

DESIGN ANALYSIS

SITE ANALYSIS: HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Dechmont developed from its association with nearby Houston House estate in the 17th century and its location on the original Edinburgh-Glasgow route, with the site itself forming part of an area of small-holdings associated with Houston Mains (linked to the original estate). As shown on the 1856 OS extract, this included a farmstead called West Port on the site's eastern edge at that time.

The generally accessible location led to the building of Bangour Hospital to the west of the village in the late 19th/early 20th century, served by a railway spur from the Edinburgh-Glasgow line and facilitating growth of the settlement along the main road in the first half the 20th century in typical linear form.

By the mid-1950's, the creation of further small-holdings is visible on the site and adjoining area to the east (including the existing derelict buildings that remain on the site today). The extension of Dechmont along the main road towards the site is just visible whilst the new A89 extends south of the site.

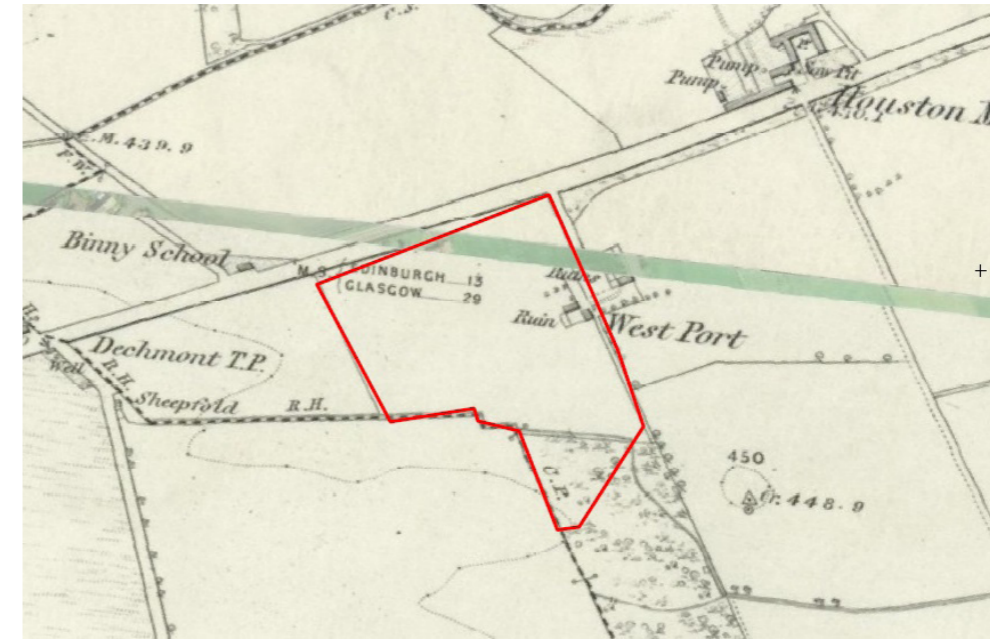
The development of the Craiglawn council housing estate to the south of the site in the 1950's extended the urban area further eastwards, whilst the Dechmont Roundabout, A899 and adjacent roads infrastructure associated with the M8 clearly contains the site by the mid-1970's.

The historic plans highlight the gradual urbanisation of this area, linked firstly to Houston House, then Bangour Hospital, then proximity to new road network (and Livingston New Town immediately to the south).

