



# Mid Calder 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 Mid Calder 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 Mid Calder:

- Strong 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century core of rubble or harled stone buildings with slate roofs and simple rectangular plans.
- Distinctive linear street pattern shaped by historic droving routes and narrow land between rivers.
- Surviving Victorian shopfronts, traditional sash windows, pantiled roofs with easing courses, and rubble boundary walls.
- Key landmarks include Calder House, Mid Calder Parish Church, Calder Steading, East Bridge, Black Bull Inn, and Cunnigar Hill.

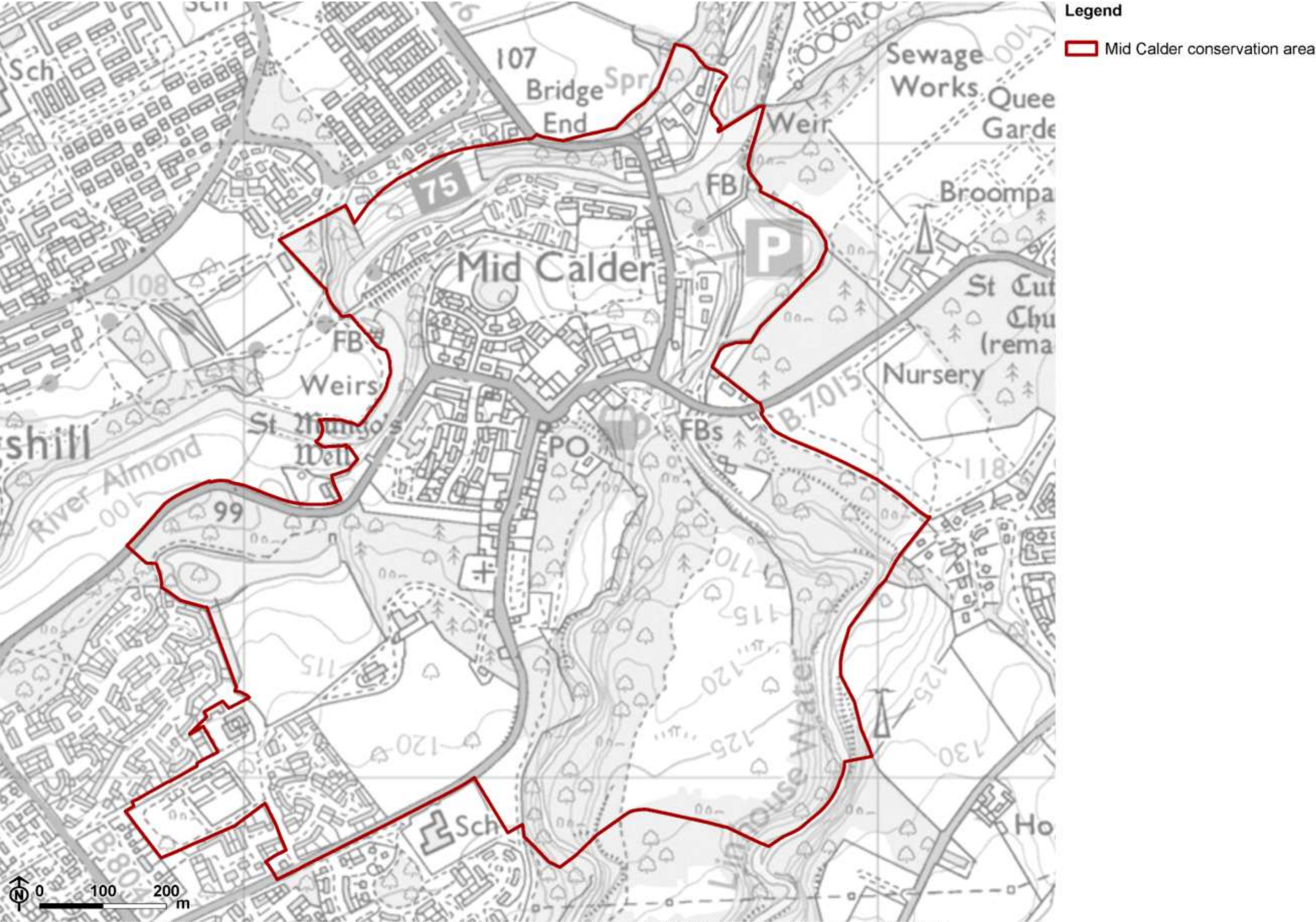
- Semi-rural character around Calder Kirkyard and Calder House, with villas in large plots.

### 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:
  - Ongoing deterioration of key historic structures

Figure 1.1: Mid Calder 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

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 is 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.”

## Introduction

**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.

## Mid Calder Conservation Area background

**2.19** 1976: Mid Calder Conservation Area officially designated, covering the historic core of Main Street, Market Street, and Bank Street.

**2.20** 2017: Mid Calder Conservation Area leaflet published.

# 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 Mid Calder that made it suitable for successful occupation.

### Location

**3.2** Mid Calder is situated between two watercourses, the River Almond to its north and west, and Linhouse Water to its east and south-east. The conservation area, however, extends beyond this to include sections north of the River Almond and east of the Linhouse Water. Although the development of Livingston New Town has encroached on its rural surroundings, woodland and large arable fields characterise its environs to its east and north.

## Geology, topography and landscape setting

### Geology

**3.3** The underlying geology of the conservation area includes fluvial Dunnet Sandstone along its centre with lacustrine Hopetoun Member, sedimentary rocks in its east and a spur of olivine analcime-microgabbro in its far west. The Murieston and Linhouse Waters in its east also overly Binny fluvial sandstones [See reference 2]. This bedrock geology, which formed during the Carboniferous period belongs to the West Lothian Oil-Shale formation [See reference 3]. The presence of oil-shale embedded within the bedrock allowed the shale oil industry to take hold in West Lothian and form a vital element of the local economy. In addition, Dunnet sandstones have historically been a popular building material [See reference 4], characterising the appearance of much of the historic buildings in the region.

