

LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENT CHARACTER ASSESSMENT



**ODD RODE PARISH
CHESHIRE EAST**

November 2017



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SECTION 1 : INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

Introduction

Environmental Associates were commissioned by Odd Rode Parish Council in 2017 to carry out this independent landscape and settlement character assessment, **The Odd Rode Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment**.

This parish wide character assessment provides an overview of the key qualities and characteristics that define the Parish of Odd Rode. It has been prepared in support of a larger project – the production of the **Odd Rode Neighbourhood Development Plan**. Once adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan will be used by Cheshire East Council when considering planning applications for development within the local area.

The Odd Rode Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment is one of a number of key documents that will provide the necessary evidence base to support the vision, objectives and policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.

Character assessments record the special qualities that give an area its sense of place and unique identity. They are widely recognised as useful tools, helping to aid the planning, design and management of future development in a particular locality.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) recognises the value of local distinctiveness and supports the use of characterisation studies, such as character assessments, to underpin and inform planning policy. Specifically, paragraph 58 of the NPPF states that:

‘Local and neighbourhood plans should develop robust and comprehensive policies that set out the quality of development that will be expected for the area. Such policies should be based on stated objectives for the future of the area and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics. Planning policies and decisions should aim to ensure that developments: respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation’.

This character assessment will support the design and character policies progressed within the Odd Rode Neighbourhood Plan. It is intended to be used by developers, architects, designers, planners, and the local community to help to ensure that all future development and change in the parish of Odd Rode is not only of high design quality, but is also appropriate and complementary to the distinct and special character of the settlements and conservation areas within the parish.

Scope of Assessment

The Odd Rode Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment has been prepared in accordance with a project brief prepared by the Odd Rode Parish Council with input from Environmental Associates and the Neighbourhood Parish Council Steering Group. The settlements of Rode Heath/Thurlwood, Scholar Green, Mount Pleasant and Mow Cop were studied.

The study has the following objectives:

- define and describe the characteristics of each landscape character area and set out its key characteristics and visual attributes;
- provide guidance on the condition and value of each character area and highlight particular sensitivities including valuable trees;
- describe the contribution of the landscape setting to the Conservation Areas and other historic features

SECTION 2 : ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The method for the assessment of landscape and settlement character has been developed in line with current guidance, in particular, An Approach to Landscape Character Assessment Guidance, Natural England, 2014, Topic Paper 6, Countryside Agency, 2002 and Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA) Edition 3, April 2013.

The landscape character assessment is at a local level working within the context of the district, county and national character assessments. These are referred to in the following section of the report.

Landscape and settlement assessment acknowledges that the character of any settlement is formed by more than just the appearance of the buildings which occupy it, this Character Assessment considers a broad range of influences, including:

- Landscape setting;
- Structure, spacing and layout;
- Vegetation and planting;
- Townscape and built environment;
- Historical evolution of the area;
- Landmarks;
- Views and vistas; and
- Streetscape.

The character assessment for Odd Rode Parish has been progressed through the study of Ordnance Survey maps, aerial photographs, historical maps, existing landscape character assessments, historic landscape character assessments and constraints information e.g. Conservation Areas and landscape designations.

Natural England have prepared a diagram to explain what makes up landscape (2014).



Fig 2-01 - What makes up landscape

While the primary objective of this assessment is to identify the qualities and positive characteristics of Odd Rode Parish, where appropriate, existing development which fails to contribute positively to the character of the area is also highlighted. The identification of negative forms of development ensures that a holistic assessment of the parish character is presented and that all key aspects of local character are considered. This approach can also help to identify opportunities where local character might be reinforced and enhanced.

The Odd Rode Character Assessment divides the landscape within the study area into several larger, largely homogenous units which have distinct, recognisable, and consistent character. They are referred to as **Landscape Character Types**, and are generic types which possess broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern in every area where they occur.

For the purpose of this study the assessment has been carried out at a more local scale also, these more locally specific character areas are referred to as **Landscape Character Areas**: they are the unique individual geographical areas in which landscape types occur. They share generic characterisations with other areas of the same type, but also have their own particular identity.

This study determines the boundaries of each character area by identifying the patterns in the landscape resulting from the interaction of natural and socio-cultural factors that create landscape character. In some cases the boundaries between areas are clear, defined and recognisable, but sometimes the boundaries of each character area are more indicative or transient and not so defined or prescriptive.

The Odd Rode character assessment focusses on the main settlements within the parish, their internal spatial relationships as well as their relationships to the broader open countryside adjacent to the settlement borders.

Section 5.0 identifies the various Landscape Character Types and Landscape Character Areas.

SECTION 3 : PARISH DESCRIPTION

Nationally

The Parish of Odd Rode is a civil parish in the unitary authority of Cheshire East and the ceremonial county of Cheshire, England, located on the western side of the Peak National Park, stretching westwards about 7 miles from the highest point of the Parish at Mow Cop. Little Moreton Hall, located in the north of the parish, is a grade 1 listed building of national importance. Rode Hall located in the south west of the parish is a grade II listed building and has a grade II listed park and gardens of national importance.

Regionally

Odd Rode sits roughly halfway between Birmingham and Manchester close to the M6 corridor. Its is located on the Cheshire and Staffordshire border and is therefore at the threshold between the Northwest Region and the Midlands. Transport has played a major role in shaping the parish with several A roads passing through the parish connecting the city of Stoke On Trent with the towns of Congleton, Knutsford and Sandbach. The Manchester to London mainline railway passes through the parish on its eastern side. Two historic canals pass through the parish, The Trent and Mersey Canal and The Macclesfield Canal. The Parish marks an important transition from the more urban suburbs of Stoke On Trent and the rural Cheshire Plain.



Fig 3-01 - Little Moreton Hall

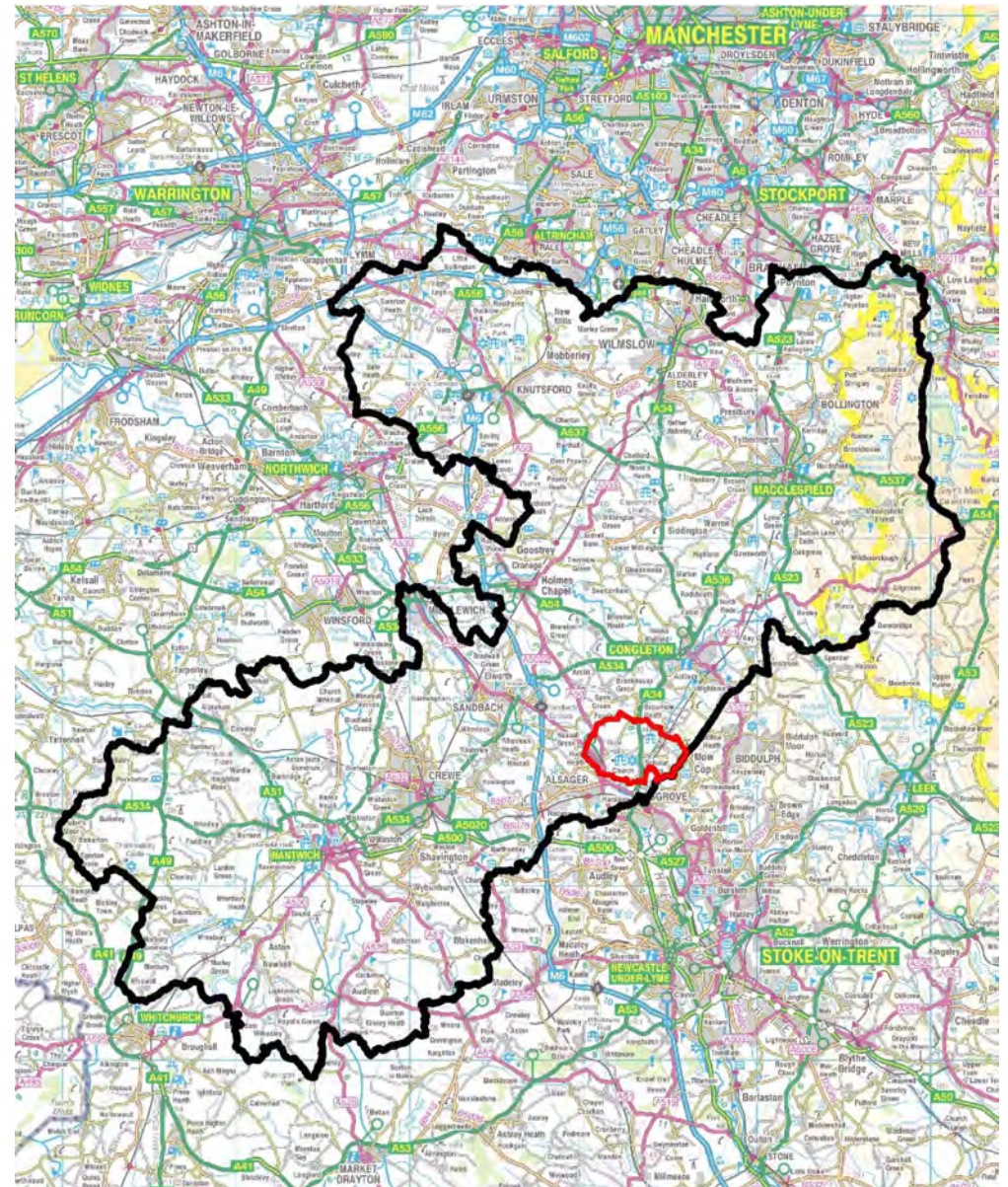


Fig 3-02 - Parish Location within Cheshire East

Locally

The Parish is mostly rural with four main settlements of Mow Cop, Mount Pleasant, Scholar Green and Rode Heath . The Parish in 2011 carried out a study called the '**Odd Road Village Design Statement**' which sets out to capture the general character of the parish to asses elements of the parish which it considers important, particularly with reference to guiding future developments to ensure they are designed to work with the aspirations of the community and re-enforce local character.

To ascertain local views on a range of subjects and to help inform future projects which affect the parish, **The Odd Rode Parish Plan** was created in 2006. The plan, via a series of questionnaires and consultations, encapsulated the views and aspirations of the inhabitants of the Parish on a variety of subjects including: public services, village halls and shops, public heath, housing, roads, traffic and transport, the natural environment and conservation, facilities for young people in Odd Rode, facilities for elderly and disabled people in Odd Rode, and business and voluntary organisations.

This Landscape Character Assessment seeks to add a further level of assessment to the Odd Road Village Design Statement and the Odd Rode Parish Plan without where possible, repetition.

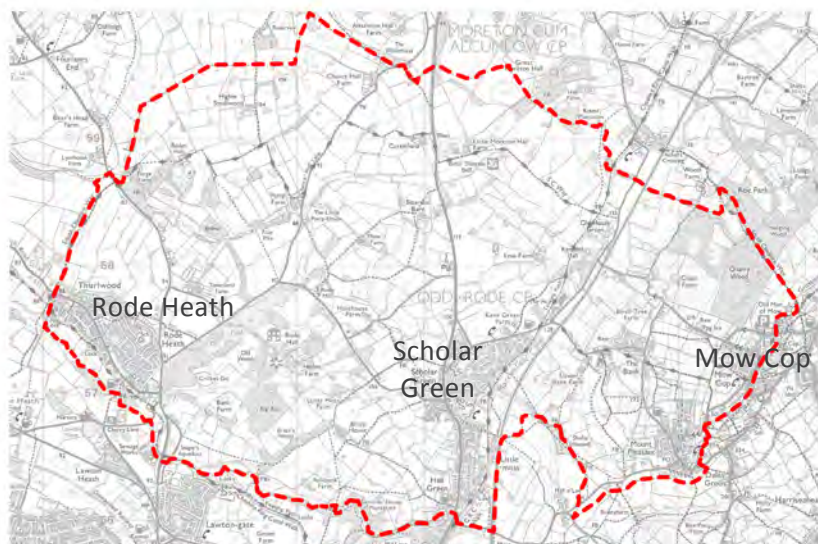


Fig 3-03 - Map Showing Parish Boundary

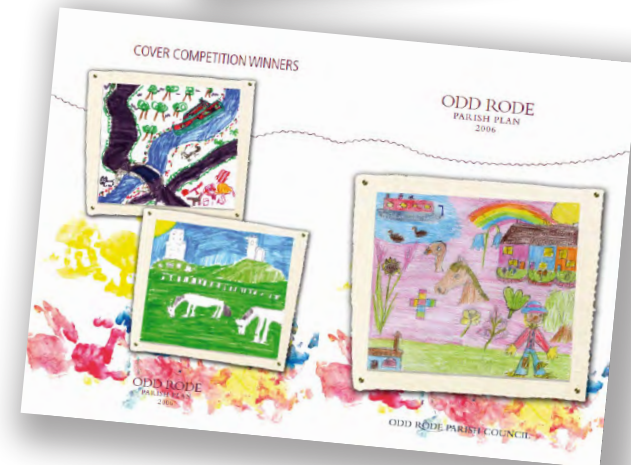


Fig 3-04 - Village Design Statement and Parish Plan Front Covers

SECTION 4 : LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

Previous Character Assessments:

National Character Assessment

Introduction

As part of their responsibilities as set out in the Natural Environment White Paper¹, Biodiversity 2020² and the European Landscape Convention³, Natural England are revising profiles for England's 159 National Character Areas (NCAs).

These are areas that share similar landscape characteristics, and which follow natural lines in the landscape rather than administrative boundaries, making them a good decision-making framework for the natural environment.

NCA profiles are guidance documents which can help communities to inform their decision-making about the places that they live in and care for. The information they contain will support the planning of conservation initiatives at a landscape scale, inform the delivery of Nature Improvement Areas and encourage broader partnership working through Local Nature Partnerships. The profiles will also help to inform choices about how land is managed and can change. Each profile includes a description of the natural and cultural features that shape our landscapes, how the landscape has changed over time, the current key drivers for ongoing change, and a broad analysis of each area's characteristics and ecosystem services. Statements of Environmental Opportunity (SEOs) are suggested, which draw on this integrated information.

The parish lies within the NCA⁶¹

61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain

The Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain National Character Area (NCA) comprises most of the county of Cheshire, the northern half of Shropshire and a large part of north-west Staffordshire. This is an expanse of flat or gently undulating, lush, pastoral farmland, which is bounded by the Mersey Valley NCA in the north, with its urban and industrial development, and extends to the rural Shropshire Hills NCA in the south. To the west, it is bounded by the hills of the Welsh borders and to the east and south-east by the urban areas within the Potteries and Churnet Valley, Needwood and South Derbyshire Claylands, and Cannock Chase and Cank Wood NCAs.

A series of small sandstone ridges cut across the plain and are very prominent features within this open landscape. The Mid-Cheshire Ridge, the Maer and the Hanchurch Hills are the most significant. They are characterised by steep sides and woodland is often ancient semi-natural woodland which is notably absent from the plain, except around Northwich.

Key Characteristics:

Extensive, gently undulating plain, dominated by thick glacial till from the late Pleistocene Period, producing productive, clay soils and exemplifying characteristic glacial landforms including eskers, glacial fans, kettle holes, moraines and a landscape of meres and mosses.

Prominent discontinuous sandstone ridges of Triassic age, characterised by steep sides and freely draining, generally infertile soil that supports broadleaved and mixed woodland.

Few woodlands, confined to the area around Northwich and to estates, cloughs and deciduous and mixed woods on the steeper slopes of the wind-swept sandstone ridges. Locally extensive tracts of coniferous woodland and locally distinctive orchards scattered throughout.

Strong field patterns with generally well-maintained boundaries, predominantly hedgerows, with dense, mature hedgerow trees. Sandstone walls occur on the ridges and estate walls and Cheshire-style (curved topped) black and white painted metal railing fences occur locally on estates and road junctions in Cheshire.

Dairy farming dominates on the plain, with patches of mixed farming and

arable in the north and large areas in the south-east.

Diversity of wetland habitats includes internationally important meres and mosses comprising lowland raised bog, fen, wet woodland, reedbed and standing water, supporting populations of a host of rare wildlife, including some species of national and international importance.

Extensive peat flood plains where flood plain grazing marsh habitats support regionally important populations of breeding waders in areas such as Baggy Moor, Weald Moor and Doxey Marshes.

Many main rivers and their flood plains lie in this area, including the Dee, Dane, Severn, Penk and Sow. Significant areas of grazing marsh, alluvial flood meadows and hay meadows associated with the rivers Dee, Sow, Gowy and Severn. The area has the highest density of field ponds in western Europe.

Rich archaeological evidence of iron-age hill forts concentrated on the sandstone ridges and the Weald Moors. Remnant ridge and furrow and moated houses are features of the plain. The Roman road, Watling Street, crosses the plain linking London to Wales via Wroxeter. Chester was an important Roman settlement.

Regularly spaced, large farmsteads, dispersed hamlets, market towns and many other settlements including Macclesfield and Telford. Timber-frame buildings are a distinctive feature of the plain, often highly decorated in Cheshire, for example, the moated Little Moreton Hall. The historic towns including Stafford, Shrewsbury and the city of Chester have a wealth of 17th- and 18th-century half-timber, brick and red sandstone buildings.

Parklands and gardens associated with estates such as Chillington, Trentham, Tatton and Attingham; country houses such as Gawsworth Hall, Arley Hall and Adlington Hall; and fortified manor houses and castles such as at Shrewsbury, Stafford, Beeston, Acton Burnell and Cholmondeley.

Nationally important reserves of silica sand and salt are present. Active extraction of salt has developed a locally distinctive landscape of subsidence flashes, particularly around the area of Sandbach. Adjacent to these saline flashes are areas of salt marsh rarely found at inland sites.

The numerous canals are important for recreation as well as habitat. Several National Cycle Routes and nearly 5,000 km of public rights of way cross the

plain. Six National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are scattered throughout, close to large population centres and well used for recreation.



Fig 4-01 - Area 61: Shropshire, Cheshire and Staffordshire Plain

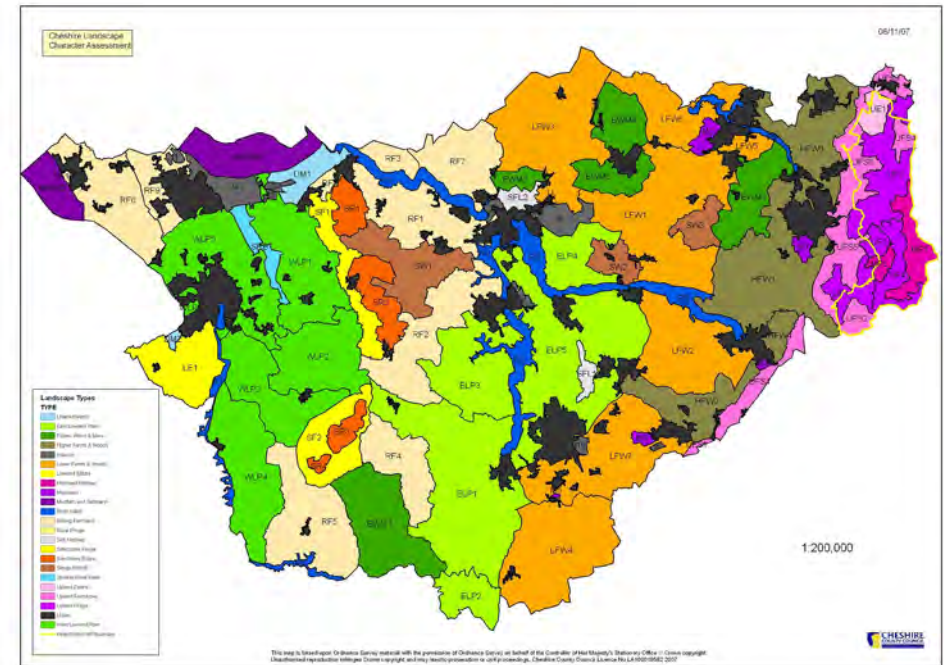
Previous Assessments:

Cheshire Landscape Character Assessment 2008

The Cheshire landscape character assessment provides an up to date classification of the whole of Cheshire's landscape which can be used for making assessments of landscape character for development management and as a basis in the formulation of a Landscape Strategy in the future.

