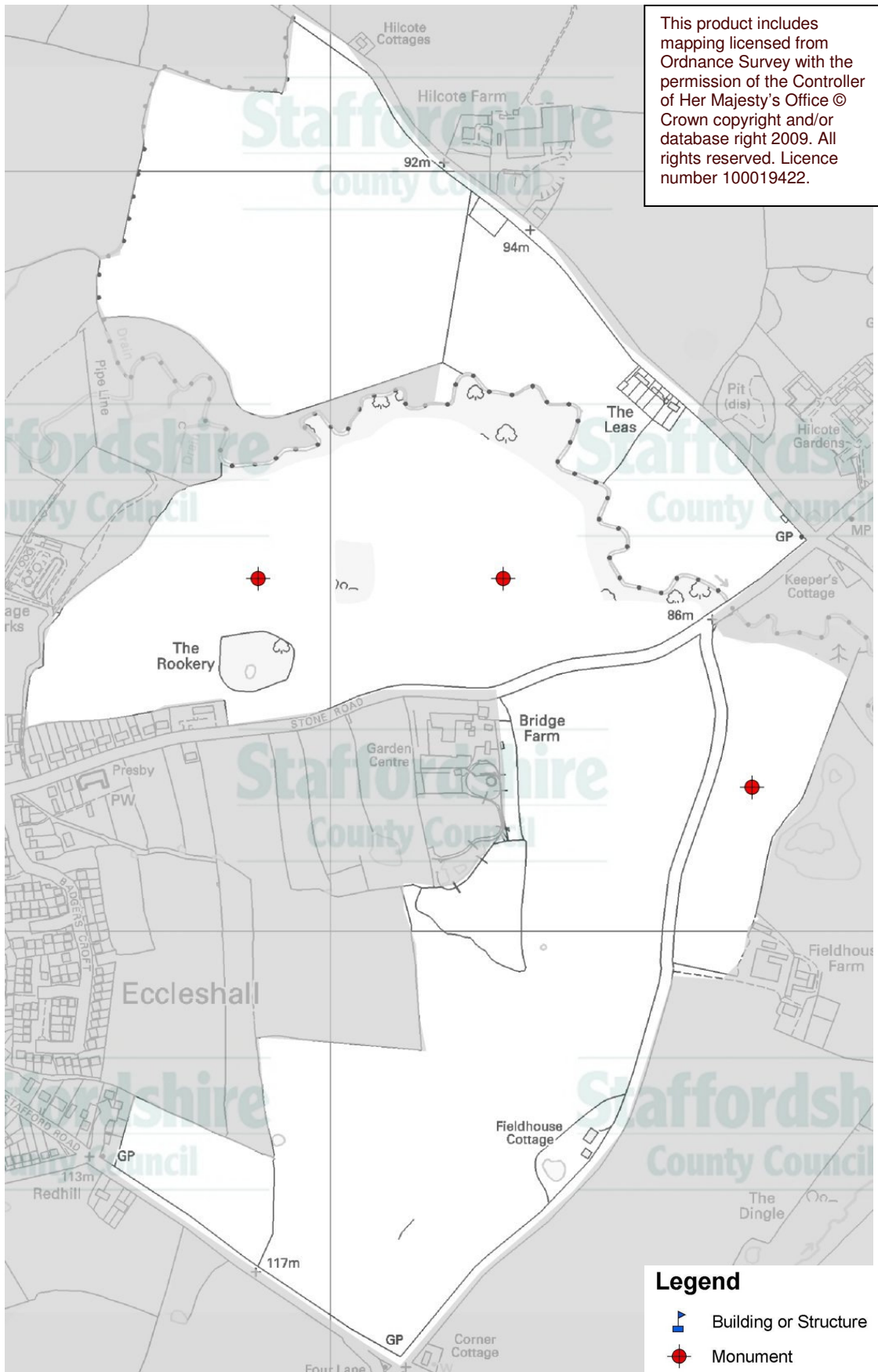
The historic enclosure pattern has been significantly impacted through the removal of field boundaries during the 20th century.

