Darlaston Strategic Development Area: An Archaeological Assessment

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
Project No. 906
Month 2002

Darlaston Strategic Development Area: An Archaeological Assessment

by
Melissa Conway

For further information please contact:
Simon Buteux or Iain Ferris (Directors)
Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit
The University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
Tel: 0121 414 5513
Fax: 0121 414 5516
E-Mail: BUFAU@bham.ac.uk
Web Address: http://www.bufau.bham.ac.uk

Contents

Figures

Plates

Darlaston Strategic Development Area: An archaeological assessment

Summary

An archaeological assessment of the Darlaston Strategic Development Area was commissioned by GVA Grimley ahead of proposed regeneration of the area. The assessment was carried out by Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) in February and March 2002. The assessment combined an evaluation of the historic documentary evidence and mapping available for the Darlaston area with a walkover survey of the area to be affected by the development and regeneration works. The assessment concluded that the Darlaston Strategic Development Area was probably not initially developed prior to the closing stages of the eighteenth century. The development area spans much of the core industrial area which established Darlaston's importance and reputation as a regional and national centre for mining and the manufacture of metals and metal goods from the mid-nineteenth century to the late twentieth century. The majority of sites identified during this assessment were industrial sites – mainly those of former metal works – and of the canal, former transport networks and other related features. The assessment also identified areas affected by nineteenth century mine-workings. Several of the sites identified are of national or regional importance; these being two statutory listed buildings and one building designated as of local importance. The other sites identified by this assessment are of local importance and reflect the areas industrial history. The canal corridor and adjacent industrial sites form the dominant historic feature of the Darlaston Strategic Development Area. It is recommended that a more detailed assessment and recording of any sites to be demolished or altered as part of the regeneration and development works be carried out.

1.0 Introduction

This report outlines the results of an assessment of the nature of the archaeological resource within the Darlaston Strategic Development Area. Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU) carried out this assessment in February and March 2002 on behalf of GVA Grimley for inclusion into a wider environmental assessment of the Darlaston Strategic Development Area. The cultural and archaeological heritage consists of features of archaeological, historical and architectural value; it can include above-ground remains – standing buildings, other structures and earthworks – buried remains, palaeoenvironmental evidence, sites of historic events or sites with historical associations, historic landscape elements, and artefact scatters that may indicate the presence of an archaeological site below ground. National planning policies concerning archaeology are set down in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 and those concerning standing historic buildings are outlined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (DoE 1990 and 1994). This assessment was carried out according to the guidelines set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999).

2.0 Site location

The Darlaston Strategic Development Area, hereafter referred to as the Study Area, covers a large area to the north-east of Darlaston town-centre (centred on NGR SO 9835/9765). The Study Area is bounded by the Black Country Route, the former LNWR railway line, the disused Darlaston Branch line, the River Tame and Sneyd Brook, parts of the canal system, Reservoir Place, the Darlaston Road, the M6, Richards Road and Willenhall Road (Figure 1). Two watercourses – the River Tame and the Sneyd Brook – run though the Study Area; both have been diverted and straightened in recent years.

The drift geology of the Study Area is mainly characterised by boulder clays. Alluvial deposits, however, are found around the river and stream corridors (British Geological Survey Sheet 154). The underlying solid geology is mainly composed of coal measures. Darlaston is situated on the South Staffordshire coalfield and the seam of 'thick coal' or 'ten yard coal' outcrops in the vicinity.

3.0 Objectives

This assessment aims to define the nature of the archaeological resource contained within the Study Area, and can include buried archaeological features and standing buildings of historical or industrial archaeological importance. The assessment will highlight any areas or buildings within the Study Area which may require further archaeological work prior to any development or regeneration taking place so that appropriate mitigation strategies can be devised.

4.0 Methodology

A number of sources were consulted during the course of this assessment:

- The Black Country Sites and Monuments Record (BCSMR)
- Tithe maps and early Ordnance Survey maps held by the Walsall Local Studies Centre
- Reports on the extent of limestone mining held by the Walsall Local Studies Centre
- Secondary archaeological and historical sources held by the Walsall Local Studies Centre and the University of Birmingham Library

A walkover survey of the Study Area was conducted to assess the archaeological potential of the area and identify any buildings of architectural or archaeological value.

5.0 Present character

The areas contained within the Study Area are currently subject to a variety of different land-uses:

- Industrial areas comprising mainly modern factories.

- Industrial areas where the majority of factory buildings date between the mid-nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries.
- Commercial properties including public houses, large warehousing and distribution units, and a car auction premises.
- Residential properties; mainly located on The Flatts, the southern end of Richards Road, Bentley Road and Darlaston Road.
- Cemetery.
- Open waste-ground where fly tipping seems to have been a major problem.
- Animal pasture, situated by the River Tame. Three areas were noted - pasture to the north of Darlaston Road contains many disused mineshafts.
- Disused railway line. The boundary of the Study Area between The Flatts and Heath Road follows the cutting of the former line of the Darlaston branch line.

6.0 Archaeological and historical background

The settlement of Darlaston may have its roots in the Anglo Saxon period, as the place-name 'Darlaston' is Anglo-Saxon in origin (DCHP 1984, 3). The earliest known archaeological deposits in the Darlaston area date to the Medieval period

6.1 The Medieval Period

The Study Area extends across much of the north-eastern portion of the medieval parish of Darlaston. It also includes very small sections of the medieval parishes of Bentley and Wednesbury in the area around the M6 motorway. Darlaston is not mentioned in the Domesday Book, this may be because no settlement existed at this date or could merely be one of the many omissions from the survey. By the thirteenth century Darlaston had become established as a settlement which was probably focused, as today, on the area around Church Street and King Street.

The Study Area spans the unsettled hinterland of the parish of Darlaston. A large part of the Study Area lies in an area known as Darlaston Green. This was not a 'village green' in the proper sense but more probably an extensive area of waste or heathland on the edge of the town (Timmins 1993, 13 & 56). The Study Area also includes an area known as 'The Flatts', which was part of the town's medieval open field system. The pattern of strip-cultivation indicative of open fields survived in this area into the mid-nineteenth century and is visible on the Darlaston Tithe Map of 1840. A water mill to serve Darlaston and Bentley was established on the River Tame in the mid-thirteenth century. Archaeological remains of the medieval mill still survive, its site, however, lies just outside the Study Area (BCSMR 5388).

