

# SWYNNERTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL



January 2014

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## 1 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The special interest that justifies the designation of the Swynnerton Conservation Area derives from a number of architectural, historical and environmental factors including:

- Although there was an Augustinian Priory in the 10<sup>th</sup> century (dissolved in the 16<sup>th</sup> century) and Saxon origins to the place name, the growth and development of Swynnerton village is largely attributable to the development of the Swynnerton Estate from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century;
- A well preserved village core, retaining much of its historical and architectural form and character, with little 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century infill development;
- The area's buildings are of high architectural and historic quality; ten are listed and many others that make a positive contribution to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area;



Figure 1	War Memorial with St Mary's Church in the background
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- A variety of building types ranging from the prestigious Swynnerton Hall and its related outbuildings, through the two churches, Village Hall and public house, to modest cottages, agricultural and commercial buildings;
- Prevalence of vernacular materials such as red brick with Staffordshire blue clay roof tiles, although timber framing, render, slate and sandstone are all in evidence creating diversity and interest within the village;
- Quality and significance of public spaces such as around the war memorial, within the churchyard and at the fish pond;
- Contribution of private open space, most notably the landscaping in Swynnerton Park attributable to Capability Brown and James Trubshaw;

- Notable places of worship of both Anglican and Catholic denominations: Church of St Mary (C12 origins) and Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption (1868-9);
- Individual trees and groups of trees notably those in the churchyards of the Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption and St Mary's, within the parkland of Swynnerton Hall, and mature street trees, such as at Weavers Walk;
- Well-defined boundaries ranging from the stone and brick boundary walls to St Mary's Church and Swynnerton Hall Estate to domestic hedge boundaries, and including key details such as gate piers.

## **1.2 Key issues:**

- Incremental erosion of historic fabric such as loss of historic timber windows for UPVC units on unlisted but significant buildings;
- Unsympathetic and dated highway infrastructure and signage;
- Tree management;
- Poor condition of The Old Post Office.

These issues are discussed in greater detail in Section 8.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background

The Swynnerton Conservation Area was originally designated in February 1970 by Staffordshire County Council.

### 2.2 Planning policy context

Conservation Areas are defined as ‘*areas of architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*’ in Section 69 of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* (The Act). Local Planning Authorities are required by the Act to identify the parts of their area that should be designated as conservation areas and to formulate and publish proposals to preserve or enhance them. Section 71 of the Act recommends that Local Planning Authorities should review their conservation areas where appropriate. Therefore making sure that conservation area designations are still ‘fit for purpose’.

As well as receiving statutory protection, conservation areas are protected by national and local planning policies. National policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework places importance on the ‘significance’ of ‘heritage assets’. A conservation area is deemed as a heritage asset in itself, as well as historic buildings and archaeological sites contained within it. The relevant documents are:

- *The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*;
- Central government guidance, principally as set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (2012) paragraphs 126-141
- *PPS5 Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (2010);
- *Stafford Borough Local Plan 2001* (saved policies), particularly Policies E&D18 to 22 affecting Conservation Areas, Policies E&D23 to 25 affecting Listed Buildings, and Policies E&D33 to 35 affecting archaeology. Relevant historic environment policies within *The Plan for Stafford Borough* will supersede these Saved Policies after adoption;
- *Staffordshire Structure Plan 1996-2011* (saved policies), policies NC14-NC19.

Details of other relevant policy and guidance is detailed and listed under Appendix 3.

### 2.3 Development Management

Broadly, the effects of designation are:

- Planning permission must be obtained from the local planning authority prior to the substantial or total demolition of any building or structure within a conservation area, with some exceptions;
- The local planning authority must consider the desirability of *preserving or enhancing* the character or appearance of the conservation area as a ‘material consideration’ when assessing applications for change in conservation areas;
- Permitted development rights are slightly different in conservation areas, to ensure that proposals that might affect the character and/or appearance of a building are considered under the relevant planning policies;
- Permission is required from the planning authority to fell or lop a tree over a certain size.

## **2.4 Purpose of the appraisal**

This appraisal defines the special architectural and historic interest for which the Swynnerton Conservation Area merits designation. It identifies the positive features that should be protected and highlights the negative factors that detract from its character and appearance. It will be used by the Borough Council in considering planning proposals and will also inform property owners and developers to take account of the importance of buildings, features, spaces and landscape within and adjacent to the Conservation Area.

Disclaimer: The omission of any particular feature within this appraisal does not imply that it is of no significance.

## **2.5 Community Involvement**

Stafford Borough Council's Statement of Community Involvement sets out to ensure that all sections of the community and interested parties have a reasonable opportunity to engage with plan-making and planning application processes. Consultation was held between 20 August 2013 and 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013, and a public exhibition was held at Swynnerton Village Hall on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

# **3 LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE SETTING**

## **3.1 Location and activities**

Swynnerton lies approximately five kilometres northwest of Stone and is located within the North Staffordshire Green Belt. The Swynnerton Ward has a population of approximately 4500 people. Swynnerton itself is a rural Estate Village owned by Lord Stafford, and the Conservation Area covers the historic core on the eastern side of the present day village.

The ecclesiastical establishments and buildings of the Swynnerton Estate are key presences within the conservation area, but there are also former agricultural buildings, some commercial businesses, including a pub, as well as domestic properties.

## **3.2 Topography and geology**

Swynnerton is developed on Sherwood sandstone on a ridge of over 500 feet, between the valley of the Trent to the east and its tributaries to the west. The sandstone geology is reflected in the construction of some of its buildings, such as St Mary's Church, and the prominent use of stone for boundary walls and architectural detail.

## **3.3 Relationship of the conservation area to its surroundings**

The extensive estate of Swynnerton Park, owned by Lord Stafford, almost encloses the conservation area, resulting in a contrast of open landscapes with the more intimate enclosed nature of the village. Despite the village being in an elevated position, it is largely hidden away by parkland trees to the south and wooded hills to the north, though some glimpses can be seen in the approach across the parkland from the south. From the village itself, however, the hilltop location affords several vistas across the countryside, especially to the north and south.

A grade II listed water tower, located just outside of the village and conservation area to the north, is the only notable landmark building within the immediate surrounds of the village.

**4 HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

**4.1 Historic development**

Swynnerton is thought to have Saxon origins. The Saxon translation for Swynnerton was “farmstead of the swineherd”, the suffix ‘ton’ meaning a settlement or farmstead. Swynnerton has been known by several names including the Norman *Sulvertone* (1086) as described in the Domesday Book, *Swineduna Helye* (1166-7), *Swiluerton* (1206) *Suinnerton* (1242), *Swynaferton* (1272) and *Swynforton* (also 1272). One possible meaning of Swynnerton comes from ‘wallowing place for animals’, i.e. for pigs (hence the Saxon swineherd), with ‘ton’ meaning a ford. This has led to suggestions that the original settlement was located on lower ground to the south, where a ford passed through a narrow valley. Although the parkland to the south of Swynnerton contains some possible late-prehistoric burial monuments, there is no known archaeological evidence of early medieval activity. The 12<sup>th</sup> century church of St Mary’s within the present village, suggests Saxon settlement in the existing location of the village.

