



# Extract from Parks and Gardens UK

# Introduction

Although the estate at Whittingehame is in divided ownership the structure of the early-19th-century designed landscape remains intact. There is parkland and a notable arboretum. Late-19th-and early-20th-century additions include a double lime avenue and balustraded terraces around the house.

The following is from the Historic Environment Scotland Gardens and Designed Landscapes Inventory. For the most up-to-date Inventory entry, please visit the Historic Environment Scotland website:

http://portal.historic-scotland.gov.uk/designations

### **Location and Setting**

Whittingehame is situated between the Lammermuir Hills and the Firth of Forth, approximately 3 miles (5km) south of East Linton and 6 miles (10km) south-west of Dunbar on the Firth. The designed landscape is laid out on either side of the glen of the Whittingehame Water and is bounded by minor roads and by the B6370 to the south. The estate is surrounded by the fertile agricultural lowlands of East Lothian and views extend as far as Arthur's Seat to the north- west on a clear day. The policy woodlands enclose the designed landscape and are, in themselves, significant to the view from the surrounding area.

The earliest part of Whittingehame Tower is thought to date from the 13th century and its position above the steep glen of the Whittingehame Water reflects the need of those times for an easily defensible fortress. Whittingehame House, built in the early 19th century, is a mansion set on the opposite (east) bank of the glen, facing south- west. The Tower is visible in the view from the main rooms of the house. While the valley was recorded as being well-wooded prior to the building of the new house, the designed landscape was laid out c.1819 to the designs of W.S. Gilpin and the extent has remained the same to the present day. Documentary evidence relies on the OS map editions and there are 542 acres (219ha) in the designed landscape at Whittingehame.

## **Landscape Components**

### **Architectural Features**

Whittingehame Tower is thought to date from the early 13th century or earlier. It is a square, battlemented keep, three storeys high, which was restored in the 17th century for one of the Douglas family. It is listed A. Whittingehame House is a classical mansion designed by Robert Smirke in 1817 with additions by William Burn in 1827. It is three storeys with a balustraded

upper storey; the porch on the garden front was added in 1871. The house is listed A. The Stables were possibly designed by Smirke and lie to the north of the house, consisting of two parallel ranges and are statutorily listed. The stables and most of the lodges are now in separate ownerships. The Lodges were possibly designed by Smirke, the West Lodge is listed C(S). Nearby the walled garden is a Temple built by Lord Balfour in 1905; the elaborate wrought- iron gates to the walled garden are dated 1914. The entrance gatepiers to Whittingehame Tower are dated 1740. Lady Eleanor's Cottage, a 19th century Gothic cottage, is listed C(S). There is also a wellhead in the garden of the Tower, and the Balfour palm tree crest appears on the garden gate dated 1956. The Garden House is a classical one-storey building ornamented with urns along its flat roof; it is listed.

#### **Parkland**

The 1st edition OS of 1853 shows the parkland as laid out by Gilpin, bounded by Mountlehoy Lodge in the south and Eastfield in the north. There were many individual parkland trees planted in all the parks but only those in the park south of Whittingehame House now remain, and the parks are now farmed. The drives to the new house impressed most recorders of the scene and one noted 'there are three noble approaches, each of great length, winding through beautiful scenery and guarded by handsome lodges'. In 1902 there were 40 acres of lawns and 11 miles of paths and drives. Trees in the parks included specimen lime, Scots pine and beech.

A lime avenue marks the original entrance route to Whittingehame Tower and it is divided from the former deer park beyond by both a high wall and a deep ha- ha for deer. The splendid double avenue of limes to the north of Whittingehame House was put in by Miss Alice Balfour. Some tennis courts and sports pitches were added near the house in recent years while it was used as a school. The garden terrace retains its potted trees and balustrades.

## Woodland

All the woodlands at Whittingehame have been managed on a commercial basis since they were first planted. The 1st Lord Balfour was a keen forester and conducted experiments on the different growth rates of hardwood trees. An area of the walled garden has been let to the Forestry Commission for silvicultural experiments. The policy woodlands are planted with mixed deciduous species.

### Walled Garden

The gardens in Miss Alice Balfour's time were celebrated and contained conservatories and vineries on a large scale, including a 'curvilinear roofed peachery'. There were herbaceous flower borders as well as fruit and vegetables in the garden. In 1905 Lord Balfour added the Temple outside the walls, and the large wrought-iron gates were added in 1914. Part of the walled garden is leased to the Forestry Commission and part is used for pheasant-rearing. The Forestry Commission also manages a seed orchard to the south of the walled garden adjacent to the drive.

There is also a walled flower garden adjacent to Whittingehame Tower.