## Assessing the special interest

**3.4** This bedrock is primarily overlain by poorly sorted glacial till with pockets of glaciofluvial gravels sands and silts [See reference 5]. These were created, and deposited, by melt water during the retreat of the glaciers. Although glacial deposits often result in poor agricultural capability, the land around Mid Calder is very productive, being able of producing a wide range of crops [See reference 6].

### Topography

**3.5** The landscape around the River Almond is, generally flat with the occasional gentle undulations. The most dramatic landscape features in close proximity to the conservation area include the Corston and Auchinoon Hills to the far south of Mid Calder. The expansion of Livingston New Town towards the south and west of the conservation area, as well as that of East Calder, has encroached on the otherwise undeveloped land which surrounds Mid Calder. The remaining land is characterised by Calder Wood which extends beyond the south-east of the conservation area and the large, rectilinear arable fields, characteristic of the post-medieval rationalisation of the rural landscape, to its north.

Figure 3.1: Context



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# Chapter 4

## History and development

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

### Prehistory and the early medieval period

**4.2** The earliest examples of human activity in the vicinity of Mid Calder comprise a number of possibly prehistoric or early medieval inhumations at Broompark farm near Main Street (B7015) c.160m south of the conservation area [\[See reference 7\]](#) and on Powies Path c.60m north-east of the conservation area [\[See reference 8\]](#). Within the conservation area, to the north-west of the historic core of Mid Calder is a large mound known as Cunnigar. Excavations of the mound by Dr John Sommers, the minister of the Kirk of Calder, in either the late 18th or early 19<sup>th</sup> century allegedly recovered stone coffins containing human bones suggesting that the area around Mid Calder was occupied in the Bronze Age to early medieval periods.

**4.3** A number of Roman coins have been recovered from Calder Wood [\[See reference 9\]](#) and may denote a Roman

presence in/near the south of the conservation area and, therefore, provide evidence for human activity near Mid Calder in the Iron Age/Roman periods, i.e. between the Bronze Age and early medieval period. The Romans likely perceived the people of modern-day West Lothian as part of the 'Votadini Tribe' who are often viewed as clients of (separate from but dependent upon) the Roman [\[See reference 10\]](#). 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 [\[See reference 11\]](#) and that of Bernicia [\[See reference 12\]](#) [\[See reference 13\]](#). It was not until the 10th to 11th centuries that the Lothians would be annexed by the Kingdom of Alba/Scotland [\[See reference 14\]](#).

**4.4** Medieval settlements in Scotland were often re-used [\[See reference 15\]](#) 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

**4.5** According to the Scottish Words and Place-names database, the name 'Calder' may relate to the Old Scots 'Cald' meaning 'cold' [See reference 16]. Alternatively, the placename 'Calder' may, as theorised in both the Old and the New Statistical Accounts of Scotland, stem from Gaelic and denotes a wooded, or otherwise untamed, region with a body of water [See reference 17] [See reference 18]. A Gaelic placename is likely to coincide with the construction of a church, funded by Duncan, Earl of Fife [See reference 19], in 1150 [See reference 20] where the Kirk of Calder (LB14144) is now positioned. This kirk would have been under the control of the diocese of St Andrews and had vicars appointed by the Abbot of Dunfermline before it became a rectory.

**4.6** A settlement, or settlements, must have existed in close proximity to the modern village in order to justify the presence of this kirk. These settlements, and the wider lands of Calder were granted to the Sandilands family, who were originally from Clydeside, by the Douglas family in the 14<sup>th</sup> century [See reference 21]. This family would later form the Lords of Torphichen [See reference 22].

### The post-medieval period – the Sandilands and religion

**4.7** Calder House (LB14153), constructed in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, was the residence of the powerful Sandilands and a significant Renaissance house [See reference 23] from where they would manage their surrounding lands. This early phase has not been mapped but is known to have featured a stable block [See reference 24]. In addition to being architecturally significant, John Knox (1514 – 1572), the theologian who spearheaded the Scottish Reformation, celebrated his first Protestant communion there in 1556 [See reference 25]. By the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century much of Mid Calder was occupied by the Sandilands' estate which was characterised by long tree lined avenues that ran towards the house and the Kirk. Later, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, elements of this estate include a lodge on the junction between modern Main Street and South Lodge Avenue, a threshing machine, and steading (LB14154). Winding paths cross across various parts of the estate from Calder House (LB14153), such as around the loch to the north-west and the icehouse.

**4.8** The church has been a prominent feature in the history of Mid Calder. The position of Calder House (LB14153) was likely a product of its proximity to the parish Kirk (LB14144) where the Sandilands were rectors until the mid-16<sup>th</sup>

## History and development

century before the mantle passed to John Spottiswood [See reference 26]. Witch hunts were first coordinated by John Spottiswood before Reverend Hew Kennedie's zealous campaign which resulted in the execution of Agnes Bischope in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century [See reference 27]. It is said that the mound of Cunnigar was used for the execution of witches by burning but it is unclear if this particularly cruel act of violence, predominantly against women, actually took place here [See reference 28]. The Parish Kirk's (LB14144) graveyard would expand eastward in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century / early 20<sup>th</sup> century across the other side of Main Street, seemingly resulting in the demolition of buildings that once stood here [See reference 29].

