



Walk Mill Conservation Area Appraisal



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1. Introduction

1.1. Definition

- A Conservation Area is defined in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, as an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Section 69 (1) of the Act imposes a duty on the local planning authority to identify areas of special architectural or historic interest, and to designate those places as conservation areas. Designation helps to ensure that an area identified for its architectural and historic significance is managed and protected appropriately.

1.2. Purpose of Appraisal

- Conservation Area Appraisal is a means of identifying and assessing the special architectural or historic character of a place. Walk Mill Conservation Area was designated in 1993 by Staffordshire County Council after an appraisal of the special architectural and historic interest of the area. Under section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is a requirement of the local planning authority to update conservation area appraisals regularly, and designate further areas as necessary. The purpose of this appraisal is to assess and define the special character and appearance of Walk Mill as it stands today, and identify any threats or future threats to the area's character and integrity.
- Appraisal ensures that the local authority, developers, property owners and the local community are aware of the area's special character when drawing up and assessing proposals for change.

1.3. Effects of Conservation Area Designation

- The conservation area appraisal will be adopted as a “material consideration” in the planning process and will be used by the local planning authority when considering the effects of any proposed development affecting the conservation area, including its setting and the desirability of *preserving and enhancing* the character or appearance of the conservation area.

1.4 Certain works in a Conservation Area require consent:

- Planning permission must be obtained from the local planning authority prior to the substantial or total demolition of any building or structure within a Conservation Area (with some exceptions)
- Permitted Development Rights, i.e. those works of alteration or extension that can be carried out without planning permission, are slightly different in conservation areas. Some conservation areas are covered by Article 4 Directions, which restrict certain Permitted Development Rights, for example the installation of uPVC windows or satellite dishes. These are specific to each conservation area, and are in place to ensure the special historic and architectural character is protected.
- Works to trees: Anyone proposing to cut down, top or lop a tree in a conservation area, even if the tree is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)), must notify the local planning authority and allow six weeks before commencing work. This gives the local planning authority the opportunity to make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) if the tree is considered to be important.

1.5 Community Involvement

- Stafford Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement sets out to ensure that all sections of the community and interested parties have a reasonable opportunity to engage with plan-making and planning application processes. A public consultation took place between 17 March 2015 and 30 April 2015 and a public exhibition was held at Offley Hay Village Hall on 1 April 2015. Letters were sent to all properties within the conservation area and to key stakeholders and other interested parties, inviting comment. The draft appraisal was made public on the Borough's website, or in paper form. All representations were then considered and some minor amendments made to the text of the Appraisal.

1.6 Planning Policy Context

1.6.1 National Planning Policy Framework policy relevant to Walk Mill Conservation Area

- National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Section 12 relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and paragraphs 127-141 are relevant to Walk Mill Conservation Area.
- *PPS5 Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (2010) remains relevant. National conservation guidance to support the NPPF policies is currently in preparation by national government and will replace this guidance.

1.6.2 Local Planning Policy relevant to Walk Mill Conservation Area

- Local planning policy is contained within The Plan for Stafford Borough (adopted 2014). Section 12 *Environment* contains policies relevant to Chebsey Conservation Area: Policies N8: *Landscape Character*, N9: *Historic Environment* and paragraphs 12.45-12.56.

2. Summary of Special Interest, Walk Mill Conservation Area

Walk Mill Conservation Area was designated by Staffordshire County Council on 10 June 1993, as a means of preserving and enhancing the special architectural and historic interest that has been retained and enriched through its development over the centuries. Walk Mill is considered worthy of Conservation Area designation as an example of a small rural community based on agricultural related activity.

The key elements of this special character are summarised as follows:

- The site of a fulling mill and mill pond from the 13th/14th century, relating to the cottage industry of cloth making.
- The Walk Mill, associated buildings and landscape are a rare survival of an almost complete, late 18th century milling environment. The mill is a grade II listed building.
- The mill and wheelhouse retain some machinery, including a 15 feet diameter iron undershot waterwheel.
- The site contains a harmonious group of traditional buildings which reflect the character of Walk Mill, including examples of traditional, modest midlands farmhouses.
- The mill yard forms part of the farmyard with other traditional farm buildings, including a barn and cowshed, cart shed and stables, and piggery.
- Walk Mill is characterised by its historic link to agricultural and industrial activity and economic development in and around the area.
- The Conservation Area has a distinctive rural setting, enhanced by the peace and tranquillity of the location
- Walk Mill retains surrounding historic landscape features, such as ancient woodland and water meadows, which relate to the damming of the River Sow to form the mill pond.
- The mill pond is a significant area of water, both within the context of the mill site, and as a valuable habitat for wildlife.
- Mature woodland of environmental significance surrounds the mill pond and enhances the setting of Walk Mill.

2.1 Location and Topography

2.1.1 Walk Mill lies approximately 2 miles west of Eccleshall and 9 miles northwest of Stafford. Situated along the main road from Eccleshall to Bishop's Offley, the rural settlement of Walk Mill is a linear, picturesque hamlet which takes its name from its landmark old water mill. The Walk Mill Conservation Area is located to the northwest of the hamlet and includes the site of the mill, mill pond and associated buildings, Walk Mill Farm and Walk Mill House.

2.1.2 The setting of Walk Mill is directly linked to the topography of the area. Passing to the north of the hamlet, the River Sow feeds the large mill pond within the Walk Mill Conservation Area and connects the pond to nearby Cop Mere, to the east, and Offley Brook to the west. Many watermills were sited on the most suitable watercourse in order to harness water power and this often led to the location of watermills in isolated, rural spots (English Heritage, 2011). With the associated stream, sluice gates and marsh, the Walk Mill pond forms a significant part of this rural setting.

2.1.3 Set in a shallow valley, the area surrounding Walk Mill is dominated by open countryside. The phases and type of landscape development around Walk Mill Conservation Area can be identified through the Historic Landscape Characterisation in figure 2. Floodplain fields and areas of woodland border the Conservation Area to the north and east, and large areas of early irregular piecemeal enclosure can be seen to the north and west. Re-organised and planned enclosure is evident to the south of the Conservation Area.

