

# Kirknewton Conservation Area

## Appraisal

### West Lothian Council

#### **Draft report**

Prepared by LUC

August 2026

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# Chapter 1

## Executive summary

### Summary of special architectural and historic interest

**1.1** The context and historical development of Kirknewton are unique and it is from this that it draws its individual character. This strong sense of place comes from many facets, but the following characteristics are of particular importance to the special interest of Kirknewton:

- Core defined by 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century Scottish vernacular buildings using random rubble, ashlar dressings, skew gables, slate roofs and timber sash windows
- Occasional Georgian elements, including symmetrical façades and fanlit doors
- Burial ground enclosed by rubble and ashlar walls, containing ornate burial enclosures and early gravestones
- Estate lodges with distinctive features such as corbelled parapets, turrets, stugged ashlar and decorative ironwork

- Landscape setting shaped by private gardens, mature trees and the parkland of Kirknewton House

### Summary of management recommendations

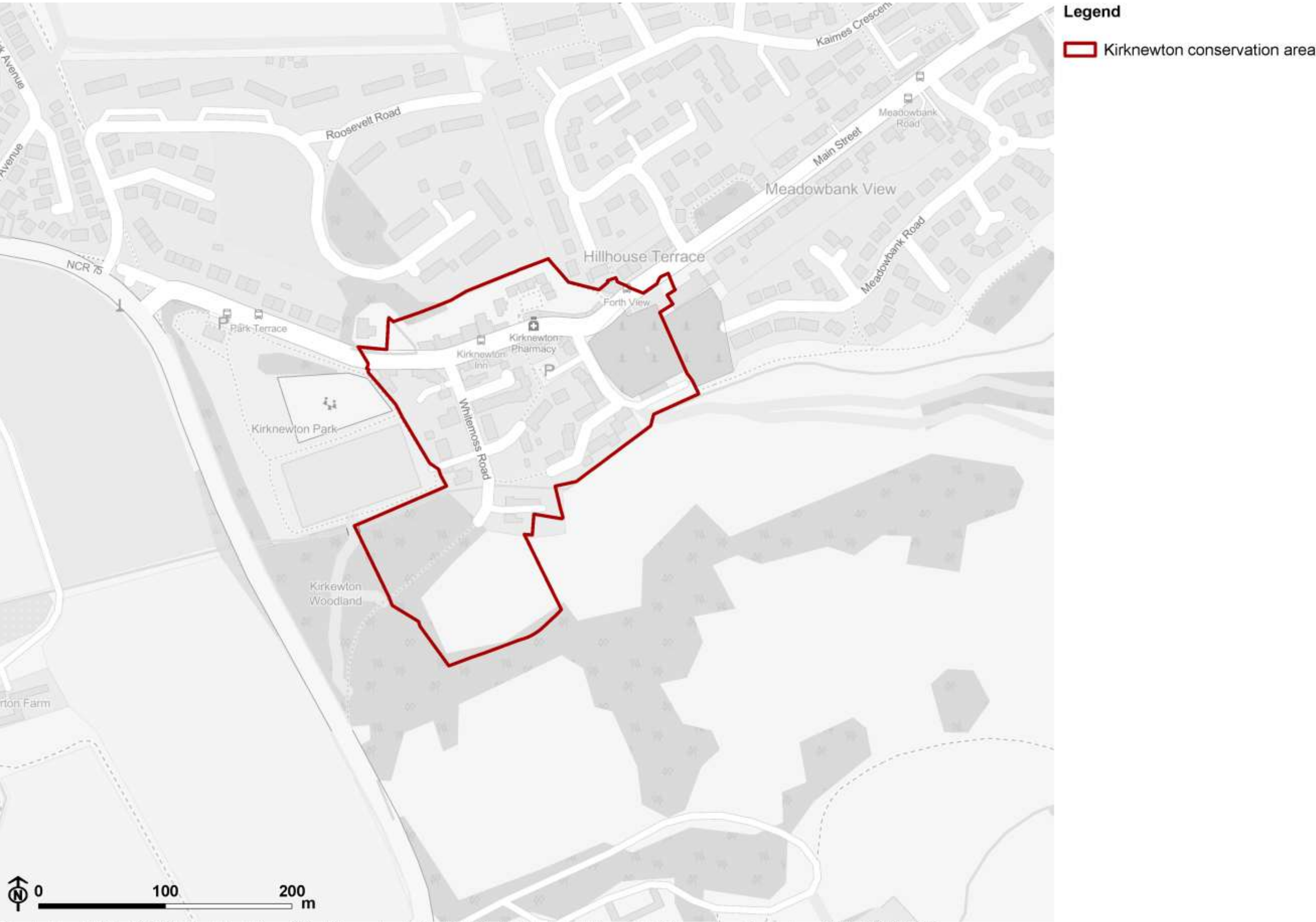
**1.2** The appraisal has identified the following issues to effectively manage the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area:

- Changes are recommended to the boundary to reflect the special character of the conservation area.
- No changes are recommended to the Classes of development controlled by the current Article 4 Direction. The area it applies to should be amended to reflect the new extent of the conservation area should the proposed boundary changes be adopted.
- The conservation area is found to have a balance of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, of which the key points are:

## Executive summary

- Condition and maintenance issues, including poor condition of burial enclosures.
- Loss of historic character in places.
- Limited sense of arrival and inconsistent street furniture.

Figure 1.1: Boundary map



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# Chapter 2

## Introduction

### What are conservation areas?

**2.1** In 1967, the Civic Amenities Act introduced the concept of recognising buildings and areas of historic interest and making provisions for their protection. Today, the spirit of that Act is embodied in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, which places a duty on local authorities to designate,

**“Areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”**

**2.2** The legislation applies nationally, although conservation areas are identified and designated by local authorities based on what is considered ‘special interest’ in their area. The Council is responsible for administering conservation areas and managing the impacts of change to their special interest.

**2.3** The designation of an area introduces some restrictions on what can and cannot be done without planning permission. It increases local planning authority controls, such as over the design of new buildings, and planning applications are judged by their impact on the character and appearance of the area.