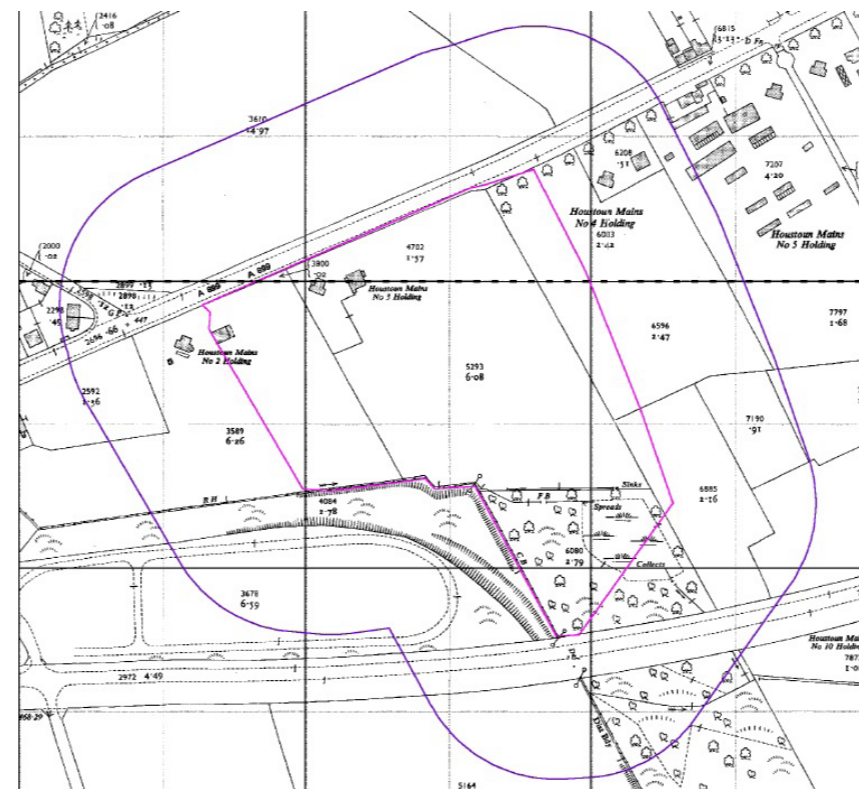
The man-made containment the site benefits from is augmented by areas of woodland and linear tree planting which creates a clear area for future eastwards expansion of Dechmont. Whilst surrounding urban form is varied in terms of blocks and building types, the site provides the opportunity to consolidate the east of the settlement and provide a distinctive edge to maintain Dechmont's individual identity amongst the wider developments in the area.

OS extracts from AOC Archaeology report & RFBP Desk Study Report, all Crown Copyright

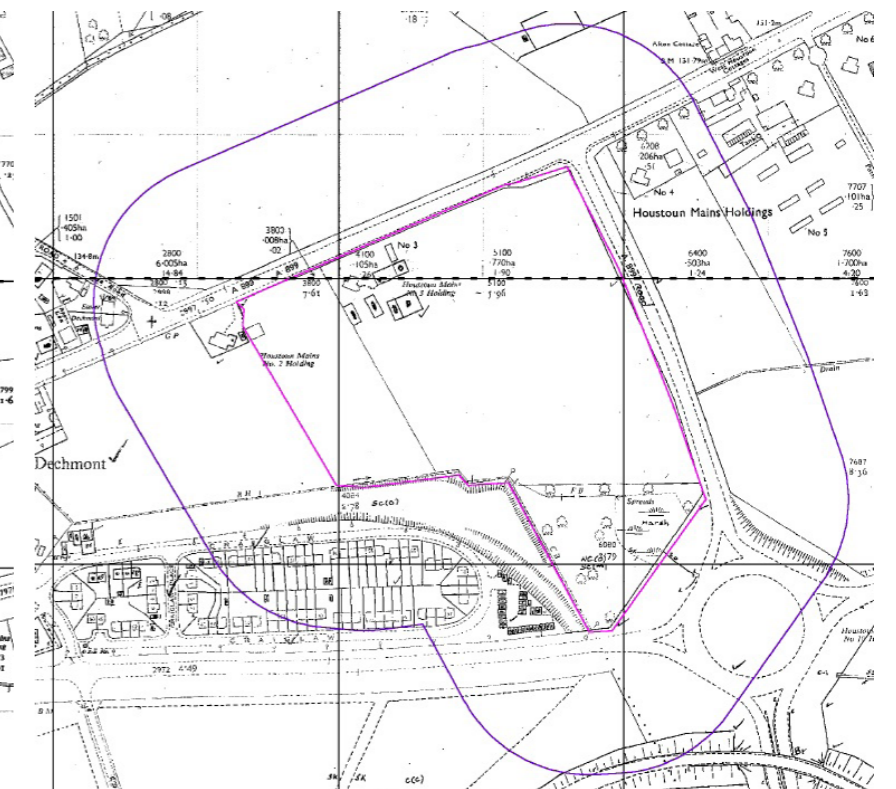
1856



1955



1975



SITE ANALYSIS: CONNECTIONS

Services, Amenities & Employment Centres

Dechmont village has an existing Infant School (Primary 1 & 2), village shop/post-office, community centre, play park and playing field all within 5-10 minutes walk of the proposed site. Additionally, there are a range of services, amenities and employment centres within a short distance, accessible by public transport, cycling and walking.

