Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area Appraisal

October 2015

Contents

Introduction

1.1. Definition

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 Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area is an extensive linear conservation area, first designated on 17 April 1978 by Stafford Borough Council, South Staffordshire District Council, Staffordshire County Council, Wolverhampton Metropolitan Borough Council and Wyre Forest District in Worcestershire. At that time a joint Conservation Area document was produced, covering the whole of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire 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 Staffordshire and Worcestershire 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 Staffordshire and Worcestershire 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 16 November 2015 and 31 December 2016 and a public exhibition was held on 1 December 2015 at Walton Village Hall. Letters were sent to all properties within or adjacent to the conservation area, and to key stakeholders and other interested parties, inviting comment. The draft appraisal was made public via the Borough's website, and in paper form at the Council offices. All representations were then considered and some minor amendments made to the text of the appraisal.

1.6 Planning Policy Context- National Planning Policy Framework policy relevant to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area

- National planning policy is contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Section 12 relates to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and paragraphs 127-141 are relevant to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area.
- Historic England's *Good Practice Advice (GPA) notes 1,2,3* (2015) is the national conservation guidance to support the NPPF policies and supersedes PPS5.

1.6.1 Local Planning Policy relevant to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area

- Local planning policy is contained within The Plan for Stafford Borough (adopted 2014). Section 9 *Economy* contains policies relevant to canals: Policy E7 Canal Facilities and New Marinas and Section 12 *Environment* contains policies relevant to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area: Policies N1: *Design*, section h and paragraphs 12.4-12.5, N8: *Landscape Character,* N9: *Historic Environment* and paragraphs 12.45-12.56.

2. Summary of Special Interest, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area

2.1. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area is of outstanding industrial archaeological significance, both nationally and locally. It was first designated on 17 April 1978 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 Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area as it stands today.

2.3. The key elements of the Stafford Borough section of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area are summarised as follows:

- An early narrow canal engineered by James Brindley, “the father of English Canals”, completed in 1772, it formed 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.

- Retains an example of an 18th century narrow pound lock and lock keepers cottage at Tixall.

- A wealth of single-span brick road and accommodation bridges with stone and brick copings, contemporary with the canal and four listed at grade II.

- Surviving masonry structures such as sandstone steps and copings

- A variety of surviving historic surfaces, especially under bridges, including sandstone copings and brick paving.

- Associated industrial buildings strategically located close to the canal and surviving wharfs such as the mill and wharf at Great Haywood, reflecting the importance of the canal for industry.

- Distinctive canal ironwork features such as bridge plates and strapping posts.

- A predominantly rural canal setting characterised by long reaching views out over rolling countryside, water meadows, and historic landscaped parkland.

- Forms a distinctive part of the setting of the historic buildings and landscape of the Tixall Conservation Area, and includes a section of Capability Brown designed ‘landscaped’ canal at Tixall Broad.

- Canal-side trees and hedgerows form boundaries to give an enclosed setting to the canal in parts

- Strong visual elements of industrial transportation heritage evident due to the close proximity of the railway and navigations of the River Sow.

3. Historical Development

3.1 The canals of Staffordshire are numerous and extensive. Historically important, due to the geographical setting and mineral wealth of the County, Staffordshire is at the centre of the national canal network devised by one of the greatest of the early canal pioneers, James Brindley, to transport heavy and fragile commodities ranging from coal to china. The earliest canals in the country built by Brindley include the Trent and Mersey and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, both of which run through Staffordshire.

3.2 The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal was one of the components of Brindley's "Grand Cross" design for canals linking the Mersey with the Thames and the Trent with the Severn, the south-western arm of the "Grand Cross" ran from Great Haywood to Stourport on Severn in Worcestershire and the name of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal was adopted.

3.3 The canal received its act of parliament in 1766, the same day as its fellow Staffordshire navigation the Trent and Mersey Canal. Construction began straightaway and the canal opened to navigation in 1772 costing somewhere between £100,000 and £110,000

3.4 During the early years of canal building in the 1770s civil engineering was still in its infancy and canals typically followed the contours of the landscape, for cheapness and ease of construction, using locks to negotiate changing land levels. The line adopted by Brindley for this canal takes a fairly direct route, the over-riding pre-occupation of the 18th century canal builder being to minimise the cost of construction of such items as lock, embankments and deep cuttings. Consequently this was an era of contour canals which attempted to maintain long level stretches of water without the need for expensive changes of level.

3.5 Canals of the 18th century were at the beginning of the revolution in bulk overland transportation and were revolutionary, not only in accelerating the transport of goods, but also in providing a new arterial pattern divorced from the roads. Their only serious competitors were the pack-horse and the navigable rivers, the range of which the canals were designed to extend. Indirect as they seem on plan, they nevertheless moved more materials, more quickly and cheaply than their competitors of the period.

3.6 Some existing industries along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire route made use of the canals, whilst others grew up around it or took advantage of the transportation benefits to expand. At Great Haywood the ancient Lord's corn mill of the Aston family was sold to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Company; the siting of the mill at the junction of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire and the Trent and Mersey canal was an ideal location and the site was expanded to include a paper mill. There was a short lived lime works at Radford Wharf from 1806 until 1814, and a late 19th century brickworks and canal arm at Hazlestrine. In the late 19th century a salt works was erected at Baswich which operated well into the mid-20th century before being demolished in the 1980s to make way for an industrial estate.

3.7 Wharves allowed the delivery of bulk goods and some industries were able to connect to the canal using the public wharves along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire at Radford, Old Hill Lock at Tixall, St. Thomas, Milford and Great Haywood. Coal and lime were transported to and from St. Thomas' and Milford Wharves, and the local stone industry at Tixall was able to utilise the wharf at Old Hill Lock to transport its stone much further distances.

3.8 Large scale transport needs were also considerations that were taken into account by both industries and canal companies, both on a national and local level. The transportation of coal from the canal to the centre of Stafford became a priority in the late 18th century, and the idea of constructing a navigable waterway from the Staffordshire and Worcestershire at Radford Wharf to Stafford was detailed in a survey by Thomas Dadford in 1787. Despite further plans the canal was never constructed and instead a tramway

opened in 1805 in order to transport coal and lime from the canal into Stafford. However by 1814 the tramway had closed and the focus was once again on a navigable waterway.

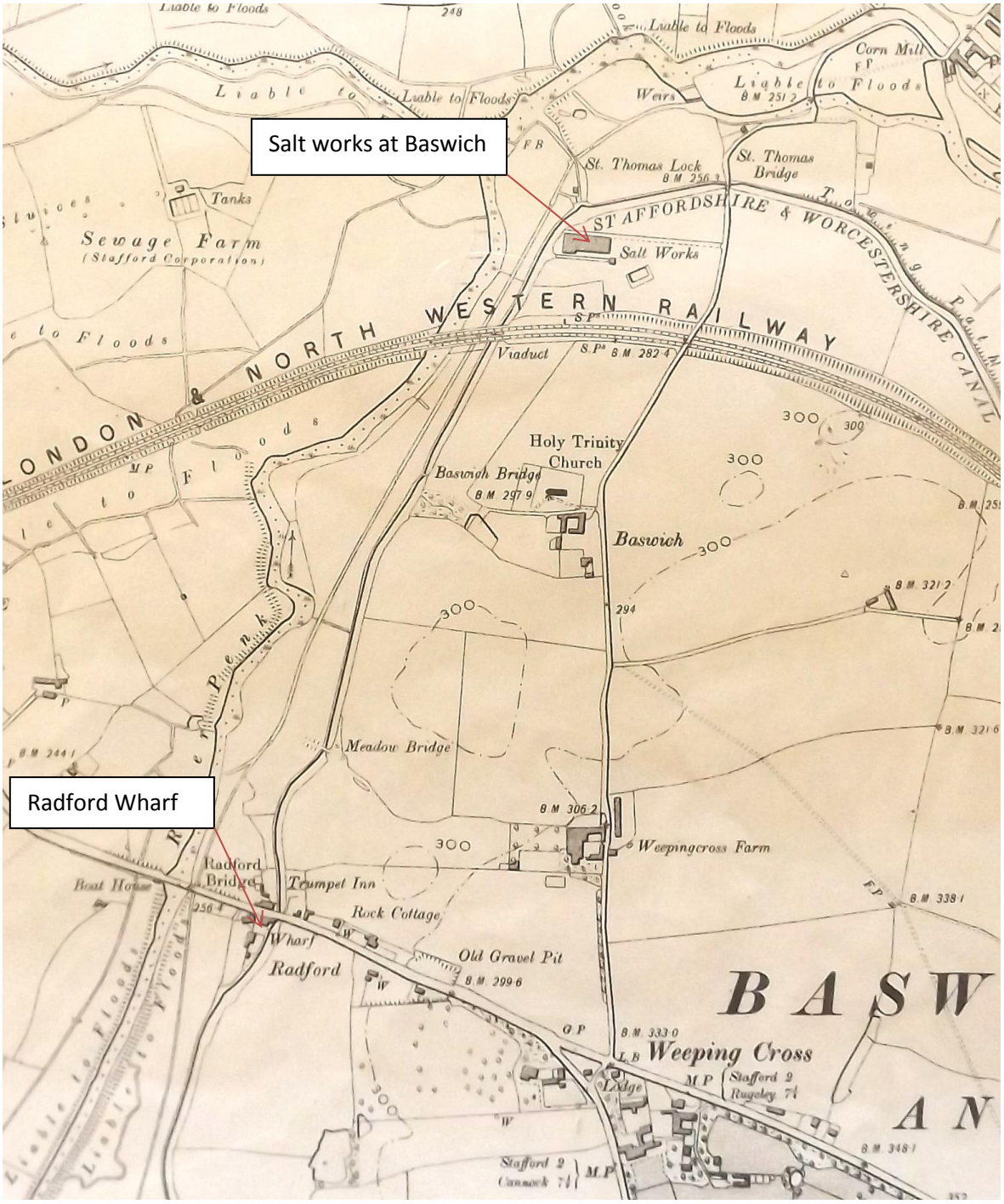


Figure 1 2nd edition OS map showing location of the salt works at Baswich and Radford Wharf

3.9 The Stafford Borough section of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal made use of its close proximity to several rivers and in 1816 the River Sow Navigation was constructed privately by Lord Stafford, linking the canal with the centre of Stafford via the River Sow. The navigation consisted of a short branch canal which left the Staffordshire and Worcestershire at Baswich, just west of St. Thomas' Bridge, passing beneath a roving bridge and into a basin, next to which was a Lock-Keepers house. An aqueduct carried the branch over a drainage channel and into the River Sow via a lock known as Baswich Lock or St. Thomas' Lock. The course of the River Sow was straightened to make it navigable for 1 ½ miles into Stafford town, where it terminated at a basin near Green Bridge. The navigation remained in use until the early 20th century but transport had stopped by the 1920s. By the 1930s the basin and lock had been filled in and the lock-keepers cottage demolished in the late 1950s.

