



HOUSTOUN MAINS, WEST LOTHIAN

Desk-top Archaeology Assessment

July 2009

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MA (Hons) FSA Scot



PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

<i>Client</i>	GVA GRIMLEY ON BEHALF OF DOBBIES GARDEN CENTRE PLC
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	NT 049 706 (CENTRE)
<i>Address</i>	UPHALL
<i>Parish</i>	WEST LOTHIAN
<i>Council</i>	COUNCIL
<i>Planning Application No</i>	N/A
<i>NMRS No</i>	N/A
<i>Oasis No</i>	N/A
<i>SMR No</i>	N/A
<i>HB/SAM No</i>	N/A
<i>Listing Category</i>	N/A
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<i>Fieldwork</i>	N/A
<i>Report</i>	JULY 2009

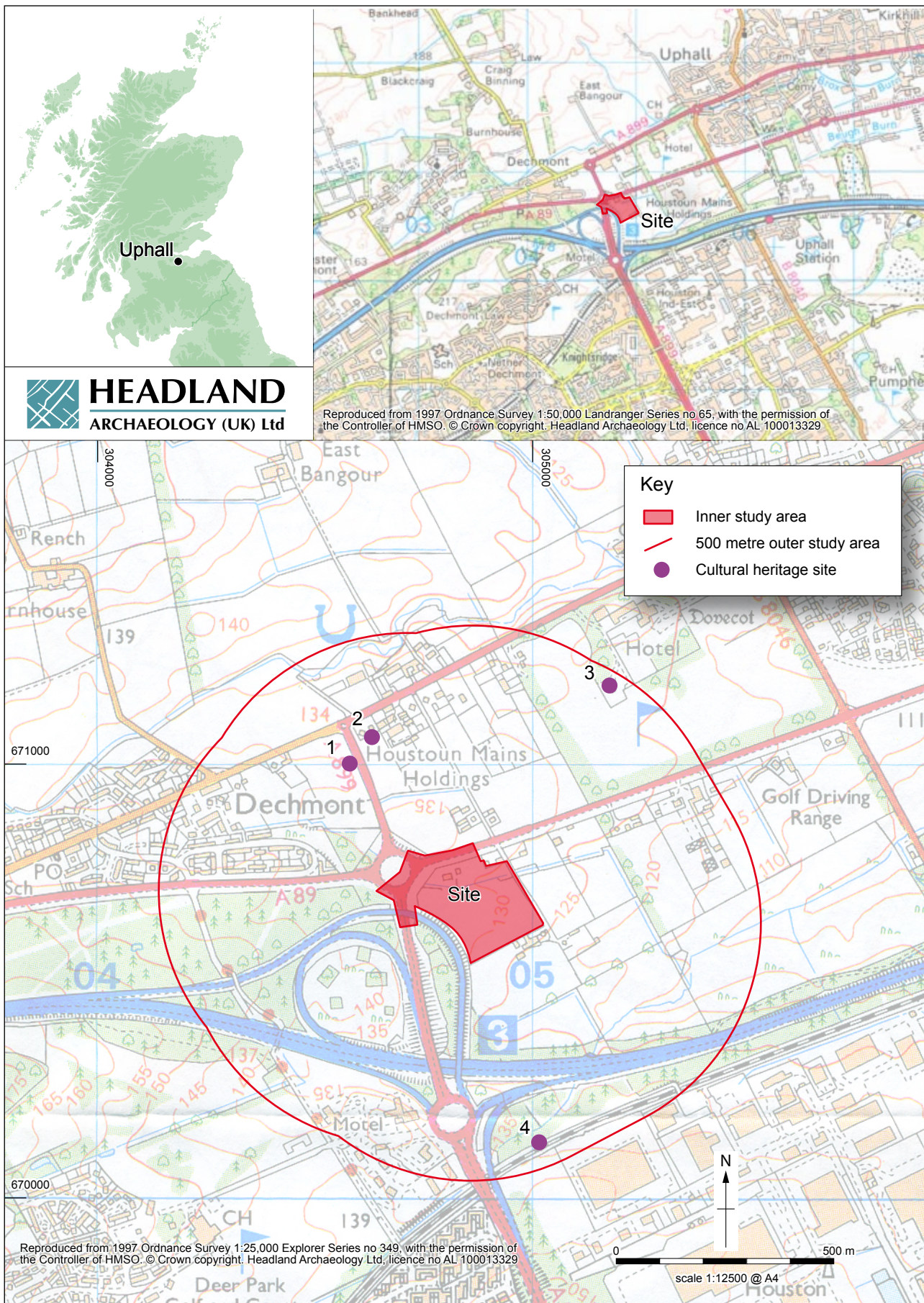
Signed off by:

