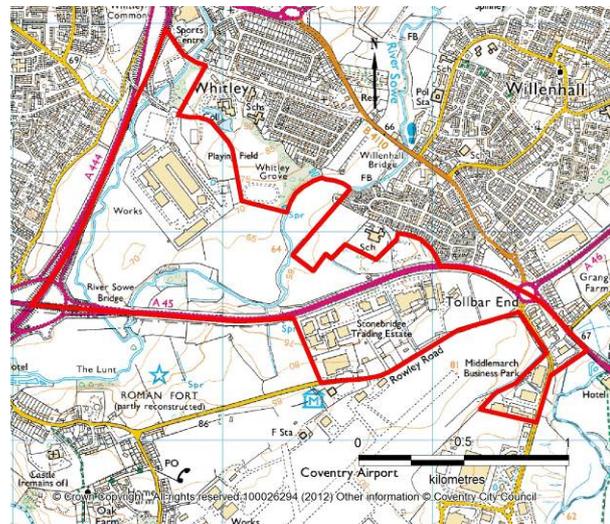


Location and Context

A mixed-use light industrial and commercial area located on the southern fringe of the Coventry border. The area is bounded by the A444 to the west, settlement to the east and the border of Warwickshire to the south. Just outside the character area to the south is the location of Coventry Airport.

**Heritage Designations in the Area**

Scheduled Ancient Monuments: 0

Archaeological Constraint Areas: 6

Listed Buildings: 1

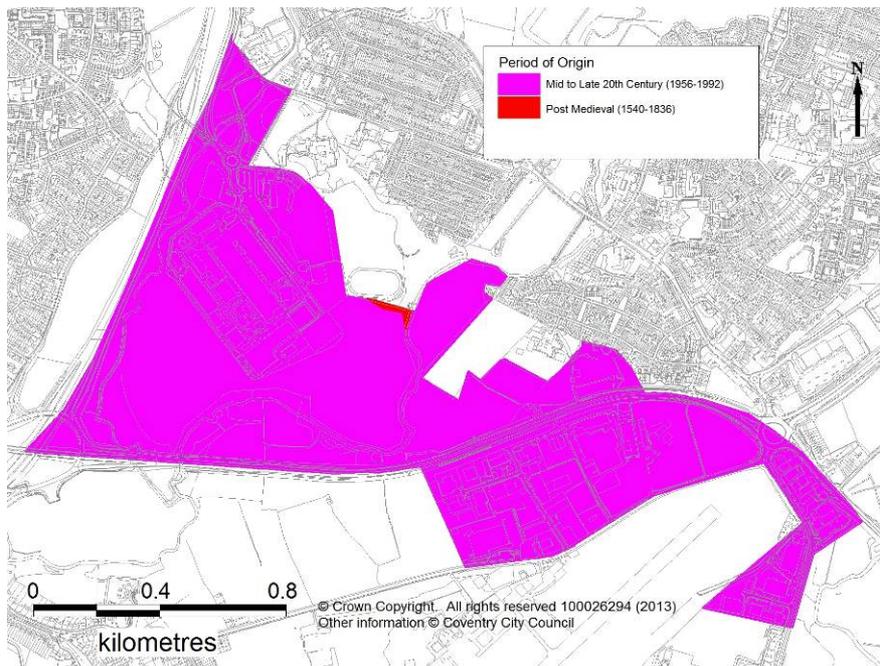
Locally Listed Buildings: 0

Conservation Areas: 0

Registered Parks and Gardens: 0

Historic Development

The earliest mapping of the area is the 1841 Baginton Tithe Survey recorded a pattern of enclosed fields and two farmsteads south of the River Sowe. The northern part of the Character Area was described as 'Whitley Abbey and Lands' in the 1849 St. Michael's Tithe Survey but no further details are depicted. Whitley Abbey Farm is shown for the first time on the 1888 OS map on the eastern edge of the area but there were few further changes to the landscape until the First World War when the farm was requisitioned by the government and the fields were laid out as an airfield. The land to the south and east of the farm buildings was levelled for a grass landing strip. Three large hangars, workshops and store buildings were constructed immediately to the west and south of the farm and outbuildings. The original farm buildings were retained and continued in use as offices, workshops and storage until the final clearance of the site in 1968. The airfield was used as an operational military base by the Royal Flying Corps for fighter aircraft.