### Special architectural or historic interest

**2.4** Deciding what is special for each place includes consideration of:

- The **architectural quality** of buildings and structures. 'Quality' does not just mean the number of listed buildings in an area or buildings designed by a notable architect: it could be a building that is representative of an era or type of use; one that retains many historic features; is a good or rare example of local or regional architectural style; is distinct in appearance, a local

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landmark, or one part of a whole street or townscape that collectively imparts a strong sense of place.

- **Associations** with notable people, literature or art, industries, artistic, political or cultural movements or events that have left their mark on how a place appears today.
- The **spatial qualities** of a place. This is not just about the height, orientation, density and layout of buildings, but of streets, public spaces, private spaces, urban spaces, green spaces, trees, and how all these features relate and are used and valued by their communities.
- Relationship with the **surrounding topography and landscape**. As well as adding to the visual appeal or drama of a place, it can also tell us why a settlement is where it is, why it prospered or failed, what industries it relied on, why it developed in one direction and not another. In this way, the setting of a conservation area can contribute greatly to our understanding of the story of a place, or its beauty, or both.

## The benefits of conservation area status

**2.5** There are several environmental, social and economic benefits of conservation area status.

### Economic

**2.6** Retaining and enhancing the buildings, features and spaces which make a place special ensure that residents, workers and visitors continue to enjoy its unique character and invest in its success.

**2.7** Re-using and enhancing the buildings, features and spaces will also help retain and attract businesses, making a major contribution to their long-term survival as a vibrant place and an attractive destination.

**2.8** The protection of the special character of a place generally means higher market values for buildings, and their appreciation in value. Research by the London School of Economics in 2012 [[See reference 1](#)] demonstrated that conservation area restrictions have benefits – beyond the conservation of character and appearance - as they help sustain or enhance the value of properties in designated areas.

## Introduction

**2.9** Potential for grant funding to conserve or enhance conservation areas. This can be to repair, re-use or restore buildings, sites or the public realm.

**2.10** All the above combined give greater economic confidence and can lead to investment in built fabric and regeneration.

## Community

**2.11** Conservation area designation reflects the value placed by the community on its place and its role in the regeneration of the local area. People are more likely to come together in community groups in protected areas to care for and enhance the significance of their homes, business and their sense of place.

**2.12** This can also provide greater certainty to residents, businesses, and stakeholders that harmful change will be avoided, minimised or mitigated through the requirement to preserve or enhance the special character of the conservation area.

## Environmental

**2.13** Green and open spaces and trees, which make an important contribution to the local environment, are

protected where they contribute to the area's special interest.

**2.14** Locally valued buildings will be protected. Traditional buildings were built with lower embodied energy than modern construction. They have the potential to perform over centuries, with sensible and sustainable maintenance and repair, and reduce their operational energy use through low embodied, sustainable and healthy energy repairs.

**2.15** Conservation area controls can provide opportunities to improve the appearance and maintenance of the streetscape with appropriate materials which are environmentally conscious (natural, compatible, repairable, re-usable, recyclable) and work in balance with traditional building materials.

## Purpose of a conservation area appraisal

**2.16** Section 63 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 places a duty on the local authority "to formulate and publish, from time to time, proposals for the preservation and enhancement of any parts of their district which are conservation areas."

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**2.17** Section 64 of the Act requires that, “special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.”

**2.18** Conservation area appraisals are a tool to help people understand what is important about a place and manage change within it. Change is managed using the information about the conservation area and its character in the appraisal, and by carrying out the actions identified in the management plan.

## Kirknewton Conservation Area background

**2.19** 1970s: Kirknewton Conservation Area officially designated, covering the historic core of Main Street, the graveyard and Whitemoss Road.

# Chapter 3

## Assessing the special interest

**3.1** The character of an area starts to form long before the human interventions of buildings, streets, fields and towns are established: it starts with the geology and topography of a place. This section considers what it is about the location and context of Kirknewton that made it suitable for successful occupation.

### Location

**3.2** The conservation area is located in the south of Kirknewton, c.1.8km south-east of East Calder. The combined parish of Kirknewton and East Calder is bounded on the north by the River Almond, on the south by Harperrig reservoir and the Water of Leith. Its highest point is Corston Hill, near Little Vantage on the stretch of the Lanark Road known as the Lang Whang. The village of Kirknewton lies at about 180m above sea level [\[See reference 2\]](#). The conservation area is flanked by 20<sup>th</sup> century housing development to its north and north-east, Kirknewton Park to its west and treelined fields to its south and south-east.

### Geology, topography and landscape setting

**3.3** The bedrock geology of the conservation area is largely characterised by Ballagan formation sandstone with an area of Dalmahoy sill microgabbro in its south-west, both of which formed during the Carboniferous period [\[See reference 3\]](#). This is largely overlain by poorly sorted glacial till, which was created, and deposited, by melt water during the retreat of the glaciers. Areas along tributaries of the Gogar Burn feature alluvial clays, silts, sands and gravels [\[See reference 4\]](#). Although glacial deposits often result in poor agricultural capability, the land around Broxburn is capable of producing a wide range of arable crops [\[See reference 5\]](#).

**3.4** The landscape around Kirknewton is generally flat with occasional gentle undulations. The most dramatic landscape feature in close proximity to the conservation area is Kaimes and Dalmahoy hills to its south-east beyond which lie the Pentland Hills.

Figure 3.1: Context



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# Chapter 4

## History and development

**4.1** This section considers how Kirknewton developed from its earliest origins into the place we see today

### Prehistory and the early medieval period

**4.2** One of the earliest examples of settlement within the vicinity of Kirknewton includes the multi-phase Iron Age hill fort on Kaimes Hill which features evidence of 15 hut circles, ramparts, and timber-laced structures. The Romans likely perceived the occupants of this fortified settlement as part of the 'Votadini Tribe' who are often viewed as clients of (separate from but dependent upon) the Roman Empire [\[See reference 6\]](#). There is also evidence of Roman occupation of the fort despite removal of much of the archaeological record due to quarrying. Following the retreat of the Romans, the region would repeatedly change hands as early medieval kingdoms vied for control. Initially, the region was likely part of the Brythonic Kingdom of Gododdin but by the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the Lothians would be split between the Kingdoms of Strathclyde/Cumbria [\[See reference 7\]](#) and that of Bernicia [\[See reference 8\]](#) [\[See](#)

[reference 9\]](#). It was not until the 10th to 11th centuries that the Lothians would be annexed by the Kingdom of Alba/Scotland [\[See reference 10\]](#).

