



High Speed Rail (West Midlands - Crewe)

Environmental Statement

Volume 5: Technical appendices
CA3: Stone and Swynnerton
Cultural heritage baseline report (CH-001-003)



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Department for Transport

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1 Introduction

1.1 Structure of the cultural heritage appendices

1.1.1 The cultural heritage Appendices for the Stone and Swynnerton community area (CA3) comprise:

- a baseline report (this Appendix);
- a gazetteer of heritage assets (Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-003);
- an impact assessment (Volume 5: Appendix CH-003-003); and
- survey reports, incorporating geophysical survey and remote sensing studies, which are available in the Background Information and Data document¹.

1.1.2 In addition there are two route-wide cultural heritage appendices:

- a historic landscape character report (Volume 5: Appendix CH-005-000); and
- a geoarchaeology desk study report (Volume 5: Appendix CH-006-000).

1.1.3 Maps referred to throughout the cultural heritage appendices are contained in the Volume 5: Cultural Heritage Map Book.

1.2 Study area

1.2.1 The Stone and Swynnerton area lies within Stafford Borough within the county of Staffordshire and comprises parts of the civil parishes of Chebsey, Stone, Stone Rural, Swynnerton, Eccleshall and Standon.

1.2.2 All non-designated and designated assets within the land required for the Proposed Scheme and within 500m of it have been detailed in this baseline assessment. In addition, designated heritage assets have been examined within the zone of theoretical visibility (ZTV).

1.2.3 All identified assets are listed in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-003 Gazetteer of heritage assets and shown in Cultural Heritage Map Series CH-01-209b to 213a and CH-02-104a to 106b (Volume 5: Cultural Heritage Map Book).

1.3 Data sources

1.3.1 Sources examined as part of this baseline assessment include published secondary sources, cartographic sources, Historic Environment Record (HER) data for non-designated heritage assets, and Historic England national heritage list (NHL) for designated assets. A full list of published sources can be found in Section 8 of this Appendix.

¹ HS2 Ltd (2017), *High Speed Two (HS2) Phase 2a (West Midlands - Crewe), Background Information and Data, Cultural heritage survey reports*, BID-CH-004-003. Available online at: www.gov.uk/hs2

1.4 Survey undertaken

1.4.1 The following surveys were undertaken as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process:

- light detection and ranging (LiDAR) survey of land required for the Proposed Scheme and land around it (see BID- CH-004-003 Cultural heritage survey reports); and
- a programme of non-intrusive surveys comprising geophysical prospection (see BID- CH-004-003), targeted field walking and walkover surveys.

2 Geology, topography and landform

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 The solid geology of the study area is dominated by rocks formed during the Carboniferous and Triassic ages. The study area can be broadly split between a southern and northern half, with the dividing line just to the north of Stone. The southern half of the study area is dominated by rocks of Triassic age (251–250 million years ago). These largely comprise red siltstones and salt deposits (halites) and, less often, green-grey mudstones, of the Mercia mudstone Group. Deposits of interbedded sandstone and conglomerates of the Kidderminster Formation occur in a band running north from Stafford to the east of Stone, with deposits of the Stafford Halite Member curving round the north and west of Stafford.
- 2.1.2 The solid geology within the northern half of the study area comprises rocks of both Triassic (250 – 200 million years) and Carboniferous age (271 - 312 million years), but with significantly more variety and complexity in rock types and form. The Triassic deposits comprise orange red sandstone siltstone and mudstone of the Wildmoor Sandstone Formation, interbedded pebble conglomerates and sandstones of the Kidderminster Formation, Tarporley siltstone Formation, conglomerates and pebbly sandstones of the Hulme Member, conglomeratic sandstones of the Hawksmoor Formation, sandstones of the Kibblestone Formation, and very occasional deposit of the Bromsgrove sandstone Formation. Whilst the Tarporley siltstone Formation forms part of the Mercia Mudstone Group, the remaining Triassic rock types form part of the Sherwood Sandstone group. Deposits of Carboniferous age comprise widespread siltstone and sandstones of the Halesowen Formation, sandstone and conglomerates of the Etruria Formation concentrated at Hanford on the southern edge of Stoke-on-Trent, along with more restricted deposits of the Butterton Sandstone Beds, Springpool Sandstone Beds and Hanchurch Sandstone Beds. All rock types form part of the Warwickshire Group of Carboniferous sedimentary rocks.
- 2.1.3 The solid geology is partially overlain by superficial deposits formed during the Quaternary period (last 2.5 million years) as a consequence of the repeated advance and retreat of the ice sheets. Superficial deposits are patchy across the study area, particularly along the proposed route buffer, largely occurring north of the route associated with the Trent Valley. The study area is close to the margins of the last major ice sheet to have affected mainland Britain, which expanded during the late Devensian (approximately 30–15 Ka BP) to cover the area, largely removing evidence for earlier ice sheets and palaeodrainage. Present evidence suggests the margins of the ice sheet reached a line from Lichfield to Wolverhampton, although the precise limits of the ice sheet are still a matter for debate. It is possible therefore that isolated remnants of earlier glacial and fluvial sediments may be preserved beneath deposits of more recent date, although the majority of the deposits will date to the Devensian and Holocene. The superficial geology can be divided between five main deposit types: 1) fluvio-glacial sediments, including river terrace gravels and glacial outwash; 2) till; 3) head; 4) Holocene alluvium; and, 5) peat.
- 2.1.4 Significant deposits of fluvio-glacial sands and gravels occur across the study area, primarily in relation to the River Trent. These comprise deposits characterised by the

BGS at 1:50,000 as fluvioglacial sheet deposits and river terrace gravels. The former, deposited either as outwash at the edge of ice sheets or laid down directly as subglacial, englacial and supraglacial deposits, occur largely within the southern section of the study area along both sides of the River Trent, with more isolated deposits of fluvioglacial sands and gravels to the south of Swynnerton Old Park and around Beech. In the context of the wider landscape, river terrace deposits, representing fluviually deposited sediments incised to form terraces, occur along the course of the River Trent, particularly between Weston and Aston-by-Stone on the western bank of the River Trent, and to the north-west of Stone along the eastern bank of the Trent. River terrace gravels also occur to the north of Stone associated with a minor tributary of the Trent. River terrace deposits are limited; likely dating to the most recent Devensian glaciation. However, whilst the 1:50,000 BGS mapping shows sands and gravels and river terrace deposits as discrete deposits, at the 1:625,000 these are conglomerated and mapped simply as river terrace deposits. In practice it is difficult to distinguish fluvioglacial sands and gravels from river terrace deposits unless exposed, but accurately determining the nature of the deposits is fundamentally important in terms of the potential of river terrace deposits to yield artefacts and ecofacts of Palaeolithic date.

- 2.1.5 Deposits of poorly sorted tills laid down directly by the ice sheet (previously termed boulder clays) are widespread across the study area, particularly from Ashton-by-Stone, around Beech, and to the north of Stone where deposits form the southern edge of large till deposits concentrated around Stoke-on-Trent. The deposits are likely to be late Devensian in date, although the possibility of earlier pre-Devensian deposits should not be discounted. Head deposits are defined as poorly sorted slope deposits, typically comprising gravels and sands, although locally including lenses of silt, clay and rarely peat. They are a minor component of the superficial sediments within the study area, occurring as highly localised deposits around Swynnerton, Beech, Bury Bank, Barlaston and Moddershall, and to the west of Lightwood and Meir Heath, but with more substantial deposits at Kings Park and Trentham Wood.
- 2.1.6 Deposits of Holocene alluvium are present where former and extant river and minor tributaries cut across the study area. The most significant deposits of alluvium are associated with the course of the River Trent that runs north-west to south-east longitudinally along the study area. Alluvium deposited along the course of minor tributaries of the River Trent occurs to the immediate south and north of Stone, as well as being associated with the course of the Filly Brook running west from Stone and the Park Brook running west along the northern edge of Trentham Park and golf club. Peat deposits, representing waterlogged partly decayed plant material, occur in two distinct areas. The first area of peat is located on fluvioglacial sands and gravels and terrace deposits on the western bank of the Trent 1km west of Burston. The deposit is associated with an extant lake and may represent deposits infilling a formerly more extensive lake. The second area of peat is located to the immediate west of Yarnfield associated with the course of the Filly Brook, and appears most likely to reflect peat forming within the floodplain of the Brook.
- 2.1.7 The solid and superficial geology of the study area supports a range of soils. Loamy and clayey floodplain soils predominate within the floodplain of the River Trent, with slightly acid and acid sandy, clayey and loamy soils predominating to the south of

Stone, with the addition of freely draining slightly to very acid sandy and slowly permeable base-rich loamy and clayey soils within the study area north of Stone. These soils are largely of low fertility, with floodplain and slightly acid loamy and clayey soils having moderate to high fertility. The soils support both arable and grassland pasture with patches of deciduous and coniferous woodland. The most significant are located at Swynnerton Old Park and Trentham Forest. The study area is situated within a low-lying and gently undulating terrain, varying between 90 – 220m above sea level (ASL), with the highest elevation in Swynnerton Old Park. The route of the Proposed Scheme increases in elevation from approximately 100m south of Aston-by-Stone to approximately 180m ASL near Swynnerton and Beech but decreasing in elevation to approximately 130m ASL along the western edge of Swynnerton Old Park.

2.2 Gearchaeological characterisation

2.2.1 The following gearchaeological characterisation zones (GCZ) have been identified within the Stone and Swynnerton area (see Volume 5: Appendix CH-006-000 Gearchaeology desk study report):

- GCZ 23 – extending north to the Filly Brook, this zone contains only small areas with till deposits along the fringe of the proposed route, with the majority of the zone containing no superficial deposits with loamy and clayey soils covering the Mercia Mudstone solid geology. The zone therefore has very limited gearchaeological potential except that related to deposits of till to the south-west of Stone;
- GCZ 24 – comprises deposits of Holocene alluvium associated with the course of the Filly Brook, a tributary of the River Trent, running south-west from Stone before heading to the north-east. The deposits are relatively modest in extent, but nonetheless may contain preserved waterlogged archaeology and/or organic deposits of gearchaeological significance. The remainder of the zone is devoid of superficial deposits, with the soil cover instead developed on Mercia Mudstone Bedrock;
- GCZ 25 – Holocene alluvium associated with the course of the Filly Brook, along with fluvio-glacial sands and gravels, occurs within the central part of this zone. These superficial deposits have a well-established potential for either preserving or sealing organic deposit of possible gearchaeological significance. The remainder of the zone is of limited or no gearchaeological potential with no surviving, recorded, superficial deposits;
- GCZ 26 – this zone is largely devoid of superficial deposits apart from the northern end of the zone where there are deposits of till and head; the former sediment are defined as poorly sorted slope deposits, typically comprising gravels and sands, although they can locally include lenses of silt, clay or even peat;
- GCZ 27 – this zone is similar to the previous zone, with outcrops of head and till, along the line of the A51 Stone Road, of well-established

geoarchaeological potential, with the remainder of the zone containing no recorded superficial deposits;

- GCZ 28 – this zone also includes large areas with no recorded superficial deposits, but with deposits of till located to the south of Swynnerton Old Park near Beech. In addition, the BGS records laterally restricted deposits of alluvium that relate to a former water course of a tributary of the Meece Brook, running parallel to Common Lane (Swynnerton) from the Hattons. Although the alluvium may preserve waterlogged archaeological remains and/or organic deposits, the possible extinct nature of the water course and restricted extent of the alluvium may limit their preservation and extent; and
- GCZ 29 – this zone comprises deposits of alluvium associated with the Meece Brook, with river terrace deposits distributed along the eastern bank, and a small deposit of peat on the western bank. The peat deposit may reflect part of the sequence of Holocene alluvial deposits preserved within the floodplain, perhaps within palaeochannel features, or infilling the natural topography adjacent to the floodplain. The peat and alluvium may preserve waterlogged archaeology and are likely to contain a range of palaeoenvironmental remains of high geoarchaeological potential. The river terrace deposits are laterally restricted, but in common with similar deposits in other areas, may contain unstratified artefacts and ecofacts of Palaeolithic date, or seal stratified organic deposits of geoarchaeological significance.