Swynnerton’s market was granted a Charter by King Edward I in 1306. The original manor house was destroyed in the Civil War. Rebuilding began following the Restoration of 1660 on the present site of the Hall, and it is said, the village was moved bodily to its present location. The present Hall owes much of its appearance to work between 1725 and 1729 by the famous mason, Francis Smith of Warwick (see statutory listed building description in Annex 1). The new village was deliberately sited behind the hall so as not to hinder its outlook. Plans for the Park to the south of the Hall were drawn up by Lancelot (Capability) Brown in 1758, although these do not appear have been completed, and major landscaping was undertaken by James Trubshaw in 1810. Trubshaw undertook other significant work in the Borough, including the grounds of Sandon Hall and Trentham Hall.



Figure 2	Swynnerton Hall in 1821 viewed across the parkland to the south, and with St Mary’s Church in the background
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The Swynnertons were Lords of the Manor from the Norman period to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when in 1562 Elizabeth Swynnerton married Sir William Fitzherbert. The Fitzherberts were catholic Royalists and were under threat via the Parliamentarians and Cromwell during the Civil War and were forced to flee, but returned to Swynnerton in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. This family stem relates to the present Lord Stafford the current landowner.

Maria Teresa Fitzherbert and her son Basil Fitzherbert commissioned the present Roman Catholic Church, the Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption, built in 1868. It was designed by Gilbert Blount, a renowned Victorian Gothic architect influenced by Pugin, and is now a grade II\* listed building. The close proximity of the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Church of St Mary is quite unusual, though the two churches now share many services and events. The predominant style of the grade I listed St Mary's is Early English (early medieval), but it has 12<sup>th</sup> century origins, most clearly demonstrated by the Norman doorway to the tower. The interior contains an effigy of a knight, thought to be John de Swynnerton, circa 1264.

#### 4.2 Map Analysis

Yates' map of 1775 clearly shows the topography of Swynnerton and the location of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Hall and village on a natural ridge of land.



Figure 3	Yates' 1775 Map
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Brown's scheme for landscaping the parkland to Swynnerton Hall was only partially completed, but remains in evidence, particularly in the belt of trees to the east of the Estate.



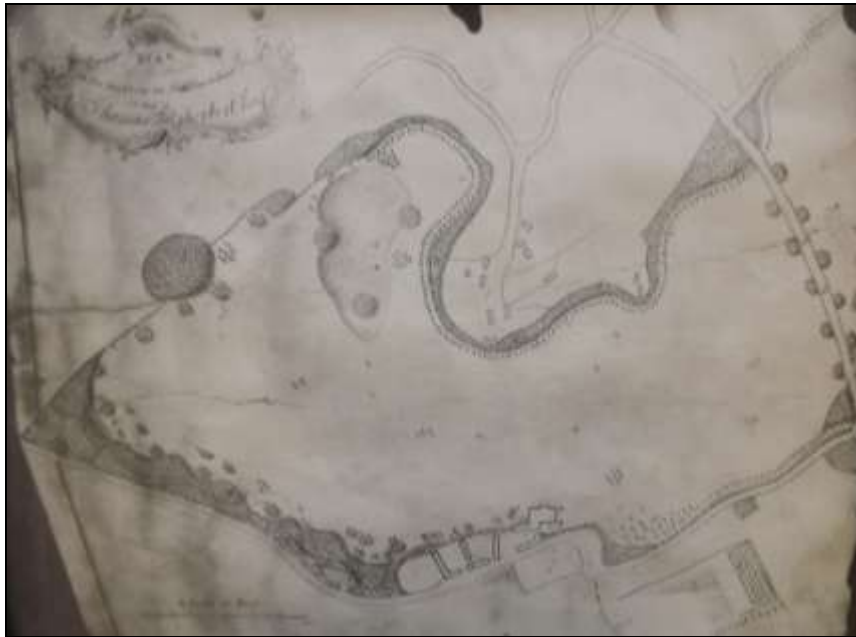


Figure 4	Copy of Lancelot Brown's plan for Swynnerton Park, thought to date from 1758 (reproduced with permission from Staffordshire Record Office)
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Figure 5	Tithe Map 1848 (reproduced with permission from Staffordshire Record Office)
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By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century the historic core of the village was well-established, including the road layout, which has remained unchanged to this day. The wooded parkland to the east, now known as 'The Shrubs' was well established, but to the southeast were more open prospects across the parkland.



Figure 6	Swynnerton, First Edition Ordnance Survey (survey of 1879)
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Some more modern estate housing was developed along Early Lane in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and later in the 20<sup>th</sup> century substantial housing estates were established west of the village core. More recently new housing on former allotments to the north has been completed.

## 5 SPATIAL ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Plan form and layout

The street pattern of the historic village of Swynnerton has been determined by two factors: the Saxon origins and the historical development of the Swynnerton Hall Estate. It is organic in character with few modifications or alterations evident since the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The historic buildings are located adjacent to the main road, which runs on a north-south axis through the village. The road skirts to the west as it reaches the Hall to the south, ensuring the Hall enjoys unhindered vistas across landscaped grounds and open parkland to the south.

The village buildings enjoy quite a loose and organic layout, which has evolved over time. The majority are orientated to face the road and look inward to the heart of the village, although farm buildings are typically orientated around their yards. The Hall alone turns its back on the village.

## 5.2 Landmarks, focal points and views

The main landmarks are the two churches at the central triangle of the village, with the memorial being the centrepiece. Although the presence of the Hall is felt, so is its privacy; it presents quite a forbidding tall stone boundary wall and irregular rear elevation to the village.



Figure 7 | War Memorial, Main Street

There are no views of the parkland from within the conservation area or village, but approaches from Eccleshall to the south present open views across the parkland to the fine south front of the Hall.

Views are both enhanced and enclosed by trees lining the road to either side throughout the conservation area. Notable views are thus where the space opens out: around the Churches, War Memorial and Hall, and to the south where the enclosure of hedges and trees abruptly opens out to the parkland beyond. The reverse is true of views approaching the village, where the leafy boundaries introduce the intimacy of its historic core.



Figures 8 & 9 | The contrast in character of views out of the conservation area, to the north and to the south

### 5.3 Open spaces, trees and landscape

The main significant trees are those found amongst the historic plantations relating to the Swynnerton Estate. Although these are on private land, the village benefits much from its wooded setting.