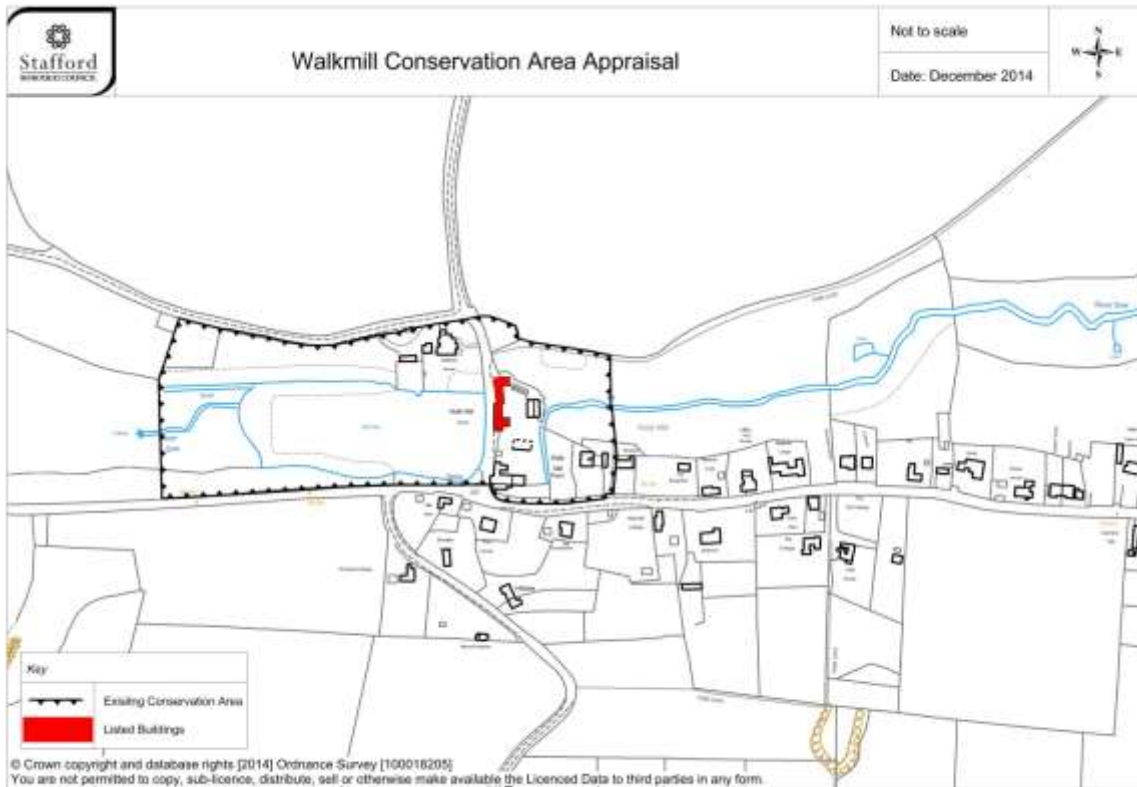


Figure 1 Walk Mill Conservation Area

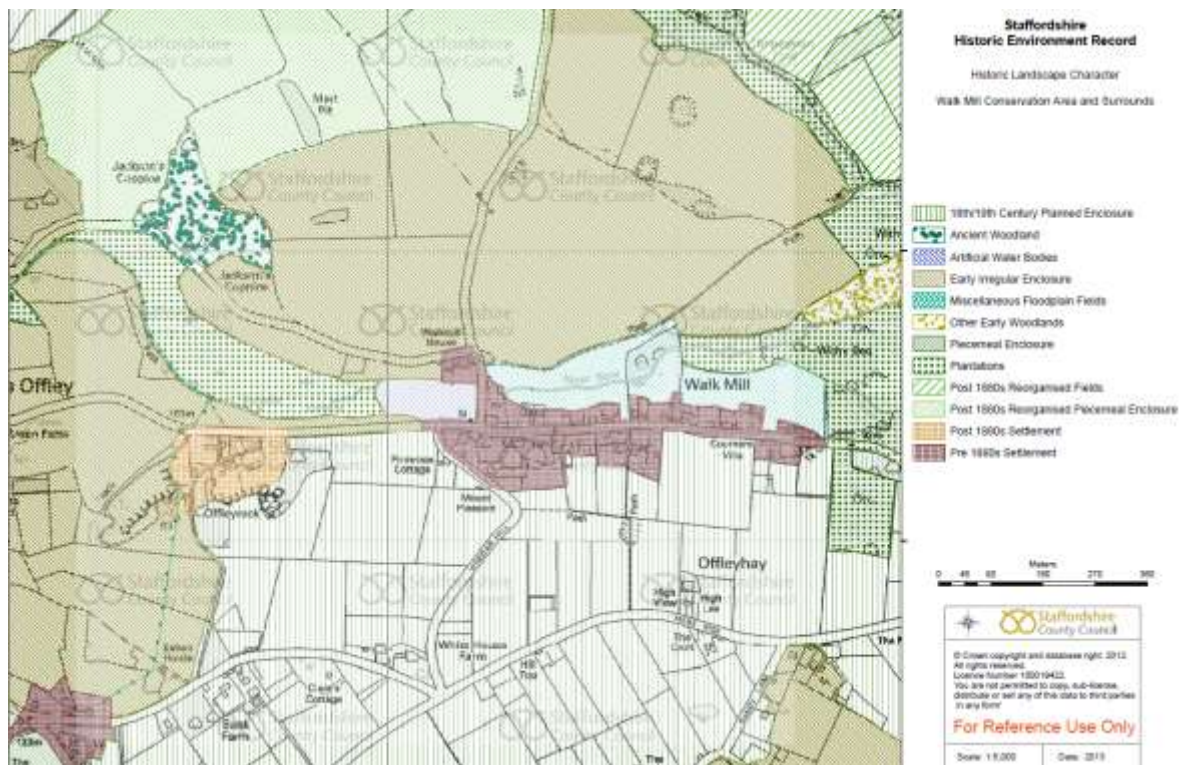


Figure 2: Historic landscape character mapping identifies the historical development of Walk Mill.



Figure 3 Aerial view of Walk Mill and surrounding countryside

2.2 Archaeological Background

2.2.1 Archaeological investigation in 1974 identified two surface finds of worked prehistoric flint at Walk Mill Farm. This traces early human activity in the area to the Mesolithic to Bronze Age period. Further excavation in 1995 recovered a Roman ditch, Romano-British pottery and some charcoal in the vicinity of Walk Mill Farm. Whilst no evidence of a structure was discovered, it is thought that this was the site of a kiln.

2.2.2 Earthwork remains of medieval ridge and furrow, to the southeast of the Conservation Area, is identified on historic environment records. This provides evidence for early agricultural activity in the area

2.2.3 The mill gives its name to the hamlet of Walk Mill, which lies in the parish of Eccleshall. At the time of the Domesday survey, two mills were recorded at Eccleshall; the site of Walk Mill and its position on the River Sow is likely to be one of the mills recorded.

2.2.4 Walk Mill is a common name meaning 'fuller of cloth' from the verb to walk or weolc (M.E). 'Walking' the cloth was the process used to remove odour and oils from sheep's wool, converting a relatively loosely-woven fabric into a close-knit one. The mill and dam at Walk Mill probably date from c.1300, most likely constructed as a result of the demand for cloth in the area. The mill pond was formed by the damming of the River Sow and would initially have covered over 10 acres.



Figure 4 The main mill building and wheelhouse c.1930-1950 (Staffspasttrack)

2.2.5 The present mill building was used to grind corn and produce malt and is thought to have replaced the original fulling mill in the late 18th century. By this time Walk Mill had given its name to the settlement that had built up around it (staffordshirepasttrack.org).

2.3 Historical Development and Relationship to Current Layout

2.3.1 The most widespread historic use of watermills was for grinding corn and the availability of water for driving the wheels was an important factor in the location of this industry. The harnessing of water power to drive the industrial equipment associated with milling began with the development of the textile fulling mill in the 12th century (Cossons, 1975). There is thought to have been a mill and pond at Walk Mill from around the 13th/14th century. The first mention of Walk Mill appears in 1298; documents describe how tenants were obliged to send their corn to be ground at the 'Lord's Mill'; the lord being the Bishop of Lichfield.

2.3.2 A demand for a cloth or 'fulling' mill arose in the area from an increase in the supply of wool. The clearance of Eccleshall forest in the 12th century led to areas of commons which were used as sheep runs. The chief product of the sheep was wool which, not only provided the raw material for the cloth, but also provided the commoners with a cottage industry in spinning and weaving, hence the production of cloth. Prior to the 13th century, the fulling process would have been carried out by pounding the cloth, which was soaked in urine, with the feet. The more widespread use of mechanism during the 13th century meant that a mill could provide the power to beat the cloth with wooden hammers, driven by a waterwheel. All walk mills have been cloth or fulling mills at some period in their history (Dulgnan, 1902).

2.3.3 The earliest recorded occupier of the mill site is John Pershall in 1606. Subsequent tenants of a 'corn mill and adjacent fulling mill' are noted throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Further 17th century records detail the property as consisting of a fulling mill, a corn mill and a meadow known as Copmere Suck. At this time the mill and mill pool lay within the township of Sugnall Magna within the parish of Eccleshall.

2.3.4 During the 17th century, nearby Eccleshall became home to a large number of tailors. The cloth produced at Walk Mill supplied local tailors, contributing to the growth of the cloth industry in the area; this industry became part of an important trade and economy in Eccleshall parish which lasted for some 500 years.

2.3.5 Map regression shows how the hamlet of Walk Mill developed around the mill. A mill and mill pond is recorded on Yates's map of Staffordshire from 1775 (figure 5) and is the first visual record of the site. The local fulling trade had declined during the 18th century and there was an increase in the corn trade. In 1795, Walk Mill was auctioned for sale by its occupant at the time, John Jones. The sale particulars for the building mention the corn mill as 'lofty and newly erected', and it is thought that this is the extant building on the site today. The mill was purchased by a Robert Deakin and was to remain in the Deakin family throughout the 19th century.



Figure 5 Yates's Map of Staffordshire 1775 showing mill and mill pond



Figure 6 Yates's map of Staffordshire, 2nd edition 1798

2.3.6 Walk Mill retains its historic road layout and the character of the surrounding landscape remains relatively similar to that of the 18th century. The road which runs between Eccleshall and Bishops Offley appears on mapping from the early part of the 19th century; no such road can be identified on Yates's Maps of 1775 and 1798, but is clearly recorded on Greenwood's map from 1820. Cutting through, what is thought to be a large area of common at Offley Hay, the road was most likely built to meet the demands of local trade and agricultural practices



Figure 7 Greenwood's map 1820 shows the road between Eccleshall and Bishops Offley.

2.3.7 The mill, mill pond and Walk Mill House can be identified on the OS in 1837, along with a building thought to be the existing former barn. A building on the site of Walk Mill Farmhouse appears for the first time on the 1839 tithe map of Horsley. The tithe map also records the mill and the barn and shows the linear development of buildings within the hamlet.



