

Uphall Conservation Area Appraisal

West Lothian Council

Draft report

Prepared by LUC

August 2026

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1	Draft for public consultation	PJ, VA, JS, NN	RH	RH	14.08.2026



Land Use Consultants Limited

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Chapter 1

Executive summary

Summary of special architectural and historic interest

1.1 The context and historical development of Uphall 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 Uphall:

- Core building types - single-storey cottages and two-storey 19th century houses in stone with slate roofs, raised skews, simple margins and rectangular plans.
- Outbuildings and hierarchy - surviving steading ranges and outbuildings in brick, rubble or harling with pantile or slate roofs, reinforcing historic agricultural origins.
- Traditional details - multi-paned timber sash windows, timber panelled doors and surviving shopfronts with traditional stallrisers and fascias.

Summary of management recommendations

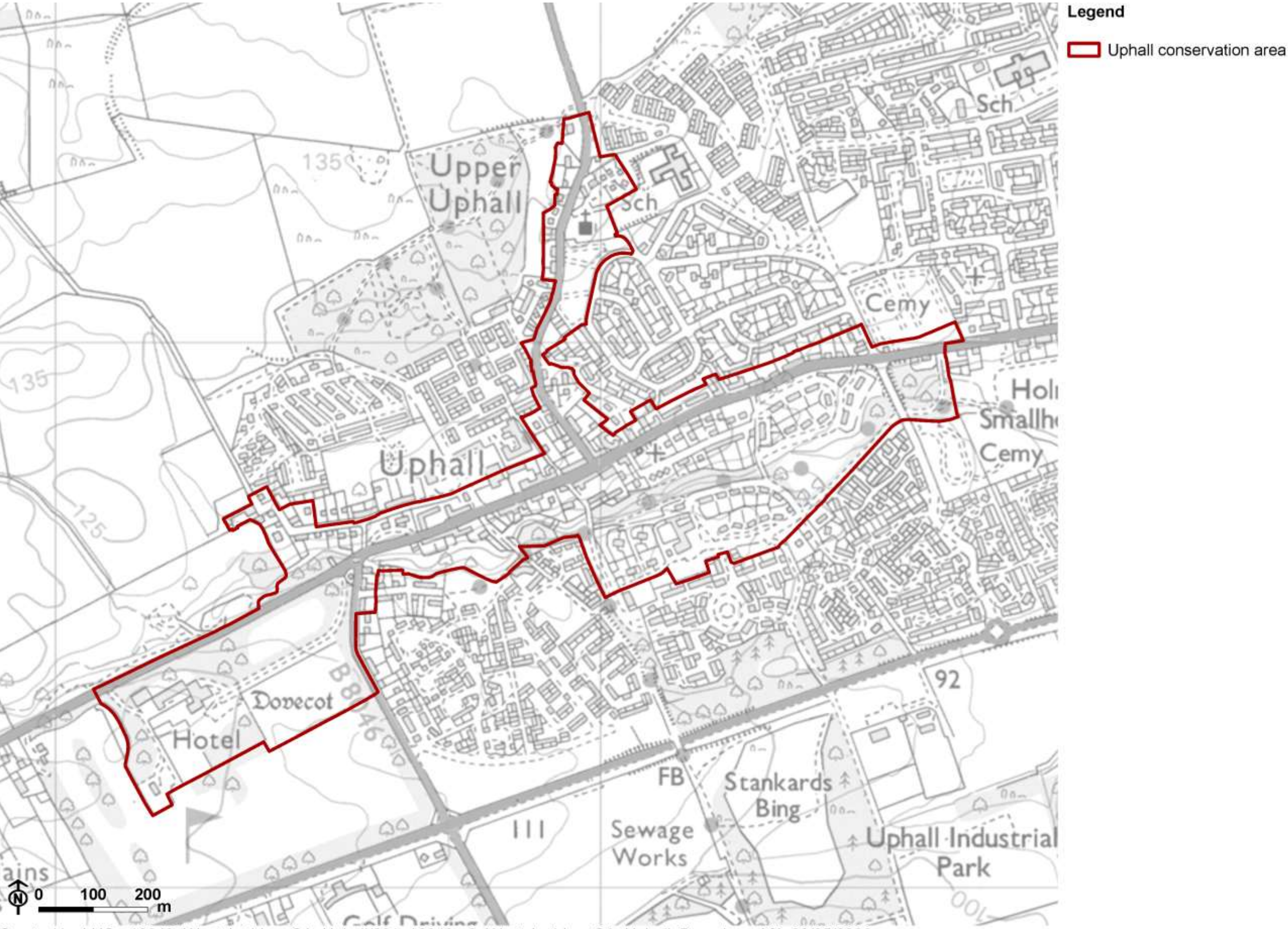
1.2 The appraisal has identified the following issues to effectively manage the preservation or enhancement of the conservation area:

- 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:
 - Erosion of historic fabric - continued loss of traditional features through incremental change

Executive summary

- Condition issues - deterioration of older buildings, boundary walls and rainwater goods.
- Incongruous public realm changes - surfacing, signage or lighting that conflict with historic character.

Figure 1.1: Uphall Boundary



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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.

Introduction

- **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.

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."

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

Introduction

appraisal, and by carrying out the actions identified in the management plan.

Uphall Conservation Area background

2.19 1976: Uphall Conservation Area officially designated, centred on the historic core of West Main Street, East Main Street, and Ecclesmachan 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 Uphall that made it suitable for successful occupation.

Location

3.2 Uphall stretches along an east-west aligned Main Street roughly following the Brox Burn. The town of Broxburn is located to its immediate east, Dechmont approximately 1km to its west and Livingston approximately 1.7km to its south-west. The conservation area, representing the historic core of Broxburn, is flanked on all sides by modern development, with the settlement as a whole located within an arable landscape.

Geology, topography and landscape setting

3.3 The underlying geology of the conservation area is almost entirely characterised by lacustrine Hopetoun Member sedimentary rocks with an area of olivine analcime microgabbro running north-east to south-west through the west of the conservation area [\[See reference 2\]](#). This bedrock geology, which formed during the Carboniferous period, belongs to the West Lothian Oil-Shale formation [\[See reference 3\]](#).

3.4 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, the Dunnet and Binny sandstones which belong to the Hopetoun Member bedrock have historically been a popular building material, characterising the appearance of much of the historic buildings in the region [\[See reference 4\]](#).

3.5 This is primarily overlain by poorly sorted glacial till, which was created, and deposited, by melt water during the retreat of the glaciers, while areas along the Brox Burn

Assessing the special interest

feature alluvial clays, silts, sands and gravels [See reference 5]. Although glacial deposits often result in poor agricultural capability, the land around Uphall is capable of producing average to high yields of arable crops [See reference 6].

