

Country Houses

in West Lothian

Summer 2022



Country houses in West Lothian

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Introduction



The many country houses spread across West Lothian contain locally important historical aspects of Scottish history, as well as archaeological remains. These houses, that are often several hundreds of year old, provide unique records of social, cultural and economic change at both local and national levels and greatly contribute to the national identity.

Before the Industrial Revolution most wealth came from the land and generally the most substantial house in a medieval village belonged to the laird. At that time, country houses and surrounding land gave security, status and a stake in country affairs. In other ways, the more modest country landowners looked after their acres, played a part in local government and improved their country house as finances permitted.

Country houses are the physical remains of the societies and people of Scotland and provide a unique record of social, cultural and economic change. Large traditional houses in the countryside display the heritage of wealthy families and their surrounding villages and tenants which were often kept under the same family name over generations through marriages

Country houses in Scotland contribute to national identity but also promote the history, enrich the landscape and allow nature conservation to prosper in their grounds. Currently many country houses either remain

in private residency or are used in other ways, serving often as hotels, institutions and hospitals.

Within Scotland country house large woodland estates are common. Policies are generally enclosed grounds with gardens surrounding a country house, developed usually for both pleasure and productive purposes. In this booklet you will find more information of the country houses and small mansions across West Lothian. Country house estates and woodland policies listed have in many cases retained their original character and are worth of protection through general planning policies when assessing any development proposals.

Please note that Hopetoun House, House of the Binns, Harburn House and Hatton House are introduced in their own booklet; *Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes in West Lothian*. You might also be interested of *Scheduled Monuments in West Lothian 2022*. Please respect the privacy of these country houses.

Philpstoun House

Location: Philpstoun / Linlithgow
Grid Reference: 306604 677758

Philpstoun House is a charming white-walled house of the late 17th century with a scenic and historic value. A window lintel is dated 1676, when presumably the house was built for John Dundas of Philpstoun, whose initials are also found over the former entrance.

Philpstoun House is a U-plan house with sundials at each of the three angles. The

the Dundas Clan came to live on land along the southern shores of the River Forth and by the 15th century the greater part of Linlithgowshire, now equivalent to West Lothian and the western part of Edinburgh, was controlled or owned by the Dundas's. Serving as a laird's house, Philpstoun House is located only 4 miles away from Dundas Castle.

David Dundas obtained from his father, John Dundas of Newliston, about 1618, the lands at Philpstoun in the parish of Abercorn,



house is two storeys. Located north of Philpstoun village and in the vicinity of Linlithgow, Philpstoun House is situated between two larger country house estates; Hopetoun House and House of the Binns.

Philpstoun House has a long history under the Dundas family. From the 12th century onwards

becoming the first Dundas of Philpstoun.

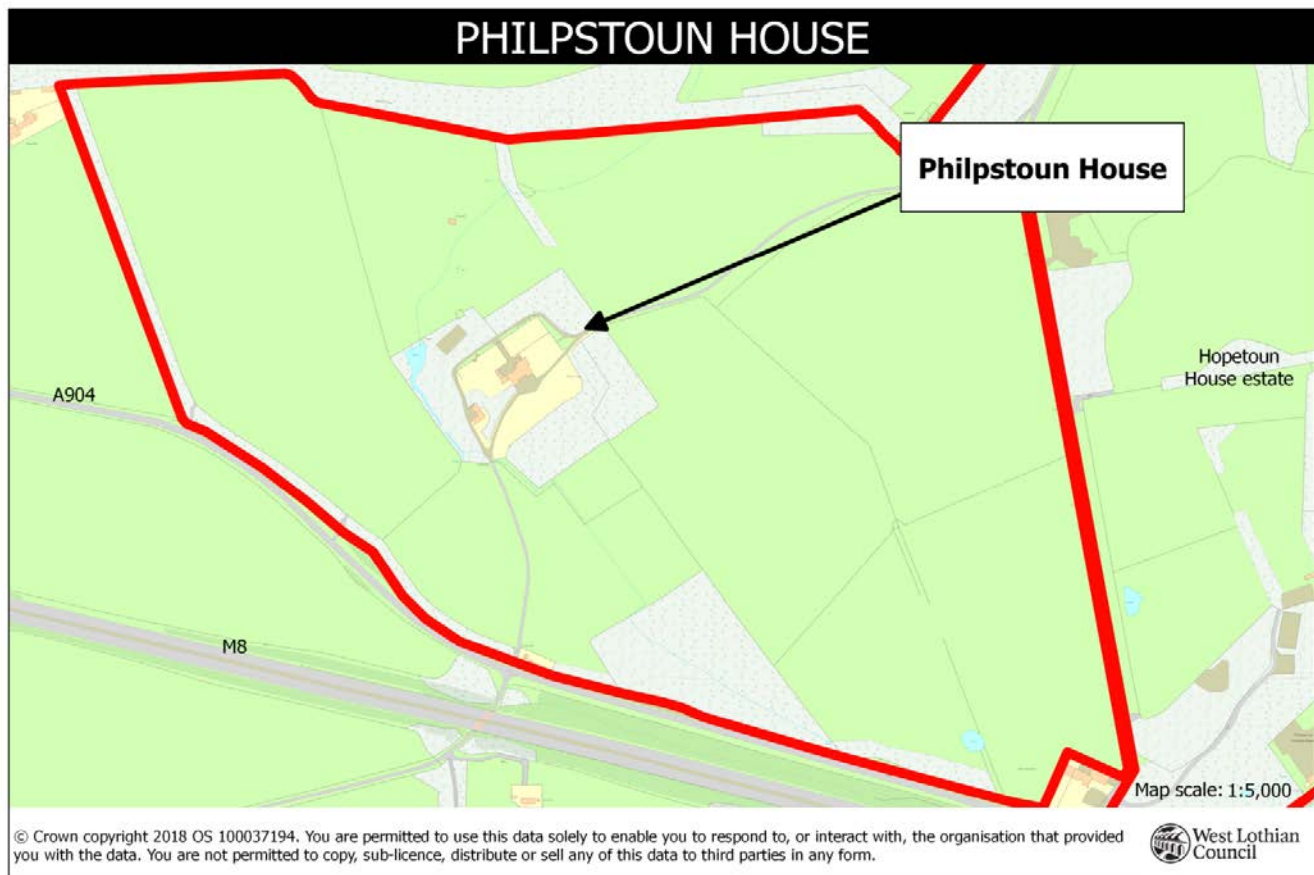
'Eupham Dundas, the eldest daughter of David Dundas of Philpstoun, married John Dundas who succeeded to the estates of Philpstoun and built the country house'

Even though the house is in good condition, it has lost some of its original character during the 18th century. The original basement, which seems to have vaulted ceilings, has been filled in and the farm-court yard that lay behind the house, has been removed. More modern extensions at the north end and against the

stair-wing are built in keeping with the older work. The country house is surrounded by a traditional Scottish lowland landscape with open fields. The woodland belt surrounding the house adds enclosure to the site and interest to the landscape.



Philpstoun House in 1856 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland



Houstoun House



Location: Uphall

Grid Reference: 305264 671334

Houstoun House is a Category A-listed mansion house with an associated estate designed landscape of high architectural, historic and scenic value. Specifically several independent buildings and the formal garden contribute to the local history of West Lothian.

Situated on slightly higher ground than surrounding fields and a modern golf course, Houstoun House is located on the west side of Uphall. The earliest mention of the lands of Houstoun is in a charter of 1342, when King David II granted them to William Douglas. The lands were in the ownerships of the Houstoun family until 1569, when they were bought by Sir John Shairp, an advocate to Mary Queen of Scots. Shairp began building an L-plan tower house in 1598.

Houstoun House has subsequently been extended in 1607 and 1730s. The house remained in the Shairp family until 1945, when it was sold to the architect Ian Gordon Lindsay. Lindsay died in 1966 and after his death Houstoun House was refurbished and converted into a hotel by the architects Wheeler & Sproson. Due to the various extensions, the estate includes five separate protected buildings.

The designed landscape and gardens within Houstoun House are formal and well maintained as part of a hotel. The pleasure grounds are located south from the mansion house and include a resting area and small garden.

Small areas of woodland remain as part of the policies, providing a mix of deciduous trees of various ages, with coniferous trees in patches that add visual interest to the site. Woodland and planted flower beds on the main

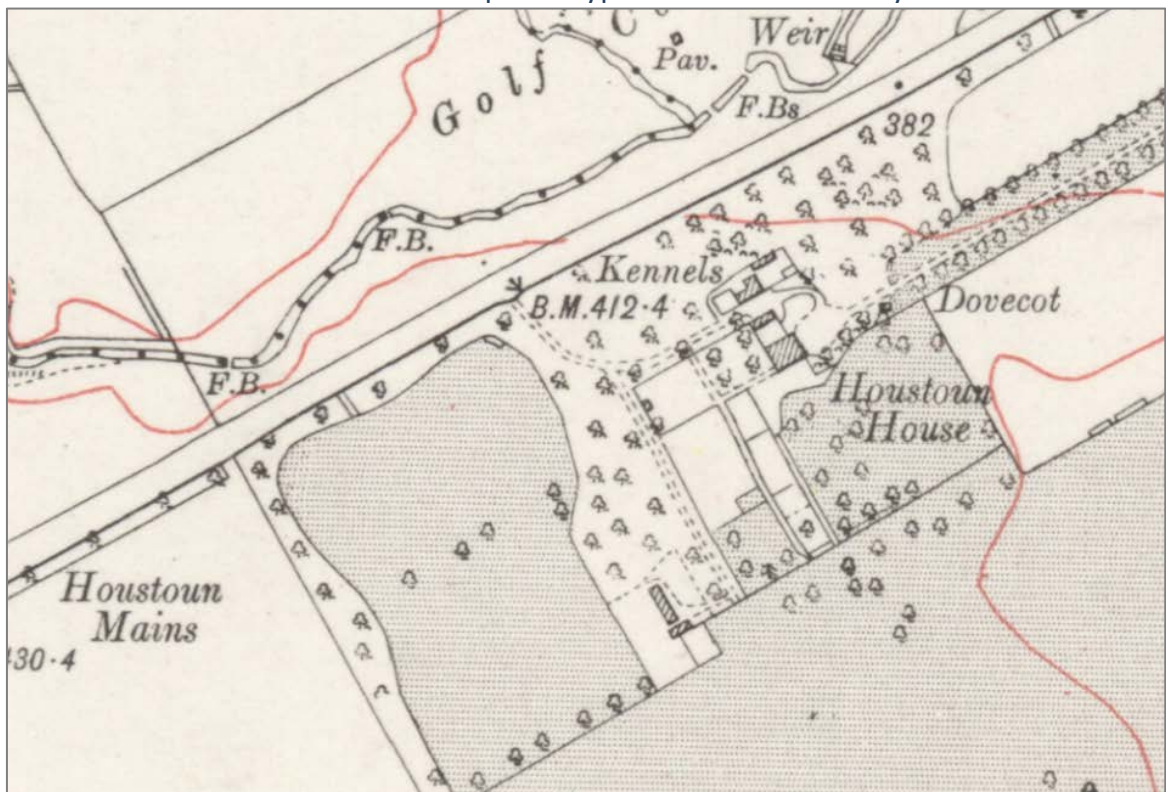
entrance to the estate frame views towards the house from the east.

Houstoun House has been used as a hotel for the past 50 years. The original estate boundary has changed as the surrounding

fields have been transferred to a golf course and is no longer included to the estate boundary. The core estate remains internal to the surrounding golf course and long-views are otherwise blocked by surrounding shelter belts.

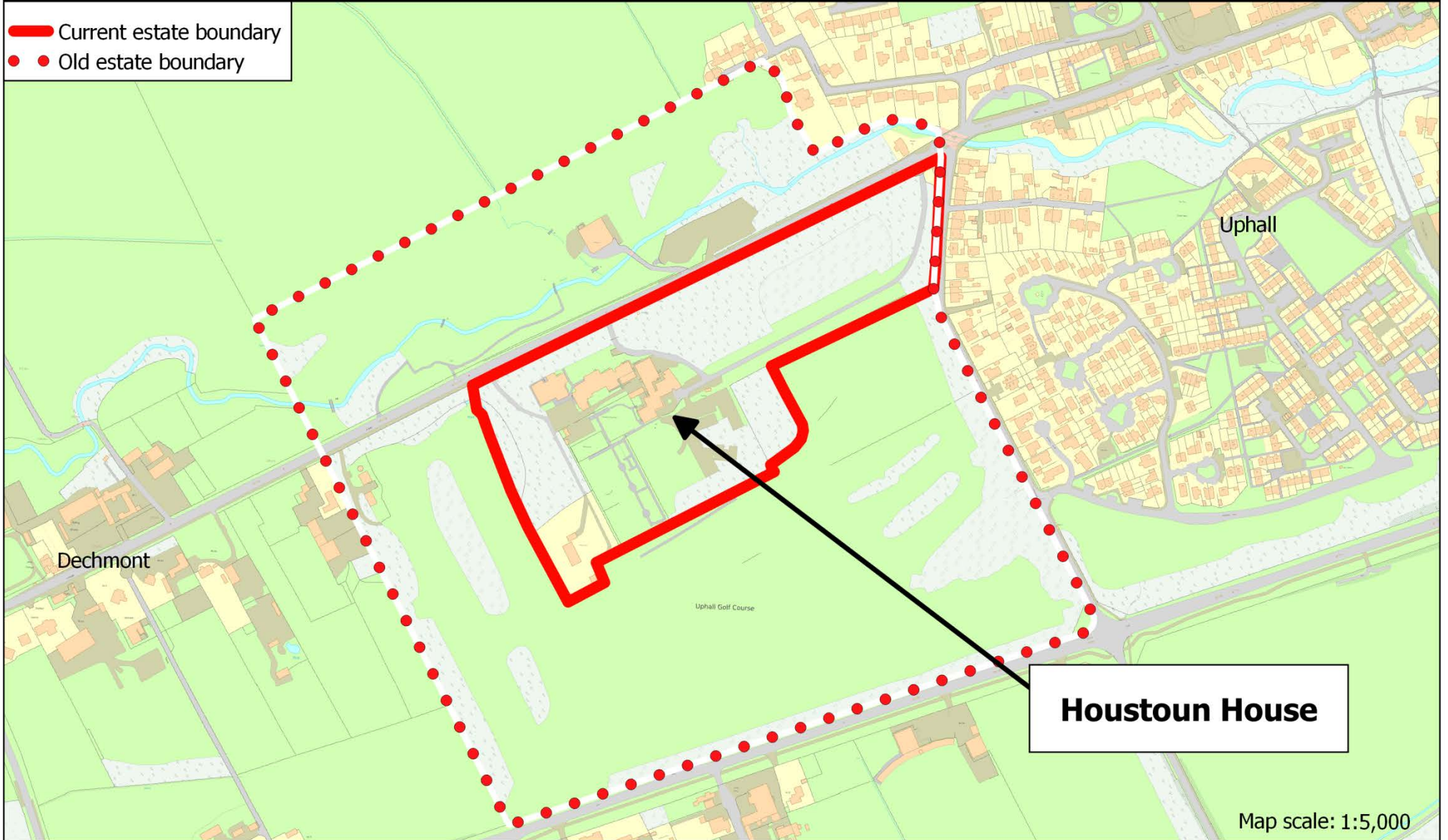


Houstoun House in 1856 and 1922 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland



HOUSTOUN HOUSE

- Current estate boundary
- Old estate boundary



Houston House

Map scale: 1:5,000

Cathlaw House



Location: Torphichen
Grid Reference: [298233 672332](#)

Cathlaw House is an old mansion from the 18th century, standing on its own sloping grounds, amidst the Bathgate hills. Torphichen, where Cathlaw House is located, has an interesting history. The ancient land around Torphichen was settled by the Knights Hospitaller of St John in the 1160's when they built the Preceptory.

