

CHESHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

Widnes

Archaeological Survey

2003

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Widnes and Farnworth: Area of Archaeological Potential

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An Area of Archaeological Potential (AAP) has been outlined at Widnes comprising two Archaeological Character Zones (ACZs). Each Archaeological Character Zone is identified by its defining archaeological or historical characteristics, or *Primary Characteristics*. For example, within Industrial Widnes (Archaeological Character Zone 1), the defining characteristics include the Railway docks, the West docks and numerous alkali manufactories.
- 1.2 Each Archaeological Character Zone may also include sites and features which are not defining characteristics but are nonetheless of archaeological and historical importance, and these are identified as *Secondary Characteristics*. For example, Archaeological Character Zone 1 includes the archaeological remains of post medieval settlement, which has been identified as a Secondary Characteristic.
- 1.3 The list of characteristics is not exhaustive, and it is possible that other types of important archaeological remains and features exist within each Archaeological Character Zone. The boundaries of the AAP and the Archaeological Character Zones, and the list of Primary and Secondary Characteristics are intended as a guide for planners and developers. They are based on current knowledge, and are therefore subject to change as new information is revealed.

2. Existing Designations (Figure 1)

Scheduled Ancient Monuments	One- Standing Cross, St Luke's churchyard, Farnworth (SAM 25704)
Listed Buildings	Grade I - None Grade II* - The railway bridge over the River Mersey, St Luke's Church Grade II - 14
Conservation Areas	Two - Victoria Square and the West Bank Promenade.

The Archaeological Character Zones (Figure 2)

Zone 1: Farnworth Medieval Borough

Primary Characteristics	
St Lukes' Church and Churchyard	There has been a church at Farnworth since the 12th century, which was dedicated to St Wilfrid until the 19th century. In the churchyard stands a cross, the base and plinth of which are medieval but the cross itself is 19th century in date.
Medieval Settlement	References are made to a borough at Farnworth from the 14th century. The plan of this, with long narrow boundaries running at right angles to Church Street and a common rear boundary shared by most properties, partially survives in the plan of the modern settlement.

Secondary Characteristic	
Post Medieval Settlement	Farnworth continued to be settled in the post medieval period and although little from this period survives above ground, the potential for below ground remains is high.

Zone 2: Industrial Widnes

Primary Characteristics	
Industrial Sites	The first chemical manufactory was built in 1849 and by the 1860s Widnes was an international centre for chemical production. Numerous industrial sites are therefore known at Widnes.
Railway Dock	An important aspect of the initial development of Widnes is the railway dock, which allowed goods to be transferred from rail to ship.
West Dock	The construction of the West Dock allowed industry to develop away from Spike Island, where the chemical industry had first developed.
Railways and Canals	St Helens Canal and the numerous rail links constructed at Widnes were central to the town's industrial development.

Secondary Characteristic	
Settlement	Interspersed with the industrial sites are domestic and civic buildings, in particular there are a large number terraced houses, which housed the workers of the chemical industry.