Figure 8 OS 1837 showing mill and mill pond and Walk Mill house

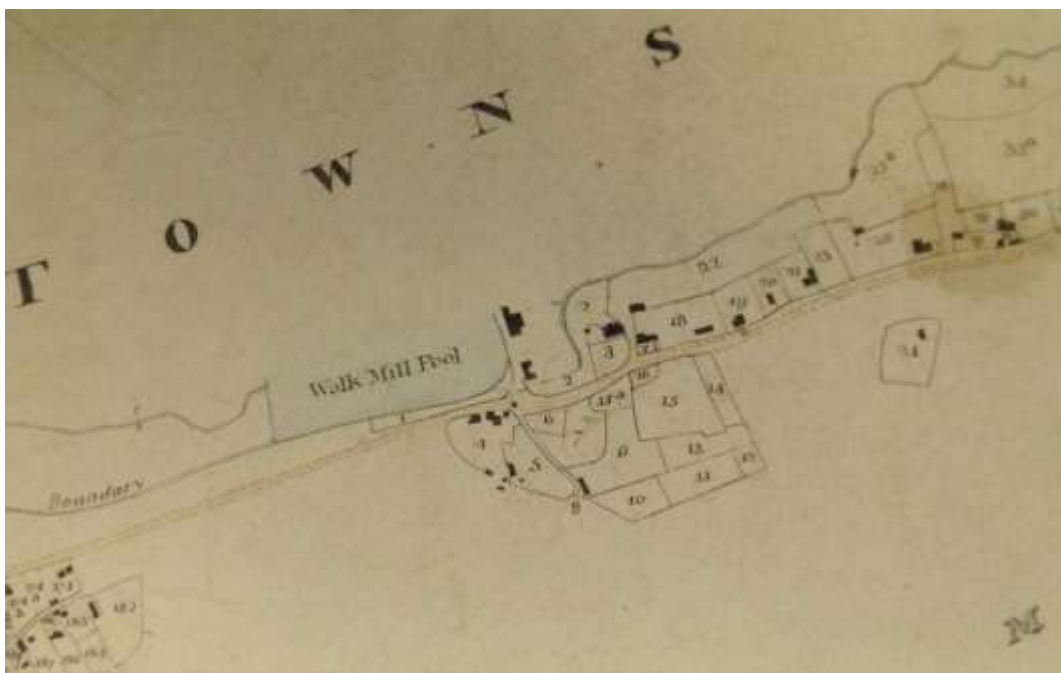


Figure 9 Horsley tithe map 1839 showing linear development of the hamlet of Walk Mill

2.3.8 Further development of the mill site occurred during the 19th century, in line with changes in farming practice. Suggestion is that the former fulling mill was rebuilt as a maltings by Isaiah Deakin, who was recorded as the landowner of the mill site and surrounding land in 1841; a date stone above the door of the malthouse has the inscription, 'ID 1830', possibly referring to Isaiah Deakin and dating the maltings to this period. The site developed into a farmstead from the mid-late 19th century, most likely as a result of the newly constructed Walk Mill Farmhouse around the 1850s; this building is the existing Walk Mill Farm. By the 1st edition OS map of Walk Mill, surveyed in 1879, a small cluster of mill and farm buildings are clearly recorded. It is likely that these are the extant buildings within the Conservation Area.

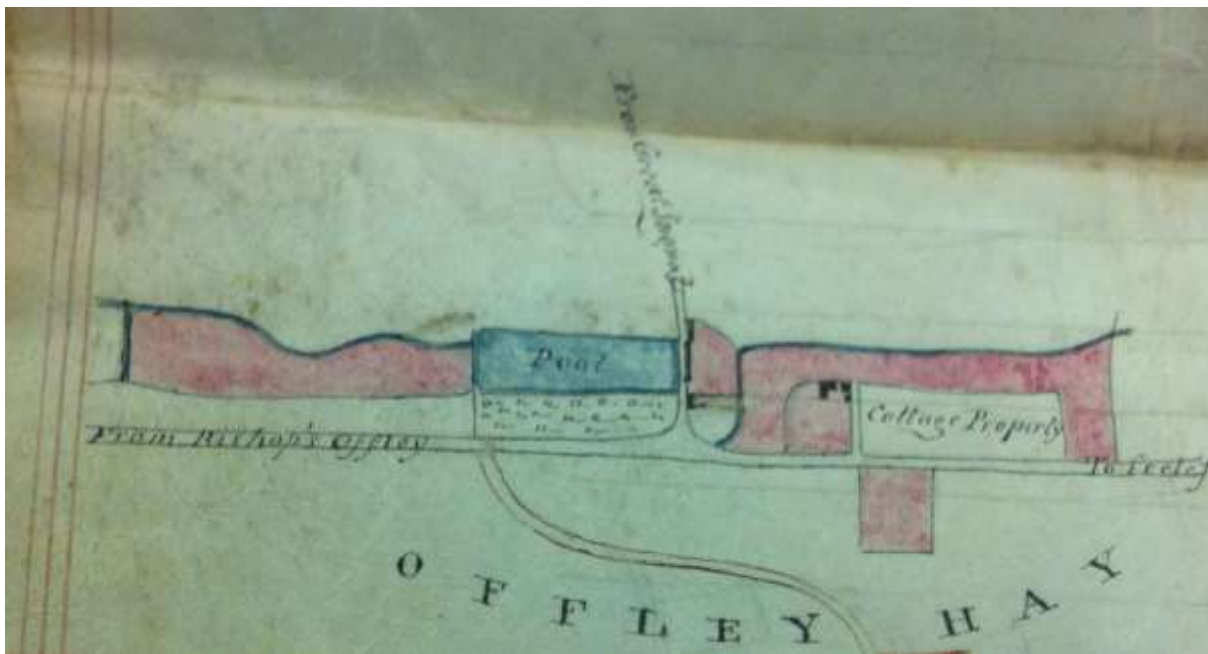


Figure 10 Map of lease from 1851 showing newly constructed Walk Mill Farmhouse

2.3.9 1st and 2nd edition OS mapping identifies enclosure in and around Walk Mill. Enclosure in the area occurred around 1795 and established many property and field boundaries. Large areas of early irregular enclosure, typical of medieval field systems, can be identified to the north of the Conservation Area and highlights agricultural activity in the area from this period. More regular, planned enclosure to the south would have occurred during the 18th and 19th centuries, as the settlement of Walk Mill developed. Many of the fields and the roads of Walk Mill can be identified on present day maps.



Figure 11 Coloured 1st edition OS map surveyed in 1879



Figure 12 1st edition OS map 1889

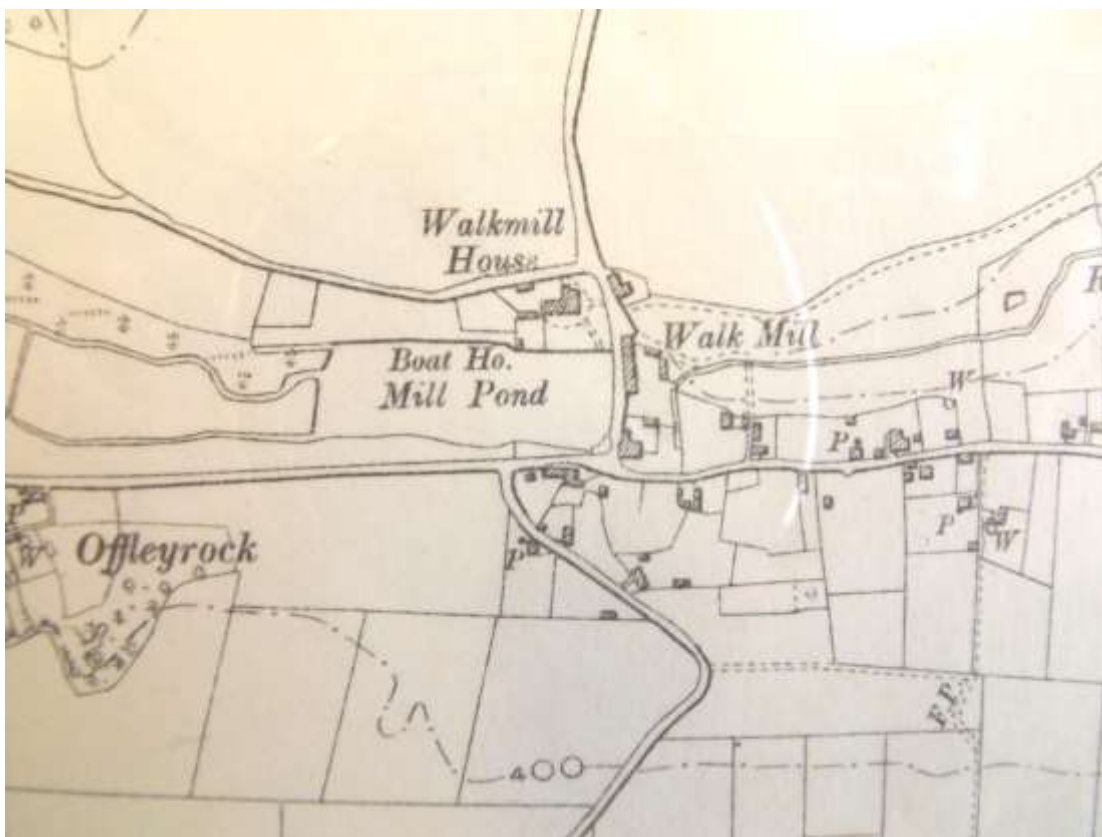


Figure 13 2nd edition OS map 1901



Figure 14 3rd edition OS map 1924



Figure 15 Painting of Walk Mill c.1905-1915 (staffspatrack.org)



Figure 14 Tithe map of the Township of Sugnall Magna 1841 showing apportionment 155a

2.3.10 In 1911 the Walk Mill, Walk Mill House, Walk Mill Farm and the Millers House were auctioned for sale by the Deakin estate as one lot. The mill and farm complex was purchased by Charles Lowe of Sugnall Hall. Sale particulars describe the mill as 'held together with the Mill Pool, Malt House, Piggeries, Cottage and Meadows'. A further group of buildings near to the Mill, described as former stabling and cow housing, are thought to be the current barn buildings. Part of the barn building was described as a house and gardens in the 1841 Sugnall Magna tithe apportionment, suggesting previous domestic use.