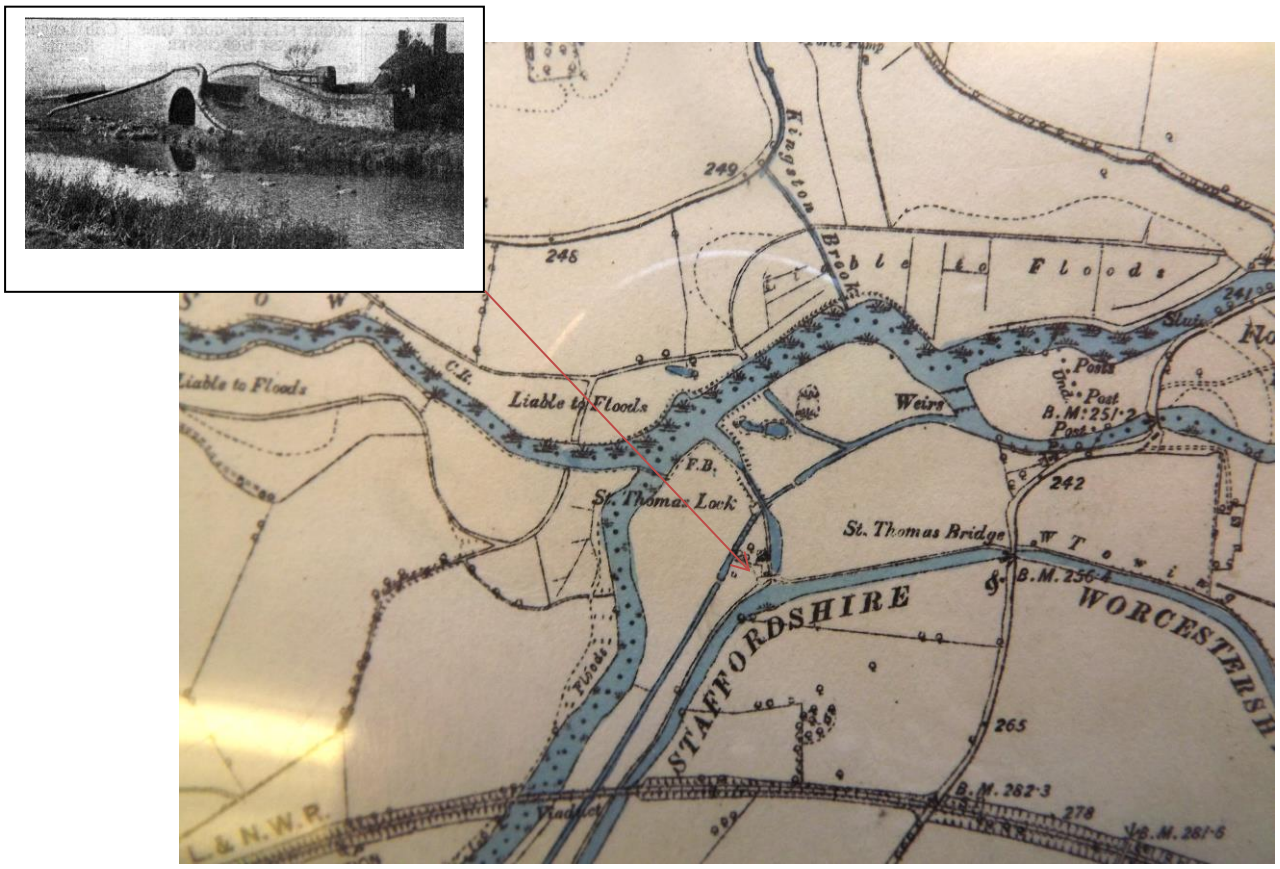


Figure 2 1st edition OS mapping shows the location of the roving bridge and lock keeper's cottage at the entrance to the basin on the River Sow Navigation.

3.10 The completion of other Midlands canals during the first part of the 19th century, including the Worcester and Birmingham Canal (1815) and the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal (1835), meant that trade and therefore traffic began to divert away from the Staffordshire and Worcestershire. This was further compounded by the railway boom in the 1840s and fierce competition grew which could not be fended off indefinitely.

3.11 Despite the decline in trade, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire continued to operate commercially into the 20th century, remaining free from the takeover of the railway companies in the 1890s. However, it became increasingly difficult for the canal to compete with the speed and load-carrying capacity of the railways and its commercial viability declined. The canal remained independent until becoming the responsibility of the then British Waterways Board in the late 1940s, and commercial traffic finally ceased on the Staffordshire and Worcestershire in 1949.

3.12 Today Britain's canals are enjoying a new lease of life, with popular and growing leisure use by walkers, cyclists, anglers and boaters. There is substantial pressure for additional canal-side moorings and often large-scale marinas, 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, Setting and Topography

4.1 The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal stretches for 46 miles from the River Severn at Stourport in Worcestershire to its junction with the Trent and Mersey Canal at Great Haywood in Staffordshire. The most northerly stretch of the canal travels through the Stafford Borough for just over 5 miles from Hazlestrine Bridge at the border of South Staffordshire, to its meeting with the Trent and Mersey at Great Haywood.

4.2 As with most early canals, the route of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal was designed to minimise construction costs and difficulties, and as a result it generally follows the contours of the landscape; this man-made topographical feature in western Staffordshire provides a visual and historical contribution to the landscape.

4.3 Travelling north on its journey through the Borough, the canal runs parallel with the River Penk to the west until it horseshoes around Baswich to continue its route southeast. Within the valley of the River Sow, its course meanders to the south of the river passing north of the villages of Milford and Walton and being flanked to the south by the railway line. Crossing the Sow via Milford Aqueduct, the canal travels northeast across the wide valley of the River Trent, to its terminus at Haywood Junction where it meets the Trent and Mersey Canal.

4.4 The setting of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal through the Stafford Borough takes in rural, semi-rural and urban landscapes. The settlements of Baswich and the modern housing estates at Wildwood are screened from the canal in most parts by trees and hedging, giving the canal a semi-rural setting as it travels through. Other sections of the canal are distinctly more urban in character, particularly at Radford and Baswich where the built environment is more prominent. Otherwise the landscape is open and rural, passing through areas of the highest natural or designed character such as the former landscaped parks of Tixall to the northeast of the conservation area, and the grade I registered park and garden of the Shugborough Estate which stretches to the southeast with the Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) beyond.

Figure 3 Views across the Shugborough Estate from the canal towpath

4.5 At Tixall there is a broad water known as Tixall Broad or Tixall Wide. Here the canal widens in order to resemble a broad lake, part of the redesign scheme by Thomas Clifford of Tixall Hall in the late 18th century. Clifford is said to have been prepared to tolerate the canal provided that it did not spoil his view from the hall. The canal was landscaped along with the grounds and Clifford is thought to have been assisted by the renowned landscape architect, Capability Brown, who is recorded as visiting the estate in 1773.

4.6 There are a good number of regularly spaced bridges along the canal; however many of the long stretches can feel isolated from the surrounding landscape, with access to and from the towpath limited to the road bridges. The close proximity of the railway line to the south of the canal contributes to this sense of isolation and lends the canal a remote intimacy; the occasional interruption of train traffic only serves to enhance the sense of peace and tranquillity created by this rural isolation.

Figure 4 The railway bounds the canal to the south from Milford to Baswich.

4.7 Despite its loss of industrial transportation, the canal survives as a popular tourist and leisure attraction which adds a vitality to its setting. The waterway is host to many canal boaters, and moorings such as at Milford and Great Haywood provide a welcome and colourful contrast to the detachment of the isolated stretches.

5 Buildings and Structures of the Staffordshire Union

Canal Channel

5.1 The fundamental structure of the canal is the channel itself, or 'The Cut'. The 46 miles of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal were excavated using picks and shovels and lined with puddled clay, a mix of sand and clay that forms a water-tight seal. In some parts, the channel is reinforced with a masonry lining, but generally this only occurs at locks, bridges or wharfs. The Staffordshire Worcestershire Canal, as an early canal, was built as cheaply as possible, and to the minimum width to enable two 'narrow boats" of 7 feet width to pass.

Locks

5.2 The waterway follows the route of the Rivers Penk and Sow 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 Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, the locks are 'narrow locks' with chambers 7ft 2in wide and about 7ft long designed for boats of 7ft beam and up to 7 ft length; the extra length to allow the bottom gates to open inwards.

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 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.

5.5 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 5 Tixall 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 access their land. The bridges on this early canal are typically simple structures built of local materials, usually brick with a stone or brick coping, and mostly with a 'dripstone' or string course of sandstone above the brick arch. Most have simple elliptical arches and are hump-backed. Surfaces were usually paved with stone or brick setts, but many have now been resurfaced in tarmac.

5.8 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. Milford Bridge No.105 is a good example of a turnover or 'roving' bridge and retains historic paving setts and stone copings.

Figure 6 Milford Bridge

5.9 At the corners of some bridges, deep grooves can still be seen in the masonry caused by taut wet tow ropes holding grit from the towpath rubbing against the corners. Later, iron plates or rods were introduced to protect the bridges, but often these became worn too. The majority of the bridges along this section of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire show tow rope wear; good examples can be seen at Great Haywood Bridge (No.109) at the junction with the Trent and Mersey Canal, and at Baswich Bridge No.100 where the masonry bears the distinctive grooves alongside the iron straps under the bridge arch.

Figure 7 Tow rope wear to bridge 99

Figure 8 Bridge plate at 101

5.10 Bridge plates on the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal are oval-shaped cast iron plates, all using the established palette of white names and numbers on a black background.

5.11 Aqueducts are constructed where the canal crosses the rivers and are good examples of early canal engineering. The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal follows the river valleys of the Rivers Penk, Sow and Trent for its course through the Stafford Borough and there are two aqueducts along this stretch, both of a typical Brindley design. At Milford the Canal is carried over the Sow on a substantial stone aqueduct of 4 arches, whilst a more modest brick and stone aqueduct takes the canal over the Trent at Great Haywood.

Figure 9 Aqueduct over the River Trent

5.12 Culverts are usually simple structures designed to carry the canal over rivers, streams and tributaries. Tributaries and mill races along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire were accommodated by simple brick or stone culverts, such as at the mill-leat at Haywood Mill.

