

Historic Building Record
Westwood Cottage
Balthayock
Perth and Kinross

PE70

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**HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD
WESTWOOD COTTAGE, BALTHAYOCK,
PERTH AND KINROSS
PE70**

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ABSTRACT

Alder Archaeology produced a historic building record (site code PE70) of Westwood Cottage, Balthayock, Perth and Kinross, in advance of its demolition and replacement by single house. The recording was undertaken on 14th April 2021.

Westwood Cottage was a large thatched cottage on the Balthayock Estate, just E of Perth. It consisted of a ground floor and attic, built mainly of whinstone rubble with sandstone dressings, faced with cement harling, and stood on a naturally prominent rocky outcrop. As well as the thatched roof, it had many notable architectural features, including round-arched dormers and apsidal-ended ranges, resulting in cylindrically curved glazing, and window arches curved in two axes above the apsidal ends.

The whinstone rubble, especially where exposed in internal walls, consisted of unusually small and angular whinstone, bedded in an unusually generous matrix of lime mortar. Now that the mortar is exposed and weathering away, this has made the remains of the building even more unstable than they might otherwise be.

In 1998, the building was destroyed by fire, leaving only a shell, filled with collapsed masonry, charred timber and, with the passage of the years, abundant self-seeded saplings and other vegetation. It was much too unstable to enter, but even from the outside it was possible to record the many sophisticated details of design and craftsmanship which made this such an ambitious building for its size, and had justified its B listing (withdrawn on 09 March 2018 on account of its ruinous state). Westwood Cottage was an intriguing Scottish example of the Cottage Orné.

1 Background

1.1 Introduction

Jenny and James Walter commissioned Alder Archaeology to undertake an archaeological Historic Building Record of Westwood Cottage, Balthayock, prior to its demolition and replacement by a single house. The building was formerly B-Listed (LB10987), but was delisted on 09 March 2018 on account of its ruinous condition, having been destroyed by fire in 1998.

It is located at NGR NO 17037 23009, on the N side of an unclassified which runs through the hills above Kinfauns. It is well set back from the road, and hidden from view by woods, and by a smaller estate cottage closer to the road.

The work (site code PE70) was undertaken on 14th April 2021. The requirement was to make an enhanced level record of the existing building and its setting, and to note evidence of its changing use and social history

The work was designed to satisfy the archaeological condition 9 on development application reference 20/1559/FLL.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this investigation was to record the remains of the building as it currently is, and to note as much as possible of its distinctive character and features.

1.3 Reporting

The present document has been prepared as the final report on this investigation. Copies will be sent to the client, The National Record of the Historic Environment at Historic Environment Scotland, and the Perth and Kinross Historic Environment Record.

1.4 Acknowledgements

Guidance was provided by Sophie Nicol of Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust.

2 Details of Work

2.1 The Site (Illus 1)

Westwood Cottage is located in the Balthayock Estate, 5 km E of Perth, on the N side of an unclassified road which winds its way through the hills above Kinfauns, towards Glencarse. It is located just W of the junction with a road which leads N past Balthayock House towards Marrayshall and Scone. It is set back from the road behind woods and a smaller estate cottage.

The principal aspect of the cottage faces slightly E of S (164° Mag), over a broad grassy slope descending to the S. However this is bounded on all sides by steep drops. The rocky outcrop on which the cottage stands is also bounded on the E by steep drop. As a result, the only practicable access to the cottage is from the N, very much the back of the house, and overshadowed by woods and rising ground, or else the W side. There are entrances on to the S, W N and E, but the W entrance appears to be the principal one.

2.2 Historical Background

Historic Environment Scotland's report on the withdrawal of B-listing (dated 09 March 2018) includes a useful historical summary. The house was built around 1830 in the Cottage Orné style, and extended about 1850. The extensions included a full height bay to the W, the canted bay window in the centre of the S elevation, and the addition of two first-floor windows to the bowed bay of the S elevation. The cottage appears on the Ordnance Survey First Edition (surveyed 1860), by which time it had reached its present form and extent. It is rubble-built and harled, with droved and splayed ashlar stone margins.

