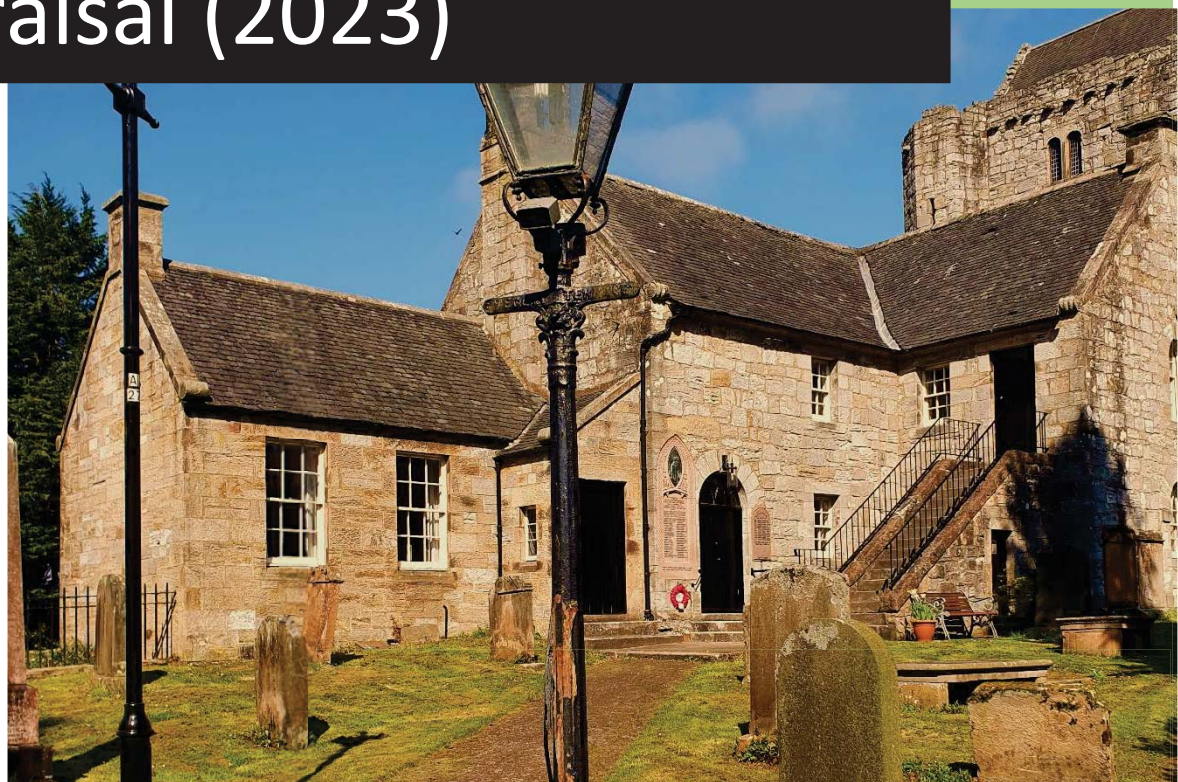


Conservation Area Appraisal (2023)



West Lothian Council - Planning Services

Approved by Council Executive on 15 August 2023

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1.0 Introduction to Torphichen conservation area



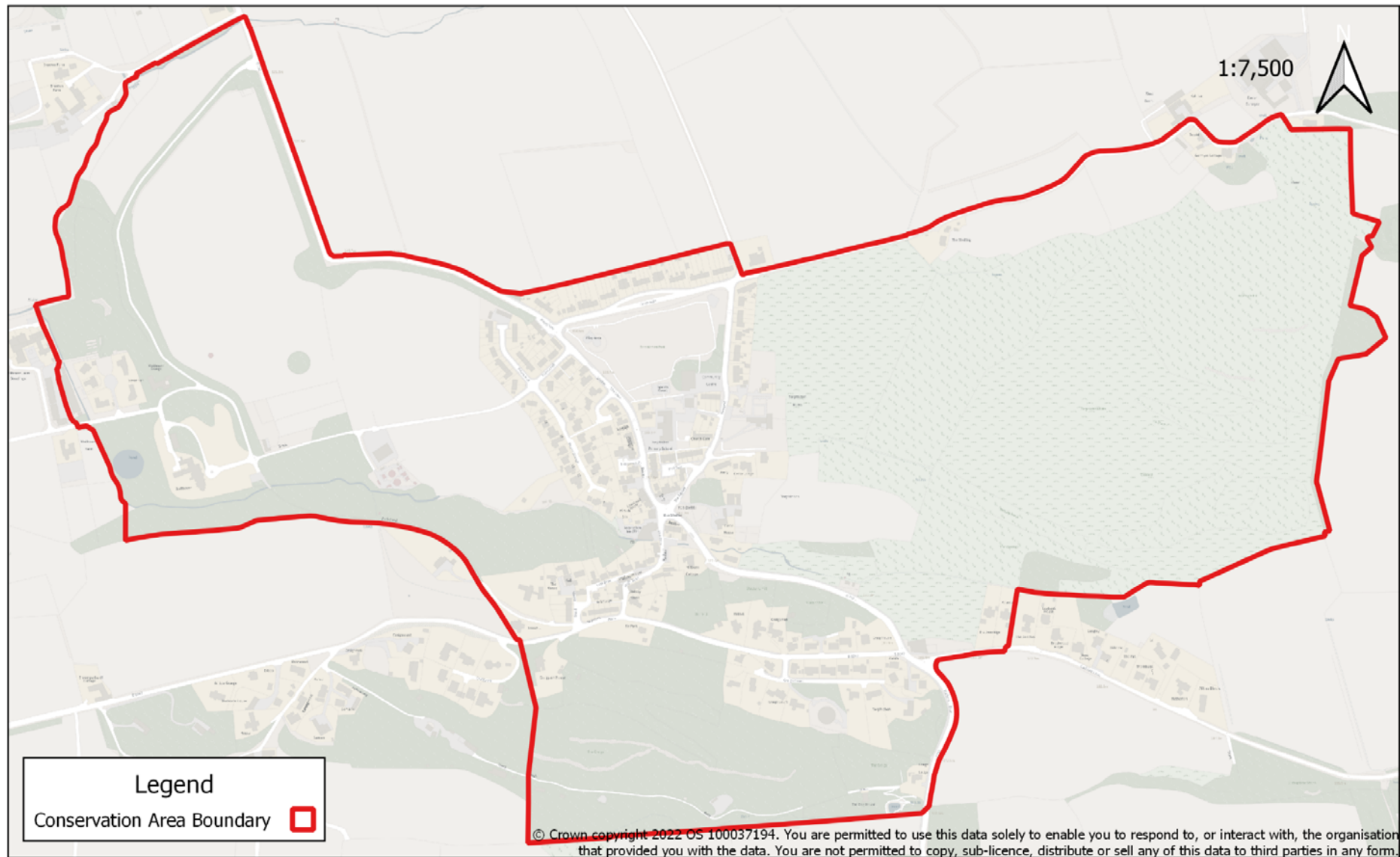
Torphichen is one of 10 conservation areas in West Lothian. It was designated in 1976 and is centred on the Torphichen Preceptory, a Scheduled Monument of national importance, and it embraces a number of listed buildings. In recognition of its exceptional rural setting and in order to prevent further erosion of the village's form by the building of inappropriate and unrelated housing development, the boundary of the conservation area was drawn to include not only the village itself but also substantive areas of open land to the east (Torphichen Hills), the south (The Craigs) and the west (Wallhouse). See map on page 3.

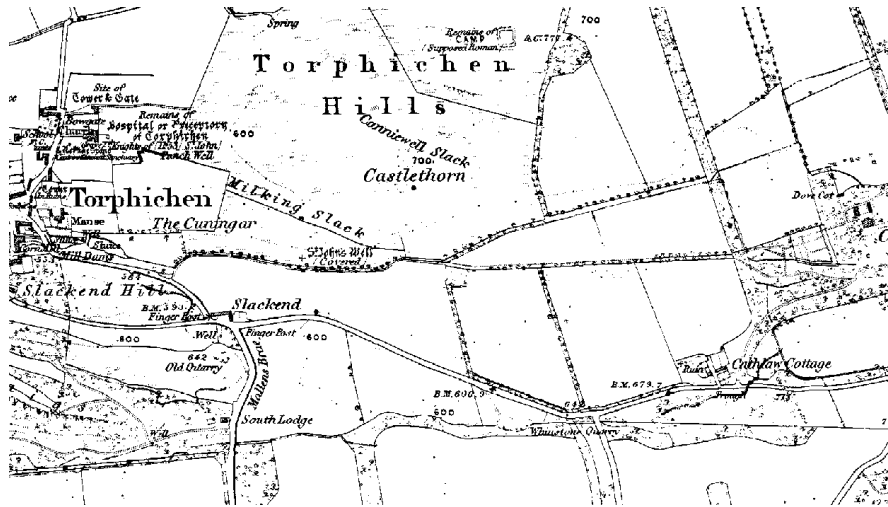
The village of Torphichen comprises mostly residential buildings but also a traditional Inn, a primary school, Post Office, and the historically significant Torphichen Kirk, all of which are situated around the village green. There are 13 Listed Buildings in the conservation area, 6 of which are Category B listed and 7 of which are C listed. There are also 3 Scheduled Monuments within the conservation area boundary. Details are provided at 6.2.



The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that conservation areas "*are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*". Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas.

Boundary of the originally designated Torphichen Conservation Area





A Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA) is a management tool augmenting other legislative provisions and guidance which helps identify the special interest, and changing needs of an area.

An appraisal provides the initial information to develop an action plan in relation to protecting and managing the factors which have led to an area being designated as a conservation area.

Many 'permitted development' rights are removed within a conservation area and brings the following works, including demolition of unlisted buildings and structures, the removal of, or work to trees, and small house alterations and extensions (including the installation of satellite dishes, roof alterations, stone cleaning or painting of the exterior) under planning control.

2.0 Purpose of a conservation area appraisal

It is a statutory requirement in terms of the 1997 Act for local authorities to periodically review conservation area boundaries and consider whether new conservation area designations are appropriate and this appraisal contributes to the discharging of that obligation.

Conservation area appraisals are part of the ongoing management of conservation areas and are prepared in accordance with a methodology based on the advice of Scottish Ministers set out in Planning Advice Note 71: Conservation Area Management (2004). Additional guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out in the [Historic Environment Policy for Scotland \(HEPS\)](#) and [Managing Change in the Historic Environment](#).

The purpose of a conservation area appraisal is not to prevent change but to manage it, to help define and evaluate the character and appearance of the conservation area and to identify the special architectural or historical interest of the area along with those key elements that contribute to its character and appearance.

The area's special features and changing needs are assessed through a process which includes researching and highlighting its historical development and carrying out a townscape analysis and it provides a framework for managing change in a way which continues to enhance the historic character of the area.