5.13 The close proximity of the railway line to the canal dictates that at some point one will need to cross the other. At Baswich, Baswich Railway Bridge No. 100a is a viaduct that takes the railway across the canal and the River Penk.

Figure 10 Baswich Railway Bridge 100a

Towpaths and Surfaces

5.14 The canal presents a relatively natural appearance within the landscape for much of its length, as the engineered water's edge has gradually become softened by vegetation. Canal edges are predominately grassy although some sections are coped with sandstone or brick, usually on the approach to and beneath bridges. Some copings have been replaced with concrete which is uncharacteristic, however good examples of replacement stone coping to canal edges can be found at St. Thomas Bridge.

Figure 11 Untreated towpath south of Bridge 100 and brick setts at Bridge 107

Figure 12 Stone coping at Bridge 106 and replacement stone copings at Bridge 101

5.15 Towpaths are generally untreated along the more rural sections of the canal. Under bridges surfaces were typically paved with stone or brick setts and good examples can be seen at Tixall Bridge and Old Hill Bridge. Some bridge towpaths remain untreated such as at Hazlestrine Bridge, and where towpaths have been more recently treated, or historic materials replaced, some modern but traditional materials have been used, such as at St. Thomas Bridge and Walton Bridge.

Figure 13 Towpaths are generally untreated although many under bridge sections retain brick and stone setts

5.16 An uncharacteristic towpath appearance is created where less successful materials have been introduced such as at Lodgefield Bridge (No.102) and Stoneford Bridge (No.103), which have concrete paving and copings. At Radford Bridge large concrete slabs take the towpath to the former Radford Marina area where concrete and gravel have been used, giving this section of canal towpath a very modern feel

Figure 14 Concrete paving and coping at Bridge 103 and concrete and gravel towpath at Radford

5.17 On many of the road bridges, historic surfaces have now been replaced with tarmac, whilst on the accommodation bridges surfaces are predominantly untreated. Fine existing examples of historic and traditional brick surfaces are found at Great Haywood Bridge and Milford Bridge which combine red and blue brick with stone setts and ashlar sandstone.

Figure 15 Surviving brick and stone surfacing to Bridges 109 and 105

Buildings

5.16 Canal architecture is typically simple and unpretentious, using local vernacular materials and styles. The canals revolutionised the landscape of 18th and 19th century Britain and introduced a whole new transport industry, supporting merchants, boatmen, 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.

Figure 16 Tixall Lock Cottage

5.17 Wharfs tended to be located close to existing towns and villages, as at Radford, or at Junctions, as at Great Haywood, and provided maintenance yards, smithies and stabling. Other wharves appear in isolated, rural spots such as at Tixall and Milford, which now provides private moorings.

5.18 Apart from the regularity of bridges, the built environment of the Stafford Borough section of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal has very little in the way of historic buildings. The majority of canal-related buildings have now been demolished with some evidence of the structures remaining in the form of brick remnants. Good examples of buildings that have been influenced by the canal, its industry and its people are the former lock-keepers cottage at Tixall and the Mill and small banksman's lobby at Great Haywood.

5.19 The mill displays striking architectural style and quality in this prominent canal side location. Window openings, lucams and loading doors remain, and the lucams retain cast iron corbels with a circular motif in the spandrels. 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.

5.20 The banksman's lobby at Great Haywood is a simple brick and tile structure with distinctive gothic-style windows. These unique buildings were built for banksmen or lockkeepers simply to protect them from the weather and are often found along canal navigations.

Figure 17 Haywood Mill

Figure 18 Banksman's lobby at Great Haywood

Building Methods and Materials

5.18 Red and blue brick is the predominant building material for bridges, the brick laid in a traditional English or Flemish Bond. Traditional lime mortar was used at the time of construction and much of this is retained. Historic red and blue brick copings and sandstone copings are retained to many bridges, and stone features remain in some sections, most notably on the approach to and under bridges. Aqueducts are of stone or brick with stone facings.

Figure 19 Blue and red brick laid in English Bond to Bridges 104 and 100

Figure 20 Brick and stone copings to Bridge 105

5.19 Canal side buildings are of brick with pitched and tiled roofs; the ubiquitous Staffordshire blue clay tile being the traditional roofing material within the conservation area. Tixall Lock Cottage combines stone and brick and has been painted off-white, with stone lintels and cills.

6 Buildings, Setting and Views: Great Haywood to Tixall Lock

6.1 The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal begins its journey to the River Severn at its junction with the Trent and Mersey Canal (Brindley's Grand Trunk Canal) at Great Haywood. Here the towpath is carried over the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal by the grade II listed and scheduled Haywood Bridge No.109. The bridge is of the familiar vernacular brick construction built in a 'dog-legged' style and is unusually wide, to accommodate narrow boats turning at the junction. Restored in the 1980s, the bridge has its elliptical arch defined by a stone course, and with well-preserved setts and copings, is a striking landscape feature.

Figure 21 The grade II listed and scheduled Haywood Bridge 109

6.2 Travelling west into the conservation area the canal passes the former Haywood Corn Mill. The mill originally obtained its water supply from the Trent, as a result of which Brindley had to construct two stone aqueducts one over the tail race, and one over the river itself. The canal narrows to cross the mill race aqueduct, passing the tiny brick toll office, with its elaborate intersecting gothic traceried windows, before again narrowing to cross the Trent by a low, four-arched sandstone aqueduct with blue engineering brick parapet.

6.3 Beyond the aqueducts the canal corridor becomes enclosed by trees with open countryside beyond. Just beyond the Colwich to Tixall parish border is Swivel Bridge (No.108), which carries the towpath from Tixall across to the Shugborough Estate; its name implies this was originally a swing bridge and its lack of a string course shows it is a later replacement. The bridge is a modest blue brick accommodation bridge with brick copings, three brick elliptical arch and abutments coped in moulded sandstone blocks. Views of open fields and trees sets this section of canal firmly within the rural landscape.

Figure 22 Swivel Bridge no. 108

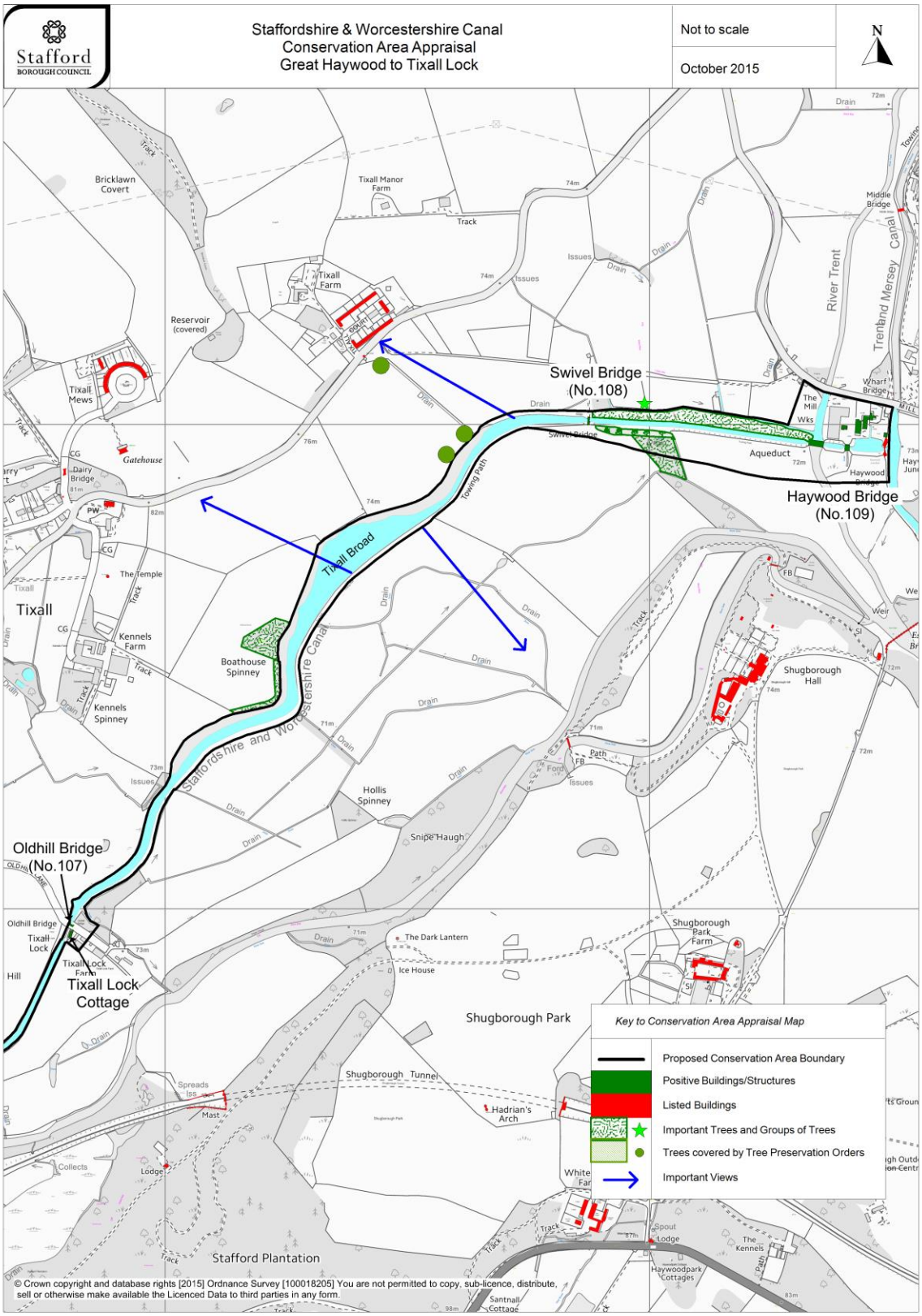
6.4 Following the valley of the River Sow splendid views are obtained to the northwest across the neighbouring conservation area and former landscaped park of Tixall, taking in the grade I listed gatehouse and the 19th century model farm of Tixall Court. Majestic glimpses to the south across Shugborough Park and Milford are afforded by the occasional breaks in the well-grown canal-side hedge from one of the few embankments constructed.

Figure 23 View from canal towpath toward Tixall Gatehouse across Tixall Broad

6.5 At Broad Water the canal widens to resemble a large lake. Known as Tixall Broad or Tixall wide, Thomas Clifford of Tixall Hall is said to have been prepared to tolerate the canal provided that it did not spoil the view from his Hall. As a result, almost a mile of the waterway was 'softened' to give the appearance of a landscaped lake.