Historic Assets Summary Table

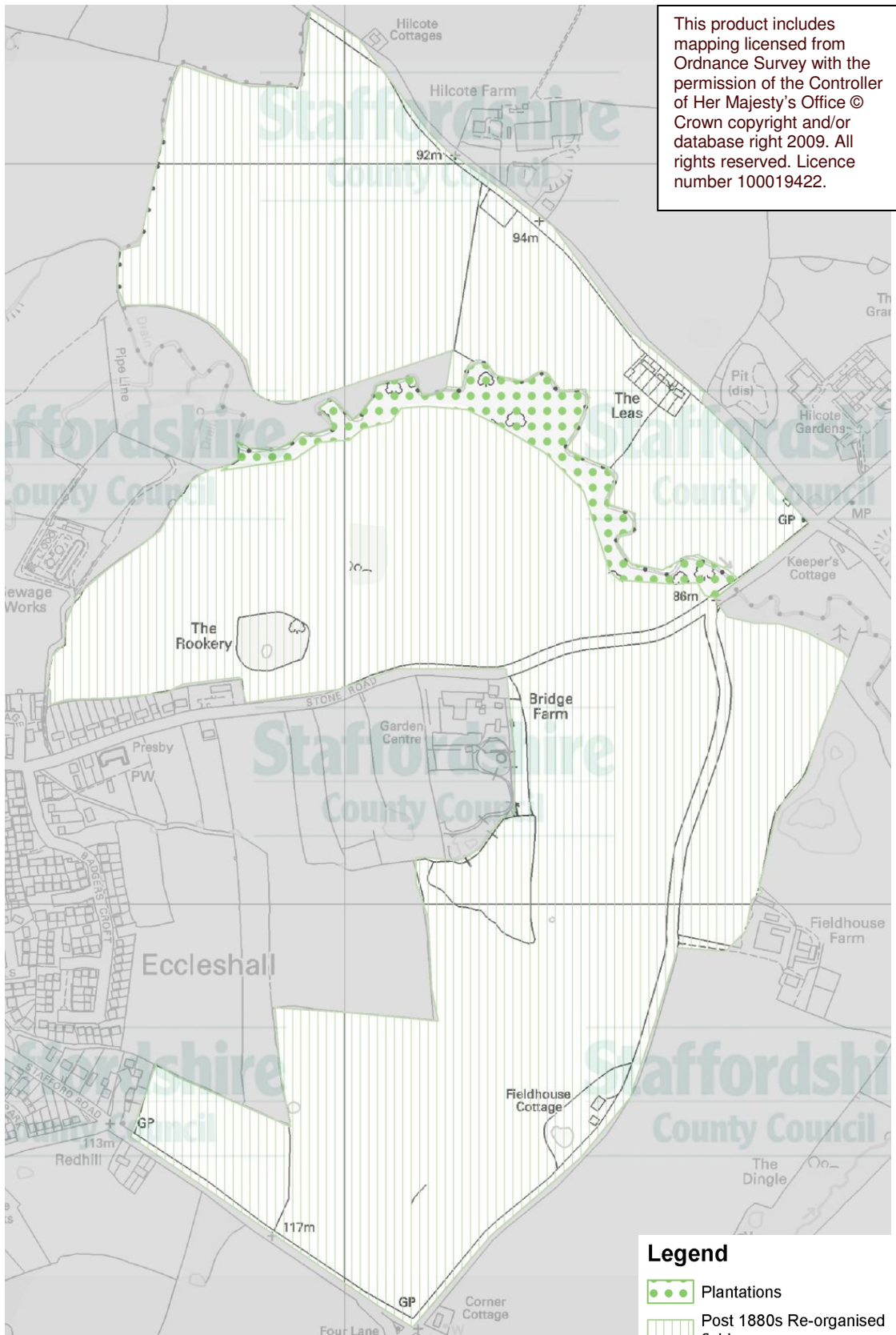
Survival	The zone has moderate disturbance through ploughing activity. The historic field patterns have been largely impacted by boundary removal.	2
Potential	There are limited known historic environment assets (HEAs) in terms of the below ground potential, however the zone has not been significantly disturbed and the current lack of knowledge is probably the result of lack of investigation rather than poor preservation.	2
Documentation	HER data	1
Diversity	There are very few known HEAs within the zone.	1
Group Association	The zone contains few HEAs.	1
Amenity Value	The historic environment does not lend itself to display or visitor attraction.	1
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for SBC)	The historic environment of the zone could accommodate medium to large scale development; however specific HEAs may suffer adverse effects although mitigation strategies could be determined on a site-by-site basis.	1
Overall Score		9