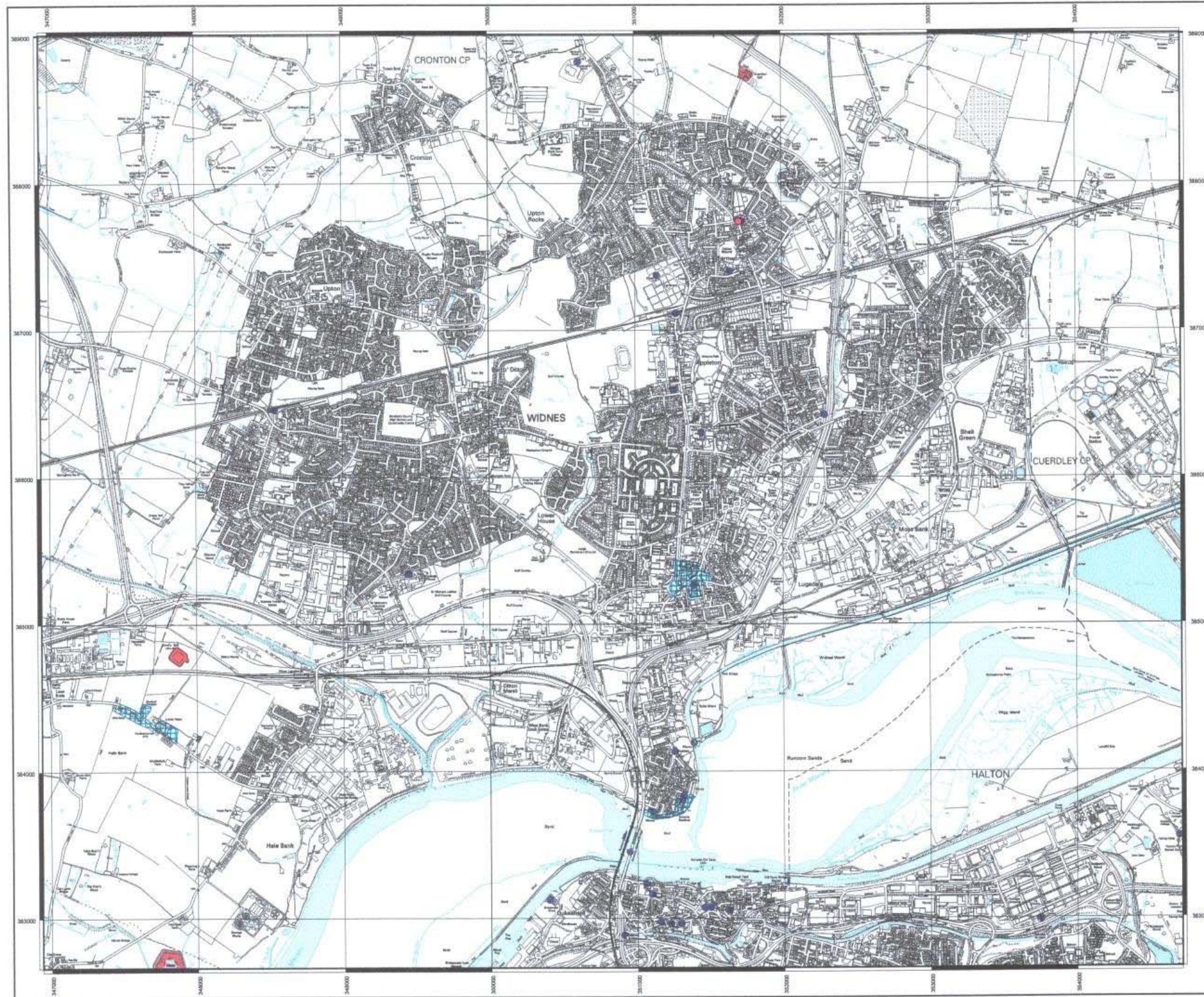


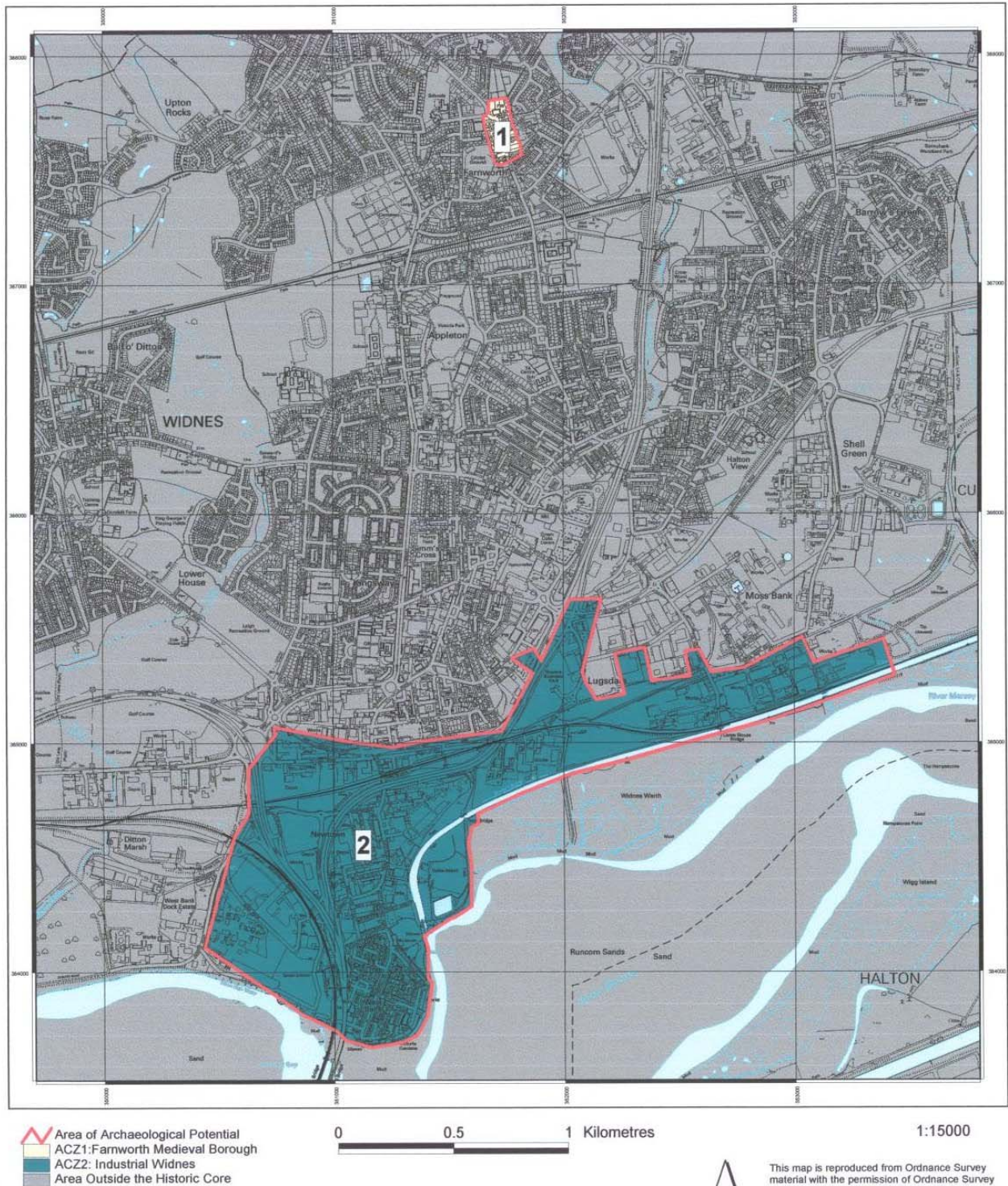
Figure 1:
Widnes and Farnworth
Existing Designations

- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Listed Building
- Conservation Area

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Figure 2: Widnes and Farnworth Area of Archaeological Potential and Archaeological Character Zones



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