

LHECZ 13 – Land around Shenstone

Summary

The historic character of this LHECZ is of a discreet settlement within an agricultural landscape. While, during the 20th century, the settlement has substantially increased in size and modern agricultural practices have resulted in changes to the historic field patterns, this overall character remains.

There is good potential for archaeological remains to be preserved, particularly in relation to prehistoric use, a Roman Road and farmstead, a medieval moated site and the historic village which has Anglo-Saxon origins.

Medium or large scale development is likely to have some impact upon the historic environment assets of the zone. Any development which may be planned for the zone would need to address impacts upon and potential mitigation strategies for:

- the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings
- the potential for below ground archaeological deposits
- Impact on the historic parkland of Shenstone Hall

Early consultation with the Conservation Officers at Lichfield District Council, the Cultural Heritage Team at Staffordshire County Council and English Heritage is advised.

Designations

There are 18 Listed Buildings within the LHECZ.

There is one conservation area covering historic core of the village of Shenstone.

There is one Scheduled Monument on the Shenstone Park moated site.

There are no other designated sites falling within this LHECZ.

Archaeological Character

There is potential for archaeological remains from all periods. The overall character of the HECZ for the earlier Prehistoric period is likely to have been of a heavily wooded landscape perhaps supporting a pastoral economy.

Archaeological finds and crop marks provide evidence of continuous human activity in this area from the Palaeolithic onwards. Axes have been found dating from the Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age and a flint scraper found in the area possibly dates to the Mesolithic. Evidence of a more permanent presence dates from the late Neolithic onwards with a ring ditch and possible henge visible as a crop mark. There is also a barrow and a ring ditch with a central burial all dating to the Bronze Age and visible as crop marks.

The line of the Roman road, Ryknild Street runs through this HECZ to the west of the main settlement. While there may be little evidence of this remaining on the surface there is considerable potential for stratified remains at a lower level. Ryknild Street meets Watling Street just to the north of this HECZ and the Roman town of Wall (*Letocetum*) is located to the north-west of the HECZ. It is likely that the HECZ sat within the agricultural hinterland of Wall and as such may contain further as yet undiscovered evidence of Romano-British farmsteads as evidenced in the north of the HECZ. Here a farmstead of 2nd-3rd century AD date was excavated and found to contain evidence for agricultural exploitation and a small metal-working industry. To what extent these and similar remains are the result of new plantations or a continuation of the Iron Age pattern of land distribution and agriculture is not currently understood.

The remains of the medieval church tower contain Anglo-Saxon masonry and the Shenstone was mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) confirming the early origins of the settlement. Domesday records 21 taxable villagers within the settlement at 1086; a mill has been suggested at this period although to date no evidence has been proposed.

The medieval moated site situated to the south-east of the settlement of Shenstone survives in a very good condition. There is documentary evidence that it was built on or near to the site of the Norman hunting lodge. The surrounding medieval deer park was established by 1236 and was still in use in the mid-17th century and has associations with Henry VIII. The physical remains of the deer park have been significantly compromised by 20th century developments in agriculture which have resulted in substantial increases in field size and boundary loss.

Historic Landscape

By the 11th century this LHECZ lay within the Royal Forest of Cannock where the landscape was dominated by a mixture of woodland, wood pasture and heathland. There is evidence of some clearance for pasture or even arable farming dating from the Anglo-Saxon period. Shenstone (Senestre) was mentioned in the doomsday book providing the earliest historical reference to the settlement.

In the medieval period this LHECZ formed part of a wider landscape of dispersed settlements and while there is some survival of the historic field patterns most field patterns have been impacted by 20th century alterations.

The landscape as it exists today consists of a 20th century settlement surrounding the historic village. This in turn is surrounded by large fields mainly in arable use which has lost much of the historic field systems. The surviving elements of the medieval landscape are limited and principally consist of an area of ancient woodland to the west of the settlement, areas of wetlands which survive along the line of Crane Brook and Black Brook. There is also an area of medieval irregular enclosure to the north of the LHECZ.

