

Rugeley Wharf to Wharf Cottage

The canal continues its course along the outskirts of Rugeley. At Brindley Bank it takes a sharp bend to the north east and crosses the River Trent back out into open countryside. Another bend to the north west takes it back towards the Trent at Wharf Cottage.

Notable Features

Rugeley Wharf

Bridge No. 66 carries Leathermill Lane over the canal. To the south of the bridge are a number of historical features including the Old Mill. Built in 1863, the building was used as a corn mill. Although greatly changed since then, the gable which fronts the canal still has a date plaque and the remains of the steam powered lifting gear. The building now houses a variety of small industries. Some of the smaller surrounding outbuildings are also original, although these have been altered dramatically.

To the north of the bridge are the now derelict wharf buildings. They date from the early 19th century and were built for use as a tannery. Some of the original buildings remain; extensions of the early 1900s covered a much larger site but these were demolished in 1972 and the site is now occupied by the Magistrates' Courts and the Fire Station. The canal agent's house was built in 1829 and subsequently used as the tannery offices between 1947 and 1966. It then fell into disuse and in 1979 was restored to residential use. There are plans now to restore the wharf buildings and convert them into a pub and restaurant with canalside facilities for boat users. At the wharf, the canal narrows slightly where there were once lock gates. This also provided a point at which barges were weighed. A path leads from the towing path to town via the bridge.

St. Augustine's

The playing fields and Church of St. Augustine's are both important features along the canal. Adjacent to Church Croft House, are the 13th and 14th century remains of the first St. Augustine's Church and, across the road, there is the Church of St. Augustine's (built 1823) and Churchyard.

Brindley Bank Wharf

Aptly named Brindley Bank is an attractive area of trees at the bend in the canal. It is known as the Wharf, but there is no evidence of any buildings on the site at any time. It was here that the body of Christina Collins was found in 1839. Mrs. Collins had set out to travel by canal from Liverpool to join her husband in London. Somewhere between Colwich and Rugeley she was attacked by the boat's crew, raped and pushed into the canal to drown. The Captain and a crew member were convicted of murder and hanged at Stafford. Local folklore reports that her screams can still be heard along the steps from the Wharf to Wolseley Road,; they are known as the "Bloody Steps".

The Pumping Station

The Wolseley Road Pumping Station is a 19th century building.

Bishton to Little Haywood

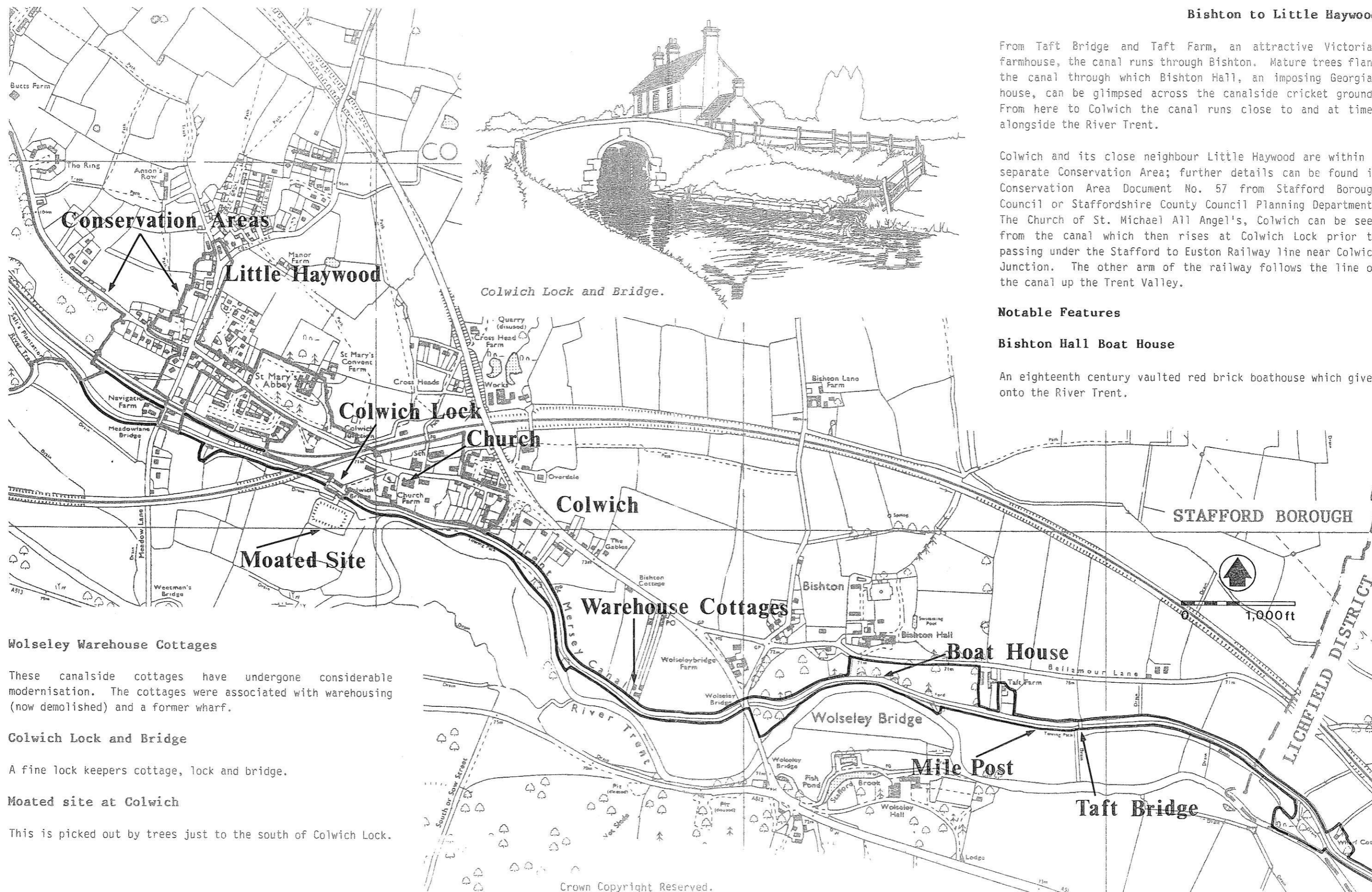
From Taft Bridge and Taft Farm, an attractive Victorian farmhouse, the canal runs through Bishton. Mature trees flank the canal through which Bishton Hall, an imposing Georgian house, can be glimpsed across the canalside cricket ground. From here to Colwich the canal runs close to and at times alongside the River Trent.

Colwich and its close neighbour Little Haywood are within a separate Conservation Area; further details can be found in Conservation Area Document No. 57 from Stafford Borough Council or Staffordshire County Council Planning Department. The Church of St. Michael All Angel's, Colwich can be seen from the canal which then rises at Colwich Lock prior to passing under the Stafford to Euston Railway line near Colwich Junction. The other arm of the railway follows the line of the canal up the Trent Valley.

