



HISTORIC  
ENVIRONMENT  
SCOTLAND

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ALBA

Property in Care (PIC) ID:  
Designations:

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Scheduled Monument (SM2210); Listed  
Buildings (LB22358; LB52435; LB50490)

Taken into State care:  
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1937 (Guardianship)  
2022 (2025 update to include Empire  
connections)

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

# KINNEIL HOUSE



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# HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

## KINNEIL HOUSE

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# I. SUMMARY

## 1.1 Introduction

Kinneil House is set within Kinneil Estate, 200 acres of parkland and woodland owned by Falkirk Council and managed by Falkirk Community Trust. The house stands beside the east bank of the Gil Burn 1½ miles west of the centre of Bo'ness and is sited along the line of the Antonine Wall.

The Property in Care (PIC) consists of 3 main elements: Kinneil House, the James Watt Cottage and the Kinneil Cross:

- Kinneil House is a mansion built chiefly during the 16th and 17th centuries which contains some important painted interiors. It was the discovery of these wall paintings (as the house was being demolished in 1933) which led to the house being taken into care and explains the part roofless and stripped-out state of parts of the building. The in care area includes an area of ground around the house, and to the south, walls and gatepiers.
- The early medieval Kinneil Cross (See separate Statement of Significance: The Kinneil Cross) which predates the house by several centuries is displayed in the basement of the house. It is associated with nearby Kinneil Church (not in State Care).
- The James Watt “cottage” Immediately south-east of the house is a small roofless structure where the famous 18th century engineer worked on a prototype steam engine.

A stretch of the Antonine Wall lies within the PIC boundary close to the house. The main designed landscape pertaining to the house is outwith the PIC boundary and is managed as a public park with open access and is the setting for many recreational activities and events. The park includes a Roman forlet and the ruined medieval Kinneil Old Church.

A long straight driveway leads up to the house providing an impressive entry, it passes the former Coach House which has been converted to a museum and interpretive centre for the estate. There is open access to the exterior of the PIC, but internal access is currently limited to open days and prearranged visits mostly held in conjunction with the Friends of Kinneil.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Historic Environment Scotland gratefully acknowledges the help of the Friends of Kinneil and Falkirk Community Trust in drawing up this document and in supporting research efforts at Kinneil House.

Prior to visiting, please check access information, available at: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/kinneil-house/> (Accessed: 18 July 2022).

## 1.2 Statement of Significance

Kinneil House was built for the powerful Hamilton family to serve as their chief seat in the east of the country. The family held the estate from the 1320s almost continuously until 1933, though it last served as their residence in the mid -18th century.

The site chosen is a place whose importance was established centuries prior to the building of Kinneil House for it lies directly beside the line of the Antonine Wall, and the place-name Kinneil is understood to mean “head (or end) of the wall”. This position (along with Abercorn) of marking the head of the wall led to its being one of the earliest settlements in Scotland to be specifically mentioned in surviving written sources (Bede in 731 AD), while the existence of the Kinneil Cross indicates it was also a religious site of some importance in early medieval times.<sup>2</sup>



Figure 1: Kinneil House east elevation © Crown Copyright HES.

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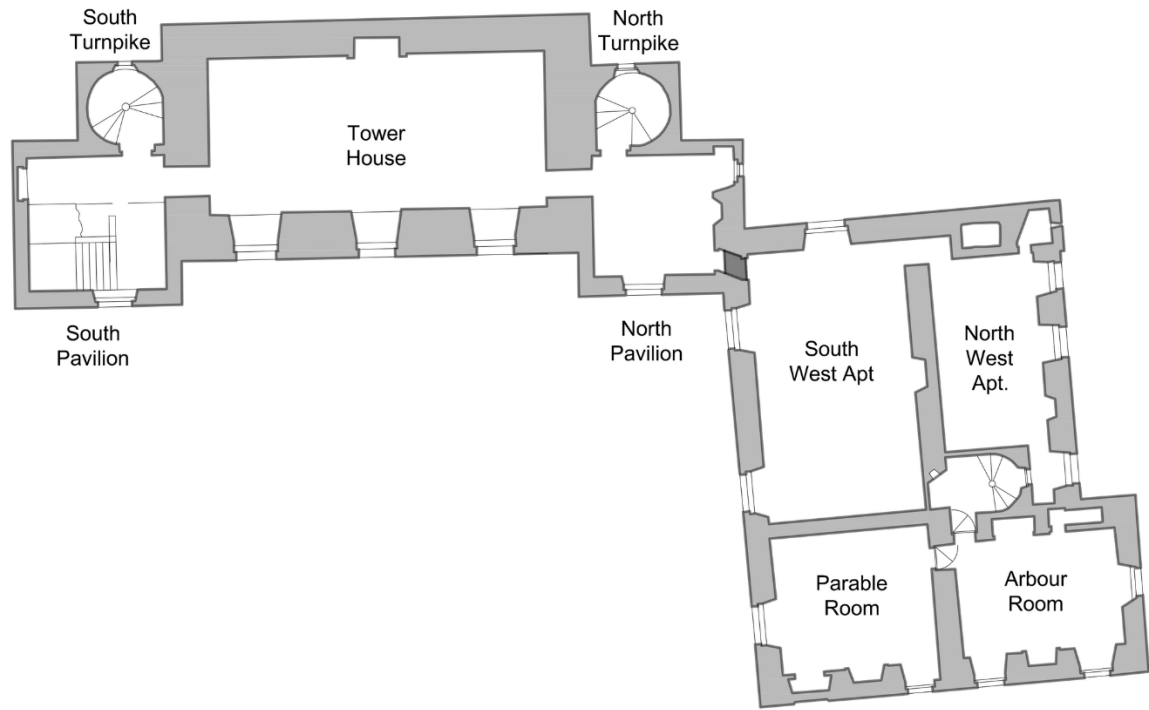
<sup>2</sup> However, some uncertainty remains as the site isn't explicitly documented as anything more than a conventional parish church circa 12th - circa 17th.



Figure 2: Kinneil House south elevation © Marcin Klimek



Figure 3: Kinneil House from the north (1950) (SC 1113871) © Crown Copyright: HES



MONUMENT	KINNEIL HOUSE
PROJECT	KEY PLANS



PROJECT DRAWING NUMBER		First Floor Plan	
SCALE	1:200 @ A3	ARCHITECT	C Cruickshank
DATE	Feb 2022	DRAWN BY	I Cernicchiaro
ARCHIVE NUMBER			

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Figure 4: Kinneil House first floor plan © Historic Environment Scotland.



While HES recognises the importance of the wider setting and cultural landscape around Kinneil House as integral to the cultural significance of the place, this Assessment focusses primarily upon the area managed by HES.

In a national context, Kinneil House is chiefly important for its architectural qualities and historical associations. It is part of a peer group of high status near-Royal or Ducal houses which combine particular architectural fashions with important functions as show-pieces for a family's nobility, taste and culture and thereby a demonstration of their lineage and legitimacy.

- The archaeology of Kinneil is of particular importance because of its time-depth, from the Roman era to the industrial revolution. The evidential potential of the site is therefore very high both for its early Roman and Medieval archaeology and also later garden layouts and settings pertaining to the Renaissance and post-Renaissance house.
- Kinneil House itself is one of the most significant monuments of 16th and 17th century architecture in Scotland and contains some of the finest Renaissance painted interiors in Britain. Surviving documentary evidence means that the missing furnishings of the interior and the successive phase of planting and garden design could be reconstructed with a fair degree of certainty. This adds greatly to the potential for interpreting the site.
- Kinneil Cross is the only known example from Scotland of a rood cross, the possibility that it is associated with the 12th century church would make it one of the only surviving architectural fragments from a church of this period in Scotland
- Kinneil is strongly associated with the famous engineer James Watt. Kinneil has a strong claim as being the birthplace of James Watt's transformational improvements to the steam engine, because of its association with his pioneering work there with John Roebuck, and his first patent, for a separate condenser. This makes it the site of what is generally regarded as one of the world's most important advances in technological progress ever made, which led directly to the Industrial Revolution.