The Cottage Orné style originated in England in the mid-18th century, and reached its peak in the Regency period. Thereafter, it became a recognisable strand within the Arts and Crafts movement. It is characterised by the application of very high standards of architectural design, decoration and craftsmanship to buildings which, though usually much larger than an ordinary estate worker's cottage, are nevertheless well below the scale of the principal mansion house. We might add that Jane Austen (*Sense and Sensibility*, 1811) settles the Dashwoods in what appears to be a recently-built Cottage

Orné in Devon, demonstrating her usual keen awareness of the cultural currents of her time.

The Cottage Orné is relatively rare in Scotland, making this example of some interest. Thatched roofs are not usually associated with Scotland, but in fact were not uncommon in this area, so close to the famous Tay reed beds. The distinctive round-arched dormer windows are of course much easier to accommodate in thatch than in rigid materials such as slate and tile.

2.3 Proposed Development

The cottage is to be demolished and replaced with a new dwelling house. The cottage is no longer listed, and is very obviously far beyond any reasonable repair, in fact on the point of collapse, with daylight showing through numerous cracks, and large parts of the structure visibly leaning off the vertical.

2.4 Method

The site was visited on 14th April 2021. The building was exhaustively photographed outside, to show as much of its fabric and condition as possible, and its relation to the surrounding landscape. It was not possible to enter the building, due to its very unstable condition and obstruction with fallen debris and self-seeded saplings. However, it was possible to observe and photograph the interior through the windows, and to photograph internal walls upstanding above the external shell.

The photographic record was intentionally structured to allow intuitive cross-reference between detail and its wider setting. It is described in detail in Appendix 1 below, together with interpretive notes where relevant. The text which follows gives a general overview. The illustrations are based on architect's plans and elevations, annotated to show features of interest.

2.5 Results of Investigations

2.5.1 Fuel Store and Outbuilding

A single-story oil fuel store and outbuilding are hidden away to the NE of the cottage, concealed by the steep drop of the ground in this area. They are of no intrinsic interest, but were briefly recorded for completeness, and because they illustrate how the design of the building uses the very uneven topography of the site.

2.5.2 North Elevation

This is the most easily accessible elevation of the building, but very obviously the back entrance. It is overshadowed by the building, and hemmed in by trees and rising ground. The walls in this area are of red brick in header bond, rather than stone, visible where the harling has fallen off. The use of brick on the north wall is curious, because there might be very little cost saving compared with locally sourced whinstone rubble, and very little aesthetic difference once the wall has been harled over. It does not quite fit with any chronological scheme either. Having lived in a whinstone rubble building myself, the present author can testify that they can be desperately cold and damp inside. Perhaps brick was used on the dark and shady N side in the hope of making this part of the building slightly more heatable and habitable.

Most of the windows on this side are barred, not only on the ground floor but also on the attic storey. One of the hipped roof extensions on this side is probably a boiler room, given the tall brick chimney and the proximity of the fuel store. There is a curious enclosure of welded steel rod outside what might have been the boiler room coal hatch, and a collapsed block and tackle lifting apparatus clamped to fallen window bars. This could have been something as mundane as a clothes line.

Rising behind the boiler room and back door area is a tall whinstone rubble gable wall, perhaps the E gable end of the W block added in the 1850s. There appears to be a rectangular window in this gable, looking E over the boiler-house roof. Where it is possible to look in through the windows, the internal walls are mostly of whinstone rubble with sandstone dressings, but some, adjoining the boiler room and back door, are of red brick.

2.5.3 South Elevation

This is clearly the principal elevation of the house, and designed to make the best of the sunlight and the view, with its central bay window, large ground-floor windows and numerous round-arched dormers above. The round-arched dormers, although generally similar, show interesting differences of detail. The arch on the W side has seven voussoirs, with pecked faces and drafted edges. The arch on the E side has five voussoirs, with faces tooled in a radial pattern.

On the apsidal bay at the E end, the central arch again has five voussoirs, with faces tooled in a radial pattern. The arch immediately to the E of this has five voussoirs with pecked faces and a drafted edge. The arch immediately to the W of centre is partly missing, but also has voussoirs with pecked faces and a drafted edge, probably five in number. This is compatible with the HES report, based on photographic evidence, that two of the windows here are part of the 1850s alterations to the building.