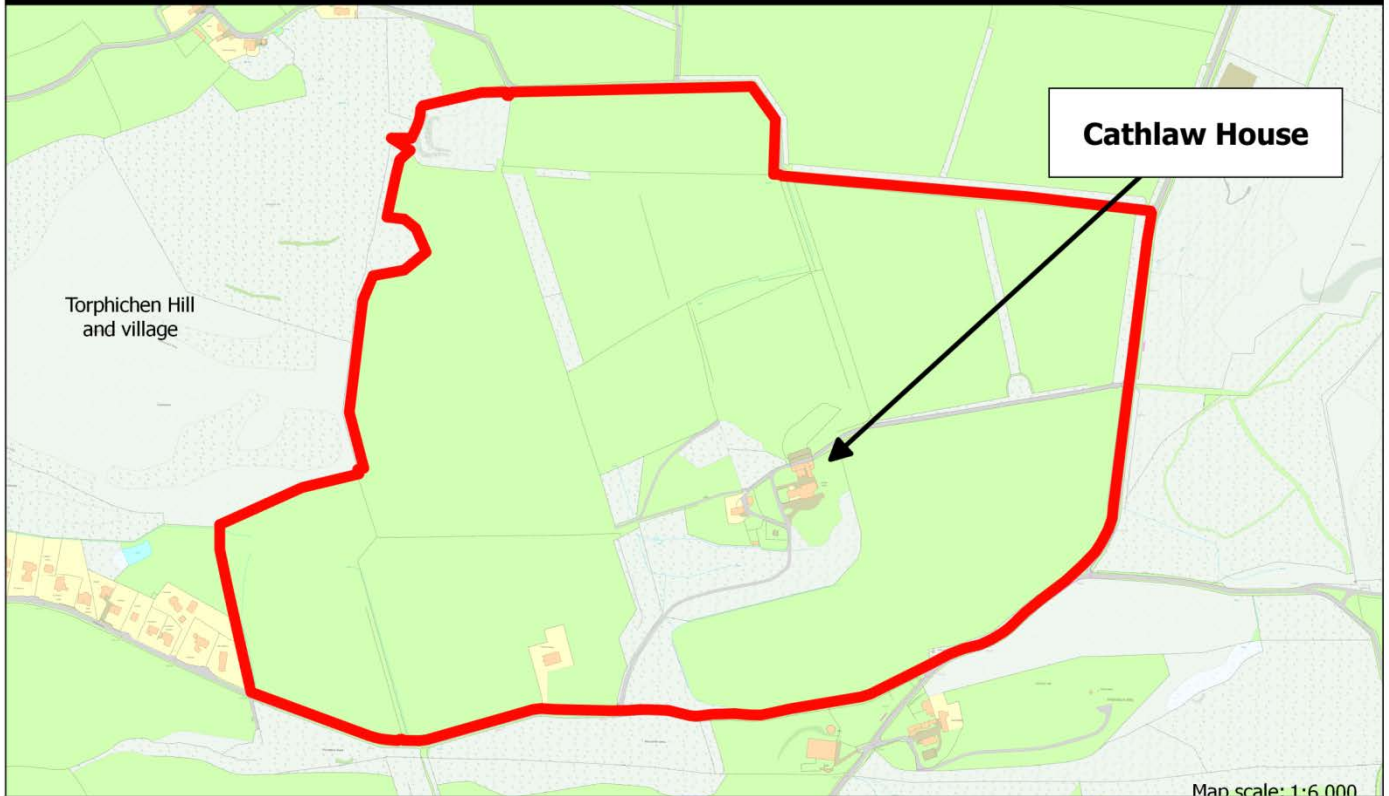
Cathlaw House is located on the east side of Torphichen village, only a short walk away from the Preceptory. It is believed to be mainly constructed in the 19th century from around 1840. However, the unevenness in form implies an older house. Cathlaw House

belonged formerly to the Hamilton's of Westport.

This category B-listed country house is a two and a half storeys, harled mansion with porch. It is slated with a skew-gabled roof, and gabled chimney and dormers. Due to its location, Cathlaw House provides good views towards the north. It has a large garden on its own mature grounds. Cairnpapple Hill is located nearby to the south east of the estate.



CATHLAW HOUSE



Cathlaw House in 1856 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

Binny House



Location: Ecclesmachan
Grid Reference: 305254 673367

consoles supporting cornices overhead, have a much earlier character.



Dating from 1840, Binny House has all the features of a Regency villa – it is elaborate, ornate and neoclassical and has generously borrowed Greek motifs. The house originally belonged to the Stewarts of Binny.

Located in Ecclesmachan Village, Binny House is built in 'creamy' Binny stone, with pavilion roof and great tall chimneystacks. The house has a Doric porch flanked by projecting columns. This could all be dated to c1840, but the tripartite bay windows and the slim

It is believed that the house was designed by Richard Crichton (c. 1771– 1817) whose career was cut short by his premature death. His practise was continued by his pupils, Richard and Robert Dickson who are believed to have completed his unfinished projects. Binny House is a Category B-listed building, being an excellent example of Regency style and having local importance. The estate includes stables, mausoleum, lodge and dovecot. The 18th century dovecot especially adds great architectural and historical interest

to the site and is also protected as a listed building. The mausoleum was consecrated by the Bishop of Edinburgh in 1873. The burial chamber has a plain Gothic façade and is set in the rock of the hill.

'When asked by local villagers why he would want to build this when there was a churchyard so close, he replied 'in the great day of resurrection, I wish to rise from my own property'. Both Captain Stewart and his wife, Janet Stewart, were buried in the mausoleum.

Binny House is currently in institutional use as a care home. The landscape features are largely dominated by the adjacent Scottish Rural University College - Oatridge Campus as

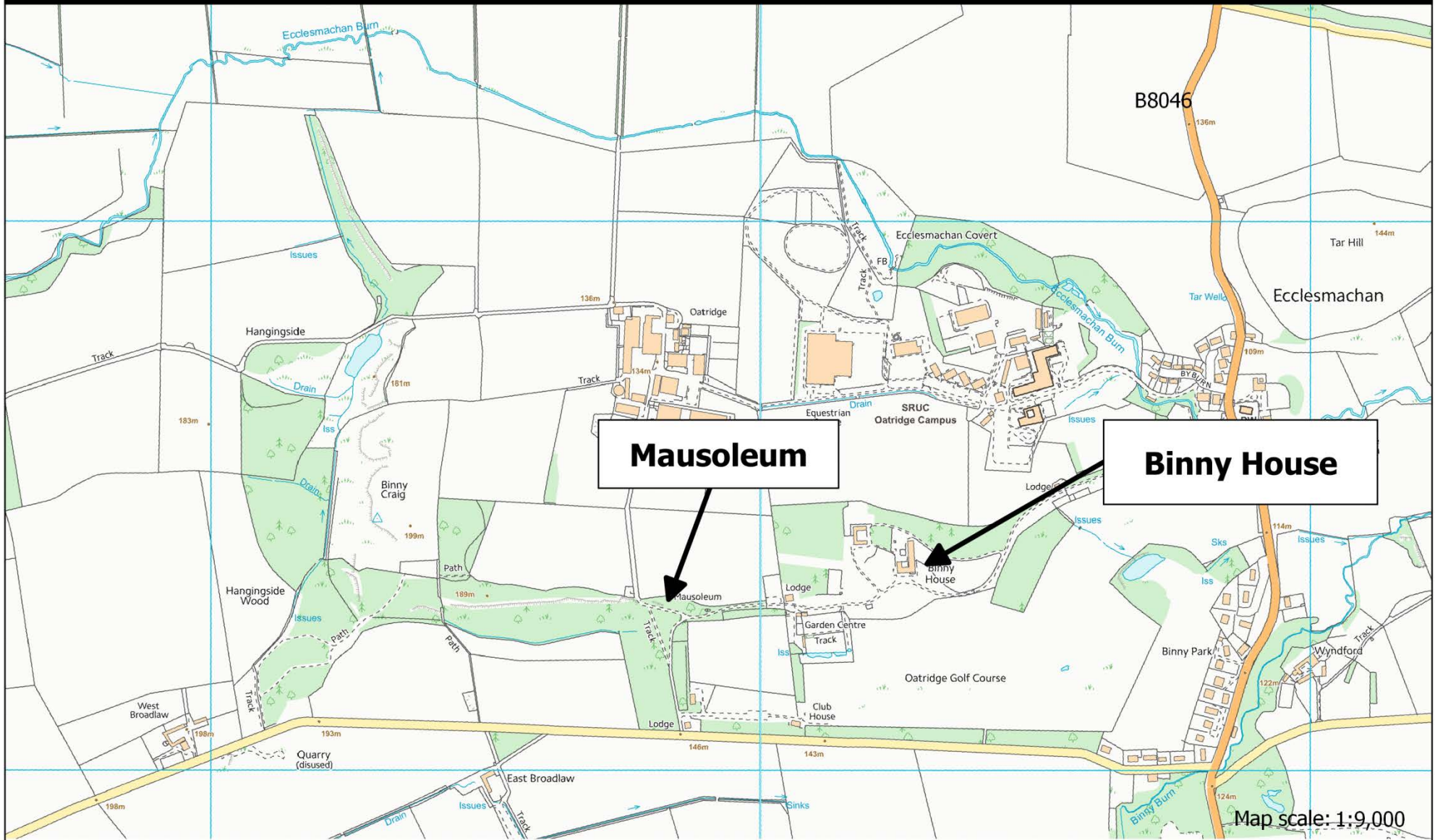
the surrounding fields are mostly used for farming, equestrian use and a small golf course. The country house estate includes small area of woodland policies.





Binny House in 1856 and 1895 (previous page) © Reproduced via National Library of Scotland

BINNY HOUSE



Wallhouse



Location: Torphichen
Grid Reference: 296096, 672447

Wallhouse is an imposing mansion with designed landscape that was constructed during the 1840s. This category B-listed house is hidden from view behind mature dense woodland.

Located near Torphichen Village, Wallhouse is set in about 23 acres of its own grounds and is part of the designated conservation area, being an important part of villages' history. Originally built for the Gillon family, Wallhouse was rebuilt by James Maitland Wardrop in 1855 who added the side wings and rear tower.

The country house has been owned by West Lothian County Council, who used it as a children's home from the late 1940s, and thereafter several different private companies.

Architecturally Wallhouse is an excellent example of the romantic style. The house has a two-dimensional Gothic frontage with octagonal straits, Gothic windows, crenellations and tall chimney stacks.

The immediate gardens around the house comprise extensive open lawns in front with a brick paved turning circle and central fountain. The country house estate includes water features as the stone paving continues towards the nearby stream and wooded bank. A large pond is situated west from the house.

There is a stone bridge over the burn, leading towards the woodland. Woodland runs both side of the burn and is mix of fir, larch and hardwood trees. The category B-listed doocot, from the 1840, lies north-east from the mansion in an open field. This makes a great contribution to the landscape and adds archaeological value to the site.



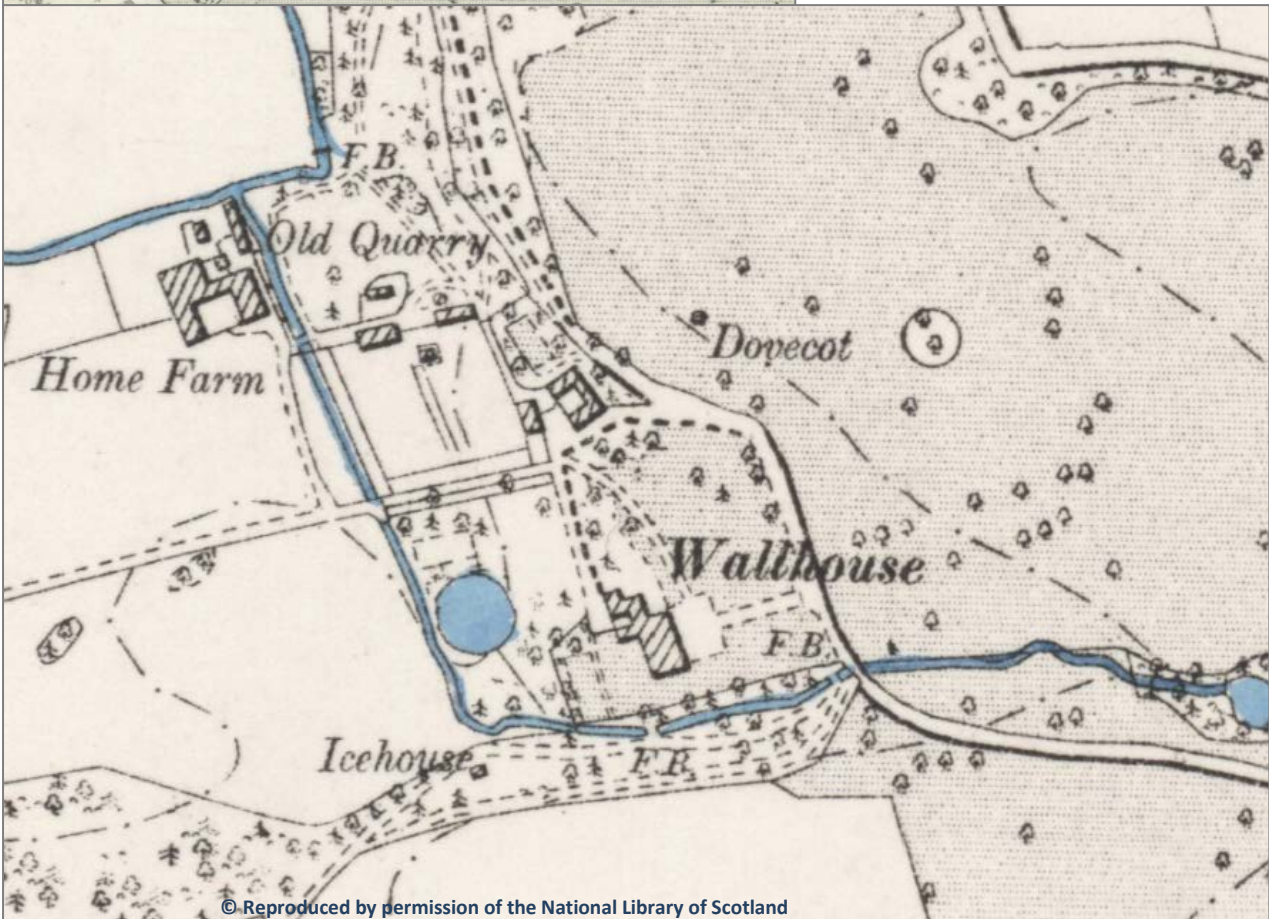
The original boundary of Wallhouse Estate has covered a large area of Torphichen. However, Wallhouse has been sold separately from the steadings, which serves as a farm and a lodge that are located inside the original estate area.