2.3.11 Milling continued at Walk Mill well into the 20th century. In 1975 the mill building was severely damaged by a tree which fell during a storm and milling operations ceased. As the buildings were not insured, restoration proved too costly and they remained unrepaired. English Heritage listed the building grade II in 1980, as an example of a 'former mill and grain store'. In 1988, the Trustees of the Sugnall Estate conveyed the mill to the Staffordshire Historic Buildings Trust who had plans to restore the building. When restoration proved too costly, the Trustees of the Sugnall Estate re-acquired the building. No restoration has been carried out to the buildings to date and all buildings have suffered from a significant amount of decay and deterioration. The top two floors of the mill building were lost in 2012 and the site is currently in an extremely poor state of repair and significantly overgrown.



Figure 14 Storm damage to the mill in the 1970s

3. Built Character

3.1 Building types

The buildings within the Walk Mill Conservation Area form a cohesive group and are all part of the historical development of the site in some way.

3.1.1 Of brick, stone and tile, the buildings are a combination of industrial, agricultural and domestic, dating from the 18th and 19th century. The mill and farm buildings are no longer in use and there are no public or commercial buildings within the Conservation Area.

3.1.2 The Walk Mill site consists of the mill building and attached maltings/grain store. Both buildings are in a dilapidated state and unoccupied. Other buildings on the mill site are former agricultural buildings including a cart shed, piggery and barn. These buildings are also in a poor state of repair and are uninhabited.

3.1.3 The domestic buildings within the conservation area consist of Walk Mill Farm and Walk Mill House, both of which date from the 19th century.



Figure 15 Mill and farm buildings on the Walk Mill site

3.2 Scale, plot size and plan form

3.2.1 The domestic buildings of Walk Mill are detached, two-storey houses. Walk Mill Farm is a modest farmhouse, square on plan and set in an elevated position looking down onto the mill. Walk Mill House is a large-scale, asymmetrical building set in its own grounds facing Sugnall Road, with the side elevation overlooking the mill pond. Both buildings retain their historic plot size and form.

3.2.2 Storm damage to the mill in the 1970s has left the building somewhat reduced in scale. Prior to this, Walk Mill was a three and a half storey mill building, rectilinear in plan form with an attached two-storey grain store and maltings on a t-shaped plan. The buildings appear two-storey and single-storey respectively from the front elevation, with the lower storeys built below the road level to the rear. Linked via a single-storey stone wheelhouse, which houses the waterwheel and mechanisms, the mill and maltings are sited close to the roadside and form part of the original 18th century mill complex. Other buildings within the complex are former agricultural buildings of a modest-scale, single-storey rectilinear or L-shaped on plan, with simple gabled roofs of a shallow pitch. The mill and farm buildings amalgamated into one farmyard site during the 19th century.



Figure 16 The three and a half storey mill building with top floors still intact shows the difference in scale and contrast to the lower storeyed maltings and agricultural buildings.

3.3 Architectural style and features

The buildings within the Walk Mill Conservation Area form a harmonious group, and reflect the character of the Conservation Area through the use of vernacular building materials and architectural styles. Similarities and contrasts add architectural interest.

3.3.1 Courses of sandstone and brick have been used on the mill, agricultural and domestic buildings. Used in a variety of ways, and for a variety of features, this gives a unity and a vernacular quality to the buildings within the Conservation Area.



Figure 17 Courses of sandstone and brick to the maltings



Figure 18 Combinations of sandstone and brick to front elevation of barn



Figure 19 The use of brick and stone to Walk Mill Farmhouse

3.3.2 There are a variety of window styles within the Conservation Area, from polite, domestic sashes and casements, to more basic openings in the mill and farm buildings. Walk Mill House displays an interesting selection of surviving sash windows and historic glass; eight over eight sash windows dominate on the first floor front elevation, with two over two to the ground floor. There is a multi-light bay window to the side elevation with a ten over ten sash above. Painted stone lintels and cills reflect those at Walk Mill Farm; historically these would have been unpainted. Walk Mill Farmhouse displays an historic metal cellar window.



Figure 20 Sash windows to Walk Mill House



Figure 21 Cellar window to Walk Mill Farm

3.3.3 No windows or frames remain in the mill buildings, however where the buildings remain intact, original openings are still apparent. Arched fenestration combines with square openings to the maltings and historically the mill house had side-opening, timber casement window of 3 lights, recorded on historic photographs.



Figure 22 The front elevation of the mill c.1930, showing historic casement windows



Figure 23 Side elevation of mill house c.2009, prior to loss of upper storeys, showing 3 pane side opening casement windows

3.3.4 Variations of segmental arched brick lintels can be found to the windows and other fenestration of the mill and associated agricultural buildings. Simple, single-course red brick is seen to the mill and maltings, whereas the former cart shed has double-course, blue brick lintels. A double-course combination of red and blue brick arch to the wheel house gives further variation in style and adds architectural interest to these buildings. The domestic buildings display a marked contrast to the segmental arch with stone lintels to be found at Walk Mill House and Walk Mill Farm.



Figure 24 Variety of segmental arch lintels to windows

3.3.5 There is an unusual, moulded stone lintel above the doorway to the south side of the malt house. Inscribed *I.D. 1830*, it is thought to reference Isaiah Deakin, occupier of Walk Mill House and surrounding land in the early-mid 19th century. The elaborate lintel appears to be out of context with the brick maltings and it is unclear whether it is contemporary with the building, although the building is of 19th century construction. A semi-circular iron framed window above the date stone, with a red and buff brick segmental arch, adds additional architectural interest to this unusual feature.



Figure 25 Moulded datestone lintel to maltings

3.3.6 Few original doorways remain within the Conservation Area. The doorway to Walk Mill Farm has a moulded stone surround, an unusual stone surround fanlight, and there is an historic cellar door. Walk Mill House has a pitched roof porch which, whilst not original to the building, compliments some architectural features.



Figure 26 Doorways to domestic buildings of Conservation Area

3.3.7 The loss of historic doors is particularly evident in the mill and farm buildings. Most original openings however, can be identified and there is evidence of plank doors, which refer to former agricultural use. Although little remains by way of doors, door arches are worthy of note. Brick, segmental arched lintels of varying materials and colours add architectural interest to otherwise simply designed structures. .



Figure 27 Doorways to farm buildings of Conservation Area

3.3.8 Dentilation at eaves provides architectural interest on all of the buildings within the Conservation Area. This feature is echoed throughout the mill and farm buildings, as well as the domestic buildings; Walk Mill Farmhouse displays diagonally set dentilations which provides a contrast. This link through architectural features gives a unity of style, and helps to draw the varying building types together to form a harmonious group.



Figure 28 Dentilation to eaves to the maltings, Walk Mill Farm and the barn

3.4 Building materials

3.4.1 The predominant building material within the Walk Mill conservation area is red brick built in Flemish or Flemish Stretcher Bond. Contrasts are found in the use of Staffordshire blue bricks for some segmental door and window arches, and within walls such as on the road-side elevation of the mill and cow shed. Roof material is exclusively Staffordshire blue clay tile.



Figure 29 Staffordshire blue clay tiles to the roof of the maltings



Figure 30 Blue and red brick to road side elevation of mill building

3.4.2 Stone is used throughout the Conservation Area, most likely due to the nearby location of a number of historic quarries. Often found combined with red brick to the farm and mill buildings, stone foundations are evident to the former barn and to the lower courses of the maltings and Walk Mill Farm. There are stone copings to the pen area of the piggery and stone walls define historic boundaries. There are painted stone lintels and cills to Walk Mill Farm and Walk Mill House and the farmhouse has a painted stone string course. Historically, all stone would have been unpainted, such as is found to the lintels on the rear of the farmhouse.



Figure 31 Use of stone within Conservation Area

3.4.3 Historic metalwork can be found in the Conservation Area. Iron gates help define the front and side entrances to Walk Mill House and cast iron structural supports can be seen to the maltings. Walk Mill Farmhouse has more recent metal structural supports, although these are in keeping with the character of the Conservation Area. The mill wheelhouse retains its historic iron undershot waterwheel and much of its historic machinery. An iron pulley wheel attached to the rear wall of the mill continues the use of historic metal and adds interest to the mill site.