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Date:.....

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Illus 1
 Site location.

Houston Mains, West Lothian

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

by Richard Conolly

A desk based archaeological assessment including a site visit led to the conclusion that the area in which the planned Dobbies Garden World centre is to be built has a low to moderate archaeological potential. The field constitutes a gentle south facing slope at 130-135 OD and finds of prehistoric and roman artefacts in the Uphall area indicates that some Prehistoric or Roman activity may have taken place. Three previously recorded sites are present in the outer study area but none in the inner, all of these are of post medieval date. One additional site was identified on a nineteenth century map but this is also in the outer study area. Statistical accounts as well as map evidence supports the interpretation that little human activity took place in the area prior to the agricultural improvements introduced in the middle to late eighteenth century.

INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology was commissioned by GVA Grimley on behalf of Dobbies Garden World plc to carry out a desk-based archaeological assessment and site appraisal for the proposed development of a Dobbies Garden World near Houston Mains, West Lothian. The desk-based assessment was requested by West Lothian Council before the submission of the detailed planning application.

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The development area is located southeast of Dechmont roundabout, centred on NGR NT 049 706. It is bounded by the A899, Livingston Road and the M8 slip road to the west and by a road to a local farmhouse on the east. The A89 forms the northern limit and to the south a local farm marks the area boundary. The planning application area takes in the southeastern part of the roundabout and about 120m of the A89 and approximately 75m of the A899.

The application area takes in some 3.5ha most of which is farmland, with trees and bushes along the field boundaries (this does not include the areas of Dechmont Roundabout and the associated roads which are included in the over all application area for associated highway works). Existing development is restricted to two small derelict houses. The ground slopes very gently down from north to south and lies between 130-135 m OD. Banks and ditches associated with modern roads, the farm access road and the field boundaries are present. Geologically oil shale dominates the area but a layer of glacial till derived from the carboniferous sedimentary sequence with minor areas of peat lie above the shale. Various mineral belts are found

including coal, limestone and freestone all of which have been exploited in the wider area.

METHODOLOGY

Two study areas have been used:

- Inner study area. This takes in the application area.
- Outer study area. This extends 500m from the inner study area and has been used to gather background data to inform consideration of the development area's archaeological potential.

The area in which the development is taking place was visited to verify the results of the desk-based work and to identify any further sites present or variations in the archaeological potential.

The following sources were consulted:

- Archaeological records held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RACHMS) and National Monuments Record of Scotland (NMRS);
- Records of Listed Buildings held by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland;
- Historic Maps and plans held at the National Library of Scotland;
- Ordnance Survey Maps held at the National Library of Scotland;
- Relevant plans held at the National Archives of Scotland;
- West Lothian Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) maintained by West of Scotland Archaeology Service; and
- Vertical air photographs held by RCAHMS



Illus 2
Approximate location of inner study area.
Armstrong, Map of the three Lothians. 1773.

RESULTS

Previously recorded sites in the NMRS or SMR

To date, there have been no prehistoric or medieval sites identified in the inner or outer study area. Three sites within the outer study area are recorded in the NMRS and one of these is also recorded in the SMR. No sites have been recorded previously inside the inner study area. A gazetteer of the three here identified and a site identified in the map evidence (see below) can be found in Appendix A.