**4.3** Medieval settlements in Scotland were often re-used [\[See reference 11\]](#) or 'over-written' with very similar post-medieval structures. This can make it difficult to understand the precise origins of a place around this period.

### The medieval period

**4.4** There are various theories as to the meaning of the place name. One explanation relates to the old spelling being 'Neutun' and the prefix 'Kirk' being added to distinguish it from a place of the same name in another part of the Lothians [\[See reference 12\]](#). Alternatively, the name may have derived from Count John de Lantoun, the 13<sup>th</sup> century Vicar of the neighboring Calder Cleir (East Calder), whose surname is said to mean "Kirktown" [\[See reference 13\]](#). However, the most widely accepted explanation is that the village owes its name to the proximity to the church, 'kirk' in Scots, and the Old English 'tun' for a farm or settlement [\[See reference 14\]](#) [\[See reference 15\]](#).

## History and development

**4.5** Much of the local area around Kirknewton was once a royal hunting chase gifted by the King to the Earls of Fife [\[See reference 16\]](#). The land would later be passed on to the Douglass family, then the Templars, and then to the Knights of St John who established their main Scottish settlement at Torphichen in 1124 [\[See reference 17\]](#).

**4.6** The presence of a hogback stone within the Old Parish Churchyard, prior to its theft, represented the presence of a high-status burial dating between the 11th and 12th centuries [\[See reference 18\]](#). This indicates that the area held considerable significance prior to the founding of the church in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This church, dedicated to Saint Cuthbert, was a 'Chapel of Ease' rather than a parish church, and measured only 8m by 2.5m. Nothing remains of the church except a wall which forms part of the enclosed tomb of the Maconochies of Meadowbank, in what is now the village burial ground [\[See reference 19\]](#).

### The post-medieval period

**4.7** Kirknewton was its own parish for 500 years, lending its name to the 'Kirknewtown Moor' to its south on 17<sup>th</sup> century mapping, at which point it was situated to the north of a major east-west road [\[See reference 20\]](#). The parish would ultimately be merged with East Calder in 1750 when the Kirknewton Church was built to serve the two villages [\[See](#)

[reference 21\]](#). At this time Kirknewton was one of the largest settlements in the local area, featuring numerous, densely packed, structures on a rough east-west alignment. Between 1801 and 1844, the population of the wider Kirknewton parish had increased by over a third [\[See reference 22\]](#) but the character of the settlement remained largely unchanged from that of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, remaining a series of tightly spaced buildings with a rough east-west alignment [\[See reference 23\]](#).

**4.8** By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the pace of expansion had increased at Kirknewton with five new buildings appearing towards its north-eastern, south-eastern, and north-western fringes as well as in its center near Sawmill House (LB7381) [\[See reference 24\]](#). Lodges associated with the Kirknewton Estate were also constructed to the south of the settlement around this time (LB7348).

**4.9** The churchyard is a historic burial site featuring remnants of the old church, two distinct burial enclosures, and several 18<sup>th</sup> century gravestones. Situated in the Parish of Kirknewton, it serves as a resting place with deep ties to the local community's history.

**4.10** Approximately 280m south-east of the conservation area, is Kirknewton House (LB7362), formerly Meadowbank House. Although much altered later in its life, it originated in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It appears, according to the mid-18<sup>th</sup>

## History and development

century Roy's military map, to have been located within a wider designed landscape, with parkland enclosed by trees. This can be seen as an early precursor to that which would extend towards Kirknewton in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### The 19<sup>th</sup> century economy

**4.11** Agriculture and rural industry, as suggested by Sawmill House (LB7381) in the middle of Kirknewton, provided the main means of livelihood in the parish. In addition, it formed an important stop in the driving of cattle from the highlands to markets further south beyond the Cauldstaneslap [\[See reference 25\]](#). Nowadays, the Cauldstaneslap forms part of the right-of-way from Kirknewton to the village of Carlops on the other side of the Pentlands.

**4.12** The Caledonian Railway would substantially change the nature of overland travel through the West Lothian area. Kirknewton, which formerly stood on important overland travel routes, would be bypassed by this railway line, only being served by the Mid Calder and Kirknewton railway station c.800m to the north-west of the settlement which opened in 1848 [\[See reference 26\]](#).

**4.13** By the time of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century mapping, the parkland around Kirknewton House (LB7362), extended northwards

towards Kirknewton into what is now the south of the conservation area. As such, the south of the conservation area is characterised by an area of open grassland, reflecting its prior parkland use. Within this area, raised earthworks can be seen and relate to the former drives in/out of the Kirknewton Estate [\[See reference 27\]](#).

### 20<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> century development

**4.14** Since the construction of the railway, the village has grown westwards towards the railway station as well as north-east towards Hill House. This expansion started in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century [\[See reference 28\]](#), before the substantial housing developments which would see the former agricultural land to the north-west, north and north-east of the village almost entirely lost to the need for new housing following World War Two [\[See reference 29\]](#) [\[See reference 30\]](#). Some of this development, encouraged in part by the establishment of RAF Kirknewton in 1941, included a new parish church (LB50535) and primary school. What resulted is the now continuous linear development from the historic core of the village to the railway station. In addition to this northward expansion, the historic core of Kirknewton also experienced development with the construction of a new structure in its west, 8

## History and development

Whitemoss Road, as well as the creation of Smithy Brae and the buildings which line its north and south.

**4.15** The conservation area has experienced limited change in the late 20<sup>th</sup> to early 21<sup>st</sup> century, with alterations largely comprising the construction of new buildings in the land between Whitemoss Road and the Public Park to its west. Its economy, however, has radically changed from that of previous periods, as it became increasingly established as a commuter settlement [\[See reference 31\]](#).

