

# Sheepfair/Bow Street Conservation Area Appraisal

February 2018



## Conservation Area Appraisal Sheepfair/Bow Street, Rugeley

### 1. Introduction

This document seeks to provide a clear definition of the special architectural or historic interest that warranted designation of Sheepfair/Bow Street, Rugeley as a Conservation Area through a written appraisal of its character and appearance. It is intended to be used as a guide upon which to manage the form and style of future development in the area as it continues to evolve.

Sheepfair/Bow Street Conservation Area was designated by Cannock Chase Council on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004. It adjoins Church Street Conservation Area to the north-west and Rugeley Town Centre Conservation Area to the east. The Conservation Area covers Crossley Stone, Sheepfair, Elmore Park, the eastern part of Lion Street, the southern part of Taylors Lane and the western part of Bow Street and includes the green space of Elmore Park with its mature tree planting and lake on the Rising Brook. The boundary is illustrated on Plan 1. Overall it comprises one of the historic built-up areas which developed around the town centre fulfilling commercial needs along the main route into the town from the north-west and the Chase. It comprises part of the grounds of the former Hagley Hall and exists today as a quiet and attractive largely residential suburb.

Rugeley was first documented at the time of the Domesday Survey, and its development has focussed on the main Lichfield-Stafford road along Horsefair, Upper and Lower Brook Street and Market Street. Rugeley's prosperity has been based on its mining and industrial history with water power an important asset and its first market charter dating from 1259. The Trent and Mersey Canal (formerly Grand Trunk Canal) to the east of the town opened in 1777 and provided the means of bulk transport of goods. Coal, power and electronics dominated during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and today's built environment continues to provide evidence of this development with the cooling towers of Rugeley power station featuring in town centre views.

The Conservation Area focuses on the junction between Sheepfair, Bow Street and Crossley Stone, a street layout already existing when the 1840 Tithe Map was produced. The group value of the buildings around the junction complement the only Listed Building in the area and contribute towards its setting, despite some modern infill. The Rising Brook crosses the Park and formerly served the corn mill off Sheepfair. The 1570 survey of the town showed a road towards the Chase along Sheepfair (then called Woode End Lane) and in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries sales of Cannock Chase sheep are reputed to have been held here. Construction of Western Springs Road in the late 1950's took through traffic away from Sheepfair and reduced its importance as a thoroughfare.

The Conservation Area is characterised by its historic street pattern and tight urban grain but with plenty of gaps. There are pleasant views within the Conservation Area along winding streets and towards the green space of the Park. There is a diverse range of building types from almshouses and terraced houses to substantial detached and semi-detached buildings. Though predominantly residential some public houses and other commercial uses are present, typical of an edge of town centre area.

Building heights vary between two and three storeys. Generally there is good continuity and consistency between the buildings in terms of appropriate mass, height, scale and materials. The overall impression is of a quiet, mainly residential area of largely 19<sup>th</sup> Century buildings, some with earlier origins, and some 20<sup>th</sup> Century infill development. A scattering of other uses complement the residential character and mature tree planting around the Park enhances the street scene and views though the Area.

There is one Listed Building within the Conservation Area, the Georgian Crossley Stone House at the junction of Bow Street and Crossley Stone, It has a frontage to both streets, comprising 20 Crossley Stone and 45 Bow Street. It is listed Grade II and dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century. The list description can be found in Appendix 1.

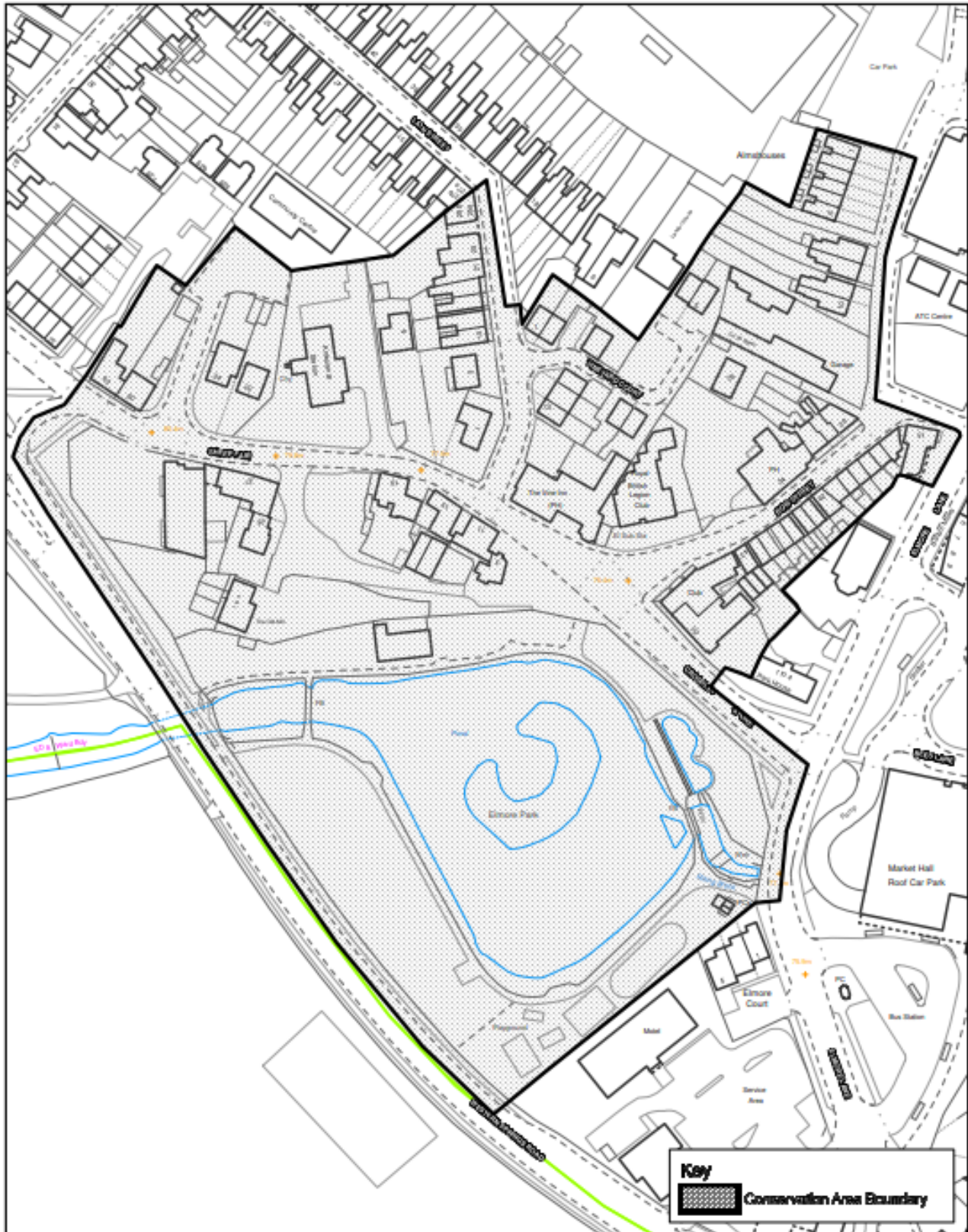
Summary of Special Interest of the Sheepfair/Bow Street Conservation Area:

- Its traditional winding street pattern with development around a historic thoroughfare (and marketplace)
- Its townscape of diverse building types and buildings/groups of individual interest, harmonised by mass, height, scale and materials
- Its human scale, with visual interest created by differing frontages, rooflines and design details and several landmark buildings
- Its green spaces, mature trees, pool and brook in Elmore Park which bring a rural element into the town
- Its historic association with Hagley Hall and grounds, giving strong historic context and potential for archaeology to survive
- Its green spaces adjacent to Elmore Park offer views to attractive old buildings and trees, thereby enhancing the street scene.

The Conservation Area has two distinct character areas:

- The built-up area (Crossley Stone, Bow Street, Sheepfair and Taylors Lane)
- Elmore Park and the 'green lane'

The survey work for this Appraisal was carried out in April and May 2012 and in February 2014.



## **2. Planning Policy Context**

Government policy recognises the importance of effective protection for all aspects of the historic environment through legislation and policy guidance. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides specific protection for buildings and areas of special architectural or historic interest, including buildings within a conservation area (sections 69-72). The National Planning Policy Framework 2012 provides a full statement of Government policy for the protection of historic buildings, areas and other features and is supported by the Planning Practice Guidance 2014.

The Government is responsible for compiling a List of buildings of special architectural or historic interest of national significance. There are three grades of listed buildings to give an indication of relative importance, Grade I, II\* and II; 94% of listed buildings are Grade II.

The Local Authority is responsible for the designation of conservation areas where appropriate and for formulating and publishing proposals for the preservation or enhancement of these areas. A conservation area is “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The effect of designation is broadly to bring demolition of buildings and tree removal under planning control and to restrict ‘permitted development’ rights which permit certain building works to take place.

Restrictions are imposed on tree works by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO’s) and Conservation Area designation. Presence of a TPO makes it an offence to cut down, lop, top, uproot, willfully damage, or willfully destroy a tree without the written consent of the Local Planning Authority, unless a suitable exemption can be demonstrated. TPO’s not only protect the aerial parts of the tree but also their root systems. Trees within Conservation Areas are also afforded protection through planning law and six weeks written notice of any work must be given. Fines imposed by the courts can be severe if a person is found guilty of infringing the law and trees removed in contravention must be replaced before the end of the following planting season.

Staffordshire County Council (SCC) supported by Historic England have undertaken an Extensive Urban Survey of Rugeley as one of a series of 23 medieval Staffordshire towns. The report, completed in 2010, characterizes the historic development of the town through reference to historic sources, cartographic material and archaeological evidence. The town is subdivided into a series of Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCA’s) with a statement of archaeological, historic, aesthetic and communal value for each one, supported by more detailed descriptions and mapping. Sheep Fair/Bow Street Conservation Area mainly falls within HUCA 9, with parts within HUCA’s 8 and 10. These extracts are found in Appendix 2. Developers are advised to consult this document and the SCC Historic Environment Team at an early stage when considering schemes within the Conservation Area.

Cannock Chase Local Plan (Part 1) was adopted in 2014 and contains local planning policy including CP15 seeking to safeguard all aspects of the District’s historic environment. Policies CP12 and CP14 seek to enhance biodiversity and landscape character. Policy CP3 seeks high standards of design of buildings and spaces, conservation and enhancement of the local historic environment as a stimulus to high quality design, and successful integration with trees, hedges and landscape features to green the built environment. The Conservation Area also falls partly within the boundary of Rugeley Town Centre Area Action Plan, within Local Plan (part 1), which

incorporates detailed urban design guidance for Rugeley including enhancing links between the town centre and the Park and reflecting the characteristics of Historic Urban Character Areas (HUCA's) to strengthen local distinctiveness and reinforce sense of place. A Design Supplementary Planning Document to support Policy CP3 has been prepared. This Conservation Area Appraisal is a background document to the Local Plan. It has the status of a material planning consideration providing a basis for development management decisions.

### **3. Development History**

The name 'Rugeley' is thought to derive from the Old English 'hrycg' and 'leah' referring to a clearing on a ridge. The settlement was owned by the Earls of Mercia until 1069 when the last Earl, Edwin, son of Aelfgar of Rugeley, forfeited it to the Crown. In 1189 it was granted to the Bishop of Lichfield and it descended with the Bishop until it passed to the Paget family in 1546.