6.2 The Post-Medieval Period

The Study Area remained largely undeveloped into the middle of the nineteenth century despite the fact that the Darlaston area was rich in mineral resources such as coal, ironstone and fireclays (VCH 1968, 285). The industrial development of Darlaston, like much of the Staffordshire Black Country, was hampered by its relative isolation. The absence of navigable rivers meant bulky raw materials, such as coal, could not be easily transported from the area.

The arrival of new transport links stimulated the industrial development of the area and facilitated the exploitation of the mineral resources present within the area. Darlaston was connected to the extensive Birmingham Canal Navigations in 1799 and the Grand Junction Railway was cut through the area in 1837 (VCH 1968, 292, 310). The two networks were linked in 1845 when an early interchange basin, known as Darlaston Green Goods Station, was constructed at Bughole Bridge (Foxon 1998, 101). Darlaston became an important centre of coal and ironstone mining in the early to mid-nineteenth century (DCHP 1984, 8). Mining in Darlaston was mainly carried out by cutting numerous small-scale workings using the rib and pillar system (DCHP 1984, 10). Large collieries were exceptional in the area and only one such establishment, The James Bridge Colliery, operated within the Study Area (see section 7.0 below).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century mining began to be complemented by the production of iron and steel in particular. Many furnaces and sheet mills, which took advantage of the coal and ore resources of the area, grew up around the established mines and the railway and canal. A further development away from primary and secondary manufacture toward the production of finished metal articles occurred in the later nineteenth and early twentieth century (VCH 1968, 121). The mainstay of Darlaston's manufacturing trades was nuts and bolts and the town became a national centre for their manufacture. Many of the firms thrived and grew to become major manufacturers, the Richards Company, and were significant employers in both the town and the region as a whole.

Darlaston, like the rest of the Black Country, suffered immensely during the recession which hit the country in the 1970s. Only a few firms survived the ongoing collapse of the country's manufacturing base, which continued unabated into the 1980's. This led to the dereliction and demolition of many former industrial sites on the town's outskirts. Some of these former industrial properties remain in a derelict state, while difficulties in reinstating areas of former lime and ironstone working has meant that several of these have reverted to waste ground. However, the sites of some factories are beginning to be re-used by service-sector companies.

In summary, the earliest tangible industrial development in the Study Area followed the construction of the canal in 1799 and the construction of the Grand Junction railway in 1837. Early industry was focused on the primary extraction of coal, ironstone and, to a lesser extent, limestone. Mines were located near the canal at Heath Road and Darlaston Road (Ove Arup 1983). The shafts of former coal and ironstone pits are visible

peppering the Study Area on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map dating to 1886. By the 1880s industry within the Study Area had begun to move away from mining and extraction toward the production of metals. Several forges and sheet mills had developed around the canal and railways by the time that First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of this area was surveyed. These metal works were later complemented by the establishment of many large factories producing finished metal goods. The Richards Company was one of the largest of these firms and operated from the large works on Lower Green and Richards Road producing nuts and bolts (Site No. 6, Figure 2). The current run-down state of many of the former works within the Study Area and the occupation of some of the former factory sites by service-sector companies likewise reflects the recent general trends in the Darlaston economy away from the traditional manufacturing sector toward service industries.

7.0 Archaeological and Historic Character of the Darlaston Strategic Development Area

The area covered by the Study Area has a broadly industrial character and lies at the edge of the Black Country conurbation. Only a handful of areas within the Study Area are non-industrial in character, these include some areas of open pasture next to the River Tame. The site of a toll-house associated with the turnpike road to Wednesbury (the modern Darlaston Road) lies next to the River Tame in a small area of pasture (BCSMR 6947, Figure 2). It is probable that recent works to straighten and embank the river in this location have removed the remains of the toll-house (further details are given in Appendix 1 Section IV: Other Sites). Other open areas exist within the Study Area and are largely the overgrown sites of demolished works. The James Bridge Cemetery (BCSMR 8918, Figure 2) was established in the mid-nineteenth century to serve the expanding population of Darlaston (further details of the cemetery and associated buildings are given in Appendix 1 Section IV: Other Sites). There is some encroachment of residential areas on the fringes of the Study Area (Figure 1). The housing within these developments is of early to mid-twentieth century date. Incorporated into the stretch of houses on the north side of Darlaston Road, to the west of the M6, is one of the few listed buildings in the Study Area – the Globe Inn (BCSMR 1555, Figure 2). The Globe Inn has been accorded Grade II listed status and is probably dated to the early eighteenth century (DoE Statutory List, 6/30). The inn is one of the oldest structures in the area (further details of the building are given in Appendix 1 Section IV: Other Sites).

The industrial nature of the Study Area can be sub-divided into a number of zones based on the type of industrial activities represented in these zones and the chronology of their development:

The Canal System and related features (Figure 1)

The Walsall canal runs through the Study Area and forms part of the Birmingham Canal Navigations. The canal was cut through the area in 1799 and is the main line of the Walsall Canal (BCSMR 5870, Figure 2) and the Anson branch (BCSMR 6728, Figure 2).