## Historical mapping

Figure 4.1: Kirknewton in 1854-5 (Linlithgowshire sheet 10, Surved 1854-55, Published: 1856. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)



Figure 4.2: Kirknewton in 1895 (Linlithgowshire sheet VI.NW and VI.SW, Revised: 1893, Published: 1895. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)



# Chapter 5

## Heritage assets

### Designated assets

**5.1** Six listed buildings comprising:

- Three category B; and
- Three category C.

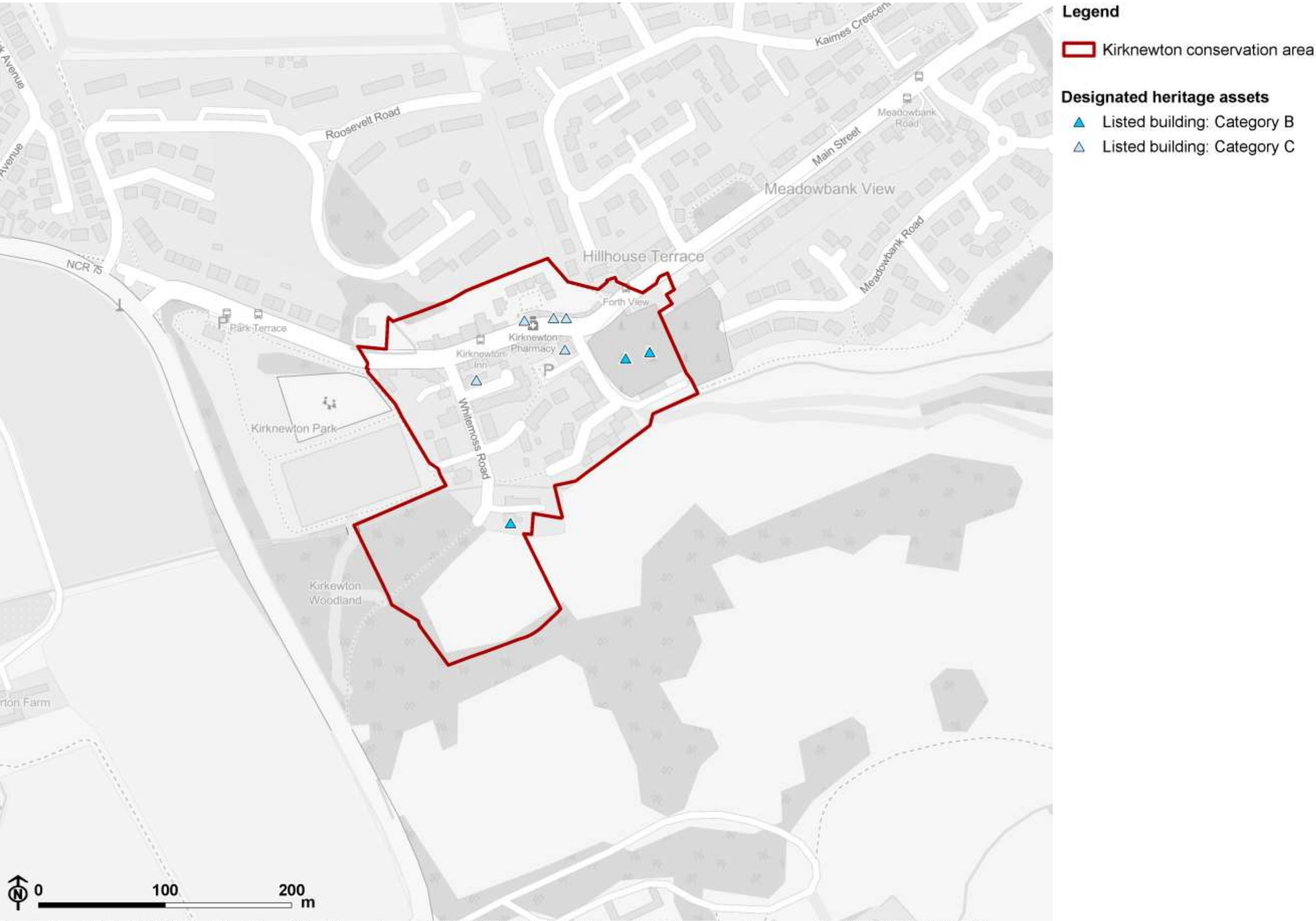
**5.2** There are no other types of designated heritage assets (such as scheduled monuments, or gardens and designed landscapes) within the conservation area.

### Archaeological potential

**5.3** Kirknewton Conservation Area may hold archaeological interest in addition to that contained in the historic layout of the village and its individual historic buildings. The archaeological potential of much of Kirknewton is low owing to the density of 19<sup>th</sup> century development and the distribution of known archaeological sites.

**5.4** There remains the potential for archaeological remains relating to early phases of the settlement, including the medieval period, to survive beneath the foundations of later structures. However, these are likely to be severely truncated. The potential for such remains to have survived is highest within the Kirknewton churchyard and the undeveloped area in the south of the conservation area. Such remains would further our understanding of Kirknewton's development. Future planning and development of the settlement should consider this potential.

Figure 5.1: Heritage Assets



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# Chapter 6

## Character analysis

### Overall character

**6.1** Kirknewton is a compact, nucleated settlement which derives its main character from the historic core and streets and lanes radiating out from Main Street which divides the village into north and south. The street layout reflects the importance of the medieval church with traffic being funnelled towards its former location via Main Street with short residential roads and narrow pedestrian paths extend off of.

**Figure 6.1: View along the historic core of Main Street towards Kirknewton Burial Ground**



### Green spaces, trees and landscaping

**6.2** Kirknewton Burial Ground creates an area of open green space amidst the dense development and sense of enclosure created by the main street and residential back streets. The burial ground lies on a gentle slope which heads down towards Gogar Burn, and looks across to the open woodland surrounding Kirknewton House. The burial ground contains a variety of mature and younger trees.

**6.3** Mature trees planted in the conservation area are mostly in private gardens. e.g. Whitemoss Road.

**6.4** Private gardens are an important part of the green spaces within the village, bringing colour and seasonal variety into areas where there are no public open spaces.

**6.5** The parkland of Kirknewton House defines the southern setting of the conservation area, maintaining vital open space, scenic views, specimen trees and a rural atmosphere.