The woods, ironstone, coal and clay in the area, together with available water power, led to the town becoming an industrial settlement. There was a mill in the town, some meadow along the Trent and woodland on Cannock Chase at the time of the Domesday Survey in Rugeley in 1086, with tanneries present by the 12<sup>th</sup> century and mills and forges along the Rising Brook from the Middle Ages. In 1086 there was a mill worth 30 shillings in the Manor and by 1423 a fulling mill (for making cloth) belonging to the Lord of the Manor, believed to be the 'walkmill' on the pool (now drained) downstream from Horns Pool near Slitting Mill, on the edge of the Chase to the west. By 1560 there was a further mill leased by the Lord of the Manor. There were iron mines and a forge within the Manor by 1298 and in 1380 there were 17 workers in iron. In 1682 there was a forge near Slitting Mill and between 1692 and 1710 a slitting mill (for working the forged iron) at Rugeley was handling most of the output of Staffordshire's ironworks. There was also a forge in the centre of Rugeley around 1775 and by 1834 two forges, rolling mills and two iron foundries. Early coal mining activity led to prospecting for coal at deeper levels between 1791 and 1794 and generated the social and economic development of the area from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, eventually becoming the district's major industry.

At the same time agriculture formed an important activity and during the Middle Ages the town was surrounded by three common fields – Churchfield, Upfield and Hodgeley – which would have given the little town a spacious aspect. Upfield was on the Etchinghill side of the town, in the area of Sheep Fair/Bow Street. Plan 2 shows the development history of the Conservation Area.

Rugeley was of sufficient importance by 1259 that the King granted a charter for a Thursday market to the Bishop of Lichfield and an annual fair of three days to be held on the Vigil, Feast and Morrow of St Augustine of Canterbury (25-27 May). Market status for Rugeley assured the progress of the town in relation to neighbouring settlements. A rental survey of the town in 1570 shows something of its layout – one main axis with two branches, one being 'wood end lane' (Sheep Fair) leading to the Chase and the other 'newbolde end' (Horse Fair) towards Brereton. The tithe plan of 1840 suggests that the layout was little changed, though in the process of being developed with additional streets and plots. Rugeley was famous through the Midlands for its horse fairs during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, at a time when horse power was supreme, and the sheep fair was apparently established during this time, with sheep being reared on Cannock Chase.

The houses of several prominent families stood in the countryside within a few miles of Rugeley, including Hagley Hall. The first manor house of Hagley is thought to have been on the site of the

current Elmore Park in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1636 the Weston family built a new house at Bank Top, on the high ground further west and outside the Conservation Area. Sir Richard Weston was created Earl of Portland and the family was also living at Weston Park, Weston-under-Lizard. In 1749 the Hall was bought by Assheton Curzon MP who in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century remodelled the house and redesigned the surrounding landscape. The landscape works in the gardens and Park along the Rising Brook included several weirs, an ornamental bridge and a grotto, typical features of 18<sup>th</sup> Century landscape design; both of the latter survive as Listed Buildings (see Appendix 1). The architects were the Wyatt Brothers from Elford, Staffordshire. Curzon was a keen racehorse owner and he built a stable adjacent to the Hall. His son Sir Robert Curzon and his wife Harriet Anne, Baroness de la Zouche opened the grounds to the public and lived at the property until 1864. The Hall was purchased by William Harrison, a local colliery owner, who added an ornamental pool, and then the estate passed into the hands of the trustees of the Marquis of Anglesey. Most of the Hall was demolished c.1930, a fate which befell many country houses during this time and, apart from part of the former stable block, the rest was demolished c.1985 when the site was developed for housing. Nevertheless this remnant of an 18<sup>th</sup> Century designed landscape set out around a country house remains a signpost to Rugeley's long history.

The Rising Brook powered mills as it flowed into the town and corn milling was an important activity in the area. Rugeley Mill, mentioned in the Domesday Book (1087), later became Hagley Mill, mostly rebuilt in modern times and known as 'The Old Mill' and still bears evidence of the waterwheel pit to its western side adjacent to the Park wall and the higher ground where the mill pond lay to its rear. The millpond was built before 1884. The mill race followed the 'green lane' eastwards and then southwards, acting as the watercourse for the millpond of the Central Mills, south of Bees Lane. Both pond and race were filled in by the late 1950's. The Rising Brook then ran on to provide the power for a mill in Queen Street and the leather mill in Leathermill Lane before joining the River Trent. The stream today leaves the Park to enter a culvert under most of the town centre, emerging at intervals allowing its course to be traced.

Elmore Park forms part of the former Hagley Hall estate that was separated upon completion of Western Springs Road in 1958. Elmore Park was formally opened in 1960, band concerts were held there in summer and the Park was welcomed as an asset to the town. It has become the main Park for Rugeley town, the focus being the lake which is fed by the Rising Brook and was refurbished in 1998 as part of the Trent Challenge Scheme, then again more recently.

### Crossley Stone & Sheepfair

Sheepfair may have originated as a small area of unenclosed land or 'green' used for recreation or grazing animals, possibly during the medieval period. A sheepfair is not specifically recorded here however sheep formed an important part of the local economy from at least the 14<sup>th</sup> Century and wool was an important industry by the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Century, so it is likely that the sheepfair had its origins in the later medieval period. Maps suggest that the infilling of the open 'fair' area with buildings had occurred by the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Sheepfair and Crossley Stone are considered to form the historic core of the Conservation Area.

Sheepfair forms a historic thoroughfare and once contained many timber framed buildings. Its status is reflected with the development of former coaching inns, such as the Vine Inn and the former White Lion Inn, on opposite corners of the Sheep Fair/Lion Street junction. The imposing building at the junction of Bow Street and Crossley Stone, Crossley Stone House, faces both ways

and is a Listed Building. It dates from the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century and is a local landmark being 3 stories high. It is likely to have been two substantial houses at one time, in a prime position, though more recently the Bow Street side has been occupied by Rugeley Comrades and United Services Club before being used as a bar, and is now under conversion to flats, and the Crossley Stone side has been in use as offices for some years. The windows and doorcases on the building are splendid, with moulded timber detailing, and historically stood behind a wall with railings on top; the railings were removed to assist the war effort in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and partly replaced in the 1960's.

The Vine Inn buildings at the corner of Lion Street contain historic 17<sup>th</sup> Century timber box framing to the single storey malthouse. There is potential for other buildings in the Conservation Area to have earlier cores, hidden behind Victorian frontages. Crossley Stone (the source of the name is not known) had its own brewery, run by Thomas Collet in 1834. It was located immediately to the rear of the Vine Inn. The 3 storey building was demolished in 1989 and now provides parking for the public house. The area was ideal for a brewery with plenty of water available from the Rising Brook and other raw materials available locally. The brewery moved to Brewery Street in 1860. Robert Bentley, entered as 'Vine Inn and Maltster' in Kelly's Directory 1860, provides possibly the first reference to the Vine Inn name. Wings and outbuildings were added at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century when an off-licence and tobacconists shop were added to the range of buildings. The 'outshut' to the malthouse, with its 'catslide roof', formed the cellar to the inn. In 2000 the malthouse was refurbished as a small function room, revealing much of the early timberwork. An early 20<sup>th</sup> Century photograph of the Vine Inn shows it behind roadside iron railings with the frontage largely covered by a vine. When the inn was under threat of demolition in 2004 it was considered for Listing by English Heritage who decided it was not of sufficient completeness to qualify, though stated that it was potentially a candidate for a Local List (forthcoming).

The White Lion was another timber framed late 16<sup>th</sup>/early 17<sup>th</sup> Century building in the locality with a large central chimney. It was still standing in the late 1950's but was demolished along with several groups of cottages around this time and their sites were infilled with modern development – there were cottages at the road junction then the site of the British Legion, cottages on the present site of the ambulance station and also at Crossley Stone Terrace, near the present Elmore Lane. At the White Lion jockeys used to be weighed for the Etchinghill races and the yard at the rear was known as the 'mail yard' because the mail coaches stopped there. The site has also been a blacksmiths shop.



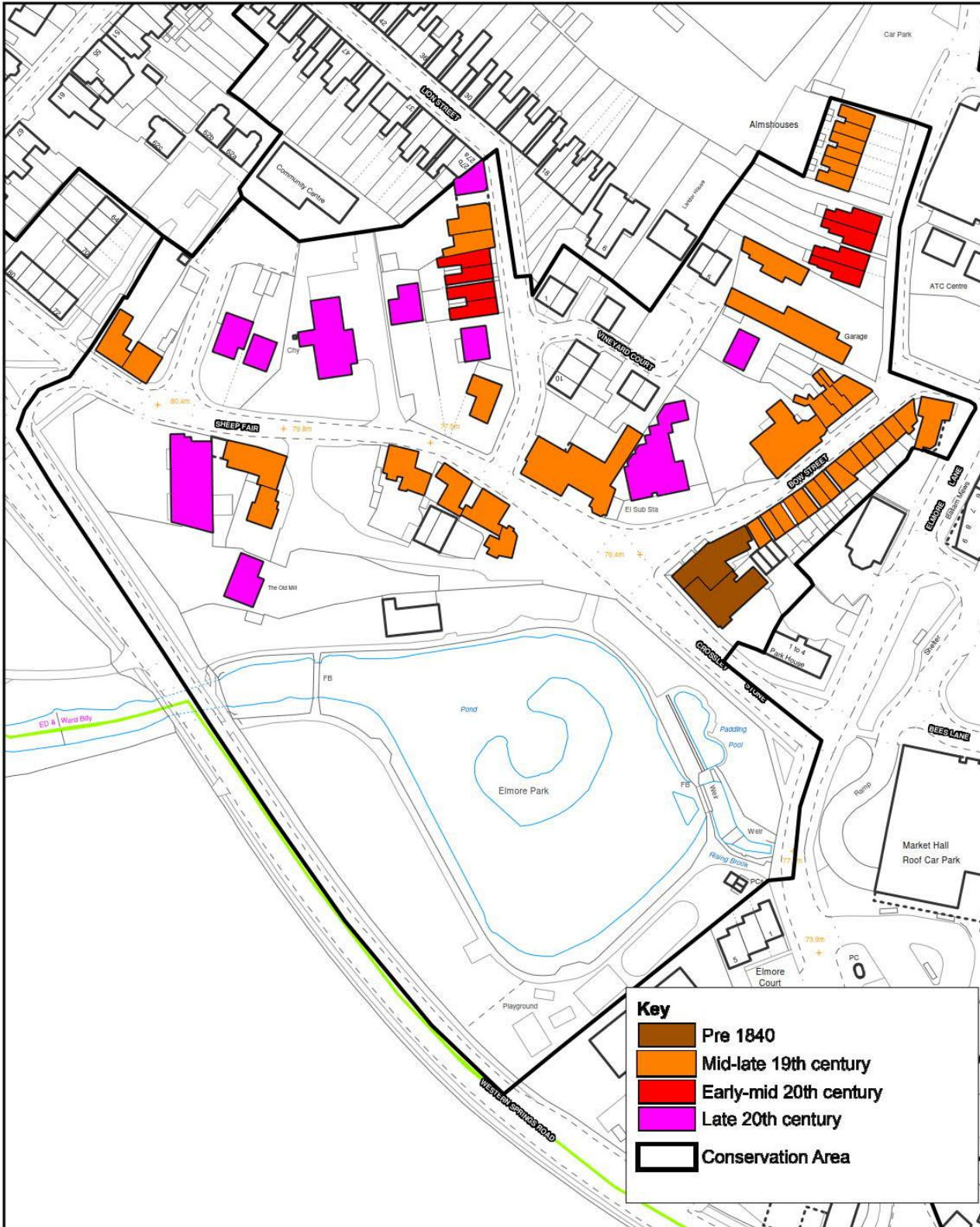


# PLAN 2: DEVELOPMENT HISTORY



SCALE: 1:1500

DATE: April 2014



In the 1960's and 70's many older houses and cottages were failing to provide the modern conveniences desired by their occupants and redevelopment was considered a step forward towards modernity and a brighter future rather than the sad loss it may be thought today. Indeed it was at this time that conservation area legislation was enacted through the Civic Amenities Act 1967 in response to a nationwide threat to and loss of significant historic areas of our towns. As a result the need was recognised to look beyond the protection of individual buildings to secure protection for building groups and areas of historic townscape.