In either form, the three arched dormers over the apsidal bay are curved in two axes, to form the round arches and to follow the cylindrical curve of the apse. Making voussoirs and sills of this form would require a very high level of craft skills.

The architect's drawing shows a round arched dormer over the central bay window, but this has since collapsed. It also shows an entrance door to the E, and three large windows on the ground floor of the apse, but these are now obscured by vegetation.

Looking in through the windows, it can be seen that the internal partition walls and also the high gable wall are generally of very small angular whinstone rubble, set in a matrix of thick lime mortar. Rubble masonry in Scotland is often more like a drystone dyke, complete with pinnings, with a small amount of lime mortar added for extra stability. This maximises the use of cheap rubble, and minimises the use of expensive lime. It also has the effect that the wall is still stable as the mortar decays, being supported by direct stone on stone contact. In the present case, this has been completely abandoned, the wall is completely dependent on the lime mortar, and as this weathers out, the walls have become completely unstable. It can also be seen that the walls are indented with horizontal rebates to support horizontal battens, on which vertical studs would have been nailed to support lath and plaster or panelled lining, now lost.

The E wall of the cottage is largely blank. According to the architect's drawings, there is an entrance door at ground level, and round-arched dormer above, but these are entirely obscured by vegetation.

2.5.4 West Elevation

The W elevation partly mirrors the S elevation, terminating in an apsidal projection. At the S end, there is a large sash and case window on the ground floor, complete with internal shutters. Above is a round-arched dormer, with seven voussoirs with pecked faces and drafted edges. Near the middle of the elevation is what may have been the main entrance door. Above it is a large rectangular window, one of only two examples on the upper storey, and now about to fall backwards into the house. The location of the main door, tucked into the re-entrant angle beside the projecting apse or drum at the NW corner, is reminiscent of a tower-house door, perhaps intentionally.

In the centre of the apse is a single large ground floor window, with a single round-arched dormer above. The sill, lintel and joinery of the sash and case window all follow the cylindrical curve of the apse, and so originally, would the glass. The arched dormer above is of the seven-voussoir type, with pecked faces and drafted edges, again compatible with the 1850s enlargement identified in the HES report. This arch also is curved in two axes, as it follows the curve of the apse. The arch has sagged very slightly as the apse below splits and bursts open under its own weight, allowing daylight to be seen in between the voussoirs.

The partial subsidence of the NW apse suggests that it may be founded on softer, made ground, extending beyond the rocky outcrop on which most of the cottage stands.

3 Discussion

Westwood Cottage is a relatively compact structure, but displays considerable ingenuity, virtuosity even, in its design and construction. The use of round-headed dormers to exploit the flexibility of thatch, and the addition of apsidal bays to echo the round form in a different axis, and the partial mirroring of S and W elevations show great skill in the composition of spaces and volumes, spread very successfully over two phases of construction. The combination of cylindrical forms and round-arched windows, sometimes in clusters, from certain angles echoes the form of a tower house or even a Romanesque church, and is probably meant to. At the same time, the compact form, and extensive S-facing aspect would have made this a very habitable domestic building, if perhaps a little gloomy on the N side.

The complex cylindrical and circular forms required some very impressive levels of craft skill from the masons and joiners, showing that, while very much a practical building, this was far from utilitarian in spirit, and a very interesting Scottish expression of the Cottage Orn e concept.