²³ Ridge & 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 © 2009)

²⁴ Staffordshire HER: PRN 20362



Map 9: Known historic environment assets from the HER



Map 10: Refined HLC

EHECZ 5 – South of Stone Road, Eccleshall (HECA 5f)

Summary

The zone is dominated by an historic field pattern probably dating to the post medieval period. It had its origins as a medieval open field which was probably utilised by the inhabitants of Eccleshall.

Medium to large scale development would have an impact upon the historic environment of the zone. Should development be planned within the zone it would need to address impacts upon and potential mitigation strategies for:

- The impact upon the surviving historic field pattern and how this could be retained or reflected.
- The impact upon below ground archaeological deposits.

Early consultation with the Conservation Officer at Stafford Borough Council, English Heritage and the Cultural Heritage Team at Staffordshire County Council is advised.

Designations

There are currently no designated sites lying within the HECZ.

Archaeological Character (map 11)

The current understanding of the later prehistoric landscape of the country suggests that it had mostly been heavily wooded until the Bronze Age. Some clearance may have begun to take place by this period to support a small scale pastoral economy when humans were settling down to farm specific landscapes. A small-scale environmental investigation carried out to the north of Eccleshall suggests that a pastoral and arable economy was present in the area around Eccleshall by the Iron Age or Roman period²⁵. There is currently no evidence for human activity prior to the medieval period within the zone, although this is likely to be due to a lack of investigation as to poor preservation.

Historic Landscape (map 12)

This small zone is comprised of a field system which had its origins as an arable open field system in the medieval period²⁶. This was a pattern of arable agriculture, where two or more large fields were divided into individual strips whereby the local people, probably residing in Eccleshall, held scattered strips among them. This system was probably in place by the late Saxon period. Evidence of this form of arable agriculture was identified on aerial

²⁵ Leah et al 1998: 205-6

²⁶ 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 © 2009)

photographs taken in the early 1960s in the form of ridge and furrow²⁷ earthworks to the west of the garden centre and in the very south of the zone²⁸.

The open fields were often enclosed, within Staffordshire, from the late medieval period onwards in the form of piecemeal enclosure. This was a process which was carried out through a means of informal, verbal agreements between farmers who wished to consolidate their holdings into a block rather than being scattered across two or more fields.

The piecemeal enclosure of the zone survives well with distinctive field boundaries, creating a reverse 'S' shape that are typical of this type of field pattern. The historic landscape character of this zone is closely associated with the medieval town.