In more regional and local contexts, Kinneil is very important to the history of Bo'ness and to its contemporary communities.

- The chief historical associations of Kinneil lie with the Hamilton family. The house was the setting for several notable incidents in their history, the periodic confiscation in and out of Hamilton hands illustrates the nature of politics and power relations in 16th and 17th century Scotland.
- The setting of Kinneil amid parkland adds to its attractiveness, particularly among locals and visitors who use the site regularly, and

links between the community and the work of Friends of Kinneil enhances this aspect. Events such as Roman Week or the Bo'ness Hill Climb raise the profile of the estate and enhance a sense of connection and attachment to a wider public.

- Kinneil House is the backdrop to many events and activities on the estate and is a visually distinctive icon for the place. Many groups of people have a strong attachment to Kinneil both as a place of recreation and refreshment, and also for its contribution to a sense of place, identity and local pride.

The above short statement encapsulates our current understanding of the main significances of this site. A broader overview of the cultural and natural heritage values of the place is given in succeeding paragraphs and appendices.

### 1.3 A note on terminology

#### Tower, Lodging and Palace

In its external guise, Kinneil House presents a fairly unified appearance as one of Scotland's finest seventeenth century 'show houses' and the long straight drive through forecourts enhances this perception. However, the mansion was created by the clever adaptation of older buildings and is a composite structure. The main block was originally an impressive rectangular tower house, while the adjoining residential wing contains well-preserved sixteenth-century apartments. To date, these two elements are usually referred to as the 'tower' and 'palace', though this usage does not have clear support in primary sources, which indicate that the term Palace was understood to mean the whole building. Therefore, in this document the two elements are referred to as the Tower (the tower) and the Lodgings (the residential wing) with the term Palace used to mean the whole structure.

#### Various spellings of the 16th century dukedom<sup>3</sup>

There are various potential spellings of the name-form for the sixteenth-century duke who was responsible for so much of the early construction and decoration. This document uses "Châtellerault", which is the modern spelling of the actual French place-name from which his title was derived. The sixteenth-century form was "Chastelherault", but peerage sources and Hamilton documents conventionally use the Anglicised spelling Chatelherault, while the DNB and the Almanach de Gotha both opt for "Châtelherault", which does not seem to be a real French form, but which has gained significant recent traction on the back of DNB. You occasionally

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<sup>3</sup> As choices of terminology are often fraught, the approaches noted in this document are not "writ in stone".

also find “Chateauhervault”, which is the traditional English form of the place-name.

## 2. ASSESSMENT OF VALUES

### 2.1 Background

The property known as Kinneil House incorporates not just the upstanding later medieval Hamilton residence but its associated gardens (including substantial surviving elements dating from the seventeenth century), James Watt’s 18th-century workshop, a buried stretch of the Antonine Wall and the medieval Kinneil Cross (fuller detail on the significance and history of the Cross is given in a separate document: [Statement of Significance, The Kinneil Cross](#)).

There is a variety of evidence available upon which to base our understanding of the development and significance of the site, however research has been quite limited to date and the exact chronology and sequence of construction of Kinneil House is still imperfectly understood. This document presents HES current thinking on the site and particularly in Appendix 3 sets out the basis for this and rehearses some of the alternative interpretation.



Figures 5 and 6: Kinneil Cross. Both © Historic Environment Scotland.

A full Timeline for the property from Roman times is given at Appendix 1, but a few key dates particularly relevant to the Hamiltons at Kinneil are summarised below:

Date	Event
1323	King Robert I grants the estate of Kinneil to Walter fitz Gilbert, ancestor of the Hamilton family
1474	Lord Hamilton marries Princess Mary, sister of James III, and is granted permission to build a castle at Craig Lyon a small island off the coast shown on Pont's map of 1590.
1540s	References indicate Craig Lyon is still in use and accounts show various building materials provided to both Craig Lyon and Kinneil
1549	James 2nd Earl of Arran is created Duke of Châtellerauld
1553	Accounts record a founding pint for the workmen for the 'Palace' at Kinneil. Expenses also for gardens, fruit trees and kitchen plants. Some of the painted decoration in the Lodging is dateable to this time.
1560	A French-led army burns the mansion at Kinneil and its furnishings. Sources suggest extensive damage, but the family are in residence again by 1561.
1570	Kinneil again attacked and "burnt with fire", extent of damage not known.
1575	Kinneil habitable again; death of Châtellerauld.
1581 - 1585	Hamilton estates confiscated and Kinneil given to James Stewart, captain of the Guard. James VI a regular visitor. Estates return to Hamilton hands by 1585.
1620s	Second decorative scheme (Arbor room) undertaken for James 2nd Marquis of Hamilton
1670s	Duke William and Duchess Anne embark upon major works at Kinneil completing the refenestration/regularisation of front elevation and addition of pavilions and staircases.  Major landscaping of grounds.  Inventories of 1688 and 1704 help to ascribe functions to rooms.
1759	Kinneil leased to Dr John Roebuck who sponsors James Watt in his experiments with improving steam technology



Figure 7: Kinneil Watt 'cottage' and boiler. © Historic Environment Scotland.

From the moment you turn through the gates on to its long approach avenue, Kinneil appears as a splendid seventeenth-century mansion, with a symmetrical main façade and formal courtyard, flanked on one side by a neat forward-projecting wing. Walling on the opposite side of the courtyard and raggles on the wall of the main block indicate that another flanking range of similar design was intended to complete the house's symmetry. This part of the house was probably never completed, but its absence does not impact on the visual effect as much as might be expected.

Whilst the later 17th-century transformation of Kinneil into a Restoration 'show-house' dominates our perception of the house today, the building incorporates substantial earlier fabric. The shell of the main house is in fact a lofty, rectangular five-storey tower. Even today, it rises tall above the treetops along the Gil Burn and would have been an even more prominent landmark in the days before the current overgrowth of woodland. At right angles to the tower stands an adjacent residential range, the Lodging. This is normally interpreted as a secondary addition to the tower, though documentary support for this is lacking, and the exact chronological relationship between them will be discussed more fully below in Appendix 3.

The Lodging was not one build either and had its origins as an earlier building, which housed separate apartments for the lord and lady of the house in the upper floors above a vaulted service basement. The upper

apartment was gutted in the early twentieth century, but the lower suite contains substantial remains of sixteenth and early seventeenth century wall painting.

Each suite comprised three rooms (hall, outer and inner chamber).<sup>4</sup> Their important painted decoration is more fully discussed in Appendix 4 below.

The setting of the mansion also needs to be considered in the context of the Antonine Wall, which stands immediately to its south, abutting the tower at right angles. A quadrangular courtyard is thus formed by the relationship between the ancient Roman rampart, the main tower, and the north wing. In the late seventeenth century, a symmetrical south wing was evidently projected on the line of the Antonine Wall itself, but this seems not to have been built.

## 2.2 Evidential values

### Kinneil House

The house itself has seen very little in the way of modern archaeology. Following the transfer of the main tower house into state care in 1975, an archaeological watching brief was held as the basement was levelled to enable a full scaffold to be erected in advance of re-roofing. Substantial plaster fragments from the former ceilings were recovered, and a possible 'priest's hole' was located in the north-west corner which led to a stone-vaulted tunnel heading down the gorge towards the Gil Burn; the tunnel's outer entrance had been located previously.<sup>5</sup> This may in fact have been a service passage linking the main house to the detached kitchen range shown in a plan of 1703, broadly comparable to the early eighteenth-century example from Newhailes.