The aims of a future Landscape Strategy would be to:

- inform new planning policies on landscape, as well as Supplementary Planning Documents
- guide and inform the development control process
- promote public awareness of landscape character and the importance of conservation and enhancement of the landscape
- guide and inform project planning by local and national agencies
- assist the formulation of landscape management policies



Parish of Odd Rode

Three Cheshire Landscape Character areas fall within the parish, the following pages summarise the general characteristics:

- Upland Footslopes UFS1 Mow Cop
- Higher Farms and Woods - HFW2: Little Moreton
- Lower Farms and Woods - LFW2: Brereton Heath Character Area

Fig 4-02 - Character area map

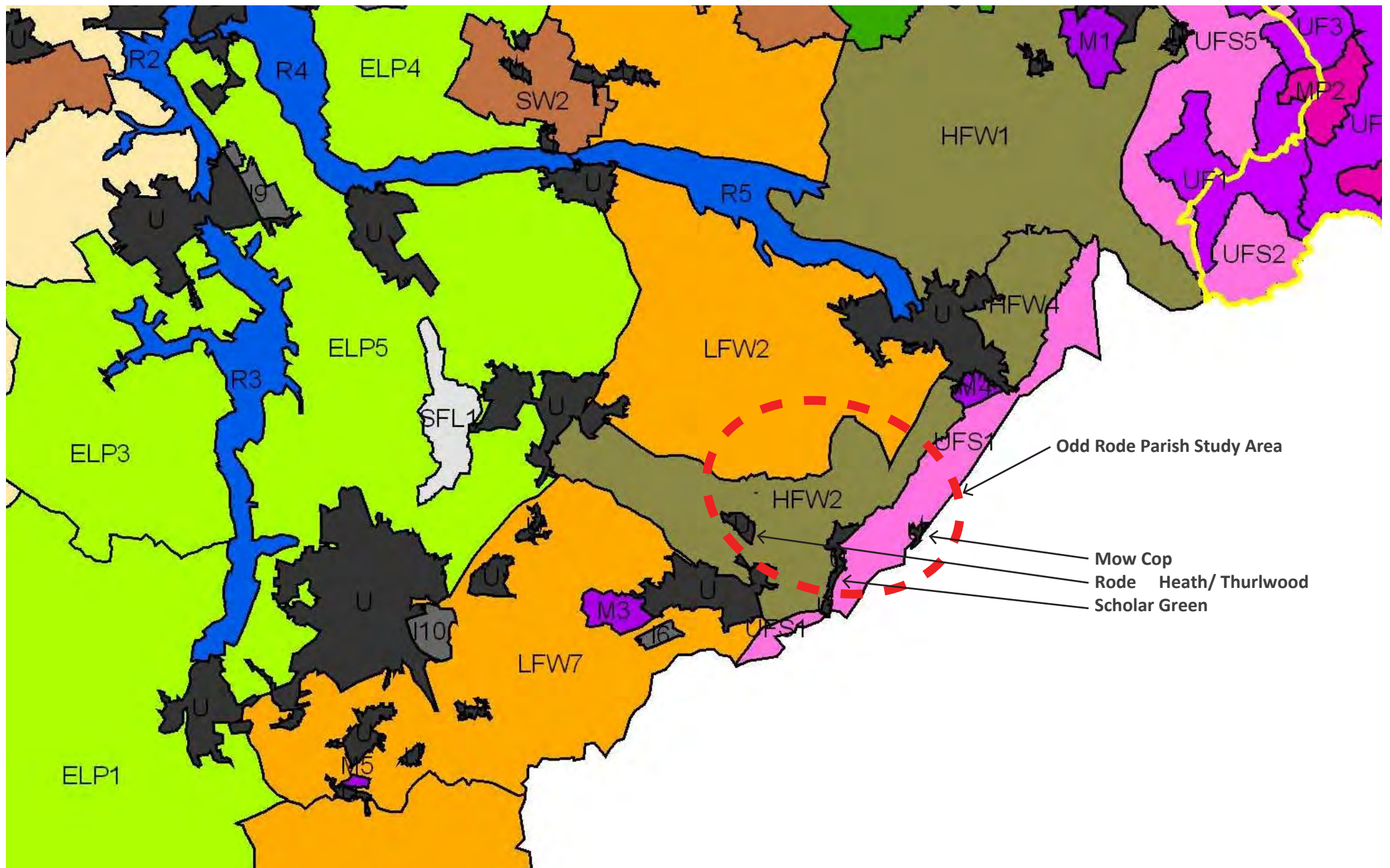


Fig 4-03 - Character area map enlarged

Upland Footslopes UFS1 Mow Cop

Key Characteristics:

- Upland inclines and undulations, steep slopes c100 – 343m AOD
- Wooded steep sided stream and river valleys – large proportion of which is ancient woodland
- Small surviving patches of heathland
- Dense network of streams and tributaries
- Dispersed settlement - farms and houses
- Stone built houses, structures and boundary walls
- Gritstone exposures in quarries
- Medieval field patterns with hedgerow boundaries surviving on the lower slopes
- Areas of semi-improved and unimproved neutral and acid
- Grassland
- Extensive views dependent upon the location
- High rainfall – reservoirs, open and covered
- Folly and distinctive landmarks

Higher Farms and Woods - HFW2: Little Moreton

Key characteristics

- Gentle rolling and moderate undulating topography
- A mix of medieval and post-medieval reorganised fields (irregular, semi-regular and regular up to 8ha)
- Hedgerow boundaries and hedgerow trees
- High density of woodland – blocks, coverts and riparian
- Predominantly low density dispersed settlement.
- Ponds

Lower Farms and Woods - LFW2: Brereton Heath Character Area.

Key Characteristics:

- Low lying gently rolling topography
- Hedgerow boundaries and standard trees in a mix of medieval and post-medieval reorganised fields (irregular, semi-regular and regular up to 8ha) but with a loss of boundaries leading to formation of large fields and a large proportion of fences adding to this impression.
- Horsiculture – fenced horse paddocks.
- High density of woodland – blocks, coverts and riparian
- Medium settlement density - mix of dispersed farms and
- nucleated hamlets/ villages
- Mosses and some meres resulting from glacial deposits
- Large number of water bodies

Landscape Assessment of Congleton Borough

A Landscape Assessment of Congleton Borough carried out in 1999 by Chris Blandford Associates. This study was commissioned jointly by the former Congleton Borough Council and Cheshire County Council. The study aims to improve the design of new buildings within the countryside by promoting new development which is harmonious with its setting and which respects and sustains local diversity and distinctiveness. The study followed established techniques evolved by Natural England in its publication Landscape Assessment Guidance which divides the landscape of the Borough into broadly homogenous units of similar character, of which eleven such areas were identified. The study also incorporates a specific section on the main settlements, both urban and rural, which are located within the identified character areas. See appendix A for detailed descriptions of the areas of Odd Rode.

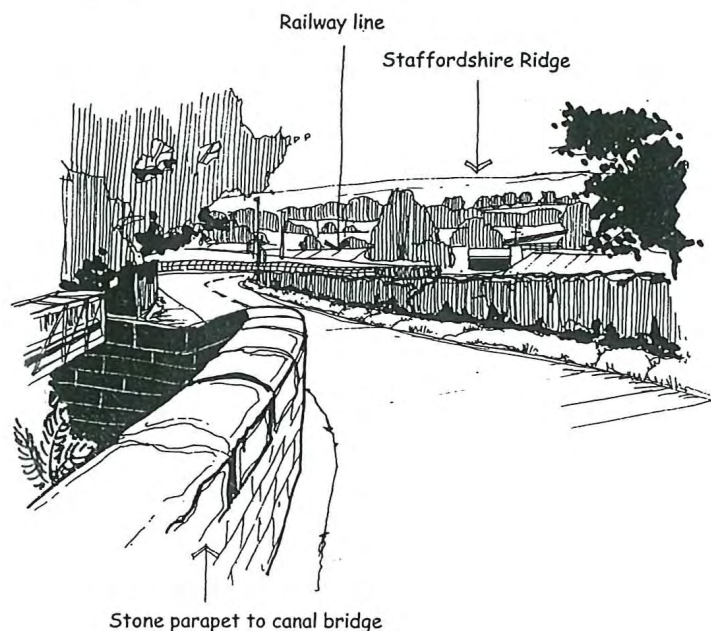
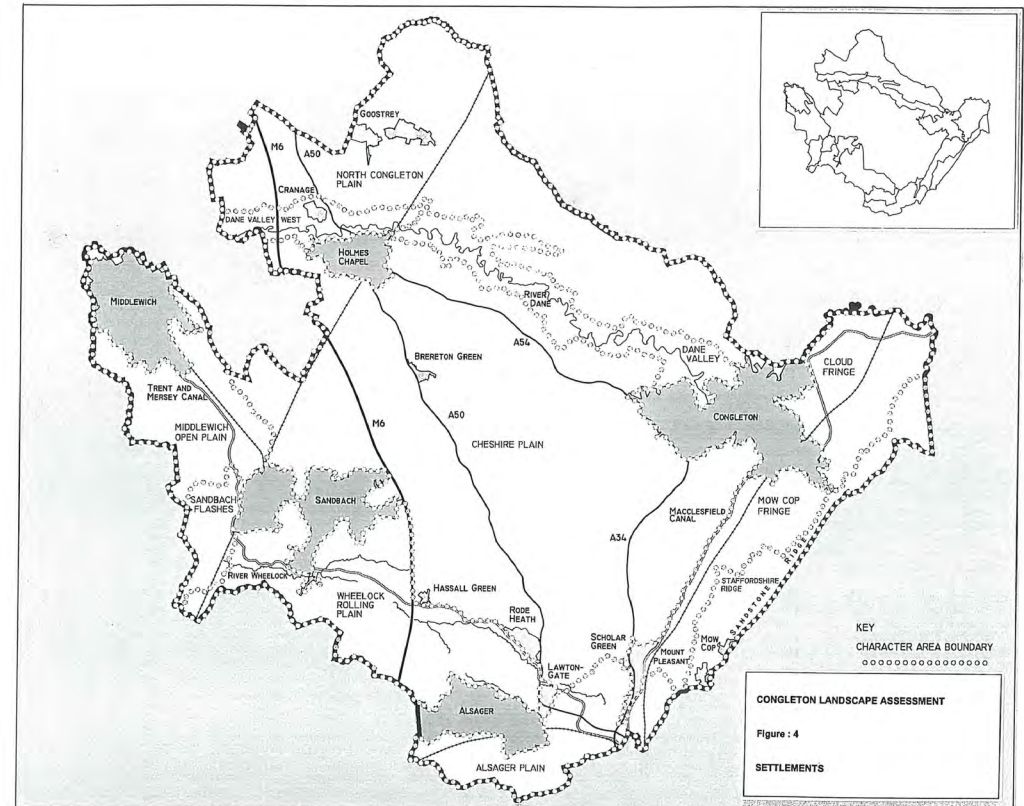


Fig 4-04 - Image from Congleton Landscape Assessment 'Mow Cop' section



Mapping data used and developed during the assessment

Materials and sources including Google Earth, a parish leaflet, the Cheshire East Council Interactive Mapping Web Page and ordnance survey maps were used to develop the figures on the following pages i.e:

- Fig 4.06 Google Earth aerial photo
- Fig 4.07 Local wildlife sites
- Fig 4.08 Important historical designations
- Fig 4.09 Public footpaths
- Fig 4.10 Main Transport routes
- Fig 4.11 Landscape features and urban grain
- Fig 4.12 Areas for possible Tree Preservation Orders

Fig 4-05 - Congleton Landscape Assessment area map

Parish Aerial Photograph

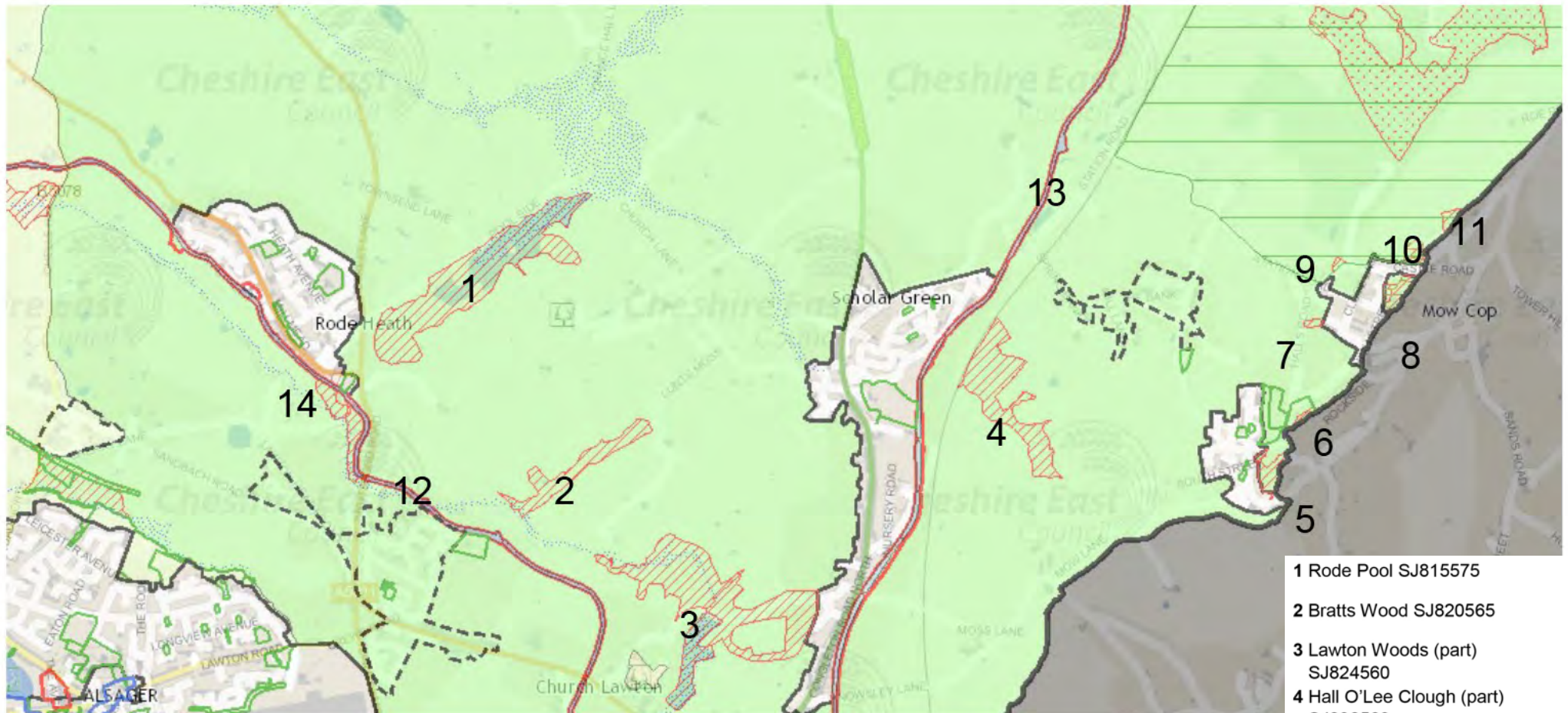


Fig 4-06 - Image from Google Earth showing Odd Rode Parish

Local Wildlife Sites

Extract taken from the Parish Leaflet:

LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES (FORMERLY SITES OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE) & TPOS
(INDIVIDUAL & GROUP) WITHIN THE CIVIL PARISH OF ODD RODE



- 1 Rode Pool SJ815575
- 2 Bratts Wood SJ820565
- 3 Lawton Woods (part)
SJ824560
- 4 Hall O'Lee Clough (part)
SJ838569
- 5 - 11 Mow Cop Heaths
SJ858575
- 12 & 13 Canals
- 14 Woods by The Rise
(part)

Fig 4-07- Local Wildlife Sites

Important Historical Designations

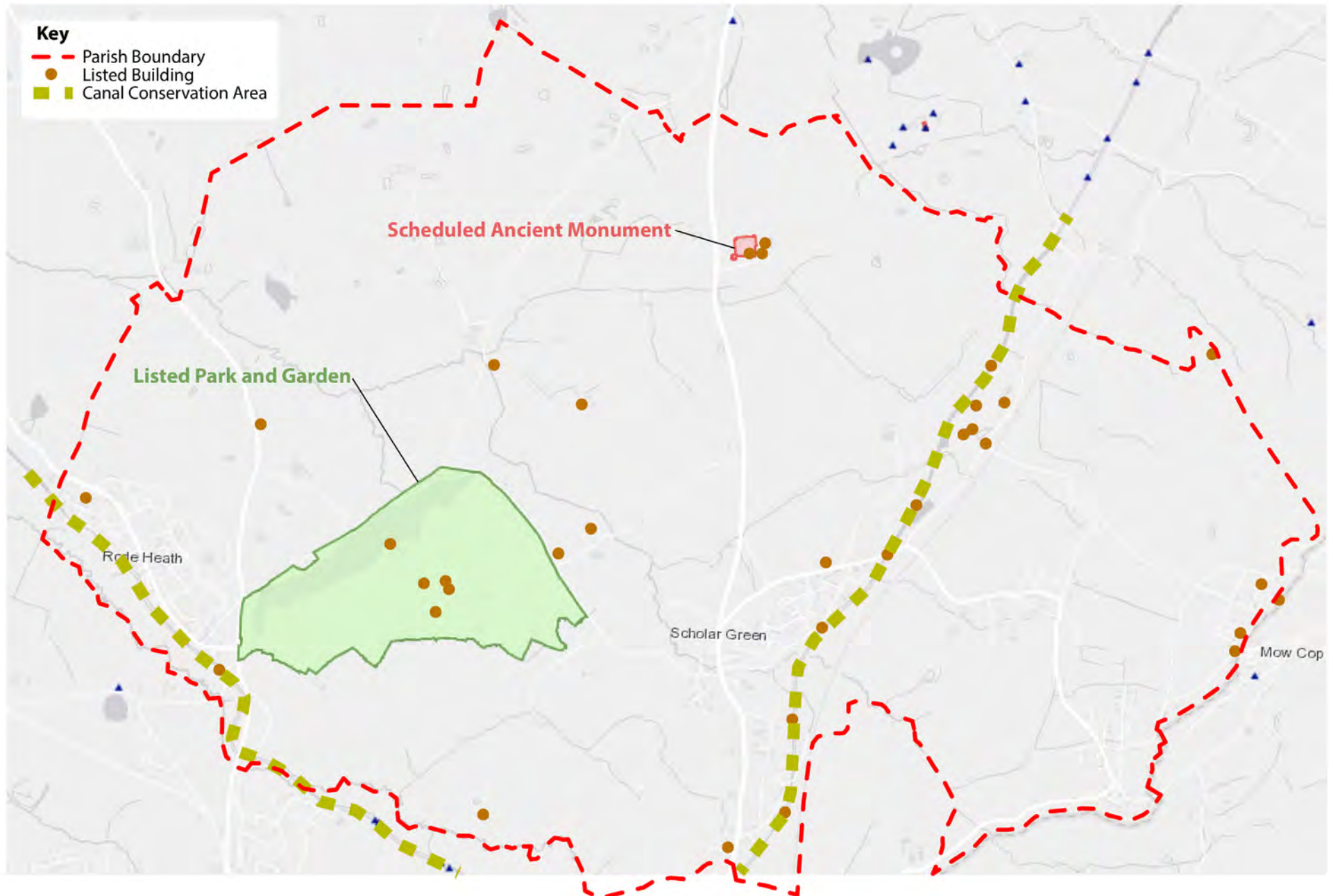


Fig 4-08 - Important historical designations

Public Footpaths

Extract taken from Cheshire East online interactive map showing public footpaths (pink) and bridleways (green).

