

High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester) Environmental Statement

Volume 5: Appendix HE-003-0MA01

Historic environment

MA01: Hough to Walley's Green

Historic landscape character areas

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Department for Transport

High Speed Two (HS2) Limited has been tasked by the Department for Transport (DfT) with managing the delivery of a new national high speed rail network. It is a non-departmental public body wholly owned by the DfT.

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1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report is an appendix to the historic environment assessment. It presents a description of the historic landscape character areas (HLCA) that have been defined in the Hough to Walley's Green area (MA01).
- 1.1.2 This appendix should be read in conjunction with:
- Volume 2, Community area reports;
 - Volume 3, Route-wide effects;
 - Volume 4, Off-route effects; and
 - Volume 5, Appendix (Summary gazetteer, impact assessment table and archaeological character areas, HE-002-0MA01).
- 1.1.3 Historic environment baseline data are set out in the following Background Information and Data (BID) reports:
- Historic environment baseline report (BID HE-001-0MA01¹), which includes the historic environment detailed gazetteer in Appendix A;
 - Historic environment field survey report (BID HE-004-0MA01²); and
 - Historic environment remote sensing report (BID HE-005-0MA01³).
- 1.1.4 Figures are included in this report that show the locations and extent of the identified HLCA.

¹ High Speed Two Ltd (2022), High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester), *Background Information and Data, Historic environment, Hough to Walley's Green, Historic environment baseline report*, BID HE-001-0MA01. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-2b-crewe-manchester-environmental-statement>.

² High Speed Two Ltd (2022), High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester), *Background Information and Data, Historic environment, Hough to Walley's Green, Historic environment field survey report*, BID HE-004-0MA01. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-2b-crewe-manchester-environmental-statement>.

³ High Speed Two Ltd (2022), High Speed Rail (Crewe – Manchester), *Background Information and Data, Historic environment, Hough to Walley's Green, Historic environment remote sensing report*, BID HE-005-0MA01. Available online at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-phase-2b-crewe-manchester-environmental-statement>.

2 Methodology

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The approach used for this assessment was a character-based method. Historic landscape character (HLC) mapping derived from National HLC data (NHLC) was used, in conjunction with data from the local and regional HLC projects, to determine broad HLCA. HLCA are areas of coherent or distinctive historic landscape characteristics.
- 2.1.2 HLCA are described below, in terms of their attributed value and assessment of impact, to determine the significance of effect of the Proposed Scheme on the HLCA in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Scope and Methodology Report (SMR), see Volume 5 Appendix CT-001-00001.

2.2 Defining historic landscape character areas

- 2.2.1 HLCA were defined where the historic landscape displays demonstrable patterns of homogeneity and/or distinctiveness. There may be some areas defined as HLCA that, owing to the nature of recent land use, have limited or no heritage value.
- 2.2.2 Within the 2km study area, the boundaries of HLCA were determined by considering the nature and patterning of HLC types (e.g. extensive areas of parliamentary enclosure) informed by information from other sources (see below). In some cases, a HLCA may extend beyond a community area boundary due to continuity of historic landscape character. Where this is the case, they will be described in the Historic landscape character area report for the community area in which the majority of the HLCA lies.
- 2.2.3 Some HLCA were influenced by factors such as topography and geology as these physical factors influence agriculture, industry and settlement. In these instances, HLCA may align closely with the Landscape Character Areas (LCA) prepared by the landscape and visual assessment team.
- 2.2.4 The HLCA can contribute to the historical dimension of corresponding LCA. There has been collaboration with the landscape and visual assessment team to ensure a common understanding of how historic processes have shaped the landscape and are expressed within it.

Defining historic landscape character areas

- 2.2.5 Defining the HLCA described below was primarily based on:
- HLC and NHLC mapping;
 - historic mapping, including tithe maps, estate maps and first edition Ordnance Survey;
 - Historic Environment Record (HER) data;

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- aerial photography;
- project specific data drawn from historic air photographs, Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data and site visits; and
- a review of existing LCA boundaries/typologies.

2.2.6 From the sources above, the boundaries and characteristics of the HLCA were determined and are described below, based on an analysis of overall historic development trends and the following factors:

- patterning (homogeneity or variance) of HLC types in terms of type, relationships⁴ and date;
- variation in apparent survival level⁵ of historic landscape features; and
- professional judgement.

2.3 Assigning value

2.3.1 The heritage value of the HLCA is described in line with the SMR. Key attributes that contribute to heritage value are defined as follows:

- historic interest – illustrative value (illustrating past events, places or people), communal value (commemorative or symbolic), and associative value (association with a notable person, event or movement);
- archaeological interest – evidential or research value;
- architectural and artistic interest – contemporary appreciation of the asset's aesthetics;
- historical and cultural associations (links to historic interest) – relates to the value of a place's association with important historical events and themes, eras, patterns of use and development or individual people. It incorporates the history of aesthetics, artistic and literary, architecture, archaeology, science and society, so it overlaps (or underlies) the other categories of heritage value; and
- research potential (links to archaeological interest) – value relates to the technical achievements associated with a place, or to its educational potential. It also encompasses places important to furthering the understanding of the natural and altered environment, and the embodiment of heritage research.