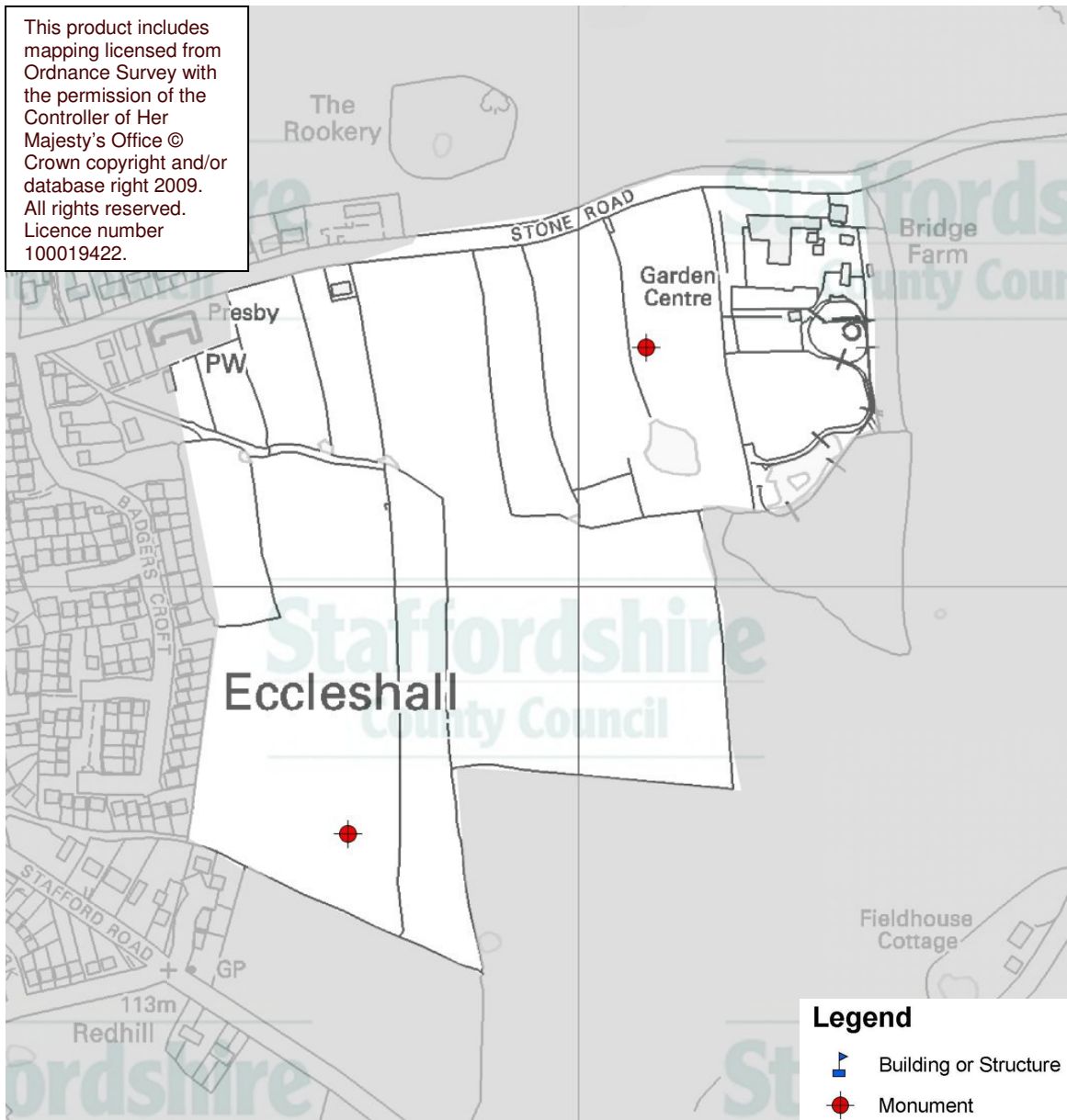
Historic Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has seen some impact from modern farming practices, but otherwise the field pattern survives well.	2
Potential	There are limited known historic environment assets (HEAs) in terms of the below ground potential, however the zone has not been significantly disturbed and the current lack of knowledge is probably the result of lack of investigation rather than poor preservation.	2
Documentation	HER data	1
Diversity	There are few known HEAs.	1
Group Association	The surviving field pattern is closely associated with the development of Eccleshall during the late medieval and post medieval periods.	2
Amenity Value	The historic environment does not currently lend itself to display or visitor attraction.	1
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for SBC)	Medium to large scale development is likely to have a moderate impact upon the historic environment character of the zone in terms of the loss of the historic field pattern.	2
Overall Score		11

²⁷ Ridge & 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 © 2009)