An appraisal is intended to raise awareness of the area's special qualities within local communities. It provides an agreed basis of understanding of what makes an area special which in creates an understanding informs and provides the context in which decisions can be made on proposals which may affect that character.



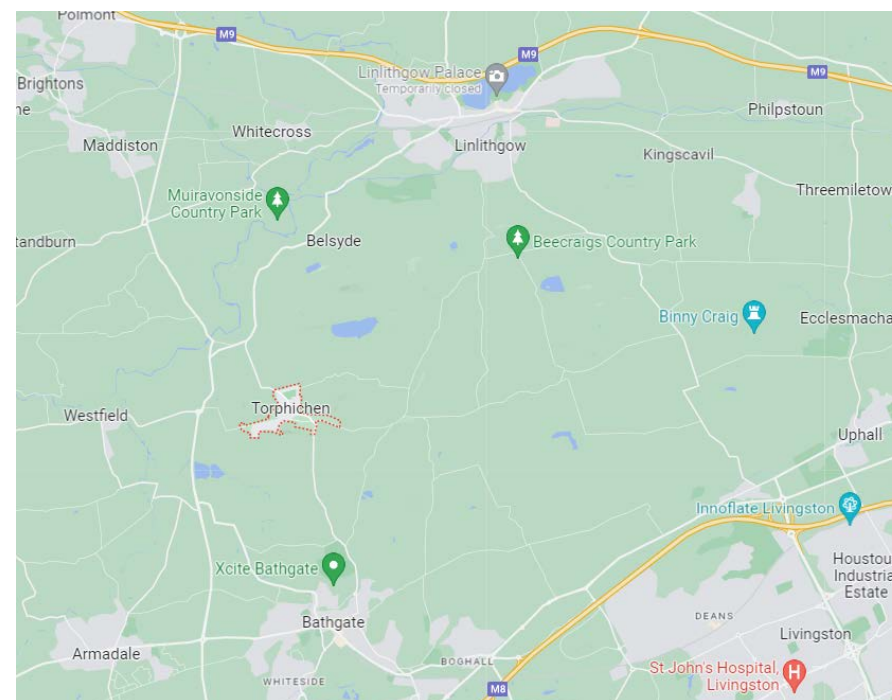
An appraisal also provides an opportunity to reconsider conservation area boundaries, to make certain that they accurately reflect what is of special interest and ensure that they are logically drawn.

3.0 Location and geography

Torphichen is situated in the North West area of West Lothian. It is approximately 2 miles NNW of Bathgate town centre, 3 miles SSW of Linlithgow town centre, and 8 miles NW of Livingston town centre, which is the largest West Lothian town.

The conservation area boundary extends west of the village and includes Wallhouse Mansion and its grounds. It also extends eastwards to the Torphichen Hills, including Gomyre Hill and the prehistoric Castlethorn Hill Fort and Standing Stones which is a scheduled monument.

There are a number of major access roads in close proximity to Torphichen Village, making it easily commutable and also accessible by the rail links located in nearby Linlithgow and Bathgate.



4.0 Climate

Temperature

Temperatures in Torphichen are variable throughout the year. The warmest summer month is July, with temperatures ranging from a low of 9.8°Celsius to a high of 4.6° Celsius. The coldest winter month is most often January, with temperatures ranging from a low of 1°Celsius to a high of 4.6°Celsius.

Rainfall

The average annual precipitation for Torphichen is 185mm. This 185mm of precipitation falls over an average of 126.9 days per year.

Climate Changes

These weather patterns are expected to be impacted by the effects of climate change. It is expected that Torphichen will largely mirror nationwide changes in weather patterns and so experience hotter, drier springs and summers with the risk of milder, wetter autumns and winters. There is a higher risk of extreme weather events including heat waves, droughts, cold waves and floods.

While historic buildings have survived centuries, climate change brings extra stresses such as moisture penetrating much further than before.

Global warming is likely to encourage both fungal and plant growth and insect infestation, affecting historic building materials. Structural problems may also increase from changing extremes and fluctuations (heat as well as cold) in temperature.

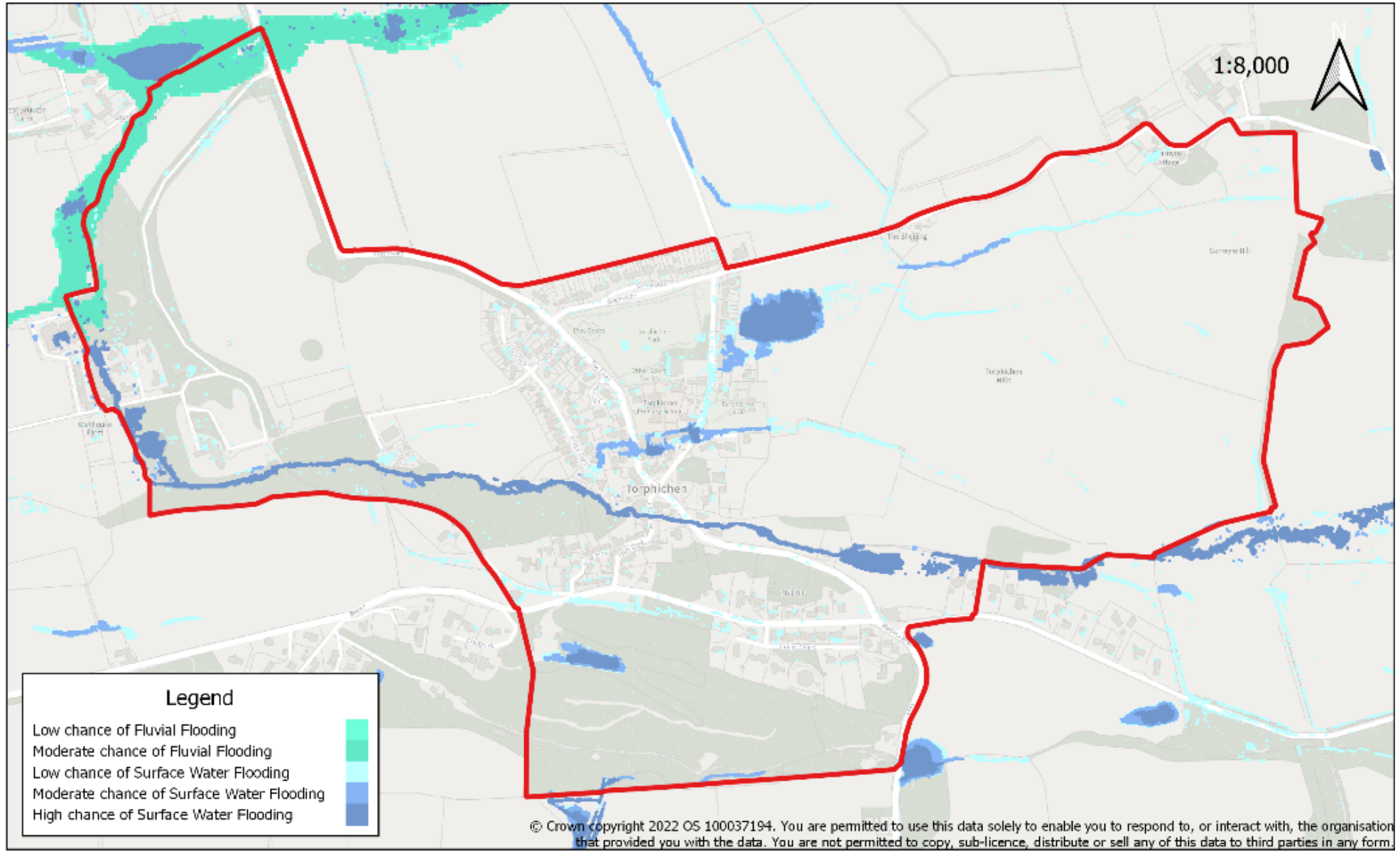
In dry conditions soil shrinkage, particularly of those that are clay-rich, can lead to building subsidence, structural deformation and collapse in the most severe cases.

Flood Risk

A Flood Risk Map, sourced from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), highlights the risk of surface water flooding from increased rainfall.

The map shows the areas with a moderate to high chance of Surface water and Fluvial flooding per year. Areas shown as high risk indicate that there is a 10% chance of flooding per year, while areas marked as having a moderate risk have a 0.5% chance on flooding per year. Areas shown with low risk suggests that they have a 0.1% chance of flooding per year.

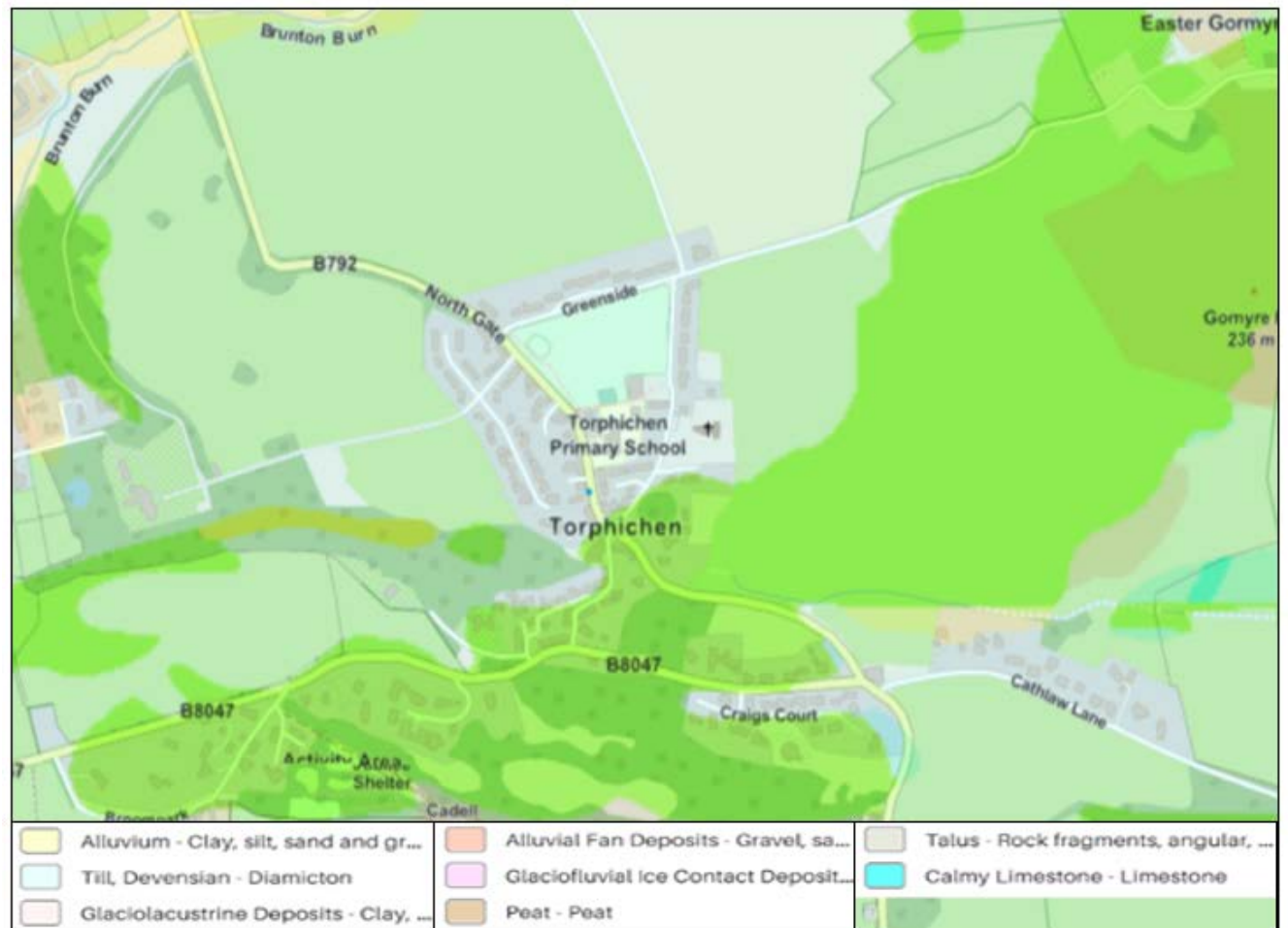
Specifically, the Brunton Burn stream has a 10% annual risk of flooding as well as a field immediately North of the Preceptory. Flooding therefore poses the risk of damage to listed buildings in the area as well as damage to other buildings and features that maintain the character of the Conservation Area. It is important that when any new development is being proposed the implementation of a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS) is used to manage any potential flood risk.