Notable Features

Bishton Hall Boat House

An eighteenth century vaulted red brick boathouse which gives onto the River Trent.



Wolseley Warehouse Cottages

These canalside cottages have undergone considerable modernisation. The cottages were associated with warehousing (now demolished) and a former wharf.

Colwich Lock and Bridge

A fine lock keeps cottage, lock and bridge.

Moated site at Colwich

This is picked out by trees just to the south of Colwich Lock.

Little Haywood to Great Haywood

On leaving Little Haywood the canal which is sandwiched between the railway and the River Trent at the foot of a steep and wooded slope enters the Great Haywood and Shugborough Conservation Area; further details can be found in Conservation Area Document No. 7 from Stafford Borough Council or Staffordshire County Council Planning Department. Views of Shugborough Hall set in its parkland can be enjoyed along this stretch.

Just to the north of Great Haywood is the Haywood Junction with the northern end of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal constructed in 1766-1772. The towpath is carried over the Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal by a gracefully curved brick bridge. There are mooring and servicing facilities at Haywood Junction. Haywood Junction still retains its corn mill and associated housing and formerly had a wharf.

The canal continues northwards under Mill Lane and into open countryside.

Notable Features

Cast Iron Bridge

This 19th century bridge, in the style of other bridges and railings of the Shugborough Estate, provided a route for carriages between Shugborough Hall and St. Stephen's Church in Great Haywood.

Trent Lane Bridge

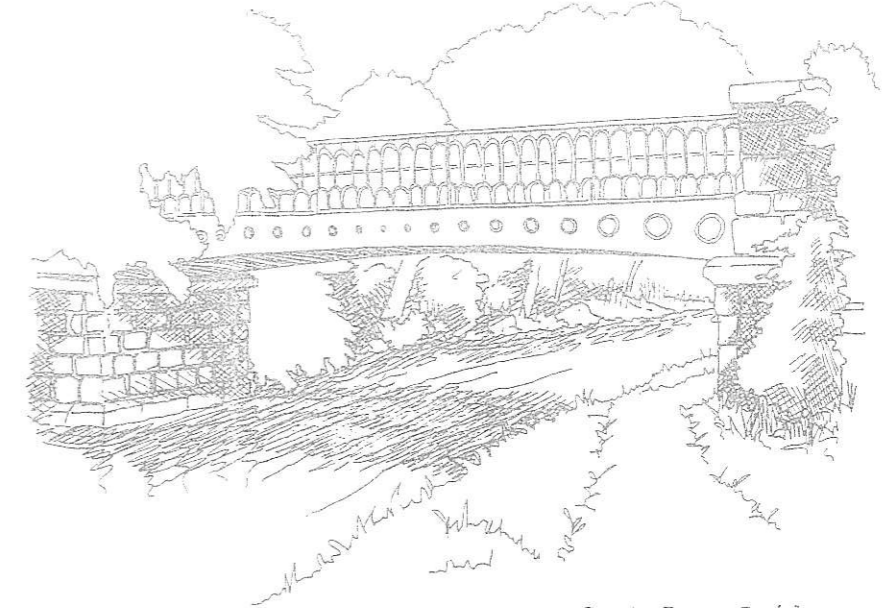
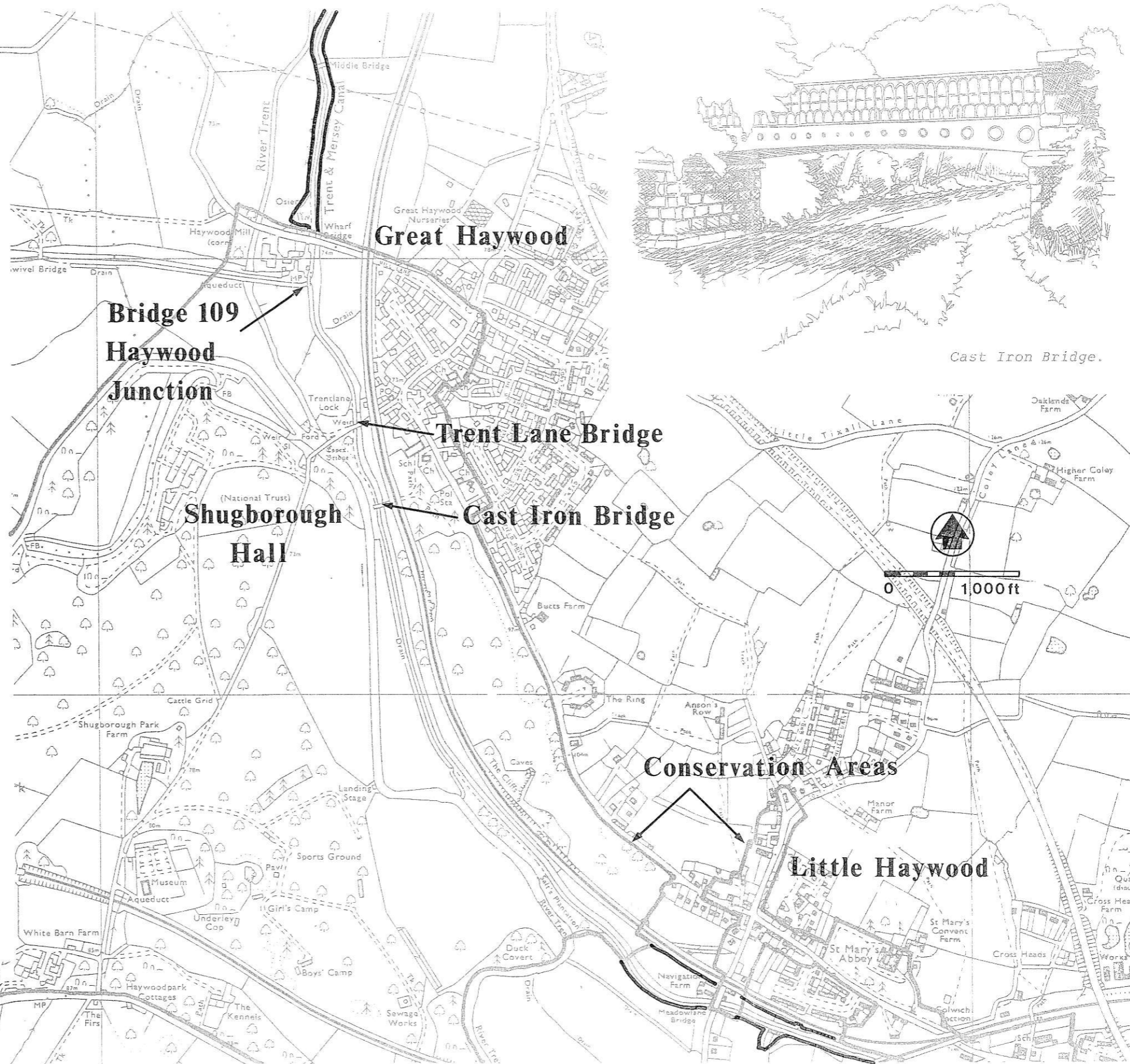
An attractive late 18th century bridge with ashlar stone parapets.