A more detailed archaeological excavation within the footprint of Kinneil House would doubtless shed further light on the building's evolution over several centuries.

While an excellent start to the understanding of the house has been made with Addyman Archaeology's<sup>6</sup> unpublished notes *Kinneil House, a Preliminary Analytical Assessment*, the whole structure of Kinneil House would benefit greatly from a comprehensive standing building survey, as it is clear from the remains that much of archaeological interest remains in the fabric.

### Gardens and James Watt's workshop

No archaeological excavation is recorded as having taken place in the immediate vicinity of Kinneil House. However, given what we know of the

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<sup>4</sup> Richardson 1941, 184-204.

<sup>5</sup> Price 1973c, 59.

<sup>6</sup> Historic Environment Scotland gratefully acknowledges Tom Addyman's many helpful contributions towards the development of this document.

history of the immediate area, this potential is likely to be very high, with likely remains spanning two millennia, from the Roman occupation of Scotland to the modern era. The landscaped garden grounds of Kinneil House, of importance in themselves, may also obscure earlier landforms, including not just a stretch of the 1st-century Antonine Wall but also perhaps a medieval predecessor of the island castle of Craig Lyon first alluded to in 1474.

### **Kinneil Church and village**

Although not in state care, the area in and around the old parish church of Kinneil, to the west of the Gil Burn, represents another significant archaeological resource, including the medieval graveyard and deserted village. Excavation in 1998 recovered no evidence of settlement before the twelfth century,<sup>7</sup> but Kinneil is rare among medieval Scottish settlements because it is reliably recorded in a written source as early as the eighth century – this is especially significant, as Kinneil was not a fortress or a monastery, but instead was notable due to its proximity to the end of the Antonine Wall.

## **2.3 Historical values**

A Timeline giving a fuller chronology of the site is presented at Appendix 1.

### **Early historical associations and place-name evidence**

The most important early event at Kinneil occurred around 142 AD, when the Roman legions constructed a section of the Antonine Wall here. This frontier rampart between the Forth and Clyde, had its eastern end near Kinneil: ‘end of the wall’ is the literal meaning of the place-name Kinneil.

This proximity to the Antonine rampart subsequently attracted the attention of medieval writers, such as the Venerable Bede in the eighth century, meaning that Kinneil is one of the first handful of settlements in Scotland to be identified by name – an especially notable achievement as it was neither a great fortress nor a prominent monastery.

A new phase began around 1150, when David I granted the lordship of Kinneil to Herbert the Chamberlain, the head of his royal household.<sup>8</sup> At around the same date, archaeological evidence for the medieval parish church and village begins.<sup>9</sup> This was an important period of social change in European history, in which society was reshaped by the adoption of a common framework of ideas and skills, often brought by individuals coming from abroad (Herbert was probably born in England, but of French and perhaps ultimately Viking ancestry).

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<sup>7</sup> Glendinning *et al* 2000, 522.

<sup>8</sup> Barrow 1999, 34.

<sup>9</sup> Glendinning *et al* 2000, 522.

### Association with the Hamilton family

In 1323, Kinneil was acquired by Sir Walter fitz Gilbert, who had previously fought in the English army, but who had defected to the Scottish forces of King Robert the Bruce shortly after the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Sir Walter is regarded as the founder of the Hamilton family, one of the most prominent aristocratic lineages in Scottish history. Kinneil would become one of their most important residences, and they would locate the legendary deeds of their ancestors in the surrounding landscape.<sup>10</sup>

The family achieved great prominence from the time of the 1st Lord Hamilton, who married Princess Mary of Scotland, a sister of King James III. The family evidently had a castle near Bo'ness known as Craig Lyon,<sup>11</sup> and conventionally, this has been equated with the main tower at Kinneil, with a later reworking being attributed to one of the couple's grandsons, the architect Sir James Hamilton of Finnart (d. 1537).<sup>12</sup> However, unambiguous evidence for a building on the site only emerges under Finnart's half-brother, James Hamilton, Duke of Châtellerauld, who became regent of Scotland and heir to the throne in 1542. A document of 1553 records the laying of foundations for a new 'palace' at Kinneil, and the Duke and his Duchess, Margaret Douglas, are commemorated in important sculpted and painted decoration which survives within the building, datable to the period 1549-1575.

This was also a turbulent period, with Scotland sharply divided into two political factions allied to France and England, each well-armed and backed by foreign military aid. The Duke switched back and forth between the two factions, so Kinneil was sacked by both sides, by a French-led army in 1560 and an English-led one 1570. Surprisingly, the house appears to have been very promptly restored after both attacks. In between, in 1562, the Duke's mentally unstable son escaped from an upper floor down a rope made from bed sheets. In the early 1580s the Palace was briefly confiscated from the Hamiltons, and given to the young James VI's royal favourite, Colonel James Stewart.

The Hamiltons returned in 1585 and made extensive use of Kinneil due to its proximity to the political capital in Edinburgh. In 1641, the mansion played a role in a puzzling political event known simply as 'the Incident'. The Civil War of the 1640s-1650s decimated the Hamilton dynasty, leaving the family's lands and titles to an heiress, Duchess Anne.

Kinneil was briefly confiscated once again by the Roundheads in the 1650s, but after the restoration of King Charles II in 1660, the Hamilton family once again regained control, and Duchess Anne and her husband Duke William set about transforming Kinneil into a grand 'show house', with a classical

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<sup>10</sup> Hamilton, *Historie of the Hamiltons*, an unpublished manuscript written around 1550, attests to the existence of these traditions.

<sup>11</sup> Thomson *et al* 1814-1984, vol 2, 1140, 1178.

<sup>12</sup> McKean 2004, 93-94.



façade, an opulent interior, and extensive grounds displaying the formally-planned aesthetics of the Restoration period.

The Hamilton family do not seem to have used Kinneil regularly after around 1711, however and the house was leased to various tenants

Other (non-Hamilton) prominent occupants and associations include the entrepreneur John Roebuck in 1759-94, the inventor James Watt and later on, the philosopher Dugald Stewart in 1809-28.

Roebuck's tenure connects the site to the wider Imperial economy. He partnered with Glasgow 'tobacco lord' John Glassford in the firm Roebuck and Glassford that leased Bo'ness Colliery in 1760. He also partnered with James Watt in a salt business which aided the supply of cured herring to the West Indies where cured fish was a staple of the diet of enslaved people. Roebuck also founded the Carron Company, which profited from ancillary enterprises of the Atlantic slavery economy. His sponsorship of Watt's engineering experiments is particularly important for the history of Kinneil. James Watt is probably the most important figure of modern times associated with Kinneil, and himself had links to Atlantic slavery through his father's mercantile business.<sup>13</sup>

The plain, single-storey (now roofless) building to the south-west of Kinneil House is often referred to as James Watt's 'cottage', though it is more likely a workshop. Currently roofless, early photographs show it with a steeply pitched pantiled roof, ivy-clad and tumble-down by the time of its being photographed. In this workshop James Watt experimented on an improved model of a steam engine which was (eventually) to become extremely successful. However, Roebuck did not benefit from this and his patronage of Watt led him into severe financial difficulty. Kinneil is still celebrated though for its part in the refinements of technology that made the industrial revolution possible.

Professor Dugald Stewart (1753 - 1828) lived largely at Kinneil from 1809 until his death, in what seems to have been a grace-and-favour arrangement by the Duke of Hamilton. Stewart was something of a polymath, teaching both philosophy and mathematics at Edinburgh University. He was an important Enlightenment thinker, and by the time of his moving to Kinneil he was a well-established figure with many of his major works already published.