5.0 Geology

The bedrock geology of Torphichen is predominantly *Midland Valley Sill-complex* Igneous bedrock formed during the Carboniferous period (shown green). There is a small area of *Passage Formation* sedimentary bedrock (shown yellow) in the west of the conservation area towards Wallhouse.

The dominant superficial geology across this area is described as Till, *Devensian - Diamictan*. A sedimentary superficial deposit formed during the Quaternary period. There are smaller scattered areas of *Talus* rock fragments formed during the Quaternary period found between the village and Gomyre Hill as well as areas of *Alluvium* (clay, silt, sand and gravel) to the East and South of the village.



6.0 History and architecture



6.1 Historic Background

Much of Torphichen's history is centred on the Preceptory, a scheduled monument.

The Preceptory was built around an existing church which was established by St Ninian. Speculation of a pagan place of worship predates the Christian worship structure first erected in the 12th Century.

After the first crusade, the Knights Hospitaller were formed by Brother Gerard de Saxo. The hospitallers were established in St John the Baptist Hospital in Jerusalem. The Knights Hospitaller were invited to Scotland in 1132 by King David I. The Knights Hospitaller were transferred the lands of the Knights Templar after their suppression in 1312. Torphichen benefitted greatly from this transfer of land. The Preceptory effectively became the Scottish base for the Knights Hospitallers.

The Preceptory played a key part during the Scottish Wars of Independence. It hosted the last assembly of William Wallace in 1298 before his defeat and capture by English forces at Falkirk. Edward I of England also received treatment here following a horse riding injury sustained before the battle.

The monument is of national importance because of its potential to contribute to our broader understanding of medieval ecclesiastical architecture and practice.

More particularly this Preceptory was the only house of the Knights Hospitaller or Knights of St. John founded in Scotland and as such holds an important place in their history and also in the history of Torphichen and the surrounding area.



There are 5 refuge/ sanctuary stones or “stones” in and around Torphichen, which were placed to delineate a 1 (Scots) mile radius around the Preceptory. 4 of the stones are now entified and protected as Scheduled Monuments.






Historically, the area falling within the boundary of the Stanes functioned as a sanctuary or refuge area for people escaping persecution and where pilgrims and local people could be guaranteed safety and protection and the right to a fair trial.




The Jubilee Well which is located in the square dates back to 1897 and was built and dedicated to Queen Victoria for her Diamond Jubilee. In 2022, for Queen Elizabeth’s Platinum Jubilee, an ancient horse chestnut tree in the rear of Torphichen Kirk & Preceptory Yard was dedicated in Her Majesty’s honour. The tree is one of 70 ancient trees dedicated across the UK as part of the Queen’s Green Canopy project.







Castlethron Hillfort and standing stones, is one of the oldest settlements in the conservation area, and it is a scheduled monument. The prehistoric fort served both domestic and defensive purpose. This monument is of national importance as an example of a prehistoric enclosed settlement, which has the potential to increase considerably our understanding of prehistoric domestic life in this area.







6.2 Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments

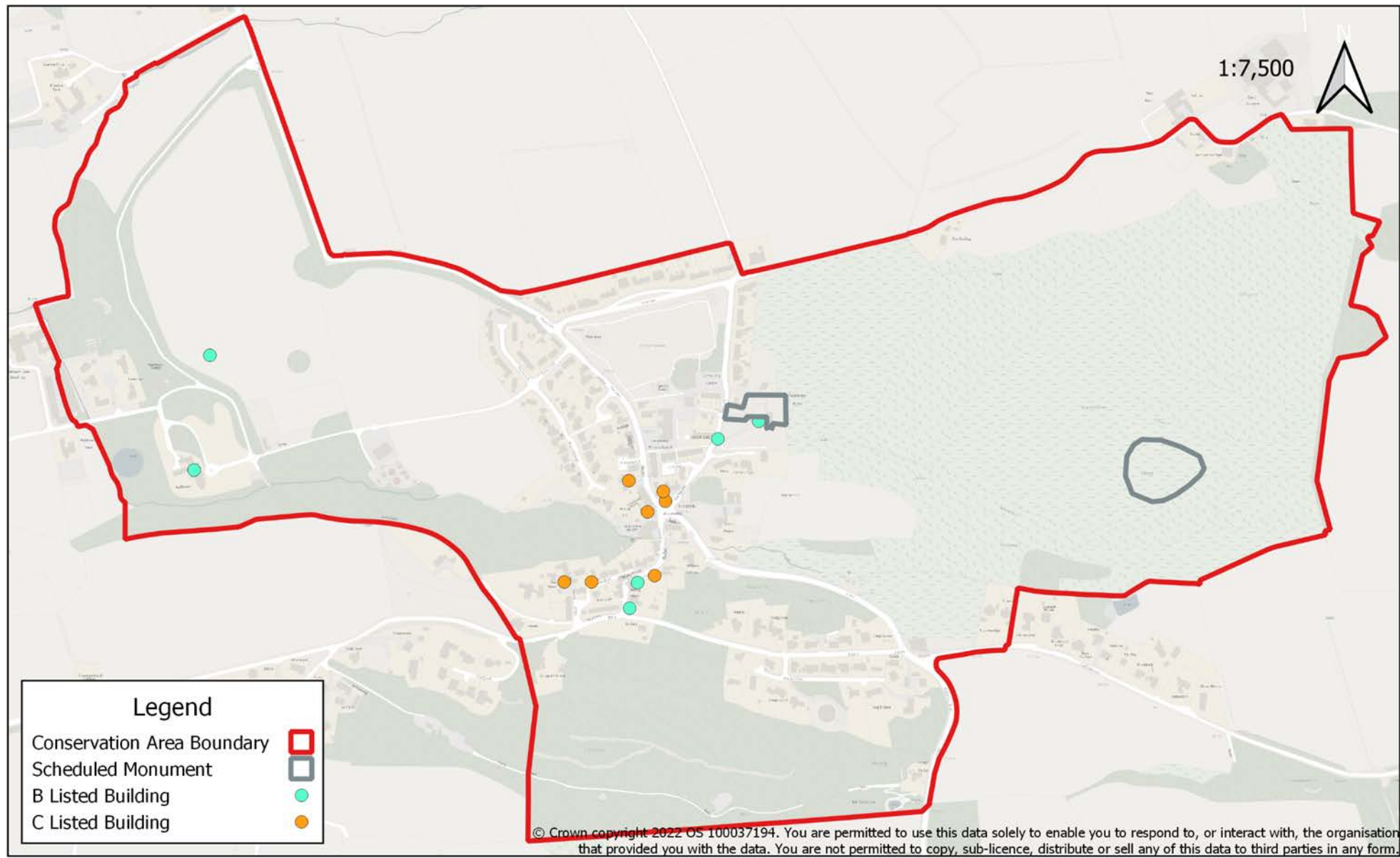
Name/Listing Type & No./ Function/Address	Current Photograph (where available)		Current Photograph (where available)
<p>• Torphichen Kirk <i>B Listed building - LB14533</i> <i>Bowsett, EH48 4LZ</i> <i>Kirk</i></p> <p>1836</p>			 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1152366</p>
<p>• Torphichen Kirkyard Gatehouse <i>B Listed building - LB14534</i> <i>Bowsett, EH48 4LZ</i> <i>Kirkyard Gatehouse</i></p> <p>1975 – 1976</p>			 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1647971</p>
<p>• Wallhouse <i>B Listed building - LB19704</i> <i>Wallhouse, EH48 4NQ</i> <i>Residence</i></p> <p>1975 – 1976</p>			 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1647968</p>

Name/Listing Type & No./ Function/Address	Current Photograph (where available)	Current Photograph (where available)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wallhouse Doocot <i>B Listed building - LB14549</i> Wallhouse, EH48 4NQ Doocot <p>1975 - 1976</p>		 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collecton/1847966</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewforth <i>B Listed building - LB14540</i> 6 High Brae, EH48 4LX Residence 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sundial <i>B Listed building - LB14541</i> High Brae, EH48 4LX Sundial 		

Name/Listing Type & No./ Function/Address	Current Photograph (where available)	Current Photograph (where available)
<p>• Jubilee Well <i>C Listed building - LB14535</i> 2 The Square, EH48 4LY <i>Historic Well</i></p> <p>1975 – 1976</p>		 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1647972</p>
<p>• Rose Cottage (Old Smithy) <i>C Listed building - LB14538</i> 5 The Loan, EH48 4NF <i>Residence</i></p> <p>1975 - 1976</p>		 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1647983</p>
<p>• Hill House <i>C Listed building - LB14539</i> 8 High Brae, EH48 4LX <i>Residence</i></p> <p>1975 – 1976</p>		 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1647978</p>

Name/Listing Type & No./ Function/Address	Current Photograph (where available)	Current Photograph (where available)
<p>• Torphichen Free Church <i>C Listed building - LB14542</i> 6 Manse Road, EH48 4LT Church Hall</p> <p>1975 – 1976</p>		 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1647979</p>
<p>• Kirk House <i>C Listed building - LB14537</i> 8 The Square, EH48 4LY Residence</p> <p>1975 - 1976</p>		 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1647975</p>
<p>• Cottages <i>C Listed building - LB 14536</i> 1-4 The Square, EH48 4LY</p> <p>1 Post Office & Shop 2 Residence 3 Residence 4 Architecture practice</p>		 <p>https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1647974</p>

Name/Listing Type & No./ Function/Address	Current Photograph (where available)	Current Photograph (where available)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ivy Cottage C Listed building - LB18189 1 Low Brae, EH48 4LU Residence 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torphichen Preceptory Scheduled Monument – SM90305 Bowgett, EH48 4LZ • Torphichen Refuge Stone Scheduled Monument – SM1903 Bowgett, EH48 4LZ 1990 / 1924 		 <p data-bbox="1637 772 1906 794">https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1215858</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Castlethorn Hill Fort Scheduled Monument – SM11242 500m ESE of Mains Standing Stones 		 <p data-bbox="1585 1123 1989 1145">https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1729214</p>



6.3 Architectural analysis



Torphichen is a small village that historically surrounded a central village green and the architecture varies from 12th century to modern day. There are many traditional buildings that lie within the conservation area boundary but 6 are Category B listed buildings and 7 are Category C listed buildings.