#### Bow Street and Lion Street

Bow Street leads out from the Market Square in Rugeley town centre before entering the Conservation Area and joining Sheepfair. The street has medieval origins. The appearance of this part of the Conservation Area today mainly reflects Rugeley's expansion during the Victorian period as dense terraced housing spread to house the town's growing population.

The southern end of Lion Street is within the Conservation Area and links further high density terraced houses enclosing the narrow Lion Street beyond the boundary with the larger and more spacious properties of Sheepfair. At this point there are good detached and semi-detached early-mid 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings, which still retain characteristic features of their period, together with more recent infill housing.

The commercial uses in the Conservation Area include several licensed premises, in Bow Street and at its junction with Sheepfair/Crossley Stone, including the Vine Inn and Olly's Bar. These attract the relatively few, mainly younger, drinkers but overall there are few attractors to generate any significant evening activity in the Conservation Area.

#### Taylor's Lane

Taylor's Lane, like Crossley Stone and Sheepfair, is a historic medieval thoroughfare, once leading to open fields. Church Field was bounded on the south side by Church Lane, now Church Street, and stretched north along Wolseley Road, and Taylor's Lane was the path leading from the town to Church Field. Several of Rugeley's historic buildings stood in this area including the medieval tithe barn which until 1649 stood in Bow Street near the junction with Taylor's Lane.

The Almshouses built in 1890 are the main buildings of note along Taylor's Lane remaining today. They were called the Walters Almshouses until 1906 when they were bought by Rev C J Littleton. He renamed them the Littleton Almshouses and gave them to the Trustees of the Girls Friendly Society. There are two plaques detailing this history on the front of the buildings.

The car park adjacent to the Almshouses, just beyond the Conservation Area boundary, was the site of the former Rugeley Fire Station built in 1935 by the former Rugeley Urban District Council. It was planned to house the full time fire engine and ambulance driver Mr George Rutter. At the opening ceremony Mr Rutter drove the new fire engine from the police station to the fire station. The engine was named 'Beatrice May' (after Mr Rutter's daughter) and the site became a very busy station housing three County appliances. The fire station was demolished in 1978 after much controversy and several attempts to save it. The tower would have been a considerable landmark in the streetscape. It had been redundant since 1974 when the new fire station in Bryans Lane was opened. Opposite the site of the fire station still stands the former Drill Hall.

Through most of its history Rugeley has been a well-favoured small town, however the changes over the last 30 years, particularly the rapid loss of its main economic base, have had a significant impact in common with other coalfield communities. After a long and relatively prosperous history the town today has become a quieter place, notwithstanding its strong community spirit, with most of its industries and activity having ceased. However evidence of its past lives on in its distinctive street layout and older buildings, street and place names, markets and the continuing presence of the Rising Brook, and represents an important and valuable asset to guide future regeneration of the town.

#### **4. Archaeology**

The County's Historic Environment Record (HER) highlights areas of potential importance in increasing knowledge of the history of the town. Very little archaeological investigation has been carried out in Rugeley compared with other towns of similar date and size. Archaeology may exist anywhere within the boundaries of historic towns and has the potential to help understand origins, development and growth, therefore any development proposals involving the disturbance of ground within the Conservation Area may need to be accompanied by an archaeological assessment as part of a Heritage Statement to accompany planning applications. There is high potential for archaeological deposits to survive in this area which could inform understanding of the watermill site and the settlement around Sheepfair, in particular.

The County's Extensive Urban Survey of Rugeley highlights important historic features and makes recommendations for the Sheepfair/Bow Street area including:

- Any planning application should be accompanied by a statement of significance to assess the impact of proposed development on the historic environment
- The sympathetic restoration/enhancement of the historic buildings, listed and unlisted, would strengthen the character and quality of the townscape and Conservation Area
- There is a high potential for below ground deposits to exist and for historic buildings to retain architectural elements which could inform understanding. Where development may result in loss, archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record significance and advance understanding.

#### **5. Townscape Character Appraisal**

##### Location and Landscape Setting

Rugeley stands on the south bank of the River Trent on ground gently rising from the valley to the forest and heath of Cannock Chase to the west. The Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was designated in 1958 and covers an area of approximately 6,900 hectares. Its primary purpose is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, and this higher ground forms a green setting to the town. The Rising Brook flows down from the Chase to the Trent through Elmore Park and the centre of the town. Rugeley lies roughly halfway between the County town of Stafford and the cathedral city of Lichfield, and historically most of its buildings have been concentrated along the north-east south-west axis of the Stafford-Lichfield road. The Trent and Mersey Canal (itself a County-wide Conservation Area) runs along the eastern edge of the town, beyond which stands Rugeley Power Station with its landmark cooling towers, and further east run the River Trent and West Coast mainline railway. Waterways and routeways follow the contours between the Chase and the River, features which have determined the historic layout of the town.

The Conservation Area lies on the north-western side of the town centre bounded by Western Springs Road and containing Elmore Park, Crossley Stone/Sheepfair and adjacent streets Bow Street, Taylors Lane and the southern part of Lion Street.

### Character Analysis

The Conservation Area has two distinct character areas:

- A: Built-up area including Sheepfair, Crossley Stone, Lion Street, Bow Street and Taylors Lane
- B: Elmore Park

These character areas are shown on Plan 3.

### A: Sheepfair, Crossley Stone, Lion Street, Bow Street and Taylors Lane

#### Spatial analysis

This built-up part of the Conservation Area is physically compact although the frontages have been opened up in places by redevelopment of old cottages with more spacious modern development set back from the road. The distinctive street pattern on the fringe of the town centre has several 'kinks' and curves. Bow Street leads out from the town centre joining the more 'organic' Taylors Lane. It meets Sheepfair, a historic curved street winding between buildings which still shows how the old buildings closely fronted the road. Sheepfair rises up onto a higher bank towards its western end which once contained the millpond. Before the construction of Western Springs Road, Sheepfair branched and continued onward to the Chase and into Green Lane. Its informal alignment contrasts with the formal Lion Street leading off to the north which is straight with a kink in the middle, probably laid out and developed in stages based on old property boundaries. The winding streets within the Conservation Area are likely to have medieval origins, hence their 'organic' pattern and layout, developed over the centuries. The 'planned' streets have a more 'urban', high density feel, infilling land which opened up for development as the population of Rugeley grew. The former open 'green' area near to the Park and Old Mill still retains something of its rural nature with lower density development around the informal space. It forms a transition zone where character areas merge.

#### Character Analysis

Townscape is the feature which distinguishes the special interest of a Conservation Area from the merits of individual buildings within it, including the inter relationship between buildings and spaces. It derives from appearance, history and historical association, and its nature and quality may vary within the area, providing a drama of shapes, colours, textures, design and detail. Examples are noted to illustrate features and are not intended to be comprehensive.

This section of the Conservation Area mostly appears to date from the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries with some 20<sup>th</sup> Century infill. There is a variety of domestic styles from traditional Victorian terraces and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century semi-detached houses in Bow Street/Taylors Lane to the more individual substantial detached and semi-detached houses from a range of periods along Sheep Fair/Crossley Stone (Fig 1). The older buildings, generally constructed in local orange-red brick, including some buildings along Crossley Stone and Sheep Fair, may have earlier cores or remnants of earlier buildings within (eg the Vine Inn – see Historic Development section) and stand

on their original burgage plots, property units dating from medieval times, and still recognisable in many old towns today. Some buildings have been rendered which has altered their appearance to some extent, though roofs, chimneys and chimney pots remaining in brick give a clue to earlier materials.



Fig.1 Buildings around the Conservation Area.

The general character of the area is quite dense within the groups of buildings, though modern infill development is usually set back from the original building line, giving a more open and less intensive feel, and the open spaces amongst the building groups provide space for greenery and views of trees in the Park. The street width varies, from the narrow confines of Bow Street into the openness of the Sheep Fair junction, which contributes to visual interest and variety of views. The modern infill buildings, which replaced historic ones, have affected the completeness and cohesiveness of the Conservation Area to a degree in terms of their scale, form and use of standardised building materials, but many have adopted front garden boundaries which still help to contain the street.

The orientation of the buildings is generally consistent, with roof slopes fronting the highway and the gables side facing. There are some exceptions where gables front onto the highway, such as The Vine Inn with its front facing gables. This can be a clue that a building has earlier origins based on a type of structure characteristic of an earlier period, though here the gables were in fact added later. There are also some historic dormer windows partially built into the top of the front wall on some houses to create an extra floor. The historic buildings in the Conservation Area are of two and three storey height. As a general rule taller buildings tend to be found closer to town centres where land values are higher and there is a need to maximise accommodation; heights tend to decrease as building densities decrease towards the edge of town. Such features provide variation and interest to the streetscape and roovescape and help make a place distinctive.

Crossley Stone House and The Vine Inn are two landmark buildings within the Conservation Area due to their significant scale and form, prominent location and their standing on the historic building line. Crossley Stone House retains its elegance and proportions. The Vine Inn has a mixture of design details from different periods which bring visual variety, including the crenelated parapet wall and the frontage of the former off-licence shop. The houses adjacent to the Old Mill are of local interest for their individual design and their distinctive contribution to the character and appearance

of the Conservation Area. They occupy a quiet enclave within a predominantly green space amongst trees, accessed from a 'green lane', a reminder of its rural past.



Fig. 2 Almshouses and villas in Taylors Lane

On a smaller scale (Fig 2) the almshouses represent the 19<sup>th</sup> Century idea of 'cottages' with lattice window design, decorative detailing and pretty porches and add visual and historical interest to the Conservation Area. Their attractive front gardens contribute soft planting and trees at this eastern end of the road. The houses along the south-west side of Bow Street add further variety being arranged in pairs with a central passage entry to each pair. At the junction of Bow Street and Taylors Lane buildings comprising the former Co-op dairy remain at a right angle to the road, arranged around a courtyard, and now converted to other uses. Two attractive pairs of villas stand between the almshouses and the former dairy, dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, one pair named as Rose Cottages 1909, again a hint of something more rural. In Sheepfair several taller houses incorporate a front dormer in brick, which add an extra storey without much increased height, but which helps to emphasize the 'vertical' dimension of the buildings. In Lion Street is a further group of typical early 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings, houses and a shop, currently in use as a launderette. A recent terraced infill development here has sought to reflect adjacent materials, design and detailing as it links to the Victorian terraces of the tightly knit Lion Street. Towards the west end of Sheepfair is a pair of double-fronted cottages with attractive detailing, including roof finials along the ridge. Amongst these buildings are occasional modern houses and bungalows set squarely within their plots.

At its west end Sheep Fair meets Western Springs Road and peters out into its wide corridor, some historic buildings having been lost during the road redevelopment. The Motor Components premises occupies a large and prominent site on this junction with an existing planning permission for a residential development likely to provide a more suitable enclosure of space than the existing low modern building and large car park enclosed by a metal barrier. The only visual benefit this site provides from Western Springs Road is the view across its openness of mature trees to the Old Mill garden and Park.

Some of the modern development in the Conservation Area has only a neutral effect on otherwise attractive views so there is potential, should such sites come up for redevelopment, that their design and layout could be improved upon today in a way which enhances the Conservation Area. The very recent infill development to the rear of the Vine Inn (Fig 3) has sought to retain the high density nature of the area using characteristic design and materials whilst allowing for current space standards between windows and parking provision as far as possible. Similarly adjacent to but outside the Conservation Area in Sheepfair recent development on the Prince of Wales car park site has sought to reflect the surrounding character in design, layout and materials. The

Cannock Chase Heritage Trail runs along Sheepfair with its information boards at intervals signposting the area's history, adding further interest for pedestrians and cyclists.