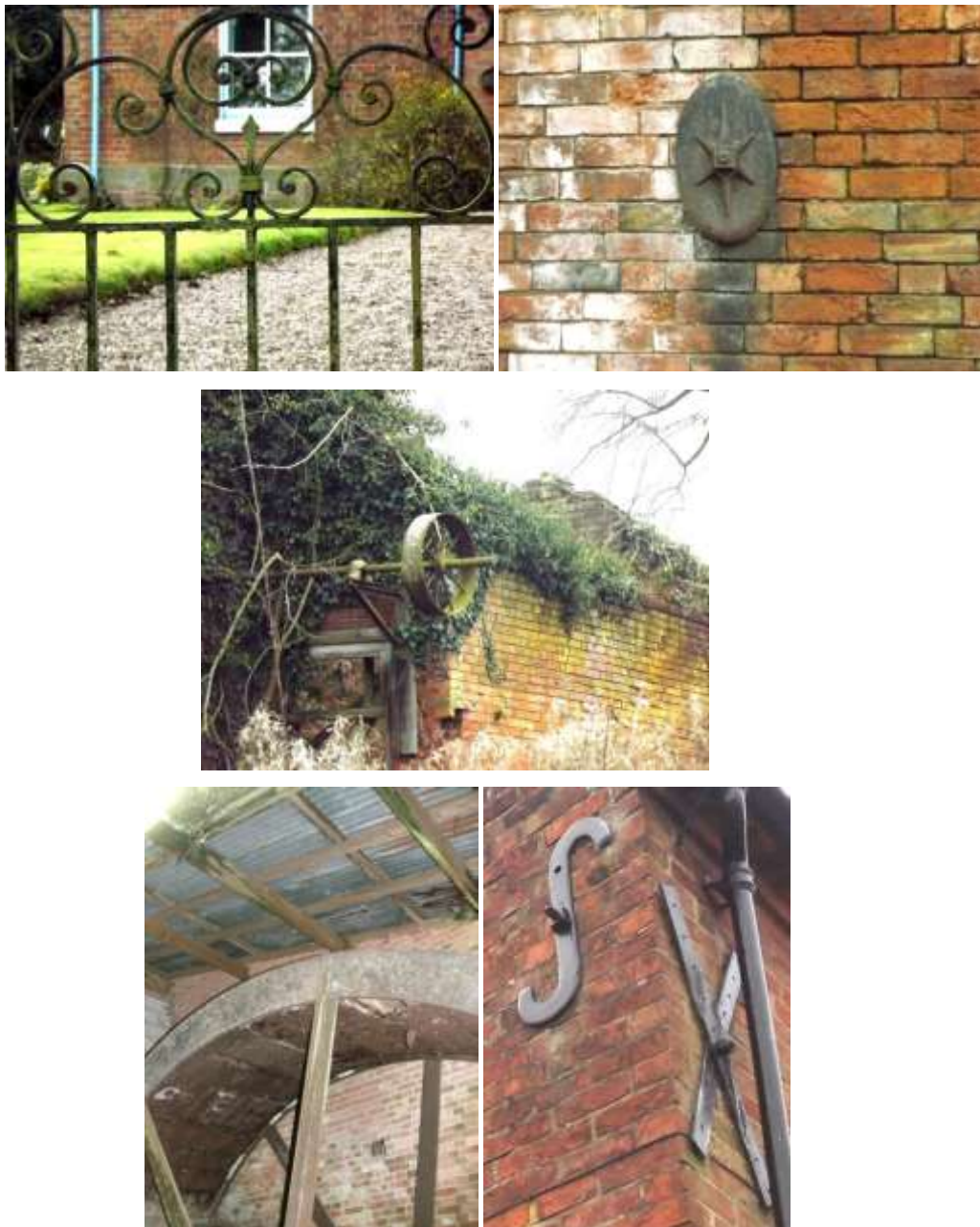


Figure 32 Use of metal within Conservation Area

3.4.4 The use of 20th century materials can be found throughout the Conservation Area. There is a section of concrete wall, topped with hedges, to the south boundary of Walk Mill Farm, some concrete kerbing to the lay-by and concrete render to the inside of the mill site boundary wall. The former farm yard is laid with concrete to the rear of the barn and cowshed.



Figure 33 Use of 20th century material within Conservation Area

3.5 Colour palette

The warm tones of the reds and oranges of the brick and varying hues of pinky/red sandstone, contrast with the colder tones of the blue/grey tiles and blue/grey bricks and stone, to form the colour palette for the Walk Mill Conservation Area.

3.6 Listed buildings

The Mill and Maltings

The mill and maltings are grade II listed and are one of the very few surviving examples of a dual-purpose building of this type. The most prominent feature of the mill complex is the three-and-a-half storey mill house which houses the waterwheel within a one-storey attached building. The mill is thought to have replaced a former fulling mill on the site in the late 18th century.

In addition to grinding corn, the mill range was also used for the production of malt. Before the development of large-scale breweries, malting was a local, small-scale activity. The long, two-storey building to the south of the mill is the former maltings, thought to have been rebuilt sometime in the early 19th century. The architecture of the maltings derives from its functionality and is more associated with the agricultural than the industrial tradition of building (Cossons, 1975). The malthouse retains on its upper level the growing floor where barley was spread during its germination period. The kiln in which the germinated grain was roasted to produce malt was in the south east corner of the building, formerly heated by a furnace on the lower, yard level.



Figure 34 The mill, wheelhouse, maltings and piggery c.1930

Separated by the Sugnall Road, under which ran the millrace, and adjacent to the mill buildings, is the large mill pond, fed by the River Sow. With the associated stream, sluice gates, verges and marsh, the pond forms a significant part of this historic milling setting.

Both the mill house and the maltings are in a ruinous state after storm damage occurred in the 1970s. The mill house has lost its top one and a half storeys and roof, and the maltings has had its roof tiles removed.



Figure 35 The grade II listed mill and maltings



Figure 36 The maltings and former grain store

3.7. Positive buildings

All buildings in the Walk Mill Conservation Area are part of the history of Walk Mill and contribute positively to the overall character, appearance and special interest of the Conservation Area. The agricultural buildings located on the mill site form part of an historic milling complex and farmstead; as these buildings lie within the curtilage of the grade II listed mill, they are also covered by the listed status and contribute to its special interest.

3.7.1 Walk Mill Farm Built c.1850, Walk Mill Farm is a two-storey farmhouse of three bays, square on plan, with a double-gabled rear section. The farmhouse is of red brick built in Flemish bond, with a pitched, tile roof. The farmhouse has a stone plinth, painted stone lintels and cills, and a stone string course. Although the windows are later timber replacement casements of traditional form, Walk Mill Farm is a good example of a modest Midlands farmhouse, adding a contrast in scale and architecture to the agricultural buildings of the farmyard.



Figure 37 Walk Mill Farmhouse

3.7.2 Associated mill and farm buildings

The mill site contains a number of agricultural buildings which include a barn, a cart shed and a piggery. All of these buildings are in a dilapidated condition, however, their built form, building materials and links to historic, agricultural use are significant to the Conservation Area.

The Barn and cowshed A building is recorded on this site from 1837. Recorded on the 1841 tithe as a dwelling, it is not clear when the building changed to agricultural use, although it is likely to have occurred around the time of the construction of Walk Mill Farmhouse in the 1850s. The building lies within the curtilage of the grade II listed mill building and, as the earliest of the farm buildings, holds significance in the development of the site. Built predominantly of sandstone, with some red brick in a Flemish Stretcher bond, the building is of three bays, with a two bay cow shed or 'shippon' to the rear and some original cobblestone flooring. Building recording, carried out in 2009 by Casterling Archaeology, revealed sandstone foundations and a single remaining timber post suggest that the three bay barn was originally of timber frame and sandstone construction; it is thought that the shippon may have been rebuilt in red brick in the late 19th century. There is a 20th century extension to the west bay of the shippon, added post 1957 and first appearing on OS mapping in 1970. The barn became disused in the late 1990s.



Figure 38 The barn as viewed from the north along Sugnall Road



Figure 39 The rear of the barn and attached shippon, as viewed from former farmyard

The cart shed and stables A traditional 19th century agricultural building of red brick and tile, the cart shed forms part of the historic farmstead. Sited opposite the mill buildings and facing inwards to the farmyard site, the building was described in sale particulars from 1911 as 'a trap house, wagon and implement shed with a two-stall stable'. Displaying original openings, and blue brick segmental window and door arches, the cart shed is currently in extremely poor condition and has had the historic tiled roof covering removed.



Figure 40 The former cart shed and stables



The piggery A small scale, low building of less than a storey high, the piggery defines the northern boundary of the mill site. Located immediately to the west of the mill, facing inwards towards the farmyard, the piggery forms part of the curtilage of the listed building. Part of the 19th century farmstead, the building is of red brick with a low-pitched roof, previously of tile. The tiles have been removed exposing roof trusses beneath. There is a brick and stone walled pen to the front.



Figure 41 The piggery. Currently without roof tiles and in a dilapidated condition



Figure 42 The piggery in 2009 prior to the removal of historic roof tiles.

3.7.3 Walk Mill House A two-storey farmhouse of brick and tile, Walk Mill House is of larger proportions than Walk Mill Farm and stands in its own well-tended grounds, and is bounded by a stone wall and iron gates. Dating from the early 19th century, the house displays a more polite architecture than the other buildings within Walk Mill and retains much original fenestration. With three bays to the front elevation, the house is asymmetrical on plan with a range of historic farm outbuildings to the rear. The large grounds to the west elevation slope down to the Mill pond and border the length of the northerly boundary to the Conservation Area. Listed for sale in 1911 as a 'residential and sporting property', Walk Mill House formed part of the sale lot along with the mill, farm and pond.