3 Archaeological and historical record

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section provides a chronological overview of the wider archaeological context of the study area. This is intended to enable the potential for unidentified archaeological remains to be assessed, and their likely location and form to be identified.
- 3.1.2 Descriptions of all identified cultural heritage assets are presented in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-001; and shown in Cultural Heritage Map Series CH-01-209b to 213a and CH-02-104a to 106b (Volume 5: Cultural Heritage Map Book).

3.2 Early prehistory

Palaeolithic 500,000BC – 10,000BC

- 3.2.1 The first artefactual evidence of the early human occupation of the region in which the study area is located dates to approximately 500,000 years ago, and derives from sediments associated with a pre-Anglian-glaciation river system called the Bytham River. The Bytham River flowed through north-east Warwickshire, and drained the southern part of the Trent catchment through East Anglia and across a vast fertile plain beyond, which joined what is now Britain to the European mainland. It is likely that animals and early humans would have moved along such riparian corridors, because of the constant access to water and food sources they afforded.
- 3.2.2 A cluster of pre-Anglian stone-tool artefacts has been found in north-east Warwickshire, along the line of the Bytham River. The most significant finds to date have been made at Waverley Wood to the north of Warwick, where an assemblage of five hand axes in fresh condition and bones of a straight-tusked elephant were found in organic palaeochannel deposits, and date to around 500,000 years ago (MIS 13)². The Bytham River was erased from the landscape by the Anglian glaciation.
- 3.2.3 If the River Trent was not already in existence before the Anglian glaciation (and sediments either side of the Ancaster Gap in Lincolnshire suggest it may have been³), dated sediments preserved within its drainage basin suggest it came into existence shortly after, approximately 400,000 years ago (MIS 12)⁴.
- 3.2.4 Archaeological finds of Palaeolithic date are extremely rare with only two unstratified finds of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic date known from Staffordshire as a whole⁵. The study area is located north of the estimated southern limit of the ice sheet in the last glaciation⁶. Nonetheless the discovery of an antler pick⁷ of Upper Palaeolithic date during bridge construction at Darlaston in 1959 indicates the potential for localised survival within the vicinity of the study area.

² Garwood, P. (2011), The earlier prehistory of the west midlands. In: S. Watt (ed), *The Archaeology of the west midlands: a framework for research*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, 16

³ Bridgland D.A., Howard A.J., White M.J. and White T.S (2011), *The Quaternary of the Trent*

⁴ Knight, D. and Howard J. (2004), *Trent Valley Landscapes: The Archaeology of 500,000 Years of Change*. King's Lynn: Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd, p. 12

⁵ Bridgland et al (2011)

⁶ Volume 5: Appendix CH-006-000

⁷ Transactions of the North Staffordshire Field Club (1960), vol94, p86

Mesolithic 10,000BC – 4,000BC

- 3.2.5 At the end of the last Ice Age, Britain was still connected to the European mainland by the Doggerland land bridge. Rapid climate warming led to the replacement of the late glacial tundra, initially by birch and pine within a still open landscape, and subsequently by much denser mixed deciduous woodland comprising oak, alder, willow, hazel and elm. Environmental evidence suggests that in the West Midlands this process of succession spanned the period from approximately 9,500/8,500BC to approximately 7,200/7,000BC⁸. The land bridge also facilitated colonisation by red and roe deer, aurochs, boar, elk, wild pig and horse.
- 3.2.6 There is a very thin spread of Mesolithic finds across Staffordshire, which seems to correlate with well-drained elevated terrain close to water sources⁹. Valley floor locations may be under-represented in the artefactual record, because many sites at such locations are likely to have been buried beneath later alluvium and colluvium¹⁰. A contributory cause of the generally low density of Mesolithic finds throughout Staffordshire may, at least in part, be a result of HER recording protocols, which encourage the undercounting of material of this period¹¹.
- 3.2.7 Research on the peat deposits at Kings Pool, Stafford, suggests that in the early Mesolithic period Stafford lay close to a transition zone between pine dominated woodland to the south and hazel dominated woodland to the north¹².
- 3.2.8 Within the Stone and Swynnerton area only a single flint scraper of possible Mesolithic date is known from Stone.

Neolithic 4,000BC – 2,200BC

- 3.2.9 During the Early Neolithic (approximately 4,000BC - 3,300BC), domesticated animals (cattle, sheep and pigs) and plant species (principally wheat and barley) were introduced to Britain from the continent, and there started a transition from a mobile hunter-gatherer lifestyle to one of sedentary cultivation. There remains much debate at the national level as to the speed of this process, and whether it was the product of acculturation or colonisation. However, in the West Midlands the evidence suggests very gradual acculturation, in that woodland persisted down to approximately 2,500BC, with little clearance and little cereal cultivation before that date¹³.
- 3.2.10 The Early Neolithic saw the emergence of communal burial in long barrows, and of a tradition of monumental ceremonial centres and meeting places, in the form of causewayed enclosures. During the Middle Neolithic (approximately 3,300BC - 2,900BC) these went out of use, and were replaced by oval barrows and cursus monuments. By the Late Neolithic (approximately 2,900BC - 2,200BC) henges, stone

⁸ Garwood (2011), 27

⁹ Garwood (2011), p 27

¹⁰ Knight and Howard (2004), p38

¹¹ *ibid*

¹² Leah, M.D., Wells, C.E., Stamper, P., Huckerby, E. and Welch, C. (1998), *The Wetlands of Shropshire and Staffordshire: Northwest Wetlands Survey 5*. Lancaster, p98

¹³ Buteux, H. and Chapman, H. (2009), *Where Rivers Meet, The Archaeology of Catholme and the Trent-Tame confluence*, CBA Research report 161, Council for British Archaeology, p60

and timber circles, and oval barrows, were often combined to form ceremonial landscapes.

- 3.2.11 There are no known ceremonial monuments of Neolithic date within or adjacent to the study area. However, a field name 'Double Bank Field' at Cold Norton Farm (STSo77¹⁴) has been interpreted as indicating the former presence of earthworks¹⁵, which coupled with a cropmark and the discovery nearby of a number of stone tools including a mace head, an axe-adze, a stone axe hammer and a perforated pebble, suggests that a site of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date lies in the vicinity. The site lies on the fringe of an area of peat, which in the Neolithic would have been wetland¹⁶.
- 3.2.12 Environmental evidence from Kings Pool, Stafford, included cereal pollen dating to 3,800BC - 3,150BC¹⁷.

3.3 Late prehistory

Bronze Age 2,600BC – 700BC

- 3.3.1 At the end of the Neolithic, the ceremonial landscapes comprising communal monuments ceased to be augmented and maintained. These were replaced initially by single-phase circular burial mounds, which contained single crouched inhumations with ceramic beakers and occasionally copper daggers and gold ornaments (though rarely in the West Midlands) and which attracted few or no secondary burials. From approximately 2,200BC, multiphase round barrows were constructed in the West Midlands, which saw iterative structural elaboration and which contained multiple secondary burials. Initially the regional burial rite would appear to have been mixed, but later standardised upon urned and unurned cremation. The earliest barrows would appear to have celebrated individuals, and the later ones, lineages. The pace of round-barrow construction in the West Midlands appears to have increased rapidly from approximately 1,900BC.
- 3.3.2 Known or supposed barrows are present at Bury Bank hillfort (STSo35), Swynnerton Park (STSo43) and Sandyford (STSo44). Two further examples lay outside of the study area at Groundslow and Bury Bank Farm. None of these examples have been examined under modern conditions although one of the barrows at Bury Bank hillfort was investigated in the 19th century with no conclusive result¹⁸ and a considerable number of metal detected finds have been made in the vicinity of the Swynnerton Park barrow. These suggest continued activity in the vicinity of the monument in and after the Roman period. The barrow at Bury Bank farmhouse, known as Round Low Barrow, was excavated by the landowner as an obstruction to ploughing¹⁹ – a possible cist or pyre arrangement containing human skull fragments was uncovered (no earthwork remains now survive).

¹⁴ Asset reference numbers throughout refer to the Unique Identifier provided for each asset in the gazetteer (Volume 5:Appendix CH-002-003)

¹⁵ Leah et al (1998), p218

¹⁶ Leah et al (1998), p95

¹⁷ Leah et al (1998), p98

¹⁸ Victoria County History (1908), *A History of the County of Stafford*, Volume I, London, Archibald Constable and Co, p342, strongly suggests the presence of a central burial but the material recovered does not seem to have included any pottery or metalwork, which would have allowed the features to be dated

¹⁹ Staffordshire HER reference MST589

- 3.3.3 There is virtually no direct evidence of Early Bronze Age settlement in the West Midlands, and none within the study area. However, it has been suggested that ring ditches in river terrace locations (such as that at Sandyford) were sited close to occupation sites or on marginal land bordering settlement areas²⁰.
- 3.3.4 Finds of Bronze Age material are known from several locations in the Stone and Swynnerton area including a fragment of spearhead from west of Beech, which was reported under the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Iron Age 800BC – AD43

- 3.3.5 The Iron Age is characterised by a greater visibility of settlement sites²¹ and an equivalent decline in the number of funerary sites. Hillforts are first seen in the very late Bronze Age and are significant monument types throughout the Iron Age (although it is notable that hillforts are rather less commonly found in Staffordshire than elsewhere in the West Midlands²²).
- 3.3.6 The general picture in the region is of intensified farming with the emergence of enclosed settlements and new types of landscape organisation evident in the form of pit and posthole alignments. Environmental evidence from Kings Pool, Stafford²³ indicated large scale deforestation in the Iron Age providing some corroboration for the picture of intensified agriculture in this period.
- 3.3.7 Notwithstanding the impression of intensified activity gained from the characteristic monuments of the period, this activity does not seem to be reflected in the surviving material culture, which may indicate that wealth and status in the period was measured in terms of material that does not survive well in the archaeological record such as aggregations of livestock and crops²⁴.
- 3.3.8 The hillfort of Bury Bank (STSo35) occupies a 1.94 ha site overlooking the Trent Valley. It is sub-oval in plan with twin ramparts and has a single in-turned entrance on the western side. The only investigation of the fort prior to the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME)²⁵ topographic survey of 1992 took the form of a single small trench cut through the inner defences in 1892 and knowledge of the date and internal layout of the fort is negligible.
- 3.3.9 Two potential enclosed settlement sites of Iron Age date have been located by geophysical survey north (STSo65) and south (STSo64) of Dog Lane, Shelton under Harley approximately 6km north-west of Bury Bank hillfort. Both sites included possible pit clusters and enclosure ditches – the site to the south of Dog Lane suggesting a sub-oval enclosure and the site to the north a rectilinear arrangement (see BID-CH-004-003, CA3-2354 and CA3-2356).

