

## Post Industrial

### *Areas within this Zone*

*'Bradgate Post Industrial', 'Catcliffe Post Industrial', 'Central Post Industrial', 'Cortonwood Colliery Site', 'Dalton Post Industrial', 'Dinnington Main Colliery Site', 'Former Royal Ordnance Factory, Maltby', 'Grange Colliery Site', 'Grange Lane, Brinsworth', 'Hellaby Industrial Area', 'Ickles Post Industrial', 'J33 Post Industrial', 'Kilnhurst Post Industrial', 'Kiverton Park Colliery', 'Kiverton Park Quarries', 'M1 M18 Junctions', 'Manvers Main Colliery Site', 'Netherthorpe Airfield', 'New Stubbin Colliery Site', 'North Staveley and Waleswood Colliery Site', 'Northfield and Park Gate', 'Rother Valley Country Park', 'Rotherham Main Colliery Site', 'Roundwood and Aldwark Colliery Sites', 'Silverwood Post Extractive', 'Site of Kimberworth Colliery', 'Spoil Heaps, Jordan', 'Swinton Bridge Post Industrial', 'Thurcroft Main Colliery Site', 'Wath Main Colliery Site', 'Wickersley Post Industrial'*

### *Summary of Dominant Character*



**Figure 1: Cortonwood Retail Park. Typical late 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouse retail development on the site of the former Cortonwood Colliery. © Jeff Pearson used according to a creative commons licence - <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>**

This zone is characterised by landscapes formed since the mid 1970s, during which period the county has undergone a large scale transformation in its employment base from an economy based overwhelmingly on traditional heavy industries, such as the extraction of coal and the manufacture and

processing of steel, to one in which retail, leisure and other service industries play a much greater part (Munford 2003, 149). These changes have resulted in substantial changes in landscape character within this zone, particularly where large formerly industrial or extractive sites have gone out of use and been cleared of the buildings associated with those uses.

Typical land uses associated with this zone include: commercial complexes, typically housed in prefabricated buildings, often large sheds used for warehousing and distribution or modernist office complexes housing administrative or 'contact' (call centre) facilities; ornamental or recreational parklands, characterised by young plantation woodlands, grassed areas and artificial lakes (figure 2) generally found on post extractive sites; retail complexes consisting of large warehouse type sheds associated with large areas of car parking; and finally (and often on former agricultural land rather than post industrial land) large transport infrastructure features such as motorway junctions and associated service areas. Sites where industrial or extractive activities have ceased and structural remains have been cleared without the clear implementation of a new management regime (by the time of the HEC data collection exercise) have been included within this zone. These sites are generally characterised by scrub vegetation, spoil heaps, slurry ponds and rubble.



**Figure 2:** A jet-ski cuts across an artificial lake created by deliberate flooding of a former open cast coal extraction site at 'Rother Valley Country Park'. © Copyright David Morris and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>

### ***Relationships with Adjacent Character Zones***

This zone is widely distributed across the Rotherham MBC area, and is largely built on areas of former coal mining although but there is also a strong relationship visible with the flood plains of the rivers Don and Rother. This means that there are close relationships with areas of 'Industrial Settlements' and 'Planned Industrial Settlements'. These will have served to house the work force at the collieries and other industrial sites. The improvement of these settlements is often the driving force for the redevelopment of the former industrial sites, either to improve the quality of the landscape around the towns or to bring new employers into the area.

### ***Inherited Character***

The redevelopment of former industrial and coal mining areas is often specifically designed to remove the former landscape character as part of land reclamation regimes seeking to improve the countryside. However, the large scale of the spoil heaps that developed alongside these mines in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century can sometimes defy removal without very substantial earth moving operations. This means that despite considerable alteration of the land through landscaping, planting of trees and grasses, and the removal of colliery buildings many of the sites within this zone have significant historic legibility of their coal mining past.

The Middle and Upper Coal Measures are the dominant geology within the Rotherham district. These rocks hold valuable coal and clay seams which dip from the west to the east. The thickest deposits of coal run down the centre of the coal measures with one of the most productive seams being the Barnsley Bed. Further east the seams thin and dip further under ground until the coalfield runs beneath the Magnesian Limestone west of Doncaster (Hill 2002, 14).

The shallow outcrops in the north and west of the district made the seams accessible from an early date. These mines tended to be worked on a small scale due to problems encountered with keeping deeper shafts free from flooding. Examples of the remains of coal mining dating to before the widespread adoption of mechanisation in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries can be seen in the surviving bell pits of the north west of the district of Rotherham although these have generally 'naturalised' as part of the wider rural landscape and now form parts of the 'Assarted Enclosure' zone. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century collieries in the west of the coalfield were beginning to become exhausted and advances in technologies of transport, ventilation and pumping were beginning to make the exploitation of the deeper seams a reality (ibid 16). This led to a vast increase in mining in the district and as technologies developed further many of the collieries expanded to cover wide areas. The former collieries within this zone were often first worked in the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century but were subject to significant expansion in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The reorganisation of the coal industry in the 1970s and 80s led to many pits closing or combining with other nearby collieries and by the 1990s there were only small numbers of active pits in the district. After closure the colliery buildings were sometimes pulled down immediately, but the mounds caused by the extensive dumping of spoil are still dominant features in the landscape. Rare examples of the range of the pit head structures to be found at these mines can be seen at Kiveton (fig 3). Pit wheel monuments also provide legibility of the past landscape.



**Figure 3: Fishing ponds on the site of Kiveton Park Colliery (closed 1994). Most of the site was flattened following closure although the Grade II listed 1877 colliery offices (top left behind trees) and 1938 pit-head baths survive. © Xurple - licensed for reuse under a creative commons licence <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>**

The nature of the activities at these sites means that beyond traces of their earlier development as extractive landscapes, previous historic character is generally invisible having literally been mined away. One exception to this rule is at Bedgreave Mill, which was retained as a centrepiece for Rother Valley Park and heavily restored for that purpose in 1983. The mill now forms an island of legibility surrounded by the site of former open cast extraction - the river Rother on which it once stood has now been diverted into an artificial channel to the east.

A similar pattern of character transformation is visible at the 'Northgate and Parkgate' character area, now largely occupied by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century Parkgate Business Park, Barbot Hall Industrial Estate, and Parkgate Retail World developments. These developments represent the regeneration of an enormous areas formerly occupied by the Park Gate Iron and Steel Co (Munford 2003, 78-90) and the South Yorkshire Chemical Works. Very little survives of these earlier landscapes.

### ***Later Characteristics***

As this zone is typified by much of the most recent developments to affect the Rotherham landscape it is perhaps best to consider it as a growing landscape, highly likely to expand over the next decade. During the life of the project work has been in progress at most of the colliery sites of this zone, most notably in the establishment of community woodlands and nature reserves.

### ***Bibliography***

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| <b>Munford, A.</b> | 2003 | <i>Iron and Steel Town: An Industrial History of Rotherham.</i> Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd.  |