6.6 The curved nature of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal can be appreciated as the canal winds its way west to Tixall Lock. Old Hill Bridge (No.107) is a simple red brick bridge with stone copings which marks the entrance to Tixall Lock and carries the lane across the lock tail. The copings and arch have been painted white although this is a later addition. Tixall Lock Cottage is the early 19th century former Lock-keepers cottage, adjacent to and facing the canal. The bridge, the lock and the cottage form a quintessential group of historic canal structures.

Figure 24 Tixall Lock, Old Hill Bridge and Tixall Lock Cottage


Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal
Conservation Area Appraisal
Great Haywood to Tixall Lock
Not to scale
October 2015
N
Swivel Bridge
(No.108)
Haywood Bridge
(No.109)
Oldhill Bridge
(No.107)
Tixall Lock
Cottage
Tixall
Tixall Broad
Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal
Towing Path
River Trent
Trent and Mersey Canal
Shugborough Park
Stafford Plantation
Key to Conservation Area Appraisal Map
Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
Positive Buildings/Structures
Listed Buildings
Important Trees and Groups of Trees
Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders
Important Views
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7 Tixall Lock to Stoneford Bridge

7.1 Beyond Tixall Lock the canal leaves behind the landscaped graces of the parks for quieter but still serene and pleasant scenery. Tixall Bridge (No. 106) carries the Holdiford Road across the canal from Tixall to Milford. A typical red brick Brindley road bridge with a wide elliptical arch, the bridge has been substantially rebuilt, particularly to the east side, and has been re-coped with concrete.

Figure 25 Tixall Bridge, No. 106

7.2 Leaving Tixall Bridge the canal winds on its course to the approach of the impressive Milford Aqueduct , which carries the canal across the River Sow to the south side of the valley. This low, sturdy four-arched aqueduct is grade II listed and built of Tixall stone to a typical Brindley design.

Figure 26 Milford Aqueduct

7.3 Leaving the aqueduct the canal curves west and is now closely bounded on the south by the railway and the village of Milford beyond. Milford Bridge (No.105), an attractive convoluted turnover bridge, returns the canal towpath to its “normal” position on the embanked downslope side of the canal. Of red and blue brick with stone and brick copings, a stone course defines the elliptical arch.

Figure 27 Milford Bridge, No. 105

Figure 28 Milford Wharf

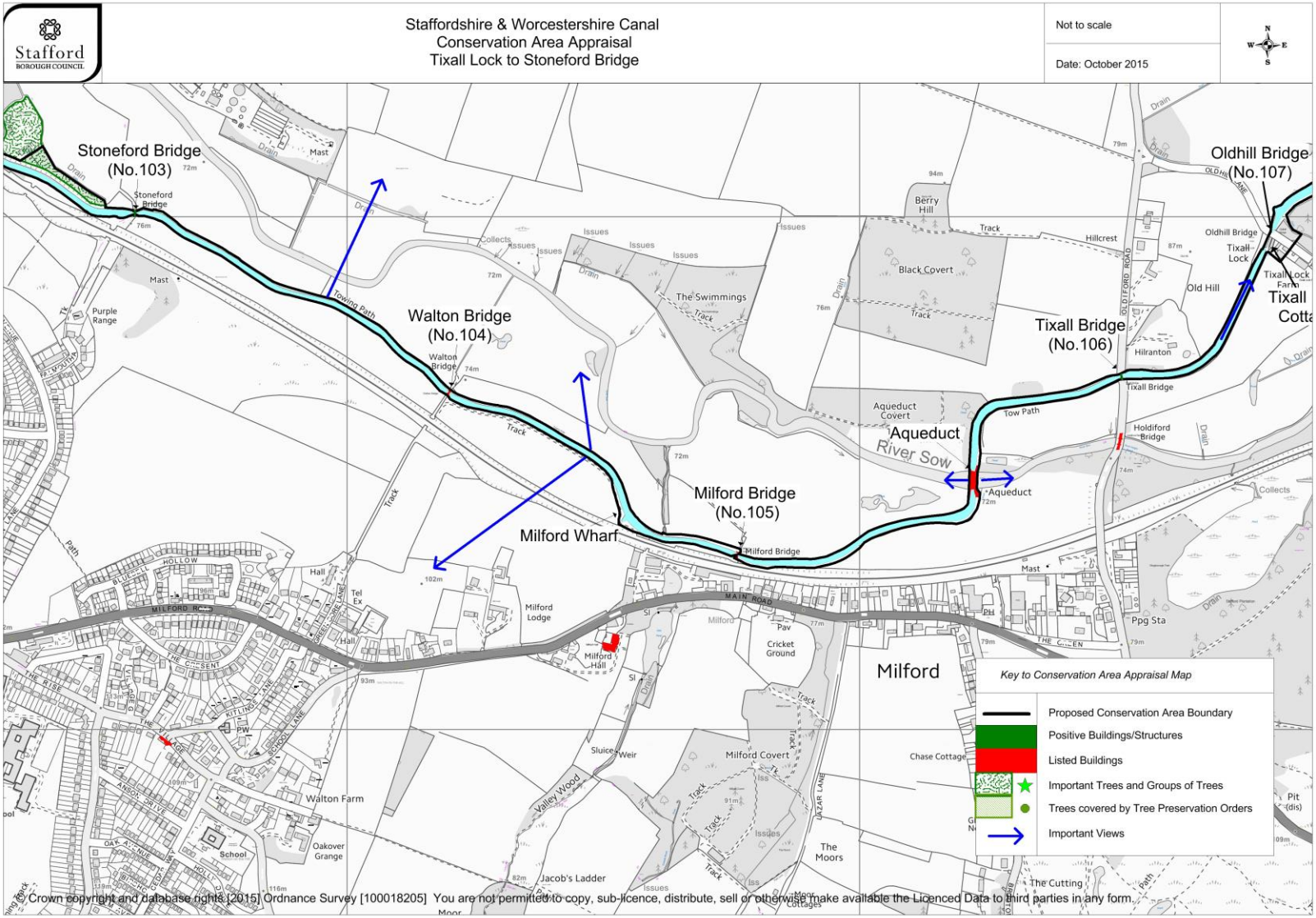
7.4 Just beyond the bridge lies Milford Wharf which hires out private moorings. Beyond the wharf, on the approach to Walton, more extensive views occasionally open out to the north across the flood plains of the Sow, bounded by river terraces, and to the south, towards Walton Village up shallow side valleys. Walton Bridge (No. 104) seals the view to the west along this stretch, the blue brick accommodation bridge having distinctive brick and stone wing walls.

Figure 29 Walton Bridge, No. 104

7.5 Continuing its course through the valley of the River Sow the canal passes through its most rural section along the Stafford Borough stretch. Here the canal is ‘sandwiched’ between the railway and open countryside with hedge boundaries to the towpath side and a large bed of reeds to the off-side presenting a softened feel to the canal edge. The railway here runs almost parallel to the canal and the frequency of trains can interrupt the peace and tranquillity of the setting, although serves to remind us of the canal’s industrial precedence. Beyond the hedgerows to the north, the open spaces beyond the canal corridor are crucial to the character of the conservation area and views glimpsed through hedgerows reinforce the rural character of this stretch. The now isolated Stoneford Bridge (no. 103) is a red and blue brick accommodation bridge with a brick and stone elliptical arch and stone coping.

Figure 30 View from Walton Bridge looking west, the railway to the south and river terraces to the north

Figure 31 Stoneford Bridge, No. 103


Stafford
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Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal
Conservation Area Appraisal
Tixall Lock to Stoneford Bridge
Not to scale
Date: October 2015
Stoneford Bridge
(No.103)
Walton Bridge
(No.104)
Milford Bridge
(No.105)
Tixall Bridge
(No.106)
Oldhill Bridge
(No.107)
Aqueduct
River Sow
Milford Wharf
Milford
Key to Conservation Area Appraisal Map
Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
Positive Buildings/Structures
Listed Buildings
Important Trees and Groups of Trees
Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders
Important Views
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8 Stoneford Bridge to Baswick Bridge

8.1 Beyond Stoneford Bridge the canal approaches Baswich and the landscape character changes to one of a semi-rural nature. A wooded copse lies to the north and the railway embankment directly abuts the canal to the south creating a strong sense of enclosure. Beyond the railway embankment to the south lies Baswich, a former civil parish which is now densely populated with 20th century housing, and beyond the copse stretch the flood plains of the River Sow.

Figure 32 The railway embankment and wooded copse north of Baswich

8.2 Emerging from the enclosure of the copse, Lodgefield Bridge (No.102) is a little used brick and stone accommodation bridge, now forming a private route for residents of nearby Lodgefield Park, which bounds the canal to the south. Beyond Lodgefield Bridge the landscape opens up once again to the north and views are of the Sow flood plains.

8.3 The low-scale residences of Lodgefield Park have a relatively neutral impact on the setting of the canal and the open green space and natural boundaries in front of the properties are well-maintained. Further west domestic rear gardens present to the far bank of the canal and a group of recently pollarded poplar trees are an unusual feature in the landscape.

8.4 At St Thomas Bridge (No.101) the canal changes course as it turns sharply southward to round the spur of high ground at Baswich and take up its direct route south. The bridge is a grade II listed red and blue brick road bridge with sandstone copings and the distinctive brick and stone-coursed elliptical arch. The parapet has been sympathetically rebuilt and there are good examples of replacement stone copings to the off-side.

Figure 33 The grade II listed Saint Thomas Bridge (No.101)

8.5 Beyond St Thomas Bridge is the site of the former Salt Works to the south. Now an industrial estate, the salt works ceased production in the 1980s and was demolished soon after. There is an industrial feel to this stretch of the canal despite the modern canal side development. Other surviving features in this vicinity reflect the important part played by water in earlier transport history and the interconnection of inland waterways for the purposes of transportation. Here, where the River Penk joins the Sow, there is the channel of the Sow Navigation, a canal link to the Sow which was earlier navigable to the centre of Stafford. The labyrinth of waterways is completed by the mill stream and tail race of the no longer existing mill on the site of St. Thomas' Priory.