2.3.2 Each of the attributes contributed to defining the overall value of the HLCA.

⁴ That is the presence of types that inherently related to one another such as assart fields and ancient woodlands.

⁵ This is an aspect which can be initially evaluated from comparing recorded HLC type with aerial photography. Examples can include whether vegetation, particularly hedges, look to be denuded (survive poorly) or relatively intact (survive well), or ridge and furrow is extant and visible as earthworks (survive well) or are ploughed out (survive poorly).

2.4 Magnitude of impact

- 2.4.1 The magnitude of impact includes consideration of the elements of the Proposed Scheme that extend into the HLCA, and how these physically alter identified key elements of the HLCA which make a positive contribution to its heritage value. A judgement of the capacity of the HLCA to accommodate change as a result of the Proposed Scheme has also been considered. For example, a HLCA characterised by linear industrial features, such as major roads and canals, is likely to have a greater capacity to absorb additional linear development without experiencing a significant change to its heritage value. The assessment also considered the duration and reversibility of the impact; for example, where a temporary effect would occur during the construction phase, but land would be reinstated afterwards such as in the case of temporary construction compounds.

2.5 Significance of effect

- 2.5.1 The assessment of the significance of effect was undertaken using the method set out in the SMR.

3 List of acronyms

3.1.1 The following acronyms have been used in this report:

Table 1: List of acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
BID	Background Information and Data
HER	Historic Environment Record
HLC/HLCA	Historic Landscape Character/ Historic Landscape Character Area
LCA	Landscape Character Area
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging Data
NHLC	National Historic Landscape Character
SMR	Scope and Methodology Report
WCML	West Coast Main Line

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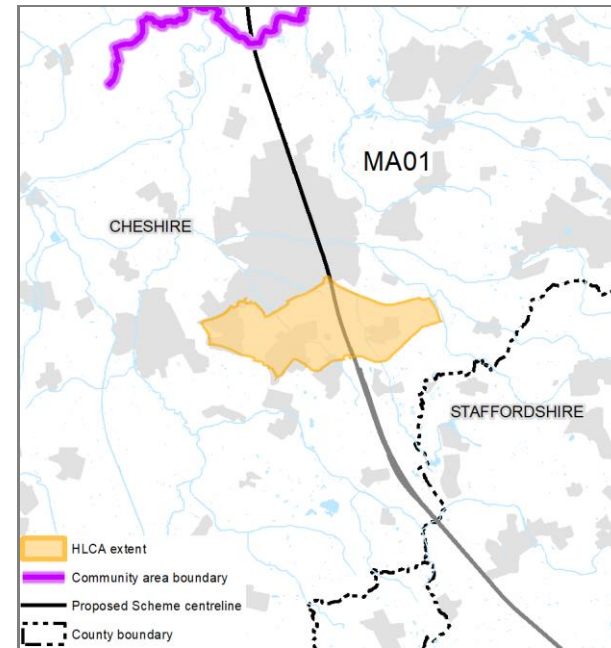
Historic landscape character areas

4 Historic landscape character area sheets

MA01_HLCA01: Crewe Fringe

Key Characteristics

- A lowland landscape dominated by open farmland.
- Manorial villages of Weston, Basford and Shavington.
- Mixed medieval, post-medieval and modern fields.
- Historic linear transport features including the Grand Junction Railway (now known as the West Coast Main Line, WCML).
- Modern housing development enclosing historic cores of Weston, Basford and Shavington.