3.6 The landscape around Uphall is generally flat with occasional gentle undulations. The most dramatic landscape feature in close proximity to the conservation area is the Law hill to its north-west. The conservation area is largely surrounded by Uphall's 20th century and later housing expansions with the exception of its south-east which is surrounded by the Uphall golf course. Uphall largely coalesces with the 20th century expansion of Broxburn to the east. The northward expansion of Livingston new town is constrained by the M8 and Edinburgh-Glasgow railway line, leaving a narrow, largely agricultural strip separating the built-up areas of Livingston and Uphall-Broxburn.

Figure 3.1: Context



Chapter 4

History and development

4.1 This section considers how Uphall 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 Uphall includes the late Bronze Age to early Iron Age settlement of Carledub, a scheduled monument located to the north-east of the conservation area.

4.3 A Roman coin recovered from Uphall Golf Course which dates to AD 238 – AD 244 also suggests a Roman influence in the area [\[See reference 7\]](#). 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 Empire [\[See reference 8\]](#). 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 7th century, the Lothians would be split between the Kingdoms

of Strathclyde/Cumbria [\[See reference 9\]](#) and that of Bernicia [\[See reference 10\]](#) [\[See reference 11\]](#). It was not until the 10th to 11th centuries that the Lothians would be annexed by the Kingdom of Alba/Scotland [\[See reference 12\]](#).

4.4 Medieval settlements in Scotland were often re-used [\[See reference 13\]](#) 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 Uphall appears to have originally been called 'Strathbrock' meaning 'Valley of Badgers' [\[See reference 14\]](#). The settlement developed around two 12th century features – the Kirk of Uphall and Strathbrock Castle. The castle, built on a knowe or motte, may have been the property of the Flemish nobleman Freskyn, who was granted the lands of modern Uphall by King David [\[See reference 15\]](#). Unlike the kirk, the castle is no longer extant but was located between 39 West Main Street and the Brox Burn. The castle later became the property of the Douglas

History and development

family, who were a source of political instability in Scotland throughout the 15th century.

The post-medieval period – early development of modern Uphall

4.6 The local economy remained predominantly agricultural – the Houston Mill on the south bank of the Brox Burn is recorded in later mapping and was supposedly commissioned by the 1st Earl of Argyle. Strathbrock Castle was unusual in that it was not destroyed following the conflict between James II and the Black Douglases. It is recorded in the ownership of J Dingwall, the rector of Kirk of Uphall, in 1524. It is unclear when Uphall was renamed from Strathbrock but in Blaeu's mid-17th century mapping, the change had evidently occurred with 'Uphal' clearly situated north of the Brox Burn [\[See reference 16\]](#). Nearby related features from this period include Houston House (LB14243), constructed in the early 17th century, marked as 'Houstoun' in Blaeu's map, and the Old Manse on Ecclesmachan Road (LB14236), constructed around 1695 as a house for Dowager Lady Cardross.

4.7 The location of Uphall in the landscape would also see the settlement form an important stop for cattle droving. 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 [\[See reference 17\]](#). From here, most continued on their journey south, via Linlithgow, Ecclesmachan, and Uphall [\[See reference 18\]](#).

4.8 Later, mid-18th century military mapping shows Uphall as a collection of distinct farmsteads and hamlets which are loosely connected by agricultural land to one another, the Kirk and to Houston House. At this time, large areas of land were being enclosed to form policies – the enclosed, designed landscapes and pleasure grounds associated with high status dwellings. For example, the Old Manse (LB14236) is depicted within a large, possibly tree lined, enclosure while Middleton Hall (LB14242) in the south of the conservation area is shown within a series of such enclosed areas. However, the most substantial is that associated with Houston House (LB14243) where a series of long, treelined avenues are depicted south of the house, even extending across the Brox Burn.

The post-medieval period – 19th to early 20th century Uphall

4.9 By the mid-19th century, the character of Uphall was broadly similar to that in the 18th century, made up of a series of distinct farmsteads and country houses. However, a concentration of houses had begun to develop near the Main Street / Ecclesmachan Road [See reference 19]. This is likely a product of the substantial population increases the Parish of Uphall experienced, almost doubling between 1810 and 1841 [See reference 20]. The overall character was still strongly agricultural, demonstrated by the continued presence of a grain mill on the southern bank of the Brox Burn.

4.10 Over the course of the 19th century, the settlement expanded considerably [See reference 21]. This expansion occurred primarily along Main Street but with notable development also occurring along the Halfland Syke where a railway line now ran to serve the new Forkneuk Shale Pit. The shale industry would be vital for the economic prosperity of Uphall and much of its population growth in the late 19th century can be attributed to it. Despite these considerable changes, the grounds associated with Middleton Hall (LB14242) and the Old Manse (LB14236) remained intact during this phase of urban growth but many of the features, such as treelined avenues, are no longer

extant. Much of the Houston House estate was converted into the Uphall golf course, established 1895 [See reference 22].

4.11 By the time of World War One, Uphall had continued to grow with small expansions in its far east, north of Loaninghill Farm, and south of the Brox Burn north-east of the Houston House estate along Station Road [See reference 23]. By this time the shale industry was already in decline and the Forkneuk shale pit had fallen into disuse. However, some industry remained, with the Middleton Hall estate being converted into housing and workshops which were connected to the Halfland Syke railway line. The development included a picturesque garden suburb estate for staff of Scottish Oils, c.1924.

Post-World War Two

4.12 Following the end of the war, Uphall experienced a boom in housing developments. Lands to the south-east of the Kirk and manse would also be subject to a substantial housing development. This had the effect of merging Uphall with Broxburn. There was a decline in the agricultural economy - the Houston Mill fell into disuse prior to being converted into a bleach factory and then, after another period of abandonment, converted into a dwelling [See reference 24].

History and development

4.13 Although the position of Uphall along vital transport links, primarily the M8, allowed the workshops of the Middleton Hall Estate easy access to Edinburgh and Glasgow, this production and distribution hub would, in the late 20th to early 21st centuries be replaced with more housing developments [\[See reference 25\]](#), likely to accommodate the development of the settlement into a major commuting base for the central belt.

Historical mapping

Figure 4.1: Uphall in 1854 (Linlithgowshire 6, Surveyed: 1854-5, Published: 1856. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland)