After 1828, Kinneil seems to have been largely neglected. In the 1930s, it was sold to the local council and stripped of most of its roofing and interior fittings but saved from destruction when the remains of the sixteenth-century decorative scheme were discovered. Since then, the house has

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<sup>13</sup> The full report on the research into the relationships between the Properties in Care of Scottish Ministers and the British Empire can be downloaded from the HES website: [Surveying and Analysing Connections between Properties in Care and the British Empire, c. 1600-1997 \(historicenvironment.scot\)](https://www.hes.scot.nhs.uk/properties-in-care-and-the-british-empire-c-1600-1997) (accessed: 17 December 2024).

been recognised as a national monument, and its grounds are used as a public park. The grounds are associated with motor racing in the 20th century with the Bo'ness Hill Climb, an event revived in 2007 and which is described at 2.7 and Appendix 5.

### **Ability to demonstrate particular past ways of life**

Kinneil is a unique resource for the lifestyle and aesthetic tastes of Scotland's aristocracy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The physical evidence of the building, complete with the layout of its grounds and the surviving details of its interior scheme, present an unparalleled ability to glimpse the scale and grandeur of the setting in which nobles like the Duke of Châtellerauld and Duchess Anne resided.

In contrast with many other sites, however, little remains at Kinneil of the service areas where 'below stairs' life took place (which seem to have been located in detached ranges outside the main house), and the stripping of the building in the 1930s removed much of the interior layout. Attention is naturally focused on the exterior facades, the sixteenth-century ducal apartments in the partially-roofed north wing, and fragments of sculpture and other decoration presented in modernised display areas. Nonetheless, there is more potential than is immediately apparent – the outline of the formal route of the 1670s through the great staircase and great hall to the private chambers remains discernable and documentary evidence enables a full reconstruction of the interior decorative scheme, hung with a vast gallery of paintings (see Appendix 6 (to follow)).

## **2.4 Architectural and artistic values**

The house and its grounds are among the most impressive embodiments of the ideals of authority, aesthetics and ambition pursued by the high aristocracy in seventeenth-century Scotland, and are all the more remarkable for their impressive state of preservation.

The earlier period of the mansion's history is less clearly understood – in particular, it is unclear whether there was a castle or mansion here before the 1550s, and the wider architectural setting of the ducal apartment is also somewhat enigmatic; but the overall layout of the buildings, and details such as the ashlar façade and the sustained use of ionic columns in the sculpted and painted decoration suggests that this may have been a building of great architectural importance, embodying the Renaissance concept of the villa – closer to French and Italian models than almost anything else in the British Isles during this period. An architectural analysis of the building conducted by Addyman Archaeology represents a major step forward in understanding the architectural evolution of the building before the 1670s.

This 17th-century house was planned with great skill. Kinneil marks an interesting junction in the direction of Scottish architecture, attempting to impose a grand symmetrical design, with fine classical detailing, on to an older structure. It does this respectfully: for example, the string-course on the pavilions is dictated by the eaves line on the north wing. At Kinneil the antiquity of the site is exploited to the full and the dominant majesty of the ancestral tower is preserved, while simultaneously achieving an overall effect that is firmly classical in detail and layout; this represents a unique synthesis in Scottish architecture. Other contemporary 'show-houses' such as Glamis Castle, Hatton House and the royal Holyrood Palace cannot translate the mass of the tower into a classical idiom. A generation later such concerns are largely overridden in the pursuit of a more strictly Palladian perfection.

In addition, the interior of the building contains important examples of painted decoration and sculpture, surviving from the period before the house reached its current architectural form in the 1670s. A suite of rooms in the north wing contains decoration from the third quarter of the sixteenth century in its inner and outer chamber, showing that these rooms were occupied by James Hamilton, Duke of Châtellerauld and regent of Scotland; they are conventionally identified as his presence chamber (throne room) and bedroom, while the outer hall (now roofless) was perhaps the guard room, and his Duchess, Margaret Douglas, would have used the parallel suite above. Of particular note is the mid-16th century coffered oak ceiling in the Regent's presence chamber (the 'Parable Room'), comparable to those in Queen Mary's Apartment in Holyroodhouse which are based on a Serlio design.

### **The painted decoration**

The painted decoration surviving from this period consists of a complex and largely complete scheme combining figurative scenes, Renaissance motifs, heraldic shields and written inscriptions, in both the inner and outer chambers, along with a second superimposed scheme of imitation panelling and plasterwork from the seventeenth century in the inner chamber, while some additional decoration on the upper floors was recorded before being lost during demolition in the 1930s.

### **The carved stones**

In the basement of the palace is a small but important collection of carved stonework. These have been brought from elsewhere in the house and the ruined church across the Gil Burn. Of particular note are two early Christian stone crosses and a large heraldic stone of the 1550s formerly an exterior panel.

The large Kinneil Cross, carved from a single block of sandstone, is unique in Scotland and has few parallels in Britain. It has a high-relief carving depicting the Crucifixion, the figure of Jesus surviving only in shadowy form save for his feet, with the hand of God above the head and a skull and

bones at the base, symbolising Golgotha. Its date is uncertain with the balance of probability on the later 12th century. It is fully discussed below in a separate document [Statement of Significance: The Kinneil Cross](#).

The superbly carved large and ornate heraldic stone, originally adorning the exterior of the building, dates from Châtellerauld's time (1550s). It is divided into two panels by classically inspired fluted columns echoing those used to divide the panels of the Parable Room murals. The left panel has the arms of Châtellerauld under a ducal coronet (dating the sculpture no earlier than the very end of the 1540s), encircled with the French chivalric Order of St Michael. The right panel bears the arms of his wife, Margaret Douglas. This panel is one of the most impressive armorial stones surviving in Scotland and is particularly notable for its excellent state of preservation.

## 2.5 Landscape and aesthetic values

The main approach to Kinneil impresses. The straight level drive leading directly to the massive central block comes as a surprise to the visitor after travelling through the urban and suburban townscape of Bo'ness. It still contrives to convey much of the grandeur originally intended by its creators, Duchess Anne and Duke William.

The overall appearance of the grounds is attractive with few modern intrusions, a pretty complex of buildings whose basic layout dates back beyond 1703 (mostly forming Kinneil Museum). A backdrop of maturing trees, largely self-seeded sycamores, currently provides a sense of enclosure and screens the industrial sprawl of Grangemouth to the north and west.

The immediate setting of the house can seem disappointing, with the building obviously empty, closed-up and apparently lifeless, and the once-attractively planted gardens now largely given over to grass.

The interior of the house varies considerably. The painted rooms are quite charming if somewhat sterile, whilst the ground floor of the same wing is somewhat gloomy and 'municipal'. The gutted main block is awe-inspiring in its space, a temporary viewing platform installed 2017 will give a different experience of the space viewed from a more elevated position.

## 2.6 Natural heritage values

The ground within the property in care is dominated by a large area of amenity grassland to the east of the house. This grassland is species poor and of limited wildlife value. There is mixed amenity planting around the perimeter of mixed woodland species, including: wych elm, sycamore, cherry, and Scots pine.

The site is bounded on the west by the Falkirk and Kinniel Wood, listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory Scotland as semi natural broadleaved woodland. The understory is dominated by spring flowering wild garlic (ransoms), *Allium ursinum*.

There is no record of rare fauna associated with the area under HES management. Bats are active in the surrounding woodland. The House and associated structures have high bat roosting potential and roosting bats could be present. Grey squirrels are present in the woodland, but red squirrels seem to be absent.

The small burn running to the west of the House cuts through the underlying rock strata showing clearly the sedimentary nature of the underlying rocks, which includes the rich coal seams which lie beneath.