²⁰ Garwood (2011), p75

²¹ Watt, S. (2011), *The archaeology of the West Midlands: A framework for research*, Oxford: Oxbow Books, p106

²² See Watt (2011) p107 figure 3.4

²³ Leah et al (1998), p98

²⁴ Watt (2011), p114

²⁵ Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (England) (1996), *Hillfort Survey Reports*, unpublished reports, Bury Bank p1

3.4 Romano-British AD43 – AD410

- 3.4.1 The Romano-British archaeology of the Stone and Swynnerton area is characterised by its use as a resource procurement zone²⁶, which may have included active woodland management²⁷, resulting in substantial gaps in settlement distribution. Comparison with the medieval period suggests that the extreme shortage of Romano-British settlement is the result of human choice.
- 3.4.2 A contributing factor to the nature of the archaeology of this period may be the persistence of a 'cattle and warfare culture'²⁸, which meshed poorly with Roman social practice leading to a low adoption of innovative practices and continuance of traditional forms throughout the Romano-British period.
- 3.4.3 Stone and Swynnerton lie within the presumed administrative area of the *civitas*²⁹ of the *Cornovii*³⁰, the capital of which lay at Wroxeter (Shropshire). The *civitas* is assumed to have achieved some degree of self-government in the last decade of the 1st century AD. Prior to that date it is probable that the area was under military administration following an advance north and west from the Fosse Way frontier in or after AD48.
- 3.4.4 The known military sites in Staffordshire include forts at Wall and Penkrige along the line of Watling Street (Margary route 1³¹) and Chesterton on the road from the Fosse at Willoughby on the Wolds (Nottinghamshire), via Rocester to Northwich (Cheshire) (Margary route 181). In addition to these forts a number of temporary camps have been identified including one at Hollywood east of Stone and a further possible example at Aston by Stone. The latter was initially identified from aerial photographs and subsequently subject to geophysical survey in 1992³².
- 3.4.5 In a review of Roman Staffordshire Wardle proposed a 'probable' road linking Penkrige with the Rocester to Northwich route at a point east of Chesterton³³. This alignment would cross the route of the Proposed Scheme in the vicinity of Stone³⁴.
- 3.4.6 Chance finds of Roman material have been made in the area since the 19th century. These include: Pottery and a coin of Trajan (AD98 – 117) from Stone during the 19th century; a coin of Licinius (AD308 – 324) south of Beech; a coin of Domitian (AD81 – 96) was reported under the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) from a location east of Swynnerton Grange; and, an incomplete and corroded coin of the 1st/2nd century AD and a brooch of similar date was reported to the PAS from a location east of Stone. The largest collection of finds was made during metal detecting at Swynnerton in the vicinity of the scheduled barrow (STSo43), which resulted in the discovery of around 100 artefacts of Roman, Saxon and medieval date including four brooches, a strap end and two coins of Roman date.

²⁶ Watt (2011) p144

²⁷ Ibid p131

²⁸ Ibid p140-141

²⁹ Tribal capital

³⁰ Webster, G. (1991), *The Peoples of Roman Britain: The Cornovii*. Stroud: Alan Sutton, p21-23

³¹ Margary, I.D. (1957), *Roman Roads in Britain; volume 2 North of the Foss Way*. London, Phoenix House, p13-14

³² Stratascan (1992) *Report on a Geophysical Survey carried out at three locations in the Borough of Stafford*, unpublished report

³³ Wardle, C. (undated), *Roman Staffordshire: The Five Towns and Beyond*. Staffordshire County Council, unpublished paper, p4

³⁴ However, it is worth noting that no evidence for this road is put forward and it does not feature in either Margary's (1957) definitive work on Roman Roads or Webster's overview of the Cornovian civitas

3.5 Early medieval AD410 to AD1066

3.5.1 The post-Roman and early medieval period has been described as “Probably one of the periods least visible archaeologically”³⁵ in the West Midlands region whilst noting that “place name and historical evidence reveals a period of intense activity in a closely settled and developed landscape”.

3.5.2 The ethnicity of the population of the region in the centuries after AD410 is unknown with various theories proposed for the degree to which Germanic incomers formed part of the population and for the ways in which the incomers interacted with the existing Romano-British population³⁶.

In the late 6th or the early 7th century, Staffordshire was incorporated into the newly formed Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Mercia. The Tribal Hidage and the writings of Bede make it clear that Staffordshire formed part of “Original Mercia”, that is part of Mercia before its expansion in the 8th century, when it asserted control over much of central and southern England³⁷. In spite of the fact that the Mercian kingdom was officially pagan until the reign of Peada (655 – 656), archaeology would seem to support the place name evidence in suggesting that Staffordshire was culturally British when incorporated. This is suggested by the almost complete absence of pagan Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in the county, with the exception of a cluster located along the west bank of the River Trent where it borders Derbyshire. Two outliers from this concentration in the east and north of the county are known south-west of Eccleshall and at Barlaston in the Trent valley³⁸. The possibility that other burial sites remain to be discovered may be indicated by the presence of the place name element ‘low’ from the Old English *hlaw* (burial mound/hill with mound/hillock in Old English), for example at Micklow (STS015) and Blakelow Farm (STS030).

3.5.3 The ethnic mixture of the population of the region in the post-Roman period has been posited from place name evidence; e.g. the use of *wahl* as a place name element (as at Walton (STS012)). Eccleshall preserves evidence in its name for a British institution – *Eccles* (a church) and it has been suggested³⁹ that the estates of St Chad here and at Lichfield, gifted in the 7th century, may represent late Roman estates or districts.

3.5.4 The heartland of the kingdom of Mercia, which coalesced from earlier, smaller, tribal groupings in the late 6th century, is thought to have lain in the valley of the River Trent in central and southern Staffordshire. At its greatest extent the kingdom expanded as far south-east as the Thames estuary and as far west as Wales. Later medieval documents associated the Mercian *King Wulfhere* (who reigned between approximately 656 - 675) with the establishment of a monastery at Stone and with a site known as *Wulferecaester*; thought by antiquarians to be Bury Bank hillfort⁴⁰, although no archaeological evidence has been found to support these claims. Recent

³⁵ Watt (2011), p149

³⁶ Watt (2011), p149-151

³⁷ Phillips, A.D.M. and Phillips C.B. (2011), *An Historical Atlas of Staffordshire*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p. 30; Brooks, N. (1989), The formation of the Mercian kingdom. In Bassett, S., *The Origins of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*. London: Leicester University Press, pp. 160-163

³⁸ See Watt (2011), p151 figure 5.1

³⁹ Palliser, D.M. (1976), *The Staffordshire Landscape*. London, Hodder and Stoughton

⁴⁰ Plot, R. (1686), *The Natural History of Staffordshire*, Oxford, p406-7

research⁴¹ has questioned the location of *Wulferecaester*. Whatever the nature of Wulfhere's association with Stone and Bury Bank he was a strong supporter of Christianity and, during his reign, the Mercian kingdom began the process of conversion from paganism to Christianity.

- 3.5.5 Evidence for Anglo-Saxon rural settlement sites is extremely rare in the region; none are known from the study area. Environmental evidence⁴² from Kings Pool, Stafford, suggests that the post-Roman woodland regeneration was halted and that, by the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, woodland clearance was more or less complete. This suggests that the area may have been used primarily for agriculture. The evidence from Kings Pool supports this argument, suggesting that, from around AD1000, cereal cultivation saw a considerable expansion. In consideration of the settled landscape within the study area described in the Domesday Book of 1086 it would seem reasonable to assume that a similar pattern of clearance and cultivation may have occurred at Stone and Swynnerton by the latter part of the early medieval period.
- 3.5.6 Evidence for the development of urban settlement in Staffordshire appears late in the early medieval period. The town of Tamworth had been established as a royal *vill* by the 8th century and was one of the chief seats of the Mercian kings, although there is little evidence that it attracted significant commercial or industrial activity⁴³. The collapse of the Mercian kingdom, in the face of Danish attacks in the 9th century, led to reduction in the influence of the former royal centre. Despite this Tamworth was fortified as a *burh*⁴⁴ during the 10th century Anglo-Saxon resurgence led by the kings of Wessex. This resurgence also saw the town of Stafford founded as a *burh* on a new site on the River Sow. This new town developed a thriving pottery industry and held an administrative role, establishing a county system on the Wessex model towards the end of the period⁴⁵.
- 3.5.7 In parallel with the establishment of the county of Staffordshire as an administrative unit, smaller units called 'hundreds' were established, which formed the basis of local justice. Hundred courts were supposed to meet every four weeks to settle criminal cases and land transactions⁴⁶. Staffordshire was divided into five Hundreds⁴⁷, with that of Pirehill being named for its presumed meeting place at Pire Hill (STS004).
- 3.5.8 At the same time that the civil administration was being re-organised so too was the ecclesiastical with the establishment of smaller parishes out of the large minster territories⁴⁸ established in the aftermath of the conversion of the pagan Mercians. Minster foundations have been described as 'apart from the *burhs*the nearest thing to urban sites in early Anglo-Saxon England'⁴⁹. It has been suggested⁵⁰ that a minster

⁴¹ Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (1996), Bury Bank p8-10

⁴² Leah et al (1998) p98

⁴³ Phillips and Phillips (2011), p30 and figure 31d

⁴⁴ Old English term for fortification or fortified settlement

⁴⁵ Staffordshire first appears by name in an entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for the year 1016 Phillips and Phillips (2011), p10

⁴⁶ Zaluckyj, S. (2013), *Mercia: The Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Central England*, Almely: Logaston Press, p257 f, for the 'shiring of Mercia and the function of the constituent hundreds

⁴⁷ Cuttlestone, Offlow, Pirehill Seisdon and Totmonslow

⁴⁸ Minster churches were served by communities of secular clergy

⁴⁹ Watt (2011) p161

⁵⁰ Jenkins, A.E. (1988), *The Early Medieval Context of the Royal Free Chapels of South Staffordshire*. MPhil Thesis, University of Birmingham, p69ff

church was located at Stone although no evidence pre-dating the establishment of the 12th century priory church of St Wulfad (STSo19) has yet come to light.

- 3.5.9 In the later medieval period extensive and regular open field systems were present in central and southern Staffordshire and the degree to which these had their roots in the later Anglo-Saxon period is debatable. It is certainly noteworthy that by the late 11th century when Domesday was compiled, settlements were already present at Aston by Stone (STSo02), Stoke (STSo66), Walton (STSo12), Darlaston (STSo80), Meaford (STSo34), Swynnerton (STSo42), Hatton (STSo55) and Shelton under Harley (STSo75).
- 3.5.10 Archaeological evidence for the date at which these rural settlements were established is entirely lacking, presumably because it lies beneath present day settlements, which have generally not been subject to significant levels of development led investigation.
- 3.5.11 Artefactual evidence is also limited to metal detected finds such as the pendant, die and stirrup strap found near to the bowl barrow in Swynnerton Park (STSo43). Other finds reported to the PAS and made further afield at Trentham and Eccleshall were respectively a 9th/10th century copper alloy hooked tag and a silver *sceat* dated AD700 - AD710.

3.6 Medieval AD1066 – AD1540

- 3.6.1 Domesday provides a great deal of invaluable statistical detail for the study area. The entry for Swynnerton⁵¹ identifies 'land for 8 ploughs (in lordship 1), 10 villagers and 5 smallholders with 6 ploughs, 10 acres (approximately 0.04km²) of meadow and woodland 1 league long and 1 league wide (approximately 5km by 5km). Value 40 shillings'. The amount of woodland belonging to the manor is notable – at 5,760 acres (approximately 23km²) it is the largest area of woodland belonging to a Domesday manor in the Stone and Swynnerton area. Arable land belonging to the manor amounted to approximately 240 acres (approximately 1km²).
- 3.6.2 Domesday does not record a manor at Stone and it is possible that the site of the later town lay within the manor of Walton. However, an Augustinian Priory⁵² was founded at Stone between 1125 and 1131 on the site of a pre-existing church. The foundation date of the pre-existing church is not known although antiquarian accounts suggest a middle-Saxon date based on a muddled version of an incident recorded by Bede in his *History of the English Church*. The Priory accumulated endowments and prospered under the patronage of the de Stafford family. Only minor elements of the priory buildings; a rib-vaulted undercroft (part of the western range of the cloister) and some 14th century architectural fragments, survive within a later house on the site.
- 3.6.3 The presence of the priory appears to have encouraged the growth of an urban settlement at Stone and in 1251 a charter permitting a weekly market and annual fair was granted, although in 1263 the town was burnt and the Priory plundered.