The most architecturally significant building is the Torphichen Preceptory and Kirk. The use of ribbed vaults, large ornate, pointed arch windows and buttresses are typical of the gothic architectural style in which the preceptory was built and the Preceptory remains are now protected as a scheduled monument. The remains consist on the North and South transepts, and the crossing surmounted by a bell tower, all of which stand together with the foundations of a domestic cloister to the North, and the remains of the choir to the East. The remains are of 12th century foundation, with major additions that were constructed from the 14th to 15th century.

The monument has a significant role to play in helping gain a better understanding of medieval ecclesiastical architecture and practice.

The Kirk/ New parish church was constructed in 1756. The church was built in a traditional T-plan. The original nave of the preceptory was dismantled but part of it was used in the construction of the new parish Church. This however is not included in the preceptory scheduling. The North wall of the preceptory was also incorporated in the construction of the Church. The materials used in the construction of the Church are coursed rubble for the envelope, and slate for the skew-gabled roof. The Church includes a 'bird-cage' belfry with a bell by John Meikle dated 1700, round headed windows, the fore-stair of the South arm. Later 19th century additions at the West end include plaster ceilings, lofts, pulpits, as well as folding communion pews.



The Gatehouse was built sometime after the church but the same style and materials were used in its construction. The envelope and chimney materials consist of random rubble, and the material used for the skew-gabled roof is slate.



Other significant 18th century buildings in the area include the imposing Wallhouse mansion and doocot constructed during the 1840s. Originally built for the Gillon family, Wallhouse was rebuilt by James Maitland Wardrop in 1855 who added the side wings and rear tower. This category B-listed house is hidden from view behind mature dense woodland. The large castellated gothic mansion is double storey, and was built using ashlar stone for the envelope of the building, and slate for the piended (hipped) roofs, behind crenelated parapets. The central block, has 5 bays, a porch, end wings, and a rear tower. The octagonal Wallhouse doocot, is a double storey built using random rubble string-course for the envelope. The doocot is roofless, with a rounded arch entrance, and chase with hood-moulding.



Hill House is a traditional 18th century double storey building. The building envelope was constructed using modern pebble-dash masonry, and the skew-gabled roof was constructed in slate. The building has a common terrace in the front, just off of the road. Ivy cottage is located in close proximity to hill house, and is also a traditional 18th century house. The single storey house was built using random rubble, with a lime wash finish on the front of the house. Clay Pantile was used in the construction of the skew-gabled roof.



Other significant buildings in Torphichen include 5 No 19th century C listed buildings. Kirk House and Viewforth were both designed in the Georgian architectural style. Both buildings have slate skew-gabled roofs, and are both double storey houses. Kirk House was built using random rubble and has moulded door architraves, and a frieze inscribed "1802". Viewforth was constructed using Whitestone, and fillet string courses. There is a cornice above the doorway on the terrace, which is approached by steps.



Torphichen Free Church/ church hall is also a 19th century building. This building was designed and built in the Norman Revival style in 1843. The building envelope was constructed using droved and stugged ashlar, with dressed facework. The roof was constructed using slate. The building has latticed windows, with the front windows being round-headed and the side windows being lintelled. The building also has a tower with a belfry projecting from the front end. This building was one of the earliest buildings erected by the free church.



Other 19th century buildings include cottages 1-4 The Square, and Rose Cottage. Rose cottage is a single-story house which functioned previously as a smithy. The envelope of the cottage was constructed using squared rubble with flush margins. The roof of the cottage was constructed out of slate and has skews and coped end stacks. The cottage face has a centred door with an architrave, and a window on either side of the door. The wing to the left was also built with rubble and slate roof, which has a roof light. The cottage still maintains the original sashes. Cottages 1-4 The Square are traditional 1½ story cottage, with 4 dormers in the centre. The building is 4 individual properties.



The majority of the residential buildings in Torphichen are however more contemporary. A large number of houses are post-war and were originally constructed as council housing.



There are no buildings within the conservation area which are listed on the Buildings at Risk Register (BARR). BARR identifies properties of architectural or historic merit that are considered to be at risk.

While the historic core of the village is clustered around the church and the village square, it slowly expanded northwards during the course of the 20th Century, firstly with the creation of the James Wood Park in 1922 followed by the construction of local authority housing to the north and east of it (Greenside and Bowyett) from 1945. While these houses are not architecturally distinguished in themselves, they play a role in providing the setting and character of the village and were clearly designed as such.



They do not attempt to replicate the architecture of the traditional properties in the village centre but they do nonetheless include traditional vernacular materials and details such as pitched roofs, moulded architraves and in some instances gabled dormers.

These are typified by red Rosemary Tile roofs. Such tiles are small sized, natural clay products which were commonly used as an alternative to slate on local authority and private housing. The houses are all either semi-detached or terraced and therefore roofs are shared. From an inspection it would appear that all houses still retain their original roofing materials although there is evidence, as one would expect, of patching and repair in places. Such roofs will not last indefinitely and it might be expected that over the next decades owners will wish to consider re-roofing as an alternative to patching. Patching or replacement with precisely the original material will not require planning permission but using a different material would.

When originally designated in the 1970s, the boundary of the conservation area was drawn very wide to encompass the landscape setting of the historic settlement and to bring due control to those buildings which contribute to it, particularly in views into and across the village.

Further expansion took place with more council housing being built in Priorscroft in the north and in St. John's Place in the south of the village.

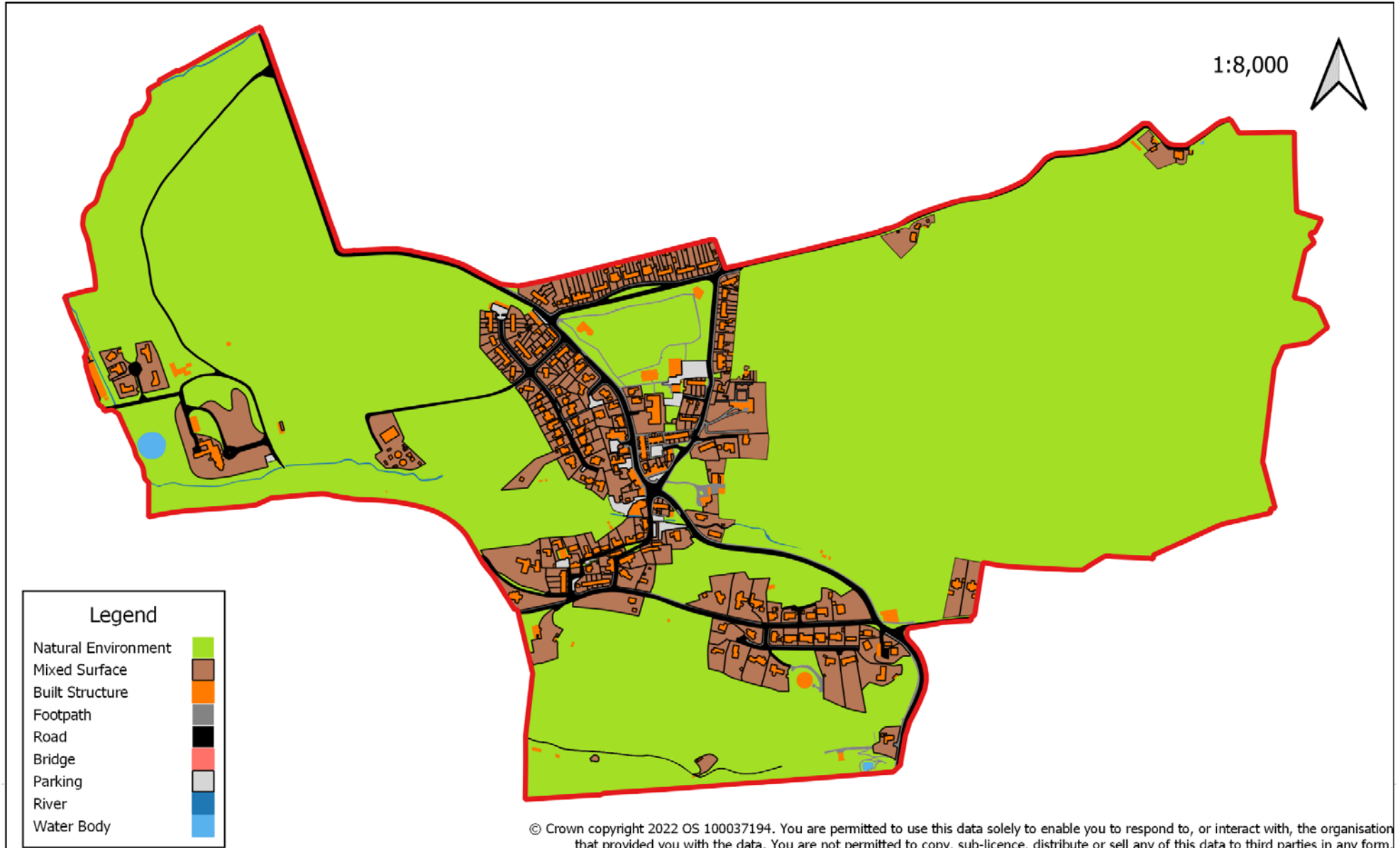
In the early 1960's the last council housing built in the village was erected in Northgate and Priorscroft in the north and also at Manse Road in the south of the village.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a further expansion to the south with a number of detached new houses being built in Cathlaw Lane and Craigs Court.

