



The Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area Appraisal

August 2014

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1. Introduction

1.1. Definition

1.1.1. 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

1.2.1. A conservation area appraisal is a means of identifying and assessing the special architectural or historic character of a place. The Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area is an extensive linear conservation area, and was first designated on 6 May 1988 by the City Council of Stoke-on-Trent, the Borough Councils of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stafford, the District Councils of Cannock Chase, East Staffordshire and Lichfield, and Staffordshire County Council. At that time a joint Conservation Area document was produced, covering the whole of the Staffordshire section of the Canal.

1.2.2. Under section 69 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is a requirement of local planning authorities to update conservation area appraisals regularly, and designate further areas as necessary. Local councils are now reviewing their sections of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area independently. The purpose of this appraisal is to assess and define the special character and appearance of the Stafford Borough section of the Trent and Mersey Canal, and to identify any threats or future threats to the area's character and integrity.

1.2.3. 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

1.3.1. 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.

1.4. Certain works in a conservation area require consent:

1.4.1. Planning Permission is required for the demolition or substantial demolition of an unlisted building within a conservation area.

1.4.2. 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.

1.4.3. 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.

1.5. Community Involvement

1.5.1. 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 2014 and 28 April 2014, when interested parties were invited to comment on the findings of the appraisal.

1.5.2. Planning Policy Context

1.5.3. In the Plan for Stafford 2011-2031 (June 2014), the policies of particular relevance to the conservation area are: N8 Landscape Character and N9 Historic Environment.

1.5.4. National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraphs 127 through to 141 are relevant to conservation areas. National conservation guidance to support the NPPF policies is currently in preparation by national government.

2. Summary of Special Interest, the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area

- 2.1. The Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area is of outstanding industrial archaeological importance, both nationally and locally. It was first designated on 6 May 1988 as a means of preserving and enhancing the special architectural and historic interest that has been retained since its creation.
- 2.2. This appraisal defines the special architectural and historic interest of the Stafford Borough section of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area as it stands today.
- 2.3. The headquarters of the Trent and Mersey Canal Company was located in Stone, where the canal and associated buildings form an integral part of the historic townscape. This section of the canal falls within the boundary of the designated Stone Conservation Area. Whilst brief mention is made within this document of canal related features within Stone, full analysis is provided within the Stone Conservation Area Appraisal (Stafford Borough Council, 2008).
- 2.4. The key elements of the Stafford Borough Section of the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area are summarised as follows:
 - An early narrow canal engineered by James Brindley, “the father of English Canals”, completed in 1777, as part of his vision for the ‘Grand Cross’, a national network of navigations
 - A typical ‘Brindley Canal’ following the natural contours of the landscape with hardly any embankments or cuttings, changes in level being negotiated by simple pound locks or series of locks.
 - A wealth of single-span brick road and accommodation bridges with stone copings, many original to the canal and listed at grade II and that at Great Haywood a Scheduled Monument.
 - Narrow pound locks, with gates, beams, pounds, sluices, weirs and culverts unaltered from their 18th century construction.
 - Surviving masonry structures such as sandstone steps and copings
 - Late 18th century brick built lock cottages and terraced canal side cottages
 - A variety of surviving historic paving surfaces, especially under bridges
 - Groups of associated industrial buildings strategically located close to the canal, such as Sandon lime kiln and the mill at Great Haywood, reflecting the importance of the canal for industry

- Surviving wharfs and boatyards: the boatyard at Barlaston, Weston wharf and Great Haywood wharf
- Early 19th century cast iron mileposts and other canal ironwork features such as bridge plates and strapping posts
- A predominantly rural setting with surviving trees, hedgerows and water meadows

3 Historical Development

- 3.1 The Trent and Mersey Canal was the first of the major inland waterways which were to form the main arteries of Britain's canal network, the nation's principal transport and communications system in the late 18th and first half of the 19th centuries. It was essential in promoting the rapid development of Britain as the first industrial nation by providing efficient transport for raw materials and manufactured goods. The Trent and Mersey was also the first canal to be begun in Staffordshire, in 1766. It had a dramatic effect on the development and prosperity of trade and industry in the county.
- 3.2 Surveys for a waterway between the Rivers Trent and Mersey, linking the ports of Hull and Liverpool, were made as early as 1755. Road transport was slow, difficult and expensive, but a canal would provide much cheaper and more efficient carriage for raw materials and finished good, thus promoting the development of Staffordshire industries and mines, as well as the Cheshire salt fields. In 1758 James Brindley, the great pioneer of canal construction, began to survey a route.
- 3.3 In December 1765 a meeting was held at Wolseley Bridge near Rugeley, of 'the Company of Proprietors of the Navigation from the Trent to the Mersey'. They included the Duke of Bridgewater, important Staffordshire landowners such as Earl Gower of Trentham and Thomas Anson of Shugborough, major manufacturers notably Josiah Wedgwood and Matthew Boulton of Smethwick, and many other local landowners, merchants and manufacturers. Wedgwood was a particularly important advocate of the canal, a major investor in the company and its treasurer. He regarded the construction of the canal as vital to the development of his pottery business, since it would provide an import-export route bringing in raw materials and taking out his wares to the markets of the world. In 1766 he bought the Ridge House estate at Cobridge (Stoke-on-Trent section), and built his home, Etruria Hall, potbanks and Etruria Works, alongside the canal.
- 3.4 On 14th May 1766 "The Navigation from the Trent to the Mersey Act" was passed. The waterway was often referred to by Brindley and others, as the "Grand Trunk Canal", for it was expected that there would be many branch canals from it; the first, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal (also a conservation area), was authorised on the same day. Brindley was appointed Surveyor General, and his brother-in-law, Hugh Henshal, was Clerk of Works. Wedgwood cut the first sod at a ceremony near Brownhills in the Potteries to inaugurate construction on 26th July 1766. Work began at once at both ends of the Harecastle Tunnel and at Wilden Ferry in Derbyshire, where Cavendish Bridge at Shardlow now stands.
- 3.5 On 24th June 1770 the first completed section of canal was opened from Wilden Ferry on the navigable River Trent to Shugborough. The section to Stone was opened on 12th November 1771 with such exuberant celebrations that a bridge and lock collapsed owing the repeated firing of a canon. On 27th September 1772 Brindley died, and Henshall took over as surveyor. In October 1772 the section to Stoke-on-Trent was finished, and the Cheshire section was completed in 1775.

- 3.6 Final completion was delayed by great difficulties encountered in constructing the first Harecastle Tunnel one of the first canal tunnels to be built and a principal engineering work of the canal (Stoke-on-Trent section). 2880 yards long and 9 feet wide, it was commenced in 1766, and not completed until 1777. Brindley did not live to see its completion or its great success. Although it created a bottle neck as it could only take traffic in one direction, and having no towpath, barges had to be 'legged' through by men lying on their backs walking along the roof of tunnel. A second tunnel was therefore designed by Thomas Telford and opened in 1827, much wider, and with a towpath.
- 3.7 The canal cost approximately £300,000 to construct, and its effect was dramatic. The Company had promised a carriage cost of 2s. 6d. per ton, compared with 9s by road, but actual costs were even lower, one quarter of the rate by road. Costs of raw materials and finished goods were thus dramatically reduced, stimulating rapid industrial development in the areas served by the canal. An observer commented: "In a few years after it was finished, I saw... the value of manufacturers arise in the most unthought of places, new buildings and new streets spring up in many parts of Staffordshire, where it passes; the poor are no longer starving... and the rich grow steadily richer. The market town of Stone... from a poor insignificant place is now grown neat and handsome in its buildings, and from its wharfs and busy traffic, wears the lively aspect of a little sea port".; The head of the Trent and Mersey Canal Company was in Stone, at Westbridge House (now demolished).
- 3.8 The Trent and Mersey Canal was the only route between the Midlands, Manchester and Liverpool until the 1830s. Traffic was very heavy; mostly, but not entirely commercial. Some passengers were carried, and in 1798, during the Irish Rebellion, the canal was used to carry troops en route for Ireland.
- 3.9 In addition to his second Harecastle Tunnel, Thomas Telford also made a number of other improvements to the canal, including straightening some sections, and duplicating locks. But in the 1840s the railway boom began, and it became increasingly clear that competition from the railways could not be fended off indefinitely. In 1847 the Trent and Mersey Canal Company merged with the North Staffordshire Railway Company. The Railway intended to keep the canal working, as a 'feeder' for its own traffic. However, by the 1860s the railways were seriously affecting canal trade. A gradual decline in commercial traffic along the Trent and Mersey Canal continued through the 19th and 20th centuries, dwindling to very little in the 1960s. The canal was nationalised in 1948, and on 1st January 1963 the British Waterways Boards took control. On 2 July 2012 all of British Waterways' assets and responsibilities in England and Wales were transferred to the newly founded charity, the Canal and River Trust.
- 3.10 Today Britain's canals are enjoying a new lease of life, with popular and growing leisure use by walkers, cyclists and boaters. There is substantial pressure for additional moorings, often on a large 'marina' scale, whilst a waterside location is popular for both residential and commercial developments. Recognising and respecting the special historic character and appearance of the canal and its setting is therefore as important as ever.

4 Location and Topography

- 4.1 The Trent and Mersey Canal stretches 93 miles from Preston Brook in Cheshire, to Shardlow, the terminal port in South Derbyshire. The conservation area passes through the counties of Cheshire, Staffordshire and Derbyshire. Within Stafford Borough, the canal runs north-to-southeast through the parishes of Barlaston, Stone Rural, Stone Urban, Sandon and Burston, Salt and Enson, Weston, Hixon, Ingestre and Colwich.
- 4.2 As with most early canals the route of the Trent and Mersey was designed to minimise construction difficulties and costs. As a result it generally follows the contours of the landscape and is located within the river valley. Its course meanders to the east of the River Trent, with many twists and bends, as well as locks, along its length. Later canals, such as the Shropshire Union Canal, were to follow as straight a course as possible for speed of travel.
- 4.3 The settlements of Barlaston and Stone create an urban setting to the canal, but otherwise the landscape is predominantly open and rural, and passes through landscapes of the highest natural or designed character. Part of the conservation area falls within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which stretches from Great Haywood to Cannock Chase in the southeast, and includes the Shugborough estate.



Figure 1 Fields to the west of the canal near Barlaston

- 4.4 Sandon Park, a grade II registered park and garden, lies to the east of the canal conservation area at Sandon. At the southeast of the conservation area the canal passes through the eastern part of the Shugborough Estate, a grade I registered park and garden.

5 Buildings and Structures of the Trent and Mersey Canal

Canal Channel

- 5.1 The fundamental structure of the canal is the channel itself, or 'The Cuts'. The 93 miles of the Trent and Mersey were excavated using hand tools and lined with puddled clay, a mix of sand and clay that forms a water-tight seal. Sometimes the channel was reinforced with a masonry lining, but generally this only occurs around locks, bridges or basins. The Trent and Mersey, as an early canal, was built as cheaply as possible, and to the minimum width to enable two 'narrow boats' of 6ft 10in to pass.

Locks

- 5.2 The waterway followed the route of the River Trent as far as possible, where the minimum changes in land levels occurred. Occasionally, however, it was necessary to negotiate gradients, and this was achieved by 'pound locks'. These comprise rectangular, brick-lined 'pounds' of minimum dimensions to handle the largest type of boat using the canal. On the Trent and Mersey Canal, the locks are 'narrow locks' with chambers 7ft wide and about 76ft long designed for boats of 6ft 10in beam and up to 72 ft length; the extra length to allow the bottom gates to open inwards.



Figure 2: Typical narrow lock with single top gate and double bottom gates

- 5.3 Working down, a boat enters a full lock and once the gates are closed, sluices, known as 'paddles', at the lower end of the lock are opened. Once the levels inside and outside are the same, the lower gates are opened and the boat passes through.

- 5.4 Lock gates are usually of timber, often oak. The norm on the Trent and Mersey Canal, is for there to be a single top gate and double bottom gates, and their distinctive horizontal balance beams form focal points within the landscape.
- 5.5 The gates bed against a timber sill at the bottom of the chamber, and fit via a heel post into a hollow quoin in the masonry wall of the lock. Only a light iron strap is needed to maintain the gate in place as water pressure holds the heel post tightly into the quoin when the gate is closed. The outer end of the gate also has a vertical post called a breast or mitre post, which fits a rebate in the opposite wall, or in the partner gate. The balance beams operate the gate and provide counterweights to the gate. Ground paddles mounted in the wall of the locks admit water through culverts, and are generally used in combination with gate paddles at the head of a lock. The paddle usually consists of a slab of elm that slides vertically in a frame across the sluice aperture, and the most common mechanism for lifting being rack and pinion.
- 5.6 The fabric of the canal locks has to be routinely maintained, including repairs and replacement, especially of the timber elements. But these repairs are carried out 'like-for-like', so that the mechanisms and materials of these simple engineering structures are unchanged since the late 18th century.



Figure 3: Oak lock gates, footbridge and stone steps at Sandon Lock.

Bridges, Aqueducts and Culverts

- 5.7 The canal had to accommodate existing roads and properties, and as a result is peppered along its route with a number of road bridges, and 'accommodation' bridges, which allowed farmers to move their livestock and property owners to gain access their land. The bridges on this early canal are typically simple structures built of local materials, usually brick with a stone saddle-back coping, but sometimes further enhanced with stone string courses or brick dentils. Most have simple segmental arches and are hump-backed. Surfaces were usually paved with stone setts, but many have now been resurfaced in tarmac.



Figure 4: Sandhill Bridge north of Weston; a typical 'Brindley' bridge

- 5.8 At the corners of some bridge, deep grooves can still be seen in the masonry caused by taut wet tow ropes. Later, iron plates were introduced to protect the bridges, but often these became worn too. At Great Haywood Bridge at the junction with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, a series of iron straps can be seen under the bridge arch, bearing the distinctive grooves.



Figure 5: Grooved iron plates at Great Haywood Junction, Bridge no.109

- 5.9 Where the canal towpath changed from one side to the other ‘turnover bridges’ were constructed, with ramps to either side for the horses to cross.



Figure 6: Turnover bridge No.100 at Meaford; Brick paved surface of bridge No.109 at Great Haywood.

- 5.8 In the 20th century new roads tended to cross the canal by modern concrete slab bridges, though often these are now enhanced with brick facing.
- 5.9 The Trent and Mersey Canal followed the route of the River Trent, without crossing it, there are therefore no aqueducts, although the Conservation Area does include one simple aqueduct designed by Brindley to take the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal over the Trent at the Haywood Junction. Elsewhere tributaries and mill races were accommodated by simple brick culverts.



Figure 7: Brick culvert at Weston

Towpaths and Surfaces

5.10 Towpaths were generally unsurfaced other than around the locks or under bridges, whilst the engineered water's edge has become softened by vegetation. The canal therefore presents a relatively natural appearance within the landscape for much of its length.

5.11 In some areas initiatives have been taken to enhance accessibility of the canal, with hard tarmacked surfaces introduced. Although surfaced in a buff colour to mimic the former earth track, they present a more urban character adjacent to the canal.



Figure 8: The natural canal edging and tarmacked and unsurfaced towpaths

5.12 Under bridges surfaces were commonly paved with stone setts, although some later brick surfaces are found. Around locks, the surface is often in brick pavers, edged with ashlar sandstone.



Figure 9 Surviving historic paving surfaces at Meaford locks, Barlaston, Sandon and Turnover Bridge 100

Buildings

- 5.13 The canals introduced a whole new transport industry, supporting merchants, boatmen, suppliers of provisions, warehousemen, lock-keepers and lengthmen. Once agricultural landscapes were transformed with the introduction of new buildings to accommodate the industry. This included new building types, such as warehouses, wet and dry docks and lockkeeper's cottages, but also familiar buildings such as cottages, smithies, stables, inns and mills, either serving the canal, or taking advantage of the new transport route.
- 5.14 Wharfs tended to be located close to existing towns, as at Stone, or at Junctions, as at Great Haywood, and provided maintenance yards, smithies and stabling.
- 5.15 Unique buildings include the tiny lobbies for banksmen or lockkeepers, simply to protect them from the weather. One survives at Aston-by-Stone, and another at Great Haywood Junction. Often these were later replaced by more substantial cottages.
- 5.16 Canal architecture is typically simple and unpretentious in style, using local vernacular materials and styles, in contrast with the exuberance of the railway architecture of the following century.



Figure 10: Banksman's cottage at Haywood Junction

5.17 Despite the attraction of industry and development to the new transportation network, the Stafford Borough section of the Trent and Mersey Canal remains largely rural in character. Stone developed as a major canal town, but otherwise industry was dispersed within the agricultural landscape, as at the Salt Works south of Weston, or formed minor clusters as at the Mill adjacent to the Haywood Junction and the former mill and lime kiln near Sandon Lock.

Mile Markers and Signs

5.18 The canal used the established systems of mile posts to identify distances from the beginning and end of the route from Preston Brook to Shardlow. These are in a uniform company design: a circular post with moulded head and embossed convex faces painted black and white. All bear a plate on the shaft stating "R&D Stone 1819", which is thought to refer to the Stone foundry of Rangeley and Dixon. Where new features have been introduced for the current leisure industry, the established palette of black and white is used.



Figure 11 : Mile marker at Barlaston and Fingerpost at Haywood Junction installed in 1984

6 Buildings, Spatial Analysis, Setting and Views: Barlaston to Stone

- 6.1 This appraisal begins at the northern part of the conservation area within Stafford Borough at Barlaston, through to Colwich at the southeast of the conservation area.
- 6.2 At the north of the conservation area, views of the 20th century Wedgwood works and museum serve as a reminder of Wedgwood's role in the creation of the canal. To the north, the canal curves around a tree-lined corner and a tall hedgerow to the west of the towpath creates an enclosed feel as the canal crosses the administrative boundary to Stoke-on-Trent.
- 6.3 The first bridge reached travelling south is bridge number 104, or 'Old Road Bridge'. Views from the south are marred by the adjacent late 20th century footbridge, with modern orange bricks and metal overhead railings. The large car park of the Wedgwood works creates a negative void space to the northwest, and noise from associated traffic impacts on the rural character. Views south encompass open fields with occasional farm buildings and late 20th century houses, which are set back from the canal, preserving the rural setting. Views from the bridge encompass a wooded area to the southeast of the canal.
- 6.4 Other important views include the west façade of Barlaston Hall, built between 1756-58. Barlaston Hall is a grade I listed, three-storey building with classical proportions. The striking octagonal glazing is a key feature. The ground floor is of rusticated Hollington sandstone, and the upper floors are of soft orange brick. The central bay projects forward giving a graceful symmetry. Its rural setting is well-preserved and clearly visible from the conservation area.
- 6.5 Views towards Barlaston Hall are marred by the dark green railway fencing in the foreground. Approaching Barlaston, late 20th century houses to the west are sited close to the towpath, creating a modern intrusion on the otherwise well-preserved rural character.

