



Mavisbank

Conservation Area Character
Appraisal & Management Plan

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL
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Introduction

1. Conservation areas are areas of special architectural and/or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. Under Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, Midlothian Council is required to determine which parts of its administrative area should be designated as conservation areas.
2. When a Conservation Area has been designated, it is the duty of Midlothian Council to pay special attention to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area when exercising powers under planning legislation. The character of a conservation area is not a simple matter of style, it is a combination of street layout, building density, scale and form, and landscape character.
3. Conservation area character appraisals are a non-statutory form of planning guidance recommended as part of the ongoing management of conservation areas. The purpose of this Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plan (CACAMP) is to:
 - Highlight the significance of the Conservation Area in terms of townscape, landscape, architecture and history;
 - Provide a framework for conservation area management and for managing change within the conservation area; and
 - Confirm the importance of the designation of the area.

The CACAMP will define how change is managed within the Conservation Area, identifying specific opportunities for enhancement and it will inform planning decisions in the Conservation Area. The purpose of conservation area designation and this CACAMP is not to prevent change. The aim is to identify the key characteristics of the historic environment and establish a context within which change can continue in a way which enhances historic character.

4. The Mavisbank Conservation Area, shown in Figure 1, is centred on the Mavisbank Estate, which is located 6 miles south of Edinburgh, between Loanhead, Lasswade and Bonnyrigg (Poltonhall). The population within the Conservation Area is approximately 180 people. The Conservation Area straddles the River North Esk and is bounded by Wadingburn Road to the north, Loanhead to the west, Poltonhall (Bonnyrigg) to the south and Kevock (Lasswade) to the east. The village of Polton is the only settlement within the Conservation Area. The focal point for the Conservation Area is, however, the Mavisbank Estate.
5. The Mavisbank Estate was originally created by Sir John Clerk in collaboration with William Adam, in the early 18th Century. The Category A listed Mavisbank House is one of Scotland's earliest Palladian villas, and was one of Scotland's finest country houses for many years. It is still of significant architectural importance, despite being

derelict, and is considered to be of European importance. Mavisbank House is set within a designed landscape referred to as the Mavisbank Policies. Policies is a Scots word for “grounds” or “estates”.

6. Mavisbank Conservation Area was designated in 1977. The boundary was reviewed and enlarged in 1992 and 2014. There are four areas of distinct character – Mavisbank Policies, Polton (including the village, Polton Bank and Polton Road), Wadingburn Road and the southern slope of the North Esk valley. The Conservation Area boundary overlaps in parts with the following designations, shown in Figure 2:

- North Esk Valley Special Landscape Area;
- [Mavisbank Garden and Designed Landscape](#); and
- Mavisbank Local Biodiversity Site and River North Esk (Lasswade) Local Biodiversity Site.

Figure 1: Mavisbank Conservation Area Boundary

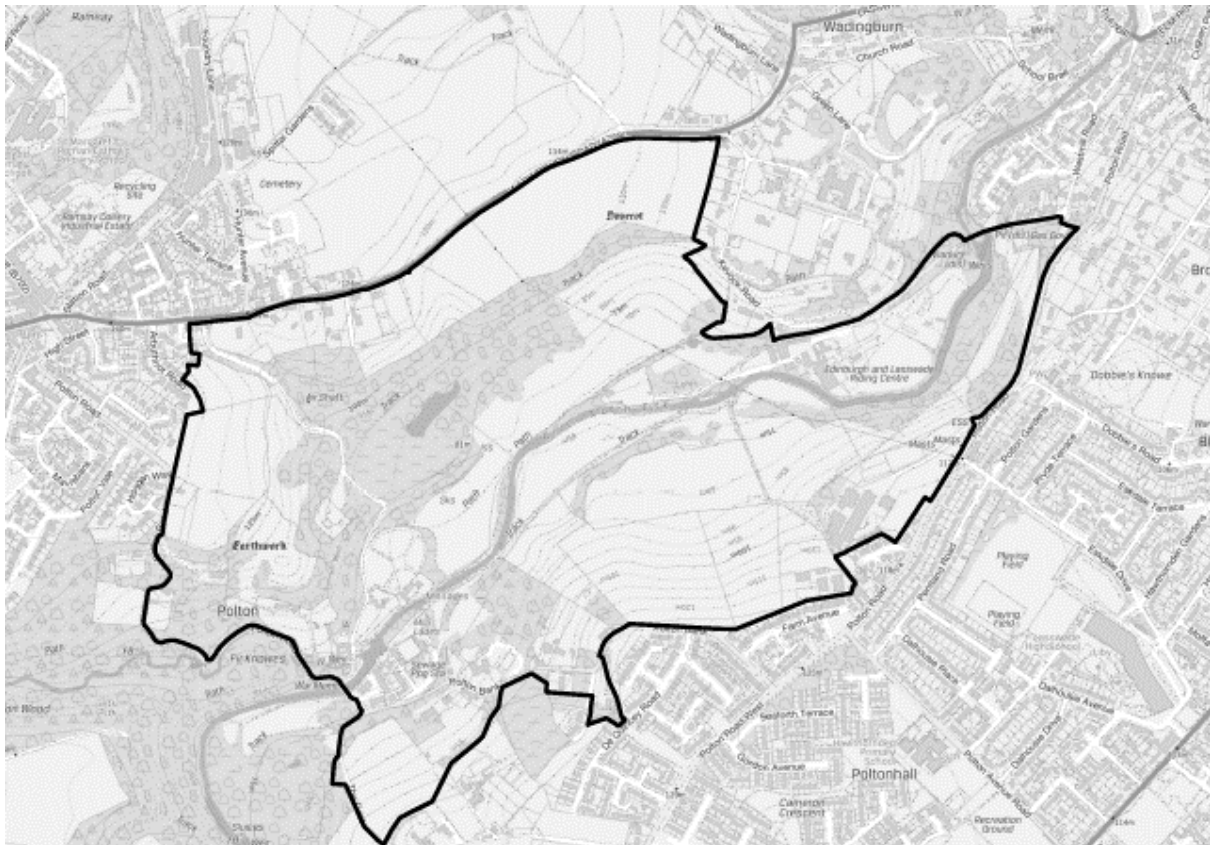
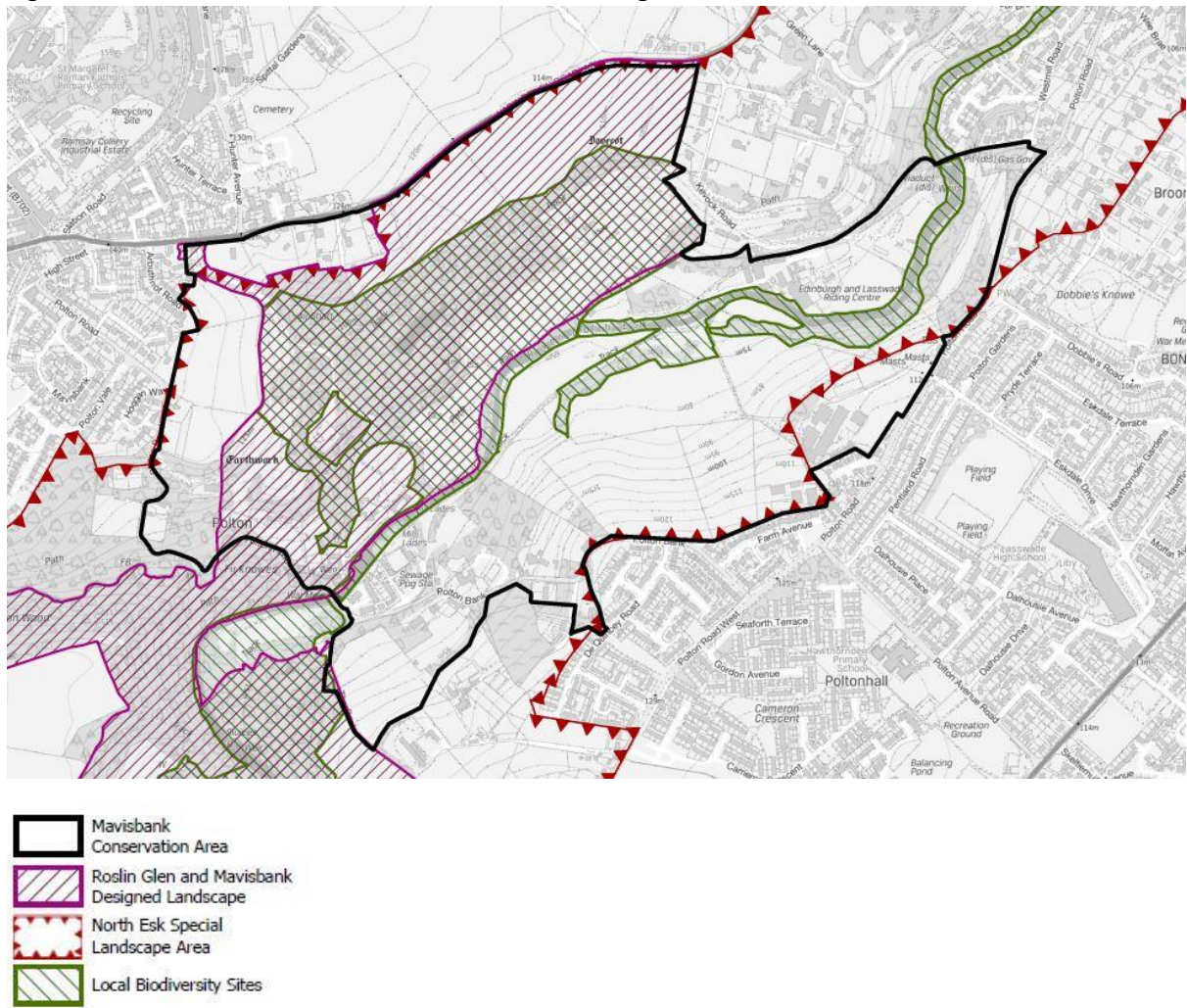


Figure 2: Mavisbank Conservation Area and Other Designations



Historical Development and Significance

Origins of the Area

7. Mavisbank Conservation Area spans the River North Esk between Polton and Lasswade. Much of the North Esk valley is narrow with steep and densely wooded sides, but it opens out a little around Polton, creating a broader but still steep sided and largely wooded valley. Along much of its length, including at Mavisbank, the River North Esk runs through or is bordered by large estates and former estate lands. The character of Mavisbank Conservation Area is largely influenced by the landform resulting from the river, and by the estates lining the banks of the river – Mavisbank Estate and Polton Estate.