HLCA location © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Description

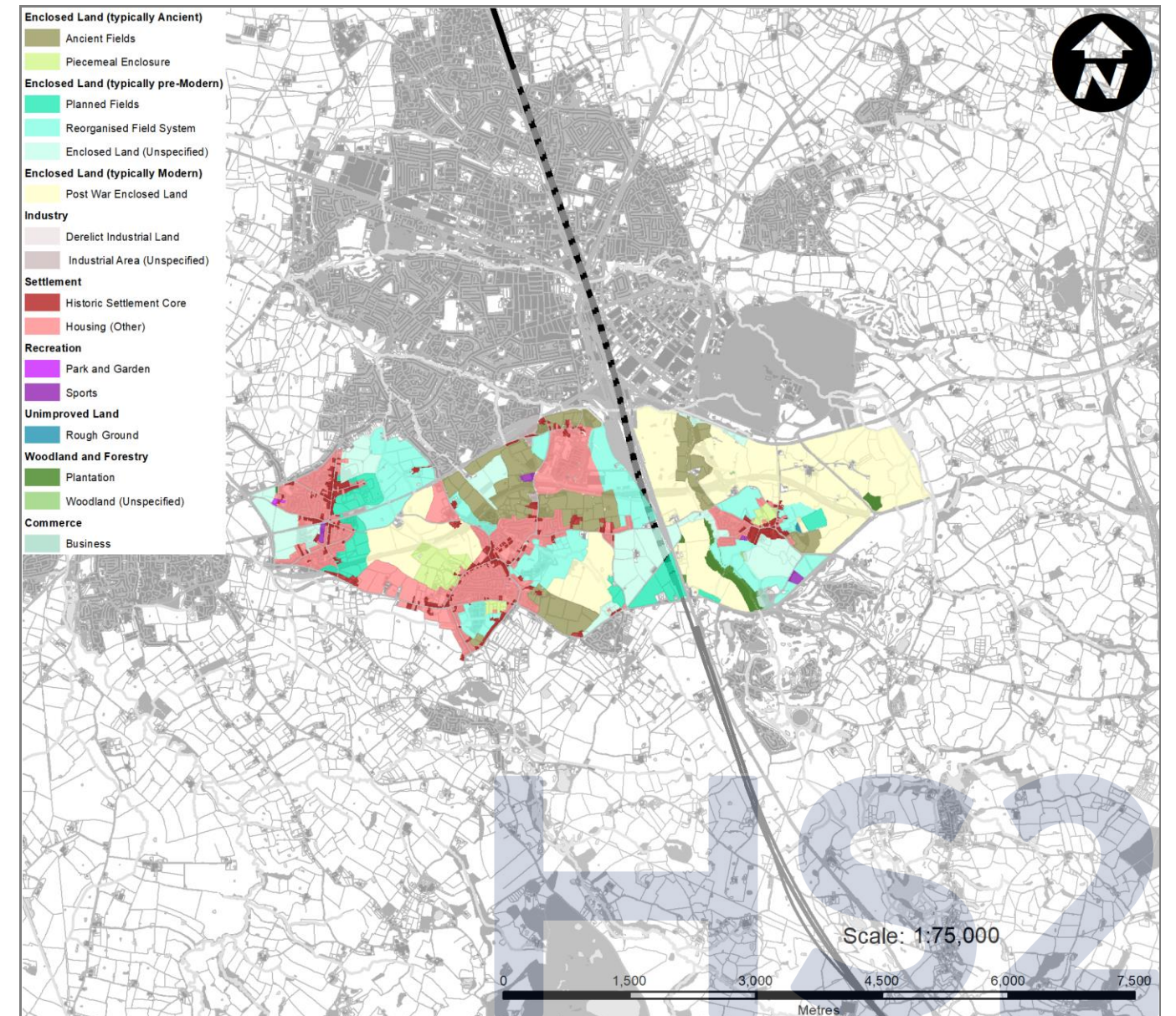
The HLCA lies south of Crewe and has been influenced by the development of the rail network and associated expansion of the town.

The HLCA is characterised by farmland with dispersed settlement of low density mainly consisting of medieval manorial hamlets and farms such as Weston, Basford and Shavington. The underlying geology was substantially moderated by the end of the last glaciation, when it lay close to the edge of the ice sheet. The melting of the ice led to the widespread deposition of sand, gravel and clay in this area. This created a well-watered, agriculturally rich landscape, which appears to have been cleared of woodland relatively early.

Fields are a mix of medieval, post-medieval and modern regular, semi-regular and irregular fields with hedgerow boundaries. A number of waterways traverse the landscape including Cheer Brook, Swill Brook and Basford Brook, and several mosses are dispersed in the southern part of the landscape.

Throughout the HLCA there are several high status individual halls and farmhouses, including the Grade II* listed Hough Hall and Grade II listed Red Lion Farmhouse. These survive in contemporary medieval fields. Although there are traces of this medieval agricultural landscape in many places these appear to have been superseded by later field systems.

The construction of the Grand Junction Railway in 1837 led to some localised reorientation of the earlier fields through which it cuts, which affected how the landscape can be moved through. The area around Crewe on the northern boundary of the HLCA became an important junction of the new rail system contributing to its growth and development. In the late 19th century an engine shed, and extensive sidings were constructed at the northern end of the HLCA following the expansion of Crewe. The expansion and development of the railway throughout the post-medieval and modern periods also affected the historic settlement pattern of the HLCA as evident by the expansion of existing villages such as Willaston, Shavington and Weston, whose historic cores are now enclosed by later 19th and 20th century residential development. Modern infrastructure within the HLCA includes the A500 Newcastle Road/Shavington Bypass connecting Stoke-on-Trent with Nantwich east to west which defines the southern boundary of the HLCA.



HLCA detail © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Asset value Low

Magnitude of impact

Construction temporary	Low adverse
Construction permanent	Low adverse
Operation permanent	Low adverse

Effect

Construction permanent	Minor/Negligible adverse
Operation	Minor/Negligible adverse