The main line of the Walsall Canal is embanked as it crosses the shallow valley of the River Tame. This stretch is carried over Bentley Mill Lane, and formerly the River Tame, by the James Bridge Aqueduct (BCSMR 2694; Figure 2). The aqueduct is a Grade II listed structure (a further description of it is included in Appendix 1 Section I: The Canal System)

The arrival of the canal to the area did not lead initially to much industrial development within the Study Area. The Tithe Map of Darlaston parish (1841) shows that several basins (see Appendix 1 Section I: The Canal System, Site Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 12 and Section II: the Railway System, BCSMR 11028) were cut from the canal into what were undeveloped areas during this period. These basins were presumably constructed to serve factories or mines which were planned but not yet established. It was only after the railway arrived and was linked to the canal in the 1840s that large-scale industrial development seems to have taken place. From the 1840s onwards many furnaces (including the Darlaston Green Furnaces Site No. 13, see Figure 2) and, later, many metal goods factories (including the Albert Works (BCSMR 11029, the LNWR Works (BCSMR 11030), the Crescent Ironworks (BCSMR 11031) and the Darlaston Steel and Iron Works (Site No. 6) were established around the canal in the area around the junction of Heath Road, Willenhall Road and Bentley Road (Figure 2). The existing basins served several of these furnaces and factories which were established around the canal from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. The Bescot Forge, which lay c.1.5 kilometres to the south-east of the canal, and is outside the Study Area, was linked to the canal at a basin (Site No. 3) by a horse tramway (Site No. 4, Figure 2, further details are given in Appendix 1 Section I: The Canal System). Other canal related industries and processes became established by the canal within the Study Area. These included a malthouse (BCSMR 11032, Figure 2. See Appendix 1 Section IV: Other Sites) on Bentley Road.

The Walsall Canal and its associated basins and factories (Plate 1) within the Study Area is a very good example of what has been termed the "industrial canal" (Foxon 1998). Elements of the canal system are preserved in varying condition. The main line of the canal itself is fairly well-maintained, however, the stretch of the Anson branch lying within the Study Area is almost entirely silted-up. The James Bridge aqueduct is also in fairly good condition (Plate 2). The underside of the aqueduct's arch over Bentley Mill Lane has been damaged in places due to traffic ignoring height restrictions and scraping the roof as they pass through. The original bridges of the canal system do not survive well in the Study Area, and the majority seem to have been either substantially reconstructed or totally rebuilt. This re-building and alteration begins in the later nineteenth century continuing into the 1990s. The railway interchange basin (BCSMR 11028) is clogged with weeds (Plate 3), only the silted-up mouth of basin Site No. 3 is currently visible. The remaining basins known from cartographic evidence (Site Nos. 1, 2 and 12) were not visible on the ground during the walkover survey, however, it is possible that they may survive below ground or have been built into later buildings. Evidence of the horse tramway from the Bescot Forge to the canal (Site No. 4) survives in the form of a bridge abutment carrying the line over Darlaston branch railway opposite the junction of Heath Road and Kendricks Road.

The Railway System (Figure 1)

The Study Area was served by two rail lines in the nineteenth century. One of the lines is still in use, the other had been abandoned by the mid-twentieth century. The extant rail line through the Study Area was laid in 1837 and was a part of the Grand Junction Railway (GJR) that later became part of the London and North Western Railway (LNWR). The LNWR line was linked to the canal at an existing basin near Bughole Bridge in 1845, and the rail interchange basin thus created became known as Darlaston Green Goods Station (BCSMR 11028, Figure 2. See Appendix 1 Section II: The Railway System).

The other line which served the Study Area was the Darlaston branch line which was opened in 1863. The James Bridge station was on this line and was situated near the junction of the branch line and the LNWR line at Darlaston Road. The Darlaston branch line was not very successful and falling passenger numbers, due to competition from the tramways, lead to the suspension of passenger services and the demolition of the stations on the line in the 1880s (DCHP 1984). The branch line then operated as a freight only line until its closure in the 1950s. The rails of the line were taken up in 1970 (DCHP 1984). The Darlaston Green Furnaces were linked to the Darlaston branch line by a small branch line. The abutments of the bridge which carried this line over the canal were identified by the walkover survey (Site No. 5, Figure 2. See Appendix 1 Section II: The Railway System).

The course of the Darlaston branch line remains free of development and survives as an overgrown path within the Study Area (Plate 4). The original infrastructure of the rail lines within the Study Area, such as bridges, do not survive well. The majority of rail bridges seem to have been subject to substantial alteration and reconstruction. None of the extant rail bridges seem to have any particular architectural merit.

Industrial Sites

Mining Areas (Figure 1)

The mining of coal and ironstone is the earliest known phase of industrial activity within the Study Area. It is hard to establish a precise chronology, or locations, for the majority of mine workings in the Study Area due to the nature of mining in this area. Mining in the Darlaston area is poorly documented as the majority of mine workings were small-scale, short-lived workings carried out on an ad-hoc basis. Formal, large-scale commercial mines and collieries are rare in this area. It is probable that mining was being carried out in this area before the eighteenth century. The arrival of the canal in 1799 provided an outlet to the lucrative Birmingham coal markets and probably led to a growth in mining activity at this time. By the time that the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of the area was surveyed (published in 1886) the Study Area is peppered with old mine shafts. Only a few shafts are shown as operational and one colliery, the James Bridge Colliery, is shown. The James Bridge Colliery (Site No. 11, Figure 2) was the only proper colliery known to have operated within the Study Area (further details are

given in Appendix 1 Section III: Industrial Sites). It is unclear at what date the colliery was established, however, the Third Edition Ordnance Survey coverage of the area shows that it was defunct by the 1920s and a copper works had been established on its site.

The main phase of mining in the Study Area dates from the close of the eighteenth century to the later nineteenth century. Documentary and cartographic evidence have contributed to the present estimate of the extent of the Study Area affected by mining (Figure 1). Many of the open areas within the Study Area bear the scars of former mining activity. This is most notable in the pasture field which lies between the River Tame and the M6 to the north of the Darlaston Road (Plate 5).

Industrial Sites:

Historic Industrial Core (Figure 1)

The mining industries outlined above began to be supplanted, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, by furnaces and sheet mills producing metals. The majority of these furnaces and mills, including the Darlaston Green Furnaces (Site No. 13, Figure 2), grew up around established mines in the area around the canal and railway interchange basin.

