

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority

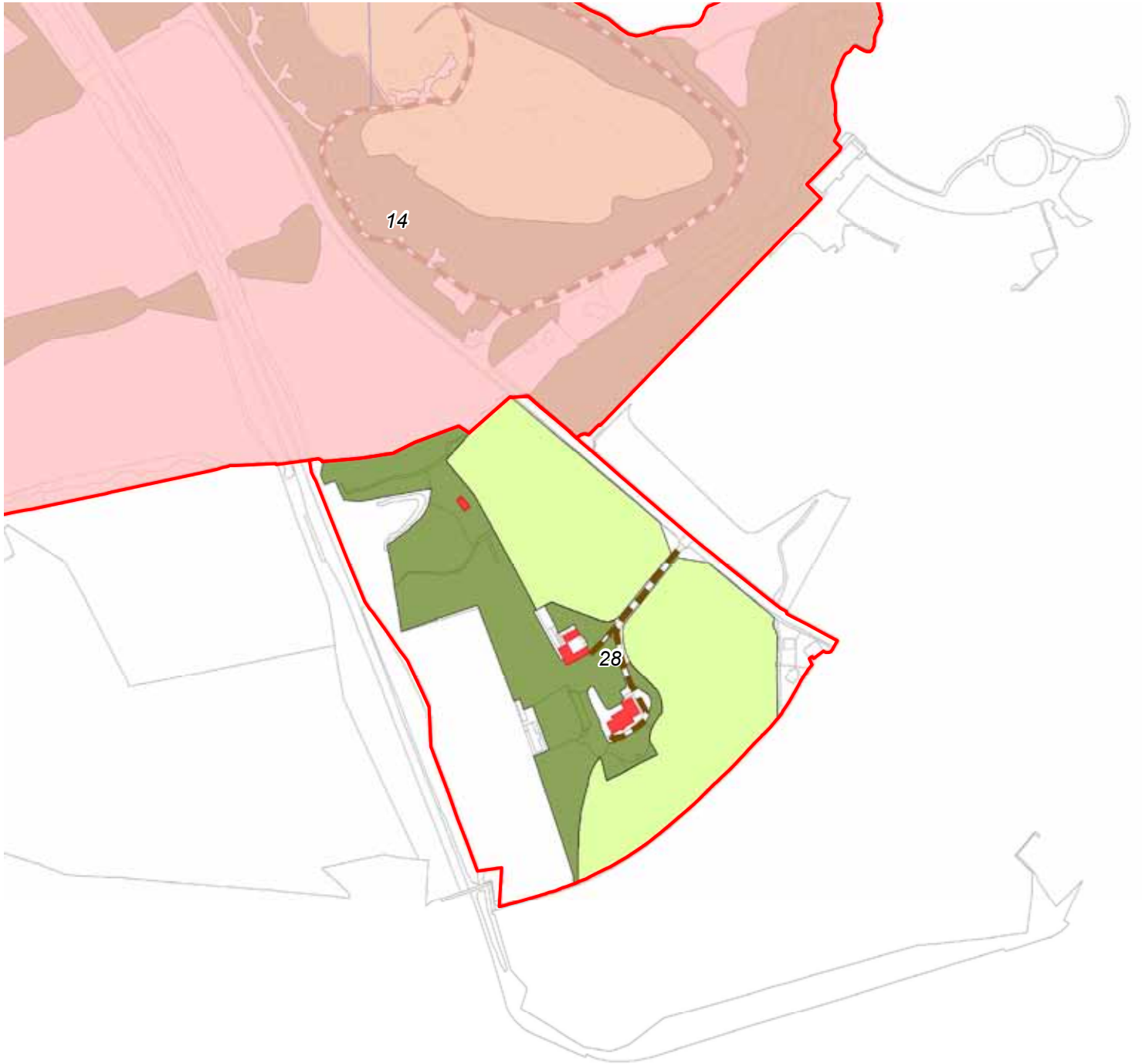
Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

28 Woodbank House

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Legend

- Designed landscape boundary
- Neighbouring sites
- Notable views
- Main drives
- Gardens
- Former garden
- Walled garden
- Woodland
- Parkland
- Principal building
- Scheduled ancient monument



Site 28

Woodbank

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28 Woodbank House

County Dunbartonshire

Parish Bonhill

NGR NS 382 818; OS 1:25,000 Sheet 347

Designations

Listing Woodbank House with garden building (now gone, HB No. 1125);
Category A

Ancient Woodland (planting on slope to west)

REASON FOR INCLUSION

A very small site on the edge of the built-up area with a limited range of designed landscape features but important for its house (although ruinous), woodlands and road edge trees.