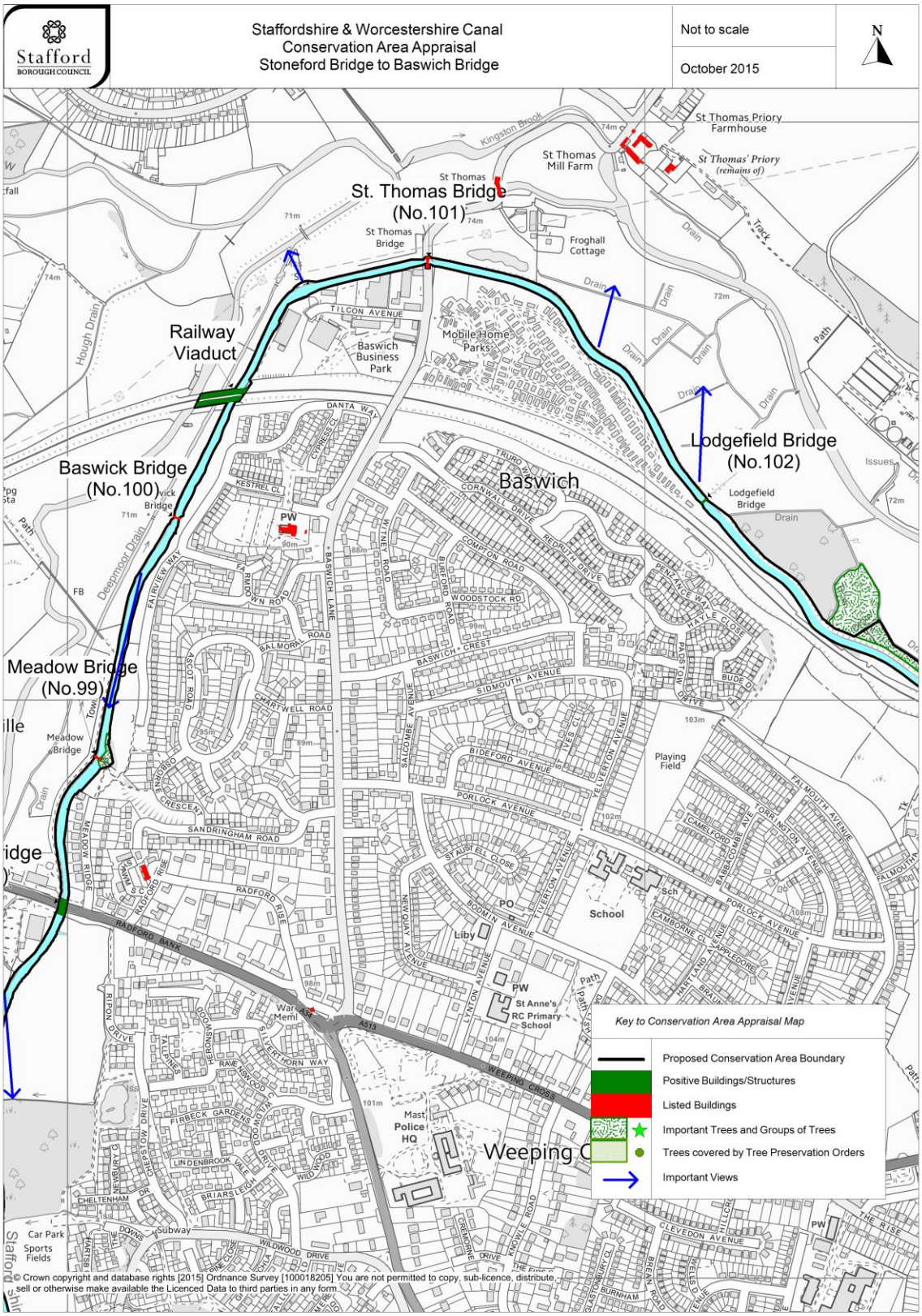
8.6 To the west of St Thomas Bridge lies the site of the former lock, lock-keepers cottage and towpath bridge of the River Sow Navigation. Visible brick remains of the towpath bridge survive and beyond the towpath remnants of the lock-keepers cottage can be seen. A ground paddle from the former lock marks an overflow weir at the entrance to the former wharf.

Figure 34 Site of the entrance to the former Stafford Branch

8.7 As the canal continues its course south, Baswich Railway Bridge (No.100a) carries the railway across the canal and the River Penk. Here the canal route leaves the railway which continues its journey towards Stafford. The canal has a slightly overgrown feel as it travels through the urban area of Baswich, bounded to the east by large housing estates.

Figure 35 The canal has a slightly overgrown feel through Baswich

Figure 36 Baswick Bridge, No. 100


Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal
Conservation Area Appraisal
Stoneford Bridge to Baswich Bridge
Not to scale
October 2015
N
St. Thomas Bridge (No.101)
Railway Viaduct
Baswick Bridge (No.100)
Meadow Bridge (No.99)
Lodgefield Bridge (No.102)
Baswich
St Thomas Priory Farmhouse
St Thomas' Priory (remains of)
St Thomas Mill Farm
Froghall Cottage
Baswich Business Park
Mobile Home Parks
Playing Field
School
Police HQ
Car Park
Sports Fields
Subway
Key to Conservation Area Appraisal Map
Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
Positive Buildings/Structures
Listed Buildings
Important Trees and Groups of Trees
Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders
Important Views
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9. Baswick Bridge to Hazlestrine Bridge

9.1 As the canal moves south following the course of the Penk, it manages to retain a sense of isolation from the surrounding landscape despite its proximity to the modern houses of Baswich. Views are enclosed by an avenue of trees which lines the canal corridor, screening the houses from the canal and maintaining a semi-rural character in an urban setting.

9.2 Meadow Bridge (No. 99) is a blue and red brick bridge with brick and stone copings and a three-course brick elliptical arch. A former accommodation bridge, Meadow Bridge carries a footpath across the canal from the housing estate. Beyond Meadow Bridge the canal character becomes distinctly more visually urban as its tree-lined banks are replaced by domestic rear gardens.

Figure 37 Meadow Bridge, No. 99

9.3 At Radford Bank where the Lichfield Road crosses the canal, Brindley's early brick bridge is contained within the enlarged modern concrete span bridge which carries the highway. The original Radford Bridge (No. 98) has had its arch encased within concrete however the elliptical arch shape has been retained. The setting of the canal through Radford bank is distinctly urban, the area being much developed in the late 20th century.

Figure 38 Radford Bridge, No.98

9.4 Beyond Radford Bridge is the site of the former basin, warehouse and wharf which served Stafford via a short-lived tramway link before the opening of the 'Sow Navigation'. Replaced by Radford Marina in the 1970s, and later by a car showroom, this area has a distinctly modern feel to it with concrete and gravel towpaths. Leaving Radford behind, the canal curves as it once again enters a semi-rural landscape, a bank of trees to the east and Radford Meadows, the water meadows of the Penk, forming views across to the outer fringes of Stafford town to the southwest. At certain parts of the stretch, the canal channel narrows due to extensive reed bed coverage.

9.5 For the remaining stretch of canal the landscape character remains largely consistent. The modern housing estate of Wildwood to the east is screened for the most part by a tree-lined bank and gaps in the hedge-lined towpath boundary to the west continue to offer glimpse views across Radford Meadows. Modern parkland, playgrounds and tennis courts can be viewed from the towpath and create positive canal side spaces with the houses set back beyond. These modern structures and activities are yet to be assimilated in the canal-side scene but nevertheless have a reasonably neutral impact on canal character.

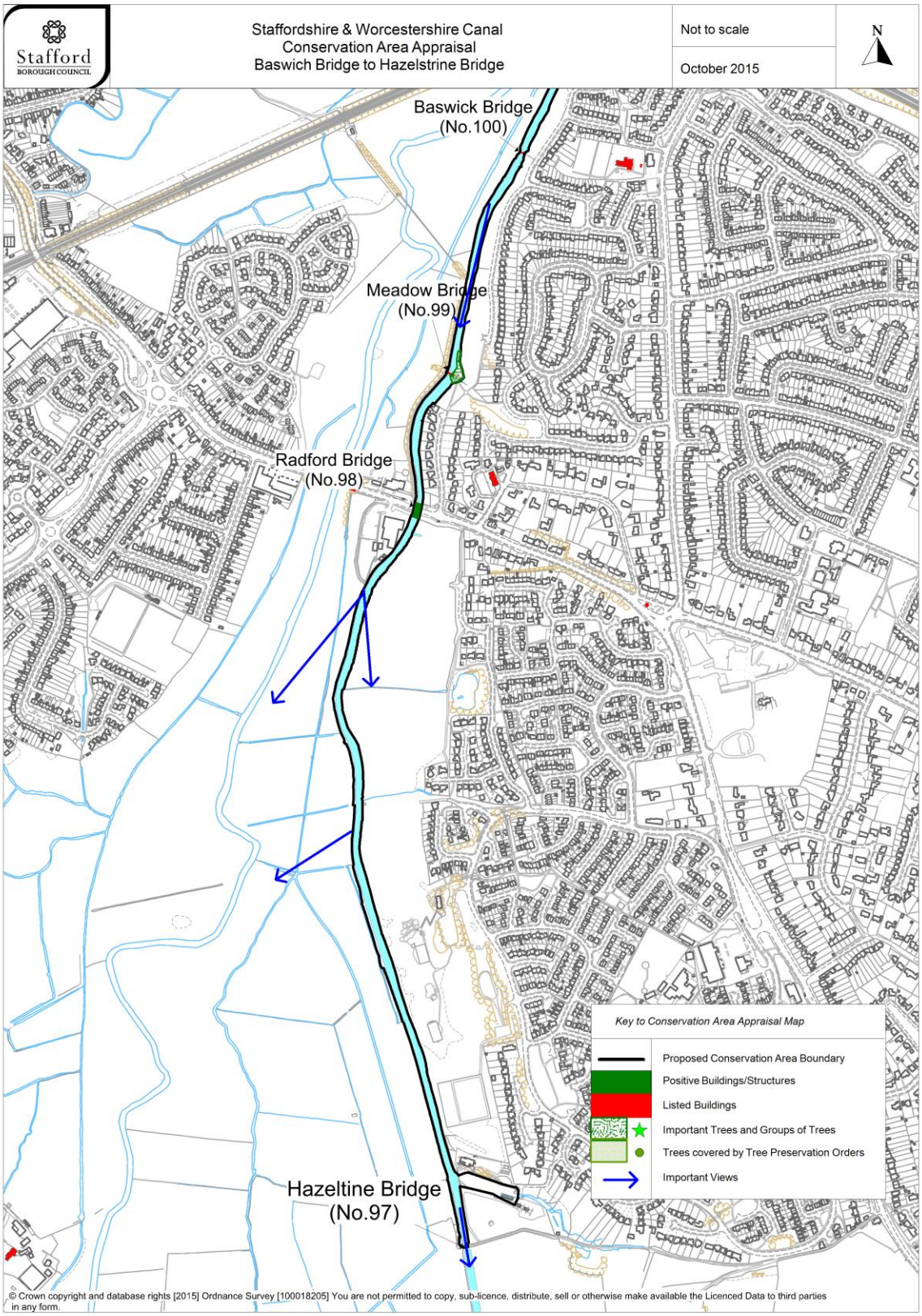
Figure 39 South of Radford Bridge the canal travels south with Wildwood to the east and Radford Meadows to the west

9.6 The final leg of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal through the Stafford Borough passes by the former disused Hazlestrine Canal Arm. The arm which was used to carry clay and bricks for the now demolished Hazlestrine Brickworks was restored in the late 20th century and is now home to Stafford Boat Club.