John Adair Map (printed 1735)

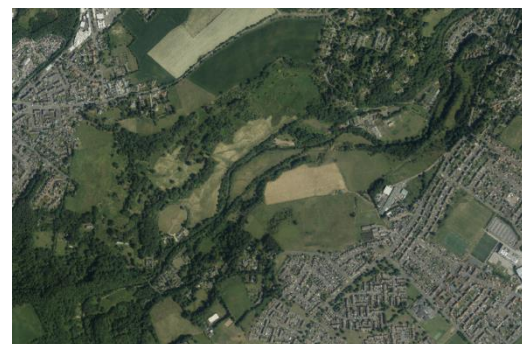


Roy Lowland Map (1755)

8. The main focus of the Mavisbank Conservation Area is the Mavisbank Estate. The Estate was formed by Sir John Clerk (2nd Baronet of Penicuik) from land originally purchased by his father (Sir John Clerk, 1st Baronet) as part of Mavisbank Farm. The farm was purchased with the intention of building a small house from which the 1st Baronet could supervise his local coal mining operations more easily than from the family home in Penicuik.



Mavisbank Estate aerial view



Aerial view of Conservation Area

9. The former Polton Estate also lies within the Conservation Area. The estate was feued in 1500 by Sir David Ramsey from the Abbot of the hospital of St Leonard (Edinburgh). The estate was purchased by William Calderwood (later Lord Polton) in 1711. The now demolished Polton House was built in the 1700s on a small promontory over the valley, which was the site of an older house dating from the 16th century. The site of Polton House is now the Poltonhall Industrial Estate. The summerhouse has survived

and is Category B listed. It sits outwith the boundary of the Mavisbank Conservation Area.



Polton House (by Mrs Kenny Stuart 1864-65)



Polton House (Ordnance Survey 1852)

10. Polton village developed as a result of the establishment of the Springfield Paper Mill in 1742 and the Polton Paper Mill in 1750 which both utilised the power of the River North Esk. The site of the Polton Paper Mill lies within the Conservation Area. The site belongs to Midlothian Council, and following the demolition of the former mill buildings, has been re-naturalised. The site of Springfield Mill is not within the Conservation Area. The mill buildings were demolished and the site has been restored for wildlife, managed by the Midlothian Council Ranger Service. It is a designated Local Biodiversity Site. The paper mills were served by the Esk Valley Railway, which was a branch from the Edinburgh – Peebles railway, from the 1860s to the 1960s.



Polton Paper Mill 1974



Polton Bowling Green 2020

Archaeological & Historical Significance

11. The great estates, combined with the industrial development along the North Esk in the 18th and 19th centuries, has led to strong relationships between the buildings and landscapes of the valley and a rich and complex set of literary, artistic and architectural associations. During the mid-18th century there were claims that the River Esk was the most industrialised 17 miles in the whole of Europe. The water of the North Esk provided power for numerous industries along its bank for centuries, leading to the construction of more than 20 weirs along its length and leaving a significant legacy of industrial heritage and archaeology. This industrial development also had a significant effect on the pattern of built development and urban expansion along the river. The whole of the North Esk Valley has important historic and cultural

associations, which over time had significant influence on Scottish cultural life, and Mavisbank is a key part of this.

12. Sir John Clerk (2nd Baronet of Penicuik) was a lawyer and politician. He was instrumental in the Act of Union between England and Scotland in 1707, and served on the first joint Government of the United Kingdom. Alongside his role in early 18th Century British political and cultural history, he was a central figure in the Scottish Enlightenment (the period in the 18th and early 19th centuries characterised by an outpouring of intellectual and scientific accomplishments which exerted significant cultural influence). Sir John was Scotland's leading patron of the arts and "arbiter of taste" in the first half of the 18th Century. He was an enthusiastic antiquarian and improver of his estates. He was also an important patron of the architect William Adam, with whom he designed Mavisbank House and Policies.

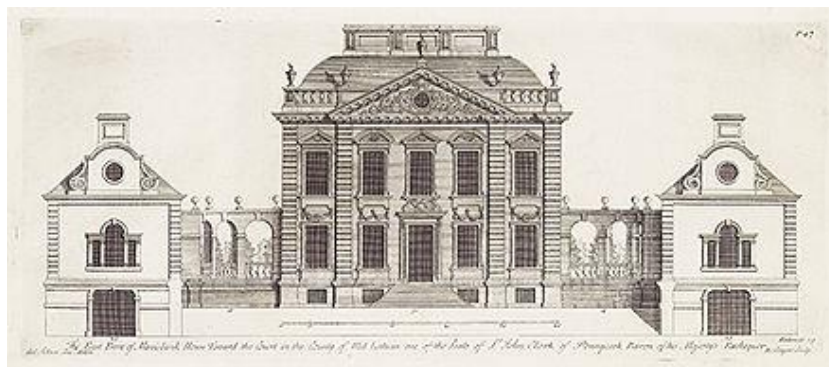


Sir John Clerk



William Adam

13. Mavisbank House was intended to be a summer pavilion rather than the family's principal residence, which remained at Penicuik House. Mavisbank House and the designed landscape of the Policies provided Sir John with the opportunity to put into practice the vision he set out in his poetic treatise on "The Country Seat", which was published in 1727. Mavisbank House was Scotland's first Palladian villa and is a prime example of a 'villa' built within commuting distance of a town or city. The design of the house is Palladian in form, sketched by Sir John Clerk on the basis of Dutch examples, and finalised by William Adam with added Baroque detail. It had a profound influence on Scottish architecture, inspiring a generation of country houses with symmetrical plans, curved wings and classical ornamentation. It is a Category A listed building.



Front elevation of Mavisbank House by William Adam, published in *Vitruvius Scoticus*

*“On Esca’s flowry banks there is a Grove,
Where the harmonious Thrush repeats its love.
There He observes the precepts you indite,
But never any more attempt to write”*

From “The Country Seat” by Sir John Clerk, 1727

14. Polton Paper Mill was originally established in 1750, and by the 1780s was owned by William Simpson, who was responsible for a number of papermaking innovations in Scotland. These included introducing the use of chlorine bleach in whitening paper, the tub-sizing of writing paper to improve the absorption of ink, mechanical agitation of the stuff chest and steam heated vats. The Esk Valley Railway opened in 1867 to serve the Polton Paper Mill, the neighbouring Springfield Mill and Kevock Mill. It was a branch line off the Edinburgh to Peebles railway. One of the significant features of the Esk Valley Railway was the Lasswade Viaduct, a six arch viaduct with a gentle curve. The viaduct was designed by Thomas Bouch, designer of the first Tay Bridge which collapsed in 1879, and is a Category B listed structure.



Polton Station (circa 1910)

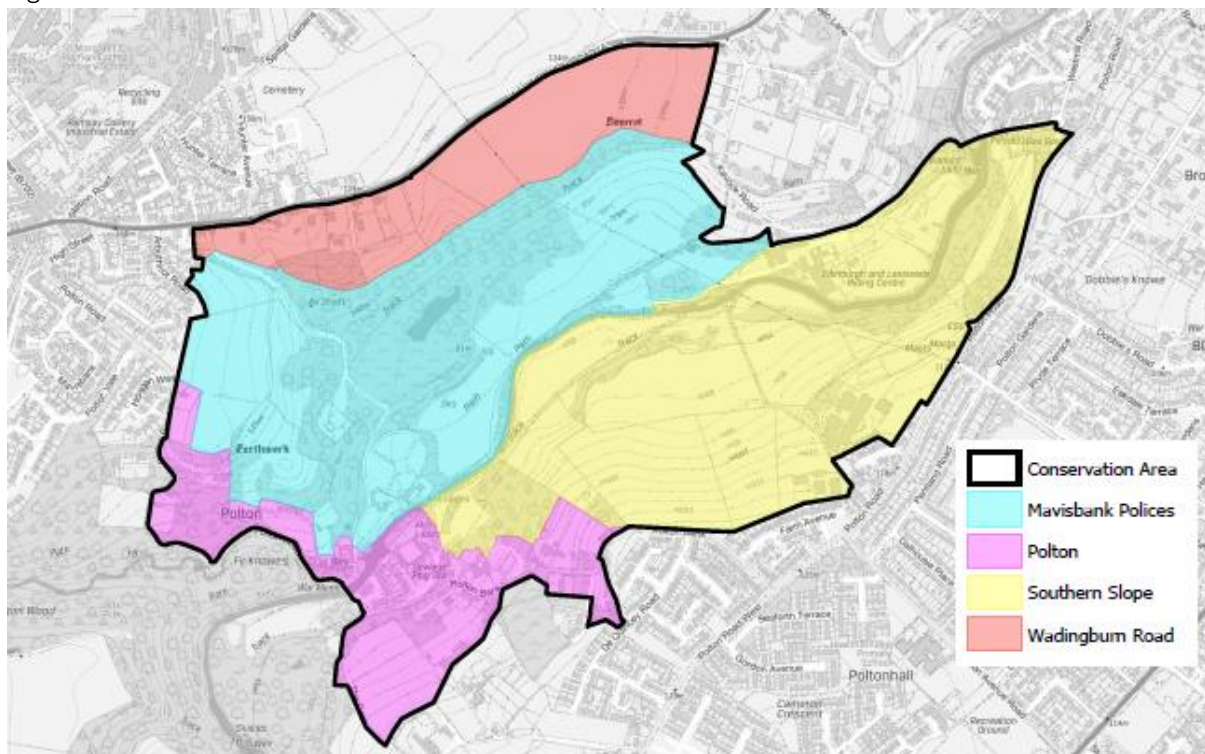


Lasswade Viaduct (aerial view)

Townscape and Landscape Setting Analysis

15. Four areas of distinct character can be identified in Mavisbank Conservation Area (shown in Figure 3 below) – Mavisbank Policies, Polton (including the village, Polton Bank and Polton Road), Wadingburn Road and the southern slope of the North Esk valley. These character areas are simply a means of describing areas of common characteristics (architectural, historical and layout) within this appraisal. They have no administrative, legal or other significance.