## 2.7 Contemporary/use values

Kinneil House is set within the 200-acre Kinneil Estate, which is managed by Falkirk Community Trust on behalf of Falkirk Council. The Estate comprises parkland and wooded grounds and includes buildings and archaeological remains that evidence human settlement over a period of more than 2000 years. The Estate also includes a number of privately occupied houses, reinstated gardens/orchards, as well as extensive park and woodland. The John Muir Way, a long-distance walking trail, cuts through the Estate and it is a short walk from Kinneil Halt, a stop for steam trains run on the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway. There is a small Museum located in a 17th-century stable block to the front of the House. The grounds are permanently accessible and known to be well visited.

The House and surrounding estate are important to many groups of people including residents of Bo'ness and environs, people with family connections to the area for whom the park was an important place for recreation and informal socialization. Others may come for exercise: walking, running or cycling; to derive inspiration for creative activities or for simple relaxation and tranquility. A Report compiled in 2020 as part of a PhD research project<sup>14</sup> identified many groups of people to whom the site was important and who had strong feelings of attachment to the place. As well as the activities and uses indicated above, some felt a particular attachment to the Old Kirk (not managed by HES) and the tradition of holding Easter Services there, while others valued the feelings of peace and reflection that the Estate offers.

Not everyone visiting the estate will be aware of the story of the house and the painted decoration. For many who do know the story it is valued as an

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<sup>14</sup> Wrestling with Social Value [Kinneil Estate, Bo'ness \(wrestlingsocialvalue.org\)](https://www.kinneil.org.uk/kinneil-estate-bo-ness-wrestlingsocialvalue.org) . Kinneil Estate was one of a number of case studies examining methods to identify and assess some key aspects of the social value of heritage sites.

important symbol of the community, its origin and history with the house as a constant presence. The story of The White lady (identified as Lady Alice Lilburne)<sup>15</sup> is well known and important locally and is still passed on to younger generations and to incomers and visitors.

Kinneil House remains a place of significance to members of the Hamilton family, as the most important surviving buildings associated with their 'clan' and ancestors (Hamilton Palace has been razed to the ground, **Cadzow**<sup>16</sup> is a shattered ruin, and **Craignethan** is more closely associated with Hamilton of Finnart than with the wider history of the family). There is as much local interest in the use of Kinneil as a residence of John Roebuck, James Watt and Dugald Stewart as they are in its Hamilton or Roman era history: a reflection surely of the proud industrial heritage of the Bo'ness area.

Kinneil also benefits from the 'Friends of Kinneil', a community-based charitable organisation that, *inter alia*, organises 'open days' at the property, including guided tours of the Palace interiors. These are proving popular, and together with the nearby Kinneil Museum, help bring additional vitality and social value to the property. The Friends are actively involved in research efforts to explore many different aspects of the site's history from Roman to modern times and have a critical role in outreach and engagement.

### Access

Kinneil House is open to the public on selected open days each year, currently around once a month during the period from March to October. These events are very popular and are facilitated by Friends of Kinneil in co-operation with HES staff.<sup>17</sup> In 2017 the ground floor of the tower was cleared, and a low viewing platform installed to allow safe access to and appreciation of the void of the tower. Similarly recent opening up of previously inaccessible parts of the Lodging range has increased access during tours.

On recent open days, access to the interior (in the form of guided tours) has been combined with historically appropriate events, such as Renaissance singing or the presence of re-enactors playing the role of Roman Legionaries.

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<sup>15</sup> The story may also refer to Margaret Lilburne, see Timeline entry for 1650s below.

<sup>16</sup> Throughout the text, site names in **bold** are managed by Historic Environment Scotland and are publicly accessible. Access information can be found at <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/> (Accessed: 18 July 2022).

<sup>17</sup> For more information, please check access information, available at: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/kinneil-house/> (Accessed: 18 July 2022).

## Recreation and amenity

The grounds of Kinneil House are a public park, with paths, lawns and large areas of woodland. The setting is large, extending from the approach avenue and the local museum in front of the house to the ruined medieval church and the site of the Roman fort at the rear. Together with the house these features form an interesting and well interpreted historic landscape. Recent work to develop an orchard adds to this amenity.

The Estate is also a setting for many cultural and sporting events including the Bo'ness Hill Climb, a form of motor sport where cars drive up a hill as quickly as possible. The Kinneil event originated in the 1930s and continued to circa 1967. Thereafter it was in abeyance but was revived in 2007 as the Bo'ness Revival and continues as an annual event drawing sizeable crowds and features classic cars. The Kinneil track was the first dedicated motor sport facility in Scotland and hosted the first ever round of the British Hill Climb Championship in 1947. Many of the great names in world motor sport competed there and elements of the early course survive to be viewed by enthusiasts today.<sup>18</sup> It therefore has both a contemporary and historic value.

## 3. MAJOR GAPS IN UNDERSTANDING

- What is the date and original location of the Kinneil Cross? Given that this is such an unparalleled artefact, it would benefit from modern, in-depth art-historical analysis. Perhaps an archaeological study of the medieval church, coupled with a study of comparable material in western Christendom, may do this remarkable object justice.
- What was the detailed form of the original tower? A comprehensive standing building survey is long overdue for this property, but a major step in this direction has now been taken in the form of a draft assessment by Tom Addyman, which has already shed significant light on both the original design and date of the tower house and also its evolution into a Restoration 'show-case' mansion.
- What is the architectural history of the 'lodging'? It is clear that the core of the north wing contains a well-preserved princely apartment from the third quarter of the sixteenth century, but too little is known about the development of the range: work needs to be done to explore the hypothesis that the building may owe its basic structure to work by James Hamilton of Finnart before 1540, and to gain a clearer understanding of the changes brought about by the sack of

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<sup>18</sup> We are grateful to Alan Dalton for information on the significance of the Hill Climb. The Hill Climb course, while it is not on the area under HES management, contributes to the cultural significance of the House and Estate. A report is available on request from Historic Environment Scotland Cultural Resources Team, [crtenquiries@hes.scot](mailto:crtenquiries@hes.scot).

1570 and the later phases of architectural reworking in the 1620s and 1670s.

- What was the later-17th century designed landscape like? This is known only in general terms but plans and documents provide more information on the layout and the plant life than is usually realised, and modern archaeological techniques may well shed additional light on the details. What was the extent of Alexander Edward's involvement and design in 1704? How much of the layout shown on his drawing was already there? How much was a future design and of that, how much was ever executed? What was the wider story of Edward's commissions for the Hamiltons and how did it relate to his other designs and to the development of Scottish landscape history?
- What is the origin of the steam engine cylinder set up beside the tower? If this is really a relic of Watt's first full-sized steam engine, it is one of the most significant objects in the history of technology.
- What is the later (19th and 20th century) history of the house A minute in a file about Kinneil in the National Records (DD5/1347) suggests that Kinneil was still occupied up until about 1922, though it does not say by whom (info from Friends of Kinneil). It may also be worth scouring 19th-Century newspapers for information on events at Kinneil in the Victorian era. Geoff Bailey's paper about Kinneil Park implies that both Kinneil House and Dean House continued to be rented out during the 19th Century. There does appear to be evidence of significant use of the house in the 19th Century, including for community events etc, and it would be of interest to pick out the highlights of this period.
- Can the author of the wall paintings be identified? A typed paper in a file about Kinneil in the National Records (DD27/2225) Painted Decoration in Castles and Mansions states 'Judging from the records of other work undertaken for the Regent the painter is likely to have been Walter Binning'. Richardson seemed to suggest they might be the work of a Frenchman named Gillian, and also mentions Binning. Can anything now be done to establish this? Further research to identify the artist, if possible, would be of great interest.
- What was the story of the Banqueting Hall now at Duchess Anne Cottages? What was it used for? What was its relationship to the main house and to life on the estate?
- What was William Adam doing at Kinneil in 1735?
- What was the history of the walled garden? When was it built? What was the layout? What was grown there and how many staff etc? What activities were managed and took place (including hunting, mining etc) over the rest of the estate? What can be learned from the voluminous surviving estate papers and accounts about the



people who lived on the estate and the relationships with the wider community?