The approaches from the south such as from Main Street and Hall Lane are significant with dense tree cover framing the main approaches into the village. There are other significant trees around the main village core, especially in St Mary's Churchyard. There is also an avenue of significant trees between Main Street and Weavers' Walk which screens the 1970s housing beyond.





Figure 10	Trees at Swynnerton Hall's grounds
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The village has quite an enclosed nature, making the open space around the church and war memorial a key focal area.

The conservation area includes that part of Swynnerton Park which surrounds the Hall and contributes to the immediate setting of it and the village. To the northeast is a historic fishpond, now enhanced and managed by the local community for fishing and as a leisure space. The pond is only briefly viewed through gaps in the mature tree boundary from the main road, but opens out into a tranquil and leafy waterside space.



Figure 11	The fish pond
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 <p><b>Stafford</b> BOROUGH COUNCIL</p>	<p>Stafford Borough Council Civic Centre Riverside Stafford ST16 3AQ Tel: (01785)619000</p>	<p>Not to scale</p>	
		<p>Date: May 2013</p>	

### Swynnerton Conservation Area Open Spaces and Trees

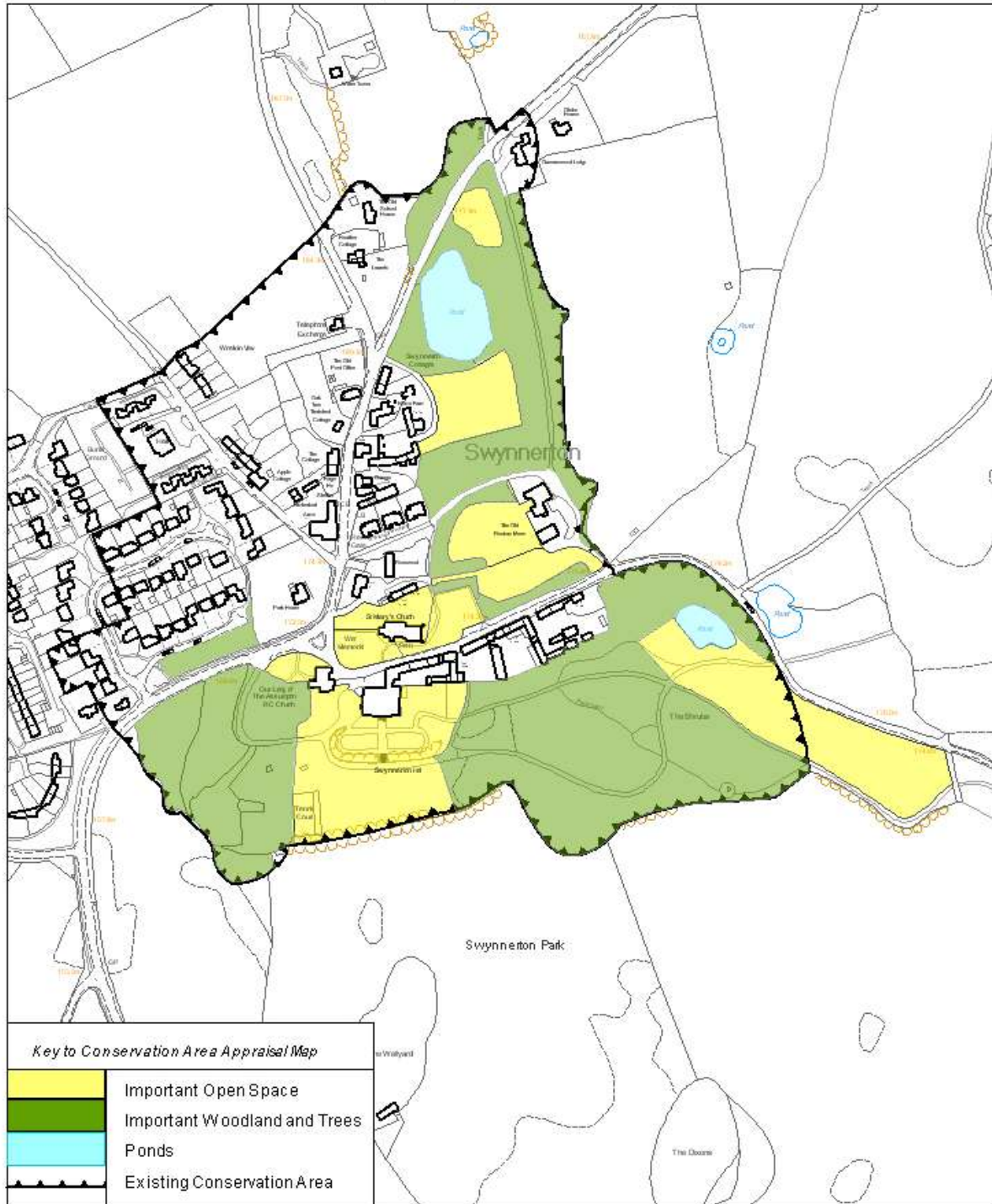


Figure 12

## 5.4 Public realm

The majority of roads within the conservation area are of tarmac, but have informal grass verges without kerbs, whilst accesses are informally defined and surfaced with gravel, thus maintaining the historic rural character. Along the main street, however, there are tarmacadam pavements with a mix of granite and concrete kerbs.

Some areas of historic surfaces – usually brick pavers – survive around private houses.



Figure 13	Traditional kerbing
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Figure 14	Informal grass verges along Hall Lane
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The village is largely free of intrusive highways road markings and signage, though there is unnecessary clutter of modern road signs at the junction with the Newcastle road. Lighting columns are standard galvanised steel units, but amid the well-treed boundaries are unobtrusive. Likewise, over-head cables carried on timber columns are barely noticeable within the rural landscape.



Figure 15	Clutter of highways signs at the junction of Main Road and Stab Lane
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## 6 THE BUILDINGS OF THE CONSERVATION AREA

### 6.1 Building types and principal buildings

There are many examples of community and residential buildings, as well as buildings and structures associated with Swynnerton Hall and its estate. The conservation area is therefore host to a variety of building types but is especially notable for some exceptionally interesting places of worship including St Mary's Church and the Chapel of Our Lady the Assumption. St Mary's pre-dates the Hall and is a remnant of the medieval settlement, whilst the Chapel of Our Lady the Assumption was built by the Fitzherberts and is closely associated with Swynnerton Hall.

Although Swynnerton owes its development and plan form to the building of the Hall in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, the conservation area's historic building stock includes buildings of a range of dates, including timber framed buildings of 17<sup>th</sup> century origin or earlier. These may be buildings that were relocated during the laying out of the Swynnerton Estate in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, or may have already existing as outlying houses of the original settlement, strung out along the main road leading north. Other cottages appear contemporary with the Hall, and later Victorian development includes the Fitzherbert Arms and Village Hall.

