

Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document 2019



Introduction

This area-specific Management Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) follows from the Council's generic Conservation Areas Management Plan which sets out the package of measures available to the Council to apply to all of its Conservation Areas. The area-specific Plans relate to each of the individual Conservation Areas, based on recommendations in the individual Conservation Area Appraisals, and should be read in conjunction with the generic Plan.

The Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area

The Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area was designated on 6th May 1988 by Staffordshire County Council in conjunction with the District Councils and it runs throughout Staffordshire. This section running through Cannock Chase District is marked on Plan 1. There are nine listed buildings in the Cannock Chase part of the Conservation Area and many others of historic and visual interest. The Listed Buildings are: Brindley Bank Pumping Station and St Augustine's Church, Grade II*, the churchyard walls to St Augustine's, the Old Chancel and its churchyard walls, cross and tombstone, the Viaduct and Canal bridge no. 64, all Grade II. Descriptions of the Listed Buildings can be found in Appendix 1 and other buildings of interest are noted within the Appraisal.

The boundaries of the Conservation Area generally follow the boundaries of the Canal and its towpath, but extend in places to include adjacent buildings and groups of historic and architectural interest which are broadly linked historically or in character with the Canal. The Canal was completed in 1777 and is of outstanding industrial archaeological importance, being the first of the major inland waterways which were to form the basis of the nation's principle transport and communications system in the late 18th and first half of the 19th Centuries.

Issues identified in the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area Appraisal (Draft Update)

An Appraisal of the Trent and Mersey Canal was adopted at Cabinet in 2012 and has now been updated and accompanied by this Management Plan in 2019. The Appraisal defines the special architectural and historic interest of the Conservation Area and identifies negative features. These are illustrated on the Townscape Plans 5, 6 and 7. It makes recommendations for future management and enhancement opportunities arising from this assessment, aiming to reinforce the positive features and eliminate the negative to ensure the continued quality of its special interest over time. The Management Plan takes these recommendations forward through a Delivery Plan.

Summary of Special Interest

- **Its long history** as an inland waterway still evident in its winding linear layout following the contour with associated buildings and structures

- **Its diverse buildings** types and buildings/groups of individual interest
- **Its predominantly quiet ‘green’ character** with ‘nodes’ of activity at crossing/access points
- **Its extensive tree cover** with significant specimens and groups



Main Issues

- 1. The retention and enhancement of buildings, boundaries and characteristic features** making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, including architectural detailing which is vulnerable to decay and modern replacement, and encouragement for bringing vacant or underused historic buildings back into appropriate use.
- 2. The retention of mature tree planting and other vegetation** adjacent to the waterway, with appropriate management, especially on land adjacent to but outside the Conservation Area where the trees are not protected by the designation yet contribute significantly to its appearance and character.
- 3. The treatment of new development** and new additions to existing buildings both within and affecting the setting of the Conservation Area, including building design and layout in relation to the waterway frontage and to existing buildings making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, materials, boundary treatment and hard and soft landscaping. Inclusion of appropriate soft landscaping will be a particular aspiration in mitigating visual impacts.
- 4. The potential for enhancement for the Conservation Area into the future.**

Delivery Plan/Target/Resources

A package of measures as set out in the Council’s generic Conservation Area Management Plan is available to deal with the above issues in a way beneficial to the Conservation Area. Their effective use is dependant not only on the Council but

on a partnership approach, including the commitment of developers, development professionals, building owners and the local community. This area-specific Management Plan seeks to stimulate debate on how the issues might be addressed.

1. Retention and enhancement of building, boundaries and characteristic features

The Council will encourage the retention, repair and maintenance of all buildings including their characteristic features making a positive contribution to the Conservation Area, including unlisted buildings of particular interest. Repairs using traditional materials and methods are recommended.

Safeguarding characteristic features will require an acceptance by property owners of their intrinsic value and commitment to invest in their property to maintain its historic value. Historic features can be slowly lost through decay and under investment as well as more rapidly through modernisation and unsympathetic over-investment.

The Council will encourage owners to bring back into use vacant or underused historic buildings which make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area to help secure their retention and maintenance into the future and contribute to the regeneration of Rugeley. In particular the potential of the Old Mill and the Listed canal bridge 64 will be explored, both of which appear to be in need of maintenance.

The sympathetic restoration of the Old Mill would strengthen the understanding of the industrial archaeology of the own for the benefit of the community. There is potential for the Mill to retain architectural elements which would contribute to an understanding of the history of the site and any proposals should be supported by a heritage/archaeological evaluation to record and advance understanding of its significance.