LOCATION AND EXTENT

A very small but long-established villa landscape in a prominent location, next to the Old Luss Road, on the northern edge of Alexandria. It is sandwiched between the two much larger estates of Cameron and Tullichewan, making it difficult to determine the historical extent of this designed landscape. The house and its associated policy planting are now positioned between the A82, which bypasses Alexandria to the west, and the old road, Old Luss Road, which is now effectively a *cul-de-sac*, on the east. Access is by a short drive from the old road. The house stands on a low terrace at the base of a gentle hill slope, overlooking fairly flat ground between it and the road.

LANDSCAPE HISTORY**Maps and documentary evidence**

The house appears as 'Stochrothart' on Blaeu (1654), between 'Tullichewym' to the south and 'Camron' to the north, though without any additional detail. Roy (c1750) marks a small group of buildings or fermtoun, within a small tree-lined enclosure, surrounded by unenclosed rig cultivation and a few extra trees. Taylor & Skinner (1776) record the house 'Stuckroger' belonging to Scott Esq, with some associated planting. On Ross (1777) 'Stockiroger' is marked as a mansion set within well-wooded policies. Thomson (1823) is the first to name the house 'Woodbank', although a remark by Stoddart (1801) suggests that this name was already in use before the beginning of the 19th century. At the time of the 1st edition OS (1860) the landscape had most of the attributes of a gentleman's estate, albeit in miniature – the mansion house overlooking a small



Roy c1750



Ross 1777

Woodbank House in its
planted setting seen from Old
Luss Road





Ordnance Survey 6" map
1860

park and policies, a separate court of offices and a small kitchen garden. Save for the realignment of the A82 in the 1970s, the remaining landscape features appear to have remained largely unchanged from the mid-19th century. The house appears on modern maps as Hamilton House, its later-20th century name as a hotel.

Building history and ownership

Its appearance on Blaeu (1654) suggests that there was a house or settlement at this location from an early date. Historic Scotland state that the land was settled on James Lindsay and his wife Sarah Brisbane Lindsay in 1670. Timperley (1976) gives the owner c1758 as a Mr. Semple. Gifford & Walker (2002) suggest a date of 1775 for the present house, built for Glasgow merchant Charles Scott of Dalquhurn, when the house name was changed to Woodbank. Thomson (1823) names the owner as a Miss Scott. By the 1st edition OS the owner was William Campbell (Junior). In 1885 William Ewing-Gilmour of Croftenga was the occupant of the house and it is likely that the later additions date from his occupancy, the coat of arms on the west wall is the same as that on the Masonic Hall in Alexandria. Historic Scotland and the local history website name William Ewing-Gilmour as the owner before the start of the 20th century. He is thought likely to be responsible for additions made to the house c1885. During the 1930s the house became a hotel and continued in that use for some 50 years. Robbed of passing trade by the realignment of the A82, the hotel's fortunes declined, despite a revamp and re-opening c1979 as the Hamilton House Hotel. The closure of the hotel in 1981 was followed by a rapid deterioration in its condition, which saw it added to the Scottish Civic Trust's *Buildings at Risk* register. The house is now a ruinous shell following a fire in 1996.



Thomson 1823

COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

Architectural Features

Woodbank House with garden building (Cat. A)

Two-storey over basement, five-bay, rectangular-plan mansion house of c1775, with large three-storey, five-bay later 19th century addition at right angles to the south. Stucco over rubble; main east front pedimented at centre; raised ashlar margins; rusticated quoins; eaves cornice.

The main east façade stands almost intact, as do some other external walls, but the roof, interior walls and floors have mostly collapsed.

East façade of Woodbank House



Former gazebo

This garden building was completely destroyed by fire some years ago. The listing describes it as a 'small octagonal timber gazebo with chevron joinery; pagoda style roof; door on south elevation; terracotta fishscale tiles'.

Stables and garage

The former stables and garage buildings, in the form of a small three-sided courtyard, are in a ruinous state to the north of the house.



Stables etc

Walled garden

A small walled garden is shown at the north end of the main woodland belt on the 1st edition OS, divided by a central path. Nothing remains of this on the ground.

Boundary and field enclosures

A well-detailed estate wall of squared red sandstone rubble with a triangular ashlar coping, c1.2m high, runs the length of the site beside Old Luss Road; collapsed or missing in sections where weakened by tree roots or boles.



Boundary wall

Iron estate fences run both sides of the East drive; broken and leaning for much of their length.

East drive

A short drive from the old road to the house and stables areas; drybound construction; fair condition.



East drive

*Stewart mausoleum*

Gardens and policy planting

Gardens

No gardens remain. Various trees and shrubs from garden areas remain around the house site including box, cedar (Deodar), cypresses, laburnum, cherry laurel, rhododendrons, Scots pine and a large oak, plus invasion by birch and goat willow.

Parkland

The south park is shown as parkland on the 1st edition OS with very few parkland trees. None remain, although some younger trees occur in the south-west part and additional planting associated with the A82 realignment now closes off the west of the field. The north field is similar in character and both are grazed by horses. About eight large limes (plus some stumps) are regularly spaced close to the estate wall beside the road and are an important feature of the local landscape.