### The post-medieval period – transport, industry and prosperity

**4.9** The location of Mid Calder, to the immediate south of the Almond River, facilitated its role as an important hub for transport and trade. In many parts of the Highlands, cattle, which were bred for southern markets, were transported as large herds and driven by various roads to cattle trysts at Crieff and Falkirk. Some of the cattle sold there returned to the Highlands, but most continued on their journey south, chiefly by way of Linlithgow, Ecclesmachan, Uphall, and across the traditional river crossing at Mid Calder [See

reference 30] before being driven onward to their destinations. This, combined with the fact that Mid Calder soon found itself as an important coaching stop on the Glasgow – Edinburgh Road [See reference 31], meant that Mid Calder became part of a major thoroughfare, supporting nine public houses. Although never granted the status of burgh, a market would appear to have developed at Mid Calder owing to the development of a wide road, known as 'Market Street'. If Mid Calder ever had a market cross, it is likely to have once stood on this street. The prosperity of Mid Calder led to the population of the Parish nearly doubling from 760 in 1755 to 1,456 in 1841 [See reference 32].

**4.10** It is likely that the north bridge and east bridge (LB14151) were constructed near established water crossings. The resulting flow of people and animals south/north, combined with relatively narrow parcel of land on which the settlement is located, likely contributed to the narrow, linear nature of historic Mid Calder.

**4.11** The development of the railways in the 19<sup>th</sup> century lessened the importance of overland travel through Mid Calder which would not be served by a train station. The spread of railways from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century halted cattle droving. Mid Calder railway station (later Kirknewton railway station) was built in 1848 as part of the Caledonian Railway line connecting Edinburgh and Glasgow. The station is in

## History and development

Kirknewton because the original railway developers were prevented from bringing the line closer to the village of Mid Calder by the local landowner, Lord Torphichen, who wished to protect his property at Calder House.

**4.12** Although a decline in prosperity might have been anticipated, it would benefit from the establishment of the shale oil industry, for example, the Oakbank shale mine in the far east of the conservation area on the eastern bank of Linhouse Water [\[See reference 33\]](#).

**4.13** Mid Calder became a major hub for the 19<sup>th</sup> century shale oil boom, transforming into a mining village and continuing to prosper. The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century core was built during and after the golden age of the Scottish oil trade, especially relating to production at nearby Oakbank pit.

### The mid-20<sup>th</sup> century to present day

**4.14** The layout of Mid Calder remained largely untouched until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century when a housing development boom followed the end of the Second World War. This would result in numerous houses being built across the north of the Calder House estate to the immediate south of the Cunnigar, as well as along the southern bank of the River Almond along Almond Side Road. These

developments formed part of the establishment of Livingston New Town to ease pressures on overcrowded housing in Edinburgh and Glasgow, providing cheaper, rentable, accommodation [\[See reference 34\]](#). Although not initially intended to house commuters [\[See reference 35\]](#), Livingston, like many other New Town developments across Scotland, is popularly considered as such today. It is also around this time that the green to the east of the Cunnigar would be mapped as a playing field [\[See reference 36\]](#).

## Historical mapping

Figure 4.1: Mid Calder in 1895 (Linlithgowshire X-SW, Surveyed: 1895, Published: 1898. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)



Figure 4.2: Mid Calder in 1971 (NT0767NW\_A, Surveyed: 1971, Copyright: 1972. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)



# Chapter 5

## Heritage assets

### Designated assets

**5.1** Twenty-one listed buildings comprising:

- Three category A;
- Seven category B; and
- Eleven category C.

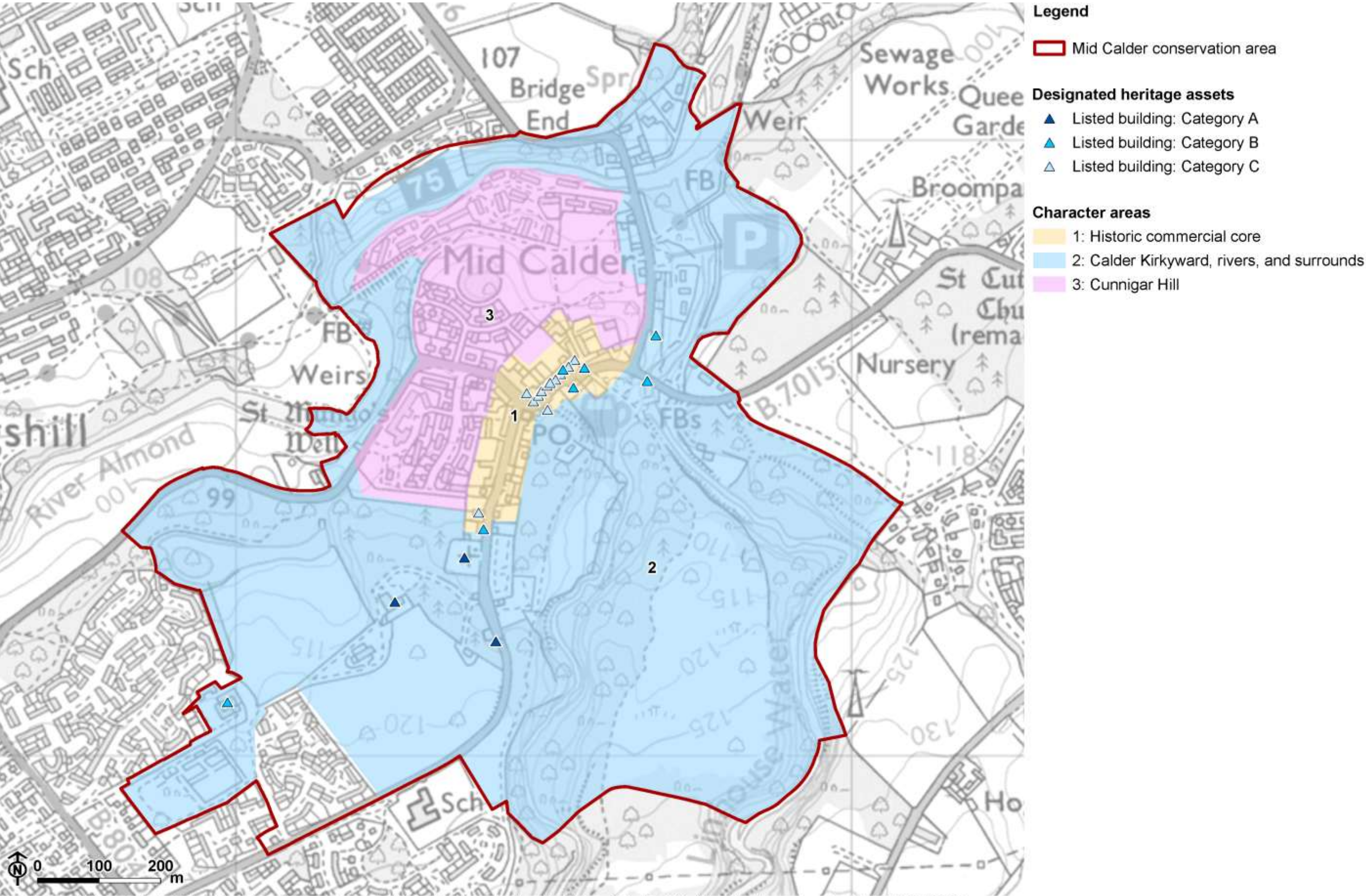
**5.2** There are no other types of designated heritage assets (such as scheduled monuments, or gardens and designed landscapes) within the conservation area.