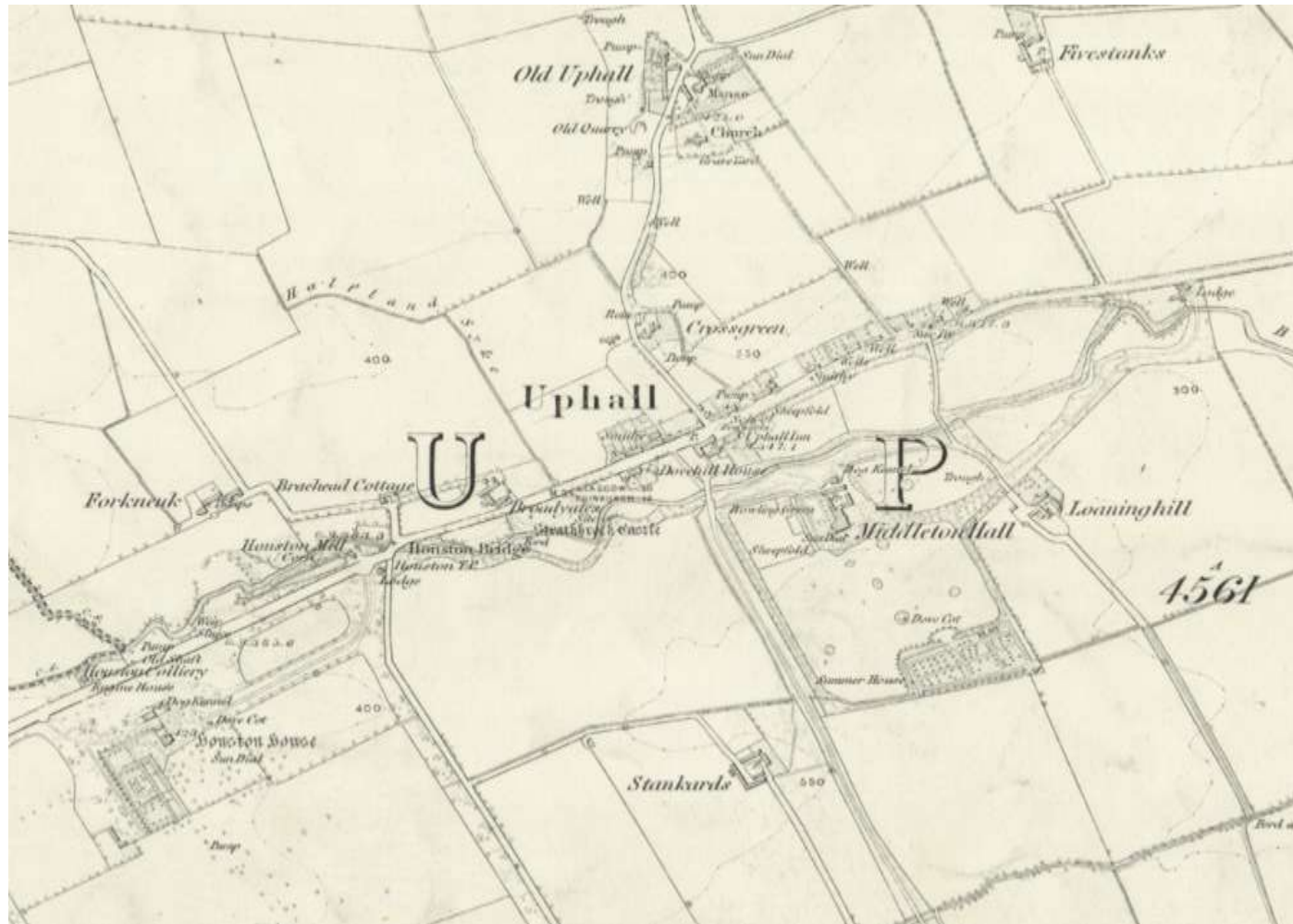


Figure 4.2: Uphall in 1955 (NT0571 - A, Surveyed: 1954, Published: 1955. Reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland



Chapter 5

Heritage assets

Designated assets

5.1 Thirteen listed buildings comprising:

- One category A;
- Three category B; and
- Nine category C

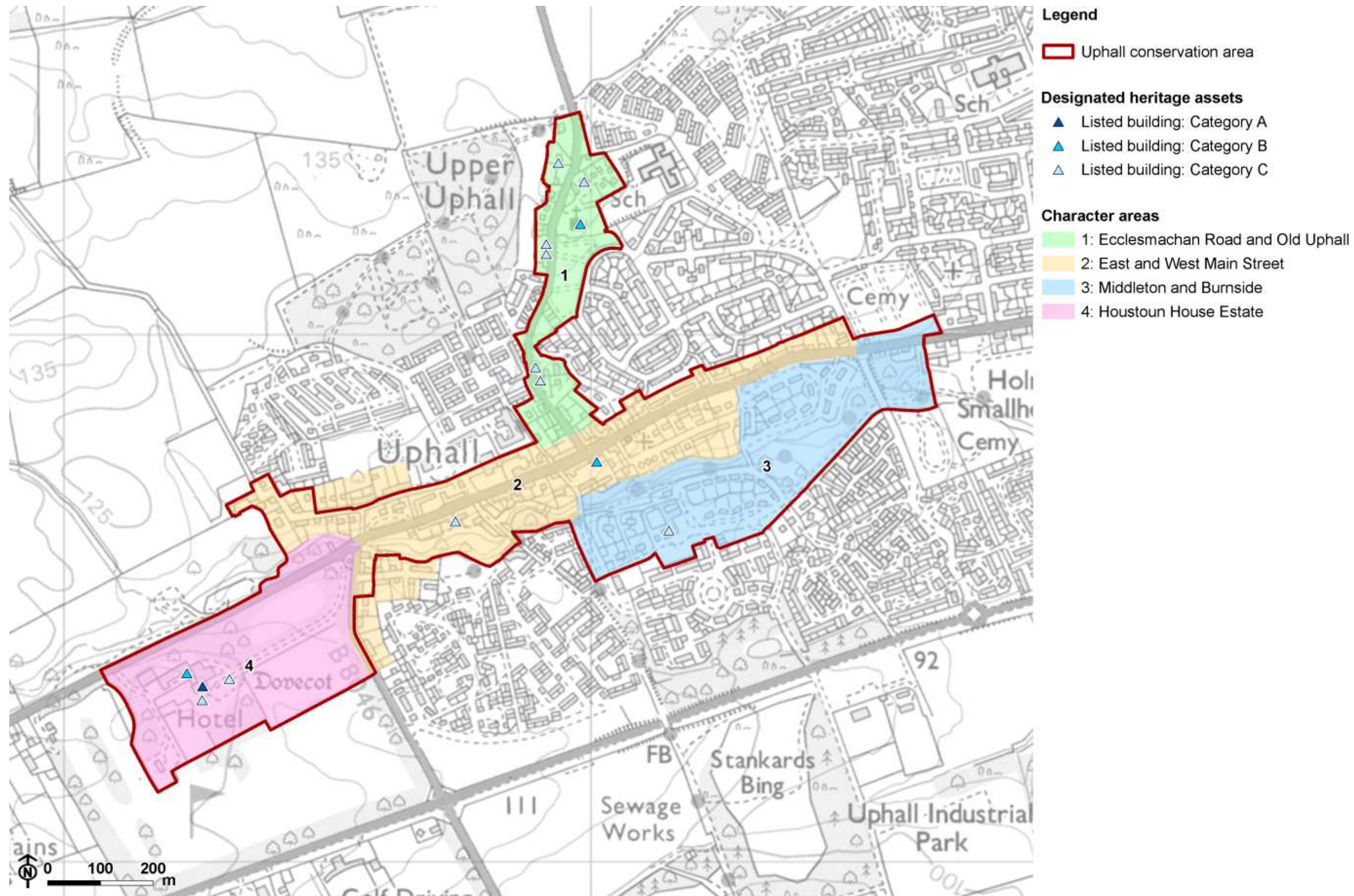
5.2 There are no other types of designated heritage assets (such as scheduled monuments, or gardens and designed landscapes) within the conservation area.

