

# Rocester

Historic Character Assessment



# Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey

## Rocester

### Controlled Document

Staffordshire County Council Document No:	EC4609.R24		
Status:	Final	Rev. No:	2

	Name	Signature	Date
Prepared by:	Debbie Taylor	<i>Debbie Taylor</i>	11/05/2014
Checked by:	Stephen Dean	<i>Stephen Dean</i>	05/06/2014
SCC Approved:	Suzy Blake	<i>Suzy Blake</i>	22/07/2014

### Revision Record

Rev.	Date	By	Summary of Changes	Chkd	Aprvd
1.	06/06/2014	DAT	Amendments following editing by SD	SD	SD
2.	22/07/2014	DAT	Amendments following editing by SB	SD	SD

# Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	8
Background	9
Aim	9
Outputs	9
<b>Part One: Background And Setting</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Section Summary</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>1. Setting</b>	<b>10</b>
1.1 Location	10
1.2 Geology and topography	11
1.3 Sources	12
<b>2. Context and Historical Development</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Prehistoric	14
2.2 Roman (49AD to 409AD)	16
2.3 Early Medieval (410 to 1065)	22
2.4 Medieval (1066 to 1499)	24
2.5 Post Medieval (1500 to 1699)	34
2.6 18th & 19th century (1700 to 1899)	36
2.7 20th & 21st century (1900 to circa 2009)	45
<b>Part Two: Characterisation And Assessment</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Section Summary</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>3. Statement of Historic Urban Character</b>	<b>50</b>
3.1 Definition of Historic Character Types (HCTs)	50
3.2 Statement of Historic Urban Character (HUC)	50
<b>4. Assessment of Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCA)</b>	<b>55</b>
4.1 HUCA 1: High Street	56
4.2 HUCA 2: Market Place and High Street	60
4.3 HUCA 3: Riversfield Drive	64
4.4 HUCA 4: Mill Street	66
4.5 HUCA 5: Millbank Drive	69
4.6 HUCA 6: Tutbury Mill and West View	71
4.7 HUCA 7: St Michael's Church and Abbey Fields	75
4.8 HUCA 8: Dove Lane	79
4.9 HUCA 9: Abbey Road and Church Lane	83
4.10 HUCA 10: Church Lane and Ashbourne Road	85
4.11 HUCA 11: Northfield Avenue and Edes Farm Drive	89
<b>5. Bibliography</b>	<b>91</b>

## 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 the establishment of the town in the medieval period 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.

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

## The Historical Development of Rocester

The story of Rocester is most closely associated with the foundation of the Roman fort and settlement on land lying between the rivers Churnet and Dove. Archaeological work has revealed evidence for prehistoric activity within the valley bottom to the north and south of Rocester. The majority of evidence comes from finds recovered during fieldwalking and metal detecting and includes relatively rare discoveries of Neolithic and Iron Age pottery and a Mesolithic flint scatter. Aerial photography has also revealed evidence in crop marks for enclosures and ring ditches thought most likely to represent late prehistoric occupation. As it stands, the finds and cropmark evidence suggests that Rocester's situation has long attracted people.

Three phases of successive fort building, dating between the late 1st and mid 2nd century AD have been identified through archaeological work. These forts were associated with a vicus (civilian settlement) which grew up alongside them. Evidence for this settlement has been found to the north, south and west of the area of the forts. The final phase fort and the vicus appear to have been abandoned circa 200AD after which date a civilian settlement, often referred to by modern commentators as a town, was established within the former extent of the fort in the third and fourth centuries.

Human activity is again attested to from archaeological work in the 9th century, and possibly earlier, within the area of the former Roman fort and later settlement. There is currently little other evidence for post-Roman settlement, but it does suggest that Rocester remained a place of some, at least local, significance. There is circumstantial evidence that it may have been the location of an important (minster) church later in the early medieval period. It is recorded as an important estate in Domesday Book (1086).

In the 1140s an Augustinian abbey was established within part of the area of the former fort; some of the ramparts of which were still visible above ground at this date. The layout of the abbey is unknown and only the late 13th century parish church, the Grade II St Michael's, survives. Archaeological work at the former Abbey Farm (Castrum Close) found evidence for a 17th century 'farmhouse' which may have been rebuilt or adapted from an earlier, presumably monastic, stone building. The abbey remained the lord of the manor until its dissolution in the mid 16th century.

The plan form of Rocester, as surviving and as shown on historic maps, suggests that it may have been laid out as a medieval town with burgage plots along High Street, the south

side of Mill Lane and part of the west side of Ashbourne Road which all meet at a triangular market place. This market place effectively lay at the gate of the abbey and the order is likely to have zealously guarded their rights within the settlement. A market charter was granted in 1283 and reaffirmed in 1440. It is possible that the charters were merely affirming pre-existing trading within Rocester, which may have begun at the foundation of the abbey, or possibly even earlier.

The manorial mill is likely to have been located on the River Dove and a fulling mill, probably on the same site, is also recorded in documentary sources during the medieval period. This site was to play a much more significant role in Rocester's history in later centuries. Agriculture remained the principal industry during the medieval period and evidence suggests that cattle may have been particularly important. A long-lived tannery was discovered during archaeological work to the east of Rocester affirming a commercial role in the settlement as well as highlighting the likely importance of cattle to the local economy.

The abbey was dissolved in 1538 and the manor was divided among a number of land holders. The abbey buildings are believed to have been entirely dismantled by the 17th century and even Rocester Hall, which is believed to have replaced or adapted some of the abbey buildings, apparently did not survive the end of that century. A number of post medieval buildings, all timber-framed, survive within Rocester two of which are Grade II Listed. The majority of the historic buildings are constructed of brick and appear to date to the 18th and 19th centuries, although evidence for earlier phases may survive within the structures as they do at the Grade II listed Queens Arms Public House on Church Lane. Similarly, historic structures throughout Rocester may have been built in

part from stone robbed from the monastic buildings after the Dissolution.

Cloth-making apparently continued in Rocester during the post medieval period, but the details of the industry for during this period are unknown. In the 1780s Richard Arkwright, pioneer of the cotton industry, established a cotton mill at the existing corn mill on the River Dove. The cotton mill, known as Tutbury Mill from the late 19th century, remained in production until the 1980s. The Grade II mill was converted to a school in the early 21st century. During the 18th and early 19th centuries Tutbury Mill had a significant impact upon Rocester with new houses being built to house its workers. A high proportion of these properties survive along High Street and on West View.

Rocester has continued to expand from the mid 20th century, partly due to the success of JCB which was established to the west during this period, with housing estates being built to the north and south of the historic core. The site of the abbey, represented by Abbey Field and St Michael's Church remains at the heart of the town and is part of a Scheduled Monument. The historic core of Rocester is also designated a Conservation Area.

## Characterisation and Assessment

- ◆ Evidence for Rocester's origins as a medieval planned town are legible within the **HUCA 2** where the property boundaries reflect the extent of medieval burgages and the triangular market place is also extant. A high number of historic buildings survive within this HUCA including two Grade II listed properties one of which is a timber framed house of 17th century date. A further timber framed property has been identified, of possible late medieval or post medieval date and there remains the potential for others to be discovered. The extent of the Augustinian abbey is fossilised within the street pattern comprising Ashbourne Road, Mill Lane, Church Lane and West View. The core of this site is represented by **HUCA 7** whose focal point is now the Grade II listed St Michael's church and the Abbey Field. This HUCA is notable for the high proportion of designated sites including two Scheduled Monuments ('Site of Rocester Abbey and part of Roman Town' and 'Cross in Rocester churchyard'). The former Scheduled Monument covers all of the southern and western portions of the HUCA in recognition of the potential for archaeological remains of both Roman and medieval date, to survive. (cf. map 14).
- ◆ Part of the area of the medieval town also lies within **HUCA 4** and **HUCA 10**. The historic character of **HUCA 4**, which included evidence for the burgage plots, was significantly altered in the mid 20th century when housing was built upon the site. This included the re-development of early to mid 19th century houses with low rise flats in the 1960s. These properties have in their turn been redeveloped in the early 21st century. Within **HUCA 10** the boundary of the former burgages may survive in the line of a footpath.
- ◆ The legible historic character of **HUCA 8** and **HUCA 10** survives principally in the form of late 18th-19th century red brick properties. These comprise a mix of architectural styles and include domestic properties such as cottages and a farmhouse, but also two phases of a purpose-built school (the earliest phase dating to the 1850s and since converted to domestic use) and a former Baptist Chapel. That both HUCAs probably represent at least post medieval development is evident also within the built environment. In **HUCA 8** the Grade II listed Dove Cottage is one of very few timber framed properties of 17th century date known within Rocester. In **HUCA 10** the Grade II listed Queens Arms Public House, whilst considered a good example of late 18th century architecture, retains evidence for earlier phases presumably of at least post medieval date.
- ◆ The establishment of the cotton industry in the late 18th century has also contributed to Rocester's historic built environment. The core of development associated with the industry lies within **HUCA 6** where the Grade II Tutbury Mill has recently been converted to a school. The HUCA also contains the Grade II listed former manager's house, Millholme, with its associated Grade II listed coach house which both date to circa 1831. West View, a terrace of 24 houses, represents a later phase of development, probably associated with expansion of the mill in the mid 19th century. Earlier mill workers houses, mostly of three storey and possibly weavers houses, can be found along the north side of High Street in **HUCA 1**. Two Methodist chapels are associated with the houses within **HUCA 1**. Further, probably late 19th century, terraced houses presumed to be associated with the cotton industry are located on Dove Lane within **HUCA 8**.

- ◆ Further evidence for early industry can be found within **HUCA 1** in the form of the Grade II listed Podmore's (or Rocester) mill, a corn mill, built in the late 19th century probably on an earlier site. Farmsteads survive within **HUCA 1** and **HUCA 8** providing evidence for the importance of agriculture to Rocester's economy into the 19th and 20th centuries.
- ◆ Modern development of mid 20th to early 21st century date dominates the character of **HUCA 3, HUCA 4, HUCA 5, HUCA 9** and **HUCA 11**. Evidence for earlier activity, in the form principally of below ground archaeological remains, may survive across all of these HUCAs.
- ◆ The assessment has also identified a high potential for below ground archaeological remains relating principally to Roman and medieval date across **HUCA 2, HUCA 4, HUCA 6, HUCA 7, HUCA 8, HUCA 9, HUCA 10** and **HUCA 11**. Further archaeological potential has been identified within **HUCA 1** and **HUCA 3**.



<sup>1</sup> Taylor 2014: 13, 15, 16,18, 43 viewed 04/04/2014 on [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/extensive-urban-survey](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/extensive-urban-survey)  
<sup>2</sup> Tier 1 Settlements in East Staffordshire are Barton-under-Needwood, Rocester, Rolleston on Dove and Tutbury. For further information on the Local Plan please see East Staffordshire Borough Council website <http://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/planning/planningpolicy/Pages/default.aspx>  
<sup>3</sup> Hunt nd.; Taylor 2014: 11-13 viewed on 04/04/2014  
<sup>4</sup> Taylor 2014: 11-13 viewed 04/04/2014

<sup>5</sup> Slater 2007: 31; Taylor 2014: 13 viewed 04/04/2014

## 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 original project looked at twenty-three historic towns within the modern administrative boundary of Staffordshire. Rocester was initially excluded from this list, but its archaeological and historical importance was highlighted in the Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey Final Report<sup>1</sup>. Rocester has been identified a Tier 1 village in the East Staffordshire Local Plan 2012-2031<sup>2</sup>. Within the Local Plan, Rocester has been identified for some housing growth, including a strategic allocation for 90 dwellings to the south of the settlement as well as an assigned development allowance for 25 dwellings to be delivered within the plan period. As a consequence the Borough commissioned Staffordshire County Council to complete an Extensive Urban Survey for Rocester. 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 towns<sup>3</sup>. To qualify as a town under this assessment the settlement had to meet at least two of a set of nine criteria<sup>4</sup>. 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. Rocester had only qualified under

one of the nine criteria so did not qualify for inclusion in the original EUS project. Rocester's sole criterion was that it was considered to form part of the urban hierarchy by the historical geographer Terry Slater. He argued that the plan form of the settlement was suggestive of medieval town planning with burgage plots and a market place (cf. 2.4 below)<sup>5</sup>.

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.

<sup>6</sup> **Burgage plot:** A plot of land longer than it is wide, can include any structures on it. Typical of medieval towns. (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2012 English Heritage)

<sup>7</sup> Hunt (nd.)

<sup>8</sup> William Salt Library Contacts Web page: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/leisure/archives/williamsalt/ContactDetails/home.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> Extensive Urban Survey page on the Staffordshire County Council website: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/HistoricEnvironment/Projects/urban/eushomepage.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> Archaeology Data Service website: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/>

## 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 plots<sup>6</sup> and formal market places whether physically 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 settlement<sup>7</sup>. The EUS project, comprising the 23 towns, was completed in 2014.

## 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.

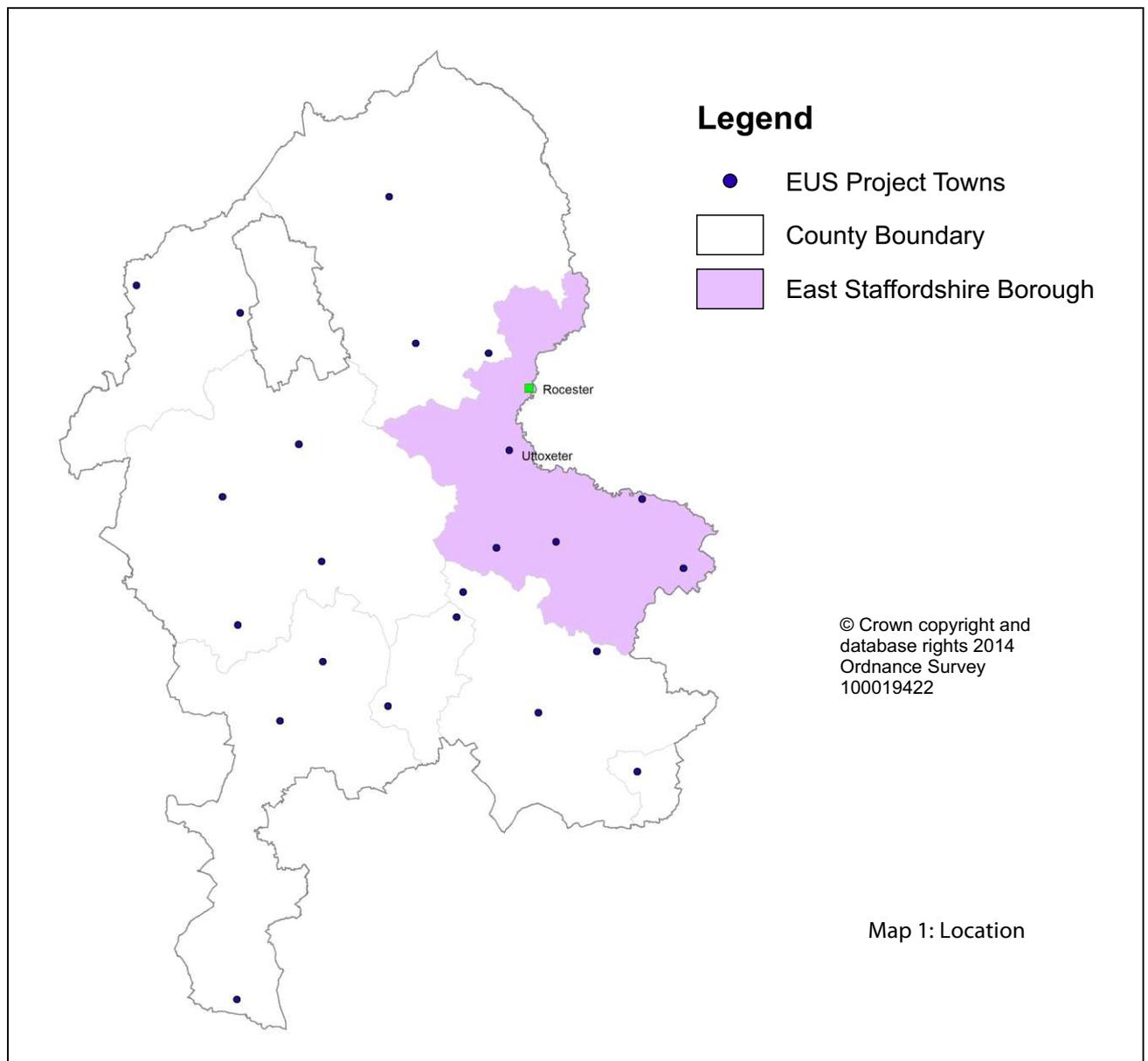
The principal outputs are the Historic Character Assessment reports for each town. These are available as hard copies located at the William Salt Library<sup>8</sup>, but are also accessible through the Staffordshire County Council website<sup>9</sup>. The national programme is currently held on the ADS website<sup>10</sup>.

## Section Summary

### 1. Settings

#### 1.1 Location

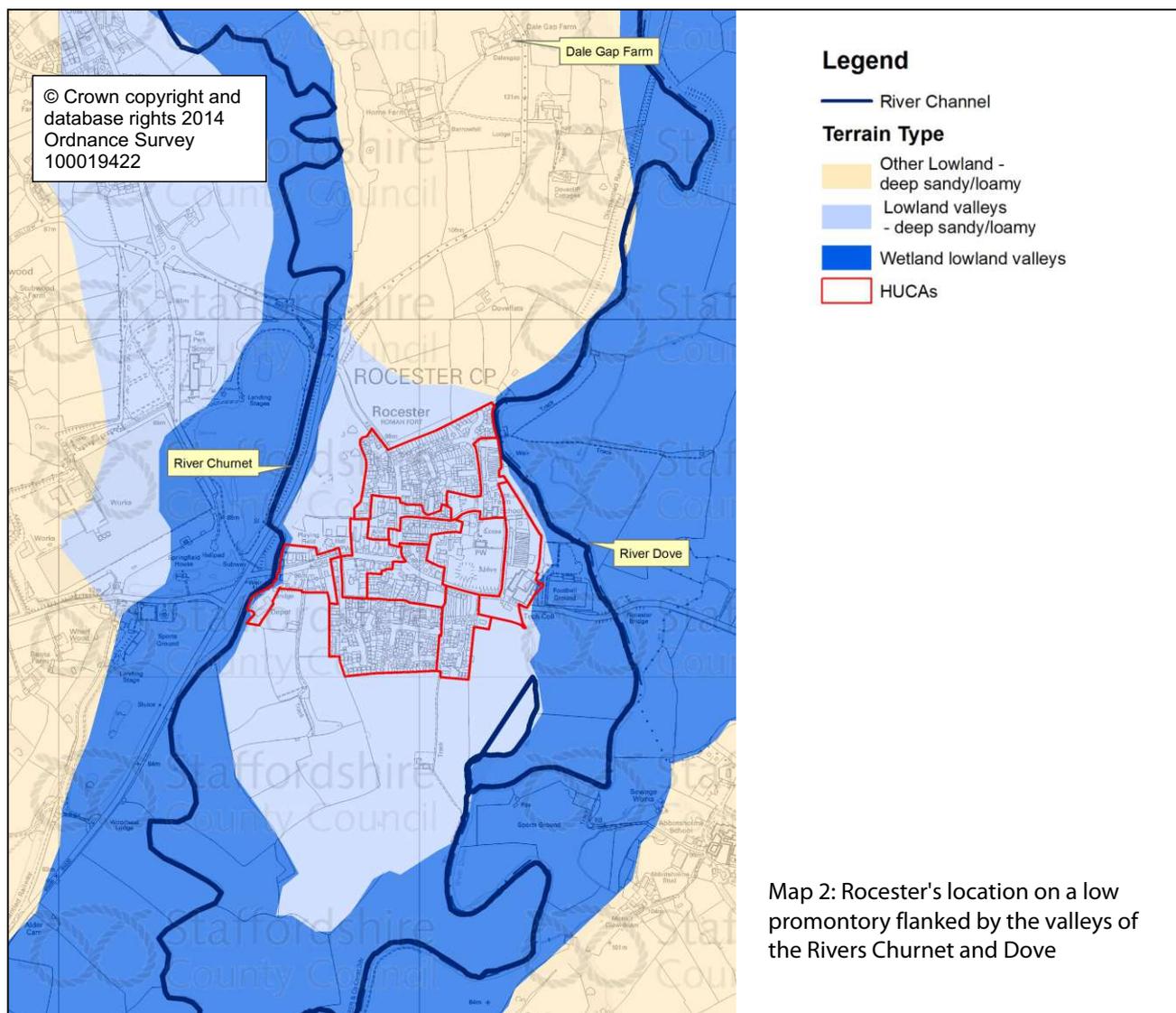
Rocester lies within East Staffordshire Borough, immediately adjacent to the county boundary with Derbyshire (cf. map 1). It is located in the northern portion of the Borough lying between the two main rivers of the Churnet and the Dove. The River Churnet flows southwards around the western side of Rocester whilst the River Dove, also flowing southwards, skirts around the eastern side. The confluence of these two rivers lies just under 2km to the south of Rocester.



## 1.2 Geology and topography

A bedrock geology comprised of Mercia Mudstone extends across the entire parish of Rocester<sup>11</sup>. Overlying this bedrock, in the area of Rocester itself and extending southwards for about 1km, is a superficial deposit comprising sands and gravels representing the first river terrace (cf. map 2 'Lowland Valleys'). To either side of this sand and gravel deposit, and associated with the Rivers Churnet and Dove, there are deposits of alluvium (cf. map 2 'Wetland Lowland Valleys').

The landscape around Rocester is predominantly low lying and level as is to be expected, lying as it does between two rivers. However, as Map 2 makes clear, the settlement appears to lie on a very low promontory within the river valley described by one commentator as a 'scree knoll' which was not prone to flooding<sup>12</sup>. St Michael's Church, within Rocester, lies at around 90m AOD representing one of the highest points within the EUS project area. From here the land falls very gently away, almost imperceptibly, to the south, east and west towards the river valleys. To the north the land begins to rise more sharply beyond the EUS project area to around 140m AOD at Dale Gap Farm.



## 1.3 Sources

### 1.3.1 Historical

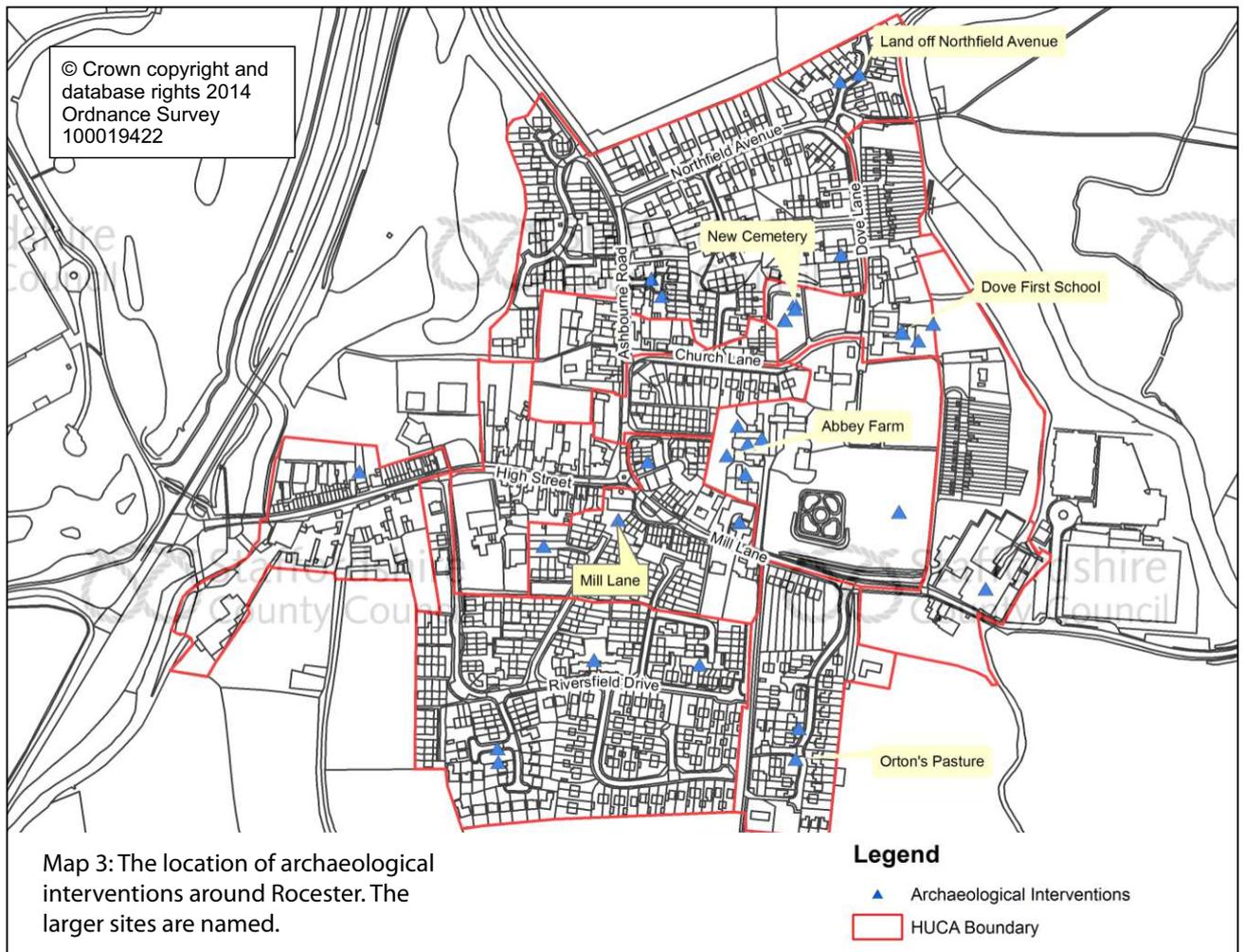
To date very few comprehensive histories have been written for Rocester. The only one consulted was 'A History of Rocester' by Alan Gibson which was published in 2003.

A history of the Abbey was covered by the Victoria County History volume (III) on the religious history of Staffordshire<sup>13</sup>.

### 1.3.2 Cartographic

The earliest map consulted, which shows the entire settlement, was a transcribed copy of the tithe map of 1843 held by the Staffordshire HER. The original copy of this map is held by Stafford Record Office.

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

A large number of archaeological investigations have been carried out in Rocester. Map 3 shows the location of these interventions, naming only the larger works or those where significant remains were recovered. Reference will be made to this map throughout the document when discussing the larger sites in particular (especially in Section 2.2 Roman).

Rocester's archaeological importance was first noted in the 18th century when prehistoric and Roman finds began to be made, particularly in the area of the watermill on the River Dove (Tutbury Mill). However, the first archaeological excavation was only carried out in 1913 at the Dove First School when a trench was excavated across the playground<sup>14</sup>. The first comprehensive archaeological excavation was carried out by Graham Webster in 1961 at the New Cemetery site. Further work was carried out here in the mid 1980s by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit. The work on this site set the phasing for the Roman forts and later settlement (cf. section 2.2). Throughout the 1980s up until the early 21st century Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (later Birmingham Archaeology) carried out the majority of the archaeological investigations in Rocester under the direction of Dr Iain Ferris. These investigations included not only New Cemetery, but also Orton's Pasture and the Dove First School both of which have been published in a number of the Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Transactions<sup>15</sup>. Grey literature reports are held by the Staffordshire HER for the remainder of the sites.

In 1990-1991 Birmingham Archaeology Field Unit initiated a landscape survey and documentary research which provided an outline of the parish from the Norman Conquest to the late 20th century<sup>16</sup>.

During the early 21st century a number of smaller interventions have been carried out in advance of development.

## 2. Context and Historical Development

### 2.1 Prehistoric

#### 2.1.1 Evidence from Rocester

Evidence for prehistoric activity has been recovered from the low promontory upon which Rocester now stands (cf. map 2). The majority of this evidence relates to unstratified finds recovered during archaeological work within the town or found as stray finds<sup>17</sup>. Such finds include worked flint of Mesolithic to Bronze Age date recovered from across Rocester in the excavations at the New Cemetery site, the Dove First School, Orton's Pasture and Northfields Road (cf. map 3). The assemblage from the archaeological work at Northfields Road represented the largest number of prehistoric flints (both debitage and tools) yet found in Rocester with 430 items being recovered<sup>18</sup>.

The earliest flint tools have been dated to the Mesolithic period, although they have only been found in small numbers. They have been recovered from several of the sites across Rocester and comprise two backed bladelets from New Cemetery<sup>19</sup>, a possible Mesolithic blade from Orton's Pasture<sup>20</sup>, a number of bladelets from the Dove First School<sup>21</sup> and a small assemblage, including a microlith, from Northfields Road (cf. maps 3 and 4 for locations)<sup>22</sup>. Permanent settlement during the Mesolithic period is currently unknown in England and it is likely that small groups operating from seasonal camps dominated. Rocester, located on a low promontory close to two rivers and sat within a broad floodplain would have offered excellent opportunities for resource exploitation and the Mesolithic finds made here may point to the presence of just such a seasonal camp.