A building of 20<sup>th</sup> century interest lies to the south of the building known as 'The Old School House'. Little more than the base of the original village school survives in the rebuilt late-20<sup>th</sup> century dwelling, but within its garden is the school's former air raid shelter from the Second World War, an important vestige of mid-20<sup>th</sup> century defense architecture.

### 6.2 Listed buildings

There are ten listed buildings within the conservation area, of which two are grade I (Swynnerton Hall and St Mary's Church) and one graded II\* (Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption). This reflects the high architectural and historical interest of the village as a whole. The descriptions on the statutory list are reproduced in Appendix 1.



Figure 16

Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption

### 6.3 Other Positive buildings

A number of unlisted buildings have been identified as being positive buildings of historic interest that contribute to the overall character and appearance of the conservation area. These are identified in Appendix 2 and on the Appraisal Map on page 18.

The World War II Air Raid shelter and recent housing development to the north of the village core are also considered positive buildings. The latter, constructed 2012-2013 for the Swynnerton Estate, draws on the materials and forms of the historic environment, adding Arts and Crafts themes typical of early 20<sup>th</sup> century model housing schemes and is considered a successful design response to the historic environment.

### 6.4 Building scale and form



The majority of buildings in the conservation area are of a detached form and generously spaced, contributing to its loose informal layout. There are some semi-detached buildings such as Heather Cottage/The Laurels and Forge House/The Cottage, which originated as single dwellings, being later subdivided. There are some terraced cottages, such as along Early Lane, but this is an exception for Swynnerton.

Many buildings are set within spacious grounds, and most are set back from the roadside; the exceptions being the Fitzherbert Arms and the outbuildings to Swynnerton Hall which are set tightly to the road. The historic buildings have varying orientations relative to the road, usually facing the road, but sometimes with the gable-end presented to the road. This adds to the village's character and interest. Standard housing development from the 1970s is more uniform in form and orientation, though there is some variation in detail and layout to tie the buildings to the historical character of the village.



Figure17	Gable orientations add interest to linear cottages along Main Road
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### Swynnerton Conservation Area Character Appraisal

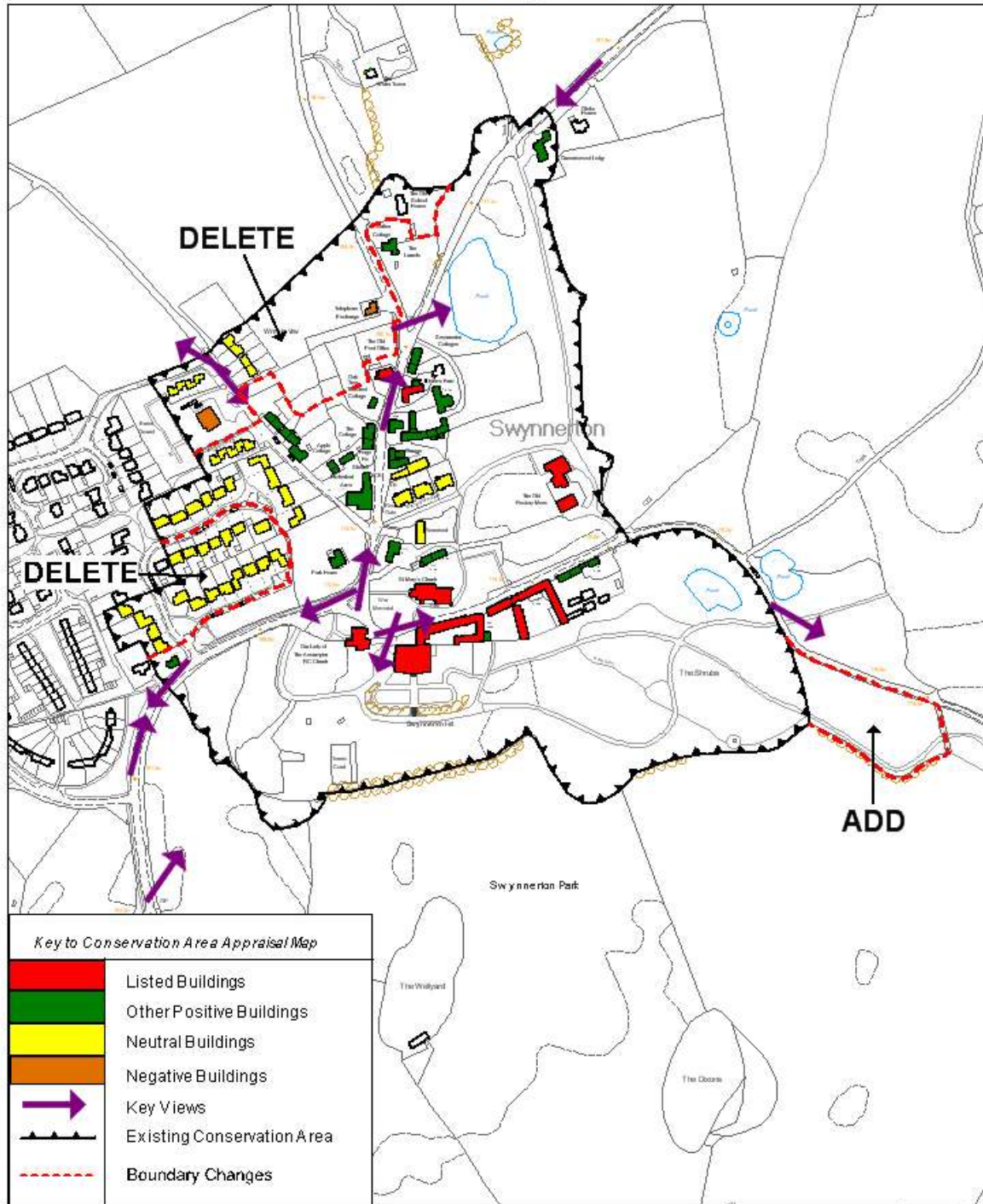


Figure 18

Most houses are two storeys in height, although the earliest have the first floor set partially within the roof space, lit by dormer windows, thus keeping the eaves and roof height low. Agricultural buildings are typically low, of one, or sometimes two, storeys, and the Church Hall is a typically modest single-storey community building. The principal exceptions to this low form are the Hall and churches; their higher status being evident through their scale.

The typical building form is rectilinear with gable ended roofs. Variety is in the form of dormer windows with gablets or swept “eyebrows”, which indicate former thatched roofs. At the outbuildings to the Hall are isolated instances of a hipped roof, and a pyramidal roof to the dovecote.

## 6.5 Building materials and local detail

Brick is the most prevalent building material in the conservation area, due to the high proportion of 18<sup>th</sup> century vernacular buildings. Some brick elevations have been painted or rendered, though these tend to be later 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations rather than historic finishes.