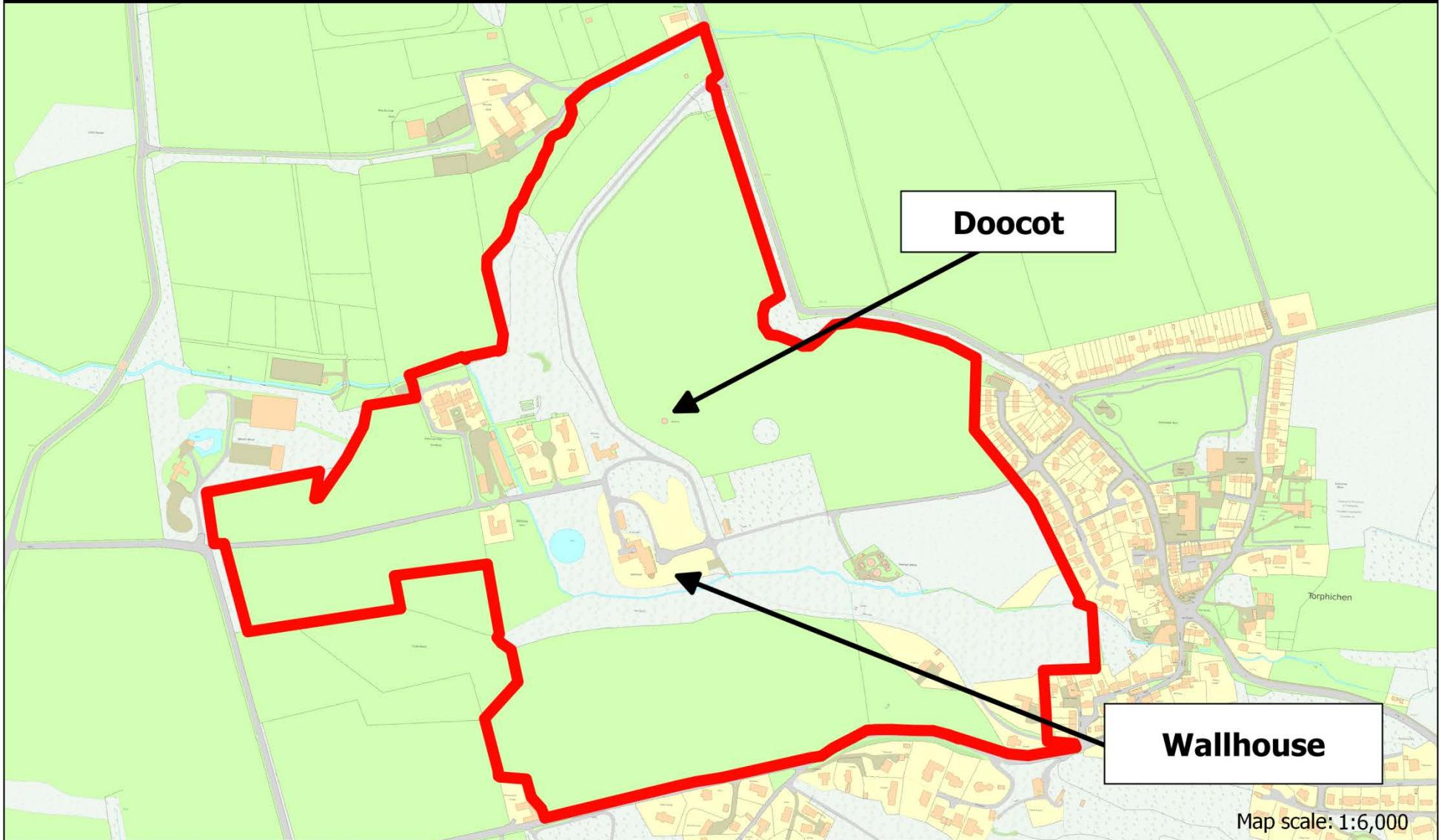
Wallhouse in 1856 & 1896

Wallhouse underwent its last large extension in 1855 when end wings and rear tower were added. Since then the façade of the house has remained much the same.

By 1896 the home farm was built north west from the main mansion.



WALLHOUSE



Map scale: 1:6,000



Bridgecastle House

Location: Westfield
Grid Reference: 294355 670951

Bridgecastle House is an attractive old castle within well maintained grounds. Located in Westfield, to the south west of Linlithgow, the building has particular historical and architectural interest.

Bridgecastle House, sometimes known as 'Little Brighthouse', was originally built in the 16th century to protect Linlithgow Palace from invasion. It was built to guard the bridge over Barbauchlaw Burn which was on a main route into Linlithgowshire. Brighthouse was recorded for the first time in 1409, indicating that the

site was in use before the construction of Bridgecastle House.

Initially, the castle was a five storey tower but four storeys and a garret wing were added in 17th century. The original castle, tower, was described as '*The Fortalice of Little Bridgehouse*'.

Comprising four floors, attics, and vaulted basement, the house appeared to become a roofless ruin during most of the 18th century. At the end of the next century, the repairs of the house started. The house served as a hotel for 20 years from 1950s, but was sympathetically converted into four properties in 1985. The house is built of random rubble with a slated roof and

pedimented dormers. It has retained much of its original features despite the extensions to the rear and offices and stables in the 19th century. It is a B Listed Building.



Bridgecastle House in 1922 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

The country house is situated within 7 acres of extensive mature wooded and communal grounds and is well maintained. It can be assumed that the original estate has covered at least the grounds between Bridgehouse Burn and the unnamed road to the south and east but the estate is much smaller in size now.



BRIDGECASTLE HOUSE



Map scale: 1:5,000

Boghead House



Location: Whiteside, Bathgate
Grid Reference: 5589524 367083

Boghead House Estate is located in Whiteside, between Bathgate and Armadale, on the site of Paraffin Young's first oil refinery in 1851. The Estate has great historic and archaeological value and is part of the West Lothian's mining heritage.

Boghead House was built in the late 18th century and was owned by the Durham family until 1929. On this estate, Torbanehill cannel coal was first mined by Paraffin Young for extracting mineral oil. The Durham family made their money from the coal which underlay their estate and there were several mines in the vicinity of their estate.

The Durhams also built Durhamtown to house the miners. It is said that the hamlet was first called 'Durhamville'. When the locals apparently turned this name into

'Durhamville', the owner quickly changed the name.

There are several interesting reasons why Boghead House estate and the area around it are of interest. Durhamtown was located next to Bathgate Chemical Works which extracted oil from Boghead Coal, a generic name adopted internationally to characterise brown coal, rich in organic matter.

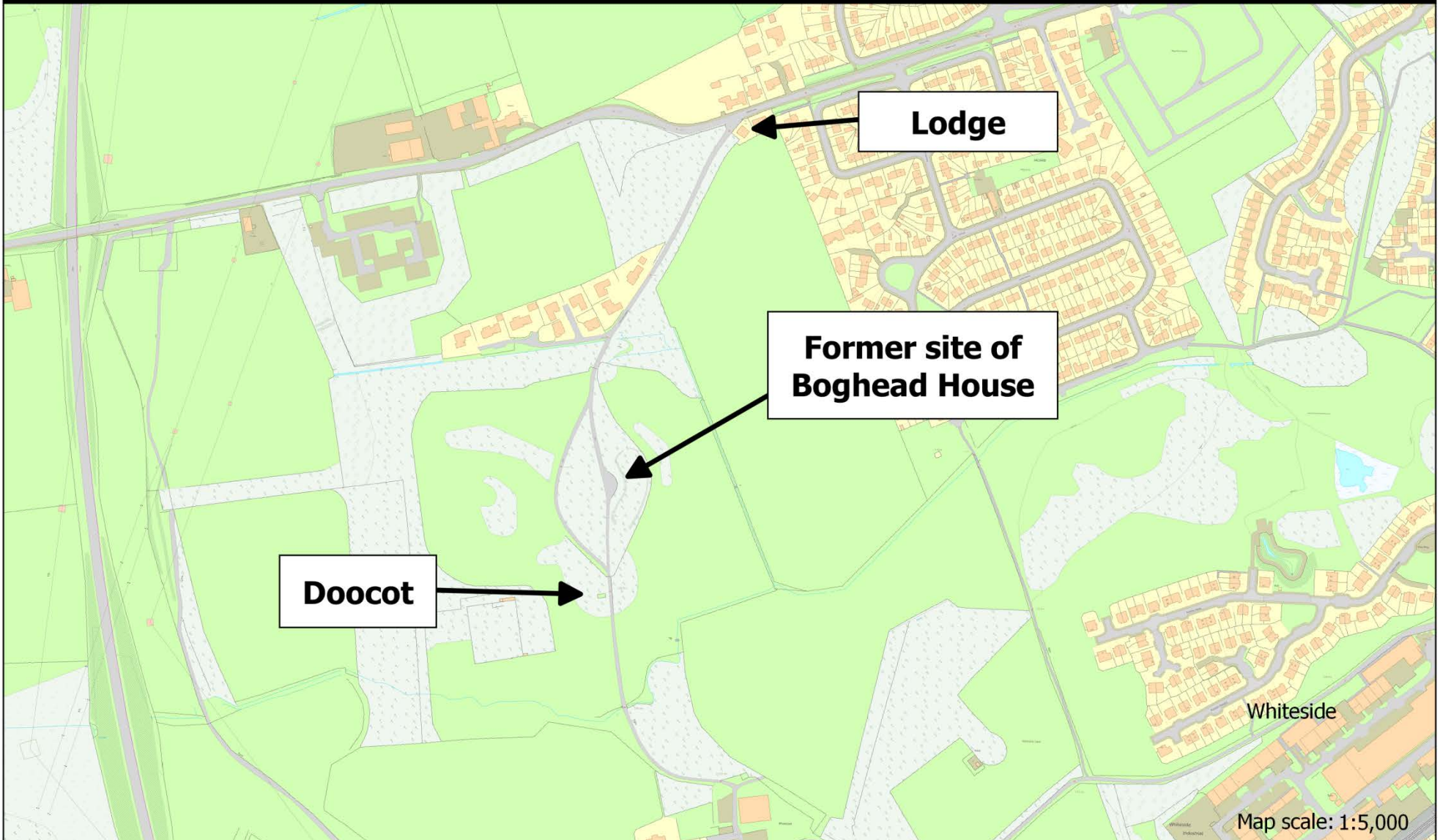
Another historic event occurred in February 1857 when Durhamtown miner Peter McLean was hanged at Linlithgow's last public execution, for the murder of a fellow miner, Thomas Maxwell, near Boghead Bridge in Bathgate.

An execution had not taken place in Linlithgow for 38 years and between three and four thousand people turned up to watch. It is thought that McLean and Maxwell had had a drunken argument over religion.

Boghead House was demolished in 1962 after it was purchased by the National Coal Board. The Lodge and Doocot are only that remain. The former site of the Boghead House is surrounded by woodland, consisting of a mixture of deciduous trees. Site still has a historic estate atmosphere with good views to surrounding areas.



BOGHEAD HOUSE



Dechmont House



Location: Livingston
Grid Reference: 55909367 3556744

Dechmont House is the successor of Dechmont Castle. Located in the northern part of Livingston, the house presents the late-Edwardian era with ties to local heritage.

Before Dechmont House was built around 1910, Dechmont Castle was situated in this locality. It was built by Edward Meldrum, a pioneer in the shale oil industry, in 1869. At that time, the castle could have been seen at a great distance from the south, from the 'foot of the Pentland Hills'.

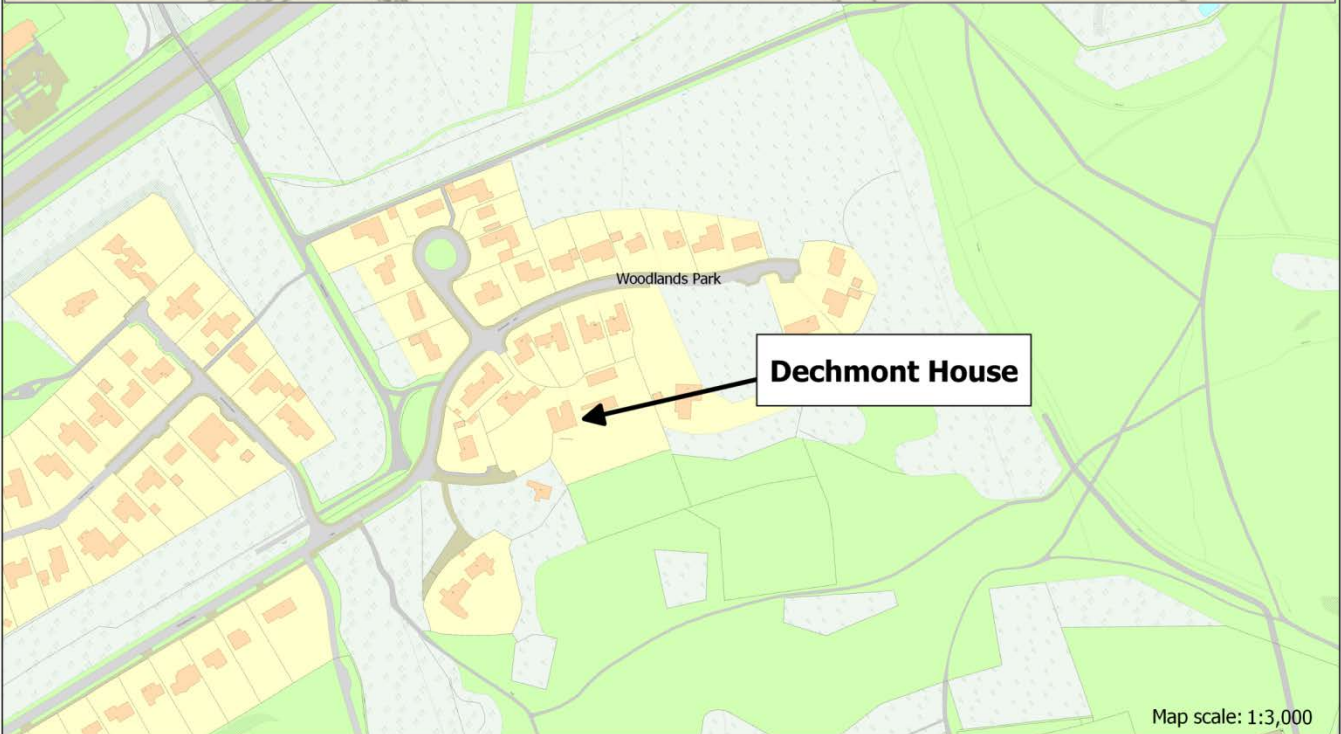
Dechmont Castle looked widely different of how the country house currently looks. After Meldrum's death, his son Arthur demolished

the castle in 1914 as it was too expensive to maintain.

Since then the house has been a moderate-sized country house. Originally the estate included 390 acres of land, including a greenhouse southwest from the mansion, but when Dechmont House was sold to a Lt-Col A.S. Hardie, the grounds were donated for community use.

Currently the Dechmont House is in private residency, comprising approximately one acre of established garden grounds, bordered by burgeoning herbaceous borders. The Estate also consisted of, albeit now demolished, cottages, garage and stabling.

The old estate around Dechmont House is unrecognisable as the area now serves as a peaceful and desirable housing area in the north of Livingston New Town.



Howden House



Location: Livingston
Grid Reference: 305212 667663

Howden House is a prominent building lying at the brow of a hill in central Livingston. This lovely mansion is particularly important building of special interest. In a new town such like Livingston, Howden House makes a special contribution to the wider landscape.

The house is a harled, substantial mansion with flanking wings, enormous chimneystacks and a Doric porch, and contains parts of the earlier tower inside. It overlooks the 33 acres of parkland, with views south over the town towards the Pentland Hills. The rear walled garden within the estate remains as oasis with community use.

Howden House was built for Thomas Farquharson of Howden in the late 18th century.

In 1834, it was passed to Henry Raeburn, son of the Edinburgh portrait painter Sir Henry Raeburn. It was later owned by the daughter of the chemist James Young, often referred as Paraffin Young (c. 1811– 1883), until her death in 1931. Later it was owned by the ministry of Agriculture 1946-1966 until the house was purchased by Livingston Development Corporation. Being one of the Scotland's post-war new towns, Livingston was developed around the estate in the 1960s.

From the 1990's, Howden House faced serious neglect. People visiting the house without permission claimed the

house was haunted and the outlook of the building fitted this picture. External walls were covered with graffiti's and the inside of the house was unsecure.

After two decades of neglect, the building was sold to private developer who converted the rear steadings area into a courtyard of small terraced houses and Howden House itself into flats in 2012. The former stable block was converted into Howden Park Centre which has received national praise. Howden House has retained much of its Georgian character and remains as category B-listed building.



Howden House in 1853 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

HOWDEN HOUSE

Howden House

Howden Park Centre

Map scale: 1:3,000

Alderstone House

Location: Livingston

Grid Reference: 304389 666287

Alderstone House, also known as Alderston House, is a great old crow-stepped Scots mansion with similar style lectern doocot. Including features from 16th, 17th, 19th and 21st centuries this rather interesting country house is located between Almondvale and Kirkton near Livingston Centre.

Situated in the heart of the new town, the light yellow upper storeys of Alderstone House are notable from adjacent roads. The harled and gabled mansion had a free-standing 16th century tower at the north end where the walling is still twice as thick as elsewhere. This is the oldest surviving remains and was built by Henry Kinloch who had a charter for the area in 1556 for Alderstown. The rebuilding was undertaken by his grandson, advocate Patrick Kinloch.

The main block is two and half storey and dated 1626. The three storey rear wing and one storey offices are from 18th century.