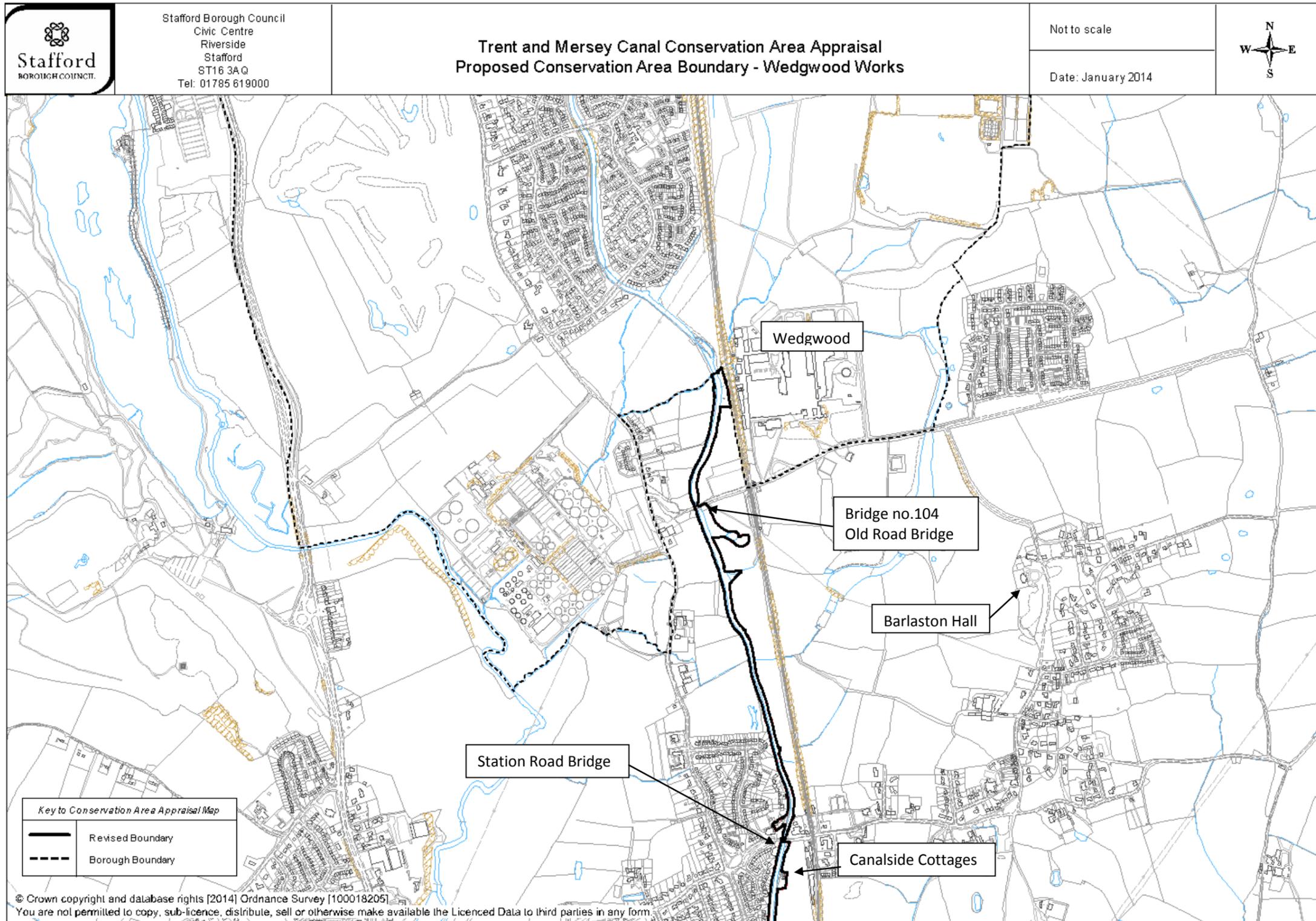


Figure 12: Wedgwood Works to Barlaston



Figure 13: Views to the north from the pedestrian bridge, adjacent to bridge 104



Figure 14: Views towards Barlaston Hall

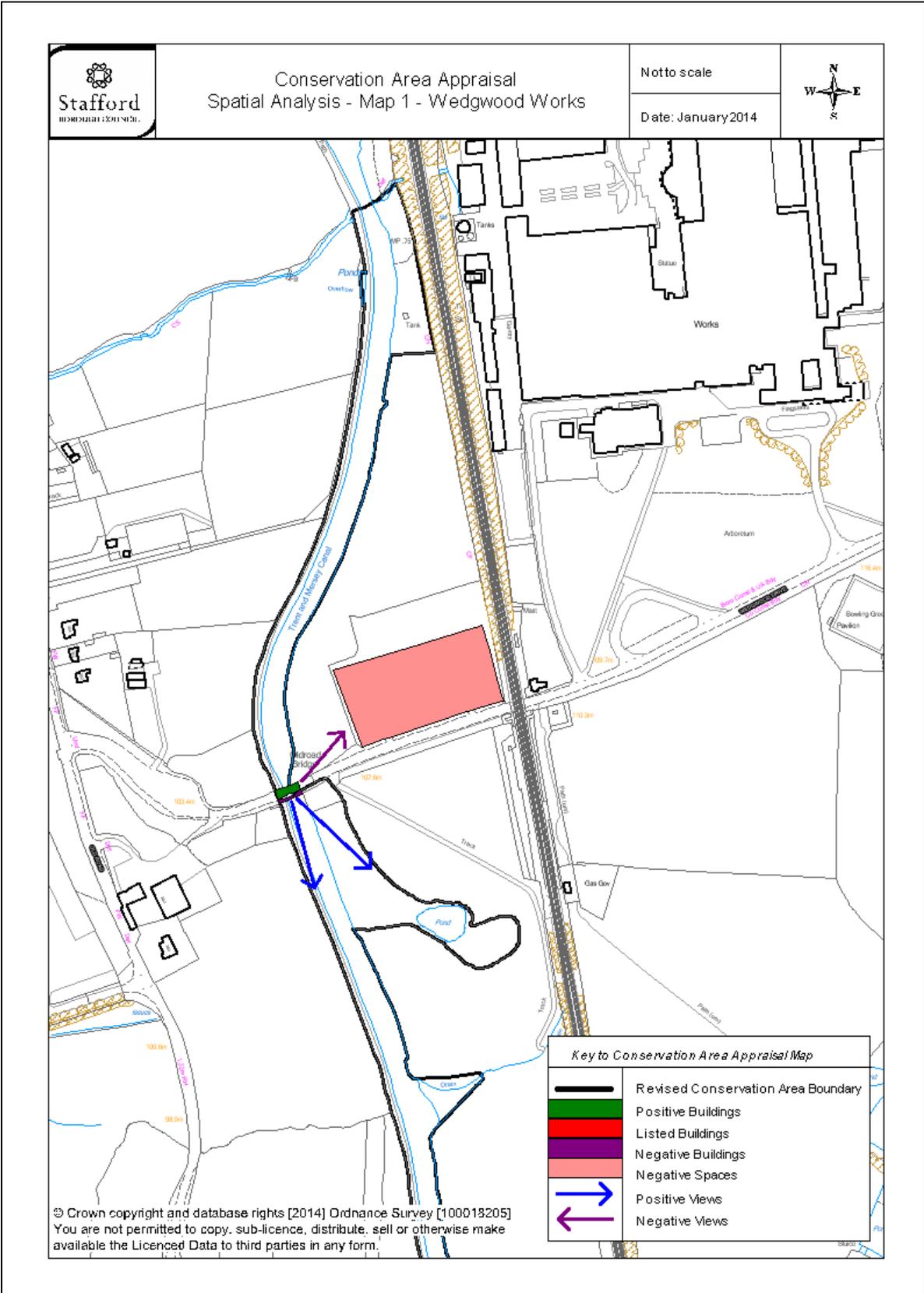


Figure 15: Wedgwood works character appraisal

- 6.6 Approaching Barlaston, 3 Canal Side presents an attractive Victorian frontage, and leads to the gable end of 2 Canal Side. Mature trees create a sense of enclosure along the footpath that runs parallel to the towpath.
- 6.7 1 and 2 Canal Side are rectilinear, 18th century cottages with six bays, positioned to the southwest of the canal. Lean-tos and gables are visible to the rear. The main (south) elevation faces the canal, and the windows are outward-opening, vertically hung casements divided into two lights by a horizontal glazing bar, in fairly square, deep-set openings. One ground floor window is a three-light window with a cambered head. The cills are stone, and the chimneys with oversailing courses and clay pots add to the horizontal emphasis created by its two-storey, rectilinear plan form. Gardens are found to the front and rear. The walls are a roughcast render painted white; the roof is of Staffordshire blue tiles.



Figure 16 1 and 2 Canal Side

- 6.8 The rectilinear form of 1-2 Canal Side leads towards the space before the Plume of Feathers pub. This is a large negative gap site, with a patch-repaired, uneven paving surface. Across the canal to the east a large garage possesses cladding and brightly coloured signage. The bridge on Station Road employs modern brickwork and green metal railings, and metal column lighting, signage, bins and poor paving surfaces. Heavy traffic and traffic noise from Station Road contribute to the general loss of historic and architectural character in this part of the conservation area.
- 6.9 Views to the south are rural, and a row of terraced cottages possess a Victorian appearance, due to their massing and hipped roof structure. Marked as New Buildings on contemporary maps, these are two-storey, one bay each, with small front gardens. Although linear, the seven cottages are fairly square on plan. Deep orange brick and Staffordshire blue roof tiles are employed. Most windows along the east elevation are replacements, except one window in the southernmost cottage that may be original. Window openings have been retained along with cills and lintels. On a map of 1837, the cottages are not yet built, suggesting a mid to late 19th century date, and that the 2 over 2 vertically sliding sashes as found at the southernmost cottage would be the original form of fenestration. The windows are set back slightly within the openings.



Figure 17: New Buildings

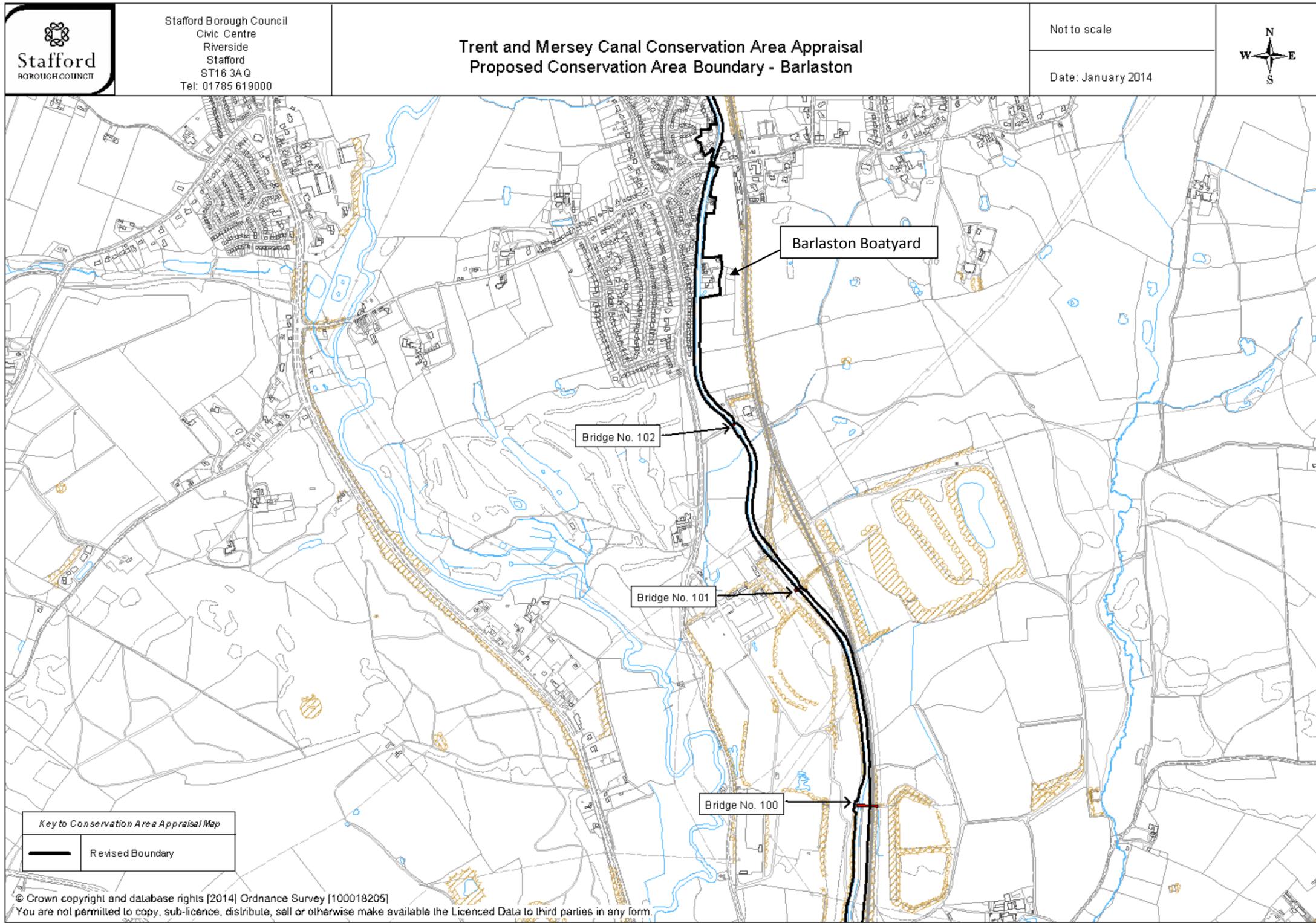


Figure 18: Barlaston

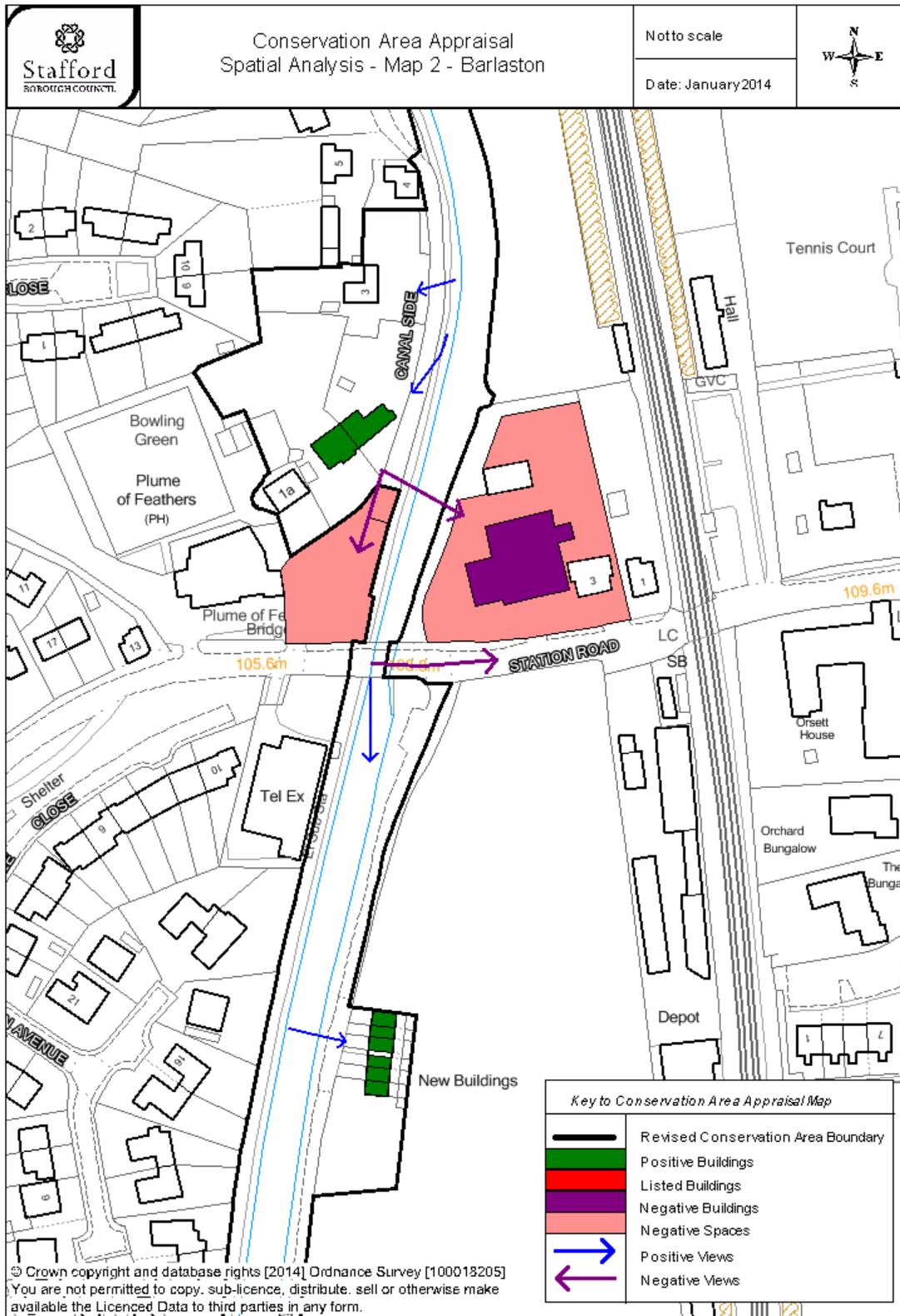


Figure 2 Barlaston character appraisal

- 6.10 Further south is the former Barlaston Boatyard. This complex of building has been much altered and is now in residential use. The oldest building dates from the eighteenth century; other buildings which surround it may be of similar date, but were altered in the 19th century and after. An arm used to go round the buildings to service dry docks, which are now filled in. The yard gave its name to the Barlaston Boat which was built there.
- 6.11 Boatyard Cottages are a group of five late 18th century two-storey cottages of brick, painted white, with Staffordshire blue roof tiles. Each cottage is two bays each. The southernmost cottage adjoins a cottage on the southeast end, forming a double-pile building. This links to a gabled cottage further east. The other four cottages to the north have gabled wings at right angles to the rear. Two of the five chimneys are substantially built, being square on plan with a brick band before two oversailing courses. This adds to their horizontality. Former stables remain to the east. All windows on the west elevation are replacements, but the design form suggests these were originally outward-opening, two-light casements with a horizontal glazing bar. The window cills appear alien to the row of cottages which probably would have possessed a chamfered ledge between window and the outer face of the brickwork originally. The windows are now almost flush with the brickwork.
- 6.12 The Boatyard is a two-storey rectilinear building which faces the canal; this is marred by replacement uPVC windows. Along the towpath to the west, rows of semi-detached late 20th century houses abut the towpath, creating a visual intrusion. In contrast, to the east, fields are observed, and medieval or later ridge and furrow is visible.



Figure 20: Boatyard Cottages

- 6.13 The maps below show Barlaston in 1837. Boatyard cottages with stable yard are marked on the first image, and 1-2 Canal side cottages are visible on the second image, with buildings in the foreground where there is a gap site before The Plume of Feathers pub. New Buildings had not yet been built.

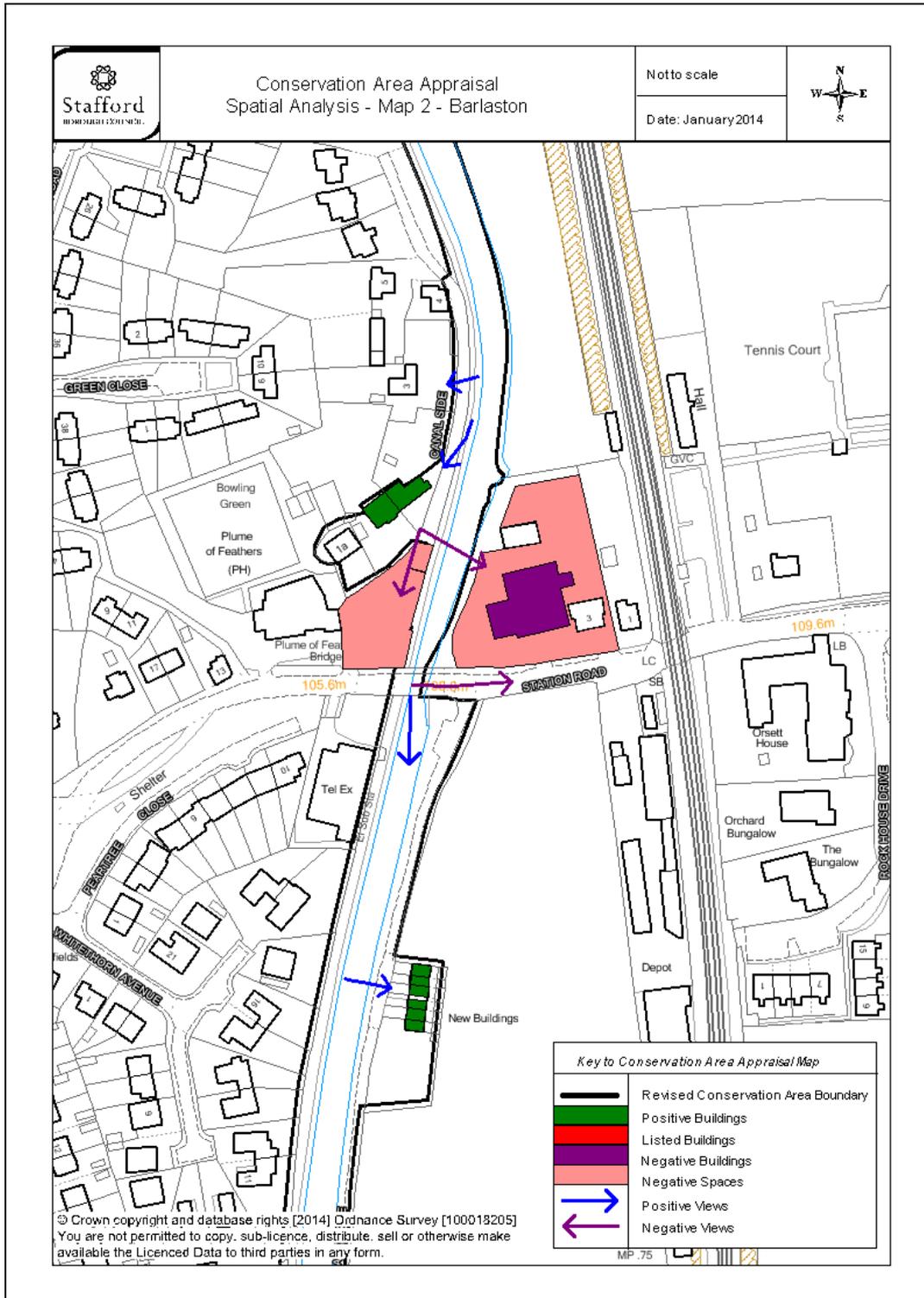


Figure 23: Barlaston character appraisal

- 6.14 Between Barlaston and Meaford, the setting is predominantly rural, and the course of the canal and towpath is punctuated by a series of bridges.
- 6.15 Farm Bridge (bridge number 102) is a grade II listed canal accommodation bridge with substantial sandstone copings with a tooled finish, with some replacement bricks and copings. A stone string course supported on brick dentils adds grace to the bridge. The large stone quoins are well-preserved to the jambs, and moulded bricks are used for the haunch. Along the towpath historic setts have been retained, preserving character. The elliptical arch of the bridge frames views north and south. From the bridge, a gas valve compound to the east impacts on character with grey modern brick, metal fencing and barbed wire.
- 6.16 Bridge 101, a simple 19th century brick structure, is missing stone copings and four courses of bricks above the arch, and vegetation growth has taken hold. Repair in bright orange brick jars with the original, darker and softer brickwork. Bridge 101a, being of concrete and bright orange brick, is detrimental to the character of the conservation area.
- 6.17 Grade II listed Malkins Bridge, number 100, is a turnover, or roving bridge. The towpath crosses via ramps across the bridge to the opposite side of the canal, allowing the horse towing the boat to change sides without being unhitched. The retention of paving setts that have become worn over time adds to the charm of this bridge, and these are also retained under the bridge. Some vegetation and damaged brickwork is visible, and areas are in need of repointing.
- 6.18 Bridge 99, (Siddalls Bridge) has heavily overgrown vegetation and is obscured by bridge 99a, of modern brick and metal construction.
- 6.19 Bridge 98 at Meaford (Top Lock Bridge) has a distinctive tall and narrow arch, with no towpath. Horses used the adjacent lane. Its parapet is vulnerable to traffic strikes, being narrow, and positioned before a road junction.
- 6.20 Many historic paving surfaces are retained under the bridges, contributing significantly to overall character. The maintenance and repair issues are common to many of the bridges within the conservation area.



Figure 24: Bridge 102, (top left), Bridge 101 (top right), disused, with missing courses of bricks and copings. Bridge 100 (middle row, left) a turnover bridge, Bridges 99a and 99, Bridge 99, disused and heavily overgrown with vegetation. Bridge 98 (Top Lock Bridge) with damage from strike



Figure 25 Meaford Locks

- 6.21 Approaching Meaford, a sense of enclosure is created by the hedgerows and trees to the west of the canal and a low dry stone wall to the east. Views west encompass fields and mature trees. Four pound locks replace earlier staircase locks; Top Lock is contemporary with the construction of the canal, and three were constructed when the canal was straightened in the 1830s, possibly under the direction of Thomas Telford. Staircase locks are defined as two or more adjacent locks where the upper gates of one lock serve as the lower gates of the next. Pound Locks are locks with a small area (pound) between gates allowing a short stretch of the canal's water level to change. The change to pound locks reduced congestion as boats waited to enter the staircase. The former staircase is marked by a sharp gradient in the overgrown course of the old canal, which is still clearly visible in the field and woods to the west of the canal.
- 6.22 Some copings at the water's edge have been replaced with concrete blocks or have a cement scree, and repointing is needed between brickwork and copings in some lock chambers. Some setts have been re-laid in cement, but each lock is well-preserved generally, including surrounding coping stones, stone steps and a variety of historic paving surfaces.
- 6.23 Sequential views are created from the north of Meaford locks viewed from bridge number 98 and continuing along the towpath to the next turnover bridge (bridge 97). Further south trees frame the view, and the rise and fall in height at bridges 97 and 98 adds interest.