Archaeological potential

5.3 Uphall village and 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 Uphall is low owing to the extent of 20th century development. There

remains the potential for archaeological remains relating to early phases of the settlement to survive beneath the foundations of later structures, but these remains are likely to be severely truncated. However, areas which have experienced less development, such as that around the Kirk (LB14235) and the banks of Brox Burn, particularly near where the former castle was located, have a moderate potential for medieval archaeological remains. Such remains would further our understanding of Uphall'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 The following aspects of character apply to the whole conservation area. The conservation area also contains the Ecclesmachan Road and Old Uphall; east and West main Street; Middleton and Burnside; and Houstoun House, as sub-areas with a distinctive character of their own. These areas are shown in **Figure 5.1** and **Figure 6.15**, and the factors contributing to their special character is described below

6.2 Uphall takes an elongated T-shaped layout, formed where the organic Ecclesmachan Road meets the linear Main Street, rising slightly towards the west marking the prominence of the former Strathbrock Castle. The layout reflects the three key historical focus points – Old Uphall, Houstoun and Middleton.

6.3 The Brox Burn is the key unifying feature, its tree-lined banks forming the backdrop to streets and buildings, falling in and out of view as it passes behind or beside areas of varying character.

Figure 6.1: The linear Main Street is a key element of character



Character Analysis

Figure 6.2: St Nicholas burial ground, looking south over Glebe Park



Green space, trees and landscaping

6.4 The green spaces of Houstoun, Burnside and Uphall Cemetery form green bookends to the linear Main Street.

6.5 Glebe Park and St Nicholas burial ground create a green and treelined area in the north of the conservation

area. This creates a distinct sense of place from East/West Main Street.

Figure 6.3: Greenspaces and trees line the road at the east end of the conservation area



Character Analysis

Landmarks

6.6 The main landmarks within the conservation area comprise the following architecturally unique and prominent structures and artworks:

- Houston House (LB14243) and the associated Doocot (LB14226)
- Oatridge Hotel (LB14241)
- Middleton Hall (LB14242)
- Clock above 7 and 9 West Main Street.
- Uphall South Parish Church
- Uphall Kirk (LB14235)
- West Main Street shale mining mural
- Goschen Place shale mining memorial

Figure 6.4: Houstoun House from the gardens



Character Analysis

Figure 6.5: Strathbrock St Nicholas Church (Uphall Kirk)



Figure 6.6: Shale mining mural, West Main Street



Views

6.7 Views within the conservation area are generally restricted by buildings which line roads, such as those east/west along East/West Main Street.

6.8 Glimpse views of the Brox Burn and its wooded banks contribute strongly to the area's character.

Character Analysis

6.9 The slope and presence of buildings lining Ecclesmachan Road encourage views to the east, across Glebe Park and towards Uphall Kirk (LB14235).

6.10 Outward views comprise those along the A899 as it extends westward and into Broxburn to the east, south from Houstoun House across the golf course, and glimpses of the surrounding agricultural landscape in the north-east of the conservation area.

Figure 6.7: View along driveway towards Houstoun House



Figure 6.8: View over the Brox Burn, looking east from Station Road bridge



Figure 6.9: View from Ecclesmachan Road across Glebe Park towards Uphall Kirk



Character Analysis

Architecture

6.11 Single-storey cottages and two-storey houses, mainly of the 19th century, form the essential building blocks of Uphall's historic built character. These are generally of a simple rectangular plan, in stone with a slated pitched roof with raised skews, ridge parallel to the street, low chimneystacks and simple dressed margins to window and door openings.

6.12 Variations in how these building blocks are grouped, their relationship to the street and plot, and use of materials and detailing, create subtle changes in character between different parts of Uphall.

Figure 6.10: Single storey cottage - two storey to rear - along West Main Street



Figure 6.11: Two-storey terrace, Millbank Place



Figure 6.12: Two-storey terrace, Ecclesmachan Road



Character Analysis

Figure 6.13: Former steading to Uphall Kirk Manse



6.13 Groups of outbuildings associated with larger buildings often survive, usually in single-storey, linear groups or courts with brick, rubble or harled walls and pantile or slate roofs. These provide a sense of hierarchy and diminishing scale between side and rear elevations.

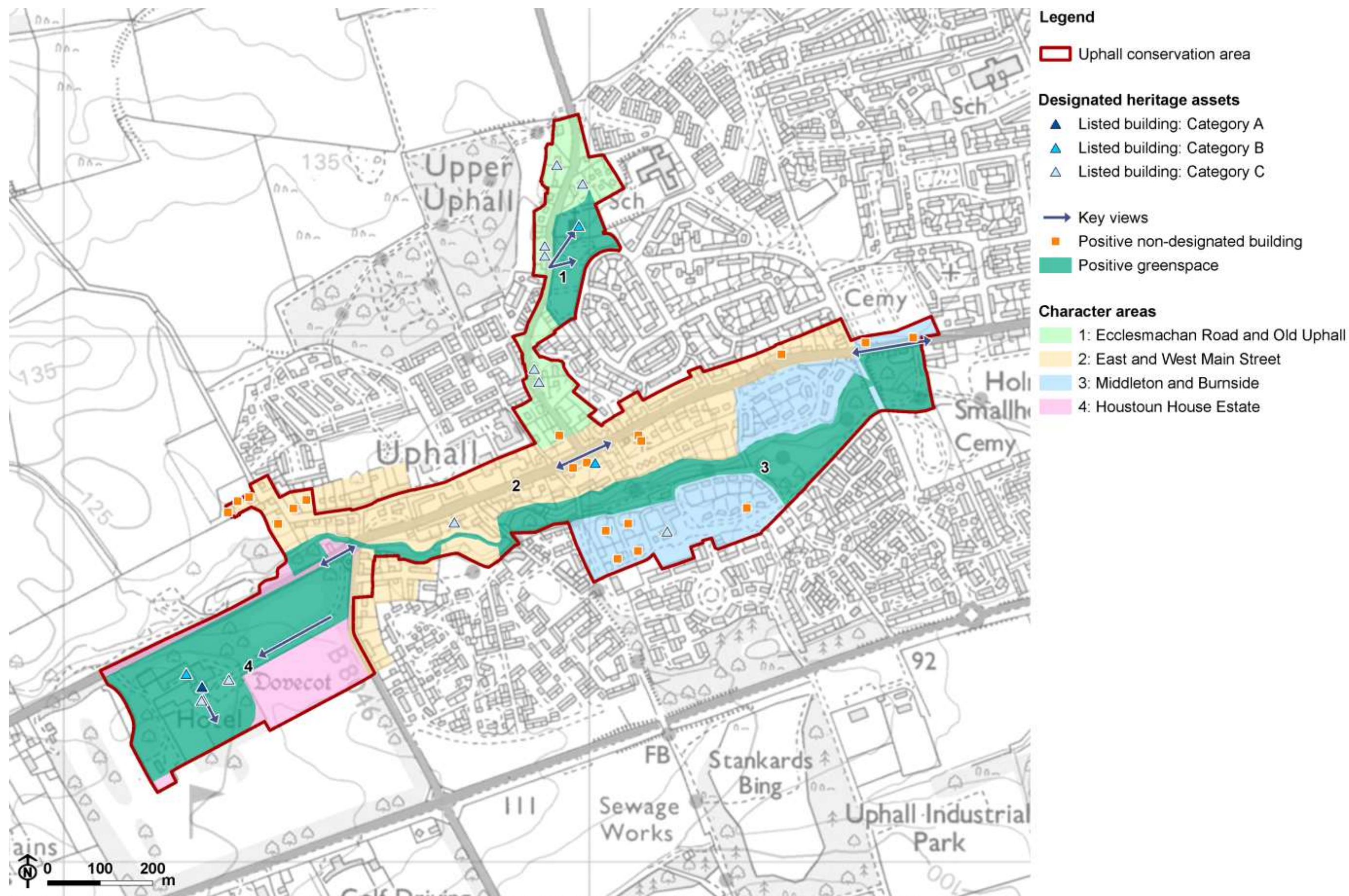
6.14 Boundary walls in rubble or brick, with stone coping and simple gate piers, vestiges of railings are also characteristic of the area.