The previously recorded sites consist of the Dechmont or West Port farmstead (Site 1), Houstoun House estate cottage (Site 3) and Bangour Railway Station (Site 4). The first two are first mapped on the First Edition OS (1856), however, West Port (Site 1) clearly has earlier origins as some of the buildings on the First Edition are annotated 'Ruins'. The now demolished Bangour Railway Station opened in 1905.



Illus 3
Approximate location of inner study area.
John Thomson's Atlas of Scotland. 1820.

Map evidence

The earliest map available of the area is Pont's map of Scotland dating to the late 16th century. The hand-drawn map has very limited information but Dechmont, Knightridge and Houstoun can be identified as Daechmont, Knightrig and Houson. The map does not provide information regarding land use or field boundaries but the general area of the development shows no signs of having been occupied at this point in time. Drumshoreland Moor may have stretched into the outer study area but this cannot be established with absolute certainty.

Not until Armstrong's map of 1773 can the countryside be identified (Illus 2). On this map field boundaries are clearly depicted in and around the area south of Houstoun and east of Dechmont. Several small buildings can also be identified in the general area, but none fall within the inner study area (Illus 2).



Illus 4
Location of inner study area.
Ordnance Survey, One-inch to the mile map of Scotland First Edition.
Sheet 32 (Edinburgh). 1857.

Thomson's Atlas of Scotland published in 1820 (Illus 3) also contains information relevant to the search area. The landscape depicted is largely unchanged from that seen on the 1773 map. The study areas had certainly been enclosed. A building marked Colliers Houses (Site 4) lies some way to the north of the inner study area.

The First Edition OS map of 1857 shows the inner study area as enclosed with an area of mixed woodland within it (Illus 4). The surrounding area is not densely populated but has a formalized road and railway infrastructure. No buildings are shown on this map. The buildings that are currently present within the inner study area did not appear on a map until the OS map of 1952.

Archives and Published Sources

A substantial amount of information about Uphall Parish within which the study areas lie is available. The three sources here used consist of the Old and New Statistical Accounts and a personal account by the Right Hon Earl

of Buchan to *Archaeologica Scotia* in their first volume of *Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*. Much of the material present in this account can also be found in the *Old Statistical Account* (1791-99). The area had at this point been agriculturally improved substantially, mostly through Earl Buchan's introduction of 19 year leases and ending of the runrig system. However, he was also responsible for the introduction of summer fallow, straightening of the ridges, enclosing, draining and other improvement techniques. Wheat, barley and beans could all be successfully grown on the Uphall Parish soil.

The *Old Statistical Account* records a colliery, a lime quarry and two freestone quarries. The colliery and colliery houses can be seen on the maps above. The former is visible on the OS First Edition and the latter can be seen on Thomson's 1820 map.

Site visit

A site visit confirmed what was already known. The area is dominated by agricultural uses with some modern industry. The two buildings present were inspected. Both are semi-derelict and are of twentieth century date.

CONCLUSION

No cultural heritage features (defined here as relict features appearing on the First Edition OS map and selected later features of special historic interest) are known within the development site.

There is no evidence of the inner study area having been developed before the 20th century, but there is potential for unrecorded prehistoric archaeology to be present, in particular small scale sites that would not present as cropmarks. Few prehistoric sites have been recorded in the Uphall area, but it is unclear as to whether this is a result of the distribution of field work in the area, relatively little has been undertaken, or whether it is a true reflection of the low levels of activity during the prehistoric period. Given the development's location on a gentle south-facing slope and that chance finds of prehistoric and Roman material have been made in the Uphall area, it is considered that the potential for previously unrecorded features is low to moderate.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cartographic Sources

The following maps, listed in chronological order, were consulted:

- Pont, T 1580s to 1590s *Maps of Scotland*. West Lothian and Linlithgowshire
- Pont, T 1630 *A new description of the Shyres Lothian and Linlithgow*.
By T. Pont. Judocus Hondius celavit sumptibus Andrae Hart.
- Blaeu, J 1654 *Lothian and Linlithgow*.
- Adair, J 1682 *Mappe of Wast Lothian commonly called Linlithgowshire*.