Appendix 1 Photographic Register

No	Description	View
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	Fuel Store and Outbuilding	
001 - 2	SE bay, through woodland	N
003 - 5	Outbuilding and Oil Store.	WNW
006 - 7	Oil Store interior. Oil tank and collapsed roof.	W
008 - 9	Outbuilding and Oil Store.	S
	North Elevation	
010 - 12	N elevation, NW corner. Stone retaining wall and boiler room with tall brick chimney. Barred window. Wooden shed with louvered sides. Game larder?	S
013 - 14	Detail of ?Game larder.	E
015 - 16	Detail of Boiler room, with tall brick chimney behind. Wooden ?coal hatch. Mild steel fence enclosure in foreground. Purpose unknown.	S
017	N entrance. Cement harling on red brick. Uniform blue slates. Barred window.	SW
018	N entrance and Boiler room. Pitched hipped roofs. Uniform blue slate.	SSE
019	Detail, cement harling on red brick.	S
020	Detail, N entrance door, barred window and roof.	S
021	Detail, roof, with ruin of E gable wall above, and barred, round-headed dormer window	S
022 - 3	Detail, remains of archaic wheelbarrow beside Game larder. Wooden frame, cast iron hub, wrought iron tyre.	E
024	Detail, roof, with ruin of E gable wall of N range above, and barred, round-headed dormer windows in N wall.	SW
025 - 6	Detail of mild steel enclosure around Boiler-room hatch.	E
027	General, Game larder, retaining wall, and path down to Oil Store.	E
	South Elevation	
028 - 9	General, house on raised ground. S elevation. Central bay window on ground floor. Round-headed dormers above. Three round-headed dormers on apsidal S end of E range.	N
030 - 2	W end of S elevation. White cement harling on sandstone rubble wall. Round-headed dormer above. Seven dressed sandstone voussoirs with pecked face and dressed inner edges. Ground-floor window below, hidden by vegetation.	N
033 - 4	Central bay window. Sash and case windows. Flat roof. Wall above missing.	N
035	Detail view to internal partition wall. Unusual small angular whinstone rubble in lime mortar. Horizontal indentations for timbers to support lath and plaster.	N
036 - 7	E end of S elevation. White cement harling on sandstone rubble wall. Round-headed dormer above. Five dressed sandstone voussoirs with tooled face and dressed inner	N

	edges. Different from W dormer. Ground-floor doorway below, hidden by vegetation. Apsidal S end of E range to R.	
038	Detail, internal partition wall above central bay window. Small angular rubble.	NNW
039	Apsidal S end of E range. Three round headed-dormers. Three windows on ground floor, obscured by vegetation.	N
040	Apsidal end hidden by vegetation. Ground falls away to L.	N
041	Ground falls away to L. Rocky outcrop.	NNE
042 - 3	Round-headed dormers in apsidal end. E dormer also five voussoirs. Dressed edge, pecked face. Arches curve in two axes, because of apsidal end.	NNW
044	As 042. Collapsed harling shows rubble masonry of outside wall.	NW
045	As 042. Angle shows two-axis curve of arches.	WNW
046	As 043	NW
047	As 043	NNW
048	As 044. Apsidal end meets E wall of E range. Cement harling on lime-bonded whinstone rubble.	NW
049 - 51	As 048. Detail of rubble.	NW
052 - 3	Detail, wire mesh arch in shrubbery. Steps down to Fuel Store.	NE
054 - 5	Collapsed wall above central bay. Internal wall beyond.	NNW
056 - 7	Internal walls and doorways. Rubble walls, sandstone dressings.	NNE
058	Internal walls and doorways. Rubble walls, sandstone dressings. Boiler room chimney beyond.	NE
059	SW corner, with S and W elevations. Apsidal projection at NW corner. Cement harling on rubble walls. Round-headed dormers above.	NE
060 - 1	SW corner and S elevation	ENE
	West Elevation	
062	SW corner, with S and W elevations. Apsidal projection at NW corner. Cement harling on rubble walls. Round-headed dormers above.	NE
063 - 6	SW corner and W elevation.	NNE
067	Detail, window in W elevation. Sash and case. Wooden shutter behind.	NE
068 - 9	Detail, round-headed dormer above. Seven voussoirs. Pecked face, tooled edge.	NE
070 - 2	W elevation. Entrance door with large window above. Apsidal projection at NW corner. Upper window leaning inwards, separating from apse. Daylight visible.	NNE
073 - 5	Apsidal corner leaning to W. Round face of wall, lower window and dormer above.	N