⁵¹ Morris, J. (1976), *Domesday Book: Staffordshire*, Chichester: Phillimore and Co Ltd, p.249a; the 11th century form of the name being Sulvertone

⁵² Details of the establishment and development of the Priory of St Mary and St Wulfad at Stone can be found in Victoria County History (1970), *A History of the County of Stafford*, Volume 3, London, p240-247

Excavations⁵³ in Stone town centre suggest that there was medieval occupation at the south-eastern end of the modern High Street. The traces of typical burgess plots still detectable along the High Street suggest that the medieval town may have stretched for approximately 300m from the Priory precinct⁵⁴.

- 3.6.4 The early records of Stone Priory indicate disputes in respect of its authority over several churches in the vicinity amongst which was that at Swynnerton. This dispute was resolved in favour of Stone Priory in 1157. The church of St Mary at Swynnerton (Grade I listed) is 12th century in origin, extended in the 13th to 15th centuries (STSo42). A late 13th century statue was found under the floor of the south chapel of the church⁵⁵ suggesting that it was the 'chapel of the Blessed Virgin in the church of Swynnerton' referred to in an appeal to Pope Innocent VI in 1357. The appeal, by John, King of the French on behalf of Thomas de Swynnerton knight, petitioned for a relaxation of 1 year and 40 days of penance for those who visited the chapel⁵⁶. The statue 'of a quality worthy of Westminster Abbey or Lincoln Cathedral'⁵⁷ is a good reflection of the probable importance of the pilgrim trade at Swynnerton.
- 3.6.5 Efforts to increase the importance of the church at Swynnerton were not the only way the lords of the manor sought to develop their manorial village. In 1306 Sir Roger de Swynnerton was granted a charter for a weekly market and an annual fair. The attempt does not seem to have been successful – 20 years after the grant of a market charter the 1327 lay subsidy records show that seven households in Swynnerton contributed an average of 12d each (in comparison 24 households in Stone contributed an average of 1s 6d each).
- 3.6.6 The degree to which population and settlement expanded during the medieval period can be judged by the extent of evidence for arable cultivation in the form of ridge and furrow. Remains of ridge and furrow cultivation strips have been found in aerial photographic and LiDAR survey throughout the Stone and Swynnerton area. Much of the ridge and furrow in the southern part of the area has been eroded as a result of modern farming practices. However, in the northern part it survives in better condition, for example at Swynnerton (STSo37, STSo41) and Darlaston (STSo38) it has been encountered at 12 out of 16 locations subject to geophysical survey (see BID-CH-004-003).
- 3.6.7 In addition to the establishment of the small town at the gates of Stone Priory, the period after Domesday saw smaller settlements created, which have continued in existence to the present day at Yarnfield⁵⁸ (STSo24), and others which have shrunk,

⁵³ For example, excavations to rear of 9 High Street Stone, as described on Archaeology Data Service, <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archsearch>

⁵⁴ In 1326 the Priory acquired 10 messuages in Stone

⁵⁵ See listing description for the Church of St Mary, Swynnerton NHLE 1374205

⁵⁶ Bliss W.H. (ed) (1896), *Petitions to the Pope 1342-1419*, Volume XXVII, 5 Innocent VI. London, Eyre and Spottiswoode. The petition was granted

⁵⁷ Pevsner, N. (1974), *The Buildings of England: Staffordshire*, London, Yale University Press, p272

⁵⁸ Wrottesley, G. (1886), *The Exchequer Subsidy Roll of A.D. 1327*, Collections for a History of Staffordshire, part 1, volume 7, The William Salt Archaeological Society, p197 -215; four households in Yarnfield (then Ernefen) contributed 6s 10d to the 1327 lay subsidy

disappeared or moved at Cold Norton⁵⁹, Swynnerton Grange⁶⁰ (STSo31) and Blakelow Farm⁶¹ (STSo30).

3.6.8 A monument type characteristic of the medieval period, the moated site, is represented by several examples in the Stone and Swynnerton area. At Tilling Drive, Walton a homestead moat⁶² survived into the 20th century but was destroyed by the development of Tilling Drive and Friars Avenue. The moat at Aston Hall (STSo02) is rectangular in form and survives as a dry feature within the grounds of the hall. At Cold Norton a moated site located south-west of the deserted village was excavated in the 1980s⁶³.

3.6.9 Routeways also feature as part of the medieval landscape servicing both long and shorter distance travel⁶⁴. In 1343 the canons of Stone Priory were allowed to appropriate the church of Madeley in order to offset the heavy burden of hospitality resulting from the priory's location on a main highway⁶⁵. The main highway was most likely the Lichfield to Newcastle-under-Lyme road, which carried on to Chester. This was joined at Stone by a road to Stafford, which crossed the Trent at Walton where the medieval bridge (STSo12) survives, much altered, next to the modern crossing⁶⁶. Other routes of probable medieval origin include the B5026 Eccleshall Road and Pirehill Lane, which linked Walton to Whitgreave and a crossing of the River Sow at Great Bridgeford.

3.7 Post-medieval AD1540 to AD1901

3.7.1 Between 1536 and 1541 the monasteries, priories, convents and friaries in England, Wales and Ireland were suppressed by an act known as The Dissolution of the Monasteries. The redistribution of assets and income that followed was 'the greatest ever transfer of property in English history'⁶⁷. The effects of this transfer were wide ranging and fundamental, arguably setting in motion changes that led to the industrial revolution.

3.7.2 Stone Priory was suppressed in the spring of 1537 during the first tranche of closures, which were aimed at the smaller monastic houses. A valuation of the priory undertaken in 1535⁶⁸ gave the total gross income as £130 2s 11d (approximately

⁵⁹ Ibid at Cold Norton 18 households contributed to the 1327 lay subsidy. A modern farm occupies the site now with earthworks extending to the south and east indicating the extent of the settlement

⁶⁰ LiDAR survey identified a possible building platform at the junction of two areas of ridge and furrow

⁶¹ The date at which a settlement was established at Blakelow is uncertain – it does not appear as a separate entity in the 1327 lay subsidy. However, the entry for Darleston includes sums paid by Henry de Blakelowe and Hugo de Blakelowe. The calendar of close rolls for the period 1313-1318 records that the Priory at Stone was 'burdened with the maintenance for life of William de Blakelowe a soldier who had been maimed at the recent siege of Carlisle'. It would seem therefore that the settlement of Blakelowe must have been established by the beginning of the 14th century

⁶² The moat surrounded Priory Farm and is shown on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map. It is one of three examples in the vicinity of Stone noted in Victoria County History (1908), *A History of the County of Stafford*, Volume I, London, Archibald Constable and Co (p367); the others being Moat Farm, Hartwell and Aston Hall

⁶³ Staffordshire HER MST2000; the site lies outside of the study area

⁶⁴ The longer distance routes were those to Chester and Carlisle, see Victoria County History (1967), *A History of the County of Stafford*, Volume 2, London, p275ff

⁶⁵ Victoria County History (1970), p240-247

⁶⁶ Another bridge was located at Darlaston from at least 1372 – see Staffs HER MST 603. The present bridge is single span stone bridge built by Thomas Telford in approximately 1818

⁶⁷ Watt (2011), p211; although it might be argued that the Norman Conquest and the changes recorded in the Domesday survey actually constituted the greatest transfer of property in English history

⁶⁸ The Valor Ecclesiasticus for details of the holdings and income of Stone Priory; see Victoria County History (1970), p240-247

£68,000 in modern currency). The spiritual endowments of the priory included the churches of Stone, Tysoe, Madeley and Milwich along with pensions from the churches of Swynnerton and Checkley. The temporal endowments consisted of lands and rents principally located in the vicinity of Stone but including property as far afield as Coppenhall, Stafford and Newcastle under Lyme.

- 3.7.3 There is little evidence from the study area for the 'Great Rebuilding'⁶⁹ of the 16th and early 17th centuries. One of the few clear examples of construction in this period is Meaford Old Hall Farm (STSo34), which retains a late 16th century wing in an otherwise 17th century house. The apparent absence of a phenomenon otherwise common across Britain may argue for the economic stagnation of the area in this period. However, it is not out of the question that earlier fabric is concealed within later structures and the true level of building activity in the area is not reflected in our current state of knowledge. The Old Post Office at Swynnerton (STSo42) provides an example of a structure in which the presence of earlier fabric in a building of ostensibly post-17th century is not always obvious – recent fieldwork in this case demonstrating the presence of a timber framed smoke hood in the earliest part of the building indicating that the original construction date probably lay in the late 16th or early 17th century rather than the 18th century as given in the listing description for the building⁷⁰.
- 3.7.4 Swynnerton Hall (STSo42) was built between 1725 and 1729 replacing a Tudor house destroyed in the Civil War⁷¹. The Tudor house was sited 'below the present Georgian building'⁷² with at least part of the old village sited south of the present hall – the only trace remaining following relocation in the early 19th century being the former village well⁷³. An undated plan⁷⁴ exists for the alteration of Swynnerton Park drawn up in the style of Capability Brown (possibly by him although the implemented scheme was executed to a slightly different plan by another architect in Brownian style⁷⁵). A range of model farm buildings comprising barns and a dovecote was constructed to the north-east of the hall in the late 18th or 19th century. James Trubshaw made improvements to both the Hall and grounds in the early 19th century. The inner parkland (STSo73) retains a degree of its Brownian character. However, the outer park (STSo74) is much altered and given over to agriculture although a few elements such as Lodge Covert provide evidence of its earlier appearance.
- 3.7.5 At Trentham the Leveson family acquired the site of the Augustinian priory in 1540. Remodelling of the house on this site, which lies outside of the study area, took place at intervals culminating in the palatial residence created by Sir Charles Barry in 1836 -

⁶⁹ Hoskins, W.G. (1953), *The Rebuilding of Rural Britain, 1570 - 1640. Past and Present*, vol 4, no. 1

⁷⁰ Frost, P. (2009), *The Old Post Office, Swynnerton, Staffordshire, Historic Building Recording*, unpublished report by Castlery Archaeology, p15ff

⁷¹ Pevsner (1974), p272; Grazebrook, H.S. (ed) (1884), *The Heraldic Visitation of Staffordshire made by Richard St George, Norroy, in 1614 and Sir William Dugdale, Norroy, in the years 1663 and 1664*. Collections for a History of Staffordshire Part 2 volume 5, The William Salt Archaeological Society, details Dugdale's heraldic visitations to Staffordshire in 1663/4. These have no records of claims made for the Fitzherberts of Swynnerton. The possible implication being that following the death of John Fitzherbert during the Civil War, the family may have resided elsewhere in the late 17th century

⁷² Mowl, T. and Barre, D. (2009), *The Historic Gardens of England: Stafford*, Bristol, Redcliffe Press, p182

⁷³ Yates' map of approximately 1775 shows the village established in more or less its present position by the late 18th century. Recent work on the Old Post Office (Frost (2009) cited above) suggests that the northern extent of the village had already been settled before the destruction of the Tudor House

⁷⁴ Possibly drawn up in 1758, see Stafford Borough Council (2014), *Swynnerton Conservation Area Character Appraisal*, pg

⁷⁵ Mowl and Barre (2009), p183

1842. Earlier remodelling included work by Capability Brown⁷⁶ who also worked on the grounds⁷⁷. In the 19th century the pleasure grounds at Trentham were remodelled in the Italian style by Barry in parallel with his work on the house. The Italian Gardens put Trentham at the forefront of garden design at this period and remain a feature of the site although the palatial house was demolished early in the 20th century. The outer parkland at Trentham (STSo61) extends into the study area.