This includes:-

- Dobbies Garden Centre (<400m) - c. 5mins walk
- Houston House Hotel & Uphall Golf Course (800m) - c.10 mins walk
- Deer Park offices, hotel/restaurant/leisure (900-1000m) - c. 10-12 mins walk
- Uphall local shops and services (1600m) - c.20 mins walk
- Uphall Rail Station (1800m) - c.20-25 mins walk (c.7-8 mins cycle)
- Uphall Primary School (2km) - c.25 mins walk
- Houston Industrial Estate (2km) - c.25 mins walk
- Broxburn Academy (3km) - c.10 min cycle
- Livingston Town Centre (5km) - c.15 min cycle

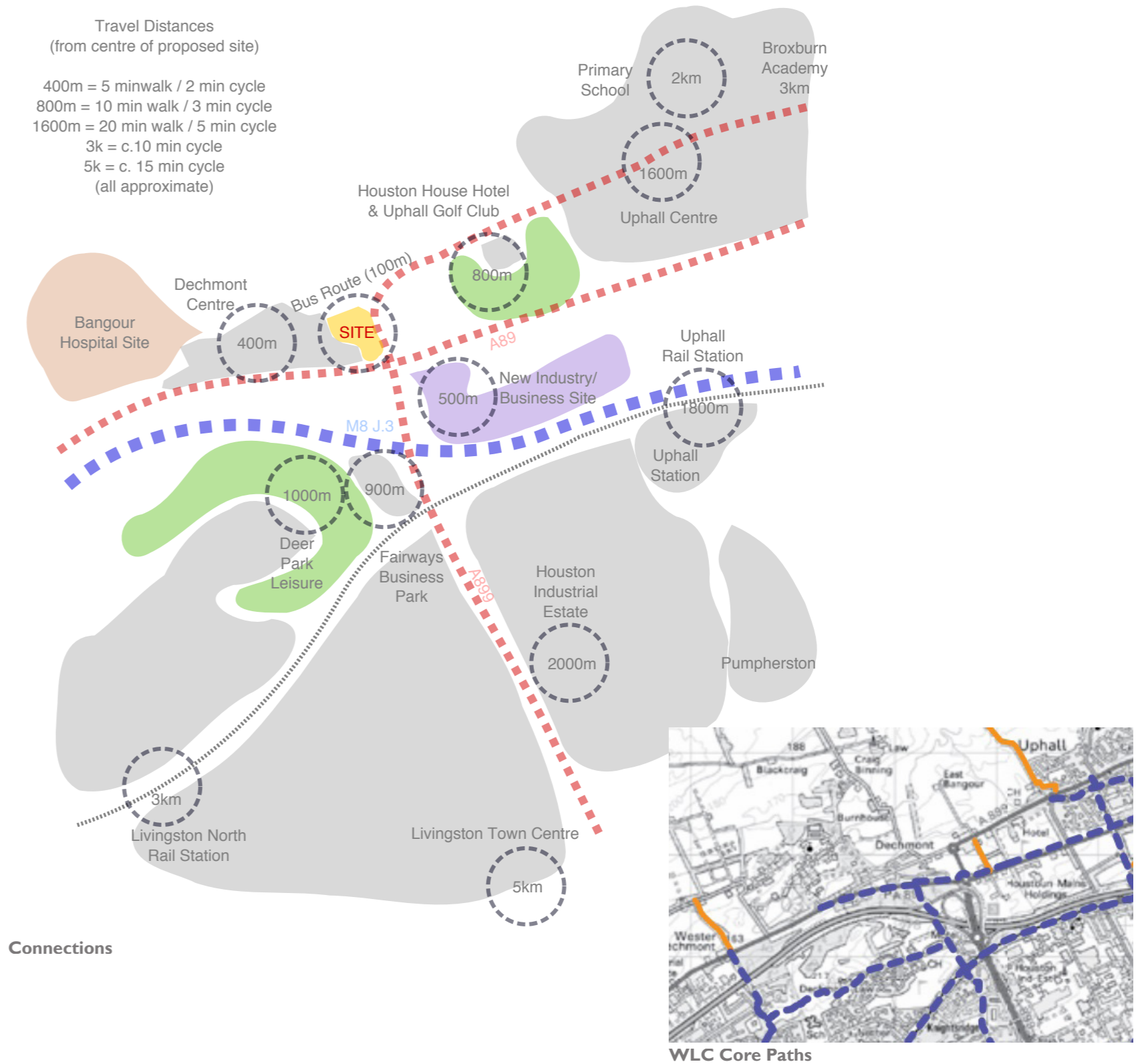
Public Transport

Bus - First Scotland East No. 20 and 43 provide a regular, 7-day service to Edinburgh and Bathgate/Whitburn and EMH No.31/32 provides similarly regular services to Livingston and Linlithgow.