The majority of the flint tools, where they were datable, are of the Neolithic and Bronze Age and the number may suggest the presence of a settlement in the area of Rocester. This potential is supported by the recovery of some Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery from the town. It is rare to find prehistoric pottery in Staffordshire, but a number of sherds have been recovered in Rocester. The earliest identified was a single sherd of late Neolithic Peterborough ware from the New Cemetery site<sup>23</sup>. A whole Bronze Age beaker was found during the construction of Northfields Road in the 1930s (cf. map 4)<sup>24</sup>. The remaining small assemblages of pottery found in Rocester have been dated, sometimes only tentatively, to the Iron Age. This includes sherds from a single late Iron Age jar recovered from the New Cemetery site and a rim sherd described as possibly late Iron Age recovered from the Northfields Road site<sup>25</sup>. There does remain the distinct possibility that this late Iron Age pottery may represent the continuation of pre-conquest ceramic traditions in the Rocester.

A single Bronze Age axe was also reportedly found in the late 18th century in the vicinity of Arkwright's mill to the east of Rocester<sup>26</sup>. The precise location of the findspot is, however, unknown.

The prehistoric finds do not, in themselves, provide evidence for actual occupation during the prehistoric period in Rocester. However, the topography combined with the relative wealth of late prehistoric flints (both finished tools and detritus) does suggest if not permanent occupation then the presence of seasonal camps at Rocester. These groups may well have been attracted by the raised position overlooking two river systems and the rich resource this situation offered.

There is tantalising evidence, if not closely dated, for more substantive activity at least in

<sup>17</sup> Unstratified Finds: those finds that are not clearly associated with known episodes of activity or monuments which have been identified through archaeological investigation (i.e. that were found in the topsoil or within contexts which they are clearly not associated with being clearly earlier or later in date).

<sup>18</sup> Ferris & Burrows 2002: 9

<sup>19</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 182

<sup>20</sup> Ferris et al 2000: 53

<sup>21</sup> Ferris 2009: 23

<sup>22</sup> Ferris & Burrows 2002: 9

<sup>23</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 39

<sup>24</sup> Ferris 2009: 33

<sup>25</sup> Ferris & Burrows 2002: 9

<sup>26</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 01801

<sup>27</sup> Ferris et al 2000: 5

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ferris & Burrows 2002: 5

<sup>30</sup> Richmond 2012

<sup>31</sup> Ibid: 72-3; Staffordshire HER: PRN 55793 and PRN 55794

<sup>33</sup> Ibid: 44; Staffordshire HER:PRN 55795

<sup>34</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 60406

<sup>35</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 02533

<sup>36</sup> Ring Ditch: Circular or near circular ditches, usually seen as cropmarks. Use the term where the function is unknown. Ring ditches may be the remains of ploughed out round barrows, round houses, or of modern features such as searchlight. Pit Alignment: A single line, or pair of roughly parallel lines, of pits set at intervals along a common axis or series of axes. The pits are not thought

the later prehistoric period (probably Iron Age). At Orton's Pasture to the south of Rocester the earliest features excavated comprised short lengths of a boundary ditch and an associated pit<sup>27</sup>. No finds were recovered from these features, but the excavators noted that they appeared to pre-date sustained Roman activity. Consequently the features were tentatively dated to either the late prehistoric or the very first phases of the Roman military activity (cf. 2.2.1)<sup>28</sup>. At the Northfields Road site, to the north of Rocester, the earliest activity comprised three linear ditches, which were interpreted as a possible field system, and an associated large sub-circular pit, from which was recovered the rim sherd of possible Iron Age date (see above)<sup>29</sup>.

### 2.1.2 Evidence from the wider area

Evidence from other river valleys particularly within Staffordshire has revealed the presence of extensive activity during the late prehistoric period. This included a late Neolithic and Bronze Age ceremonial and funerary landscape in the River Trent and later agricultural exploitation in the Trent and Tame. The proximity of the nearby confluence of the Rivers Churnet and Dove may have offered further attractions to late prehistoric groups with access to water (for drinking, irrigation and transport), wildfowl and fish resources and excellent opportunities for crop and livestock farming.

In the Dove valley the most significant known site lies 4km to the south of Rocester near Crakemarsh (Uttoxeter Quarry) where recent archaeological excavation in advance of quarrying has uncovered substantive evidence for human activity throughout the prehistoric period<sup>30</sup>. The earliest evidence for activity dated to the mid-Neolithic period in the form of three small pits<sup>31</sup>. In the early Bronze Age, however, the area was exploited as a ceremonial landscape which included the

establishment of a cremation cemetery<sup>32</sup>. Late Bronze Age activity included evidence for what appears to be the remnants of a burnt mound (in this case a clay-lined trough, channel and significant quantities of fire-cracked stone). Evidence also suggests, dating to this period, the beginning of an agricultural landscape indicated by a number of field ditches, which due to the paucity of finds, were interpreted as being sited away from any settlement<sup>33</sup>. A prehistoric spear, found during metal detecting, was also recovered in the general vicinity of Crakemarsh in 2001<sup>34</sup>.

Further evidence, although not examined archaeologically, lies approximately 450m to the south of Rocester and comprises a number of features of probable prehistoric date visible on aerial photography<sup>35</sup>. These include two or three ring ditches, possibly evidence of ploughed down Bronze Age burial mounds, as well as a later (Iron Age or Roman) pit alignment<sup>36</sup>. Field walking in this general area, between the two rivers to the south of Rocester, has also recovered further prehistoric flint implements<sup>37</sup>.

Approximately 4km to the south west, near Stramshall, more cropmarks visible on aerial photography indicate further late prehistoric and Roman activity lying on the western edge of the Dove Valley and just to the north of the Tean Valley<sup>38</sup>.

Within Doveridge parish, Derbyshire lying approximately 7km to the south east, a multi-period site was found during archaeological work with evidence for worked flint dating from the late Mesolithic to the early Bronze Age<sup>39</sup>. A number of features were also identified including a probable barrow and a possible hearth. The evidence suggested a late Bronze Age-early Iron Age settlement in the vicinity. Activity on the site continued into the Roman period (cf. 2.2).

to have held posts. (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2014 English Heritage).

<sup>37</sup> Ferris 2009: 33

<sup>38</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 03643 and PRN 00626

<sup>39</sup> Derbyshire HER: PRN 19135

A number of prehistoric implements, mostly represented by flint tools, have also been recovered at various times across Croxden parish<sup>40</sup>. These collections are indicative of activity away from the main Dove Valley, although the parish is bi-sected by a number of its tributaries (including the River Tean). A Scheduled Bronze Age barrow stands on a promontory within Croxden parish which overlooks the Tean Valley to the south<sup>41</sup>.

All of these sites lie within or just beyond the valley of the River Dove and its main tributaries (which includes the River Churnet). Little archaeological work has, to date, been carried out within the Dove Valley, with the exception of the excavations at the quarry site near Crakemarsch. What little is known, therefore, is beginning to suggest that activity within this valley during the prehistoric could be as equally extensive and complex as is that known within the Trent Valley lying further to the south within Staffordshire. Such activity could quite easily have been located within and around Rocester as is hinted at by the sites and finds recovered to date.

## 2.2 Roman (49AD to 409AD)

*This account provides a summary of the evidence for Roman activity known to date. For more detailed overviews of Roman Rocester, including the role of the early forts within their landscape, then please see the two journal articles in the volumes of the Staffordshire Historical and Archaeological Journal particularly that published in 1996 'Excavations at New Cemetery' and the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) publication of 2002<sup>42</sup>.*

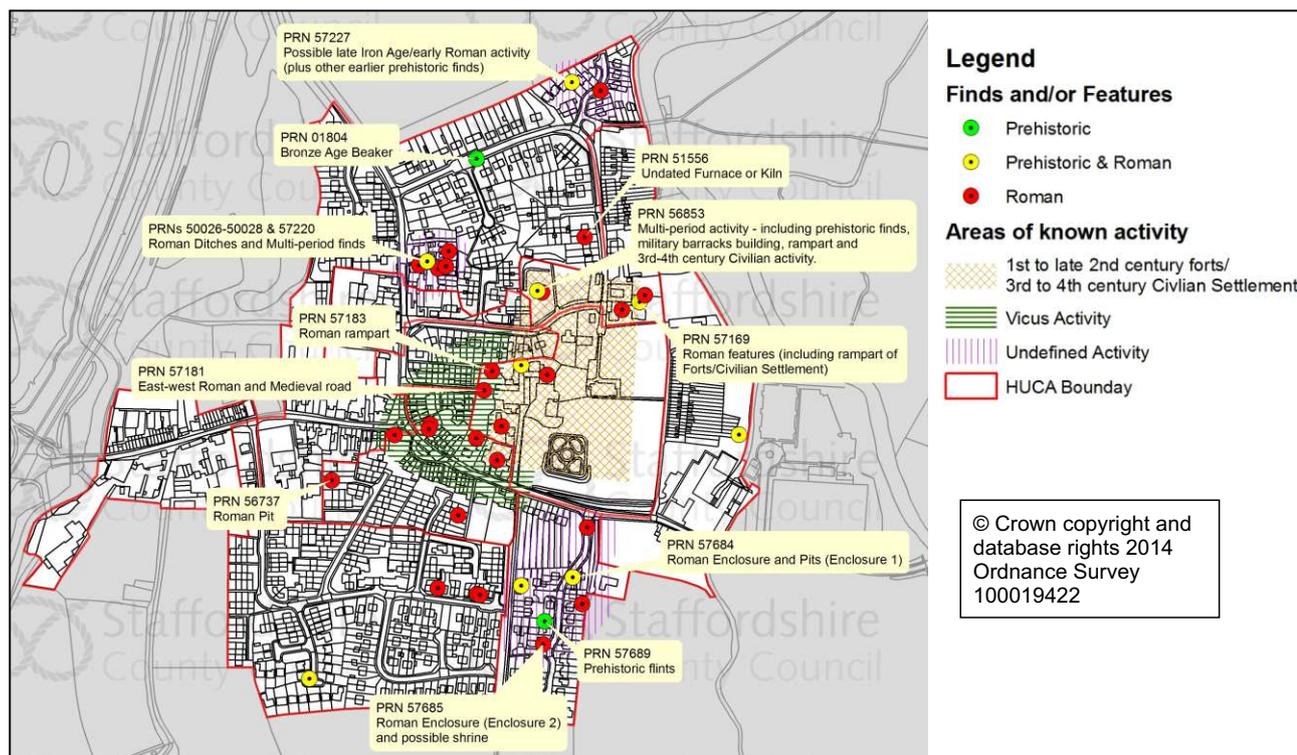
There have been six larger-scale archaeological investigations within Rocester which have principally focused upon the Roman origins of the settlement. The periods used within this section are based upon the phasing of deposits identified at the largest of these excavations, the 'New Cemetery' site to

the north (cf. map of locations of excavations). This phasing was used across all of the larger sites which were excavated by BUFAU from the late 1980s/early 1990s. Subsequent to these major interventions, a number of smaller interventions have been carried out which, due to their nature, have not always been able to utilise this phasing and they shall mostly be considered separately.

The earliest identification of a Roman presence at Rocester occurred in the late 18th century. Roman coins and pottery were found during the construction of the cotton mill (cf. 2.6.3.3) in 1792 along with possible Roman structures<sup>43</sup>. Further Roman pottery was found in the 19th and early 20th centuries associated with a possible contemporary ditch principally from the western side of Rocester.

Roman activity at Rocester appears to have been strategically located to take advantage of the promontory between the River Churnet and the River Dove (cf. 1.1 and 1.2). It links into the wider Roman road network being sited on the Chesterton (near Newcastle-under-Lyme) to Little Chester (near Derby) route<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> Webster 1962: 37-62; Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996  
<sup>44</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 220  
<sup>45</sup> Ibid: 9 and 221; Webster 1962: 37-62  
<sup>46</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 221; Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1986: 6; Ferris 2009: 33  
<sup>47</sup> Cf. Ferris 1989 and Ferris 2004 for evidence of the later 3rd century rampart



Map 4: The shaded areas indicate the extent of Roman activity across all three periods as it is currently understood from archaeological work undertaken to date. There remains the potential for military and/or civilian settlement activity to extend northwards and westwards in particular. The sites to the south, around Riversfield Drive, by their nature, have been suggested to lie beyond the principal areas of intensive occupation

## 2.2.1 Late 1st century AD to Early 2nd century AD

### 2.2.1.1 Military activity

The earliest known evidence for Roman activity at Rocester relates to two phases of military fort construction as initially identified at the New Cemetery site in the 1960s and again in the 1980s (cf. map 3; HUCA 8)<sup>45</sup>. The first of these two forts was probably constructed towards the end of the 1st century AD, defined during the 1980s excavation as two closely-spaced parallel ditches<sup>46</sup>. This was replaced by a second fort in the same area in the late 1st to early 2nd century AD and which was seen to be defined by a rampart<sup>47</sup>. This rampart has also been observed in other archaeological interventions thus enabling a definition of the northern and eastern extent of the fort complex. The northern extent lay within the New Cemetery site and the eastern extent within the Dove First School site (HUCA 8) (cf. map 3 and map 4)<sup>48</sup>. The western, and possibly the southern, extent can probably be postulated as running along the same course as the later 3rd century rampart (as it does elsewhere in Rocester cf. 2.2.3) just to the west and south of Abbey Farm (HUCA 7), although the evidence for this was not seen during the archaeological work on this site<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Ferris 2009: 33

<sup>51</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 221; Intervallum road: road located within and following the line of a defended site/fort.

<sup>52</sup> Vicus: A district, suburb or quarter of a town or village adjacent to a fort, with the lowest legal status accorded to a built up area. (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2014 English Heritage).

<sup>53</sup> Mould 1996: 14

<sup>59</sup> Cherrington 2008: 19 and 23

<sup>60</sup> Ferris et al 2000

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

Archaeological work at the Dove First School site recovered evidence for activity associated with the Phase 2 fort comprising a small oven and timber structure<sup>50</sup>. The evidence (or lack of) at the New Cemetery site enabled excavators to postulate that the 'second fort' represented an annexe rather than the fort proper. This was based upon the fact that there was no *intervallum* road associated with the rampart<sup>51</sup>.

### 2.2.1.2 Vicus activity<sup>52</sup>

Archaeological work in Rocester has also identified civilian activity located adjacent to the fort (a settlement known as a *vicus*). The earliest date of this activity is currently understood to be as early as the later 1st century or early 2nd century AD, and therefore possibly associated with the second fort<sup>53</sup>. This early evidence appears to be concentrated to the west of the fort on the north side of what is now Mill Street (HUCA 4)<sup>54</sup>. Archaeological work undertaken on a number of occasions in this area has identified several phases of activity within this period. Archaeological evidence has included the remains of a number of structures, courtyards and fence lines<sup>55</sup>. One timber framed building appears to have been replaced at a later date by a stone building. Pit digging, including a possible cess pit, also indicates domestic activity<sup>56</sup>. Elsewhere off Mill Street there was evidence for metal working in the form of two smithing hearths<sup>57</sup>. Settlement in this area appears to have continued until circa 200 AD (cf. 2.2.2)<sup>58</sup>.

*Vicus* activity found in excavations to the south of the fort (at the former Police House; HUCA 4) and to the north (at Northfield Avenue (HUCA 11) cf. map 3) suggests occupation during a slightly later phase (from the mid 2nd century cf. 2.2.2). At the Police House site, although activity was defined as being

probably associated with the third fort (cf. 2.2.2) the finds had a date range of between the late 1st and 2nd century, including one unstratified collection from a rusticated jar which was more tightly dated to the late 1st to early 2nd century<sup>59</sup>.

Overall it is not possible on the evidence currently available to state how extensive *vicus* activity may have been in this early period.

### 2.2.1.3 A Possible Shrine

Archaeological work at Orton's pasture to the south of Rocester (HUCA 5) revealed a number of phases of Roman activity. The earliest which could be dated with any certainty corresponds dates to the late 1st to early 2nd century AD (cf. 2.1 for earlier and 2.2.3 for later activity). During this period two ditched enclosures separated by a hollow way were created on land probably lying just on the edge of the river valley as it existed in the Roman period and away from the main areas of occupation<sup>60</sup>. The two enclosures were found to be largely devoid of features with the exception of a small stone building in the southern enclosure, which was not closely dated. One interpretation may be that the enclosures were agricultural in nature, however, the excavators have argued, on the basis of morphology, lack of finds, environmental data and comparisons with similar sites elsewhere, that there was sufficient evidence to suggest that this was a complex associated with religious activity with the small stone building representing a shrine<sup>61</sup>. It was suggested that the shrine was most likely associated with military personnel based at the fort to the north<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Mould 1996: 13; Ferris 2000

<sup>55</sup> Bell 1986: 20-21; Ferris 2000

<sup>56</sup> Ferris 2000

<sup>57</sup> Bell 1986: 20-21

<sup>58</sup> Mould 1996: 14

<sup>63</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 221-225  
<sup>64</sup> Ibid: 221-222  
<sup>65</sup> Ibid; Ferris 2009: 33  
<sup>66</sup> Ferris 1989: 9  
<sup>67</sup> Ibid: 222-224  
<sup>68</sup> Ferris 1989  
<sup>69</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 225; Ferris 2009: 5 and 33

<sup>70</sup> Mould 1996: 14  
<sup>71</sup> Bell 1986: 20-51; Mould 1996: 13  
<sup>72</sup> Colls & Hamilton 2006; Cherrington 2008  
<sup>73</sup> Cherrington 2008: 23  
<sup>74</sup> Colls & Hamilton 2006: 3-4  
<sup>75</sup> Cherrington 2008: 23  
<sup>76</sup> Colls & Hamilton 2006

## 2.2.2 Early-late 2nd century AD

### 2.2.2.1 Military activity

Evidence for the third and final fort at Rocester has suggested that it was constructed in the mid 2nd century (circa AD 140-160) and was active until circa 200 AD<sup>63</sup>. The evidence includes the construction of an intervallum road which was found to overlie the earlier rampart (cf. 2.2.1)<sup>64</sup>. The position of this new road might suggest that the fort was enlarged at this stage into an area formerly comprising an 'annexe'? Associated with this renewed military activity was the construction of a barrack block at the New Cemetery Site (HUCA 8) and a further timber building, possibly also a barrack block or may be a workshop, at the Dove First School site (HUCA 8)<sup>65</sup>. At Abbey Farm (HUCA 7) two phases of timber buildings were identified one of which may relate to this period of activity<sup>66</sup>. A later phase of activity at New Cemetery suggested that part of the barracks block went out of use and the area became associated with food-preparation (a 'cook-house') as evidenced by the hearths, ovens, associated structures and finds which included sherds of amphora and glass bottles<sup>67</sup>.

At Abbey Farm a possible Roman road was found sealed beneath a later medieval road (cf. 2.4.4 and map 4)<sup>68</sup>. This was interpreted by the excavators as potentially representing the line of the *Via Principalis* (main road) through the final phase fort.

Military activity appears to have come to an end circa 200 AD as is evidenced by the complete dismantling of the wooden buildings and site clearance works identified at both the New Cemetery site and at the Dove First School site<sup>69</sup>.

### 2.2.2.2 The Vicus

As noted above, evidence for civilian activity outside the western defences of the fort

appears to have existed from the later 1st/early 2nd century (cf. 2.2.1; HUCA 4). This activity appears to have continued in this area into the later 2nd century and is therefore associated with the final phase of the fort<sup>70</sup>. This activity includes industrial activity associated with smithing<sup>71</sup>.

Archaeological work carried out at what is now the surgery (HUCA 4) is believed to have straddled the boundary between the third phase fort and the *vicus* lying to its south<sup>72</sup>. The *vicus* is assumed to extend southwards from this site<sup>73</sup>. Features recovered from this site principally comprised a series of ditches (not all contemporary) and pits<sup>74</sup>. Two linear features were observed to run parallel and were interpreted as ditches to a road which ran north-south through the *vicus*, although a function as property boundaries was not ruled out<sup>75</sup>. A stone surface and a stone wall were also identified just to the north of Mill Street. Animal bones recovered revealed that cattle dominated the faunal assemblage, which is usual for Roman military sites, but the presence of pig was taken to indicate potential high status activity within the settlement<sup>76</sup>.

Two possible ditches of possible mid 2nd century date were revealed on a site to the north west of the New Cemetery at what is now Rowan Court (HUCA 11)<sup>77</sup>. The nature of this activity has not been determined with certainty, but its location may suggest that it is associated with *vicus*' activity.

At the north eastern edge of Rocester further mid 2nd century activity has been identified (HUCA 11). Three, possibly four, rectilinear enclosures were identified along with other features including a number of rubbish pits<sup>78</sup>. One of the enclosures was interpreted as potentially representing a stock enclosure, which was possibly associated with a small building and a stone surfaced area<sup>79</sup>. The third rectilinear enclosure was found to have been sub-divided into a number of units described

<sup>77</sup> Krakowicz 2002  
<sup>78</sup> Ferris & Burrows 2002  
<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>81</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>82</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>83</sup> Mora-Ottomano 2013b: 10  
<sup>84</sup> Mould 1996: 14  
<sup>85</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 1  
<sup>86</sup> Webster 1962: 37-42; Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 225-7

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>88</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 225-7  
<sup>89</sup> Ibid; Ferris 1989; Ferris 2009: 33  
<sup>90</sup> Ferris 1989; Ferris 2009: 33  
<sup>91</sup> Ferris 2004: 8  
<sup>92</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 225-7  
<sup>93</sup> Ferris 1989  
<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

by the excavators as appearing to form a "'ladder' enclosure"<sup>80</sup>. Within this enclosure industrial activity had occurred represented by a kiln and a series of possible hearths associated with a small working surface and a large well. Further industrial activity, in the form of a hearth was also observed in another area of the rectilinear enclosure as well as a series of kilns or furnaces being located just outside of its bounds. The activity was suggested to form part of the *vicus*<sup>82</sup>. This evidence suggests that occupation around Rocester in the 2nd century was considerable and although its full extent remains unknown, it was potentially almost as extensive as the modern settlement.

A small-scale excavation approximately 60m to the south of High Street revealed a possible Roman pit from which was recovered a brooch which, whilst possibly of Iron Age date, was assumed to be later in date. Pottery recovered from this area suggested a late 1st to mid 2nd century date which suggests it represents *vicus* activity associated with either the first or second phase fort<sup>83</sup>.

To date the evidence, notably from the Mill Street site, but also from the paucity of later finds from other excavations, suggest that civilian settlement within the *vicus* ended around the same time as the military occupation in circa 200 AD<sup>84</sup>.

### 2.2.3 3rd and 4th centuries AD

During this period there is evidence from several sites around Rocester that the area of the former fort was reoccupied as a civilian settlement, significant enough to be considered by commentators to have been a small town<sup>85</sup>. A second 'clay' rampart has been identified at New Cemetery, which overlies the alignment of the earlier late 1st/early 2nd century grass rampart, which is associated with this civilian settlement<sup>86</sup>. A wall was possibly also constructed at a later date during

this period along the alignment of the bank<sup>87</sup>. The clay rampart at New Cemetery was seen on two alignments, running both east-west and north-south<sup>88</sup>. It was also identified, aligned north-south at Abbey Farm (HUCA 7), representing its western extent, and on the same alignment at the Dove First School (HUCA 8), where it reaches its eastern extent<sup>89</sup>. The rampart had survived as a low earthwork in a field to the west of Abbey Farm and is likely to have survived as an upstanding feature at the Dove First School long after the Roman period<sup>90</sup>. A small section of the southern extent of the clay rampart was also observed during drain-laying in the area between Abbey Farm and Mill Street<sup>91</sup>. The extent of this civilian settlement is therefore quite well-defined through archaeological investigations.

What is less clearly understood is the plan form and function of this defended civilian settlement. The best evidence comes from the New Cemetery site where excavations revealed evidence for what has been interpreted as an open area likely to represent the rear plots of properties fronting onto the main east-west road to the south<sup>92</sup>. This road, considered to be the *Via Principalis* (cf. 2.2.2) was observed during archaeological work at Abbey Farm and is therefore likely to have continued to serve the defended civilian settlement<sup>93</sup>. This open area was marked off to the north by a ditch beyond which lay an area of cobbled surfaces possibly divided by fences or palisades, whose purpose was unknown, but which did not appear to be associated with industrial activity<sup>94</sup>.

Activity during this period has been identified from possibly three other sites within Rocester, which lie beyond the area defined by the defended civilian settlement. The most substantive of this activity occurred at Orton's Pasture to the south (HUCA 5) where a series of floors or yards were created along with associated structures interpreted from their

<sup>95</sup> Ferris et al 2000: 13 and 14  
<sup>96</sup> Ibid: 14  
<sup>97</sup> Mould 1996: 13 and 14  
<sup>98</sup> Ibid: 14  
<sup>99</sup> Ferris & Burrows 2002: 9  
<sup>100</sup> Ferris 2004: 5

<sup>100</sup> Ferris 2004: 5  
<sup>101</sup> Cherrington 2008  
<sup>102</sup> Paul et al 2008  
<sup>103</sup> Nichol 1998  
<sup>104</sup> S. Dean pers. Comm..  
<sup>105</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 00272, PRN 01764, PRN 50417, PRN 60509, PRN 60515, PRN 60662, PRN 60663 and PRN 60664

form as likely to have been 'flimsy' and therefore possibly representative of workshops<sup>95</sup>. The latter interpretation is perhaps supported by evidence elsewhere on the site of a hearth and floor surfaces as well as evidence of burnt clay, charcoal and small quantities of iron smithing slag<sup>96</sup>. This evidence suggests that industrial activity may have been focused away from the core area of settlement. This is not an unreasonable conclusion bearing in mind the fire hazard that metal working posed to a community dominated by timber framed buildings roofed in thatch.

At Mill Street a curvilinear enclosure ditch was revealed which contained 3rd century pottery sherds suggesting activity on this site during this period<sup>97</sup>. Whilst the excavators did not rule out this interpretation which would have seen a substantial enclosure outside of the defended settlement area they did suggest that this ditch could have been associated with earlier vicus activity and was only backfilled in the 3rd century<sup>98</sup>.

To the north at Northfield Avenue excavations revealed a large 3rd/4th century ditch aligned north-south which was interpreted as possibly associated with a Roman trackway<sup>99</sup>. No further features were identified relating to activity in this area at this date thus suggesting that substantive Roman activity in this area came to an end during an earlier phase on this site.

#### **2.2.4 Indeterminate Roman Activity within Rocester**

A number of sites within Rocester have revealed evidence of Roman (or possible Roman) activity which has not been closely dated. These include a metal working furnace (possibly for making bronze) from a site to the north of Abbey Farm (HUCA 7). It was not possible to date the hearth from the pottery recovered and consequently the excavators

were unclear whether the activity represented was associated with the military phase of activity or the defended civilian settlement (cf. 2.2.2 and 2.2.3)<sup>100</sup>.

A further industrial feature (a kiln, furnace or oven) was recorded during archaeological work at Dove Lane to the north of the New Cemetery site (HUCA 11)<sup>101</sup>. The location of the site suggested that it may have been of Roman date, but no finds were recovered to support this hypothesis and so it remains an enigmatic find.

Ephemeral evidence for activity was found from two separate archaeological interventions along Riversfield Drive to the south of Rocester. This included evidence for possible temporary structures or fences<sup>102</sup>. To the south east no archaeological features were identified, but abraded Roman pottery led the excavators to conclude that the land had probably been in cultivation in this period and later<sup>103</sup>. Overall both these investigations concluded that Riversfield Drive lay beyond the Roman settlement core.

A watching brief to the east of the River Dove and associated with the nearby Tutbury Mill redevelopment recovered evidence for considerable quantities of heavily abraded Roman pottery sherds. The excavator has suggested that the scatter of finds, the date range of the assemblage and their abraded nature suggest the heavy manuring of fields in close proximity to the Roman settlement<sup>104</sup>.

#### **2.2.5 Roman activity in the wider landscape**

Overall there is currently little evidence for substantive activity in the wider landscape. The majority of the evidence comes from finds, particularly coins, which have been recovered by metal detectorists in the parishes of Denstone and Rocester, as well as at Alton<sup>105</sup>. However, a site excavated over eight seasons by the Stoke-on-Trent Museum Archaeological

Society has revealed substantial evidence for Roman activity<sup>106</sup>. The site, which lies approximately 2.5km to the west of Rocester and just south of the Little Chester to Chester road, revealed evidence for a spur road, substantial buildings (including a two-storey timber framed structure) and industrial activity. The latter included evidence for smithing and significant number of leather shoes recovered from a well which also contained cattle bones (including a near complete skeleton) and horn cores<sup>107</sup>. The evidence may suggest a site supplying the nearby fort, although a number of high status pottery sherds may suggest a more substantial site in the vicinity. The site was active in the early Roman period, but had been abandoned by the mid 3rd century.

A possible Roman camp has been identified at Barrowhill, lying approximately 1.4km to the north recognised by its rectangular form with rounded corners on aerial photography<sup>108</sup>. Roman pottery and coins are reputed to have been found in the vicinity in 1872, but to date no archaeological work has been carried out to determine its origins, phasing or potential relationship with the military activity at Rocester.

To the south east in Derbyshire, lying approximately 7km from Rocester, archaeological work has uncovered evidence for what is interpreted as a temporary settlement and industrial site (which included evidence for two possible Roman pottery kilns)<sup>109</sup>.

Whilst the evidence to date is not extensive there remains the potential for further Roman sites to be identified within the landscape around Rocester in the form of settlement, but also the cemeteries belonging to the forts and later town which elsewhere have been found lying adjacent to the principal roads.