Fig. 3 Recent development in Lion Street and Sheepfair

Traffic noise becomes apparent at this western end of the Conservation Area, after the more tranquil environs of Crossley Stone, Bow Street and Sheepfair. The Park suffers from traffic noise along its south western boundary with the main road but further eastwards traffic sound diminishes in favour of ducks quacking as they congregate on the Lake. Hedging along the main road boundary does however prevent visual intrusion of traffic.

### Building materials

#### 1. Boundary Walls & Facing Materials

The facing materials within the Conservation Area are typical of Staffordshire, mainly consisting of local orange-red brick with some blue brick banding (such as found on the almshouses, Taylors Lane). Some brick has been painted, and smooth render is used on some later Edwardian buildings, such as at first floor level on the terrace 13-19 Lion Street. Render has been used on other buildings as a modern post-war alteration obscuring the facing brickwork. Eaves on some buildings are decorated with corbelling and even some of the more modest terraces along Bow Street have dentilled eaves (a projecting course of brick 'toothing' decoration), some in contrast coloured brick, and such detailing suggests a good quality build. Some of these houses have bootscrapers near their front doors, a reminder of the days when roads were unsurfaced. Stone detailing to doors and windows is also a feature of the area.

There are remnants of old brick boundary walling in places with distinctive blue Staffordshire copings, such as those found between the almshouses in Taylors Lane (Fig 4). Boundary walls have however suffered from considerable erosion, and many are in disrepair and in poor condition (see photo). Some front boundary walls have been lost or replaced with incongruous fencing, such as timber panels with concrete posts, and some historic railings have been removed in the past and replaced more recently.

The frontage walls to Crossley Stone House are very decorative with sweeping curves, the original railings were removed to help the war effort in the 1940's but those on the Crossley Stone frontage were replaced in the 1960's. The walls on the Bow Street frontage have in the past been painted bright blue, which strikes a discordant note. Modern railings bound Elmore Park allowing good views into the greenery of the Park. Between the Vine Inn and the site of the former Royal British Legion building the electricity sub-station has galvanised pallisade fencing around it which detracts from the character and setting of the Conservation Area and the setting of the Inn. A simple measure such as painting this fencing a dark colour would reduce its prominence at this focal point.



Fig.4 Old boundary wall in Taylors Lane and sub-station fencing in Sheepfair

## 2. Windows

Historic windows in the Conservation Area mainly consist of timber sliding sashes, with some opening casements. Crossley Stone House has elegant 18<sup>th</sup> Century sashes. The Vine Inn has an eclectic variety of windows, including bays, sliding sashes and three light casements, illustrating different periods of historical development. The early 20<sup>th</sup> Century villa houses have ground floor bays and top opening first floor windows typical of their period, and the Walters Almhouses along Taylors Lane have a distinctive and decorative 'diamond lattice' patterned windows which gives a slightly ecclesiastical and 'rustic' character to the building.

Most historic windows are timber framed and in the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century softwood began to be imported from Scandinavia and the Baltic states. This slow grown, high quality, naturally durable timber was widely used until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century when inferior species began to be used. Historic timber is therefore not a renewable resource, and it is very difficult to source timber of this quality and durability today. By the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century the sash window was well established and rapidly superseded the older casement, remaining the standard domestic window until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The sash window was the great revolution of the late 17<sup>th</sup> Century, particularly the counter-balanced double sash which used weights in the mechanism to keep the windows open at any desired position.

Many wooden windows are destroyed because people believe they are beyond repair. However many replacement windows inserted in the last 30 years have now decayed beyond repair, whereas examples of original windows survive from the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and earlier showing the high quality of materials and compatible methods of construction used historically. Limited decay can be tackled without total destruction, and repair methods are available to enable a decayed window to be brought back into a sound functioning condition. Some windows in the Area have been replaced with UPVC double glazed windows, a common change where houses have 'permitted development' rights and owners wish to improve energy efficiency. Despite this objective such change has adversely affected the character and historic continuity of the buildings, especially where sashes have been replaced with top-opening units where the glazing bar details have not been replicated to match. Design detailing is important in achieving an appropriate visual effect and needs careful attention.

Many of the historic windows have simple stone headers and sills, though some have brick segmented headed detailing. This creates visual emphasis and solidity.



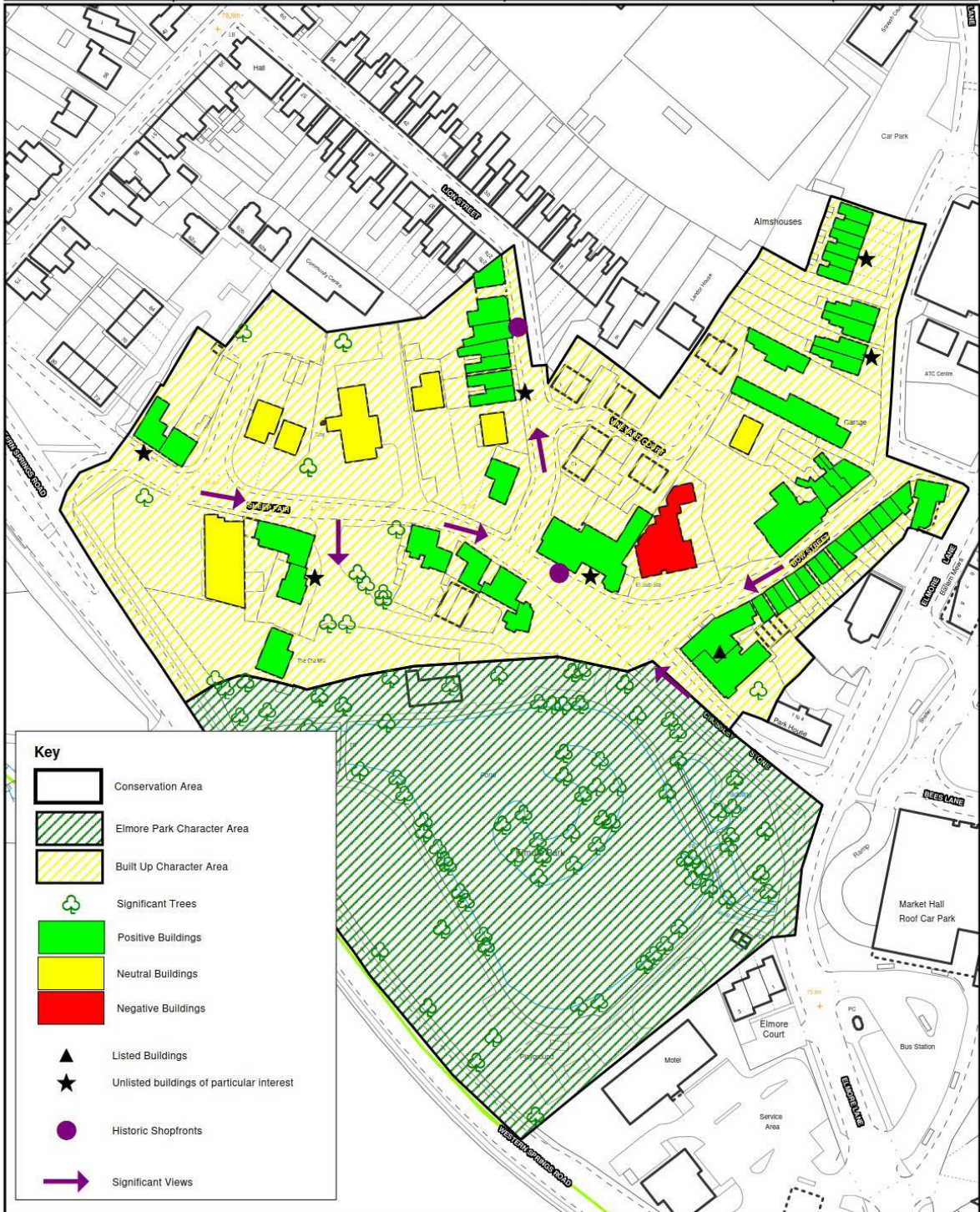


# PLAN 3: TOWNSCAPE APPRAISAL



SCALE: 1:1500

DATE: April 2014



Crown Copyright and database rights [2014] Ordnance Survey  
 Licence No. 100019754. You are not permitted to copy, sub-licence, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.

### 3. Doors

Many traditional doors in the Conservation Area are timber panelled, with some six panelled doors such as that found at 20 Crossley Stone. Smaller scale dwellings such as the almshouses have four panels. Later Edwardian terraces have partially glazed doors with simple fanlights. In Bow Street the pairs of houses with a central entry mostly retain original panelled doors which are to be valued (Fig 5).



Fig 5 Panelled door and doorcases in Bow Street

Some doors in the Conservation Area have been replaced with UPVC units which do not replicate the original panelled design. Along the terrace of Bow Street are simple timber doorcases and other houses with decorative stone heads and attractive capital brackets leading into the passageways which give access to the houses either side. These details reflect the fashions of the time for more up-market houses. Porches are not a typical feature within the Conservation Area, but do provide detail in places; timber porches with pitched tiled roofs can be found on the almshouses with timber columns and contrasting red tiled roofs at 7-10 Taylors Lane.

### 4. Roofs

Roofs within the Conservation Area are often characteristically covered by blue Staffordshire clay tiles. Roof pitches on the historic buildings tend to be steeper than the modern ones though Crossley Stone House is typically Georgian with a shallower pitched, hipped roof. Roof pitches do vary, depending on building design and the materials used for covering them, whilst ensuring best drainage of rainwater.

Rooflines in the Conservation Area are of two and three storey height, some with dormer windows, and introduce a pleasant informality through the townscape as buildings step up and down following the curving streets. Some houses have fancy and decorative ornamentation along their roof ridge, showing attention to detail by the builder (Fig 6). Chimney stacks are prominent and quite substantial within the Conservation Area and give visual interest and rhythm to the roofscape of the area, and many have attractive brick detailing with projecting upper courses to add definition. Some chimney pots survive which vary from terracotta round profile pots to square profile buff coloured pots.



Fig. 6 Decorative chimney and roof in Sheepfair

Some cast iron guttering and downpipes remain, though these have been replaced by UPVC on many buildings.

#### Architectural features of interest (Fig 7)

- Boot scrapers, dentilled eaves and doorheads in Bow Street
- Foundation stones on Almhouses, Taylors Lane
- Old road sign on Crossley Stone
- Decorative roof ridges and doorcases at 60-62 Sheepfair
- Decorative chimneys at 28-30 Bow Street and 11 Sheepfair



Fig. 7 Bootscraper, dentilled eaves and door head in Bow Street

#### B: Elmore Park

##### Spatial analysis

Elmore Park has historic origins as the site of the original Hagley Hall, though some of its special context was lost when Western Springs Road severed this area from the main parkland of the estate. The area of Elmore Park measures just under 1.5 hectares and it has provided the town's primary public greenspace and recreational/amenity area close to the town centre for the last 50 years. It stands slightly elevated above Sheepfair and Crossley Stone, overlooking the built part of the Conservation Area to the north and north east. The island in the lake has a distinctive horse-shoe shape profile and is important archaeologically, considered to be the location of the original Hagley Hall (see Historic Development section). The lake is supplied by the Rising Brook which comes into the town through the Park from Cannock Chase. Around the lake many mature trees give height and colour to the area and form a mature green backdrop to views through the town centre itself. Gates on Elmore Lane, Sheep Fair and Western Springs Road allow users to cross the area as well as circumnavigate the lake, and the Park is well used. Adjacent to the Park runs the 'green lane' (known by some older residents as Brookside) which provides an informal access to the Old Mill and the Mill House, 35 Sheepfair, looping around the back of 3-19 Sheepfair to re-emerge on the road adjacent to an open green space surrounded by trees. It is a wide, partially surfaced driveway with grass spreading across on either side, and running beneath the mature trees.