Reception rooms on the ground floor and a



two-storey bay were added in the 19th. The office pavilions in the former gardens impact on the

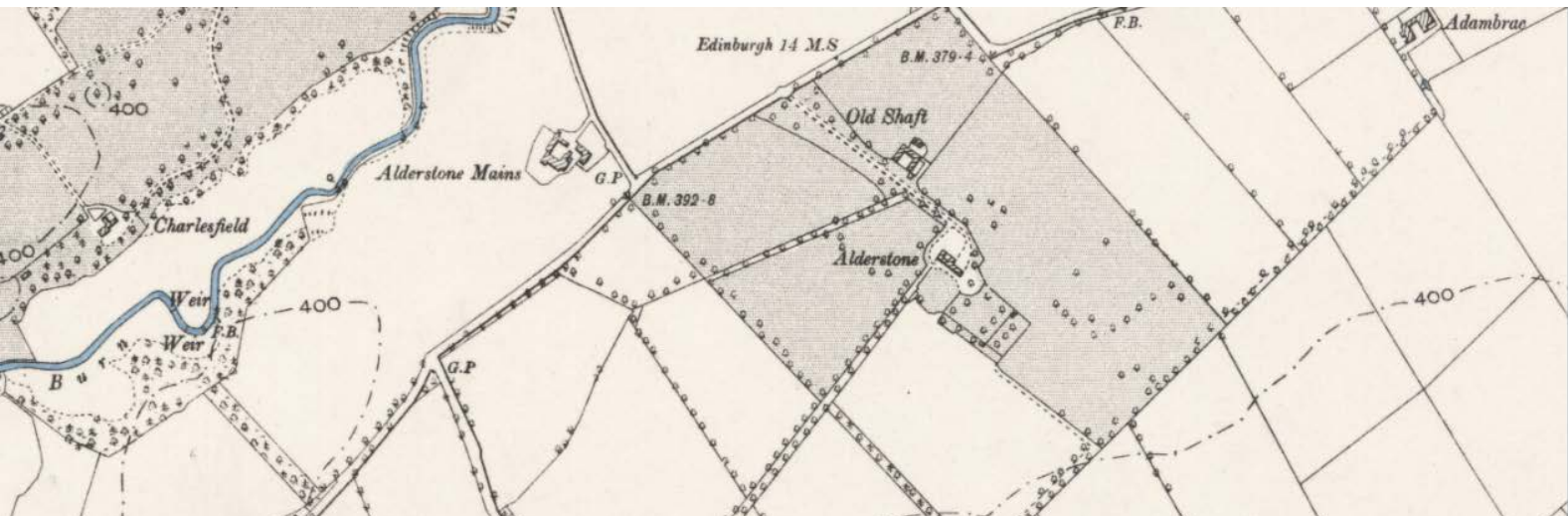


setting of the building and continue the theme of the adjacent business park.

Since Kinloch days, the country house has been in many hands. Currently it is owned by a private company and the conversion to company headquarters, undertaken by architects Simpson and Brown in 2006, included a re-exposure of the older elements combined with a radically modern extension on the west side of the house.

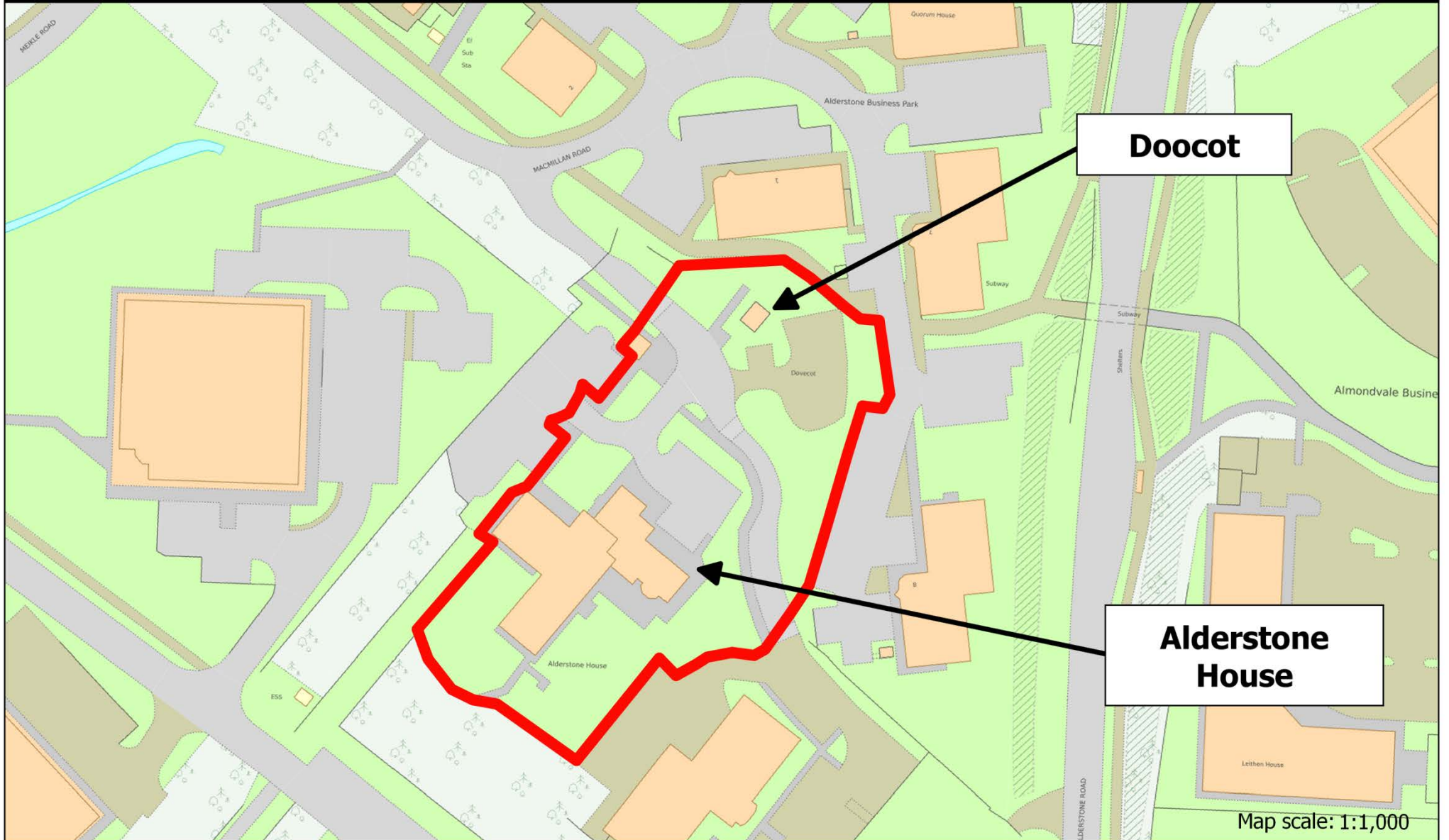
Due to the changes made to the original country house, Alderstone house has been downgraded and is currently a Category B-listed building. The Category B-listed Doocot stands northeast from the house.

The estate has a small, open garden which is dominated by grass and deciduous trees. Alderstone House Steadings used to be located where Klondyke Garden Centre now stands which indicates that the estate policies have previously covered a wider area.



Alderstone House in 1898 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

ALDERSTONE HOUSE





Murieston House

Location: Livingston

Grid Reference: 305804 664666

Murieston house is a stunning Georgian mansion in South Livingston; situated on the north bank of Murieston Water, amidst mature woodland.

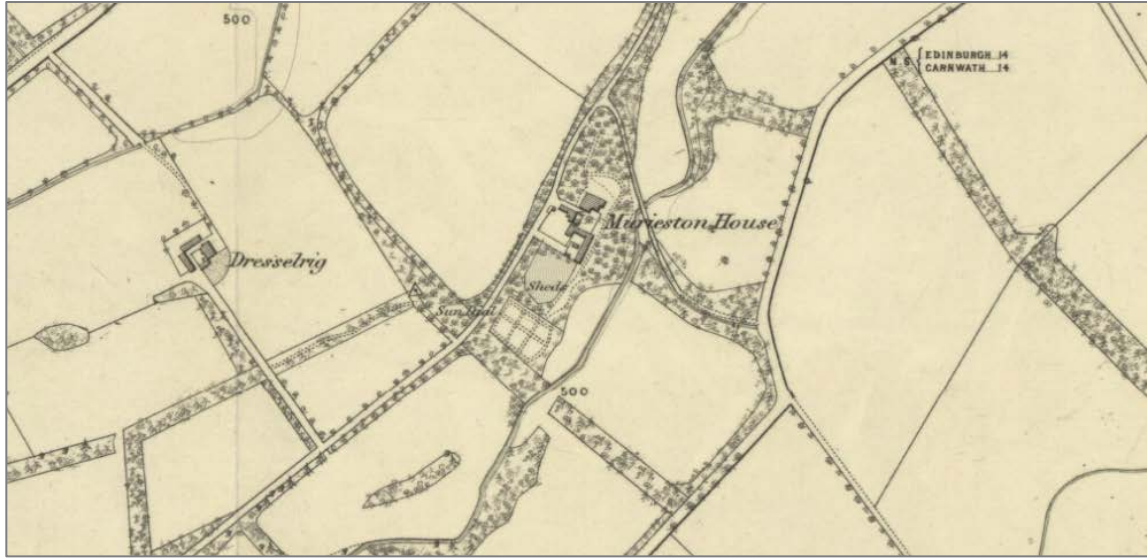
Murieston House is a two storey country house with five bays, in which the central bay forms a pedimented pavilion and a pedimented entrance. It consists of ashlar and cornice and has a pilastered doorway.

The mansion was built for Henry Jamieson of Murieston who was a banker in Edinburgh in the 1800's. He seized the property in 1793 but sold it in 1812 as he became bankrupt. The next owner got also into debt and it was transferred to trustees.

In 1852 the country house was occupied by Sir Alexander Maitland. Additions with a handsome facade of classical design on the east elevation and a pediment over the entrance door, were made in 1855 by John Learmonth of Murieston (c. 1789–1858).

A portion of old baronial fortalices are retained in Murieston House. The immediate estate grounds are well maintained and woodland gives intimacy. Currently the estate grounds and buildings to the south west are divided into smaller properties with house plots in the former garden area, while the council maintain the surrounding greenway.

Murieston House has high local importance and due to the good condition of the building, it is an excellent example of Georgian style. Therefore the house is a Category B-listed building by Historic Environment Scotland.



Murieston House in 1853 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

MURIRSTON HOUSE



Murieston House

Map scale: 1:1,500

Bankton House



Location: Livingston
Grid Reference: 306172 665621

Bankton House is an interesting estate with a country house as the prime focal-point, with surrounding grounds fostering the house. The Country house has local historic connections in Livingston and serves currently as a hotel.

Bankton House was built in 1812 for James Bruce of Bankton (c. 1753–1826) who was Secretary of Excise. The house is plain

Georgian with two storeys and garret. It is built of coursed rubble with dressed stone chimneys and with piended slated roof, which is

platformed on top. Flat-roofed dormers were added later.

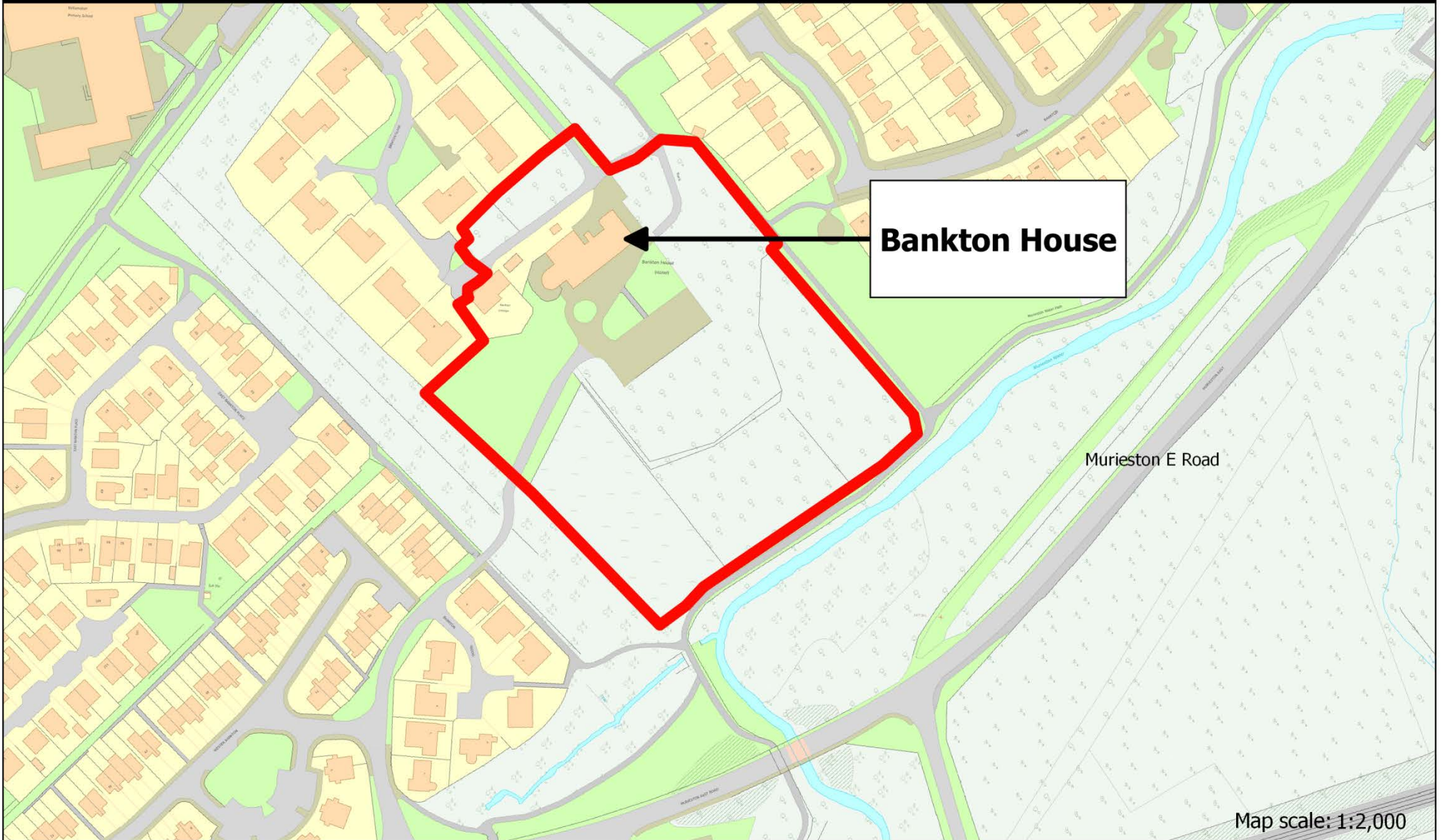


The grounds within the country house are well maintained and exudes a romantic

atmosphere. Woodland consists of a mixture of deciduous and coniferous trees of mixed ages. Unfortunately the south view to the river bank is blocked by vegetation.

The surrounding new town housing development has reduced the extent of the previous estate size as Bankton House is currently has housing on its north, west and east sides. Altogether, much of its original character has survived and Bankton House again has a high local heritage interest value.

BANKTON HOUSE



Illieston House



Location: Broxburn
Grid Reference: 310086 669981

Elegant Illieston House, also often called Elliston House, or Illieston Castle, makes a great contribution to both national and local history in Scotland. Starting life as a castle but now seen more as a country house, Illieston House is a stunning 1600's building south of Broxburn.

The lands of Illieston had been mentioned in the 13th century. The Roman name Halistonium was once used for the area. Later on Illieston served as the Royal hunting seat of the Kings of Scotland. Most notable of these were James II (c. 1430–1460) and James IV (c. 1473–1513). James II has been associated with Lord Hamilton who was gifted house and the lands as reward for releasing the Earl of Monteith from capture at Pontyfract Castle.

King James II and James IV would ride out from the magnificent Linlithgow Palace to hunt at Illieston.

Illieston House is a two and half storey, rubble and corbie-step-gabled house. It has a square three and half storey stair-tower on the south side. When land was acquired by Edinburgh advocate John Ellis in 1664, the house was altered and all that now remains are the main house and the adjacent kitchen garden. Ellis also added the splendid baroque gateway in 1663 which adds great visual value to the site. In 1765, ownership was passed over to the Earl of Hopetoun.