- 3.7.6 Another potential minor gentry residence may be found at Blakelow (STSo30). The surviving remains here are of 18th century date and comprise an isolated farmstead around a regular u-plan courtyard. The site appears on Yate's map of approximately 1775 where it is named Blake Ley. However, Dugdale's 'Heraldic Visitations' suggest that it was the home of a gentry family much earlier: in 1663 John Lutwich of Blakelow juxta Swynnerton, aged 50, presented his claim to a coat of arms⁷⁸. John was the son of Stocket Lutwych, rector of Swynnerton and Prebendary of Lichfield (d.1642), a post-nuptial settlement following John's marriage to Catherine, 'daughter of Richard Parker, Audley, County Stafford', is dated to 9 November 1639.
- 3.7.7 Long distance travel along the Chester Road continued to be important in the post-medieval period. In 1675 John Ogilby's roadbook noted that it was 'one of the most frequented in the kingdom'⁷⁹. A guide to the importance of the route is provided by the salary of the post-master at Stone who in the 17th century was paid a salary of £64 (only exceeded by the salaries of the postmasters at Birmingham and Preston). Improvements to the route were made, in the later 16th century the road was re-routed westwards at Darlaston and in 1663 the bridge at Darlaston was repaired and widened in order to allow the passage carts and waggons where only packhorses had previously been able to cross. Similarly the road to Carlisle switched to the west bank of the Trent at Tittensor to avoid the low-lying ground in the vicinity of Barlastone. The generally good condition of the roads in Staffordshire was noted by Plot (with the exception of areas in the south of the county '*where they are uncessantly worn with the carriage of coale*'⁸⁰), which may have led to the relatively slow establishment of turnpike trusts to improve the condition and capacity of the roads. The first section of road to see the establishment of a turnpike was the Carlisle road north of Tittensor in 1714, followed by the Stone to Lichfield road in 1729 and the Stone to Stafford road in 1761⁸¹.
- 3.7.8 A revolution in long distance transport came with the development of canals in the mid 18th century. Inspired by the success of the Bridgewater Canal in Lancashire, notables including Earl Gower of Trentham, Thomas Anson of Shugborough and Dr Erasmus Darwin, as well as visionary businessmen such as Josiah Wedgewood and Matthew Boulton, agitated for the construction of a Grand Trunk Canal to link the manufacturing centres of the midlands with seaports of the north-west allowing

⁷⁶ Pevsner (1974), p284

⁷⁷ Brown worked at Trentham between 1759 and 1780 (see listing description) and it is not improbable that his plans for Swynnerton were developed while he was in the area working at Trentham

⁷⁸ Grazebrook (1884), p 204

⁷⁹ John Ogilby's Britannia atlas comprised 100 strip road maps accompanied by text. The comment about the Chester Road is cited in Victoria County History (1967), p275ff

⁸⁰ Plot (1686), p110

⁸¹ Victoria County History (1967), p275ff

quick, cost effective⁸² and safe transit of goods and raw materials. An Act of Parliament authorising the construction of the Grand Trunk Canal (later renamed the Trent and Mersey Canal) was passed in 1766⁸³. The canal was to be twelve feet wide at the bottom and three feet deep. It was able to accommodate boats seventy feet long and six feet wide carrying twenty tons of cargo. The designer of the canal was James Brindley, the consulting engineer associated with the Bridgewater Canal and one of the most notable engineers of the 18th century. Brindley died in 1772 and the canal was completed by his assistant Hugh Henshall. The headquarters of the Trent and Mersey Canal Company were established at Stone and a maintenance facility constructed, including wet and dry barge docks, carpenters and blacksmiths workshops and offices. This boatyard (STSo17) survives in good condition and represents perhaps the only surviving example of an 18th century canal yard. In the 1780s *'The market town of Stone from a poor insignificant place is now grown neat and handsome in its buildings, and from its wharfs and busy traffic wears the lively aspect of a little seaport'*⁸⁴.

- 3.7.9 The advantageous position of Stone on the road and canal network resulted in a degree of prosperity in the second half of the 18th century, which is reflected in the present day fabric of the town⁸⁵. Many of the existing properties along the High Street were built (or rebuilt) in this period, the Crown Hotel (STSo18) for example is a handsome example of a Georgian coaching inn and buildings of similar date include Cumberland House at the southern end of the High Street and numbers 10, 15 and 36 High Street. The Church of St Michael (STSo19) was built between 1753 and 1758 within the precincts of the former Priory and is 'a remarkably early piece of Gothic revival'⁸⁶.
- 3.7.10 Outside of the urban area of Stone there were also changes to the pattern of rural settlement with the establishment of isolated farmsteads as the process of enclosure proceeded⁸⁷. Farmsteads of late 18th or early 19th century date can be found at Pirehill (STSo05), Walton Heath (STSo06, STSo07, STSo14, STSo15 and STSo09, which is no longer extant), and Swynnerton Heath (STSo49), whilst rebuilding occurred at this date at older settlements that now have the character of isolated farmsteads such as Cold Norton, Blakelow Farm (STSo30), Swynnerton Grange (STSo32) and Shelton under Harley (STSo75). Agricultural improvements in this period also included soil improvement through marl spreading⁸⁸, evidence for which is widespread throughout the area in the form of the pits from which the marl was extracted. Traces of former managed water meadows can also be found in the Trent valley north of Stone (STSo78) and in the valley of the Meece Brook at Stableford (STSo56). Management of land through creation of water meadow could substantially increase the

⁸² On completion of the canal, freight costs from the Potteries dropped from 10d to 1 ½ d per mile; see Uglow, J. (2003), *The Lunar Men*, London, Faber and Faber, p117

⁸³ Victoria County History (1967), p285ff; Palliser (1976), p214

⁸⁴ Unattributed, quoted by Palliser (1976), p236

⁸⁵ For example, see discussion at Staffordshire County Council (2012), *Staffordshire Extensive Urban Survey: Stone Character Assessment*, p55

⁸⁶ Pevsner (1974), p267

⁸⁷ Edwards, B. and Lake, J. (2012), *Historic Farmsteads and Landscape Character in Staffordshire*, Forum Heritage Services, p3, note that isolated farmsteads are the norm for Staffordshire as a whole, where 76% of recorded farmsteads are located in isolated locations or within loose farmsteads clusters

⁸⁸ It is worth noting that fertiliser was also more freely available following the completion of the canal network on which manure was often carried free of charge; see Uglow (2003), p117

productivity (and value⁸⁹) of land and was in widespread use from the 17th century. Further water management features are present at Aston Farm (STSo76), south of Stone, here the mill ponds, head race and leat worked from farm machinery in the 19th century⁹⁰.

- 3.7.11 The arrival of railways in the early part of the 19th century brought further substantial changes to Stone and its hinterland. The Grand Junction Railway, the first truly national mainline railway opened in 1837 passing through Norton Bridge. In 1846, faced with competition from the railways, the Trent and Mersey Canal Company merged⁹¹ with the North Staffordshire Railway Company (NSR) and in 1848 the NSR completed the Pottery Line connecting to the Grand Junction at Norton Bridge⁹². The NSR line passed to the north and west of Stone and a railway station (STSo18)⁹³ was built approximately 1km north-west of the historic town centre. The presence of the railway provided a stimulus to the development of the town, which resulted in a considerable growth in population (doubling between 1821 and 1901⁹⁴) and the establishment of new housing in the former fields north and west of the town.
- 3.7.12 Another significant development in the period was the establishment of a Water Pumping Station at Hatton in 1892 (STSo51) by the Staffordshire Potteries Water Company. The design featured a highly ornate Italianate style at the insistence of the landowner Basil Fitzherbert of Swynnerton Hall⁹⁵. The station comprised primary and secondary pumping stations, boiler house and chimneys. The station was converted to electrical power in 1959 and buildings subsequently converted to residential use. The water tower north of Swynnerton village (STSo47) was constructed in a similar style and at the same date. It too has been converted to residential use.
- 3.7.13 The Stone and Swynnerton area was the location of key activity in the 19th century catholic revival. The owners of Aston Hall donated the house to the English Franciscans and it functioned as a nunnery between 1829 and 1837. In 1842 Aston Hall saw the arrival of Dominic Barberi, an Italian Passionist missionary, who subsequently received John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman into the Roman Catholic Church⁹⁶. After Barberi's death in 1849 Aston Hall was bought by Canon Edward Huddleston who commissioned EW Pugin to rebuild the house in 1855, one of Pugin's first independent commissions. The house now serves as a retirement and convalescent home for priests of the Roman Catholic diocese of Birmingham. Gilbert Blount, a pupil of Pugin, built the Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption at Swynnerton (Grade II* Listed Building) for the Fitzherberts of Swynnerton Hall, a prominent catholic family.

⁸⁹ Breeze, P., Challis, K. and Kinsey, M. (2008), *Staffordshire Water Meadows Survey*, Birmingham Archaeology, p8, suggests up to a threefold increase in value

⁹⁰ Staffordshire HER reference MST11106

⁹¹ One of the results of the amalgamation was the removal of the canal company headquarters to Stoke on Trent, see Staffordshire County Council (2012), p40

⁹² Victoria County History (1967), p305ff

⁹³ The station buildings are listed as Grade II and are now in use as a community centre

⁹⁴ Staffordshire County Council (2012), p30

⁹⁵ See listing description for NHLE entry 1374201; Pevsner (1974), p273, notes that the Italianate style was 'extremely antiquated' by the 1890s

⁹⁶ Newman, John Henry (1801 - 1890), theologian and cardinal; see Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (2017), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/>

3.8 Modern AD1901 to present

- 3.8.1 Perhaps one of the more distinctive features added to towns and villages in the 20th century are the war memorials commemorating the dead of two world wars. In the town of Stone there are two, one in Granville Square (STSo18) and one in St Michael's churchyard (STSo19). Other memorials exist at Coldmeece (STSo68), Swynnerton (STSo42) and Tittensor. A now lost memorial was once located near the Trent Bridge in Walton⁹⁷.
- 3.8.2 In 1940 Royal Ordnance Filling Factory number 5 (ROF) opened on a site at Cold Meece south-west of Swynnerton. By 1942 the number of workers at the site had grown to approximately 18,000 and a new railway branch line was built to connect the NSR line between Stone and Norton Bridge to a new station at Cold Meece in order to facilitate the movement of staff to the site⁹⁸. The factory ceased production in 1958 and by the mid 1960s the branch line had been closed⁹⁹. Not the entire workforce at ROF Swynnerton commuted to the site. For those living at ROF Swynnerton seven hostels were constructed at nearby Yarnfield, two of which were later converted to use as a Post Office (later BT) training college. The site of the former ROF remains in use as a Ministry of Defence training area.
- 3.8.3 Military activity in the Stone and Swynnerton area did not end with the Second World War. A 1948 aerial photographic survey shows four bunkers (STSo53) present on farmland north of Clifford's Wood Swynnerton. These features are still present and are described below. The bunkers are presumed to have been an ammunition storage facility and are currently in use for storing pyrotechnics.
- 3.8.4 During the earlier part of the 20th century there was a small growth in Stone, principally in the northern part of the town. In the later part of the 20th century new business parks, industrial and housing estates led to the subsuming of the settlements at Walton, Stoke and Aston by Stone into the urban area¹⁰⁰ although the town boundary had already by 1932 extended to include these settlements.
- 3.8.5 In the 1960s the most recent contribution to major transport infrastructure in the area came in the form of the M6 motorway. Between 1960 and 1965 the Stafford by-pass was linked to Preston and Lancaster by a route running to the west of Stone and Trentham roughly paralleling the old Carlisle Road (now the A34 Stafford Road/The Fillybrooks).

