



Historic Scotland

Mavisbank House Policies Landscape Management Plan



Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005
Screening report
6 July 2010

SEA SCREENING REPORT

COVER NOTE

PART 1

To: SEA.gateway@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

PART 2

A SEA Screening Report is attached for the plan, programme or strategy (PPS) entitled:

Mavisbank House Policies Landscape Management Plan

The Responsible Authority is:

Historic Scotland

PART 3

Screening is required by the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005. Our view is that:



an SEA is required because the PPS falls under the scope of Section 5(4) of the Act and is likely to have significant environmental effects **or**



an SEA is not required because the PPS is unlikely to have significant environmental effects

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Signature

R. J. Campbell

Date

6 July 2010

SEA SCREENING REPORT

KEY FACTS

Responsible Authority

Historic Scotland

Title of PPS

Mavisbank House Policies Landscape Management Plan

Purpose of PPS

Mavisbank House, an 18th century country villa and its policies, is situated on the north side of the valley of the River North Esk between the villages of Loanhead and Polton. The house and the surrounding policies are in a dilapidated state. Scottish Ministers own the policies which Historic Scotland manages on their behalf as an executive agency of the Scottish Government. Currently these are managed on very basic care and maintenance.

The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for the future management of the policies which surround Mavisbank House. The plan will identify key maintenance works that need to be carried out to safeguard the historic designed landscape from permanent loss of features and to avoid further degradation of the landscape. The plan will also consider the implications for balancing issues in relation to the natural and cultural heritage of the site. The plan will also explore how greater public benefit can be gained from the policies.

What prompted the PPS

In recent years the house and its policies have been the subject of various studies and proposals, which have attracted national and international attention. This includes a Lothian Building Preservation Trust feasibility study in 1989, and the formation of the Mavisbank Trust which entered the BBC's Restoration series in 2003. Historic Scotland does not own the building but since the 1980's has had close involvement with the site, using emergency powers under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 to install scaffolding to prevent the building's collapse, erecting a security fence to the site and undertaking some basic maintenance.

As mentioned above the management plan's primary aim is to set out a maintenance programme but it will also set out an aspirational Conservation Plan. This will include :

- Re-associating of the house with its grounds and wider landscape setting
- Recovering some key designed landscape features
- Opening up access to the house and its policies from the main road.

Restoration work to some of the policies may require Properties in Care Clearance¹ and careful consideration will need to be given to the treatment of other environmental issues (biodiversity, hydrology etc).

Subject	Natural and historic environment
Period covered by PPS	2010 - 2020
Frequency of updates	As required
Area covered by PPS	Mavisbank Policies only (not the house)
Summary of nature/ content of PPS	<p>The plan will contain the following key elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of research into the Mavisbank Policies (archive material) • A description of the fieldwork that has been carried out to identify existing features • It will prioritise works • Development of preservation, management and proposals setting out different levels of recovery for obscured features (management scenarios) • Which proposals and associated activities will be prioritised
Are there any proposed PPS objectives?	The specific aims and objectives of the management plan will be considered during the preparation of the plan.
Date	6 July 2010

¹Please refer to [Scottish Historic Environment Policy](#) (SHEP) 2009 Section 3.23-3.328 for information on Properties and in Care Clearance. Further information on Properties in Care is also contained in Chapter 4 of SHEP. Please note that this process is currently under review.

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TITLE OF PPS

Mavisbank House Policies Landscape Management Plan

RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY

Historic Scotland

Criteria for determining the likely significance of effects on the environment	Likely to have significant environmental effects?	Summary of significant environmental effects (negative and positive)
1(a) the degree to which the PPS sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources	No, for the routine maintenance programmes. Yes, for public benefit and landscape recovery proposals. The extent is presently uncertain	One of the purposes of the Management Plan is to identify projects and activities that need to be carried out to safeguard the historic designed landscape. Depending on the specific actions taken forward the plan may set a framework for consent (Properties in Care Clearance).
1(b) the degree to which the PPS influences other PPS including those in a hierarchy	Possibly, but the extent is uncertain	The Management Plan is at a relatively low level of the plan-making hierarchy. However, it is expected that the plan will influence other plans, including the Midlothian Council Local Development Plan and associated access strategies/core path plans.
1(c) the relevance of the PPS for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development	Yes	Sustainable management rather than development is at the heart of the Management Plan. Other relevant issues will be considered, the precise nature of which cannot be determined at this stage.
1(d) environmental problems relevant to the PPS	Yes	The Management Plan will identify current environmental problems for the site in terms of the natural and historic environment. Due to the unique nature of the site environmental problems are quite complex and cover a range of issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old coal workings • Hydrology issues • Invasive species (Japanese knotweed and rhododendron in particular)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitats (potential for badgers & bats) • Flooding • Access Issues • Self seeded trees (not in keeping with original policies) <p>The SEA will also seek to identify any other environmental issues that require to be taken into account within the plan.</p>
1 (e) the relevance of the PPS for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment (for example, PPS linked to waste management or water protection)	No	The site is not immediately adjacent to any sites designated for their nature conservation interest at European level.
2 (a) the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects	Uncertain	This will depend upon the objectives and measures included in the plan and will be explored in the SEA.
2 (b) the cumulative nature of the effects	Uncertain	This will depend upon the objectives and measures included in the plan and will be explored in the SEA.
2 (c) transboundary nature of the effects (i.e. environmental effects on other EU Member States)	No	None.
2 (d) the risks to human health or the environment (for example, due to accidents)	Uncertain	There could be potential hazards from the building itself and abandoned coal workings. The likelihood of this and any other risks to human health will be explored in the SEA.
2 (e) the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected)	No	The geographical area concerned is relatively small, although the redesign of the policies, improved access and promotion could increase visitors etc.