Illieston House estate is approximately 20 acres with surviving original walled garden. It is standing in open fields and provides panoramic long-distance views south, above the River Almond. Currently the house is in private residency.



Illieston House in 1856 & below in 1898

As seen from the maps above and below, much of the original Illieston House estate has survived. The Country House is still surrounded by open fields and overall is a peaceful area to live. In the late 19th century

the Illieston steadings were constructed in the vicinity of the house. Illieston steadings and cottages are located north from the house, on the road leading to the house and were also renovated for housing.



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ILLIESTON HOUSE



Illieston House

Map scale: 1:3,000

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Calder House



Location: Mid Calder
Grid Reference: 307259 667251

Calder House is a large mansion in Mid Calder with a long history under the Sandilands family. In close vicinity to the post-war Livingston New Town, Calder House has an important historic environment setting.

Calder House dates principally from the 16th century, but the estate grounds have been the seat of the Sandilands, later Lords Torphichen, since 1348. Upon the marriage of Eleanor Douglas to Sir James Sandilands (c. 1511–1596), William Douglas gave the barony of Calder to Sandilands as a wedding gift. In 1564 James was created the 1st Lord Torphichen by Mary Queen of Scots, a title the family continue to hold.

The country house is an enormous L-plan random rubble house. Even though the house is mainly built in 16th and 17th centuries, the massive thick walls suggest that the mansion incorporates part of an earlier castle. In 17th century the north-west wing was extended

twice and further additions were made in the 1780s, 1820s and 1880s.

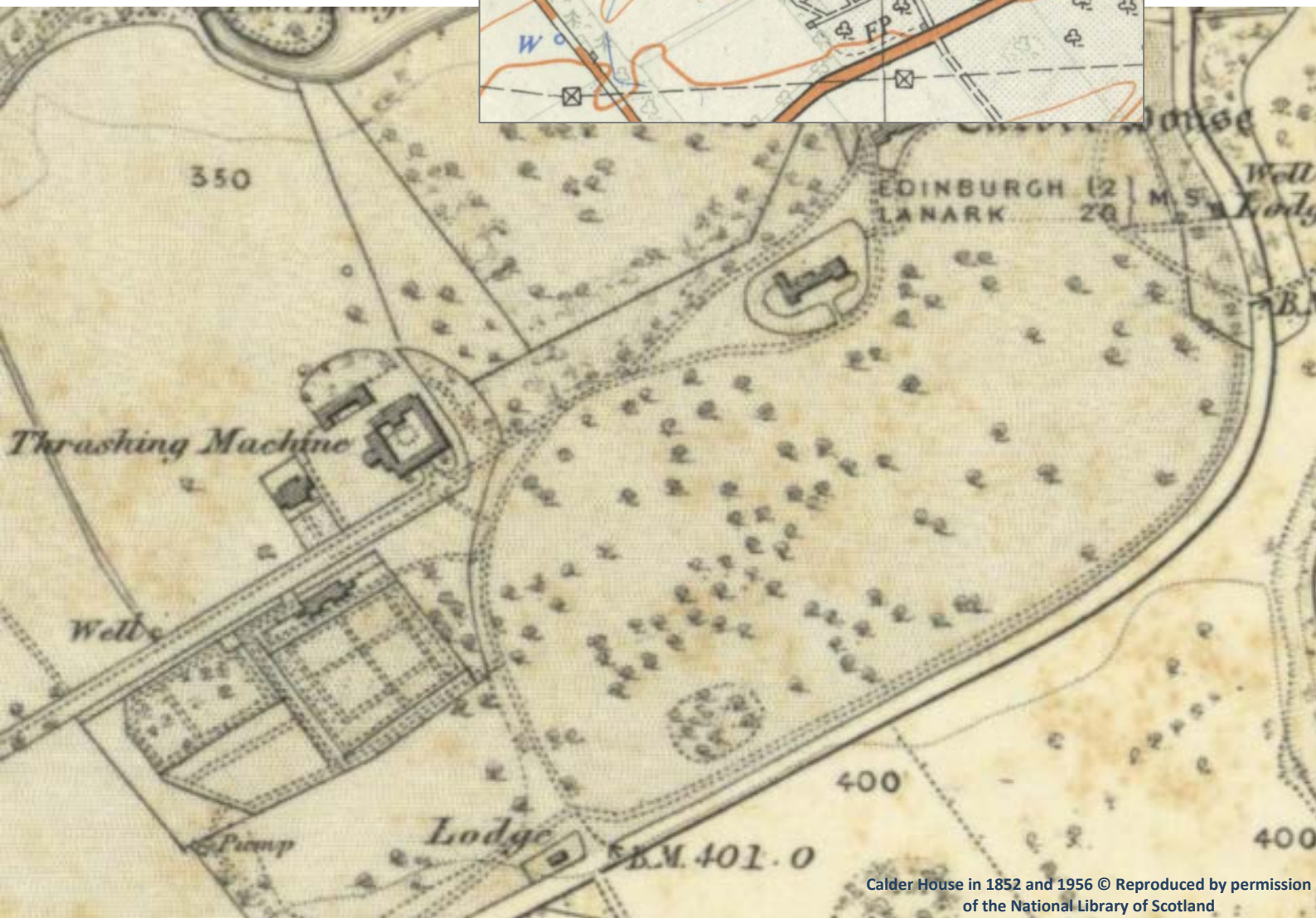
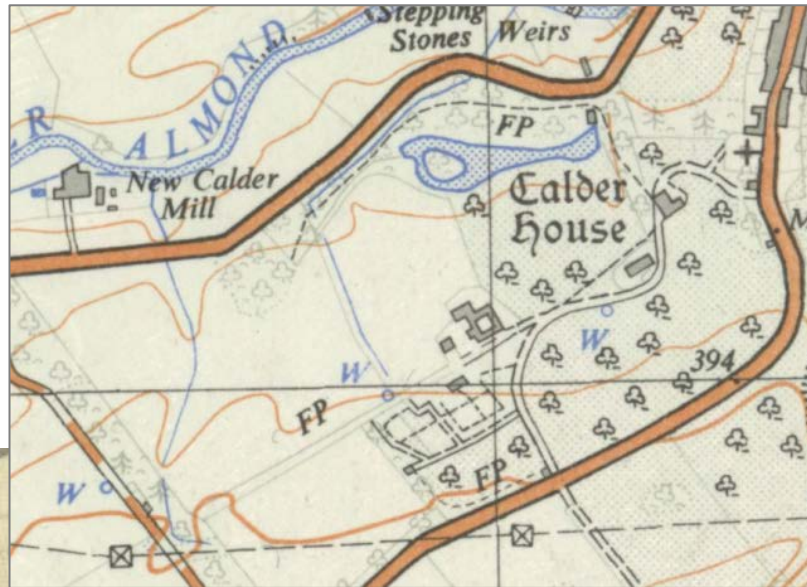
Despite the changes made both outside and inside the house, the history is undiminished for this earlier country mansion. It still holds a great local heritage value and is listed as a Category A-building.

Surrounding fine buildings, such as the icehouse, the 1808s one storey converted steadings, splendid 1670 gateway and 17th century sundial, all add value to the site. Cup and dome icehouse, whose construction date is unclear, was built into the top of the bank, having exterior walls ashlar sandstone, roof and interior lined in brick. The Icehouse is currently listed in the national Buildings at Risk Register due to its poor condition causing loss of historic value.

The south wing can be seen from Main Street as the grounds open up on this side of the house. Calder House is otherwise surrounded by mature woodland which separates the mansion from housing that has been

constructed in the surrounding policies of the house in the 1970's and 80's.

The Steadings, gateway and sundial are located southwest from the main house. As seen from the map to the right, in 1956 the original estate was still on place. The later housing has taken over the west part of the estate.



Calder House in 1852 and 1956 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

Calder Hall

Location: East Calder

Grid Reference: 309077 669178

Calder Hall was a sophisticated Greek revival mansion located in East Calder. The house was designed in 1824 by the King's architect Robert Reid (c. 1774–1856). Calder Hall was strategically located in the vicinity of Calder



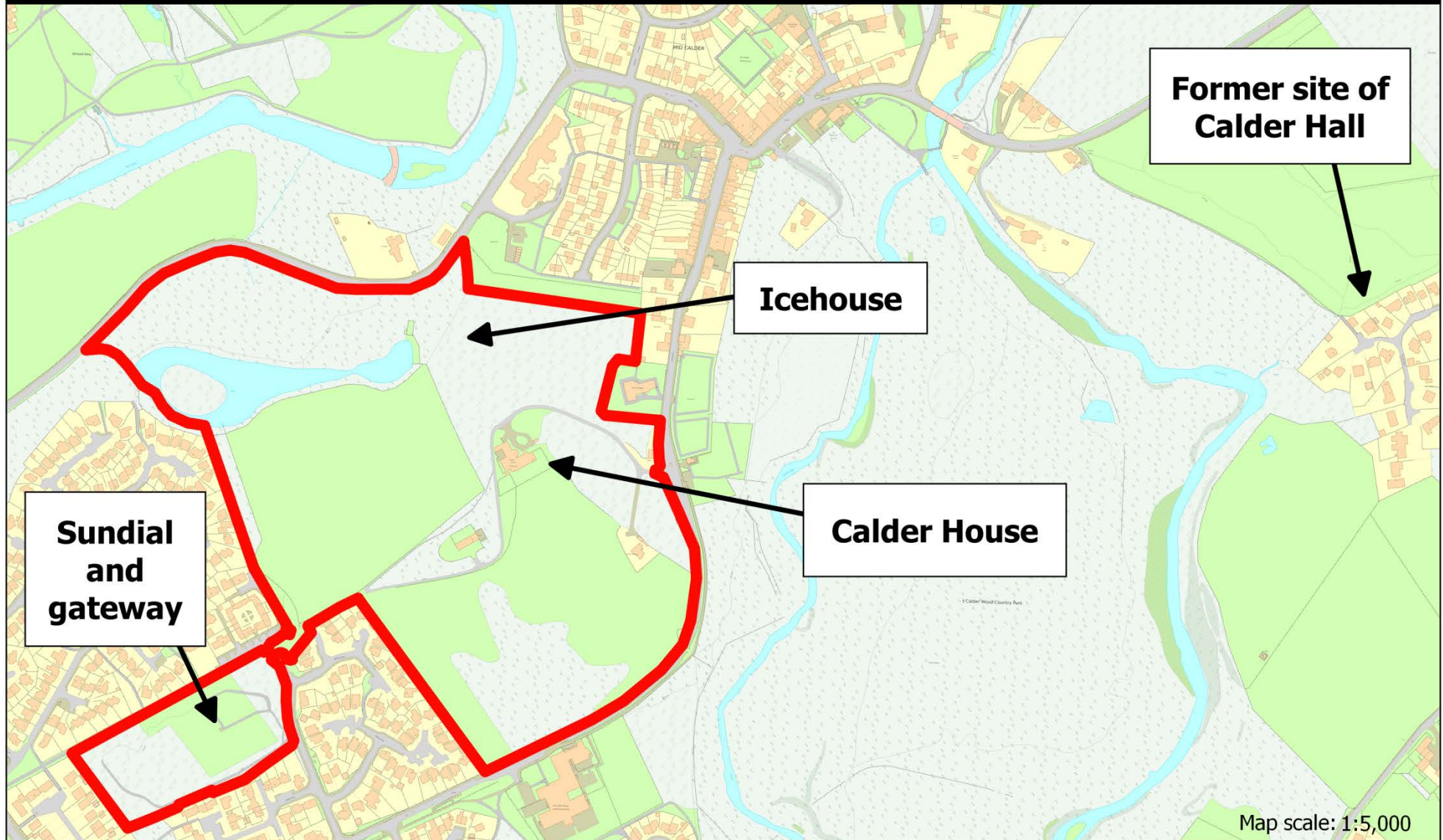
House which still stands on the west side of Linhouse Water. The Hall was a Category B-listed building, but was demolished in 1970 after being derelict for a number of years. Now serving as a housing area, the house was built with views to surrounding land.



Calder Hall in 1853 and 1963 © Reproduced by the permission of the National Library of Scotland

The house has been known to be owned by Sir Alexander Houstoun and Colonel Hare, who was Her Majesty's Body-guard. When Calder Hall was still standing, it had marginally projecting wings, windows recessed within panels, Ionic pilasters at the set-backs with an Ionic-columned and pilastered porch and doorway.

CALDER HOUSE & CALDER HALL



Almondell House



Location: Livingston
Grid Reference: 309077 669178

Almondell House was a stunning country house on the edge of East Calder which unfortunately was demolished in the 1960s. However, the old grounds of Almondell House estate includes many fine estate buildings which add great value to the Almondell Country Park that now covers the area.

The house was built in 1789 by the Whig politician and lawyer Henry Erskine (c. 1746–1817) in the valley of the River Almond. The coach house and stables, built soon after in 1790, are symmetrical with a pedimented two-storey centre section. The Mansion house was interestingly unsophisticated, in the style of an Italianate villa and it was located southwest from the stables and is now a parking area.

Generations of the Erskine family continued to live at Almondell until the 1940's when the Dowager Countess passed away and the title was passed to her son in Gloucester. The house was then leased as a private residence for ladies until the 1950's. Unfortunately, the house became vacant after this time and the roof and windows were removed to avoid hefty taxes.

The house soon fell into disrepair and was in ruins by the 1960's. It was officially 'blown up' by the Territorial Army in June 1969 as a training exercise in the use of explosives.

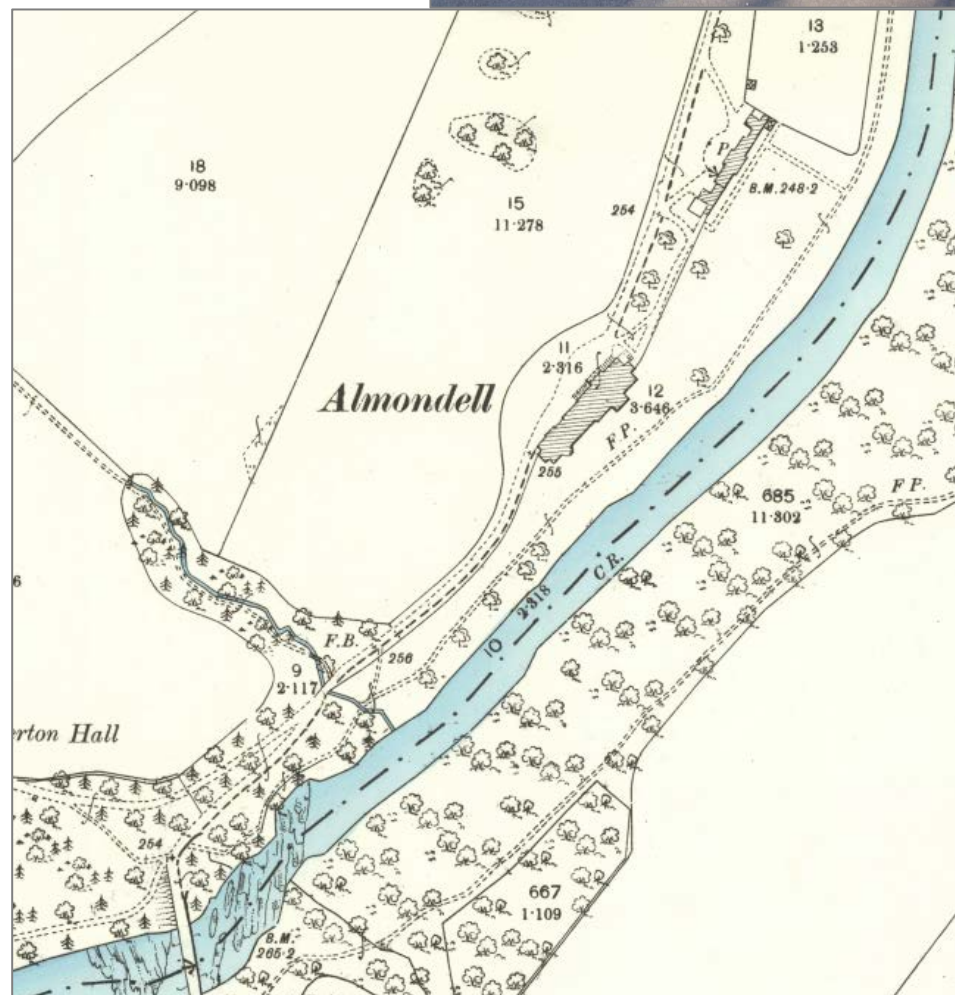
The old estate area, now better known as the central part of the Almondell Country Park, provides grounds also for the Earl of Buchan's Astronomical Pillar, 1776, which is located in front of the former stables. It was originally built at Kirkhill House in Broxburn by David Stewart Erskine where it remained until the

1970's. It was brought to Almondell and rebuilt as seen today. It is a square pier, surmounted by a belltower and cross, incised with Latin inscriptions and astronomical equations.