Rail - Uphall Station (<2km from site) is easily accessible by cycle or for utilising park and ride with regular services to Edinburgh (20 mins) and Glasgow (1 hr).

Cycling & Walking

Excellent connections exist with Core Path 10 (Bathgate-Newbridge) adjoining the southern edge of the site and linking with CPI 7 (Uphall-East Calder, including Uphall Rail Station) and CP31 (Loan Path, linking Livingston town centre).



SITE ANALYSIS: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Landscape Context

As indicated on the accompanying plan, the site is located on the eastern edge of Dechmont (western section within the defined settlement boundary), within an area of generally level land with topography rising to the north and falling to the Almond Valley to the south. Land to the north is characterised by undulating farmland with smaller enclosed fields to the east forming part of smallholdings (as is the site). To the south/south-east of the site, the landscape is dominated by the motorway network.

Dechmont is screened to the south by dense woodland plantation which forms a distinct separation with Livingston. The southern part of the site, adjoining Dechmont Roundabout, also comprises screening woodland.

As denoted on the plan by dark green shading, the area to the south, west and north-west of Dechmont comprises an Area of Great Landscape Value, thus limiting significant urban growth. Additionally, as denoted by an orange line, the Bangour Hospital allocated housing site is a designated Conservation Area.

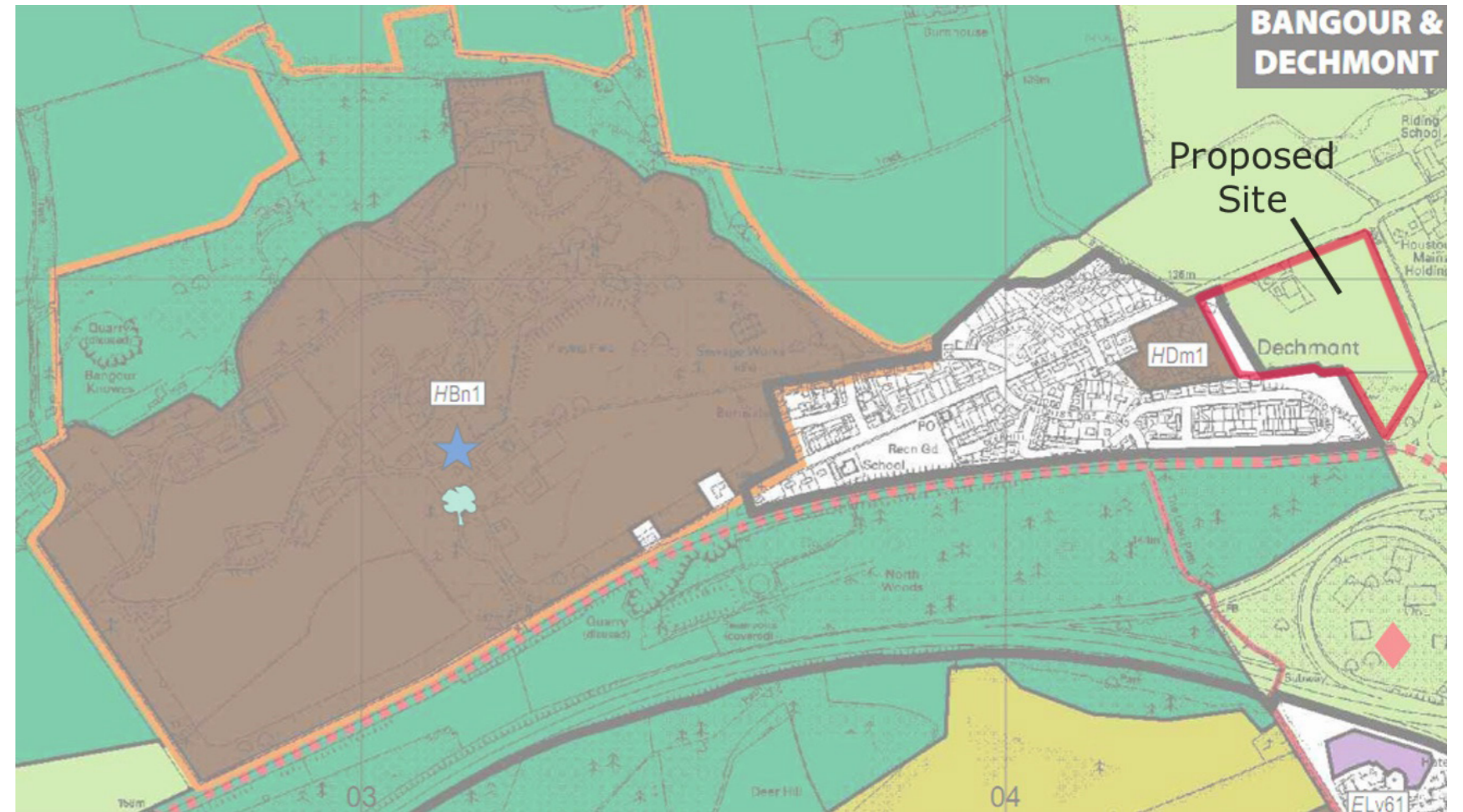
Overall, this forms a strong landscape separation which can be augmented with further planting to reinforce a new eastern edge to Dechmont.