⁹⁷ Imperial War Museums list of UK War Memorials, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/13625>

⁹⁸ Christiansen, R. and Miller, R.W. (1971), *The North Staffordshire Railway*, Newton Abbot, David and Charles, p260-261

⁹⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰⁰ Staffordshire County Council (2012), p40

4 Built heritage

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 This section provides baseline information relating to all built heritage assets within the land required for the Proposed Scheme; all designated and key non-designated built heritage assets within 500m of the land required for the Proposed Scheme; and any built heritage assets that lie between 500m and 2km from the land required for the Proposed Scheme and within the ZTV of the Proposed Scheme, where the Proposed Scheme will have adverse effects of moderate or major significance.
- 4.1.2 Further information on all these assets, plus any designated assets that lie between 500m and 2km of the land required for construction of the Proposed Scheme and within the ZTV, but are not described below, can be found in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-003.
- 4.1.3 All assets are depicted in Cultural Heritage Map Series CHo1 209b -213a, CHo2 204b-206a (Volume 5: Cultural Heritage Map Book).

4.2 Built heritage assets within the land required for the Proposed Scheme

Swynnerton Conservation Area (STSo42)

- 4.2.1 Swynnerton Conservation area comprises the historic village of Swynnerton, Swynnerton Hall and associated buildings along with the pleasure gardens in the immediate vicinity of the Hall (STS 073). Although the village has Saxon origins, the earliest surviving building is the parish church of St Mary, which dates to the 12th century. Swynnerton Hall is early 18th century in date and replaces an earlier manor house on the site destroyed in the 17th century. Stables, dovecote and other agricultural buildings were built to the east of the hall in the later 18th century. The historic core of the village and associated road layout is already clear by the late 18th century and fully established in its present form by 1848. The significance of the Conservation Area lies in the historic relationship between its two principle components – Swynnerton Hall and Swynnerton village (see Photomontage LV.01.656 in Volume 5: Appendix LV-001-003 Landscape and visual assessment and photomontages).

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.2.2 The immediate setting of the Conservation Area can be broken down into a number of elements; Swynnerton Park pleasure grounds and inner park (STSo73) to the south, Swynnerton Park outer park (STSo74) to the east, Tittensor Road and farmland to the north of Swynnerton village and the modern housing development west of the historic village core. The inner parkland retains elements of ridge and furrow associated with medieval land use as well as elements of landscaping regimes designed by Brown and Trubshaw. The location of the Conservation area on the southern end of a prominent sandstone ridge means that the open nature of the planting in the parkland coupled with deliberately contrived vistas through the shelter belt planting around the perimeter allows important views to and from Swynnerton

Hall. The evidential and aesthetic contribution of the Inner Park to the significance of the Conservation Area is high. The outer parkland is now mostly given over to agriculture, although some elements such as Lodge Covert provide evidence for older land management practices. The eastern boundary of the Conservation Area is largely screened by well-developed tree belts and the contribution of the outer park to the significance of the Conservation Area is low. The approach to the northern part of the village along the Tittensor Road has been identified 101 as a key view into the northern approach to the village, and the road itself is an historic approach route to the village. The more open nature of the northern boundary of the Conservation Area allows the position of the settlement on its ridge to be well understood. The contribution made by the Tittensor Road and nearby farmland to the significance of the Conservation Area is moderate. The modern housing to the west of the village core does not contribute to the significance of the Conservation Area.

Unlisted milepost near Cash's Pit (STSo48)

- 4.2.3 A late 19th century cast iron triangular milepost. The front panel gives the parish name, right hand side gives distances to Stone and Stafford, and left hand side gives distances to Pipe Gate, Woore and Nantwich.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.2.4 The significance of the milestone lies in its position on the A51 Stone Road. This would be lost if removed from its roadside setting.

4.3 Designated and key non-designated built heritage assets within 500m of the land required for the Proposed Scheme

75 and 77 Newcastle Road, Stone (STSo21)

- 4.3.1 Pair of houses built in approximately 1820. Built of brick with ashlar dressings in Georgian style. The buildings have a tile roof with brick cross-axial and end stacks. Two storeys with three-window range. Entrances have door cases with reeded pilasters, entablatures and pediments. There is a rear gabled wing.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.2 The key element of the setting of the two houses is their relationship to the A519 Newcastle Road, which was the focus of an early 19th century ribbon development northwards from the historic town core.

79 and 81 Newcastle Road, Stone (STSo21)

- 4.3.3 Pair of houses built in approximately 1820 as part of the development of Stone following the building of the Trent and Mersey canal. Built in Georgian style of brick with ashlar dressings they have slate roofs with brick end stacks. Each building has two storeys and symmetrical two-window range. Paired segmental-headed entrances have six-panel doors. Windows have sills, and wedge lintels over 16-pane sashes. There is a rear gabled wing.

¹⁰¹ Stafford Borough Council (2014), Figure 18

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.4 The key element of the setting of the two houses is their relationship to the A519 Newcastle Road, which was the focus of an early 19th century ribbon development northwards from the historic town core.

62 Newcastle Road, Stone (STSo21)

- 4.3.5 A brick built detached house to a double depth plan in Georgian style of approximately 1810. It has two storeys and a slate roof with brick end stacks. It has a symmetrical three-window range. Its round-headed entrance has a door case with fluted pilasters and open pediment. There is a fanlight with radial glazing.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.6 The key element of the setting of the house is its relationship to the A519 Newcastle Road, which was the focus of an early 19th century ribbon development northwards from the historic town core. Unlike number 75, 77, 79 and 81 Newcastle Road, this building is set back from the road and enclosed by mature trees and hedges increasing the privacy of the setting.

Blakelow Farm (STSo30)

- 4.3.7 Blakelow Farm is now an isolated farmstead laid out around a regular u-plan courtyard, with additional, detached elements. However, it may represent a shrunken or migrated settlement. A 'Blake Ley' is named on William Yates late 18th century maps of Staffordshire in this vicinity although elements of the farmstead may date to the 17th century¹⁰². Late 19th century Ordnance Survey maps show an orchard and pond to the west of the farmhouse. The farmstead survives relatively unaltered, with none of the large modern agricultural buildings that characterise similar nearby farmsteads at Walton Heath.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.8 Blakelow Farm forms part of the Swynnerton estate and its wider setting incorporates its relationship to Swynnerton Hall and Park. The immediate setting of the asset comprises the agricultural land of the holding associated with the farm. The construction of the M6 motorway in the 1960s introduced a negative element to the immediate setting of the farm.

Dixons and the adjoining range of outbuildings (STSo42)

- 4.3.9 These buildings comprise a varied range of red brick buildings extending from north-east side of Swynnerton Hall, presenting attractive frontage to Churchyard. They are a mix of two storey and single storey ranges. The right-hand wing with renewed casements adjoins a single storey range with pitching-eyes and segmental-headed carriage arch to yard with a rear wing. The adjoining 18th century brick octagonal garden house has a pyramidal roof with ball-head finial. Further to left there is a barn with pitching-eyes and honey-comb brickwork in part, the left-hand side is now a

¹⁰² Lord Stafford, pers comm

dwelling (Dixons). There is a return wing on the left-hand side with a three storey corner bay, formerly a dovecote. To the left of the yard gateway there is a single storey stone barn with alterations in brick. The buildings provide a good example of late 18th or early 19th century model farm buildings now partly adapted of non-agricultural use.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.10 The buildings are positioned in close proximity to Swynnerton Hall and the key aspect of their setting is their relationship to the main house.

Gate piers and forecourt wall of Swynnerton Hall (STSo42)

- 4.3.11 Stone wall with moulded coping and plain gate piers built in approximately 1890 and related in character to the Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption, the east side of which it adjoins. Listed for group value.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.12 The gate piers and wall serve to link Swynnerton Hall with the nearby chapel and form the southern limit of the open space at the end of the village main street, which forms a focus for the village layout.

Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption, Swynnerton (STSo42)

- 4.3.13 Roman Catholic chapel built to 13th century Gothic style design by Gilbert Blount a pupil of Pugin. Stone built with tile roof. The chancel has public chapel on west side. The chapel has a richly decorated interior. The significance of the asset principally lies in its architectural interest.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.14 The chapel provides a link between Swynnerton Hall and the village by reason of its position within the estate boundary but with public access into what would normally be a private devotional space.

War Memorial, Swynnerton (STSo42)

- 4.3.15 The memorial comprises a tapering stone shaft on an octagonal four stepped base, surmounted by an elaborately carved cross. The names of sixteen Great War dead are inscribed in the memorial.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.16 The memorial is located within a public open space at the end of the village main street close to the parish church where private memorials can also be found. The setting of the asset emphasises the communal nature of the sacrifice recorded on the memorial.

Church of St Mary, Swynnerton (STSo42)

- 4.3.17 The core of the church is 12th century in date. Aisles were added and the chancel was rebuilt in the 13th century. A south chapel added in the 14th century and the tower built against the front with its Norman doorway in the 15th century. The Norman west

doorway also in the tower has probably been re-set. Heavy restoration took place in the 19th century when the clerestory was added and the roofs renewed. During the restoration works a notable large stone seated figure of Christ of late 13th century work was found under the floor of the south chapel. There are triple sedilia in chancel and chapel. The chancel screen is 15th century in date. The defaced effigy of a cross-legged knight (probably Sir John Swynnerton, circa 1264) is located in a recess on south side of chancel. The interest of the church lies in its historical and architectural value.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.18 The church sits on a slight prominence at the southern end of the village main street, at one side of the public open space formed by the junction of a number of roads, in which is located the village war memorial. The church sits opposite the entrance façade of Swynnerton Hall. The key relationships in the setting of the church are with the communal space in front of it and the proximity of the principal local landowner's residence.

Queenswood, Swynnerton (STSo42)

- 4.3.19 Queenswood is the former rectory of St Marys Church. Built in approximately 1760 to a design by the architect Charles Cope Trubshaw, the church comprises two storeys of red brick on stone plinth. Now a private residence.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.20 The key element of the setting of Queenswood is its secluded position within well wooded private grounds close to Swynnerton Hall and the parish church of St Mary. Some gaps in tree cover give views from the house to the east.

The Thatched Cottage, Swynnerton (STSo42)

- 4.3.21 Probably 17th century in date, built of stone and brick, comprising two storeys. It has casement windows and a thatched roof with two small windows with 'eye-brows' at eaves.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.22 The key aspect of the setting of the cottage is its relationship with the main street from which it is set back slightly and within a hedge lined plot.

The Old Post Office, Swynnerton (STSo42)

- 4.3.23 Brick built thatched cottage. Recent investigation¹⁰³ during refurbishment works suggest that the earliest element of the cottage was a two bay timber frame of possible 16th or early 17th century date. The cottage was subsequently extended in the 18th century and again in the 1840s.

¹⁰³ Frost (2009)

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.24 The key aspect of the setting of the cottage is its relationship with the main street from which it is set back slightly and to which it is aligned at an acute angle providing a view down the length of the street.