Figure 40 The former Hazlestrine Arm now home to Stafford Boat Club

9.7 The southerly boundary of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area through the Stafford Borough terminates at Hazlestrine Bridge (No.96). The absence of bridge number 97 is a historical anomaly; the original Bridge No.97 was at Barnfields and has now disappeared. Hazlestrine bridge is a pleasant red and blue brick bridge which retains its stone copings. Views from Hazlestrine Bridge follow the canal as it leaves the Stafford Borough and heads out into the district of South Staffordshire.

Figure 41 Hazlestrine Bridge, No. 96


Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal
Conservation Area Appraisal
Baswich Bridge to Hazelstrine Bridge
Not to scale
October 2015
N
Baswick Bridge
(No.100)
Meadow Bridge
(No.99)
Radford Bridge
(No.98)
Hazeltine Bridge
(No.97)
Key to Conservation Area Appraisal Map
Proposed Conservation Area Boundary
Positive Buildings/Structures
Listed Buildings
Important Trees and Groups of Trees
Trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders
Important Views
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10 Key Positive Characteristics

Built Character

Canal structures

- Canal cut of meandering form and natural appearance to canal edge
- Brick lined narrow pound lock with single top gate and double bottom gates, ground and gate paddles
- Brick road or accommodation bridges, many original late 18th century structures and grade II listed, often with humped backs and typically of local brick with stone coping and courses
- Low-arched stone and brick aqueducts
- Canal wharfs, and later modern canal marinas

Building Types

- Brick-built canal-side buildings including a former corn mill, lock-keeper's cottage, and banksman's lodge

Architectural Styles and Features

- Simple vernacular canal architecture of brick structures with pitched tiled roofs
- Simple brick, single span canal bridges with elliptical arches
- Ashlar stone dressings to bridges and aqueducts
- English and Flemish Brick Bond to canal bridges
- Surviving original fenestration

Building Materials

- Red and blue brick with sandstone copings as seen at bridges
- Tixall stone and blue engineering bricks to aqueducts

- Sandstone and diamond-pattern coping stones to canal edges at bridges and locks
- Stone and brick paving setts
- Blue and red hogback coping bricks for walls and bridges
- Brick at Haywood Mill and Tixall Lock Cottage and painted brick to banksmen's lodge
- Lime mortar to canal bridges
- Staffordshire blue clay tile roofs

Spatial Analysis

Public Realm

- The canal towpath is accessible to the public via some road and accommodation bridges which provide routes on to and off the canal.
- Towpaths are mostly untreated or grassed. Under bridges towpaths are mostly paved with historic brick or modern brick pavers.
- The canal navigation is popular with leisure boaters and towpaths provide access for walkers, dog walkers, cyclists and anglers.

Open Spaces

- Open countryside with surviving hedgerows and trees, creating an attractive setting for the canal and a rural feel
- Historic parkland forming majestic views and creating a dramatic setting for the canal
- Extensive openness and views created by the flood plains and water meadows of the rivers Sow and Penk.

Boundary Types

- The canal is characterised by important natural boundaries; in open landscape hedgerows and trees form important boundaries to the surrounding countryside.
- The railway line and embankments forms a boundary to the canal in some sections

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

11.1 For the most part, the bridges along the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal are in reasonably good condition and the majority of historic fabric has been retained. The impact of the 20th century on 18th century bridges however, has led to some physical damage and visual harm to character and setting.

- Increased levels of road traffic and heavier vehicles have meant that some historic canal bridges have become increasingly susceptible to traffic strikes. Bridges such as Tixall Bridge and the grade II listed St Thomas' Bridge have been most affected by traffic damage which has led to a significant loss of historic fabric and substantial areas of rebuilding. Where ill-matched materials and inappropriate repair methods have been used this results in a loss of character.

- Some bridges and structures, however, have been repaired in the past with cement that is unsuitable for the porosity and absorbency of the original brick or stone and lime mortar, resulting in sacrificial decay to the brick or stonework. 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.

- The addition of service pipes across bridges interrupts the rhythm these simple structures create. Tixall Bridge has its west side marred by the introduction of water piping and subsequent enclosure within concrete pillars, and 20th century pipework across Stoneford Bridge detracts from character.

Figure 42 Inappropriate materials at Tixall Bridge

Figure 43 20th century water pipes and concrete casing at Tixall Bridge

11.2 Canals and associated structures can attract anti-social behaviour and vandalism which can greatly affect the appearance and character of the canal and its setting. Physical damage can cause permanent damage to historic structures and lead to the permanent loss of historic fabric, and graffiti can cause damage and greatly alter the appearance of structures. Milford Bridge has been subject to vandalism and graffiti, and at Radford Bridge excessive graffiti creates a negative visual appearance which detracts from the overall character of the conservation area.

..

Figure 44 Vandalism and graffiti at Milford Bridge

Figure 45 Graffiti at Radford Bridge

11.3 Measures to protect historic fabric from vandalism can also impact on character such as at the banksman's lobby at Great Haywood, where the tracery windows are unfortunately now obscured by security grilles.

Figure 46 Tracery windows at banksman's lodge obscured by security grilles

11.4 Modern industrial development has had an impact on some sections of the canal. At Baswich, the site of the former Salt Works is now home to a modern industrial estate and industrial units which are out of character and have a negative impact on the setting of the conservation area.

Figure 47 Modern industrial units are out of character with the conservation area

11.5 Electric pylons are a prominent feature along much of this stretch of canal and are visually intrusive to the canal character. Most notably at the site of the former River Sow Navigation which has a significant degree of archaeological sensitivity.

Figure 48 Electric pylons at the site of the former River Sow Navigation

11.6 Whilst narrow boats moored along-side the canal can add to the character and appearance of the canal conservation area, there is increasing pressure for canal-side moorings, which can impede the enjoyment of boaters and anglers. Structures such as sheds and fences adjacent to the boats add a cluttered appearance and incongruous domestic character.

12 20th and 21st Century Development Affecting the Setting of the Conservation Area

12.1 Development does not necessarily have a negative impact on the setting of the canal in some circumstances. However development would be inappropriate in some areas of open countryside, as here the rural character of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal is very well preserved and contributes to the unspoilt setting of the conservation area.

12.2 Large areas of modern housing have developed alongside some stretches of the canal and whilst some sections are now screened by trees and hedging the scale, plan form, density and siting can create a suburban intrusion on character.

12.3 Scale also has an impact on historic character. Where buildings are sited close to the canal and are tall in scale, this can have an overbearing effect on the setting of the canal conservation area, particularly where smaller historic structures are present. At Great Haywood, despite its 4 storeys, Haywood Mill is dwarfed by adjacent 20th century industrial units which have damaged its setting and give the mill a 'lost' appearance, out of context with its historic setting.

12.4 The positioning of buildings is also a key consideration. Historically many buildings had their main façade fronting the canal and many canal-associated buildings are sited directly adjacent to the water's edge. Often rising directly from the canal edge, this gives the buildings a distinct visual relationship to the canal. Many modern houses and commercial buildings 'turn their backs' to the canal and create an anonymous feel, compounded by heavily domesticated garden areas that face the canal and intrude on character. Suburban houses and rear gardens have not yet become assimilated into the canal character.

12.5 Materials also impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Replacement uPVC windows on canal facing elevations can harm character and obscure historical detailing, as can large paned glass windows with horizontal openings. uPVC conservatories to the rear of modern properties can have an overbearing and cluttered effect, and solar panels and roof lights fronting the canal cause a visual intrusion and draw further attention to development that is not sympathetic to the character of the conservation area.

12.6 Paving materials can also have a negative effect on the conservation area. Concrete, tarmac and gravel are non-traditional canal side materials and give a much harsher appearance when compared to the traditional brick pavers and stone copings. Concrete copings have also been used along some sections of the canal and to cope bridges, and modern brick has been used for repairs to some bridge which creates a harsh appearance against the softer and more muted tones of the historic brick.

13. Protecting the Character and Appearance of the Conservation Area

13.1 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 the Plan for Stafford Borough sets out policies for the protection and management of the historic environment through policies N8 and N9 and paragraphs 12.45 to 12.56. These should be used in conjunction with this appraisal to guide or assess any future development within the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation area.

13.2 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.

13.3 To manage and protect the special historic character and appearance of the conservation area in the exercise of these policies and duties:

- 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.

- '*Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment'* in the *Planning Practice Guidance* (2014) and *Good Practice Advice (GPA) notes 1,2,3* (Historic England, 2015.

13.4 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).

13.5 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.

14 Recommendations for Future Management

- Changes that came into force through the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 have enabled 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 Canal and River Trust, formed in 2013 from the former British Waterways, are in the process of developing a pilot project with Historic England to develop the first National Listed Building Consent Order. The Trust's emphasis on the importance of heritage should enable more sympathetic works generally in the future, avoiding further harm through, for example, unsympathetic repairs, alterations or replacements.

- 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.

- 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.

- The setting of the conservation area varies considerably along its length, and includes historic settlements, modern suburbs and some small industrial areas, as well as valuable stretches of open space and 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.

- Development visible from the conservation area can have a negative impact on the setting of the conservation area. Consideration must be given to the setting of the conservation area and the appropriateness of the location and siting of new buildings as well as their material and scale.

- Residential canal-side moorings are likely to need planning permission, and there are no permitted development rights for ancillary works at moorings. Owners should therefore seek advice from the Planning Department before erecting any structures alongside the towpath, such as sheds or fences.