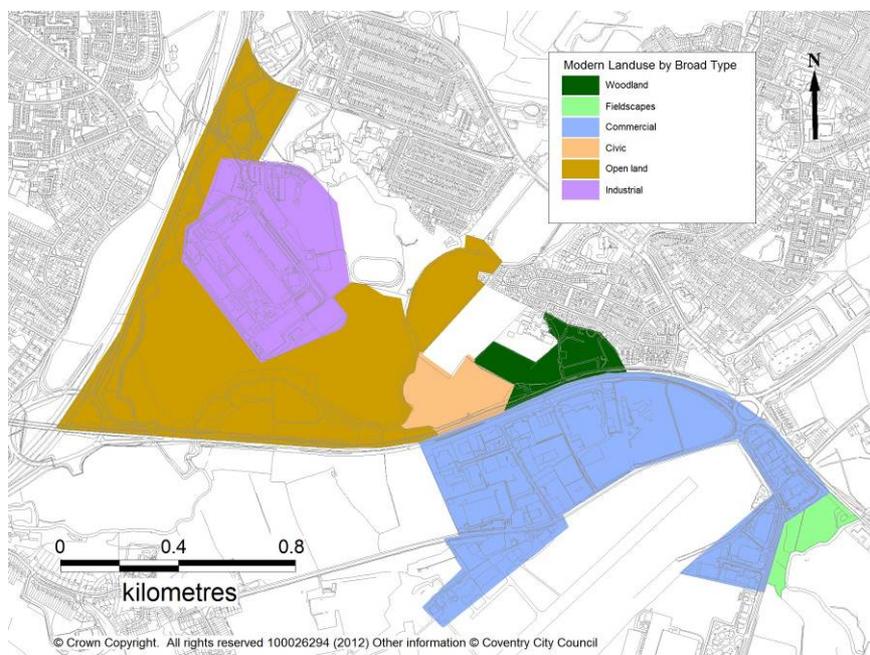
In 1920, the newly formed Armstrong Whitworth Aircraft Company bought Whitley airfield and in subsequent years produced a number of aircraft here under the name of Armstrong Siddeley. Aircraft production and testing continued at the site until the late 1960s when the site was bought by the Rootes Group and the open ground to the south and west of the factory

site was allowed to revert back to open pasture. The main part of the old Armstrong Siddeley factory site was redeveloped for as new engineering research and development centre with associated access road, landscaping and car parks. The site was eventually acquired by Jaguar Cars in 1985 and became the new headquarters for the company.

The Stonebridge Highway had been built by 1936 and the area to its south remained in agricultural use until the late 1960s/early 1970s, at which an industrial estate was built. This remains largely the same today.

Modern Character

The area is located on the outskirts of the city and is dominated by the road infrastructure of the A444 and A46. Two water courses, the River Sherbourne and the River Sowe, meet in this character area and the corresponding floodplains have had a strong influence on the pattern of development. The industrial and commercial areas are divided into two main



areas. The industrial and commercial areas are divided into two main

pockets by the courses of the rivers with the areas of development mostly surrounded by scrubland and flood plain, part of which is a local nature reserve. The area is mostly green and well wooded but has a slightly neglected, isolated character.

A tightly contained area of industry was developed on farmland between 1925 and 1936 in the north of the Character Area on a former World War 1 air field. The buildings and airstrip soon became too small and aircraft production was expanded on to the present Coventry Airport site at Baginton to the south. The

present Jaguar

Engineering Centre buildings comprise large scale, rectangular sheds on a common alignment.

The industrial estate to the south had a more gradual development with the majority of buildings dating to the late 20th century. Offices are square in shaped and low-lying with planned space for extensive car parking facilities. Neither development is sensitive to former field boundaries. The development of the business park is influenced by the Stonebridge Highway which was developed between 1925 and 1936. There is a general feeling of openness and isolation due to development being surrounded by scrubland the few remaining agricultural fields, although the area is noisy due to the dual carriage way and airport to the south.

Geology and Topography

The Character Area overlies sandstone to the west and mudstone to the east with sand and gravel drift geology. It is relatively flat and low lying with the highest point to the northwest at 75m above sea level and the lowest area in the south at 65m.



Jaguar Engineering Centre



Stonebridge Meadows Nature Reserve