Home Farm, Swynnerton (STSo42)

- 4.3.25 Home Farm is a former farmhouse with roughcast exterior to earlier timber frame, which is revealed internally. L-shaped on plan and two storeys high. There is a gabled bay on left-hand side to cross wing, which is the earlier portion of the building – 17th century in date as evidenced by exposed ceiling beams and timber frame with wattle and daub infill to outer wall of former sitting room, and 17th century staircase with turned balusters. Main part of building added in the 19th century.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.26 Home Farm is set back from the main street of the village and faces southwards into an area that is now occupied by modern residential properties.

Swynnerton Water Tower (STSo47)

- 4.3.27 Yellow and red brick water tower, square on plan with a semi-circular arch on each of the four sides. Each arch has triple arch rings with stone key blocks. The tank chamber has a three-light oriel window on each side and brick parapet. Built approximately 1890 in the same Italianate style as Hatton pumping station. The ornate style was at the insistence of the landowner, Basil Fitzherbert. Converted to use as a private residence.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.28 The position of the former water tower close to the highest point of the ridge, which forms the watershed between the River Trent and the Meece Brook is largely a function of the practical use of gravity in water supply. The unusually ornate character of the building and its prominent position means that it constitutes an eye catching landscape element, even if this was not a deliberate aspect of its original design.

Swynnerton Heath Farmhouse (STSo49)

- 4.3.29 Swynnerton Heath Farmhouse is an early 19th century farmhouse built of red brick in the local vernacular style. It is L-shaped on plan. The front façade to the south has five sash windows with flat brick arches to each storey. There is a plain brick pilaster porch with pediment and a wooden, canted, bay window on the ground floor. There is a lower wing at the rear with plain doorway and modern wood gabled porch.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.30 The most important element of the setting of the farmhouse is its relationship to the other elements of the farmstead, which comprise a range of historic brick built farm buildings extend to the north along the A519 Newcastle Road. An extensive range of modern farm buildings is located behind the historic farm buildings and to the north of the farmhouse. The farmhouse sits at the junction of two major roads (the A51 Stone

Road and A519 Newcastle Road), which represent the modern form of historic routeways.

Hatton Water Pumping Station (STSo51)

- 4.3.31 The pumping station at Hatton was built for the Staffordshire Potteries Water Company in approximately 1892 to a design by G Day Harrison. The complex comprises the original pump house, boiler house and chimney to which a secondary pumping house was added in 1898, all of which are listed at Grade II or II*. Other, non-designated elements of the Station include engine men's houses, offices and entrance. The buildings are of yellow brick and elaborately Italianate in style with contrasting red brick and terracotta dressings. The elaboration of the decoration was a requirement of the landowner, Basil Fitzherbert of Swynnerton Hall although the choice of an Italianate style was somewhat anachronistic having seen its peak of interest in the 1850s¹⁰⁴. The Station was converted to electric pumps in 1959 and the buildings are now private residences.

The contribution setting makes to the significance of the asset

- 4.3.32 The Pumping Station is positioned at a bend in the A51 Stone Road as it enters the valley of the Meece Brook. The site is screened by trees to the east and north but is prominent in views from the south and west. Although the positioning of the Pumping Station was largely a factor of its utilitarian function, the elaborate nature of the architecture has resulted in a striking group of buildings, which are a local landmark.

4.4 Key built heritage assets within 2km of the land required for the Proposed Scheme, where this also falls within the ZTV

- 4.4.1 The criterion for inclusion within this section is that the Proposed Scheme is assessed in Volume 5: Appendix CH-003-003 Cultural heritage impact assessment table as having a major or moderate adverse effect upon a designated asset that lies between 500m and 2km from the land required for the Proposed Scheme and also lies within the ZTV of the Proposed Scheme. Descriptions of all designated assets within this area can be found in Volume 5: Appendix CH-002-003.
- 4.4.2 There are no designated heritage assets within the above-defined area upon which the Proposed Scheme will have adverse effects of moderate or major significance.

¹⁰⁴ Pevsner (1974), p273

5 Historic landscape

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 A process of historic landscape assessment has been carried out, identifying Historic Landscape Character Areas (HLCA) along the route of the Proposed Scheme. HLCA are based on historic landscape characterisation undertaken by Staffordshire County Council and Cheshire County Council and through consultation with these authorities and Historic England. HLCA have been defined where the historic landscape has a broadly distinct area of homogeneity. Descriptions of individual HLCA are presented in Volume 5: Appendix CH-005-000 Historic landscape character report.

5.1.2 HLCA identified within the Stone and Swynnerton area comprise:

- HLCA₁₁: Stone, Walton and environs;
- HLCA₁₂: Meece Brook to the River Trent; and
- HLCA₁₃: Swynnerton and Tittensor.

5.2 Parks and gardens

5.2.1 A number of country houses and their pleasure gardens and landscape parks were established throughout Staffordshire during this period, perhaps aided by the early enclosure of the Staffordshire landscape.

Darlaston Hall

5.2.2 At Darlaston, the hall (STSo80), originally owned by Burton Abbey, was acquired by James Collier a wool merchant. In 1655 the estate was sold to William Jervis of Meaford. In the early 19th century a Palladian style house was present on the site, this was substantially rebuilt after 1835. The Victorian Hall was itself demolished sometime after 1955. The hall was surrounded by pleasure gardens and a landscaped park (STSo26). The landscaped area has been altered and partially built over. However, elements such as the large mid 19th century fernery, walled garden and Egyptian style icehouse survive¹⁰⁵.

Trentham Hall

5.2.3 At Trentham the Leveson family acquired the site of the Augustinian priory in 1540. Remodelling of the house on this site, which lies outside of the study area, took place at intervals culminating in the palatial residence created by Sir Charles Barry in 1836 - 1842. Earlier remodelling included work by Capability Brown¹⁰⁶ who also worked on the grounds¹⁰⁷. In the 19th century the pleasure grounds at Trentham were remodelled in the Italian style by Barry in parallel with his work on the house. The Italian Gardens put Trentham at the forefront of garden design at this period and remain a feature of

¹⁰⁵ Parks and Gardens UK (2017), www.parksandgardens.org/places-and-people/site/7011

¹⁰⁶ Pevsner (1974), p284

¹⁰⁷ Brown worked at Trentham between 1759 and 1780 (see listing description) and it is not improbable that his plans for Swynnerton were developed while he was in the area working at Trentham

the site although the palatial house was demolished early in the 20th century. The outer parkland at Trentham (STSo61) extends into the study area.

Swynnerton Hall

- 5.2.4 Swynnerton Hall (STSo42) was built between 1725 and 1729 replacing a Tudor house destroyed in the Civil War¹⁰⁸. The Tudor house was sited 'below the present Georgian building'¹⁰⁹ with at least part of the old village sited south of the present hall – the only trace remaining following relocation in the early 19th century being the former village well¹¹⁰ although in the modern parkland the remains of ponds, field boundaries and ridge and furrow cultivation (STSo40 and STSo41) indicate the extent of the cultivated area associated with the medieval village. An undated plan¹¹¹ exists for the alteration of Swynnerton Park drawn up in the style of Capability Brown (possibly by him although the implemented scheme was executed to a slightly different plan by another architect in Brownian style¹¹²). A range of model farm buildings comprising barns and a dovecote was constructed to the north-east of the hall in the late 18th or 19th century. James Trubshaw made improvements to both the Hall and grounds in the early 19th century. The inner parkland (STSo73) retains a considerable degree of its Brownian character. However, the outer park (STSo74) is much altered and given over to agriculture although a few elements such as Lodge Covert provide evidence of its earlier appearance.

¹⁰⁸ Pevsner (1974), p272; Grazebrook (1884)

¹⁰⁹ Mowl and Barre (2009), p182

¹¹⁰ Yates' map of approximately 1775 shows the village established in more or less its present position by the late 18th century. Recent work on the Old Post Office (Frost (2009) cited above) suggests that the northern extent of the village had already been settled before the destruction of the Tudor House

¹¹¹ Possibly drawn up in 1758, see Stafford Borough Council (2014), p9

¹¹² Mowl and Barre (2009), p183

6 Archaeological risk mapping

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The archaeological character of the route has been broken down into a series of Archaeological Character Areas (ACA) and Archaeological Sub-Zones (ASZ). These are described below and depicted in Cultural Heritage Map Series CH-209b – 213a.

6.2 Archaeological character areas

ACA5: Meece Brook and Swynnerton

- 6.2.1 This ACA covers the section of the route of the Proposed Scheme as it passes to the west of Stone. The route runs initially across a lowland area of former wetland and heath between Yarnfield and Stone, at a minimum elevation of 100m above Ordnance Datum (AOD), before climbing onto higher ground to the east and north of Swynnerton, where it reaches approximately 180m AOD.
- 6.2.2 There is relatively little archaeological evidence known from the area. The higher ground from Swynnerton northwards remained heavily wooded into the post-medieval period and to some extent remains so in the present. Medieval settlements at Swynnerton and Darlaston, to the south and north of the route, both developed into post-medieval aristocratic estates with landscaped parks. The farm at Shelton under Harley, overlooking the Meece Brook at the western end of the ACA, has probably been the site of settlement since 1086.
- 6.2.3 The landscape of the area today is dominated by the passage of the M6 across it from south to north. This runs along the valley of the Filly Brook, which drains eastwards into the River Trent. The surrounding agricultural fields have seen significant hedgerow loss and are now largely used for arable crops. From Swynnerton westwards, early enclosure fields are better preserved and there is an increasing amount of pasture.
- 6.2.4 Most of the archaeological fieldwork carried out in this area has been salvage work focussed on works associated with the M6. This has failed to identify significant traces of past settlement. More recently work at Cold Norton has uncovered evidence for Neolithic settlement.

6.3 Archaeological sub-zones

ASZ 41 Peasley Bank

- 6.3.1 This sub-zone comprises the hill top of Peasley Bank. It has acid loamy and clayey soils over Mercia Mudstone. It is an area where archaeological character is partially or poorly understood and where data collected indicates that the area is likely to contain archaeological remains of significance. In this case the potential is for remains of prehistoric date.

ASZ 42 Pirehill South

- 6.3.2 This sub-zone comprises the elevated ground south-west of Stone. It has acid loamy and clayey soils over Mercia Mudstone. It is an area of post-medieval enclosure with no trace of historic settlement, although aerial photographs and LiDAR provide evidence of numerous vestigial traces of ridge and furrow (now largely ploughed out) suggesting that the outfields of the historic settlement of Aston by Stone lie in this area. Medieval and later cultivation in this sub-zone may mask traces of earlier activity, although the location of the sub-zone on higher ground and heavier soils is not particularly likely to have attracted early settlement. LiDAR identified a small enclosure defined by a slight raised bank on the north-east slopes of Peasley Bank. This feature is shown on late 19th and early 20th century Ordnance Survey maps as having a small pond and two earthworks (possibly the result of quarrying) within the interior. Both LiDAR and historic mapping show the presence in the sub-zone of former marl pits. There is no record of historic fieldwork in this sub-zone. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ 43 Black Plantation

- 6.3.3 This sub-zone comprises the drainage valley of a small stream tributary of the River Trent. It has alluvium over mudstone. A leat and a fish pond, associated with a post-medieval mill pond at Aston Farm, are evidence for the historic exploitation of the water resource in this sub-zone. The water features may have earlier antecedents. However, in the absence of historic fieldwork, the archaeological character of this sub-zone is partially or poorly understood. Geological data indicates that the area has potential to contain palaeoenvironmental remains of significance.