Figure 26: Sequential views towards Turnover Bridge (97)



Figure 27 Turnover bridge 97

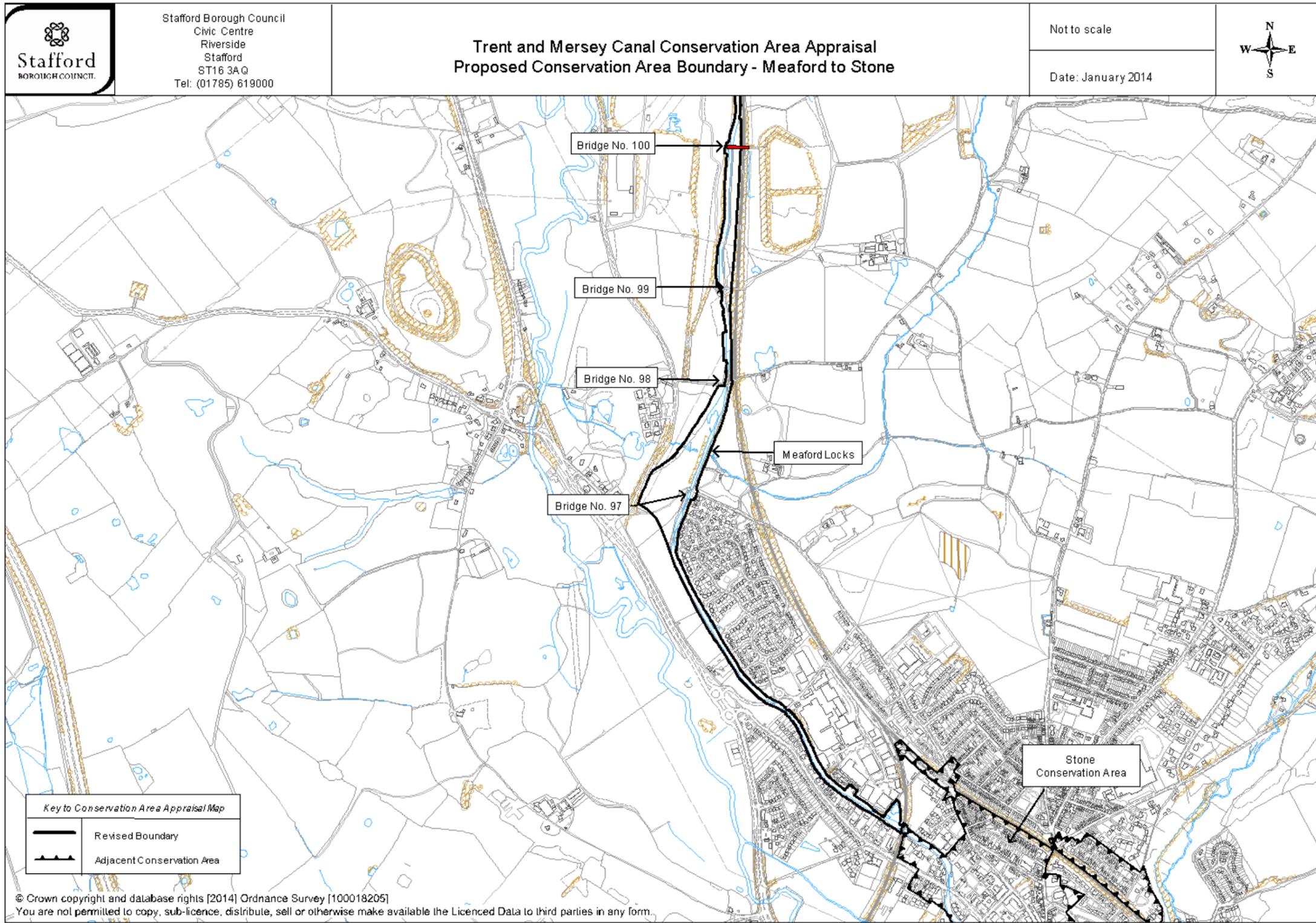


Figure 28 Meaford

6.24 Approaching Stone, residential developments and the Whitebridge industrial estate creates a visual intrusion on the character of the conservation area by their scale, proximity and siting close to the canal. Past the industrial estate, Stone conservation area is reached. This ends at Star Lock, and the Trent and Mersey canal conservation area begins again heading south.

7 The Canal within Stone Conservation Area

- 7.1 The town of Stone lies at the centre of the Canal route, becoming the site of the Headquarters of the Trent and Mersey Canal Company when construction work reached this point from the south in 1771. Many canal-associated buildings lie within the Stone conservation area, reflecting the importance of the canal to the prosperity of the town.
- 7.2 The first canal-associated building reached from the north is the grade II listed Joules Brewery Ale Store. Built in 1881 as a waterside store with a central loading bay, the attractive Victorian gables front directly on to the canal, creating a striking landmark feature, and illustrating its function and relationship to the canal.
- 7.3 The boatyard and wharf, still in use for boat repairs, retains an early (1772) example of a covered dock, and the two-storey wharfinger's office, workshop and blacksmith's shop all date to the 19th century. Further south are the 18th century Star Inn and Lock. All these key canal buildings are grade II listed.
- 7.4 Further details and analysis of the character of the Trent and Mersey as it passes through Stone, can be found in the Stone Conservation Area Appraisal (Stafford Borough Council, 2008).



Figure 29: Joule's brewery store in Stone Conservation Area

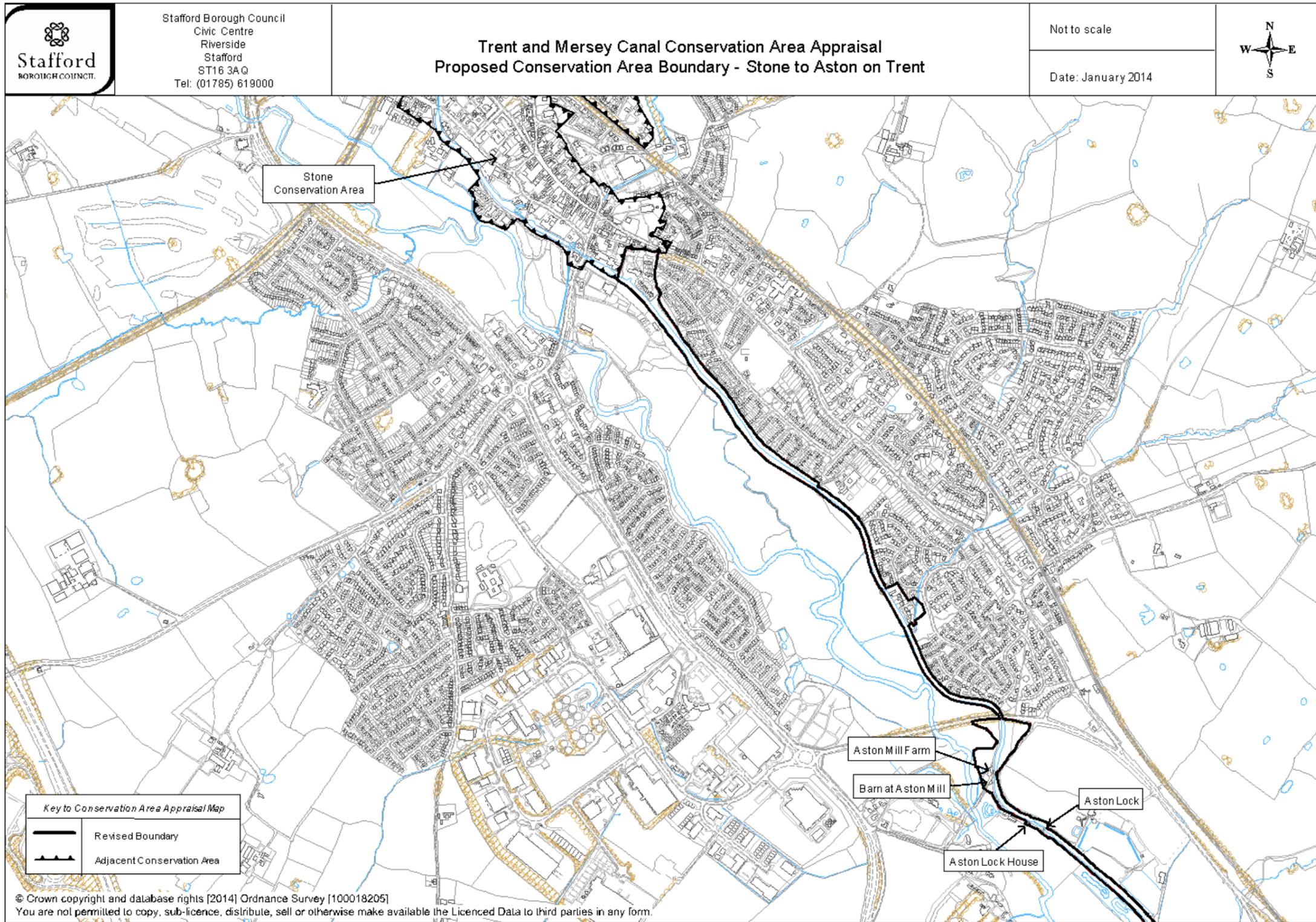


Figure 30 Stone to Aston-by-Stone

8 Stone to Aston-by-Stone

- 8.1 The canal forms the boundary between housing development to the east and the undeveloped valley of the River Trent to the west as it passes south from the Stone Conservation Area.
- 8.2 Westbridge Park skirts the high bank to the southwest of the towpath leaving Stone, the bright blue sports centre appearing as an industrial hangar within the landscape. Further south is an early 20th century brick built pumping station in a sorry state of repair. Opposite, two-storey houses line the bank on the north side of the canal. The solar panels on the roofscapes facing the canal and close-boarded fencing adds a domestic appearance and breaks up the space visually, lessening the visual flow created by the canal.
- 8.3 To the southwest, a tall native hedgerow screens views to vast fields, part of the post-medieval water meadow system identified in 2009 (Staffordshire Historic Environment Record).
- 8.4 Development gradually becomes less dense travelling south, until bridge number 92 (Andre Mills) is reached. The bridge is a well-preserved, grade II listed single span bridge with a depressed arch and moulded bricks with a stone band at the springing line. Bridge number 91 (Brassworks Bridge) is almost identical to bridge 92 but the parapet has been rebuilt with modern brick. Here the character immediately becomes more rural.
- 8.5 Brassworks Cottage is sited south of Brassworks Bridge. It formed part of the brass foundry which was served by the Trent and Mersey Canal in the 18th century (Staffordshire HER). This is a two-storey, gabled building, rendered and painted off-white, and relatively square on plan. Adjoining and running eastward is a two-storey rectilinear gabled cottage with gabled dormers passing through at eaves level, creating a T-shaped plan form. This is marred by uPVC windows in a deep brown colour, of which there is no precedent in the conservation area.
- 8.6 Brassworks Farmhouse is a grade II listed, three-storey farmhouse dating to 1794. In Flemish bond brickwork with a slate roof, it is distinctly Georgian in appearance, with classical proportions and a central doorway. The closed triangular pedimented doorcase with fluted corbels and moulded architrave reinforces its classical appearance. The windows are vertically sliding sashes, arranged as 6 over 6 at ground and first floor, and 3 over 3 at third floor. The height of the building contrasts to the relatively flat surrounding landscape. Adjoining two-storey wings to the east possess casements divided into two lights. Its character is very well-preserved.



Figure 31: Brassworks Cottage and Brassworks Farmhouse



Figure 32: Brassworks Farmhouse

- 8.7 Bridge number 93, carrying the A51, crosses over the canal before the village of Aston-by-Stone. This modern structure and the presence of heavy traffic creates an unwelcoming environment, but this is quickly lost approaching Aston-by-Stone.
- 8.8 Aston Mill Farm, formerly a flint mill, sits close to the canal on the west. The mill race travels through the garden and the mill is marked on Yates's map of 1775. Flint mills were vital in Staffordshire for supplying the potteries in Stoke with silica for white ware.
- 8.9 The mill race travels through the garden of the farm. The steeple of Victorian St Saviour's Church, built by James Trubshaw (steeple by J R Botham) and canal bridge number 90 create a picturesque scene. However, an extension

to Aston Mill Farm employs uPVC windows. The bridge is a simple but attractive structure in the local vernacular, although much rebuilt with modern bricks.

- 8.10 A former stables and hayloft converted to a dwelling sits adjacent to the canal. This retains original brickwork, first floor pitching eyes and original openings. The farm may have diversified by providing stabling for horses for passing boaters. Remains of water meadow survive to the west of the conservation area in surrounding fields.



Figure 33: Approaching Aston-by-Stone; former stabling and hayloft next to the towpath

- 8.11 The rural character continues towards Aston Lock and Lock Cottage. Aston Lock is a pound lock with well-preserved setts, sandstone steps and massive sandstone copings. An early blue brick lock keepers' lobby survives, now as an outbuilding to the later, early 20th century Lock Cottage. This is a gabled two-storey cottage with a gabled wing fronting the canal. This façade is of a brighter orange brick to the side facades, and the roof is slate. Replacement uPVC windows are a modern intrusion on character, replacing vertically sliding 2 over 2 sashes. A section of historic brick paving in blue engineering bricks is preserved to the front of the house.
- 8.12 To the west of the cottage, a brick boundary wall with blue saddleback brick copings, a milepost (Preston Brook 46 miles/Shardlow 48 miles) and the former lock keepers' lobby, create a focal point of strong historical and architectural character. Views west are towards the church and surrounding fields containing post-medieval water meadow. Facing east, the recently constructed Aston Marina has a sensitively designed café and chandlery building, with its scale, materials and detail drawing closely on the historic character of canal-side buildings. The wet dock building, however, has a more modern industrial appearance, whilst associated leisure facilities are starting to clutter the site.



Figure 34: Aston Bridge and Aston Lock with preserved historic paving surfaces



Figure 35: Mile post, boundary wall and outhouse adjacent to Aston Lock



Figure 36: Lock Cottage, and views towards Aston Marina

- 8.13 Between Aston and Burston the landscape is characterised by historic hedgerows and mature trees, and evidence of water meadow remains to the west between the canal and the River Trent.
- 8.14 Structures include simple brick culverts for drains and a single grade II listed milepost in the Trent and Mersey Canal corporate style.

9 Burston

- 9.1 Burston is an ancient village reputedly dating back to the 7th century (Staffordshire HER). It is a linear settlement with buildings clustered around crossroads and a mill pond; the mill (demolished) stood adjacent to Upper Burston Bridge (bridge number 86) at the canal. The village is visible from the towpath to the east of the conservation area across expansive open fields, giving attractive views and an unspoilt setting to the canal. The linear layout of the village is well-preserved.
- 9.2 Burston Villa is sited close to the edge of the canal to the east. This grade II listed, early 19th century house is three storeys, of brick, with a moulded stone eaves cornice. The main façade is to the east. The villa may have served as the farmhouse to the adjacent former farm buildings, which are laid out as a regular U-plan courtyard. Gable extensions, roof lights and windows on the gables give a very domestic appearance, resulting in the loss of much agricultural character. The mid-19th century corn mill may have been associated with these two remaining buildings, and the mill race runs towards the canal from the mill pond in the village.



Figure 37: Views towards Upper Burston Bridge and former farmstead from the south, and Burston Villa from the towpath

- 9.3 In views south towards Burston, the white stuccoed west façade of Burston Hall, outside of the conservation area, is prominent. It is a grand early 19th century house with hipped slate roof and prominent chimney stacks.
- 9.4 Burston House, again outside of the conservation area, is also a prominent building in views from the canal; a three-storey, late 18th to early 19th century redbrick farmhouse of generous proportions.
- 9.5 To the southeast views Sandon Hall is seen in the distance across its surrounding parkland.



Figure 38: Views towards Burston from the towpath include Burston House (left) and Burston Hall (right)



Figure 39: Views east and west approaching Sandon

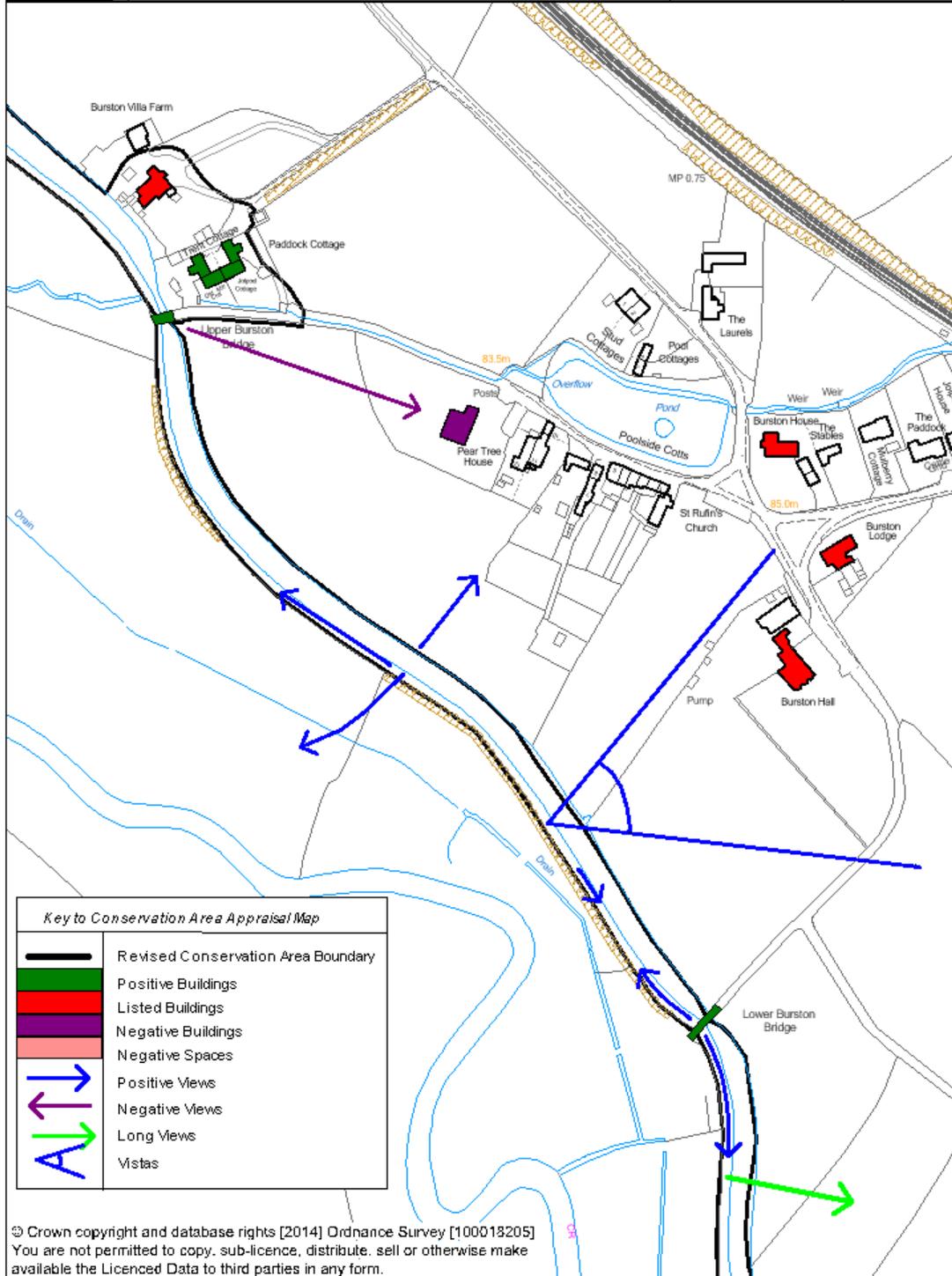


Figure 40: Burston character appraisal

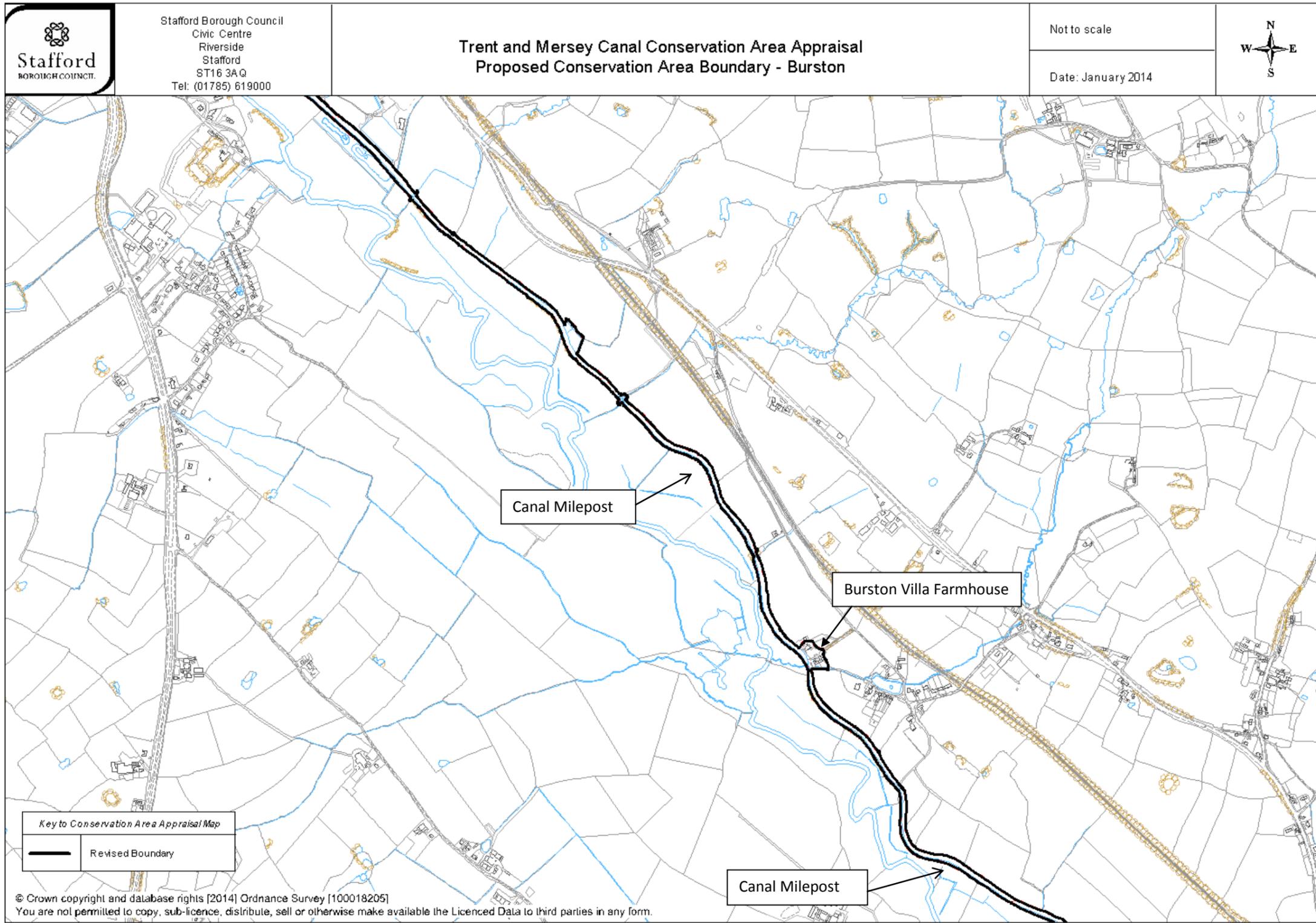


Figure 41 Aston to Burston

10 Sandon

- 10.1 The village of Sandon lies one mile south of Burston. Water meadow and ridge and furrow remain between the two villages; views in every direction encompass open countryside, and to the west the River Trent passes close to the canal. Directly to the east of the conservation area is the grade II registered Sandon Park and Garden, and grade II* Sandon Hall.
- 10.2 Directly west of the canal, the former mill, mill cottages, smithy, lock cottage and the grade II listed lime kiln form a small settlement concentrated around the canal quite separate from the village, which is of linear form alongside the road to the east. The lime kiln is evident only as a mound within the landscape from views along the canal; its entrance, with classical sandstone pediment and cornice faces south towards the former mill. It dates to 1790 and was probably constructed to provide lime for the surrounding agricultural land and for building at the Sandon Hall estate. Limestone was burnt in the kiln to produce quicklime, and then slaked for agricultural use, or to make mortar and limewash. It was also used as a flint kiln, to calcine flint prior to grinding it for use in the pottery industry.
- 10.3 The current mill building (now residential) was a flint and corn mill, designed by Sampson Handley in 1792 to replace an earlier mill that fell into disuse in the 18th century. The mill, lime kiln and smithy to the east of the lime kiln formed a small industrial focus in 1802, the canal side location enabling efficient delivery of coal and lime, and valuable when in use as a flint mill for importing flint and exporting the finished product north to the Potteries. The kiln ceased around 1850 and the mill in 1870 (National Heritage List). The former lock cottage remains to the north of the canal and is two storeys with a former single storey toll office to the north, which is now two-storey. Gabled and brick with Staffordshire blue roof tiles, the dentilation at eaves is well-preserved.