Bridge No. 109

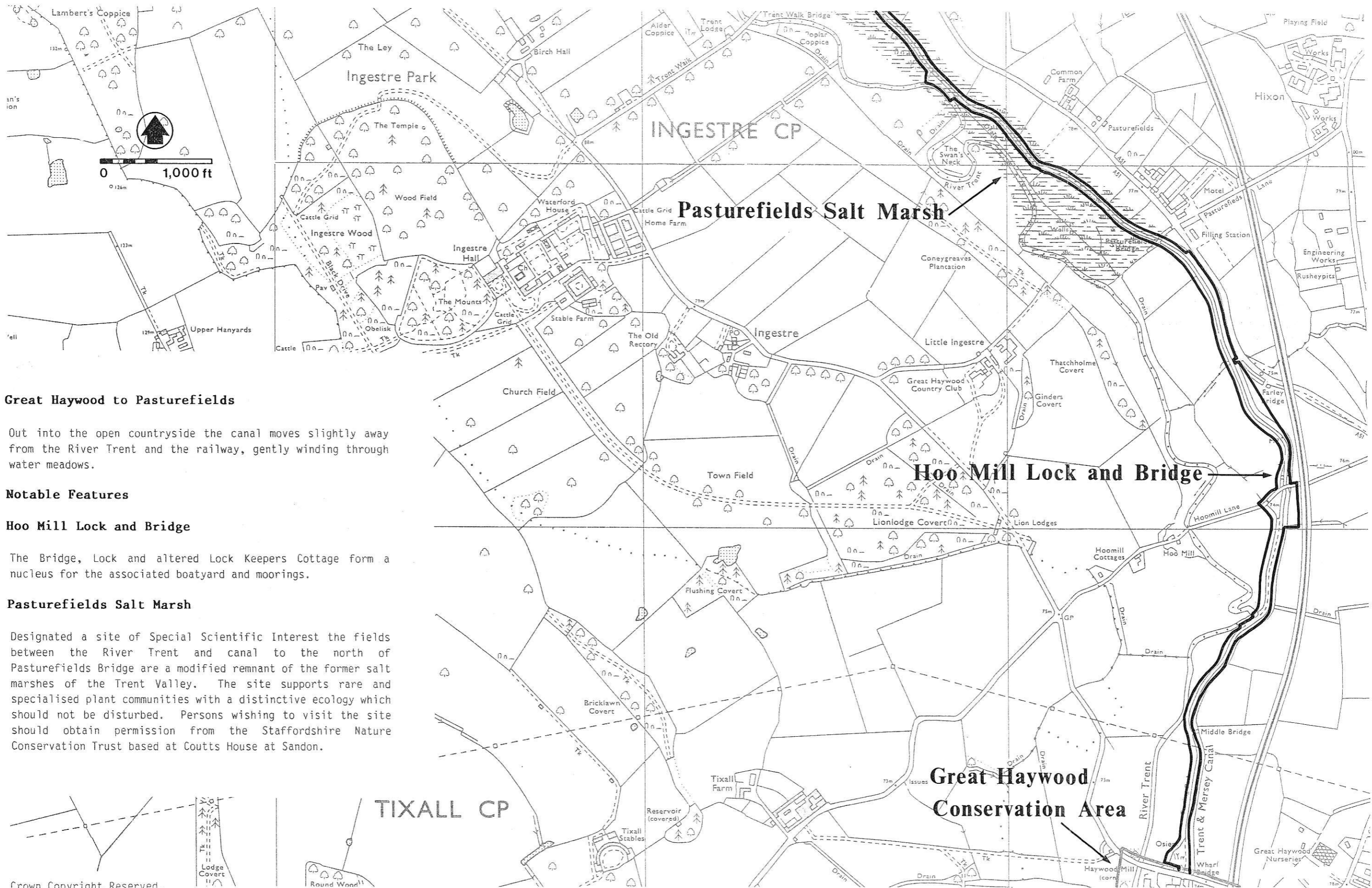
A brick built bridge with curved parapets and stone copings carrying the towpath. It is unusually wide to allow for boats turning at the junction.



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Cast Iron Bridge.



Great Haywood to Pasturefields

Out into the open countryside the canal moves slightly away from the River Trent and the railway, gently winding through water meadows.

Notable Features

Hoo Mill Lock and Bridge

The Bridge, Lock and altered Lock Keepers Cottage form a nucleus for the associated boatyard and moorings.