## Character analysis

**Figure 6.2: Private garden visible from Main Street**



### Landmarks

- Kirknewton Burial Ground and associated burial enclosures (LB7384 / LB7351);
- Sawmill House (5 Whitemoss Road) (LB7381);
- Lodges 19 and 21 Whitemoss Road (LB7348);

- Kirknewton Inn; and
- Kirknewton Village Hall.

**Figure 6.3: View across Kirknewton Burial Ground, towards Dr Cullen's Burial Enclosure (LB7351) and the parkland of Kirknewton House beyond**



## Character analysis

**Figure 6.4: Sawmill House (5 Whitemoss Road) (LB7381) is a landmark owing to its unusual pantile roof (with easing course) and detached nature**



### Views

**6.6** Although Kirknewton can be seen from the Pentland Hills and the Kirknewton House Estate, within the conservation area, the relatively flat nature of the historic core of the settlement means that views within this part of the conservation areas are largely enclosed within it. This

means that the key views from within the conservation area comprise:

- View into and along Main Street;
- Into and across Kirknewton Burial Ground;
- Along the junction of Main Street and Smithy Brae; and
- Along the junction of Main Street and Whitemoss Road.

**6.7** Outward views are obtained from:

- North-westward from Main Street towards Kirknewton railway station;
- Southward from Whitemoss Road towards woodland and open green landscape; and
- Southward from Kirknewton Burial Ground towards open green landscape of the Kirknewton House Estate.

## Character analysis

**Figure 6.5: Lodges 19 and 21 Whitemoss Road (LB7348) stand prominently at Whitemoss Road**



**Figure 6.6: View along Main Street from the junction with Smithy Brae**



## Character analysis

**Figure 6.7: View north-west along Main Street out of the conservation area**



**Figure 6.8: Two-story dwelling with exposed masonry**



**Figure 6.9: Painted 43 Main Street with varied roofline**



## Architecture

**6.8** Rows of one- and two-story buildings in traditional Scottish vernacular 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century form the essential building blocks of Kirknewton's historic built character styles. These typically feature a random rubble construction with droved ashlar for dressings and quoins, skew-gable, slate roof (grey or Welsh slate), timber sash and casement windows. Date stones are a common feature.

## Character analysis

**6.9** Few buildings retain any form of harling, exposing the stonework of historic buildings. However, some buildings, such as 43 and 45 Main Street are painted white. This creates some variation in the streetscape. Similarly, variation in the roofline between one- and two-storey buildings and the 'stepped' nature of the Smithy Brae terraces, as well as the unique pantiled roof of Sawmill House, also contributes to visual interest of the streetscape

**6.10** There are also examples of classical inspired Georgian houses. For example, 55 Main Street which is a two-storey dwelling with four bays and a Georgian style six panelled wooden door with fanlight.

**6.11** Buildings in residential areas tend to be surrounded by low or medium level boundary features. These comprise original stone walls or a mixture of timber fencing with hedges or concrete or stone. Those situated along street set back from the main thoroughfare of Main Street, such as those on Whitemoss Road, feature larger plots, with front and rear gardens.

**6.12** Unlike elsewhere in West Lothian, shops are mainly located within cottages and an old farmhouse (Livingston Craft Workshops). Due to this, shops do not contain design elements seen in traditional Victorian shopfronts, such as fascias, pilasters and stallrisers.

**Figure 6.10: Kirknewton Burial Ground's boundary wall**



**6.13** The Kirknewton Burial Ground is oblong and defined by a random rubble wall, the rear of which is ashlar. As the church is no longer present, the primary focus of this area are two burial enclosures. These are oblong structures constructed of snecked rubble with ornamented doorways and segmental broken pediment and bronze relief. Also present is an elaborate baroque with broken-pedimented door. These are surrounded by some well-preserved 18<sup>th</sup> century headstones.

## Character analysis

**6.14** Related to the Kirknewton House Estate are two lodges. A two-storey tower lodge was built using snecked rubble and features a corbelled parapet, angle turret, and a single storey addition to east. Opposite the tower is a single-storey lodge featuring stugged ashlar masonry with a slated roof and chamfered window-surrounds, decorative strap-hinges on the door and dressed stone gate-piers and iron gates.