Elements of a soft red local sandstone survive at Oak Tree Cottage and to the interior of the Old Post Office. Elsewhere, at the higher status buildings, i.e. the Churches and Hall, a finer quality sandstone is used. Sandstone is also used for minor architectural detail elsewhere, as for the mullioned windows of the Church Hall.



Figure 19	Oak Tree Cottage
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The interior of the Old Post Office displays early timber-framing and a smoke hood thought to date from the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, and further timber-framing is found within Home Farmhouse. Faux timber-framing reflects this earlier characteristic where it is applied to Victorian buildings, such as at Park House..

The variety of brick hues and quality reflects the date of buildings: earlier vernacular buildings are carried out in a rich soft orange handmade brick, whilst a dark blue/brown mix and polychromatic brickwork features on later Estate buildings in the gothic style, such as at the Fitzherbert Arms.



Figure 20	Building within conservation area demonstrating vernacular materials.
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Most eighteenth century roofs were covered with Staffordshire blue or dark red plain clay tiles. This tradition continued throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, including for the Churches (although medieval in origins, St Mary’s was re-roofed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). The Chapel of Our Lady the Assumption and Park House have alternating decorative bands of tiles; a popular fashion in the Victorian period.

Slate is found only at Swynnerton Hall, whilst thatch features on the oldest vernacular buildings. Eye-brow dormers, where the roof is swept in a gentle curve over a dormer window, usually indicates former thatched roofs, and are found re-covered in plain clay tiles at the Swynnerton Hall barn and at the side wing to Home Farmhouse.



Figure 21	Swynnerton Hall barns – The roof covering of Staffordshire blue clay tiles probably replaced thatch.
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Window and door joinery in the conservation area is predominantly of painted timber. Windows are generally side opening casements for the lower status and earlier vernacular buildings, and sash for the higher status or later buildings, such as Swynnerton Hall, and the Old Rectory. Several of the unlisted historic buildings have had windows replaced with uPVC, which has had an unfortunate impact on the overall character and appearance of the historic street scene.

Window openings also vary in terms of dimensions and orientation according to age and status, and this variety contributes to the rural character of the conservation area. Window openings are typically headed by either straight lintels, or simple segmental brick arches, though the gothic arch features at the Church and Chapel, and is repeated at the picturesque Queenswood Lodge.



Figure 22	Queenswood Lodge
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Chimney stacks are an important detail within the conservation area, varying from modest functional brick, to prominent and multiple stacks with moulded brickwork. The Victorian Estate buildings also favour overhanging eaves, bargeboarding and exposed purlins, in contrast to the plain verges of their earlier neighbours.

## 6.6 Boundary treatment

Boundaries within the Swynnerton Conservation Area play an important role in defining the character of the area and street scene. Treatments vary considerably: there is a mixture of stone and brick walls of varying heights, picket fencing, iron railings, and hedging.

Swynnerton Hall is well-defined and enclosed from view with tall stone walls adjacent to the house, and brick walling around the outbuildings and parkland, whilst St Mary's Churchyard has a low stone wall allowing open views across. In some areas boundary walls survive as a clue to former historic structures and landscapes. At Frobisher Drive and Weaver's Walk, a modern housing estate has been built to incorporate the late-18<sup>th</sup> century brick wall of the Hall's kitchen garden; although in part hidden from public view, it adds character to back gardens. Along Main Road are remnants of a tall brick wall incorporating a public water tap.



### Swynnerton Conservation Area Important Boundaries

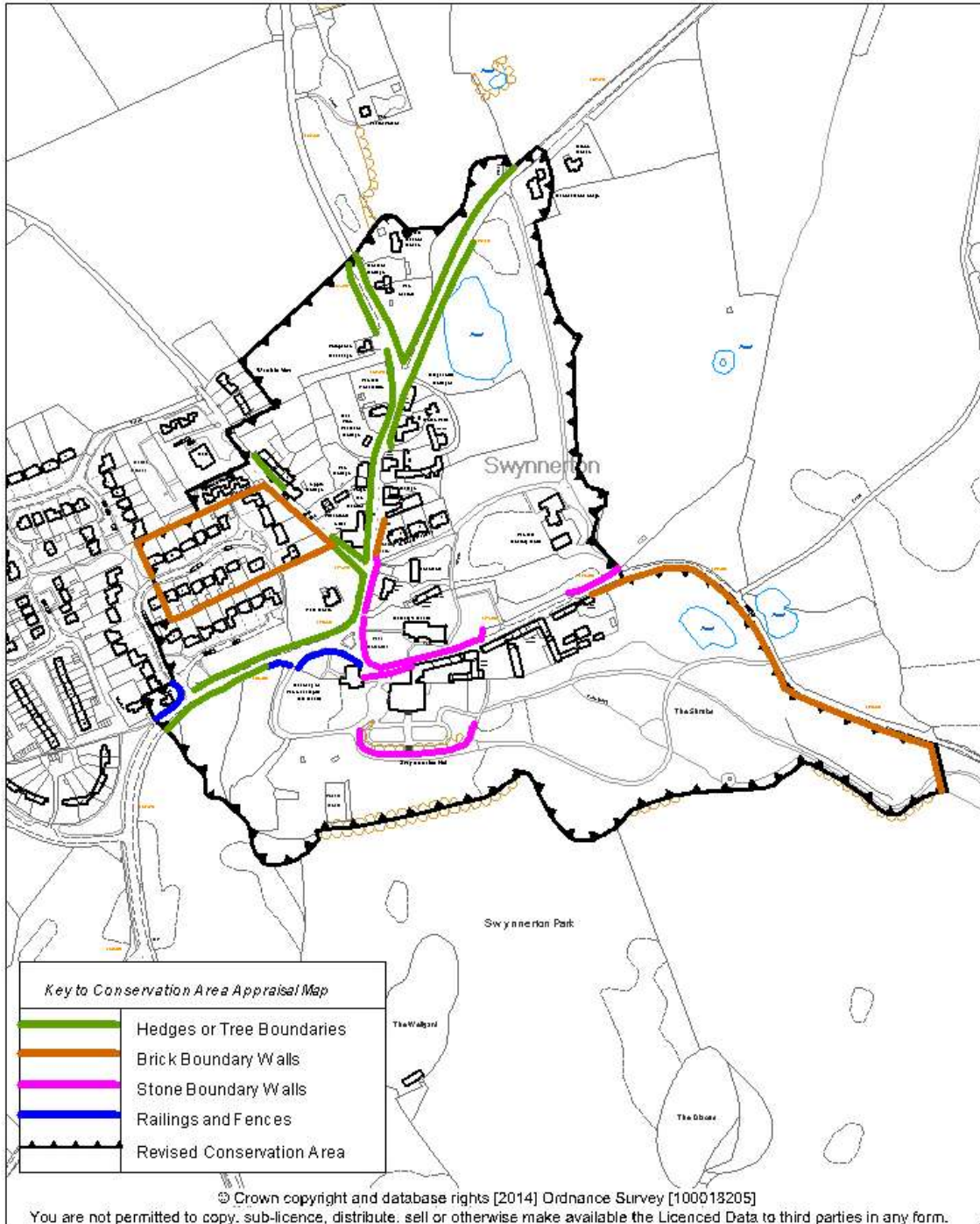


Figure 23



Figure 24 | Boundary wall around Swynnerton Park

Domestic boundaries in the main village core are more open and comprise of hedging, sometimes above low stone walls, whilst stone gate piers and historic iron gates add interest and variety.