It is likely that many of the ancient woodland had its origins in at least the medieval period and earthworks associated with earlier woodland management may survive within them.

Wetlands or floodplain fields are the fields which line the sides of river valleys and whose origins may be of a variety of dates. They would have traditionally been used as meadows and by the mid 17th century the lush pastures in these areas were being used to fatten cattle. Some of these landscapes will have been extensively drained from the 17th century onwards, or have been utilised as watermeadows from the 18th/19th century whose earthworks and associated structures may survive so consequently these areas are considered to be sensitive to development.

To the south of the settlement is an area of 18th-19th planned field systems. These areas are characterised by either small or large fields that share very straight boundaries, giving them a geometric, planned appearance. Laid out by surveyors, these field patterns result from late enclosure during the 18th and 19th centuries. This historic landscape character type, therefore, includes commons that were enclosed by Act of Parliament. In Staffordshire the majority of these fields were created out of former commons, heathland or moorland but in some areas they may formerly have been open arable fields dating from the medieval period. The origins of these planned field systems are generally well understood and they often have landscape relations with other important historic landscape elements such as model farms and designed parklands. In this instance these fields are related to Shenstone Court Farm which lies just to the north.

The principle current landscape type is of modern re-organised fields. Many of these field systems date of the modern period (1914-to present). However, most of them were created out of earlier field systems of a variety of dates, but due to intensification in agricultural practices, particularly over the last 50 years, the earlier characteristics have been significantly eroded. This relates in the main to the loss of field boundaries.

Some areas of plantations survive and while many areas within this type date from the 20th century there are some that have an earlier origin and are often associated with historic parks. This appears to be the case within this LHECZ and as such should be read as part of a historic park and gardens landscape.

Shenstone in the late 19th century was a small village sited just off the main Birmingham to Lichfield Road. The settlement grew up along Main Street, Pinfold Street and Church Hill. Shenstone Hall is situated on Birmingham Road and the remnants of its parkland form an important part of the landscape of this HECZ.