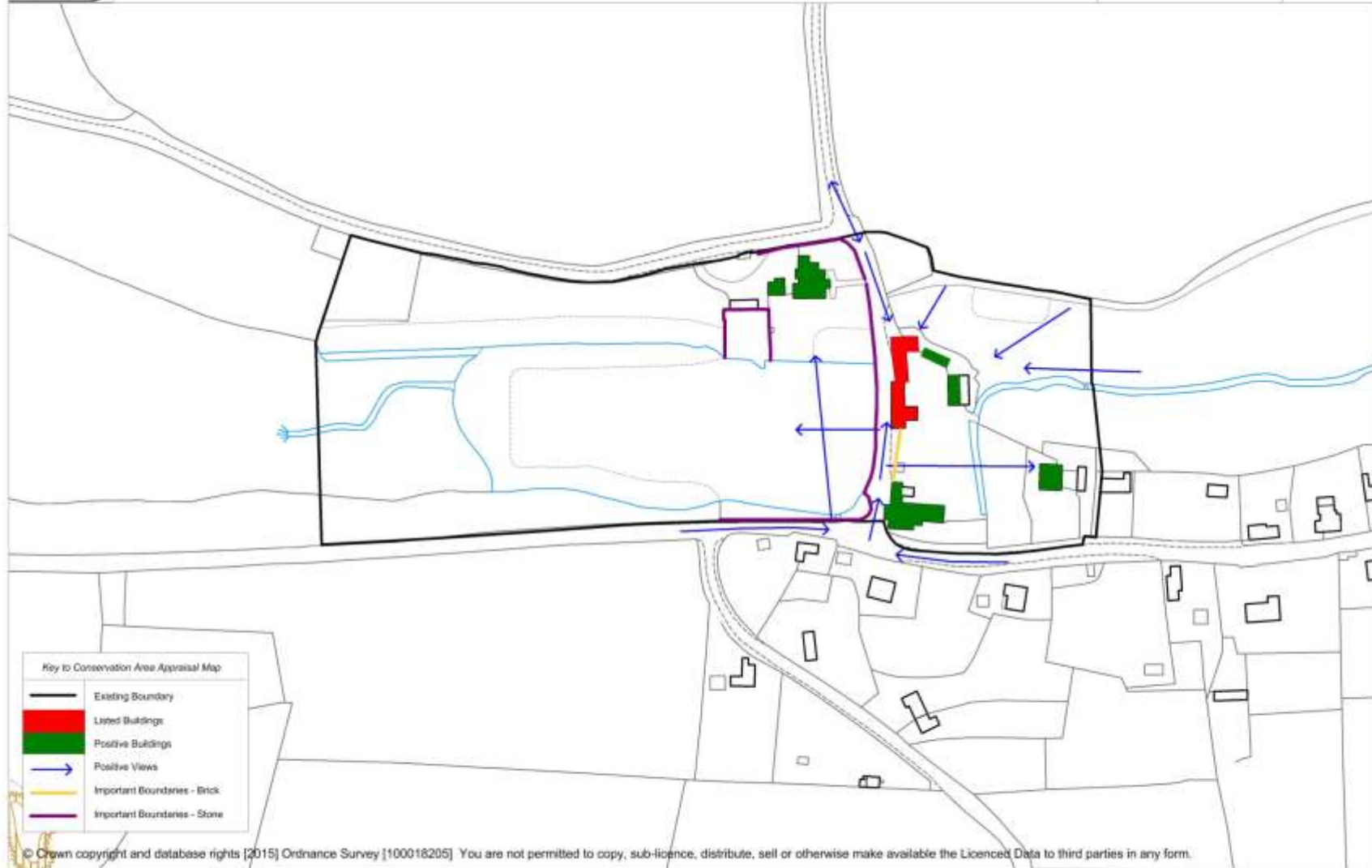
Figure 43 Walk Mill House front, side and rear elevation



Walkmill Conservation Area Appraisal Character Appraisal

Date: February 2015

Not to scale



4. Spatial analysis

4.1 Plan form and layout

4.1.1 The Walk Mill Conservation Area forms a small, rectangular-shaped area within the hamlet of Walk Mill, surrounded by historic roads on three sides. The street pattern of the Walk Mill Conservation Area and the surrounding hamlet has been determined by a variety of factors: early agricultural activity in the area, the development of the local milling industry and changes in farming practices during the 18th and 19th centuries. The linear development of the hamlet of Walk Mill has its origins in early agricultural activity, evident from the surrounding medieval field systems. Industrial development in the area, through the milling of corn and cloth, led to the development of the hamlet during the 18th and 19th centuries. No alterations to the historic street pattern are evident from at least the 19th century.

4.1.2 The Sugnall Road is the only road which lies within the Conservation Area, running north to south across the dam between the mill and mill pond. The mill and farm buildings are concentrated on the Walk Mill site and form a nucleated cluster within the bordering hamlet. The mill and maltings and the former barn are located adjacent to the Sugnall Road, with further farm buildings forming a loose courtyard arrangement to the farmyard at the rear. Walk Mill Farm is sited in an elevated position above the farmyard and Walk Mill House can be found set back from Sugnall Road in its own grounds. All buildings are oriented to face the mill, including the farm buildings, which are also typically oriented to face the farmyard.

4.1.3 A mill pond covers a large section of the Conservation Area, bordering land to the south of Walk Mill House. Areas of historic woodland lie to the north, south and west sides of the mill pond and provide a contrast to the openness of the water. Trees and hedgerows line the Conservation Area boundaries, enclosing the Conservation Area from the surrounding roads of the hamlet and contributing to an isolated, rural feel.

4.2 Landmarks, focal points and views

4.2.1 The old watermill, from which the settlement takes its name, is a landmark of both historic and architectural significance. Along with the attached maltings, the mill is a grade II listed building, providing evidence of former agricultural and industrial activity in the area. Despite the loss of some of the upper storeys, and almost ruinous state, the mill building provides a strong focal point within the Conservation Area. As a key landmark and focal point, views towards the mill from all vantage points are of importance and hold a high level of significance.



Figure 44 View of the mill and associated buildings from the north



Figure 45 View of the mill from the south



Figure 46 View of the mill from the public footpath

4.2.2 The mill pond provides a setting of authenticity for the mill and offers a strong focal point within the Conservation Area. The pond is of considerable environmental significance and is valuable, both as a habitat for wildlife, and as a visual feature. Pleasant views from the Sugnall Road, across the water towards woodland, take in landscape features which contribute to the rural setting of the Conservation Area; these views are positively reinforced throughout the changing seasons and from varying vistas. The mill pond provides a sense of openness set against the enclosure of the surrounding trees and woodland in the background.



Figure 47 Varying vistas of the mill pond



Figure 48 View approaching from Eccleshall

4.2.3 Views approaching the Conservation Area, along the main road from Eccleshall or Bishops Offley, give little hint of the small group of buildings and pond which form the Walk Mill Conservation Area. Enclosed behind trees and hedgerows, only glimpses of the historic buildings and mill pond provide clues to what lies beyond. The views reinforce the isolated, rural feel and give a sense of enclosure to the Conservation Area.



Figure 49 View approaching from Bishops Offley



Figure 50 View looking in to the Conservation Area along the Sugnall Road from the north

4.2.4 Approaching the Conservation Area along the Sugnall Road from the north, a pinch point is created by the lane as it narrows, and the view goes from one of openness to one enclosed by trees, hedges and stone walling. This view further reinforces the enclosed and isolated feel of the Conservation Area, particularly when contrasted with the view of open countryside looking out of the Conservation Area from this vantage point.



Figure 51 View looking north out of Conservation Area

4.2.5 Views into the Conservation Area can perhaps best be appreciated looking north along the Sugnall Road. Glimpses of the mill and farm buildings to the right, with the mill pond and Walk Mill House to the left, draws the eye into the Conservation Area. This view is enhanced through the changing seasons, which allows us to appreciate different aspects of the Conservation Area.



Figure 52 View into the Conservation Area looking north Along Sugnall Road

4.2.6 Glimpses through the trees, across the mill pond towards Walk Mill House, offer positive views. The openness of the pond and the large grounds of Walk Mill House can be fully appreciated from this southerly edge of the Conservation Area; the house itself provides an additional focal point to the scene.



Figure 53 View across mill pond to Walk Mill House

4.2.7. The cluster of mill and farm buildings, set in a shallow valley with open countryside beyond, is encapsulated by views from the public footpath. The open green space, with the mill site beyond, positively reinforces the nucleated feel of the Conservation Area in relation to its setting.



Figure 53 View of mill site from public footpath

4.2.8 Looking west towards the mill site provides a positive vantage point within the Conservation Area. The view combines green and wooded space, historic buildings, and a significant area of water, all of which contribute significantly to the character of Walk Mill.



Figure 54 View of mill site looking west

4.2.9 The view of Walk Mill Farm from the Sugnall Road, across the former farmyard, provides a focal point within the context of the other farm buildings. Currently marred by temporary security fencing, this view identifies the farmyard as a significant historic space, reinforcing agricultural character.



Figure 55 View across former farmyard to Walk Mill farmhouse

4.3 Public Realm

4.3.1. Public spaces are limited within Walk Mill. The Conservation Area is comparatively small and the Walk Mill site is privately owned. There is no seating or street furniture which contributes to the feel of an isolated, rural setting. Public space is provided by the narrow lay-by to the mill pond and a public footpath through fields, located to the north of the mill site and farm.