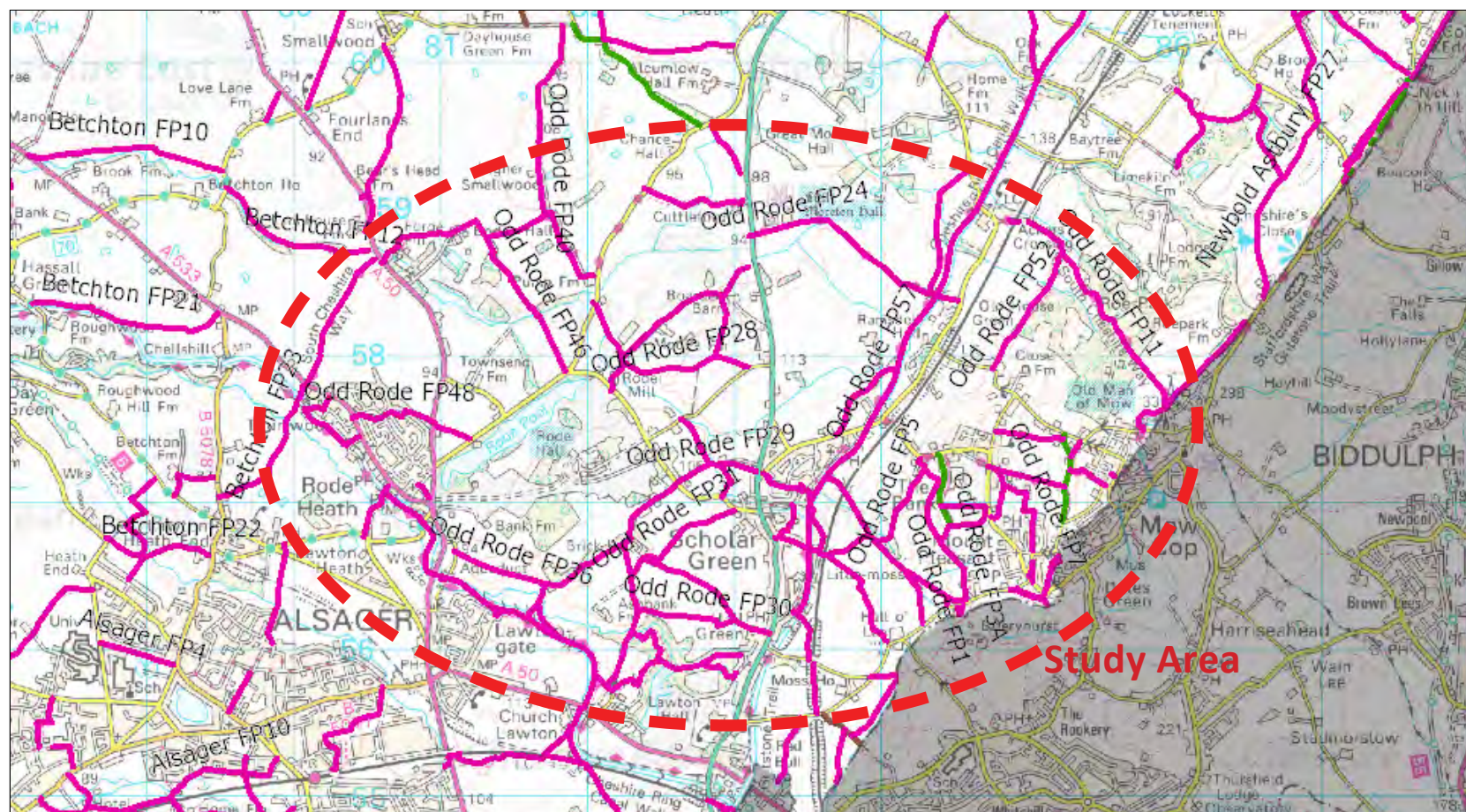


Fig 4-09 - Public footpath map

Main Transport Routes

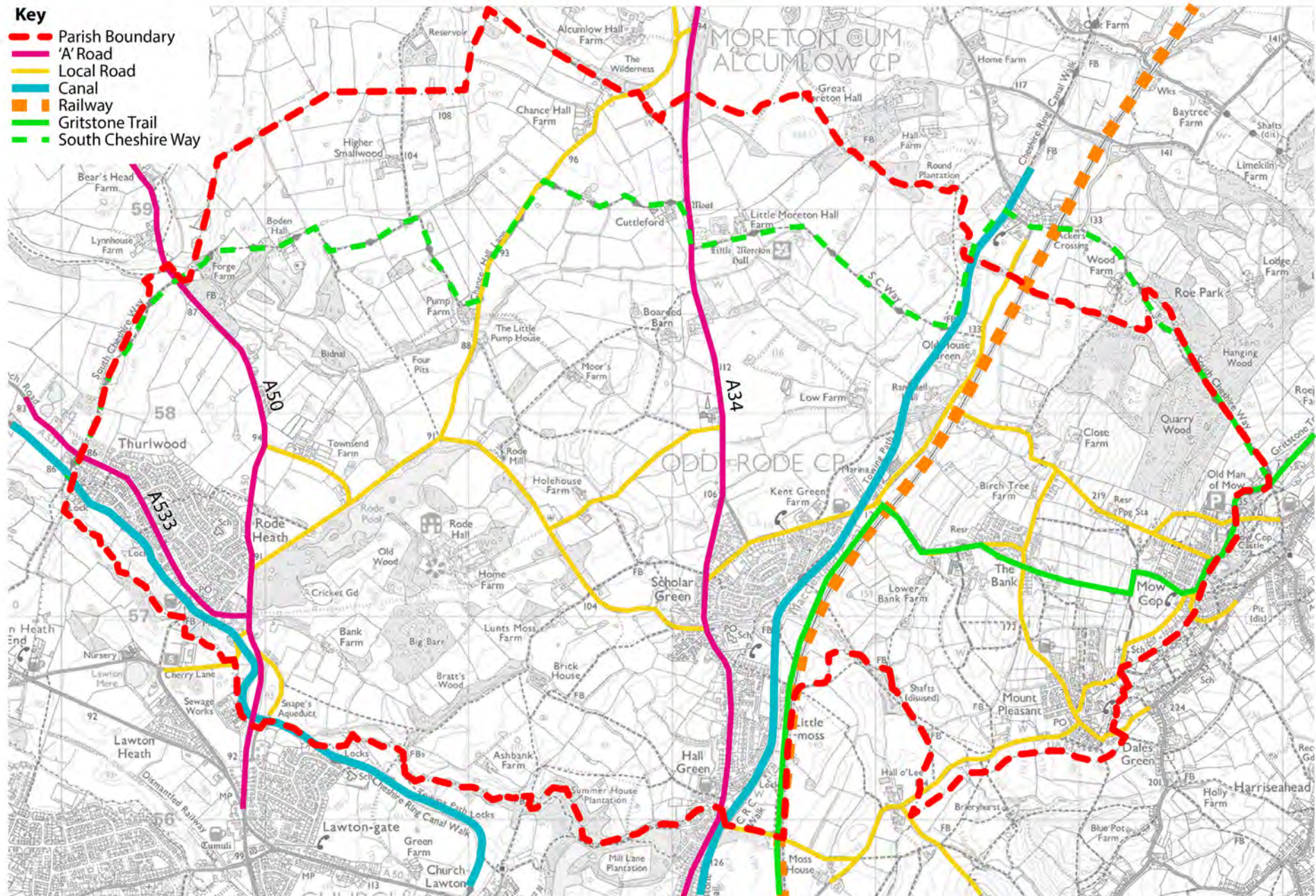


Fig 4-10 - Main transport routes

Landscape/Urban Grain and Features with Submitted Sites

Key important landscape features for the study with submitted housing sites.

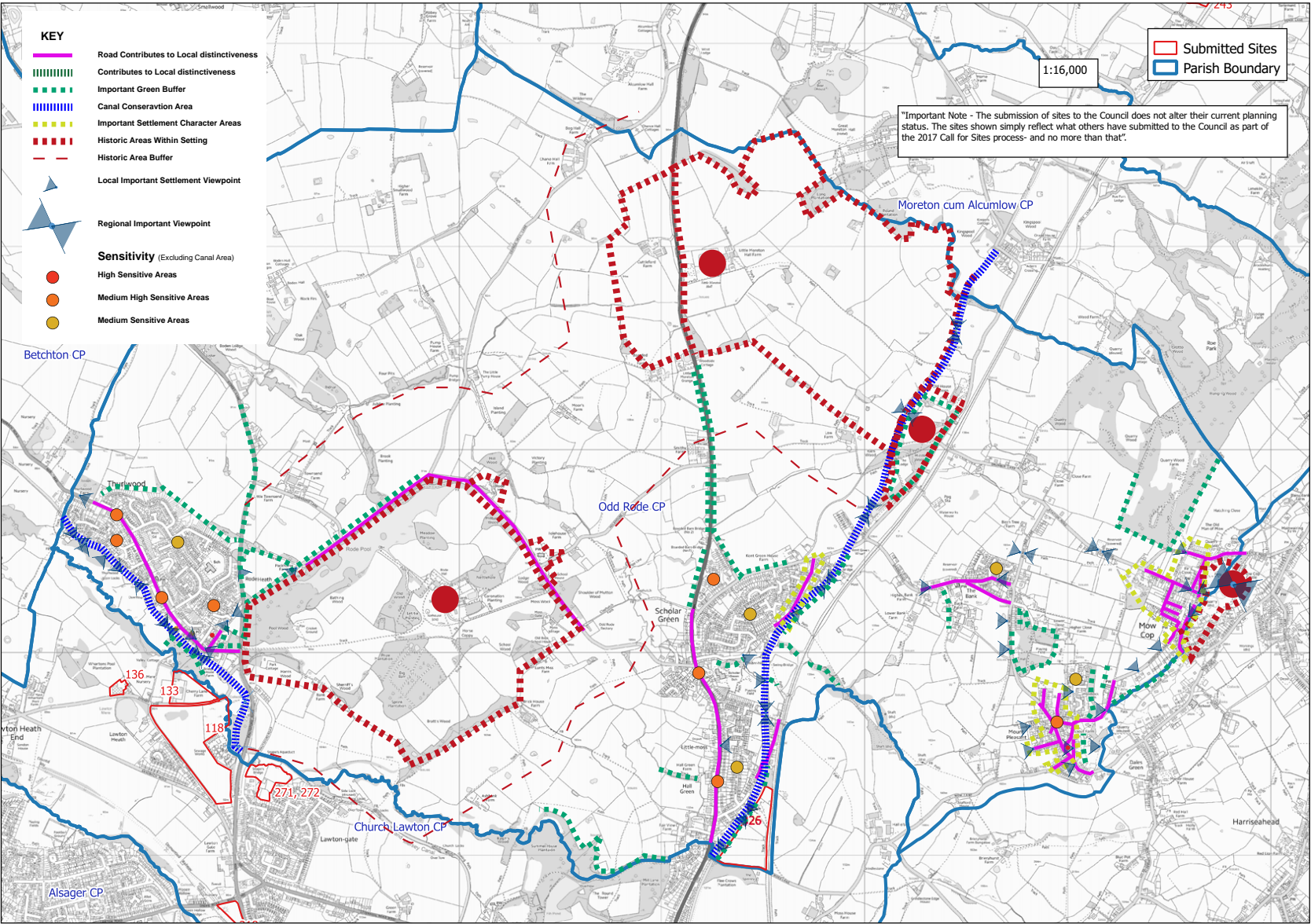


Fig 4-11 - Landscape Features and Urban Grain

Future Tree Inspection Areas

Based on general observations, some areas within or adjacent to settlements had tree cover worthy of further professional inspection to assess their value and whether additional Tree Preservation Orders may be required.

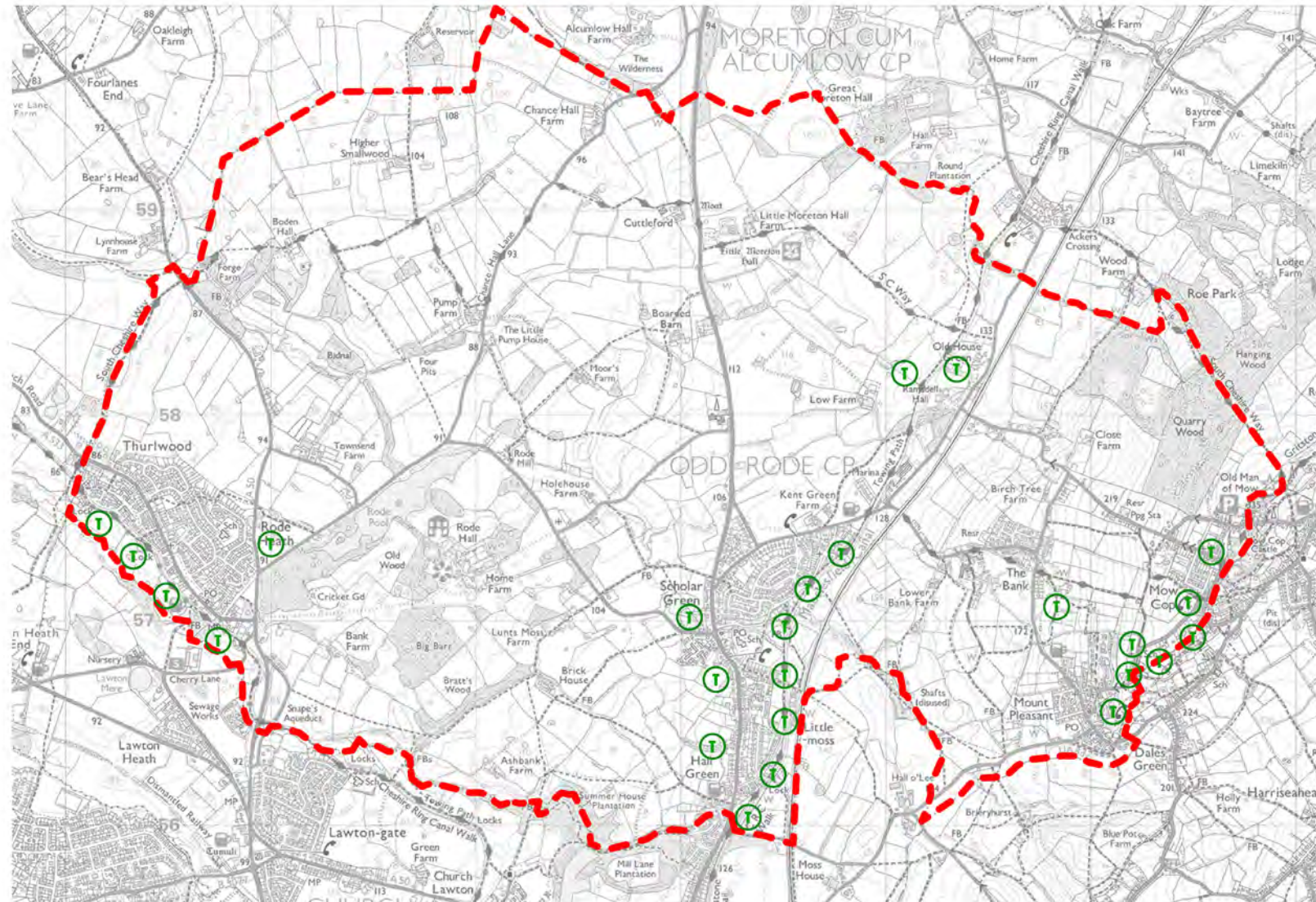


Fig 4-12 - Areas for possible tree preservation order assessment indicated by 'T'

SECTION 5 : ODD RODE CHARACTER AREAS

INTRODUCTION

Character areas divide landscapes into areas of distinct, recognisable, and consistent character, and groups together areas of similar character. For the purpose of this study the assessment has been carried out at a local level scale.

Landscape character: A distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse

Landscape character types: are generic types which possess broadly similar patterns of geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use, settlement and field pattern in every area where they occur.

The same landscape character types may occur in different parts of the parish.

Landscape character areas: are the unique individual geographical areas in which landscape types occur. They share generic characterisations with other areas of the same type but also have their own particular identity. Character area names are geographically specific, attributed to a single, unique area.

This study determines the boundaries of each character area by identifying the patterns in the landscape resulting from the interaction of natural and socio-cultural factors that create landscape character as judged by a landscape architect. In some cases the boundaries between areas are clear, defined and recognisable, but sometimes the boundaries of each character area are more indicative or transient and not so defined or prescriptive.

The Odd Rode character assessment focusses on the main settlements within the parish, their internal spatial relationships as well as their relationships to the broader open countryside adjacent to the settlement borders. The parish can be split into four broad character areas:

Cheshire Plain and its associated estates and farmsteads - see pg 22

Rode Heath and Thurlwood - see pg 24

Scholar Green, the A34, Macclesfield Canal and the Manchester Mainline to London corridor - see pg 36

Mow Cop and its associated settlements - see pg 50

Within these four broad landscape character types are as this study identifies 13 settlement related character areas, four canal character areas.