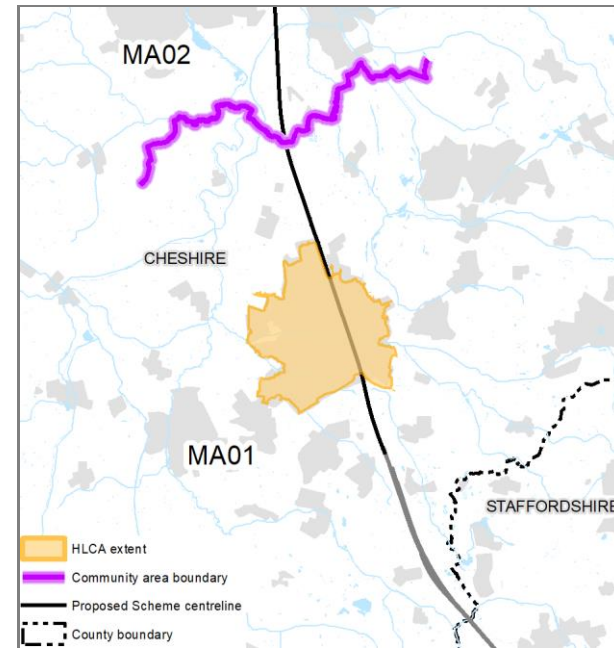
Commentary

The interest of the HLCA is due to the landscape of small medieval villages with associated high status halls and farmhouses. Although there are some surviving medieval field systems in the HLCA, the landscape has been the subject of some reorientation and is now characterised by the post-medieval and modern expansion of the medieval villages. It has also been affected by the growth of the WCML and associated expansion of Crewe. The Proposed Scheme will result in the removal or truncation of some aspects of the historic landscape, such as field boundaries. However it will run on a similar alignment to the existing rail infrastructure and as such will not disrupt the overall grain of the landscape.

MA01_HLCA02: Crewe Metropolitan

Key Characteristics

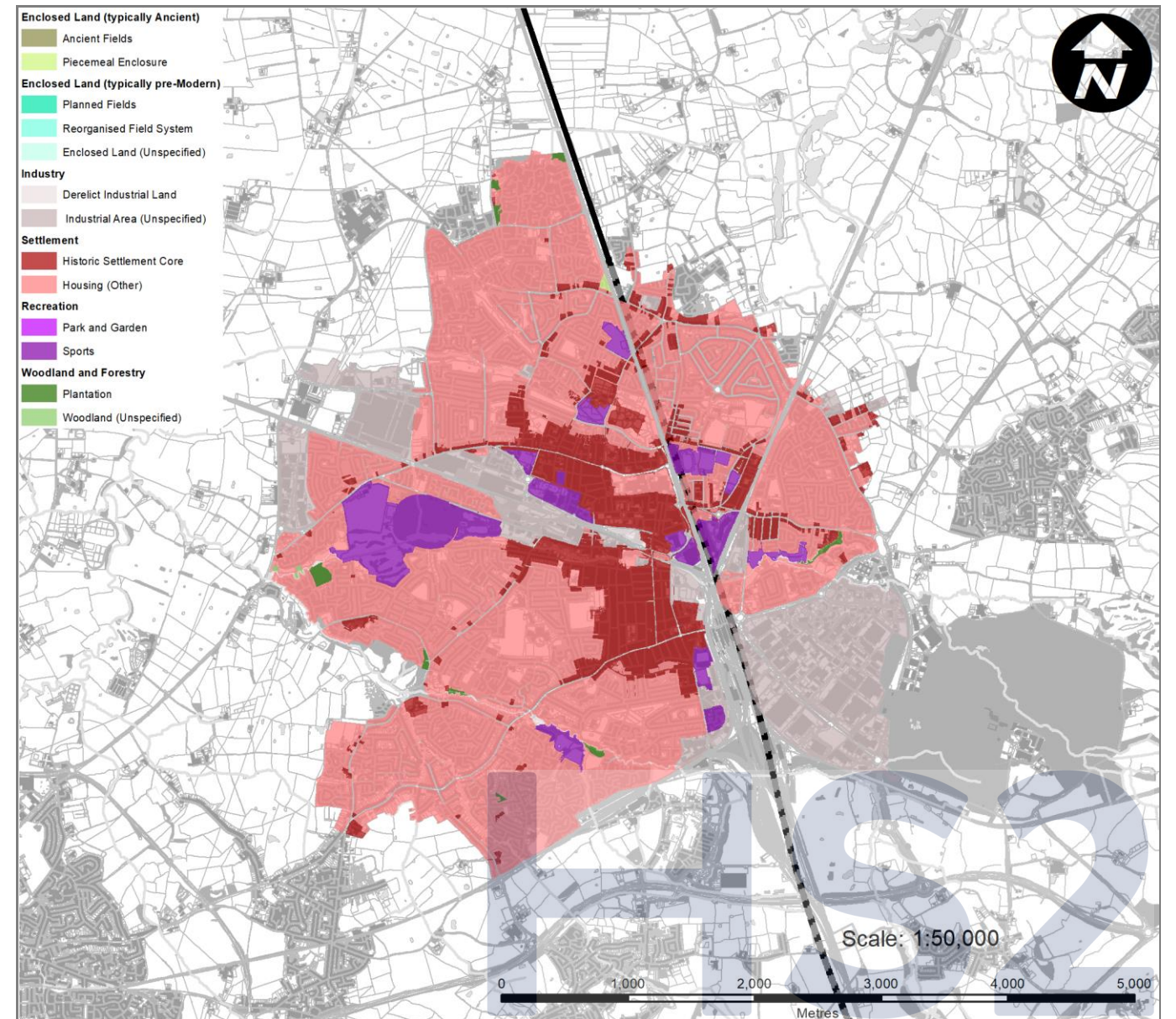
- Crewe town.
- Mainly residential including a regular grid pattern of post-medieval housing alongside 20th century infill.
- Numerous industrial estates and business parks particularly concentrated alongside the railway sidings.
- Historic linear transport features including Grand Junction Railway (now known as the West Coast Main Line, WCML) with lines towards Chester, Preston, Stockport and Stafford.
- Railway infrastructure including a large engine shed, extensive railway sidings, depots and stations.