Figure 56 The Sugnall Road which runs through the Conservation Area bordered by grass verges and a narrow lay-by

4.3.2. The road through the Conservation Area is of modern tarmac and there are road markings in part, and at junctions. The road is lined with informal, grassy verges with no pavements or kerbs, which adds to the rural feel. There is some concrete kerbing to the lay-by which borders the mill pond.



Figure 57 The public footpath through open fields form part of the public realm

4.3.3 There is no street lighting within the Conservation Area, nor within its neighbouring hamlet, which further highlights the isolated, rural feel. Highway signage consists of three road signs and a modern fingerpost sign, and appears slightly overdone for the small stretch of road that it serves. There are numerous warning signs located to the mill buildings, although these can be considered to be temporary. An information sign located adjacent to the mill pond and a wooden post sign for the public footpath are more in keeping with the rural feel of the area.



Figure 58 Signage within the Conservation Area

4.4 Open spaces and gardens

4.4.1 Walk Mill Conservation Area is surrounded by open countryside on all sides. The open, green space forms the backdrop to the Conservation Area and contributes to the rural feel.



Figure 59 View of open countryside surrounding the Conservation Area

4.4.2 Open space within the Conservation Area is provided by fields, private gardens and the large mill pond. The mill pond covers a significant proportion of the Conservation Area and provides a tranquil, waterside space. Further open space can be found in the fields to the north of the Conservation Area; a public footpath gives access to this space which offers views of the mill site and mill pond, as well as Walk Mill Farm and Walk Mill House.



Figure 60 The mill pond offers a tranquil, waterside setting and open space within the Conservation Area

4.4.3 The large gardens of Walk Mill House offer open and enclosed space. The openness of the gardens to the south and side elevation of the house are visible, as the gardens gently slope away to meet the mill pond. Enclosed gardens stretch to the rear of the property and continue to border the length of the mill pond to the north.



Figure 61 Large gardens to Walk Mill House

4.4.4 The mill building, malt house and former barn front directly onto the road. Open space at the mill site is the former mill yard and farmyard to the rear of these buildings. The cluster of historic mill and farm buildings are sited around this space, which also provides views up to Walk Mill Farm.



Figure 62 Former farmyard offers open space within the Conservation Area

4.5 Important trees and hedgerows

Mature trees cover a large area of the Conservation Area and give a wooded character to these parts. Groups of important trees and individually significant trees line some boundaries to the Conservation Area. Larger groups of trees form areas of woodland and create a strong sense of enclosure which contrasts with areas of open space. Historic hedgerows intersperse with the trees to form borders and boundaries within the Conservation Area, and provide a positive contribution to the rural setting

4.5.1 An important group of trees forms a natural border at the southerly entrance to the Conservation Area. The mature, deciduous trees separate the Conservation Area from the road and contribute to the sense of enclosure from within. Groups of trees continue along the southerly boundary of the Conservation Area, further enhancing the enclosed feel which is most apparent during the summer months.



Figure 63 An Important group of trees form a natural border to the Conservation Area

4.5.2 Mature trees line the historic boundary between Walk Mill House and the Sugnall Road. To the north of the mill, a group of trees cluster near the gated entrance to the public footpath. These important groups of trees contribute to the rural setting of the Conservation Area.



Figure 64 Mature trees along the Sugnall Road

4.5.3 A large area of enclosed woodland is located to the west of the mill pond. The area is densely populated with mature, deciduous trees and, along with the mill pond, forms an area of biodiversity and ecology. There is a further group of trees to the far northwest corner of the Conservation Area, and significant trees line the north border of the mill pond. These important groups of trees contribute significantly to the wooded character of Walk Mill.



Figure 65 Woodland to the west of the mill pond

4.5.4 Individually significant trees add an aesthetic value to the Conservation Area. A significant Yew tree is located in the south grounds of Walk Mill House and a mature oak sits close to the north boundary of the rear gardens. A line of individually significant lime trees form an avenue to the north of the public footpath.



Figure 66 Individually significant lime trees line the public footpath to the north of the Conservation Area.

4.5.6 Hedges and hedgerows line the boundaries of the Conservation Area to the north and the south and follow historic field boundaries. An area of mature hedgerow separates the grounds of Walk Mill Farm from neighbouring fields, and further important hedges line the south easterly boundary of the Conservation Area. The hedgerows are punctuated with significant trees which creates a sense of enclosure both within and along the boundaries of the Conservation Area.



Figure 67 Historic hedgerows line the northerly boundary of the Conservation Area



4.6 Boundary Treatments

A variety of boundary treatments and materials can be found throughout the Conservation Area which help to define the character of the area. Many important boundaries correspond to the actual Conservation Area boundary.

4.6.1 Substantial stone walls define the front and side boundaries of Walk Mill House; the pinkish-grey, large block sandstone echoes that found to the mill and farm buildings. This contrasts with the lower, smaller block and rubble stone walls elsewhere in the Conservation Area. Stone gateposts mark the entrance to the house and an historic wrought iron gate adds interest. A further wrought iron gate can be found to the side entrance to the property.



Figure 68 Stone walling and gate posts with historic metal gates to Walk Mill House

4.6.2 Less grand stone boundary walls define the boundary between the Sugnall Road and the mill pond. Of one to two courses with stone copings, the boundary wall here is lower than that which borders Walk Mill House and culminates in an interesting cylindrical end post. A section of stone kerbing leads to a further low stone wall which follows a curved pattern and continues along into the south boundary of the Conservation Area; the lower height of the wall allows for open views across the water.



Figure 69 Lower stone walls border the mill pond and continue down Sugnall Road

4.6.3 Brick provides a contrast and variety to the boundary treatments of the Conservation Area. A red brick wall with blue brick copings borders the mill site and farmyard; the bricks mirror those used in the buildings. A wooden gateway marks a previous entrance to the site and remnants of former brick gateposts can still be seen. Identified as an important boundary, the wall has deteriorated significantly in recent years and is currently in a dilapidated state. Unsightly metal fencing secures the site, whilst the surviving areas of the wall provide a clue to the former size and style of this historic structure.



Figure 70 Brick boundary walls to the mill site

4.6.4 Combinations of hedges and trees, some interspersed with rubble stone walling, closely follow historic field boundaries, many of which define the Conservation Area boundary.



Figure 71 Rubble stone walling along historic field boundaries

4.6.5 What appears to be the wall of a former walled garden can be found in the grounds of Walk Mill House. An important boundary wall, it is of red brick with red tile copings. Built on three sides, the wall can be seen from across the mill pond.



Figure 72 Walled garden wall in Walk Mill House grounds

5. Key positive characteristics to be considered during any proposal for change

Layout of the Conservation Area

- An historic, nucleated settlement within a linear hamlet, with surviving historic street pattern.
- Identifiable historic field boundaries, trees and hedgerows emphasising the rural feel of the area.
- Historic agricultural, industrial and domestic buildings, providing evidential value of farming and milling activity in Walk Mill over several centuries.

Building types

- A rare survival of mill buildings and associated farm outbuildings.
- Examples of modest- to-large scale domestic farm houses.

Plot size and plan form

- The rectilinear form of the mill buildings and former barn, sited close to the edge of the road, emphasises horizontal perspective and draws the eye up and into the Conservation Area.
- The difference in height of the mill building and the elevated position of Walk Mill Farm contrasts with small scale agricultural buildings in the former farmyard and gives a vertical emphasis.
- The large, private plot of Walk Mill House contrasts with the former 'communal' space of the mill site and farm yard.

Building materials

- The predominant building material is red brick, and Staffordshire blue clay tile is the preferred roofing material. The use of stone, both structurally and decoratively, can be found throughout the Conservation Area.
- Historic ironwork is evident in the form of iron gates, the waterwheel and associated mill machinery.

Public Realm

- There is little public space in Walk Mill, however the Conservation Area is surrounded by open farmland and countryside which give a rural feel. Open space is provided by a public footpath through fields, and by the narrow public lay-by where the Sugnall Road borders the mill pond.

Boundaries

- Positive boundaries are created through historic hedgerows interspersed with mature trees, many of which border the Conservation Area boundary. Stone walls dominate within the Conservation Area along with examples of red brick walls, wrought iron gates and some concrete.

Colour palette

- Brick, stone and Staffordshire blue clay tile create hues of red, orange, pink, blue and grey.

Architectural features

- Historic sash and timber casement windows, stone and segmental brick-arched lintels, dentilation at eaves.

Open space

- The Conservation Area Appraisal has identified that the open countryside which surrounds Walk Mill, contributes significantly to its rural setting. The open fields to the north east of the Conservation Area provide open space, along with the large gardens of Walk Mill House and former farmyard area.
- The most significant area of open space is provided by the large mill pond. The pond provides an openness which contrasts with the enclosed feel created by tree-lined boundaries, and large groups of trees and woodland.

Important views

- It is important that significant and positive views are protected both into and out of the Conservation Area.
- Key views, landmarks and focal points, identified within this Appraisal, positively contribute to the character of the Walk Mill Conservation Area.

Important Trees and Hedgerows

- Mature trees and hedgerows line the majority of boundaries of the Conservation Area, reflecting the historic layout of the surrounding lanes and giving an enclosed feel.
- Individually significant trees and groups of important trees can be found throughout the Conservation Area. The trees provide aesthetically pleasing and picturesque contrasts throughout the changing of the seasons .
- Large areas of woodland contribute to a wooded character and reinforce the sense of enclosure within the Conservation Area.
- Mature trees mark the entrance to the Conservation Area from the main road, forming a natural boundary, and an 'avenue' of lime trees line the public footpath.