### Archaeological potential

**5.3** Mid Calder Conservation Area may hold archaeological interest in addition to the historic layout of the farmstead and its individual historic buildings. The archaeological potential of Mid Calder is moderate owing to the presence of prehistoric to early medieval inhumations in and around

Mid Calder. In addition, the fertility of the surrounding agricultural land and utility of the River Almond as a routeway through the landscape would have encouraged the settlement of Mid Calder during prehistory, increasing the likelihood of buried archaeological evidence relating to past settlement, or further evidence of activity. This is particularly true for the undeveloped areas around Calder House (LB14153) and within Almondell and Calder Wood Country Park. It is also possible that the historic buildings which form the historic core of Mid Calder were constructed upon earlier buildings which may, partially, survive, beneath their foundations. Such remains would further our understanding of Mid Calder's development. Future planning and development of the settlement should consider this potential.

Figure 5.1: Heritage Assests



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# Chapter 6

## Character analysis

### Overall character

**6.1** The following aspects of character apply to the whole conservation area. The conservation area also contains the Historic commercial core, Calder Kirkyard, rivers and surrounds, as well as Cunnigar Hill sub-areas sub-area with a distinctive character of their own. These areas are shown in Figure 5.1 and Figure 6.18, and the factors contributing to their special character is described below.

**6.2** The shape of Mid-Calder reflects the constraints of its location on a relatively flat and narrow plateau like area between the watercourses of the River Almond and Linhouse Water. It also retains its key historical focus points – Main Street, Calder House, and Cunnigar Hill, with the focal point at the junction of the three principal streets. These streets reflect the historic livestock droving route, historically one of Scotland's most important throughfares and the main turnpike road from Edinburgh to Glasgow.

**6.3** The River Almond and Linhouse Water, along with its associated woodland, clearly define the boundary of the conservation area.

**Figure 6.1: Watercourses and historic crossings are key to Mid Calder's character - East Bridge**



## Character analysis

### Green space, trees and landscaping

**6.4** There are four areas of ancient woodland within the boundary of the CA: North of CA behind Powie's Path; West of CA, NE of Braeside Park; Behind cemetery on Main Street. The group of trees north-east of Calderwood Site of Special Scientific Interest is an area of Tree Protection Orders known as Calder Hall. In addition, half of the whole conservation area is part of Almond & Linhouse Valleys Special Landscape Area while the woodland of Almondell and Calder Wood, which dominates the view of the bridge approaching Bank Street, is a site of special scientific interest (SSSI). These create a green corridor which separates Mid Calder from surrounding settlements (see Figure 3.1).

**6.5** Open space is provided by Cunnigar Hill, Gala Park and the associated park/playing field are an enduring focus of respite and recreational activity. This provides a visual and audible contrast from the main streets from which it is set back.

**6.6** Calder Kirkyard creates further open green space on the edge of the village's development. The burial ground contains a variety of mature and younger trees. When approaching from the core of Mid Calder, the change in character as you move away from the dense compact street frontages to the kirkyard is pronounced.

**Figure 6.2: Calderwood SSSI**



## Character analysis

### Landmarks

**6.7** The main landmarks within the conservation area comprise the following architecturally unique and prominent structures:

- Calder House (LB14153),
- Gateway to Calder Estate (LB14155),
- Calder Steading (LB14154),
- Mid Calder Parish Church (LB14144),
- East Bridge (LB14151),
- Black Bull Inn, 6-4a-4 Market Street (LB14136),
- Calderbank House, 2 Pumpherston Road (LB19671),
- Cunnigar Hill and Gala Park.

**Figure 6.3: Gateway to Calder Estate**



**Figure 6.4: Calder Steading**



## Character analysis

**Figure 6.5: Mid Calder Parish Church**



**Figure 6.6: View southeast from East Bridge**



### Views

- The two road bridges provide some of the most extensive views across the conservation area.
- Across and along Main Street of the landmark buildings.
- From North Bridge across the River Almond and river valley.
- Sweeping curve of the Almond and wooded bank to north with Craigshill beyond on the plateau.
- From Cunnigar Hill across and out of the conservation area.
- Views out to the surrounding woodland and rivers to the east, south and west; from the B7015 out towards the rural setting of the River Almond; to Almondell and Calder Wood from North Bridge
- Views out from Wallace Mill Gardens across the River Almond and valley.
- Views in from Main Street, south of the conservation area boundary, moving northwards towards Calder House; from the B7015 towards the River Almond and Cunnigar Tumulus;

## Character analysis

- Views in from the River Valley towards the green open space of Cunnigar Park and the historic core of Mid Calder.

**Figure 6.7: View across Gala Park to Cunnigar Tumulus**



## Architecture

**6.8** Single-storey cottages and two-storey houses, mainly of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, form the essential building blocks of Mid Calder's historic built character.