##### Character Analysis

Modern buildings within the Park dating from c. 1970 accommodate a 'pets corner' which provides an attraction for children, and the lake is frequented by wild ducks and geese. The toilet and refreshment block is of a concrete block construction, painted and Modernist in design, especially with its distinctive roofline, providing a contrast with the mainly Victorian buildings of the adjacent Conservation Area (Fig 8).



Fig. 8 Modernist toilet block and scenes around Elmore Park

The green open character of the Park containing a lake (former moat) and many mature trees provides a contrast to the built up town. Hedgerows screen the Park from the Western Springs Road side giving enclosure and shelter from passing traffic and prevailing winds. Attractive modern railings facing Crossley Stone and Sheepfair enhance the open aspect, and there are some short views between the built section of the Conservation Area and the Park which enhances both. An old brick wall runs along part of the northern Park boundary close to the Old Mill. This has been added to over time with a variety of red bricks and methods of work, and a section has recently been rebuilt beside the Old Mill due to instability. Beneath the ivy an old doorway existed here which at one time led onto land at the rear of the Old Mill, and this has been reconstructed in the new work to retain its historic reference, though there is no longer a right of way through it.

The Park is the most tranquil part of the Conservation Area, and tree cover provides a degree of shading and screening of views between the Conservation Area and Hagley Park on the other side of Western Springs Road, where there is a larger open green space with playing fields. The Elmore Park Management Plan indicates that the Park contains twenty-one different species of trees, both native and exotic, and there is a diverse range in terms of age. A Tree Trail leaflet is available from the Council. The contribution made by trees to the special interest of the Sheep Fair/Bow Street Conservation Area is evident right across the designated area, but particular in the CCDC owned and maintained Elmore Park. The Elmore Park Management Plan 2007-17 gives direction to the management of the Park in terms of leisure and tree planting.

Tree species within the Park include alder, cedar, holly, hornbeam, Indian bean tree (Catalpa), Sweet Gum (Liquidamber), Maidenhair tree (Ginkgo), Locust tree (Robina) English Oak and Swamp Cypress. Noteworthy specimens include an avenue of newly planted Limes which run along the southern end of the western boundary adjacent to Western Springs Road. Although at present these trees are small and unremarkable, they will as they mature form an impressive elevated screen which serves to define the western boundary of the Park and the Conservation Area. Near the gate from Western Springs Road in the north-west corner is a mature Sycamore which overhangs the water and casts shade onto the surface of the stream. The tree is prominent and serves as a significant focal point. A variety of tree species line the outer bank of the lake including Oak, Alder and Sweet Chestnut. There are also several Swamp Cypress trees (*Taxodium distichum*), several of which have the characteristic visible growths protruding up from the top of the rootplate. These protrusions are known as 'Cypress Knees' and are often found on trees from the family Taxodiaceae, which grow in wet or swampy environments. The exact function of these structures has never been demonstrated but suggestions include assistance in support, nutrient accumulation, and carbohydrate storage. The most popular theory has been that the structures grow up to protrude above the swampy water so the trees can absorb oxygen from the atmosphere, although scientific trials do not at present support this. The island within the lake is dominated by a canopy layer of Sycamore, Alder and Oak, with a dense understorey of Rhododendron, Rowan and Holly.

Overall the Park provides an important green space with many benefits and is a significant asset to the town and a distinctive feature of the Conservation Area. It was awarded Green Flag status, a quality award for parks and open spaces judged on key criteria including conservation and heritage, in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

### Building Materials

Historic building materials in this part of the Conservation Area mainly comprise the red brick wall along the northern Park boundary. Bridges within the Park are of timber construction.

### Trees outside the Park

Trees serve to soften the appearance of urban areas by providing a leafy green backdrop to buildings and hard surfaces. They are also used to define boundaries, frame views and act as focal points in open areas. Additional to these direct visual benefits, trees also encourage a variety of wildlife into the area, reduce wind speeds, solar glare and storm water flooding, and also reduce atmospheric and noise pollution, all of which will have an effect on the appearance of an area. Trees have also been shown to have a positive effect on property values by making neighbourhoods more desirable and hence attracting higher prices. This can be demonstrated through advertisements seen within local estate agents who state 'located within the leafy suburbs'. These types of property are always marketed at a premium. All these benefits make a strong case for the inclusion of trees within a Conservation Area.

In addition to the main area of mature tree planting in Elmore Park, trees make a contribution to the wider character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Several groups of Sycamore located around the Old Mill create shade and a feeling of maturity; also an early mature Ash located to the side of the Ambulance Station and a Cherry with a Tree Preservation Order add colour in season and branch structure in winter. In the garden of 20 Crossley Stone are flowering trees which add seasonal colour. Otherwise the environment is quite urban, softened only by the views over and between buildings of the greenery beyond. All of the soft landscape components serve to provide a healthy and attractive level of green infrastructure which serves to enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, and soften the effect of the built environment.

Trees in Conservation Areas as well as those covered by Tree Preservation Order are protected by law. Tree Preservation Orders not only protect the aerial parts of the tree, but also their root systems. Further information on protected trees can be obtained from the Council's website at <http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/> or by contacting the Council's Tree and Landscape Protection Officer.

### Public realm

The ground surfaces in the Conservation Area are generally surfaced with tarmac and concrete, some of which is patchy and would benefit from repair. No obvious traditional paving has survived, though some kerbing with granite setts survives in places, including a short stretch in Sheepfair. Painted double yellow lines affect the appearance of the Conservation Area, providing a strident feature. Other ways of managing parking are possible using narrower lines and less garishly coloured paint.

### Shopfronts and signs

There are few commercial properties in the Conservation Area (see Plan 4) so neither shopfronts nor signage form a significant feature. However two examples of traditional shopfronts exist, one at the Vine Inn and the other at the laundrette at 21 Lion Street. All of the original joinery has survived, though the material forming the stall risers have been altered. Signage is generally minimal and discreet, such as the window signage at the laundrette and the lettering and hanging sign at the Vine Inn. There is also a more modern shop frontage at 3 Sheepfair.

### The setting of the Conservation Area

The setting of the Conservation Area has been somewhat compromised by surrounding busy roads (Elmore Lane and Western Springs Road) with limited pedestrian crossing points and limited off-street parking, so traffic including noise and parked cars is ever-present. Road building has removed surrounding historic buildings and provided new open spaces with grass verges, affecting views in and out. Highway signage is also noticeable. There is potential to better link the Park and town centre with enhanced pedestrian routes across Elmore Lane which would slow the traffic too.

Lion Street has a natural transition and continuity northwards into the predominantly residential Church Street Conservation Area and Bow Street wends its way eastwards into Rugeley Town Centre Conservation Area, the heart of the town.

### Views

Good views within and through the Conservation Area include:

- Along Bow Street to Elmore Park
- Down Sheepfair past Crossley Stone Cottage(13 Sheepfair) to Crossley Stone House
- Along the 'green lane' from Sheepfair past 35 Sheepfair to the Old Mill and Elmore Park.
- Along Lion Street

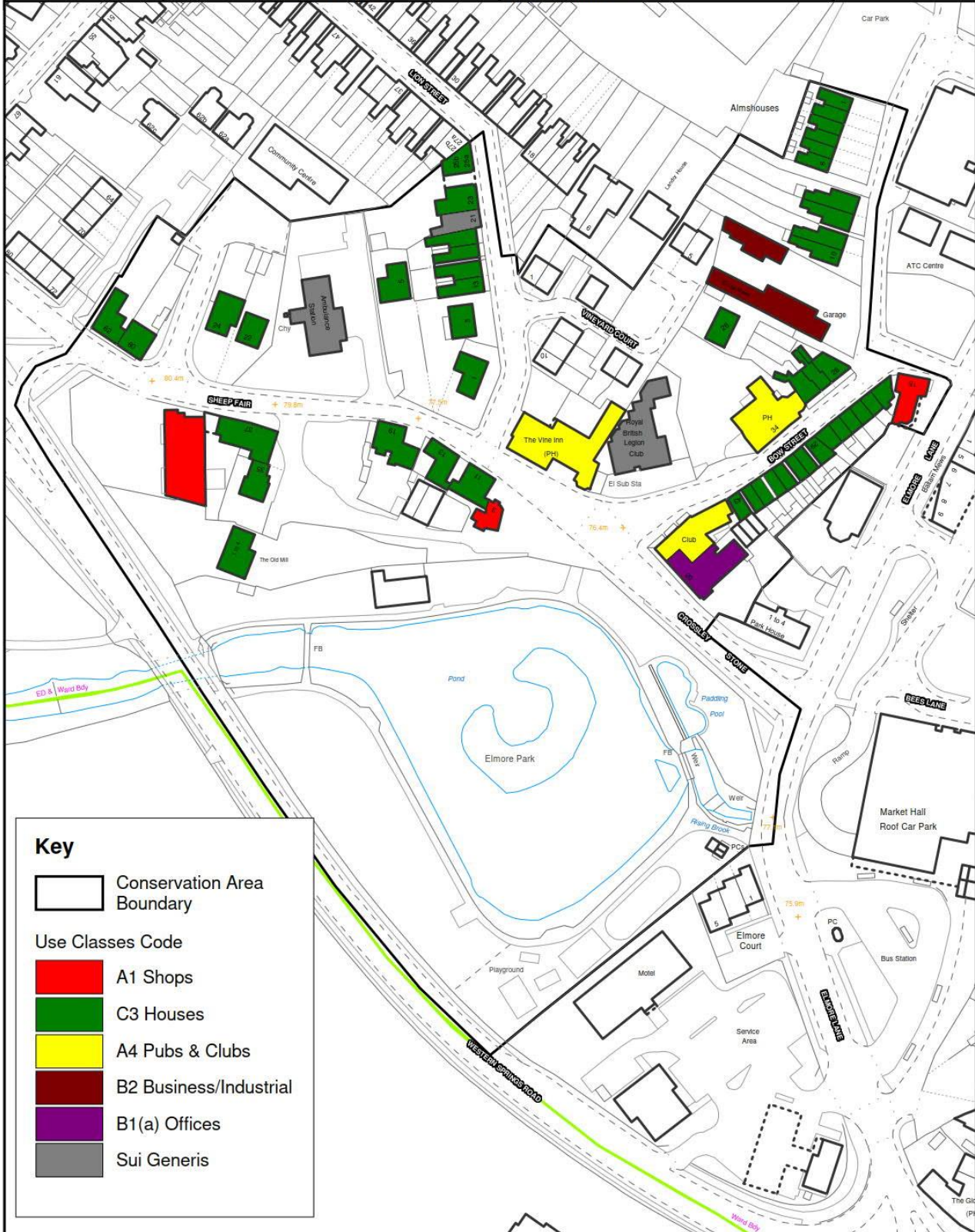


# PLAN 4: GROUND FLOOR USES



SCALE: 1:1500

DATE: April 2014



## **6. Loss/Intrusion/Negative features**

The main intrusion into the historic Conservation Area results from unsympathetic modern features and developments or neglected areas. These include:

- Redevelopments which are not in character with their surroundings, particularly those in prominent positions. Redevelopment proposals for the site of the former British Legion Club premises at the heart of the Conservation Area are being carefully assessed for conservation impact. Any proposals for redevelopment of the site of the former Bow Street nursery which, though outside the Conservation Area, is the focal point of views along Bow Street to the north east, will also be considered for impact on the setting of the Area, though development has been awaited for some years now.
- Modern paraphernalia such as a profusion of satellite dishes in obtrusive locations, aerials, plastic windows and doors, the 'blue wall' to Crossley Stone House, the fencing to the electricity sub station and the cabinets along the front wall of the ambulance station.
- Prominent double yellow lines along Bow Street.

The character and appearance of a Conservation Area can easily be eroded as a result of unsympathetic alterations and development and the decay or removal of characteristic buildings and features. Most of the existing modern development in and adjacent to the Conservation Area was built prior to designation and mainly dates from the 1970s. Through careful design new buildings can respect, complement and enhance the architectural character of an area. Fine buildings of any type, style and age can enhance the visual environment and contribute to a sense of community. Modern development has a part to play in continuing the historic development of the area providing its appearance is carefully designed.