Figure 42: Sandon Lock mill, cottages and former smithy

- 10.4 The former mill is fairly square on plan, three-storey in three bays with a hipped slate roof and deep eaves. On the side of the building nearest the river, the position of the sloping roof covering one of the millwheels, and the position of its central axle can still be identified. The adjacent cottage, with gabled roof, Staffordshire blue roof tiles and three gabled dormers passing through the eaves, and the single storey former shed, add interest with contrasting roof heights and shapes, and lead to the two-storey southernmost cottage. Opposite and adjacent to the canal is the former Smithy,
- 10.5 Sandon Lock, the weir, Sandon Bridge, and the adjacent lock cottage create a pleasing focal group in the approach from the northwest. Sandon Lock is a grade II listed building possessing well-preserved setts and stone steps. The setts under and around bridge number 83 are incredibly well-preserved. The bridge carries the busy road traffic of the B5066, creating an unwelcoming atmosphere. The bridge has been subject to numerous bridge strikes and its parapet is now of a modern brick, which is to the detriment of the character of the surrounding area.
- 10.6 Long views west across fields towards the railway station (built in 1867) reflect the rural location of the station. The orange brick and blue brick diaper work, tall chimneys, and stone mullioned windows create a strong Neo-Tudor appearance.
- 10.7 Just to the southeast of Sandon Lock, the River Trent, the canal, railway and the A51 converge, the railway closely hugging the course of the canal for almost a mile. Here is found Salt Bridge (No.82), a grade II listed canal road bridge, thought to be of late 18th century origins, but not in the standard Brindley style. It was raised in level when the adjacent railway line was built, and semi-circles of corbelled brindle bricks above the original arch build the bridge out to accommodate additional road width above.
- 10.8 Views to the southwest later encompass the Neo-Jacobean style Dutch gables and tall chimneys of Grade II Listed Stafford Lodges, built of sandstone with a slate roof in 1902 in a Neo-Jacobean style, and Pitt's Column soaring above the wooded grounds of Sandon Hall.



Figure 43: Entrance to Lime Kiln



Figure 44: Sandon Bridge with rebuilt parapet and lock keepers cottage behind



Figure 45: Sandon lock, weir, lock cottage and bridge.



Figure 46: Salt Bridge

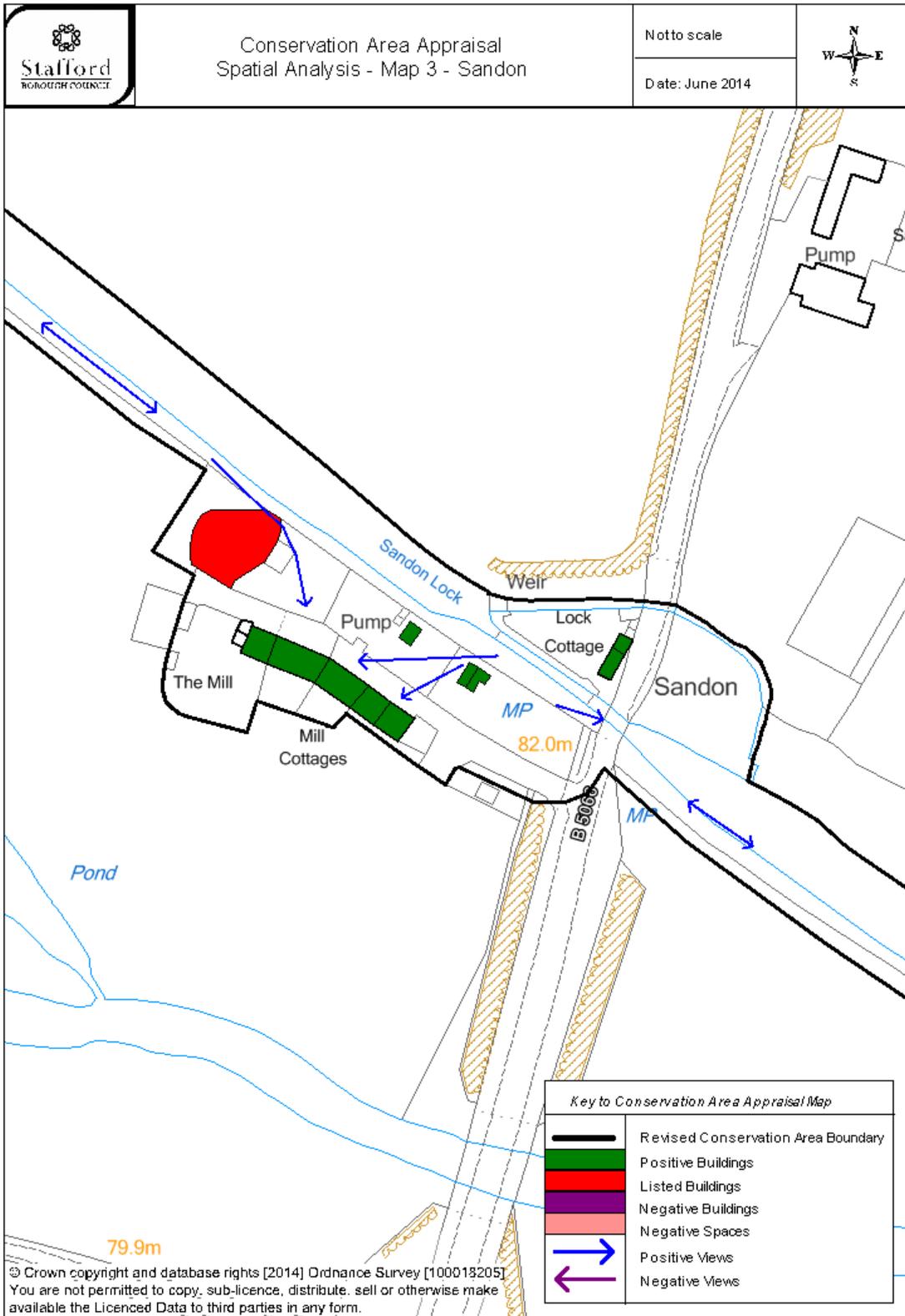


Figure 47: Sandon character appraisal

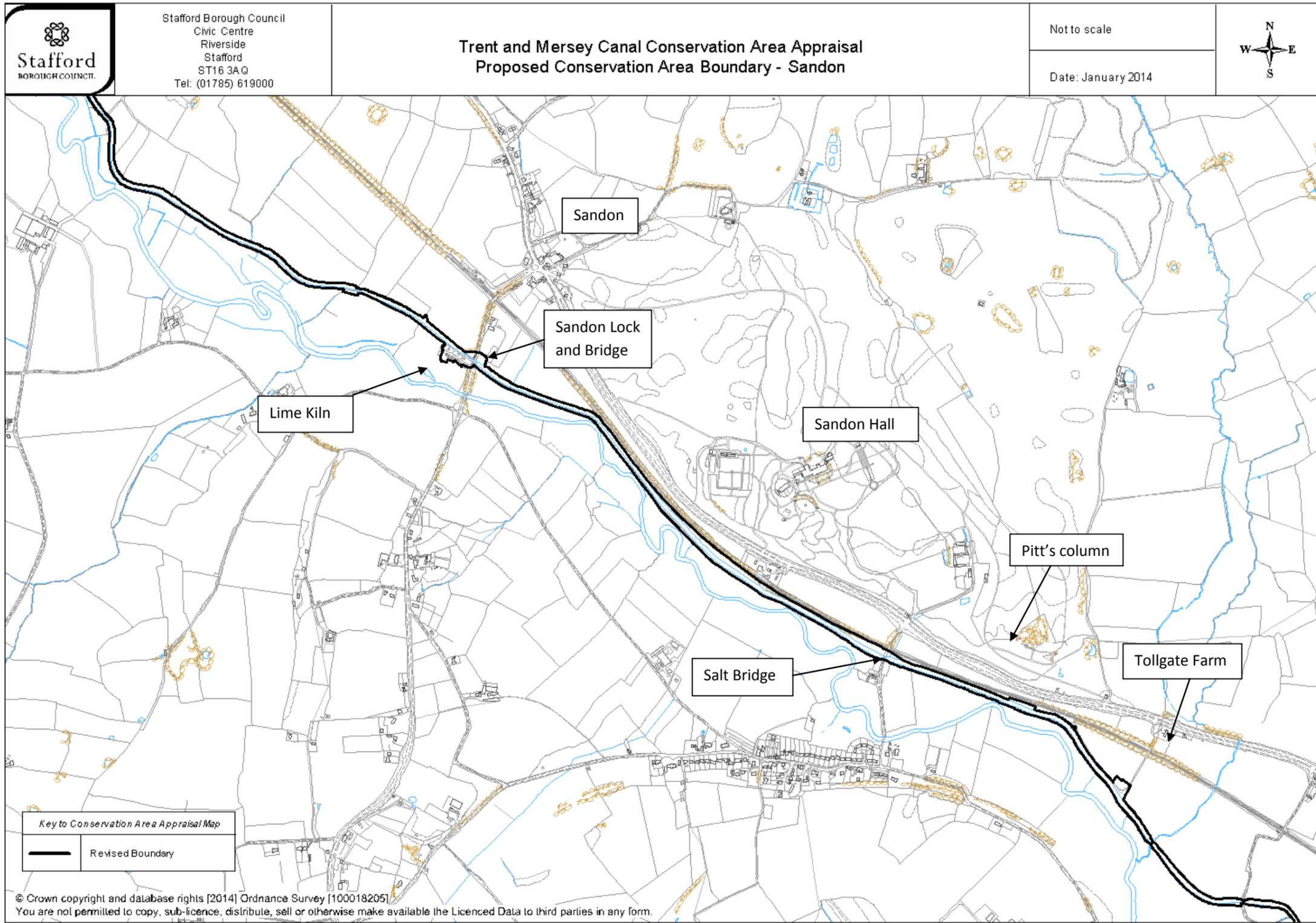


Figure 38: Sandon

11 Weston

- 11.1 Continuing south the canal sweeps around via Sandhill Bridge, a typical brick built Brindley accommodation bridge, and enters Weston with the spire of the grade II* St Andrew's Church visible in the distance.
- 11.2 The village of Weston pre-dated the canal, having its origins in the 11th century or earlier (Staffordshire HER). The canal, however, allowed new and old industries to prosper. An area of brine pits and salt marshes between Weston, Salt and Ingestre was exploited, and the Salt Works just south of Weston alongside the canal was especially successful in the 19th century. The linear layout of historic Weston is well-preserved, with historic houses including the grade II Abbeylands, and the grade II* listed St Andrew's Church sited close to Stafford Road. However, late 20th century development adjacent to the canal has had a negative impact on the setting of the canal.
- 11.3 The conservation area crosses the Weston Road at Weston Bridge, and includes Weston Pool to the east, Pool Cottage, Bridge Farmhouse, The Saracen's Head and a row of 18th century cottages to the west of the canal. To the north, the Boat House sits adjacent to the canal along Boat Lane. The River Trent runs to the west of the conservation area and the canal passes through the centre of the village. Many of the historic buildings are sited near the canal, creating an attractive focal point.
- 11.4 Pool cottage is an early 19th century, two-storey cottage to the northwest of the canal. The deep pitch, low eaves, symmetrical cross-shape plan form and ornate barge boards give a charming Gothic Cottage Ornee appearance. The fenestration is generally vertically hung outward opening casements with stone mullions, but a photograph dating to c.1919 shows a ground floor oriel window on the north elevation. It is brick, painted white, with Staffordshire blue roof tiles.
- 11.5 Bridge Farmhouse is an attractive Georgian three-storey brick farmhouse with gabled roof and attached two-storey gabled building to the north. Chimneys are situated at gable ends. The roof is of Staffordshire blue tiles. The Saracen's Head is a two-storey, early 19th century pub with 8 over 8 vertically sliding sashes and a six-panelled, scratch-moulded central doorway with semi-circular headed moulded architrave. Windows are framed by stone lintels and cills, and dentilation is found at eaves beneath the roof of Staffordshire blue tiles.
- 11.6 The gabled row of low, two-storey rectilinear cottages (1-5 Stafford Road) directly to the east creates a contrast to the taller Saracen's Head, and a rhythm is created by the regularly spaced gabled dormers passing through the eaves. Much altered in the 19th century, it is believed to be in part a cruck timber-framed building originally dating to the 15th or 16th century (Staffordshire County council). Purlins are visible in the end (west) gable.



Figure 49: Pool Cottage



Figure 50: Pool Cottage, c.1919. Reproduced with permission of Mrs G S McCann. Staffordshire County Museum Service, reference 14/1593

- 11.7 Dentilation is found at eaves level, and windows appear to be replacements, possibly of outward opening casements divided into three panes horizontally. Windows at ground floor have cambered heads. The west end of the north elevation has a single pegged timber window on the ground floor, and no windows at first floor level on the front elevation. The wide door in the end gable retains substantial wrought iron hinges inserted directly into the jamb, and a bricked-in cambered window is visible on the first floor, suggesting a former agricultural function. Some extensions to the rear have spoilt the historic character of the south elevation by introducing a box-shape to the historic rectilinear plan form. The cottages are painted white, with Staffordshire blue roof tiles.



Figure 51: Pool Farmhouse and The Boathouse



Figure 52: 1-5 Stafford Road with dormer windows and wide west gable doorway with purlins at verges

- 11.8 The Boat House on Boat Lane is a two-storey cottage adjacent to the canal to the north of the village centre. It is brick with a gabled roof in Staffordshire blue tiles, with a gabled single storey building to the east. Replacement uPVC windows and the loss of the central window has marred the front elevation slightly, but retention of features such as wedge lintels and dentilation at eaves means the simple cottage character of the building is retained.
- 11.9 Weston Bridge itself, carrying the busy Weston Road over the canal, is probably a late-18th century bridge, but the brickwork has been covered with a cement-based render, to all but the parapet.

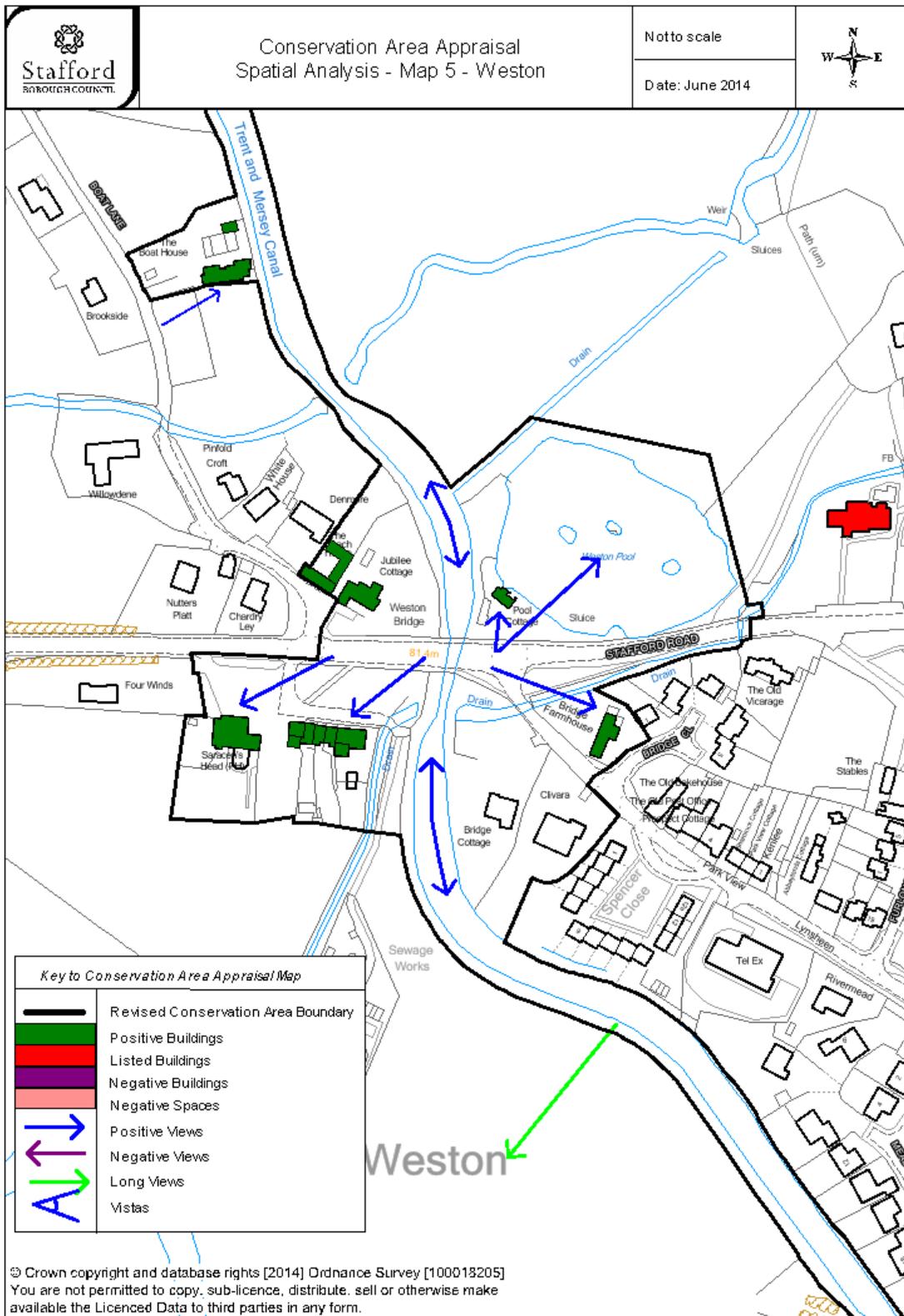


Figure 43: Weston character appraisal

- 11.9 Travelling southeast out of Weston along the towpath, views to the west encompass the River Trent, mature trees and field boundaries, and views to Grade II* Weston Hall, a 17th century Jacobean house. It is three storeys plus attic, and its height and hillside location creates an impression of grandeur. The Jacobean character is derived from its gables topped with finials, and the mullioned windows. It is of Sherwood sandstone giving a warm grey colour.
- 11.10 Wharf House and Salt Works Farm at the former Salt Works is a two-storey gabled building with end gable facing the canal. It is brick painted off-white, with Staffordshire plain clay roof tiles. The timber finials and overhanging eaves give a Victorian appearance, but no remaining historic fenestration survives on the south elevation. A Tuscan stone portico on the west façade suggests this was the front elevation. An outhouse to the south survives, and to the north a single-storey brick gabled outbuilding is attached to a further two-storey gabled building, suggesting former agricultural function. These are currently unused and in a poor state of repair. To the east the canal arm to the former salt works remains, with well-preserved sandstone copings. The wharf is in use as a boatyard.