**Figure 6.11: Two-story tower lodge with corbelled parapet, angle turret, and a single storey addition**

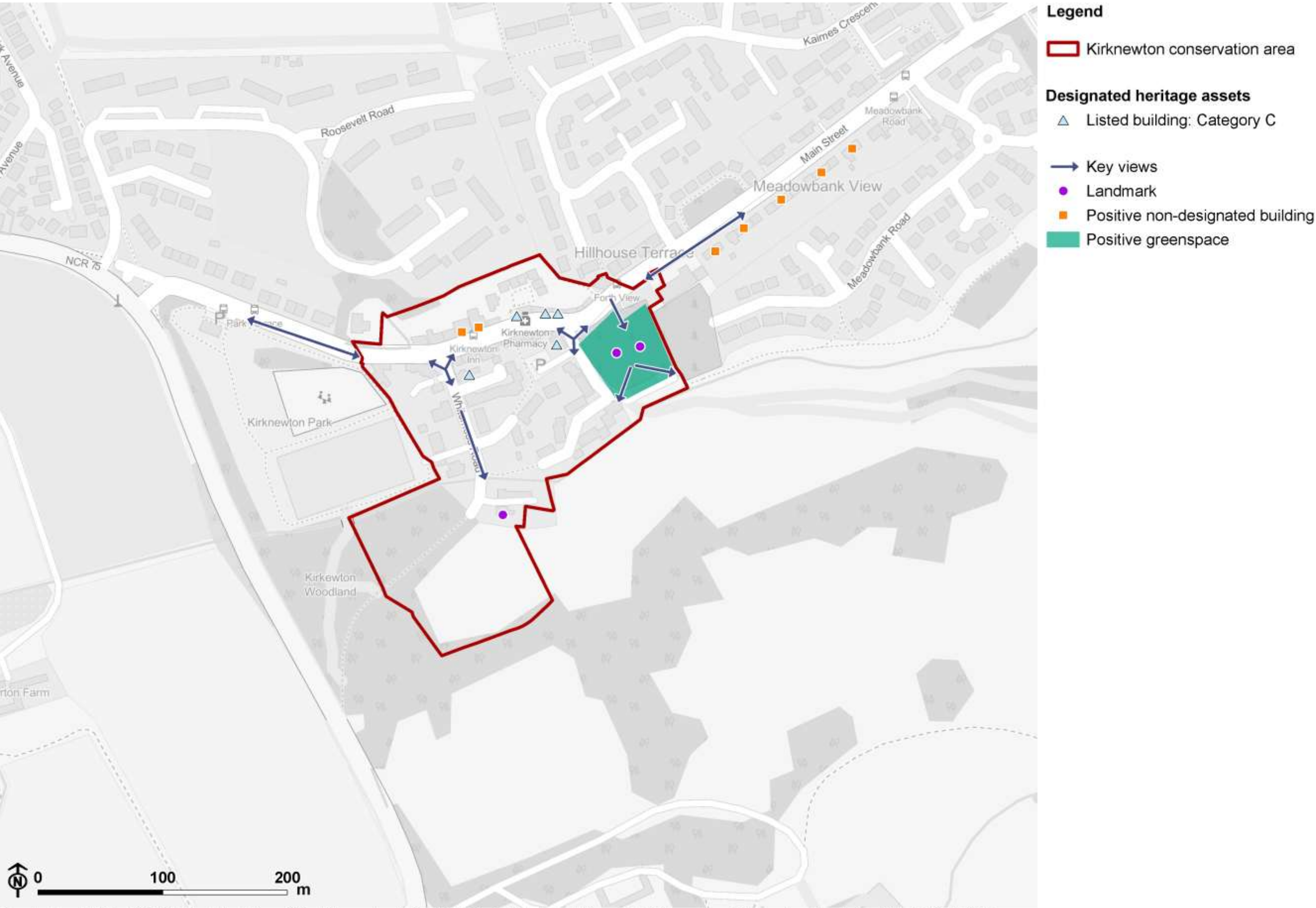


**6.15** Later 20<sup>th</sup> century houses at the south end of Smithy Brae contribute to the conservation area as contextual design taking inspiration from traditional forms and materials. It comprises short, stepped terraces which form a picturesque composition around a small, central green. Stone banding, chimneys, window and door margins quote traditional details in a modern way.

**Figure 6.12: 20<sup>th</sup> century houses at the south end of Smithy Brae**



Figure 6.13: Character Analysis



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# Chapter 7

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

### Strengths

- Surviving historic features and details to buildings and the use of traditional materials
- Retains much of its original layout and character
- The quality of the architecture and the story it tells us about the Georgian and Victorian periods in West Lothian, its architectural tastes and fashions.
- The historic core of the conservation area has experienced little change.
- Buildings within the conservation area are largely well maintained.
- None of the buildings within the conservation area are vacant. Few are neglected or underused.
- Roads are maintained relatively well within the conservation area.

- Scale of lighting appears sympathetic to the scale of the village, and there is no overpowering/domineering lighting that would impact the conservation area.
- Many boundary walls are in harmony with the surrounding buildings.

### Weaknesses

Some issues have been identified in the appraisal of the Kirknewton conservation area:

- Condition of some older buildings and boundary treatments within the conservation area.
  - Loose or faded painting in public façades
  - Staining and algal growth on rear of properties
  - Overgrowing vegetation on the rear of properties and in roofs.
- Dr. Cullen Burial Enclosure and Maconochies of Meadowbank Burial Enclosure in need of repairs

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

as both are in poor condition. Dr. Cullen enclosure, requiring more urgent repairs, would need attention with the ivy, metal gate and wall; also the stone pilaster movement needs attention. Maconochies of Meadowbank enclosure is in better condition but would require some metal work and attention is needed to the close by tree as it poses a threat to the enclosure.

- High wooden fences built to protect the privacy of the properties but decrease historic character.
- Metal fencing has usually negative effect as they rarely harmonize with the original buildings
- Many walls within the conservation area have been lost or damaged through time by lack of maintenance.
- New residential development inside the area that does not harmonise with the character of the conservation area. Often the later development in the village centre has a negative effect on the spaces, as the buildings from later 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century rarely harmonise with the earlier historic buildings.
- Extensions and alterations/additions
  - Many of the windows and doors have been replaced with white UPVC windows.

**Figure 7.1: Dr. Cullen Burial Enclosure is in poor condition and requires repair**



## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

**Figure 7.2: Example of damaged wall on Whitemoss Road**



- Modern dormer extensions have been added in roof spaces after expanding the single storey cottages. The character of many is rarely matching with the original building fenestration. Especially the inset dormer in 24 Main Street is out of place and compromises the character of the core centre.
- Small scale dormer extensions in roof spaces accompanied by replacement of windows and door with non- traditional designs and materials.
- Poorly positioned, or over prominent, security alarms, and visible surface cables. Altogether there are only few buildings where security alarms and cables can be seen but they are located on core centre and are notable when passing by.
- Public Realm
  - Sense of welcome and arrival is limited.
  - Lack of street furniture, or inappropriate location especially in Main Street.
  - Limited on-street parking and lack of off-street parking.
  - Some shop frontages with inappropriate signage/lighting/shutters.
  - Issues arise with the bus stops in the core village. Bus stop signages are not in good condition.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

**Figure 7.3: Metal railings on Main Street**



**Figure 7.4: 24 Main Street with large dormer and uPVC fittings**



- Need for interpretation or heritage board within the area.
- There are no historic signs within the conservation area. Newer modern street signs are lacking in care.
- Litter bins are located on the front façade, on already narrow pedestrian paths.
- Unlike in many other West Lothian villages, Kirknewton does not have a single palette of materials in benches.
- Some pedestrian paths are not maintained, with litter and overgrown vegetation in places.