#### Arboretum

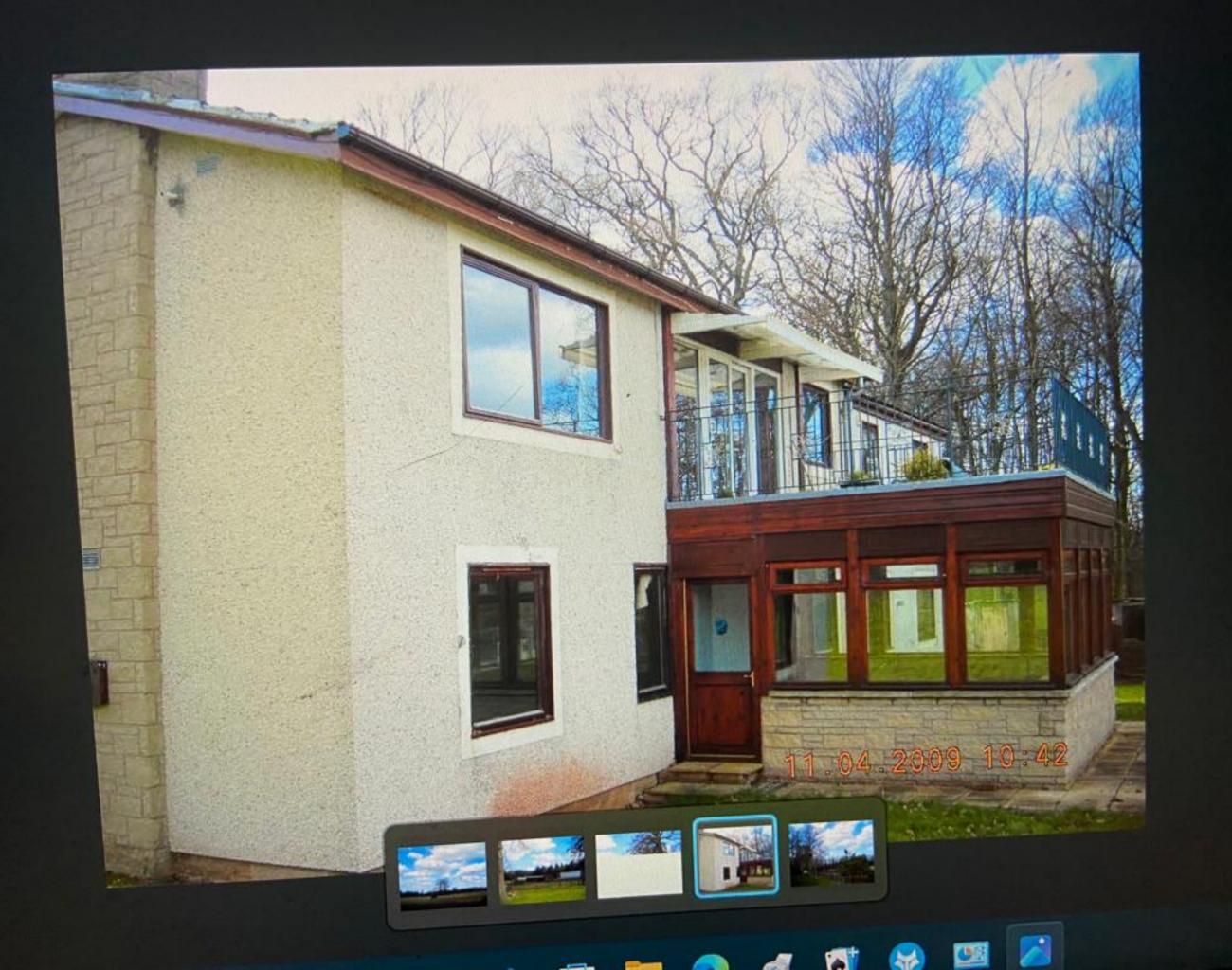
There is an early and very interesting collection of exotic specimen trees around the walled garden to the north of Whittingehame Tower. One of the first trees recorded here was a Blue Gum, planted in 1846 and measured at 53 feet high in 1885. Alan Mitchell measured over 60 large specimen trees here in 1974 including two Eucalyptus gunnii 'Whittingehamensis', one of which has since died. He also measured the Whittinghame Yew, a tree of great age and thought to be c.700 years old, as 56 feet tall and 11 ft 5 inches in circumference. The Yew's most impressive feature, however, is the circumference covered by its vast spreading branches, which was recorded as 180 yards in the 1880s.

There are many magnificent trees in the arboretum here including a monkey puzzle clothed with branches to the ground, a 'superb' Acer pseudoplatanus 'Variegatum' which is 90 feet tall, and a fine cut-leaf beech. To these have been added more recently a Lebanese Cedar, some Metasequoias, Nothofagus and Eucryphia.

The Journal of Horticulture carried an article on Whittingehame in 1903 and recorded a wide variety of flowering shrubs interplanted with the specimen conifers. There are the remains of an elaborate trellis-work on the exterior of the south wall of the walled garden which was once planted with climbing roses. The Burial Ground is also planted round with interesting trees including walnuts, Spanish chestnut, holm oak and Sorbus varieties. Nearby are some very old fine beech trees.







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