Figure 54: Wharf House



Figure 55: Canal arm to Salt Works



Figure 56: Redundant former agricultural buildings at Salt Works Farm

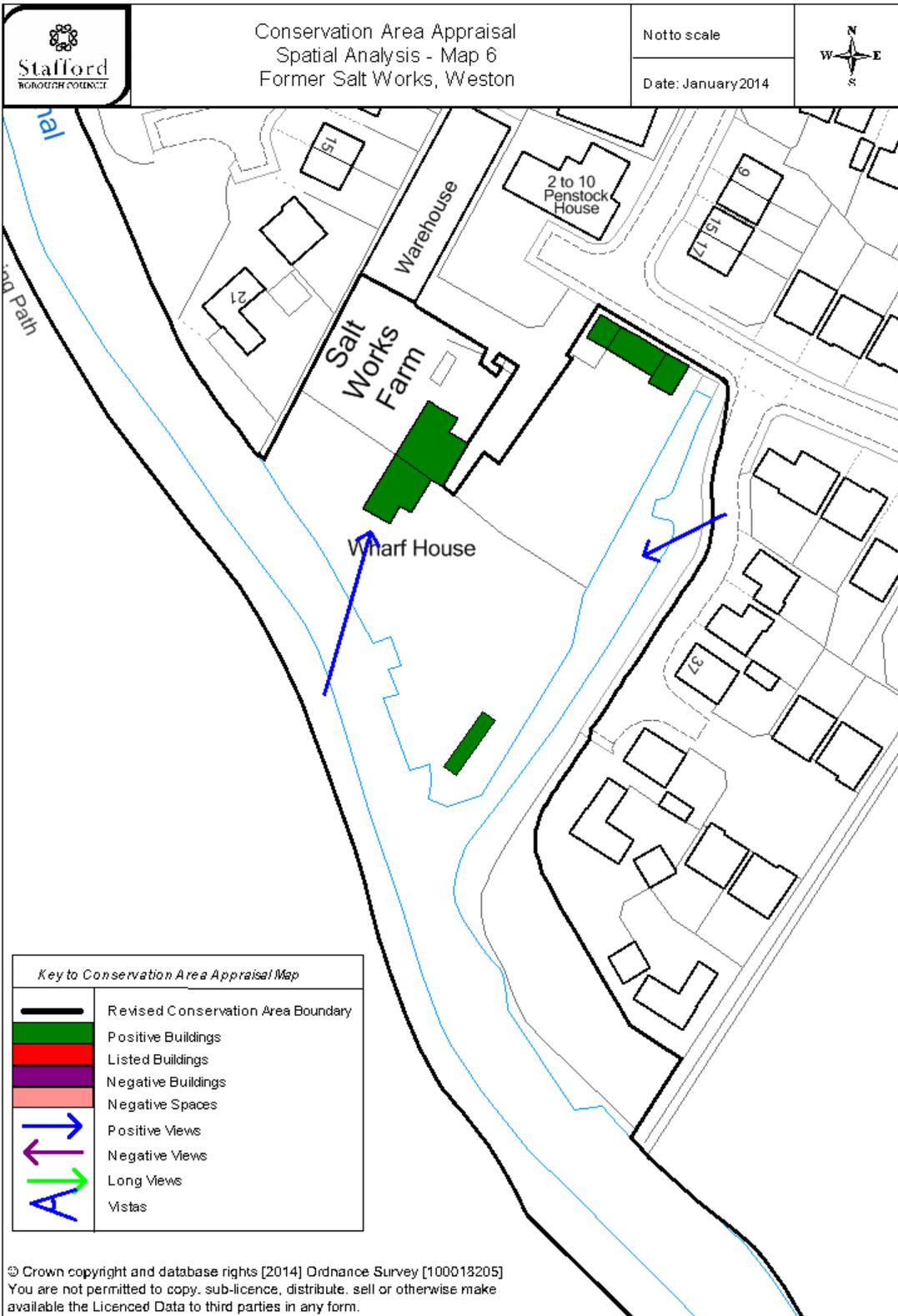


Figure 57: Wharf House and former Salt Works Farm

- 11.11 Views from the former Salt Works encompass pasture, the River Trent, mature hedgerows and veteran trees. Shirleywich is reached after passing Brinepit lock and bridge (number 79), which were built to the familiar specification of the Trent and Mersey Canal. There was formerly a lock keeper's cottage on the eastern side of the canal, now long demolished.
- 11.12 Shirleywich is the site of another historic salt works dating to the 17th century. Buildings included a smithy, brine pits, a gravel pit and factory buildings, and there is also documentary evidence for a lime kiln and wells. The salt works was redundant by 1901 (Staffordshire HER). A canal arm and wharf served the salt works, and was used for importing coal for the evaporation of brine. Only a small portion remains, which is now unconnected to the main canal. The village was planned around the salt works in the 17th century, but most houses were demolished in the 1960s, leaving a handful of dwellings sited close to the A51 (north of the canal). 18th century Shirleywich Farm, formerly the Ferrers Arms pub, survives to the north of the towpath.
- 11.13 Pasturefields Salt Marsh, to the southwest of the canal is a designated site of Special Scientific Interest and is a modified remnant of the former salt marshes of the Trent Valley. The site supports rare and specialised plant communities with a distinctive ecology which should not be disturbed. South of Pasturefields the canal moves slightly away from the River Trent and the railway, gently winding through open countryside and water meadows towards Great Haywood.
- 11.14 Pasturefields Bridge (number 77) is another grade II listed Brindley bridge, as is Hoo Mill Bridge (number 76) further south.
- 11.15 Hoo Mill Lock, Bridge and Lock keeper's cottage form a nucleus for the associated boatyard and moorings. Hoo Mill was a flint grinding mill on the River Trent, which took advantage of the new transport system by building a brief tramway to the Trent and Mersey Canal and canalside wharf. The mill went out of use at the end of the 19th century, and only foundations survive. The mill house survives to the west of the conservation area and glimpses are visible from the towpath.

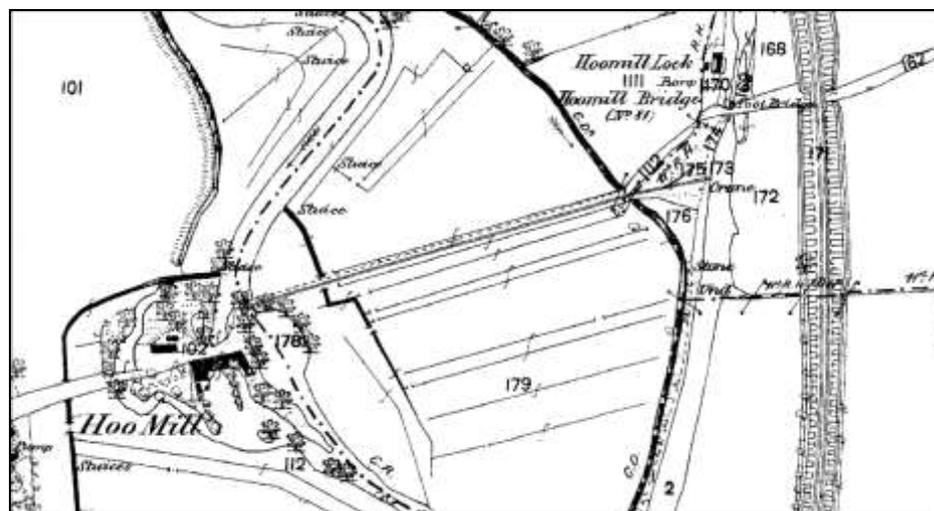


Figure 58: OS First Edition, circa 1880 showing tramway from Hoo Mill to the canal and wharf

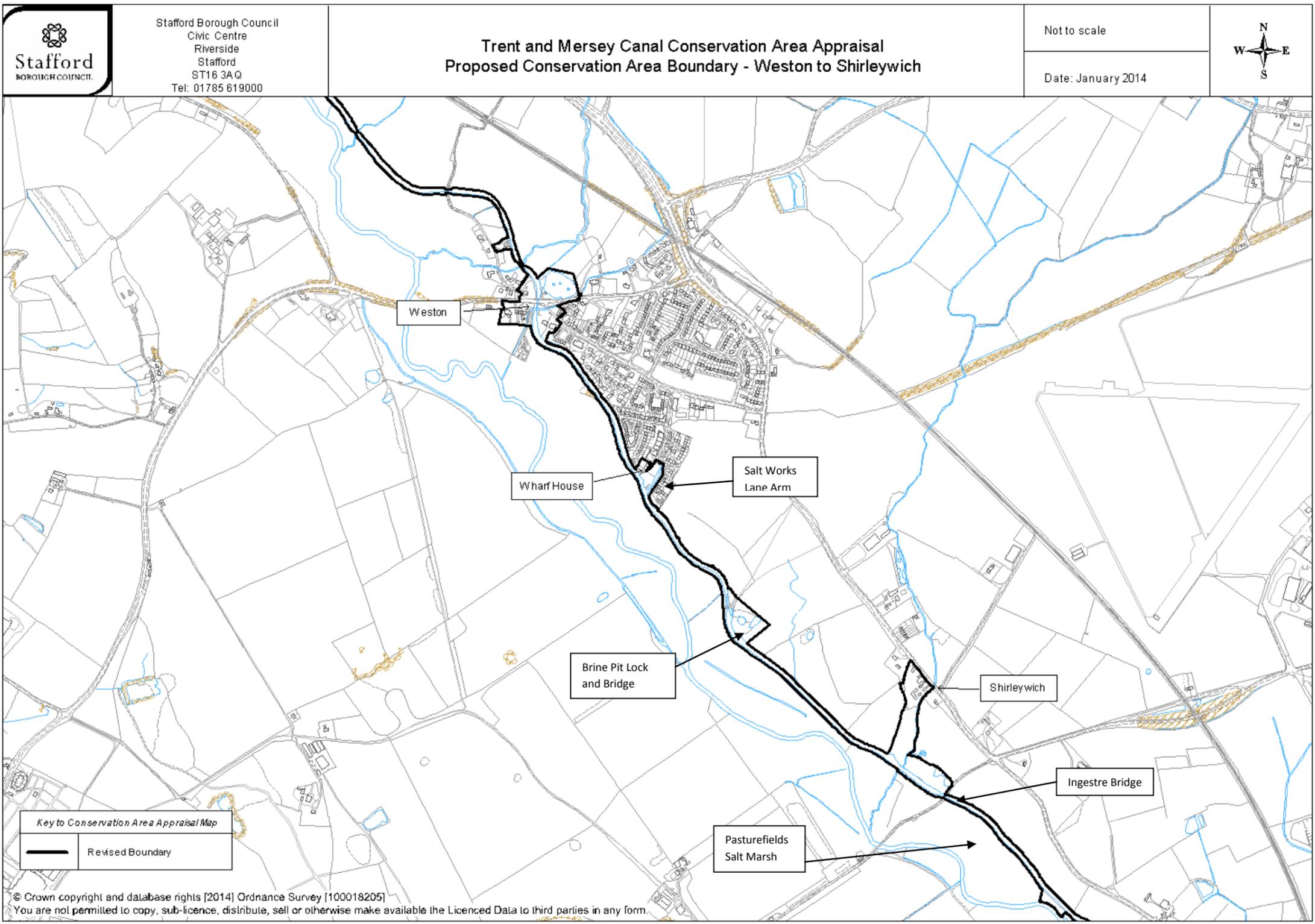


Figure 59: Weston and Shirleywich

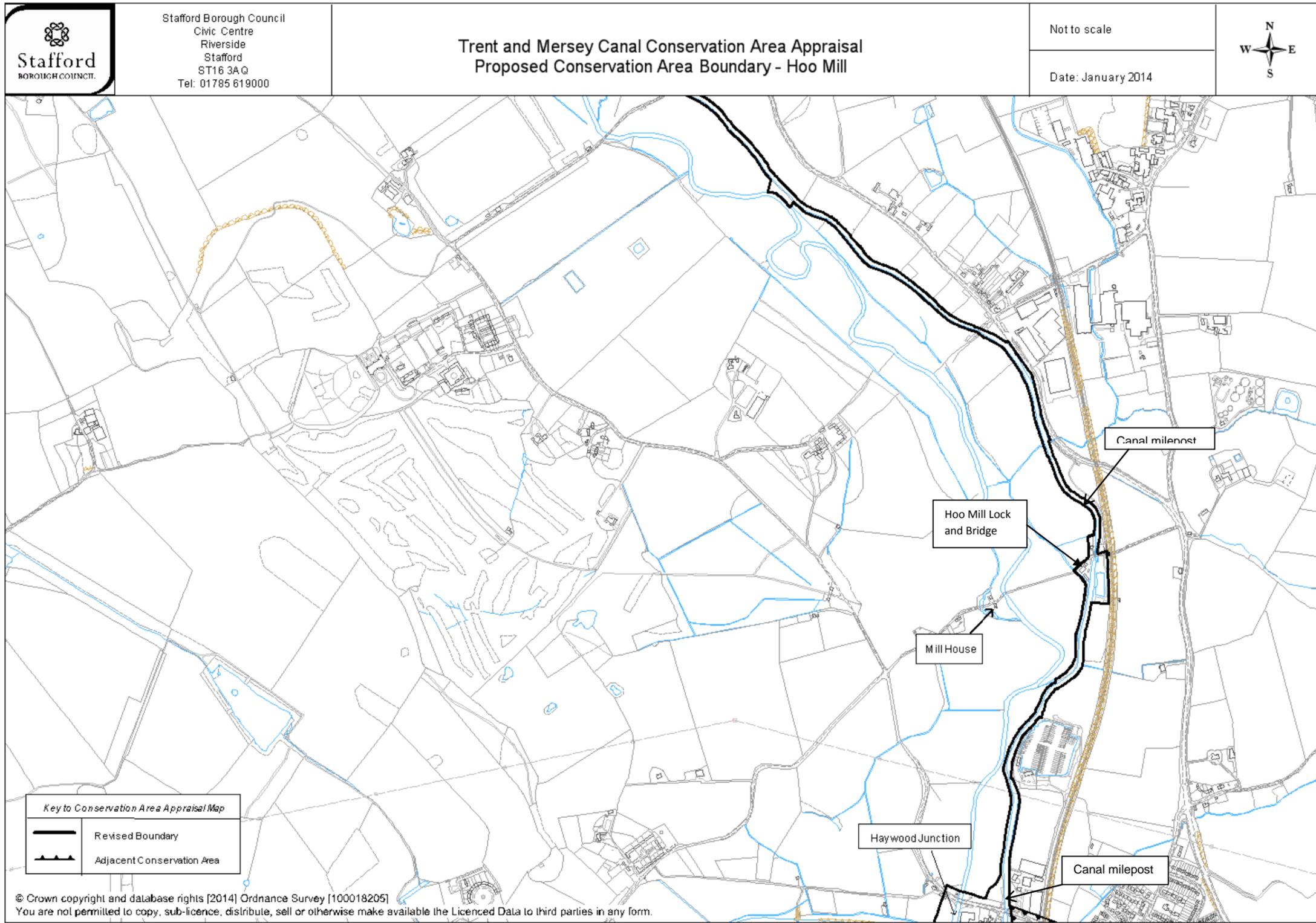


Figure 60: Hoo Mill

12 Great Haywood

- 12.1 Just north of Great Haywood Junction and east of the grade II listed Middle Bridge (number 75), is a recently constructed leisure marina. Its extensive basin of moorings for around 100 leisure boats is screened by a uniform belt of trees.
- 12.2 Great Haywood Junction canal wharf and boatyard sit alongside the junction between the Trent and Mersey Canal and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal to the west. Here the towpath is carried over the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal by grade II listed and scheduled bridge number 109. Although this bridge is of the familiar vernacular brick construction, it is unusually wide, to accommodate narrow boats turning at the junction. It is a striking landscape feature viewed from Mill Lane, and the setts and copings are well-preserved.
- 12.3 Here also is one of Brindley's early aqueducts, a relatively squat structure with low ashlar arches over the river and engineering brick parapet above. It provides little more than a culvert for the Trent to pass underneath the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, an earlier canal, completed 1772.
- 12.4 Views from the bridge to the north encompass Haywood Junction and former wharf buildings. Although alteration is visible, the layout of this group has been retained, with wharfingers' house, stabling and stores still readily identified. The space to the south of the buildings is sub-divided with gardens and development such as uPVC windows give an overly domestic appearance. The alteration of a two-storey canted bay to a flat frontage has marred the character of this group, but there is evidence of historical features should reinstatement be considered at a later date.
- 12.5 The storage building at right angles to the towpath retains a historic timber sliding door with a pegged frame and a small opening possessing vertical iron bars. This single storey gabled building adds to the character of the area and creates a pleasant historic scene with the canal and bridge 109 facing north.
- 12.6 Opposite the wharf is the former banksman's lobby to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, unfortunately with brickwork painted and gothic tracery to windows obscured by security grilles.
- 12.7 To the west of the wharf buildings is a striking 4-storey corn mill, now disused. This imposing building is L-shaped with two gabled Staffordshire plain clay roof tiles. Window openings, lucams and loading doors remain, and the lucams retain cast iron corbels with a circular motif in the spandrels. Lucams are defined as doors at first floor level or above that allow for the loading and unloading of goods. Stone ashlar is found at the door openings, and brick is a warm orange-red with a course of lighter yellow bricks at floor levels, giving a Victorian appearance. It is dwarfed by adjacent 20th century industrial units

which have damaged its setting, giving the mill a 'lost' appearance, out of context with its historic setting.

- 12.8 Views south towards Shugborough Park and Hall are unspoilt. The canal meanders through the estate, where it passes through the Great Haywood and Shugborough conservation area. To the west views across the vast grade I listed parkland and Shugborough Hall give a beautiful setting to the canal, matched to the east by a steep bank of historic trees.

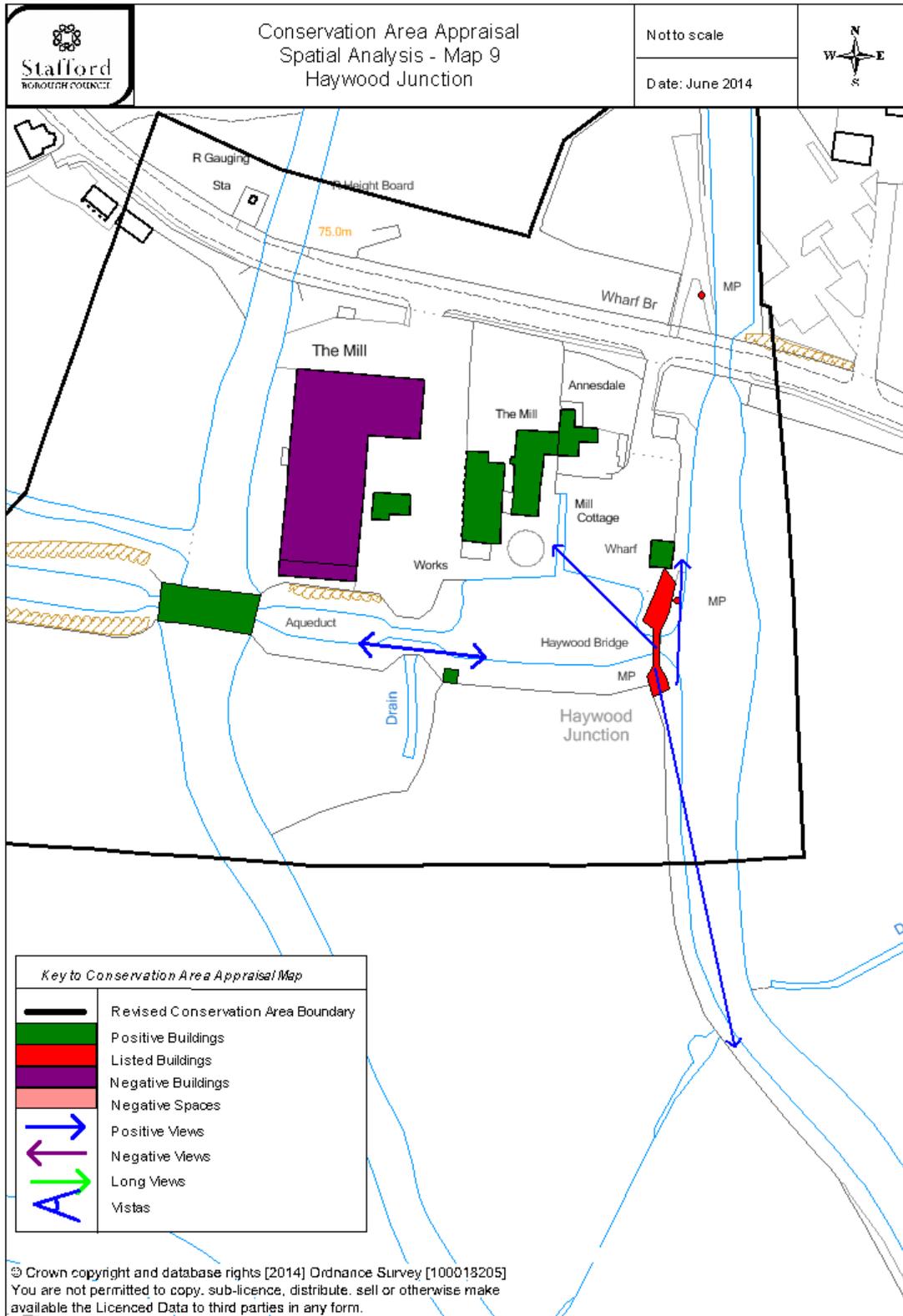


Figure 61 Great Haywood character appraisal



Figure 5 Haywood Junction facing south



Figure 6 Haywood Junction, 1962. Reproduced with permission of Tony Smith. Staffordshire County Museum Service, reference 55/22841



Figure 7 Bridge 109 from Mill Lane



Figure 8 bridge 109 at Haywood Junction

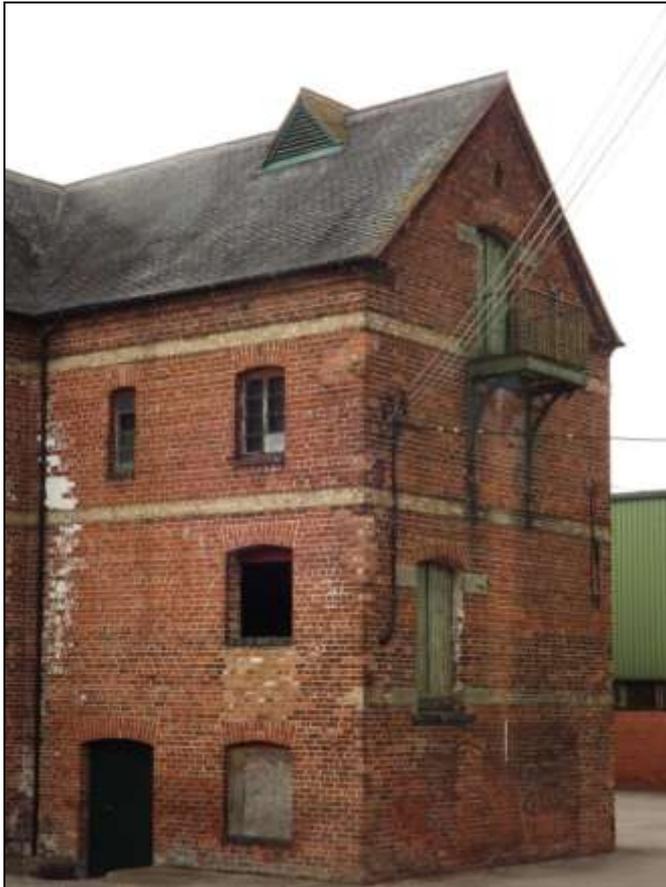


Figure 9 Haywood mill



Haywood mill in 1964. Reproduced with permission of Tony Smith. Staffordshire County Museum Service, reference 55/24761



Figure 67 : Early Brindley aqueduct over the Trent at Haywood junction.