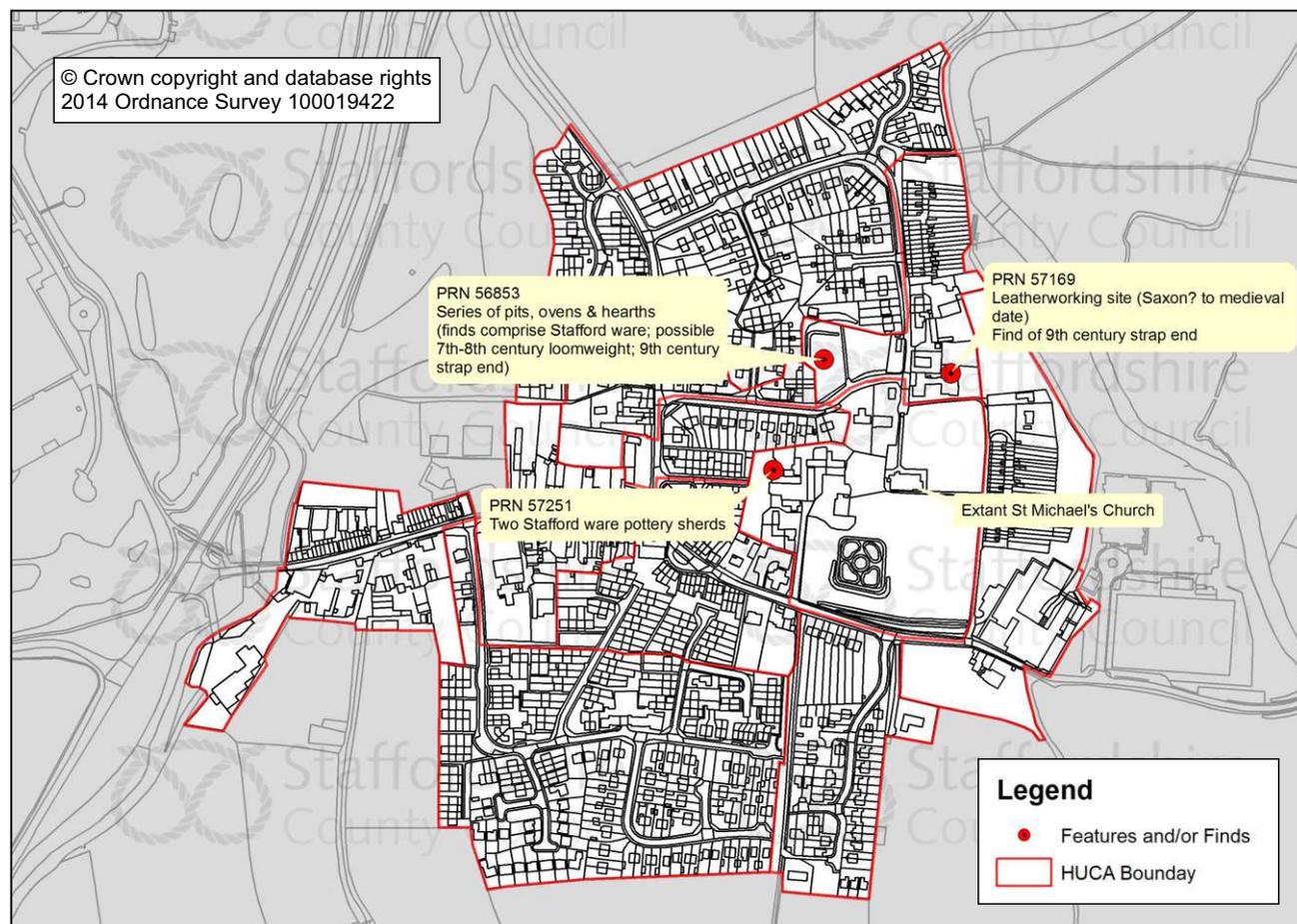
## 2.3 Early Medieval (410 to 1065)

### 2.3.1 Settlement

Rocester is first mentioned in documentary sources in Domesday Book (1086) where it is recorded as a large manor with 28 heads of household and held by Aelgar, Earl of Mercia prior to 1066<sup>110</sup>. The evidence suggests that Rocester was of some significance in the local landscape in the period prior to the Conquest, which may be indicative of a degree of continuity of settlement throughout the post-Roman period (cf. 2.3.3).

The suggestion of continued occupation, from the Roman period through to the medieval period, is supported by archaeological evidence from two sites within Rocester (cf. map 5). Much of this has been in the form of residual finds such as the pottery sherds of 'Stafford-type' ware recovered from Abbey Farm and the Dove First School<sup>111</sup>. A 9th century strap-end was also recovered from the latter site.

More substantive evidence was recovered during archaeological work at the New Cemetery site in the 1960s when a series of hearths were recorded. Four knives and part of another 9th century decorated strap end were found associated with these features<sup>112</sup>. The excavations carried out at New Cemetery in the 1980s recovered further evidence of activity possibly from as early as the 7th or 8th century<sup>113</sup>. The evidence included a clay domed oven which the excavators stated was comparable to similar ovens found in Stafford<sup>114</sup>. The pottery recovered from this site included 'Stafford-type' ware, Stamford ware and another sherd considered to be of local manufacture<sup>115</sup>.



Map 5:

Rare evidence for continuity of occupation into the early medieval period, which appears to cluster around the site of the extant parish church (whose earliest fabric is 13th century cf. 2.4.5.2). This may suggest a concentration of activity in this area, although this does not rule out the potential for further activity to be discovered elsewhere including along High Street/Mill Street where the later medieval settlement was concentrated.

The hearths and ovens recorded at the New Cemetery site provide evidence for agricultural and industrial activity within the area of Rocester during this period. A loomweight found in the backfill of one of the ovens also provides evidence for cloth-making. At the Dove First School site there was also evidence for medieval tanning/leather working which the excavators tentatively suggested may have begun in the late Saxon period<sup>116</sup>. Whilst there is no direct evidence for settlement the evidence for industrial activity certainly suggests that it was present in the immediate vicinity, possibly in the area of the historic core of Rocester.

Domesday Book (1086) provides further evidence for the economy of Rocester in the period either side of the Norman Conquest. The entry records land for nine ploughs and a mill suggesting the importance of an arable economy to the local population<sup>117</sup>. The presence of the mill has been suggested to support the evidence that Rocester may have formed the focus of a large pre-Conquest estate (cf. 2.3.1 and 2.3.3)<sup>118</sup>. Other resources recorded in Domesday Book include access to meadow and woodland.

### 2.3.3 Religion

There is currently no substantive evidence for a church in Rocester prior to the medieval period and there is no mention of a priest in Domesday Book (usually taken as evidence for the presence of a church of possible pre-Conquest origin). However, some commentators have pointed to circumstantial evidence for the presence of a pre-Conquest church, possibly a minster. A church existed in Rocester prior to the founding of the Augustinian abbey in the mid 12th century (cf. 2.4.5) and was suitably significant to function as a mother church having at least two dependant chapels (at Waterfall and Bradley-in-the-Moors) by this date<sup>120</sup>. Furthermore the parish was originally much larger than it is currently with Denstone, Waterfall and Quixhill becoming separate parishes between the 13th and 16th centuries<sup>121</sup>. Large parishes are often a signifier of minster churches and have also been taken to indicate the presence of large Roman estates. A further signifier of an early church is a dedication to St Michael, as here at Rocester, which has also been argued for St Michael's Church in Lichfield<sup>122</sup>. At present, however, this remains conjectural.

## 2.4 Medieval (1066 to 1499)

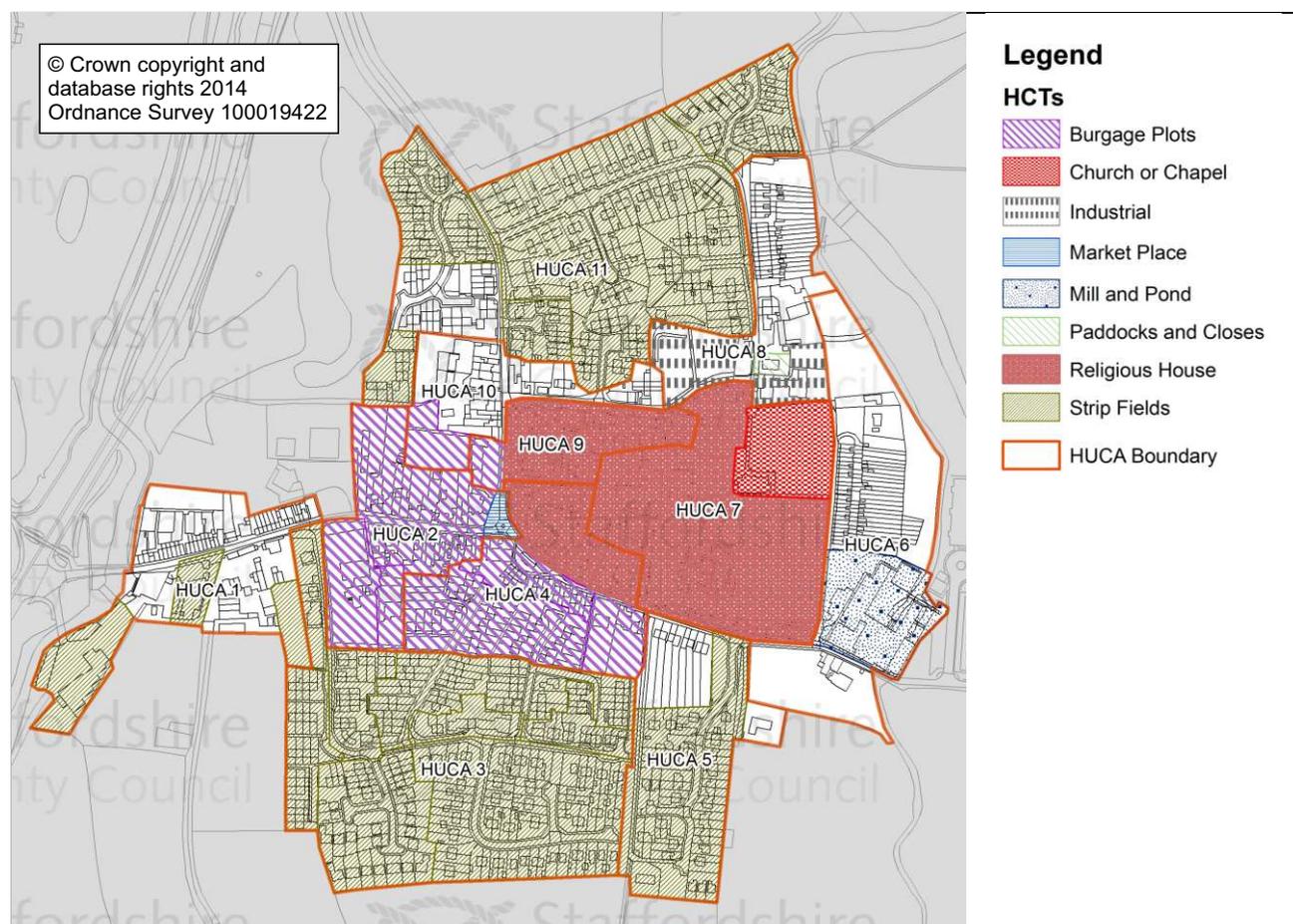
### 2.4.1 Lordship

At the time of Domesday Book the manor was held by the king, but was later granted to the earls of Chester<sup>123</sup>. In the 1140s a nephew of the Earl of Chester, Richard Bacon, granted the manor to the Augustinians who established an abbey within the settlement (cf. 2.4.5.1)<sup>124</sup>. The grant included the church of Rocester, the vill of Rocester and East Bridgeford (Nottinghamshire) as well as other lands and tenements in those places<sup>125</sup>. A second charter of unproven provenance and assumed not to be contemporary with the grant of the 1140s details further lands which it states were

granted to the abbey. Many of these lay in and around Rocester in eastern Staffordshire including at Quixhill, Combridge, Waterfall, Bradley-in-the-Moors and Wootton as well as other lands in adjacent counties<sup>126</sup>.

<sup>127</sup> Hawkins & Rumble 1976: 1,17  
<sup>128</sup> Wrottesley 1889: 111-118 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=52351> viewed 22/04/2014 (Uttoxeter had 30 taxpayers, Leek 33 and Rocester 15)  
<sup>129</sup> Litherland 1991: 16

## 2.4.2 Settlement



Map 6: Medieval Rocester.

The extent of the Abbey precinct is based upon the existing road network as suggested by the parish landscape survey, but has yet to be tested archaeologically. However, it clearly demonstrates the relationship between the town as defined by the 'Burgage Plots', the market place and the dominance of the 'Abbey'. It also highlights how disconnected the parish church is from the town perhaps indicating the location of the Saxon settlement was located in this area.

### 2.4.2.1 Population

Calculating the population of any given place prior to the census records of the 19th century is fraught with difficulties. However, some records at least enable a comparison with other settlements. At Domesday 28 households are recorded for Rocester which is comparable with other settlements which were later granted town status such as Uttoxeter, Leek and Alrewas<sup>127</sup>. Later tax records, dating to the early 14th century, suggest that Rocester's importance may have declined in comparison with the likes of Uttoxeter and Leek<sup>128</sup>. In 1532/3 Rocester was deemed to have a population of around 160<sup>129</sup>.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid: 15; Dickenson 1974: 274

<sup>131</sup> Litherland 1991: 15

<sup>132</sup> Ibid: 9

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Burgage plot: A plot of land longer than it is wide, can include any structures on it. Typical of medieval towns. (Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2014 English Heritage).

<sup>135</sup> Slater 2007: 31

<sup>136</sup> Ibid; Litherland 1991: 22

<sup>137</sup> Mould 1996

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.: Trench G

#### 2.4.2.2 Administration

Documentary evidence further suggests that Rocester was the pre-eminent settlement in the local area early in the medieval period. The unprovenced charter states that it was at Rocester where the manor court was held<sup>130</sup>. Overall few documentary sources survive relating to Rocester in the medieval period thus limiting an understanding of the development of the settlement and the rights of the abbey<sup>131</sup>.

#### 2.4.2.3 Settlement

In the 1140s the foundation charter of the abbey (cf. 2.4.5) states that Rocester was a 'vill'<sup>132</sup>. As Litherland notes in his thematic history of the parish this does not necessarily imply a nucleated settlement. However, evidence from archaeological investigations in Rocester has revealed evidence for 9th century activity indicating that at least some settlement was centred at Rocester, although its precise location is currently not known with any certainty (cf. 2.3.1 and map 6)<sup>133</sup>. It is possible that if the church of St Michael pre-dates the foundation of the abbey (in the 1140s) or even the Norman Conquest (1066). If this is the case then the earliest settlement may have been located in its vicinity, although this would assume the original church was not re-located at a later date in the medieval period (cf. 2.4.5).

There is no documentary evidence that Rocester was ever granted a town charter or any references to burgages or burgesses (indicating that tenants in the settlement were granted special dispensations in return for a money rent). Consequently, the lack of manorial records hinders a full understanding of Rocester's development and standing in the local settlement hierarchy. However, there is evidence for deliberate 'town' planning within Rocester in the form of a triangular market place and burgage plots (map 6)<sup>134</sup>. Terry

Slater has suggested that the lack of documentary evidence for town status may also be due the abbey's influence as the lord of the manor. In general abbey's appear to have been reluctant to formalise the special freedoms that came with burgage tenure, particularly where the town was located adjacent to the abbey itself<sup>135</sup>. He specifically cites Rocester as potentially being an example where an abbey may have planned out a town but retained its rights over its tenants, potentially at the expense of economic growth and innovation.

The key areas of planning as identified by map regression and the work of other commentators has identified burgage plots lying to either side of the High Street, on the western side of Ashbourne Road and on the southern side of Mill Street (cf. map 6)<sup>136</sup>. The lack of evidence for burgage plots along the eastern side of Ashbourne Road may be due to the site of the abbey (cf. 2.4.5.1).

To date there has been little evidence for medieval settlement from archaeological interventions within this core area of Rocester. This was particularly true of archaeological work carried out in the 1990s on Mill Street lying adjacent to the market place. The lack of evidence for medieval features to the north of Mill Street is discussed in section 2.4.5.1. The excavators did, however, suggest that such evidence, to the south, may have been impacted by the construction of terraced houses during the 19th century (cf. 2.6.1)<sup>137</sup>. One feature recorded in the area to the south of Mill Street was a large pit containing a small quantity of abraded Roman pottery, which may suggest that the pit post-dated the Roman period and consequently may have been of medieval date; however, the feature's origins and function remain enigmatic<sup>138</sup>. That medieval settlement was present on the southern side of High Street/Mill Street, in an area defined as forming part of the planned

town, is indicated by work elsewhere (cf. map 6). This evidence took the form of residual medieval pottery recovered from a small archaeological intervention in 2013 lying approximately 61m south of the High Street, suggesting that activity had occurred on or close to the site<sup>139</sup>.

Settlement further north along Ashbourne Road and along Church Lane is more irregular in form ('Irregular Historic Plots' on map 8), which may suggest that it forms piecemeal expansion of the settlement at a later period, but possibly still of medieval origin. This settlement may be associated with the grain drying ovens found to the north of Church Lane on the New Cemetery Site which were dated to the 12th-13th century (cf. 2.4.3.1)<sup>140</sup>.

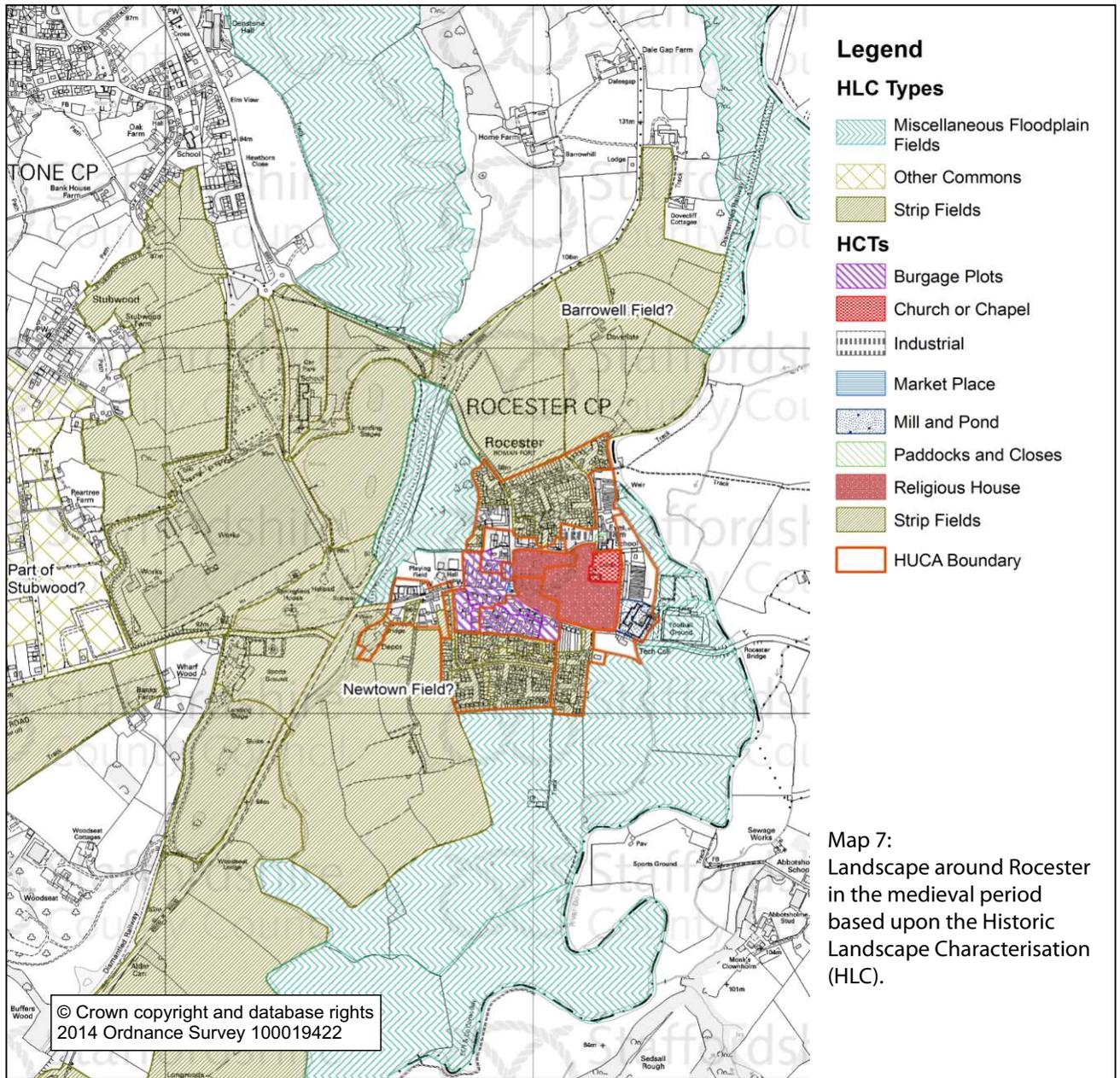
The only other medieval feature found to date is a substantial north-south aligned ditch lying to the north of Church Lane, which was considered by the excavators to be medieval in origin<sup>141</sup>. It was not established within the small-scale archaeological work whether this related to settlement or agricultural activity.



## 2.4.3 Economy

### 2.4.3.1 Agriculture

Domesday Book indicates that Rocester's economy was based principally upon arable agriculture which was processed by the manorial mill<sup>142</sup>. Meadow also constituted an important resource at this period along with some woodland<sup>143</sup>. Limited field survey and documentary research carried out in the early 1990s along with the results of the Historic Landscape Character (HLC) indicate the key areas where these resources were to be found associated with Rocester.



<sup>144</sup> Litherland 1991: 6

<sup>145</sup> 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. © 2014 English Heritage).

<sup>146</sup> Litherland 1991: 6

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Cherrington 2008

<sup>152</sup> Esmonde Cleary & Ferris 1996: 1

<sup>153</sup> Ferris & Burrows 2002: 9-10; 26

<sup>154</sup> Litherland 1991: 9

<sup>155</sup> Ibid: 8

<sup>156</sup> Ibid: 7; Assarting: the clearing of woodland to create farmland particularly associated with expansion in the medieval period.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid: 7-8

<sup>158</sup> Ibid: 7

The field survey identified ridge and furrow earthworks on the south facing slope of Barrow Hill to the north of Rocester, as well as to the south west of the town<sup>144</sup>. That Rocester's open fields were probably located to the north and south west is borne out by evidence from the HLC (cf. map 7)<sup>145</sup>. Documentary evidence refers to one of these open fields as 'Barrowell Field' in the early 16th century, which it has been suggested may be that area associated with Barrow Hill to the north<sup>146</sup>. Evidence from the tithe map (1848) suggests that the area to the south west may relate to the field known as 'Newtown field'<sup>147</sup>. Abraded medieval pottery recovered from small-scale archaeological work to the west of Dove Lane was interpreted as probable evidence of manuring thus indicating that this area, just immediately to the north of the historic core but now within the modern settlement, had probably also formed part of the open fields<sup>148</sup>.

Evidence for the importance of arable agriculture to the economy is also highlighted by the presence of two watermills recorded as belonging to the abbey, as lords of the manor, in the 1140s<sup>149</sup>. It is unclear whether both of these watermills were located in Rocester, possibly on the site of the two extant mills, one being located on the River Dove to the east and the other on the River Churnet to the west. However, the survey of the parish suggested that this latter site was unlikely to pre-date the late 18th century<sup>150</sup>. Alternatively the two watermills may in fact refer to two pairs of stones housed within one mill building or possibly one of the mills may have been located elsewhere within the abbey's holdings<sup>151</sup>. It is generally assumed that the main manorial mill was located on the site of the later cotton mill (Tutbury Mill cf. HUCA 6) which lay just to the east of the abbey complex (cf. 2.4.5.1). Further physical evidence for the importance of the arable agriculture was revealed during archaeological

excavations at the New Cemetery site (lying to the north of the historic core of Rocester) in the late 1980s when a 12th or 13th century grain drying oven was recorded<sup>152</sup>. Pits and ditches dated to the 13th to 15th centuries were identified in archaeological excavations further to the north, at Northfield Avenue, and were interpreted as relating to agricultural activity<sup>153</sup>.

The areas of extensive meadow, as indicated in Domesday Book, are likely to have lain within the river valley and may have coincided with the fields identified as 'Miscellaneous Floodplain Fields' in the HLC (cf. map 7). The survey work of the early 1990s identified these to the north east of Rocester in Derbyshire and in that part of the Dove Valley lying to the south of the settlement<sup>154</sup>. The importance of the meadowland may indicate that cattle farming (raising and dairying) was potentially as important in this period as it was to become in the Dove Valley more generally from the 17th century onwards. Documentary evidence suggests that the principal area of woodland in the medieval period lay in the western parts of the parish in an area known as Stubwood (cf. map 7)<sup>155</sup>. Assarting in this portion of the parish was identified by field survey in the early 1990s<sup>156</sup>.

The survey work also identified the likely importance of pasture to Rocester's medieval economy, although such activity leaves little obvious physical trace. The high value of the manor recorded in Domesday Book was taken to indicate evidence for the role of pasture at this date. Following the founding of the abbey it is likely that sheep in particular played an important role as they do for other abbeys, notably the Cistercians, in the north east of Staffordshire for whom a fuller documentary record has survived<sup>157</sup>. The documentary evidence available suggested that Rocester was, overall, not as committed to wool production as the Cistercian monasteries<sup>158</sup>.

<sup>149</sup> Litherland 1991: 11

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid: 11; Fulling Mill: A mill for beating and cleaning cloth, using soap or fullers earth. Scope note reproduced from the Thesaurus of Monument Types by kind permission of English Heritage. © 2014 English Heritage).

<sup>160</sup> Litherland: 15

<sup>161</sup> Ibid: 16; Slater 2007: 31

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Taylor 2014: 8

That Rocester Abbey did produce wool is supported by the documentary evidence for a fulling mill owned by the abbey and recorded after the Dissolution in 1554<sup>159</sup>.

### 2.4.3.2 Markets and fairs

The abbey, as lords of the manor of Rocester, were granted in 1283 the right to hold a market on a Thursday. Under this grant they were also entitled to hold an annual fair over three days in November<sup>160</sup>. The market grant was renewed in 1440 moving the weekly event to a Friday along with two annual fairs<sup>161</sup>. Litherland argues that the right to hold a market did not necessarily imply a growth in the economic importance of the settlement, but rather provided a further income to the abbey<sup>162</sup>. The economic importance of Rocester is obscured by the lack of documentary evidence available. However, it is likely, as long as the market was of some success that Rocester continued to act as the principal service centre for the local area.

While 1283 is a relatively late date for the establishment of a market it has been suggested elsewhere, notably in Cheshire, that the older settlements were often not granted a market charter until very late, if at all<sup>163</sup>. Therefore there is the potential that a market had existed prior to 1283 and possibly from the foundation of the abbey, if not earlier. Consequently the application for a market charter at the end of the 13th century may be seen as a decision taken by the monastery to avoid having their commercial rights challenged by the Crown.

The market place is triangular in form lying at the point where three roads meet (cf. map 6). It remains a large space still clearly legible within the townscape in the extant building lines, even where the buildings date to the early 21st century; the roadway itself has a standardised width (cf. plate 1).



**Plate 1:** Looking west towards the market place from Mill Street. Note its width as defined by the extant buildings. © Staffordshire County Council

### 2.4.3.3 Industry

The lack of documentary evidence for the medieval period also limits an understanding of how economically diverse Rocester may have been at this time. Such diversity is generally taken to indicate urban status during the medieval period. Whilst such evidence is not forthcoming for Rocester there is other evidence for some economic diversity.

Archaeological work at the Dove First School site, to the east of Rocester, revealed evidence for tanning and/or leather working which may have originated in the early medieval period, but which continued until the 14th century<sup>164</sup>. This evidence suggests industrial activity often associated with trading centres. Further evidence for industrial activity, albeit probably under the auspices of the monastery, comes in the form of cloth working. A fulling mill was recorded in documentary sources as belonging to the abbey and was probably housed in the same building as the corn mill (assumed to be on the site of the extant Tutbury Mill)<sup>165</sup>.

### 2.4.4 Communications

The landscape survey of the parish of Rocester concluded that the east-west route, which had been established or promoted by the Romans as Ryknild Street, continued to be an important route throughout the later periods<sup>166</sup>. To the east this linked Rocester to Derby and to the west ultimately with Chester. It also concluded that the north-south route linking Rocester to Ashbourne to the north and Uttoxeter to the south probably assumed greater significance in the medieval period<sup>167</sup>.

An archaeological investigation just to the west of Abbey Farm revealed evidence for an east-west road which was interpreted as being of medieval origin (although overlying a probable earlier Roman road cf. 2.2.2)<sup>168</sup>. This was aligned onto the modern Abbey Road. It

is likely that this road provided access into the abbey complex (cf. 2.4.5.1)<sup>169</sup>.

### 2.4.5 Religion

#### 2.4.5.1 Augustinian Abbey

The Augustinian abbey was founded at Rocester between 1141 and 1146 by Richard Bacon who was a nephew of the lord of the manor, the Earl of Chester<sup>170</sup>. The foundation and location Abbeys tends to occur at or close to previous high status sites and scholars have as a consequence questioned why such a small settlement as Rocester should have been granted a religious house of abbey rather than priory status<sup>171</sup>. Archaeological evidence suggesting continuity of activity at Rocester from the Roman period onwards as well as evidence for Rocester's status as a possible central place in the pre-Norman period (e.g. the site of a minster cf. 2.3.3) may in part address this question.