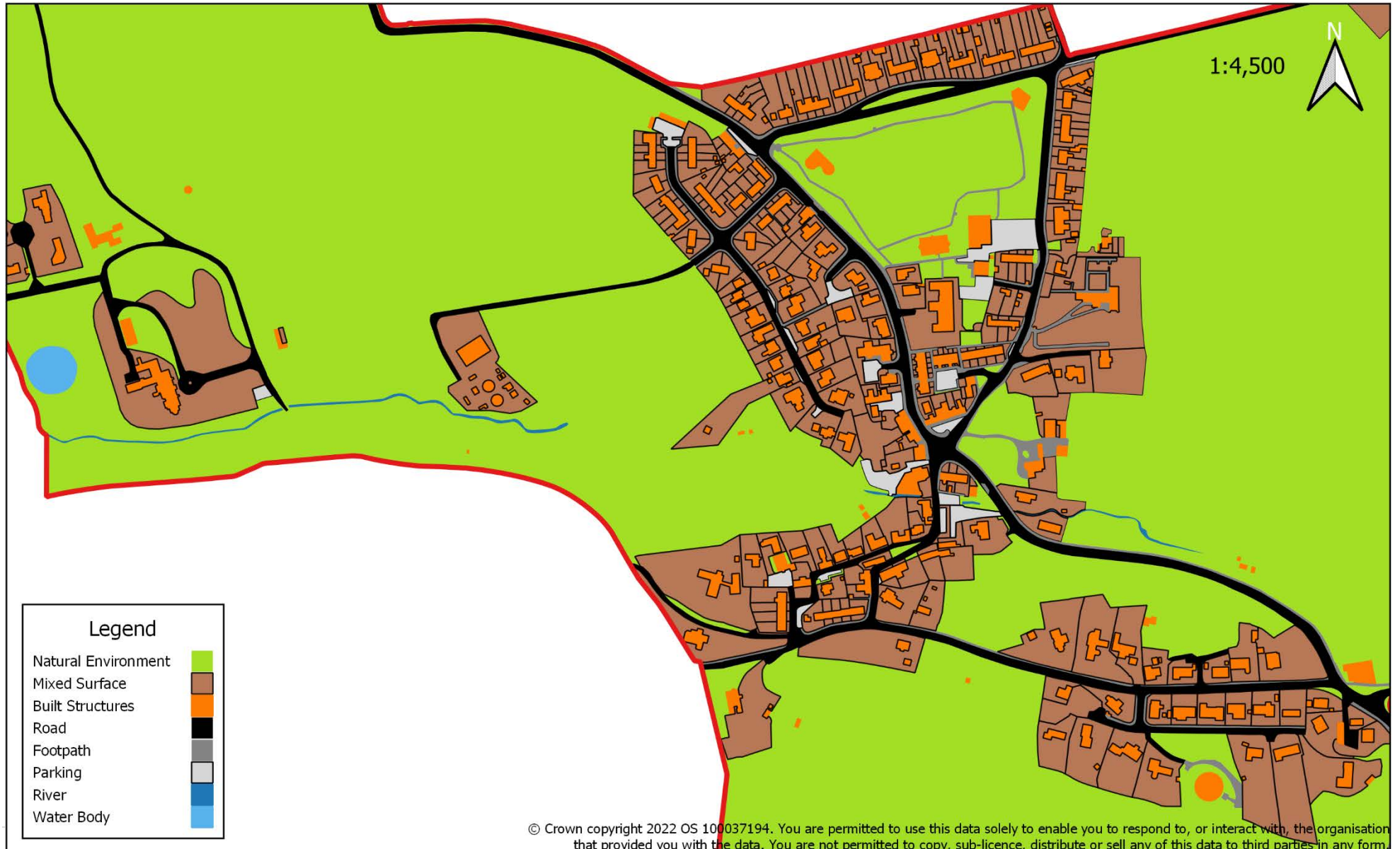
During the 1990s there was more private housebuilding at Priors Grange and in the Loan.

7.0 Urban analysis

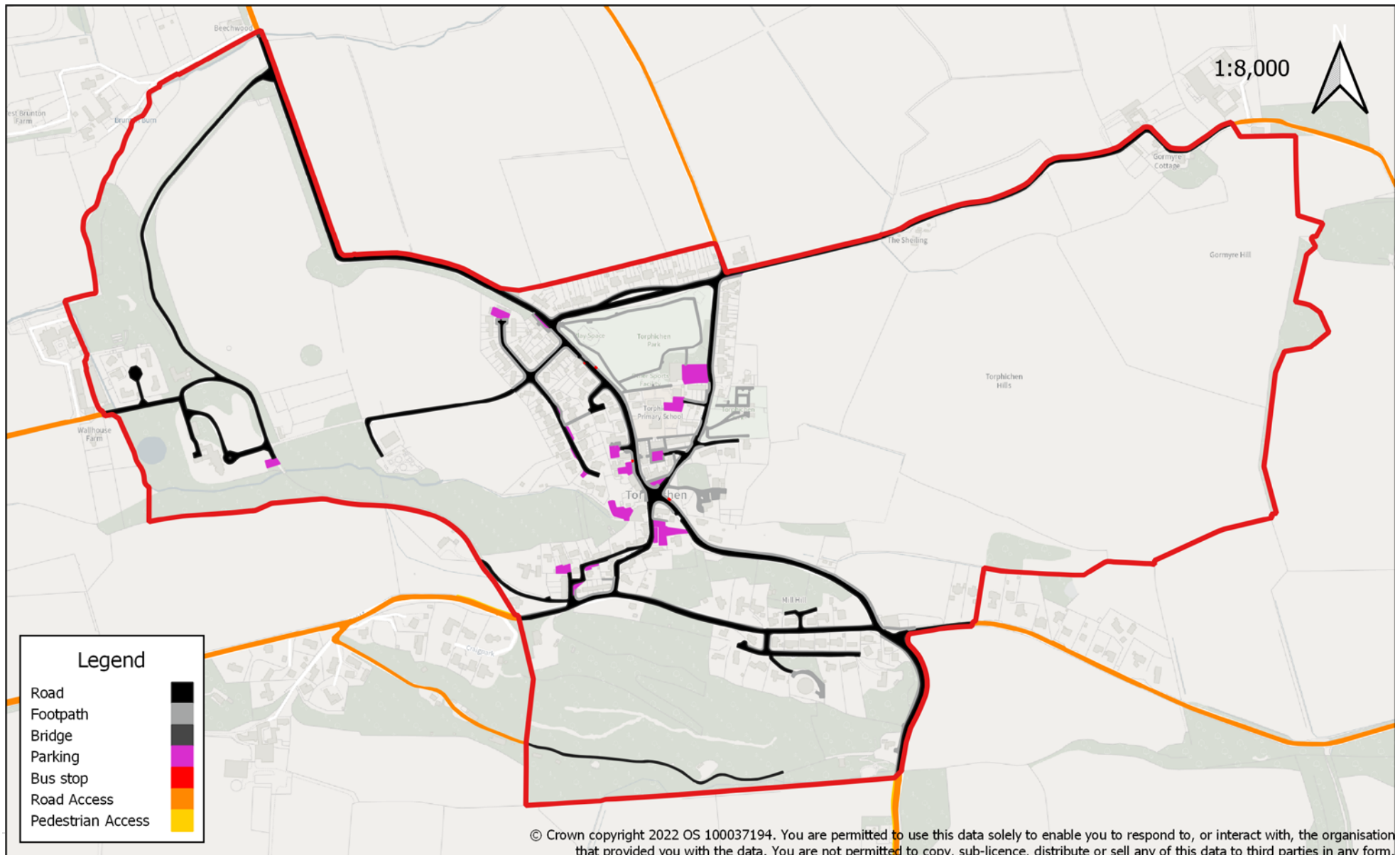
7.1 Built and natural environment (1 of 2)



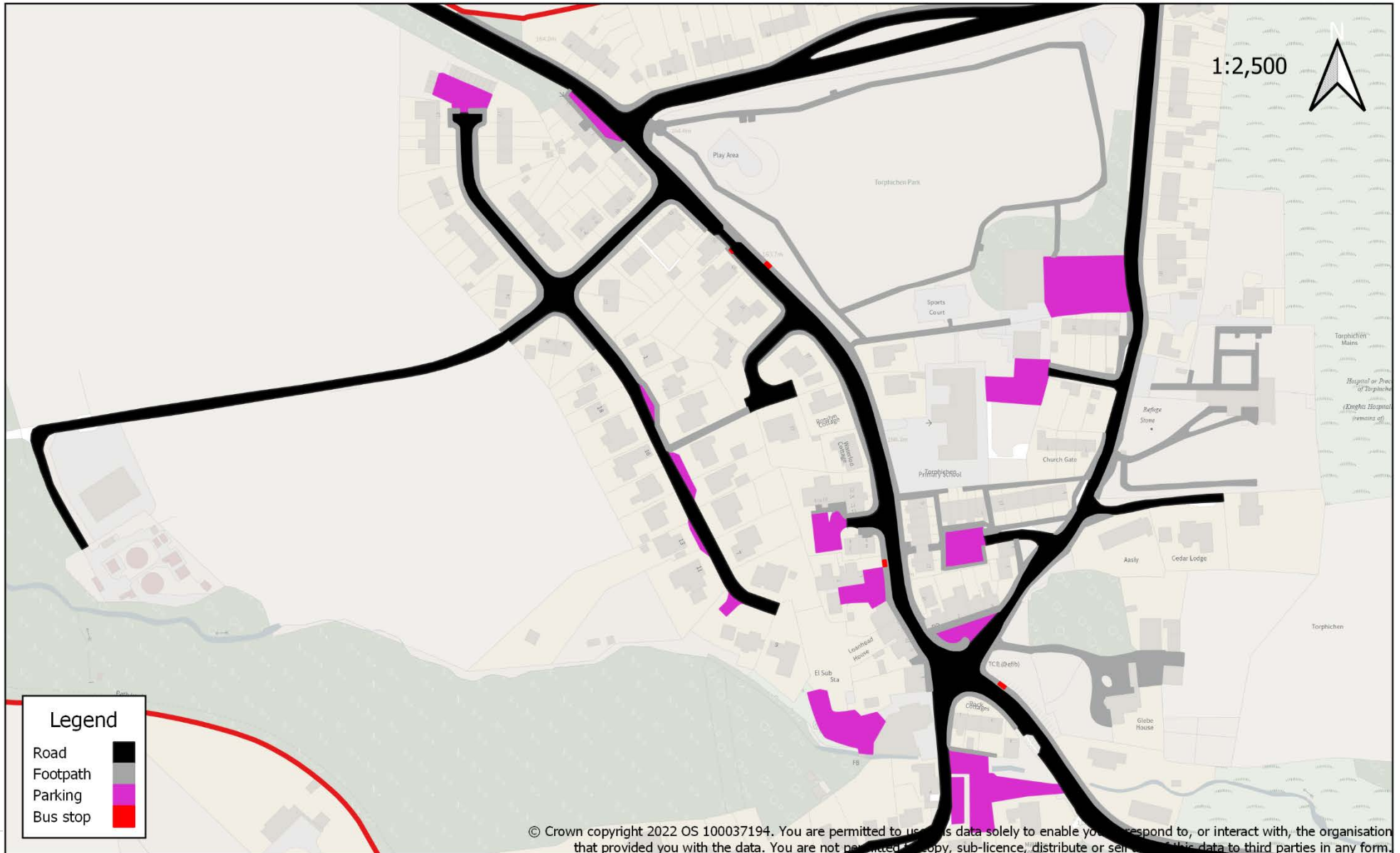
7.1 Built and natural environment (2 of 2)