Figure 68: Banksman's lobby

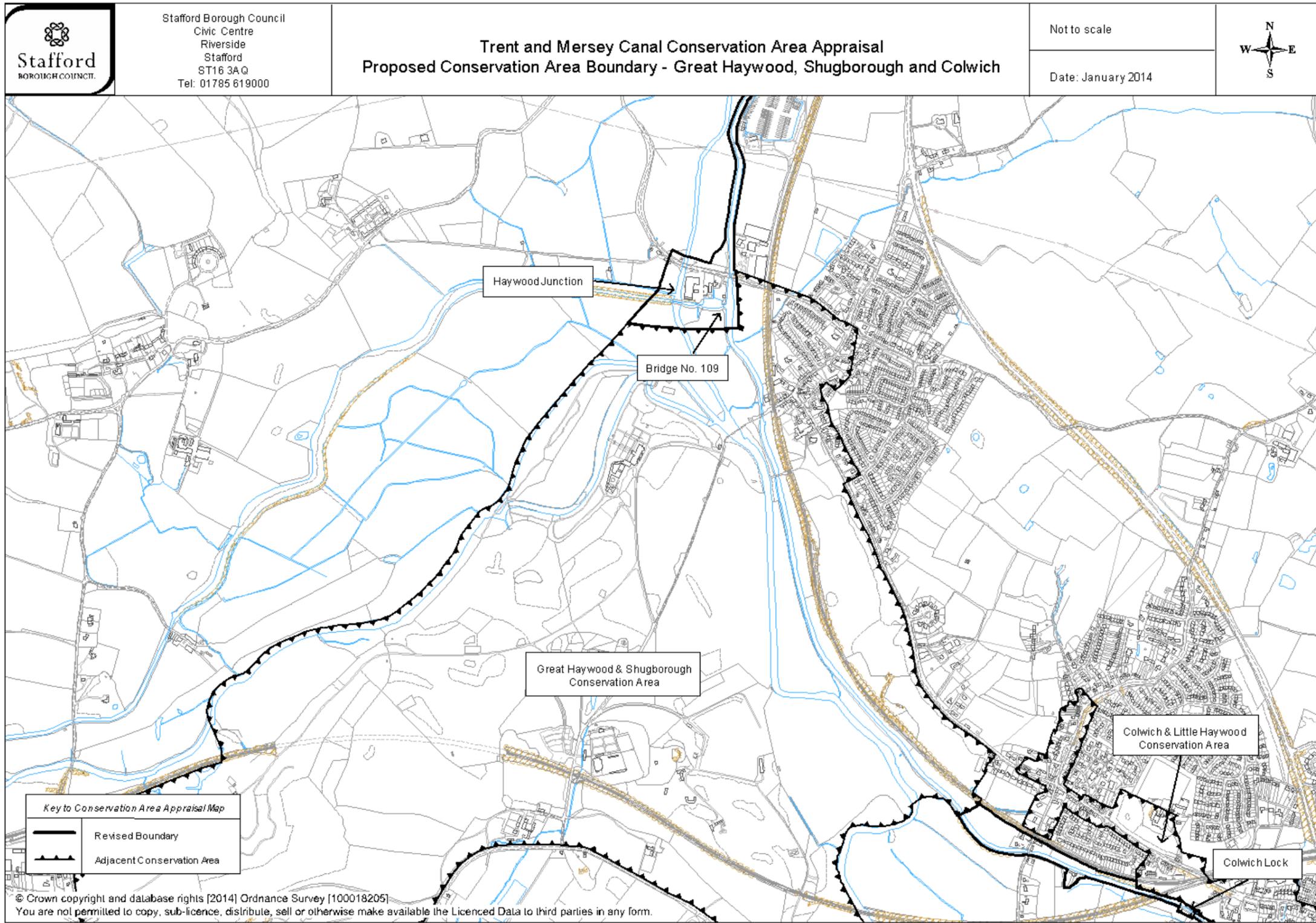


Figure 10 Great Haywood

- 12.9 The canal passes through Shugborough Park to the south of Haywood Junction, and falls within the boundary of the designated Great Haywood and Shugborough Conservation Area. This section includes two notable bridges. A 19th century cast iron bridge in the style of other bridges and railings of the Shugborough Estate, provided a route for carriages between Shugborough Hall and St. Stephen's Church in Great Haywood. The attractive late 18th century Trent Lane Bridge with ashlar stone parapets provided the main route into the village. More detail can be found in the Great Haywood and Shugborough Conservation Area Appraisal (Stafford Borough Council, 2014).
- 12.10 At the south of Shugborough Park, 20th century housing on a raised position in Little Haywood is visible from the canal, which mars the setting slightly. At the junction with Meadow Lane, Meadow Lane Bridge and Navigation Farm create attractive views to the north.
- 12.11 Meadow Lane Bridge (number 72) is well-preserved and original brickwork remains. Along Meadow Lane the rectilinear form and height of the stabling and converted stables on either side of Meadow Lane create a sense of enclosure, and lead visually towards Meadow Lane. The western block is marred slightly by a rebuilt verge with a dentilation pattern not found within the conservation area. The individual buildings of Navigation Farm, originally arranged in two courtyards to the east and west of Meadow Lane, are well-preserved although in need of repair. Pig sties remain to the west with original timber doors and Staffordshire blue tiles.
- 12.12 The name suggests the farm was built after the canal's construction, and nearby stabling may have served passing trade. In the late 19th century, the farmer was also a coal merchant, and the house to the east of Meadow Lane, part of the farm complex, was then the Navigation Inn (Staffordshire Past Track).
- 12.13 To the southeast of Navigation Farm, three cottages face the canal. These are two storey, terraced and two bays each with small gardens to the front and rear. The northernmost cottage retains outward opening casement windows with no cills. These are almost flush within the opening but slightly recessed. The ground floor window has a cambered arch. Dentilation at eaves is visible along the whole row. In spite of later window replacement, including the addition of cills which spoils the visual flow along the cottages, the cottages retain a modest charm. They are of brick with Staffordshire plain clay roof tiles.



Figure 11 Navigation Farm



Figure 12 Pigsties at Navigation Farm



Figure 72 Navigation Farm and former Navigation Inn



Figure 13 Canal side cottages

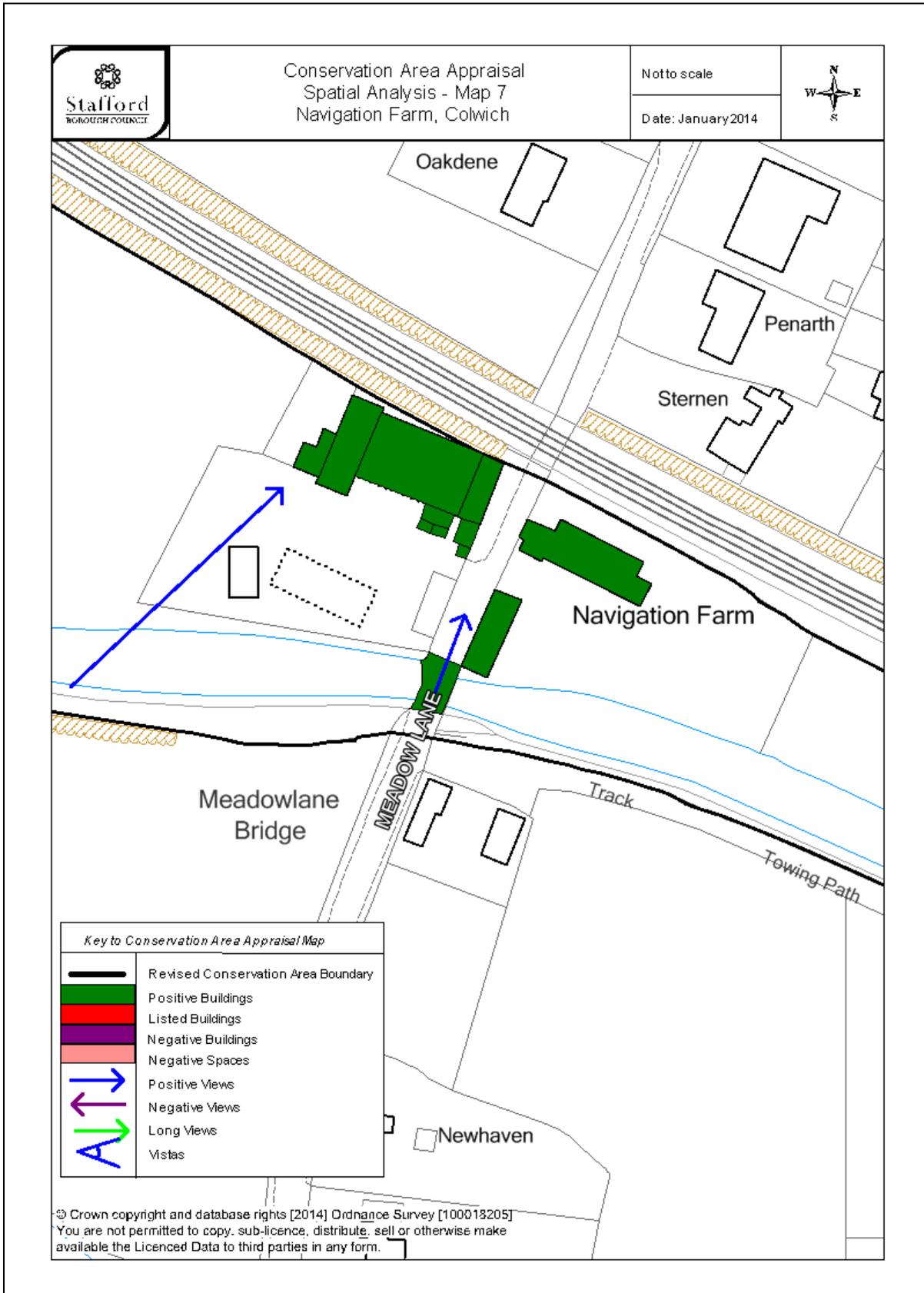


Figure 74 Navigation Farm, Colwich, character appraisal

13 Colwich

- 13.1 At Colwich is a typical group of lock, bridge and lock-keeper's cottage, all of which are grade II listed. Here, the late 19th century two-storey lock-keeper's cottage, "Colwich Lock House" has unusually decorative features, including window heads with pulvinated frieze, architrave at first floor level, wedge lintels with raised keystone at ground floor, and stone corbels below moulded brick eaves. The single storey toll office to the east reflects the former function of the cottage. It is brick painted white with Staffordshire blue roof tiles.
- 13.2 Unusually, the lock-keeper's privy, a small detached building to the north of the house, is also listed. It is thought to be of mid-19th century construction, and appears to be situated directly above the lock overflow weir for sewage disposal. To the rear, facing away from the house, there are ventilation gaps in the brickwork.
- 13.3 The lock itself is a typical Brindley narrow lock, with a brick-lined chamber and stone coping and quoins, but the gates have here been replaced with steel. The bridge is a brick-built hump-backed accommodation bridge with segmental arch and stone copings, but without towpath. There is a stone plaque towards the crown at each side, now with cast iron bridge plate attached, and a cast-iron guard rail along both copings.



Figure 75: The lock, bridge and house group at Colwich



Figure 14 Grade II listed Colwich Lock Cottage with elaborate window decoration, single storey office and listed privy to the left over canal culvert.



Figure 77: Maintenance building opposite Colwich Lock House

- 13.4 To the southwest are the remains of a scheduled moated site, and views towards the hills of Cannock Chase. The River Trent passes close to the canal towpath. Views to the north are of Church Farm and the Church of St Michael and All Saints. The farm buildings, canal setting and church create a picturesque village scene, enhanced by the brick diaper patterned ventilation on the single storey gabled barn to the northwest.



Figure 78: Views towards Church Farm and St Michael and All Angels' Church, Colwich



Figure 15: Brick ventilation detailing at Church Farm and St Michel and All Angels' Church

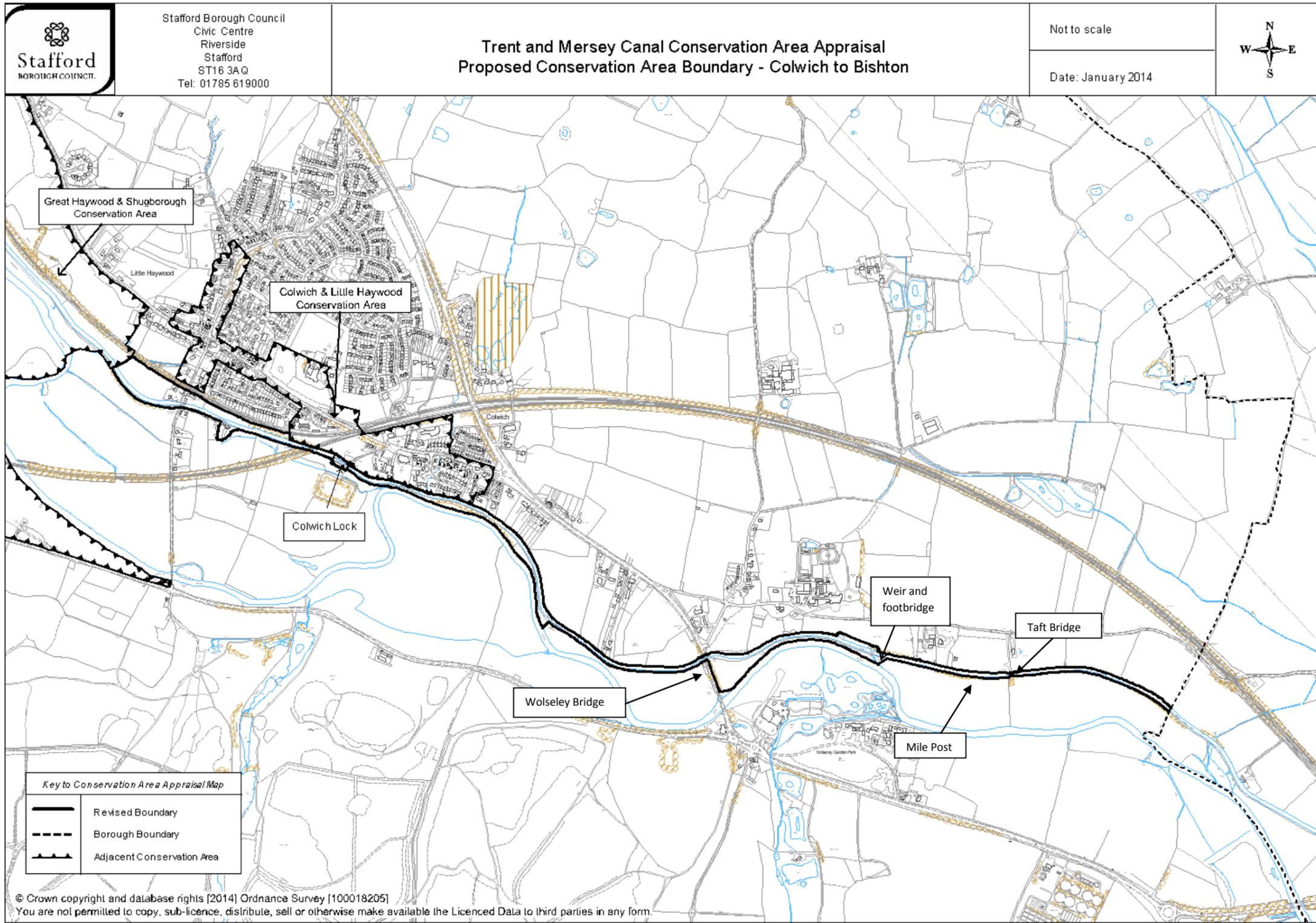


Figure 80: Colwich and Bishton

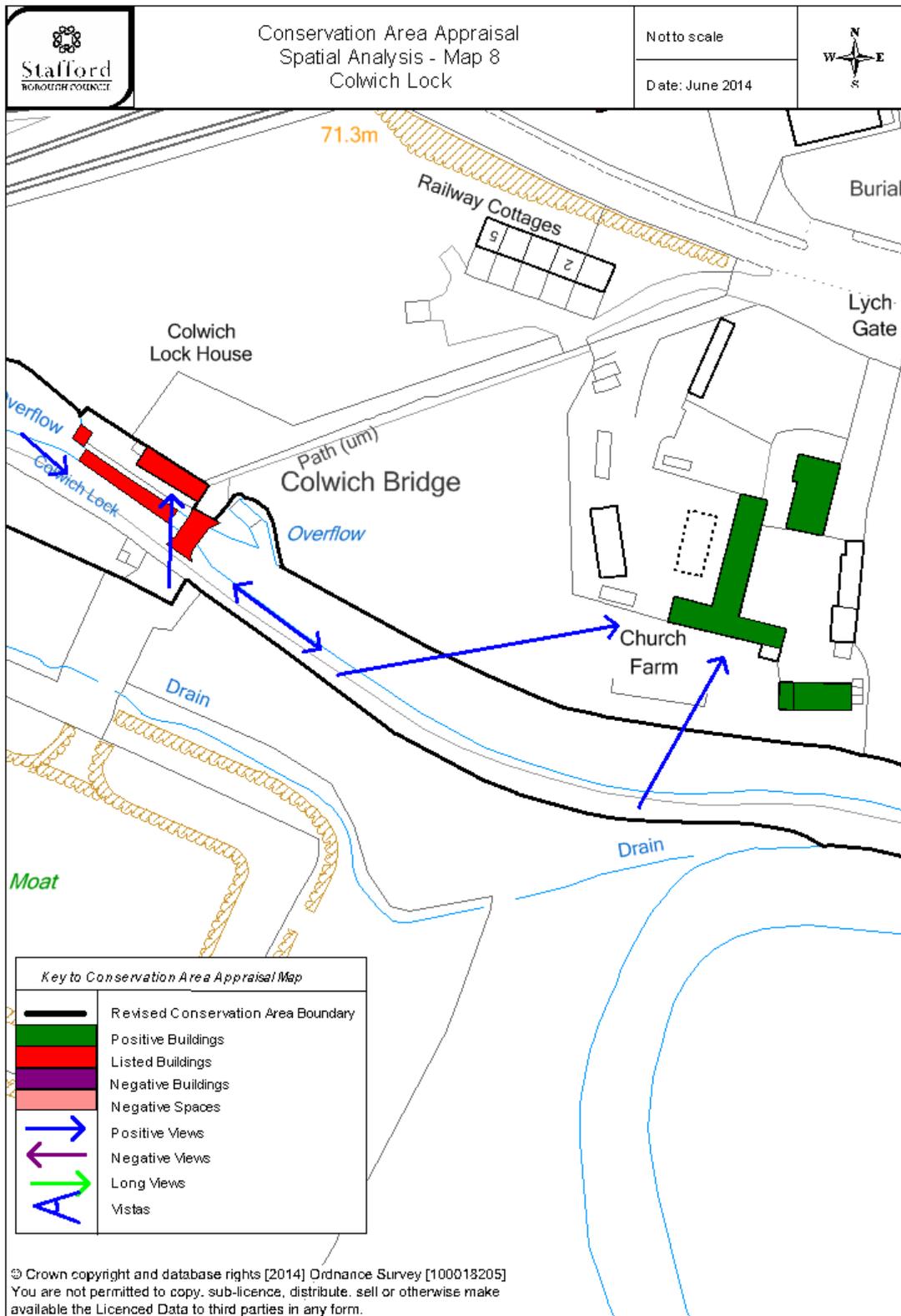


Figure 81: Colwich Lock and Church Farm, Colwich

- 13.5 To the south of Colwich, the grade II listed Wolseley Bridge spans the River Trent and is an attractive feature in views from the conservation area. This three span stone bridge dates to the late 18th century and stands on the site of a medieval bridge.



Figure 82: Wolseley Bridge

- 13.6 Grade II* listed Bishton Hall can be glimpsed across the canalside cricket ground. It dates to 1760, of three storeys, double pile with a 2:3:2 bay arrangement. The pedimented central bay projects forwards with stone quoins and a Tuscan portico. A bow fronted west wing and a mid-19th century tower with stone dressings at quoins were added in the mid-19th century, creating an asymmetrical appearance. It is rendered with stone dressings, and the roof is hipped and covered in slate. Bishton Hall park was laid out after construction of house in 1760. The Classical south frontage, created by the central projecting bay, portico and window arrangement of 6 over 6 vertically sliding sashes to ground and first floor creates an elegant and picturesque view and provides a contrast in scale and materials to the farm buildings and cottages. The base of an 18th century boathouse to Bishton Hall, still survives where the river and canal converge.
- 13.7 A little further east is an overflow weir that takes excess water into the River Trent. The weir has original stone sets with ramps on each side for boat horses to walk through any overflowing water, whilst a narrow footbridge alongside enabled the boatman walking with the horse to cross dry-shod.



Figure 83: Bishton Hall

- 13.8 The canal proceeds in an easterly direction via a mile post and Taft Bridge, number 69, another well-preserved original canal bridge. Beyond the boundary with Lichfield District, the Brindley Bank Pumping Station and Aqueduct act as focal points in views to the east.