Site Characteristics

The site is generally level with a slight fall to the east and comprises rough grazing land, scrub woodland and a derelict house. The south-east of the site comprises marshy land with a minor watercourse passing through the site and more established woodland - this area provides localised wildlife habitat.

Site boundaries comprise mature hedgerow to the north, hedgerow and a tree line to the east, woodland to the south-east with housing to west/south-west.

Views into the site are restricted from the east/south/east due to tree cover but there is intervisibility to the north which requires careful design treatment of the northern boundary edge.



Adopted Local Plan Policy Context

SITE ANALYSIS: BUILT ENVIRONMENT & CHARACTER I

The site's natural and man-made containment creates a defined site with established suburban residential character to the west/south-west, semi-rural character to the east (dispersed groups of buildings) and a more rural character to the north.

As such, boundary treatment for new development is of key importance with landscaped frontages to provide a new settlement edge and development of the site to reflect the range of housing present to the west.

Dechmont's existing urban form contains a number of disparate elements including:-

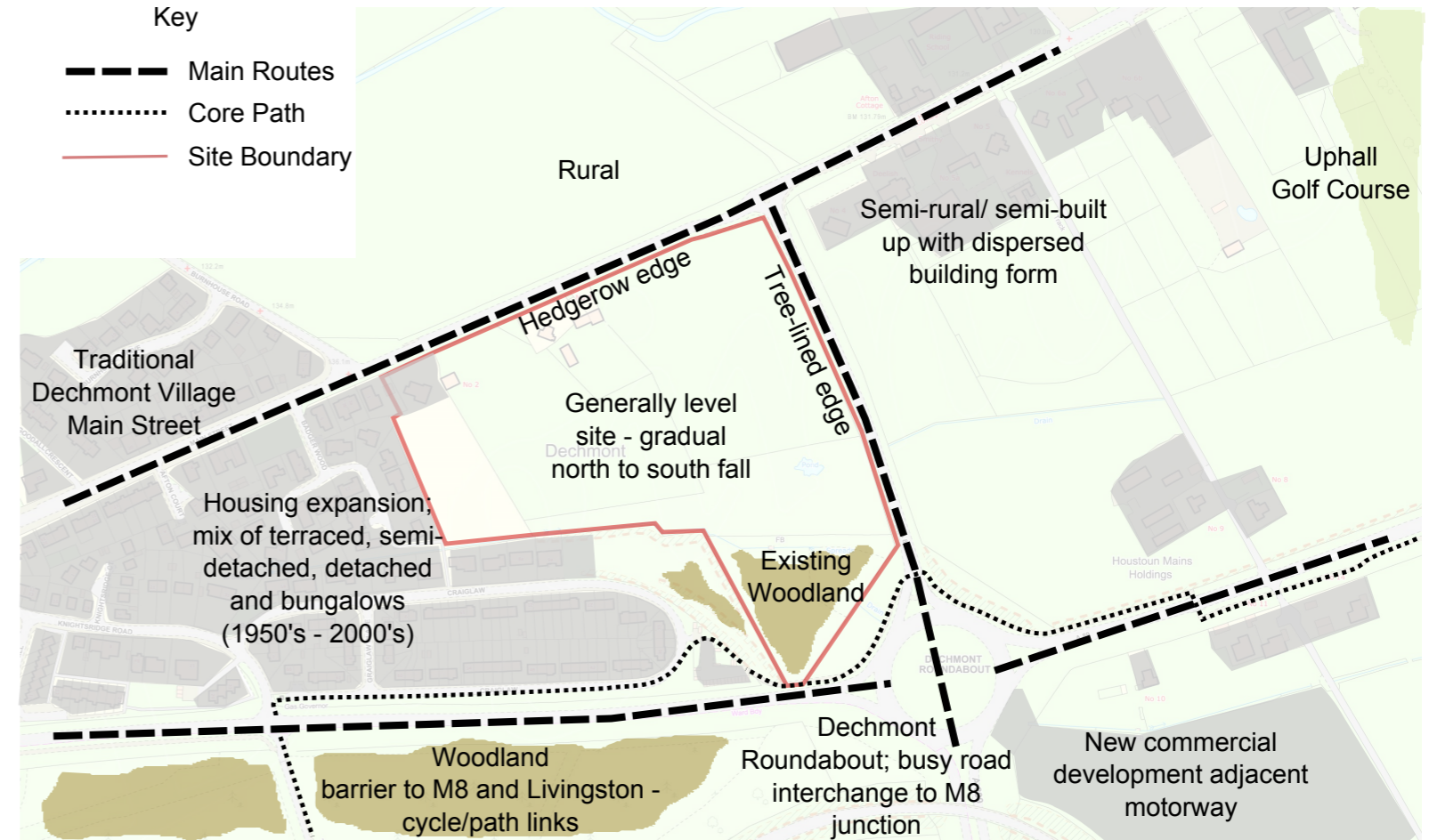
- traditional village main street with built frontage
- post-war informal terraced blocks
- ex-miners bungalows
- 1970's/80's terraced courtyards
- 1990's detached villa cul-de-sacs

The village has expanded along its main street within the physical limitations of the A89 to the south, Brox Burn to the north and Bangour Hospital grounds to the north-west. As such, layers of infill in the second half of the twentieth century have now reached their limit on all sides with the exception of the east.

The proposed site forms the last remaining logical urban extension area, with a long-term boundary being the tree-lined A899 on its eastern boundary.

Adjoining the proposed site, three built forms predominate; the 1950's terraced blocks and 1990's detached bungalows and two-storey villas.