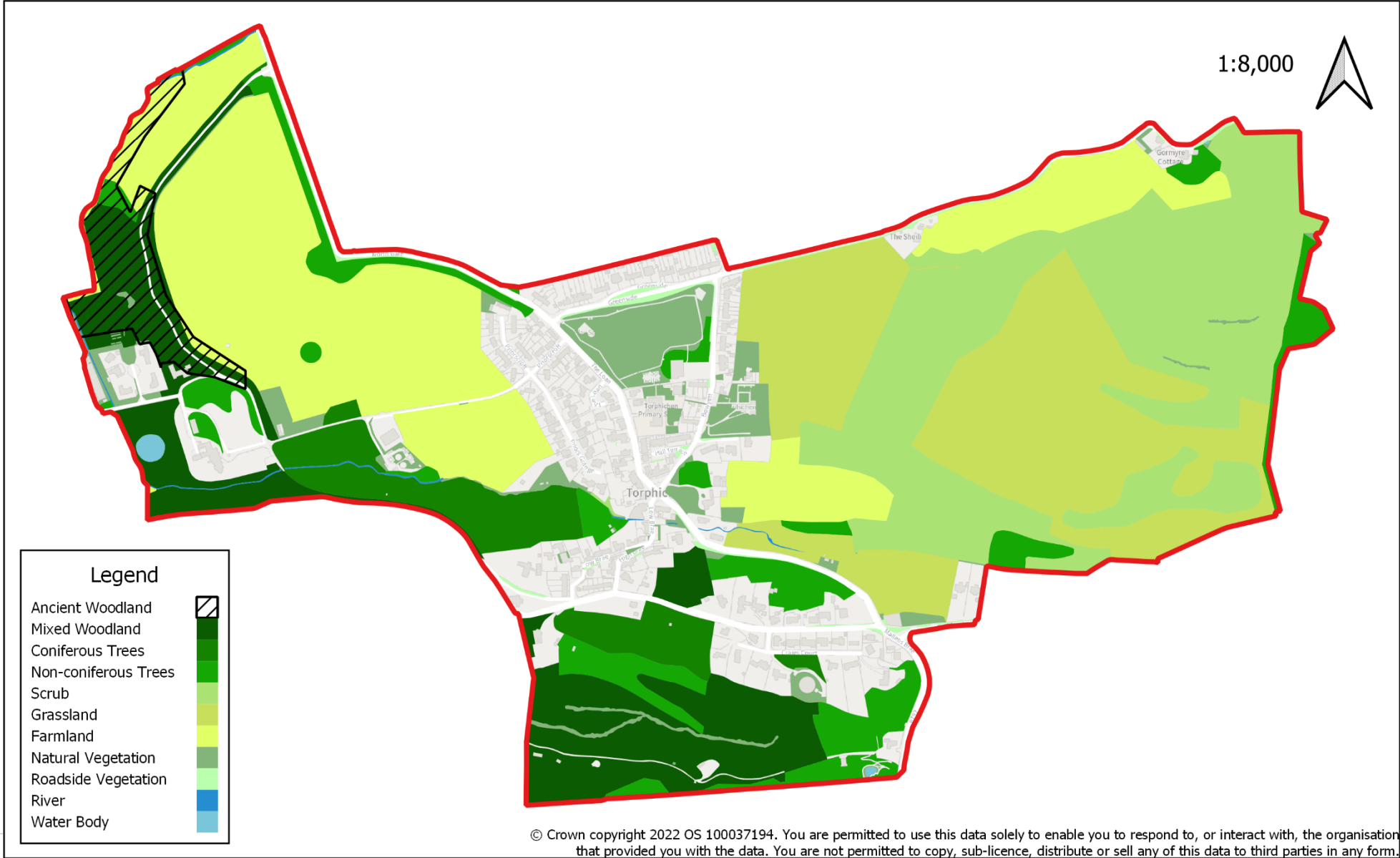
7.3. Site access points (1 of 2)



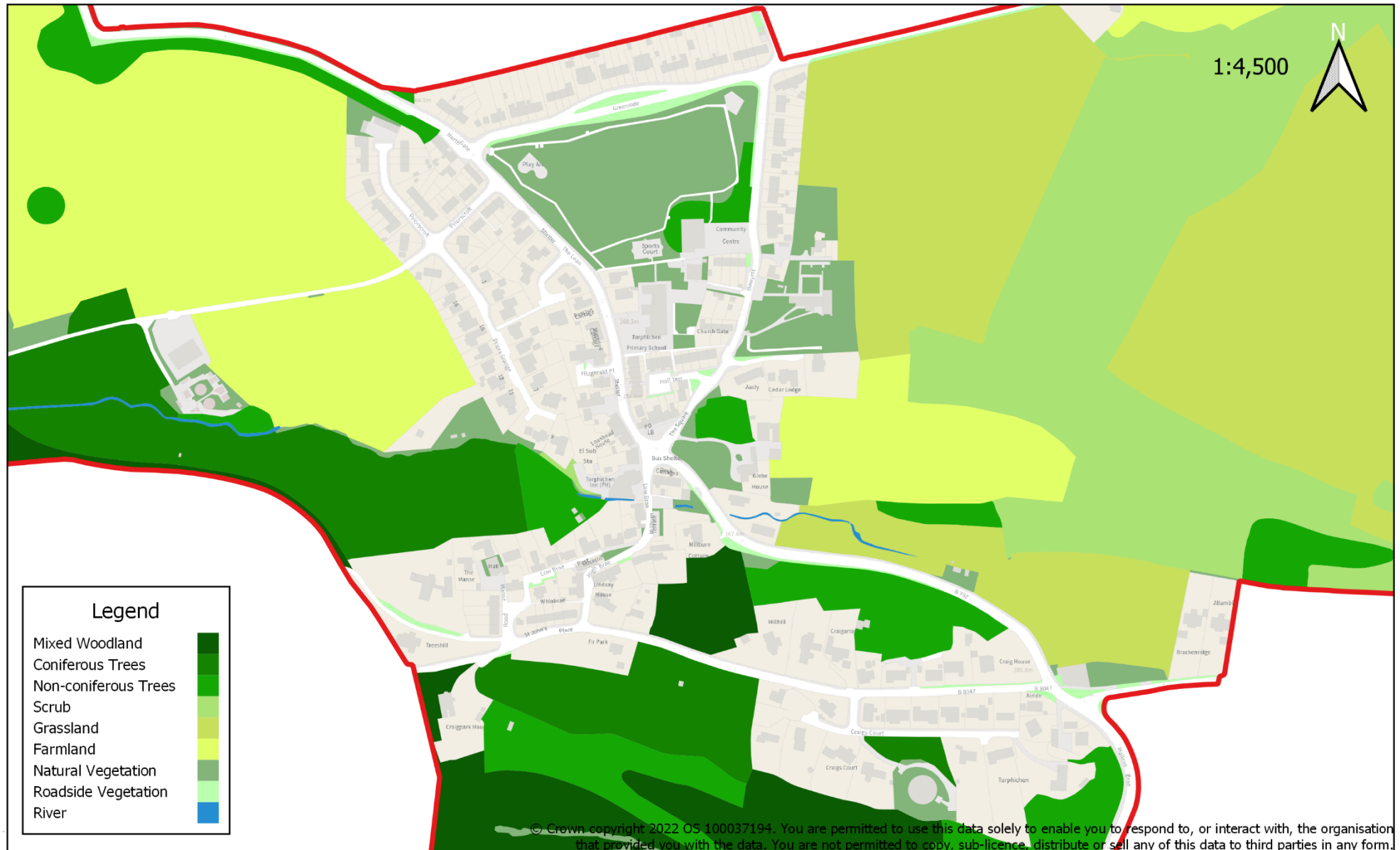
7.3 Site access points (2 of 2)



7.4 Vegetation (1 of 2)



7.4 Vegetation (2 of 2)



7.5 Patterns of growth

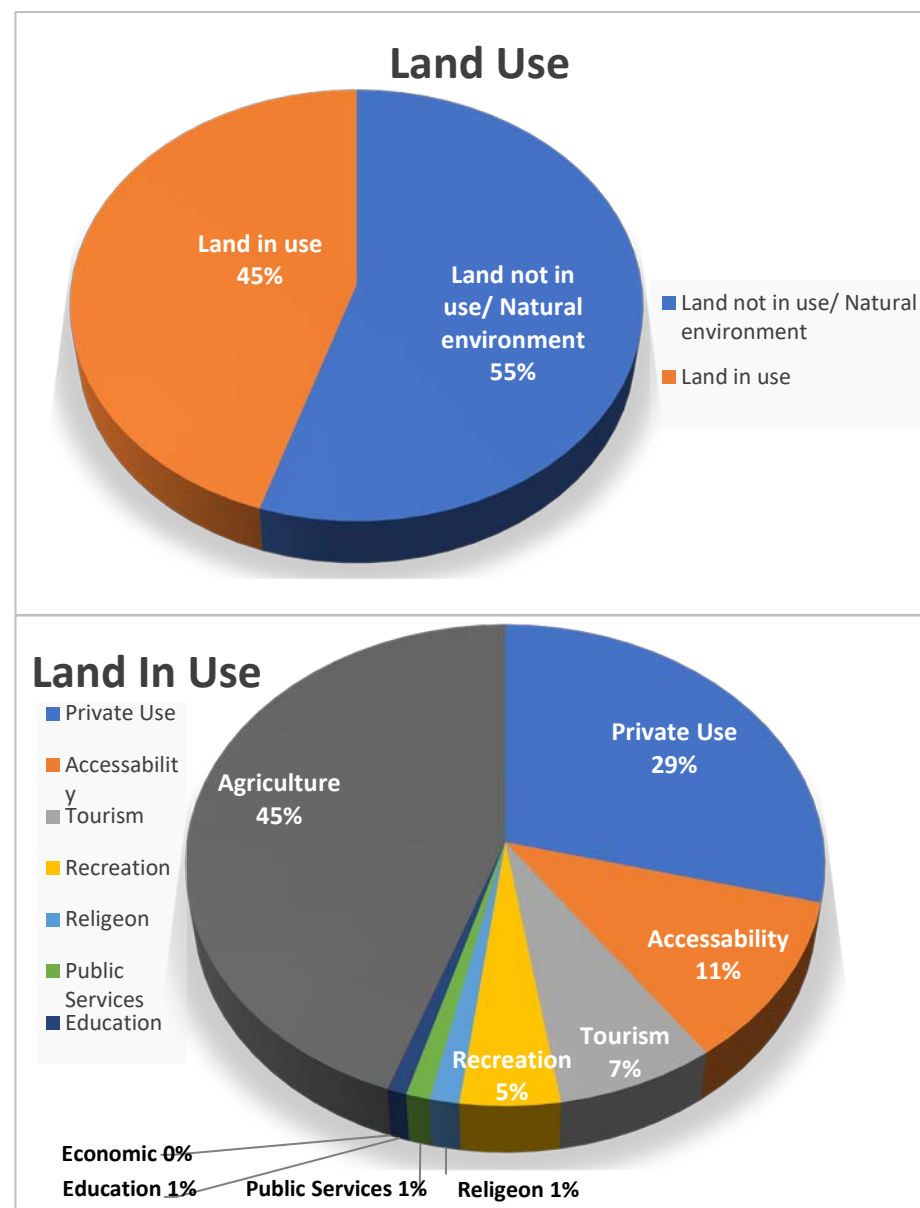
The 2011 Census indicates that Torphichen had a population of 510. This is known to have increased to 710 by 2016 and it is expected to continue growing in the future. The Census shows that in terms of ethnicity of the population the village defined itself as 98.8% British which is marginally greater (by some 2%) than the Scottish average.