HLCA location © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Description

This HLCA comprises Crewe town. The core of the town is focused around the junction of the Grand Junction Railway (WCML), which was constructed in 1837. The WCML became an important junction for the new rail system contributing to its growth and development. During the post-medieval period Crewe was predominantly rural with isolated farmsteads and some piecemeal settlement in Coppenhall, focused around Flag Lane, Hightown, Ford Lane and Cross Green. The south eastern extent of Crewe formed part of the Crewe Estate lands. The present town of Crewe came into being with the advent of the railways in the early 19th century. It is characterised by regular grid pattern of railway terraced housing, built by the Grand Junction Railway Company, which survive close to the centre of the town. The railway sidings and the density of the historic buildings which survive in their original context illustrates the significance of the railway on the development of the town. Modern development has spread outwards from the junction and includes 20th century housing, industrial estates and business parks. The expansion of the town to the south-east has built over areas of what was the parkland of Crewe Hall, the surviving elements of which are a Registered, Park and Garden. The WCML runs north-west to south-east through the landscape from Stafford towards Winsford with branches north-east towards Stockport and north-west towards Chester. The line was a catalyst for sidings, depots and a large engine shed, which led to the expansion of Crewe and the growth of the town. This modern suburban growth has to a large extent joined most of the earlier post-medieval settlement into a single entity. Modern road infrastructure includes the A500 Newcastle Road/Shavington Bypass and the A530 Middlewich Road and has helped to characterise and refine the medieval and post-medieval landscape above.



HLCA detail © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Asset value Moderate

Magnitude of impact

Construction temporary	Minimal adverse
Construction permanent	Minimal adverse
Operation permanent	No change

Effect

Construction permanent	Minor adverse
Operation	Neutral

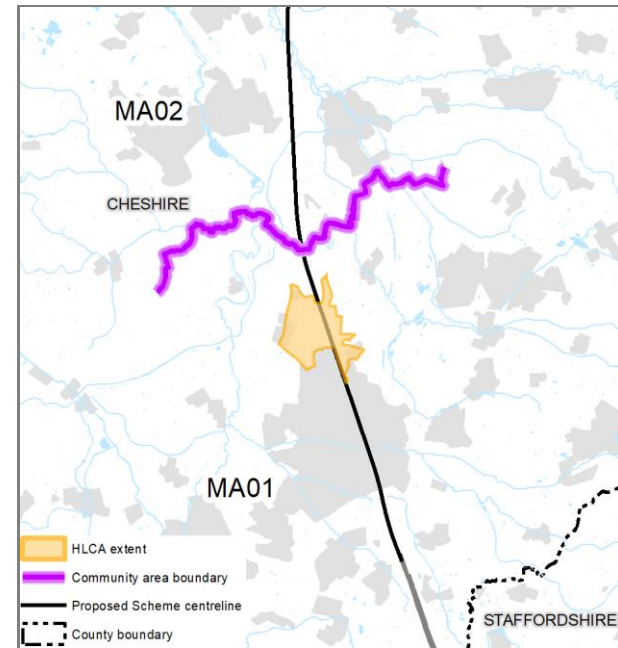
Commentary

The HLCA's value derives from the way it demonstrates the historic development and expansion of Crewe as an important railway town during the post-medieval and modern period. The junction of the railway with lines towards Chester, Preston, Stockport and Stafford, the extensive railway sidings and depots have contributed to the growth and development of Crewe in the modern period. This landscape is characterised by the WCML and the Proposed Scheme will follow this on its eastern side adding another element of modern railway infrastructure into this landscape. Within Crewe town the Proposed Scheme will be in tunnel, the presence of which will not affect the ability to appreciate the value of the HLCA.

MA01_HLCA03: Crewe Mosslands

Key Characteristics

- Former mosslands north of the 20th century suburban Crewe, namely Warmingham, Minshull, Leighton, Coppenhall and Maplin's.
- Post-medieval enclosure of common land.
- Medieval field systems around Church Coppenhall.
- Distinctive north-south linear fields resulting from moss enclosure around Moss Fields Farm.
- Repeated lines of hedgerows.
- Historic linear transport features including Grand Junction Railway (now known as the West Coast Main Line, WCML).