Figure 25 | Stone gate piers, wall and hedge at the former entrance to the Old Rectory, now Rectory Gardens

## 6.7 Street furniture and local features of interest

The character and interest of the conservation area is further enhanced by historical street furniture and minor detail within the public realm, including:

- War memorial (grade II);
- K6 Telephone box adjacent to Fitzherbert Arms PH;
- Water tap in wall outside current post office
- Date stone within boundary wall to Swynnerton Hall



Figure 26	Wall and post box in front of village shop
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## 7 CHARACTER AREAS

### 7.1 Summary of Character Areas

The Stone Conservation Area can be divided into three Character Areas according to landscape, topography, historical development, layout, building type, and uses:

Character Area 1: Village Core;  
 Character Area 2: Swynnerton Park;  
 Character Area 3: Modern Housing;

### 7.2 Character Area 1: Village Core

This character area comprises the main historic village of Swynnerton, along Main Street south to St Mary's Church, and along Early Lane.

#### Key characteristics:

- Rising topography and organic form of the historic route through the village;
- Mature hedges and trees give the village core an intimate feel;
- Single depth development along Main Street in spacious or detached plots and in organic and irregular orientations;
- Low boundary walls and hedgerows, giving an open rural feel;
- Generally residential, with church hall, public house, village shop and garage enhancing the feel of a traditional village and community;
- Wide variety of building ages and materials reflecting gradual development over time, but all of modest scale and form;
- High survival rate of historic detail including joinery, chimney stacks, boundary walls and gate piers;
- Interesting enclosed spaces, views and vistas along Early Lane;
- Fishpond in pleasant enclosed woodland setting.

- New housing development of 2013 for the Swynnerton Estate, of high architectural quality, reflecting the traditional materials and forms of the village, but also incorporating Arts and Crafts influences.

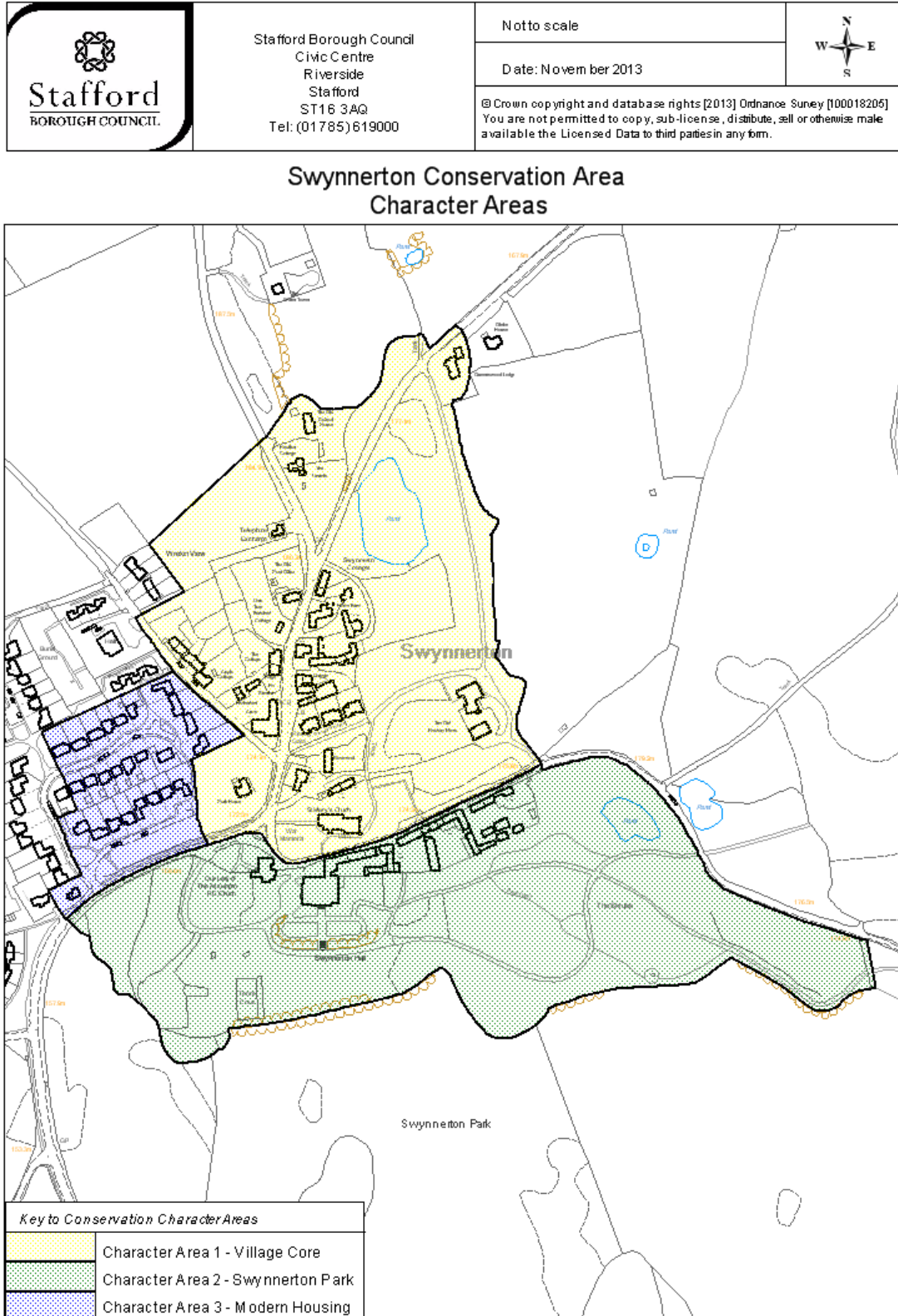


Figure 27



### Negative features

- Historic timber windows and doors have been replaced with UPVC in some buildings;
- Condition, material and age of street furniture such as litter bins and lighting columns detract from the quality of the immediate surroundings and overall setting of the conservation area.
- Poor condition of The Old Post Office, an important listed building possibly of late 15<sup>th</sup> century origins;
- Loss of views to west of village and setting of The Cottage through close proximity of recent development;
- Little historic fabric remains in terms of the floorscape, where the roads and pavements consist of concrete and tarmac.
- Use of cement rich mortar has accelerated decay of masonry of some buildings, most notably of the soft sandstone at The Cottage.