**6.9** Buildings usually rise straight from the street edge, roof ridge parallel to the street. They are generally of a simple rectangular plan, in stone with a slated pitched roof with raised skews, ridge parallel to the street. Away from the central crossroad of streets, villa-type buildings are set back from the road in more spacious grounds.

**6.10** Although building heights are fairly uniform, spaces between buildings and differences in floor heights and proportions results in a varied roofline.

**6.11** Slate is the most common roofing material, both in the form of Scots slate in diminishing courses and regular Welsh slate. Pantiles are also present but are usually reserved for ancillary buildings. On rare occasions, pantiles can appear on the principal roof, often detailed with an easing course of three or four courses of slate at the eaves. Low chimneystacks are also common.

## Character analysis

**Figure 6.8: Subtle variation in building heights along Market Street**



**Figure 6.9: Group of one-, two- and three-storey buildings, Main Street**



## Character analysis

**Figure 6.10: Group of two-storey houses, Bank Street**



**6.12** The earlier and more modest buildings are of rubble, or coursed rubble, construction. Slated roofs are common in earlier buildings, with chimneys often in gables. Some retain traditional sash windows.

**Figure 6.11: Two-storey traditional building with pantiled roof with easing course, Market Street**



## Character analysis

**Figure 6.12: Plate glass sash and case windows, panelled timber door, shutters, finishes and architectural detailing, Bank Street**



**6.13** Multi-paned timber sash and case windows, timber panelled doors and shopfronts survive well, sometimes partially altered, throughout the area. Dressed margins are also regularly found around window and door openings.

**Figure 6.13: Rubble boundary walls define villa gardens and enclose the road, Pumpherston Road**



**6.14** Rubble built boundary walls, often, with stone coping and simple gate piers, are also characteristic of the area. These typically define the grounds of villas, as well as steep changes in topography.

## Character analysis

Figure 6.14: Traditional details and materials



Mid Calder Conservation Area

Figure 6.15: Traditional details and materials



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## Character analysis

Figure 6.16: Traditional details and materials



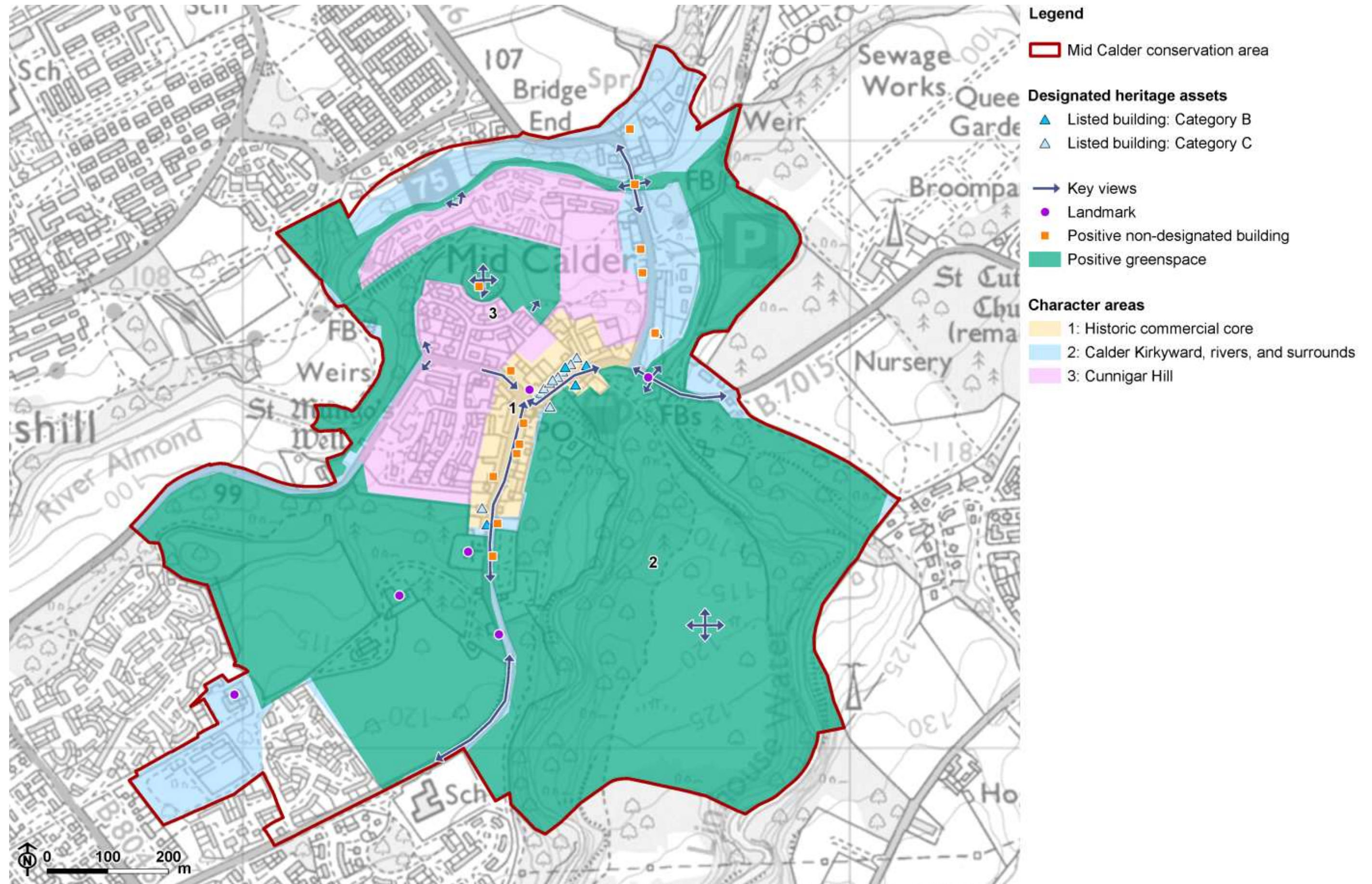
Mid Calder Conservation Area

Figure 6.17: Traditional details and materials



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Figure 6.18: Character analysis



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### Historic commercial core

#### Layout, streets and spaces

**6.15** This area retains the original linear street pattern, reflecting the historic commercial core centred around Main Street, Market Street and Bank Street. This area has the densest, and most prestigious, development in the conservation area.