The key element of existing urban form to be continued is the extension of the traditional built frontage along Main Street. Given the varying nature of adjacent built form, scope exists to create a more connected and defined urban extension of Dechmont with formation of a long-term high quality edge.



Urban Form Context



Existing Built Form

SITE ANALYSIS: BUILT ENVIRONMENT & CHARACTER 2

Examples of Dechmont built form character are highlighted on the right, offering a number of townscape clues for future development.

Main Street frontage

The existing main street is broad with the built frontage being generally set-back (5-6m), utilising a number of boundary transitions including low-walls, fencing and planting behind broad footpaths. The street character is generally at odds with its function, i.e. lower density forms predominate over higher density, and particular attention will be required with the treatment of new development adjoining the approach into the village from the east.

Housing Density and Boundaries

Whilst there are varying housing forms within Dechmont, lessons can be gained to allow for variety within new development, including:-

- the more formal blocks of Craiglaw which are characterised by two-storey higher density terraced forms with more rigid building lines and clear block boundaries (low walls)
- the detached single and two storey modern development at Badger Wood, which provides a lower-density character within larger plots with more open plot boundaries
- the smaller-scale of terraced and linked single-storey cottages within Goodall Crescent with more informal street character; a semi-rural form is created with hedgerow boundaries, no footpaths and frontage onto greenspace

Overall

Existing built forms and street design provides scope for a variety of character areas within the proposed development area, whether based upon Main Street frontage, internal block or fronting new greenspace on its south-eastern edge.



Main Street (eastwards) - broad main street with set-backs



Main Street cottages - set-backs to simple built form



Goodall Crescent - informal street design & boundaries



Craiglaw - 2 storey terraces with low-wall block boundaries



Badger Wood - varying 2 storey forms adjacent site



Main Street (westwards) - low density approach