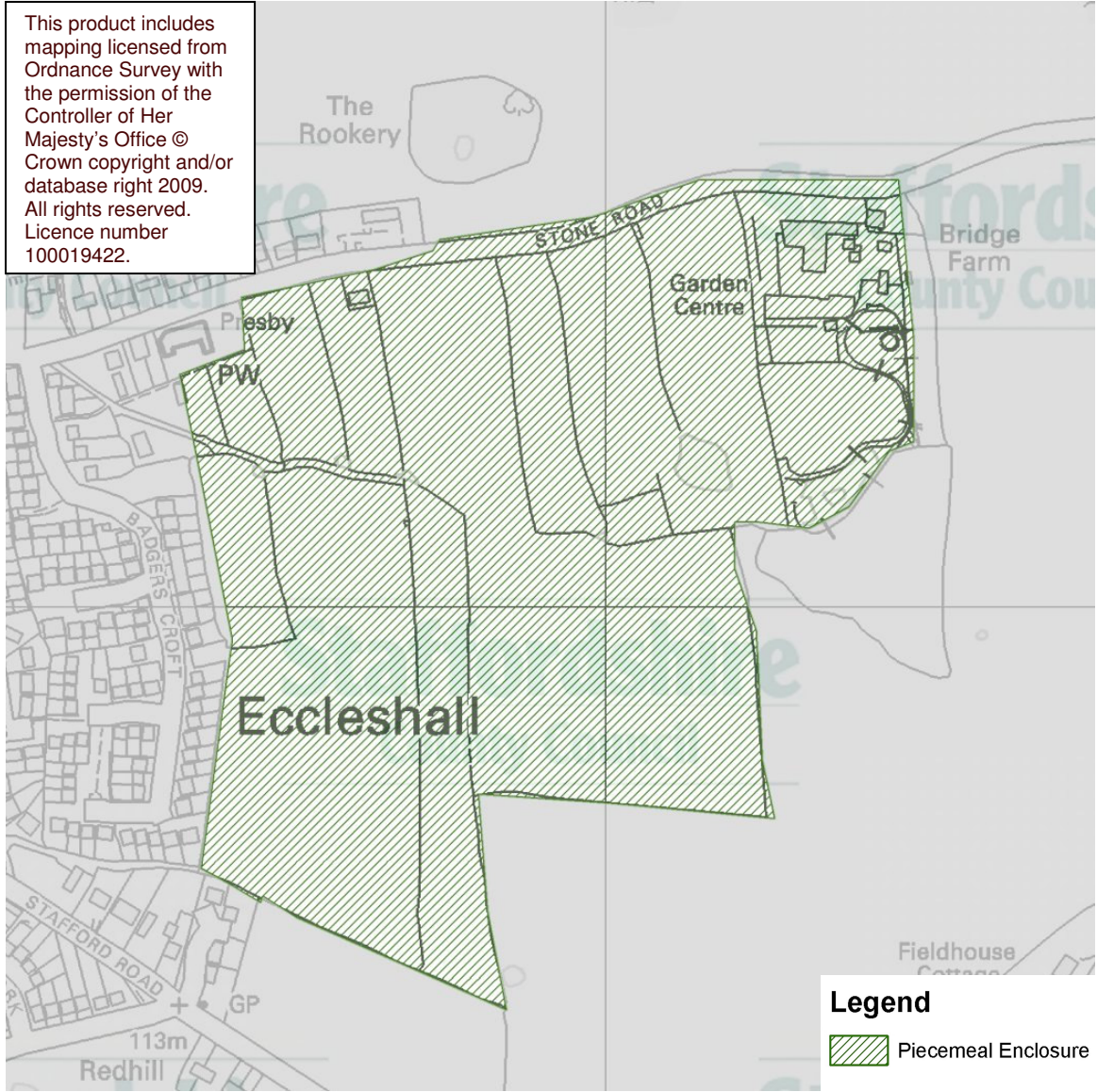
²⁸ Staffordshire HER: PRN 20362

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Map 11: Known historic environment assets from the HER

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Map 12: Refined HLC

EHECZ 6 – South of Sturbridge (HECA 5a)

Summary

The zone is dominated by field patterns which have been impacted through the removal of field boundaries during the 20th century. The origins of the Grade II Listed historic farmstead lie in the 17th century, which may coincide with the original enclosure of this landscape. The farmstead was probably re-developed during the early 19th century although 17th century elements are retained within the farmhouse.