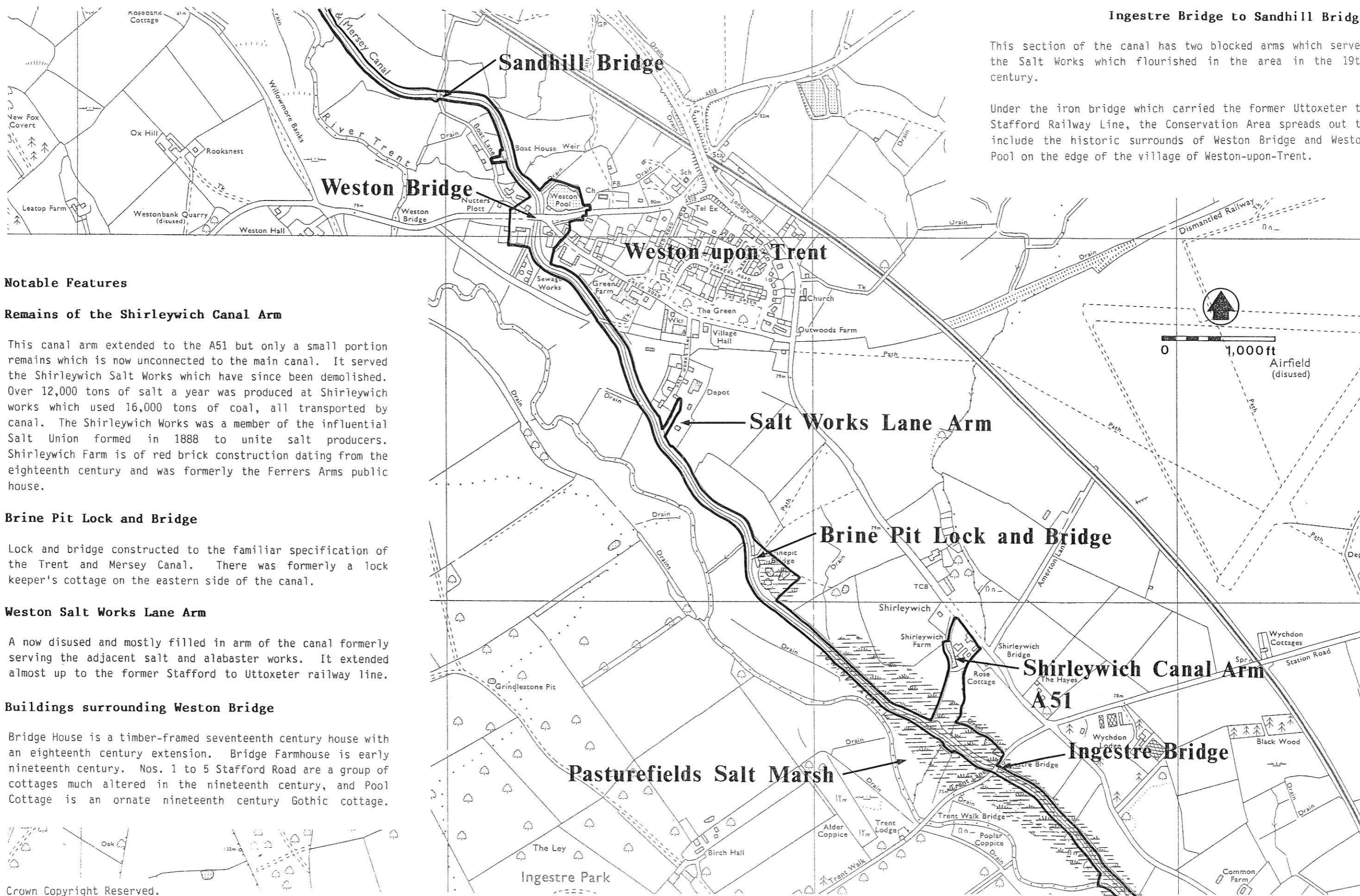
Pasturefields Salt Marsh

Designated a site of Special Scientific Interest the fields between the River Trent and canal to the north of Pasturefields Bridge are a modified remnant of the former salt marshes of the Trent Valley. The site supports rare and specialised plant communities with a distinctive ecology which should not be disturbed. Persons wishing to visit the site should obtain permission from the Staffordshire Nature Conservation Trust based at Coutts House at Sandon.

Ingestre Bridge to Sandhill Bridge

This section of the canal has two blocked arms which served the Salt Works which flourished in the area in the 19th century.

Under the iron bridge which carried the former Uttoxeter to Stafford Railway Line, the Conservation Area spreads out to include the historic surrounds of Weston Bridge and Weston Pool on the edge of the village of Weston-upon-Trent.



Notable Features

Remains of the Shirleywich Canal Arm

This canal arm extended to the A51 but only a small portion remains which is now unconnected to the main canal. It served the Shirleywich Salt Works which have since been demolished. Over 12,000 tons of salt a year was produced at Shirleywich works which used 16,000 tons of coal, all transported by canal. The Shirleywich Works was a member of the influential Salt Union formed in 1888 to unite salt producers. Shirleywich Farm is of red brick construction dating from the eighteenth century and was formerly the Ferrers Arms public house.

Brine Pit Lock and Bridge

Lock and bridge constructed to the familiar specification of the Trent and Mersey Canal. There was formerly a lock keeper's cottage on the eastern side of the canal.

Weston Salt Works Lane Arm

A now disused and mostly filled in arm of the canal formerly serving the adjacent salt and alabaster works. It extended almost up to the former Stafford to Uttoxeter railway line.

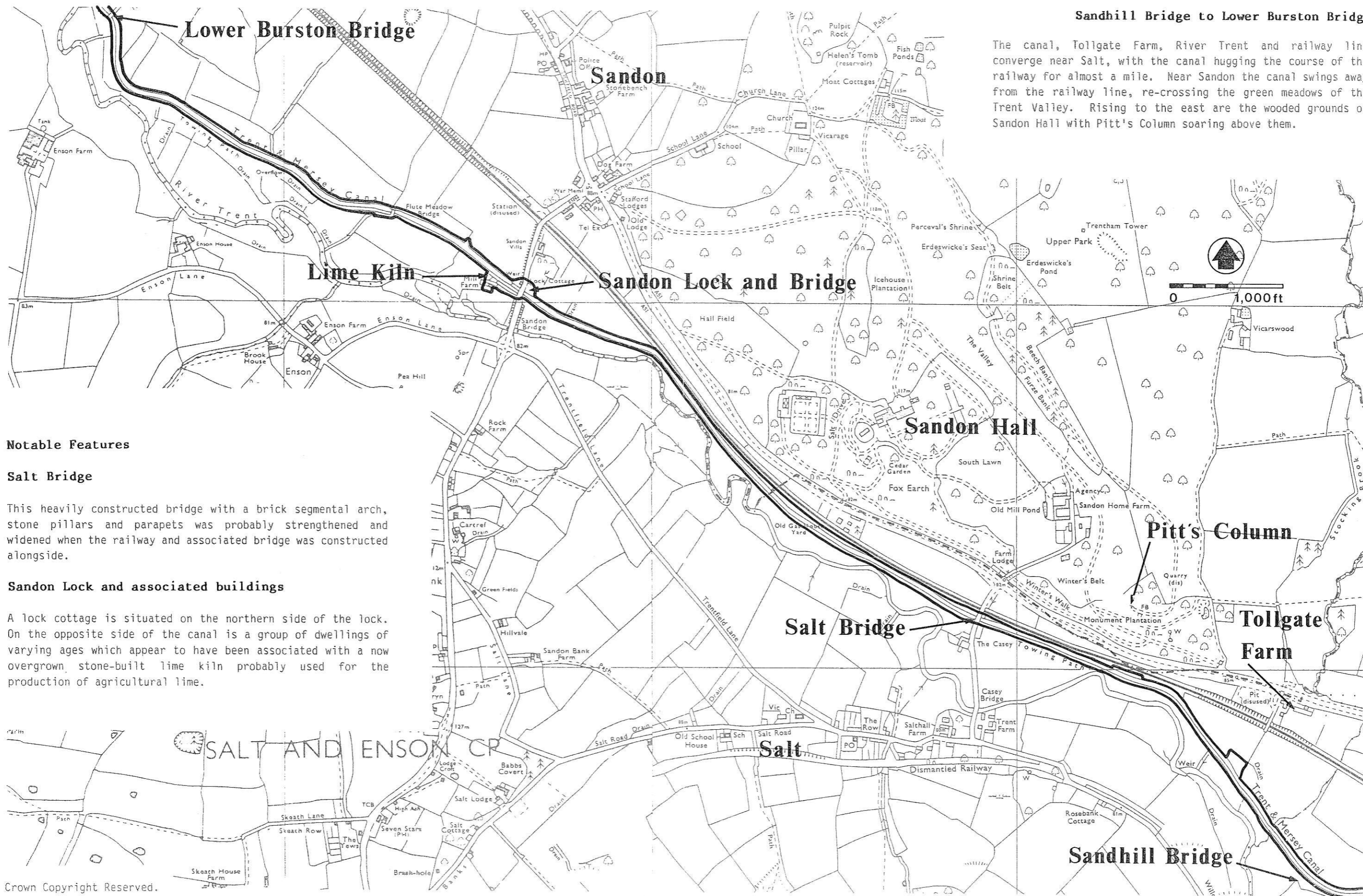
Buildings surrounding Weston Bridge

Bridge House is a timber-framed seventeenth century house with an eighteenth century extension. Bridge Farmhouse is early nineteenth century. Nos. 1 to 5 Stafford Road are a group of cottages much altered in the nineteenth century, and Pool Cottage is an ornate nineteenth century Gothic cottage.