076	Detail of dormer, with curved sill and arch curved in two axes.	NNW
077 - 9	W elevation, with apsidal NW corner, and round-headed dormers above.	E
080	Detail of round-headed dormer over apse. Seven voussoirs, pecked face, tooled edges. Daylight between voussoirs as arch sags.	E
081	Detail, ground floor window in apse. Curved sill and lintel. Sash and case window, with curved joinery. Severe cracking above.	E
082	Detail of shutter.	E
083	Detail of curved lintel, cracked, and curved joinery.	NE
084	Detail of curved sill and curved joinery.	NE
085	Curve of apse towards N wall. Leaning W.	NE
	North Elevation	
086	N wall, with projecting timber gas store.	E
087	N wall, with barred windows. Projecting gas store, and boiler room beyond.	ESE
088	Detail, large barred window in N wall.	SE
089	Detail, large barred window in N wall. Internal brick wall beyond.	SE
090	Interior overgrown with vegetation.	S
091	Interior overgrown with vegetation.	SW
092	Collapsed timbers over window.	SW
093	Interior of junction between W wall and apse. Visible open crack.	SW
094	Internal brick wall with timber studding.	S
095 - 6	Detail, N wall. Cement harling on red brick. Sandstone dressings. Header bond, six courses stretchers between header courses.	S
097 - 8	Antler trophy. D.F.W.H.W. Strone 17 10 70. Iron or steel bracket and pulley lifting gear, collapsed.	S
099	Interior of gas store.	SW
100	Detail, lifting gear. Clamped onto window bars.	S
101 - 3	N entrance and lobby. Barred dormer and internal gable wall behind	SSW
104 - 5	Inside N entrance. Collapsed roof and debris. Antique petrol snow-plough.	S
106	Detail of ?Game larder.	E
107 - 11	N Elevation and internal gable. Whinstone rubble masonry. Small angular rubble. Brick chimney over boiler room.	ESE

	West Elevation	
112	W elevation with apsidal NW corner. Internal gable beyond.	ESE
113	Distant view of W elevation, from entrance area. Masked by vegetation.	E
114 - 5	Apsidal NW corner. Ground rises beyond.	NE
	Setting	
116 - 7	View behind fuel store to rocky outcrop on which cottage stands.	W
118	Site exit to public road.	S
119	Public road, with gorse beyond.	SW
120	Site entrance.	N
121	Site boundary, with gorse beyond.	SW