Rode Heath and Thurlwood

- RT1 - Heath Avenue Estate
- RT2 - Chapel Lane, Sandbach Road (Rode Heath)
- RT3 - Sandbach Road (Thurlwood)
- RT4 - Poets Corner Estate
- RT-c1 - Rode Heath and Thurlwood Canal

Scholar Green

- S1 - A34 Scholar Green
- S2 - Little Moss Land and Portland Drive
- S3 - Wavertree Estate
- S-c2 - Scholar Green Canal South
- S-c3 - Scholar Green Canal North
- S-c4 - Heritage Marina, Ramsdell Hall

Mow Cop

- B1 - The Bank
- B2 - Spring Bank
- M1 - Mount Pleasant Centre
- M2 - The Lanes and Estates
- M3 - Woodcock Lane, Chapel Bank, High Street
- M4 - Primitive Street and Station Road

Local Landscape Character Areas

Areas outside the main character study have been divided into local landscape areas:

- L1 Cheshire Plain
- L2 Rode Hall Parklands
- L3 Canal, Railway Gap
- L4 Little Moreton Hall
- L5 Staffordshire Ridge Slopes
- L6 Mow Cop

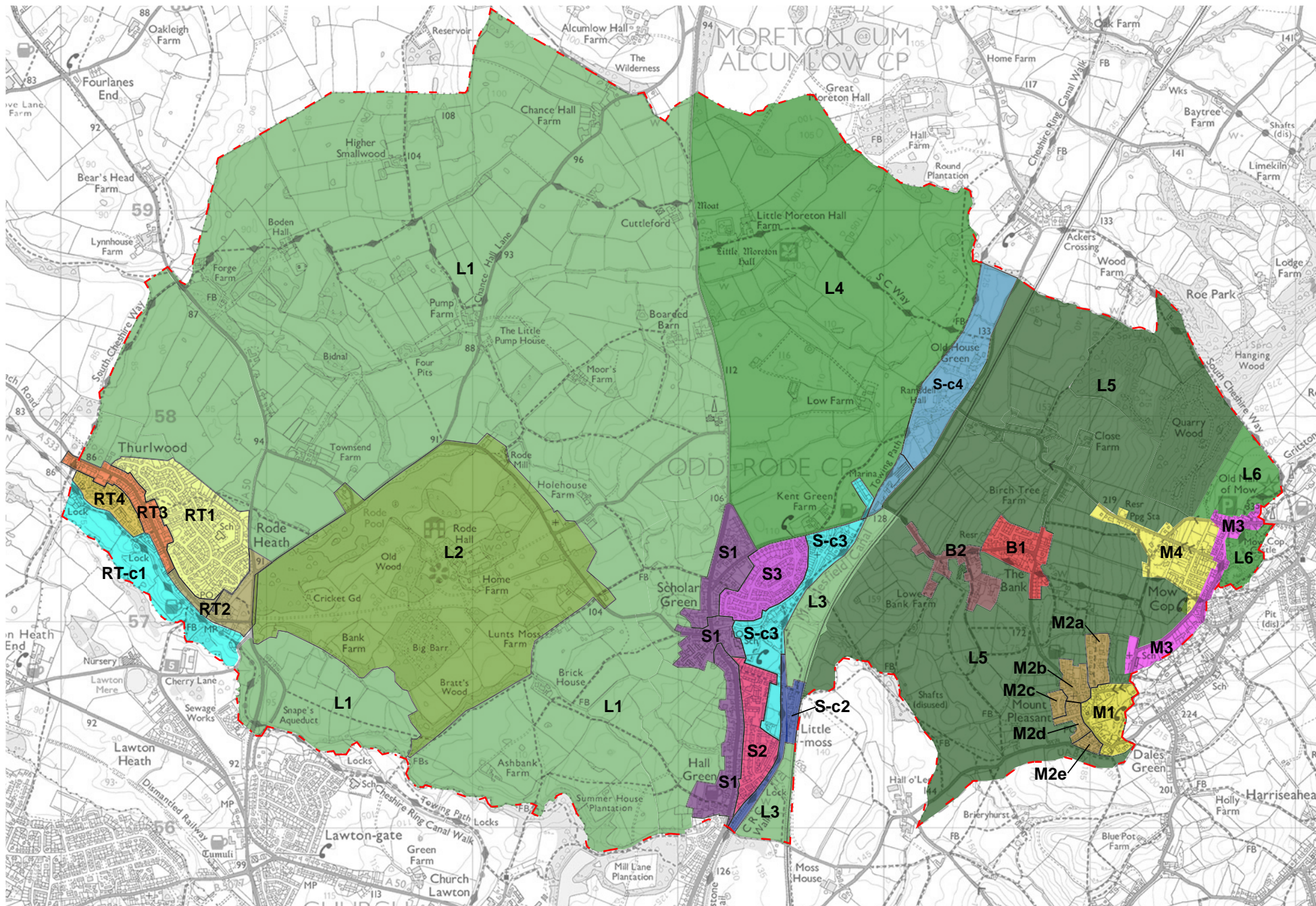


Fig 5-01 - Odd Rode Landscape Character Areas

CHESHIRE PLAIN AND ITS ASSOCIATED ESTATES AND FARMSTEADS

Odd Rode parish sits between two quite distinct, large-scale landforms: the Cheshire Plain to the east and the Staffordshire Ridge to the west. Where they pass through the parish the main north-south railway line and the Macclesfield Canal closely follow the line of transition between these two topographical features. A Landscape Assessment of Congleton Borough carried out in 1999 by Chris Blandford Associates has the parish straddling two character areas: Mow Cop Fringe and Staffordshire Ridge.

The Cheshire Plain is a more or less flat expanse of lowland lying mainly within the county of Cheshire. It extends from the Mersey Valley in the north to the Shropshire Hills in the south, bordered by the hills of North Wales to the west and the foothills of the Pennines to the north-east. The plain is the surface indication of a deep sedimentary basin covered by thick expanses of glacial till

The main agricultural use of the Cheshire Plain is dairy farming, resulting in a characteristic landscape of large scale regular fields, interspersed with smaller scale, irregular fields. Most fields are bounded with hedges and often have ponds. The plain has numerous isolated houses, farmhouses and small settlements.

There are several manor houses and country estates on the plain that “have their own character and introduce a parkland feel that elevates the landscape quality of the plain at these locations.” Lying within Odd Rode parish are two historically important houses and gardens: Rode Hall and Little Moreton Hall.

Rode Hall is a Grade II* listed Georgian country house, and the seat of the Wilbraham family. It is a brick-built seven-bay building; a second building, with five bays, was built in 1752. The two buildings were joined together in 1800 to form the present Rode Hall, resulting in an irregular and complex layout. The house is surrounded by parkland and formal gardens, which are included as Grade II on the National Register of Historic Parks and Gardens. On the site are a grotto, an ice house, and an ornamental obelisk.

Little Moreton Hall is a half-timbered manor house with a moat crossed by a sandstone bridge. The gardens lay neglected until the 1970's when they were recreated in a style sympathetic to the Tudor period and include a knot garden. The Hall is a designated Grade I listed building, and the ground on which Little Moreton Hall stands is protected as a Scheduled Monument. The house belonged to the Moreton family for almost 450 years, until it was taken over by

the National Trust in 1938. The Blandford report states that there is an “outlying prospect hill” associated with the Hall and Odd Rode, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

The east part of the parish on the lower slopes of the Staffordshire Ridge, in contrast to the part on the Cheshire Plain, occupies steeper topography. The vegetation – trees, hedges – are sparser, and fields are smaller. As a consequence of this topography and vegetation views, both in to and out of this area, are more open and distant.

Reaching in from this broader landscape are features associated with the broader transport network - i.e. Trent and Mersey Canal, the Macclesfield Canal, London Mainline Railway and the main thoroughfare of the A34. These corridors bisect certain character areas and create distinct character areas in their own right.



RODE HEATH AND THURLWOOD CHARACTER AREAS

Settlement Description

Originally two separate settlements, Rode Heath and Thurlwood are now barely distinguishable and they have merged into a perceived single community that shares local amenities and services. Rode Heath has developed where the A533, and A50 converge, just north of Alsager. The settlement boundary is determined by transport corridors - i.e. a combination of main roads, and the canal. The Trent and Mersey canal and the A50 contain the development to the south and east respectively. There are small woods at the north boundary of both villages. Some property boundaries in Thurlwood have a rural threshold setting having the Cheshire Plain at their northern boundary. To the south beyond the canal is the gently winding Wheelock river valley which separates Rode Heath from the larger settlement of Alsager. The landscape to the east of Rode Heath is dominated by the historic parkland setting for Rode Hall which includes Rode Pool, several woodland blocks and areas of rough pasture. Although the Rode Hall estate is well defined, mature woodland areas, mature trees and hedgerows spread from it into the more agricultural Cheshire Plain character areas. To the west of the settlement, the River Wheelock flows along a small valley, which is the site of former salt workings, now The Rise recreation area.



Fig RT-01 Urban edge defined by canal

Urban Form

The settlements are concentrated along the A533 and the Trent and Mersey Canal, with this main area of retail and economic activity runs along the A533, and includes a village hall, two churches, two public houses and several shops. Chapel Lane and the canal have significant historic visual impact on the settlements.



Fig RT-02 Mixed modern housing estate with various building styles, boundary treatments



Fig RT-03 Picturesque historic street

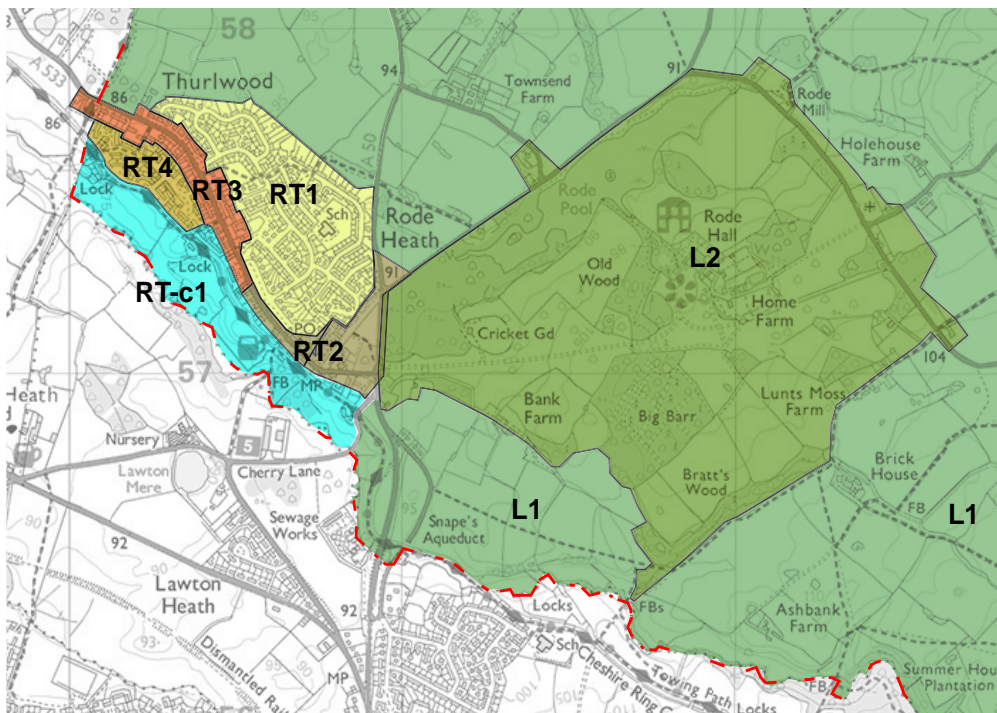


Fig RT-04 Character Areas of Rode Heath and Thurlwood

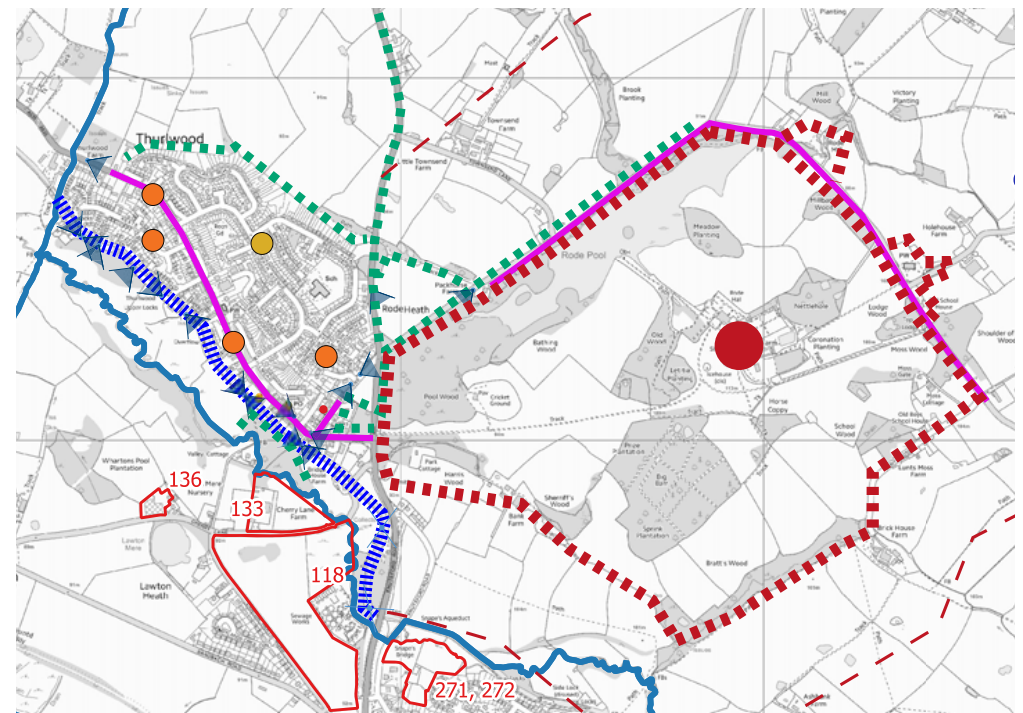
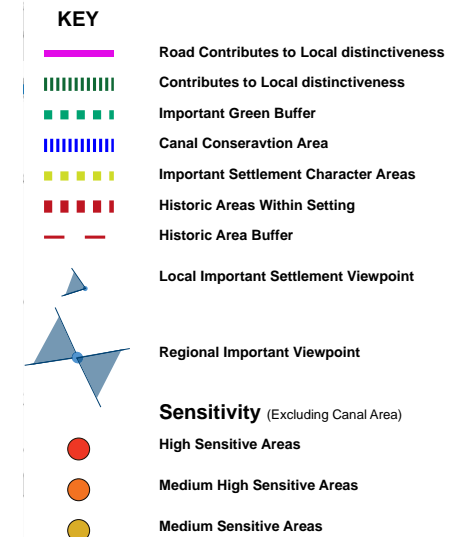


Fig RT-06 Urban Analysis Diagram



Fig RT-05 Roadside terraces, known as Black Row



RT1 - HEATH AVENUE ESTATE

General Overview

Mill mead was originally built as local authority housing, with the rest of the estate being private. Since the 1980's up to the present minor infill has occurred. The original housing was a mixture of 1970's two-storey houses and a variety of dormer bungalows, each behind well-defined front gardens.

Layout

Defined by a strong curving road structure the housing estate is bounded by the A533, Chapel Lane, A50 and a woodland strip to the north. The estate has three main green spaces that sit partially hidden among the houses.

Topography

The estate is in a shallow dip and on a simple incline running north from A533. The immediate topography blocks views out to Mow Cop

Spaces

Of the three open spaces mentioned above the largest is the sports and recreation grounds of Scholar's Green Primary School, which has mature trees along approximately half of its boundary; the open space behind the houses at the north end of Heath Avenue is grassed and the trees at its margin are all in the back gardens of the surrounding houses; the smallest area is between Beech Avenue and Bracken Close and has a significant canopy of mature trees.

Roads, Streets, Routes

The road network is typical of post-war local authority housing estates and comprises curving avenues and cul-de-sacs of varying lengths. Access to the major road network is from Heath Ave where either end meets Sandbach Road, and Sycamore Ave via Chapel Lane. Roads and pavements are generally asphalt with concrete kerbs, road gutter and regular small lighting columns. The condition of these elements is generally average, but there are some areas of poor quality. There is a network of footpaths away from the roads and linking the houses and open spaces.

Green and Natural Features

The estate is characterised by rows and groups of mature large trees, mainly in gardens but there are some street trees. There are trees in the playing field and in the play area off Greenway Close. The lack of street trees creates an open street scape and most of the vegetation is in private gardens.

Landmarks and Views

Although the school is not always visible it is a local landmark and frequent destination. There are no other notable landmarks.

Buildings and Details

The estate has a multiplicity of building material and colours, particularly differing brick colours. The staple building materials are brick for walls and concrete roof tiles, both having a variety of colours. Extensions to the sides of buildings, enlargement of dormer first-floor areas, often with a complete re-styling of the roof and window arrangements, and all in a variety of differing styles, give the estate a character of modernisation, extension and renovation having little regard to local traditional building styles, details and character.

Streetscape features

As well as a great variety of domestic boundaries the only other notable feature is a play area in the open space behind the houses at Heath Avenue

Landuse

Mainly housing, with some sheltered accommodation, and a school. Some of the open spaces around the estate are used as informal play areas.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities

- very well screened from outside the area
- although improvements to individual properties are under way, estate residents may be sensitive to new developments
- Play area is a little worn



Fig RT-1-01 Housing with trees behind, various brick and roof tile colours



Fig RT-1-02 Green buffer behind housing



Fig RT-1-03 Various brick colours



Fig RT-1-04 Varying house styles



Fig RT-1-05 Yellow brick two-storey



Fig RT-1-06 Wooden panelled dormer



Fig RT-1-07 Black brick with tiled dormer



Fig RT-1-08 Play area within estate



Fig RT-1-09 Typical dormer bungalows

RT2 - CHAPEL LANE, SANDBACH ROAD (RODE HEATH)

General Overview

Forming the eastern gateway from the A50, this character area comprises a main thoroughfare (A533, Sandbach Road) and Chapel Lane. The building types on both streets are a mixture of aesthetically pleasing vernacular, Victorian and 20th century and 21st century infill. Sandbach Road is more built up than Chapel Lane which, on most of its east side, is open to the countryside and the mature woodland of Rode Hall estate beyond Knutsford Road. On the site of the former timber mill are modern apartments. The former primary school is now used by small business. The village hall at the junction of these two roads marks the entrance to the settlement.

Layout

Sandbach Road follows roughly the course of the canal. Chapel Lane joins Sandbach Road at a right-angle.

Topography

Mainly flat.

Spaces

There are five main spaces: the linear Chapel Lane; to the east of Chapel Lane is a field and a small wood; the bowling green beside the village hall; the linear space of Sandbach Road; the car parks at either side of the Broughton Arms; and the pair of green spaces flanking the junction of the Heath Avenue and Sandbach Road, known as Thurlwood Green.

Roads, Streets, Routes

Chapel Lane is now a cul-de-sac, however historically the junction with Sandbach road would have been open. The A533 starts at the T junction with the A50 within the character area. A short public foot path travels in a east to west direction from the A50 Rode Hall Park private gated entrance to Chapel Lane

Green and Natural Features

The eastern side of the character area has significant mature trees which are protected by group and individual Tree Protection Orders. The mature registered park and garden of Rode Hall is at the site's eastern boundary. Further west most of the greenery is in front gardens in the form of small mature trees and shrubs. Notably, the large mature trees of the Wheelock valley and the Heath Avenue housing estate can be seen over the tops of roofs along the A533.

