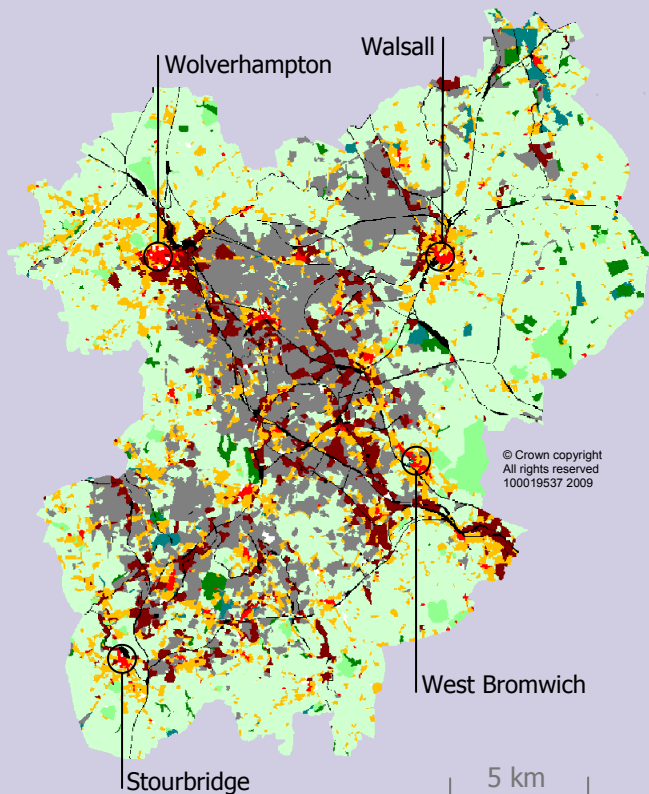
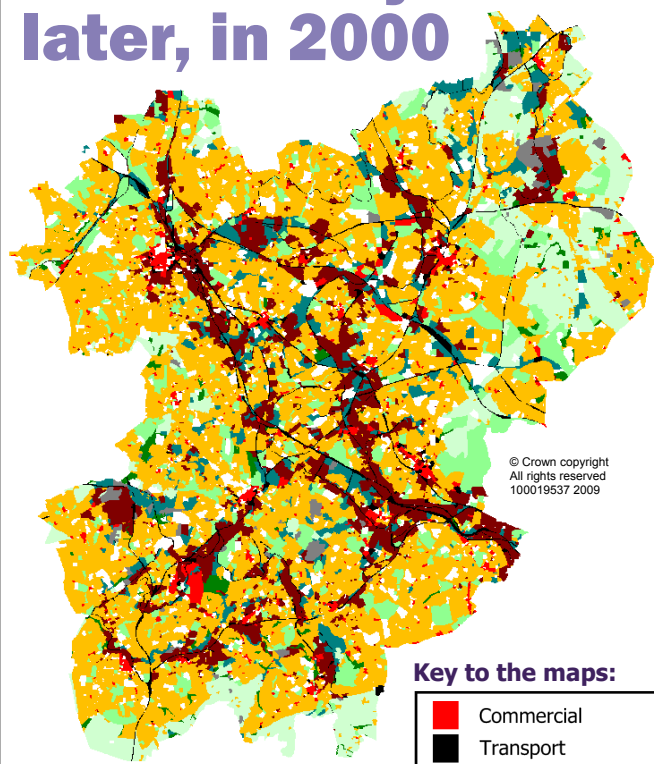


The Black Country in 1880.....



... and 120 years later, in 2000



Key to the maps:

Red	Commercial
Black	Transport
Grey	Mining
Light Green	Fields
Dark Green	Open land
Yellow	Parks & Recreation
Orange	Housing
Dark Green	Woodland

**For more information
about the history of
your area,
contact us:**



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Regeneration and Environment
Wolverhampton City Council
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Slag and waste heaps created by the area's mines had been flattened, and new areas of housing and planned industrial estates built over them.

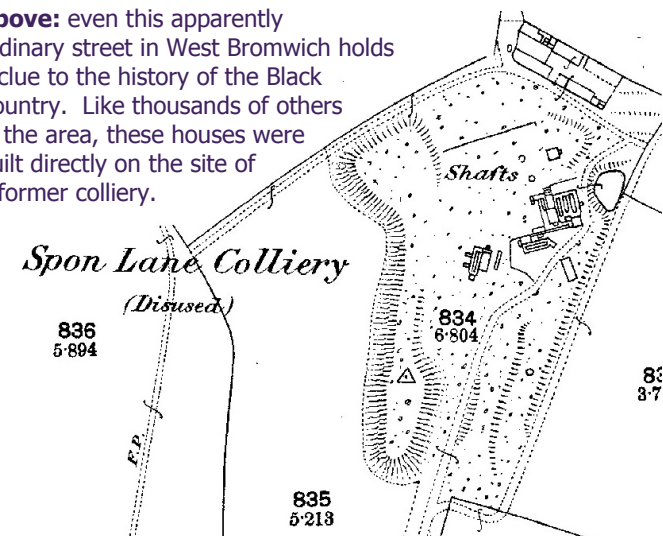
Older town centres had been joined by new competition for shoppers and visitors in the shape of retail parks and malls and, instead of canals and railways, 20th century dual carriageways and motorways had become the major routes for goods and people.