Historic Assets Summary Table

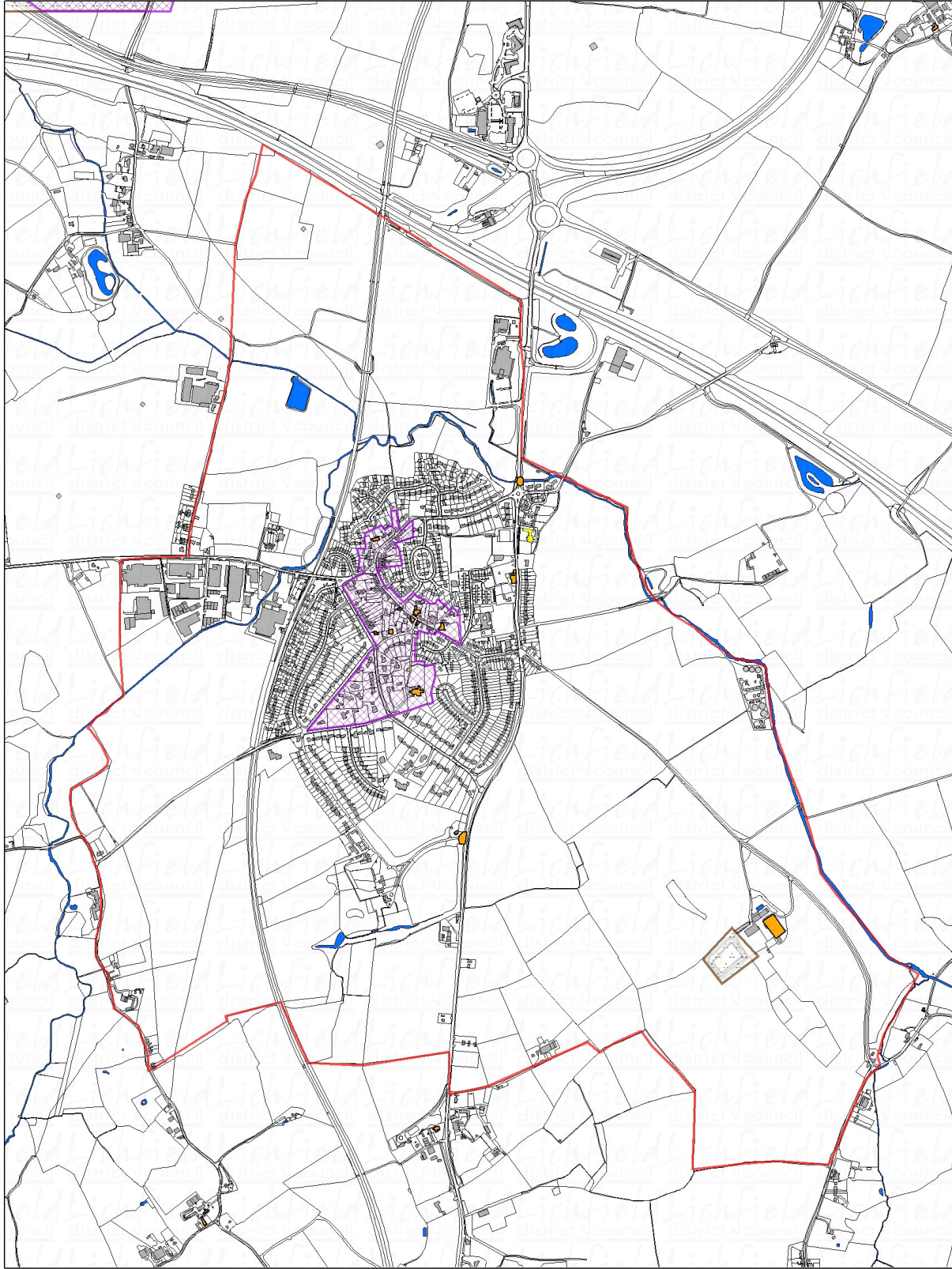
Survival	The historic settlement has been significantly extended although most of the landscape remains in agricultural use.	2
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Potential	Some remains may have been compromised by ploughing and by the intensification of agricultural practices in the 20 th century but good potential for survival in some areas particularly at deeper levels.	2
Documentation	Comprises the HER data and the VCH volume as well as local histories and Domesday records. Also significant aerial surveys, geophysical surveys and other archaeological works were carried out as part of the BNRR.	3
Diversity	A good range of assets of different types and dates from early prehistory through to post-medieval.	3
Group Association	Contains a range of assets some of which relate well in date.	2
Amenity Value	There are some aspects of the historic environment which contribute to the sense of place and would lend themselves to be promoted as such.	2
Sensitivity	The historic environment of the zone has undergone some change and could accommodate some medium to large developments.	2
Overall Score		16

For further information regarding the Historic Environment Record (HER); Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) and designated sites please contact:

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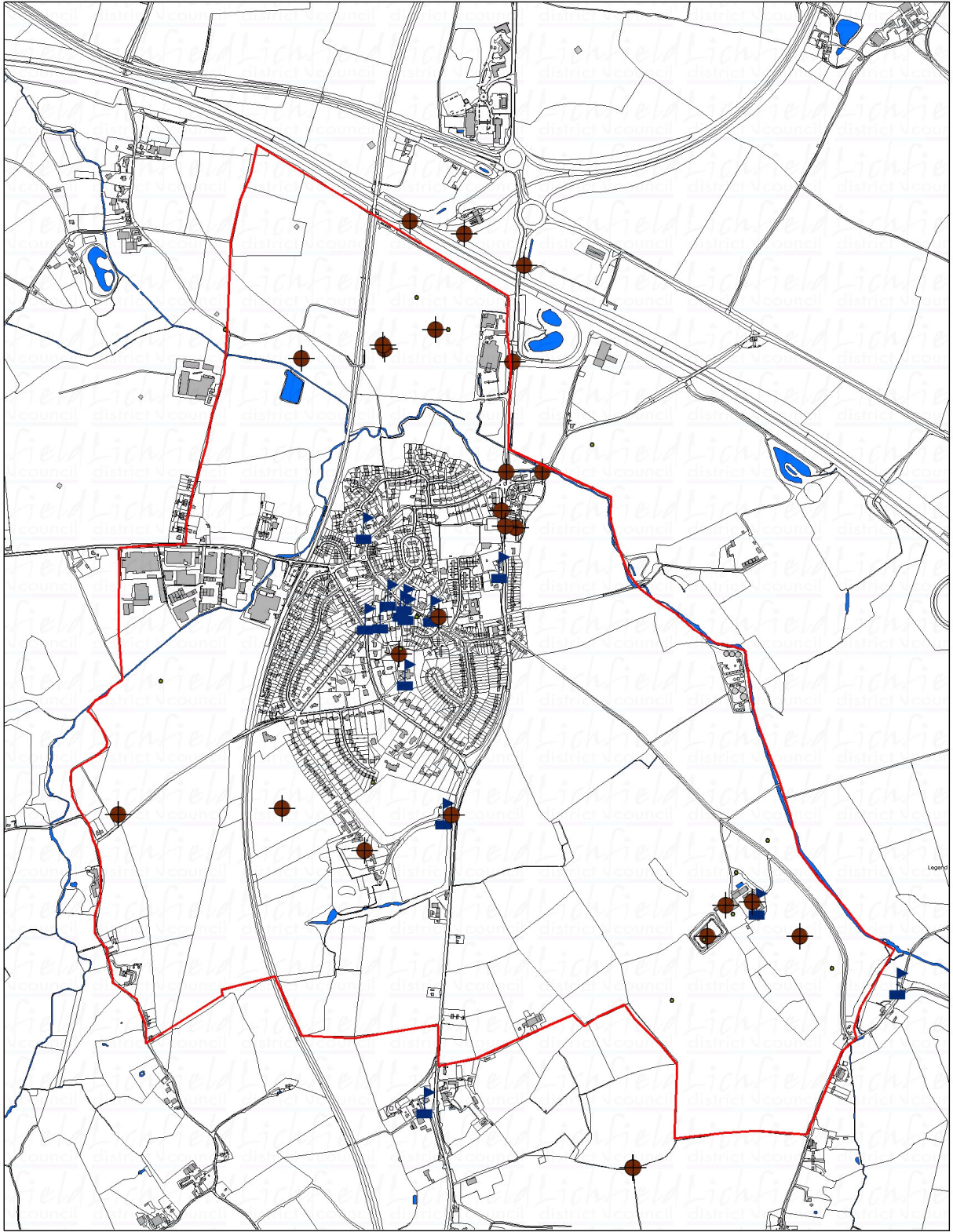


**Map 1: LHECZ 13:
Shenstone -
Designated Historic
Environment Assets**

Scale: Not to Scale
 Date: April 2009
 Drawn by: Debbie Boffin
 Drawing No:
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Key

	Conservation Areas
	Ancient Monuments
	HECA boundaries
Listed Buildings	
	Grade 1
	Grade 2
	Grade 2*