**6.16** Growth has radiated from this central point along the routes of the roads. Buildings are situated on public footways and, as such, front gardens/yards are uncommon.

**6.17** Approaching the village from the west or south, the 18<sup>th</sup> century C listed Black Bull Inn dominates Market Street. As a result, it forms a key landmark within the character area.

**6.18** Mature trees planted in private gardens, e.g. Main Street (south), are an important part of the green spaces within the character area by bringing colour and seasonal variety into the areas where there are no public open spaces.

**Figure 6.19: Street pattern at Bank Street and Market Street**



## Character analysis

### Architectural style, form and detailing

**6.19** This character area has the largest cluster of historic buildings in the conservation area, this area forms the core centre of the village, characterised by 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings. These are characterised by rubble buildings, some harled, or ashlar construction in finer buildings. Date stones or carved names feature in places.

**6.20** Within the commercial streets, the majority of the premises are in hospitality use at the ground floor, with examples of public houses, restaurants, shops, civic buildings and business premises. The number and prominence of current and former public houses, including the Black Bull Inn (1747) and The Fork and Field/The Torphichen Arms (c. 1763), reflect its past as a coaching stop on the Edinburgh-Glasgow route.

**6.21** Some street signs make a positive contribution, such as those on the corner of Bank Street and Market Street.

**Figure 6.20: Ground floor commercial uses in traditional terrace, Market Street**



## Character analysis

**Figure 6.21: Fork and Field, the former Torphichen Arms, Bank Street**



**6.22** Whilst some uses function within buildings built for a specific purpose, some commercial enterprises are housed within converted historic fabric. Some buildings retain traditional Victorian shopfronts, or vestiges of them, such as fascias, pilasters and stallrisers.

**Figure 6.22: Traditional shopfronts within tenement row, Main Street**



**6.23** Main Street has the most varied architectural character and scale with examples of three-storey tenements, one- and two storey houses in a variety of styles and finishes

**6.24** The row of modern circa 1970s residential terraced buildings on the west side of Main Street detracts from the appearance of the street. Despite this, Main Street retains much character.

## Character analysis

**Figure 6.23:** Two-storey villa with pantiled outbuildings and high rubble boundary walls enclosing garden, Main Street



**6.25** Larger villas in generous gardens are most commonly found on edges of the character area, towards Calder Kirk and Almondell and Calder Wood Country Park.

### Calder Kirkyard, rivers and surrounds

#### Layout, streets and spaces

**6.26** This character area forms a ring around the historic commercial core of Mid Calder and Cunnigar Hill. It is characterised by open green spaces with the Kirkyard, grounds of Calder House, and the woodland of Almondell and Calder Wood contrasting with the dense, compact street frontages elsewhere.

**6.27** In the west of this character area, Calder House remains a focal point in the area's landscape, with its estate grounds providing a green buffer, now largely part of the Country Park, rather than a private estate.

**6.28** An impressive stone gate signals the A listed Calder House beyond. The Lodge House features a piended roof. This would have formed one of the four original entrances to the estate. The adjacent vehicular entrance is a later addition. The other entrance was via Bank Street and the much grander lodge there.

Figure 6.24: Kirk of Calder and the kirkyard



## Character analysis

**Figure 6.25: Harled villa with traditional outbuilding and boundary wall, Pumpherston Road**



**6.29** Buildings in this part of the conservation area largely relate to 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century development forming a semi-rural suburb beyond the town core.

**Figure 6.26: East Bridge and the River Calder**



**6.30** To the east of the character area are the key river crossings of North Bridge across the River Almond and East Bridge across Linhouse Water. These were influential to the development of Mid Calder.

## Character analysis

### Architectural style, form and detailing

**6.31** There is a wide variety of building styles reflecting the variety of uses; residential, religious, agricultural. However, buildings are often set in extensive plots creating interest in the wider landscape. Also providing visual variation is the time depth represented by buildings here, with traditional Scottish architecture dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries present.

**6.32** Calder House, the centre of the Calder Estate, is unique. It is a significant 16<sup>th</sup> century mansion, featuring thick rubble walls, an L-plan structure, and 19<sup>th</sup> century additions such as a circular Doric-porched entrance. Many of its estate buildings survive and have been converted to dwellings.

**6.33** Stone walls form the boundary of the Calder Estate and along Main Street where they can be seen in various states of preservation.

**Figure 6.27: The converted former Calder Steading**



**Figure 6.28: Calder Estate boundary walls, Main Street**



### Cunnigar Hill

#### Layout, streets and spaces

**6.34** Cunnigar Hill is the highest point in the CA, encompassing prominent Cunnigar Hill and associated park and playing field. The park is an enduring focus of respite and recreational activity set back from the main streets.

**6.35** The change in character as you move away from the bustling street frontages of the historic core of Mid Calder is pronounced. The traffic and busy activity of the street gives way to green, softer environs, providing a visual and audible contrast.

**6.36** Housing is located to the north in a linear fashion along the bank of the Almond towards the site of the former Wallace Mill. In addition, groups of dwellings are also located along Combfoot Cottages and Avenue Park.

**Figure 6.29: View north over Gala Park from footpath at School Lane**



**Figure 6.30: View to Cunnigar Hill from Wallace Gardens**



## Character analysis

### Architectural style, form and detailing

**6.37** This character area is defined by considerable residential development, dating to the interwar period and late 20<sup>th</sup>/early 21<sup>st</sup> century. These buildings are detached, semi-detached and terraced dwellings, which are mostly two storeys with front and rear gardens. Low level blocks of flats and bungalows are also present.