6. Negative Aspects that impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

In order to manage the Conservation Area's special architectural and historic character and appearance, it is essential to identify and address any problems that dilute this character. As a small rural settlement even slight changes can have a substantial impact on character and affect the significance of what makes Walk Mill special. The following issues have been identified as having a negative impact on the Walk Mill Conservation Area; many of these issues are exceptionally negative and have led to the Conservation Area being placed on the English Heritage, *Heritage At Risk* register.

6.1 Damage and deterioration to the listed building

The mill building was damaged by a falling tree in the mid-1970s and has never been repaired. As a result of this damage and subsequent neglect, the building has deteriorated significantly and requires a substantial amount of rebuilding and repair. This is of particular concern as the building is grade II listed and therefore holds national significance. The mill building is without a roof, which has escalated deterioration and subsequently led to the loss of the upper storeys. The attached maltings, which also form part of the statutory listing, is structurally unsound and in a poor state of repair. Roof tiles have been lost, damaged and removed from the roof, although temporary covering means that the building is weather tight.

6.2 Damage and deterioration to curtilage buildings

Commercial activity ceased at Walk Mill in the late 1990s and the buildings on the mill site and farmyard have been unoccupied since at least this time. The barn, cartshed and piggery form part of the curtilage to the listed building and need to be considered within the context of this curtilage. The buildings have suffered significant deterioration and are now all in a considerable state of disrepair. Sections of brick and stone work are damaged, decayed or missing, and there is some wall collapse to the cart shed. The roof to the south bay of the barn is missing and the walls are deteriorating. The cartshed and piggery are without tiles to the roofs, although the cart shed roof has been covered for weather proofing. Doors and windows are

missing and/or broken to all the curtilage buildings, and there has been some graffiti to the inside of the cowshed. There is an overall 'run-down' feel to the former farmyard and this has a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area .



Figure 73 The mill building has now lost its upper two storeys



Figure 74 Scaffolding supports the former maltings

6.3 Loss of historic fabric and materials

Decay and deterioration of historic fabric has occurred to the mill and associated buildings. Historic bricks and roof tiles have been lost through damage to the mill and the subsequent decay through neglect. There is a notable loss of roof tiles from damage, theft and removal. Some roof tiles have been salvaged for storage and the roofs covered for weather proofing, although there is a notable lack of protection to the piggery.

6.4 Loss of architectural features and detail

As a result of the loss of historic fabric, some architectural features and detail have also been lost. Some original fenestration and brick dentilation to eaves has disappeared from the mill building. Some windows and doorways to the mill have been blocked up and there is no window frames or glass left in the building. In addition, some of the historic mill machinery has been lost.

6.5 Effects of lack of maintenance

The former farmyard and mill site has become heavily overgrown and untidy and this has had a negative impact on the appearance of the Conservation Area. Vegetation growth is evident on all mill and farm buildings and there is excessive vegetation growth to the mill building. This carries a more serious concern than just appearance, as not only can vegetation growth accelerate the rate of decay, but it can also contribute to serious structural problems.



Figure 75 Wall collapse to the cart shed



Figure 76 Excessive vegetation growth to the mill building



Figure 77 Damage and decay to cowshed

6.6 Effects of temporary structural and weather proofing materials

The Walk Mill site is surrounded by modern metal security fencing and scaffolding supports have been put in place due to structural issues with the buildings. Some historic roof tiles have been removed for preservation purposes, and weather proof roof coverings have been fitted to help reduce the rate of deterioration to the buildings. These measures have had a negative effect on the appearance of the Conservation Area and have dramatically changed the appearance of the buildings; the modern material covering jars against the historic buildings. The use of these materials must only be considered as a temporary measure.



Figure 78 Weather proofing to roofs of mill and farm buildings

6.7 Effects of 20th century materials

The use of 20th century materials within the Conservation area impacts on the appearance of some buildings. Blocked up windows and doors, the use of breeze blocks to the mill building and failed concrete render to an historic boundary wall, all have a negative visual impact on the Conservation Area. Non-historic paint colours have been used to some buildings, which create a noticeable conflict to the historic colour palette.



figure 79 Inappropriate materials used to block up doorways and cover walls have a negative impact on the Conservation Area.

6.8 Heritage crime

The Walk Mill site has been subject to some heritage crime. The theft of some roof tiles has necessitated the removal of others for preservation and protection. The barn and cowshed retain the majority of roof tiles although many are damaged and missing which has had a negative impact on the building. In addition, this building has been subjected to some graffiti within the rear cowshed section.



Figure 80 The cowshed to the rear of the former barn has been subject to heritage crime

7. Protecting the character and appearance of the Conservation Area

Any new development should reinforce the character outlined in the summary of special interest and be sympathetic to the historical evolution and character of Walk Mill through the consideration of the historic buildings and their setting, the historic layout and street pattern, significant spaces, massing, volume and scale of the existing and proposed buildings and the employment of vernacular materials and details.

Policies for the protection and management of the historic environment are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraphs 127 through to 141 and in the Plan for Stafford through policies N8 and N9, paragraphs 12.45 to 12.56. These should be used in conjunction with this appraisal to guide or assess any future development within the Walk Mill Conservation Area.

Other organisations such as the County Council Highways Authority, and statutory undertakers also have their own commitment to protect the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in the exercise of their duties.

To manage and protect the special historic character and appearance of the Walk Mill Conservation Area in the exercise of these policies and duties:

- The existing special historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area as set out in this appraisal and all features identified as positive on the Conservation Area Appraisal Map should be retained and reinforced.
- Further works that harm the significance of the area, as set out in this appraisal, should be avoided.
- *'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment' in the Planning Practice Guidance (2014) and Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide (Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, English Heritage, 2010).*

- Existing and emerging design or conservation guidance published by Stafford Borough Council and English Heritage guidance should be consulted where relevant, such as *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice* (English Heritage, 2006), *Living Buildings in a Living Landscape* (English Heritage, 2006), *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (English Heritage, 2008), *Streets for All* (English Heritage, 2004), *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (English Heritage, 2011), *The Setting of Heritage Assets* (English Heritage, 2011).
- Some works that could harm the character or appearance of the conservation area can be carried out under “permitted development rights”, which means that home owners do not need to apply for planning permission. Owners are nevertheless encouraged to take heed of the special historic character and appearance of the area when carrying out these works.

8. Boundary revisions and amendments

Walk Mill Conservation Area was designated in 1993 and boundaries were drawn quite tightly to include the small cluster of mill and associated buildings, and the large mill pond. The mill, mill pond and farmhouses with farm buildings are felt to accurately represent an historic milling and agricultural environment, and reflect the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The buildings form a cohesive group and the settlement is enhanced by its immediate proximity to open fields and woodland, which further contributes to the character of the Conservation Area.

After the completion of a physical survey of the Walk Mill Conservation Area and the writing of the draft Conservation Area Appraisal, a review of the boundary was considered. This review concluded that:

- Any extension of boundary could dilute the special character of the Conservation Area and result in a loss of intimacy.
- Any deletion of boundary could result in one or more significant features being lost from the Conservation Area.

It is therefore felt that no boundary revisions would improve the extent to which the designation accurately reflects the special character of the Walk Mill Conservation Area.

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English Heritage: *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011)

Horowitz, D. (2005). *The Place Names of Staffordshire*: Brewood

Stafford Borough Council, Casterling Archaeology: *Barn at Walk Mill Farm, Historic Building Recording & Archaeological Watching Brief* (2009)

Staffordshire County Council, Stafford Borough Council: *Walk Mill Conservation Area* (1993)

Selected sources

<http://www.imagingstaffordshire.org.uk/mt/mt4.htm>

<http://www.search.staffspasttrack.org.uk/engine/resource/default.asp?txtKeywords=&lstContext=&lstResourceType=&txtDateFrom=&txtDateTo=&X1=378853&Y1=329351&X2=379699&Y2=330055&scale=1&originator=%2Fengine%2FGIS%2Fdefault%5Fhndlr%2Easp&page=&records=&direction=&pointer=22346&text=0&resource=2662>

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Further information

The Plan for Stafford Borough 2014

<http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/live/Documents/Planning%20Policy/Plan%20for%20Stafford%20Borough/PFSB-Adoption.pdf>

The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6077/2116950.pdf

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Staffordshire County Council, Historic Environment Record

http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Application.aspx?resourceID=1010

Appendix 1

Statutory List Description

Name: FORMER MILL AND GRAINSTORE, WALK MILL

List Entry Number: 1374160

Grade: II

Date first listed: 25-Apr-1980

List Entry Description

Summary of Building

Early C19. Red brick; 2 storeys; plain 2 window front to road; plain doorway on north side. Disused but retains much of the original machinery ,including a 15 ft diameter iron undershot waterwheel and 2 grinding pans. The grain store, which extends to right, is of brick on stone base, single-storeyed and with gabled end to south having doorway with moulded stone lintel (not in situ), and semi-circular headed window above with small-paned iron lights.