Figure 3: Character Areas in Mavisbank Conservation Area

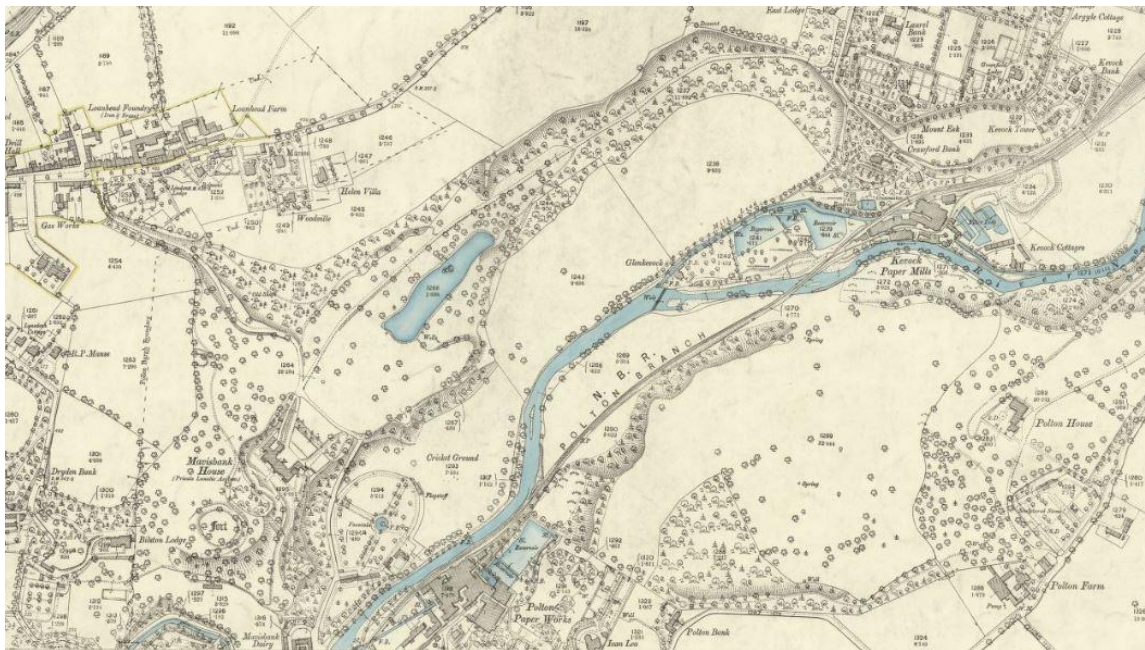


Architectural Quality & Built Form

16. **Mavisbank Policies Character Area** - Mavisbank Policies is a designed landscape laid out in the early 18th century around Mavisbank House. The grounds comprised a loch, woodlands, a walled garden, walks, viewpoints, open pasture, fields and several structures which had ornamental and/or functional roles in the estate, including a doocot and a game larder. The location of the House was chosen in response to the “Roman Station” – a mound to the south-west of the house which was said to be Roman, but is more likely to have been an Iron Age site, although there is no archaeological evidence to indicate the nature of the mound. The relationship of this “fort” to the house was a major determinant of the central axis of the designed landscape, as was the natural topography of the valley and the setting it provides.
17. Key surviving features of the original designed landscape, that integrate the house and its policies, include the formal axis leading from the “fort”, through the house, along

the central avenue terminating in the Doocot; traces of the radiating “goose-feet” avenues; and the walled garden, drives and paths. The lochan (small loch) is a key feature of the landscape and was formed in 19th century from the original ornamental canal as part of wider changes to a more natural-style landscape in the estate.

18. The original Mavisbank landscape is chiefly important as the embodiment of the early 18th century intellectual and aesthetic concerns of its creator, Sir John Clerk. Both the house and the landscape were conceived as an integral whole to demonstrate all aspects of “the Roman Life” espoused by Clerk as the proper mode of living for gentlemen. The careful and artistic integration of the House and Policies is an important feature which has survived throughout the changes experienced by the Estate. It is the later phase of the landscape from the late 18th and early 19th centuries that is most evident today – drives, paths, plantations, parkland and lochan are all in this later form. The Policies are now an important publically accessible greenspace and designated as a Local Biodiversity Site.



Mavisbank & Polton (Ordnance Survey 1892)

19. The house was built between 1723 and 1727 and was designed by Sir John Clerk (2nd Baronet of Penicuik) in collaboration with William Adam, who was the foremost architect in Scotland at the time. The architectural style of the house was mainly influenced by the Palladian style of Sir John Clerk with Baroque influences from William Adam. Mavisbank is considered by many to be the first example of this style of country house, inspiring a new generation of villas, for example Arniston House near Gorebridge and Paxton House near Duns. The Clerk family sold the house in 1815 and substantial additions were made to the house between 1820 and 1840. In 1877 further extensions were added and the house, re-named New Saughton Hall, became an asylum. When the asylum closed in 1953, it was sold to a private owner and the house was taken back to its original external form. The house has been

derelict and abandoned since a fire gutted the interior of the house and destroyed the roof in 1973.

20. The House has a five by four bay square-plan corps de logis¹ with flanking quadrant links of a single arcaded storey over a basement, the screen walls curving forward and linking symmetrically placed pavilions. The gable ends of the two storey pavilions are flanked by banded pilasters and above the Venetian windows there are scrolled chimney stacks pierced by a central bulls eye, echoing the main house. Due to the change in ground level, the south pavilion has a second basement and service yard. The doors and windows in the house were arranged to control views of the landscape beyond from inside the building.



Mavisbank House 19th Century



Mavisbank House 2006

21. Polton Character Area – Polton Road is a narrow winding road leading from Loanhead to the bottom of the valley at Polton. It forms the western boundary of the Conservation Area. There are stone walls bounding the road along much of its journey down the steep valley side. The Category B listed Blairesk Hall is one of only three houses on Polton Road within the Conservation Area. Attributed to William Playfair, Blairesk Hall was constructed in 1819 and extended in the mid-1800s. It is a single storey picturesque Jacobethan villa with basement and attic. At the bottom of the valley is the former Mavisbank Dairy, a Category C listed buildings built around 1840 and now sub-divided into 3 dwellings.



Polton Road



Former Mavisbank Dairy

¹ The term **corps de logis** is the principal block of a large, usually classical, mansion. It contains the principal rooms and an entry. The grandest and finest rooms are often on the first floor above the ground level.

22. Polton village was the location of the Polton Paper Mill and Polton Station. The station was demolished in the 1970s and a small residential development constructed on the site. Polton Cottages and the Bowling Club survive from before the Mill closed. The site of the mill is now an informal semi-natural greenspace owned by Midlothian Council with only limited remnants of the previous use visible, mainly in the form of low walls. Polton Bank leads up the southern side of the valley to Poltonhall and Bonnyrigg. On either side of Polton Bank lie Victorian villas, largely set back from the road behind high walls and with substantial gardens with considerable tree cover. The walls, trees and gardens, permitting only glimpses of the large houses is the predominant character here, as with Polton Road.



Stevenson Place, Polton



Polton Bank



Villa on Polton Bank

23. Three of the villas on Polton Bank within the Conservation Area are listed – Priorwood House, De Quincey Cottage and St Ann’s Mount. Priorwood House is a Category B listed early mid-19th Century five-bay classical house with later additions. De Quincey Cottage is a Category B listed early 19th Century three-bay rectangular plan house with later additions. It is named after Thomas de Quincey (writer) who lived there from 1840 to 1859. St Ann’s Mount is an early 19th Century five-bay hillside villa with eclectic details.
24. **Wadingburn Road Character Area** – The houses along the Wadingburn Road edge of the Conservation Area are grouped at the western (Loanhead) end and are built at the top of the North Esk valley slope, with many having long views across the valley and are therefore visible from the opposite side of the valley. Four of the houses are listed. 79 & 81 High Street are earlier 18th century 2-storey houses. One is a single bay rubble sandstone house with later additions, the other is a two-bay house with timpani gable and harled and painted rubble. These houses were originally the Jointure House for Mavisbank and are two of the oldest inhabited dwellings in Loanhead. A former north drive gate lodge of Mavisbank at Linden Place is also a Category B listed building. The neighbouring Linden Lodge is a Category B listed early 19th century two-storey asymmetrical villa. Hillwood is a Category B listed building built around 1865 and extended around 1914. It belonged to the McTaggart family, including the renowned painter William McTaggart who grew up in the house and later had a studio and gallery there. The character area includes the open fields which lie to the south of Wadingburn Road between Loanhead and Kevock (Lasswade). The fields provide the visual separation of Loanhead and Lasswade.

25. **Southern Slope Character Area** – the part of the southern slope of the North Esk valley that lies within the Conservation Area is largely undeveloped, with the only buildings being at Poltonhall Industrial Estate, and at Lasswade Riding School and its neighbouring plant nursery (which are both on the north side of the North Esk but still sit within this character area). The banks of the North Esk are wooded, beyond which are open grass fields.