Landmarks

The most significant landmarks are the Methodist Chapel and the neighbouring cottages on Chapel Lane, the Broughton Arms and associated canal bridge, and the post office amid the Victorian terrace on Sandbach Road.

Buildings and Details

The area comprises a mixture of 19th century and modern residential buildings. Some terraced houses have no front garden and open up directly on to the pavement. Interesting building details include a traditional Cheshire diamond brick pattern on no. 232 Sandbach Road, and some houses have ornate and distinctive barge boards and front doors.

Streetscape features

The boundaries of most properties are fences, low brick walls beneath iron railings or clipped hedges, or a combination of these. A few properties have poorly defined boundaries with expanses of asphalt leading to the road. Sandbach Road has bus stops with shelters, lampposts and highway signage.

Landuse

Mainly housing, with some commercial and retail properties. Some civic uses including village hall, bowling green, public house and shop with post office.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- chapel area is next to the highly sensitive, and listed, Rode Hall parkland.
- any future development should reinforce the emergent high street character of this part of Sandbach Road
- the trees in the green space between Millmead and Sandbach Rd make a

valuable contribution to the street scene

- there is potential for an improved civic focus, involving street scene and open space improvements, around the Broughton Arms, approach to the canal bridge, the green spaces flanking the entrance the Heath Estate and the Post Office.



Fig RT-2-01 Interesting gable detailing



Fig RT-2-02 Door light detail



Fig RT-2-07 Potential for civic improvements



Fig RT-2-03 Interesting gable detailing



Fig RT-2-04 Terrace, mature trees Chapel Lane



Fig RT-2-08 Village hall, mature trees



Fig RT-2-09 Modern housing on A533



Fig RT-2-05 Interesting diamond brick detailing



Fig RT-2-06 Canal at urban transition



Fig RT-2-10 The Broughton Arms



Fig RT-2-11 Terrace and Victorian semi A533

RT3 - SANDBACH ROAD (THURLWOOD)

General Overview

The north part of Sandbach Road (A533) forms the western edge of the settlement (historically Thurlwood). Although similar to the south part of Sandbach Road (area RT2) the differences in urban structure, varying property types, densities, styles and ages is sufficiently pronounced to warrant a separate character area. The mixture of 1930's buildings, with generous strips of green space, and compact terraces without front gardens tells a diverse architectural story.

Layout

The last 200 years has seen a variety of built development on both sides of Sandbach Road including simple terraced houses, a 1970's estate (see RT1), and Miller's Wharf, a 1980's private estate on the site of a former steam mill.

Topography

Following the route of the canal, the road is relatively flat with a slight slope down towards the west.

Spaces

Other than several strips of amenity grassland on the north side of Sandbach Road, which offset this busy highway from the Heath Avenue estate, there is no open space.

Roads, Streets, Routes

The A533 dominates the area and forms a spine off which numerous roads, cul-de-sacs, footpaths and tracks lead to housing areas and, at the west, the canal and locks.

Green And Natural Features

Other than a few mature beech trees there is a lack of large trees on Sandbach Road, although there are some groups of medium sized/aged trees along the route. There are distinct groups of established trees at the entrances to the Heath Avenue estate and Miller's Wharf, and mature ornamental trees in the gardens around Tudor Cottage.

Landmarks

The Tudor Cottage Grade II Listed circa 1600 with some 20th century alterations, set within mature, picturesque gardens. The Royal Oak public house is a local landmark.

Buildings and Details

Some of the older houses have interesting door, window and brickwork details, including the Tudor Cottage.

Streetscape features

The boundaries of most properties are fences, low brick walls beneath iron railings or clipped hedges, or a combination of these. A few properties have poorly defined boundaries with expanses of asphalt leading to the road e.g. the Royal Oak public house and Jade Gardens Chinese restaurant. Sandbach Road has bus stops with shelters, lampposts and highway signage.

Landuse

Mainly housing, with some commercial and retail properties. Some civic uses e.g. a public house and a complex of private flats.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- any development on the north west threshold of this settlement should enhance the quality of this important gateway to the village
- the trees around Tudor Cottage and those on the other side of Sandbach Road make a valuable contribution to this gateway
- any infill development along Sandbach Road should re-enforce its high street character
- any development on the commercial nursery fields seen when entering the area from Sandbach must be very carefully handled in this sensitive threshold to the settlement



Fig RT-3-01 Various boundary treatments and urban densities, A533



Fig RT-3-02 Royal Oak boundary to A533



Fig RT-3-03 Housing set back from A533



Fig RT-3-06 Tudor cottage



Fig RT-3-07 Western entrance to Settlement



Fig RT-3-04 Farm house



Fig RT-3-05 Dense housing A533



Fig RT-3-08 New estate cul-de-sac



Fig RT-3-09 Cottages with front gardens

RT4 - POETS CORNER ESTATE

General Overview

Although the Poet's Corner estate is a conventional modern development of detached houses, its size, variety of materials and position next to the Trent and Mersey Canal Conservation Area combine to make a distinct character area.

Layout

A series of gentle curving streets with medium density housing. The estate has a single feeder road with several cul-de-sac leading off.

Topography

Following the route of the canal, the estate is relatively flat with a slight slope down towards the south west canal edge.

Spaces

All the houses are detached and sit behind front gardens of a more or less uniform size. Some houses overlook the nearby canal, and the ends of Tennyson Close and Carlyle Close have semi-private spaces next to the canal

Roads, Streets, Routes

Keats Drive is the feeder road from the A533 into the estate, and links seven cul-de-sacs each named after a famous national poet. Keats Drive has a pavement on both sides whereas some cul-de-sacs have no footpaths; instead the road is shared spaces denoted by a change of surface material from asphalt to paving block. There is a public footpath through the estate from Sandbach Road, alongside the Tudor House and down to Lower Thurlwood Lock, known locally as Cow Lane.

Green and Natural Features

The estate has two group Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), one conspicuous clump at the corner of Keats Drive and Byron Close, the other beside the canal in a private garden beside the canal. There are also three individual tree TPOs, all in private gardens. The canal forms sharp divide between the ornamental gardens of the estate and the rural landscape of the Wheelock valley

Landmarks

The canal and the lower lock are the principal landmarks.

Buildings and Details

The estate has several house styles material combinations, but red or buff coloured brickwork and red or grey concrete roof tiles predominate. The housing types in each cul-de-sac appear to be in themed and share similar brick detailing.

Streetscape features

Most of the street features are private gardens, with small lamp columns along the streets. A group of mature trees on Keats Drive provide an area of semi open space.

Landuse

Almost wholly residential with some recreation and leisure use along the canal

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- the building of conservatories and other garden buildings in the canalside conservation area are detrimental to its character



Fig RT-4-01 Tennyson Close running parallel to canal with a mixture of national building styles



Fig RT-4-02 Orange, buff brick mix



Fig RT-4-03 Typical houses



Fig RT-4-05 Corner house



Fig RT-4-06 Shared surface cul-de-sac



Fig RT-4-04 Tennyson Close with open featureless grass verges



Fig RT-4-07 Keats Drive with defined front garden spaces

RT-c1 - RODE HEATH & THURLWOOD CANAL

General Overview

This area is located along a conservation area on the Middlewich to Red Bull section of the Trent and Mersey Canal, which runs south east to north west. To the south is rolling grassland and scattered woodland, and the meandering Wheelock valley. There is a group of houses on Low Street opposite Lock 54, (Lower Thurlwood Lock and an isolated farm near where Cherry Lane bridges the canal. The north east is bounded by housing estates and groups of terrace house of various periods. On the west side, and south of this bridge, there is open country with a few scattered houses. Historically intensive brine extraction took place to the south of the canal.

Layout

The A50 runs parallel to the course of the canal in the south of this area; the A533 runs parallel to the canal in the north.

Topography

The canal bank typically is flat with two inclines at the locks, rising to the south east. The house to the north east are slightly higher than the canal. The houses on Low street are lower than the tow path by the lock. The countryside to the west slopes substantially down to the River Wheelock, and gives the tow path elevated and panoramic views over the Wheelock valley. A calamitous subsidence lead to the collapse and demolition of former buildings on Rode Heath Rise. The site was used for landfill in the 1950's.

Spaces

Essentially the canal marks the transition between the open countryside of Rode Heath Rise to the west and urban development to the east; each provide linear recreational spaces within these two contrasting land uses.

Roads, Streets, Routes

The main emphasis of this area is that of the canal, with a few minor residential roads on the periphery. Low Street is an unmetalled road that leads to isolated residential properties and farmsteads. There are several footpaths in the area that lead from the canal. The canal is part of the Cheshire Ring which is a canal cruising circuit. The lane that crosses the canal bridge at the Broughton Arms used to be the main route south, prior to the building of the A50 turnpike.

Green and Natural Features

The canal is a grade C Local Wildlife Site, as are woods by the Rode Heath Rise, which is a mix of trees and grassland in an area west of Cherry Lane. A group of trees near to Carlyle Close, a group of trees at Rode Mill Court by the canal and to the canal are covered by a Tree Protection Order (TPO), otherwise there are no TPOs in the character area. Many back gardens run down to the canal edge at its eastern side.

Landmarks

The locks and bridges are the key landmarks. Lower Thurlwood Lock and the neighbouring terraced houses form an area of strong historic character. The original brick bridge at the upper (formerly steel lock has been replaced by a concrete bridge. The Broughton Arms public house and a pedestrianised historic, canal bridge are attractive canal side features.

Buildings and Details

There is a multitude of modern building styles along the north eastern edge of the canal, yet the main character of the canal is established by the historic red sandstone blocks and sturdy brickwork of the lock areas, as well as the bridges and groups of historic canalside properties with stone cills and lintels.

Streetscape features

The character of the area is strongly influenced by the usual canalside paraphernalia: moorings, mile posts, balustrades, ironwork associated with lock operations, and brick walls with black engineering details. Wooden fencing or metal railings demark grazing pasture. The towpath has wayfinding signage for walkers, historic mile post markers and some interpretative boards to inform users of the route. There is some evidence of the former steel lock which was built as a experiment to counter subsidence.

Landuse

Mainly housing along the north eastern boundary, leisure uses along the canal, and a large public house with beer gardens. To the south west of the canal are wooded areas and open grassland.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- the canal is a highly valuable historical, and recreational, community asset
- there are important, character-setting views from the towpath across the Wheelock valley that should be protected
- the trees and woodland of the Wheelock valley are vital components of this character area



Fig RT-c1-01 Thurlwood Lower Locks, new and old buildings, edge of countryside



Fig RT-c1-02 Urban edge, rural tow path



Fig RT-c1-03 Historic canal houses



Fig RT-c1-06 Wheelock Valley open space



Fig RT-c1-07 Decking in conservation area



Fig RT-c1-04 New out-of-character spaces



Fig RT-c1-05 Bridge linking A533 to open space



Fig RT-c1-08 Mile post



Fig RT-c1-09 Broughton Arms area

Scholar Green, the A34, Macclesfield Canal and Mainline to London, Corridor

Settlement Description

The character areas within this group are broadly defined by strong north to south transport links of the A34, the Macclesfield Canal and the London Mainline electrified railway. Historically the A34 was a more rural route connecting farmsteads and cottages, however during the interwar period the A34 was improved as part of a national road building campaign to create better, faster road networks. The upgraded A34 facilitated some interwar and post war house building along the route in Scholar Green. The A34 has gradually been in filled with housing to meet the needs of expanding settlements including Stoke and Congleton. The settlement has a distinct lack of centre. The development is characteristically linear 'ribbon' type, mainly in a north to south direction. The Cheshire Plain borders the western side, while the canal and railway restrict development to the east. Generally the area is on the lower slopes of the Staffordshire Ridge and Cheshire plain transition.



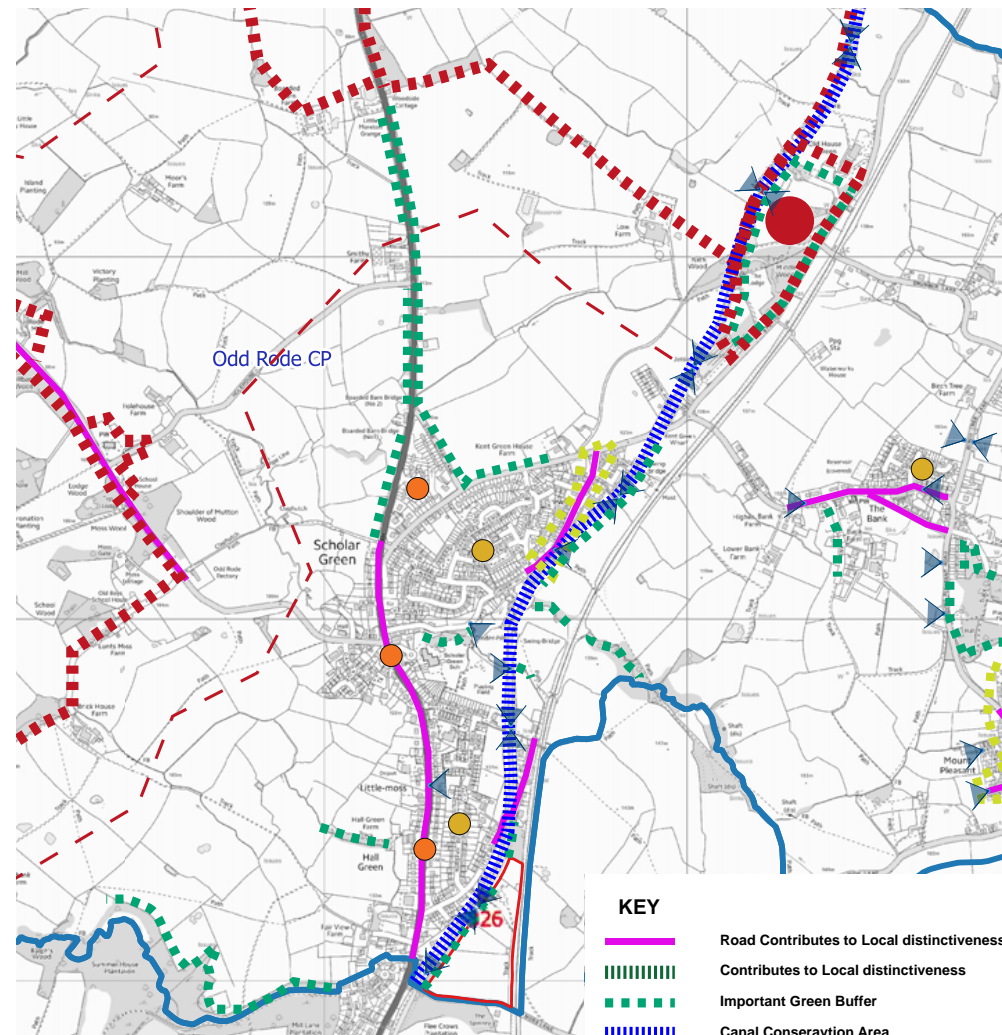
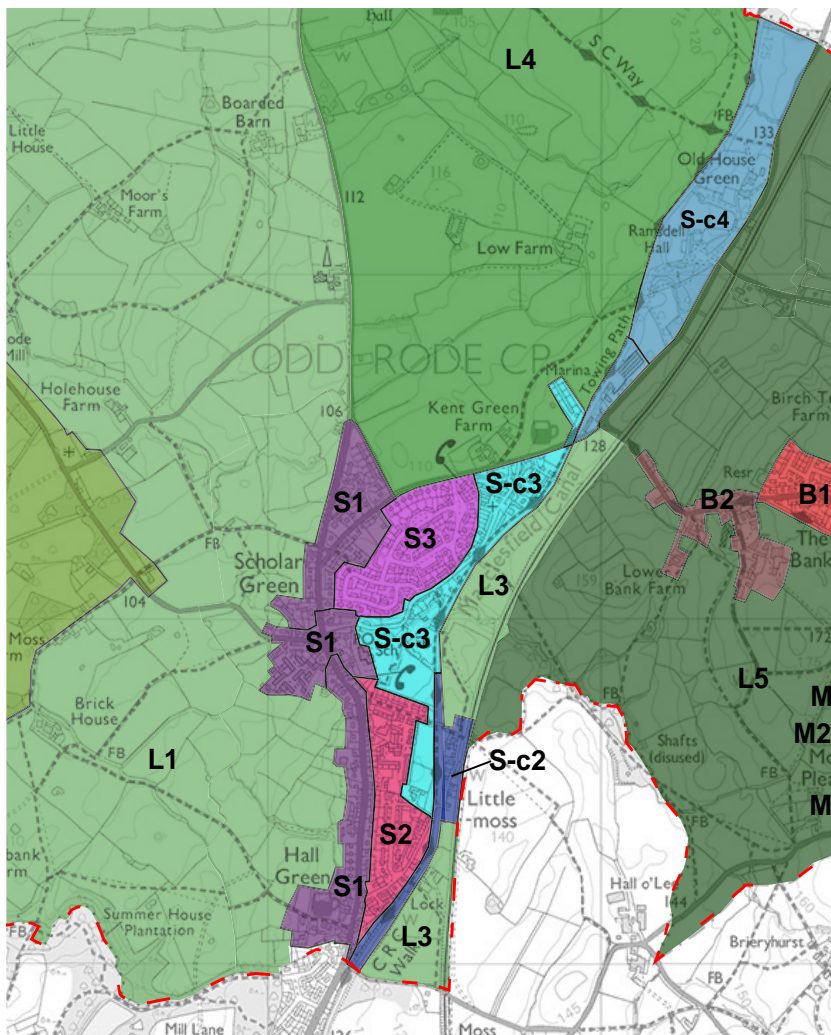
Fig S-01 Bleeding Wolf public house, A34

Urban Form

The settlement along the A34 and the Macclesfield Canal has a scattering of retail units and public houses and has no real centre. Most of its residential properties are between the A34 and the canal. The canal is an important and well-used recreation and leisure corridor which, along with the railway line, constrain further eastward development



Fig S-02 Macclesfield canal with steep, tree-lined embankments



S1 - A34 Scholar Green

General Overview

The A34 corridor, Congleton Road, is a busy road which has had numerous in fill developments and development creep. The road has a mixture of building types, ages, and densities, and ranges from semi- detached, small-roomed 19th century cottages to large, modern detached houses. The road is a focus for community activity. What was once a road through farmland with interspersed housing is increasingly urbanised.

Layout

The A34 is a busy through road with access routes to adjacent housing estates and several small cull-de-sacs leading off to some newer infill housing - e.g. Bleeding Wolf Lane and Alma Close. The rhythm of housing, especially interwar developments, is occasionally regimented. Generally, though, the mixture of ages, plot sizes and building styles creates a more irregular pattern. The Bleeding Wolf Public House is setback from the main highway in a very large car park. A new large warehouse style plumbers/DIY store adds a modern retail dimension. At the northern end of the character area a more civic core includes a small supermarket, a post office and a primary school. The northern boundary marks the transition from urban to rural, with hedgerows running along the western edge of the A34 area opposite Barnbridge Close.

Topography

The road is set with the rolling Cheshire Plain. Views to the much higher Mow Cop are occasionally visible between houses, and a pattern of scattered dwellings and the silhouette of Mow Cop Castle is visible. Areas further to the west occasionally rise higher than this character area and form a middle distance horizon.