ASZ44 Pirehill North

- 6.3.4 This sub-zone comprises the elevated ground south-west of Stone, overlooking the tributaries of the Meece Brook. It has acid loamy and clayey soils over Mercia Mudstone. Like its southern counterpart, this sub-zone is an area of post-medieval enclosure, with no trace of historic settlement predating the establishment of an isolated farmstead at North Pirehill Farm in the 18th century, although aerial photographs and LiDAR provide evidence of vestigial traces of ridge and furrow (now largely ploughed out). The Anglo-Saxon hundred of Pirehill is named for the prominent topographic feature in this sub-zone and it is supposed that the hundred meeting place was located here, possibly on a site later marked by a beacon. Geophysical survey within this sub-zone south of Pirehill Lane produced inconclusive results and there is no site specific data available to characterise archaeological assets. The archaeological potential of this risk zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ 45 Walton Heath

- 6.3.5 This sub-zone comprises the relatively low-lying ground, formerly heathland, west of the historic settlement of Walton (now a suburb of Stone), extending to the west of the M6. It has loamy and clayey soils over Mercia Mudstone. It is an area of post-medieval enclosure characterised by isolated farmsteads of 18th or early 19th century

date, sited within parcels of ploughed out ridge and furrow, which may mask traces of earlier activity. Fieldwalking in advance of the construction of the northbound service area of the M6 recovered only post-medieval and modern material. Geophysical survey undertaken for HS2 south-west of Walton Heath Farm identified only post-medieval clay pits. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ46 Darlaston Park

- 6.3.6 This sub-zone comprises the higher ground overlooking the Filly Brook. It has loamy and clayey soils over Mercia Mudstone. It is an area of former parkland associated with Darlaston Hall that is now partially in use, at its south-eastern extremity, as a golf course. Within the sub-zone there is an extensive landscape of eroded narrow ridge and furrow and boundaries, with some medieval elements. Traces of former routes linking Darlastonwood Farm and Swynnerton Grange to Yarnfield Lane cross the sub-zone. These routes link farmsteads of post-medieval origin and were severed by construction of the M6. Fieldwalking surveys were conducted in the northern part of the sub-zone in advance of works to widen junctions 11 to 16 of the M6. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ47 Yarnfield

- 6.3.7 This sub-zone lies south-west of the Filly Brook and east of Yarnfield. It has loamy and clayey soils over Mercia Mudstone. It is an area where no fieldwork has been undertaken and no chance finds made that would help to characterise archaeological assets. The area is known to lie at the margins of terrestrialised former wetland associated with a tributary of the Meece Brook. The wet nature of the ground may explain the almost complete absence of ridge and furrow in this sub-zone. The discovery nearby of a number of stone axes and mace heads at Cold Norton Farm has been suggested¹¹³ to indicate the location of a possible Neolithic or Bronze Age site at the edge of the former wetland. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ48 Darlaston Stream/Filly Brook

- 6.3.8 This sub-zone comprises the valley of the Filly Brook, a tributary of the River Trent. Alluvium and peat are present. It is an area where no fieldwork has been undertaken and no chance finds made that would help to characterise archaeological assets. Darlaston Pool, now infilled and planted with trees, is noted on early 19th century Ordnance Survey surveyors' drawings. The purpose of the pool is unknown, although the presence of possible platforms within the pool (observed in LiDAR survey) may indicate the presence of duck decoys or similar features. Site reconnaissance indicated that this feature is still partially waterlogged and as a consequence there is potential for palaeoenvironmental remains to be encountered. This potential may be present

¹¹³ Leah et al (1998), p95

throughout the sub-zone. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ49 Swynnerton Slopes

- 6.3.9 This sub-zone comprises the slopes north-east of Swynnerton. The underlying geology is mudstone. The sub-zone includes present and former parkland and is now in agricultural use. Extensive areas of ridge and furrow exist throughout the sub-zone, some of which have been substantially eroded. Geophysical survey on behalf of HS2 recently uncovered a potential settlement site north-east of Blakelow Farm, a farmstead of possible 17th century origin. Geophysical survey to the north and south of Swynnerton Grange confirmed the presence of ridge and furrow and identified the locations of post-medieval field boundaries and trackways that are no longer visible. Prior to the recent geophysical survey, no fieldwork had been undertaken and no chance finds made that would help to characterise archaeological assets. Place name evidence suggests that a prehistoric burial mound may have once existed in the vicinity of Blakelow Farm. The site of Round Low barrow, a probable Bronze Age burial mound that was removed without record as an obstruction to ploughing, lies within the sub-zone. The sub-zone also includes the inner park south of Swynnerton Hall where remains of part of the medieval village, relocated in the post-medieval period, might be located. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ50 Swynnerton

- 6.3.10 This sub-zone comprises the village of Swynnerton, which is located on a ridge forming the watershed between the valleys of the River Trent and the Meece Brook. The village has early medieval origins and traces of prehistoric and Romano-British activity have been noted nearby. Swynnerton Hall was built in the early 18th century on or near to the site of an earlier hall destroyed in the 17th century. No fieldwork has been undertaken and no chance finds made that would help to characterise archaeological assets. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ51 Sandyford Till

- 6.3.11 This sub-zone comprises the slopes to the north of Swynnerton. It has glacial till over Mercia Mudstone and head deposits (sands and gravels), which have potential to yield remains of Palaeolithic date. Geophysical survey undertaken in the vicinity of Sandyford Farm indicated the presence of eroded ridge and furrow also visible on historic aerial photographs. In addition a group of small anomalies were identified to the south-west of Sandyford Farm, which may indicate the presence of ditches and pits of unknown date. Prior to the recent geophysical survey no fieldwork had been undertaken and no chance finds made that would help to characterise archaeological assets. However, a ring ditch is known to lie north-east of Sandyford Farm, close to the sub-zone boundary. Other probable burial features are known nearby at Swynnerton and Bury Bank and as a consequence there is potential for other hitherto unrecognised burial features to be present in the sub-zone. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ 52 Swynnerton Woods

- 6.3.12 This sub-zone comprises the wooded slopes south of Swynnerton Old Park. The underlying geology is mudstone. Geophysical survey in this sub-zone has identified potential archaeology south of Dog Lane in the form of a partial enclosure ditch (possibly of late prehistoric or Romano-British date). Other, harder to interpret features were noted adjacent to Cash's Pit. Traces of ridge and furrow, in some cases multi-phase, were noted widely across the sub-zone confirming and extending the pattern observed in historic aerial photographs. Prior to the recent geophysical survey no fieldwork had been undertaken and no chance finds made that would help to characterise archaeological assets. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

ASZ53 Shelton under Harley

- 6.3.13 This sub zone comprises the area around Shelton under Harley Farm. The underlying geology is mudstone. The historic hamlet of Shelton is of early medieval origin, although the modern farmstead is of late 18th or 19th century date. LiDAR and historic aerial photographs show the existing farmstead to be surrounded by field boundaries and other traces of pre-modern agricultural activity, including historic water meadows in the south-western part of the sub-zone. Geophysical survey in this sub-zone has identified potential archaeology north of Dog Lane in the form of rectilinear enclosure ditches (possibly of late prehistoric or Romano-British date). Prior to the recent geophysical survey no fieldwork had been undertaken and no chance finds made that would help to characterise archaeological assets. The archaeological potential of this risk sub-zone could be further tested by means of geophysical and fieldwalking survey and trial trenching.

7 Analysis and research potential

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 A good general understanding of the character and significance of the archaeology within the study area can be reached using desk based sources and taking into account additional factors such as topography, geology, historic character and distribution of known archaeological finds, sites and assets.

7.2 Research potential and priorities

- 7.2.1 An Archaeological Research Framework for the West Midlands¹¹⁴ provides an introduction to key research themes in the region by period. Reflecting the potential of the land required for the Proposed Scheme in the Stone and Swynnerton area, and drawing on the general themes identified in the published research framework, the following questions could provide a focus for further investigation carried out in this study area in terms of period based and multi-period based research:

General

- 7.2.2 Leah et al noted the potential of moist undisturbed biostratigraphy to provide palaeoenvironmental evidence¹¹⁵. Deposits may survive in the Filly Brook area, which have the potential to provide evidence of this nature. Any evidence that did survive could usefully complement and expand on the regionally significant results from work at Kings Pool, Stafford.
- 7.2.3 In view of the apparently poor responsiveness of sites on mudstone to geophysical prospecting can intrusive surveys help calibrate non-intrusive surveys in order to enhance responsiveness?

Early and later prehistory

- 7.2.4 Do the deposits in this study area have the potential to yield information on ice sheet extent and human activity in the Palaeolithic period? The find of an antler pick at Darlaston would suggest so.
- 7.2.5 Is the low incidence of Mesolithic finds from the Trent valley a factor of low levels of field survey? The topography of both the Trent and Meece Brook valleys would seem ideal for activity in this period.
- 7.2.6 Does the apparent lack of Neolithic monuments in this area represent a genuine absence of activity during this period?
- 7.2.7 Where are the settlements of the Bronze Age where the barrow builders of the period lived? Are these obscured under later settlement in the Trent valley? Is there potential for controlled excavation of a barrow in this area in order to shed light on date and typology?

¹¹⁴ Watt (2011)

¹¹⁵ Leah et al (1998), p129

- 7.2.8 Are the apparent settlement sites north and south of Dog Lane late prehistoric in date? If they are is there potential to shed light on the relationship between these settlements and the hillfort at Bury Bank? Are there sites of this date masked by later activity in the Trent valley? Is the area exploited in this period in ways that leave few traces – if so do palaeoenvironmental remains hold the clues?

Romano-British

- 7.2.9 There is a scarcity of evidence for Roman British activity within the Stone and Swynnerton area. To what extent is this a true reflection of the nature of activity during this period? Is there evidence to support the supposition that the area was a thinly populated one dedicated to resource exploitation?

Early medieval

- 7.2.10 Evidence for early medieval activity within this study area is essentially non-existent. Is this lack of evidence a true reflection of the nature of occupation at this date in an area that was at the heart of the Mercian kingdom – where are the people?
- 7.2.11 Place name evidence, for example the name Walton indicating the location of a village of the Britons, has been posited. Is there scope to find evidence to support this? Where were these Britons in the Romano-British period?
- 7.2.12 When were the Domesday settlements established? Are Swynnerton and Shelton new assarts from woodland or older settlements? Are the settlements on the Trent valley – Trentham, Walton, Aston by Stone, Tittensor and Stoke by Stone founded in the 11th century or do they have older origins.

Medieval

- 7.2.13 Can the arrangement of manorial estates and lesser estates contribute to our understanding of the arrangement of the medieval landscape? Is there evidence for settlement migration and shrinkage – Blakelow would seem to offer possibilities.
- 7.2.14 The village of Swynnerton achieved its current form in the post-medieval period and in the medieval period may have lain elsewhere possibly south of Swynnerton Hall – can the settlement morphology here be better understood by integrating survey types?
- 7.2.15 The present farmstead at Shelton under Harley is relatively modern yet there is known to have been a settlement nearby by at least the 11th century – where is it?
- 7.2.16 Swynnerton Old Park is thought to be a medieval park, documentary evidence dates its establishment to 1324; is there any evidence to be found for the location and extent of its park pale?
- 7.2.17 Is there a deserted medieval village at Cold Norton? If so what evidence can it provide for settlement morphology and chronology?

Post-medieval and 20th century/modern

- 7.2.18 Is there evidence for the agricultural exploitation of marginal areas such as the heathlands at Walton and Swynnerton prior to the establishment of farmsteads in these areas in the late 18th and early 19th centuries?
- 7.2.19 To what extent did the arrival of the Trent and Mersey Canal and North Staffordshire Railway influence or change the arrangement of the landscape?

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