Southern slope (from Mavisbank Estate)



Southern slope (from Polton Bank)

Materials

26. The buildings in the Conservation Area are primarily of sandstone masonry construction. The main elevation of Mavisbank House is of cream sandstone ashlar, the remainder is rubble, once harled. Other buildings within the Mavisbank Estate are also sandstone ashlar on the principal façade with rubble to the sides and rear, with the exception of the Doocot which is random sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings to the doorways, and Game Larder, which is droved cream stone ashlar. Later buildings, such as the former Dairy and the Victorian villas in the Polton character area have grey sandstone ashlar frontages with random rubble sides and rear. Roofs are mainly slate. Surviving traditional windows are timber sash and case with varying pane numbers. Non-traditional buildings in the Conservation Area are built of a variety of materials, but many incorporate sandstone.



Mavisbank Doocot



Villa on Polton Bank

Setting and Views

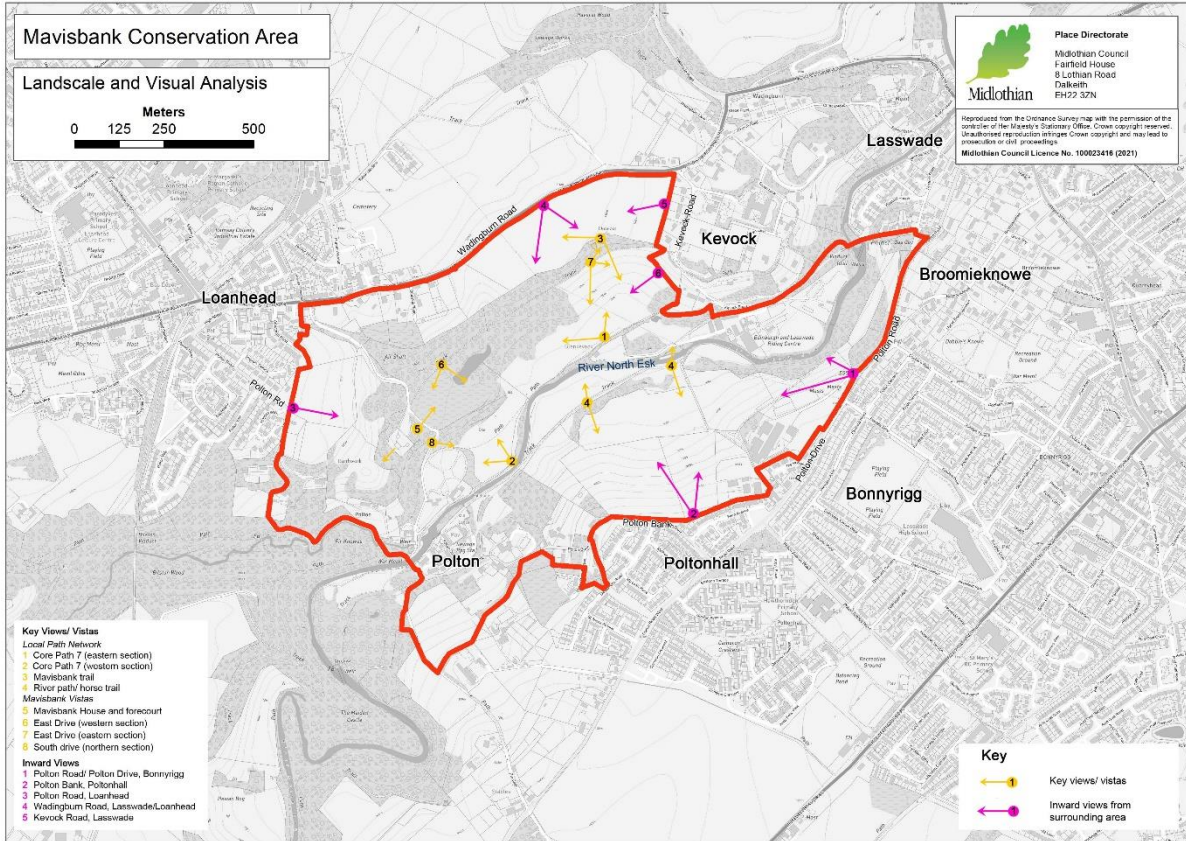
27. The landscape setting for this Conservation Area is the steep sided valley of the River North Esk. As the river enters this Conservation Area, the valley opens up so the sides are not as steep as upriver in Roslin Glen. The existing landscape character is influenced heavily by the designed landscape at Mavisbank and the remnants of the designed landscape at Polton House, which frame the tree lined river. Both sides of the valley are heavily wooded in places, juxtaposing with the open fields which also line the sides of the valley. There is little evidence at a landscape scale of the industrial heritage of this part of the North Esk valley, but it has had a significant influence on the pattern of built development, particularly Polton village.
28. The topographical enclosure and extent of woodland on the steepest valley slopes provides containment and has limited the influence of development on the edge of the valley, creating a relatively tranquil and secluded landscape. The present landscape on the valley floor is generally inward looking, in parts intimate, enhanced by the woodlands, mature trees and elements of linear vegetation. Views within the valley are frequently drawn towards open ground on the valley sides or key features within the Mavisbank designed landscape, with the skyline above the valley edge often visible beyond. More extensive views of the wider landscape of hills and coastal plains beyond the valley can be gained from the upper slopes and valley crests.
29. From the top of both sides of the valley the views are expansive across the valley and beyond to the Pentland Hills (from the south side) and the Moorfoot Hills (from the north side). Views within the valley are largely uninterrupted by buildings due to the screening provided by trees surrounding the houses.



Panoramic view of Conservation Area from Polton Bank

30. Appendix 2 contains the report of a Landscape and Visual Analysis which was carried out for the Conservation Area. Figure 4 below shows the key views and vistas in the Conservation Area, along with other key landscape features.

Figure 4: Landscape and Visual Analysis at Mavisbank (key views and vistas in the Conservation Area)



Public Realm, Open Space and Trees

31. With the exception of the greenspaces and public space within Polton village near the Bowling Green, there is limited public realm in this Conservation Area. There are some roadside footways, but not along all roads, particularly Polton Road. The two winding roads on either side of the valley (Polton Road and Polton Bank) with their high stone walls and gateways form part of the character of the Conservation Area. A narrow tarmac footway with kerbing runs along one side of Polton Bank.



View NW from Polton Bank



Mature trees on Polton Bank



Public realm on Polton Bank

32. Mavisbank Policies and the site of the Polton Paper Mill are both publicly owned semi-natural greenspaces which are open to the public. The Mavisbank Policies, and part of the river corridor, are also designated Local Biodiversity Sites. These greenspaces are important and valued locally, with Mavisbank Policies also being of Midlothian wide

significance due to its character, biodiversity and the sense of solitude provided. The paths through these spaces are largely unmade, therefore are generally not accessible to those with mobility issues. The river corridor is also a key greenspace and wildlife corridor within the Conservation Area. The Conservation Area is rich in biodiversity and is highly valued for this by local residents and visitors.

33. The trees in this Conservation Area make a very significant contribution to its character. They provide shelter and screening to the houses, adding to the overall rural appearance of the Conservation Area. They also form a very significant part of the designed landscape at Mavisbank, and frame the banks of the River North Esk. Parts of the woodland within Mavisbank Policies are Ancient Woodland of Semi-natural Origin and Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin.

Assessment

Significance

34. Mavisbank House and Policies are of national and European significance both architecturally and culturally due to the connection with Sir John Clerk and William Adam. The Conservation Area was designated in 1977, with changes to the boundaries confirmed in 1992 and 2014. It is centred on the designed landscape within which Mavisbank House is carefully set, but the Conservation Area extends beyond this to safeguard the wider setting.
35. The Conservation Area also has local significance due to the landscape and the Victorian villas, which are partly a legacy of the industrialisation of the Esk Valley in the 18th and 19th centuries. The trees and woodland areas in this Conservation Area are of particular significance in the Midlothian context because they are a key characteristic of the river valley. They have remained throughout the industrialisation of the river valley, which drove the economy and development of Midlothian for centuries, and its subsequent deindustrialisation. Mavisbank Policies is an important greenspace and biodiversity resource, valued for its character and sense of solitude.

Condition

36. The overall condition of the Conservation Area outwith the Mavisbank Policies character area is good. Most of the buildings have retained original features, with some benefitting from recent restoration work. Where modern buildings have been introduced, or traditional buildings modernised, this has generally been achieved sensitively. Tree cover has been largely retained, although there is a significant need for more proactive woodland management within the Mavisbank Policies. The value of individual trees to the overall character of the area should not be underestimated.
37. Mavisbank estate (House & Policies) has not fared so well. Parts of the original estate were sold off in parcels by the owners when it was a hospital. This included the three main access points to the estate (parts of the North Drive, South Drive and East Drive). Although a right of access has been retained over the South Drive for the owners of the Policies (currently Scottish Ministers) and possibly the owners of the House (currently unknown), the effect of these land sales has created significant challenges for the estate now.
38. The House suffered from a devastating fire in 1973 which left it roofless and derelict. Action to address the dereliction has been pursued since the mid-1970s, but this has been made more challenging by uncertainties over the ownership of the House. The ownership of the House was separated from the Policies in the 1970s with the ownership of the Policies passing to (the then) Historic Scotland in 1995. Although some emergency safety works were carried out on the House, its condition is still perilous and this valuable part of Scottish cultural and architectural history could be irretrievably lost if significant action is not taken soon. Any action would be a

significant undertaking, but could revitalise this heritage and greenspace asset of local, regional and national importance while bringing many benefits for local communities.