Spaces

The road layout was modernised at some point to allow interwar and newer properties to be built with large front gardens. Mown grass verges occur occasionally along the road corridor, sometimes flanking side road junctions.

Roads, Streets, Routes

The A34 is a main road, with smaller roads and unadopted tracks/roads feeding off it to east and west. Roads to the east lead to Mount Pleasant, and include

Moss Lane, Cinderhill Lane, Station Road and Stone Chair Lane. Church lane leads to Rode Hall and onto the A50 and Rode Heath. There are several public footpaths that lead to the A34, most of which run generally east-west leading to both the lower undulating open fields of the Cheshire plain and to the higher slopes towards Mount Pleasant.

Green and Natural Features

To the west is a mixture of open, rolling countryside with a patchwork of irregular hedge-lined fields and occasional woodland. There is a significant area of woodland south west at Lawton Woods which is a I grade A Local Wildlife site. A tree-lined, small valley and stream runs east to west following Cinderhill Lane. The A34 has a mixture of mature large trees in places and smaller amenity trees within gardens in the majority of properties. Roadside mown grass verges occur along the route. Hedgerows can be found along the western edge of the A34 in the northern part of the character area.

Landmarks

The Bleeding Wolf Grade II listed building was built in the Vernacular Revival Style between the wars and during the upgrading of the A34. The recently built Wharf Plumbing and DIY store is large and distinct enough to be termed a landmark.

Buildings and Details

There is a great variety of building styles including: traditional small farm steads, Victorian housing, interwar housing and public house, post war housing, 1970's 80's and 90's housing. More recent housing has filled in gaps and the most recent development is the Oak Drive housing estate. Building types range from detached, semi detached and bungalows and most residences have two storeys.

Streetscape features

The A34 has large, modern lampposts, and other associated 'A' road highway features including pedestrian traffic island refuges with bollards, chevron road markings and coloured asphalt speed calming measures. Most properties have defined front boundaries which range from low ornate brick walls to wooden pale fencing. There are temporary construction site fences in a few areas. The streetscape north of Cinderhill Lane has a less dense urban fabric, more rural style hedges and a generally greener feel.

Landuse

The road is mostly a residential street with interspersed business uses including two public houses, a hairdressers, a shop with post office, some storage yards and a Plumbing/DIY store.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- several recent, small-scale housing developments off the A34 are encroaching on the sensitive Cheshire Plain character area.
- the field boundary trees, particularly those either side of east-west lane, are vital components of this character area
- there is potential for an improved civic focus, involving street scene and open space improvements, around the post office, the school and the A34 junction



Fig S-1-05 A34 road to Congleton



Fig S-1-01 Post Office and supermarket



Fig S-1-02 Cottage with diamond brick pattern



Fig S-1-06 Cottages on A34



Fig S-1-07 New houses near green belt



Fig S-1-03 New shared surface estate



Fig S-1-04 Cottage with arches; former school



Fig S-01-08 A newly built landmark



Fig S-1-09 Unusual entrance

S2 - Little Moss Lane and Portland Drive

General Overview

A mainly residential area bounded to the north by a green recreational area, to the east and the south by the Macclesfield Canal, and to the west by the A34/Congleton Road

Layout

Two roads lead off Congleton Road - Little Moss Lane and Portland Drive - each serving a small housing estate. Little Moss Lane crosses the canal to reach a random cluster of houses of various ages and styles.

Topography

A gentle slope down from east to west. The canal in this area is in a deep cut

Spaces

Other than a couple of roadside verges there are no other open spaces. There is a recreational green space to the north of Portland Drive.

Roads, Streets, Routes

Little Moss Lane has two short cul-de-sacs leading off it, as well as Nursery Road, a longer cul-de-sac; Portland Drive is a cul-de-sac and Elbourne Drive is a further cul-de-sac off it. A public footpath follows Portland Drive and then crosses the canal linking to Little Moss Lane. Another footpath runs north from Portland Drive into the recreational green space. A path crosses the canal from Little Moss Lane and heads out into open country. The railway passes to the east of the area

Green and Natural Features

Mainly suburban-type gardens with medium-sized ornamental trees, with some larger trees at rear garden boundaries especially between Nursery land and Elbourne Drive

Landmarks

The two canal bridges are the only significant landmarks within the area; Mow Cop Castle is visible to the east.

Buildings and Details

A medley of older cottages with some character, late 20th century detached and semi-detached houses, and some newly built houses; most of these are small to medium scale developments. On Portland Terrace is a row of brick cottages with interesting door details.

Streetscape features

The canal bridges and walls are an interesting feature, but other than the usual lampposts, telegraph poles, road signage etc nothing stands out. In some areas there are agricultural-looking gates.

Landuse

Mostly residential and health centre. Some pasture at east boundary.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- where it approaches the canal from the south, Little Moss Lane has a distinctly rural feel which further development would jeopardise.
- the parcel of land to the east of Elbourne Drive, and which has a road built up to its west boundary, is more or less screened from view; it adjoins a conservation area.



Fig S-2-01 Canal beneath Little Moss Lane bridge



Fig S-2-02 New estate off Portland Drive



Fig S-2-04 Terrace houses along Portland Drive



Fig S-2-03 Bungalows on Nursery Road



Fig S-2-05 Rural character on Little Moss Ln



Fig S-2-06 Out-of-character buildings

S3 - Wavertree Estate

General Overview

A post war, brick-built housing estate with a strong identity at the north edge of Scholar Green and to the east of the A34/Congleton Road

Layout

A road layout of curving avenues and circuses with generous areas of public space. Private garages are set behind properties in clusters accessed by an ally. The housing estate has edges strongly defined by Cinderhill Lane, Station Road and the back gardens of properties on Congleton Road.

Topography

Located on the lower slopes of the Staffordshire Ridge, the topography generally slopes down to west from the Macclesfield Canal.

Spaces

An overall impression of openness derives from the provision of several large open grassed spaces and verges, and by the houses generally having medium or large front and rear gardens. Mow Cop ridge is occasionally visible from within the estate. Semi-private spaces and garage parking to the rear of some areas add to the feeling of spaciousness. Half a dozen new houses, set well back from Wavertree Avenue further enhance this open character. Some single storey houses are built in a campus bungalow style, with an ample open space at their front. Margery Avenue has a slightly more compact layout of dormer bungalows, some of which have undergone such substantial roof space conversions as to become almost two storey dwellings.

Roads, Streets, Routes

The streets within the estate are mostly circular or through routes and there are no cul-de-sacs. The estate has three main entry/exit roads, two of which meet Station Road and the other joins Cinderhill Lane. There are Informal routes through the estate and into semi-private open spaces to the rear of properties. Two public footpaths run across the estate, and the adjacent canal towpath is an important recreational route.

Green and Natural Features

The estate has a mixture of medium sized trees and occasional larger species mostly within either private garden areas or in the spaces to the rear of properties. Many of the open grassy spaces have a few trees but no clear use or designation. The canal is the threshold to the predominantly rural land to the east.

Landmarks

The silhouette of Mow Cop castle can be seen occasionally from within the estate; apart from this there are no other landmarks

Buildings and Details

The earliest buildings in the estate are simple, modest brick buildings whose similar stylings give a visual unity. A small shopping parade has been converted to residential units except for a hairdressers. Many bungalows have undergone loft conversions which, although deemed Permitted Development have had an unfortunate visual impact. Alongside listed built elements beside the canal, the other listed building on the edge of the character area is the Kent Green farmhouse, a grade II listed building built late 18th/early 19th centuries.

Streetscape features

There are few elements within the street scene, except lampposts, grass verges, a litter bin, a red post box and a local information board.

Landuse

Mostly residential, many open grassed areas, garages and parking areas at the rear of some houses.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- there is no provision for play in the estate
- some of the grassed public spaces have a barren and exposed feel and more trees would improve the area
- ad hoc renovations and loft conversions have both improved the livability of the estate and spoiled the aesthetics of the street scene



Fig S-3-01 View of Mow Cop from estate



Fig S-3-02 New row of housing



Fig S-3-03 uncharacteristic extension



Fig S-3-05 Staggered plot layouts



Fig S-3-04 Open mown grass space



Fig S-3-06 Previous row of shops



Fig S-3-07 Campus style property layout

S-c2 - Scholar Green Canal South

General Overview

A distinct section of the Macclesfield canal which is cut into the slopes of the Staffordshire Ridge.

Layout

A linear canal route with bridges over.

Topography

The canal cuts through a rise to reach less topographically challenging terrain further north. Located on the lower slopes of the Staffordshire Ridge which rises eastwards to Mow Cop. Typically the cut is about five metres deep with steep sloped sides. The character area ends where it meets a small lower valley and playing field, where the overall character of the canal changes.

Spaces

The space has a great sense of enclosure especially along the southern section where mature trees tower overhead; the bridges enhance this sheltered feel. Further north the scene lightens as the banks become less steep and there are fewer trees, but bridges still enclose and frame the views.

Roads, Streets, Routes

The canal towpath is an important recreational route. The canal is part of the Cheshire Ring is often busy with barge traffic. Public footpaths cross the canal and lead to open countryside and the lower slopes of the Staffordshire Ridge. A slight bend when going north along the canal which shortens views in both directions.

Green and Natural Features

The canal runs at the eastern side of Scholar Green but, despite back garden fences and a few garden sheds, the route has natural appearance especially in the southern section where wild flowers, and mature trees are plentiful.

Landmarks

Four bridges and a water stop lock create a chain of land marks. Views out to the surrounding countryside are limited due to the sunken nature of the canal cutting.

Buildings and Details

Bridge 91 is a Grade II listed structure of imposing character with ashlar-dressed yellow sandstone, and a dressed stone horseshoe arch. Nearby is a grade II listed ashlar sandstone mile post. The lock keeper's cottage at Hall Green Lock is an interesting canal side building.

Streetscape features

There are several signs related to canal operations and a prominent mile post.

Landuse

The canal is a recreational route for walkers and boat users.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- this part of the canal corridor, with its bridges, banks and trees, is highly sensitive to visually intrusive development
- the trees that line the canal are vital components of this character area



Fig S-c2-01 View showing mature tree planting



Fig Fig S-c2-02 View of Little Moss Lane bridge



Fig S-c2-03 Listed Grade II Bridge 91



Fig S-c2-04 Moss Lane bridge



Fig S-c2-05 Elevated mature trees along eastern canal bank

S-c3 - Scholar Green Canal North

General Overview

This is the Scholar Green to Kent Green section of the Macclesfield Canal. Travelling north along the canal, and following on from area S-c2, the character changes dramatically with distant views opening up and nearby properties and more distant farmsteads becoming visible.

Layout

This area has the urban edge of Cinderhill to the west and fields to the east which, along with the canal, form a distinct character. This southern section of Cinderhill Lane has a somewhat rural character where residential development is broken up by mature woodland. The northern section Cinderhill Lane has more built up character. Short cul-de-sacs of different periods give rise to a patchwork of buildings and uses including Victorian canal side cottages, larger houses, some modern housing, a more recent 'T' shaped cul-de-sac housing estate and a few storage yards and light industrial sites.

Topography

The canal sits above or at the same level as the surrounding land. The land slopes gently up to the west and the Staffordshire Ridge. There are a few slight hummocks and a stream lies a shallow valley.

Spaces

The canal is a linear spatial recreational route between fields and a settlement. A play area provides a green space in the southern area, and slightly elevated housing runs along Cinderhill Lane which bends towards and away from the canal as it runs north to Station Road. Along both the canal and Cinderhill Lane there are full and partial views to the west across agricultural land, scattered properties and woodland and, in the distance the Staffordshire Ridge

Roads, Streets, Routes

The canal towpath is an important recreational route. The canal is part of the Cheshire Ring is often busy with barge traffic. Public footpaths cross the canal and lead to open countryside and the lower slopes of the Staffordshire Ridge. The is a gentle bend in the route of he canal.

Green and Natural Features

The area is one of urban transition with residential gardens backing onto rough pasture and unkempt canal banks on the south western side. The eastern edge of the canal has sporadic trees of varying sizes, and fields beyond.

Landmarks

Two bridges and a lock are local landmarks along the canal. Cinderhill Lane has a few distinctive features: a Victorian House with has a large monkey puzzle tree in the front driveway towering over the nearby two storey buildings a Methodist chapel, and a smart row of semi-detached cottages and a pair of black and white half-timbered cottages.

Buildings and Details

The house at the side of the canal just south of Station Road bridge was formerly the Bird In Hand public house. There are two metal swing bridges for pedestrians, and a narrowing of the canal at each.

Streetscape features

There are a few signs related to the canal operation. Private front garden ornamentation provides the most interesting streetscape features.

Landuse

Next to the canal, which has recreational uses, are pasture and arable land, woodland, residential properties, a church, light industrial units with outdoor storage areas for bulk items and vehicles.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- Cinderhill Lane, north of Drenfell Road, has a valuable built character consistent with the heritage of the canal
- the line of trees on the east bank of the canal are an asset in the landscape
- there is potential for an improved civic focus, involving street and canal scene and open space improvements, around Cinderhill Lane



Fig S-c3-01 View looking north east, showing houses screened by canal hedgerow, more open countryside on eastern canal edge



Fig S-c3-02 Church on Cinderhill Lane



Fig Fig S-c2-03 Builders yard



Fig S-c3-04 Row of houses looking SW



Fig S-c3-05 Row of houses looking NE



Fig S-c2-04 House on Cinderhill Lane



Fig S-c3-06 Grade II listed Station Road bridge

S-c4 - Heritage Marina, Ramsdell Hall

General Overview

Due to recent developments around the canal warehouse and marina, the ad hoc creation of moorings along the north the north of the canal, and the parkland of Ramsdell Hall this character area might be considered to have three distinct sub areas: canal warehouse and marina, the parkland, and the north part of the canal

Layout

A linear waterway with buildings sandwiched between the canal and Station Road. The southern area is located next to Station Road bridge, and contains a recently renovated and extended canal side warehouse that has been converted to luxury apartments. North of these buildings is a large marina and its associated buildings and parking areas. At the middle of the character area is Ramsdell Hall, a grade II* listed building with neighbouring residential properties, all within a parkland environment. At the north of the character area are fields, a farm and a few canal moorings. The north boundary is marked by a wooded stream valley

Topography

The canal generally follows a contour at the lower slope of the Staffordshire Ridge. To the west are flatter areas of the Cheshire Plain and to the east the higher slopes of Mow Cop and elevated settlements and wooded areas.

Spaces

The canal warehouse and the marina both have large hardstanding areas for parking and commercial marina operations. The Ramsdell Hall area has both woodlands and open grassland vistas, with buildings on a grand scale. North of Ramsdell Hall the parkland gives way to more open agricultural land.

Roads, Streets, Routes

The area lies between Station Road and the canal with its tow path. Other footpaths cross the area in a west to east direction going towards Mow Cop from the Cheshire Plain across canal bridges. Within the marina there are areas of asphalt and crushed aggregate for vehicle movements and parking. Ramsdell Hall has a gated entrance off the main highway which leads to a series of internal roads and courtyards.

Green and Natural Features

A major block of woodland which is subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) lies on both sides of the canal clearly and separates the marina from Ramsdell Hall. Further north the woodland dwindles and the character changes to open farmland.

Landmarks and Views

Ramsdell Hall, a grand historic building set in parkland, is visible from both the canal and Station Road. The Hall's ornate entrance gates are a significant feature on Station Road. The marina, with its collection of colourful narrow boats, is a hive of boating activity. Openings in woodland create vistas in the south. Opposite Ramsdell Hall and further north there are expansive views over the Cheshire Plains and beyond. Little Moreton Hall and its environs are visible from locations along the canal tow path.

Buildings and Details

Ramsdell Hall and the other buildings in the grounds are on the grand scale, and built in the 18th century with brick and slate. The marina buildings are an assembly of functional sheds and outbuildings, with a utilitarian steel footbridge crossing the marina entrance from the canal. In the northern area a listed farm house sits amongst more modern farm buildings. impromptu canal moorings and wooden shacks line northern area of the canal.

Streetscape features

Large entrance feature gate pillars of Ramsdell Hall. Ornate wrought iron railings along tow path along western edge of canal near Ramsdell Hall. General marina works and a metal bridge.

Landuse

Residential, agricultural, private estates, boating marina, commercial sites, and recreation and leisure along of the canal and public footpaths.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- the changes occurring in the triangle of land to the south of Ramsdell Hall, including the marina, are part of the character of this area
- Ramsdell Hall and its parkland is a highly sensitive area
- the ad hoc moorings north of Ramsdell Hall are detrimental to the quality of this character area
- the trees north of Ramsdell Hall, that are within the parkland setting, do not benefit from the same protected status as those in the rest of the park



Fig S-c4-03 Ramsdell Hall



Fig S-c4-01 Ornate railing opposite Ramsdell Hall



Fig S-c4-04 Canal bridge



Fig S-c4-05 Marina bridge



Fig S-c4-02 Moorings and wooden structures within farmers field



Fig S-c4-07 Canal side renovated building

Mow Cop and its associated settlements

Settlement Description

Three small settlements located on the western slope of Mow Cop form a general character area. It has an overall rural feel with pockets of residential developments that have accrued over the last 200 years. These are among the most elevated settlements in the county and are widely visible.



Fig M-01 History and heathland

Urban Form

A mix of highly concentrated residential areas, with scatterings of dwellings at their margins. Mount Pleasant and Mow Cop have more defined centres; Bank is more nebulous. Areas of compact traditional cottages and terraces sit among less dense houses and estates. Mow Cop Castle dominates the scene.