The Council will seek the repair and maintenance of towpath surfacing and waterway edging using appropriate materials and methods in conjunction with the Canal and River Trust. In particular repair and improvement of the southern section of towpath, currently in poor condition, will be sought, and the Council will work with Brereton and Ravenhill Parish Council which has obtained funding for this in its area.

The ongoing repair and maintenance of boundary walls of brick and stone will be encouraged. For example, care and maintenance of brick and stone boundary walls using mortar to match (usually lime based) with careful pointing and reinstatement of capping materials where missing can extend the life of the wall many years into the future. Careful removal of vegetation growing in wall crevices and ivy overgrowth will reveal the attractiveness of the structure to view and avoid damage and loss of integrity from root growth, facilitating proper maintenance.

The Council will consider the preparation of design guidance of specific issues and offer other advice on request or via its website which can be sought prior to carrying out work. For example, regular painting of traditional timber windows in an appropriate colour helps protect from the weather and provides a far superior result to UPVC replacements in maintaining the historic value and appearance of the property and streetscene.

The Council will review the Conservation Area boundary from time to time to ensure it is still workable and that it encompasses a definable cohesive area with a particular character.

The Council will pursue enforcement action where unsympathetic alterations which threaten the character or appearance of the Conservation Area are carried out without the necessary planning permission to achieve a more sympathetic result.



2. Retention of tree planting and other vegetation

The Council will encourage the retention and appropriate management of the extensive tree cover which extends along both waterway and towpath boundaries through the District, creating a ‘green corridor’ through the built up area. The majority of this planting is unprotected, unless covered by separate Tree Preservation Orders, being located in gardens or other land beyond the Conservation Area boundary.

Retention of hedging and native shrub planting forming an understory below the trees and in many places forming an appropriate towpath boundary will also be encouraged.

The Council will encourage owners of property adjacent to the Canal, working with the Canal and River Trust, to ensure that vegetation along the Canal is managed to strike a balance between the needs of the functioning waterway and attractive, environmentally rich, surroundings.

3. The treatment of new development

The Council will require proposals for new development and new additions to existing buildings within or affecting the setting of the Conservation Area to adhere to well established good urban, design principles for scale, form, materials, layout, density, landscaping and boundary treatment. **In particular building design and layout in relation to the waterway frontage and to existing buildings, materials, boundary treatment and landscaping will be key considerations.** Developers are advised to engage in pre-application discussion with the Council at an early stage. **Tree and Heritage Impact Assessments should inform the development of any scheme.**

New development will in most cases require its visual impact in the Conservation Area ‘softening’ by means of retention of existing tree and other planting within the site and/or mitigation with new planting. This will require an acceptance by developers of the need to allow space for tree growth taking a long term view.

Appropriate uses will maintain the quiet and largely dark nature of the waterway corridor, avoiding ‘light spill’ from adjoining property.

The Council will seek developer contributions on conjunction with planning permissions in accordance with the Councils SPD ‘Developer Contributions and Housing Choices SPD 2015’ or via the Community Infrastructure Levy charging regime to fund public realm enhancement within the Conservation Area and footway/cycleway links to it from the wider area.

There is potential for below ground archaeological deposits in the vicinity of the Canal as highlighted by the SCC Rugeley Extensive Urban Survey, therefore archaeological evaluation and/or mitigation may be required to record and advanced understanding of their significance in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)



4. The potential for enhancement of the Conservation Area into the future

The Council will encourage owners of property adjacent to the Canal to carry out appropriate tree planting with environmental boundary treatment improvements in key locations. The Council will work with property owners to encourage enhancement of garden and other frontages to the canal boundary, including the use of planting to help screen 'clutter' and outside storage.

The Council will work with the Canal and River Trust in respecting the character of the Canal, in particular the semi rural nature of the north and south sections, with minimal street furniture and appropriate towpath surfacing and waterway edging.

The Council will work with the Canal and River Trust in ensuring that, whilst encouraging public use of the waterway and towpath its benefit to wildlife is not reduced.

Opportunities will be taken to improve pedestrian/cycle links between the Canal and its surroundings, particularly Rugeley town centre and existing routes and trails, such as Cannock Chase Heritage Trail.

Improved boat mooring facilities to encourage boaters to stop and visit the town and other local facilities will be encouraged. The Council will work with the CRT to secure the repair of boat moorings and the canal bank north of Leathermill Lane in a sympathetic manner to provide an improved facility for boaters to stop, visit and shop in Rugeley.