- What is the truth of the famous story of ‘The Ghost of Lady Alice’?
- Are there conceivably pictures or photographs in any surviving public or private collections which would show us images of, or clues to, the lost interiors of Kinneil House?

## 4. ASSOCIATED PROPERTIES

(other relevant sites locally) – Kinneil (old) Church; Kinneil Museum; Kinneil Roman Fortlet

(other Hamilton properties) – **Cadzow Castle**; Châtelherault; **Craignethan Castle**; Hamilton Mausoleum; Lennoxlove (home of the present dukes); Hamilton Palace (demolished).

(some other properties associated with the Hamiltons) – **Blackness Castle**; **Linlithgow Palace**; **Stirling Castle**

(other properties with significant 16th-/17th-century painted decoration) – **Aberdour Castle**; Crathes; Cullen House; Culross Palace; Earlshall; **Edinburgh Castle** (Palace); Falkland Palace; **Huntingtower**; John Knox House, Edinburgh; Palace of Holyroodhouse; Pinkie House; Provost Skene’s House, Aberdeen; **St Mary’s, Grandtully**; **Skelmorlie Aisle**; **Stirling Castle** (Chapel Royal); Stobhall; Traquair House

(Scotland’s only other rood) – Fowlis Easter Church (painted timber screen)

(other pumping engines) – National Museums Scotland (Watt engine); Manchester Museum of Science and Industry (Watt engine); Prestongrange E. Lothian; **Wanlockhead Beam Engine**

(other Antonine Wall sites locally) – **Rough Castle**; **Seabegs Wood**; **Watling Lodge**

## 5. KEYWORDS

tower house; palace; wall paintings; gun-holes; heraldic stones; rood (cross); steam engine; Hamilton; John Roebuck; James Watt; Dugald Stewart

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: TIMELINE

- **AD 142/3** – the Antonine Wall, Imperial Rome’s most northerly frontier, is built across Scotland’s central belt between the firths of Clyde and Forth, by Emperor Antoninus Pius’s legate, Lollius Urbicus. The wall is abandoned a generation or so later. The line of the Antonine Wall passes under Kinneil House; a fortlet immediately to the west was excavated in 1978-1981 and subsequently laid out.
- **731** – the Venerable Bede mentions Kinneil under the Anglo-Saxon name *Penneltun* and the Pictish name *Peanfahel* or *Peanuahel* (the spelling varies in different manuscripts). These names are all based on a Welsh name *Penguaal*, ‘head of the wall’, denoting the fact that the Kinneil estate surrounded the eastern end of the Antonine Wall:

the name may in fact describe the interruption of the rampart by the deep gorge of the Gil Burn immediately west of the mansion, rather than the final terminus on the Firth of Forth further west beyond Bo'ness. In addition, 'Penneltun', with the suffix *-tun*, 'town', appears to be the earliest English-language place-name recorded in Scotland, as other Anglo-Saxon settlements named in early sources, such as Melrose and Dunbar, have names of purely Celtic origin.

- **c. 1050** - a scribe editing the text known as the *Historia Brittonum* notes the Gaelic or 'Scottish' form of the place-name, *Cenail* (or in standard Irish orthography, *Cennfáil*), which is the source of the modern name Kinneil. The scribe was probably working in Wales or Scotland, but the note is preserved only in a later manuscript of the 1160s from Sawley in Yorkshire.
- **c. 1150** Kinneil is granted by King David I to Herbert the Chamberlain, the head of his royal household. It is at approximately this date that archaeological evidence for the medieval village and parish church begins.
- **c. 1150** - a parish church is built west of the Gil Burn; it is given to **Holyrood Abbey** by Herbert the Chamberlain before 1162. The unique Kinneil Cross, now on display in Kinneil House, probably originated as a rood, placed above the church's chancel arch.
- **1323** - King Robert I ('Robert the Bruce') grants the estate of Kinneil to Walter fitz Gilbert, ancestor of the Hamilton family. Walter had originally been the commander of an English garrison at **Bothwell Castle**, but he had defected to the Scottish side after the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314. Kinneil was given to him as a feudal barony, conveying far more prestige than the territory he controlled around **Cadzow** in Lanarkshire, where his status was closer to that of a royal official than an aristocratic proprietor. This contrast is reflected in later Hamilton family legends, where Kinneil is imagined as the scene of the heroic deeds which won the family their status.
- **1445** - Walter's descendant, Sir James Hamilton of **Cadzow**, is created Lord Hamilton (recent DNA studies have suggested that Sir James Hamilton was not in fact the legitimate heir of Walter fitz Gilbert, but the product of a liaison between his great-grandson's wife and an unidentified lover). The family's Lanarkshire territories are formed into a new 'barony of Hamilton' and the principle residence there is renamed as 'Hamilton Castle'. Kinneil thus loses its status as their most prestigious property.
- **1474** - Lord Hamilton marries Princess Mary, the sister of King James III, and is granted permission to build a castle at Kinneil called Craig Lyon. It is to serve as the family's main seat in the east of the country, to complement their primary residence at Hamilton. Secondary

sources generally identify this castle as Kinneil, and assume that it corresponds with the tower-house core of the present mansion's main block, but the primary evidence weighs against this identification: the text of the charter states categorically that Craig Lyon was 'surrounded by the sea' (*infra mare situatum*), and this is borne out by its depiction in Timothy Pont's map of the 1590s, which shows it on a small island off the coast, by a map of 1789 which marks its location on the foreshore, and by nineteenth-century references to its ruins near Snab Brae. This evidence is not countermanded by a charter of 1475 which refers to 'the castle of Kinneil called Craig Lyon', as this simply denotes Craig Lyon's position as the centre of the barony, and cannot be used to identify it with the mansion which later acquired the name of Kinneil.

- **1503** – The son of Lord Hamilton and Princess Mary, also James, is created Earl of Arran, at the wedding of King James IV to Princess Margaret, daughter of Henry VII of England. This was partially a reward for his financial and diplomatic activities relating to the marriage negotiations and the royal wedding, but it also acknowledged the important position he had acquired in the royal line of succession after the demise of the king's youngest brother, the Earl of Mar (King James at this date had no sons, and his surviving brother the Duke of Ross was embarking on a career in the Church which prevented him from marrying, while their uncle's sons were disinherited due to their father's treason, and also of questionable legitimacy; Lord Hamilton, as the eldest son of the king's eldest aunt, was thus the man through whom the dynastic succession was expected to continue if the royal marriage failed to produce heirs).
- **1529** – Earl James dies at 'his place of Kinneil'. His illegitimate son and executor of his will, James Hamilton of Finnart, is sometime said to have carried out building work at Kinneil, including the two tiers of wide-mouthed gun-holes through the west wall, similar to those he incorporates in works at Blackness and Linlithgow (though there is no contemporary evidence to prove this). Finnart is executed for treason in 1540.
- **1542** – Following King James V's untimely death in December, his infant daughter Mary Queen of Scots succeeds him on the throne. Finnart's half-brother, James, 2nd Earl of Arran is proclaimed heir to the throne and is made Regent. In 1545, he has his chamber at Craig Lyon re-panelled with 'Eastland Boards' from the Baltic. Further references to building materials "at Kinneil" recur in 1549, but these are concerned at least in part with the movement of supplies for other projects, and specific references to further construction here (either at Craig Lyon or the current Kinneil House) cannot be confidently disentangled from the Duke's other ongoing architectural

work, such as his transformation of the old tower of Orchard in Lanarkshire into Hamilton Palace, the completion of his lodgings in Edinburgh Castle, and work on a palatial campaign tent. In 1549 he is rewarded with the French dukedom of Châtellerauld and its substantial revenues, as a reward for consenting to Queen Mary's marriage to the French dauphin, François, and accepting a Scottish power-sharing agreement with the Queen Mother Mary of Guise.