The nearby Nasmyth Bridge to the south west, often called Almondell Bridge, was commissioned by Henry Erskine and designed by Alexander Nasmyth. Built around 1800 to serve as a crossing point over the River Almond, it was constructed from sandstone in a 'romantic fashion' and due to the good condition after restoration in the 1990's and its imposing nature as part of the designed landscape, it is Category A-listed building.

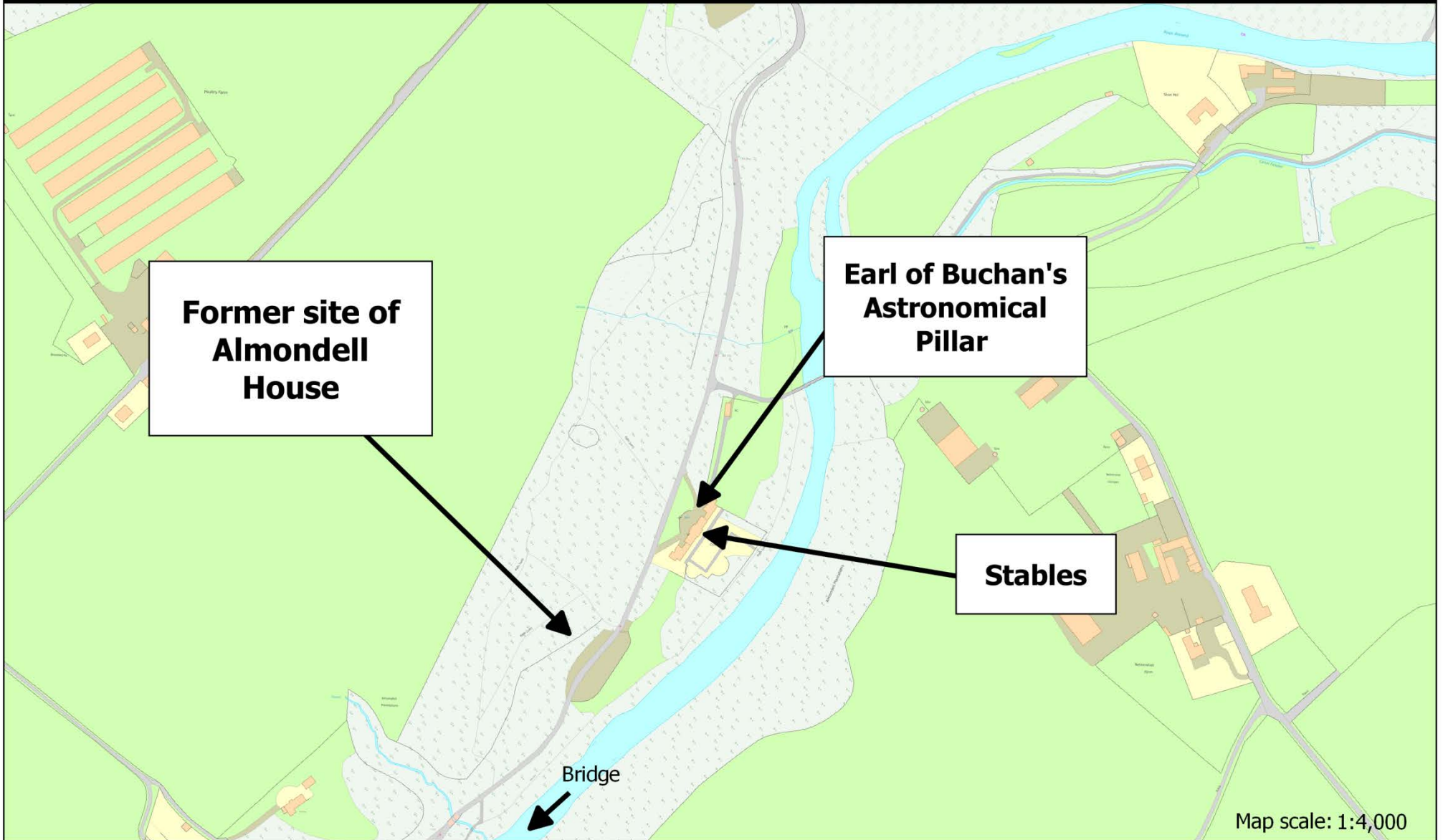
The old estate boundaries around the demolished mansion and Category C-listed stables have great conservation value and are mixture of old deciduous trees. The old stable

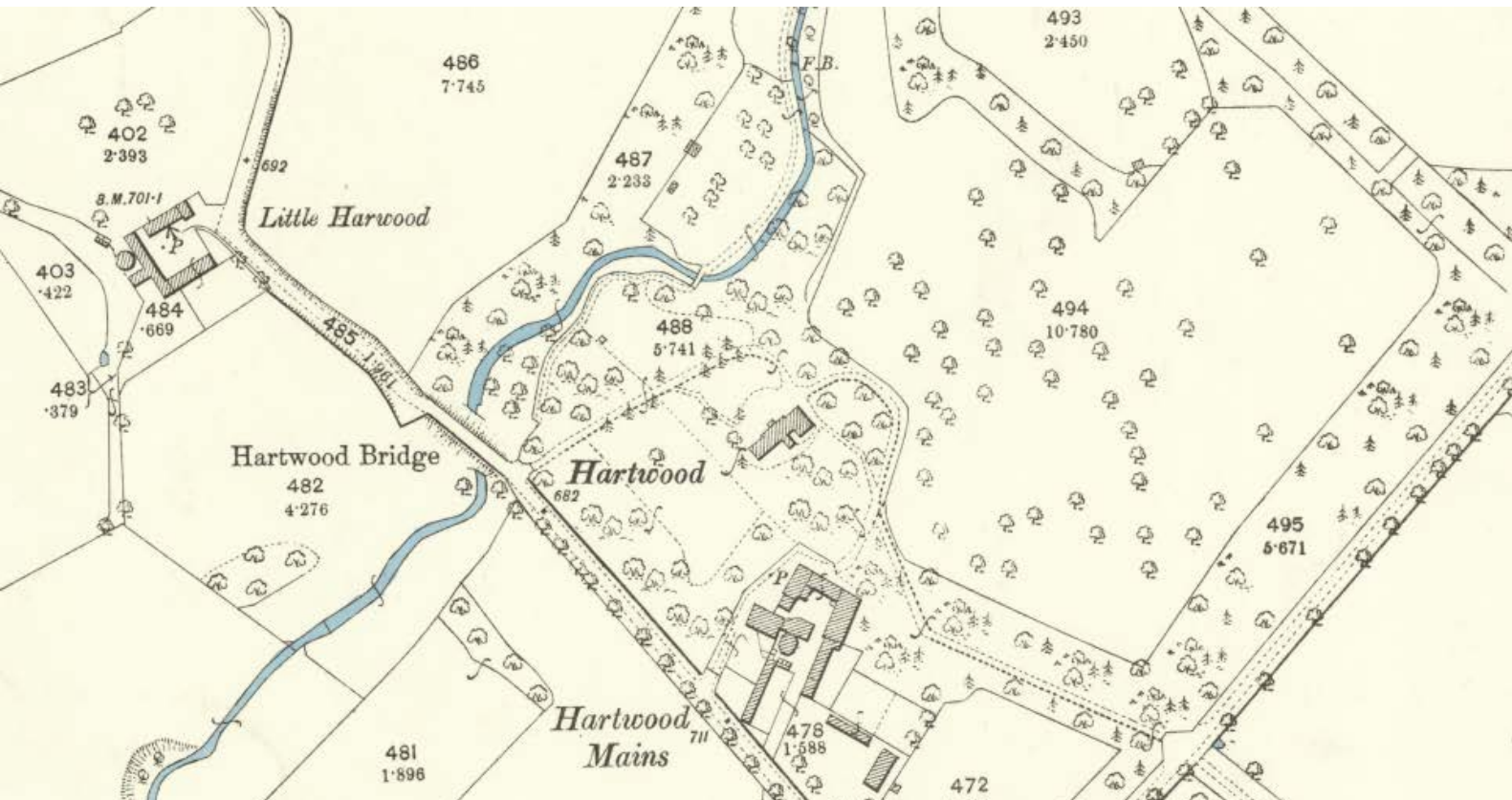
block in Almondell was converted into the Visitor Centre in 1981 and currently provides a focal point for visitors to this part of the wider Almondell & Calderwood Country Park.



Almondell House in 1893 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

ALMONDELL HOUSE





Hartwood House in 1893 © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland



Hartwood House

Location: South of West Calder
Grid Reference: 301798 661333

Hartwood House dates originally from the early 19th century, but due to several alterations has lost much of its original character. The estate policies and a few remaining interesting features still contribute historically and archeologically, adding value to the site.

As a Category C-listed building, Hartwood House is a two storey harled and skew-gabled country house with slated roof, dressed chimneys and corner stones. The central pedimented bay is flanked by later corbie-

stepped projections and a modern brick porch.

The house was originally built for the Mowbray family in 1807, probably for John Mowbray of Hartwood. Woodland policies around the old estate are mature, mainly following the natural landscape features, such as the river to the north. In the vicinity of the house is a sundial dating from the same era when the house was originally built.

Linburn House



Location: Wilkieston
Grid Reference: 312116 668223

Linburn House was a stunning country house in the proximity of old Hatton House, at Wilkieston, by East Calder. The estate is currently serving as a centre for blinded war veterans.

In 1944, the Linburn House Estate, situated outside Edinburgh was purchased to provide further facilities for those Scots blinded in the Second World War. Housing, workshops and recreational facilities within the grounds of the house were developed and the house has been replaced by a complex of seven permanent modern workshops and offices. The house itself was used as a hospital before demolition. The East Lodge was also demolished.

Even though the original house was demolished in 1955, surviving buildings from

the earlier phase includes an 1890s sundial and early 19th century west-gate lodge and gateway to Linburn Park. The Lodge is octagonal, harled and has dressed central octagonal chimney.

The Sundial, west-gate lodge and gateway are Category B-listed buildings. Other surviving buildings include the west lodge and entrance gates, south lodge, also known as Superintendent's House, and Glen Cottage, whose construction dates are unknown but are assumed to date from the 19th century. The estate also has a remaining bowling green and walled garden.



The Gogar Burn flows through the southern side of the estate. Now located on the far eastern border of West Lothian, the estate has always been in a prominent location adjacent to the A71 and in close vicinity to Edinburgh.



Hartwood House in 1893 with current estate in background © Reproduced by permission of the National Library of Scotland

LINBURN HOUSE



Kirknewton House



Location: Kirknewton
Grid Reference: 311533 666473

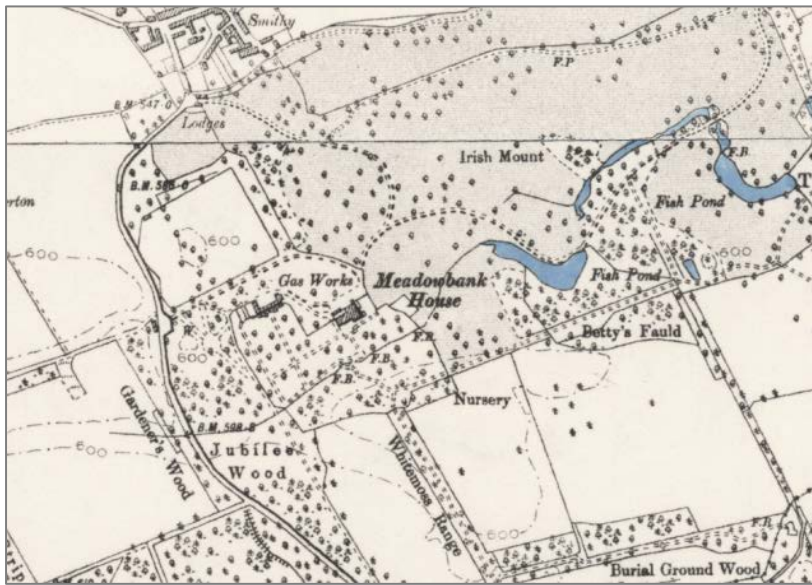
Once known as Meadowbank House, this Category B-listed large mansion with beautiful grounds dates from 17th century with stunning surviving elements around the old estate.

The country house was built in the 1690s for James Maconochie of Meadowbank (c. 1819–1885). After the Revolution of 1688, James Maconochie, who at his father's death was little more than nine years old, applied to government for the restoration of their Argyllshire property unsuccessfully. However, he obtained a grant in compensation from King William III, which he invested in the purchase of lands at Kirknewton.

Since then the house has been owned by his descendants. The house itself is a two and half storey T-plan mansion with surviving wing of a tall Georgian house. It has been altered greatly twice ; first in Scots Baronial style in 1835, by William Playfair for 2nd Lord Meadowbank and then in 1870 for Allen Maconochie, the 4th Lord.

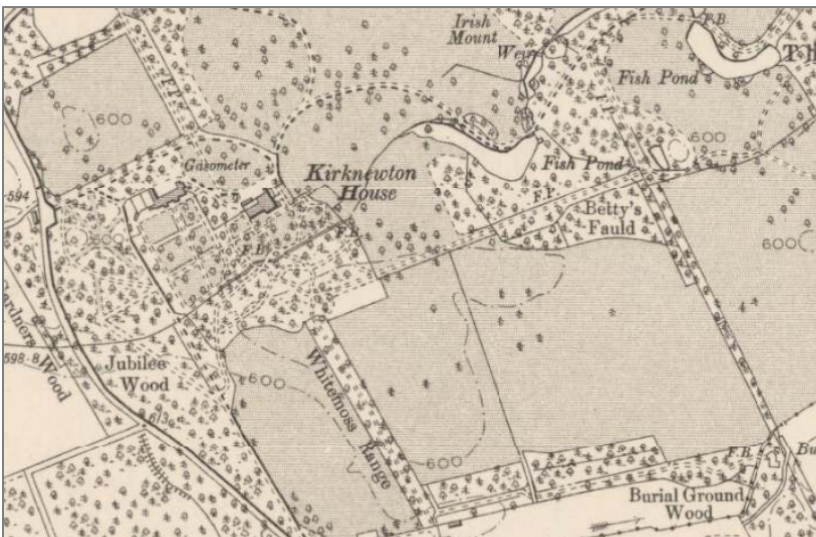
When Playfair altered the house, he was also creating Bonaly Tower for Lord Cockburn, and baronialising Craigcrook for Lord Jeffrey which still remains in the estate. The gate lodge, now called Huntingtower that was formerly an Inn, is probably also by Playfair. It takes the form of a square tower with square ashlar turrets, tall dormer-windowed gallery-wing adjacent.

The estate has beautiful grounds south of Kirknewton village.



Kirknewton House in 1893

Country house was previously known as Meadowbank House. The house and stables were already surrounded by mature deciduous trees and the gate lodge stands on the edge of the grounds, clearly marking the boundary between the Estate and Kirknewton village.



Kirknewton House in 1905

Soon after the start of the 20th century, the house had already changed its name to Kirknewton House.