## Opportunities

- Improvement of the public realm: highway surfaces, interpretation board(s), street furniture, lighting, signage and the repair and restoration of surviving historic features.
- Use of enforcement powers, guidance, grant funding and/or planning decisions to help maintain and repair historic buildings, and/or reinstate lost historic features and details.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

- Planning and design guidance for particular features such as dormers, windows and doors, boundary features or shopfronts and signage, or colour palettes and finishes for particular streets. This would control the changes to building façades in Main Street, modern developments within the buildings and the condition of burial enclosures.
- Allocated off street space for litter bins for properties along with Main Street that currently position bins along the street.
- Seasonal planting displays, promoting improved shopfronts and housing fronts in a traditional style and improving linkages to Gogar Burn to east and Pentland Hills Regional Park to south.

## Threats

- Further loss of historic features and details to historic buildings through permitted development rights, planning decisions and/or lack of enforcement action. This will particularly undermine the group value of the buildings.
- Changes to the public realm that do not respect the character or appearance of the area and appear incongruous with the buildings.
- Loss of greenery, including trees.
- Buildings becoming underused, vacant or neglected.
- New development in the conservation area or its vicinity that harms its significance, character or appearance.

# Chapter 8

## Management recommendations

### Boundary

#### Inclusions

**8.1** Beaconhill, located on 58 Main Street is a detached Victorian house with extensive gardens. One of the oldest surviving buildings in Kirknewton, contributing greatly to the historic village.

Hillhouse Terrace and Meadowbank View - 1940s timber detached two storey houses, located on east side of the original conservation area boundary. The timber for these houses is believed to have been brought from Canada and built for the people working on the airfield during and closely after the Second World War. At the time of the appraisal, most of the buildings are painted black, brown or red, with slated panel roofs and brick base courses. This type of architecture is not overly common in Scotland and provides a notable contrast to the prevailing stone built character. Timber housing is relatively rare, both regionally and across Scotland in general though neither example is

protected under conservation area designation.

#### Exclusions

**8.2** The proximity of modern buildings at north side of Main Street compromises the character and appearance of the conservation area. The Green Room, was developed in 2014 by Kirknewton Community Development Trust (KCDT). It is timber building which plays with unbalanced symmetry and is located opposite the old kirkyard in Main Street. Although it plays a valuable community role, this building compromises the character of the conservation area.

### Article 4 Direction

**8.3** Incremental change to the appearance of dwellinghouses and flats is one of the main potential threats to the special character and appearance of Kirknewton Conservation Area. Gradual, small-scale change such as replacement of traditional roofing materials, sash and case windows, wall finishes, installation of rooflights or removal of traditional garden boundaries, which would not normally require planning permission, can have a significant cumulative effect over time. Other types of change arising from agricultural, industrial and highways/ transportation works may also have potential to affect the special character of the conservation area.

**8.4** Such changes can, in certain circumstances, be controlled using Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (GPDO). Under Article 4, the planning authority can apply to the Scottish Ministers for Directions that restrict or remove permitted development rights.

**8.5** An Article 4 direction was first introduced in 1978 for Kirknewton for works within the curtilage of dwellinghouses and a range of other types of activity. This was amended in 2015, taking into account major updates made to the GPDO in 2009-2011. These updates brought most external

changes to dwellinghouses and flats under the control of the GPDO, largely removing the need for local authorities to put in place a separate Article 4 direction to suspend those PD rights.

**8.6** A further update to the GPDO in 2024 reversed the removal of PD rights for altering or replacing windows in a conservation area, and instead created a prior approval process for some changes to windows (Class 7A). West Lothian Council non-statutory guidance was updated to cover this change and advise on appropriate replacements.

**8.7** Only a very small number of prior approval submissions for windows under Class 7A was noted since 2024 (3-4 across West Lothian Council as a whole), suggesting that, at present, this Class is not widely applicable.

**8.8** The current condition of the conservation area suggests that, in general, traditional materials and built character are being maintained. However, inappropriate alterations have taken place, with replacement of traditional windows and doors with uPVC or aluminium being widespread, particularly in the unlisted buildings. Many of these instances appear to be of substantial age, or may be the result of multiple phases of replacement, and therefore outwith the scope of enforcement action.

## Management recommendations

**8.9** The application of the existing Article 4 Direction to windows and doors appears not to have been particularly successful in the case of Kirknewton, as erosion of the character of these elements has largely already taken place. However, other types of alterations, such as to external facing materials, do not appear to have caused a major erosion of character to the same extent.

**8.10** Except in the case of windows and door therefore, the requirements of the current GPDO appear sufficient and proportionate to avoid harm to dwellinghouses from incremental change. The coverage of non-domestic classes of development also remains appropriate.

**8.11** It is as yet unclear what the long-term effect of Class 7A (windows) will be in relation to preservation of character, although it appears unlikely to be able to effect a reversal of the erosion that has taken place.

**8.12** Options for reversal of the erosion of traditional windows and doors should be investigated further, which could be through a combination of publicity and encouragement to undertake sympathetic replacements, planning and repairs advice