By the 1880s a further shift in the industrial nature of the Study Area had taken place away from metal production towards the manufacture of finished metal articles. The chief product of many of these factories was nuts and bolts. The majority of industrial sites within the Study Area are the sites of factories producing such goods and dating between the 1880s and the 1930s. The earliest factories of this type (The Albert Works - BCSMR 11029, the Crescent Works - BCSMR 11031, the London and North Western Works - BCSMR 11030 and the Darlaston Steel and Iron Works - later the site of the Richards Works, Site No. 6), clustered around the canal between the Heath Road/ Willenhall Road routeway and the LNWR rail line (Figure 2). The Grand Junction Works also dates to this phase but was an outlier of this main area of development being situated by the LNWR line in the James Bridge area (Site No. 14, Figure 2). Further industrial development of this nature occurred in the early twentieth century along the canal, to the south of Heath Road and at the junction of the LNWR and the Darlaston Branch line (Figure 1). The New Midland Works marks a later, but allied, phase of development of this type of industry (Site No. 9, Figure 2). The New Midlands Works was constructed as part of the expansion of the Richards Group in the 1930s. This expansion also entailed considerable re-building and expansion on the site of the original Richards Works (Site No. 6, Figure 2).

The condition of the works sites which comprise the historic industrial core of the Study Area is very varied. It is possible that some buildings and features relating to the earliest phases of the following works may survive; Crescent Works (BCSMR 11031), London and North Western Works (BCSMR 11030), Richards Works – incorporating the site of the Darlaston Steel and Iron Works (Site No. 6), and the Grand Junction Works (Site No. 14). The site of the Albert Works (BCSMR 11029) is currently occupied by the roofless

shell of a mid-twentieth century factory so only below ground deposits relating to the early industrial phases of the site may survive.

A former generating station associated with the South Staffordshire Tramways also survives within the historic industrial core (BCSMR 3363, Figure 2 and Plate 6). This generating station was constructed c. 1892 and has been incorporated into modern factory buildings and warehouses (further details of it are given in Appendix 1 Section IV: Other Sites).

Industrial sites

Later Industrial Development (Figure 1)

More recent industrial development that does not appear to pre-date the 1950s exists in the Study Area. Industrial activity in these areas is focused on trades other than those historically carried out in the Study Area, and include warehousing and distribution centres, and recycling. One site, of two gasometers, that is recorded by the Black Country BCSMR lies within an area of later industrial development. The Gasometers lie south of the Darlaston Road and next to the M6 (BCSMR 10053, Figure 2). Map analysis shows that these Gasometers are relatively recent in date, they are not shown on the 1956 Ordnance Survey map of this area but do appear on the 1974 Edition.

8.0 Discussion

The historical and archaeological significance of the sites identified within the Study Area may best be assessed with reference to the set of criteria promulgated by the Secretary of State in 1983 and refined in Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1983 and 1990). This includes the consideration of factors such as survival/condition, period, rarity, fragility/vulnerability, documentation and group value to decide whether or not an archaeological site has national, regional or local significance. All of the sites identified in the current survey date to within the last 250 years and lie firmly in the industrial era. The following assessment of significance is for guidance purposes only. A definitive assessment would require consultation with English Heritage, Mike Shaw, the Black Country Archaeologist and the members of the Conservation Department of Walsall M.B.C.

There are two buildings on the statutory list of buildings of national importance. These are the James Bridge Aqueduct and the Globe Inn, both are listed grade II and are of regional to national significance. The James Bridge Aqueduct is relatively unaltered and is a good example of a small canal aqueduct situated on a distinctive stretch of embanked canal within one of the more historically resonant landscapes within the Study Area. The Globe Inn is the only pre-nineteenth century non-industrial building in a predominantly nineteenth and twentieth century industrial landscape. The inn is situated on an ancient

routeway between Darlaston and Wednesbury and is significant in that it is one of the only remnants of the pre-industrial past within the Study Area. The South Staffordshire Tramways electricity generating station is also on the local list of buildings of architectural or historic interest. Although it has been much altered behind, the façade is relatively intact. This is an early example of a building associated with electrical generation and is of local to regional importance. The other buildings within the Study Area are of local importance and reflect aspects of the industrial development of the area. Likewise, most of the archaeological sites of early industrial activity such as former tramways, railways or canal basins and mines and factories are also of local importance, but several of these may have been damaged by subsequent industrial activity.

The canal corridor is the dominant historical feature within the Study Area, and is a prime example of what has been characterised as an 'industrial canal'. The Walsall UDP statement has drawn attention to the desirability of sensitive enhancement of the canals with due cognisance of their heritage. However, survival of the associated infrastructure such as bridges and aqueducts is variable. Several bridges have been modernised, and much evidence of associated basins and interchanges with the railways and industry has been lost. Consideration may also be given to re-establishing infilled canal basins providing a watery setting to new development.

In general, if large-scale development is proposed within the Study Area it should be accompanied by more detailed archaeological assessment as a first stage. Likewise, the buildings identified by this survey would require further assessment before final decisions could be taken concerning their management. If significant buildings were to be demolished or altered then there should be clear justification for this and a full archaeological record be made in advance of this process.

9.0 Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by GVA Grimley. Thanks are due to Mike Shaw, the Black Country Archaeologist, and Rob Sanderson of Walsall M.B.C. Thanks are also due to the staff of the Walsall Local Studies Centre for their assistance during the project. The documentary research was undertaken by Melissa Conway. The walkover survey was conducted by Stephen Litherland, who also managed the project for BUFAU, with Melissa Conway who produced the written reposrt. The illustrations were prepared by Nigel Dodds with plates by Edward Newton.

10.0 References

DCHP 1984 *The Darlaston Community History Project*

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1983 *Criteria for the selection of Ancient Monuments, press notice 523*. London.

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1990 *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16)* HMSO.

Department of the Environment (DoE) 1994 *Planning Policy Guidance: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG 15)* HMSO.