Modern infill development has occurred incrementally, particularly during the 1970s, such as the Ambulance Station and some of the houses. These infill buildings do not tend to follow the historic building line or feature any architectural features or vernacular materials that reflect the locality. More recent infill development such as numbers 21-27 Lion Street has sought to be more successful in integrating into its locality and to reflect the character of the Conservation Area.

The cumulative effect of many minor alterations to individual properties can also have a negative effect. Special architectural interest is very vulnerable to the process of modernisation. The recovering of roofs, and removal of chimney stacks, pots and other architectural details such as decorative ridge tiles can have a similar impact, detracting from both the interest of the building and the character and appearance of the area.

In addition to loss of buildings the loss or decay of distinctive details too, such as those noted in this Appraisal, can also detract from special architectural and historic interest. Remaining features tend to be the remnants of what once existed in the area. Bearing in mind that these are the very features which helped to create the distinctive character and appearance in the first place, their vulnerability is evident. The upgrading of property does not have to be at the expense of historic fabric and character, conversely retention of appropriate detailing reinforces special interest. The Conservation Area is fortunate in retaining a good proportion of detailing on its historic buildings, however some of these are suffering from longstanding lack of maintenance. The historic fabric is slowly deteriorating leading to pressure for replacement rather than conservation and repair of elements such as window frames and architectural details, much of which is taking place in modern



materials, resulting in incremental detriment to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area over time.

A Management Plan has been prepared following from this Appraisal which seeks to address the detailed issues raised.

## **8. Community Involvement**

A report was taken to the Council's Cabinet seeking approval for consultation on the Draft Appraisal document. Occupiers of all properties in the Conservation Area, local ward councillors, Rugeley Town Council, The Landor Society, Historic England and technical consultees received publicity about the Document, inviting comments. A copy was published on the Council's website [www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk). At the end of the consultation period representations received and proposed changes to the Draft in the light of those representations were reported back to the Council's Cabinet. The Council then adopted the amended Appraisal.

## **9. Boundaries**

The boundary of the Conservation Area follows the rear boundaries of properties which have frontages to the streets covered and includes Elmore Park. The boundary has been reviewed during preparation of this Appraisal and no change is considered necessary at this time.

## **10. Enhancement Opportunities/Recommendations for Management/Planning Policy Guidance**

A specific responsibility is placed upon Local Planning Authorities to take account of the character of a Conservation Area when exercising their duties. The local distinctiveness and historic character of particular areas is greatly to be valued and needs to be reinforced in order to maintain diversity, attractiveness and historic continuity. Unless or until financial support is available as grants for building works or environmental enhancements the main opportunities for enhancement of the Conservation Area are through the Development Management process, and through encouragement to owners of buildings to consider proposed alterations carefully.

This Appraisal makes recommendations on what it is desirable to preserve, and how, and sets out broad principles for enhancement which will be further developed within a Management Plan for the Conservation Area:

**Recommendation 1:** Consideration of planning applications will be informed by the detailed descriptions of character contained in this Appraisal, particularly the features of interest and the areas which would benefit from improvement. There will be a general presumption in favour of retaining buildings and features identified in this Appraisal as making a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

**Recommendation 2:** Proposals affecting the Conservation Area must be advertised and consulted with the relevant stakeholders, with account taken of representations in determining each case. An archaeological assessment may be required as part of a Heritage Statement to support applications within the Conservation Area which would result in ground disturbance.

**Recommendation 3:** Future development should take account of the special interest of the area as set out in the Appraisal. New development, including infill, will need to acknowledge the relationship of buildings to spaces and reflect existing architectural detailing, including colour, texture and range of materials. Height of new buildings should also reflect site surroundings in a way which preserves or enhances character and appearance. Special consideration should be given to the careful choice of materials on new buildings within the Conservation Area. It should also respect existing trees. The inclusion of appropriate trees within new development will be required, especially larger, long lived and suitably sited species, eventually to replace the older trees.

Any opportunities for enhancement of areas highlighted as having a negative visual impact or allowing refurbishment of the exterior of buildings would be welcomed.

**Recommendation 4:** Traditional materials should be used in all building repair works and both hard and soft landscape elements treated sensitively:

- Where repair works fall within planning control the use of traditional materials and methods for routine repairs will be required, and elsewhere encouraged. This helps to retain both the historic and financial value of a property and the special appearance of the area.
- The repair/retention of boundary walls, original chimney stacks and pots, ridge tiles and other architectural details will be encouraged. Railings should be reinforced by a hedge.
- Re-roofing should use traditional tiles or slates rather than artificial substitutes. Where necessary, window replacement should match the original design and glazing pattern. Timber doorcases should be retained and repaired and replacement doors should be to an appropriate panelled design.

**Recommendation 5:** New signage should take account of the special interest of the area as set out in the Appraisal being of an appropriate size and location with careful use of illumination.

**Recommendation 6:** Public realm and highway improvements should include a consistent approach to street furniture and reduction of clutter, with consideration of least visually intrusive methods to control on-street parking as an alternative to bright yellow lines. Opportunities should be taken for the replacement of tarmac footpaths and concrete kerbs with more appropriate materials. The protection and enhancement of Elmore Park and its environment will be encouraged.

**Recommendation 7:** Opportunities to enhance the setting of the Conservation Area, views in and out and improve pedestrian links between the town centre and surrounding areas including via Bow Street and Crossley Stone/Bees Lane with the Market Hall/Bus Station opportunity site identified within the Rugeley Area Action Plan (Policy RTC6) will be pursued.

**Recommendation 8:** The Council will undertake to work with property owners to seek satisfactory solution of issues adversely affecting the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

**Recommendation 9:** The Council will give consideration to the use of Tree Preservation Orders to protect trees which make an important contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The management of protected trees should consider their contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and species for replacement tree planting should reflect the mainly deciduous trees existing.

**Recommendation 10:** The Council will give consideration to preparation of a Local List of buildings and features of local historical and architectural interest in conjunction with the Design Supplementary Planning Document, currently in preparation. When established, the following buildings will be considered for inclusion:

- 1-6 Taylors Lane (Walters and Littleton) Almshouses
- The Vine Inn, Sheepfair
- 13-19 Lion Street

**Recommendation 11:** The Council will give consideration to the imposition of additional controls over minor development via an 'Article 4 Direction' in order to manage future changes, based on a survey and justification, with the decision to confirm taking account of public views. An 'Article 4 Direction' is a procedure available to the Council to remove all or part of the 'permitted development' rights, as set out in Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(England)Order 2015. Such directions have a role to play if they would help to protect key features of a Conservation Area from loss or detriment and need to be supported by a clear assessment of the importance of such features to the special interest of the Area. Some Conservation Areas have already undergone significant loss of historic features so survey and justification is important in each case. The intention is not to unnecessarily restrict the freedom of residents but to enable the Council to have the opportunity of advising residents on the most appropriate design and materials.

## **11. Useful Information**

Further advice is available on all these matters from: Planning Services Team, Cannock Chase Council, Civic Centre, PO Box 28, Beecroft Road, Cannock, Staffs WS11 1BG.

Tel: (01543) 464517

Fax: (01543) 464512

Website: [www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.cannockchasedc.gov.uk/planningpolicy)

E:mail: [planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk](mailto:planningpolicy@cannockchasedc.gov.uk)

Historic England Guidance on Conservation Areas is available from their website: [www.historicengland.org.uk/conservationareas](http://www.historicengland.org.uk/conservationareas)

Principal sources of historic and local information referred to are:

- Staffordshire County Council: Extensive Urban Survey for Rugeley
- Staffordshire County Council Historic Environment Record
- CCDC Elmore Park Management Plan 2007-2017 (Updated 2011)
- Rugeley Library Local Studies Section clippings files
- A Walk through Rugeley by Don Brown, the Landor Society
- Cannock Chase Heritage Trail leaflet
- Around Rugeley by Thea Randall and Joan Anslow (1996)
- History of Rugeley by Toye, E.C. (1971)
- Hagley Mill Survey by Don Brown, Staffordshire Industrial Archaeology Society (1986)
- Joint Record Office, Lichfield (Rugeley Tithe Map 1840)
- 'Looking Back on Rugeley' by Alec Neal, published by The Landor Society (1993).
- Staffordshire County Council Conservation Area 51:Rugeley (1973)

- Heritage Gateway (Staffordshire Historic Environment Record)  
<http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/>

## **Appendix 1: Listed Buildings referred to in the Appraisal**

### **1. No. 20 Crossley Stone (Crossley Stone House) – Listed 1951**

Grade II. Late C18. Red brick: 3 storeys, 4 3-light sash windows in moulded wood frames; moulded wood doorcase with curved voluted pediment and 6-fielded panel door; bands; plain pilasters at sides; moulded plaster eaves; tiles; blocking course. Returned side has 3 sash windows with cambered heads and moulded wood doorcase behind modern porch.

### **2. Grotto at Hagley Hall, List Description – Listed 1991**

SK 01 NW RUGELEY HAGLEY HALL

3/58 Grotto at Former Hagley Hall (NGR 0395 1800)

Grade II Grotto. Circa late C18. Carved from red sandstone bedrock with seams of gravel. A series of interconnected underground chambers. A plain roughcast arched portal in a steep bank, leads to an aisled antechurch with groin vaults, at the end of which is a rotunda (a circular chamber) with a colonnade of 6 Tuscan columns with plain capitals and abaci supporting an entablature and saucer shaped dome. At north end of antechurch a vaulted passage turns north, with small saucer-shaped dome over corner, into antechamber with arcaded walls, cornice and hipped ceiling. From the antechamber a tunnel-vaulted passage to the basilica with 3-bay aisle arcades with large square piers, plain capitals and round arches and groin vaults to nave and aisles. At north (liturgical east) end of nave a round-headed apse (large niche) with pedestal-type alter. From the antechamber an inclined passage leads up to the surface.

Note: James Wyatt designed an octagonal drawing room in 1771 for Assheton Curzon of Hagley Hall (house demolished circa 1932).

Source: H. Colvin. Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600 - 1840.

### **3. Ornamental Bridge at former Hagley Hall – Listed 2012**

(NGR 0389 1792)

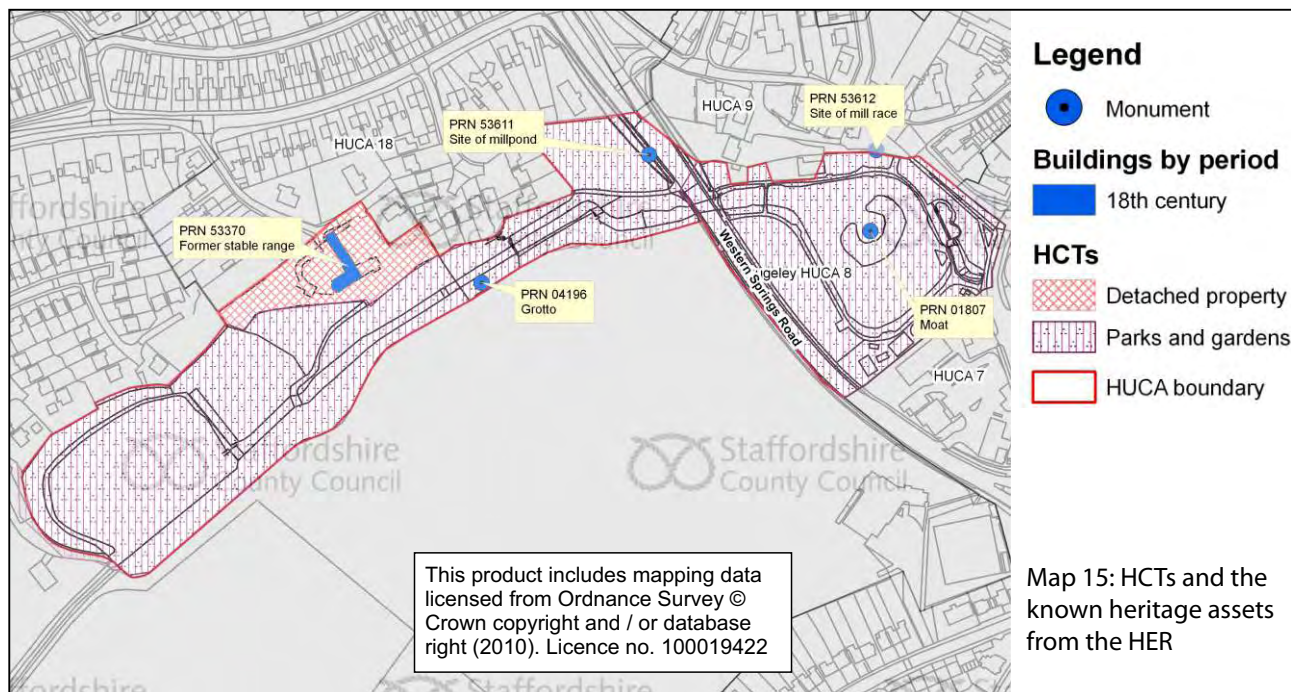
Grade II. A 1790's ornamental stone bridge spanning the Rising Brook and once forming part of the landscaped grounds of Hagley Hall (demolished c1932). Built in the 1790's for Assheton Curzon of Hagley Hall, possibly by Joe Illidge of Northwich and Lostock.