15 Boundary Revisions

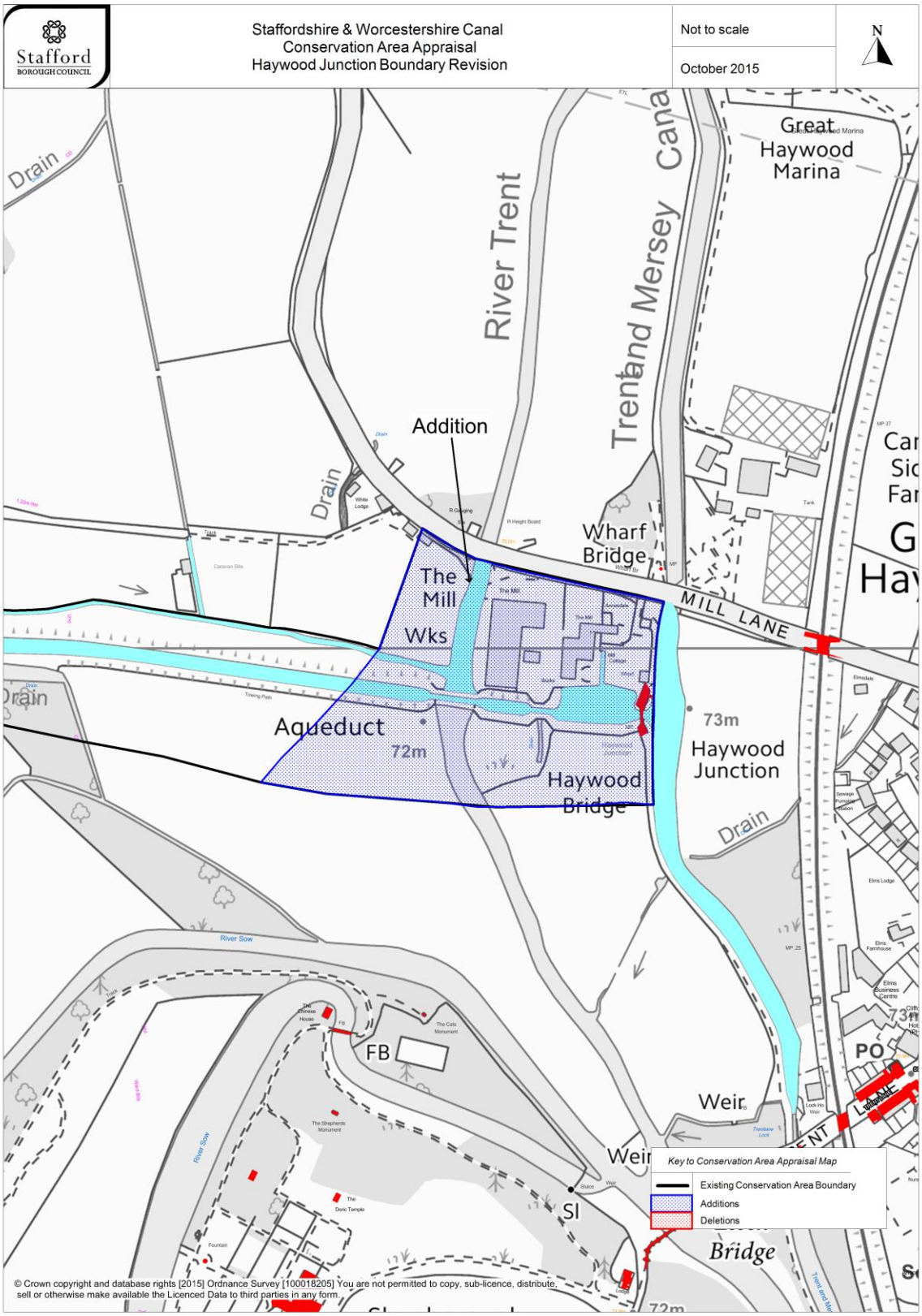
The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal Conservation Area was designated in 1978 and the boundary has not been reviewed since. Some minor boundary amendments have been made ensure that the character of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced.

- At Haywood Junction Haywood Bridge, Haywood Mill and the aqueduct over the River Trent are included. This area was included within the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area which was revised in 2014, however whilst there is an interrelationship between this area and both the Staffordshire and Worcestershire and the Trent and Mersey Canal, the buildings and structures relate more strongly to the character of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal with Haywood Bridge being the final bridge along the complete stretch of the canal.

- At Baswich railway viaduct a small area of arbitrary land to the south of the viaduct, east of the River Penk has been excluded.

- At the aqueduct over the River Sow the areas of the river to the east and west of the aqueduct has been excluded.

- The former Hazlestrine branch is now included within the conservation area due to its historical connections to the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, as is a small inlet at Milford Wharf.


Stafford
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Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal
Conservation Area Appraisal
Haywood Junction Boundary Revision
Not to scale
October 2015
N
Great Haywood Marina
River Trent
Trent and Mersey Canal
Addition
Drain
Wharf Bridge
The Mill
Wks
MILL LANE
Aqueduct
72m
73m
Haywood Junction
Haywood Bridge
Drain
River Sow
FB
Weir
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Bridge
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Key to Conservation Area Appraisal Map
Existing Conservation Area Boundary
Additions
Deletions
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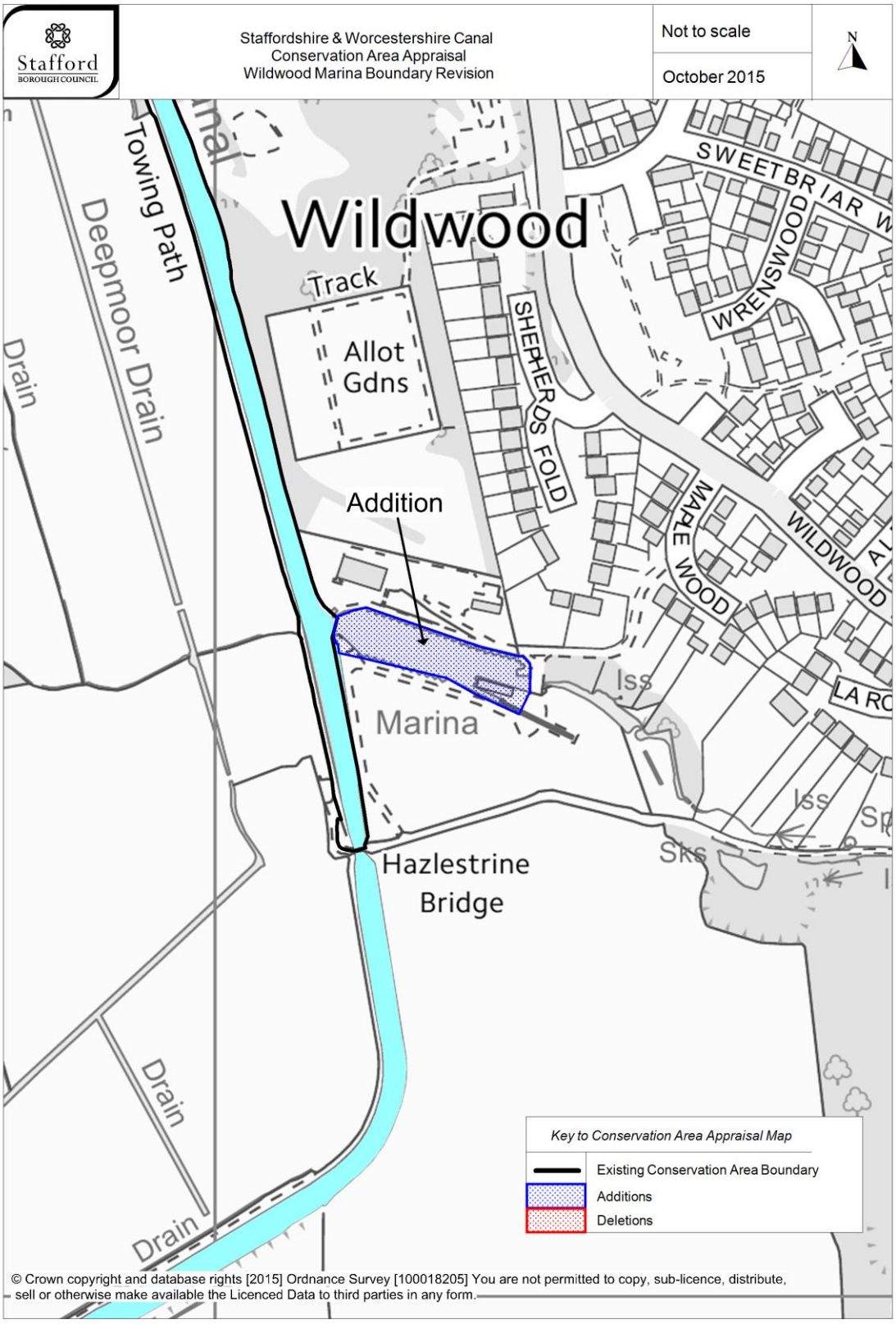
Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal
Conservation Area Appraisal
Wildwood Marina Boundary Revision
Not to scale
October 2015
N
Wildwood
Towing Path
Deepmoor Drain
Drain
Track
Allot Gdns
SHEPHERDS FOLD
SWEETBRIAR W
WRENSWOOD
MAPLE WOOD
WILDWOOD
Addition
Marina
Hazlestrine Bridge
Drain
Drain
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Existing Conservation Area Boundary
Additions
Deletions
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Conservation Area Appraisal
River Sow Aqueduct Boundary Revision