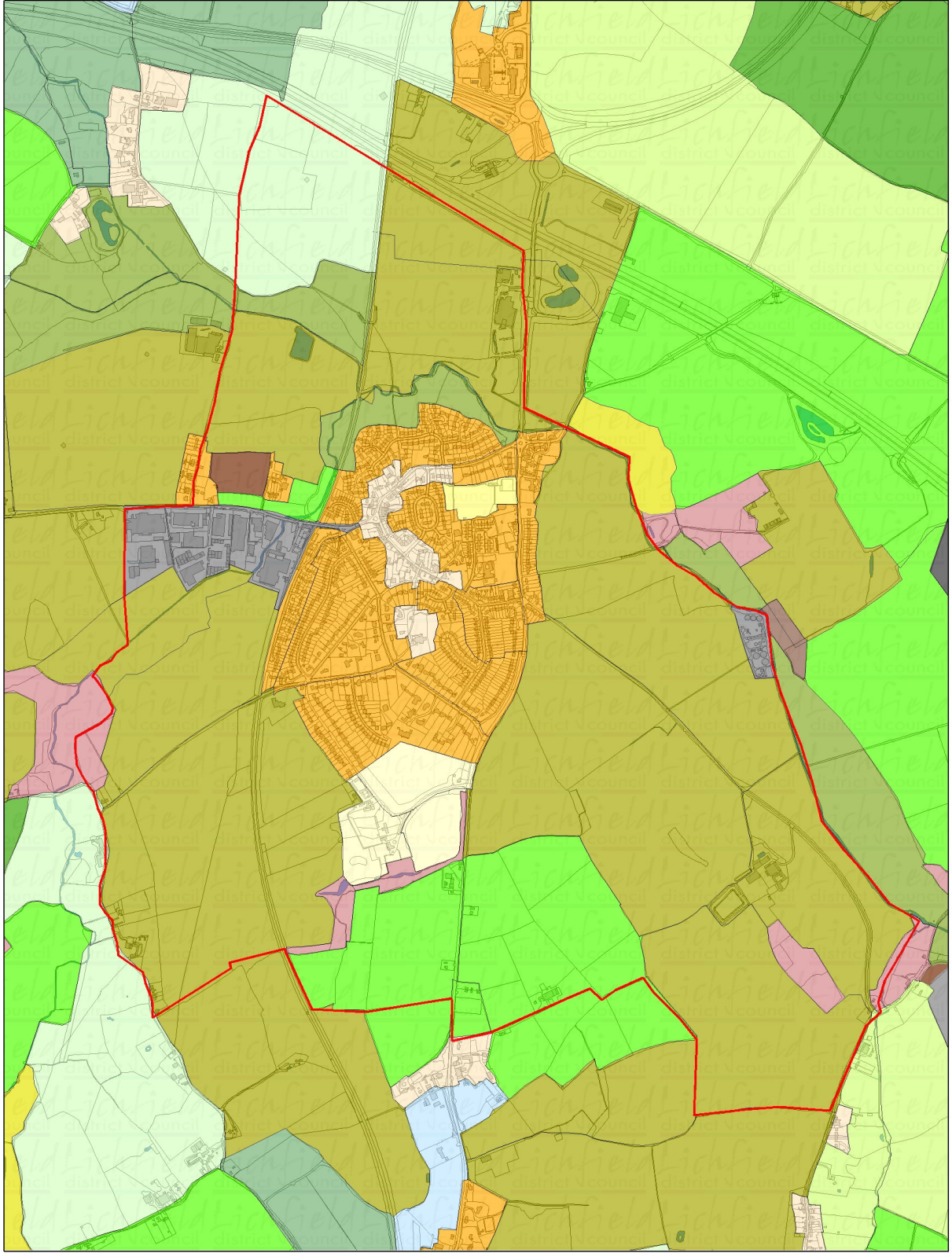
**Map 2: LHECZ 13:
Shenstone -
HER data
(excluding findspots and
documentary evidence)**

Scale: Not to Scale	Date: February 2009
Drawn By: Debbie Boffin	
Drawing No:	
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Key

-  Building
-  Monument



Map 3: LHECZ 13: Shenstone - Refined HLC

DATE: 16/11/2010
 DATE: April 2009
 BY: Debbie Duffin
 DRAWING NO: 13/01/09

- 18th century
- 19th century
- 20th century
- 21st century
- Other early woodland
- Post 1800 Settlement
- Pre 1800 Settlement
- Post 1800 small replanted field systems
- Pre 1800 paddocks & closes
- Industrial & Betwixt
- Heavy parks and gardens
- Open parkland
- Post 1800 Fine re-planted fields
- Post 1800 small replanted field systems
- Pre 1800 paddocks & closes
- Industrial & Betwixt
- 19th century woodland
- Pre 1800 woodland
- Post 1800 woodland
- Pre 1800 woodland
- Post 1800 woodland
- Pre 1800 woodland
- Post 1800 woodland
- Pre 1800 woodland
- Post 1800 woodland
- Pre 1800 woodland
- Post 1800 woodland