OUR PAST IS ALL AROUND US

Heritage is not just something on display in museums or in stately homes. In the Black Country, everything that surrounds us in our everyday lives... every street, factory, school and park—even the house where you live—is a reminder of something which happened in the past.



Above: even this apparently ordinary street in West Bromwich holds a clue to the history of the Black Country. Like thousands of others in the area, these houses were built directly on the site of a former colliery.



Looking for Clues

If we know where to look, the clues to our neighbourhood's past can be seen in the landscape around us. If we put these clues together, they make up the story of when, how and why the places we live and work in came to be the way they are now.

Often, the story that is revealed can be one that has taken place in our own lifetime, or that of our parents. The closure of corner shops like this one, for example, is part of our history over the last few decades.



Sometimes the story can be a much older one, outside our own memories. The canal bridge below, for example, was built several generations ago, at a time when the Black Country played an important role in the industrial revolution: a period of rapid technological progress in Britain and the world.



What's Left of the Past?

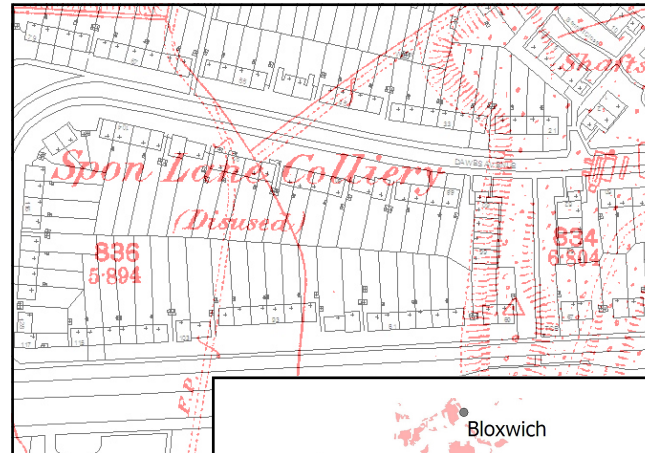
Historic Landscape Characterisation (or HLC) is a new way of recording the stories hidden in our local landscapes—whether they are recent or much older ones. Our project has made a record of every part of the Black Country (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) in terms of its surviving heritage.

To find out more, use the contact details on the other side of this leaflet.



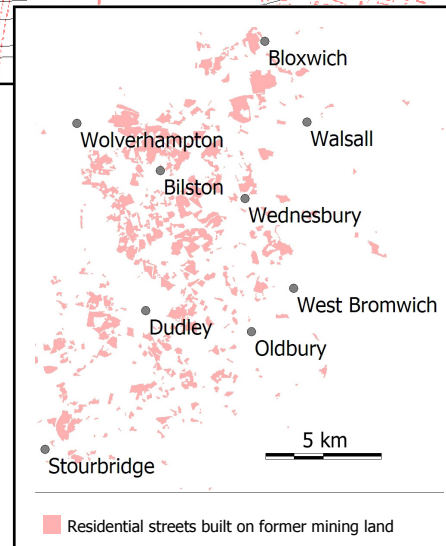
From 19th century coalfield to 21st century home to a million people

HOW HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION MAPS CHANGE



Above: about 50 years ago, streets, houses and gardens were built over Spon Lane Colliery, West Bromwich

Right: areas where houses were built on former mining land are common all over the Black Country



The Changing Black Country

Information collected by the HLC project means that maps can be drawn which show the lost landscapes of the Black Country. Two of these maps are overleaf.

They illustrate the huge change which has taken place since the late 1800s. At that time, we can see that Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton still contained large areas of green fields. But at the centre of the area was a vast expanse of mining activity, shown in grey on the 1880 map. Canals and railways can be seen crisscrossing the area, while the town centres of the time were separated from each other by agricultural land, or by mines and quarries.

By the end of the 20th century most of the mining and quarrying in the area had disappeared (the last coal mine had closed in the 1980s). Instead, the Black Country had become part of the West Midlands conurbation, a merged urban area of a million residents, where individual towns were difficult for the visitor to distinguish.