Figure 6.14: Stone boundary wall and front garden, Forkneuk Road



6.15 Multi-paned timber sash and case windows, timber panelled doors and shopfronts survive well, sometimes partially altered, throughout the area.

Figure 6.15: Character analysis



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Ecclesmachan Road and Old Uphall

Layout, streets and spaces

6.16 Sinuous historic route, which still forms an important artery in/out of Uphall, rising uphill to Ecclesmachan, housing group at the north end still partially reflects the scale and features of the historic manse and steading group associated with St Nicholas Parish Church.

6.17 Old Uphall still has a sense of separation and contrast from the later town core on West and East Main Street. Modern housing development now partially flanks the road, but Glebe Park and generous planted verges give a spacious character, echoing this character area's rural origins.

6.18 Glebe Park and the grounds of Uphall Kirk (LB14235) in the north create one of the largest green and open spaces within the conservation area, encouraging leisure and rest.

Figure 6.16: Winding Ecclesmachan Road rising towards Uphall Kirk



Character analysis

Architectural style, form and detailing

6.19 Single-storey cottages and former steading ranges in small groups are clustered along the road and around two-storey buildings of status – Uphall Old Manse, Crossgreen Farm and old Police Station.

6.20 Simple classical detail is used sparingly around main doors and windows to denote the higher status-buildings.

6.21 These key buildings are set back, with gables parallel to the road and have principal elevations facing south. Many of the associated cottages are set back from the street behind low stone boundary walls.

6.22 Squared and snecked rubble in sandstone and dark whin are the main walling materials, with dressed sandstone margins. Most roofs are slate, while pantile marks the agricultural and service origins of some of the single-storey buildings.

Figure 6.17: Single-storey pantiled cottages, Ecclesmachan Road



Character analysis

Figure 6.18: Group of two-storey and one-storey buildings and boundary wall, Crossgreen Farm, Ecclesmachan Road



6.23 Long, continuous rubble boundary walls, particularly on the east side of the road at Crossgreen, Glebe Park, the parish church and Manse Park, are a strong unifying feature of this character area.

Figure 6.19: Traditional materials and details, Ecclesmachan Road



Character analysis

East and West Main Street

Layout, streets and spaces

6.24 Linear east-west form, relatively hard and urban. Contains the commercial focus of Uphall.

6.25 The core of this area, with the densest and most prestigious buildings, is located near the junction with Ecclesmachan Road, around the Oatridge Hotel.

Figure 6.20: Core of the conservation area around the Oatridge Hotel



Uphall Conservation Area

Figure 6.21: Commercial buildings with flats above create the commercial character of central Uphall



Figure 6.22: The gable clock at 7-9 West Main Street forms a local landmark



Character analysis

Figure 6.23: Looking east along East Main Street



6.26 The eastern section of East Main Street is formed of small groups of buildings set slightly back from the street. The road meanders slightly from its otherwise straight course, providing a softer, greener effect combined with the trees and landscaping on the south side of the road, partially within the Middleton and Burnside character area (discussed below).

6.27 These trees create a visual barrier, limiting views towards Middleton and Burnside and creating sense of distinction between the two areas.

Figure 6.24: Millbank Place, behind West Main Street



6.28 Back streets – Alexander Street, Strathbrock Place and Millbank Place – parallel to Main Street, have a narrower proportion with modest plot and building scale, generally of a single storey.

6.29 The presence of the Brox Burn contributes to West Main Street, visible as a bank of trees and glimpses between and behind houses, remaining more hidden elsewhere.

Character analysis

Figure 6.25: Large villas in generous gardens at the west end of West Main Street



6.30 The western end of this character area developed as a small villa suburb, away from the busy core of Main Street. This character is most evident along Forkneuk Road where development is less dense. Here, buildings have large footprints and are located within spacious garden plots.

Architectural style, form and detailing

6.31 As Uphall had no municipal or administrative function, the more prestigious buildings marking the core are hotels and churches – the Oatridge Hotel and Uphall South

Church, as well as a series of villas – 29, 33, 35 and 54 West Main Street.

6.32 These are notable for their slightly more refined detailing, including smooth ashlar finishes or dressings, classical detailing to quoins, doorcases, occasional wallhead pediments and date stones.

6.33 The mixture of one- and two-storey buildings creates variation but overall is fairly cohesive, so no particular building notably stands out.

Figure 6.26: Architectural refinement of key buildings in the core of the conservation area



Character analysis

Figure 6.27: Ashlar stonework and classical detailing of a villa converted to retail use



Figure 6.28: Traditional shopfronts



6.34 In this central area, buildings tend to line the rear of the footway in short terraces or groups of one-and two-storey buildings. These often accommodate historic shopfronts, or vestiges of them, on their ground floors. These are typically characterised by a traditional format of stallriser, plate-glass windows and fascia for signage, and often feature recessed entrances with timber panelled doors.

Figure 6.29: Mixture of one- and two-storey buildings creates gentle variation



6.35 Single storey buildings which pre-date the 1950's are often painted in the west of this character area. The most common colours are shades of white, grey, cream or pastel

Character analysis

shades of red. Darker colours, usually black, are used for quoins and margins.

Figure 6.30: Villa in Forkneuk Road with picturesque roofline and details



6.36 Villas at the west end are in a more picturesque style, with variations of silhouette and roofline from multiple gables, dormers and parapets, prominent chimneys, bay windows and decorative timber truss and eaves details.

Figure 6.31: Forkneuk Steading



6.37 Conversion of the Forkneuk steading has turned this coherent agricultural complex into a series of dwellings. Their rubble construction and pantile roofing is distinct and demonstrates the expansion of Uphall into the surrounding agricultural landscape.