Sandhill Bridge to Lower Burston Bridge

The canal, Tollgate Farm, River Trent and railway line converge near Salt, with the canal hugging the course of the railway for almost a mile. Near Sandon the canal swings away from the railway line, re-crossing the green meadows of the Trent Valley. Rising to the east are the wooded grounds of Sandon Hall with Pitt's Column soaring above them.



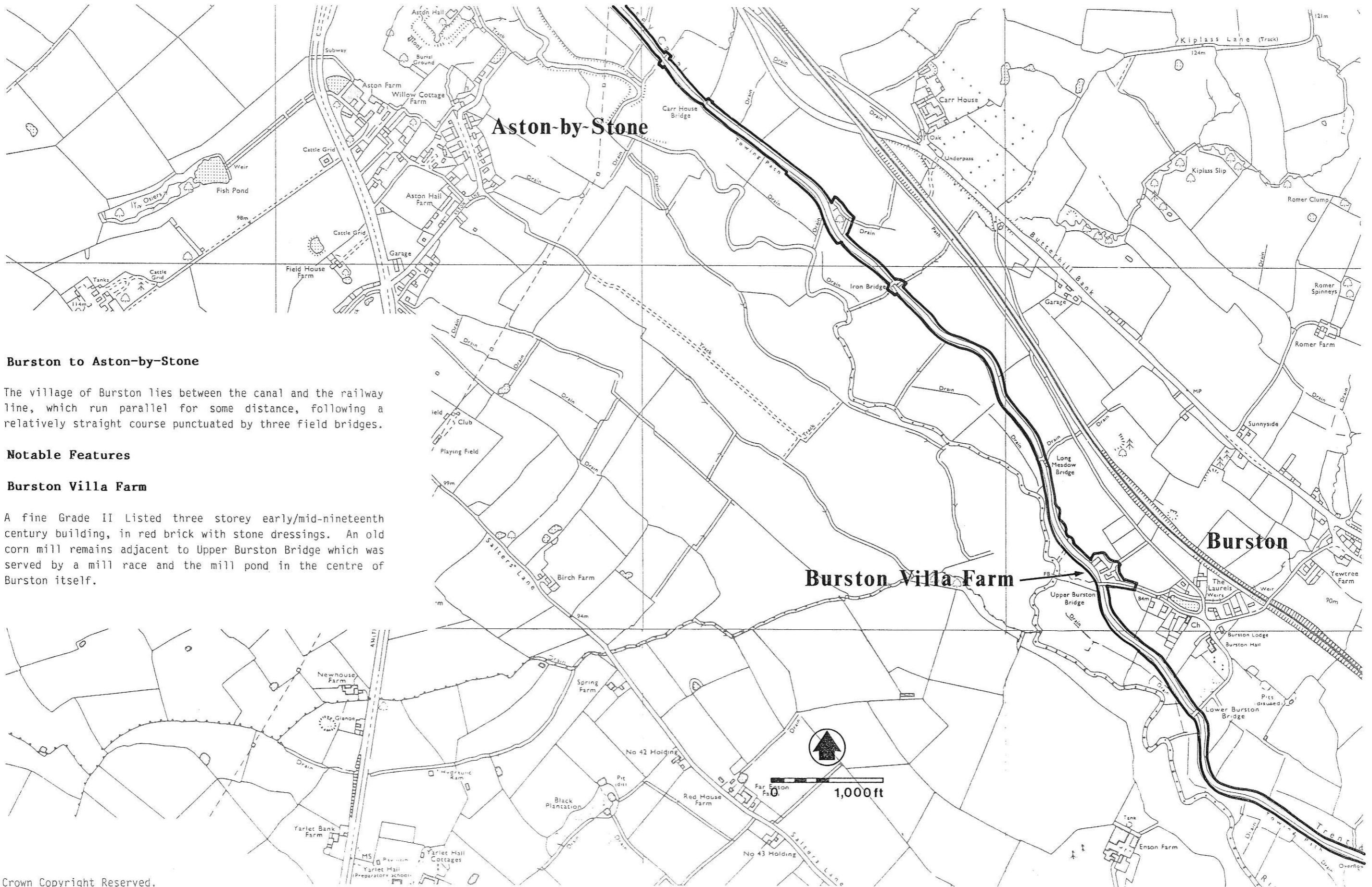
Notable Features

Salt Bridge

This heavily constructed bridge with a brick segmental arch, stone pillars and parapets was probably strengthened and widened when the railway and associated bridge was constructed alongside.

Sandon Lock and associated buildings

A lock cottage is situated on the northern side of the lock. On the opposite side of the canal is a group of dwellings of varying ages which appear to have been associated with a now overgrown stone-built lime kiln probably used for the production of agricultural lime.