The foundation charter included a grant of lands and rights and the Abbey continued to acquire further assets throughout the medieval period. By 1300 it held two churches St Michael's, Rocester (as well as its two dependant chapels) and St Giles', Churchover (Warwickshire) as well as interests in a further four churches; the vill of Rocester and Combridge; lands in Nothill, Denstone, Quixhill, Bradley, Waterfall, Kingstone, Swincote (in Blore) and Stanton (in Ellastone) as well as land in Derbyshire<sup>172</sup>. It was also granted the right to hold a market in Rocester in 1283 (cf. 2.4.3.2)<sup>173</sup>. Despite this auspicious beginning it appears that the abbey was never wealthy; this may in part be as a result of the Crown annexing the earldom of Chester (who had been the abbey's principal patrons) in 1237<sup>174</sup>. In the early 14th century the abbey was claiming that poor harvests and animal plagues were plunging them into poverty and this is supported by the contemporary account of the Croxden Chronicle. It is also

clear that the abbey and its tenants were also frequently in dispute particularly during the 13th and 14th centuries<sup>175</sup>. These were the cases which were brought before the law courts, but unfortunately the manorial records for Rocester no longer exist<sup>176</sup>.

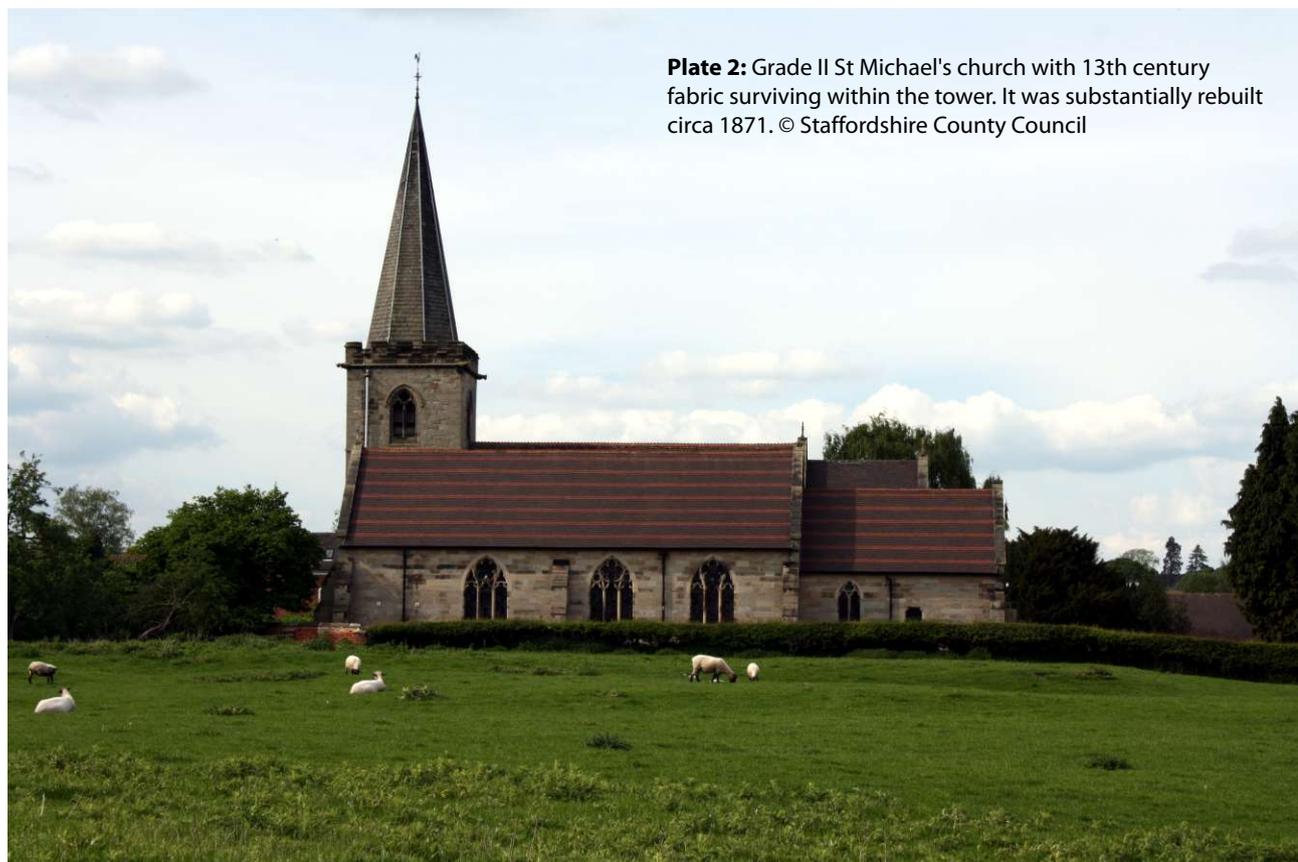
The extent of the abbey has been identified, as part of the Rocester parish survey, as being a large rectangle of land defined by Church Lane, West View, Mill Lane and the Ashbourne Road (cf. HUCA 7, HUCA 9 and HUCA 4; cf. map 6)<sup>177</sup>. A large portion of this area, incorporating earthworks in Abbey Field, form part of the Scheduled Monument 'Site of Rocester Abbey and part of Roman Town'<sup>178</sup>. The principal approach to the abbey was probably from the west (the Ashbourne Road) as suggested by the medieval east-west road revealed in excavation to the west of Abbey Farm<sup>179</sup>. This point of access lies just to the north of the market place, the latter in effect lying at the abbey gate. This close relation between church and market place is important and is frequently to be found elsewhere (e.g. Burton-upon-Trent). Furthermore if this rectangle of land represents the extent of the abbey precinct then this may explain the lack of medieval features found during archaeological work on the north of Mill Street (cf. 2.4.2.2)<sup>180</sup>. This land was therefore not developed with burgage plots, but rather lay beyond the settlement on the other side of the precinct wall.

There is little evidence substantiating the layout of the abbey buildings within the area defined as forming the precinct. It is unclear whether the extant St Michael's church formed part of the abbey complex or whether it was a distinct entity (cf. 2.4.5.2)<sup>181</sup>. The extant church lies on the eastern side of the area defined as the abbey precinct, but only archaeological work could determine whether there was a separate church lying either adjacent or elsewhere on the site. Documentary evidence

makes mention of an abbey guest house in the 1535 valuation<sup>182</sup>.

Only limited archaeological work has been carried out to date within the precinct and this has concentrated on the western end of the precinct at Abbey Farm where evidence was found for the presence of stone buildings. This evidence included a substantial stone building, with a brick wall, found during an archaeological intervention within one of the farm buildings in 1989<sup>183</sup>. Building recording was carried out on this structure in 2002, although no reference was made in the report to the earlier excavation. The building recording report identified the standing building as a 17th century 'farmhouse' standing on an east-west alignment<sup>184</sup>. Given the evidence from the excavation there is the potential that this building may have contained in situ fabric of an earlier date and that the later structure may represent the re-working or re-use of an earlier monastic building.

Further archaeological work carried out in 2013 identified that one of the extant former farm buildings was constructed on top of the foundations of an earlier substantial stone wall. This wall was interpreted as being of late 18th/19th century date, but its lowest course incorporated an architectural fragment which was suggested may have been reused from the earlier abbey<sup>185</sup>.



**Plate 2:** Grade II St Michael's church with 13th century fabric surviving within the tower. It was substantially rebuilt circa 1871. © Staffordshire County Council

The evidence for access roads within the abbey precinct such as that from Ashbourne Road (cf. 2.4.4) and a further road crossing this on a north-south alignment near to the farm complex also led Litherland to suggest that the abbey buildings stood in the vicinity of Abbey Farm<sup>186</sup>.

#### **2.4.5.2** St Michael's church

The earliest surviving architectural evidence within the Grade II listed St Michael's church lies in the west tower whose earliest stages have been dated to the 13th century (cf. 2.6.4 and plate 2)<sup>187</sup>. It has been suggested that its location at some distance from the core of the medieval settlement may indicate that it was originally part of the abbey (cf. map 6). Other commentators have noted that a church appears to have already existed at Rocester and therefore St Michael's was an independent building from the abbey, although located adjacent to it<sup>188</sup>. It is not clear whether St Michael's stands on the site of the earliest church, or whether it was rebuilt in a new location, following the construction of the abbey or even during a period of promotion possibly linked the granting (or formalisation) of the market.

A Scheduled and Grade II\* Listed cross of probable 13th or 14th century date stands in the churchyard<sup>189</sup>.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid: 9 and 16

<sup>191</sup> Ibid; Gibson 49

<sup>192</sup> Ibid: 9

<sup>193</sup> Litherland 1991: 16

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 03753; PRN 08851 and PRN 13086; English Heritage: National Heritage List no. 1231921 and 1231924)

<sup>197</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 14280; English Heritage: National Heritage List no. 1244404

<sup>198</sup> Hislop 2002: 2-3; Staffordshire HER: PRN 57185

<sup>199</sup> Ferris 1989

## 2.5 Post Medieval (1500 to 1699)

### 2.5.1 Settlement

#### 2.5.1.1 Lordship

The Dissolution of the monasteries in the mid 16th century involved a significant change in the lordship of Rocester. Large parts of the manor had been conveyed to the Earl of Shrewsbury and to the Trentham family of Shropshire by 1560<sup>190</sup>. The latter appear to have then sold off parts of their portion of the manor into different hands<sup>191</sup>. From this period onwards no single landowner held the manor and interest in the development of the settlement was presumably impacted by this fractured nature of the lordship<sup>192</sup>.

#### 2.5.1.2 Population

The key source for understanding population during this period is the Hearth Tax account of 1666 where 37 separate households were liable to pay tax (although the number ineligible was not recorded)<sup>193</sup>. Litherland calculated that the Hearth Tax indicated a population of between 180 and 250 people and the average number of hearths suggested it was, overall, not a wealthy settlement at this date<sup>194</sup>.

In the Hearth Tax account, the largest building was recorded as Rocester Hall owned by the Trentham family, which is presumed to have reused some of the abbey buildings. The evidence suggests that this property was demolished in the 17th century (cf. HUCA 7)<sup>195</sup>.

#### 2.5.1.3 Buildings

To date only a few buildings within Rocester have been identified as having origins within this period. These include three which retain timber framing: 67a High Street, the Grade II listed Dove Lane Farm cottage and the Grade II listed Rose Cottage, 50 High Street<sup>196</sup>. The

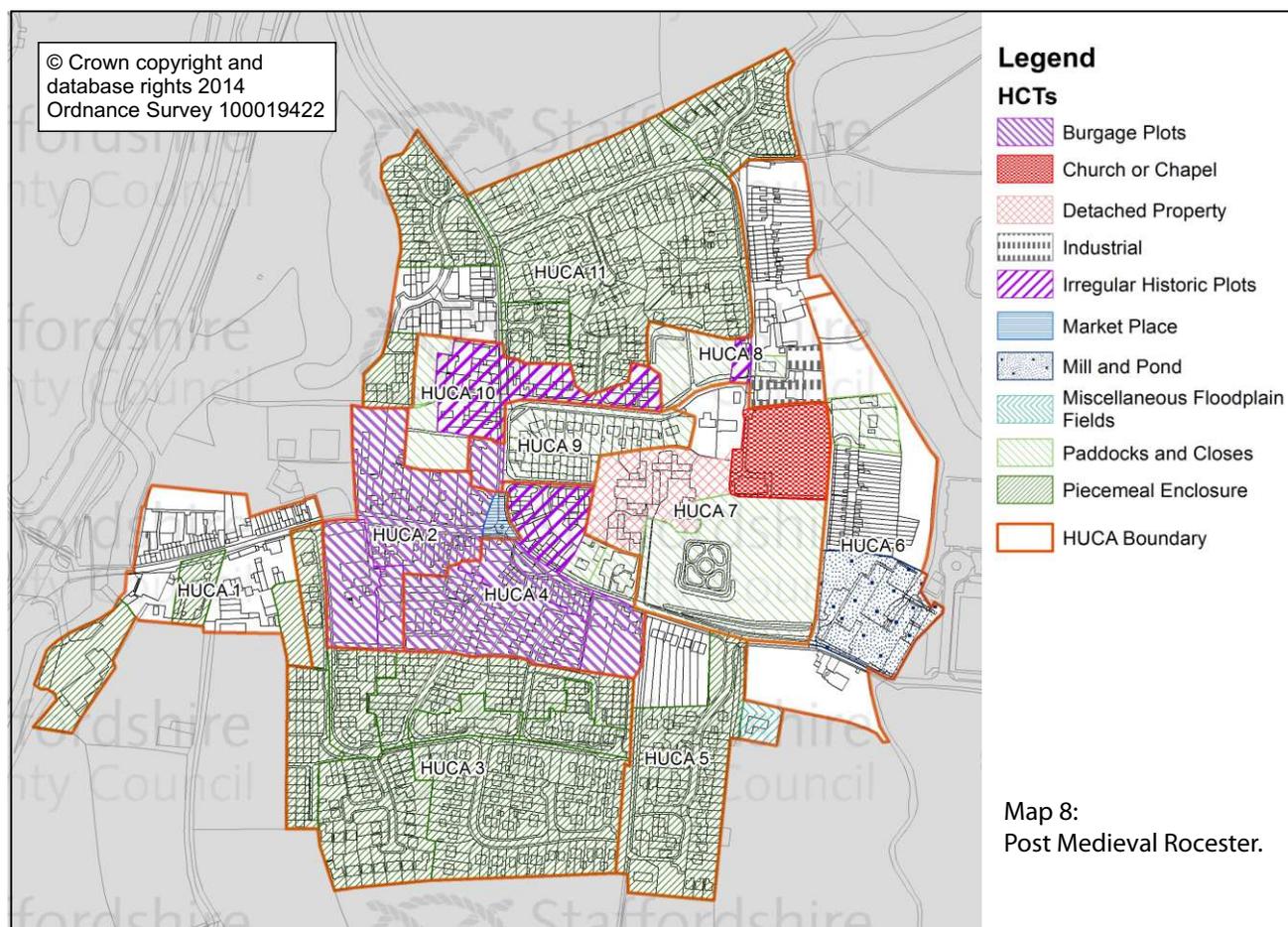
former was identified as containing cruck blades with wattle and daub infill, and although not closely dated and may have its origins in the medieval period. Dove Lane Farm Cottage and Rose Cottage, 50 High Street have been dated to the 17th century; the former lies away from the historic core in an area identified as 'Irregular Historic Plots' (map 8; HUCA 8; plate 3).



**Plate 3:** Grade II Listed Dove Lane Farm Cottage a 17th century timber framed cottage. © Staffordshire County Council

There is the potential for other buildings within Rocester to retain evidence of earlier origins within their structures. The Grade II listed Queens Arms Hotel, on the corner of Ashbourne Lane and Church Lane (HUCA 10) is one such building. It is listed as a "relatively unaltered example of a late 18th century vernacular house, which incorporates elements of an earlier dwelling"; whilst not closely dated this earlier dwelling is likely to be of post medieval date<sup>197</sup>.

At Abbey Farm the likely original farmhouse, of probable 17th century date, was retained as one of the farm buildings presumably until the construction of the extant farmhouse in the late 19th-early 20th century<sup>198</sup>. This was built upon the site of, or incorporated, an earlier stone building presumably associated with the Augustinian abbey (cf. 2.4.5.1)<sup>199</sup>.



### 2.5.1.4 Town Plan

The greatest change to the town plan during the period is likely to have been the demolition of the abbey and presumably its precinct wall. The principal areas of development are likely to have continued to have been concentrated upon High Street, the south side of Mill Street and the west of Ashbourne Road (Burgage Plots on map 8) which was potentially largely unchanged in form from the medieval period. Further settlement existed along Church Lane and Dove Lane (Irregular Historic Plots on map 8; HUCA 8 and HUCA 10), the latter certainly being present by the 17th century as the survival of Dove Lane Cottage attests (plate 3). The origins of this settlement are less clearly defined. The dissolution of the abbey may have enabled development to occur for the first time along the eastern side of Ashbourne Road/north of Mill Street; the first elements of which may have occurred during this period.

The precise location of Rocester Hall mentioned in the Hearth Tax account (1666) is not currently known, nor is the extent to which it utilised or adapted the surviving abbey buildings. It may have been associated with a rectangular earthwork within Abbey Field, forming part of the Scheduled Monument, which has been interpreted as a possible garden<sup>200</sup>.

## 2.5.2 Economy

It is unclear from the available evidence whether the market function survived the dissolution of the abbey. It is possible that, with the subdivision of the manor in this period, that it was no longer promoted. Litherland's work identified a range of occupations taken from the parish registers between 1599 and 1620<sup>201</sup>. These occupations principally reflect the importance of agriculture to the local economy, but also indicated that Rocester was involved in cloth-making<sup>202</sup>. Furthermore a fulling mill is recorded in 1554, having once belonged to the monastery<sup>203</sup>.

Litherland suggests that the open fields, still recorded in the early 16th century, may have been enclosed following the dissolution of the monastery and the passing of the land into the hands of a number of landowners. An observation of the landscape in the mid 17th century would seem to affirm that much of the land was enclosed by that date<sup>204</sup>. The enclosure of the land was probably associated with an increase in pastoral farming probably for the rearing of cattle (and later for dairying) which is a feature of the economy of the River Dove from this period onwards.

Archaeological evidence has also contributed, in a small way, to our understanding of the economy of Rocester. Evidence for smithing activity in the 16th century was recovered from the New Cemetery Site (cf. map 3)<sup>205</sup>. Other archaeological work provides evidence for agricultural activity with a possible post medieval hedgerow, associated with a ditch, being identified to the south of Rocester at Riversfield Drive and a further ditch, for drainage, was identified to the north at Northfield Avenue<sup>206</sup>. A number of pits and post holes were also identified on the latter site, although their function was not determined.

## 2.5.4 Religion

The abbey was dissolved in 1538 and the documentary evidence suggests that the buildings survived until the 17th century<sup>207</sup>.

The evidence also suggests that St Michael's church was stripped of some of its assets with records suggesting that the glass from the windows, the timber and the roof shingles were sold off<sup>208</sup>. The building itself clearly survived<sup>209</sup>. A chamber and a churchyard were also recorded in the mid 16th century<sup>210</sup>.

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

### 2.6.1 Settlement

#### 2.6.1.1 Lordship

By 1665 the manor was held by William Nabbs from whom it descended through the female line to his grand-daughter Ann Basville, who in turn bequeathed it to Sarah Harvey nee Yarnold<sup>211</sup>. In the late 18th century the manor was sold to the Bainbrigge family of Leicestershire who built a large country house, Woodseat, to the west of Rocester (beyond the EUS area)<sup>212</sup>. The Bainbrigges, and their descendant Bainbrigge George Alsopp, were one of several large landowners who had interests in the parish by 1834, along with the Earl of Shrewsbury and Mark Antony Whyte esq<sup>213</sup>. At this date Bainbrigge George Alsopp was still termed the lord of the manor<sup>214</sup>.

In 1862 the manor was purchased by Thomas Minton Campbell Esq and his son J. F. Campbell Esq<sup>215</sup>.

<sup>213</sup> White 1834: 759  
[http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/History\\_Gazetteer\\_and\\_Directory\\_of\\_Staff.html?id=mw9Mgl6AHr8C&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/History_Gazetteer_and_Directory_of_Staff.html?id=mw9Mgl6AHr8C&redir_esc=y) viewed 29/04/2014  
<sup>214</sup> Ibid  
<sup>215</sup> Gibson 2003: 50

<sup>216</sup> Litherland 1991: 21

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid: 22; Taylor Young 2014: 14

<sup>219</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 14280; English Heritage: National Heritage List no. 1244404

<sup>220</sup> Kelly's 1896 [www.historicaldirectories.org](http://www.historicaldirectories.org) viewed 29/04/2014

<sup>221</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 11521; English Heritage: National Heritage List no. 1277337



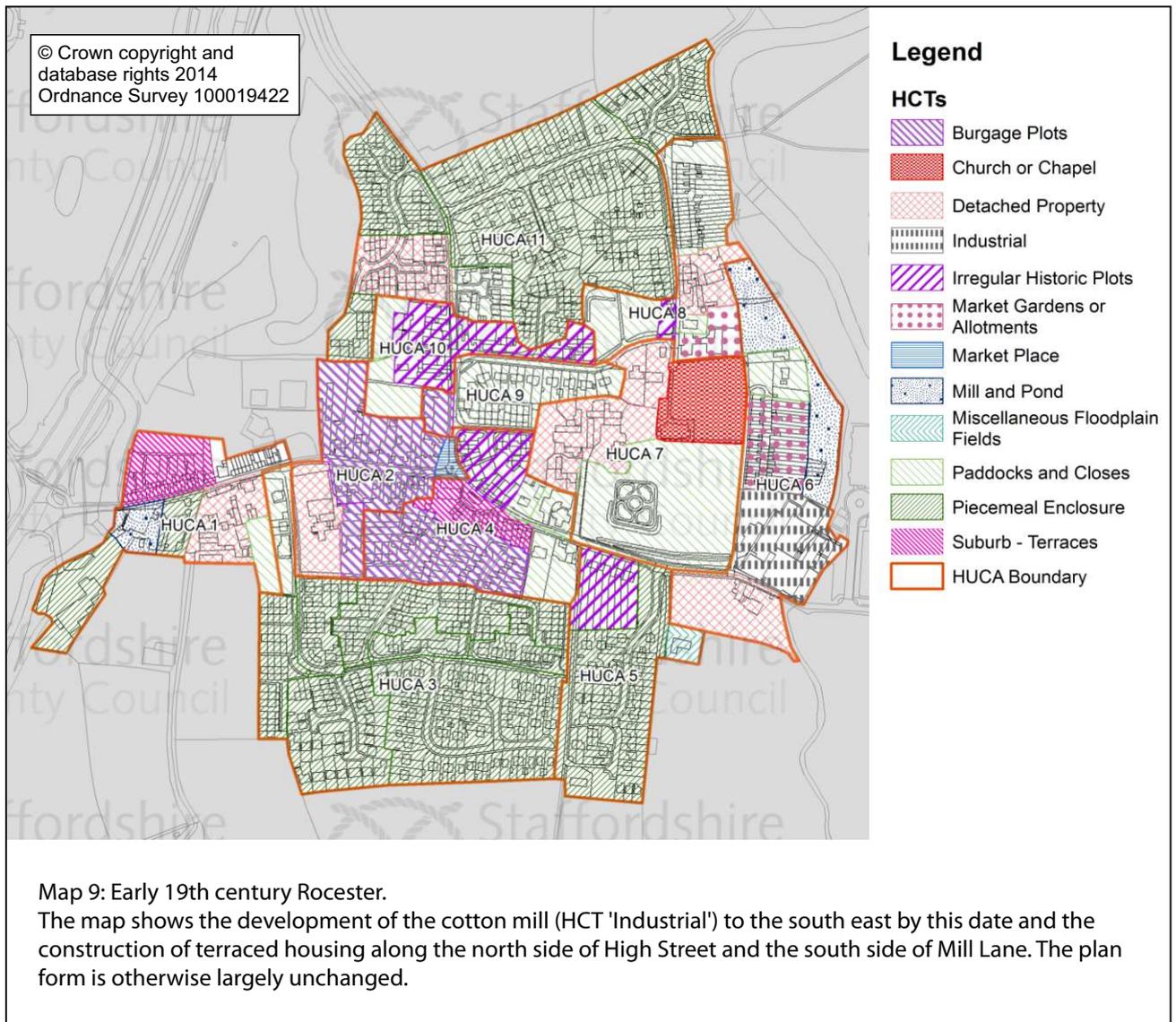
**Plate 4:** Grade II Listed Millholme and its coach house built circa 1831 for the manager of the cotton mill. © Staffordshire County

### 2.6.1.2 Population

The population of Rocester was recorded as 899 in 1801, which probably reflects the influence of the cotton mill on attracting workers from beyond the settlement itself (cf. 2.6.3.3)<sup>216</sup>. Litherland ascribes other steep rises in the population between 1801 and 1821 (when the population exceeded 1,000) and again between 1861 and 1871 to expansions to the mill<sup>217</sup>.

### 2.6.1.3 Buildings

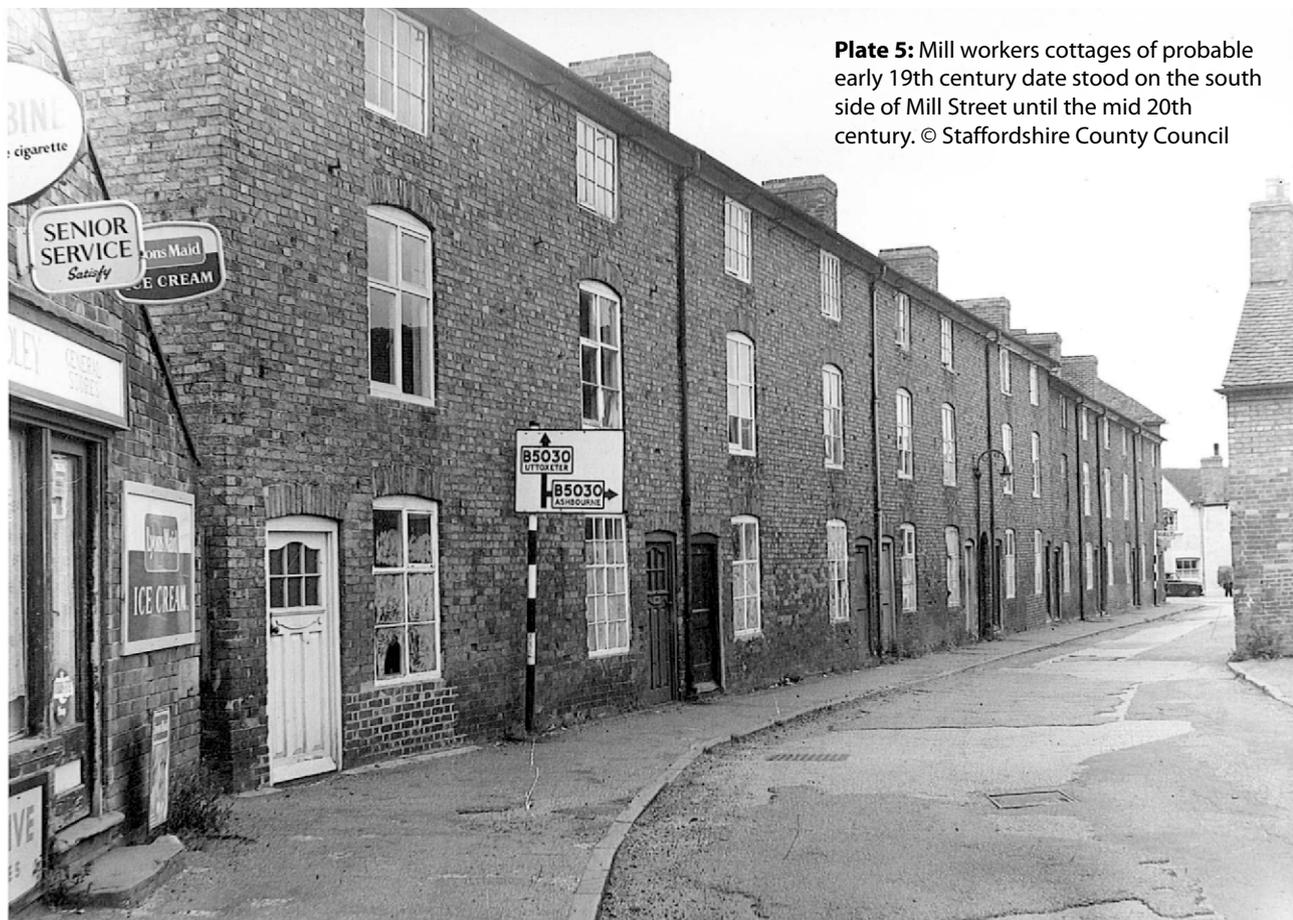
The majority of the historic buildings within Rocester appear to date to this period and are dominated by red brick with stone detailing<sup>218</sup>. Such buildings include the Grade II listed Queen's Arms Public House (Grade II), a red brick property which principally dates to the late 18th century but which has been shown to retain an earlier core (cf. 2.5.1.3; plate 15)<sup>219</sup>. It is first recorded as the Queen's Arms Public House in the late 19th century<sup>220</sup>. Number 58 High Street, also Grade II listed, is similarly a red brick property dating to the late 18th century<sup>221</sup>.



Abbey Farm, built on the site of the Augustinian Abbey, also appears to principally date to the mid 19th century, although earlier remains have been identified through archaeological work (cf. 2.4.5.1 and 2.5.1.3)<sup>222</sup>. The construction of this farmstead at the heart of the settlement is a reminder that agriculture remained the principal economic pursuit of the wider parish at this date (cf. 2.6.3.1) as do the two other surviving farmsteads (on Dove Lane and High Street) as well as the farmstead, since redeveloped, on Ashbourne Road.

The majority of late 18th or early 19th century properties (HCTs 'Suburb – Terraces' and 'Detached Property' shown on map 9) appear to have been principally constructed for the workers of the cotton mill, which includes the Grade II Millholme and its listed coach house, built circa 1831, specifically for its manager (plate 4)<sup>223</sup>. The greatest concentration of surviving early 19th century mill workers' cottages is to be found to the west along the High Street (cf. map 9; plate 10). The form of these properties, mostly of three storeys, suggests that they were probably constructed to specifically house weavers who generally worked from home at this date. Further workers houses were built, probably in the late 18th or early 19th century, on the south side of the market

place and Mill Street, which were also of three storeys (plate 5). When the cotton mill was advertised for sale in 1831 the properties included in the sale comprised a gentleman's residence, two residences suitable for managers (including presumably Millholme) and 39 cottages<sup>224</sup>.