14 Key Positive Characteristics

Built Character

Canal structures

- Canal cut of meandering form and natural appearance to canal edge
- Brick lined narrow pound locks with single top gate and double bottom gates
- Brick road or accommodation bridges, many original late 18th century structures, often with humped backs and typically of local brick with stone coping and quoins
- A variety of brick-built canal-side and lock-keeper's cottages, and banksman's or lockkeeper's lodges
- Cast iron early 19th century mileposts
- Canal basins and wharfs, and later modern canal marinas

Building Types and Scale, Plot Size and Plan Form

- Terraced, rectilinear two-storey 18th and 19th century cottages, gabled and hipped, sited with main façade to the canal
- Three-storey Georgian farm houses such as Brassworks Farmhouse and 18th to 19th century farm buildings
- Groups of associated 3 or 4 storey late 18th to early 19th century industrial buildings, such as the former Sandon lime and flint mill and Great Haywood corn mill
- Wharfs and boatyards such as Barlaston, Great Haywood wharf, the wharf at Weston's former salt works
- Lock cottages such as Aston, Sandon and Colwich, two-storey with single storey toll office such as at Colwich
- Large scale gabled farmsteads adjacent to the canal, arranged in courtyard plans, with stabling strategically located close to the canal for passing trade

Architectural Styles and Features

- Dentilation at eaves level on otherwise modest terraced cottages
- Dormers passing through at eaves level, Simple outward opening casement windows or 2 over 2 vertically siding sash windows
- 6 over 6 vertically sliding sashes, fluted door casements and classical proportions on Georgian properties

Building Materials and Colour Palette

- Brick of a deep orange and light brown, and sandstone copings as seen at the single span bridges
- Blue hogback coping bricks for walls and bridges

- Brick at the terraced canal side and lock cottages, or brick painted or rendered and painted off-white
- Slate and Staffordshire blue roofs
- Stucco painted white

Spatial Analysis

Public Realm

- The canal towpath is accessible to the public, with bridges providing routes to roads. Some parts of the towpath have undergone improvement works, making access easier, whilst some areas would benefit from a similar scheme, being muddy and difficult to access in places.
- Historic paving surfaces are very well preserved, particularly under the bridges.

Open Spaces and Gardens

- Sandon Hall and Park and Shugborough Hall and Park creating important open parkland settings for the canal
- Surviving post-medieval water meadow systems, often visible in places
- Open countryside with surviving hedgerows and trees, creating an attractive setting for the canal and a rural feel

Boundary Types

- Brick walls in conurbations and high character areas, as at Aston-by-Stone, creating a sense of enclosure
- Hedgerows form important enclosure boundaries in rural areas

15 Negative Aspects that Impact on the Character of the Conservation Area

- 15.1 Many bridges have been repaired in the past with cement and brickwork that is unsuitable for the porosity and absorbency of the original brick and lime mortar, resulting in further decay to original brickwork. Apart from the physical damage this has caused to these structures, the visual effect is one of a patchwork of repairs obscuring the character of the bridge which is gained in part through its materials. Some areas of brickwork have been rebuilt wholesale.
- 15.2 Vegetation growth is also causing problems to some bridges, in particular those that are disused, potentially leading to later repair and structural problems.
- 15.3 Traffic bridge strikes have caused damage to at least one bridge in the conservation area, being vulnerable due to its narrowness and location.
- 15.4 20th century pedestrian bridges do not take into account the character of the historic accommodation bridges in terms of materials and siting, causing visual harm to the historic structures and setting of the canal.



Figure 84: 20th century pedestrian bridges harm views of the historic bridges and cause harm to setting

16 20th and 21st Century Development Affecting the Setting of the Conservation Area

- 16.1 Although many developments are sited close to the canal, development does not necessarily have a negative impact on the setting of the canal in some circumstances. Many historic buildings such as the brewery warehouse at Stone are sited directly onto the canal, and canal-associated buildings are often sited deliberately close to the water's edge. However development would be inappropriate in some areas of open countryside, as here the rural character is very well preserved and contributes to the unspoilt setting of the conservation area.
- 16.2 Some housing estates throughout the conservation area are more damaging to the setting of the canal than others. The most damaging appear to be where little consideration has been given to appropriate design form, including roof structure and plan form, which can create an anonymous feel in the conservation area, thus diluting character. This is evident where gambrel roofs are employed for example, for which there is no historic precedent.
- 16.3 Scale also has an impact on the character. Where some two or three storey buildings are sited close to the canal, but are tall in scale, this has an overbearing effect on the canal's setting, particularly where historic structures are present, such as locks, as these are dwarfed in significance visually.
- 16.4 Positioning is also key, as historically many buildings fronted directly onto canal with the main façade onto the water's edge. Alternatively they are set at right angles, such as farm buildings. Where buildings are set at angles this creates an alien intrusion by the introduction of siting patterns not historically found within the conservation area, again diluting character.
- 16.5 The presence of heavily domesticated garden areas that front onto the canal creates a suburban intrusion on character. This is compounded by the use of close-boarded plank fencing and metal railings that divide properties, breaking up the flow of the space visually, and creating a cluttered appearance. Some late 20th century housing estates create an open, suburban appearance through cul-de-sac layouts and lack of boundary walls.
- 16.6 Detailing of new housing can also have a negative impact on the character of the conservation area. Features such as blocked-in windows create a contrived appearance, and large expanses of brickwork create a confrontational and uninviting appearance.
- 16.7 Materials also impact on character. Concrete slates and concrete pan tile roofs are alien in the conservation area and bright orange smooth textured brick jars visually with the softer textured, orange and deep orange brickwork of the bridges and historic buildings.



Figure85: Large-scale development overbears the setting of the canal, and false windows and concrete tiles harm character

- 16.8 Some development that is visible from the conservation area has had a negative impact on setting, particularly large-scale industrial buildings, where scale and materials do not respect the character of the conservation area. Industrial units and associated signage, metal roller shutters and large advertisements are detrimental to character, compounded by the scale of the units. Although native trees provide some screening, coniferous trees create an anonymous appearance. Overall an uninviting, cluttered appearance is created.



Figure 86: Industrial units harm setting at Barlaston and Stone

17 Permitted Development

- 17.1 Permitted development such as replacement uPVC windows on elevations fronting the canal have further harmed character and obscured historical detailing by introducing thick glazing bars to windows and a stark, characterless appearance. Solar panels and rooflights fronting the canal cause a visual intrusion and draw further attention to development that is not sympathetic to the character of the conservation area.

18 Successful Development that Contributes to the Character of the Conservation Area

- 18.1 Development that is successful in terms of contributing and sustaining the character of the conservation area is found to the south of Weston.
- 18.2 The design of the housing development represents several key characteristics of the historic cottages found within the Trent and Mersey Canal conservation area. Consideration has been given to scale, design form, roof type, height, materials and detailing, creating successful development close to the canal without damaging the setting of the conservation area.



Figure 87: Housing development south of Weston

- a. The storey height reflects the height of the historic cottages found within the conservation area, and although the houses are two storey they do not overwhelm the setting of the canal as they are relatively low in height. The narrow bay width also reflects the proportions of the historic cottages.
- b. The simple, gabled roof form is also a common feature on the historic building stock, with no hips or gambrel forms. Staffordshire blue roof tiles are employed, a local characteristic material, along with correctly matched, deep orange brickwork with dentilation at eaves, reflecting local detailing. Some houses are painted off-white, also a common feature of the conservation area.

- c. Windows imitate the traditional outward opening vertically hung casements with a horizontal glazing bar, and gabled dormers pass through the eaves. The roof heights are stepped and the building line is not continuous, which breaks up the space and prevents the houses becoming visually obtrusive and reflects the piecemeal evolution of the historic environment.
- d. There are small-scale front gardens, and uniform fencing, helping create a visual flow along the building fronts. There is no physical subdivision between properties, and no mix of close-boarded fencing or metal railings to break up the space.
- e. At the south of the group a large building on a corner is less successful in terms of scale, window design and positioning. This is taller, and L-shaped, and the two-storey windows and hipped roof form are not found within the conservation area. This overbears the setting of the canal continuing south, where a cul-de-sac arrangement is observed. Here the character is diluted.



Figure 88: Houses are painted off-white reflecting the character of the conservation area, but development to the south is out of scale with the buildings to the north and harms the character of the conservation area (bottom right)

19 Protecting the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

- 19.1 Policies for the protection and management of the historic environment through the development management process are set out within NPPF Paragraphs 127 through to 141, and in Saved Policies of Stafford Borough Local Plan, Policies E&D2: *Consideration of Landscape or Townscape Setting*, E&D 18: *Development Likely to Affect Conservation Areas*, E&D19: *Accommodating New Development within Conservation Areas*, E&D20: *Demolition of Buildings in Conservation Areas*, E&D21: *Advertisements in Conservation Areas*, E&D22: *Proposals for Blinds, Canopies and Shutters*, E&D23: *Development Proposals Affecting Listed Buildings*, E&D24: *Demolition/Partial Demolition of Listed Buildings*, E&D25: *Proposals to Convert or Extend a Listed Building*, E&D43: *Trees in Conservation Areas* and E&D44: *Development Affecting Trees and Hedgerows*.
- 19.2 The draft Plan for Stafford Borough sets out policies for the protection and management of the historic environment through policies N9 and paragraphs 12.27 to 12.58. These should be used in conjunction with this appraisal to guide or assess any future development within the Trent and Mersey Canal conservation area.
- 19.3 Other organisations, such as the County Council Highways Authority, and statutory undertakers also have their own commitments to protect the character and appearance of the conservation area in the exercise of their duties.
- 19.4 To manage and protect the special historic character and appearance of the conservation area:
- The existing special historic character and appearance of the conservation area and all features identified as Positive should be retained and reinforced.
 - Further works that harm the significance of the area, identified in this appraisal, should be avoided.
 - *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) or its successor should be used for guidance.
 - 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).
 - 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.

20 Recommendations for Future Management

- 20.1 Changes that come into force through the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 will enable the creation of national Listed Building Consent Orders, enabling certain repair works to be carried out without the need for listed building consent. This may speed up the repair to listed bridges in the conservation area and improve their overall condition. The creation of the Canal and River Trust in 2013 and the emphasis on the importance of heritage should enable more sympathetic works generally in the future, avoiding further harm through, for example, unsympathetic pedestrian bridges.
- 20.2 Some development within the conservation area has had a negative effect on the visual amenity of the conservation area. Consideration must be given to appropriate design form, materials and scale, to echo the character of the historic buildings within the conservation area.
- 20.3 Piecemeal replacement fences of properties that back onto the canal break up the space visually and introduce a modern intrusion on character. Owners should be made aware of the importance of protecting and enhancing the character of the conservation area and guidance should be provided to owners, to ensure any future development is in keeping with the character of the conservation area.
- 20.4 The setting of the conservation area varies considerably along its length, and includes historic settlements, modern suburbs and more industrial areas, as well as valuable stretches of open space or woodland. The location of development needs to be carefully considered to protect important views and the existing landscape that enhance the significance of the conservation area.
- 20.5 Development visible from the conservation area has had a negative impact on the setting of the conservation area. Consideration must be given to setting of the conservation area and the appropriateness of the location and siting of new buildings as well as their material and scale.

21 Boundary Revisions

- 21.1 The conservation area boundary has been adjusted in places to follow property boundary lines, to make it clear to owners whether or not their property lies within a conservation area.
- 21.2 Canal Side in Barlaston is an attractive Victorian house with well-preserved architectural character. Its siting with main façade to the water suggests a connection to the canal historically, and it is proposed to include this property, up to and including its boundaries, within the conservation area. It is also proposed to include the property boundaries of 2 and 3 Canal Side to make it clearer to owners that their properties are within the conservation area.



Figure 89: 1 Canal Side

- 21.3 At Weston, it is proposed to adjust the boundary line to include The Saracen's Head pub to the north of 1-5 Stafford Road, as this has retained architectural character and contributes to the character of this part of the village. At the former salt works Wharf House and Salt Works Farm are not currently included in the conservation area. It is proposed to include these buildings as they retain special architectural and historical character and contribute to the setting of the canal.



Figure 90: Saracen's Head, Weston

- 21.4 To the north of Hoo Mill bridge, it is proposed to adjust the boundary line to exclude an area to the east of the canal as this area has no special visual features to warrant its inclusion.
- 21.5 At Little Haywood, it is proposed to include the whole of Navigation Farm within the conservation area. At present this lies within both the Trent and Mersey Canal conservation area and the Colwich and Little Haywood conservation area. The farm's position and name suggest this was built in this location to catch passing trade at the former Inn and stabling, and for transporting coal.
- 21.6 Colwich Lock, Lock Cottage and bridge are currently included within the Colwich and Little Haywood conservation area. It is proposed to include this area within the Trent and Mersey Canal conservation area as these buildings relate to the character and history of the canal.
- 21.7 Haywood Junction is currently within the Great Haywood and Shugborough conservation area but the buildings relate specifically to the canal, and so it is proposed to include this area within the Trent and Mersey Canal conservation area.
- 21.8 Two areas of ground are currently included to the south of Bishton. There is no evidence in the Staffordshire Historic Environment Record to suggest there is any historical relationship between these areas of land with the conservation area's development so it is proposed that this is excluded from the conservation area.