Character analysis

Figure 6.32: Traditional materials and details in Ross's Walk



Figure 6.33: Traditional materials and details in Forkneuk Road



Character analysis

Figure 6.34: Mid-20th century housing in East Main Street echoes traditional scale and character



6.38 The east end features a mix of villa dwellings, terraced houses and mid-20th century housing. Pre-1950s buildings feature various forms of masonry, including square uncoursed rubble masonry, rough tooled ashlar, and fine tooled ashlar. Later buildings tend to be roughcast or pebble dashed. This creates a distinct contrast between older and newer buildings within the conservation area.

Figure 6.35: School Place, set within landscaped grounds



6.39 The mid-20th century School Place development is of architectural interest although it introduced a contrasting character from the rest of the conservation area.

6.40 Some 20th century developments, such as individual modern bungalows, may not contribute to the conservation area in their own right, but are located within a historic boundary wall, often with green space and trees which contribute to the understanding of Uphall's historic development.

Character analysis

Middleton and Burnside

Layout, streets and spaces

6.41 This area comprises comparatively low-density 20th century domestic buildings situated around Middleton Hall Care Home (LB14242) to the south of the Brox Burn.

6.42 Green, tree-lined and winding roads characterise this suburban area comprising semi-detached and half-houses with small groups of terraced buildings. Extensive, sometimes densely vegetated, public/ shared open space combined with front gardens create a leafy and uniquely green area.

6.43 While elsewhere in Uphall the Brox Burn is an incidental part of the character of each area, here it is deliberately incorporated into the picturesque layout along with associated areas of open space and woodland.

Figure 6.36: The Brox Burn is a key feature of this character area



Character analysis

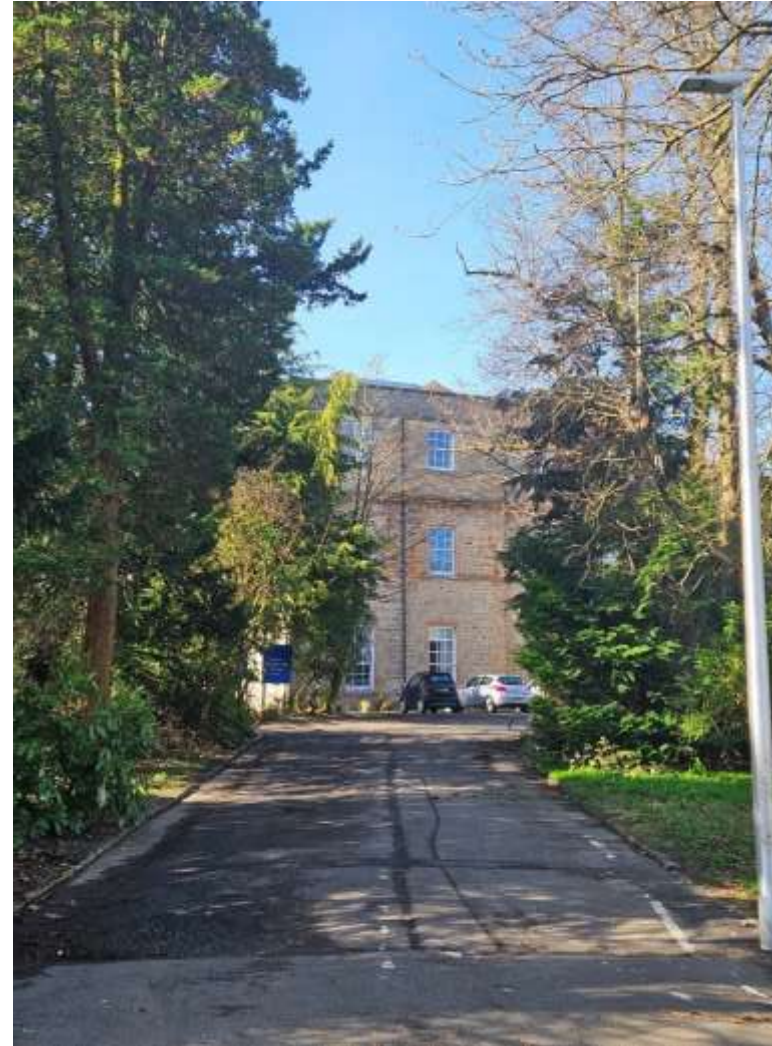
Figure 6.37: Pairs and groups of buildings set in generous gardens with mature trees



Figure 6.38: Brox Burn banks, woodland and footpaths form a picturesque, wooded setting to the houses



Figure 6.39: This area developed around Middleton Hall



Character analysis

Architectural style, form and detailing

6.44 20th century dwellings line the roads, with shared-space front gardens and large, private rear gardens.

6.45 Tall hedges and trees create a sense of privacy and enclosure, while the wooded Brox Burn separates the character area from Main Street. This creates the feeling of a distinct area of settlement within Uphall.

6.46 Buildings are often semi-detached or multi-dwelling groups, with Edwardian details. These feature a consistent palette of roughcast and slate roofing. A variety of gables, dormers, catslide roofs and chimneys provide a varied roofline.

6.47 Red brick is used as a base course or to define the ground floor. Decorative stone quoins often define doorways and windows. Both the brick and quoins are typically restricted to street facing elevations with grey roughcasting elsewhere.

6.48 Middleton Hall (LB14242) is notable in the conservation area due to being three stories tall and flat roofed. It retains its single storey service range with slate roofs, rubble construction and partial harling. Although unique in this character area, it is the last remnants of the

former historic parkland which has been lost to housing developments.

Figure 6.40: Semi-detached pair, Middleton Avenue



Figure 6.41: Main-door flats and half-houses, Burnside Road



Character analysis

Figure 6.42: Group of houses looking out over Brox Burn, Middleton Road



Figure 6.43: Multi-dwelling block in generous gardens, Westhall Gardens



Houstoun House Estate

Layout, streets and spaces

6.49 Oasis of parkland with clipped, landscaped character within which stands a cohesive group of estate architecture. This is the largest green space within the conservation area.

6.50 The woodland which surrounds the Houstoun House Estate, and golf course which lies beyond to its south, creates a distinct sense of seclusion from the rest of Uphall.

6.51 Long, curved, treelined drive provides a sense of seclusion with the curved route intentionally revealing the 17th century Houstoun House (LB14243).

6.52 Buildings are, except for Houstoun House Lodge, focused in the far west of this character area and are closely grouped around courtyards. This layout reflects the post-medieval parkland and the former service or agricultural function of its buildings.

Character analysis

Figure 6.44: Houstoun House



Figure 6.45: Entrance gates and boundary planting to Houstoun House, off A899



Figure 6.46: View out of the hotel grounds over Uphall Golf Course



Character analysis

Architectural style, form and detailing

6.53 This character area comprises buildings from the 17th to 18th century and are related to the operation of the Houston House Estate. These, as well as later buildings relating to the modern use of Houston House hotel and spa, surround the 17th century, category A listed, Houston House (LB14243).