**Plate 5:** Mill workers cottages of probable early 19th century date stood on the south side of Mill Street until the mid 20th century. © Staffordshire County Council

Further workers' houses were provided later in the 19th century along West View which comprises a terrace of 24 two-storey red brick houses facing the church and Abbey Fields (cf. map 10; HUCA 6; plate 13).

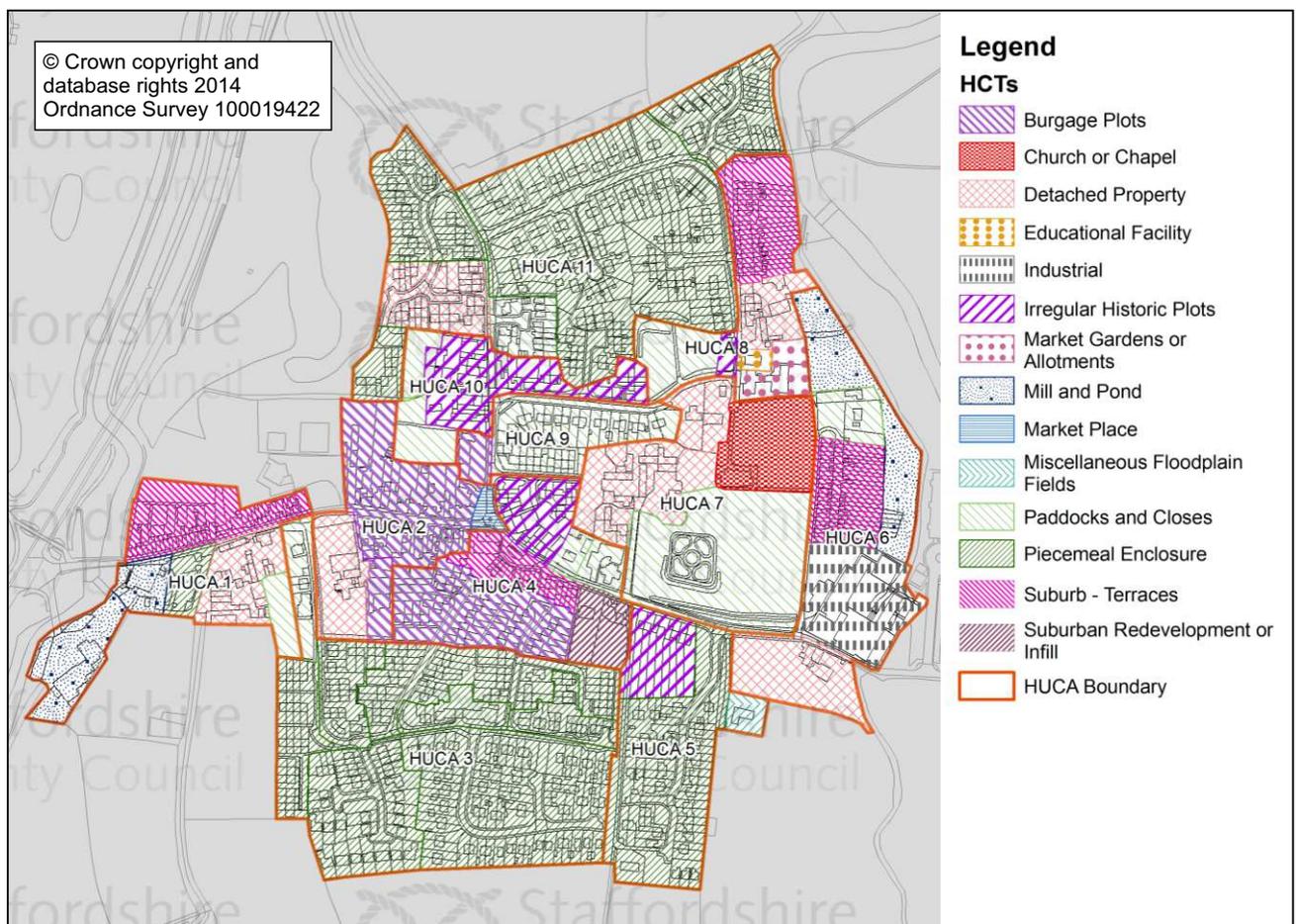
The majority of the historic buildings stand close-by the road side with very few standing within their own grounds. The notable exceptions for this period are The Old Vicarage, Millholme (mentioned above) and Riversfield House (in circa 1880 known as 'The Villa') on High Street which is enclosed by a boundary wall<sup>225</sup>.

#### **2.6.1.4** Town Plan

The construction of the cotton mill in the late 18th century and its subsequent history clearly had an impact upon the development of the settlement. However, it is also clear, as maps 9 and 10 reveal that earlier elements survive within the plan form.

The early 19th century workers' cottages constructed along Mill Street and lying at the heart of the historic core, presumably replaced earlier properties of medieval origin (cf. map 9). Archaeological work in this area has suggested that their construction removed much of the

earlier phases of the site through levelling works<sup>226</sup>. Consequently it has not been possible to understand the processes and chronology of settlement of this part in the town. It is unclear whether the earlier properties had already been abandoned during the post medieval period, thus leaving a relatively clear site for construction, or whether the earlier properties were cleared at this date. As Litherland notes the tithe map depicts regular property boundaries extending back, indicative of surviving burgage plots, which are clearly unrelated to the terraced houses along the road side<sup>227</sup>. Less is known about the history of the site on which the extant workers' cottages on High Street stand. The site lies at some distance from the historic core and it is possible that this area, as Litherland has suggested, is unlikely to have been previously developed before the late 18th-early 19th century<sup>228</sup>. The construction of the workers' cottages both at Mill Street and High Street is evidence of the investment that the mill owner was prepared to make to provide both suitable housing and work premises for the benefit of their workers (plates 5 and 10).



Map 10: Late 19th century Rocester.

The map shows the construction of further mill workers' terraced housing on new sites along Dove Lane to the north and West View just to the north of the cotton mill. At the western end of High Street the extant corn mill is also shown although its precise history is currently unknown.

## 2.6.2 Education and Welfare

Documentary evidence suggests that Rocester had a school master in the early 18th century, but little further is known about education during the earlier part of this period<sup>229</sup>. The earliest purpose-built school was constructed in 1830 on the Ashbourne Road<sup>230</sup>. The infants' school was built in 1852 to the north east of Rocester on Dove Lane (now known as 'Chalice House') and was apparently subsidised by the then owners of the cotton mill (cf. plate 6)<sup>231</sup>.

A Union Friendly Society was established in 1832 to provide medical, death and housing provision and was particularly supported by the Quakers and Methodists<sup>232</sup>.

## 2.6.3 Economy

Whilst there is no record of a weekly market at Rocester after the medieval period, an annual 'wake' had been established by at least the early 19th century<sup>233</sup>.



**Plate 6:** Chalice House, formally an Infants' School built in 1852. © Staffordshire County Council

### 2.6.3.1 Agriculture

The dairy industry and cattle farming continued to be of importance to the local economy, particularly given its location near to Uttoxeter, which during this period had become a major dairy market sending products to London. In 1893 a cheese factory opened, confirming the importance of this industry to the local economy, located outside of the town to the west of the River Churnet<sup>234</sup>.

The landscape had already been principally sub-divided into hedged fields to facilitate the dairying economy. Water meadows have been identified from a county-wide survey along the River Churnet to the south of the town. Their construction enabled improvements to the grazing and production of hay thus enabling greater numbers of animals to be over-wintered. The date of these water meadows is unknown, but may be from anywhere between the 17th and early 19th centuries.

An area of common land lying to the west of Rocester, beyond the River Churnet, known as Stubwood was enclosed circa 1800<sup>235</sup>.

Land lying near the present Dove First School, to the east of Dove Lane, was given over to allotments in the 19th century<sup>236</sup>.

### 2.6.3.2 Commerce and Industry

The 19th century trade directories provide a picture of the economic life of the town. By 1896 the three principal industries, other than agriculture, were the cotton mill, the brickworks (located adjacent to the railway line) and a stone works<sup>237</sup>.

There were a number of crafts people and those working in the building trades recorded between 1834 and 1896 including black smiths (1 in 1834, 2 in 1851 and 1 in 1896) and shoe makers (4 in 1834; 8 in 1851, 4 in 1896); wheel wrights (2 in 1834; 1 in 1851; 1 in 1896); brick layers (2 in both 1834 and 1851); joiners (2 in 1834, 1 in 1896 (who was also a cabinet maker)<sup>238</sup>. A number of butchers are also recorded (5 in 1851), including one specifically stated to be a pork butcher in 1896, which along with a saddler recorded in 1834 may also indicate how the agricultural economy enabled diversification within the town.



**Plate 7:** Possible 19th century shop front, High Street.  
© Staffordshire County Council

There were a number of shop keepers, principally grocers, with six being recorded in 1834 and 1896 and as many as 9 in 1851. There was, perhaps a greater diversity of trades later in the century, with occupations such as confectioner, cabinet maker, clog and pattern maker, hairdresser, jeweller, watch and clock maker all being recorded for the first time in 1896. Throughout the century a small number of professional and clerical occupations are recorded to support, what was quite clearly, a buoyant economy. These included surgeons (2 in 1834 and 1 in 1851); a medical officer recorded in 1896; a solicitor recorded in 1851; two insurance agents recorded in 1896 and a good's clerk recorded in 1851. A possible 19th century shop front, with decorative corbels, survives at 36 High Street (plate 7)<sup>239</sup>.

Three public houses are recorded in both 1834 and 1851, the Cock, the Cross Keys and the Red Lion, these were supplemented by two beer houses recorded in 1834. By 1896 there were four public houses comprising the Queen's Arms (plate 15), the Cross Keys, The Red Lion and the Railway Inn.

Podmore's (or Rocester) mill standing on the River Churnet at the western extent of the

<sup>240</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 02291; English Heritage: National Heritage List no. 1231923

<sup>241</sup> Kelly's 1896: 292 [www.historicaldirectories.org](http://www.historicaldirectories.org) viewed 29/04/2014

<sup>242</sup> White 1834: 759 and White 1851: 786 both viewed 29/04/2014; Gibson 2003: 67

<sup>243</sup> Peel 1975: 23; Litherland 1991: 10

<sup>244</sup> Litherland 1991: 11; Peel 1975: 23; Poole & Slatter 2008: 7.1

<sup>245</sup> Poole & Slatter 2008: 7.1

<sup>246</sup> Litherland 1991:11; Peel 1975: 23

<sup>250</sup> Peel 1975: 25

<sup>251</sup> Ibid: 26

<sup>252</sup> Litherland 1991: 12

<sup>253</sup> Poole & Slatter 2008: 7.1

<sup>254</sup> Peel 1975: 23 and 27

town is a Grade II listed three storey ashlar mill dating to the late 19th century (cf. map 10; HUCA 1)<sup>240</sup>. It is recorded in the listing description as being a 'cotton mill', but there is currently no documentary evidence to support this. In 1896 Rocester mills was described as a flour and corn mill<sup>241</sup>. There is also little evidence for this being an early mill site, which is associated with the site of Tutbury mill to the east on the River Dove (cf. 2.4.3.1 and 2.6.3.3). However, a corn miller is recorded in the Trade Directories of both 1834 and 1851 suggesting that an earlier mill may have stood on this site<sup>242</sup>.

### 2.6.3.3 Cotton Mill ('Tutbury Mill' plate 8)

The corn mill and fulling mill which stood on the River Dove from the medieval period were sold in the early 1780s to the cotton manufacturer Richard Arkwright<sup>243</sup>. The mill which Arkwright established was a spinning mill, the weaving was still carried out in the weaver's homes thus the need for the housing constructed on Mill Street and High Street (cf. 2.6.1.3; plates 5 and 10). The establishment of the cotton mill required the rebuilding of the earlier mill buildings. In 1781 a new range of 24 bays aligned north east-south west was constructed adjacent to the existing corn mill, which appears to have remained in production for a time<sup>244</sup>. A wing was added to the west in 1786 by Richard Arkwright junior<sup>245</sup>. The mill was sold to the Bridden family in 1798 in whose hands it remained until 1833 when it was sold to a Lancashire spinner Thomas Houldsworth<sup>246</sup>. During the Bridden's ownership a further extension was carried out from Arkwright junior's wing to Mill Street and an ornate entrance was constructed<sup>247</sup>. The mill house was constructed between 1781 and 1831 when it was mentioned in a sales advertisement<sup>248</sup>. In 1833 a detached cottage, believed to be intended to house the foreman, was constructed<sup>249</sup>. During this period the mill employed around 400 people although this

probably records both the factory workers and the out-workers weaving in their own homes<sup>250</sup>.

The Houldsworth family held the mill until the 1870s and in 1874 it was closed down for a period of time<sup>251</sup>. In 1876 it was sold to the Lyons brothers of Tutbury from which it gets its current name<sup>252</sup>. They were responsible for further phases of work including a number of outbuildings (circa 1878), a new wing along the Mill Street frontage which linked together the earlier phases of the mill (Arkwright senior and Bridden's wings) in 1881, a boiler room (1888) and management offices (1889)<sup>253</sup>. During this period the waterwheels were removed and replaced by vertical water turbines, steam power having previously been introduced at an unknown date<sup>254</sup>.

<sup>247</sup> Poole & Slatter 2008: 7.1

<sup>248</sup> Ibid; Litherland 1991: 11; Gibson 2003: 67

<sup>249</sup> Poole & Slatter 2008: 7.1

<sup>255</sup> White 1834: 759  
[http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/History\\_Gazetteer\\_and\\_Directory\\_of\\_Staff.html?id=mw9Mql6Ahr8C&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/History_Gazetteer_and_Directory_of_Staff.html?id=mw9Mql6Ahr8C&redir_esc=y) viewed 29/04/2014; Gibson 2003: 33-34; Staffordshire HER: PRN 08848; English Heritage: National Heritage list no. 1231919  
<sup>256</sup> Staffordshire HER: PRN 08848; English Heritage: National Heritage list no. 1231919  
<sup>257</sup> Litherland 1991: 10

<sup>258</sup> Ibid: 19  
<sup>259</sup> Ibid; Staffordshire HER: PRN 57283  
<sup>260</sup> Gibson 2003: 99  
<sup>261</sup> Ibid; Staffordshire HER: PRN 51503  
<sup>262</sup> White 1834: 759 and White 1851: 786 viewed 29/04/2014  
Kelly's 1896: 292 viewed 29/04/2014



**Plate 8:** Grade II Listed Tutbury Mill a former cotton mill converted to an educational academy in the early 21st century. © Staffordshire County Council

## 2.6.4 Religion

### 2.6.4.1 St Michael's Church

The church was enlarged on its southern side in 1823, but was substantially rebuilt circa 1871 in a late 13th century style (cf. plate 2)<sup>255</sup>. The alterations included the spire, but earlier evidence survives including the 13th century west tower and an 18th century blocked window<sup>256</sup>.

### 2.6.4.2 Non-conformism

Methodism was particularly strong in Rocester by at least the early 19th century<sup>257</sup>. The earliest chapel constructed was for the Primitive Methodists in 1813 on the south side of Mill Street and opposite the worker's cottages<sup>258</sup>. It was replaced in 1887 with a larger chapel relocated to the north side of High Street; this building is extant<sup>259</sup>.

The Wesleyan Methodist chapel is later in date; also located High Street this chapel was not constructed until 1837<sup>260</sup>. It was renovated circa 1889 and was later used as a Roman Catholic church, before being converted to domestic use circa 2005<sup>261</sup>.

The Baptists had constructed a chapel in Rocester by 1834 (and thus pre-dating the Wesleyan chapel) which was located on Church Lane<sup>262</sup>. It is not mentioned in Kelly's Directory of 1896 perhaps suggesting it had closed by this date<sup>263</sup>. The building with a date stone (of 1889) still stands on Church Lane (plate 9).



**Plate 9:** Former Baptist Chapel on Church Lane with date stone of 1889. © Staffordshire County Council

### 2.6.5 Communications

Both the east-west route and the north-south route through Rocester were incorporated into the turnpike (toll road) network in the 18th century. The earliest was the north-south route connecting Uttoxeter to Ashbourne which was carried out in the 1750s; the east-west route was not adopted until the 1890s<sup>264</sup>. The former was presumably of the greatest economic benefit easing the transport of both cattle and dairy products to the nationally famous market at Uttoxeter.

The Caldon Canal was constructed linking Uttoxeter and the Dove valley to the Potteries in the first decade of the 19th century. A wharf was constructed at Rocester Green approximately 750m to the west of the centre of Rocester<sup>265</sup>. The wharf, whose location is recalled in the name Wharf Wood, attracted a warehouse belonging to the cotton mill, a brick maker and a cheesemaker<sup>266</sup>.

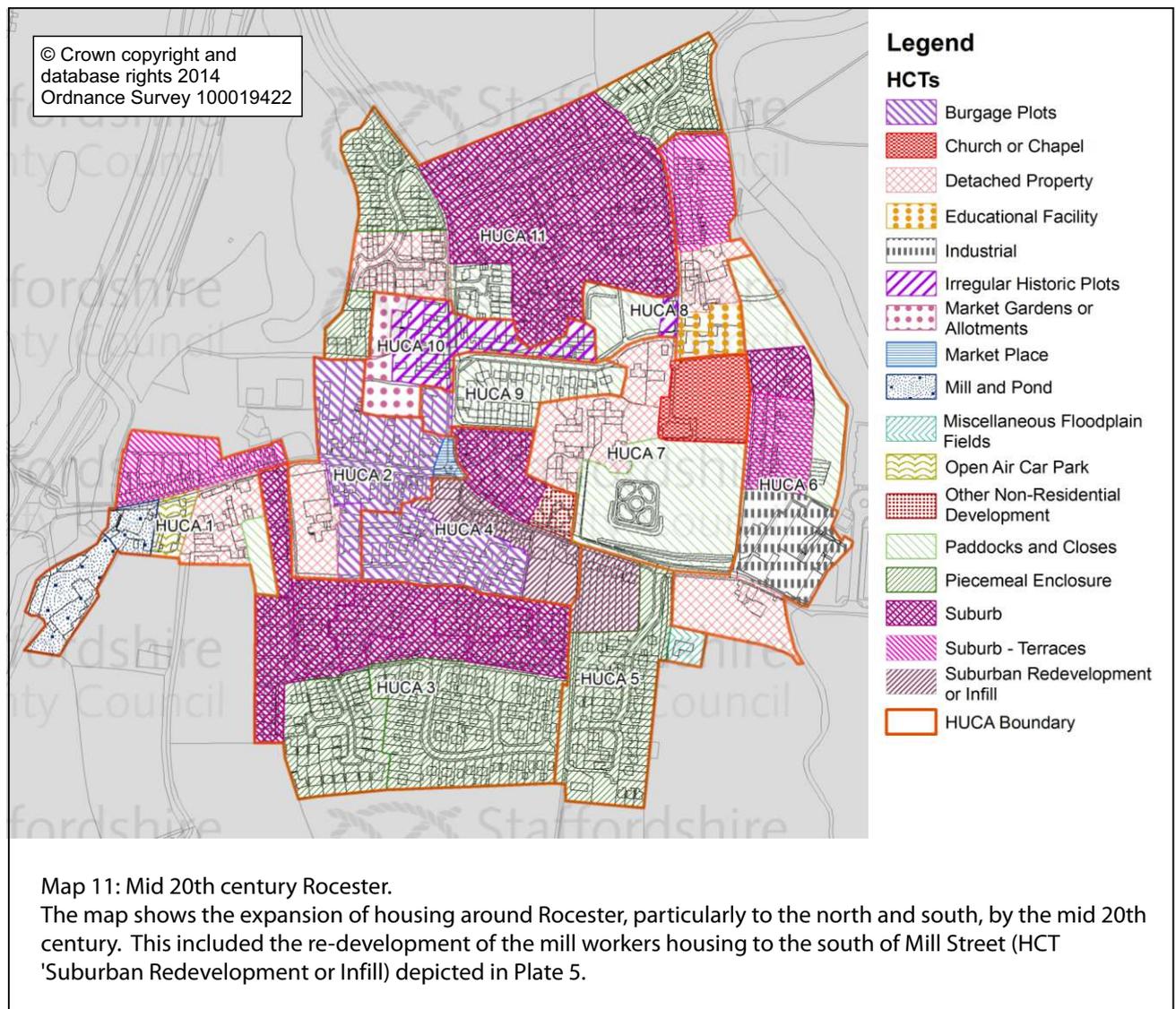
The North Staffordshire Railway Company acquired the Caldon Canal in the 1840s and constructed a line linking Uttoxeter with the Potteries which opened in 1849<sup>267</sup>. A second

line was constructed to link to Ashbourne in 1852 which branched off just north of Rocester Green<sup>268</sup>. A station was opened at Rocester Green and had been provided with cattle pens and a railway hotel by circa 1880. In 1851 there were four trains a day to both the Potteries and Uttoxeter<sup>269</sup>.

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

Rocester expanded significantly during the 20th century along with many other settlements (cf. maps 11 and 12). This has in part been due to the industry located at Tutbury Mill and, following the Second World War, at the JCB factory located to the west of Rocester (and beyond the project area)<sup>270</sup>. Production was finally brought to a close at Tutbury Mill in the mid-1980s and the mill buildings were converted to a school in the early 21st century<sup>271</sup>.

Residential expansion concentrated to the north of the town in the mid 20th century, and to some extent to the south of Mill Lane (cf. map 11). Redevelopment occurred along Mill Lane itself when the three-storey weavers houses (plate 5) were demolished in the 1960s to be replaced with flats and maisonettes along both sides of the street<sup>272</sup>. These properties along Mill Lane and in areas to the south along Riversfield Drive have, in their turn, been redeveloped during the first decade of the 21st century (cf. map 12).



The largest areas of late 20th century developments are concentrated to the south, along the southern side of Riversfield Drive and to the north west. Rocester has continued to expand during the early 21st century in response to the success of the neighbouring factory (cf. map 12).

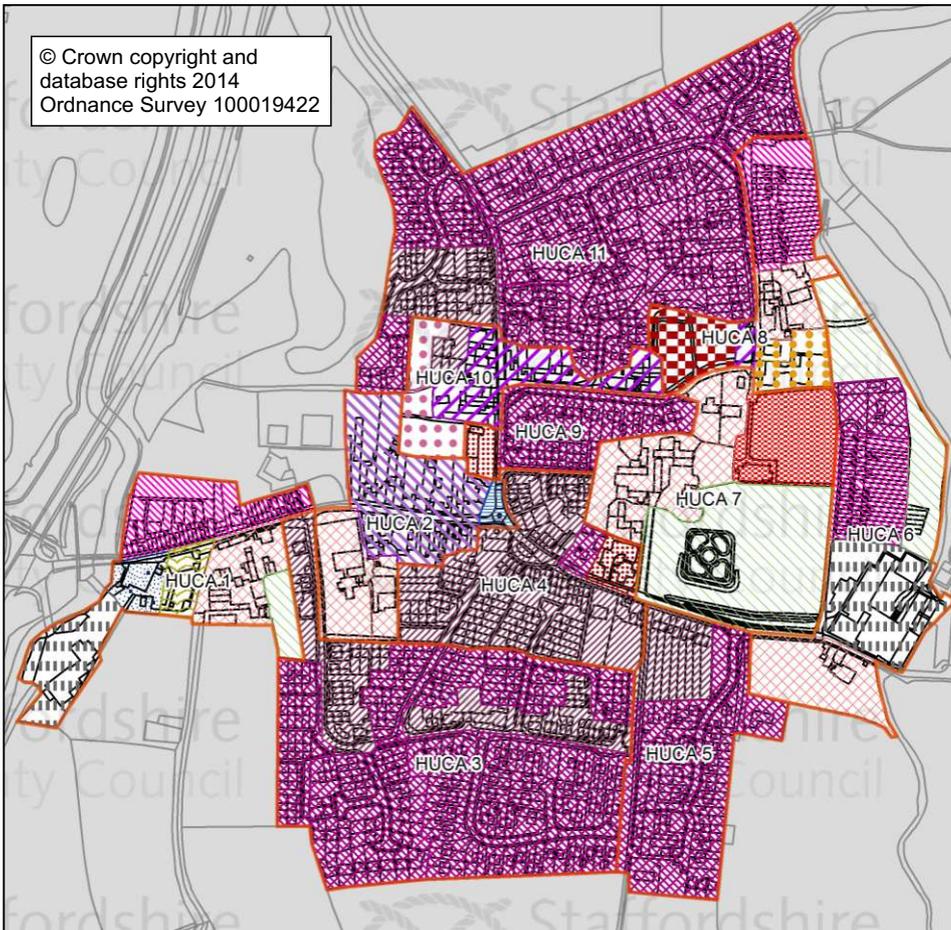
The infants' school on Dove Lane has been converted to domestic use (cf. plate 6), but a new school, now a primary school, was built in 1913<sup>273</sup>. The school built in the 1830s on Ashbourne Road closed and has also since been converted to domestic use.

© Crown copyright and  
database rights 2014  
Ordnance Survey 100019422

### Legend

#### HCTs

-  Burgage Plots
-  Cemetery
-  Church or Chapel
-  Detached Property
-  Educational Facility
-  Industrial
-  Irregular Historic Plots
-  Market Gardens or Allotments
-  Market Place
-  Mill and Pond
-  Open Air Car Park
-  Other Non-Residential Development
-  Paddocks and Closes
-  Suburb
-  Suburb - Terraces
-  Suburban Redevelopment or Infill
-  HUCA Boundary



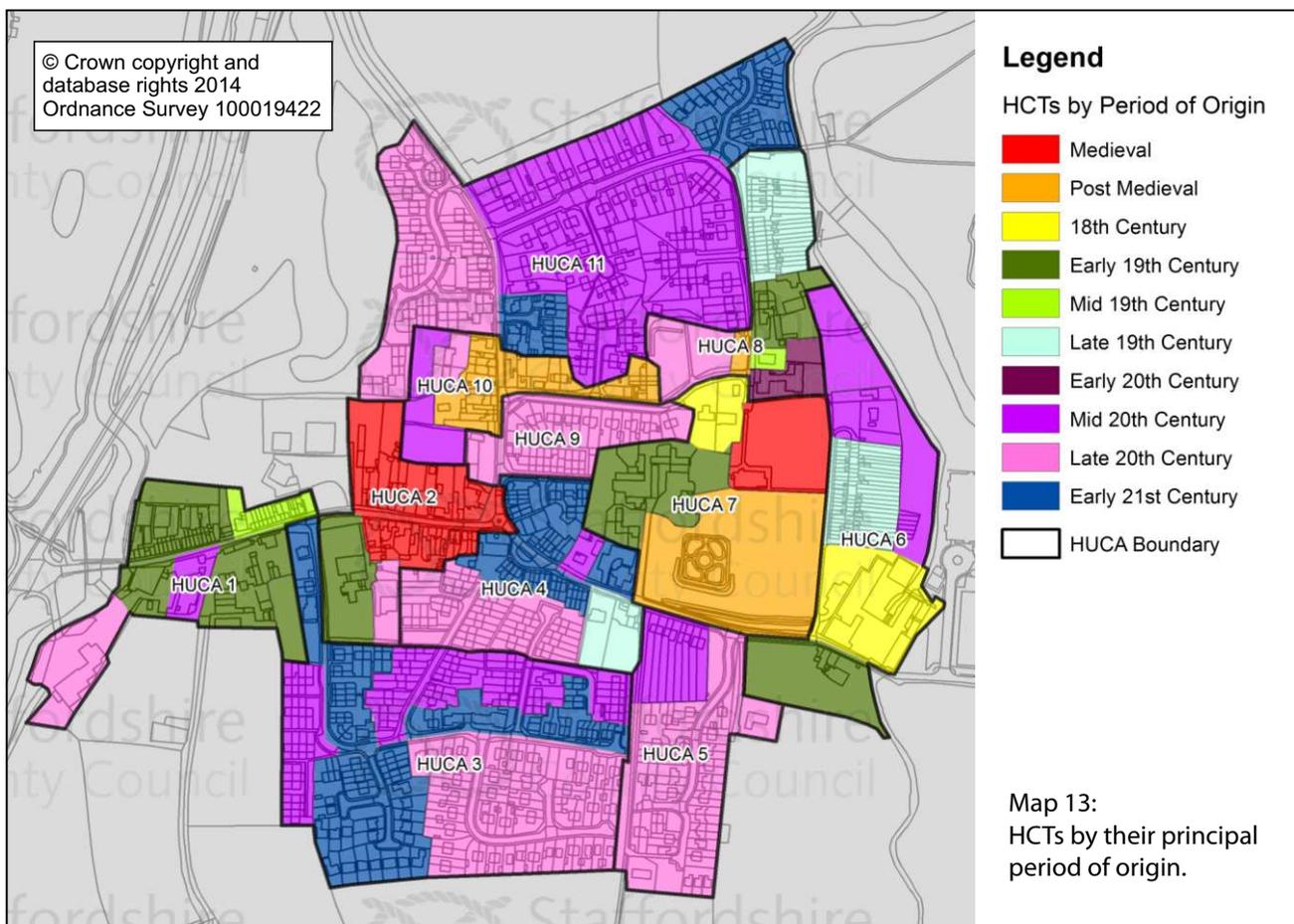
Map 12: Early 21st century Rocester.

The map shows the continued expansion of Rocester in the late 20th and early 21st century. Earlier elements are still legible within its plan form.