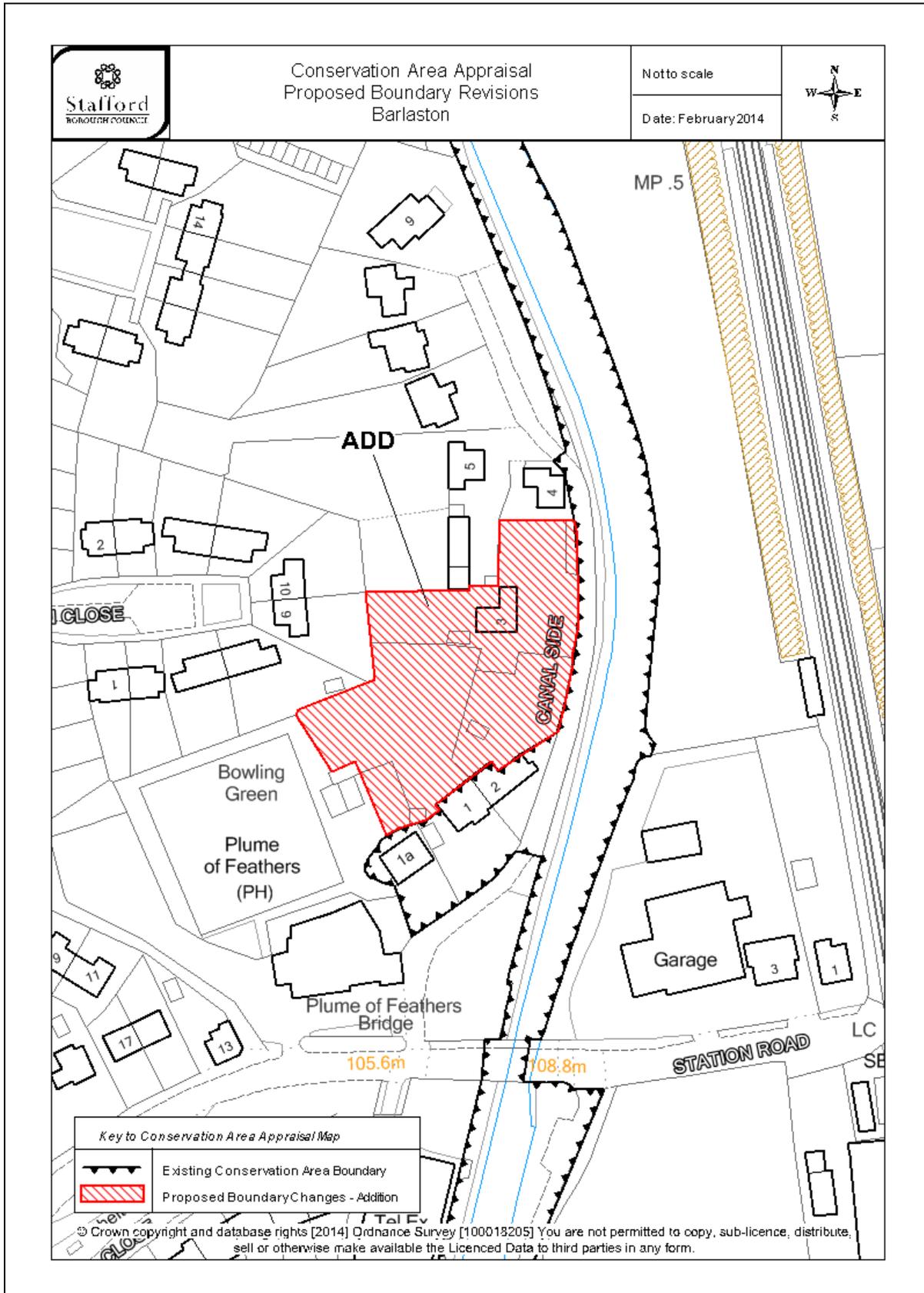


Figure 91: Proposed Boundary Revision, Barlaston

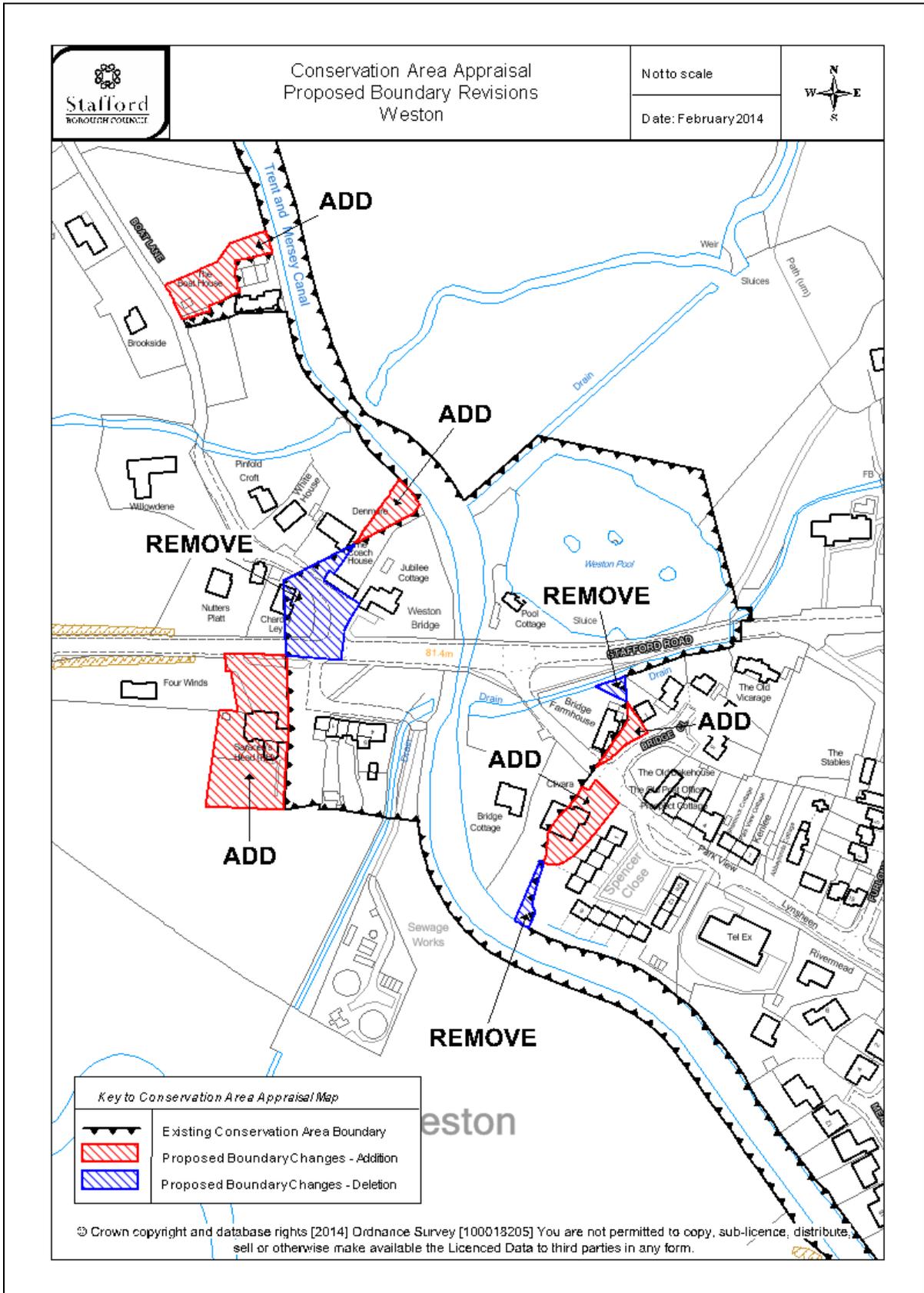


Figure 16: Proposed Boundary Revisions, Weston

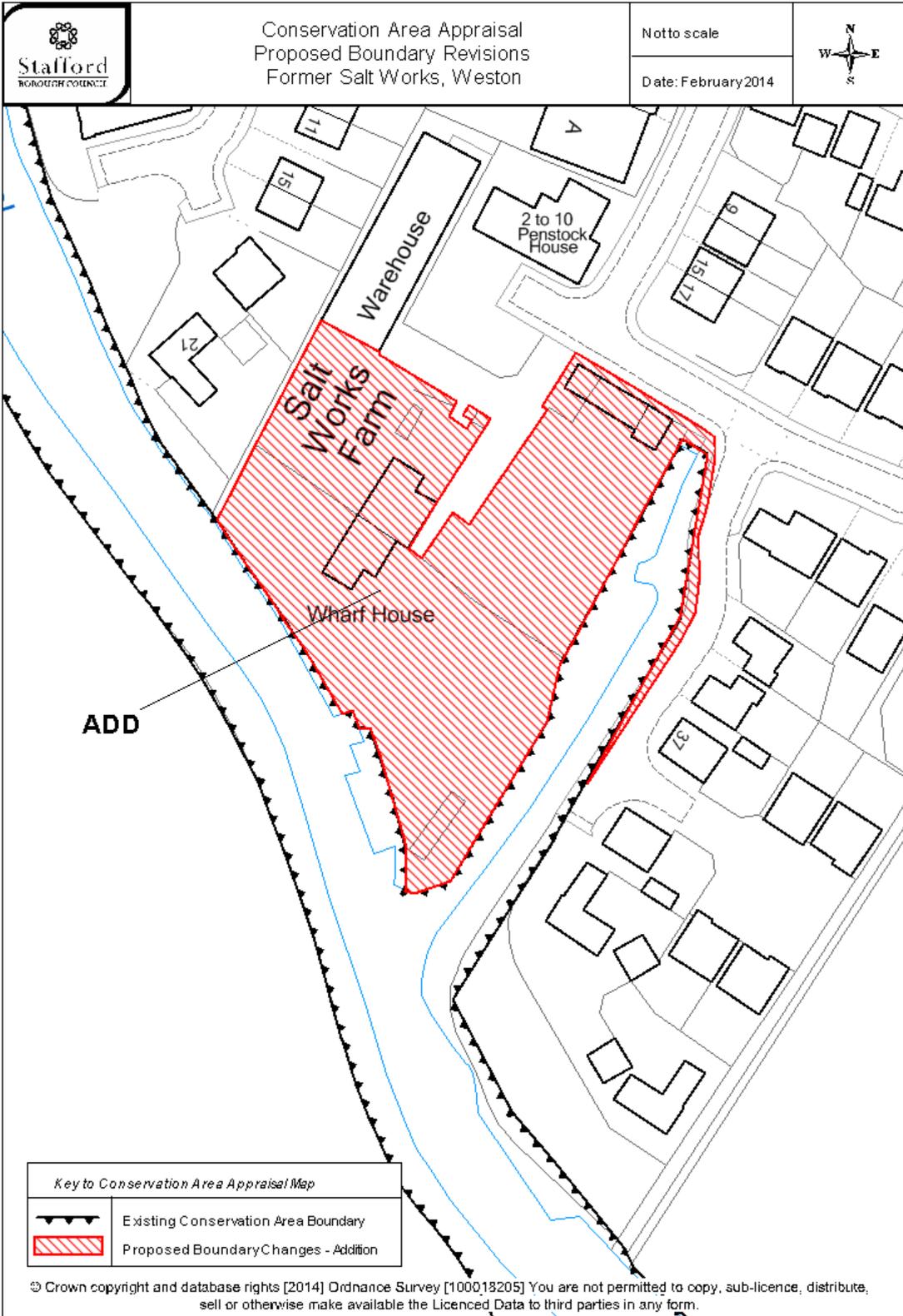


Figure 93: Proposed Boundary Revision, Weston, former Salt Works



Conservation Area Appraisal
Proposed Boundary Revisions
Hoo Mill

Not to scale

Date: February 2014

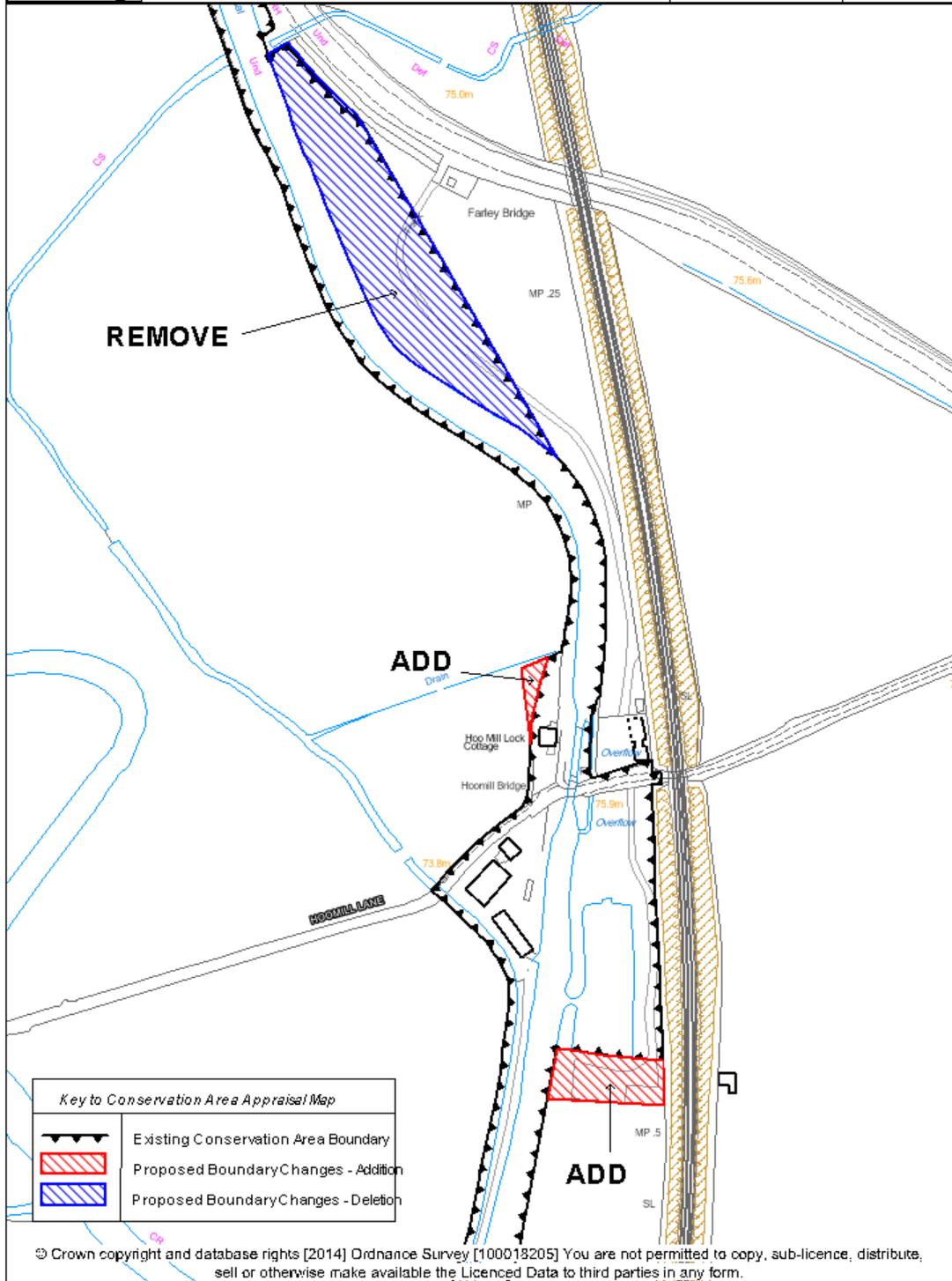


Figure 17: Proposed Boundary Revisions, Hoo Mill

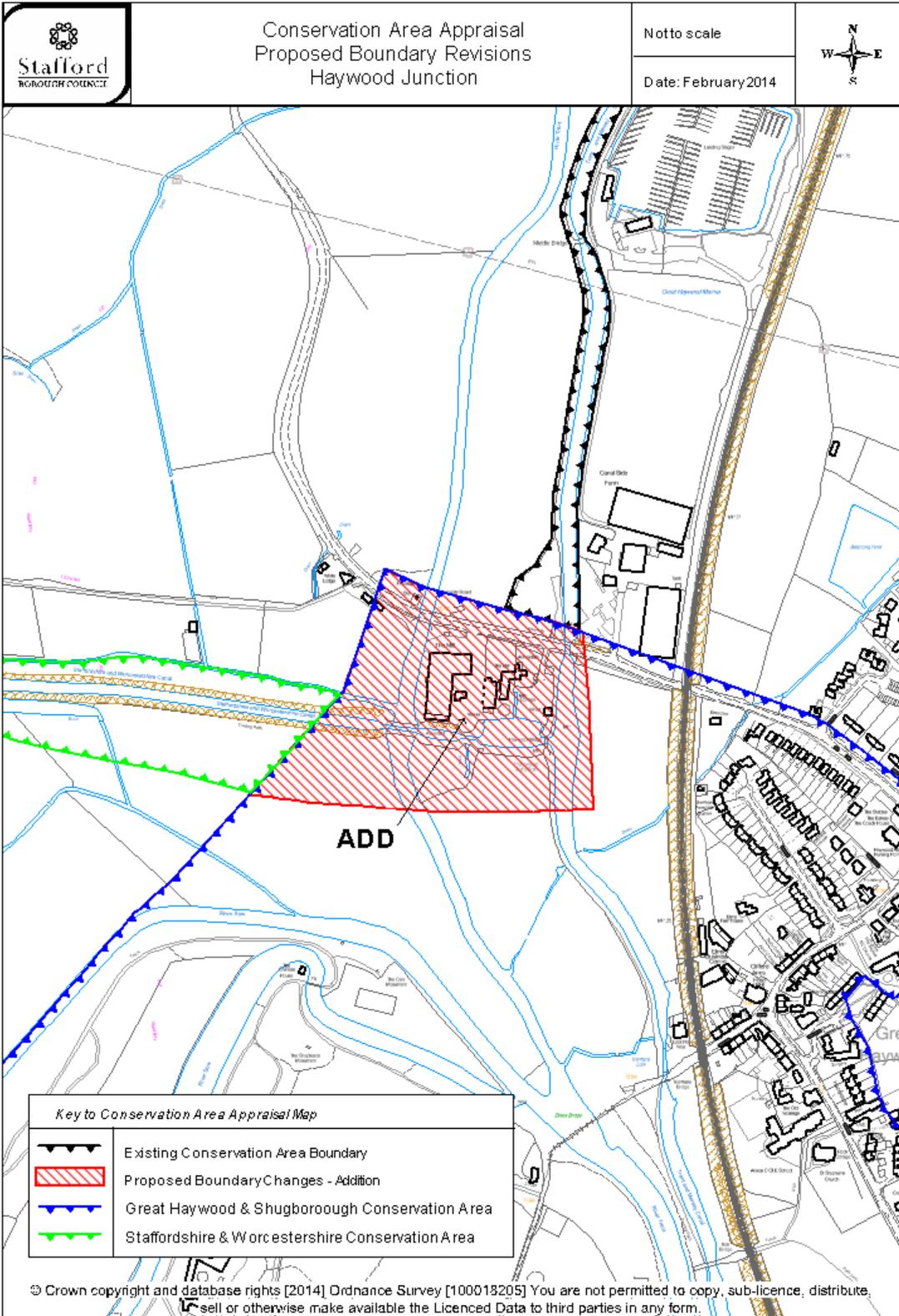


Figure 18: Proposed Boundary Revision, Haywood Junction

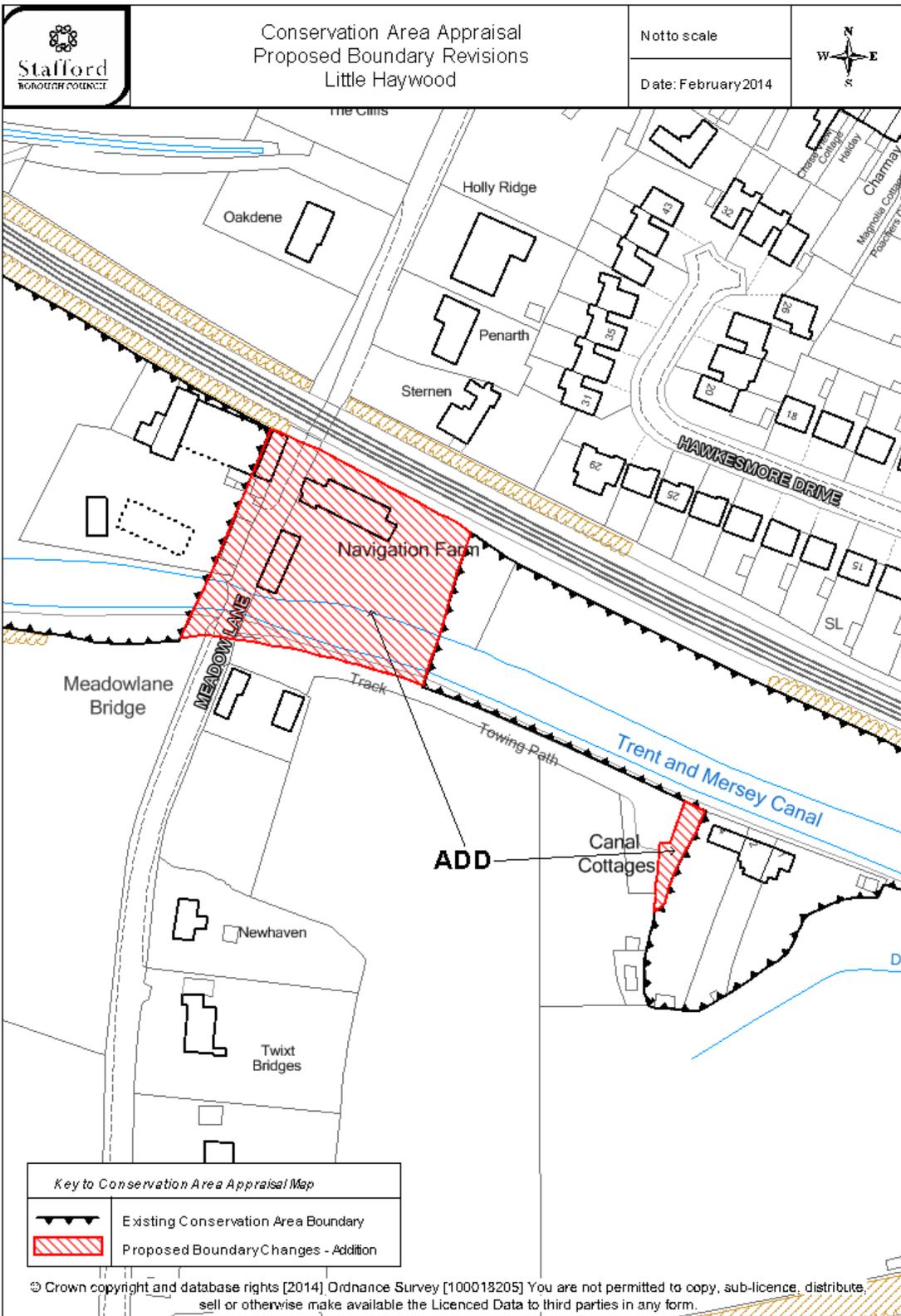


Figure 19: Proposed Boundary Revision, Navigation Farm, Colwich

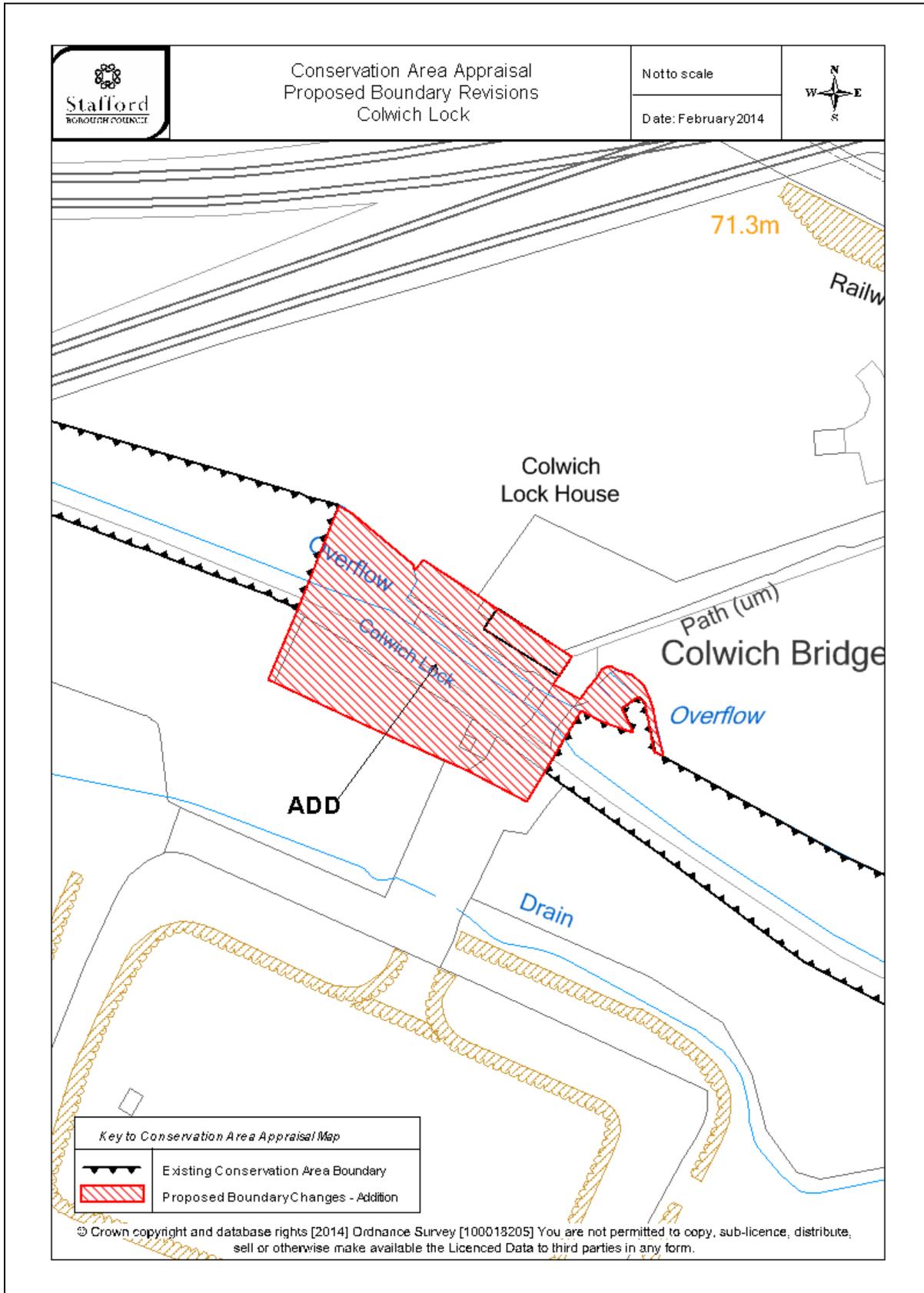


Figure 20: Proposed Boundary Revision, Colwich Lock

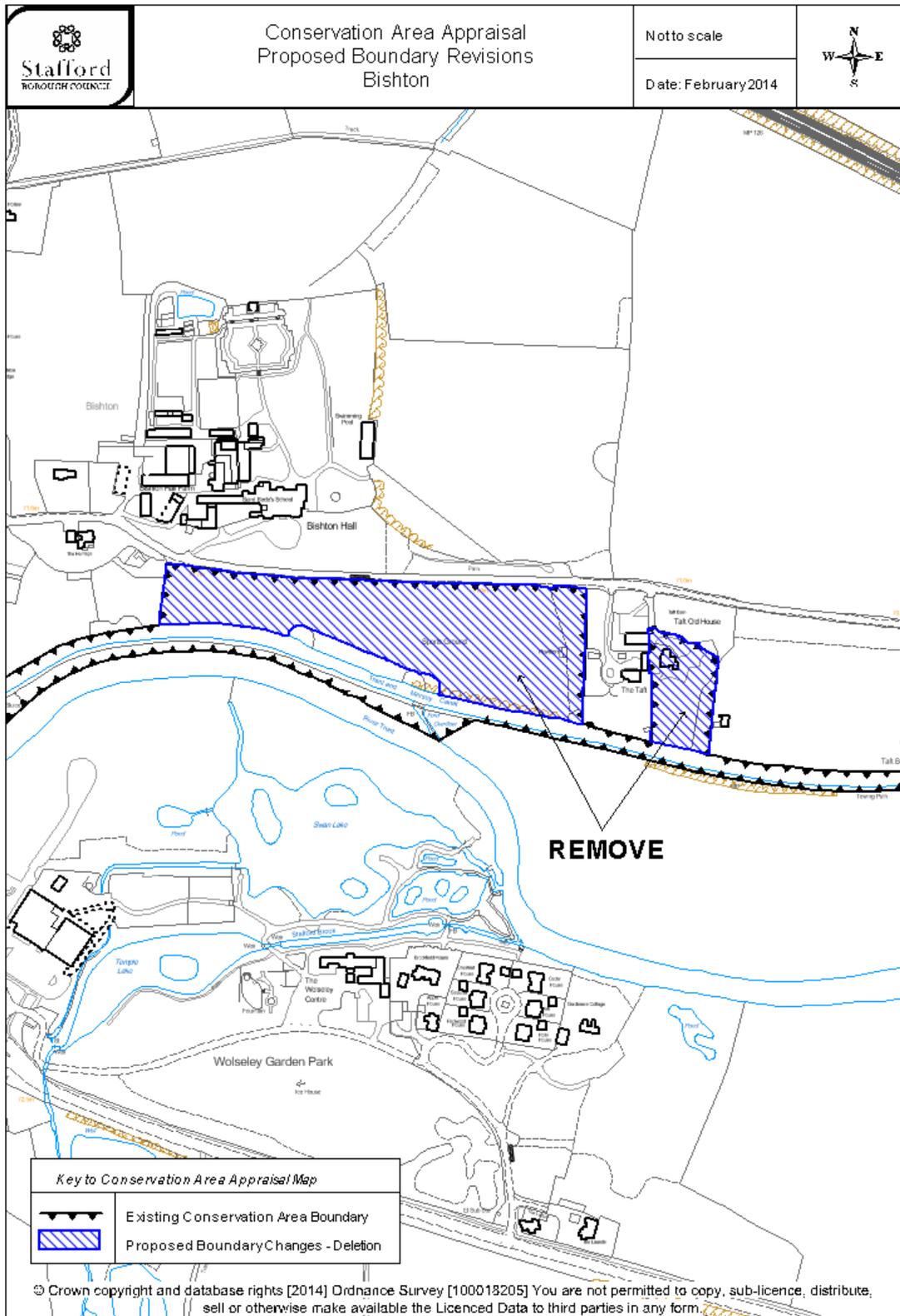


Figure 21: Proposed Boundary Revision, Bishton

Appendix

Glossary of Terms

Conservation Area

Conservation Areas are defined in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*”

Positive Building

A building identified as a contributor to the special character of the conservation area by way of its architectural and/or historical qualities.

Positive Space

An area identified as a contributor to the special character of the conservation area.

Negative Building

A building identified as detrimental to the special character or appearance of the conservation area, and would warrant enhancement or replacement in any future proposals involving this building. The negative effect may be derived from, for example, its siting, plan form, scale, height, massing or materials, and could not be readily reversed by minor alterations.

Negative Space

A space identified as detrimental to the special character and appearance of the conservation area, and would warrant enhancement in any future proposals involving this space.

Neutral Building

A building that does not contribute to, or harm, the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It does not possess qualities that contribute to the architectural or historical character of the conservation area, but does not visually intrude or cause a jarring effect by way of its of its siting, plan form, scale, height, massing, materials or colour palette, for example. The building may warrant enhancement in future proposals.

Neutral Space

A space that does not contribute to, or harm, the special character of the conservation area. It does not possess qualities that contribute to the architectural or historical character of the conservation area, but does not affect the character negatively.

Setting

Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as *“The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.”*

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Further Information

For List Descriptions of listed buildings contained within and surrounding the
conservation area please access the National Heritage List [Online] Available at:
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