- **c. 1550** - a history of the Hamilton family attributed to Friar Mark Hamilton records how the founder of the family killed the 'Lieutenant of England' in single combat on Kinneil Muir and was rewarded with a gift of the surrounding territory from Robert the Bruce. While this has almost no historical value, it shows how the Duke and his family perceived Kinneil as a symbol of their identity, set in a landscape redolent of the deeds of their ancestors.
- **1553** - the Duke begins construction on a 'palace' at Kinneil, and lays out walled gardens with fruit trees, thorn bushes, ornamental flowers, and kitchen plants including lettuce and marjoram. This is conventionally identified as the residential wing, containing twin apartments for himself and his wife, Lady Margaret Douglas, with their original decorative scheme partially preserved; but given the evidence that Craig Lyon remained the centre of the barony until the 1540s, the main tower may also date from this time, and in all subsequent references, the 'palace' designation applies to the mansion as a whole.
- **1560** - During a period of conflict between pro-English and pro-French factions, a French-led army burns the mansion at Kinneil and its furnishings, in retaliation for the Hamiltons' alliance with their opponents. Although the sources suggest extensive damage, the Duke and his family are in residence again by 1561.
- **1562** - Lord Arran, the Duke of Châtellerauld's eldest son and a thwarted romantic suitor of Mary Queen of Scots, becomes unstable, talking of conspiracies and threatening suicide. According to different sources, his father either attempts to detain him at Kinneil or he shuts himself up in his own bedroom, but on the night of 29 Mar 1562, he escapes from a high window down a rope of sheets and makes his way to Falkland Palace, where he accuses many leading public figures of conspiracy against the Queen. In response, he is declared insane and imprisoned in Edinburgh Castle for four years. It is unclear what truth there was in either his accusations or the claims about his mental health, but by the time of his release, it seems clear that his mind is genuinely broken.
- **1570** - in the civil war between the supporters of the exiled Mary Queen of Scots and the rival faction who have set up her infant son as King James VI, all the Hamilton residences (including Hamilton,

Cadzow and Craignethan) suffer because of their owner's allegiance to the exiled Queen. The palace of Kinneil is 'burnt with fire' on 29 May 1579 by an English army accompanied by their allies the earls of Lennox and Morton (Morton himself claims that the mansion was destroyed with gunpowder, but only burning is mentioned in other sources). The damage is probably not as severe as many secondary sources claim, as the decorative scheme in the lodging probably predates the incident, and the Duke of Châtellerauld is able to move back into his palace before his death there in 1575.

- **1579** - the Earl of Morton's forces launch a renewed campaign against the Hamilton strongholds. The Dowager Duchess and her daughter sit out the conflict at Kinneil, which appears to escape damage on this occasion.
- **1581** - the Hamiltons' lordships are confiscated by a hostile government, and the title of Earl of Arran is given to James Stewart, captain of the royal guard. For the next four years, he uses Kinneil as his main residence, and the young King James VI becomes a regular visitor; but the interloper falls dramatically from power in 1585 and loses his stolen title and palace. The king purloins the furnishings for Linlithgow Palace.
- **1585** - the Hamilton family are restored to Kinneil and their other lordships, though with the Duke of Châtellerauld's eldest son Lord Arran still mentally ill, his brother Lord John becomes the effective head of the family. Almost immediately, he is charged with keeping the anti-English earls of Crawford and Montrose under house arrest at Kinneil, though Crawford soon escapes. James VI later asks Lord John for a loan of his best horse and hunting dogs, for a contest against English hounds brought north by Lord Home. Lord John is eventually created Marquis of Hamilton in 1599.
- **1608** - the Scottish parliament declares all coal-miners and salt-workers to be the hereditary slaves of the owners of the works. This has important implications for the lordship of Kinneil, where coal and salt works are now a major source of revenue for the Hamiltons. This iniquitous situation endures until 1775, and some relics of the practice persist into the nineteenth century.
- **1620s** - James, 2nd Marquis of Hamilton and 4th Earl of Arran, carries out minor works at Kinneil, including extending the palace and redecorating the interiors, as the painted decoration in the 'Arbour Room' shows.
- **1641** - Kinneil is the setting for an event known simply as 'the Incident', where the 3rd Marquis of Hamilton, his brother William, and their political ally the Earl of Argyll, abruptly leave Edinburgh, claiming that King Charles I is planning to assassinate them. The

event does not cause long-term damage to the 3rd Marquis's position as royal favourite, and in 1643, he is created Duke of Hamilton.

- **1649** – James, 1st Duke of Hamilton, is executed in London for supporting Charles I. His brother, William, becomes 2nd duke, but is killed in 1651 fighting for Charles II at the battle of Worcester. The first duke's only child, Anne, inherits and becomes Duchess of Hamilton.
- **1650s** – Kinneil is confiscated from the Hamiltons by the republican 'Commonwealth' government led by Oliver Cromwell. The mansion and lordship are given to General Monck, Commander-in-Chief in Scotland 1651-52 and 1654-59. During this time Margaret Beke, the young wife of Col Robert Lilburne, Comander-in-Chief of Cromwell's forces in Scotland 1652-54, is said to have thrown herself from the top of the tower into the Gil Burn.<sup>19</sup> The story is documented from at least the mid-Victorian period, but no contemporary evidence has been located during the research for this report. By 1660, the mansion is reported to have been completely devoid of furniture.
- **1656** – Duchess Anne marries William Douglas, Earl of Selkirk. Their son, James Douglas-Hamilton, Earl of Arran, is born in 1658. In 1660, with the collapse of the republic and the restoration of Charles II to the throne, the family regain the keys to the empty palace (20 July 1660). Earl William is created Duke of Hamilton for his lifetime, and the couple set about regaining full control of their ancestral estates, restoring their financial stability, and rebuilding the Hamilton residences.
- **1668** – Bo'ness, now a busy mining town and coal port, is created a Burgh of Regality, and in the following year, its new parish church, founded in 1648, is formally established as the religious focus of the Hamilton lordship, replacing the medieval Kinneil Parish Church (subsequently largely demolished in 1745.) Kinneil village is subsequently obliterated in 1696 to make way for a park for the Hamiltons, though the remaining families there are relocated to a neat new set of cottages.
- **1670s** – Duke William and Duchess Anne embark on a major reconstruction of Kinneil as a majestic Restoration mansion. Fine gardens are laid out, and a grand approach avenue is built from the east. Although some secondary sources state that the initiative was taken by Duchess Anne to create a residence for their son Earl James, surviving letters by Duke William identify him as the guiding

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<sup>19</sup> One 19th century source and local legend identifies the White Lady who jumped or fell from the tower with a Lady Alice Lilyburne, but we were unable to resolve the conflict in drafting this statement.



figure. Much of the work appears to have been undertaken in the 1670s – the pavilions had been added to the main house by 1677, and cherry trees were being imported for the gardens in 1678 – but it seems that the south wing was never built, and the work remains unfinished at the Duke’s death in 1694. It is only in 1696 that the ‘little town’ of servants and farm workers on the far side of the Gil Burn is relocated further from the house and formalised.