Materials stone with wrought and cast iron.

A single span ornamental bridge consisting of a low segmental arch constructed from rusticated V jointed voussoirs which have vermiculated rustication. The abutments have shallow rustication with V jointed ashlar and a band of stone coping carved with vitruvian scroll ornamentation runs across the top of the stonework. Surmounting this is a wrought iron balustrade which is ornamented with a lattice pattern to the lower section over which runs a band of concentric circles. This in turn is topped by a cast iron hand rail; a section of balustrade to the west face is missing. The four circular stone end piers are surmounted by stone vases; that to the south west is inscribed Joe Illidge Northwich and that to the north west is inscribed Joe Illidge Lostock.

## **Appendix 2- Extensive Urban Survey Extracts**

## 4.8 HUCA 8 – Hagley and Elmore Parks



### 4.8.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The HUCA represents the remains of the landscape park which had been associated with Hagley Hall (cf. HUCA 18). Surviving features include the Grade II listed grotto constructed in late 18th century as well as two ponds fed by the Rising Brook, which also crosses the HUCA (cf. 2.6.1.2)<sup>284</sup>. The larger of the two ponds now forms part of Elmore Park, separated from the remaining parkland by the late 1950s Western Springs Road. The pond contains a large island which has been interpreted as a moated site and is considered to be the probable location of the original Hagley manor house from at least the late 14th century (cf. 2.4.2).

The only built structure belonging to Hagley Hall to survive is the brick built late 18th century stable block, which was extended and converted into domestic dwellings in the late 20th century<sup>285</sup>.

The site of the mill pond and mill race associated with Hagley Mill (which lies in HUCA 9) are also located within the character area<sup>286</sup>. The origins of Hagley Mill are currently unknown, but it has been suggested it may have had medieval origins (cf. 2.4.3.3). Although Western Springs Road was constructed over part of the mill pond the rest of both sites remain undeveloped, raising the potential for surviving archaeological and environmental deposits to survive.

#### 4.8.2 Heritage values:

<p><b>Evidential value:</b> The relatively undeveloped nature of the HUCA raises the probability for the survival of archaeological deposits particularly relating to the watermill complex (mill pond and mill race) as well as the moated site. Information resulting from research on these sites would expand our understanding of the development of Hagley manor and water powered industries from the medieval period onwards.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> The legible heritage assets are the sole survivors of the Hagley Hall complex and its associated landscape park. Of particular note is the Grade II listed grotto, which has been identified as being of national importance. The probable medieval moated site is also highly legible within the townscape.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> The historic character of the HUCA originates in the late 18th century when the landscape park was laid out and significant alterations were made to Hagley Hall. Although the hall itself has been demolished the stable block survives as testimony to this period of development. The probable moated site within Elmore Park forms part of the Sheepfair Conservation Area (156) which highlights its historic and aesthetic importance in the wider townscape.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Communal value:</b> With the exception of the stable block, which has been converted to private housing, the remainder of the HUCA comprises public parkland enabling community engagement with the heritage assets.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>

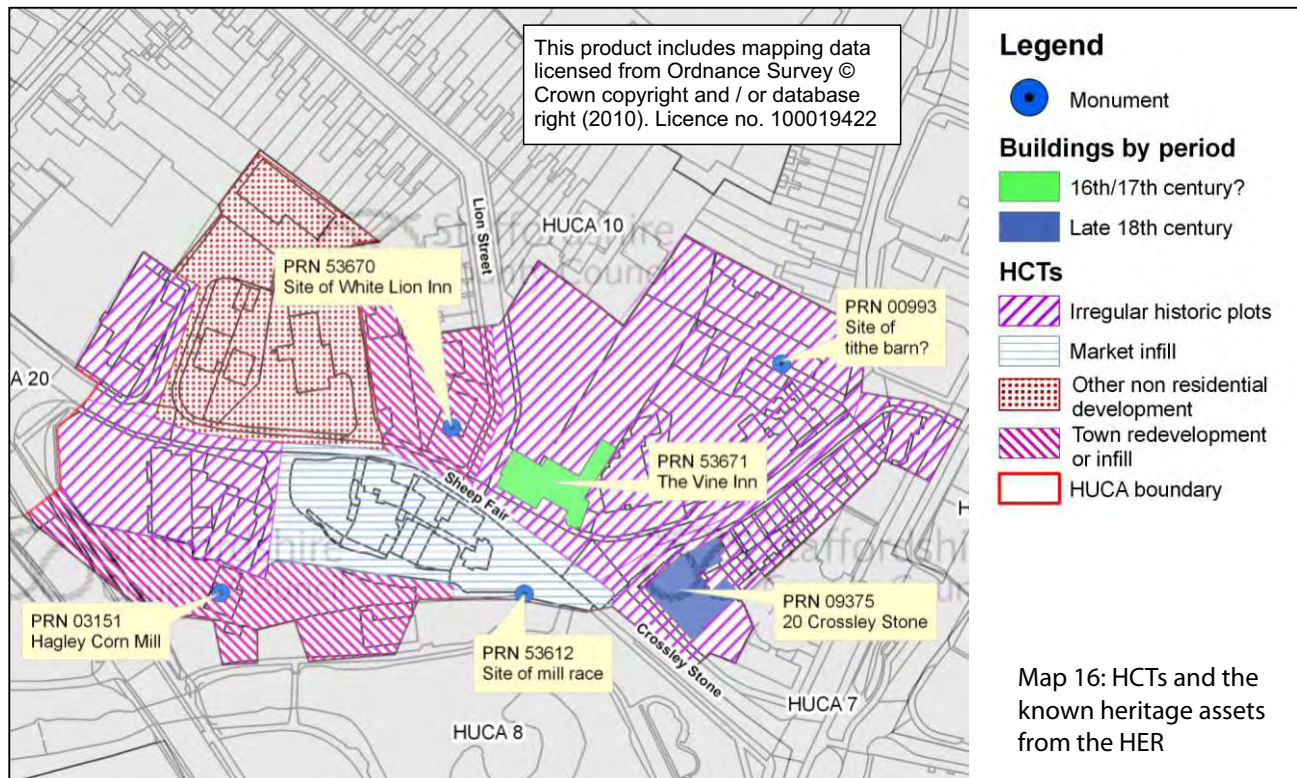
#### 4.8.3 Recommendations

The assessment has identified significant historic and archaeological interest within the HUCA which includes the potential for surviving below ground archaeological deposits as well as surviving historic designated and undesignated buildings and structures relating to the former Hagley Hall estate and landscape park.

- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA. Where development may result in the loss of these heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance; this is supported in para. 128 of NPPF<sup>287</sup>.
- ◆ Where alterations or changes are proposed to the Listed buildings the applicant should consult with the Cannock Chase Conservation Officer in the first instance. The designated heritage asset and its setting is covered under para. 132 of NPPF<sup>288</sup>.
- ◆ The HUCA represents the surviving elements of the Hagley Hall landscape park and the continued legibility of the historic aspects of this parkland, including the moated site, is desirable to the sense of place within this part of the wider townscape.



## 4.9 HUCA 9 – Sheepfair and Bow Street



### 4.9.1 Statement of heritage significance

The origins of Sheep Fair are obscure but the evidence from the heritage assets within the character area and from documentary sources suggest that the area had become developed by at least the post medieval period. Both the extant Vine Inn and the White Lion Inn (demolished in the late 20th century) are said to have been of at least 17th century origin (cf. 2.5.1.1)<sup>289</sup>.

Sheepfair possibly originated as a small area of unenclosed land or 'green' used for recreational purposes or for grazing animals, possibly during the medieval period (see map 4). The street name suggests that it became the site of a sheep fair at some unknown date, perhaps attracted here by the wide open space. A sheep fair is not specifically recorded in historic records (in the 18th century both a cattle and a horse fair are recorded<sup>290</sup>). However, sheep formed an important part of the local economy from at least the 14th century when shepherding and cloth making are both recorded in the documentary sources (cf. 2.4.3.2 and 2.4.3.3) and wool was clearly an important industry by the 16th/17th century (cf. 2.6.3.1). It is therefore likely, given the presence of buildings dating to the latter period, that the sheep fair probably had its origins in the later medieval period.

The overall historic character of irregular plots survives as demonstrated on map 16. The historic buildings, other than The Vine, mostly date from the 19th century although the largest property, the red brick Grade II Listed 20 Crossley Stone, dates to the late 18th century<sup>291</sup>. A row of 19th century red brick terraced houses survive on Bow Street, to the north of 20 Crossley Stone (plate 16).



**Plate 16:** Bow Street

Historic maps suggest that the infilling of the open fair area (HCT 'Market infill' on map 16) had occurred by the mid 19th century at the latest as suggested by the 1840 map. The surviving historic buildings within this area suggest 19th century origins (see plate 17).

Hagley Mill also stood to the south of this HUCA (the mill pond and part of the mill race lie within HUCA 8). The origins of this site are unknown, but it has been speculated that this may be one of the watermills mentioned in medieval documents (cf. 2.4.3.3). The mill building was re-constructed in the late 20th century, although some historic elements have been incorporated.