The future redevelopment of the former Rugeley Power Station site for mixed usus (including in Lichfield District) 300m north of the Canal offers potential for new footway/cycleway links with the Canal to connect development with the surrounding area and provide future residents and employees with an attractive route to shopping and leisure facilities in Rugeley Town Centre.

Inclusion of the former Talbot Basin within the Conservation Area boundary now offers the opportunity for an additional historic element enhancing significance and related interpretation of the historic environment, improving awareness of local history in the community.

The Council will work with the CRT to secure repairs to Leathermill Lane canal bridge no.66 including repair of the parapets, using appropriate materials and methods.

The Council will encourage the provision of canal-related information and interpretation including opportunities for links to the wider historic environment, town centre and footway/cycleway routes.

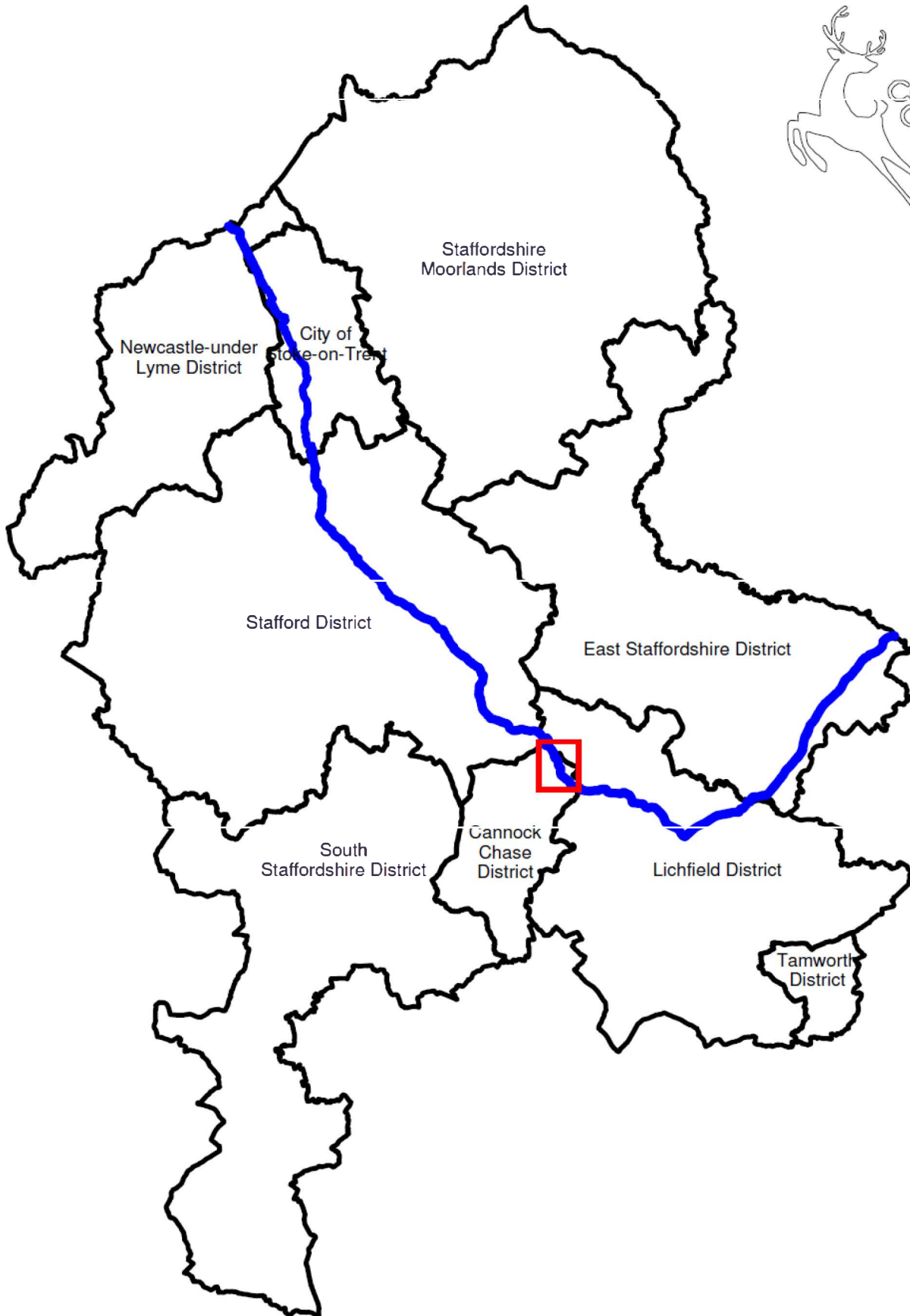
The Council will work with property owners and the CRT to seek the satisfactory solution of issues adversely affecting the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