**6.38** The dwellings along Wallace Mill Gardens are unique in Mid Calder, being constructed large of largely red brick with some featuring stone details.

**6.39** Properties in corner of Avenue Park show some details which echo the architectural heritage of Mid Calder. This includes their stone walls as well as the stone cladding detail to chimneys or window/door surrounds.

**6.40** These modern housing developments do not have special architectural or historic merit, but their modest and cohesive scale and contained extent preserve the character of the wider conservation area.

**Figure 6.31: River Almond with modern housing flanking its course**



# Chapter 7

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

### Strengths

- Rich variety of buildings.
- 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 key historical events and developments in Mid Calder, and wider into West Lothian, its architectural tastes and fashions.
- Buildings within the conservation area are largely well maintained.
- Scale of street lighting appears sympathetic to the scale of the village, and there is no overpowering/domineering lighting that would impact the conservation area.

### Weaknesses

- Loss of historic fabric such as shopfront features. While some shops have well placed and suitably sized signage, others have not retained their original shop front features. Equally, some shops have retained original features such as cornice and corbel bracket, but have lost other elements such as timber window frames and doors
- Some of the historic buildings in the town are in a state of deterioration:
  - Calder House - The wall immediately south of the gate has failed in two places and is potentially hazardous.
  - Calder House Ice House, NT 0722 6736 was identified on the Buildings at Risk Register as High Risk and in Very Poor condition – last inspection 16/03/2015. Current state not known.

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

- Lack of off street parking on Main Street/Market Street
- The line of cars parked on both sides of Main Street has a negative impact on the appearance of the CA.
- Unsympathetic signage and treatment of shop fronts
- Lack of attention to detail in street furniture, markings and road sign
- Substantial areas of more modern development.
- Terraced houses along west side Market Street – do not have the historic/aesthetic interest of other parts of the conservation area.

**Figure 7.1: Collapsed section of Calder Estate wall, Main Street**



**Figure 7.2: Dominant parking and uncoordinated public realm, Market Street**



### Opportunities

- Improved pedestrian and cycling routes
- Appropriateness of street furniture and signage e.g. should reflect the character of the area, be practical, well maintained, define the area.
- Engagement with heritage, interpretation

### Threats

- Increased traffic.
- Development in the green corridor between Mid and East Calder (see Figure 3.1) would remove the separation between the two settlements.
- New development in the conservation area or its vicinity that harms its significance, character or appearance.

# Chapter 8

## Management recommendations

### Boundary

#### Inclusions

**8.1** The current boundary is considered to satisfactorily include all elements contributing to Mid Calder's special architectural and historic character. No additional areas are proposed for inclusion within the boundary.

#### Exclusions

**8.2** Some areas of modern residential development are not considered to contribute to the special character or appearance of Mid Calder and their inclusion brings no benefit in terms of the ability to manage change to the area.

#### 8.3 Recommended areas for exclusion:

1. Modern residential development along Sommers Park, Tennent Park and Kennedie Park
2. Rationalise boundary north of Wallace Mill Gardens so it follows the riverbank and does not include the rear gardens of Cunnigar Hill View.
3. Rationalise boundary at junction of Pumpherston Road and Millbrae.

### Article 4 Direction

**8.4** Incremental change to the appearance of dwellinghouses and flats is one of the main potential threats to the special character and appearance of Mid Calder 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

## Management recommendations

works may also have potential to affect the special character of the conservation area.

**8.5** 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.

**8.6** An Article 4 direction was first introduced in 1978 for Mid Calder 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.

**8.7** 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.

**8.8** 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.

**8.9** The current condition of the conservation area suggests that, in general, traditional materials and built character are being maintained. Inappropriate alterations have taken place, such as some replacement of traditional windows and doors with uPVC or aluminium, but these instances may be of substantial age, or the result of multiple phases of replacement, and outwith the scope of enforcement action.

**8.10** Overall, the requirements of the current GPDO appear sufficient and proportionate to manage change to dwellinghouses which may incrementally cause harm to character and appearance. It is as yet unclear what the effect of Class 7A (windows) will be in relation to preservation of character. The coverage of non-domestic classes of development also remains appropriate.

**8.11** 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

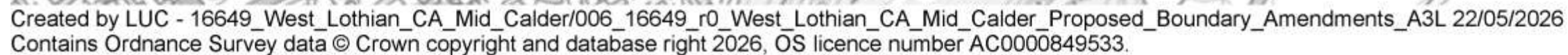
## Management recommendations

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 Mid Calder.
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 use of the prior approval system for window alteration or replacement under Class 7A.

4.