Dilworth, D. 1976 *The Tame Mills of Staffordshire* Philimore, London

Foxon, T. 1998 *The Industrial Canal: Volume II The Railway Interchange Trade* Heartland Press

GVA Grimley 2002 *Darlaston Strategic Development Area Brief for Environmental Consultant*

IFA 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* Institute of Field Archaeologists

Ove Arup 1983 *Report into the extent of Limestone Mines in the Walsall Area*

Shill, R. 1996 *The Industrial Canal: Volume I The Coal Trade* Heartland Press

Timmins, M. 1993 *Street Names of Darlaston and Bentley*

Victoria County History V.C.H. 1968 *A History of the County of Stafford* London

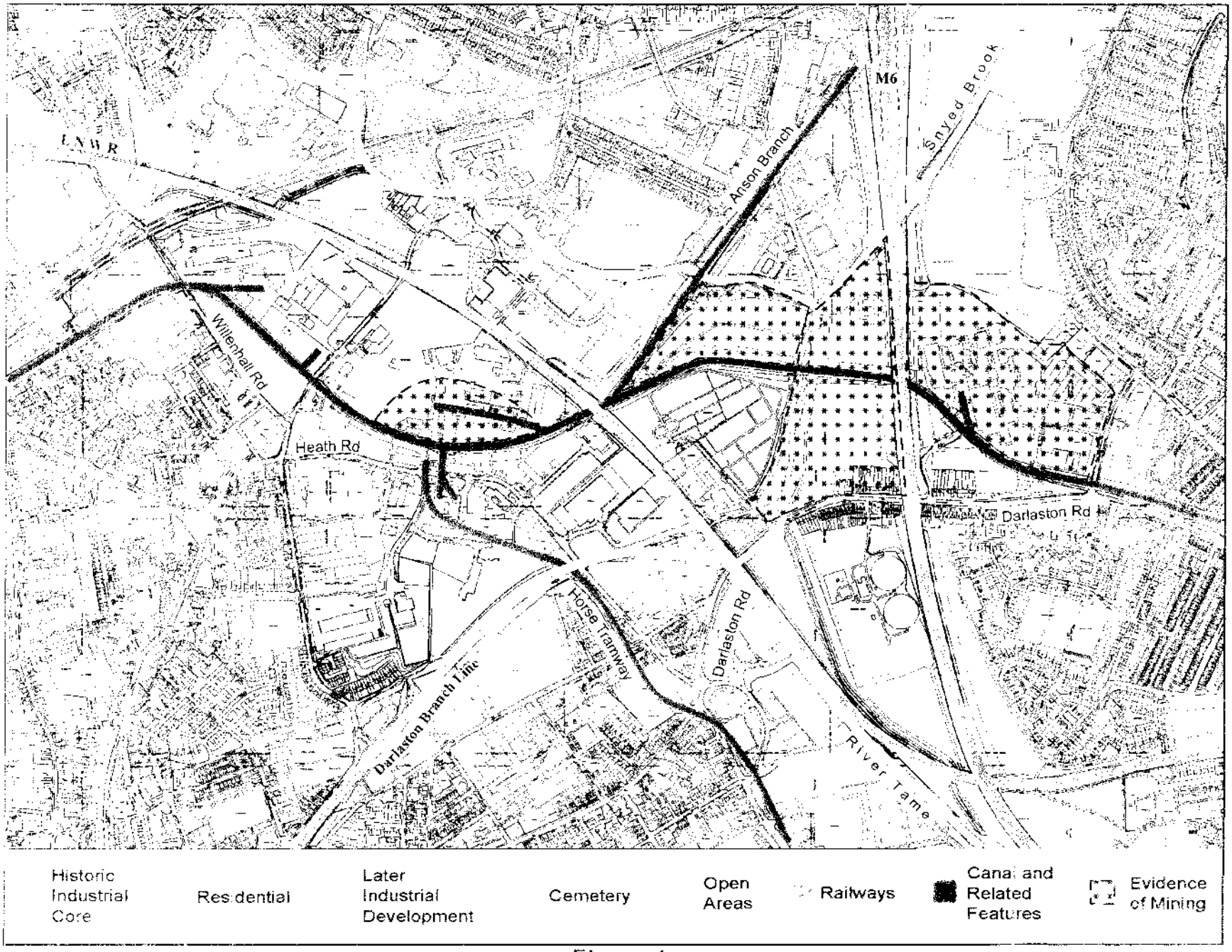
L N W R
M6
Anson Branch
Snyed Brook
Willenhall Rd
Heath Rd
Darlaston Rd
Horse Tramway
Darlaston Rd
Darlaston Branch Line
River Tame
Historic Industrial Core
Residential
Later Industrial Development
Cemetery
Open Areas
Railways
Canal and Related Features
Evidence of Mining