6.54 Later buildings echo the earlier use of coursed rubble, partial harling, sandstone quoins, stepped gables and slate roofs of the historic buildings to create a cohesive appearance.

6.55 A long, rubble built, stone wall defines the boundary of the former Houston House Estate along its north. In addition, walls are a common feature within the character area, with internal stone walls defining former court yards with flag stone floors.

Figure 6.47: Historic and modern buildings in a traditional style create a cohesive ensemble



Figure 6.48: Internal courtyard and outbuilding range



Character analysis

Figure 6.49: Modern buildings in traditional style form a rear courtyard



Chapter 7

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Strengths

- Surviving historic features and details to buildings and the use of traditional materials.
- Survival of traditional shopfronts, at least in partial form, which contribute positively.
- Retains much of its original layout.
- The quality of the architecture and the story it tells us about the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods in West Lothian, their architectural tastes and fashions.
- Buildings within the conservation area are largely well maintained, with little vacancy or serious disrepair.

Figure 7.1: Good examples of shopfronts



Weaknesses

- High wooden fences or metal fencing built to protect the privacy of the properties, but detract from historic character.
- New residential and commercial development inside the area that does not harmonise with the character of the conservation area.
- Some replacement of windows and doors with non-traditional designs and materials including use of white uPVC.
- Large dormer or roof extensions, substantially expanding and detracting from the scale and character of the modest original building.
- Poorly positioned, or over prominent, security alarms, and visible surface cables.
- Large car show rooms and associated forecourts function as substantial contrasts in the overall appearance of the conservation area, break up the roofline, have introduced large flags and signage, and create uncharacteristic wide-open spaces.
- Public spaces in accidental/ leftover spaces could receive better attention and landscape design.
- Lack of street furniture, or inappropriate location especially on West/East Main Street.
- Extensive on-street parking often blocks views of buildings. This also creates a sense of enclosure in places that there otherwise would not have been owing to the density of vehicles.
- Pedestrian paths around the Middleton area are not clearly signposted.

Management recommendations

Figure 7.2: Expanses of forecourt and pavement with poorly coordinated street furniture, bins etc



- 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.
- Awareness-raising and encouragement to apply existing non-statutory planning and design guidance for the historic environment, public realm, shopfronts and advertisements.
- Allocated off street space for waste bins for properties along East Main Street that currently position bins on along the street.
- Integration of improved planting and landscaping to public open spaces and commercial frontages.

Opportunities

- Improvement of the public realm: highway surfaces, pedestrian priority, public art, interpretation board(s), street furniture, lighting, public footpath signage (particularly around Middleton) and the repair and restoration of surviving historic features.

Management recommendations

Figure 7.3: Opportunity to enhance public open space, corner of Main Street and Ecclesmachan Road



Threats

- Further loss of historic features and details to historic buildings through 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.

Chapter 8

Management recommendations

Boundary

Inclusions

8.1 Millbank Place features a coherent series of well-preserved one-and two-storey Edwardian dwellings. These make a substantial contribution to the understanding of Uphall's history and development and, as such, should be included in the conservation area.

8.2 Station Road should be extended up to, and including, 31 Station Road. These buildings represent the Edwardian expansion of Uphall along Station Road and is a coherent expression of contemporary architectural trends. Combined with the properties on Millbank Place, these make a substantial contribution to the understanding of Uphall's history and development.

8.3 The conservation area extends up to Strathbrock Place and Forkneuk Road and, in doing so, incorporates a number of post-1950 buildings which do not make a substantial contribution to the historic character of Uphall.

By extending the conservation area to include buildings along the north of these roads, a number of Victorian and Edwardian buildings would be included in the conservation area. These buildings make a substantial contribution to the understanding of contemporary architectural trends as well as Uphall's history and development.

Exclusions

8.4 No exclusions have been identified as necessary as a result of this appraisal.

Article 4 Direction

8.5 Incremental change to the appearance of dwellinghouses and flats is one of the main potential threats to the special character and appearance of Uphall

Management recommendations

Conservation Area. Gradual, small-scale change such as replacement of traditional roofing materials, sash and case 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.

8.6 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.

8.7 An Article 4 direction was first introduced in 1978 for Uphall 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.

8.8 A further update to the GPDO in 2024 reversed the removal of PD rights for altering or replacing windows in a

windows, wall finishes, installation of rooflights or removal of traditional garden boundaries, which would not normally 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.

8.9 A review of recent planning applications in the conservation area (in the five-year period to 2026) suggests that planning applications are being submitted for relevant categories of householder development as required by the GPDO, and that decisions are being made on the basis of their impact on the special character and appearance of the conservation area. 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.

8.10 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.

Management recommendations

8.11 Overall, the requirements of the current GPDO appear sufficient and proportionate to avoid harm to dwellinghouses from incremental change. It is as yet unclear what the long-term effect of Class 7A (windows) will be in relation to preservation of character. At the moment, its potential to alter character does not appear to be applied, in practice, and therefore has no material effect requiring to be addressed through an Article 4 Direction. The coverage of non-domestic classes of development also remains appropriate.