Medium to large scale development within the zone is unlikely to have a significant impact upon the historic environment of the zone. Should development be planned within the zone it would need to address impacts upon and potential mitigation strategies for:

- The impact upon the Listed Building.
- The impact upon below ground archaeological deposits.

Early consultation with the Conservation Officer at Stafford Borough Council, English Heritage and the Cultural Heritage Team at Staffordshire County Council is advised.

Designations (map 13)

There are two Listed buildings lying within the character zone.

Archaeological Character (map 14)

The current understanding of the later prehistoric landscape of the country suggests that it had mostly been heavily wooded until the Bronze Age. Some clearance may have begun to take place by this period to support a small scale pastoral economy when humans were settling down to farm specific landscapes. A small-scale environmental investigation carried out to the north of Eccleshall suggests that a pastoral and arable economy was present in the area around Eccleshall by the Iron Age or Roman period²⁹. There is currently no evidence for human activity prior to the medieval period within the zone, although this is likely to be due to a lack of investigation as to poor preservation.

Historic Landscape (map 15)

The fields immediately east of the modern extent of the town had formed part of an arable open field system in the medieval period³⁰. This was a pattern of arable agriculture, where two or more large fields were divided into individual

²⁹ Leah et al 1998: 205-6

³⁰ 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 © 2009)

strips whereby the local people, probably residing in Eccleshall, held scattered strips among them. This system was probably in place by the late Saxon period. Evidence of this form of arable agriculture was identified on aerial photographs taken in the early 1960s in the form of ridge and furrow³¹ earthworks to the north of Bridge Farm and to the north west of Fieldhouse Farm³².

The open fields were often enclosed, within Staffordshire, from the late medieval period onwards in the form of piecemeal enclosure. This was a process which was carried out through a means of informal, verbal agreements between farmers who wished to consolidate their holdings into a block rather than being scattered across two or more fields.

The piecemeal enclosure within the character zone has been impacted particularly during 20th century, as a result of field boundary removal. However, these field systems may retain some legibility of their origins as medieval open fields within the surviving field boundaries.

One historic farmstead, Bryanna, lies within the character zone with Grade II Listed farmhouse and outbuildings³³. The farmstead is of a regular courtyard plan, which nationally mostly dates from the late 18th century³⁴. The regular courtyard plan is the most common form in Staffordshire and is spread widely across the landscape. These forms appear to represent a deliberate development aimed at improving agricultural productivity being taken forward by wealthy landowners at this period. This particular farmstead probably represents a re-building episode during the early 19th century of an earlier complex. The farmhouse has its origins in the 17th century, which may relate the piecemeal enclosure, but it was subject to alteration in the early 19th century, when the outbuildings were also constructed.

Historic Assets Summary Table

Survival	The zone has moderate disturbance through ploughing activity. The historic field patterns have been largely impacted by boundary removal.	2
Potential	There are few known historic environment assets (HEAs) within the zone, however, it has not been significantly disturbed and the current lack of knowledge is probably the result of lack of investigation rather than poor preservation.	2
Documentation	HER data	1
Diversity	There are a few HEAs; historic buildings and	1

³¹ Ridge & 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 © 2009)