**Plate 17:** Sheep Fair (within HCT 'Market Infill' on map 16)

#### 4.9.2 Heritage values:

<p><b>Evidential value:</b> There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA which could inform an understanding of the development and origins of settlement around Sheep Fair, the watermill site and the area of 'Market infill' (see map 16). The historic buildings also have the potential to retain information regarding the development of the HUCA and their contribution to the social and economic history of the town as a whole i.e. regarding their original functions.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> The HUCA retains much of its historic character in the form of the street pattern with its area of 'infill' which is little changed from the historic mapping. The areas of greatest change are shown on map 16 as the HCTs 'Town redevelopment and infill' where historic buildings have been lost; otherwise they mostly survive. 20 Crossley Stone is the only Listed Building within the HUCA.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> The character area is testimony to piecemeal development away from the town centre focusing upon an area of open land which was utilised as a market place. The presence of the sheep fair clearly attracted permanent development to take advantage of this economic focal point from at least the 16th/17th century. The importance of the HUCA to Rugeley's overall townscape has been recognised by the designation of Sheep Fair as a Conservation Area in 2004. The conservation and enhancement of the historic buildings and street pattern would enable the HUCA to retain its local distinctiveness within the wider townscape.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Communal value:</b> With the exception of the stable block, which has been converted to private housing, the remainder of the HUCA comprises public parkland enabling community engagement with the heritage assets.</p>	<p><b>Medium</b></p>

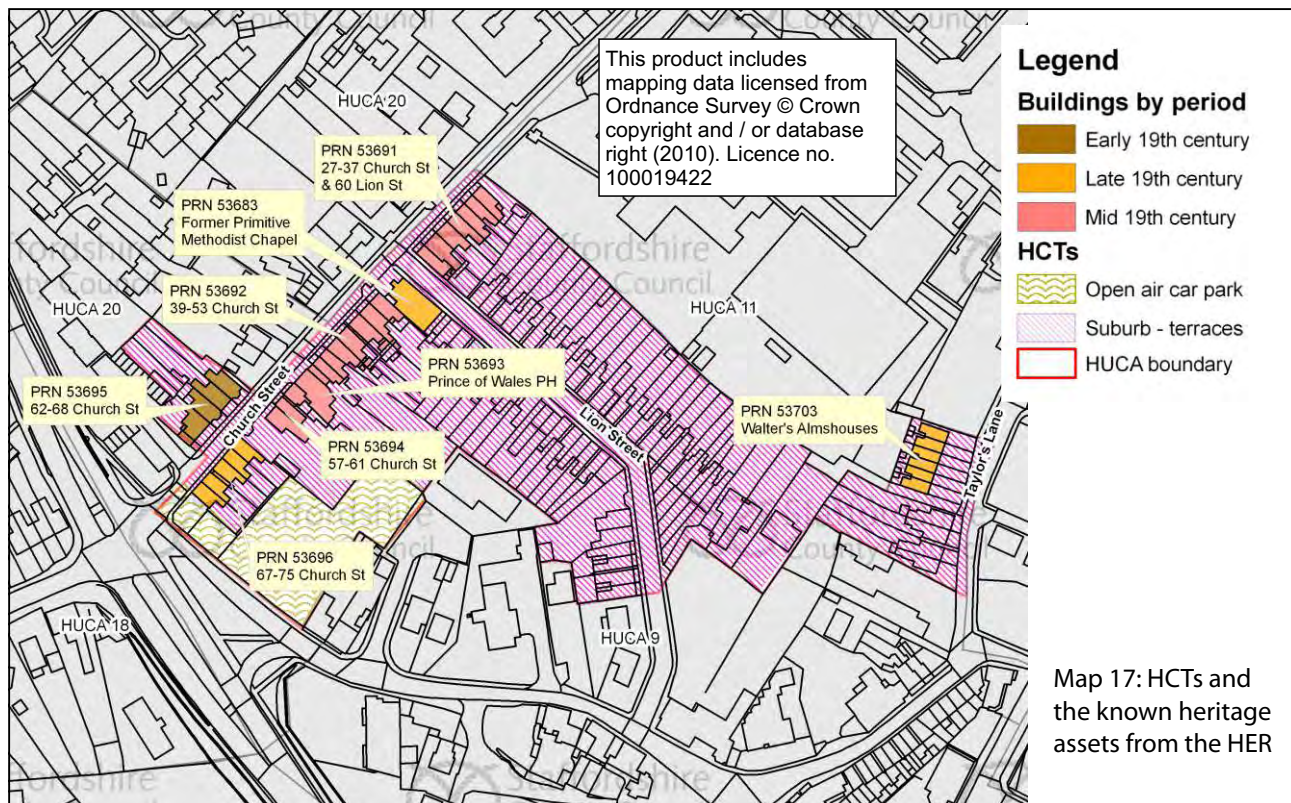
#### 4.9.3 Recommendations

The assessment has identified significant historic and archaeological interest within the HUCA which has been reflected in the designation of the Sheepfair Conservation Area. There is also the potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive.

- ◆ A statement of significance will be required to assess the impact of any proposed development upon the historic environment as part of any planning application to be made within this HUCA (cf. para. 128 of NPPF)<sup>292</sup>.
- ◆ The sympathetic restoration or enhancement of the historic buildings, both Listed and unlisted, would strengthen the historic character and the quality of the wider townscape and the Conservation Area for the benefit of this and future generations (Bullet Point 10 of para 17 (Core planning principles) also paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF)<sup>293</sup>.

- ◆ Any planned development or significant change within the area of the Conservation Area should consult the Cannock Chase District Conservation Officer in the first instance. The designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF<sup>294</sup>.
- ◆ There is a high potential for below ground archaeological deposits to survive within the HUCA. There is also the potential for the historic buildings to retain architectural elements which could inform their origins and function. Where development may result in the loss of these heritage assets (whether wholly or in part) archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advance the understanding of their significance; this is supported in para. 128 of NPPF<sup>295</sup>.

## 4.10 HUCA 10 – Lion Street and south of Church Street



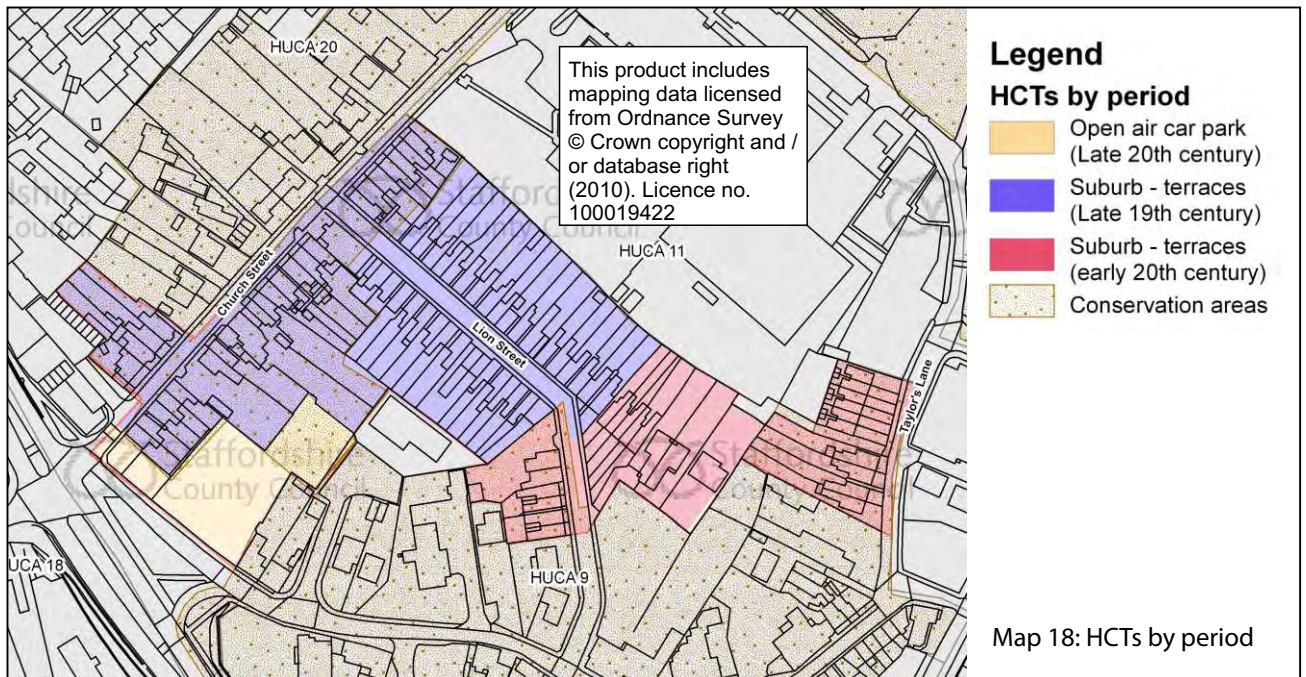
### 4.10.1 Statement of heritage significance and built character

The character area is dominated by red brick 19th and early 20th century terraced properties (see maps 17 and 18 for split). There is a greater diversity of periods of origin for the terraces along Church Street (as shown on map 17), however, the properties along Lion Street mostly date to the late 19th century, with the exception of those to the far south east. Walter's Almshouses in Taylors Lane were constructed of red brick in 1890 (cf. 2.6.2.2 and plate 4).

Church Street itself may have existed by at least the late 16th century. A 'Church Way' is recorded in the 1570 survey although it is not clear precisely where this ran<sup>296</sup>. Two suggestions have been put forward. One interpretation of this survey has suggested that 'Church Way' may have originated as a lane into Churchfield along the line of Taylor's Lane<sup>297</sup>. Alternatively it has been suggested that Church Street itself may represent 'Church Way'; prior to the construction of the houses it had been known as Church Lane<sup>298</sup>. Both of these lanes certainly existed by the late 18th century; the latter appears to have led to several route ways which cross Cannock Chase.<sup>299</sup>

The properties in Church Street include a former Primitive Methodist Chapel and the Prince of Wales public house<sup>300</sup>. All of these properties have been identified within the Church Street Conservation Area (124) as making a positive contribution to the character of the townscape. The Sheep Fair/Bow Street Conservation Area (156) also falls within the HUCA (map 18).

The earlier history of the character area is largely unknown, but it is likely to have formed part of Churchfield during the medieval period (cf. 2.4.3.2 and map 3).



Map 18: HCTs by period

#### 4.10.2 Heritage values:

<p><b>Evidential value:</b> This area had probably been dominated by agricultural activities prior to the 19th century. It is unlikely, given the subsequent intensive development, that opportunities exist to record any potential archaeological deposits. However, the historic built environment has great potential to contribute to an understanding of the cultural and social history of the town from the early 19th century and into the early 20th century.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Historical value:</b> Built heritage assets are the major components in describing the character of this HUCA. It has been noted that those properties lying within the Conservation Areas make positive contributions to Rugeley's townscape</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>
<p><b>Aesthetic value:</b> Taylor's Lane, and possibly Church Street, pre-dates the development of the properties within the HUCA, although Lion Street was a planned insertion into the townscape during the mid to late 19th century. The development of properties within the character area has been carried out on a piecemeal basis typical of 19th century development, where individual builders would construct various properties along one street. The inclusion of parts of the HUCA into two Conservation Areas (Church Street (124) and Sheep Fair/Bow Street (156)) confirms the importance of the historic character of this part of Rugeley's townscape. The properties beyond its boundary provide a setting and consequently any changes within this area should seek the opportunity to enhance the existing character of the wider HUCA. Change within the Church Street Conservation Area should take account of the policies identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal document<sup>301</sup>.</p>	<p><b>High</b></p>

**Communal value:** The properties largely comprise private dwellings and although the public house does provide opportunities for the community to have a closer engagement with the heritage assets, on the whole opportunities are low.

**Low**

#### 4.10.3 Recommendations

The assessment of the heritage values has identified considerable historic interest within the HUCA relating to the 19th century suburban expansion of the town. The HUCA lies within and adjacent to two Conservation Areas.

- ◆ A statement of significance will be required to assess the impact of any proposed development upon the historic environment as part of any planning application to be made within this HUCA (cf. para. 128 of NPPF)<sup>302</sup>.
- ◆ The sympathetic restoration or enhancement of the historic buildings, both Listed and unlisted, would strengthen the historic character and the quality of the wider townscape and the Conservation Areas for the benefit of this and future generations (Bullet Point 10 of para 17 (Core planning principles) also paras. 126 and 131 of NPPF)<sup>303</sup>. The potential for Lion Street to be included into one or other of the Conservation Areas should also be explored as it forms part of the development of this part of Rugeley. Should this not comply with the relevant policies guiding the designation of Conservation Areas the conservation and enhancement of the street should still be considered of importance as it forms part of the setting of both Conservation Areas.
- ◆ Any planned development or significant change within the area of the Conservation Areas should consult the Cannock Chase District Conservation Officer in the first instance and the Church Street Conservation Area Appraisal document where relevant. The designated heritage assets and their settings are covered under para. 132 of NPPF<sup>304</sup>.