Fig M-02 Narrow, compact lanes



Fig M-03 Steep slopes

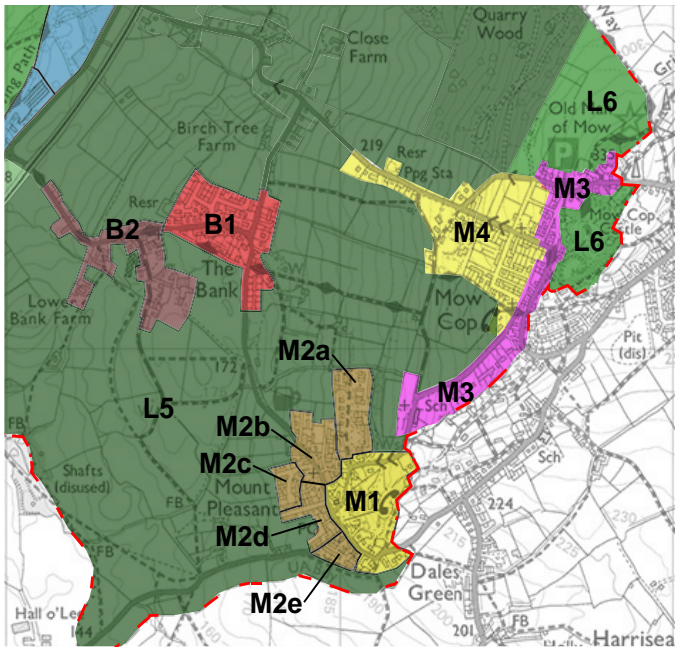


Fig M-04 Character areas for the Mow Cop area

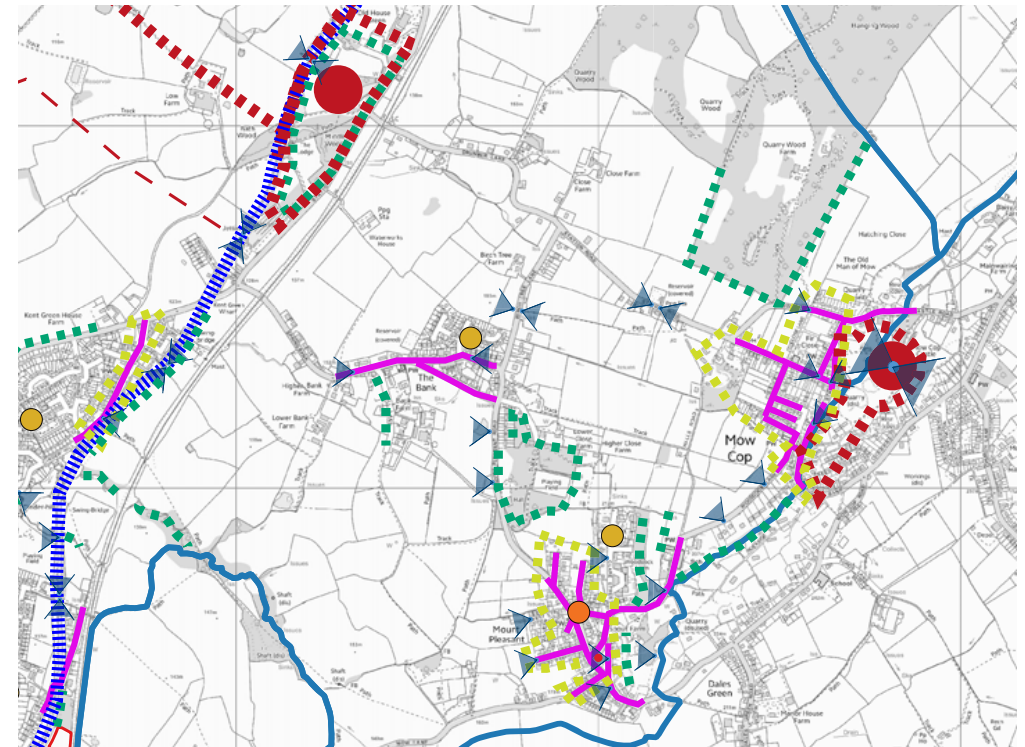


Fig M-05 Urban Analysis Diagram

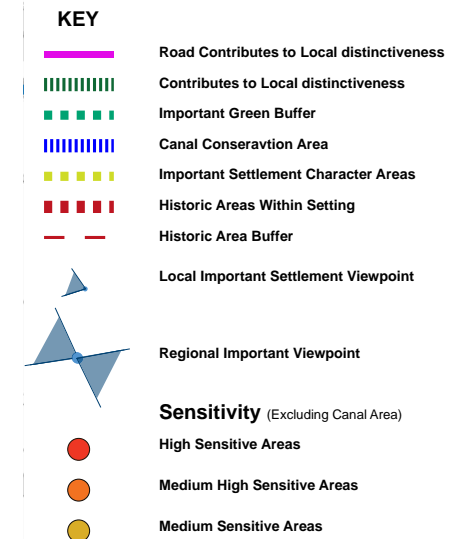


Fig M-06 Typical view from the Mow Cop area

B1 - The Bank

General Overview

This character area is a medium density settlement comprising mostly residential properties focused around the junction of The Bank, Birch Tree Lane and Mount Pleasant Road with strong, simple, defined urban edges with the surrounding countryside. The area is located on a slightly inclined natural terrace.

Layout

The Bank settlement at the confluence of three roads: The Bank, Mount Pleasant Road and Birch Tree Lane. Residential densities are compact between Bank Lane and Meadowside Lane, and in the modern Grays Close housing estate, whereas other dwellings in the area have generous gardens to the front and rear,

Topography

The buildings sit on a broad natural terrace on the slope of the Staffordshire Ridge, and some on the hillside below.

Spaces

The more or less compact settlement has some wide grass roadside verges at its centre, and is surrounded by open pasture. Grays Close has a more open feel than other parts of the settlement. There are no formal recreational spaces, though there are playing fields next to Mount Pleasant village hall between the Bank and Mount Pleasant.

Roads, Streets, Routes

The Bank drops down east to Scholar Green, Mount Pleasant Road goes south to the settlement of Mount Pleasant Road and Birch Tree Lane heads north to a small settlement clustered around a junction with Drumber Lane. Meadowside Lane skirts the south of the area and, with its rough asphalt and crushed stone, has the appearance of an unadopted road. A public footpath from the settlement takes a level route to the south, another climbs to the east.

Green and Natural Features

The roadsides and pastures are generally lined with hedges that contain groups and individual trees. A larger area of woodland lies at the south of the area. There are group and individual Tree Preservation Orders scattered throughout the settlement.

Landmarks and Views

The western side of the settlement has occasional panoramas west over the Cheshire Plain and towards the Welsh Hills, and views east looking up to Mow Cop. The central and eastern areas of the settlement have more restricted views due to the level topography cropping views west. A steep bank of mature tree restricts views from the public highways towards Mow Cop. Where visible Mow Cop Castle is a dominant Landmark skyline. A local church (currently for sale) is a minor local landmark.

Buildings and Details

A line of cottages and terraces on The Bank along side a Methodist chapel create a strong and consistent character. Other building types including bungalows, medium-sized modern housing, larger detached houses and more traditional farm cottages.

Streetscape features

Grays Lane estate has shared surfacing whereas in other areas have a footpath at one side or another or not at all. Front garden boundaries are a jumble of brick or stone walls, timber pale fencing or hedges or a mixture of these. The occasional appearance of black and white painted steel estate-type fencing is notable.

Landuse

Residential and agricultural with recreational use of footpaths

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- the slopes surrounding Bank are highly visible
- the trees and woodlands around Bank do not benefit from same protection given to the trees to the north of Bank in the Drumber Lane area.



Fig B-1-01 Edge of settlement looking towards Mount Pleasant



Fig B-1-02 Housing in rural setting



Fig B-1-03 Mixed housing types



Fig B-1-06 Partial view of Mow Cop



Fig B-1-07 Unusual roof pitch



Fig B-1-04 Cheshire railing to field edge



Fig B-1-05 New housing with Cheshire railing



Fig B-1-08 Row of terraces with vacant church in background

B2 - Spring Bank

General Overview

Sporadic linear development along a road with occasional unadopted spurs leading to residences and farmsteads.

Layout

A mostly linear development running east to west with medium to large spaces between properties. Two semi-private lanes lead off Spring Bank to the south for access to scattered housing.

Topography

The land sits on the side of the Staffordshire Ridge and slopes down to the west, with more level terrain running north-south

Spaces

Surrounded by open countryside the area is mostly public highway and private residences.

Roads, Streets, Routes

Spring Bank is a major local route from Scholar Green to Mount Pleasant and Mow Cop. Two local semi private roads lead off Spring Bank to Lower Bank Farm and Bank Farm both of which have footpaths running south across the ridge slope

Green and Natural Features

Spring Bank is surrounded by medium-sized open pastures some defined by hedgerows, with occasional groups of trees in the boundaries. A row of trees follows a small stream at a field boundary to the south of Spring Bank.

Landmarks and Views

There are no major landmarks locally, however a pair of detached Tudor-styled Victorian white rendered houses on Spring Bank are noticeable and a chapel currently for sale. There are wide panoramic views over the Cheshire Plain to the Welsh Hills. A steep bank with some mature trees and some buildings restrict views from the public highways towards Mow Cop.

Buildings and Details

A mixture of traditional cottages, with modern gap infill properties along Spring Bank. The semi private lanes have both old traditional farmsteads and a mixture of large bungalows and detached modern houses.

Streetscape features

There are a few pedestrian pavements in this rural location, however an interesting raised footpath made from natural stone work occurs beside a row of properties on Spring Bank. Natural stone, brick or concrete block walls mark the boundaries of front gardens.

Landuse

Residential and agricultural with recreational use of footpaths

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- the piecemeal development of residences along Spring Bank has, due to its respect for topography and rural appearance, evolved a positive character
- the trees and woodlands around Spring Bank do not benefit from same protection given to the trees to the north of Spring Bank in the Drummer Lane area.



Fig B-2-01 Edge of settlement rural drive



Fig B-2-02 Various fascade finishes



Fig B-2-03 Infill housing



Fig B-2-04 Raised footway

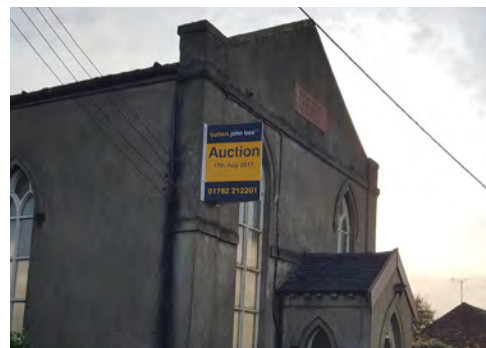


Fig B-2-05 Chapel in need renovation



Fig B-2-06 Interesting detached housing

M1 - Mount Pleasant Centre

General Overview

The central area has a distinct village green feel with properties arranged in a triangle around the intersection of three roads: Chapel Street, Heatherside and Clare Street.

Layout

A mixture of large well-spaced residential properties to the east of a green, tree lined open space. To the west is a more dense arrangement of semi-detached and terrace opening out directly onto the pavement; the few front gardens are very small.

Topography

Due to its position on the slopes of the Staffordshire Ridge, the gradient is steep here. Occasional rocky outcrops and disused quarries are the eastern backdrop to settlement which is nestled into the topographical undulations. Roads at the heart of the settlement are steep; Heatherside is noticeably higher than Chapel Street and they are linked by the steep drop in Clare Street.

Spaces

The central green space is an elongated triangle running north-south for 80 metres; at its widest it is 30 metres wide. There are trees at about 50% of its margin.

Roads, Streets, Routes

Chapel Street and Clare Street each have short lanes branching off. Heatherside has the appearance of a semi-private lane. There are two public rights of way in the village green area, and a third which rises northeast to a high point of gritstone near disused quarries.

Green and Natural Features

The village green has group of trees and some ornamental shrub planting that soften this semi-urbanised area. Above Heatherside is an area of heathland which is a Local Nature Reserve.

Landmarks and Views

The upper areas, including Heatherside and Clare Street, have panoramic views of the Cheshire plain. Around the village green are several cottages rendered in a variety of bright colours.

Buildings and Details

The steep gradients have obliged the buildings and garden to make use of a variety of masonry steps and retaining walls, especially on Heatherside. A line of cottages on Chapel Street demonstrates some interesting door and window arrangements. The post office seems to be a converted modern house which jars with the more intimate, dense cottage/terrace arrangements nearby. At the junction of Clare Street and Church Street is a garage that is an eccentric medley of brick, stone and corrugated iron and has the appearance of a Nissen hut.

Streetscape features

Natural stone retaining walls, and brick boundary walls, a stone built bus shelter, a red telephone box, steel bollards on a very narrow pavement on Chapel Street, a red post box, concrete flower planters, wooden trip rails, benches, and a village welcome sign.

Landuse

Open heath and quarry landscapes, recreational routes, recreational/green spaces, residential, some small retail.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- the topography, building materials, idiosyncratic road network, and the presence of a village green, make this a unique environment
- the views both into and out of this area are important
- there are many valuable trees throughout the area; none benefit from protection



Fig M-1-01 Row of houses opposite village green



Fig M-1-02 Ornate door detailing



Fig M-1-03 Mix of road types



Fig M-1-06 - no pavement



Fig M-1-07 Village green



Fig M-1-04 Various fascade finishes



Fig M-1-05 Heathland in quarry



Fig M-1-08 Post office



Fig M-1-09 Housing on slope

M2 - The Lanes and Estates

General Overview

Radiating to the north, west and south of the the M1 Mount Pleasant Centre Character Area is a patchwork of where three modern estates alternate with three historic lane areas of older housing.

Layout (see figure M-04 page 51 for subareas listed below)

M2a is a well-spaced, campus style post-war public housing development with some more recent gap infill housing; M2b has more traditional compact houses with small gardens, built along three lanes which run north from Chapel Street, which itself is a compact series of different period properties some with small front gardens. M2c is a post-war public housing estate arranged in cul-de-sacs with generous front gardens and mown roadside grass verges. M2d comprises a pair of rough asphalt lanes with a mixture of densities including detached houses with medium-sized gardens to compact terraced cottages, some with small front gardens. M2e is a modern compact, detached housing estate with an small open front gardens leading to a shared vehicular/pedestrian surface.

Topography

The slope of the Staffordshire Ridge affects all sub areas, although roads and properties to the north of the village centre have less steep gradients as they run with the contours. Steeper sloped lanes and roads occur on the western edges.

Spaces

The modern estates have a more open aspect with wide roads and ample gardens. M2a has an area of green space surrounded by sheltered accommodation. The lanes are more compact with little public amenity space. Small alleys and paths interconnect the subareas. Chapel Street has a strong linear composition and is more compact nearer to the village green.

Roads, Streets, Routes

There is a variety of road types: the modern estates have wide well connected routes, the lanes have more complex, denser layouts. Footpaths and alleys provide links between and within subareas.

Green and Natural Features

The modern estate gardens have enough space for medium sized trees. Area M2a has a good sized mown grass space with some mature, medium-sized trees, further north the estate has a semi-private footpath network with mown grass creating green courtyard at the front of the houses. The character area backs onto open pasture with associated hedgerows and a scattering of mature trees. There is one tree preservation order on Central Street.

Landmarks and Views

With the exception on some properties along Chapel Street, and depending on the precise locality, most properties and public spaces have occasional views over the Cheshire Plain. The Crown public house and the Methodist Church are important local landmarks. Mount Pleasant Garage has a shabby charm.

Buildings and Details

Some of the cottages and terraces have ornate and interesting window and door arrangements. Rendered façades are common, the Crown Public house is a typical example with lintels and quoins painted black set in a white rendered wall. The modern estates have less pronounced features, M2e High View Estate seems of generic design with only a few partially rendered properties, and generally out of character with the older streets in the area. At the southern threshold of the village a pair of rock faces cottages sit across the road from a white rendered house whose upper storey is clad with waney edge timber.

Streetscape features

The Clare Street housing estate M2a has a memorial plague, ornamental boulders, some seating, small lampposts, areas for private parking including garages. The other areas have few streetscape features. Boundary walls made a variety of materials including stone, brick, concrete block. Traditional hedges, ornamental planting and wooden fencing are common boundary features throughout the area.

Landuse

Residential within the lanes and estates. Chapel Street has some retail, a mechanics garage, a public house, a chapel and a hairdressers.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- the topography, building materials, and the idiosyncratic road network, make this a unique environment
- the views both into and out of this area are important
- there are many valuable trees throughout the area; none benefit from protection
- the recently built estates are out of character with an incremental character of the rest of the settlement



Fig M-2-01 Row of houses opposite village green



Fig M-2-02 Chapel



Fig M-2-03 Residential lane



Fig M-2-06 - Public house



Fig M-2-07 Weathered façades



Fig M-2-04 Renovated building



Fig M-2-05 New estate



Fig M-2-08 Estate green space



Fig M-2-09 View over Cheshire Plain

M3 - Woodcock Lane, Chapel Bank, High Street

General Overview

This character area skirts the south and west slopes of Mow Cop

Layout

Woodcock Lane starts at Woodcock Well Primary School after a sharp bend in the road. Travelling towards Mow Cop, Woodcock Lane has detached residential properties with large gardens on its eastern side only, generously spaced. Chapel Bank is narrow in places and creates a compact urban environment of terraced cottages with narrow front gardens. High Street, which starts as a track wrapping around Mow Cop, turns north to meet Chapel Bank. Properties on the High Street at the foot of Mow Cop on High Street are scattered among the rocky outcrops below the summit. Houses on the eastern side of Mow Cop are arranged more regularly than those on the western side. Mow Cop itself is a series of rocky summits and open heathland space with the Castle at the top.

Topography

The southern section of Woodcock Lane is steep and levels off more where it meets Primitive Street. Chapel Bank leads uphill towards Mow Cop from the south east and is steep in parts. High Street is steep where it meets Chapel Bank, but becomes more level where it reaches the Castle car park.

Spaces

Woodcock Lane has an open character and becomes more civic up around Woodcock Well Primary School and the church with its large, historic graveyard. Chapel Bank is mostly compact housing. The renovated mill building has large external areas and a grand setting. High Street is a open aspect street with occasional properties interspersed among rocky outcrops and heath land. The houses on the western side of High Street are more regularly arranged.

Roads, Streets, Routes

Woodcock Lane, High Street and Chapel Bank are simple routes that provide access to more complex residential streets and semi private roads. There are two public footpaths in the area, one of them running in an east-west direction from the Parsons Well down the Staffordshire Ridge towards Halls Road. There are some less formalised alleys and routes leading off the highways. Mow Cop Castle is an open access area for walkers with several informal routes leading up to and around the various rocky outcrops of the summit.

Green and Natural Features

Despite the houses at its south, Woodcock Lane has feel of an agricultural lane. A group of trees defines the school and church boundaries. Behind the houses on Woodcock Lane a band of trees runs along the ridge line up towards Chapel Bank. Chapel bank is mostly urban but has occasional medium-sized trees in private gardens; trees in the surrounding area can be glimpsed through gaps in the housing. High Street is dominated by the elevated heathland to the east, with occasional medium and large trees within private gardens. Areas of Mow Cop Castle have clumps of mature trees.

Landmarks and Views

Mow Cop Castle is a major, parish-wide landmark. The area has a long list of interesting local landmark buildings including Woodcock Well Primary School and Church, the Methodist Chapel on Woodcock Lane, Coronation Mill on Chapel Bank. There are abundant views to the west over the Cheshire Plain to the Welsh hills.

Buildings and Details

An industrial past and gritstone quarrying combined with interesting local traditions give the built environment a rich tapestry of building details and styles. See figures M-3-01 to M-3-09

Streetscape features

A unique feature of the Parish are the historic roadside wells. . Other features include: a modern telephone box, natural stone walling, timber knee rails and fences, and National Trust signage for Mow Cop Castle.

Landuse

Residential, agricultural, school, nursery, churches, recreational, and heathland.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- the combination of historic layout, gritstone buildings, topography, cultural artifacts and views, make this a highly sensitive area
- the trees in the graveyard, on the ridge behind Woodcock Lane and around Coronation Mill are important features in the landscape, but have no statutory protection.