39. The Policies experienced neglect and decline for many decades. The landscape has suffered from coal mining related subsidence and has been badly affected by drainage problems as a result of the site's complex natural and man-made hydrology systems (e.g. culverts, mine drains and water supply infrastructure). These have caused waterlogging and subsidence. Woodland areas have been unmanaged resulting in self-seeded growth, some of which has damaged structures, blocked important view lines, obstructed access routes or over-shaded ground flora. Buildings and structures within the landscape have also deteriorated due to weathering, vegetation growth and other damage. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) has started to tackle these problems in recent years, and a [Designed Landscape Conservation Management Plan](#) prepared (published December 2020). The Conservation Management Plan focuses on developing a practical plan for the future development and management of the Mavisbank designed landscape, independently from plans for the house. The Policies are also a designated Local Biodiversity Site, therefore proactive management of its key biodiversity features and overall biodiversity value is essential.
40. Various proposals have been developed over the past few decades to restore Mavisbank House. The Mavisbank Trust has been instrumental in this effort. The Landmark Trust and Historic Environment Scotland recently applied for a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant to externally restore the House and provide holiday accommodation, a skills centre, and space for community use and visitor facilities within the House, combined with improved management of the Policies to maximise its potential as a free to access public greenspace and nature conservation site. The grant application was unsuccessful.
41. This multi-million pound project would have been a significant investment in Midlothian, bringing a nationally important historic asset into beneficial use not just economically but more importantly for local communities. Midlothian Council has committed to supporting this project through use of its compulsory purchase powers to acquire the House once funding was secured and the project partners were able to take on ownership of the House immediately following the compulsory purchase. Historic Environment Scotland and partners are now considering the next steps for securing the future of Mavisbank House and Policies.

Opportunities

42. The main opportunity for the Mavisbank Conservation Area relates to Mavisbank House and Policies, and the potential for them to be a significant local social and economic resource which benefits local residents. There is the potential for Mavisbank to be a place where heritage is used to deliver learning, skills, economic development, wellbeing and nature conservation opportunities. The 2021 Landmark Trust and Historic Environment Scotland proposal was fully supported by the Council. An alternative option of consolidating the House as a ruin, with suitable interpretation

resources, alongside proactive management of the Policies as a free to access public greenspace would also in principle be supported.

43. The landscape which is discernible today is the form achieved by the mid-19th century. While reversal by restoration to the original designed landscape associated with the House is possible, continued evolution to make best use of the historic and natural assets may be more practicable for a number of reasons, particularly that restoration to the “original” would largely destroy the current landscape which is valued by many, in spite of its relatively poor condition. Implementation of a pragmatic landscape [conservation management plan](#) is planned by Historic Environment Scotland (owner of the Policies). The plan will focus on the essential high priority remedial work and maintenance needed to conserve key features of the landscape and its biodiversity, and on the works necessary to make the landscape more accessible and attractive as a visitor destination whilst maintaining its biodiversity value.
44. For the remainder of the Conservation Area, which is in overall good condition, the main opportunities relate to the ongoing preservation of its character and original building features. In particular for Mavisbank Conservation Area, this includes undertaking ongoing, proactive woodland management in the valley, ensuring that the provision of access for visitors to and around the area is sensitively managed, and maintaining the landscape character of the valley. Proactive management of individual trees and woodland areas is necessary, and any changes need to be clearly justified and carefully managed.

Challenges

45. The most significant challenge facing Mavisbank Conservation Area is the financial investment that will be required to restore Mavisbank House in a way which provides an economically viable and sustainable end use, and to restore the Policies in a way which protects its character and biodiversity whilst bringing the most benefits for local communities. To achieve and sustain this, long term, proactive management plans will need to be in place and implemented.
46. An additional challenge in relation to the Policies is finding a practical solution to the access issues. By the late 1800s, there were three accesses to the House and Policies – the North Drive, the East Drive and the South Drive. Whilst the North Drive and South Drive still exist, the ownership and access rights of the drives was fragmented during the period when the House was an asylum. The East Drive is no longer functional, although its route can still be traced through the landscape. For all three Drives, the ownership at the point at which they join the public road is separate to the ownership of House and Policies. The only legal right of access to the Policies, and therefore the House, that is suitable for vehicles is the South Drive. This is not a suitable access point for the Policies if public access is to be increased due to the right of access restrictions, and because its entrance is at the bottom of the valley and the roads leading to it (Polton Road and Polton Bank) are steep, narrow and winding. They are unsuitable for some vehicles and high volumes of traffic. The most likely solution

would be to create some form of new access from Wadingburn Road, but this would need to be carefully designed to ensure road safety and to protect the character of the Conservation Area and Designed Landscape.

47. Access to the Policies via active travel from the surrounding area and other parts of Midlothian is also a challenge which needs to be addressed, as well as ensuring that residents within the Conservation Area have appropriate access to high quality and safe active travel routes which form a connected part of the wider Midlothian Green Network.
48. Overall, a major challenge for most conservation areas is the potential for small incremental changes to buildings and the public realm to have a cumulative negative impact on the area. This has been largely avoided to date in the Mavisbank Conservation Area, but care is needed to ensure negative incremental changes are avoided. Mavisbank Conservation Area has, so far, also avoided intrusive modern development which has had a negative impact on the character. The modern development which has occurred has in most cases been sensitively designed and sited, and therefore complements the character of the Conservation Area. Again, care is needed to ensure any future development is also sensitively designed and complements the character of the Conservation Area. The almost undeveloped character of the river valley requires careful protection.
49. The historic character, secluded nature and tranquil quality of the Conservation Area is recognised in its various designations and is treasured by many. Change affecting the area needs to be carefully managed to ensure it is suitably integrated within the landscape setting and relates well to existing development in and near to the Conservation Area.

Management Plan

50. The purpose of this Conservation Area Management Plan for Mavisbank Conservation Area is to set out the actions required to maintain and enhance the elements which contribute to the special architectural, landscape and historic interest of the Conservation Area, as described in the Conservation Area Character Appraisal above. This Management Plan is intended to inform the actions of Midlothian Council and other stakeholders, including property owners and occupiers, in relation to the built environment within Mavisbank Conservation Area. It explores the issues facing the Conservation Area, opportunities for enhancement and building repair and maintenance.

Issues Facing the Conservation Area

51. The key issues facing the Mavisbank Conservation Area relate to Mavisbank House and Policies. The uncertain ownership of the House, its dereliction and the significant financial investment that will be needed to undertake its restoration are the major issues relating to the House. For the Policies, the major issues are its current condition (including land stability), the financial investment that will be needed to restore it and enable greater public benefit from the greenspace, and problems of access to the House and the Policies.
52. The issues facing the wider Conservation Area include the need to avoid cumulative negative impact from incremental changes to individual buildings and open spaces, and maintaining the undeveloped character of the valley, including the southern slope character area. Other potential issues include the need for careful management of change relating to commercial operations within or immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area, for example at Poltonhall Industrial Estate, the Edinburgh & Lasswade Riding Centre, and Kevock Garden Plants, to ensure that businesses are supported whilst respecting the character and setting of the Conservation Area.
53. To guide development to the most appropriate places and minimise potential adverse effects on the landscape and key views, the following should be considered:
- Proposed development should be sited within the context of existing settlement on the edges of the valley and allow for suitable mitigation (e.g. establishment of screening woodland) where there is the potential for adverse effects on key views and sensitive skylines.
 - Small-scale development may potentially be accommodated within the existing woodland framework, where it relates well to existing settlement and/or historic properties, and makes a positive contribution to the landscape setting by means of locally appropriate woodland, hedgerow and/or tree planting.
 - Development on the valley sides should be discouraged where it has the potential to detract from the designed landscape and its components, or impinge upon key views.

- Particular care should be taken on the fringe of the agricultural land at the valley edge between the Mavisbank Policies and Wadingburn Road to avoid settlement coalescence, minimise intrusion on the Mavisbank designed landscape and safeguard characteristic views across the Conservation Area from and to this location.
- Dispersed built development should be discouraged to preserve the sense of seclusion and naturalness which is a key quality of this landscape.
- Care and attention should be taken to avoid disturbance and spread of Japanese Knotweed, which is frequently present along the river banks and associated areas nearby.

Opportunities for Enhancement

54. Full exterior restoration of Mavisbank House, combined with the creation of an interior which respects and reflects the original internal layout and design of this nationally significant 18th century Palladian villa as much as possible, would provide the opportunity for the House to combine a viable economic end use for the building with uses that provide direct community benefit. The proposal that was in development by The Landmark Trust and Historic Environment Scotland to provide holiday accommodation for let within the main house, with community uses and visitor facilities in the wings, would fit with this vision.
55. The significance of the Policies as a greenspace which benefits the neighbouring communities of Bonnyrigg, Lasswade and Loanhead is clear. Making best use of this resource will require investment in restoration of the designed landscape, management of the woodland and other nature conservation features and the upgrading of paths within and approaching the site to enable access for all. The management of the Policies, including the improvement of access, will need to carefully balance the biodiversity, historic and community value of the site.
56. Beyond the Policies, most of the traditional buildings in the Conservation Area are built of relatively thick, solid stone walls pointed in lime mortar. This traditional method of building enables the structure to 'breathe' as it is able to accommodate varying moisture levels by taking in and then evaporating moisture. These buildings usually have good ventilation under the floor and air movement is encouraged by open flues and through roof spaces. Breathing buildings are comfortable and healthy to live in. Repairing traditional buildings with modern materials such as cement mortar, gypsum plaster, modern formula paints and replacement windows will lead to problems with damp, stone decay and rot in timbers, and should be avoided.
57. The following sections provide information on construction methods and materials used locally, and expectations for the repair and restoration of traditional buildings in the Conservation Area.

Roofs and Chimneys

Original roof pitches and coverings should be preserved. Roof coverings are usually natural slate (most commonly Welsh or Scottish in Midlothian) which gives a distinctive character and texture to roofs that substitutes cannot easily replicate. When repairing or reroofing, the preferred option is to use matching slate.