### **7.3 Character Area 2: Swynnerton Hall Estate**

This area comprises the south-eastern section of the conservation area, the Hall, the Chapel, outbuildings and part of the historic parkland.

#### Key characteristics:

- Formal and enclosed on the north side and in relation to the village;
- Open aspect across parkland to south;
- Attractive mature trees of varying species in woodland plantations or as individual parkland specimens;
- Survival of parts of Capability Brown's 1758 landscaping and subsequent early 19<sup>th</sup> century remodelling by Trubshaw;
- Variation of boundary treatments, including brick and stone walls, hoop topped railings, timber palings;
- Impressive buildings of high architectural quality in the form of Swynnerton Hall and Our Lady of Assumption, both of which also act as landmark buildings;
- Interesting outbuildings along Hall Lane that have a strong and consistent building line enhancing the sense of privacy and enclosure.

#### Negative features

- Condition of boundary wall in some places.

### **7.4 Character Area 3: Modern housing**

This character area is predominantly made up of the modern 1970s housing to the west of the village.

#### Key characteristics:

- Substantial tree cover along Main Street and Weavers Walk giving a very green and open character and allowing the historic buildings to remain prominent in the street scene;

- Historic wall that bounded the late-18<sup>th</sup> century kitchen garden of Swynnerton Hall. This gives this section of the conservation area some historic context and established character, as well as some enclosure to the housing;
- Broad palette of building materials and form tie the more modern development to the historic environment



Figure 28	Historic Boundary wall, adjacent Frobisher Drive
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### Negative features

- Standardised architecture fails to reinforce the historic character of the village, in terms of quality of materials and detailing, and in plan form;
- Overall character is suburban rather than rural;
- Negative buildings including the Village Hall and the electricity sub station on Stab Lane.

## **8 MANAGEMENT OF THE CONSERVATION AREA**

Any new development should reinforce the character outlined in the summary of special interest and key characteristics identified above, and be sympathetic to the historical evolution and character of the village. The following is intended for referral by developers and home owners.

Policies for the protection and management of the historic environment through the development management process are set out within NPPF Paragraphs 127 through to 141, and in Saved Policies of Stafford Borough Local Plan, policies E&D 18: *Development Likely to Affect Conservation Areas*, E&D19: *Accommodating New Development within Conservation Areas*, E&D20: *Demolition of Buildings in Conservation Areas*, E&D23: *Development Proposals Affecting Listed Buildings*, E&D24: *Demolition/Partial Demolition of Listed Buildings*, E&D25: *Proposals to Convert or Extend a Listed Building*, E&D43: *Trees in Conservation Areas* and E&D44: *Development Affecting Trees and Hedgerows*.

The draft Plan for Stafford Borough sets out policies for the protection and management of the historic environment through policies N9 and paragraphs 12.27 to 12.58. These should be used in conjunction with this appraisal to guide or assess any future development within Hanchurch conservation area.

Other organisations, such as the County Council Highways Authority, and statutory undertakers also have their own commitments to protect the character and appearance of the conservation area in the exercise of their duties.

To manage and protect the special historic character and appearance of the Swynnerton Conservation Area in the exercise of these policies and duties:

- The existing special historic character and appearance of the conservation area as set out on Sections 5, 6 and 7 above and all features identified as positive on the Conservation Area Appraisal Maps on pages 13, 17 and 21 (Figures 11, 17 & 22) should be retained and reinforced.
- Further works that harm the significance of the area, as set out on pages 25 and 26 above should be avoided.
- *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* (Department for Communities and Local Government, Department for Culture, Media and Sport, English Heritage, 2010) or its successor should be used for guidance.
- Existing and emerging design or conservation guidance published by Stafford Borough Council and English Heritage guidance should be consulted where relevant, such as *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings: A guide to good practice* (English Heritage, 2006), *Living Buildings in a Living Landscape* (English Heritage, 2006), *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (English Heritage, 2008), *Streets for All* (English Heritage, 2004), *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (English Heritage, 2011).
- Some works that could harm the character or appearance of the conservation area can be carried out under “permitted development rights”, which means that home owners do not need to apply for planning permission. Owners are nevertheless encouraged to take heed of the special historic character and appearance of the area when carrying out these works.

## **9 PROPOSED BOUNDARY REVISIONS**

It is proposed to revise the boundary of the conservation area to reflect changes that have taken place since it was first designated in 1970. The amendments are shown in figure 28.

### **9.1 North boundary**

It is proposed to delete an area to the north where the Village Hall was constructed on the site of former allotment gardens on Early Lane, not long after the designation of the conservation area. The building was built in a style of its age, and does not harmonise with the established historic character. The same is true of some infill housing development alongside at Bernard Cheadle Close and Wrekin View.



Figure 29	Swynnerton Village Hall and car park
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### 9.2 West boundary

The late-20<sup>th</sup> century development along Frobisher Drive and Weavers Walk is not of historic character, but the retained kitchen garden boundary wall is an important survival of character and indicates the former extent of the grounds of Swynnerton Hall. There is also a band of mature trees adjacent to the High Street/Main Road which is part of the leafy setting on entering the conservation area from the south. The houses along Frobisher Drive and Weavers Walk that have the kitchen garden wall as their boundary will therefore be retained within the Conservation Area, but those outside of the historic context, i.e. Nos. 1 to 4 Frobisher Drive will be omitted.

### 9.3 East boundary

The southeast boundary currently cuts across Swynnerton Park without following any existing boundaries or landscape features. This will be amended, to include a continuation of the boundary wall to the historic parkland carried out in 19<sup>th</sup> century brickwork, and to then follow a parkland track.



Figure 31	Estate Boundary wall to Swynnerton Hall
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## Appendix 1 Statutory List Descriptions