Adair, J 1737 *A map of West Lothian survey'd by Mr J. Adair*.

Elphinstone, J 1744 *A new & correct map of the Lothians from Mr Adair's observations*.

Moll, H 1745 *Lothian contains The Shire of Linlithgow or West Lothian. The Shire of Edinburgh or Midlothian and Haddington or East Lothian*

Roy, W 1747-55 *Military Survey*

Armstrong, A and Armstrong, M 1773 *Map of the three Lothians*

Forrest, W 1818 *Linlithgowshire*.

Thomson, J 1820 *Edinburghshire*.

Thomson, J 1820 *Sheet 2 Linlithgowshire*.

Ainslie, J 1821 *Ainslie's Map of the Southern Part of Scotland*.

Ordnance Survey 1853 *Edinburghshire IV 1:10,560*. Surveyed 1852.

Ordnance Survey 1856 *Linlithgowshire X 1:10,560*. Surveyed 1854-55.

Ordnance Survey 1857, *Sheet 32 Edinburgh*. One-inch to the mile. Surveyed 1851-56.

Ordnance Survey 1897, *Sheet 32 Edinburgh*. One-inch to the mile. Second Edition. Revised 1895.

Ordnance Survey 1897, *Linlithgowshire*. Six-inch to the mile. Second Edition. Revised 1894-96

Ordnance Survey 1913-14 *Linlithgowshire*. Surveyed 1854-55. Re-levelled 1911-14. Revised 1913-14.

Ordnance Survey 1952 *West Lothian NVIII and Midlothian part of sheets II, V and VI*. Surveyed: West Lothian 1854-55, Midlothian: 1852. Revised: West Lothian 1913-14 and 1950, Midlothian: 1905, 1913 and 1950. Re-levelled 1942-48.

Ordnance Survey 1958 *West Lothian NT 07 SW*. Surveyed 1955.

Documentary sources

Primary sources:

Statistical Account 1791-9, *Uphall, County of Linlithgow*. Vol. 6, p.543-545.

New Statistical Account 1834-45, *Uphall County of Linlithgow*. Vol. 2, 85-89.

Buchan, John 1792 *Account of the Parish of Uphall in Archaeologia Scotica: Transactions of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*. Vol. 1 p. 139-155.

Secondary source:

McWilliam, C 1978 *The Buildings of Scotland*. Lothian except Edinburgh. P. 461-462.

Aerial Photography

The following aerial photographs, held by NMRS were examined:

Sortie	Frames	Date	Scale
541/A/467	3205-3202, 4258-4256	26/04 1949	1:10000
OS/66/173	033-037, 053-050	22/07 1966	1:10000
Meridian 112/71	077-078	10/07 1971	1:10000
OS/73/399	198-196, 155-158, 126-123	12/08 1973	1:15000 – 1:30000
51988	208-210	07/08 1988	1:24000

APPENDIX A: SITES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE INTEREST

Site No	Site name	Alternative name	Recorded in	NGR	Type of Site	Local Authority	NMRS No	SSMR No
1	Dechmont	West Port	NMRS & SSMR	NT 0459 7100	Farmstead	West Lothian	NT07SW.24	50169
2	Colliers Houses	n/a	n/a	n/a	Workers Houses	West Lothian	n/a	n/a
3	Houstoun House Workers' Cottage	Houstoun Barns	NMRS	NT 05182 71180	Estate Cottage	West Lothian	NT07SE.10.3	–
4	Bangour junction	Bangour Station	NMRS	NT 05015 70128	Railway Statio	West Lothian	NT07SE.115	–