The detailing of roof lights, dormers, copings and flashing is equally important to the overall appearance of the roof and any change of materials should be avoided. Roof lights tend to be of metal fixed flush to the slope of the roof. Where replacement is necessary, conservation style roof lights should be specified. Repair and restoration of dormer windows should match the original design, materials and profiles closely. Original chimney stacks (stalks) and pots should be maintained where possible. Lead should usually be used to repair or replace dormer window flashings, roof valley gutters and skew gutters.

Masonry Walls

Traditional masonry walls are built with two 'skins' of stone and lime mortar. The core between the skins is filled with broken stone, lime mortar waste and rubble. The outer layer or face is either random rubble (to take harl or smooth lime render) or ashlar (stone blocks with smoother or textured face built with fine joints). The inner skin is rubble with wider joints and lime mortar. Horizontal timber laths are fixed to the inner face to take two or three coats of lime plaster. The cavity between the laths and the stone face allow air movement and the evaporation of any moisture in the wall. Original masonry surface coverings such as harling should be kept. Pointing should use a lime mortar and should be correctly carried out.

Moisture in the base of walls can be reduced by lowering ground levels, improving drainage around the buildings, replacement of cement mortar with lime mortar and ensuring underfloor ventilation is functioning effectively. Stone repairs should be carried out using matching stone and lime mortar. Reconstituted stone is not an appropriate finishing material in the Conservation Area. Using a mortar analysis service, such as that offered by the Scottish Lime Centre, can help identify suitable mortar for repairs and maintenance.

Windows and Doors

Original door and window openings possess the correct proportions for a building and should be retained to preserve the architectural integrity of the buildings. Original mullions should also be retained.

Additional window openings should be of an appropriate size and proportion, and should not spoil symmetry.

Most original windows in traditional buildings are either sash and case or casements. Repair or restoration of traditional windows is preferred over replacement, and replacement with windows in other materials such as aluminium or uPVC is not

recommended or supported. Any replacement windows on the front and all sides of a traditional building in the Conservation Area which is visible to the public should match the original in every detail, including materials, design, opening method and paint finish.

Any original glazing should be investigated for its historic importance, and retained if merit is established (for example, Crown glass). Where existing glazing has no special merit, it may be possible to insert modern narrow section double glazing or vacuum double glazing into the existing frames and astragals with minimal effect on the original profile.

Traditional doors are normally timber and panelled. Rear doors are usually plainer in style. Original doors should be retained and restored wherever possible. Where replacement is unavoidable, new doors should be timber and traditional in style, with door hardware in keeping with the character of the building.

External Details

A wide range of details contribute to the character of a conservation area, and it is important that these are not lost. Important details include rainwater goods, external pipework, finials and stone details such as skews, cornices, balustrades, door and window surrounds and other ornamentation. Stone walls and metal railings should be retained.

Satellite dishes will not be permitted on principal or public elevations or above the ridge line of the roof unless there are technical reasons for such a location. Equipment should be placed in unobtrusive locations to minimise their impact.

Streetscape and Street Furniture

Any future works to the public realm in the Conservation Area should use traditional materials (for example yorkstone, granite setts and whinstone kerbing). Detailing should be in keeping with existing traditional styles. Street signage should be carefully located and kept to the minimum amount possible.

Trees

Under Section 172 of the Planning (listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, trees in conservation areas are given some protection. Anyone proposing to cut down or carry out work on a tree in a conservation area is required to give the planning authority six weeks' notice. The purpose of this requirement is to give the planning authority an opportunity to consider whether a Tree Preservation Order should be made in respect of a tree. Further information and a link to relevant application forms is available at www.midlothian.gov.uk.

Midlothian Local Development Plan 2017

58. Midlothian Local Development Plan Policy ENV 19 Conservation Areas will apply to development within or adjacent to a conservation area where planning consent is

required. Other policies within the Local Development Plan may also be relevant, including Policy ENV 20 Nationally Important Gardens and Designed Landscapes, and Policy ENV 14 Regionally and Locally Important Nature Conservation Sites.

Policy ENV 19 Conservation Areas

Within or adjacent to a Conservation Area, development will not be permitted which would have any adverse effect on its character and appearance. In assessing proposals, regard will be had to any relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal.

New buildings, extensions and alterations

In the selection of site, scale, choice of materials and design, new buildings, and extensions and alterations to existing buildings, must preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Materials appropriate to the locality or structure affected, will be used in new building, extensions or alterations. Care in the design of replacement windows and doors will be required on the public frontage of buildings.

Demolition

Demolition to facilitate new development of part or all of a building or structure that makes a positive contribution to a Conservation Area will only be permitted where it can be shown that:

- A. The structural condition of the building is such that it cannot be adapted without material loss to its character to accommodate the proposal; and*
- B. The Conservation Area will be enhanced as a result of the redevelopment of the site; and*
- C. There is no alternative location physically capable of accommodating the proposed development.*

Where demolition of any building or other structure within a Conservation Area is proposed, it must be demonstrated that there are acceptable proposals for the immediate future use of the site which enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Detailed plans for an acceptable replacement building must be in receipt of planning permission before conservation area consent will be granted for demolition and redevelopment. Conditions will be applied to the planning permission to ensure that demolition does not take place in advance of the letting of a contract for the carrying out of a replacement building or alternative means of treating the cleared site having been agreed.

These requirements may not apply in circumstances where the building is of no architectural or historic value, makes no material contribution to the Conservation Area, and where its early removal would not detract from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

For information on permitted development rights in Conservation Areas and other restrictions on development go to www.gov.scot or www.midlothian.gov.uk.

Appendix 1: Listed Buildings & Scheduled Monuments

Listed Buildings

Address	Description	Category	Ref No.
Mavisbank House	Classical country house or villa comprising 2-storey over basement, 5-bay square plan corps de logis, with flanking quadrant screen walls curving forward and linking to symmetrically disposed rectangular plan single storey over basement pavilions. Cream sandstone ashlar principal elevation and quadrants, rubble (formerly harled) walls to side and rear elevations, and pavilions, all with polished ashlar dressings and margins. Base course, eaves course, modillioned cornice at eaves, balustrade above with regularly spaced corniced and panelled dies surmounted by urns (now missing). Horizontally channelled strip pilasters framing centre 3 bays and clasping corners at principal and 1st floors, pilaster pedestals to outer left and right with Latin inscriptions. Margined window jambs with cill and lintel courses at forming grid pattern at principal floors to side and rear elevations of main block. Margined windows to screen walls and pavilions. The roofs (now missing) were of grey slate comprising a distinctive and unusual domical piended platform roof to the main block, piended and bell-cast roofs to pavilions with a monopitch to the service wing. A-group with Doocot, Gazebo, Walled Gardens, Ice House, Dairy, Game Larder, and East Lodge (Kevock Road, Lasswade).	A	LB7404
Mavisbank House Walled Gardens	1739. Large horseshoe-plan walled garden with smaller triangular-plan walled garden adjoining to SW; gates to NW, NE and SE and road access from former dairy to SW; lean-to potting sheds on S boundary of horseshoe-plan garden, now converted to house and garage. Ashlar sandstone with brick inner facing; flat ashlar cope. The walled gardens lie out of sight, to SE of the house, positioned in a sheltered area by the river, flanked along the W side by woodland, and a belt of trees to the E. The plan is particularly unusual, as	A	LB44166

Mavisbank Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan

	gardens with curved walls were thought to cause the wind to eddy, retarding the ripening of fruit. The smaller garden contains the gazebo (see separate list entry). A-group with Mavisbank House, Doocot, Dairy, Gazebo, Ice House and Game Larder, East Lodge (Kevock Road, Lasswade).		
Mavisbank House Doocot	1738. Tall, circular doocot. Upper third partially missing; roofless. Random sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings to doorways. The building certainly formed an integral part of the designed landscape around Mavisbank. From the house ran three radial avenues and a canal, the central axis terminated by this circular eye-catcher doocot to the NE of the house. The oculus reflects similar features in the pediment and pavilion wings of the main house and the former Jointure House on Linden Place, Loanhead (see separate list entries). A-group with Mavisbank House, Doocot, Gazebo, Walled Gardens, Ice House, Game Larder and East Lodge (Kevock Road, Lasswade).	A	LB7386
Mavisbank House Gazebo	Dated 1731. Square-plan gazebo. Cream sandstone ashlar (rubble to sides and rear) with polished dressings. The gazebo lies opposite the Dairy in the walled garden to south of the main horseshoe-plan garden. A-group with Mavisbank House, Doocot, Dairy, Walled Gardens, Ice House, Game Larder and East Lodge (Lasswade).	A	LB7387
Mavisbank House Game Larder and Ice House	Game Larder - Later 19th century. Single storey, square plan game larder leading to associated brick and stone lined ice house below. Droved cream sandstone ashlar. Formerly grey slated roof with overhanging eaves (roof removed around 2011). Cast iron under floor ventilator grilles; chamfered angles swept to square at eaves; hood moulded openings; adjustable timber louvres. Formerly used for hanging game, the larder, which is	B	LB44164