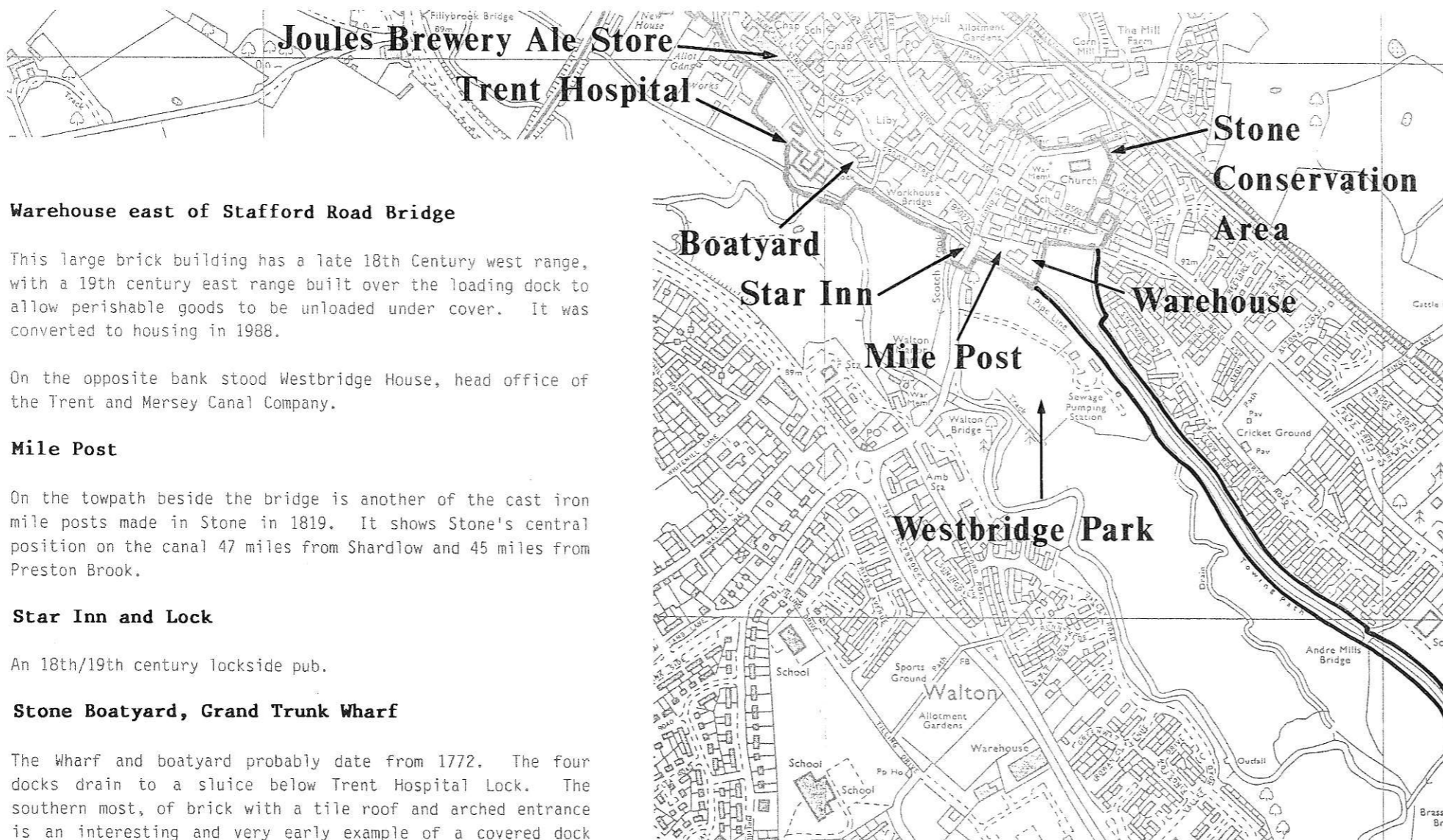
Burston to Aston-by-Stone

The village of Burston lies between the canal and the railway line, which run parallel for some distance, following a relatively straight course punctuated by three field bridges.

Notable Features

Burston Villa Farm

A fine Grade II Listed three storey early/mid-nineteenth century building, in red brick with stone dressings. An old corn mill remains adjacent to Upper Burston Bridge which was served by a mill race and the mill pond in the centre of Burston itself.



Warehouse east of Stafford Road Bridge

This large brick building has a late 18th Century west range, with a 19th century east range built over the loading dock to allow perishable goods to be unloaded under cover. It was converted to housing in 1988.

On the opposite bank stood Westbridge House, head office of the Trent and Mersey Canal Company.

Mile Post

On the towpath beside the bridge is another of the cast iron mile posts made in Stone in 1819. It shows Stone's central position on the canal 47 miles from Shardlow and 45 miles from Preston Brook.

Star Inn and Lock

An 18th/19th century lockside pub.

Stone Boatyard, Grand Trunk Wharf

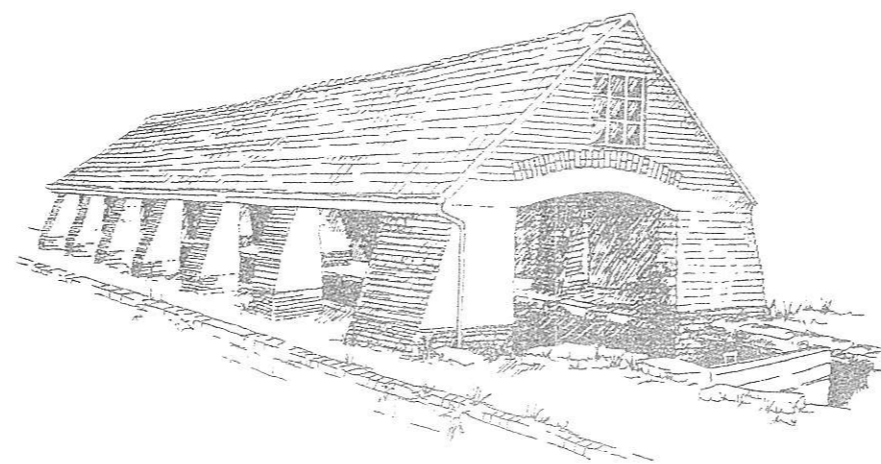
The Wharf and boatyard probably date from 1772. The four docks drain to a sluice below Trent Hospital Lock. The southern most, of brick with a tile roof and arched entrance is an interesting and very early example of a covered dock built about 1772. The northern most dock has an early 19th century slate roof and cast iron pillars. The 2-storey Wharfinger's office building and workshop with distinctive deep eaves and the blacksmith's shop are mid 19th century. The docks and buildings are all Grade II listed buildings.

Trent Hospital

This was built in 1793 as a workhouse; the top floor and further blocks were added in 1839 and later.

Joules Brewery Ale Store

Constructed in 1881 as a waterside store with central loading bay, the Ale Store forms a spectacular backdrop to the gentle curve of the canal at this point.



Stone Boatyard covered Dock.

Stone Conservation Area

The canal forms the boundary between housing development to the east and the undeveloped valley of the River Trent to the west as it passes through the Stone area. Attractive trees border the canal as it passes Westbridge Park and enters the Stone Conservation Area, detailed in Conservation Area Document No. 1 issued by Stafford Borough Planning Department. Stone benefitted greatly from the construction of the canal, thriving on the busy traffic using its wharves.