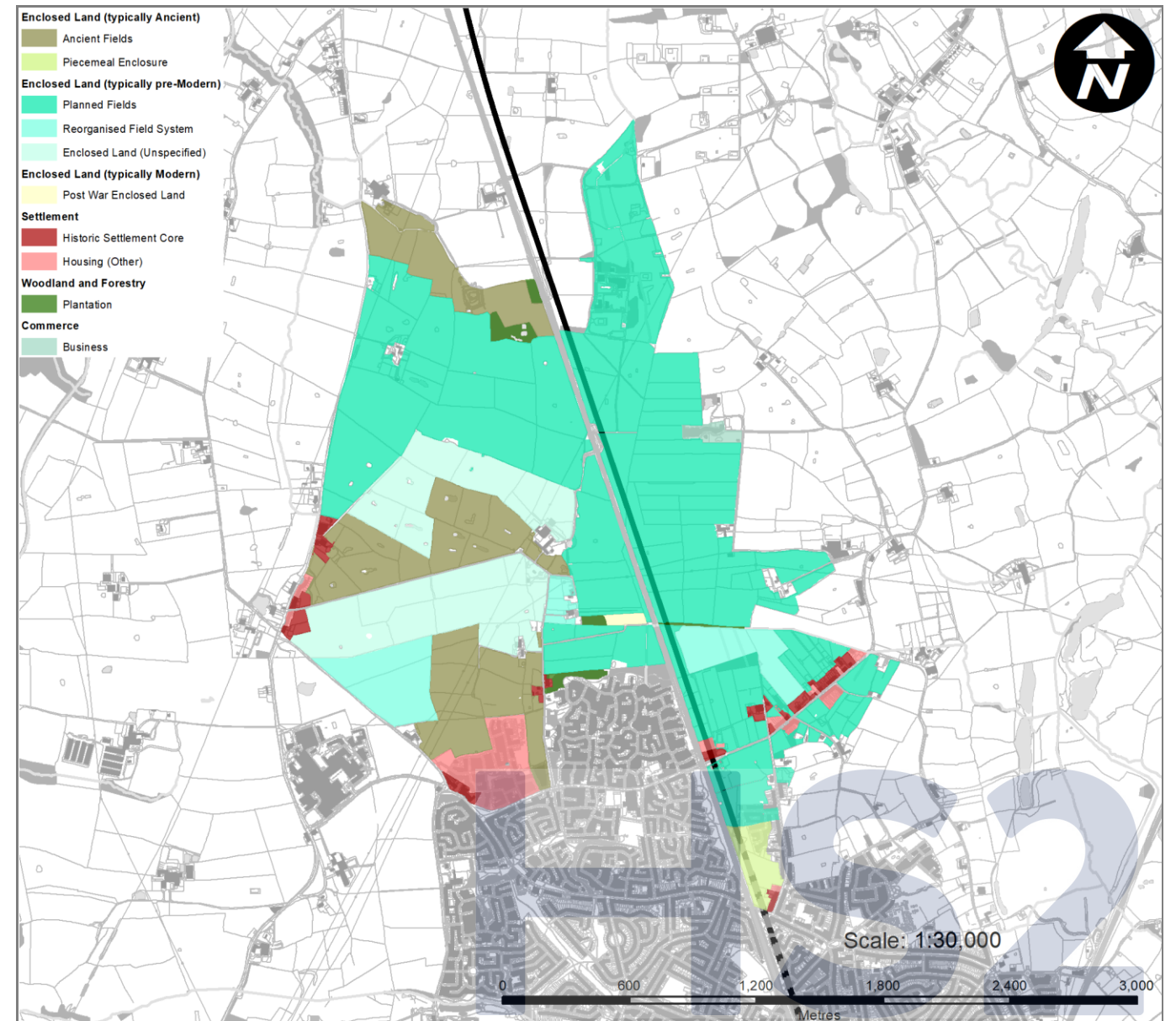
HLCA location © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Description

The HLCA represents former mosslands north of the 20th century suburbs of Crewe enclosed between 1790s and 1820s. Mosses are areas of peat, which formed in hollows or depressions left in the landscape after the last glaciation. During the medieval period mosses were used for grazing and as a source of fuel. The cutting of peat for fuel led in places to the formation of a distinctive small linear enclosures referred to as moss rooms. Throughout the post-medieval and modern periods many mosses were drained and brought into agricultural production while others were turned over to forestry or have been intensively cut for peat. There are no visible remains of what was formerly one of the largest mosslands in England. The area includes five separately identified mosses namely Warmingham, Minshull, Leighton, Coppenhall and Maplin's or Merbury.

Warmingham Moss was enclosed in the 1790s. The effects of enclosure have produced distinctive east-west linear fields around Moss Fields Farm and Moss Farm, in a triangle north of Moss Lane. Medieval field systems around Church Coppenhall reflect the former pattern of town fields and common land of Coppenhall moss which was utilised for fuel and pasture. The enclosed mosslands are visible as linear fields running broadly north-south, east of Moss Bridge. Maplin's or Merbury Moss was located between Coppenhall Moss and Leighton Moss and is located under what is now the current northern edge of Metropolitan Crewe.

Coppenhall Moss was severed in two by the construction of the Grand Junction Railway (now the WCML) in the 1830s. This resulted in the erosion of common rights and the former common land was all enclosed by the late 19th century. Leighton Moss probably including Minshull Moss was enclosed in the 1820s. The majority of farmers who owned the mosslands were tenants as opposed to freeholders so this appears to have been a rapid process. The landscape of Leighton Moss does not have characteristic field patterns in contrast to the other mosses. The evidence for its existence is reflected in Moss Farm and Moss Lane which runs from Bradfield Green east then south into the northern suburbs of Crewe. The historic landscape character of this area is difficult to differentiate from the post-medieval enclosed lands further north. However, it reflects a very different process of landscape formation characterised by the enclosure of mosslands which, is not evident further north. The absence of scattered trees and copses, former marl pits and isolated trees common on the plains further north reflect the origin of the land as former mosslands enclosed in the later post-medieval period for agricultural purposes.