Mavisbank Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan

	located above the ice house, is situated on the wooded ridge between the main house and the dairy, for optimum shade and ventilation.		
79 & 81 High Street (former Mavisbank Jointure House)	Earlier 18th century. 2-storey single bay rubble sandstone house and 2-storey 2-bay terraced house with timpany gable, harled and painted rubble. Part of A Group with Mavisbank. Two of the oldest inhabited dwellings in Loanhead, it was built as a jointure house for Mavisbank.	B	LB47740
Linden Place (former Mavisbank Gate Lodge)	Circa 1830. Single storey bow end gate lodge with later rear extension. Coursed rubble and ashlar. Ashlar base band and long and short quoins. Thought to be a later gate lodge to Mavisbank (listed separately) and sited at the top of the north drive. This lodge was formerly used by the adjacent Linden Lodge and is partially hidden by its boundary wall.	B	LB47741
Linden Lodge	Earlier 19th century. 2-storey asymmetric villa with ancillary outbuildings. Coursed rubble, ashlar dressings. 1st floor cill band. Gates thought to be originally the entrance to Mavisbank House.	B	LB37510
Hillwood, Braeside Road	Circa 1865, extended circa 1914. Single and 2-storey, irregular-plan house with bowed end walls. Harled and painted walls; plain margins; polished ashlar base and band course, ashlar rybats. Overhanging eaves. This house was owned by the McTaggart family, of whom the most famous was Sir William MacTaggart (1903-1981), the renowned Scottish painter. The timber chalet in the garden was built in 1917 for the 14 year old William to use primarily as a studio. It is now used as a summerhouse.	B	LB47739

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Lasswade Viaduct	1867. 6-span viaduct with segmental arches on tapered, rectangular-plan pylons. Cream bull-faced sandstone with polished voussoirs; string course and curved ashlar cope. Light steel railings. Built in 1867 for the Esk Valley Railway by Thomas Bouch.	B	LB13621
St Ann's Mount, Polton Bank	Originally circa 1810, with mid-19th century additions. 2-storey, 5 bay picturesquely situated hillside villa with eclectic details. Stugged grey sandstone ashlar to front (W); pink sandstone rubble to remainder.	B	LB13206
De Quincey Cottage	Earlier 19th century with later alterations and additions. 2 storey, symmetrical 3-bay rectangular-plan house with later additions to W angle and SW (rear) wall. Grey ashlar sandstone to front (NE); sandstone rubble to other elevations; raised, droved margins and cills; polished ashlar doorpieces; chamfered doorpieces to side and rear elevations; base course; band course between ground and 1st floor to addition; eaves course; strip quoins. From 1840 until his death in 1859 the house was lived in by Thomas de Quincey and his family.	B	LB7388
Priorwood House	Earlier-mid 19th century with later alterations and additions. 2-storey, formerly symmetrical, 5-bay classical house with advanced 5-light bay to left of centre and single storey, addition to NE. Grey sandstone ashlar with polished ashlar dressings to NW; stugged sandstone to sides and rear elevation. The house was built for Mr Todd, a local mill owner. Apart from the bay window to the front elevation, probably added in the late 19th century, the house would have been symmetrical and classical.	B	LB44168
Blairesk Hall	Attributed to William Playfair, 1819; extended 1830-60. Single storey, basements and attic. Picturesque Jacobethan villa. Coursed squared rubble with ashlar quoins and dressings; band course; raised long and short quoins; overhanging eaves and mutuled cornice. Formerly known as Bilston Lodge, it was built for Dr Alexander Brunton, minister	B	LB37509

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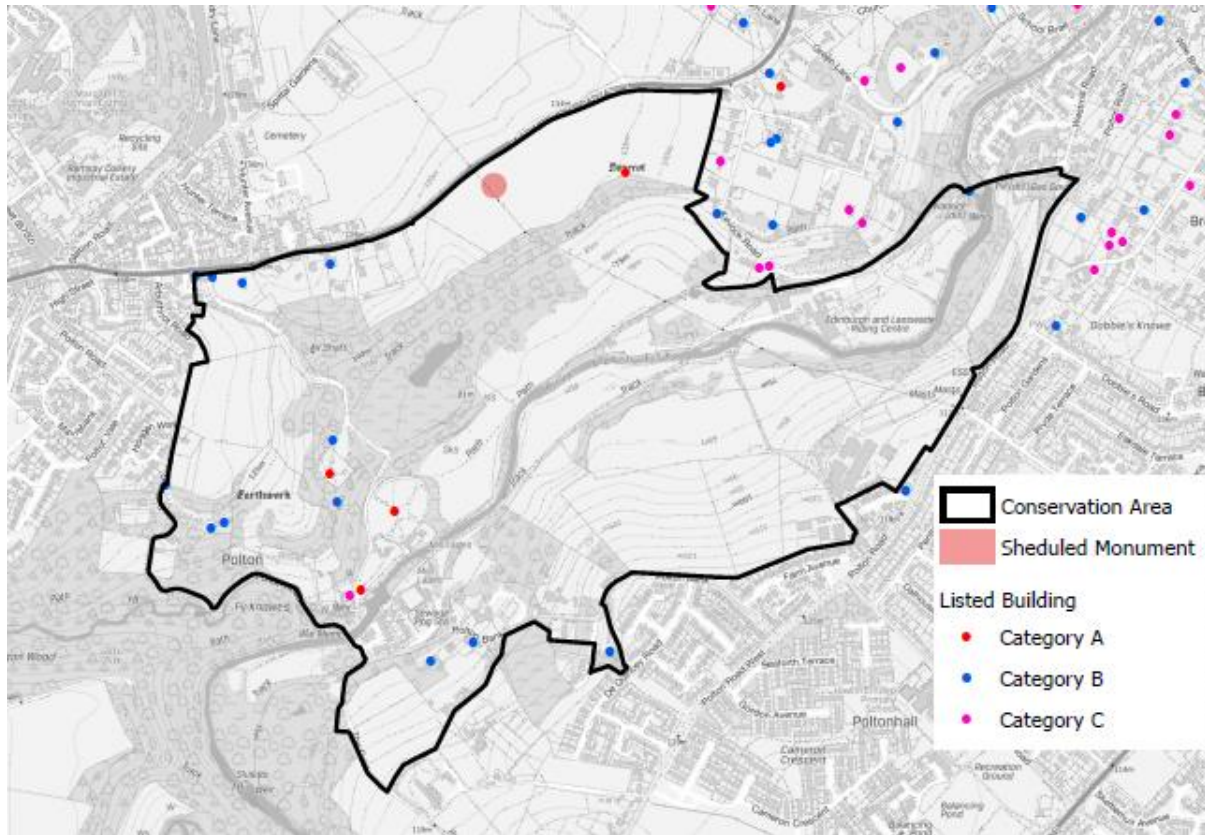
	of the Tron Kirk and Professor of Oriental Languages at Edinburgh University. The house also was used in 1888 for the first meeting of the Women's Guild of the Church of Scotland.		
Mavisbank House Dairy (comprising South Lodge, The Coach House and The Barn)	Circa 1840. Single storey with attic and 2-storey, gabled dairy complex incorporating coach house, cow shed and stable ranges around a square yard, left open to SW angle, with milking range to W (only rear wall remains) and semi-circular walled yard to N. Stugged and snecked grey sandstone with droved tails to openings. Originally a dairy complex with some stabling and storage, it has now been converted to three dwellings, each occupying an angle and part of a range. It is probable that the present structure was built in the mid-19th century on the site of a small 18th century farm. However, the present structure seems to be uniformly of the later date, and there seems to be no evidence left of an earlier build. The milking parlour to the W exists only in the form of the rear wall, with some iron tether rings still extant. A-group with Mavisbank House, Doocot, Gazebo, Walled Gardens, Ice House, Game Larder and East Lodge (Kevock Road, Lasswade).	C	LB44163

Mavisbank Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan

Scheduled Monuments

Title	Description	Ref No
Glenkevock (enclosure 400m NW of)	The monument comprises the remains of a prehistoric enclosed settlement represented as cropmarks on oblique aerial photographs. The monument lies on sloping ground in arable farmland north of the River North Esk. It comprises a clearly defined sub-circular enclosure of approximately 20m diameter, with a single ditch some 2m wide. There is an entrance in the SE. The monument may represent the remains of a single roofed building of a type known as a ring ditch house and dating to the later prehistoric period. However it is perhaps more likely to represent a small enclosure that would have contained a smaller domestic building or buildings.	SM6263

Figure A: Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments within the Conservation Area



Appendix 2 Landscape & Visual Analysis Report

Introduction

1. This report contains a concise landscape and visual analysis of the Mavisbank Conservation Area. Its purpose is to identify notable landscape features and characteristics, as well as key views within the Conservation Area and surrounding landscape. The findings will aid the management of change within the Conservation Area by:
 - Safeguarding key landscape features and characteristics;
 - Minimising potential adverse effects on key views and visibility; and
 - Guiding development so that it can be suitably integrated within the wider landscape setting.

Landscape Features and Characteristics

Landform and Topography

2. The character of the landscape within the Conservation Area is greatly influenced by its location within the River North Esk valley. The incised valley landform comprises areas of level floodplain, with topography on the southern valley sides rising away relatively steeply from the river banks to the settlement edge at Poltonhall and Lasswade. On the northern valley side the topography appears more varied, with a series of sloping terraces broadly parallel to the course of the river, interspersed by steep wooded escarpments. A broad sweep of sloping fields separates the northernmost escarpment from Wadingburn Road and the settlement edge at Loanhead.
3. The topographical enclosure and extent of woodland on the steepest valley slopes provides containment and has limited the influence of development on the edge of the valley, creating a relatively tranquil and secluded landscape.

Land Cover and Land Use

4. The river banks are fringed by a ribbon of deciduous woodland, punctuated by historic buildings (e.g. Glenkevock, Mavisbank South Lodge and Walled Garden), localised settlement (Polton) and remnants of the area's industrial heritage. The floodplain comprises mostly grazing fields and associated rural land uses, including a riding school and plan nursery. Invasive, non-native Japanese Knotweed is frequently present along the river banks.
5. Extending along the southern fringe of the floodplain is the route of the dismantled Polton branch of the Esk Valley Railway line. Marked by linear vegetation, it is now a well-used path for horse riders and walkers. The disused Lasswade viaduct, another remnant of the railway line, forms a distinct feature in the valley at the north eastern extent of the Conservation Area.