The main function of Torphichen village today is residential, albeit that it was historically aligned with agriculture. However, the Preceptory in Torphichen was also the Scottish base to the Knights Hospitaller of the Order of St John of Jerusalem who provided shelter and protection to visitors visiting the Holy Land and which greatly elevated the importance of Torphichen.

Today the remains of the Preceptory are largely an historic legacy for touristic and local use leaving the residential use the most prominent function of the Village.

45% of the land within the Torphichen conservation area boundary has some description of functional use while the remaining 55% is not in any defined use and is part of what is best described as 'the natural environment' and includes forestry, rivers, ponds etc.

Of the land that is in use, agriculture is by far the most predominant.



7.6 Building function and evolution

The majority of the buildings in Torphichen are in residential use and many of the contemporary buildings were originally constructed as council houses during the early 1960's.

Some of the older buildings were not however originally built as dwellings, an example being Rose cottage near the Square which functioned as the village smithy.

Wallhouse mansion was originally conceived as a private country house but was later owned by West Lothian County Council who used it as a children's home from the late 1940s, and thereafter by several different private companies. Part of the expansive Wallhouse estate, some 26 hectares, was developed for housing, including the walled garden. Today, Wallhouse mansion has reverted to its original residential use but the associated Doocot on the estate is now vacant and derelict.

Torphichen Preceptory was of course built for religious purposes but the Preceptory was much larger than the structure that can be seen today. Historically, there was a larger complex of buildings consisting of the transepts, nave, cloister, refectory, doocot, an arch, a gatehouse, water mill with a dam. The Parish church is nevertheless still actively used for religious ceremonies and other events.

Much of what can be seen today at the Kirkyard dates from the 1400s. The Gatehouse at the Kirkyard previously functioned as the offertory, but this is no longer the case.



Torphichen Preceptory is a Property in Care, which means that much of the land to the north of the Torphichen Kirk (Category B Listed Building) is in the care of Historic Environment Scotland (HES), on behalf of Scottish Ministers, and there are a number of conservation issues that have been highlighted in this document which are being monitored by the Cultural Resources and Operations teams in HES.

HES have also been reviewing the current management of trees and vegetation on site which may be likely to affect wall stability and below-ground archaeology within the area of the site managed as a Property in Care.

The remains of the preceptory now serve as a tourist attraction and museum. There are two existing interpretation panels at the Preceptory, one of which shows a reconstruction of the buildings and highlights many of these buildings to help visitors understand the history of the structure now present on the site. Opportunities for further interpretation on site have been identified and will be taken forward with HES.

8.0 Challenges and opportunities

Having carried out an assessment of the conservation area it has been possible to identify a number of key issues which it is concluded have the potential to have a detrimental impact if they go unchecked. These can be broadly summarised as:

- The replacement of traditional materials has led to a loss of historic fabric and a negative impact on the character of the conservation area.
- Modern development in the area has not always been sympathetic to the character of the area in terms of materials, design, plot size and density. This has consequently had a negative impact on the character of the conservation area.
- The public realm is in some parts utilitarian in character and can detract from the high quality historic built environment. In other areas the more traditional streetscape is in need of repair.

The enhancement of the conservation area will therefore come from addressing the issues set out in [Annex 1](#) which includes the public realm and the Conservation Area Action Plan and which will be reviewed after 5 years.

Although the majority of the buildings in the Torphichen conservation area appear to be in a reasonable physical condition the area as a whole is nevertheless at risk from small changes which can cumulatively dilute the special character of the area.

Examples which have adversely affected some of the buildings in the conservation area include the replacement of original timber windows or doors with inappropriate materials such as uPVC or unsympathetic designs or methods of opening; the replacement of natural roof coverings; and removal, inappropriate repair or poor modern equivalents of boundary treatments. These changes in detailing and the loss of original features effect both the external appearance of individual buildings and the local streetscape more generally. It is therefore important that future changes are more sympathetically managed, ensuring that appropriate materials and designs are used wherever it is appropriate to do so, in order to protect and enhance the overall character of the conservation area.

Instances of unauthorised development within the conservation area are likely to have been occasioned by a lack of understanding of the complexities surrounding planning controls in the historic environment, or the overall uncertainty of it. Raising awareness of this issue for the benefit of property owners throughout the conservation area is therefore the most effective way of addressing this.

The public engagement undertaken as part of this Conservation Area Appraisal will have hopefully served a useful purpose in this regard and will help to reduce the number of contraventions and ensure that in the long term Torphichen will not lose any more of its historical character.

For the Torphichen Conservation Area, a more active approach by the council is also likely to be most effective in future, including monitoring development activity and ensuring compliance with the terms of planning permissions.

Climate Change

While the council has a duty to protect the historic environment and maintain the built heritage it is also recognised that people must have the ability to adapt their properties to address climate change where this can be done without significant detriment to the special character which makes them worthy of protection.



To tackle the climate emergency, existing homes and buildings will require to be made more energy efficient and powered by renewable energy.


It is essential to understand, however, that traditional/historic buildings do not function in the same way that modern buildings do and there is therefore a need to ensure an appropriate and sustainable approach to energy retrofitting by understanding the way traditional buildings work, as well as the need to respect their character and significance.

Energy retrofit measures can be both external and internal, and unless it is a listed building, it is the external changes (which may include installing solar panels, air-source heat pumps, ground source heat pumps, insulation replacement windows) that are likely to be the most challenging to reconcile in terms of their potential impact on the appearance of the conservation areas.

In the meantime the council is reviewing guidance on the replacement of windows in listed buildings and in conservation areas and climate change will inform the outcome.


Historic Environment Scotland has published a series of [guidance notes](#) about managing change in the Historic Environment which can be accessed from their website. These include advice on improving energy efficiency in traditional buildings and on micro-renewables.

Annex 1

Challenges	Photographic Evidence CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY	Action Plan
<p>Some of the areas in the conservation area, add no significant historical, cultural or architectural significance to the area. 4 insignificant areas have been identified.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Agricultural shed. B. Roadside sheds for nearby residential properties. C. Unlisted residential building. D. 2 Unlisted residential buildings. <p>The accompanying map shows the proposed boundary adjustments in green, and the existing boundary in red.</p>		<p>The conservation area boundary should be adjusted to exclude these 4 areas from the Torphichen Conservation Area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The conservation area boundary should be adjusted to run along the western property line to exclude the agricultural sheds. B. The conservation area boundary should be adjusted to run along the rear side of the sheds/ along the western property line of the adjacent residential property excluding the sheds. C. The conservation area boundary should be adjusted to run around the residential lot along the East, South and West property line excluding this lot. D. The conservation area boundary should be adjusted to run around the two residential lots, along the west and north property lines excluding the two lots.


Amended Torphichen Conservation Area Boundary


Key:

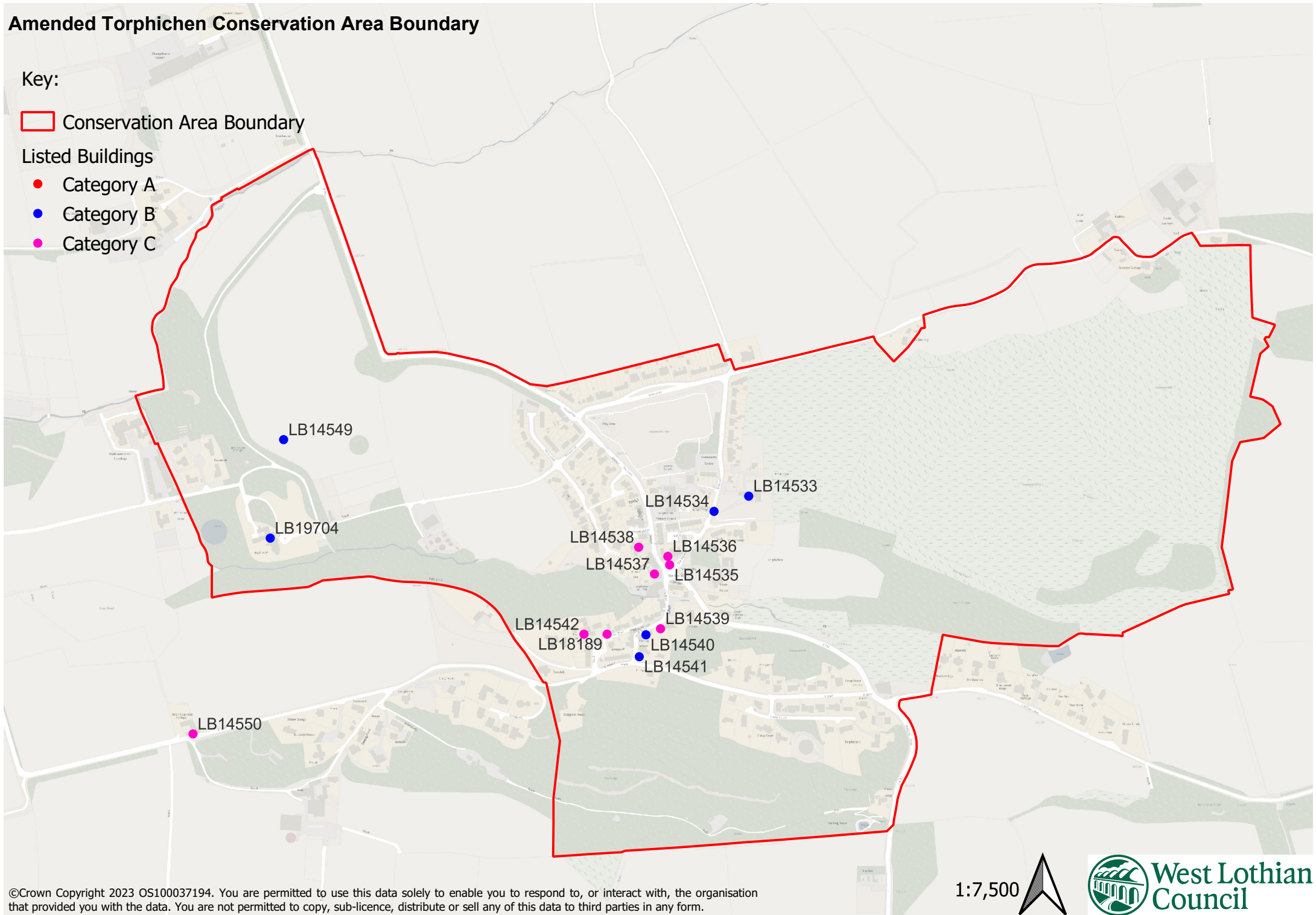
 Conservation Area Boundary



Listed Buildings



 Category A


 Category B



 Category C





Challenges	Photographic Evidence	Action Plan
<p>On the grounds of the preceptory is a Lamp Post. The post is in a state of disrepair with flaking paint and damage to the wooden structure.</p>		<p>It is recommended the post is repaired appropriately and repainted black (preferably not high gloss).</p> <p>Alternatively, the wooden post could be replaced entirely, including an internal hollow to allow the containment of the unsightly loose cable that can be seen trailing the length of the post.</p> <p>At the time of visiting it is unclear if the Lamp is in working order. It is recommended that the lamp be repaired to full working order if so required.</p>
<p>The South window of the Preceptory is in a state of disrepair. The window is not structurally sound and is blocked off by metal fencing. due to risk of collapse, damage and/or risk of injury.</p>		<p>It is recommended that appropriate repair work is undertaken as a priority to repair the masonry of the window frame and to replace missing glass panes and brickwork.</p> <p>Actions should be undertaken to ensure the condition & structure of the building is of a safe standard.</p>