HLCA detail © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Asset value Moderate

Magnitude of impact

Construction temporary	Low adverse
Construction permanent	Medium adverse
Operation permanent	Low adverse

Effect

Construction permanent	Moderate adverse
Operation	Minor adverse

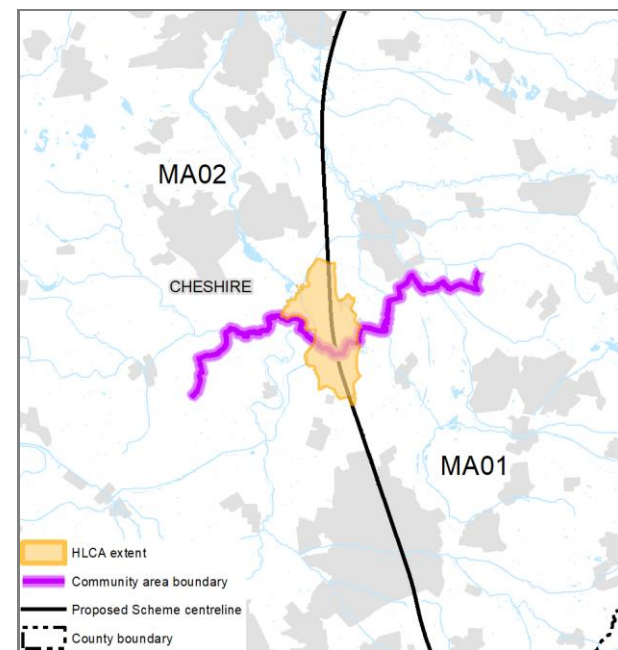
Commentary

The interest of the HLCA is due to its capacity of the landscape to illustrate and provide evidence for historic rural land use north of Crewe, particularly former mosslands. The WCML has led to some localised reorientation of earlier fields, which has affected how the landscape can be experienced. The Proposed Scheme will follow the WCML on its eastern side, adding another element of modern railway infrastructure into this landscape. The presence of the Crewe North Connection will introduce new rail infrastructure into this environment. This will result in not only some physical loss of boundary features but also affect the way in which the historic landscape is experienced and can be understood.

MA01_HLCA04: Wimboldsley Plain

Key Characteristics

- Flat land between shallow river valleys of the Weaver and Wheelock.
- Small hamlets including Minshull Vernon, Walley's Green, Occlestone Green, Wimboldsley and Clive Green.
- Individual 17th century farmhouses between these hamlets.
- Mixture of medium sized irregular fields and large fields formed during the agricultural revolution.
- Marl pits (excavated for good quality loam to improve soil quality over remaining fields).
- Infrastructure corridors including the A530 Middlewich Road and Grand Junction Railway (now known as the West Coast Main Line, WCML).



HLCA location © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Description

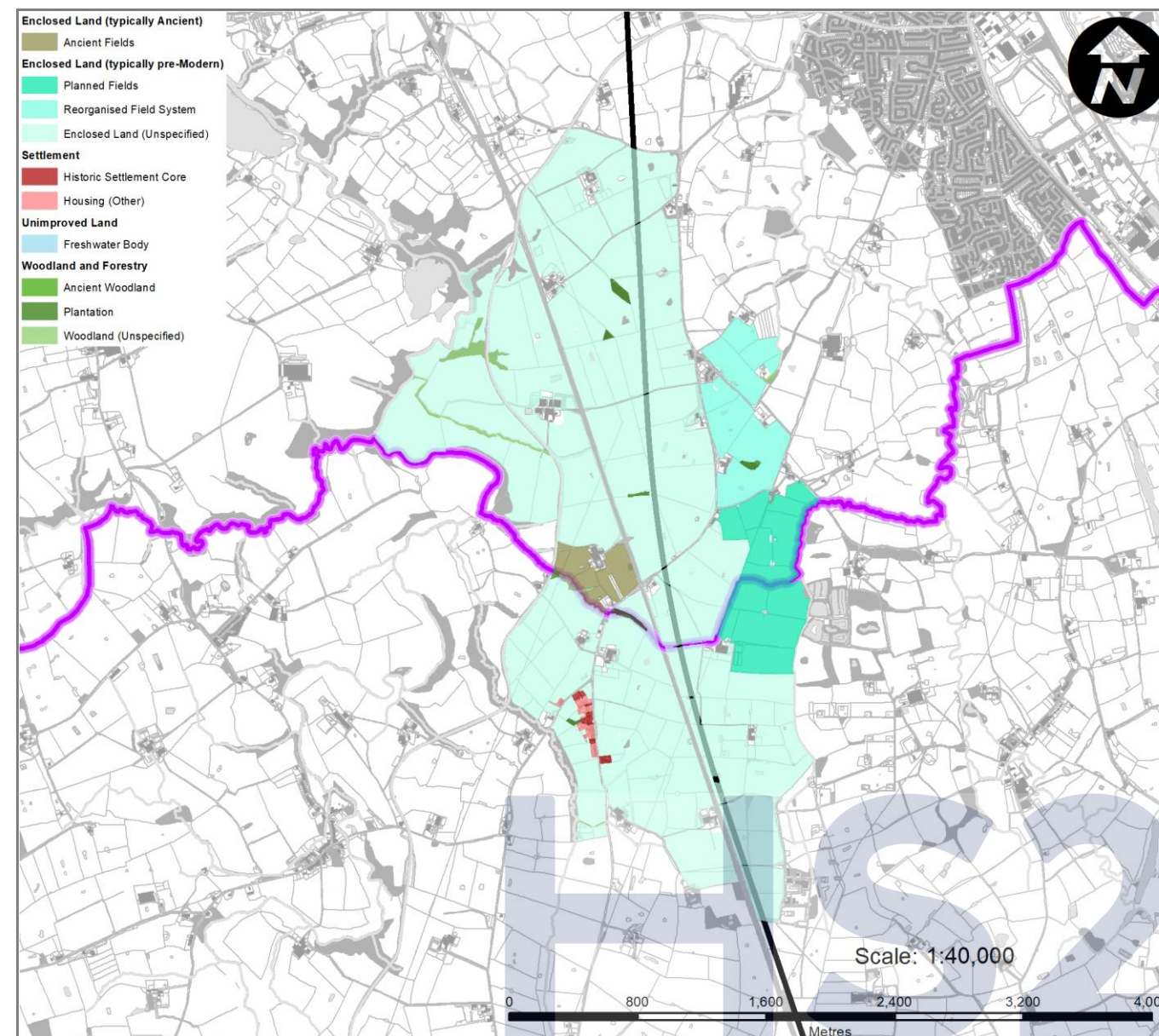
The area is located north of Crewe in an area of flat land between the shallow river valleys of the River Weaver and River Wheelock. The area is predominantly rural comprising of enclosed medieval, post-medieval and modern arable and pasture fields.