6. The southern valley side is largely under pasture, and provides a contrast to the built development at the adjoining settlement edges of Poltonhall and Lasswade. Roads on the edge of the valley allow panoramic views across the valley bottom, and beyond to the Pentland Hills and Arthur's Seat. Poltonhall Industrial Estate, at the site of former Polton House, forms a noticeable pocket of development at the valley fringe off Polton Road.
7. Vegetation cover on the southern valley side comprises extensive woodland and scrub around Polton and Lasswade. Frequent mature trees also contribute notably to the setting of numerous historic villas on the valley sides. Around Polton, in particular, woodland cover creates considerable containment and a notably sheltered character. A small cluster of contemporary residential housing sits on the southern river bank on the site of the former Polton Station. Nearby, a series of small grassland meadows set amongst woodland mark the site of the dismantled Polton Mill. Informal use has established a circuit of walking trails, with remnants of the mill reservoirs occasionally visible in the undergrowth.
8. The northern valley sides are largely occupied by the Policies of the 18th century Mavisbank House and include sweeping meadows on the gentler slopes above the river, and mature woodland (including designated ancient woodland) on the steeper escarpments. A fringe of pasture and arable fields extends along the upper valley side and adjoins Wadingburn Road and the south eastern settlement edge of Loanhead. This provides a buffer to the Designed Landscape at Mavisbank, and separation between settlements of Loanhead and Lasswade (Kevock). The rougher textures of scrub and woodland on valley floors and slopes contrast with the smooth fields on the upper slopes and fringes.

Landscape Character and Designations

9. The well-defined river valley landscape within the Conservation Area forms part of the distinctive *Lowland River Valleys – Lothians Landscape Character Type* (SNH National Landscape Character Assessment, LCT270). This extends across the valley landscapes of the Rivers North and South Esk.
10. The Conservation Area is largely covered by the *North Esk Valley Special Landscape Area*, which recognises the cultural, ecological, scenic and recreational interest of the valley. Of particular importance locally are:
 - The strong sense of naturalness and seclusion;
 - Extensive policy woodland and designed landscape features;
 - Pastures on valley sides, enclosed by hedgerows and shelterbelts; and
 - Rich cultural interest which includes mansion houses, historic buildings and industrial heritage sites.

11. The Mavisbank Policies contribute notably to the character of the Conservation Area. The Designed Landscape that surrounds Mavisbank House holds great historic and cultural interest, and have been the subject of a number of comprehensive studies and surveys. Although many of the its elements are in decline, key landscape features that are evident make a notable contribution to the local setting, including:

- The naturalised lochan (the lake in the grounds of Mavisbank House) and surrounding parkland that are the focus of views from the main house;
- The earthwork and Victorian shrubbery south west of the house;
- The distinct walled garden and adjoining grassland meadow (former cricket pitch);
- The prominent Doocot on the valley fringe;
- Numerous veteran trees that adorn the parkland and historic access drives; and
- Designated ancient woodland on steep slopes and escarpments (including elements of Ancient Woodland of Semi-natural Origin and of Long-established Plantation Origin).

12. The diversity of the landscape and vegetation within the Conservation Area, and its importance for wildlife is recognised in the designation of two Local Biodiversity Sites (LBS) – Mavisbank LBS and River North Esk (Lasswade) LBS.

Access Network

13. A network of paths provides access throughout the Conservation Area and includes a designated Core Path (route 7) along the northern river bank, connecting Polton and Kevock. It forms part of the North Esk Way that extends along the length of the River North Esk between Dalkeith and Penicuik. This narrow riverside path is the primary visitor access route into the Mavisbank Policies. A wider network of informal paths and trails extends throughout the Policies, including along the former East Drive.

14. Along the southern river bank, the route of the dismantled Polton rail line supports a well-used path for horse riders and walkers, linking to the wider path network at Springfield Mill and the Esk Valley horse trail.

Views and Visibility

15. The valley topography and extent of vegetation cover within the Conservation Area provides notable containment to large parts of the Conservation Area with few outside detractors. The present landscape on the valley floor is generally inward-looking, in parts intimate, enhanced by the woodlands, mature trees and elements of linear vegetation.

16. Views within the valley are frequently drawn towards open ground on the valley sides or key features within the designed landscape, with the skyline above the valley edge often visible beyond. More extensive views of the wider landscape of hills and coastal plains beyond the valley can be gained from the upper slopes and valley crests. The views set

out below are of particular note, and are shown on Figure B: Mavisbank Conservation Area Landscape and Visual Analysis Plan.

Key Views/Vistas

17. Views are described in terms of the elements and features that form the focus of the view from selected routes/locations. These are frequently seen within the context of the wider landscape setting within the valley.

Views from the Local Path Network

1. Northern river bank (Core Path 7 eastern section): Views generally directed towards the Mavisbank Policies, across grassland meadows and up the valley sides towards the Doocot. The modern house on Kevock Road forms a key feature of views in the north eastern direction.
2. Northern river bank (Core Path 7 western section): Views from the westernmost section of the route near Polton, are notably contained by boundary walls and vegetation, and are mainly directed towards the river with its frequent elements of industrial archaeology. Where the view opens up towards the Mavisbank Policies, they are drawn across the grassland meadows and up wooded slopes, with the walled garden forming a key feature in views.
3. Mavisbank trail along upper escarpment and Doocot: Views from the trail allow localised panoramic views across the river valley in a southern and eastern direction. From an elevated position near the Doocot, the settlement edge of Poltonhall and Lasswade are visible on the skyline, with distant hills visible beyond. The Poltonhall Industrial Estate and associated parking are prominent. Views across fields in the north and eastern direction are foreshortened by housing along the settlement edge of Loanhead, linear vegetation along Wadingburn Road and wooded setting associated with the settlement at Kevock Road.
4. Path/horse trail along southern river bank: There are intermittent views towards the river and up the valley sides as a result of linear vegetation along the disused rail line and localised containment by dense woodland and valley topography. Notable features along the path include historic Glenkevock and open grazing land on the floodplain and southern valley sides, with elements of built development at Poltonhall visible on the skyline above the valley.

Mavisbank Vistas

Elements of the landscaped Policies of Mavisbank were designed to direct views to key features within the landscape. A number of these vistas are still evident, although some have become overgrown over time.

5. Mavisbank House and forecourt: Views framed by woodland and directed north-eastwards towards the lochan and parkland with veteran trees. Views from the rear of the House are directed towards the slopes of the earthwork immediately to the south west.

6. East Drive (western section): Glimpsed views of Mavisbank House in a south western direction along a short section of the route. Views are generally directed east across parkland and valley sides, with the settlement edge at Lasswade visible on the skyline beyond.
7. East Drive (eastern section): Views generally directed south across a natural 'amphitheatre' of meadow grassland that slopes down to the river valley, southern slop visible beyond with elements of the settlement at Poltonhall visible on the skyline above the valley.
8. South Drive (northern section): views across Walled Garden and adjoining grassland meadow with the Poltonhall/Lasswade settlement edge visible on the skyline above the valley.

Implementation of the Mavisbank Policies Conservation Management Plan being prepared by Historic Environment Scotland should see vegetation brought back into active management. This will contribute to the maintenance of vistas within the designed landscape.

Inward Views from the Surrounding Area

18. Views into the Conservation area can be gained from roads and edge of settlement locations on the valley crests. Panoramic views across the River North Esk valley and hills beyond are available from:
 1. Polton Road, Poltonhall Industrial Estate and Polton Drive: Panoramic views across the valley in north eastern direction to Kevock, Loanhead and Pentland Hills beyond.
 2. Polton Bank, Poltonhall: Panoramic views in north and north eastern direction from the settlement edge west of Polton Farm, across the valley landscape to Loanhead and Kevock, with the Pentland Hills, Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags featuring on the horizon beyond.
 3. Polton Road: Panoramic views at selected locations along the settlement edge in a broadly eastern direction, across sloping fields and river valley to Lasswade and Bonnyrigg, with the Mayfield ridge visible beyond.
 4. Wadingburn Road: Panoramic views in south and south eastern direction, across farmland fringe and river valley to Lasswade and Poltonhall, with the Mayfield ridge and distant Moorfoot Hills visible on the horizon beyond.
 5. Kevock Road: Open views in a west and south western direction across the farmland fringe, to the woodland covered escarpment and Doocot. Notable open views across the Mavisbank Policies from points on Kevock Road, with a modern house forming a feature in views from the designed landscape and core path along the river.

Landscape and Visual Considerations for Change Affecting the Conservation Area

19. The historic character, secluded nature and tranquil quality of the Conservation Area is recognised in its various designations and is treasured by many. Change effecting the area needs to be carefully managed to ensure it is suitably integrated within the

landscape setting and relates well to existing development in and near to the Conservation Area.

20. To guide development to the most appropriate places and minimise potential adverse effects on the landscape and key views, the following should be considered:

- Proposed development should be sited within the context of existing settlement on the edges of the valley and allow for suitable mitigation (e.g. establishment of screening woodland) where there is the potential for adverse effects on key views and sensitive skylines.
- Small-scale development may potentially be accommodated within the existing woodland framework, where it relates well to existing settlement and/or historic properties, and makes a positive contribution to the landscape setting by means of locally appropriate woodland, hedgerow and/or tree planting.
- Development on the valley sides should be discouraged where it has the potential to detract from the designed landscape and its components, or impinge upon key views.
- Particular care should be taken on the fringe of the agricultural land at the valley edge between the Mavisbank Policies and Wadingburn Road to avoid settlement coalescence, minimise intrusion on the Mavisbank designed landscape and safeguard characteristic views across the Conservation Area from and to this location.
- Dispersed built development should be discouraged to preserve the sense of seclusion and naturalness which is a key quality of this landscape.
- Care and attention should be taken to avoid disturbance and spread of Japanese Knotweed, which is frequently present along the river banks and associated areas nearby.

Mavisbank Conservation Area Character Appraisal & Management Plan

Figure B: Mavisbank Conservation Area Landscape and Visual Analysis Plan