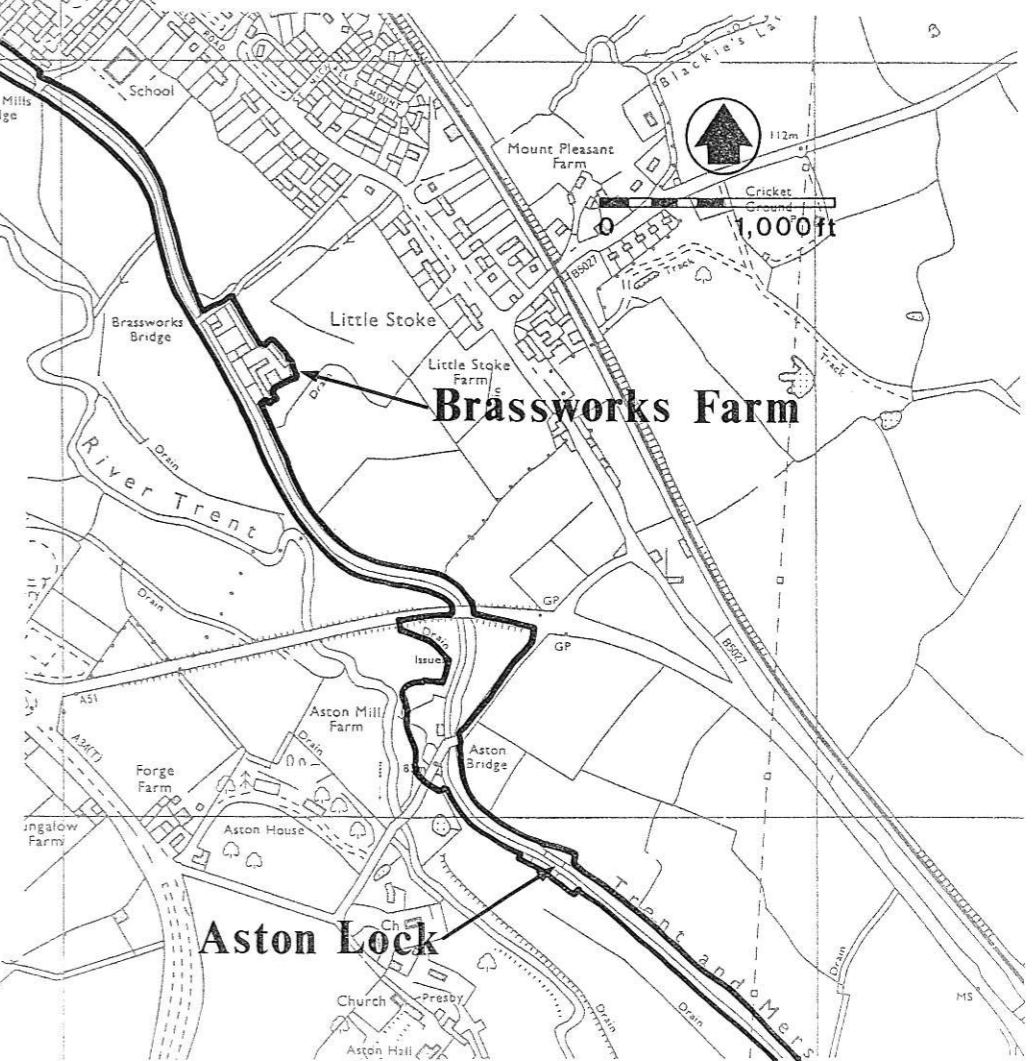
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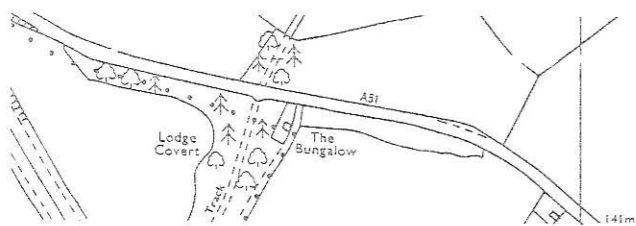
Aston Lock

A lock and lock keepers cottage.

Brassworks Farm

Its name reveals a former use of the site of this early nineteenth century farmhouse. It is of three storeys in red brick with a slate roof and is attractively set among trees.





Stone to Meaford

The course of the canal rises again through Stone Lock. Four locks to the east of Meaford take the canal up a significant gradient. The Conservation Area also includes the original course of the canal prior to its straightening. To the west is the Meaford Conservation Area. Under Top Lock Bridge and Siddalls Bridge the canal approaches Meaford Power Station which rises dramatically in the background.