³² Staffordshire HER: PRN 20362

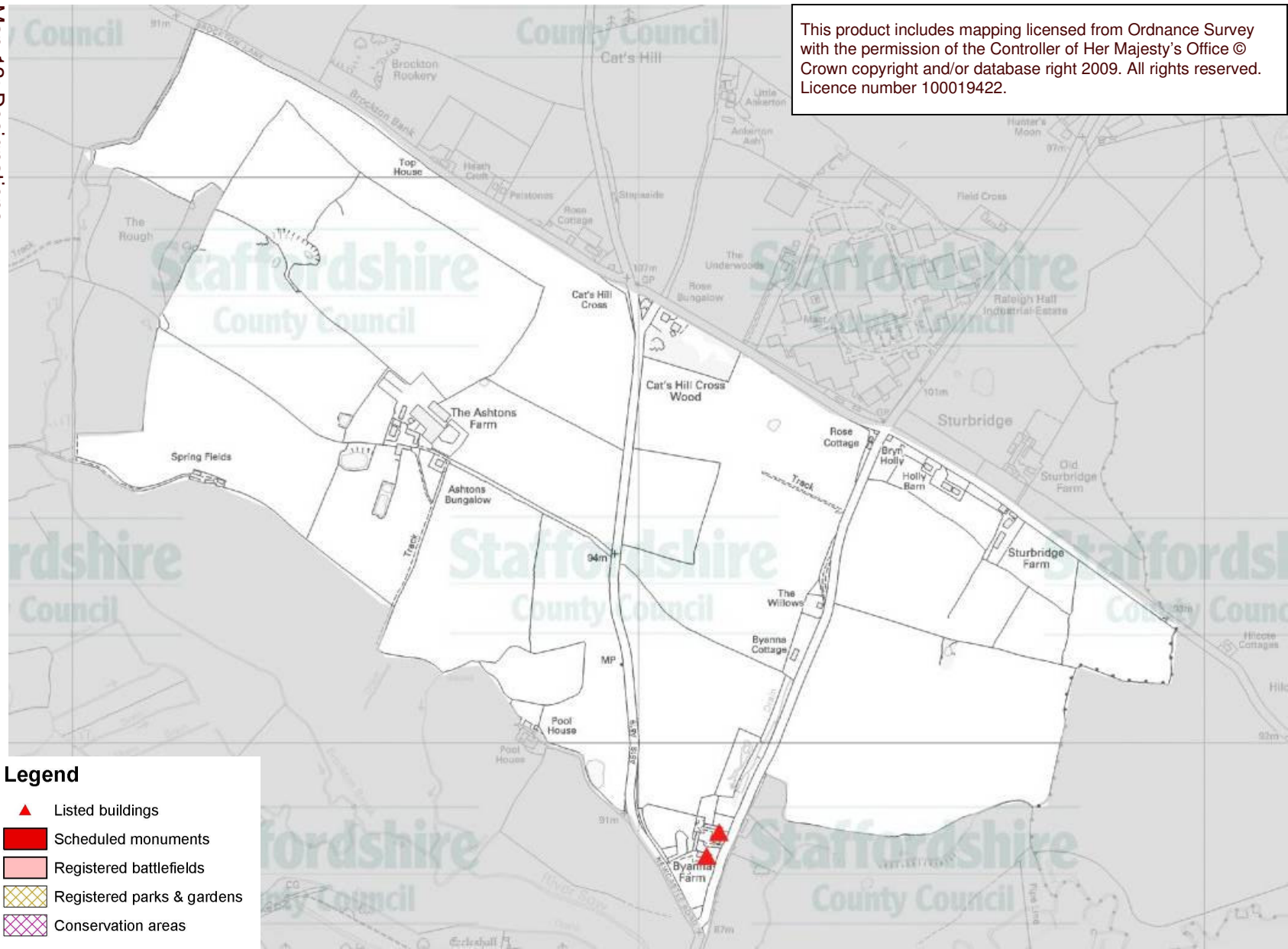
³³ Staffordshire HER: PRN 07647 and PRN 07648

³⁴ Lake 2009: 19

	some surviving aspects of the historic landscape character.	
Group Association	The field system does not survive well, but the overall character may be discernible and the original enclosure of this landscape may be associated with the origins of the farmstead.	2
Amenity Value	The historic environment does not lend itself to display or visitor attraction.	1
Sensitivity to change (to housing expansion & infrastructure for SBC)	Medium to large scale development is likely to have a moderate impact upon the historic environment of the zone, in particular the impact upon the Listed farmstead.	2
Overall Score		11