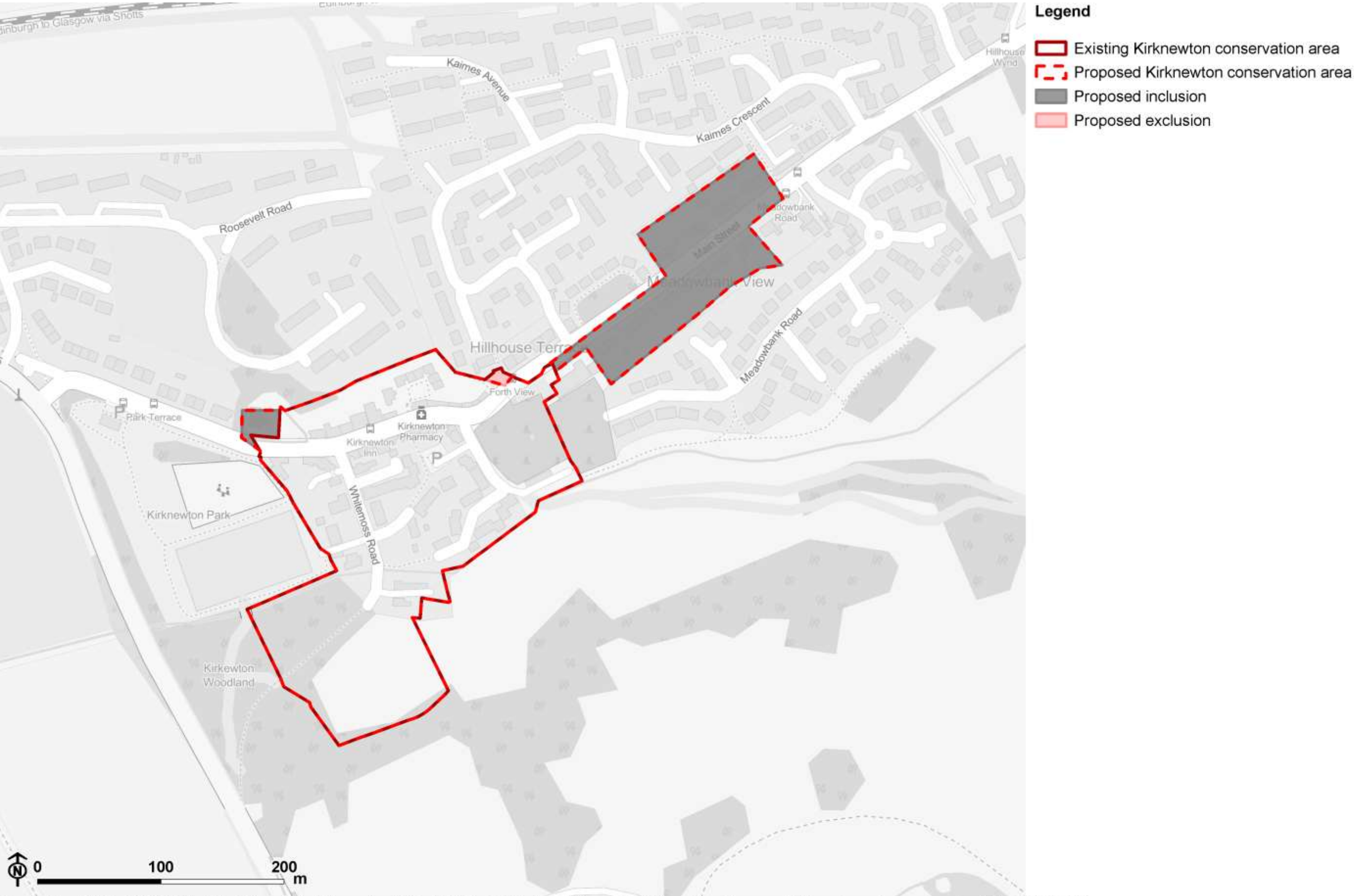
**8.13** The numbering of the Classes of development in the 2015 Article 4 Direction and the present version of the GPDO remains the same. The content of the Article 4

Direction therefore does not require amendment. The area it applies to should be amended to reflect the new extent of the conservation area should the proposed boundary changes be adopted.

## Recommendations

1. Amend the conservation area boundary to best reflect the areas containing the special character of Kirknewton.
2. Amend the 2015 Article 4 Direction to reflect any boundary amendments made as a result of this conservation area appraisal review.
3. Monitor the condition of the conservation area at appropriate intervals (approximately 5 years) to review whether additional management measures are required.
4. Investigate options to encourage reversal of the erosion of traditional windows and doors.

Figure 8.1: Kirknewton Proposed Boundary Amendments



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## Appendix A

### Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Table A.1: Gazetteer of heritage assets

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                                   | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Lodges, 19 And 21 Whitemoss Road, And Gate, Kirknewton Village</b><br>Category B<br>Listed Building - LB7348<br>Landmark |  |

## Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                                                                 | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Dr. Cullen Burial Enclosure</b><br/> Kirknewton Cemetery and Churchyard<br/> Category B<br/> Listed Building - LB7351<br/> Landmark</p>             |   |
| <p><b>Maconochies Of Meadowbank Burial Enclosure</b><br/> <b>Kirknewton Burial Ground</b><br/> Category B<br/> Listed Building - LB7384<br/> Landmark</p> |  |

## Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                 | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>'Sawmill House', 5 Whitemoss Road.</b><br/>Category C<br/>Listed Building - LB7381<br/>Landmark</p> |   |
| <p><b>14, 16, 18, 20, 22 And 24 Main Street</b><br/>Category C<br/>Listed Building - LB7382</p>           |  |

## Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                            | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>2, 4 Smithybrae</b><br/> Category C<br/> Listed Building - LB7383</p>                          |   |
| <p><b>Kirknewton Inn</b><br/> 42, Main Street<br/> Positive non-designated feature<br/> Landmark</p> |  |

## Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                              | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Kirknewton Village Hall</b><br/>Main Street<br/>Positive non-designated feature<br/>Landmark</p> |   |
| <p><b>1 - 2 Meadowbank View</b><br/>Positive non-designated feature</p>                                |                                                                                      |
| <p><b>3 - 6 Meadowbank View</b><br/>Positive non-designated feature</p>                                |  |
| <p><b>7 - 10 Meadowbank View</b><br/>Positive non-designated feature</p>                               |                                                                                      |

## Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

| Name / asset type and reference / address                         | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>11 - 14 Meadowbank View</b><br>Positive non-designated feature |   |
| <b>15 - 16 Meadowbank View</b><br>Positive non-designated feature |  |

## Appendix B

### Buildings to be included / excluded by the proposed boundary change

Table B.1: Buildings to be included / excluded by the proposed boundary change

| Proposed change | Address               |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Include         | Hillhouse Terrace, 10 |
| Include         | Hillhouse Terrace, 11 |
| Include         | Hillhouse Terrace, 12 |
| Include         | Hillhouse Terrace, 13 |
| Include         | Hillhouse Terrace, 14 |
| Include         | Hillhouse Terrace, 15 |
| Include         | Hillhouse Terrace, 16 |
| Include         | Hillhouse Terrace, 9  |
| Include         | Main Street, 58       |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 1    |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 10   |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 11   |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 12   |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 13   |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 14   |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 15   |

## Buildings to be included / excluded by the proposed boundary

| Proposed change | Address             |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 16 |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 2  |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 3  |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 4  |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 5  |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 6  |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 7  |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 8  |
| Include         | Meadowbank View, 9  |
| Exclude         | Main Street, 12     |

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