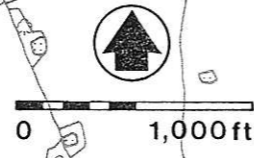
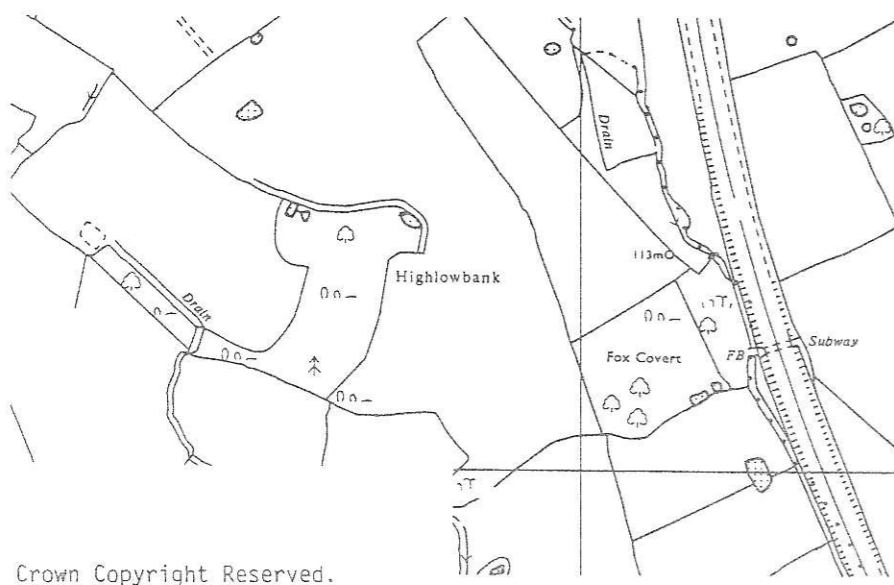
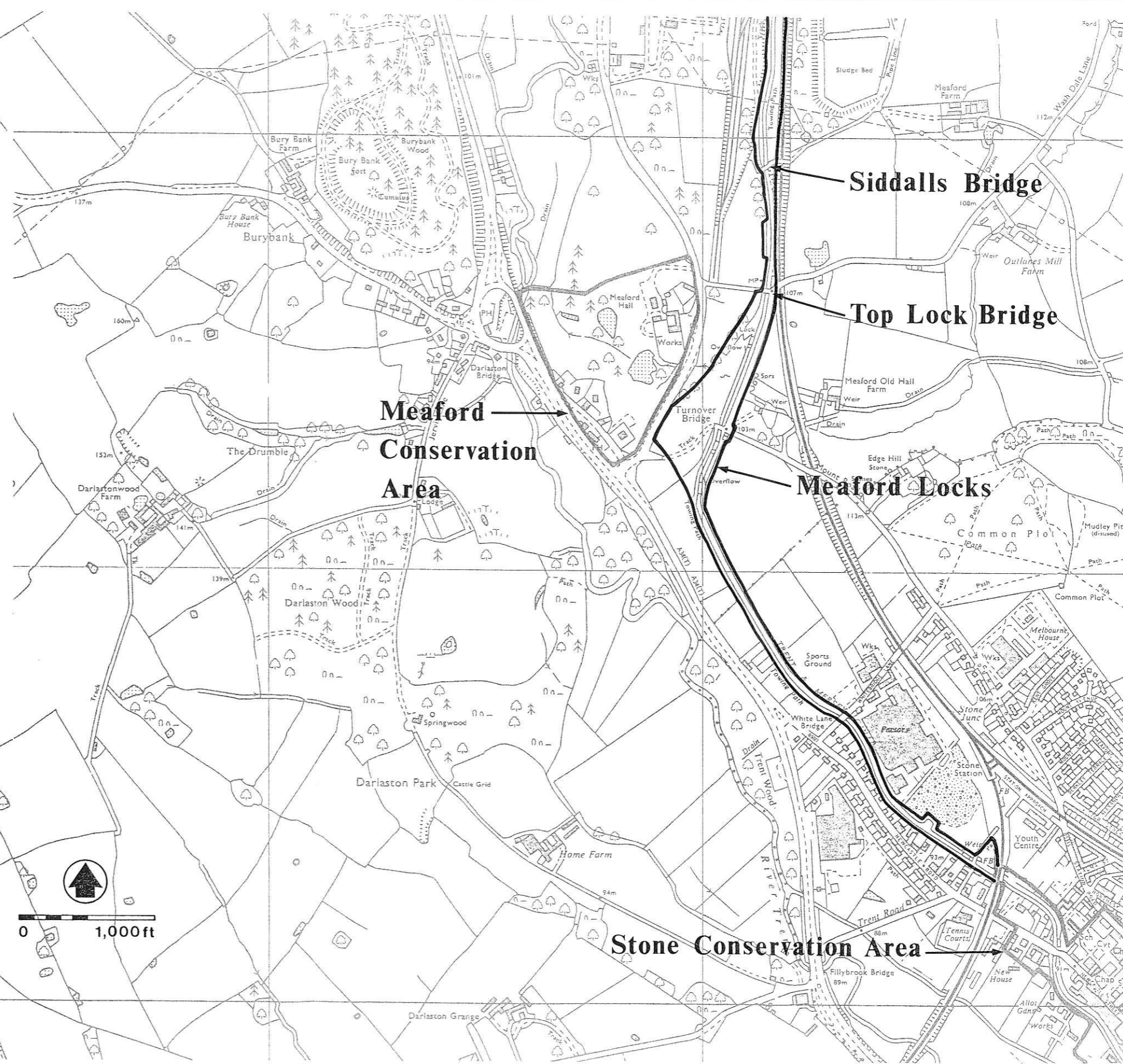
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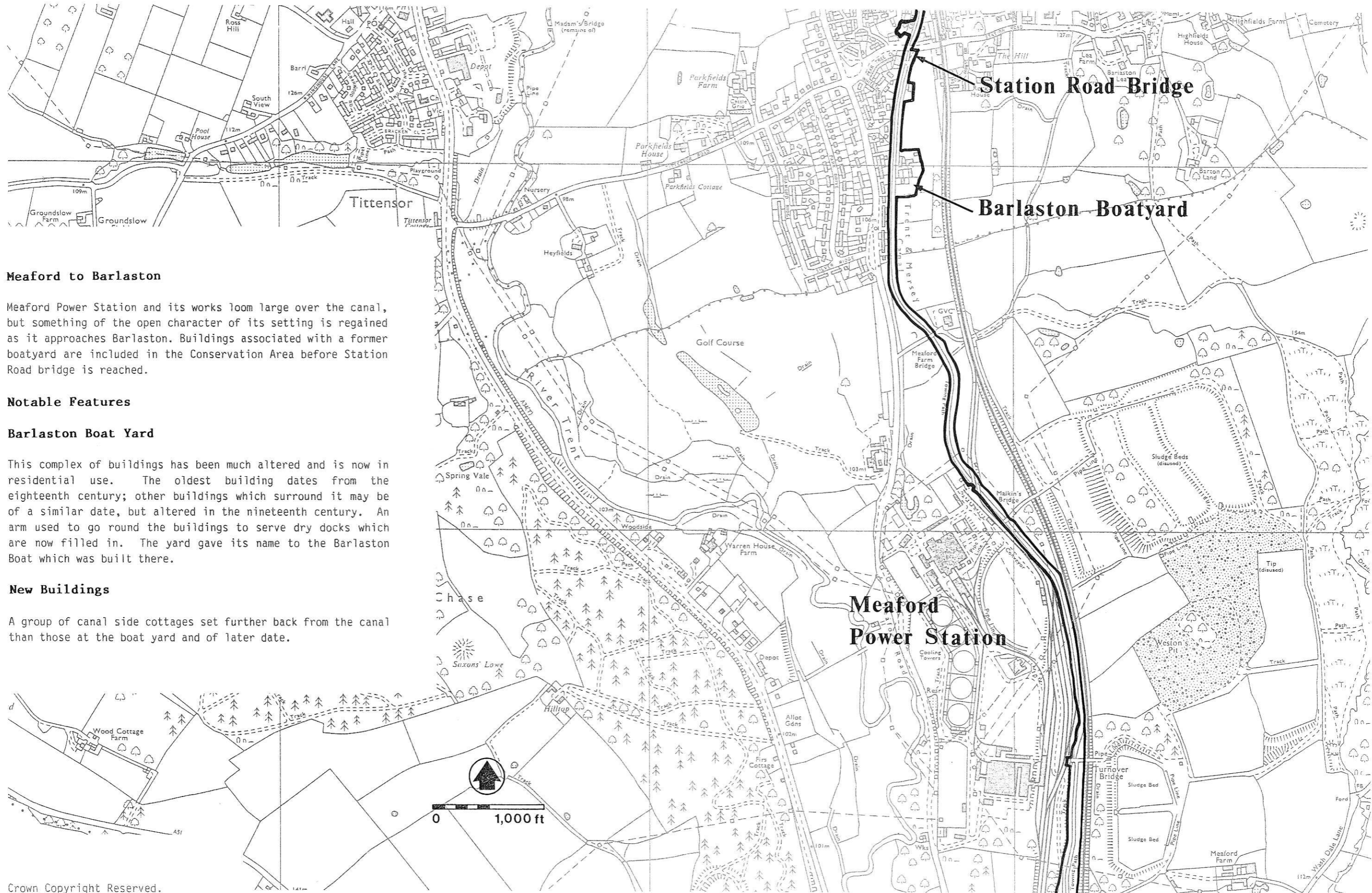
Meaford Locks

These comprise a total of four locks. The top lock was constructed at the time the canal was built, the lower three in about 1830 when the canal was straightened, probably under the direction of Thomas Telford. They replaced a staircase of locks to relieve congestion. The former staircase is marked by a sharp gradient in the overgrown course of the old canal which is still clearly visible in the field and woods to the west of the canal.

Top Lock Bridge

Is notable for its narrowness and lack of towpath, horses using the adjacent lane.





Meaford to Barlaston

Meaford Power Station and its works loom large over the canal, but something of the open character of its setting is regained as it approaches Barlaston. Buildings associated with a former boatyard are included in the Conservation Area before Station Road bridge is reached.

Notable Features

Barlaston Boat Yard

This complex of buildings has been much altered and is now in residential use. The oldest building dates from the eighteenth century; other buildings which surround it may be of a similar date, but altered in the nineteenth century. An arm used to go round the buildings to serve dry docks which are now filled in. The yard gave its name to the Barlaston Boat which was built there.

New Buildings

A group of canal side cottages set further back from the canal than those at the boat yard and of later date.