## 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>Midcalder Village Mid Calder Parish Kirk (St. John's Church)</b> Main Street<br>Category A<br>Listed Building - LB14144<br>Landmark |  |
| <b>Calder House</b><br>Main Street<br>Category A<br>Listed Building - LB14153<br>Landmark                                              |                                                                                      |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                                                                  | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Gateway, Calder Estate, West Calder Road</b><br/> c.160m south-east of Calder House<br/> Category A<br/> Listed Building - LB14155<br/> Landmark</p> |   |
| <p><b>Brewery House, 70 Main Street</b><br/> Category B<br/> Listed Building - LB14145<br/> Landmark</p>                                                   |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                                                         | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Torphichen Arms Hotel, Bank Street</b><br/> 36 Bank Street<br/> Category B<br/> Listed Building - LB14150</p>                               |   |
| <p><b>East Bridge, Linhouse Water, East Calder Road</b><br/> Main Street (B7015)<br/> Category B<br/> Listed Building - LB14151<br/> Landmark</p> |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                                                                                                                                    | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Calder Steading</b><br/>                     1 - 11 South Lodge Avenue<br/>                     Category B<br/>                     Listed Building - LB14154</p>                                                      |   |
| <p><b>House, Pumpherston Road</b><br/>                     Calderbank House, 2 Pumpherston Road<br/>                     Category B<br/>                     Listed Building - LB19671<br/>                     Landmark</p> |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                                                    | Photograph (where available)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Black Bull Inn 6-4A-4 Market Street</b><br/>           Category C<br/>           Listed Building - LB14136<br/>           Landmark</p> |  <p>A photograph of the Black Bull Inn, a two-story stone building with a dark roof and multiple chimneys. The building has several windows and a central entrance. It is situated on a street with parked cars in front.</p> |
| <p><b>2 Market Street</b><br/>           Category C<br/>           Listed Building - LB14137</p>                                             |  <p>A photograph of a two-story stone building at 2 Market Street. The building features a dark roof, multiple chimneys, and several windows. It is located on a street corner with a white car parked nearby.</p>           |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                    | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Oak Cafe 11 Bank Street</b><br/> Category C<br/> Listed Building - LB14138</p>         |   |
| <p><b>15 (Formerly 13-15) Bank Street</b><br/> Category C<br/> Listed Building - LB14139</p> |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                   | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Clydesdale Bank 17 Bank Street</b><br/> Category C<br/> Listed Building - LB14140</p> |   |
| <p><b>23-25 Bank Street</b><br/> Category C<br/> Listed Building - LB14141</p>              |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                        | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>29 Bank Street</b><br>Category B<br>Listed Building - LB14147 |   |
| <b>35 Bank Street</b><br>Category C<br>Listed Building - LB14148 |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                           | Photograph (where available)                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>37-39 Bank Street</b><br/> Category C<br/> Listed Building - LB14142</p>      |  |
| <p><b>41, 43, 47 Bank Street</b><br/> Category B<br/> Listed Building - LB14149</p> |                                                                                     |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address | Photograph (where available)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                           |  The table contains two photographs of a white building with a sign that reads "just 'a' head". The top photograph shows the building from a side angle, with a red car parked in front. The bottom photograph shows the building from a front angle, with a red car parked in front. The building has a white facade, a dark roof, and a sign that reads "just 'a' head". |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                                                                 | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>68 Main Street</b><br/> Category C<br/> Listed Building - LB14146</p>                                                                               |   |
| <p><b>Gate-Lodge And Gate-Way, Calder Estate, Bank Street</b><br/> c.60m north-west of Greenbank House<br/> Category C<br/> Listed Building - LB14152</p> |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                 | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>19-21-21A Bank Street</b><br/> Category C<br/> Listed Building - LB19670</p>                        |   |
| <p><b>Cunnigar Hill and park</b><br/> Positive non-designated feature - WoSAS ID: 17948<br/> Landmark</p> |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>13 Main Street</b><br/>Positive non-designated feature - N/A</p>   |   |
| <p><b>18 Market Street</b><br/>Positive non-designated feature - N/A</p> |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                               | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>29 Main Street</b><br/>Positive non-designated feature - N/A</p>                  |   |
| <p><b>58 Pumpherston Road</b><br/>Positive non-designated feature – WoSAS ID: 78555</p> |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                        | Photograph (where available)                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>71 Main Street</b><br>Positive non-designated feature - N/A                   |  A photograph of a two-story stone building with a green door and a red car parked in front. The building has a gabled roof and a small dormer window. |
| <b>Almond Bank, 31 Pumpherston Road</b><br>Positive non-designated feature - N/A |  A photograph of a two-story stone building with a central entrance and a hedge in front. The building has a gabled roof and several windows.         |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                               | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Bridge, North of Mid Calder</b><br/> Pumpherstons Road<br/> Positive non-designated feature – WoSAS ID: 18501</p> |   |
| <p><b>Bridgend, 25 Pumpherstons Road</b><br/> Positive non-designated feature - N/A</p>                                 |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                                           | Photograph (where available)                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Entrance to Mid Calder cemetery</b><br/>Main Street<br/>Positive non-designated feature – WoSAS ID: 94086</p> |   |
| <p><b>Glenalmond Hall</b><br/>Main Street<br/>Positive non-designated feature - N/A</p>                             |  |

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

| Name / asset type and reference / address                                                  | Photograph (where available)                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>The Mid Calder Inn</b><br/>Main Street<br/>Positive non-designated feature - N/A</p> |  |

## 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                |
|-----------------|------------------------|
| Exclude         | Cunnigar Hill View, 11 |
| Exclude         | Cunnigar Hill View, 12 |
| Exclude         | Cunnigar Hill View, 13 |
| Exclude         | Cunnigar Hill View, 14 |
| Exclude         | Cunnigar Hill View, 15 |
| Exclude         | Cunnigar Hill View, 16 |
| Exclude         | Cunnigar Hill View, 17 |
| Exclude         | Cunnigar Hill View, 9  |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 1       |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 10      |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 11      |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 12      |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 13      |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 14      |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 15      |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 16      |

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

| Proposed change | Address                         |
|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 17               |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 18               |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 19               |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 2                |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 3                |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 4                |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 5                |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 6                |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 7                |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 8                |
| Exclude         | Kennedie Park, 9                |
| Exclude         | Millbrae, 1                     |
| Exclude         | South Lodge Avenue, 20          |
| Exclude         | South Lodge, South Lodge Avenue |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 1                 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 10                |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 11                |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 12                |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 13                |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 14                |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 15                |

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

| Proposed change | Address          |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 16 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 17 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 18 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 19 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 2  |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 20 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 21 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 22 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 23 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 24 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 25 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 26 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 27 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 28 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 29 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 3  |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 30 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 31 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 32 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 33 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 34 |

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

| Proposed change | Address          |
|-----------------|------------------|
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 35 |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 4  |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 5  |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 6  |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 7  |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 8  |
| Exclude         | Tennent Park, 9  |

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