Figure 1

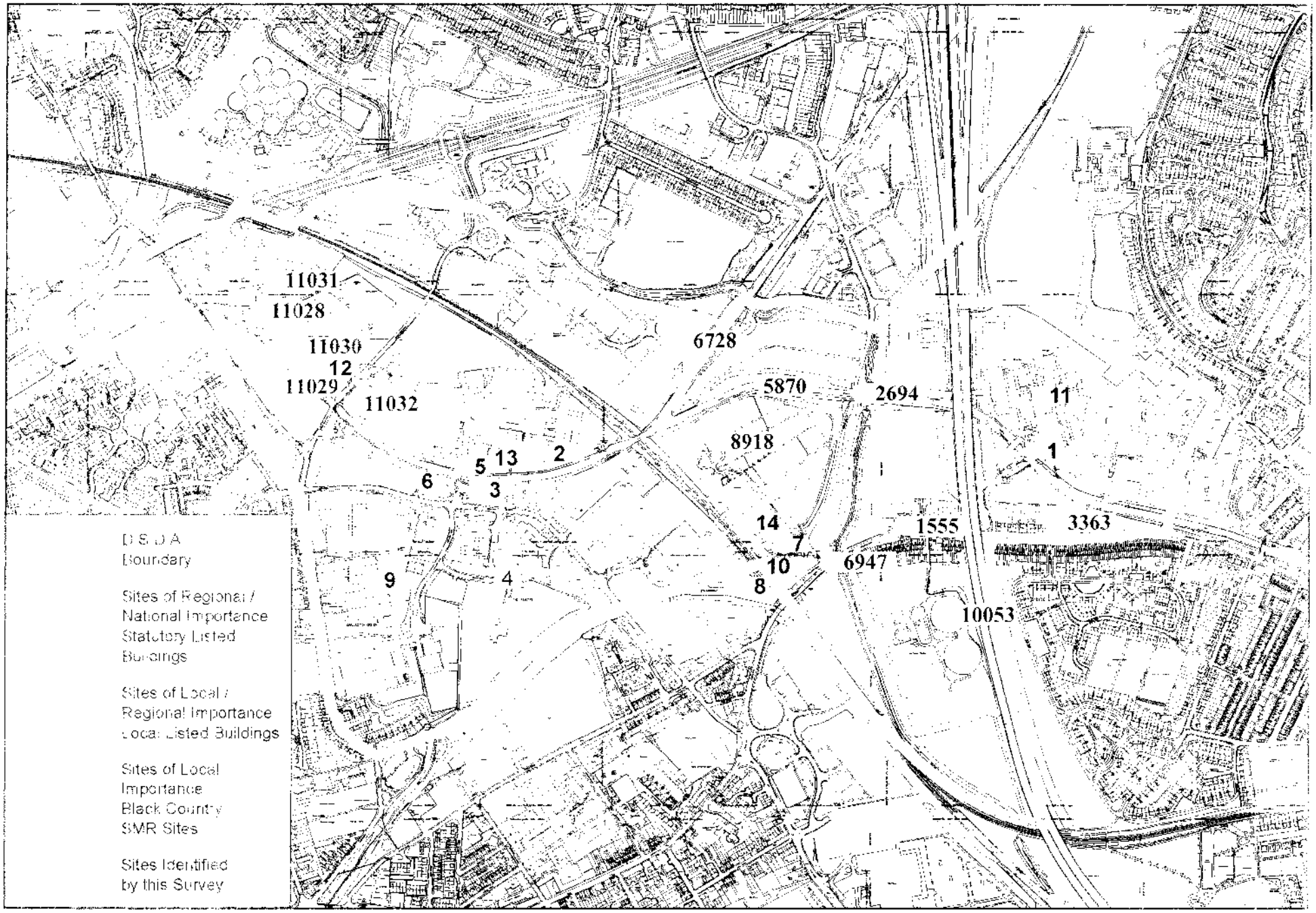
D S D A Boundary
Sites of Regional / National Importance Statutory Listed Buildings
Sites of Local / Regional Importance Local Listed Buildings
Sites of Local Importance Black Country SMR Sites
Sites Identified by this Survey
11031
11028
11030
12
11029
11032
6728
5870
2694
11
8918
1
13
2
5
6
3
14
1555
3363
7
10
6947
9
4
8
10053

Figure 2

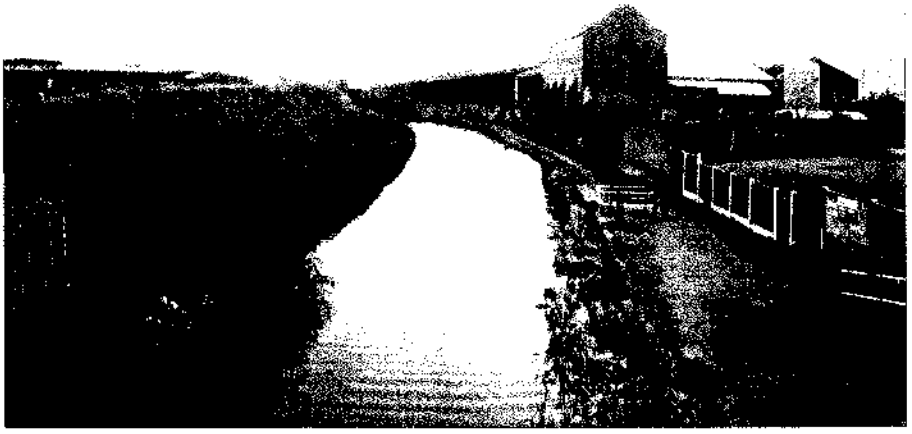

Plate 1.

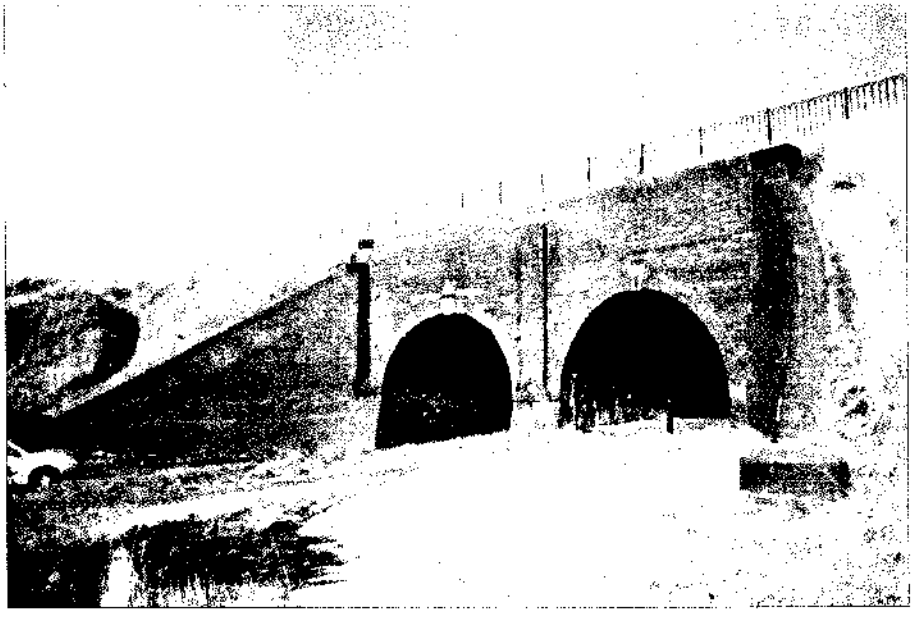

Plate 2.

Plate 3.

Plate 4.