## Section Summary

- ◆ Evidence for Rocester's origins as a medieval planned town are legible within **HUCA 2** where the property boundaries reflect the extent of medieval burgages and the triangular market place is also extant. A high number of historic buildings survive within this HUCA including two Grade II listed properties one of which is a timber framed house of 17th century date. A further timber framed property has been identified, of possible late medieval or post medieval date and there remains the potential for others to be identified (within the remains of later buildings). The extent of the Augustinian abbey is fossilised within the street pattern comprising Ashbourne Road, Mill Lane, Church Lane and West View. The core of this site is represented by **HUCA 7** whose focal point is now the Grade II listed St Michael's church and Abbey Field. This HUCA is notable for the high proportion of designated sites including two Scheduled Monuments ('Site of Rocester Abbey and part of Roman Town' and 'Cross in Rocester churchyard'). The Scheduled area covers all of the southern and western portions of the HUCA in recognition of the potential for archaeological remains of both Roman and medieval date, to survive. (cf. map 14).
- ◆ Part of the area of the medieval town also lies within **HUCA 4** and **HUCA 10**. The historic character of **HUCA 4**, which included evidence for burgage plots, was significantly altered in the mid 20th century when housing was built within the area. This included the re-development of early to mid 19th century houses with low rise flats in the 1960s. These properties have in their turn been redeveloped in the early 21st century. Within **HUCA 10** the boundary of the former burgages may survive in the line of a footpath.
- ◆ The legible historic character of **HUCA 8** and **HUCA 10** survives principally in the form of late 18th-19th century red brick properties. These comprise a mix of architectural styles and include domestic properties such as several cottages and a farmhouse, but also two phases of a purpose-built school (the earliest phase dating to the 1850s and since converted to domestic use) and a former Baptist Chapel. That both HUCAs probably represent at least post medieval development is evident also within the built environment. In **HUCA 8** the Grade II listed Dove Cottage is one of very few timber framed properties of 17th century date known within Rocester. In **HUCA 10** the Grade II listed Queens Arms Public House, whilst considered a good example of late 18th century architecture, also retains evidence for earlier phases presumably of at least post medieval date.
- ◆ The establishment of the cotton industry in the late 18th century has also contributed to the development of Rocester's historic built environment. The core of development associated with the industry lies within **HUCA 6** where the Grade II Tutbury Mill has recently been converted to a school. The HUCA also contains the Grade II listed former manager's house, Millholme, with its associated Grade II listed coach house which date to circa 1831. West View, a terrace of 24 houses, represents a later phase of development, probably associated with expansion of the mill in the mid 19th century. Earlier mill workers houses, mostly of three storey (identified as possible weavers houses), can be found along the north side of High Street in **HUCA 1**. Two Methodist chapels are associated with the houses within the HUCA. Further, probably late 19th century, terraced houses also presumed to be associated with the cotton industry are located on Dove Lane within **HUCA 8**.

- ◆ Evidence for other early industry can be found within **HUCA 1** in the form of the Grade II listed Podmore's (or Rocester) mill, a corn mill, built in the late 19th century, probably on an earlier site. Farmsteads survive within **HUCA 1** and **HUCA 8** providing evidence for the importance of agriculture to Rocester's economy into the 19th and 20th centuries.
- ◆ Modern development of mid 20th to early 21st century date dominates the character of **HUCA 3, HUCA 4, HUCA 5, HUCA 9** and **HUCA 11**. Evidence for earlier activity, in the form principally of below ground archaeological remains, may survive across all of these HUCAs.
- ◆ The assessment has also identified a high potential for below ground archaeological remains relating principally to Roman and medieval date across **HUCA 2, HUCA 4, HUCA 6, HUCA 7, HUCA 8, HUCA 9, HUCA 10** and **HUCA 11**. Further archaeological potential has been identified within **HUCA 1** and **HUCA 3**.



# 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 Rocester.

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 available<sup>274</sup>.

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.

<sup>274</sup> In line with English Heritage 2008: paragraph 38

<p><b>Evidential value*</b></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><b>Historical value</b></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><b>Aesthetic value</b></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><b>Communal value</b></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 townscapes<sup>275</sup>.

<p><b>Evidential value</b> (see * below for regarding archaeological potential)</p>	<p><b>High</b></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><b>Medium</b></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><b>Low</b></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>

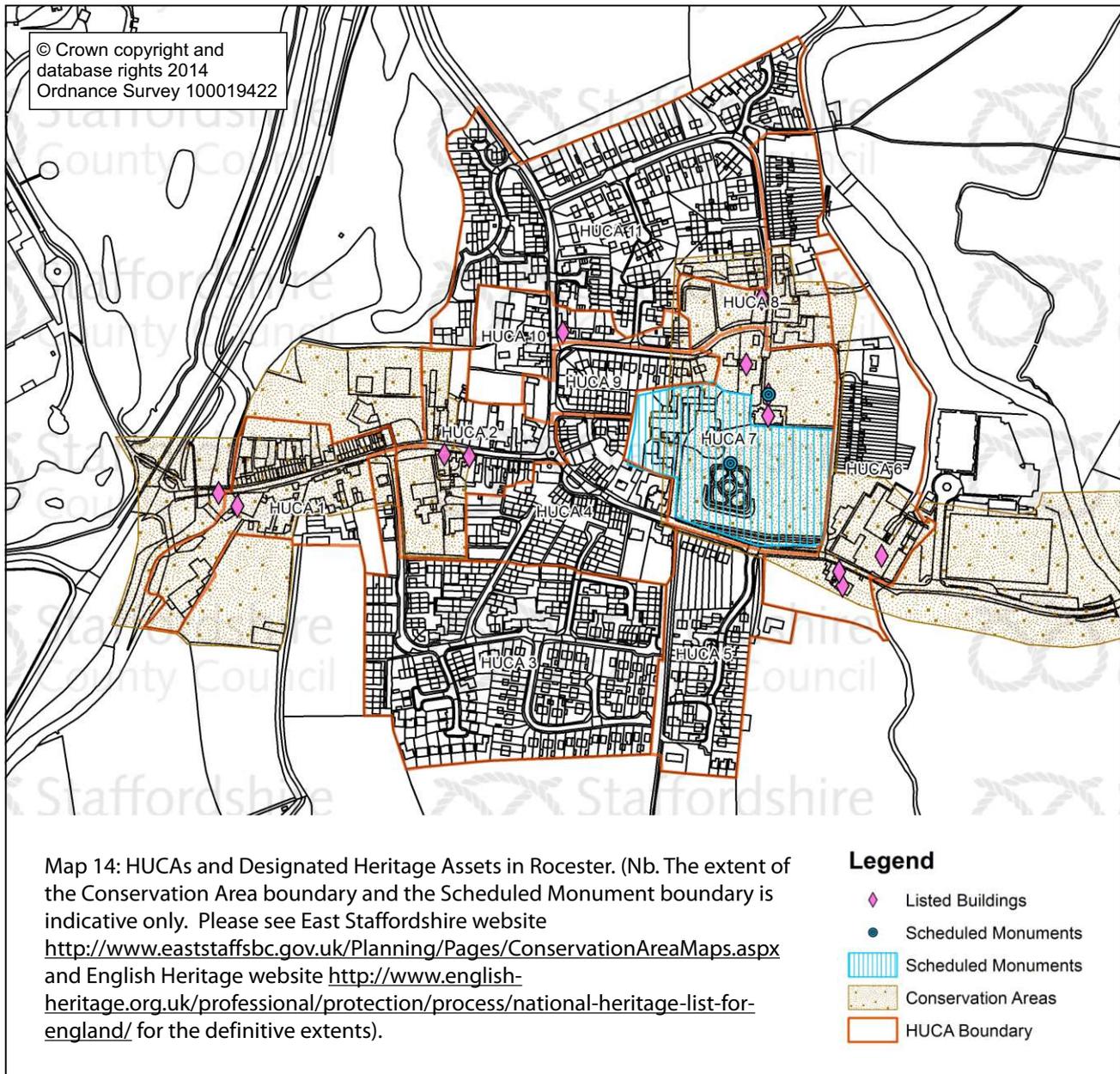
<b>Historical value</b>	<b>High</b>	The legible heritage assets either dominate or significantly contribute to the historic character of each HUCA. There are strong associations between the heritage assets (both tangible and intangible) within the HUCA that are potentially demonstrable and/or the heritage 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.
	<b>Medium</b>	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.
	<b>Low</b>	There are no or very few known legible heritage assets; where they exist their associations are not clearly understood.
<b>Aesthetic value</b>	<b>High</b>	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.
	<b>Medium</b>	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.

	<b>Low</b>	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.
<b>Communal value</b>	<b>High</b>	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.
	<b>Medium</b>	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.
	<b>Low</b>	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.

**Table 2:** Assessment of Heritage values

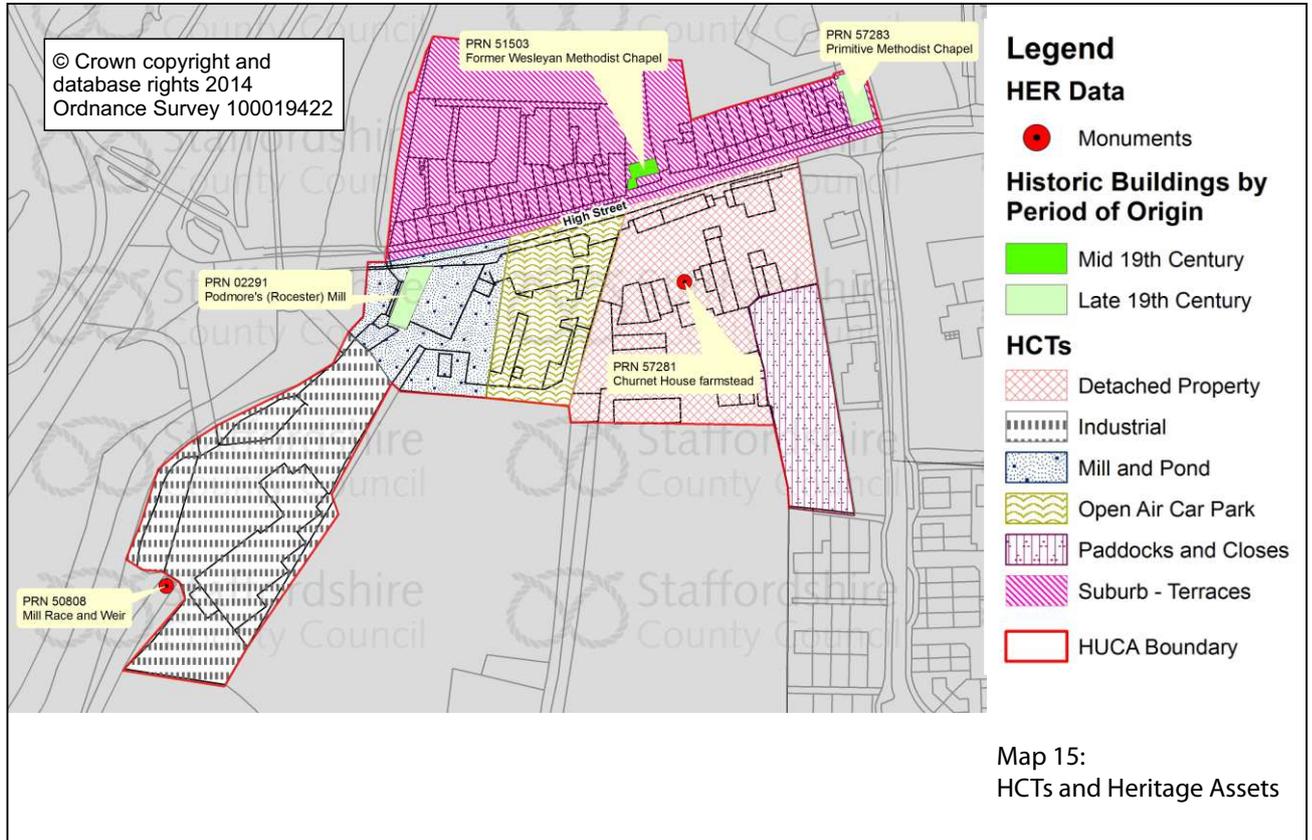
\*The potential for below ground archaeological remains to survive will not be comprehensively addressed within the EUS project. Due to the nature of the project and its time constraints it will not be possible to model archaeological deposits based upon probability and impacts of current development 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: High Street

### 4.1.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character



The HUCA lies to the west of, and probably beyond, the medieval core of Rocester. It is dominated by a 19th century built character which is comprised of domestic, religious, agricultural and industrial buildings. The majority of the HUCA lies within the Rocester Conservation Area (cf. map 14).

The built character to the north of the road is markedly different from that to the south (cf. map 15). The built form to the north of the road is dominated by high density residential dwellings comprising terraces of workers' houses, which open directly onto the pavement. The houses comprise a mix of two and three storey red brick terraces the earliest being located to the west of the HUCA (cf. map 13). The three storey houses are indicative of weavers' cottages (cf. plate 10). Two Methodist chapels are associated with the development of these workers' houses (cf. 2.6.4.2). The earliest was built in 1837 and renovated in the late 19th century; it has since been converted to domestic use<sup>276</sup>. The other chapel replaced an earlier structure, which had stood on the opposite side of High Street, in 1887 and is still in religious use<sup>277</sup>.



**Plate 10:** Two and three storey terraces of late 18th-early 19th century date constructed for workers in the cotton industry.  
© Staffordshire County Council

The south side of the road is less intensively developed and in this it respects its historic rural origins with a farmstead comprising a red brick farmhouse and a two-storey farm building (probably a cow house with hay loft over) standing adjacent to the road<sup>278</sup>. The origins of the farmstead are not known although the extant buildings probably date to the 19th century.

The corn mill, known as either Podmore's or Rocester mill, is only one of a few stone buildings within Rocester<sup>279</sup> (cf. 2.6.3.2). It is Grade II listed and has been identified as being of late 19th century date with later large extensions added to the east. The mill is associated with a mill leat and weir on the River Churnet. Documentary sources suggest that there has been a mill on this site since at least the early 19th century, although there is currently little evidence for any earlier milling activity on this site. However, given its known history there remains the potential for evidence relating to earlier phases to survive within the extant structure which would contribute to our understanding of its development. The mill complex forms part of the main access into Rocester from the west along with the Grade II Listed Churnet Bridge and Causeway<sup>280</sup>.

The HUCA is likely to have lain on the periphery of the Roman and medieval settlement at Rocester, although to date few archaeological interventions have been carried out to test this scenario. The presence of the predominantly nineteenth century farmstead and concomitant lower levels of below ground intrusion to the south of the main road suggests an increased potential for the survival of any archaeological remains in this area.

**4.1.2 Heritage values:**

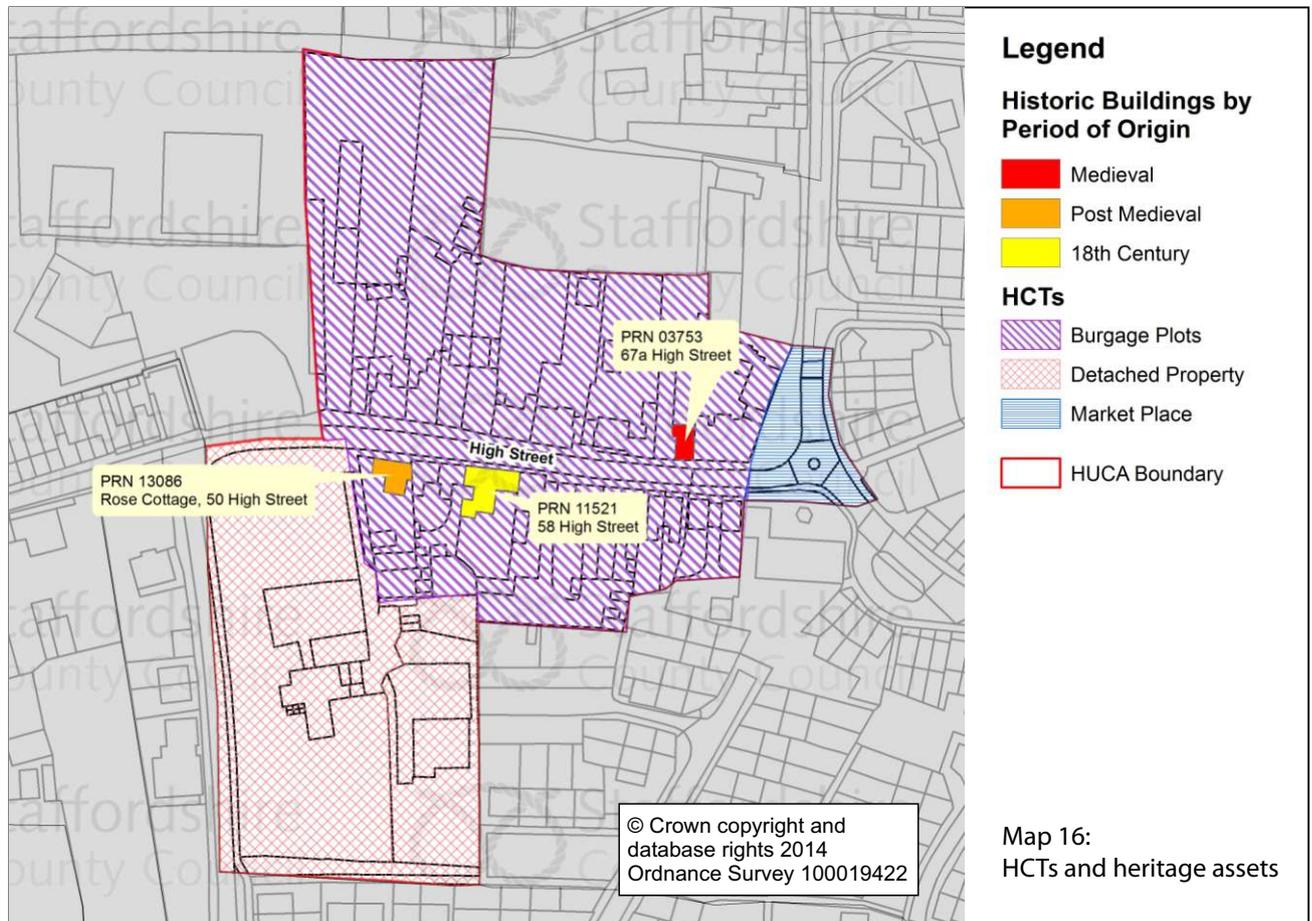
<p><b>Evidential value:</b> The archaeological potential of the HUCA in terms of Roman and medieval activity is currently unknown. There does remain the potential that the mill site may have much earlier origins in terms of its built fabric and surviving below ground archaeological deposits. The open nature of the predominantly nineteenth century farmstead to the south of the main road might suggest greater potential for the survival of archaeological remains in this area</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> The legible heritage assets within this HUCA continue to dominate the townscape in the form of historic buildings representing a diversity of functions including domestic, religious, agricultural and industrial. The river and associated management assets (i.e. the weir, leat and Grade II Listed bridge) further add to the historic character of this area The terraced houses, of two phases, are closely associated with the cotton industry which dominated the 19th and 20th century history of Rocester.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> The integrity of the historic character of the HUCA is well preserved with the north side and south side of the High Street retaining their historic form. The importance of the HUCA to Rocester's history and character has been acknowledged by its inclusion into the Conservation Area. The architectural merit of Rocester Mill has resulted in its being designated as a Grade II listed building and also in the designation of the bridge and associated causeway over the River Churnet to the west of the mill as a Grade II Listed structure.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Communal value:</b> The heritage assets can be appreciated from the road side and they have the potential to contribute to the presentation of the history of Rocester for the benefit of the community and visitors.</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>

### 4.1.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have identified the contribution of the heritage assets to the history and character of the HUCA.

- ◆ A statement of significance (heritage statement) 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)<sup>281</sup>.
- ◆ Where alterations or changes are proposed to historic buildings within the Conservation Area, both listed and unlisted, the applicant should refer to the Rocester Conservation Area Appraisal and consult with East Staffordshire Borough Council's Planning Delivery team in the first instance. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF<sup>282</sup>.
- ◆ 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) also paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF)<sup>283</sup>. The heritage assets also make a positive contribution to the tourist economy of the town. Locally important buildings and should be considered for local listing in line with the recent English Heritage guidance document entitled '*Good Practice for local heritage listing*' (2012)<sup>284</sup>.
- ◆ Change within the HUCA should be sympathetic to its historic character whether addressing infill development or the restoration of the historic buildings. 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<sup>285</sup>.
- ◆ There is the potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the entire HUCA. There is also the potential for the corn mill in particular to retain earlier architectural elements which could inform its development and role within the social and economic history of Rocester. 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 NPPF<sup>286</sup>.
- ◆ 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 Delivery team. 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*' document<sup>287</sup>.

## 4.2 HUCA 2: Market Place and High Street



### 4.2.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA represents the western portion of the historic core of Rocester where a high proportion of historic buildings survive. The western portion of the HUCA lies within the Conservation Area. The plan form of the property boundaries along this part of High Street suggests that they originated as burgage plots in the medieval period, whose extent once continued further southwards (cf. 2.4.2.2 and HUCA 4). This evidence for medieval town planning is associated with the creation of a triangular market place which is still evident within the building lines within the town plan (cf. map 16 and plate 1).

That this HUCA has early origins is attested in the piecemeal nature of the built environment in the form and massing of the properties. The earliest known building within the High Street may be represented by number 67a where a cruck frame survives which may have medieval or early post medieval origins<sup>288</sup>. Only two other properties have been closely dated, both of which are Grade II listed, 50 High Street (Rose Cottage) which retains visible timber framing and is of 17th century date (cf. plate 11), and 58 High Street a two storey red brick property of late 18th century date (cf. map 16)<sup>289</sup>. The remaining historic properties are also mostly of two storey red brick (some having been painted or rendered). Some comprise short terraces of some conformity, elsewhere they are detached. They appear to predominantly date to the late 18th-19th centuries,

although there remains the potential for evidence of earlier structures to be retained within later buildings elsewhere within the HUCA. The largest property within the HUCA is Riversfield House, a 19th century red brick villa, which stands within its own substantial grounds (HCT 'Detached Property' on map 16). The property is enclosed by a surrounding brick wall.



**Plate 11:** Looking east along High Street (towards the market place) with the Grade II Listed timber framed Rose Cottage to the right. © Staffordshire County Council

All the buildings lie immediately adjacent to the road side with the exception of Riversfield House and 57 and 59 High Street (cf. plate 11). The latter represent late 20th century re-development within the historic core on a new building line. Evidence for the earlier building line is retained in the gable end of no. 55.

It is currently unclear to what extent the Roman settlement may have extended into this HUCA as to date no archaeological work has been undertaken here.

#### 4.2.2 Heritage values:

<p><b>Evidential value:</b> There is the potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive associated specifically with medieval occupation. There also remains the potential that Roman activity extended into this area. The historic buildings also have the potential retain earlier fabric which could inform their origins and function.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> The legible heritage assets continue to dominate the HUCA in the form of the buildings as well as in the street pattern (notably the market place) and the surviving property boundaries which indicate a medieval origin.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> The integrity of the historic character on the whole is well preserved in the survival of historic buildings and the street pattern. Modern alteration to this pattern is only represented by nos 57 and 59 High Street. The value of the western portion of the HUCA to the history and character of the town has been identified by its inclusion in the Conservation Area. There are also two Grade II listed buildings.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Communal value:</b> The heritage assets can be appreciated from the road side and they have the potential to contribute to the presentation of the history of Rocester for the benefit of the community and visitors.</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>

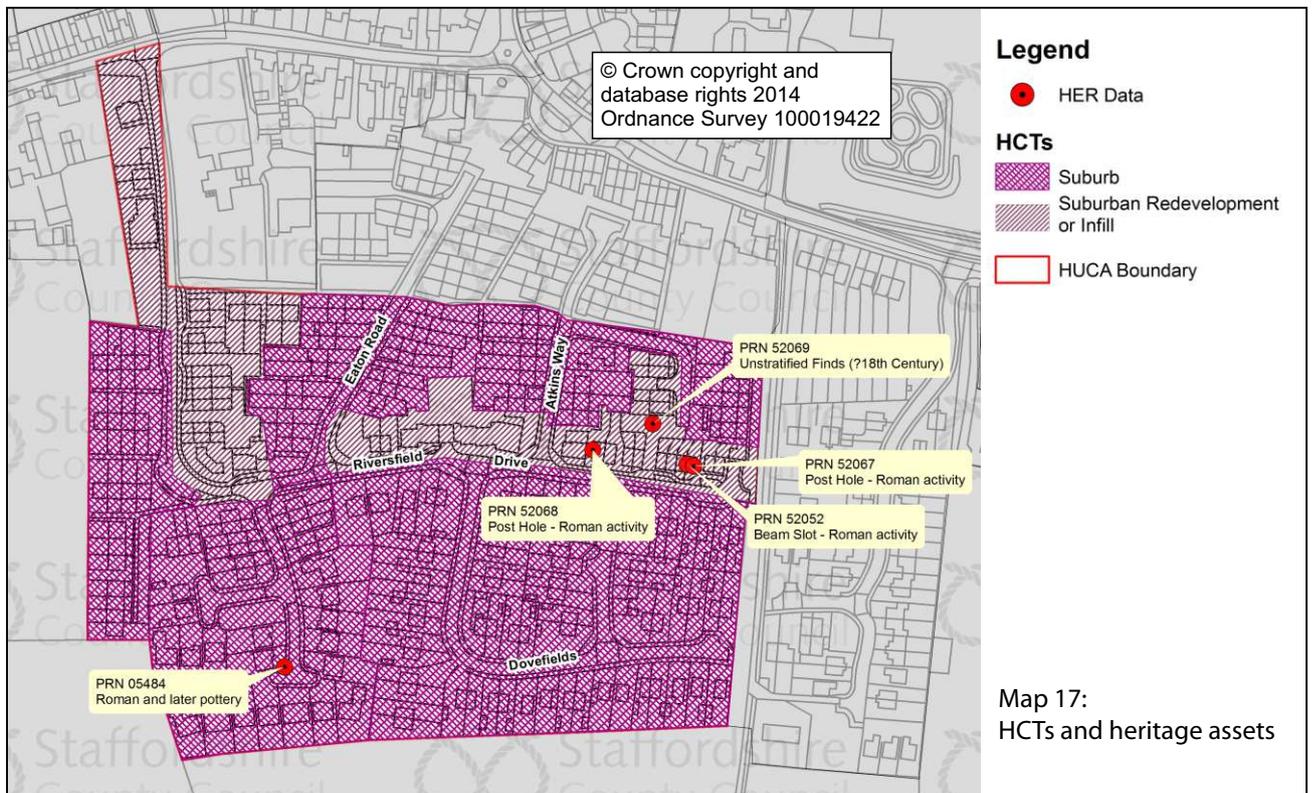
#### 4.2.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA to an understanding of Rocester's history as well as its sense of place.

- ◆ A statement of significance (heritage statement) 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)<sup>290</sup>.
- ◆ Where alterations or changes are proposed to historic buildings, whether Listed or not, within the Conservation Area the applicant should refer to the Rocester Conservation Area Appraisal and consult with the East Staffordshire Borough Council's Planning Delivery team in the first instance. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF<sup>291</sup>.
- ◆ 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) also paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF)<sup>292</sup>.

- ◆ 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)<sup>293</sup>. It is also recommended that consideration be given to extending the Conservation Area eastwards to incorporate the remainder of High Street given its medieval origins and surviving historic buildings.
- ◆ Change within the HUCA should be sympathetic to its historic character whether addressing infill development or the restoration of the historic buildings. 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<sup>294</sup>.
- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive across the entire 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 Rocester. 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 NPPF<sup>295</sup>.
- ◆ 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 Delivery team. 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' document<sup>296</sup>.

### 4.3 HUCA 3: Riversfield Drive



#### 4.3.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA was first developed in the mid 20th century as a southern suburb to Rocester and Riversfield Drive was constructed to serve these properties. A number of these mid 20th century properties survive, but a programme of redevelopment was begun in the early 21st century to replace some of them (cf. map 13). A second phase of housing development occurred in the late 20th century which survives to the south east of Riversfield Drive.

Prior to the mid 20th century the land had formed part of the southern agricultural hinterland of Rocester. It was farmed as one of the open fields in the medieval period and was probably incrementally enclosed by agreement (known as piecemeal enclosure) in the post medieval period (cf. 2.4.3.1 and 2.5.2).

The 21st century re-development of the earlier houses has afforded the opportunity to discover the extent of the Roman occupation of this landscape (cf. 2.2; map 17). Overall archaeological investigation in this area has only revealed evidence for ephemeral structures suggesting that it lay on the periphery of the main settlement to the north. The discovery of more substantial activity in the adjacent HUCA 5 does mean that there is still the potential for further archaeological remains to survive within this HUCA which may contribute to our understanding of the Roman history of Rocester.