- **1698** – Earl James assumes the title of 4th Duke of Hamilton. In contrast to his parents and siblings, he seems to take little interest in Kinneil, and at one point even offers it to his brother Lord Ruglen, though he stays here for part of 1704-05 and much of 1710-12. Accounts and inventories survive from this period.
- **1759** – Dr John Roebuck co-founds the Carron Company ironworks, Falkirk, and leases the Kinneil estate from the Hamiltons to exploit its coal and ironstone reserves; the lease includes the tenancy of Kinneil House. In 1765 he invites James Watt to develop a steam engine powerful enough to drive water pumps draining his mines. In 1768 Roebuck sponsors Watt’s patent application, and on it being granted (5 Jan 1769) builds a workshop beside Kinneil House c. 1769 in which Watt can build a full-scale engine; Watt presumably stays in Kinneil House with Dr Roebuck. Adjacent to the workshop stands the boiler cylinder from an early steam engine, moved from the Schoolyard Pit coal mine in the 1940s. Some sources identify this as the remains of Watt’s very first steam engine, originally used at the Burn Pit mine and subsequently transferred to other sites, although the dates and statements offered by printed sources are somewhat contradictory. The experiment is hampered by financial constraints, and Watt subsequently moved to England to co-found with Matthew Boulton the successful Boulton, Watt and Co., in 1774. Roebuck is near-bankrupted by the venture but continues to reside at Kinneil until his death in 1794; he is buried in Bo’ness parish church graveyard.
- **1809** – Dugald Stewart, the Enlightenment philosopher and mathematician, takes up the tenancy of Kinneil House, residing there, on and off, until his death in 1828. Thereafter Kinneil House seems to fall into neglect.
- **1909** – Alfred, 13th duke, invites Robert Lorimer to prepare a scheme for refurbishing and extending the house; although detailed plans are drawn up, nothing comes of it.
- **1927** – The 13th duke demolishes the family’s main residence, Hamilton Palace, and subsequently (1947) relocates to Lennoxlove (East Lothian).
- **1933** – The 13th duke sells Kinneil House to Bo’ness and Carriden Town Council, who decide to demolish it as part of the conversion of

the grounds into a public park. During demolition (1936), wall paintings are discovered in the palace and demolition is halted, though not before most of the main house has been unroofed and gutted. The north wing alone is taken into state care in 1937, the wall paintings repaired and restored, and the building opened to visitors.

- **1975** – The rest of Kinneil House and immediate grounds around are taken into state care. Works of repair are carried out to it, including re-roofing. Attempts to find a new use(s) for the main building thereafter come to nothing.
- **1976** – the Roman fortlet at Kinneil is discovered during field-walking. It is excavated in 1980-1 and laid out for public display.
- **2006** – the ‘Friends of Kinneil’ is established to help promote and develop Kinneil Estate for the local community, including holding ‘Open Days’ in Kinneil House.

## APPENDIX 2: SUMMARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Notwithstanding the acknowledged archaeological potential of Kinneil, relatively little excavation or detailed surveying has been undertaken. The most significant discoveries are the tunnel leading toward the Gil Burn, recorded in 1973, and a well shaft in the basement of the north wing, discovered by a watching brief in 1993 and investigated to a depth of 3.4 metres in 1994.

More significant archaeological work has been done in the grounds. The Roman fortlet was investigated in 1978-1981, while an excavation in 1998 confirmed the line of the Antonine Wall on the far side of the Gil Burn and discovered evidence for the medieval village and man-made landscape features in the seventeenth century formal grounds.

## APPENDIX 3: DETAILED ARCHITECTURAL OUTLINE

Available as a separate document on request from Historic Environment Scotland Cultural Resources Team, [crt enquiries@hes.scot](mailto:crt enquiries@hes.scot)

## APPENDIX 4: THE PAINTED DECORATION

The wall-painted decoration in the two first-floor rooms of the ‘lodging’ (the so-called ‘Arbour Room’ and ‘Parable Room’) are some of the best-preserved mural decoration of the 16th and 17th centuries in Scotland. They are carried out with a competence which allows them to be discussed as

more than just curiosities but as representing trends in high status artistic production in Scotland.<sup>20</sup>

The 'Arbour Room' (originally Châtellerauld's bedchamber and latterly Duchess Anne's dressing room) has painted decoration from two periods. The first dates from Châtellerauld's day and has a bower of curling stems, leaves and blossoms, inhabited by birds and animals. These sweep around a series of roundels depicting various biblical and religious subjects (for example, Samson and Delilah and the temptation of St Anthony). Roundels on the ceiling depict the arms of Châtellerauld and his Duchess. The second period, dated to the early 1620s by the heraldic achievements of the 2nd marquis of Hamilton and his wife Anne Cunningham, is more architectural in flavour, with the lower surfaces painted to represent panelled oak wainscot and the upper parts resembling enriched plasterwork.

The 'Parable Room' (originally Châtellerauld's presence chamber and latterly Duchess Anne's bedchamber) has painted decoration most probably dating from Châtellerauld's time. The appearance of the walls has been compared to a collection of large tapestry cartoons; they have been interpreted as incomplete, perhaps due to Châtellerauld's resignation as regent in 1554 and the consequent loss of funds from the royal coffers to pay for it. The panels mostly illustrate the parable of the Good Samaritan, but there are also individual subjects (for example, St Jerome in the wilderness). Damage to large sections of the sequence is the result of drastic modifications to the window layout in the seventeenth century, reversed during twentieth-century restoration work.

Important additional elements of the painted decorative schemes have evidently been lost. The RCAHMS survey of 1929 recorded a substantial mural painting on a gable wall in the attic storey of the north wing,<sup>21</sup> consisting of a floral interlace pattern of the Renaissance type known as rinceau. This appears to have been destroyed in the 1930s, but it is clear from the surviving photograph that it was designed to fill the polygonal space beneath the roof trusses, which in turn may have been covered by a timber canted ceiling – a similar arrangement to the Chapel at **Stirling Castle**. Such a decorative scheme seems unlikely for a garret, however, hinting that this area beneath the roof may originally have formed a high and lavishly decorated ceiling space in the upper apartment of the lodgings.

There are some hints that the decoration throughout the house formed a unified scheme: the individual mural panels in the Parable Room are enclosed in ionic entablatures of idiosyncratic but unquestionably

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<sup>20</sup> The standard discussion of the decoration of these rooms is still the account of their original discovery and restoration by Richardson, pp. 184-204.

<sup>21</sup> RCAHMS, p. 191 and fig. 219. Based on the presence of a later door slapped through one side of the gable, the most likely location for this painted decoration is on the internal partition wall separating the space above the 'Parable Room' from the outer section of the lodging to the west.

Renaissance type, which also recurs in sculpted stone relief on the heraldic panel from the exterior of the building (discussed more fully below). Thematically, the heraldic celebration of the Duke and Duchess's marriage also recurs: their shields appear both on the external stone panel and in the Arbour Room painting, where the Duchess's arms encircled in a love-knot twining her husband's Hamilton cinquefoils with her Douglas stars. There are further glimpses of the heart and stars of the Duchess's coat of arms elsewhere in the decoration: the stars are overtly depicted above the window in the Arbour Room, while a heart-shaped jar is carried by the figure of Mary Magdalene in the Parable Room murals.

In the days of Duchess Anne and Duke William, the wall-paintings were replaced first by tapestries, and then by a display of framed paintings, fully documented in an inventory of 1704.<sup>22</sup> The collection began with maps and Dutch masters on the grand staircase, and progressed through the house to the former presence chamber, now the 'Great Bedchamber', which featured old family portraits, and works attributed to Van Dyck, Mytens, Titian, Veronese and Tintoretto, although the adjacent 'vault room' (the former bedchamber) had only a seascape above the fireplace.

## APPENDIX 5: THE BO'NESS SPEED HILL CLIMB

Report on the significance of the Bo'ness Speed Hill Climb at Kinneil Estate, available as a separate document on request from Historic Environment Scotland Cultural Resources Team, [crt enquiries@hes.scot](mailto:crt enquiries@hes.scot)

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<sup>22</sup> See above, note 12.