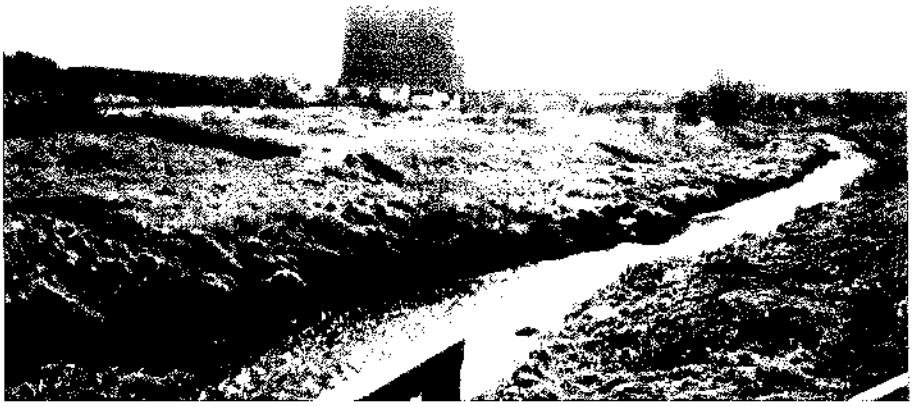

Plate 5.

Plate 6.

Appendix 1: List of archaeological sites

The location of all sites is shown on Figure 2.

Section I: The Canal System and related features
Sites Recorded on the Black Country SMR

SMR No. 2694
James Bridge Aqueduct
NGR SO 9898/9780
A Grade II Listed structure. Carries the Walsall Canal over Bentley Mill Lane, and formerly over the River Tame. Brick with sandstone keystones. Two round arches with abutments curved in plan. South side partially rebuilt in the 19th century. String course below parapet. A cast iron plate inscribed "MDCCXCVII" is attached to central pier on the south side.

SMR No. 5870
Walsall Canal
NGR SO 9796/9250 - SO 9768/9359
Part of the Birmingham Canal Navigations. The canal is embanked as it crosses the shallow valley of the River Tame.

SMR No. 6728
Anson Branch; Walsall Canal
NGR SO 9965/9950 – SO 9860/9775
The stretch of the Anson Branch between Bentley Mill Lane and its junction with the Walsall Canal is largely silted-up.

Sites not recorded on the Black Country SMR

Site No. 1
Canal Basin
NGR SO 9930/9730
Visible on First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886). May have served the James Bridge Colliery (see Section III: Industrial Sites, Site No. 11).

Site No. 2
Canal Basin
NGR SO 9840/9765
Visible on First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886), may have served Darlaston Green furnaces (see Section III: Industrial Sites, Site No. 13).

Site No. 3
Canal Basin
NGR SO 9824/9762
Silted-up opening of a basin still visible and noted during the walkover survey. The full extent of basin (two armed) shown on First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886).

Site No. 4
Course of Horse Tramway
NGR SO 9824/9757 to SO 9904/9655
Linked Bescot Forge with the canal at basin represented by Site No. 3. Bridge abutment to carry tramway over Darlaston branch railway cutting survives at NGR SO 9851/9735. Visible on First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886).

Site No. 12
Canal Basin
NGR SO 9798/9782
Short basin leading off the canal at a right angle, shown on First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886).

Section II: The Railway System
Sites recorded on the Black Country SMR

SMR No. 11028
Darlaston Basin Interchange (Darlaston Green Goods Station)
NGR SO 9782/9791
Early railway interchange basin whose sidings were connected with the Grand Junction Railway (GJR). One of four interchange basins in the West Midlands adapted from earlier basins. The Darlaston Basin had previously been used by the Birmingham Coal Co. GJR line cut across surface of the Birmingham Coal Co. colliery. Property adjoining the basin & strip of land acquired in 1845 to make short branch from GJR. Sidings constructed at junction that became known as Darlaston Green Sidings. A single track ran down to basin and opened out into number of sidings for shed & wharfside. Contemporary railway maps refer to basin as Darlaston Green Goods Station. Traffic may have been handled for Jesse Tildesley (Crescent - BCSMR 11031) & LNWR Bolt & nut Works (BCSMR 11030).
Present situation - basin is clogged with reeds, some of the 'footprints' of the existing buildings mirror those depicted on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886).

Sites not recorded by the Black Country SMR

Site No. 5
Bridge
NGR SO 9821/9762
Carried a rail line linking the Darlaston Green Furnaces with the Darlaston branch line near to the Alma Works. Bridge and railway line visible on maps to 1956. Rails removed between 1956 and 1974. Bridge abutments observed on walkover survey.

Section III: Industrial Sites
Sites recorded by the Black Country SMR

Gasometers
SMR No. 10053
NGR SO 9910/9730
Currently operational, situated next to the M6. Not visible on maps until 1974.

SMR No. 11029

Site of Albert Works

NGR SO 9785/9778

Between Willenhall Road and the canal. Plot is occupied by the outer shell of a subsequent works building.

SMR No. 11030

Site of London & North Western Works (Bolt & Nuts)

NGR SO 9785/9791

East side of Willenhall Road immediately north of Darlaston Interchange.

SMR No. 11031

Crescent Ironworks

NGR SO 9787/9800

Two large buildings immediately north of interchange basin, east of Willenhall Rd. Some of the works buildings may survive built into the modern Clark Fixings factory.

Sites not on the Black Country SMR

Site No. 6

Richards Works

NGR SO 9800/9768

Earlier factory elements encased in shell of works expansion c.1930.

Boundary wall of works complex to canal towpath contains extensive sections of sandstone walling, surviving to at least eleven courses, incorporated into brick walling. Date of structure is unclear; no buildings are shown in this area on the 1840 Tithe Map.

Site No. 7

Factory Building

NGR SO 9885/9750

Early 20th century derelict factory building occupying corner plot at junction of Kendricks Road, Cemetery Road and Bentley Mill Lane. Curved frontage, brick pilasters, windows have concrete heads.

Site No. 8

Factory Buildings

NGR SO 9875/9744

Complex of early twentieth century factory buildings.

Rear wall of one building fronts onto railway line; purple brick arcade with diapered infill – central four arches with brick pilasters and have concrete-headed windows. Frontage has the legend " Bright Steel. Nuts Bolts. Studs. Set Pins & Etc." in white tile.

Building set along the south side of Kendricks Road. Two storey brick building, ground storey is earlier and in purple brick, supervisor's office to control access into factory, may have an associated weigh-bridge.