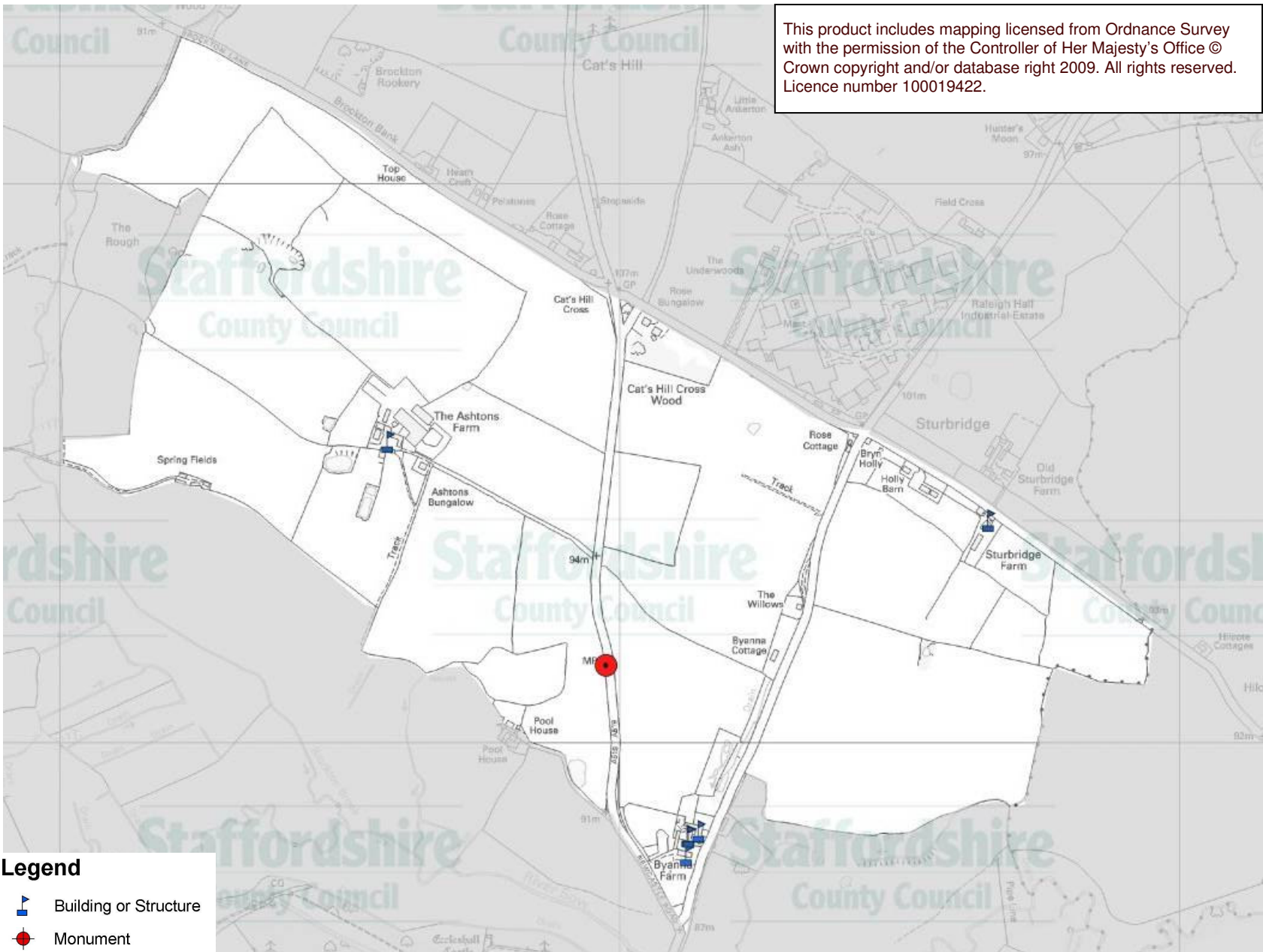
Map 13: Designations

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- Legend**
- ▲ Listed buildings
 - Scheduled monuments
 - Registered battlefields
 - Registered parks & gardens
 - Conservation areas

Map 14: Known historic environment assets from the HER



Map 15: Refined HLC