Fig M-3-01 Row of stone built houses



Fig M-3-02 Stone walling



Fig M-3-03 Sloping property gardens



Fig M-3-06 House next to rocky outcrops



Fig M-3-07 Informal driveway intersect



Fig M-3-04 Historic religious location

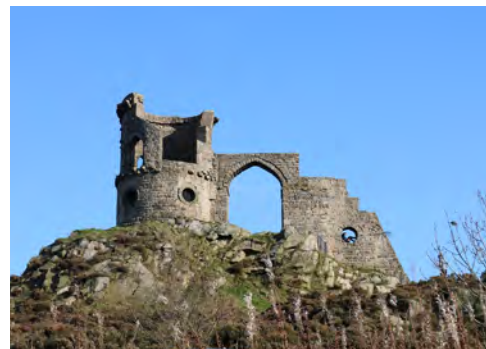


Fig M-3-05 Mow Cop Castle folly



Fig M-3-08 Listed well

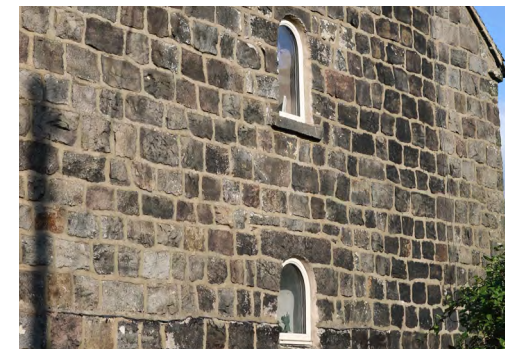


Fig M-3-09 Stone built windows

M4 - Primitive Street and Station Road

General Overview

An area of dense housing on the lower west slope of Mow Cop, petering out to sparse rows and scattered houses further west.

Layout

The east part is a regular grid of residential roads; to the west, as Top Station Road becomes Station Road, houses are mainly on the south side of the road.

Topography

The eastern section is a steep slope running down east to west, with a sharp increase in gradient in between Close Lane and Wood Street intersections, where the gradient along Top Station Road is 25%.

Spaces

Although many of the houses in the grid of roads at the east have reasonably large front gardens, high boundary enclosures give the area an enclosed feel. To the west, along Top Station Road and Station Road, properties become more widely spaced and roads broader. Both areas are basically roads with private housing and there is no public open space. The whole area is surrounded to the north, west and south by open pasture, and to the east by more housing on High Street.

Roads, Streets, Routes

Housing in the western section of the area have longer drives and there are some semi-private lanes off both Station Road and Halls Road. Five public footpaths in the Halls Road area permeate in all directions.

Green and Natural Features

Open, agricultural countryside with large fields, some with tree-lined boundaries. On the lower slopes of Station Road there is an area of group and individual tree preservation orders.

Landmarks and Views

Reaching the top of the steep slope on Station Mow Cop Castle emerges straight ahead on the horizon. Elsewhere, views are limited by buildings and topography.

Other local landmarks include the Primitive Methodist Chapel, and the Cheshire View public house (now closed). There are wide scale views over the Cheshire Plain and beyond to the Welsh hills. Jodrell Bank is visible to the north. Views of Mow Cop from lower settlements outside this area include the scattered yet elevated urban settlement around Mow Cop.

Buildings and Details

Although modern developments have been built in a scattered pattern, there are also many more traditional buildings around the area.

Streetscape features

The steepness of the roads means that building a simple bus shelter would be a challenge so there are few streetscape features on the public highways. Front garden boundaries are natural stone, brick, concrete walling, hedges, or fences or combinations of these materials. A well at the end of Woodcock Lane is a local streetscape feature.

Landuse

Residential, agricultural, churches, recreational routes.

Condition, Value and Sensitivities:

- the fragmentary nature of the built environment is an important element in this area's character
- the trees between Primitive Street and Halls Road are important features in the residential landscape, but have no statutory protection.



Fig M-4-01 Scattered housing amongst steeply sloping fields



Fig M-4-02 Stone built housing



Fig M-4-03 Stone built housing



Fig M-4-06 - Disused agricultural building



Fig M-4-07 No pavement



Fig M-4-04 Interesting property details



Fig M-4-05 Modern church



Fig M-04-08 A mixture of building facades



Fig M-4-09 Historic well

SECTION 6 : Summary

There are a variety of contrasting landscape character areas types in a relatively small area. These range from parkland, pasture, woodland associated with Rode Heath and the canal; the linear developments that follow the A34, the canal and the railway of Scholar Green; and the slopes of Mow Cop with scattered settlements.

Each of these areas have distinctive landscape features that define their characters; they also share some features. For example: the character of Rode Heath is largely determined by the presence of the canal; the historic and contemporary transport networks have shaped the character of Scholar Green; the interaction of topography and historic built environment make Mow Cop and its settlements a very special place.

Each character area's description comments on its value and condition. A range of particular sensitivities - e.g. visibility, historical value, local amenity, presence or absence of tree cover - are identified.

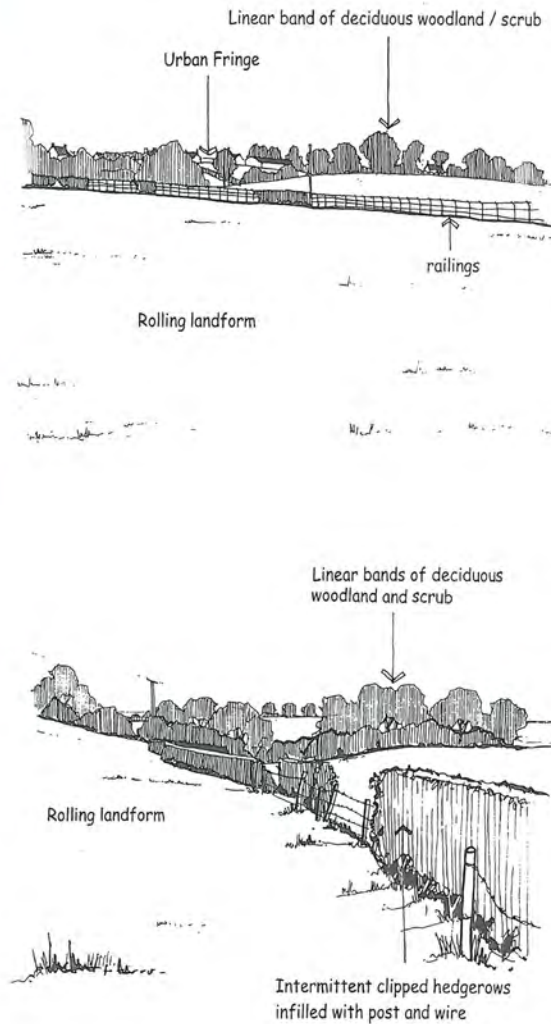
The importance of the landscape setting to each character area and, more importantly to the conservation areas, is highlighted. For example the wider landscape of the Cheshire Plain informs the character of Ramsdell Hall and the canal; where as the topography of the Staffordshire Ridge is fundamental to the character of the Mow Cop Settlements.

A number of particular themes have emerged:

- insufficient protection of existing trees
- detrimental permitted development - e.g. anonymous 'cloned' housing estates
- unfortunate proliferation of housing extensions, dormer windows, sheds, conservatories etc
- the topography of some areas makes them highly visible from great distances
- parts of the Mow Cop settlements are successfully integrated into the landscape
- due to thoughtful siting and careful design, some of the recently built estates are hardly visible in the general landscape
- the visual incoherence resulting from a jumble of different front garden boundary types and materials
- the canal side environments that have not been built on are attractive; however where building has occurred the results are very mixed - one bad building can massively impact upon the character
- the landscape setting of Little Moreton Hall, Rode Hall and Ramsdell Hall are extremely sensitive to adverse change
- the Trent and Mersey Canal, the Macclesfield Canal, Rode Hall and Mow Cop Castle are all recreation and amenity assets whose tourism value to the local economy is not fully realised.
- possibility of additional conservation areas
- the need for design guidance to inform new developments and prevent 'clone' generic housing schemes e.g. Specify a range of brick types and colours for main exterior walls



4.3 WHEELLOCK ROLLING PLAIN

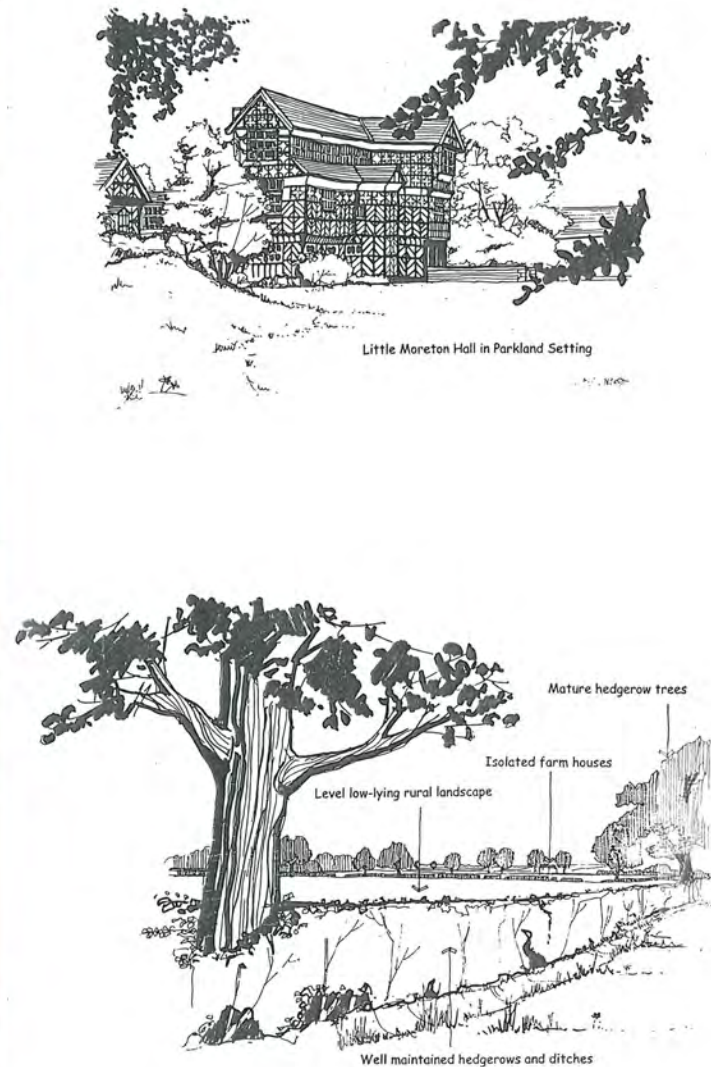


Key Characteristics

- Rolling and somewhat more incised landform than that of the Cheshire Plain
- Linear bands of deciduous woodland and scrub along natural watercourses and other corridors such as the dismantled rail line and canal
- Combination of clipped hedgerows and thick overgrown hedgerows along field boundaries and country lanes. Some hedge row loss and replacement with post and wire fencing
- Irregular medium scale fields predominantly used for pasture with some isolated areas given over to arable
- Distinctive Cheshire railings in various states of repair along country lanes
- Dispersed settlement pattern of isolated residential properties, farms and villages
- Urban fringe land uses including golf courses at Sandbach and nurseries/garden centres on the edge of Alsager
- Rolling landform tends to truncate views within the area, generally limiting them to short or middle distance views

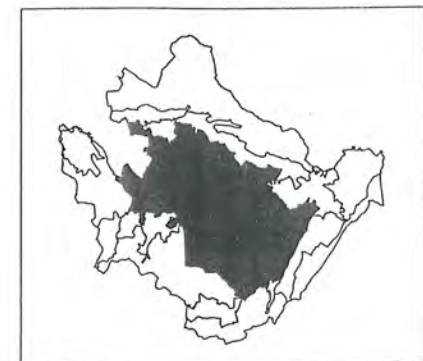


4.5 CHESHIRE PLAIN

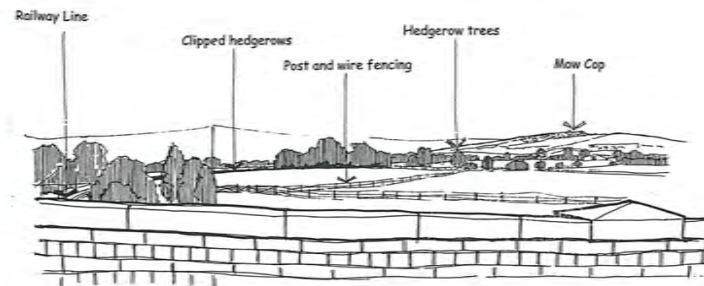
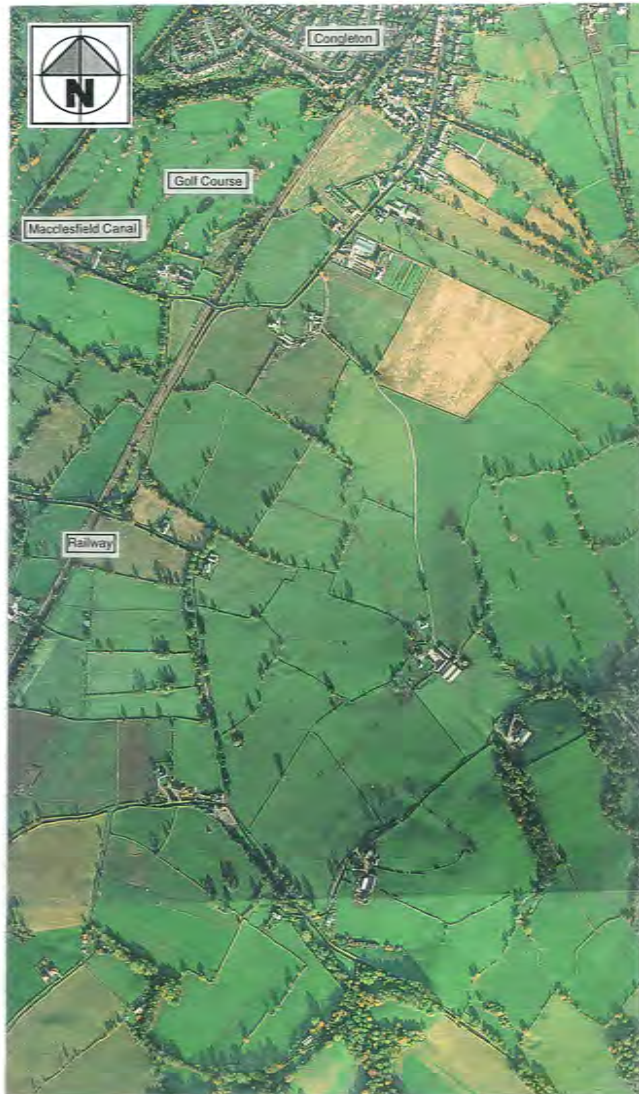


Key Characteristics

- Level low lying rural landscape, although not truly flat
- Agricultural, predominantly pastoral use. Generally medium scale farmland, large regular rectilinear field patterns interspersed with smaller irregular fields
- Maintained hawthorn hedges and hedgerow trees provide containment and are an important landscape feature. A significant number of trees are over mature
- Numerous isolated houses, farmhouses and small settlements. Traditional buildings constructed using orange-red Cheshire brick and Welsh Slate or blue clay tile roofs
- There are Estates and Manor houses having their own distinct character and parkland feel
- Small blocks of woodland, mainly broadleaf deciduous, though with some coniferous
- Dense network of roads, primarily hedge lined country lanes. There are few major roads
- Field ponds scattered, though not omnipresent, are often vegetated and species rich features

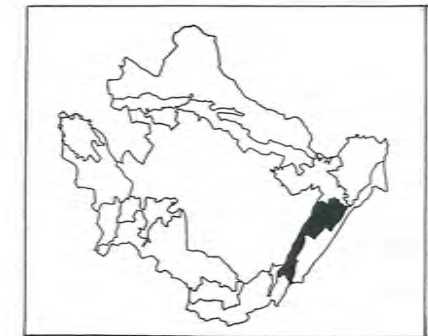


4.10 MOW COP FRINGE

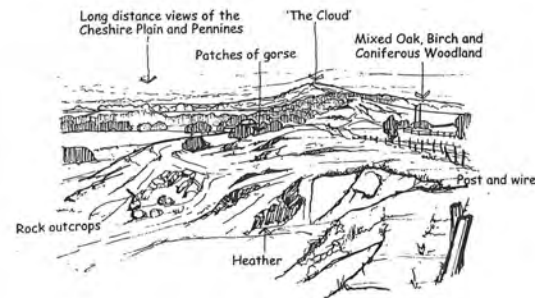
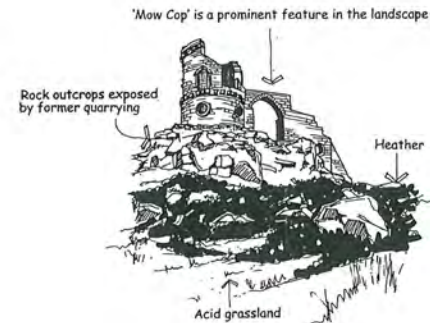
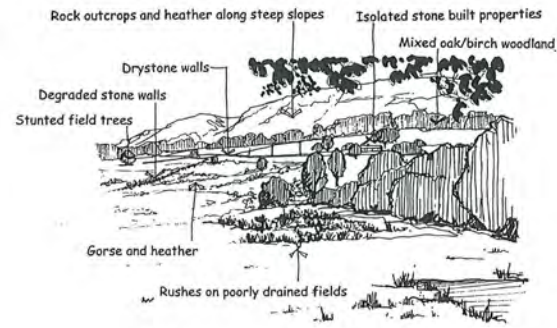


Key Characteristics

- Transitional landscape, between the Staffordshire Ridge and the Cheshire Plain
- Relatively open featureless landscape rising towards the Mow Cop and Staffordshire Ridge
- Rural landscape predominantly used for grazing dairy cattle or hay/silage production
- Medium scale field pattern is generally irregular and defined by a mixture of well maintained, intermittent or overgrown hedgerows
- Fewer hedgerow trees are found compared to the wider Cheshire Plain
- Settlement pattern is dispersed with few sizeable settlements. Older buildings are primarily constructed with cheshire brick. There are also several examples of sandstone buildings as well as some modern contemporary forms
- Areas of parkland to the south near the Macclesfield Canal, notably Ramsdell Hall
- The Stafford to Macclesfield rail line and the Macclesfield Canal cut across nearly all the country lanes in the area and bridge crossings are a particular feature



4.11 STAFFORDSHIRE RIDGE



Key Characteristics

- Rising land from lower pasture farmland in an easterly direction to a prominent gritstone ridge with exposed rock outcrops
- Distinct vegetation patterns including birch woodland which gives way to heaths and heather associated with rock outcropping
- Thick, overgrown hedgerows on lower slopes. Individual hedgerow trees less apparent. Hedgerows give way upslope to grit stone walls
- Woodland cover is higher on upper slopes, compared to the wider Cheshire Plain
- Prominent summits located along the ridgeline are the Cloud and Mow Cop
- Settlement is dispersed, comprising isolated houses and farmsteads. Buildings are simple and robust, older buildings are grey Millstone grit or red sandstone. Modern buildings are constructed using Cheshire brick and clay tiles
- Transport network consists of minor winding roads, with localised containment by woodland and hedges
- Expansive views westwards from the ridge are impressive and spectacular over and across the Cheshire Plain. Views eastwards from lower slopes have the ridge as a backdrop





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