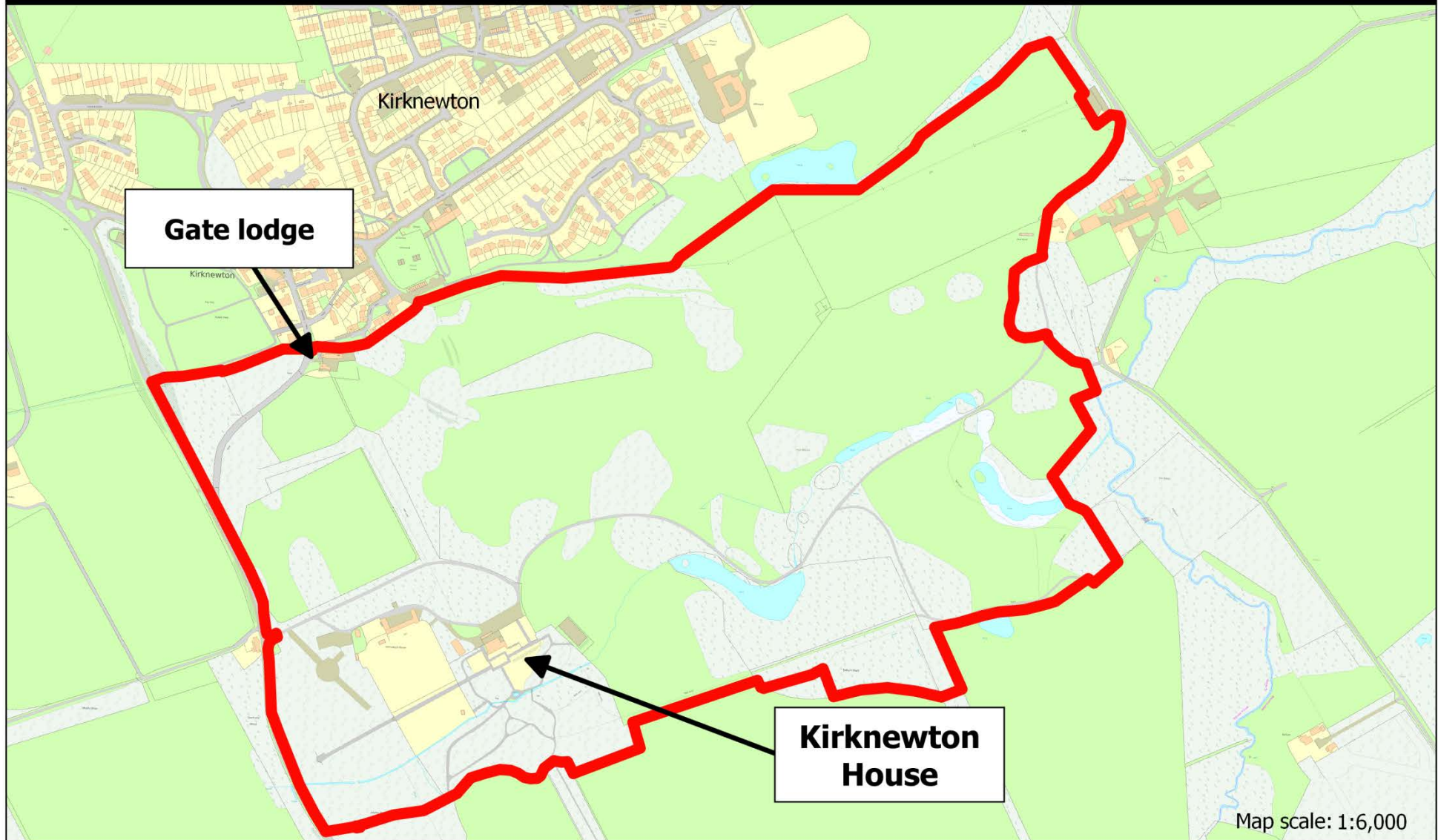


Kirknewton House in 1966

No changes are seen in Kirknewton House in the later 20th century as the estate boundary remains much the same as originally set out. No additional features have been added to the estate.

However, Kirknewton village keeps expanding north from the country house primarily related to MoD housing serving Kirknewton Airfield that was established to the south of the grounds in the 1940's, along with the associated Ritchie Camp.

KIRKNEWTON HOUSE



Map scale: 1:6,000

Limefield House



Location: Polbeth
Grid Reference: 303444 664334

Limefield House is beautiful Georgian mansion on the edge of Polbeth near West Calder. Surrounded by trees and the Harwood Water, the house is set within 5 acres of mature woodland policies.

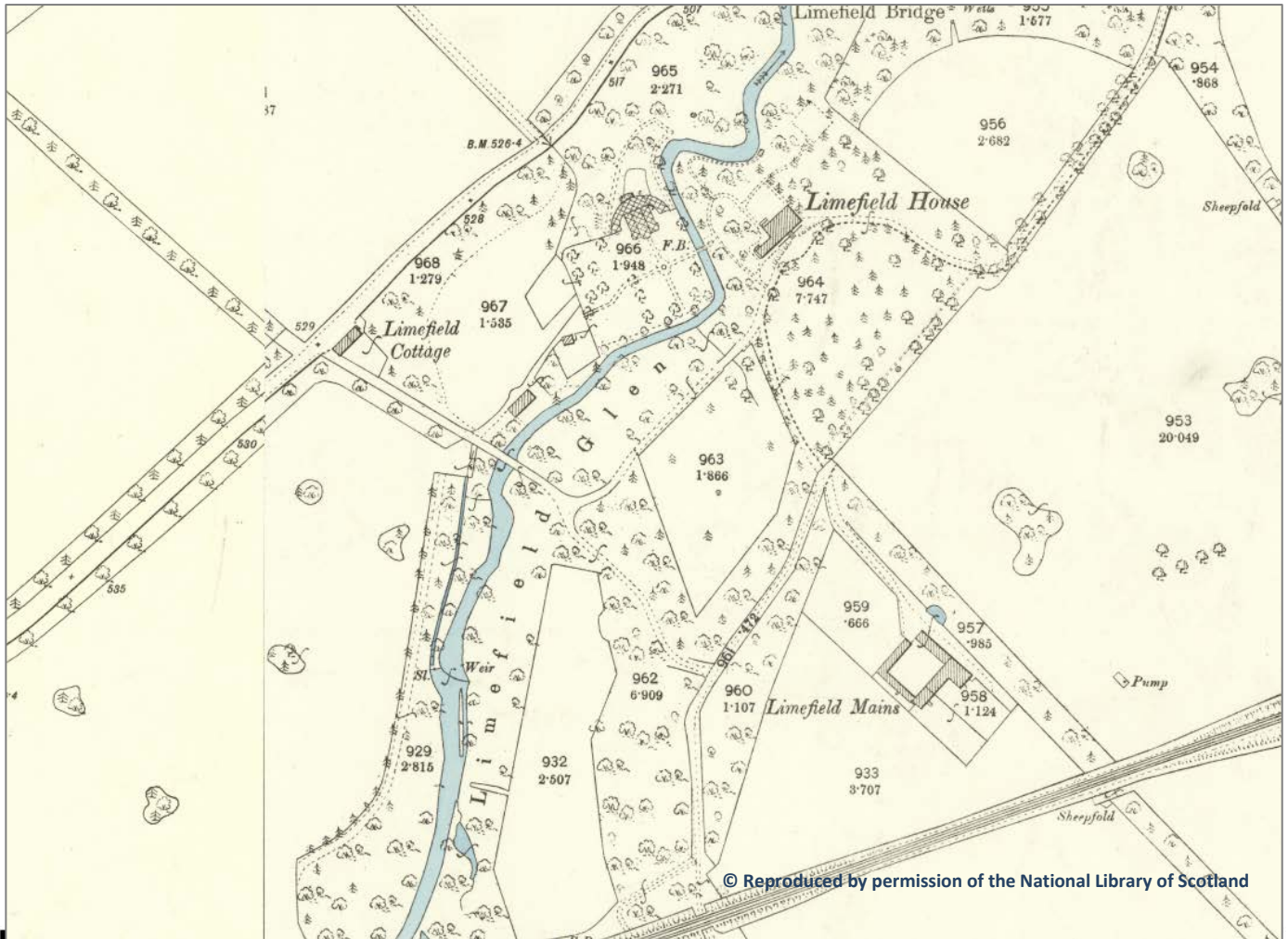
The house was built in 1804. It is a polished ashlar, two storey house with garret and basement. The house has a piended slated roof which is platformed on top. With 5-bay front entrance doorway approached by stair, the house greatly contributes to the surrounding area.

It belonged to a Thomas Gloag in the 1840s and was built with suitable offices and the surrounding ground tastefully lay out and adorned. There is also a street in nearby West Calder that is named after the Gloag family.

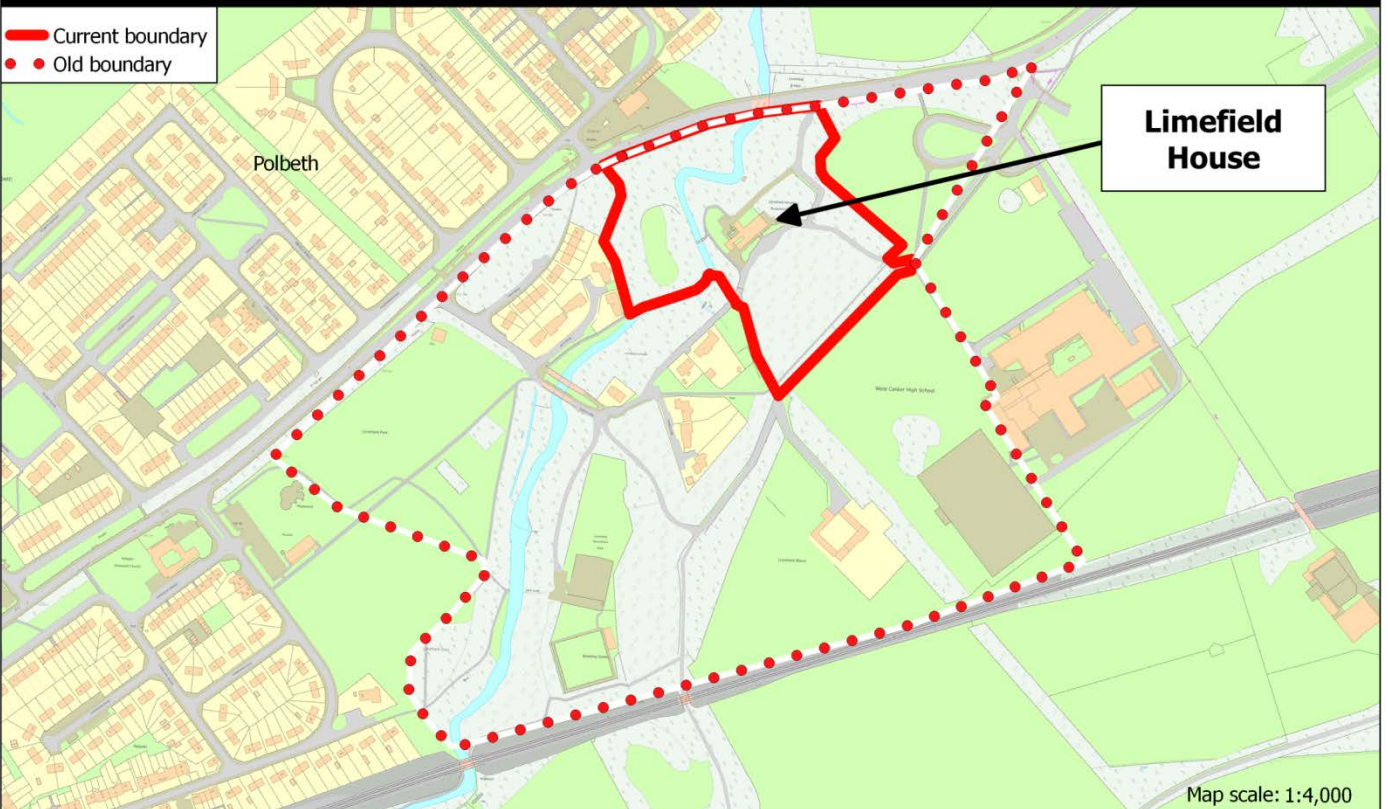
While used for offices in the 1990's, Limefield House has been converted back to residential use and retained much of its original character and is listed as a Category B. There are two original surviving bridges near Limefield House which date from 19th century.

From 1855 Limefield House belonged to James "Paraffin" Young (c. 1811–1883) who entertained in the house his lifelong friend explorer David Livingstone. A sycamore tree which Livingstone planted in 1864 still flourishes in the grounds.

The gardens within the estate contain mature planting and a waterfall which may have been built for Livingstone's visit. The gardens to the rear drop down to the Harburn Water where sea trout have been caught in the past. The gardens also have a large number of Yew trees predating the house.



LIMEFIELD HOUSE



Blackburn House



Location: Between Blackburn & Seafield. Grid Reference: 300088 665608

Blackburn House is an interesting Category A-listed house with an associated estate landscape of high architectural, historical and scenic value.

It is a later 18th century house in open grounds. Dominating the view from A705 to north, the house has ceremonial north frontage with a later Doric porch. It has two storeys with basement and attic at rear. Offices are linked by quadrant walls to the house. It is believed that house was built by George Moncrieff of Blackburn who was an agricultural improver, making his money in sugar plantations in the West Indies.

It is said that after building the new mansion the new landowner decided that the village was too near to his

house, so he moved the village about three-quarters of a mile to the west.

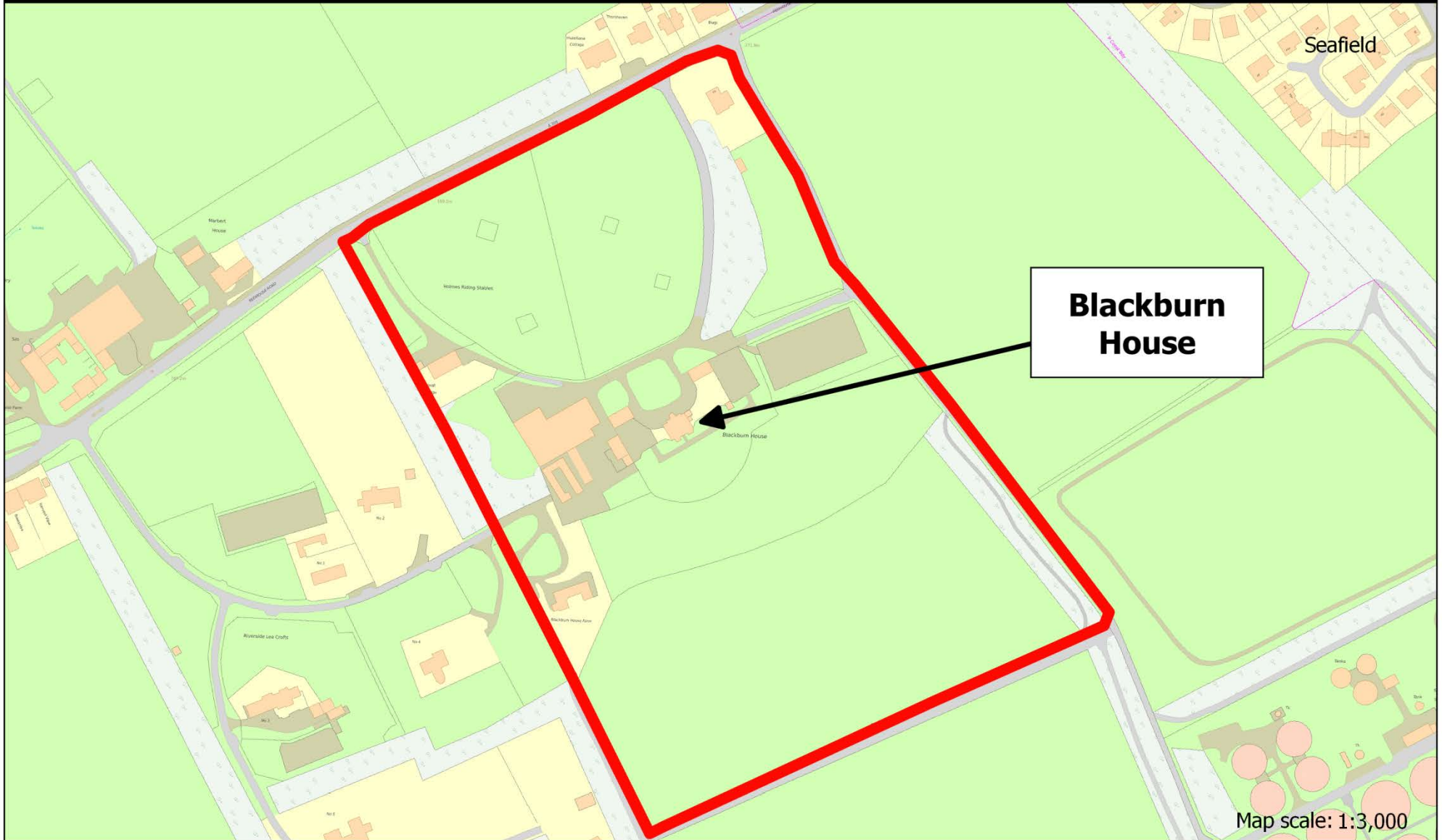
Since then the house was occupied until 1972 when it became vacant. Ten years later the former Cockburn Conservation Trust commissioned a feasibility study which concluded that a business use would be the best option for the property. It was restored in 2007, after 30 years of neglect, and serves currently as mixture of office and studio spaces.