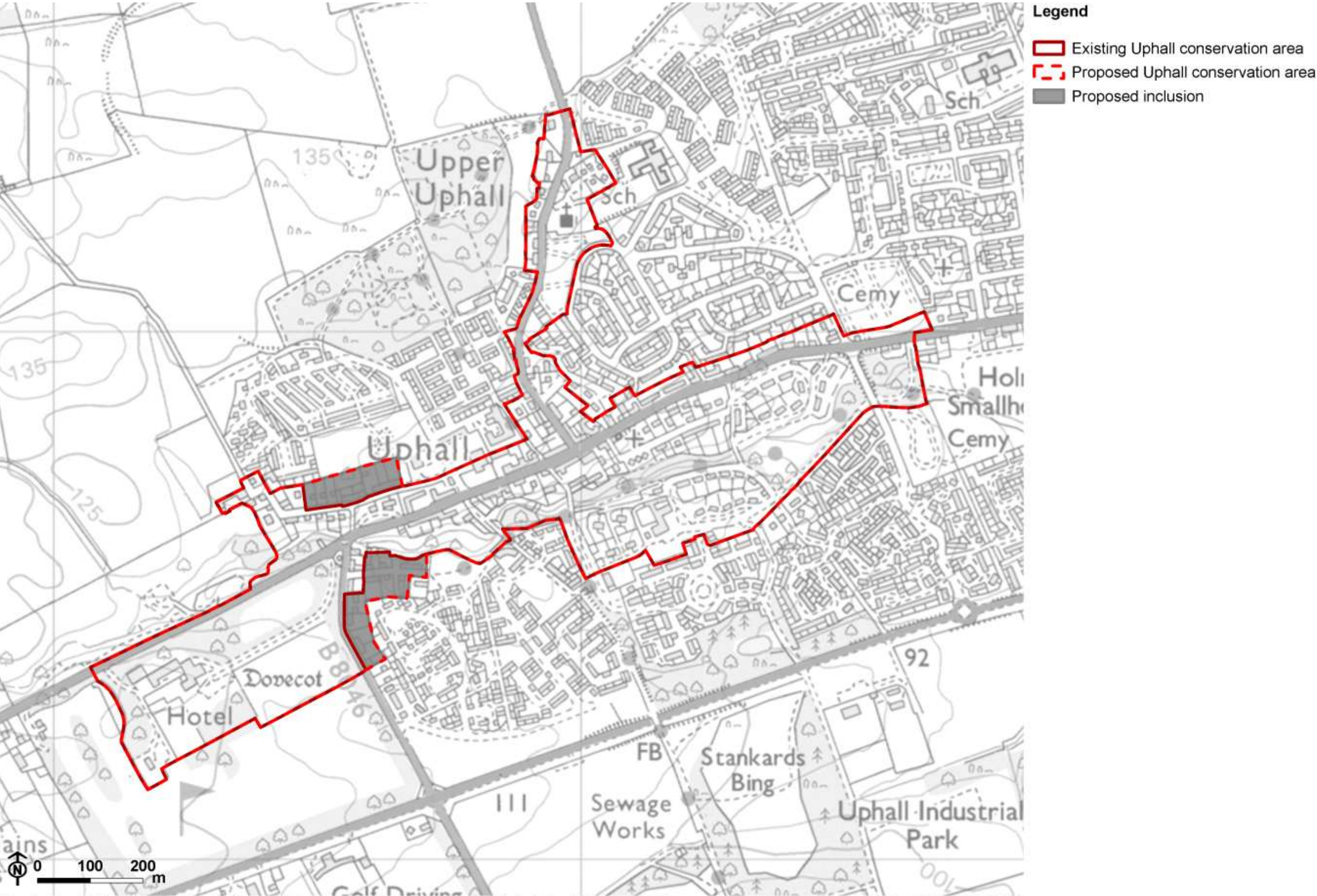
8.12 The numbering of the Classes of development in the 2015 Article 4 Direction and the present version of the GPDO remains the same. The content of the Article 4 Direction therefore does not require amendment. The area it applies to should be amended to reflect the new extent of the conservation area should the proposed boundary changes be adopted.

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

Recommendations

1. Amend the conservation area boundary to best reflect the areas containing the special character of Uphall.
2. Amend the 2015 Article 4 Direction to reflect any boundary amendments made as a result of this conservation area appraisal review.

Figure 8.1: Uphall 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 asset

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
25 And 27, 29 Ecclesmachan Road Upper Uphall Category C Listed Building - LB14237	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
28, 30 Ecclesmachan Road Uphall Category C Listed Building - LB14240	
47 Ecclesmachan Road Upper Uphall Category C Listed Building - LB14238	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
Crossgreen Farm 26 Ecclesmachan Road Uphall Category C Listed Building - LB14239	
Houstoun Coach-House And Stables (Known As The Dower House) c.25m north-west of Houston House Category B Listed Building - LB14245	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
Houstoun Doocot c.20m south-east of Houstoun House Category C Listed Building - LB14226	
Houstoun House Category A Listed Building - LB14243	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
Middleton Hall Four Seasons Healthcare Middleton Hall Nursing Home, Middleton Avenue Category C Listed Building - LB14242	
Oatridge Hotel, East Main Street Category B Listed Building - LB14241	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
Sundial At Houstoun House c.45m north-east of Houston House Category C Listed Building - LB14244	
Uphall Kirk. (St. Nicholas Ecclesmachan Road Category B Listed Building - LB14235	
Uphall Old Manse, Ecclesmachan Rd. 6 - 10 Manse Park Category C Listed Building - LB14236	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
	
Uphall, 41 West Main Street Category C Listed Building - LB49642	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
10 Forkneuk Road Positive non-designated feature - N/A	
123 East Main Street Positive non-designated feature - N/A	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
13 Forkneuk Road Positive non-designated feature - N/A	
1 - 2 Westhall Gardens Positive non-designated feature - N/A	
3 - 4 Westhall Gardens Positive non-designated feature - N/A	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
5 - 6 Westhall Gardens Positive non-designated feature - N/A	
8 - 9 Westhall Gardens Positive non-designated feature	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
60 - 61 Middleton Avenue Positive non-designated feature	
8 Forkneuk Road Positive non-designated feature	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
Clock above 7 and 9 West Main Street Positive non-designated feature Landmark	
Forkneuk Farm, 1 - 2 Forkneuk Steadings Positive non-designated feature - WoSAS ID: 50207	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
Forkneuk Farm, 3 - 4 Forkneuk Steadings Positive non-designated feature - WoSAS ID: 50207	
Forkneuk Farm, 5 Forkneuk Steadings Positive non-designated feature - WoSAS ID: 50207	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
Goschen Place shale mining memorial c.85m west of 123 East Main Street Positive non-designated feature Landmark	
Police Station, 9 - 11 Ecclesmachan Road Positive non-designated feature	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
Uphall South Parish Church - Free Church Mission Hall Positive non-designated feature	
Volunteer Arms, 103 - 105 East Main Street Positive non-designated feature	

Gazetteer of designated heritage assets and positive non-designated features

Name / asset type and reference / address	Photograph (where available)
West Main Street shale mining mural 1 West Main Street Positive non-designated feature Landmark	

Appendix B

Buildings to be included / excluded by the proposed boundary change

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

Proposed change	Address
Include	Forkneuk Road, 2
Include	Forkneuk Road, 4
Include	Forkneuk Road, 6
Include	Millbank Place, 10
Include	Millbank Place, 11
Include	Millbank Place, 12
Include	Millbank Place, 13
Include	Millbank Place, 14
Include	Millbank Place, 15
Include	Millbank Place, 16
Include	Millbank Place, 17
Include	Millbank Place, 18
Include	Millbank Place, 2
Include	Millbank Place, 23
Include	Millbank Place, 27
Include	Millbank Place, 3

Buildings to be included / excluded by the proposed boundary change

Proposed change	Address
Include	Millbank Place, 4
Include	Millbank Place, 5
Include	Millbank Place, 6
Include	Millbank Place, 7
Include	Millbank Place, 8
Include	Millbank Place, 9
Include	Station Road, 11
Include	Station Road, 13
Include	Station Road, 15
Include	Station Road, 17
Include	Station Road, 17a
Include	Station Road, 17b
Include	Station Road, 19
Include	Station Road, 21
Include	Station Road, 23
Include	Station Road, 25
Include	Station Road, 27
Include	Station Road, 29
Include	Station Road, 31
Include	Strathbrock Place, 26
Include	Strathbrock Place, 28

Buildings to be included / excluded by the proposed boundary change

Proposed change	Address
Include	Strathbrock Place, 30
Include	Strathbrock Place, 32
Include	Strathbrock Place, 34
Include	Strathbrock Place, 36
Include	Strathbrock Place, 38
Include	Strathbrock Place, 40
Include	Strathbrock Place, 40a
Include	Strathbrock Place, 42
Include	Strathbrock Place, 44
Include	Strathbrock Place, 46

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