The medieval landscape would have included halls often surrounded by moats within manors containing farmsteads and hamlets. Minshull Vernon Moated Site is the only surviving example of a moated site in this HLCA and it is thought to have had an associated deer park. Although no evidence of the deer park is visible in the current landscape it is reflected in place-name evidence including Parkfield, Park House and Park Hall Farm.

Small medieval settlements are prevalent within the landscape and include Minshull Vernon, Walley's Green, Occlestone Green, Wimboldsley and Clive Green. Between these settlements lie several farmhouses including Park House, Lea Hall, Wimboldsley Hall and Barns and Pettywood Farmhouse, which reflect the pattern of land enclosed in the post-medieval period for dairy farming. The only exception to this is north of the A530 Nantwich Road at Wimboldsley Hall, where a small area of medieval or earlier field systems survive. These fields were typically used for arable farming, with each settlement having two to four large fields, enclosed by a large ring fence or hedge to exclude grazing animals. Each field would be subdivided into a number of furlongs, which in turn, comprised a number of narrow strips. Each farmer within the community would farm a number of strips within each field and cultivation would have been undertaken co-operatively.

South of the A530 Nantwich/Middlewich Road are medium sized irregular fields formed during post-medieval enclosure in the 16th and 17th centuries. These were often rectilinear and survive surrounded by hedgerows and isolated tree stands. Each field contains or shares with its neighbour a marl pit. Marl pits were used to excavate good quality loam to be spread over the remaining field to improve the soil quality. They were left open to allow dairy cattle to water themselves. Tree cover is slight in this area and woodland that does survive is normally plantation or cover for field pursuits such as fox hunting or shooting. Examples include the plantation at Larch Wood and Burnt Covert.

In a parcel of land defined by the Shropshire Union Middlewich Branch Canal to the west and the A530 Nantwich/ Middlewich Road to the east there has been an almost total loss of earlier field boundaries. This land reflected the estate of Lea Hall in the post-medieval period and owned by the Verdin family in the 19th century. The former field boundaries, ridge and furrow and trackways are visible as earthworks and have been recorded by remote sensing. However, the current fields were produced as part of post-medieval reorganisation of the fields in the 19th century. This is most apparent in the area east of the WCML and west of the A530 Nantwich/ Middlewich Road. The fields are large and have long linear field boundaries with few trees. This fields have been made larger in the 20th century by the removal of hedgerows.



HLCA detail © Crown copyright and database rights 2018 OS 100049190

Asset value Low

Magnitude of impact

Construction temporary	Minimal adverse
Construction permanent	Minimal adverse
Operation permanent	No change

Effect

Construction permanent	Negligible adverse
Operation	Neutral

Commentary

The Proposed Scheme will follow the WCML on its eastern side until the crossing of the A530 where it continues north. This will result in the removal or truncation of some aspects of the historical landscape, such as field boundaries, south of the A530, however this will not affect the overall character of the landscape or the ability to appreciate its value. The HLCA north of the A530 will be adversely impacted by the presence of the Crewe North RSD and a cohesive borrow pit. Although this will result in an almost entire loss of the HLCA in this area, the landscape here has been largely altered as part of the 19th and 20th century agricultural revolution and little of its earlier historic character survives.

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