Blackburn House is a highly significant example of largely unaltered 18th century rustic villa with lavish rococo interior plasterwork. What makes the house interesting is its 'Janus-faced' character as the house differs greatly in south and north facade. In addition, from east and west, the house appears more like a farmhouse than a country mansion.

The house is approached by 2 drives that sweep symmetrically from the main road, where traces of former lodges remain. Estate has beautiful views to southeast and Pentlands and Five Sisters Bing can clearly be seen. A 'lowland crofting' development of low density large house plots in a woodland setting was established immediately to the west of the house in the late 1990's.



BLACKBURN HOUSE



Bedlormie House

Location: near Blackridge

Grid Reference: 298233 672332

Located on the rising ground at the western boundary of West Lothian, Bedlormie House originates from as early as the 15th century. This typical country house is currently serving as a whitewashed farmhouse.

Originally a plain peel-type tower, square and vaulted, the ancient estate of Bedlormie was for a long time part of the Barony of Ogilface. King Robert 3rd (c. 1390–1406) granted jurisdiction over the Barony of Ogilface to Holyrood, with the village and lands of Bedlormie and Wester Hillhouse. Since then, Bedlormie has been mainly under the families of Ogilface, Forrester and Livingston.

Sir Alexander Livingston acquired the Old Bedlormie, which was formerly known as

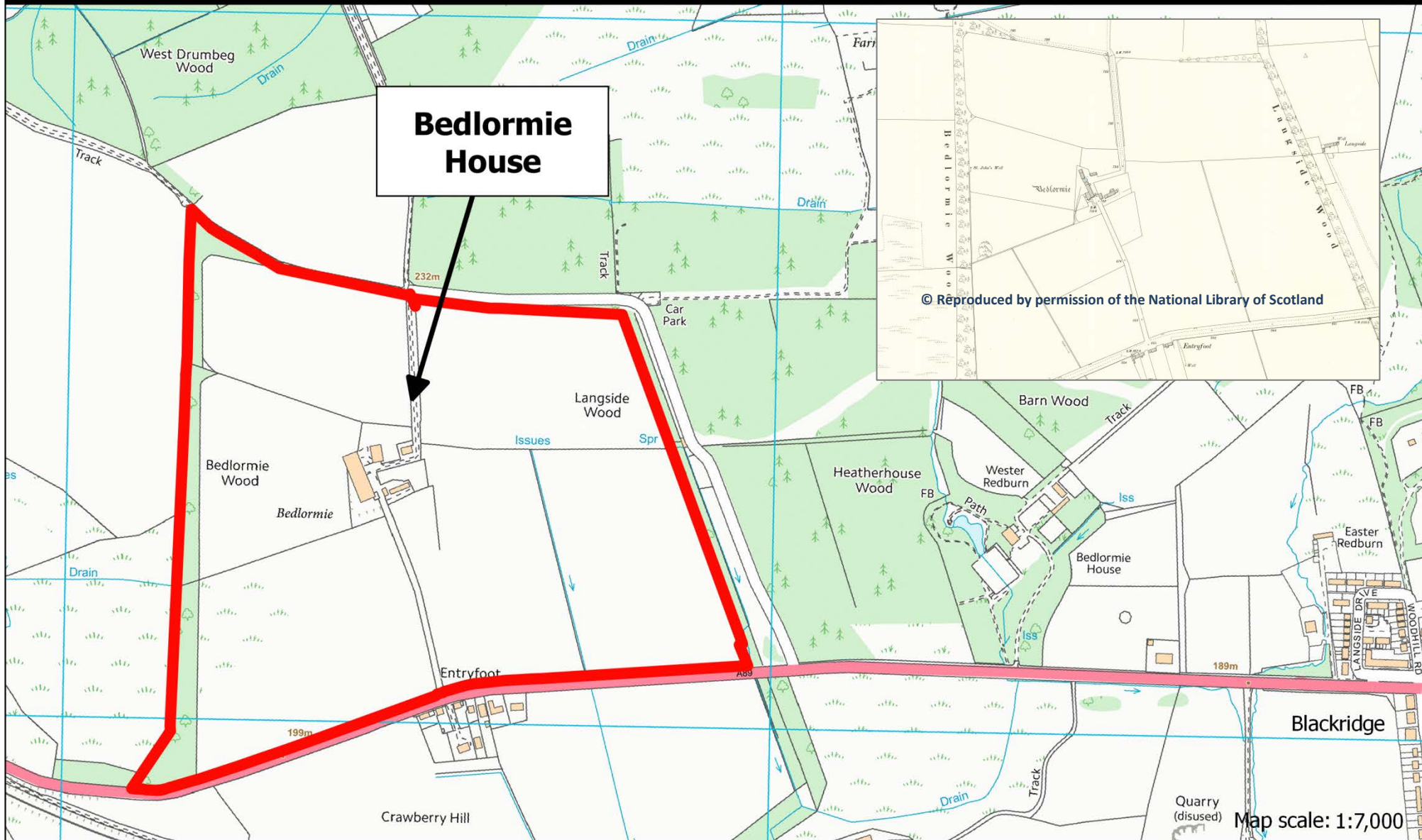
‘Badlormie’ or ‘Balormie’, but the country house was later altered and lowered by a storey in the early 17th century.

This makes it a typical L-shaped laird’s house, the main block lying east and west with the wing projecting northwards. The house has a shallow 19th century roof and the only external features that remain are the roll-mouldings of the ground floor windows.

The surrounding agricultural land of Bedlormie House is softened by shelter beds. The overgrown track north from the house has a historic estate atmosphere. Due to the location on higher ground, Bedlormie House overlooks land to the south. East from the farm is Blawhorn Moss National Nature Reserve.



BEDLORMIE HOUSE



Polkemmet House



Location: Whitburn

Grid Reference: 298233 672332

Polkemmet House Estate, currently serving as Polkemmet Country Park, consists of the remains of the 17th century building features and designed landscape.

The family of Baillie purchased the Polkemmet Estate in 1620 and built the principal mansion block east of the stable block, in the proximity of the current Bowling Green. It is believed that the house was built either for Thomas Baillie (d. 1645), or for his father, also Thomas Baillie, who acquired the estate in about 1600. The house was a two storey structure in the Scots Baronial style and it was extended twice in Victorian times, 1823 and 1878, and in 1912 by Dick Peddie & Forbes Smith.

After the First World War, a kitchen maid from Polkemmet House told that the Lady Baillie's room was called the 'Rose Room'. It had a pink carpet, pink curtains and a pink and blue eiderdown on the four-poster bed, with lovely furniture and mirrors.

Polkemmet House remained in the Baillie family until the 1950s. During the Second World War it was used as a war hospital and

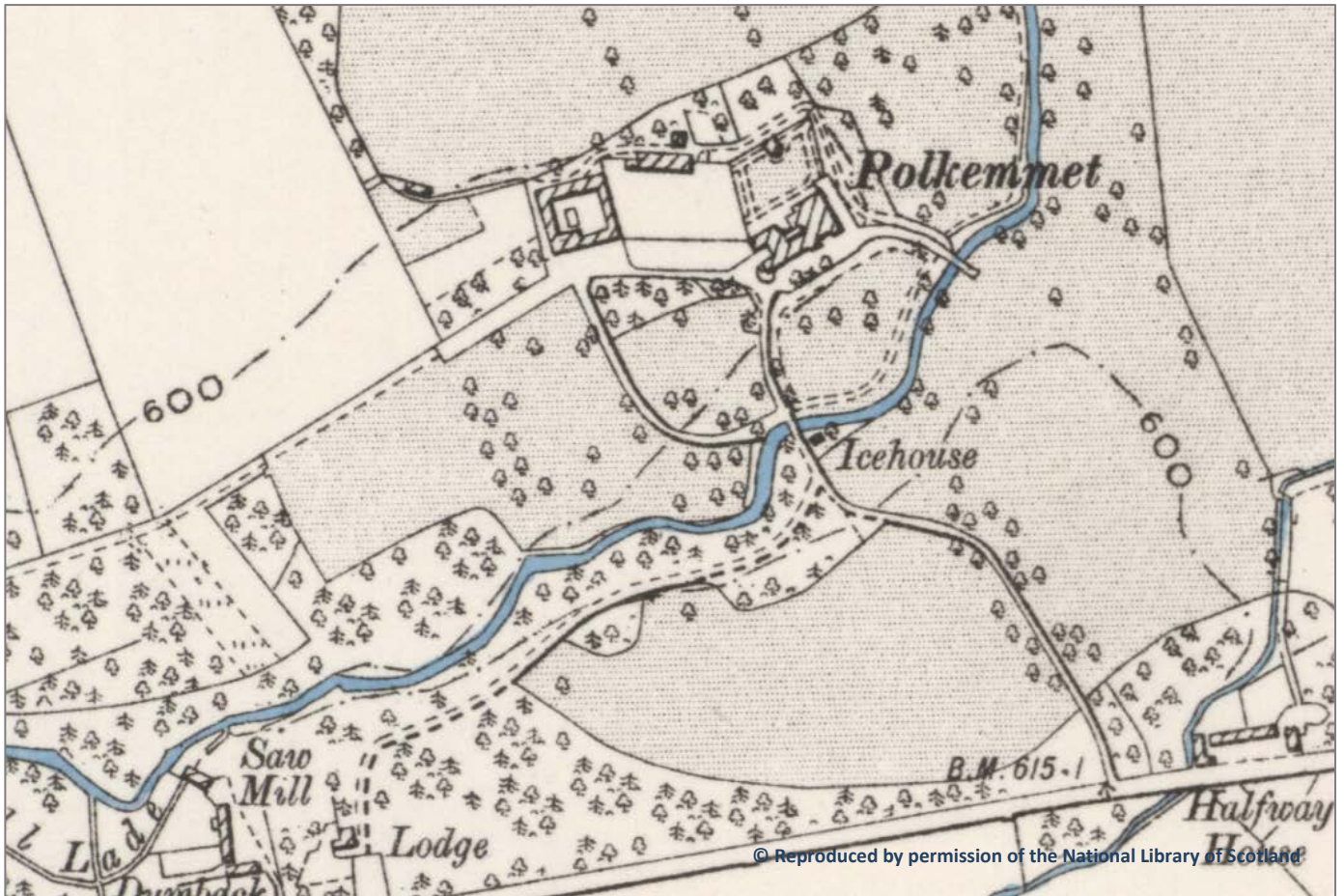
accommodation for Polish soldiers. After the war Polkemmet House and Estate served as a school and college until it was sold to the National Coal Board (NCB) in 1960. During that decade, the main house was demolished.

In 1978 Polkemmet House Estate was purchased from the NCB by West Lothian District Council. The heavily wooded 170-acre estate opened as a country park in 1979 and the former stable block of Polkemmet House accommodates the visitor facilities.

The estate has the remains of a walled garden and gazebo. Also a Mausoleum, where Sir Adrian Baillie rests after his death in 1947, can still be found on the Estate. The area around the Baillie family mausoleum and one of the dwelling houses is not owned by the Council as the NCB retained ownership of these properties.

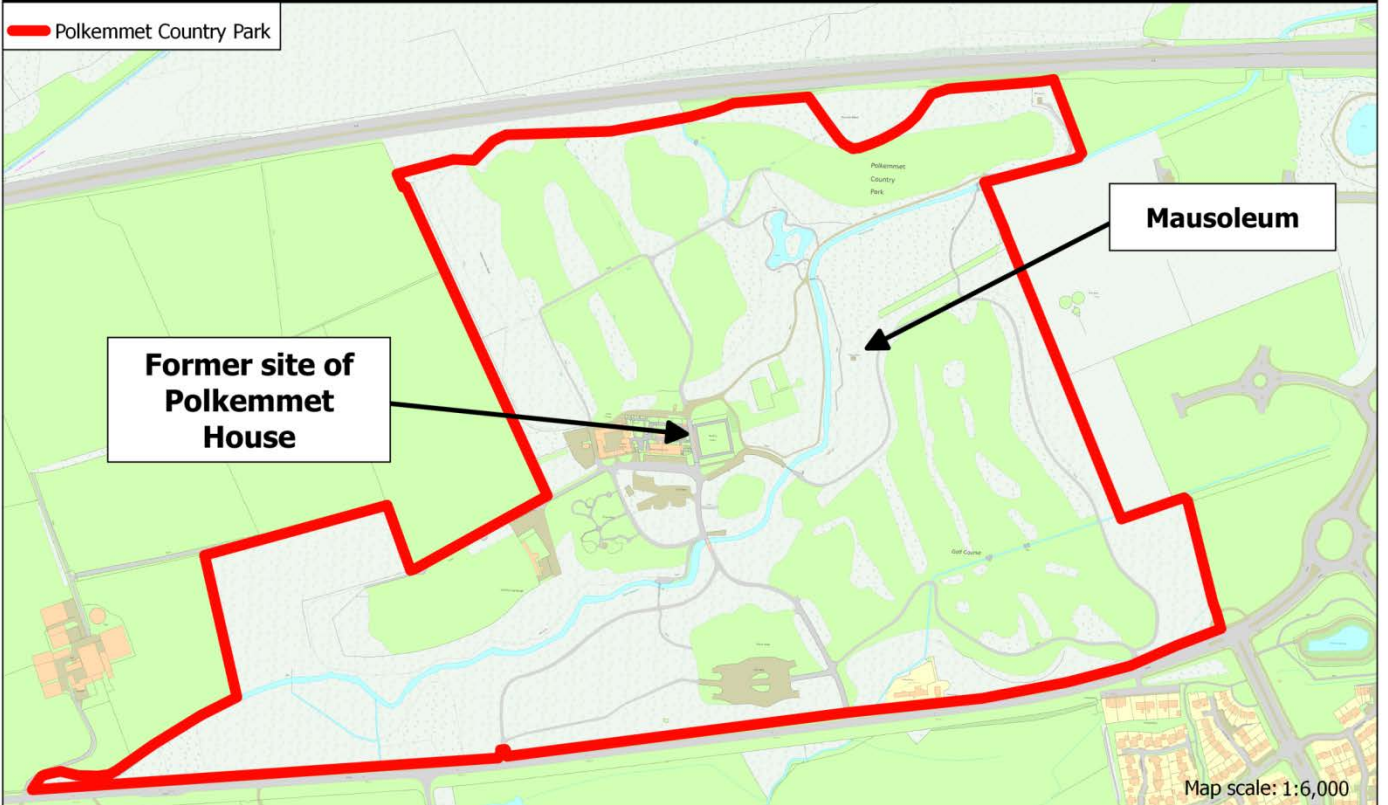
Due to several extensions, Polkemmet House was at that time a greatly admired country house. Unlike many other estates, the original boundaries of Polkemmet House Estate have mostly survived and with the related outbuildings, Polkemmet Country Park has retained its historic value and remains an important part of west West Lothian's local history.





POLKEMMET HOUSE

Polkemmet Country Park



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