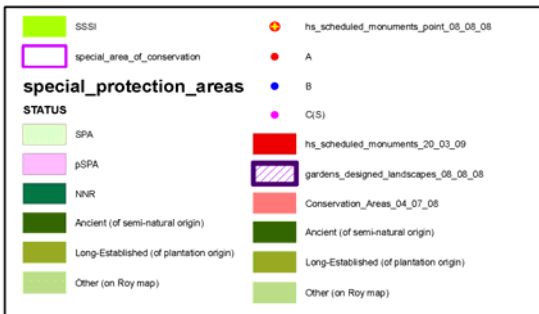
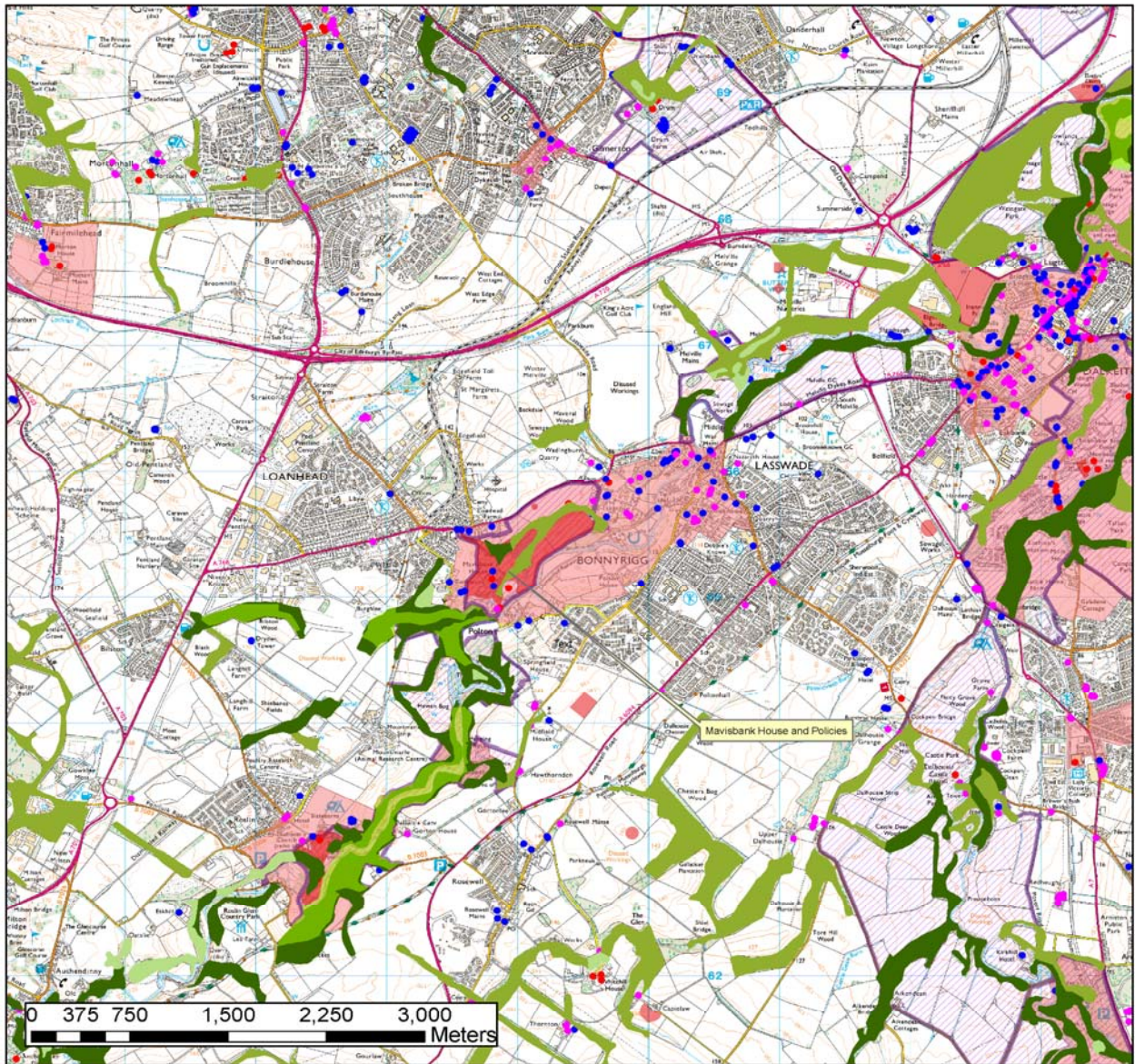
SEA SCREENING REPORT

SUMMARY

Historic Scotland is currently preparing a Management Plan for the policies that surround Mavisbank House. The plan will contain key actions and objectives that will be identified in the course of the SEA process. Some of these actions will identify key and urgent maintenance works that need to be carried out to safeguard the historic designed landscape from permanent loss of features and to avoid further degradation of the landscape. Other actions may include how greater public benefit can be gained from the policies. At this stage it is not possible to identify specific effects of the plan that may arise, as these depend largely on the actions to be taken forward. However, from a precautionary perspective Historic Scotland considers that Management Plan should be subject to SEA, particularly given that both the house and its surrounding policies have a national natural and cultural heritage value.

Historic Scotland
6 July 2010

Map of Mavisbank House and Policies



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