Building	Grade	List Description
THE OLD POST OFFICE	II	Probably C18, Red brick; 2 storeys; 3 casement windows with clambered heads; plain doorway with modern door; thatched roof.
HOME FARMHOUSE	II	Early C19. Former farmhouse. Roughcast to earlier timber frame revealed internally. L-shaped on plan; 2 storeys; gabled bay on left-hand side to cross wing, which is the earlier portion; 4 renewed casement windows; plain doorway with 6-panelled door and roughcast gabled porch; corbelled eaves; tiles. Interior of left-hand wing has exposed ceiling beams, exposed timber frame with wattle and daub infill to outer wall of former sitting room, and C17 staircase with turned balusters. Altered 2 storey wing projects at rear on left-hand side.
THE THATCHED COTTAGE	II	Probably C17. Stone and brick; 2 storeys; 3 casement windows; thatched roof with 2 small windows with 'eye-brows' at eaves.
CHURCH OF ST MARY	I	<p>The core is C12. Aisles were added in C13 and the chancel was rebuilt at this period. South chapel added in C14 and the tower built against the C12 front with its Norman doorway in C15. Norman west doorway also in the tower, probably re-set. Heavy restoration in the C19 when the clerestory was added and the roods renewed.</p> <p>In the chapel a notable large stone seated figure of Christ of late C13 work, found under the floor. Triple sedilia in chancel and chapel. C15 chancel screen. Defaced effigy of a cross-legged knight (probably Sir John Swynnerton, circa 1264) in recess on south side of chancel. Good east window by Powell, 1864, designed by Sedding. Graded for both architectural and historic interest.</p>
WAR MEMORIAL	II	Circa 1920. Stone. Tapering shaft on an octagonal 4 stepped base, surmounted by an elaborately carved cross.
CHAPEL OF OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION	II*	1868-9. Roman Catholic. Architect: Gilbert Blount. Built next to Swynnerton Hall (qv). Late C13 Gothic style much in the manner of Pugin, whose pupil Blount was. Stone with tile roof. Nave with gallery, south arcade (ritually south), chancel with public chapel on west side, and bellcote. Richly decorated interior. Included for architectural interest.
SWYNNERTON HALL	I	Circa 1725. architect: Francis Smith of Warwick and built for Thomas Fitzherbert. Later additions. Main block: ashlar; 3 storeys; 9 sash windows (5 to sides) in moulded architraves, those to first storey with keyblocks and the ground storey windows pedimented; rusticated angles; 3 centre bays have slight projection with giant Tuscan pilasters and doorway in rusticated surround with Ionic columns and bolection frieze; plain parapet with large urn

		finials. The east elevation and interior altered circa 1810 by James Trubshaw. Later 3 storey brick wing on north side. Interior: The former 2-storeyed great hall altered by being divided horizontally. Good staircase with elegant iron balustrade, extending to the top of the building.
GATE PIERS AND FORECOURT WALL OF SWYNNERTON HALL	II	Circa 1890 and related in character to the Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption (qv), the east side of which it adjoins. Stone with moulded coping and plain gate piers to left. Included for group value.
QUEENSWOOD FORMERLY LISTED AS THE RECTORY	II	1760. The former rectory. Architect: Charles Cope Trubshaw. Red brick with stone plinth; 2 storeys plus attic; 2 parallel ranges; flat string-course. Front has 5 sash windows (casements elsewhere) and doorway in moulded stuccoed dog-eared architrave with pediment and part-glazed door; wood modillion eaves cornice; tiles.
DIXONS AND ADJOINING RANGE OF OUTBUILDINGS TO N E OF SWYNNERTON HALL	II	C18 and early C19, with later alterations. Red brick with tile roofs. A varied range extending from north-east side of Swynnerton Hall presenting attractive frontage to Churchyard. Two storey and single storey. Right-hand wing with renewed casements adjoining single-storey range with pitching-eyes and segmental-headed carriage arch to yard, and rear wing; adjoining C18 brick octagonal garden house with stone quoins and pyramidal roof with ball-head finial; to left again, a barn with pitching-eyes and honey-comb brickwork in part, the left-hand side now a dwelling (Dixons); return wing on left-hand side with 3-storeyed corner bay, formerly a dovecote. To left of yard gateway, a single storey stone barn, the south side altered in brick.

## Appendix 2: Positive Unlisted Buildings

- Queenswood Lodge, Main Street;
- Swynnerton Cottages, Main Street;
- Fitzherber Arms PH, Main Street;
- Church Hall, Main Street;
- High House and adjacent outbuildings, Main Street;
- The Cottage, Main Street;
- Forge House, Main Street;
- Church Cottage and The Barn, Main Street;
- Park House, Main Street;
- Park Lodge, Main Street;
- The Barn, Main Street;
- Apple Cottage, Early Lane;
- Fitzherbert Cottages, Early Lane;
- 1-4 Cottages, Early Lane;
- Hall Cottage and attached outbuildings, Hall Lane;
- Heather Cottage/The Laurels, Stab Lane;
- Air Raid Shelter south of The Old School House, Stab Lane.

## **Appendix 3: Glossary of Terms**

### **Conservation Area**

Conservation Areas are defined in Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as “*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.*”

### **Positive Building**

A building identified as a contributor to the special character of the conservation area by way of its architectural and/or historical qualities.

### **Positive Space**

An area identified as a contributor to the special character of the conservation area.

### **Negative Building**

A building identified as detrimental to the special character or appearance of the conservation area, and would warrant enhancement or replacement in any future proposals involving this building. The negative effect may be derived from, for example, its siting, plan form, scale, height, massing or materials, and could not be readily reversed by minor alterations.

### **Negative Space**

A space identified as detrimental to the special character and appearance of the conservation area, and would warrant enhancement in any future proposals involving this space.

### **Neutral Building**

A building that does not contribute to, or harm, the special character and appearance of the conservation area. It does not possess qualities that contribute to the architectural or historical character of the conservation area, but does not visually intrude or cause a jarring effect by way of its of its siting, plan form, scale, height, massing, materials or colour palette, for example. The building may warrant enhancement in future proposals.

### **Neutral Space**

A space that does not contribute to, or harm, the special character of the conservation area. It does not possess qualities that contribute to the architectural or historical character of the conservation area, but does not affect the character negatively.

### **Setting**

Setting is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework as “*The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.*”



## Appendix 4 Documents & References

### Stafford Borough Council Documents

- Adopted Local Plan 2001 (adopted 1998) (saved policies)
- Stafford Borough Conservation Strategy for the Historic Environment (1996)
- Draft Re-use of Rural Buildings SPD\* (2012)
- Draft Urban Design SPD\* (2012)

\*Supplementary Planning Document

### Staffordshire County Council Documents

- Swynnerton Conservation Area Designation Document (1970)
- Staffordshire Parks & Gardens Register Review (1996)
- Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011 (2002)
- Conservation within the Highway: Structures of Historic Importance (May 2004);
- Staffordshire Historic Landscape Characterisation (2006)

### Staffordshire Record Office

- Swynnerton Tithe Map 1848 (ref D4474/1)
- Plan for alteration of Sinerton, Capability Brown, 18<sup>th</sup> century (ref D641/5/M/1/9)

### Staffordshire Past Track

- Etching of Swynnerton Hall, 1821

### English Heritage Documents

- Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals (2005)
- Guidance on the Management of Conservation Areas (2005)
- Conservation Principles, Policies & Guidance (2008)
- Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2011)
- Valuing Places: Good Practice in Conservation Areas (2011)
- Conservation Bulletin: Issue 62 (Autumn 2009)
- Streets for All West Midlands (2005) (English Heritage/Department for Transport)

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- *The Staffordshire Village Book*, Staffordshire Federation of Women's Institutes, 1988
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