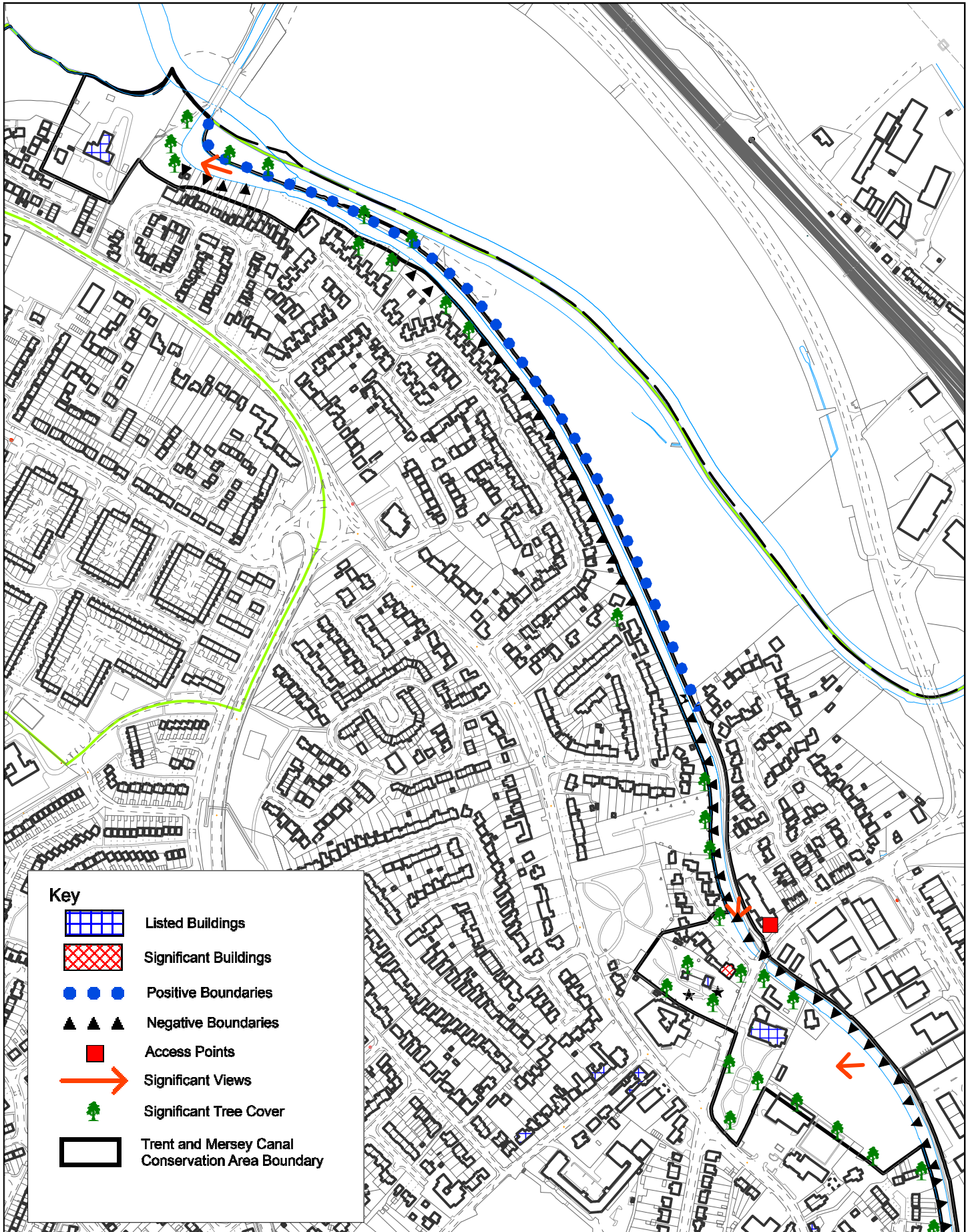
Monitoring

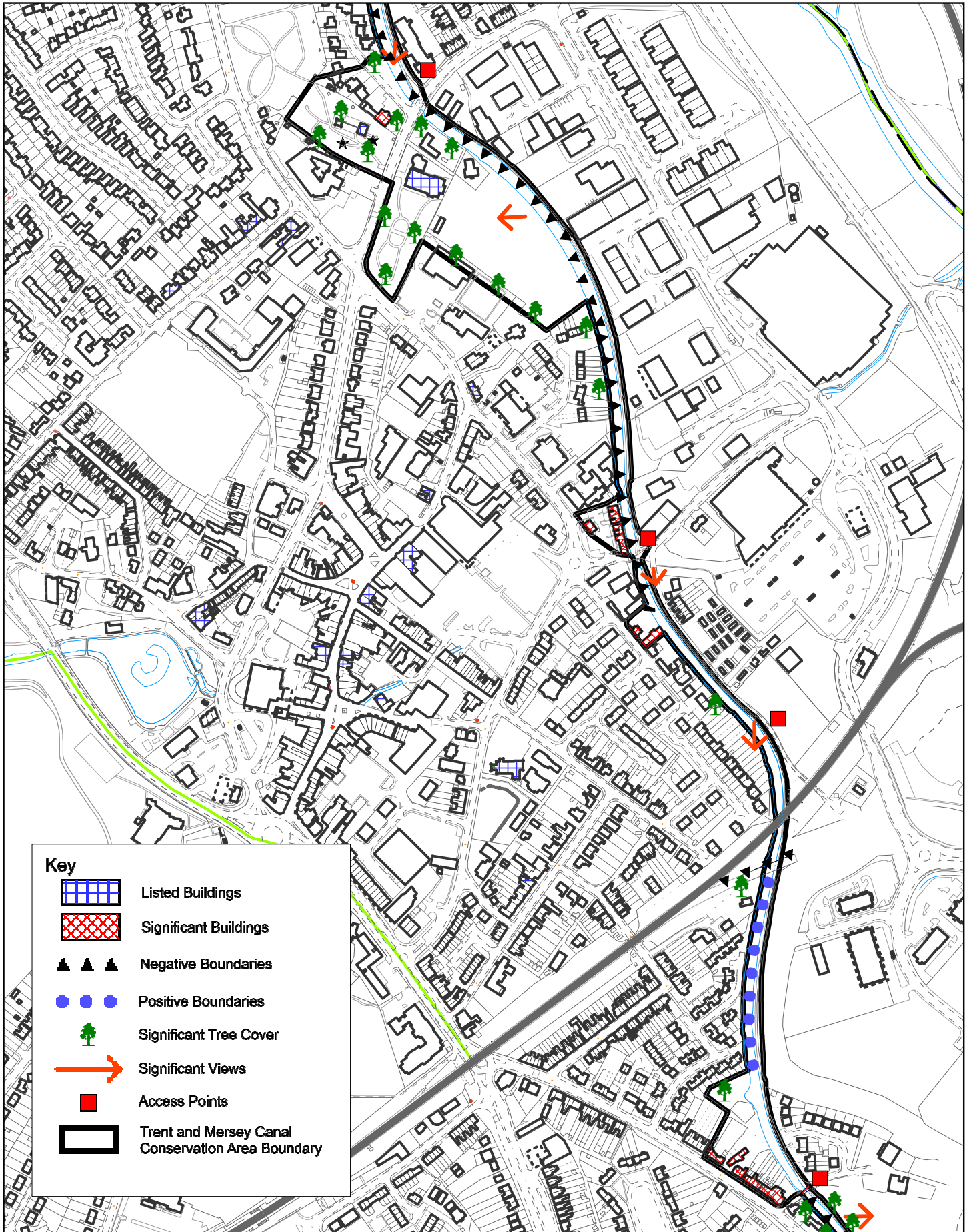
The Council will monitor progress towards the delivery of the above actions and the resultant impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area on a five year cycle. Some of the actions will be on-going, some will relate to specific actions which can be completed. The monitoring process together with developing Planning Policy will inform updating of the Appraisal and Management Plan over time.

Monitoring will involve further consultation with the community and may identify new issues and ideas for raising standards. Monitoring could also be carried out within the community, under the guidance of the Council.









PLAN 1: Trent and Mersey Canal Route Through Staffordshire







Key

-  Listed Buildings
-  Significant Buildings
-  Negative Boundaries
-  Positive Boundaries
-  Significant Tree Cover
-  Significant Views
-  Access Points
-  Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area Boundary