### 4.3.2 Heritage values

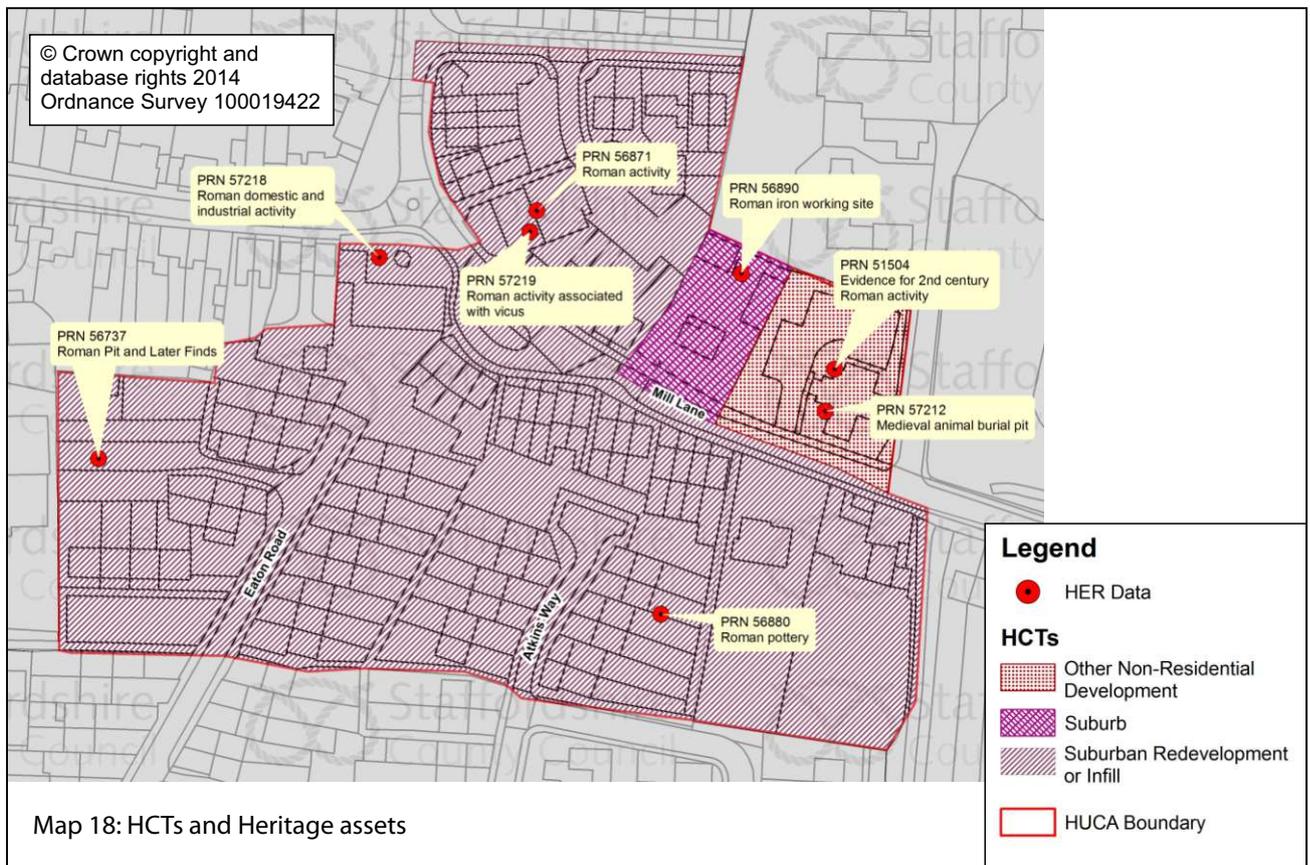
<b>Evidential value:</b> There remains the potential for evidence of Roman activity to survive within the HUCA, which while not likely to represent settlement, may provide further information about how the landscape was being utilised in this period.	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Historical value:</b> There are currently no known legible heritage assets.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Aesthetic value:</b> The HUCA comprises mid 20th to early 21st century housing development.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Communal value:</b> The evidence for Roman activity in this landscape contributes to our understanding of this period of history and Rocester's role in it.	<b>Low</b>

### 4.3.3 Recommendations

The overall heritage significance and values for the HUCA is low, although there remains some potential for the survival of below ground archaeology.

- ◆ There is the potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA relating to Roman activity in particular. 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 NPPF<sup>297</sup>.

## 4.4 HUCA 4: Mill Street



### 4.4.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA has been subject to at least two phases of redevelopment over the last two centuries. The extant buildings lining both sides of Mill Street date to the early 21st century (map 13). These principally comprise domestic properties, including a three storey property which forms the principal view down High Street towards Market Street and, further to the east, a doctor's surgery (HCT 'Other Non-Residential Development' on map 18). This redevelopment has sought to reflect the historic character of Rocester. The houses along Mill Street replaced domestic properties, principally low-rise blocks, which were constructed in the 1960s. Properties of this latter date survive to the rear of those in Mill Street along Eaton Road and Atkins Way.

The HUCA lies at the heart of Rocester's historic core adjacent to the market place. It is likely that medieval settlement, however, concentrated to the south of Mill Street and the market place where burgage plots have been identified on historic maps (cf. 2.4.2.2 and map 6). These extended southwards and the boundary of the HUCA in this area represents their termination. The modern buildings respect the historic building lines and ensure that the triangular market place (situated in HUCA 2 adjacent) remains legible within the street plan. Archaeological intervention has been carried out on both sides of Mill Street, although little evidence for medieval activity was recovered (exceptions are detailed in section 2.4.2.2). To the south of the street it was identified that redevelopment in the early-mid 19th century had probably destroyed

any evidence for medieval occupation. In the medieval period the north side of Mill Street had potentially formed part of the abbey precinct, which would in part explain the lack of archaeological deposits of this date (cf. 2.4.2.2). The first phases of development to the north of the road may, therefore, date to the post medieval period. A pit containing medieval pottery and the near complete skeleton of a cow is the only evidence to date for activity in this period on the north side of Mill Street<sup>298</sup>.

The 19th century phase of redevelopment along the south of Mill Street comprised the construction of principally three storey red brick workers houses to provide accommodation for those involved in the cotton industry. The form of these properties suggests that they may have originated as weavers houses (cf. 2.6.1.3 and plate 5). Photographs taken in the 1960s, just prior to their demolition, suggest that some earlier properties may also have survived in this area of Mill Street possibly on the north side of the street (cf. plate 12).



**Plate 12:** 73 Mill Street (was probably located on the north side of the street). Photo © Staffordshire County Council

#### 4.4.2 Heritage values:

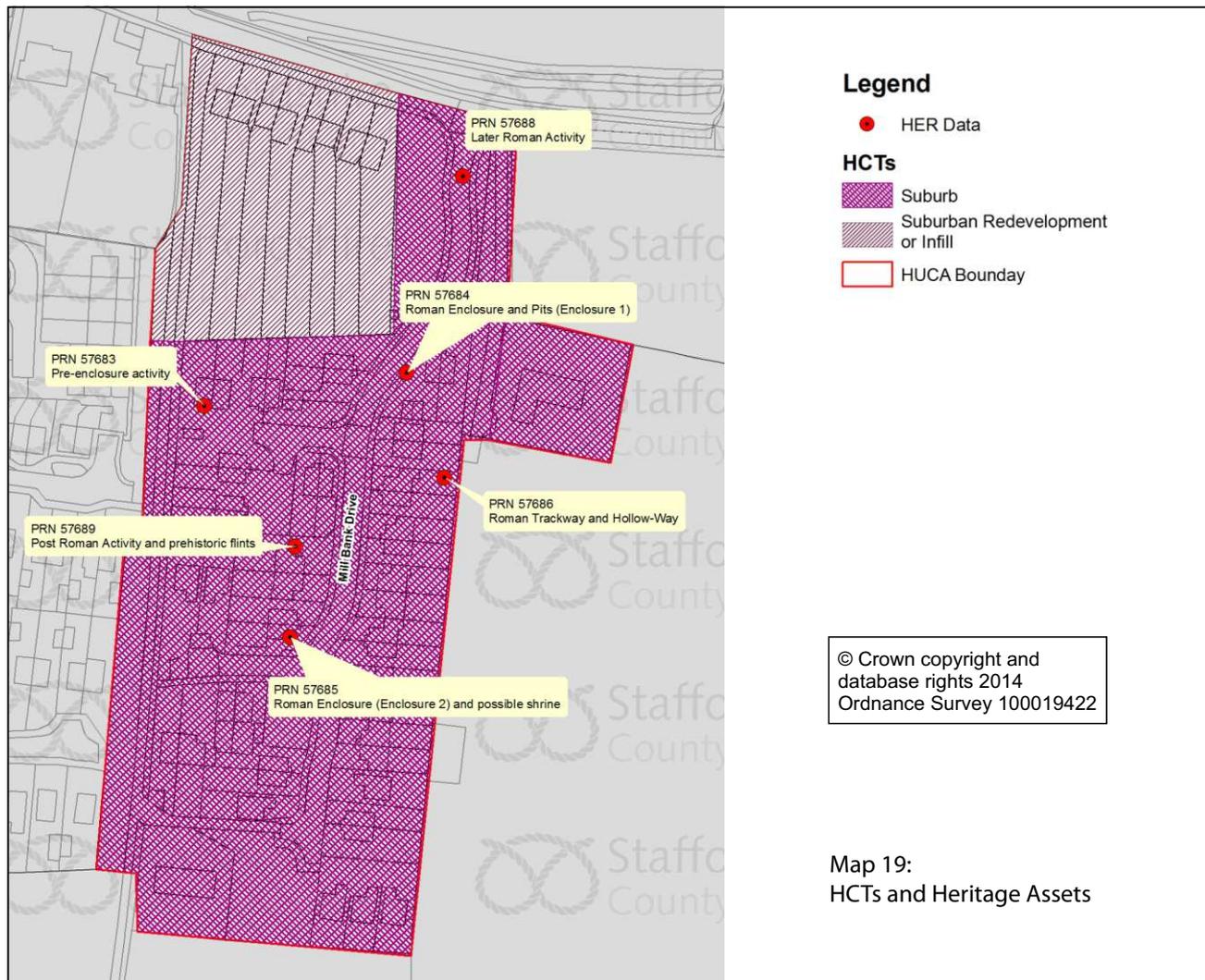
<b>Evidential value:</b> There remains the potential for archaeological deposits to survive associated with both Roman and medieval activity within the HUCA	<b>High</b>
<b>Historical value:</b> The legible heritage assets are confined to the street pattern. Archaeological work has shown that the site lies within the Roman settlement.	<b>Medium</b>
<b>Aesthetic value:</b> The integrity of the historic character has been impacted by episodes of redevelopment.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Communal value:</b> There are few legible heritage assets, although the archaeology of the HUCA contributes to our understanding of Rocester's development.	<b>Medium</b>

#### 4.4.3 Recommendations

The overall the legibility of the heritage significance and values for the HUCA is low, although there remains a high potential for the survival of below ground archaeology.

- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive across the entire 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 NPPF<sup>299</sup>.

## 4.5 HUCA 5: Millbank Drive



### 4.5.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA is dominated by mid and late 20th century housing. The former (HCT 'Suburban Redevelopment or Infill' on map 19) lines the south side of Mill Street and was constructed on the site of earlier properties whose origins dated to at least the early 19th century if not earlier. The late 20th century houses were built within one field, known as Orton's Pasture, and are accessed by a new road (Mill Bank Drive). The wider field system within which the housing estate was constructed had been created in the post medieval period (as 'Piecemeal Enclosure' cf. 2.5.2) from a medieval open field system (cf. 2.4.3.1 and map 7).

Archaeological work carried out in advance of the housing development revealed evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity, whose nature was deemed to be peripheral to the main settlement and included a possible shrine (cf. references to Orton's Pasture in 2.2).

#### 4.5.2 Heritage values

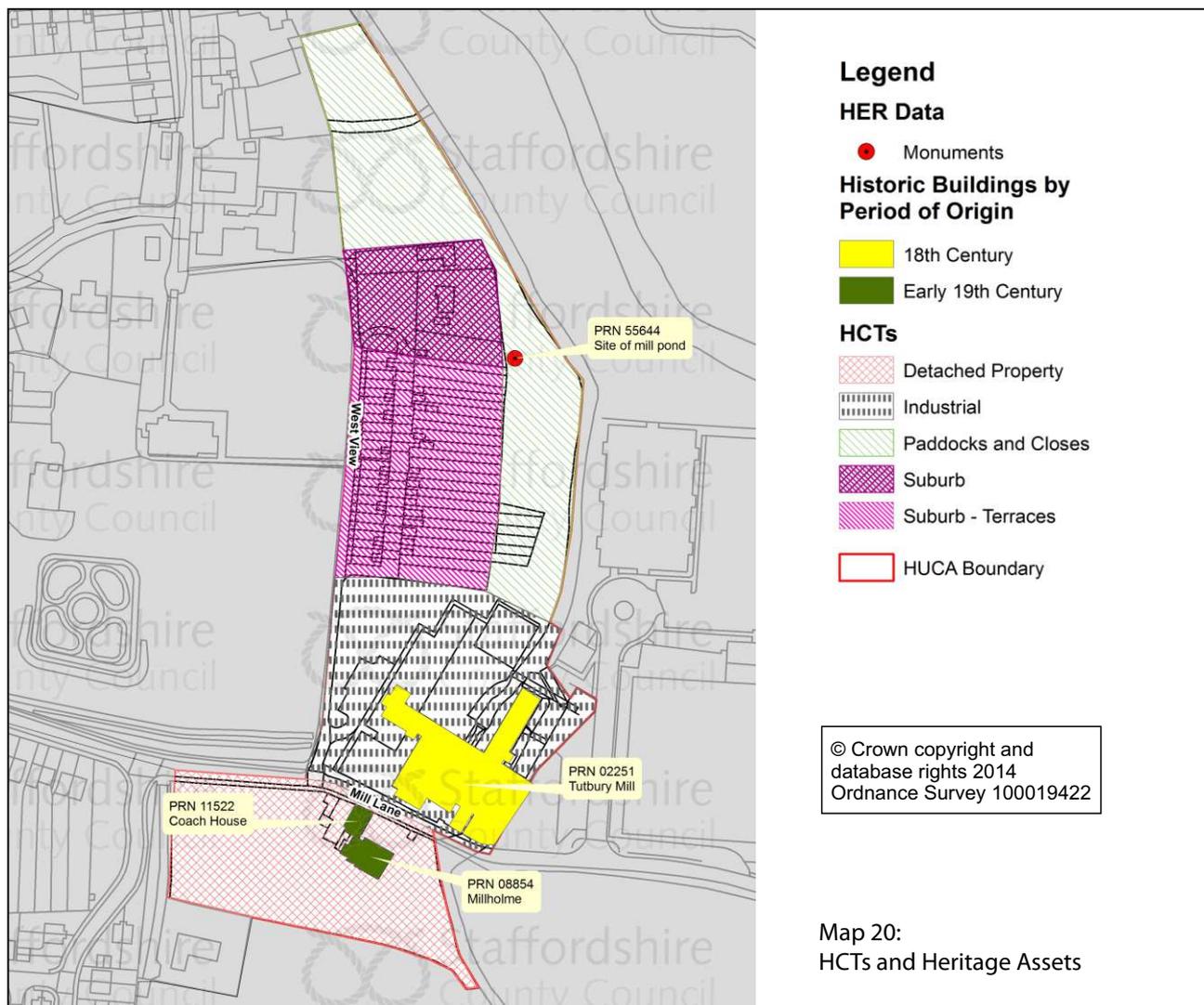
<p><b>Evidential value:</b> Archaeological work in advance of housing development revealed evidence for the survival of below ground archaeological remains. Previous archaeological excavations will have provided a high degree of understanding of the nature of Roman settlement in the area along Mill Bank Drive (Orton's Pasture) and the nature of development in this area is likely to have resulted in the disturbance of any other surviving remains. There does however remain the potential for islands of survival in this area, with a higher degree of potential within gardens to the rear of properties fronting on to Mill Street.</p>	<p><b>Low</b> for Orton's pasture; <b>High</b> for the northern part of the HUCA</p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> There are no known legible heritage assets, although the Roman archaeology found on site contributes to an understanding of the history of Rocester in that period.</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> There character of the zone is now dominated by 20th century housing.</p>	<p><b>Low</b></p>
<p><b>Communal value:</b> The archaeological work at Orton's Pasture makes an important contribution to not only the history of Rocester, but also of the Roman occupation of Britain.</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>

#### 4.5.3 Recommendations

Overall the heritage significance and values for the HUCA is low with the exception of the contribution of the archaeological work carried out to the history of Rocester. However:

- ◆ Overall there is a low potential for important below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the Orton's Pasture area of the HUCA. To the north of the HUCA it is considered that the potential for archaeological remains associated with the Roman activity in Rocester does, however, remain High. Where future 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 NPPF.<sup>300</sup>

## 4.6 HUCA 6: Tutbury Mill and West View



### 4.6.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA lies on the periphery of Rocester with the extant mill stream forming its eastern boundary. The Grade II listed Tutbury Mill has been the subject of a detailed historic building survey which attributed its earliest phases to that of Richard Arkwright and his son, also Richard, in the late 18th century (cf. 2.6.3.3 and plate 8)<sup>301</sup>. The cotton mill which was established by Arkwright went through several phases of expansion and change during the 19th and 20th centuries<sup>302</sup>. The mill stream survives, but the mill pond, which lay to the north of Tutbury mill, has since been drained<sup>303</sup>. The origins of this water management system are not fully known, they may be principally associated with the improvements made by Arkwright (and/or his successors), or otherwise may have much earlier origins. A corn mill existed on this site in the late 18th century as it continued to operate for a short period after Arkwright purchased the site (cf. 2.6.3.3). Indeed it is likely that this is the site of the abbey's manorial mill recorded in medieval documents (2.4.3.1 and 2.4.3.3). Tutbury Mill was converted to a school in the early 21st century.

The houses within the zone are all associated with the cotton industry focused upon Tutbury Mill. These include houses within the site of the cotton mill believed to have been built for the foreman<sup>304</sup>. There is also the large Grade II listed detached property, Millholme, standing in its own grounds with its own coach house (also Grade II listed) which were built for the mill manager in circa 1831 (plate 4)<sup>305</sup>. In the northern portion of the HUCA and standing away from the principal roads is West View a terrace of 24 houses built in the later 19th century (HCT 'Suburb – Terraces on map 20; cf. 2.6.1.3 and plate 13). These properties appear to have been built upon allotments or market gardens. The properties lying just to the north of West View date from the mid 20th century and were also built upon the site of the earlier allotments (HCT 'Suburb' on map 20).



**Plate 13:** Terraces of West View built in the late 19th century overlooking Abbey Field. © Staffordshire County Council

Evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity has also been recovered from the HUCA, although the nature of this is currently unknown (cf. 2.2).

## 4.6.2 Heritage values

<p><b>Evidential value:</b> There is archaeological evidence for Roman activity within the HUCA and there remains the potential for prehistoric remains to be present due to its location on the river terrace. There is also the potential for evidence for medieval and later activity associated with the mill site and water management to survive. Open areas within the HUCA raise the potential for this to have survived.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> The HUCA is dominated by legible heritage assets both domestic and industrial as well as structures such as the mill stream. All of the legible heritage assets, the mill, Millholme and West View, form part of the history of the cotton industry in Rocester from the late 18th century onwards.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> The integrity of the historic character of this HUCA is well preserved and this is, in part, reflected by the designated heritage assets (Tutbury Mill and Millholme and its associated Coach House) and the Conservation Area.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Communal value:</b> The heritage assets of the HUCA all contribute to the history of the development of Rocester and of its role in the cotton industry in particular.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>

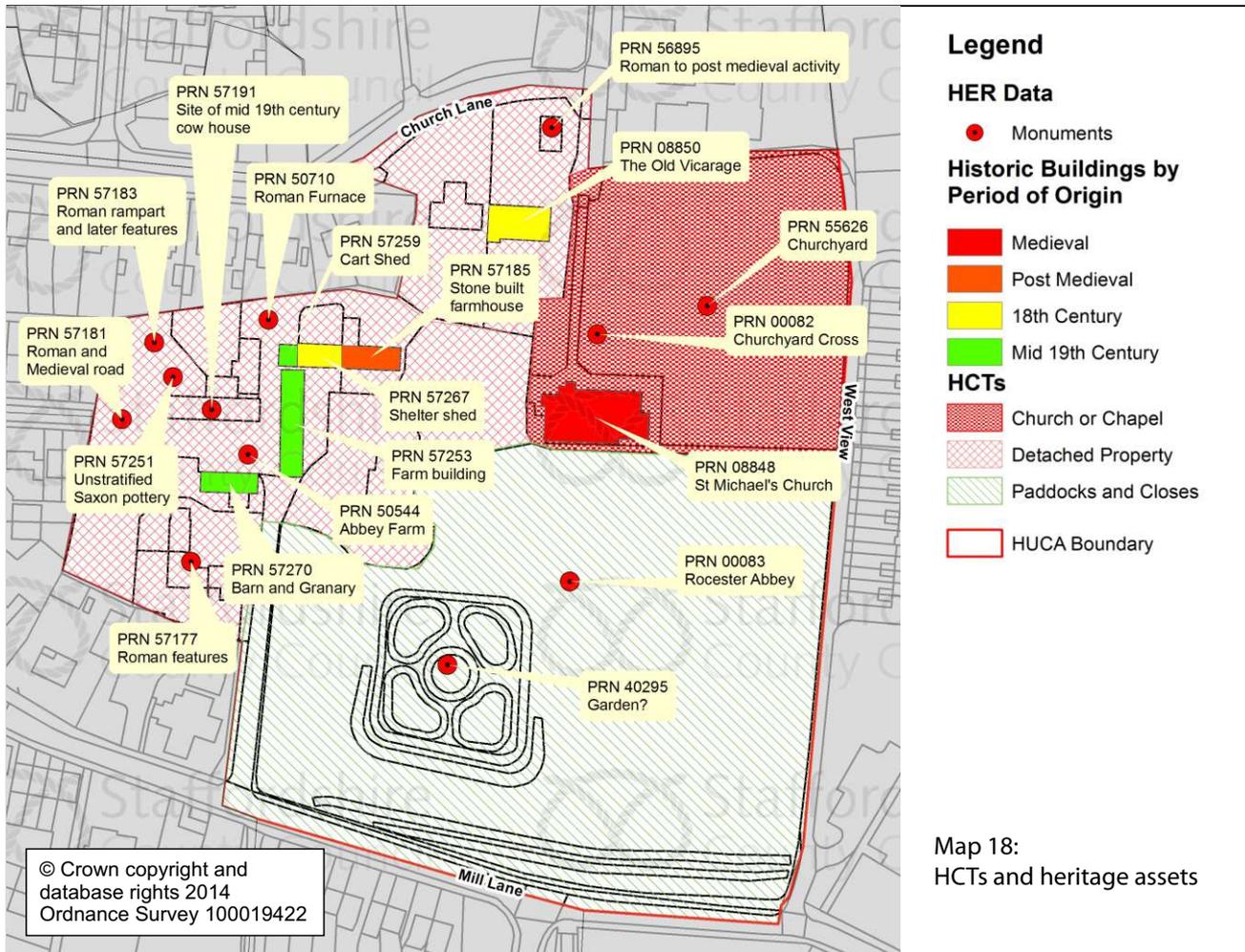
## 4.6.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA to an understanding of Rocester's history as well as its sense of place.

- ◆ A statement of significance (heritage statement) 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)<sup>306</sup>.
- ◆ Where alterations or changes are proposed to historic buildings, whether Listed or not, within the Conservation Area the applicant should refer to the Rocester Conservation Area Appraisal and consult with the East Staffordshire Borough Council's Planning Delivery team in the first instance. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF<sup>307</sup>.
- ◆ 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) also paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF)<sup>308</sup>.

- ◆ 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)<sup>309</sup>. It is also recommended that consideration be given to extending the Conservation Area eastwards to incorporate West View, which is clearly associated with the development of the cotton industry having been constructed for the benefit of the mill workers.
- ◆ Change within the HUCA should be sympathetic to its historic character whether addressing infill development or the restoration of the historic buildings. 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<sup>310</sup>.
- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive across the entire 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 NPPF<sup>311</sup>.
- ◆ 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 Delivery team. 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*' document<sup>312</sup>.

## 4.7 HUCA 7: St Michael's Church and Abbey Fields



### 4.7.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA is dominated by designated heritage assets (cf. map 14). These comprise the Scheduled Monuments 'Site of Rocester Abbey and part of Roman Town' covering Abbey Farm (now Castrum Court, the church and Abbey Field) and a 'Cross in Rocester churchyard' (also Grade II\* listed) as well as the Grade II listed buildings (St Michael's Church and the Old Vicarage) and the Rocester Conservation Area (covering all but the far western portion)<sup>313</sup>.

The HUCA lies at the heart of the known extent of the Roman forts as indicated by the designation of the Scheduled Monument. Archaeological work has been carried out around Abbey Farm in the late 20th and early 21st centuries (principally associated with the conversion of the farm buildings) which has revealed substantial evidence for features such as roads, the western fort boundary and domestic/industrial activity (cf. 2.2.1 and map 21). A small-scale excavation in 2013 recovered an unstratified fragment of early medieval 'Stafford-type' ware, a rare find, which indicates that Rocester may have continued to be a place of some significance within the economic hierarchy of Staffordshire. It has been suggested that Rocester may have been the site of a minster church during this period, although this has not been substantiated to

date (cf. 2.3.3). An important early church, if it existed, may well have been located within this HUCA and perhaps on the site of the extant St Michael's church. The Grade II Listed St Michael's church contains fabric of 13th century date, although it was substantially renovated in the 19th century (cf. plate 2; 2.4.5.2 and 2.6.4.1). Documentary evidence reveals that a church existed prior to the foundation of the abbey in the 1140s. It is not currently clear, whether the extant St Michael's was relocated, perhaps in the 13th century, given its site at a distance from the main area of settlement (HUCA 2 and HUCA 3).

In the mid 12th century an Augustinian abbey was established within the HUCA and on the site of part of the Roman fort. Its full extent is believed to have been encompassed by Church Lane, Ashbourne Road, Mill Lane and what is now West View. No evidence survives above ground to indicate the layout of the complex, but archaeological work at Abbey Farm has revealed evidence of 17th century, and probably earlier, stone buildings (cf. 2.4.5.1). The function of these buildings, should they prove to be monastic in origin, are currently unknown and do not assist in understanding the layout of the site.

The core of the abbey is believed to stand within the area now defined by Abbey Field, although no archaeological work has been carried out to date on this site. A rectangular earthwork in this area is mentioned in the Scheduled Monument description as possibly being associated with the monastery, but has also been interpreted as a possible post medieval garden<sup>314</sup>. Following the Dissolution a house recorded as Rocester Hall in 1666 (cf. 2.5.1.2) was established. It is presumed to have re-used the existing abbey buildings and may be associated with the stone building found during the building recording work at Abbey Farm (later converted to a farm building). However, documentary evidence suggests that it was completely destroyed probably in the 17th century. It may therefore be in some way associated with the rectangular earthwork in Abbey Field.

The extant farm buildings were converted to domestic use in the early 21st century. Archaeological work carried out as part of this conversion dated the majority of the buildings to the mid 19th century, although earlier evidence also survived (cf. above)<sup>315</sup>. The complex included a large combination building incorporating a cow house and a cart shed; a threshing barn and granary as well as a further cart shed and shelter shed. The farmhouse, standing to the south east away from the working buildings, was constructed at the very end of the 19th century and probably replaced the earlier, 17th century property, which was itself converted to a working building.

## 4.7.2 Heritage values

<p><b>Evidential value:</b> There is a high potential for below ground archaeological remains to survive within the HUCA principally relating to the Roman fort and the medieval abbey as is emphasised by the designation of much of this area as a Scheduled Monument. There also remains the potential for the historic buildings, including the church and farm buildings, to retain earlier fabric which could contribute to our understanding of their development and role in the wider settlement.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> The HUCA is dominated by legible heritage assets a number of which are designated. The presumed boundary of the abbey also appears to be fossilised within the extant road plan (cf. HUCA 4 and HUCA 9).</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> The integrity of the historic character is well preserved and the open space of Abbey Field, enabling views of the church from the south and east, is of particular importance. The importance of the HUCA to the history and character of Rocester is demonstrated by the number of designated heritage assets including the Conservation Area.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Communal value:</b> The HUCA is important to the history of Rocester as well as containing public space, including the church.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>

## 4.7.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA to an understanding of Rocester's history as well as its sense of place.

- ◆ 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)<sup>316</sup>.
- ◆ There are numerous designated heritage assets within the HUCA. Any works within the HUCA (and particularly within the Scheduled area) should consult English Heritage at the pre-planning stage. Where alterations or changes are proposed to historic buildings, whether Listed or not, within the Conservation Area the applicant should refer to the Rocester Conservation Area Appraisal and consult with the East Staffordshire Borough Council's Planning Delivery team in the first instance. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF<sup>317</sup>.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid.