Before the realignment of the A82, the designed landscape is assumed to have continued west of the house.

Tree belts and woodlands

One broad woodland belt runs north-south and comprises the total woodland of the site in its present form; mixed broadleaves with a few exotic conifers (Wellingtonia, firs) near the stables end. Important in screening the A82 road that runs on its west.

Water features

The Tullichewan burn forms the south boundary of the site. A former drive serving the Tullichewan estate ran on the south side. It remains as a residential road (Lower Stoney-mollan Road) and public footpath to Cardross.

*Tullichewan burn and south boundary**View from the north-east*

*Eastward view from in front of
the house*



Views and vistas

The outlook from the house is not particularly notable in its present form. Eastward views towards the loch, that would have once been a feature of the site, are now blocked by planting associated with the Loch Lomond Shores car parks and houses on Lower Stonymollan Road intrude into the view on the south-east. The views of the site seen from the Old Luss Road are its most important visual aspect.

Archaeology

The Dumbarton-Tarbet military road on the route of the old road. No other archaeological records although some interest will be present from the long residential occupation of the site.

PUBLIC ACCESS

There is a mix of land within and outwith access rights; no formal planned access exists. Public footpath close to the south boundary and West Loch Lomond cycle path to Tarbet along the old road.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL

The future of the site will depend on the future use for the ruinous house. The development needed to justify the restoration of the house and the stables group and conservation of the designed landscape is likely to include other new building within the site. The open nature of the site leaves limited options in terms of placement of new development that will impact either physically on the woodland or on views of the two parks. Conservation of the woodland cover and roadside trees must be the priority, together with minimising visual impacts on the character of the site in its setting, avoiding the appearance of extending the urban area. Repair of the boundary wall should also be encouraged.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overall

A site with limited features and only local importance, but critically positioned on the edge of the urban area and beside the A82 making its woods and roadside trees particularly significant.

Work of Art

Little

Historical

Little

Horticultural / Arboricultural / Sylvicultural

Little

Architectural

High

Scenic

Some

Nature Conservation

Some

Archaeological

Little

Recreational

Little

Primary sources, maps

J. Blaeu, *Levinia Vicecomitatus or the Province of Lennox* (1654) [after T. Pont]
– NLS Ref. WD3B/28

W. Roy, *Military Survey of Scotland* (1747-1755) BL Ref. 14/2f via SCRAN

G. Taylor & A. Skinner, *Survey and Maps of the Roads of North Britain or Scotland*
(1776) NLS Ref. EMS.b.3.48

C. Ross, *Map of the Shire of Dumbarton* (1777) – NLS Ref. EMS.s.182

J. Thomson, *Dumbartonshire* (1823) – NLS Ref. EMS.s.712(15)

Ordnance Survey, *6" to the Mile : First Edition* (1860) – Dumbartonshire Sheet XVIII

Primary sources, other

J. Stoddart, *Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners in Scotland 1799-1800*
(1801)

Ordnance Survey, *Object Name Book for the Parish of Bonhill, Book 4, p.36*
(1860)

Secondary sources

J. Neill, *Records and Reminiscences of Bonhill Parish* (1912)

F.A. Walker and F.J. Sinclair : *RIAS Illustrated Architectural Guide ; The North Clyde Estuary* (1992)

J. Gifford and F.A. Walker, *The Buildings of Scotland : Stirling and Central Scotland* (2002)

L. Timperley, *A Directory of Landownership in Scotland c.1770* (1976) – Scottish Record Society

Historic Scotland, *Listed Building Report 1125* (1989)

Scottish Civic Trust, *Buildings at Risk Register* (1990)

Forestry Commission Scotland, 'GLADE Land Information Search' website

'Vale of Leven' website

APPENDIX

Historical notes

Loretta Timperley's *A Directory of Landownership in Scotland c.1770* (1976) records the owner as "Mr Semple of Stuckrodger". Timperley also notes that the National Archives of Scotland have a copy of a Plan of the Estate of Cameron dated 1758 (NAS Ref. RHP 8758) – not examined in the course of this study – on which the estate is noted.

In his *Remarks on Local Scenery and Manners in Scotland, 1799 & 1800* (1801) John Stoddart mentions passing "Stockroger, or Woodbank, that of --- Scott Esq, opposite to which is the road to Balloch ferry".

The OS Object Name Book (1860) records Woodbank as "a neat dwelling house with ornamental ground attached, the property of and occupied by William Campbell Junior".

In his *Records and Reminiscences of Bonhill Parish* (1912) John Neill observes of Woodbank that "the present occupant is Mr. William Ewing Gilmour, a nephew of the late Mr. John Orr Ewing of Alexandria ... the place was in olden times known as Stuirodger. The original house was built in the sixteenth century, and had a very unpretentious appearance, but has been added to at various times, and is now a considerable building".