Site No. 9

New Midland Works

NGR SO 9800/9745

Large inter-war works buildings; part of the Richards Group. Frontage is very similar to that of the extended Richards works and has the same detailing in white tiling

Site No. 11

James Bridge Colliery

NGR SO 9935/9765 (centred)

The only actual 'colliery' in the DSDA it is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886) of the area. The colliery lies in the former parish of Bentley and as no tithe map was available for this parish it is unclear when it came into operation. The colliery most probably came into existence in the later eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries after the arrival of the canal and railways to the area. The colliery site is served by a basin from the Walsall Canal (Site No. 1). The colliery appears to have become disused by the mid-twentieth century if not earlier. A copper works was established on the site by the 1950s (Ordnance Survey Map 1956), the majority of the site becoming fully used by the large steel works which currently occupies the extreme eastern end of the DSDA between the M6 and the north side of the canal.

Site No. 13

Darlaston Green Furnaces

NGR SO 9825/9764

Works shown on First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886) between canal and basin (Site No. 2).

Site No. 14

Grand Junction Works

NGR SO 9880/9752

Shown on First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1886) between LNWR rail line and Cemetery Road.

Section IV: Other Sites

Sites listed by the Black Country SMR

SMR No. 1555

Globe Public House: Darlaston Road

NGR SO 9906/9754

Public house. Probably early 18th century. Rendered brick with tile roof. Two storeys, four bays. Fourth bay appears to be a later addition, as string course terminates to its left. Windows have casements with glazing bars, those on the ground floor with segmental heads. Gabled porch between second and third bays. Chimneys to right of first and third bays and on right hand gable.

SMR No. 3363
Tramway Generating Station; Darlaston Road
NGR SO9930/9760
South Staffordshire Tramways electricity generating station c.1892; now part of a wine warehouse. Single storey with gable pediment. Entablature has lettering. Bullseye window in pediment with iron glazing bars. Frontage has semi-circular window arches rising from imposts. Windows have iron-glazing bars incorporating roundels under arch. Rear has covered coal basins opening off Walsall Canal.

SMR No.6947
Site of Toll-house
NGR SO9892/9748
Sited near Railway Station at north-east angle of junction of Darlaston Road and Bentley Mill Lane; demolished 1963. Two-storey square brick building probably built c.1837.

SMR No. 8918
James Bridge Cemetery
NGR SO9870/9770
Mid-19th century municipal cemetery. Grid plan, some trees and shrubs. Cemetery chapel with spire and Lodge cottage; both in blue brick with stone dressings.

SMR No.11032
Site of Malthouse
NGR SO9801/9773
Malthouse visible on maps; situated on east side of Bentley Road, immediately north of the canal. L-shaped building, main range along roadside.

Sites not recorded by the Black Country SMR

Site No.10
The Railway Tavern
NGR SO9886/9745

?Late 19th century public house. Much altered including replacement windows on first floor. Possibly original bays windows on either side of ground floor frontage.

There are, broadly, two options for the SOA – long recognised as land of *potential* strategic importance to the region:

i) **Option 1. Darlaston Industrial Estate** : the assembly and development of those parts of the site that are not occupied by HRM (as scrap metal business) nor within the limestone consideration zone. Our estimate of the capacity of the site in this scenario is about 144,000 sqm in a mix of B2 and B8 uses – but in an environment which is typical of the Black Country and unlikely to be marketable as a top flight site, although it would attract large units, just not at the top end where environment and image are often important;

ii) **Option 2. Darlaston Logistics Park**: the assembly and development of the whole of the site, relocating all the existing businesses, remediating all of the land including stabilising the limestone mine. Our estimate of the capacity of the site is about 209,000 sqm of predominantly high spec large logistics units (the mix is set out in Section 5), mixed with smaller B2 and B8 uses, plus an amenity centre to contain a small unit incubator and

business centre, plus whatever the market will deliver in supporting commercial uses (restaurant, newsagent/shop, caterers etc., even a hotel if it can be justified).

Given the very substantial costs entailed in reclaiming the whole of the land and the differential between achievable land values (even in the much hotter top end logistics market) we cannot see at as cost efficient expenditure of public money not to do the job properly.

Thus in AFP terms, we see no option but to realise the otherwise exceptional potential of the SDA:

- the risks of the diminished option are substantial and need to be traded off against the cost efficiencies and much greater effectiveness of the logistics park approach:
    - the chances of marketing the site for higher value added activity (with all the issues over recruitment, quality of the environment, image and so on are) much diminished - thus posing a serious risk (without a means of mitigating it) of failing to achieve the objectives set by the AFP or of making optimal value of motorway-connected land,
    - the diminished marketability is likely to put the SDA on a par with other Black Country sites, albeit better located but not of exceptionally better environmental quality, again posing a risk of achieving RES as well as AFP objectives;

- this risk in turn poses a threat both to the economy and the efficiency of the public sector's investment even given the cost reductions of avoiding the investors mine and keeping the (expanding) scrap metal business

- the job creation potential to be appraised in considering the options is not just about the number of jobs, but of achieving the object of increasing representation from sectors that offer growth prospects. Jobs 'created' from standard industrial and warehousing activity (that the diminished option would be more likely to realise) would need to be netted out of any useful calculation of the value of the public sector's investment at Darlaston and reflect the underlying forecasts for the region and sub-region (i.e., continued shrinkage of employment in manufacturing, as the marginal dies back and the efficient becomes more capital intensive);

- the 'job' for the land at Darlaston in the diminished option could probably be replicated more cheaply in other locations – it only in the top end of the distribution sector where Darlaston assets approach unique in the sub-region which would require the full environmental quality treatment;

- the Logistics Park option, depending on the job densities, would create some 3,000 – 6,000 jobs including the amenity centre and assuming densities in line with Magna Park and substantial representation from higher value-added activity, compared to about half to two-thirds the lower end of the range for the Industrial Estate option.

Very preliminary estimates of the residual land values at Darlaston – excluding the amenity centre – suggest a value of about £140,000 an acre, rather lower than the possible average cost per acre of reclamation. Thus there needs to be a good case in the public interest for reclamation. We think this case can be made. Thus we do not include the diminished Industrial Estate option in the AFP.