<sup>319</sup> English Heritage 2012: <http://www.helm.org.uk/>

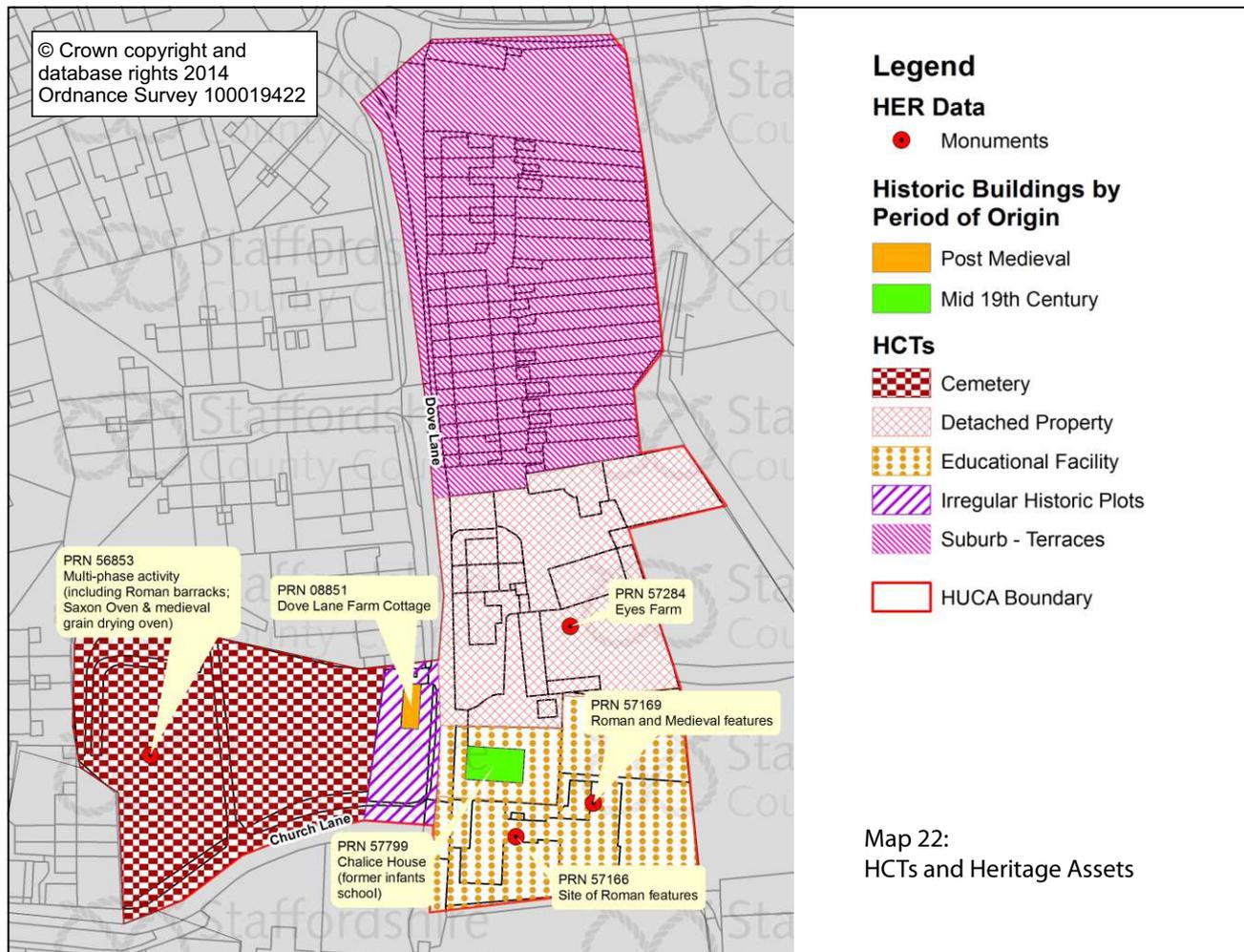
<sup>320</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government 2012

<sup>321</sup> Ibid.

<sup>322</sup> English Heritage HELM web: <http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/nav.19643>  
Staffordshire County Council. 2011. Web: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk>

- ◆ 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) also paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF)<sup>318</sup>. 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)<sup>319</sup>.
- ◆ Change within the HUCA should be sympathetic to its historic character whether addressing infill development or the restoration of the historic buildings. 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<sup>320</sup>.
- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive across the entire 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 Rocester. 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 NPPF<sup>321</sup>.
- ◆ 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 Delivery team. 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*' document<sup>322</sup>.

## 4.8 HUCA 8: Dove Lane



### 4.8.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The built heritage dominates much of the HUCA with the exception of the north side of Church Lane where a cemetery was established in the later 20th century (cf. map 22). The south side of Church Lane is lined with a mature hedgerow which emphasises a rural character. The historic buildings lining both sides of Dove Lane represent a variety of dates and functions, although the majority are constructed of red brick. The earliest property lies on the western side of Dove Lane, the remainder of this side of the lane being dominated by a later housing estate (cf. HUCA 11). This building is the Grade II listed Dove Lane Farm Cottage, a single storey timber framed 17th century house, one of very few to survive with visible timber framing in Rocester (map 22; plate 3).

The historic buildings on the east side of Dove Lane comprise a mix of building types. These, all of red brick, include the school buildings of the Dove First School. The earliest of these, since converted to domestic use (and now referred to as Chalice House), was built as an infants' school in 1852 (cf. plate 6). The current school, as it fronts onto the lane, was built in the early 19th century, extensions have since been carried out to the rear which do not impinge upon the street

scene.

The domestic properties comprise a large detached house and a pair of red brick cottages which date to at least the early 19th century (plate 14). The large detached house, fronting onto the lane, is a farmhouse the farm buildings of which lie to the rear of the cottages. It is possible that the latter were constructed as agricultural labourers' houses. This is in contrast to the terraced houses lying to the north, whose design is more reminiscent of industrial workers housing of later 19th century date; the row of six lying furthest north being constructed between 1880 and 1900. These properties, therefore, are likely to be associated with the expansion of the cotton industry possibly under the influence of Lyons' brothers who bought the mill in 1876 who moved their business to Rocester from their mill in Tutbury.



**Plate 14:** Cottages and Eyes Farm house, Dove Lane.  
© Staffordshire County Council

Dove Lane Farm Cottage is indicative of the potential for early settlement within the HUCA, although the land to the west (including that now covered by the cemetery) appears to have mainly formed part of the medieval open field system, which was enclosed during the post medieval period (cf. map 7; 2.4.3.1 and 2.5.2). However, archaeological work within the area of the cemetery and the Dove First School has revealed evidence for other activities in the form of a grain drying oven and tanning during the early medieval and medieval periods (cf. 2.3.2; 2.4.3.1 and 2.4.3.3). The earliest ovens have been dated to the 9th century and provide convincing evidence for continuity of activity at Rocester throughout the post Roman period. Furthermore, the archaeological work at both the cemetery and the Dove First School has also shown that the HUCA had formed part of the Roman fort and later town (cf. 2.2). This evidence included

elements of the northern, western and eastern fort boundary and information concerning the phasing of Roman activity from military to civilian use. The military use was attested by the excavation of one of the barrack blocks.

<p><b>Evidential value:</b> There remains the potential for further evidence relating to Roman and most importantly later activity to survive within the HUCA, which would contribute significantly to our understanding of the development of Rocester and its role in the wider landscape. The historic buildings, particularly the grade II Listed Dove Lane Farm Cottage, the farmhouse and farm cottages, have the potential to retain evidence for earlier phases of construction to survive which would also contribute to an understanding of their development and role in Rocester's social and economic history.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> The historic built environment dominates the HUCA; the houses in particular reveal the development of Rocester's social and economic history over the course of the 19th century in particular. The school is testimony to the history of social welfare and education for the benefit of the local inhabitants during a similar period.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> The integrity of the historic character of the HUCA is well preserved with the buildings and surviving hedgerows making positive contributions to it. The southern portion of the HUCA lies within the Rocester Conservation area.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Communal value:</b> The HUCA contributes to an understanding of Rocester's development from the Roman period onwards.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>

### 4.8.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA to an understanding of Rocester's history as well as its sense of place.

- ◆ A statement of significance (heritage statement) 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)<sup>323</sup>.
- ◆ Where alterations or changes are proposed to historic buildings, whether Listed or not, within the Conservation Area the applicant should refer to the Rocester Conservation Area Appraisal and consult with the East Staffordshire Borough Council's Planning Delivery team in the first instance. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF<sup>324</sup>.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

<sup>326</sup> English Heritage 2012: <http://www.helm.org.uk/>

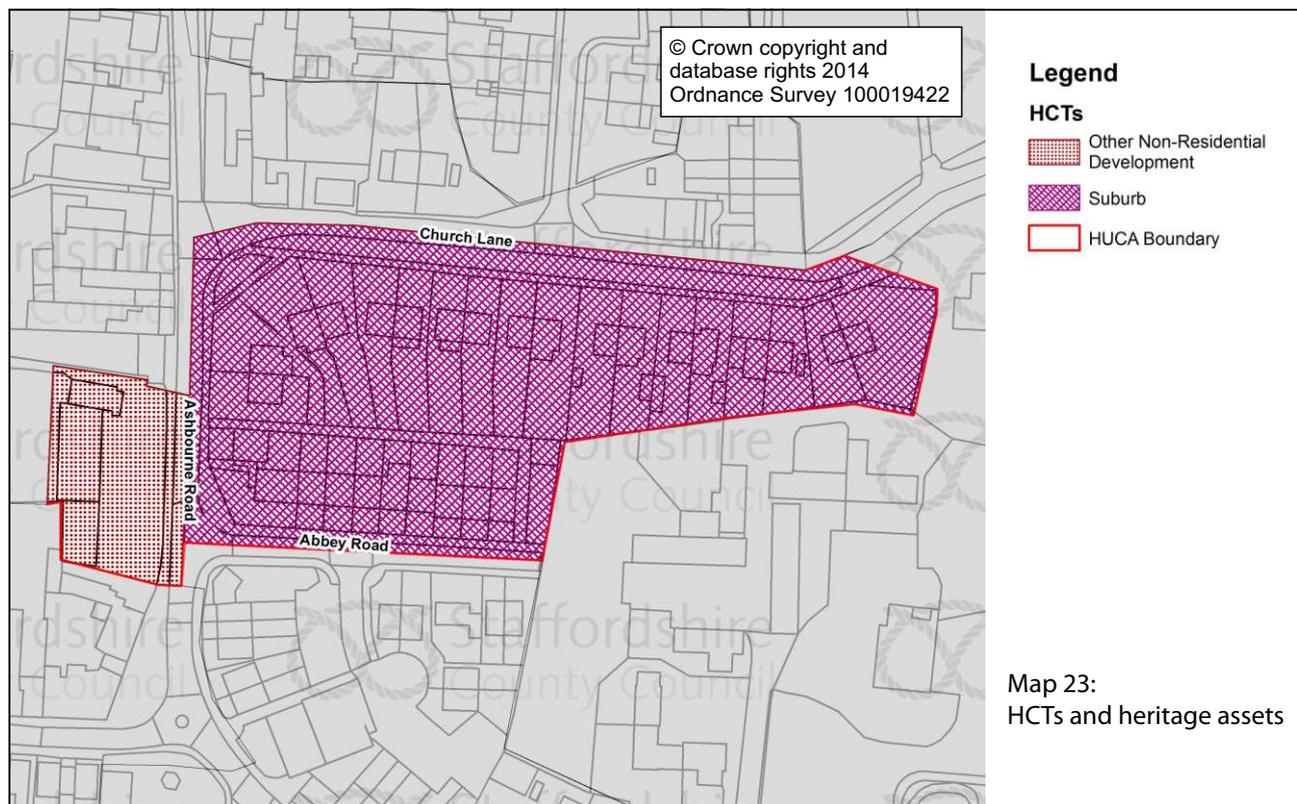
<sup>327</sup> Department for Communities and Local Government 2012

<sup>328</sup> Ibid.

<sup>329</sup> English Heritage HELM web: <http://www.helm.org.uk/server/show/nav.19643>  
Staffordshire County Council, 2011. Web: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk>

- ◆ 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) also paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF)<sup>325</sup>.
- ◆ 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)<sup>326</sup>.
- ◆ Change within the HUCA should be sympathetic to its historic character whether addressing infill development or the restoration of the historic buildings. 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<sup>327</sup>.
- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive across the entire 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 NPPF<sup>328</sup>.
- ◆ 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 Delivery team. 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*' document<sup>329</sup>.

## 4.9 HUCA 9: Abbey Road and Church Lane



### 4.9.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA is dominated by houses built in the late 20th century on an area of paddocks (cf. maps 13 and 23). Abbey Road was constructed at this time to provide access to the houses. Archaeological excavation to the east (in HUCA 7) revealed evidence for a medieval road, which overlay a Roman one, on an east-west alignment, which would have extended westwards along the line of the modern Abbey Road. In the medieval period this is likely to have been the main entrance into the abbey, whose extent is probably demarcated by Ashbourne Road to the west (cf. 2.4.4). In the Roman period it was suggested that this was the principal east-west route into and through the Roman fort and later civilian settlement (cf. 2.2.2). It is likely that this HUCA straddles the line of the forts/3rd-4th civilian settlement and the area of the 2nd century vicus (cf. 2.2).

To the west of Ashbourne Road the garage (HCT 'Other Non-Residential Development' on map 23) dates to the late 20th century. It was constructed upon the site of earlier buildings and their plots, which may have originated in the medieval or post medieval period. Alternatively, during the medieval period, the site may have formed part of the burgage plots belonging to properties fronting onto High Street (cf. 2.4.2.2).

#### 4.9.2 Heritage values

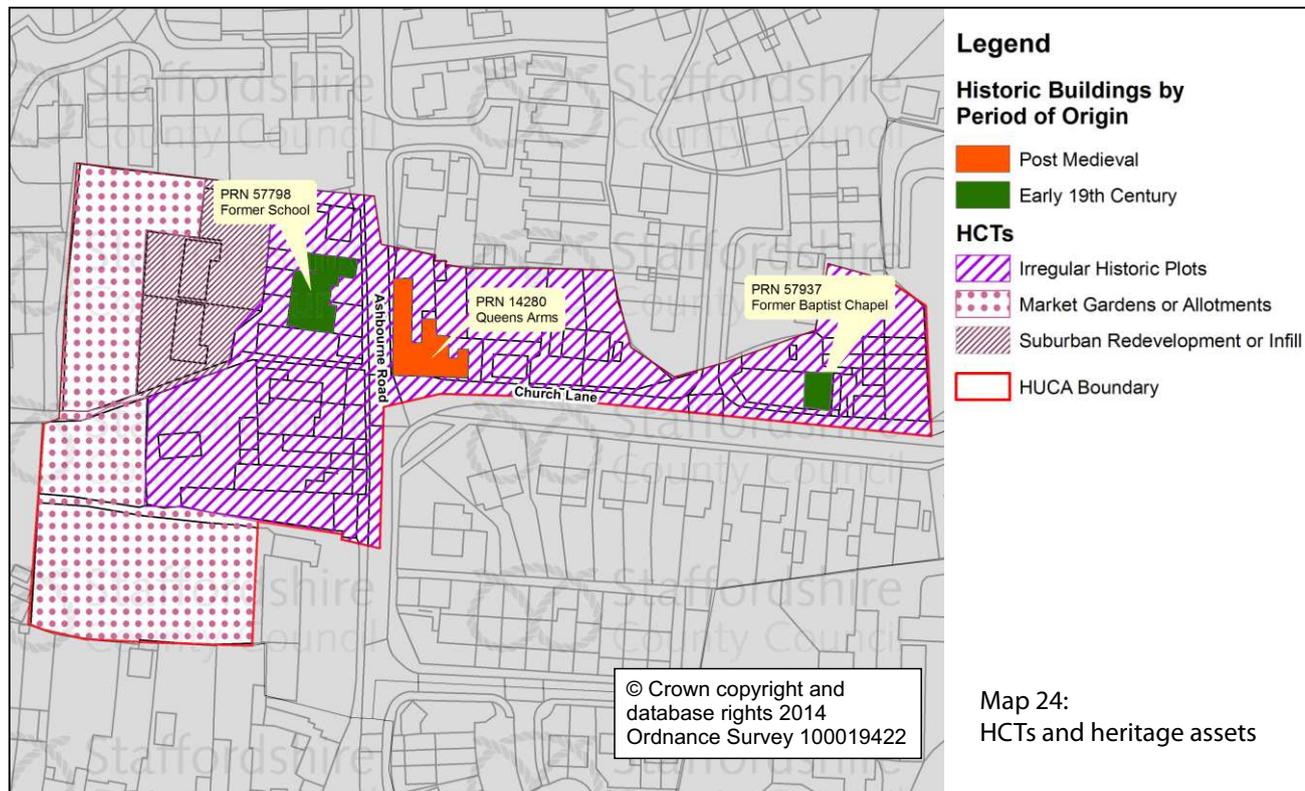
<b>Evidential value:</b> There is the potential for below ground archaeology to survive within the HUCA relating to both Roman and medieval deposits in particular.	<b>High</b>
<b>Historical value:</b> The HUCA comprises buildings constructed in the late 20th century.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Aesthetic value:</b> The character of the HUCA is predominantly late 20th century, although the road pattern of Ashbourne Road and Church Lane is significantly earlier.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Aesthetic value:</b> The potential for below ground archaeological remains could contribute to an understanding of the history of Rocester, but currently this is not fully understood.	<b>Low</b>

#### 4.9.3 Recommendations

The overall heritage significance and values for the HUCA is low, although there remains the potential for the below ground archaeological deposits to survive.

- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA relating to Roman and medieval activity in particular. 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 NPPF<sup>330</sup>.

## 4.10 HUCA 10: Church Lane and Ashbourne Road



### 4.10.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA is dominated by historic properties whose origins date to at least the post medieval period. The Grade II listed Queens Arms Public House on the corner of the two roads retains evidence to support this early occupation date within its structure (cf. plate 15; map 24; 2.5.1.3)<sup>331</sup>. The majority of the properties are small red brick cottages aligned in rows, but with little evidence of uniformity in their architectural detail or massing. The character of those cottages particularly lining Ashbourne Road and the western end of Church Lane is suggestive of piecemeal development and externally they appear to date to the 18th or 19th century. However, there remains the potential, as has been shown at the Queens Arms, for earlier architectural evidence to survive within their structures.

Historic non-domestic buildings are also present within the HUCA including a former Baptist Chapel on Church Lane and the original school, built in the 1830s, on Ashbourne Road, both of which have since been converted to domestic use (cf. plate 9; 2.6.2 and 2.6.4.2).



**Plate 15:** Grade II Listed Queens Arms is of the late 18th century incorporating elements of an earlier house.  
© Staffordshire County Council

To the rear of the plots along the western side of Ashbourne Road are allotment gardens which had been established by at least the mid 20th century. Those lying to the south of the footpath appear, from the historic mapping, to have formed part of the medieval planned town. They appear to have formed part of the burgage plots of properties fronting onto High Street, which later formed paddocks (cf. map 6).

Evidence for Roman activity has been found to the north, east and south of the HUCA and consequently there is the potential for further such remains to survive, although no work has been carried out within the area to date (cf. maps 3 and 4). Little archaeological work has been carried out to the west of Ashbourne Road and consequently the full extent of Roman activity has not yet been determined in this area.

#### 4.10.2 Heritage values

<p><b>Evidential value:</b> There is the potential for below ground remains to survive associated with Roman, medieval and later deposits which would contribute to an understanding of the social and economic history of Rocester. The historic buildings also retain the potential for earlier architectural fabric to survive within their structures which could also contribute to an understanding of this history.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> The legible heritage assets, in the form of the buildings and roads, continue to dominate the townscape and contribute to an understanding of its history and development.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> The legible historic character is well preserved in the form of the historic buildings, their plots and the road system. The very eastern portion of the HUCA also lies within the Rocester Conservation Area (cf. Map 14).</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> The heritage assets can be appreciated from the road side and they have the potential to contribute to the presentation of the history of Rocester for the benefit of the community and visitors.</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>

#### 4.10.3 Recommendations

The heritage significance and values have recognised the importance of this HUCA to an understanding of Rocester's history as well as its sense of place.

- ◆ A statement of significance (heritage statement) 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)<sup>332</sup>.
- ◆ Where alterations or changes are proposed to the Listed building, or to buildings lying within the Conservation Area, the applicant consult with the East Staffordshire Borough Council's Planning Delivery team in the first instance. All of the designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF<sup>333</sup>.
- ◆ 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) also paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF)<sup>334</sup>.
- ◆ 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)<sup>335</sup>.

- ◆ Change within the HUCA should be sympathetic to its historic character whether addressing infill development or the restoration of the historic buildings. 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<sup>336</sup>.
- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive across the entire 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 NPPF<sup>337</sup>.
- ◆ 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 Delivery team. 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' document<sup>338</sup>.



Roman activity was also identified at the latter site and a Bronze Age beaker found on Northfield Avenue in the 1930s also attests to further activity in this area during the prehistoric period. An undated kiln, of Roman or later date, was also found during small-scale archaeological work off Dove Lane (map 4).

#### 4.11.2 Heritage values.

<b>Evidential value:</b> There is the potential for further below ground archaeological deposits associated with prehistoric and later activity to survive within the HUCA. The nature of this is currently not well understood, but it could be intensive if it proves to relate to the Roman <i>vicus</i> .	<b>High</b>
<b>Historical value:</b> There are no known legible heritage assets within the HUCA, although the line of the North Staffordshire Railway is still legible just to the north of the settlement boundary.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Aesthetic value:</b> The character of the HUCA comprises development dating from the mid 20th to early 21st century.	<b>Low</b>
<b>Communal value:</b> The archaeological work carried within the HUCA to date makes an important contribution to an understanding of Rocester's history.	<b>Medium</b>

#### 4.11.3 Recommendations

The overall heritage significance and values for the HUCA is low, although there remains some potential for the survival of below ground archaeology

- ◆ There is the potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA relating to Roman activity in particular. 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 NPPF<sup>340</sup>.

## 5. Bibliography

- Aston, M. & Bond, J. 1976. *The landscape of towns*. J. M. Dent & Sons, London.
- Cherrington, R. 2007. *Land at No. 20 Dove Lane, Mill Street, Rocester: an archaeological watching brief*. Benchmark Archaeology unpublished report.
- Cherrington, R. 2008. *Land at the Old Police House, Mill Street, Rocester: an archaeological watching brief*. Benchmark Archaeology unpublished report.
- Colls, K. & Hamilton, E. 2006. *Old Police House, Rocester: archaeological evaluation*. Birmingham Archaeology unpublished report.
- Dickinson, J. C. 1974. 'Houses of Augustinian Canons: the Abbey of Rocester' in M. W. Greenslade (ed.) *A history of the county of Stafford volume III*. Oxford University Press.
- Dyer, C. 2002. 'The urbanizing of Staffordshire: the first phases' in I. J. Atherton & J. R. Studd (eds.) *Staffordshire Studies volume 14*. University of Keele.
- Esmonde Cleary, A. S. & Ferris, I. M. 1986. *Excavations at Rocester 1985-1986: an interim report*. Unpublished report.
- Esmonde Cleary, A. S. & Ferris, I. M. 1996. 'Excavations at the New Cemetery, Rocester, Staffordshire, 1985-7' in *Staffordshire Archaeological and Historic Society Transactions 1993-1994 volume XXXV*.
- Fear, A. T. 2011. 'Roman and native Staffordshire' in A. D. M Phillips & C. B. Phillips (eds.) *An historical atlas of Staffordshire*. Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Ferris, I. M. 1989. *An archaeological evaluation at Abbey Farm, Rocester, Staffordshire*. BUFAU unpublished report.
- Ferris, I. M. (ed). 2000. *Excavations at the 'Old Shops Site', Mill Street, Rocester: a post excavation assessment*. BUFAU unpublished report.
- Ferris, I. M. 2004. *An archaeological watching brief at Abbey Farm, Rocester*. Iain Ferris Archaeological Associates unpublished report.
- Ferris, I. M. 2009. 'Excavations at Dove First School, Rocester, Staffordshire in 1985' in *Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society vol. XLIII*
- Ferris, I. M., Bevan, L. & Cuttler, R. 2000. *The excavation of a Romano-British shrine at Orton's Pasture, Rocester, Staffordshire: BAR British Series 314*. Archaeopress, Oxford.
- Ferris, I. M. & Burrows, B. 2002. *Excavations of land off Northfield Avenue, Rocester: a post excavation assessment and research design*. BUFAU unpublished report.
- Gibson, A. 2003. *A history of Rocester*. Churnet Valley Books.
- Gunstone, A. J. H. 1964. 'An archaeological gazetteer of Staffordshire' in K. M. Goodway (ed.) *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies volume 4*. University of Keele.
- Hawkins, A. & Rumble, A. (eds). 1976. *Domesday Book: Staffordshire*. Phillimore, Chichester.
- Higgins, J. 2008. *Sylloge of mile markers in Staffordshire: a thematic review of milestones in the administrative county*. Staffordshire County Council/Milestone Society unpublished report.
- Horovitz, D. 2005. *The placenames of Staffordshire*. Privately published.
- Hunt, J. nd. *An evaluation of the Newcastle-under-Lyme Pilot Study, and recommendations arising for a Staffordshire EUS Project*. Unpublished document.

- Jones, L. R. & Litherland, S. L. 1991. A landscape survey of Rocester parish: first interim report. BUFAU unpublished report.
- Klemperer, W. Ross, A. and Askey, J. 2003. Historic Landscape Assessment Project: The Enclosure Acts of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. Digital Archive (GIS).
- Krakowicz, R. 2002. Land adjacent to the Queen's Arms Public House, Ashbourne Road, Rocester. BUFAU unpublished report.
- Litherland, S. 1991. A thematic history of the Staffordshire parish of Rocester from Domesday to the present. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit unpublished report.
- Mora-Ottomano, A. 2013a. 7 Castrum Court, Rocester: archaeological watching brief. ARS unpublished report.
- Mora-Ottomano, A. 2013b. Land at Eaton Road, Rocester: archaeological watching brief. ARS unpublished report.
- Nichol, K. 1998. An archaeological evaluation off Riversfield Drive, Rocester. BUFAU unpublished report.
- Palliser, D. M. and Pinnock, A. C. 1971. 'The markets of medieval Staffordshire' in A. D. M. Phillips (ed.) North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies volume 11. University of Keele.
- Palliser, D. M. 1972. 'The boroughs of medieval Staffordshire' in A. D. M. Phillips (ed.) North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies volume 12. University of Keele.
- Paul, S., Hamilton, E. & McNichol, D. 2008. Riversfield Drive, Rocester: archaeological evaluation and watching brief. Birmingham Archaeology unpublished report.
- Peel, F. 1975. 'The history of Arkwright's Mill, Rocester' in J. A. Robey (ed.) Staffordshire Industrial Archaeology Society Journal vol. 6. Unpublished journal.
- Richmond, A. 2012. Archaeological investigations at Uttoxeter Quarry: the north west (Cricket Pitch) extension. Phoenix Consulting Archaeology Ltd unpublished report.
- Slater, T. R. 2007. 'Plan characteristics of small boroughs and market settlements: evidence from the Midlands' in K. Giles and C. Dyer (eds.) Town and Country in the Middle Ages: contrasts, contacts and interconnections, 1100-1500. Maney Publishing, Leeds.
- Webster, G. 1962. 'Excavations on the Roman site at Rocester, Staffordshire, 1961' in J. M. T. Charlton (ed.) North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies volume 2. University of Keele. pp. 37-52
- Williams, A. and Martin, G. H. 2003. Domesday Book: a complete translation. Penguin Books Ltd, London.
- Online resources:**
- British Geological Survey, 2012. British geology onshore digital maps 1:50 000scale/DiGMapGB-50-WMS. Web. <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/data/services/digmap50wms.html>
- Communities and Local Government. 2012. National Planning Policy Framework. Communities web: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2115939.pdf>
- English Heritage. 2006. Streets for all: West Midlands. English Heritage web: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/streets-for-all-west-midlands/>

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

Kelly's 1896. Kelly's Directory of Staffordshire, 1896 on Historical Directories web accessed 29th April 2014. [www.historicaldirectories.org](http://www.historicaldirectories.org)

Staffordshire County Council. 2011. Staffordshire County Council Guidance Note Conservation within the Highways: structures of historic importance. Staffordshire County Council Web. <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/environment/eLand/HistoricEnvironment/BuiltEnvironment/ConservationintheHighwayGuidanceDocument2011.pdf>

Stoke-on-Trent Archaeological Society. Nd. Introduction to the archaeology of Tollgate Farm Roman site, Staffordshire. Web accessed 6th June 2014. <http://www.stokearchaeologysociety.org.uk/html/tgfm.htm>

Taylor, D. 2011. Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey: Lichfield Historic Character assessment. Staffordshire County Council Web viewed 4th April 2014 [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Extensive-Urban-Survey](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Extensive-Urban-Survey)

Taylor, D. 2014. Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey: final report. Staffordshire County Council Web viewed 4th April 2014 [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Extensive-Urban-Survey](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Extensive-Urban-Survey)

White, W. 1834. History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire, 1834 on Google Books web viewed 29th April 2014 [http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/History\\_Gazetteer\\_and\\_Directory\\_of\\_Staff.html?id=mw9Mql6Ahr8C&redir\\_esc=y](http://books.google.co.uk/books/about/History_Gazetteer_and_Directory_of_Staff.html?id=mw9Mql6Ahr8C&redir_esc=y)

White, W. 1851. History, Gazetteer and Directory of Staffordshire, 1851 on Historical Directories web accessed 29th April 2014. [www.historicaldirectories.org](http://www.historicaldirectories.org)

### **Maps:**

David & Charles. 1970. Ordnance Survey 1834-1836 1" maps.

Landmark Information Group. First Edition 25" Ordnance Survey map.

Landmark Information Group. Second Edition 25" Ordnance Survey map.

Landmark Information Group. Third Edition 25" Ordnance Survey map.

Landmark Information Group. Fourth Edition 25" Ordnance Survey map.

Staffordshire Extensive  
Urban Survey

# Rocester

Historic Character Assessment



Copyright © Staffordshire County Council

Historic Environment Team  
Staffordshire County Council

Office Location: No. 1 Staffordshire Place,  
Stafford, ST16 2LP

Postal Address: Wedgwood Building, Block A,  
Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH

Tel: 01785 277285  
Email: [her@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:her@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Mapping in this volume is based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office © Crown copyright and/or database right 2014 all rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Staffordshire County Council Licence No. 100019422

July 2014