Challenges	Photographic Evidence	Action Plan
<p>The presence of the metal fencing, display the safety risks to visitors and the appearance of the building facade.</p>		<p>After repairs should be completed, the building structure of the facade, they will be visible and not obscured by the fencing. The overall appearance of the building, as well as the overall visitor experience.</p>
<p>The scarring on the East wall of the building is a result of the fire damage. This is a significant characteristic of the building and should be repaired. The East wall would benefit from repair work. The masonry/pointing has eroded away over time leaving much of the stone work open to the elements leading to further erosion and loss of stone work.</p> <p>The roof is also in need of repair. There is a single slate missing from the Southern roof gable.</p>		<p>The gable end is a significant feature of the building and should be repaired and repointed to preserve the existing stone work. Repair work should be done on the masonry. This will also improve the overall appearance of the historic features. The gutters should be repaired and repainted black, where necessary. The paint on the facade, which is a bright color, will eventually fall apart/ crumble over time. This would ultimately be a loss of significant historic evidence. The missing slate should be replaced with an appropriate matching slate.</p>

Challenges	Photographic Evidence	Action Plan
<p>The Kirkyard boundary wall (partially pictured adjoining the gatehouse) requires sporadic repairs to ensure its continued stability.</p>		<p>The boundary wall requires re-grouting with non-corrosive cement and the replacement of missing stones, works which would require scheduled monument consent from HES.</p>
<p>The Preceptory Refuge Stone is a scheduled monument located on the Preceptory grounds (but outwith the Property in Care designation) and sits beneath a mature tree, alongside a headstone as pictured.</p> <p>There is however no information about the history and significance of the refuge stone.</p>		<p>It is recommended that consideration should be afforded to setting the stone upright while appreciating that to do so would require scheduled monument consent from HES. A free-standing interpretation plaque could also be provided to explain the story and significance of the Refuge Stone, but would similarly require the consent of HES.</p>
<p>Pathways in the kirkyard are not in great condition.</p>		<p>The overall aesthetic of the kirkyard would benefit from the improvement of the pathways.</p>

Challenges	Photographic Evidence	Action Plan
Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments		
<p>The village store is recognised for its value as a community asset. However the western façade of the buiding is not in a good condition. There is damage to the exterior wall & chimney where the roughcasting is flaking away & there is cracking between the brickwork.</p> <p>The stone posts standing at the entrance, are showing signs of erosion.</p> <p>The gutters are looking tacky and are in need of improvement.</p>		<p>It is recommended that the chimney is regouted using a non-corrosive material and that the roughcast is either repaired or completely removed to expose the original stonework.</p> <p>It is recommended that the worn bricks are replaced with matching counter parts of the same material.</p> <p>Gutters should be repainted and repaired where needed. The appropriate black paint should be used for this. Paint should not be high gloss.</p>
<p>Located in the garden of the private Rosebank residence, this sundial is dated from 1660 as is a category B listed building. The sundial appears in relatively good condition. Preventative erosion measures should be put in place, rather than restorative measures. There is no information available at the site of the sundial explaining its significance.</p>		<p>It is recommended action is taken to prevent any further erosion to the stone.</p> <p>Due to its location on a private property, any public information plaque must be located out with the boundaries of the residence or mounted to the exterior wall of the property, facing the public footpath.</p>

Challenges	Photographic Evidence	Action Plan
<p>Also present in this location, is a partial statue. The statue is under investigation by Historic Environment Scotland as it is believed to pre-date the sundial. It is thought to have depicted a sitting woman however it is missing the upper portion of the figurine and is significantly eroded.</p> <p>The statue is currently not listed under any designated protections, but HES has not ruled this out.</p>		<p>It is recommended that the statue is considered alongside the Sundial and that no action is taken with it until HES or the appropriate authority determine its historical significance.</p> <p>An information plaque would be an appropriate addition but it is recognised that the statue is located on a residential property. This will restrict access to the statue and the type of plaque used.</p>
Signage		
<p>The Signage on Davidsons Village Store is inappropriate for a listed building in a conservation area. The sign is out of character and is not sensitive to the building façade.</p>		<p>The exterior display of the premises could be improved in line with the conservation area guidance. The large tartan signage outside could be replaced with traditionally styled text signage similar to that of the Torphichen Inn. The correct proportions should be applied.</p>

Challenges	Photographic Evidence	Action Plan
Railings		
<p>Railings outside the village shop and post office are not in great condition. The paint is coming off the railings.</p>		<p>The overall aesthetic of the shop and the area would benefit from the repainting of these railings. Preferably in a non-high gloss black paint.</p>
Vacant and dilapidated buildings at the junction of Slackend/Cathaw Lane)		
<p>These buildings, formerly a garage, occupy a prominent location on the approach to the conservation village and significantly detract from its special character and appearance.</p>		<p>A sensitive restoration or redevelopment of the existing building footprint on this brownfield site would be supported. Outline planning permission has previously been granted in principle but has never been progressed.</p>

9.0 Advice for property owners and occupiers

Conservation area status does not mean that alterations and new development is prohibited. However great care should be taken to ensure that any new development will preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area and it's important that works are sympathetic and carried out in a sensitive way.

In spatial terms, it is the whole Conservation Area (made up of all buildings and the spaces between these buildings) that is of architectural or historic interest. Planning control is, therefore, directed at maintaining the integrity of the entire conservation area and enhancing its special character.

If intending to make changes to a property in the conservation area (and or it is a listed building) it is likely that some form of consent will be required and if in any doubt it is always advised to check with the council before undertaking or committing to any work.

Withdrawal of 'permitted development' rights

The character of conservation areas can be compromised over time by seemingly small but nonetheless incremental alterations which lead to a loss of historic character and it's one of the main reasons that some works and alterations which might ordinarily be undertaken elsewhere without the requirement for planning permission, known as 'permitted development', were brought within planning control.

In 2011 the Scottish ministers revised The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(Scotland) Order

1992 (GPDO) which sets out the permitted development rights of householders. In essence the changes removed the permitted development rights of householder to carry out works to listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas without having to formally apply for planning permission.

Works ordinarily include alterations to the exterior or structure of any building including alterations to a roof, installing a dormer window, replacing original windows, erecting gates, wall and fences, stone cleaning, painting the exterior of a building, installing a satellite receiver (which is visible from a road), and fixing illuminated signage.

There is comprehensive [Scottish Government guidance](#) on what can and cannot be carried out to a house or a flat without needing planning permission and this is highly commended.

Works which do require planning permission must be of a high standard appropriate to its surroundings and planning legislation requires the council to afford particular consideration whether the proposed development "preserves or enhances" the special character of the conservation area

Demolition

Where buildings are being demolished 'conservation area consent' is also required. Demolition of listed buildings in a conservation area also requires Listed Building Consent for demolition and is unlikely to be granted in the absence of proposals for satisfactory replacement of the building or redevelopment of the site.

In addition, where a building or structure makes a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area, and/or is listed, the council is unlikely to give permission for its demolition.

Article 4 Direction

The Torphichen Conservation Area is also the subject of an 'Article 4 Direction' which re-enforces controls over works which are not wholly related to domestic properties and include the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure and also the extension or alteration of an industrial building or a warehouse.

Trees

It is not just buildings that are protected. In a conservation area it is an offence for any person to cut, lop, top, uproot, wilfully damage or destroy any tree, unless six weeks' notice has been given to the council of the intention to carry out such works. The owner of the tree must submit a Tree Work Notice Application and await written consent from the council prior to undertaking such works. Failure to give notice is an offence.

The process for obtaining permission is explained on the council's [website](#) and applications are free.

Policies

There are specific policies in the adopted [West Lothian Local Development Plan](#) relating to development in conservation areas and/or affect listed buildings and scheduled monuments and which should be taken account of in the first instance. These include Policies HOU 3, ENV 24, ENV 28, ENV 29 and ENV 33.

More recently, [National Planning Framework 4](#) has been published and Policy 7 – Historic Assets and Places refers.

The council has also prepared planning guidance on a number of subject matters which may also be informative, including [The Historic Environment](#), [Shopfronts and Advertisements in Conservation Areas](#), [House Extension & Alteration Design Guide](#) and [Alteration and Replacement of Windows in Listed Buildings and in Conservation Areas](#).

As the lead public body responsible for the care for and promotion of Scotland's historic environment Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has published [Interim Guidance on Conservation Areas](#) and also [Managing Change Guidance on the Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings](#), which are insightful and informative for anyone planning to undertake works that affect buildings in a conservation area and/or which may be listed.

Historic Scotland has produced specific guidance on repointing rubble stonework, domestic chimneys and flues or domestic boundary walls under the collective banner of [INFORM](#) guides.

New development within the conservation area

Opportunities may present for a very modest element of new development/re-development within the established settlement boundary of the village and where it is appropriate new development will be supported. It is however important that it should preserve and enhance the established urban grain which has a strong identity in Torphichen.

The scale and form of new buildings, or of extensions to existing buildings, should never be such as to overpower the existing historic buildings within the streetscape and should have regard to those elements of scale and height and the topography of the village.

It is unlikely however that more substantive development would be considered appropriate beyond this. Given the predominantly rural character of the area and its protected landscape status, proposals to develop greenfield land would be incompatible with Local Development Plan policies EMP 2 and HOU 1 and National Planning Framework 4 policy 7.

The council encourages anyone who is considering undertaking works within the conservation area but is unsure if planning permission is required to contact the council's Development Management team, either by email or by writing to the team at Civic Centre, Howden South Road,

Torphichen Conservation Appraisal

Approved by West Lothian Council Executive on 15 August 2023

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