Not to scale

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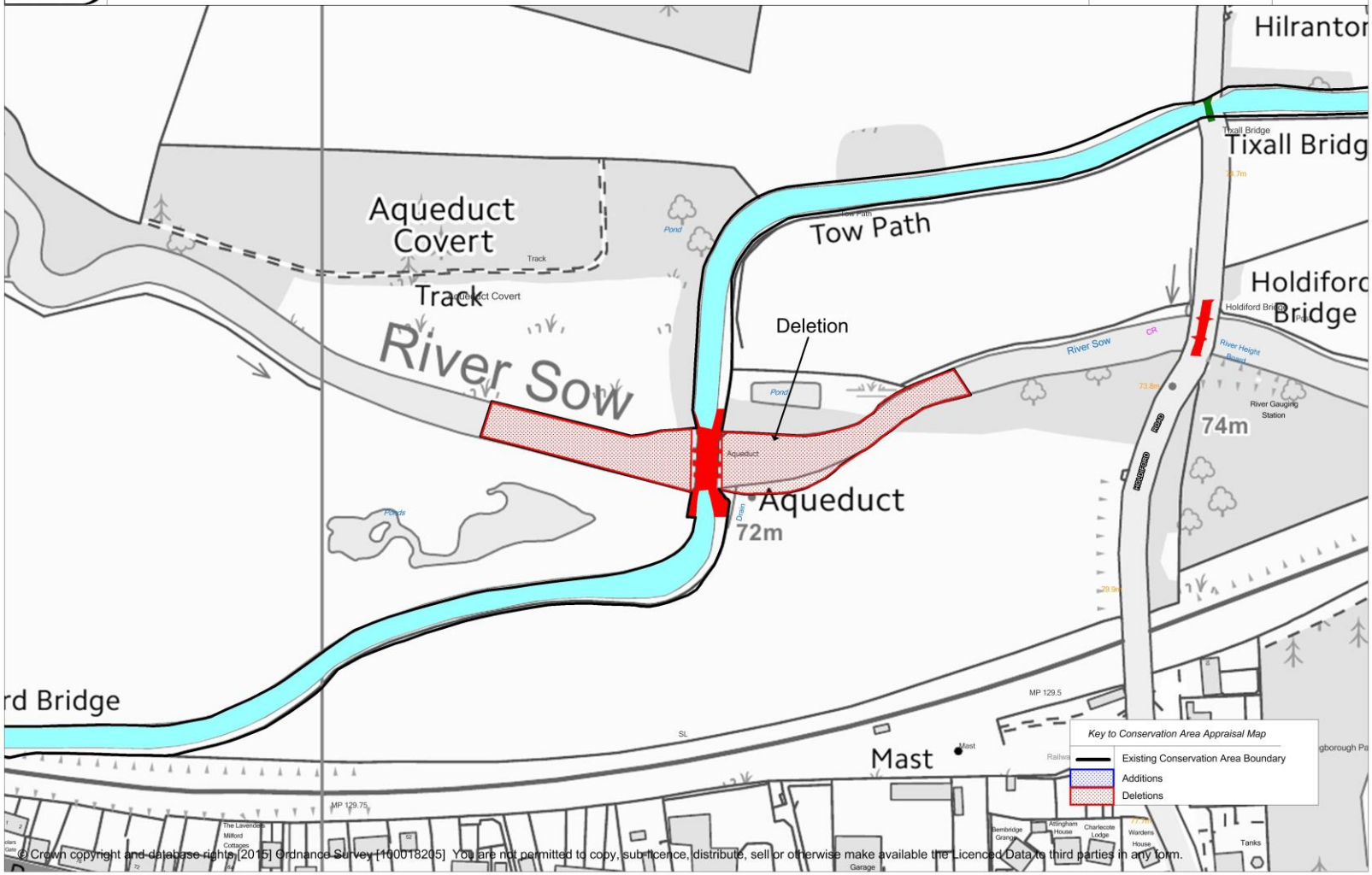

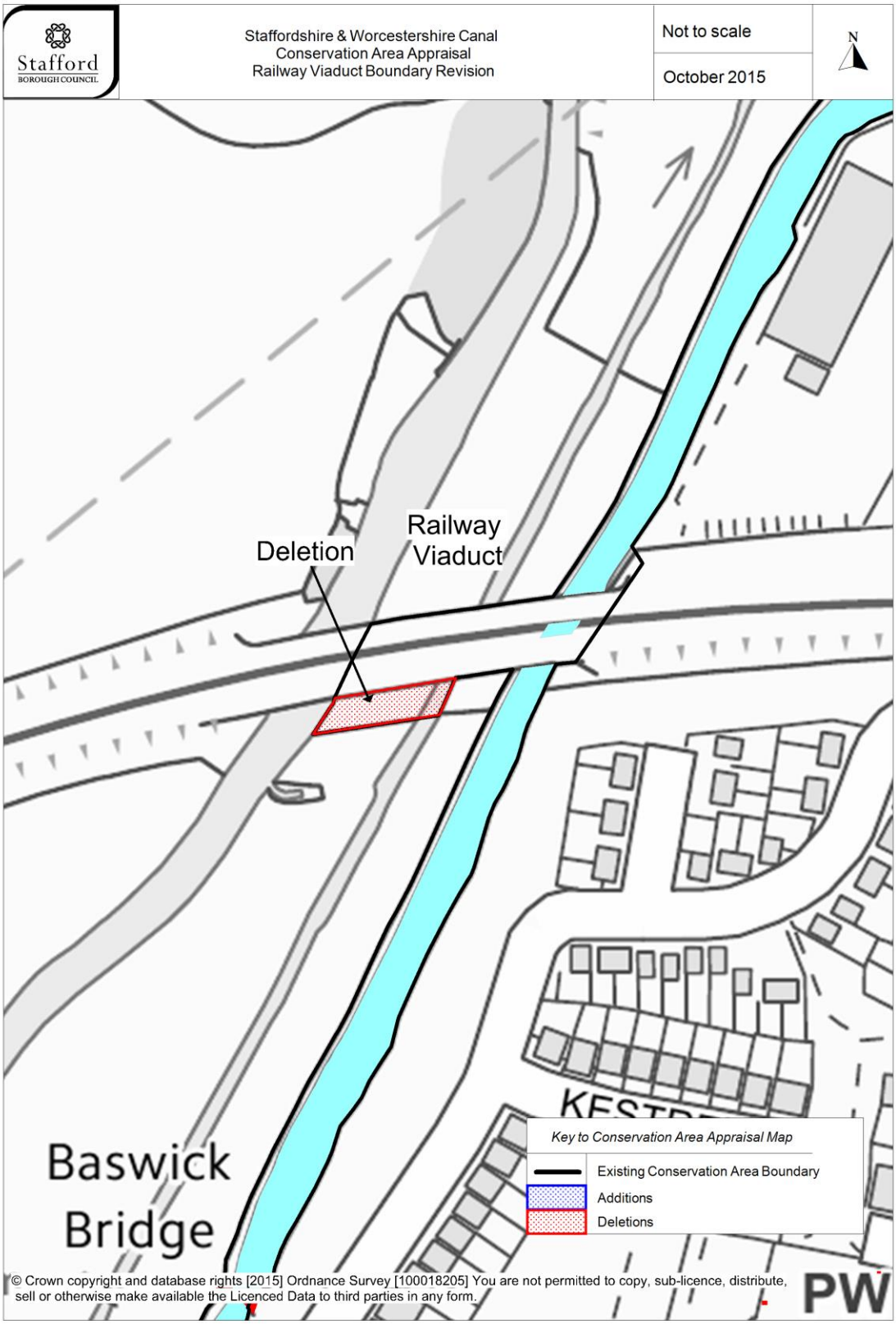
Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal
Conservation Area Appraisal
Railway Viaduct Boundary Revision
Not to scale
October 2015
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Railway
Viaduct
Baswick
Bridge
Key to Conservation Area Appraisal Map
Existing Conservation Area Boundary
Additions
Deletions
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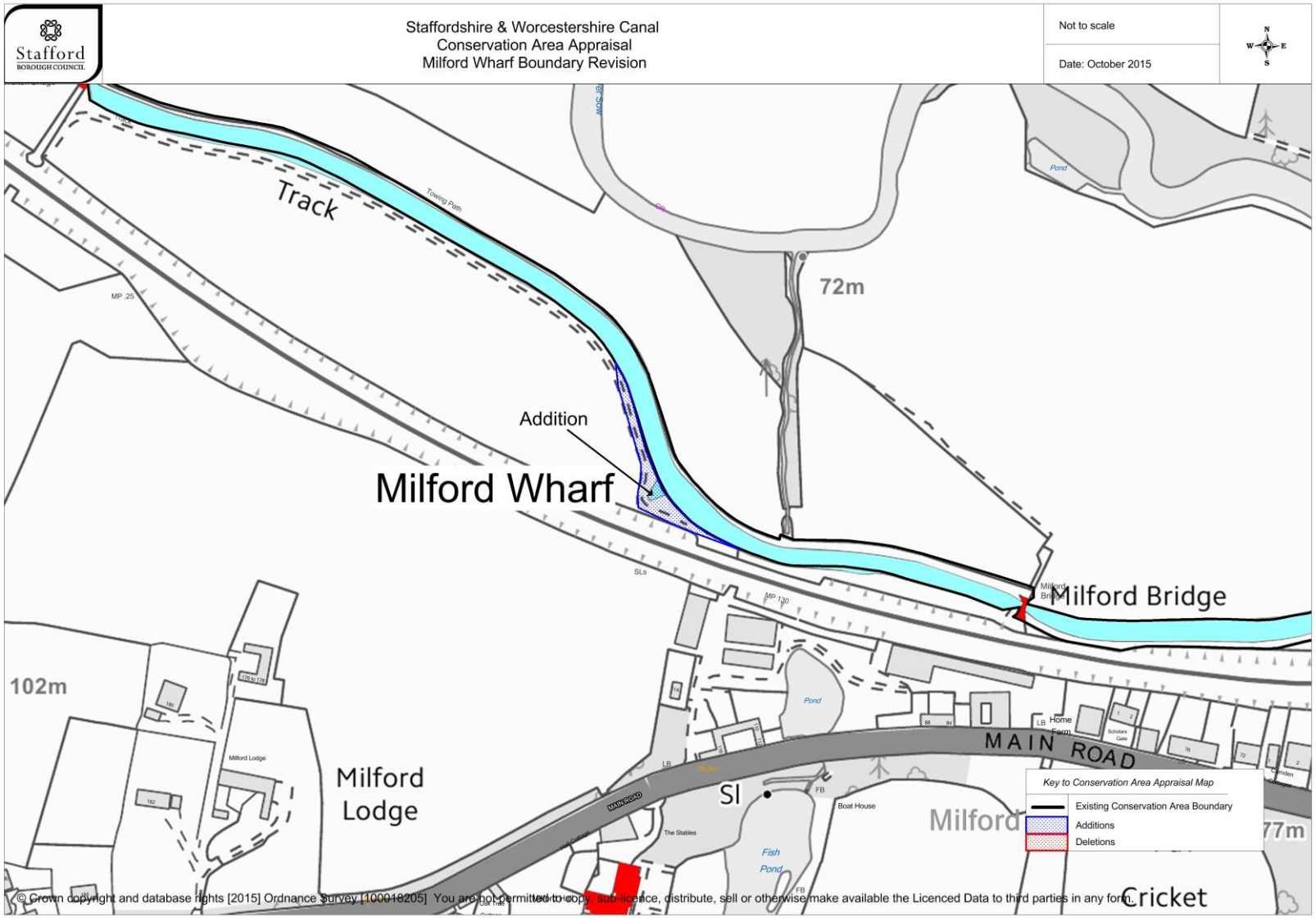
Stafford
BOROUGH COUNCIL
Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal
Conservation Area Appraisal
Milford Wharf Boundary Revision
Not to scale
Date: October 2015
N
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Track
Towing Path
Addition
Milford Wharf
Milford Bridge
72m
102m
77m
Milford Lodge
MAIN ROAD
Home Farm
Boat House
The Stables
Fish Pond
Pond
Cricket
Key to Conservation Area Appraisal Map
Existing Conservation Area Boundary
Additions
Deletions
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Further Information

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http://www.stafford-riverway-link.co.uk/House2.pdf

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