Appendix 2 Discovery & Excavation in Scotland Entry

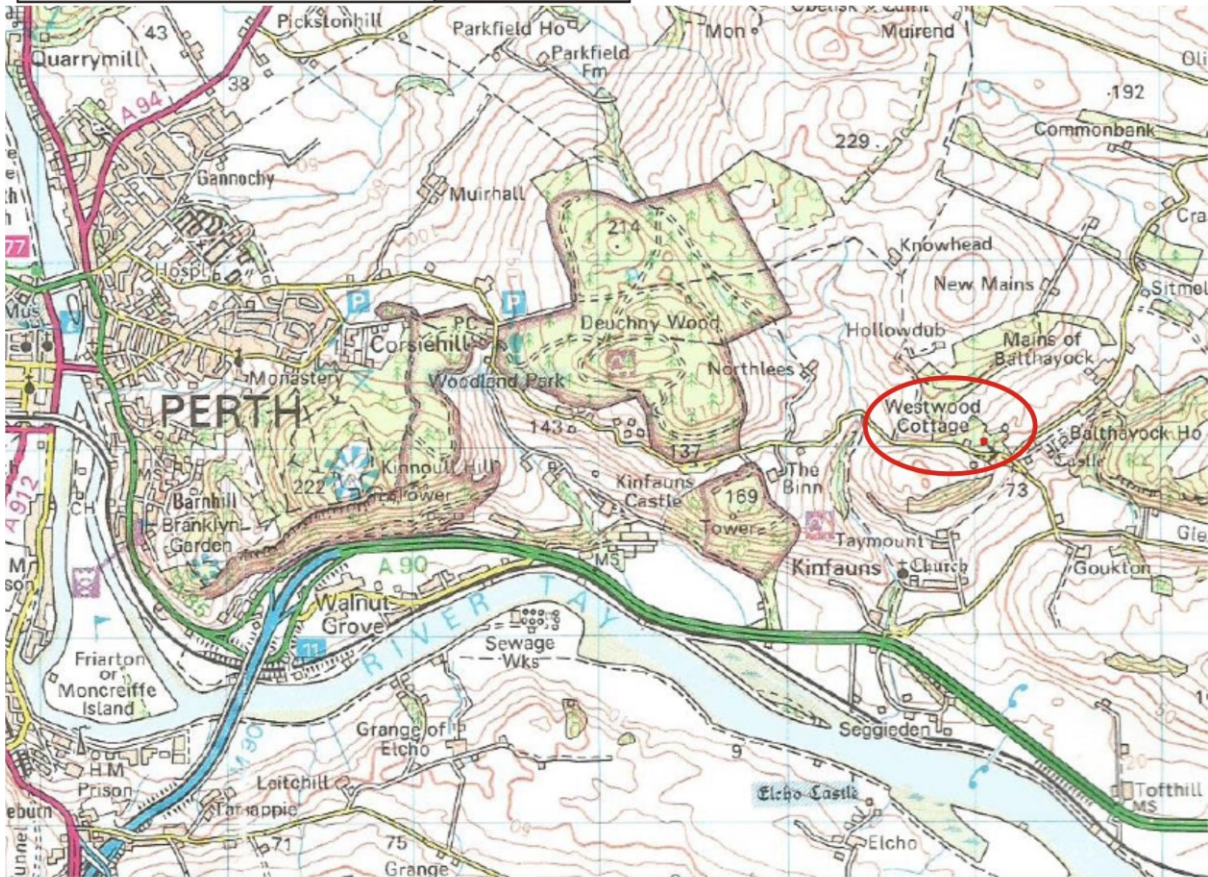
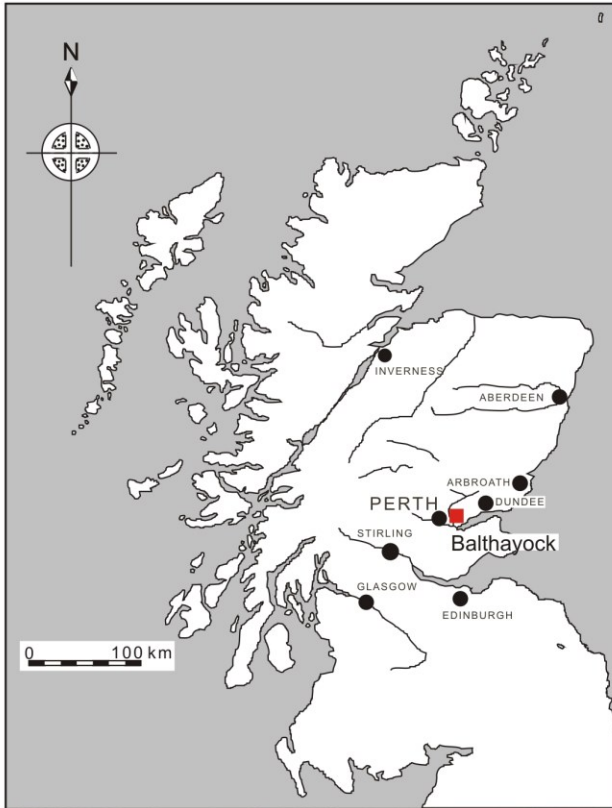
LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Perth & Kinross
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Westwood Cottage, Balthayock
PROJECT CODE:	PE70
PARISH:	Kinnoull
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	David Bowler
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Alder Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Historic Building Recording
NMRS NO(S):	-
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Cottage Orné
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	-
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	NGR NO 17037 23009
START DATE (this season)	14 th April 2021
END DATE (this season)	14 th April 2021
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	-
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	Alder Archaeology produced a historic building record (site code PE70) of Westwood Cottage, Balthayock, Perth and Kinross, in advance of its demolition and replacement by single house. The recording was undertaken on 14 th April 2021.

	<p>Westwood Cottage was a large thatched cottage on the Balthayock Estate, just E of Perth. It consisted of a ground floor and attic, built mainly of whinstone rubble with sandstone dressings, faced with cement harling, and stood on a naturally prominent rocky outcrop. As well as the thatched roof, it had many notable architectural features, including round-arched dormers and apsidal-ended ranges, resulting in cylindrically curved glazing, and window arches curved in two axes above the apsidal ends.</p> <p>The whinstone rubble, especially where exposed in internal walls, consisted of unusually small and angular whinstone, bedded in an unusually generous matrix of lime mortar. Now that the mortar is exposed and weathering away, this has made the remains of the building even more unstable than they might otherwise be.</p> <p>In 1998, the building was destroyed by fire, leaving only a shell, filled with collapsed masonry, charred timber and, with the passage of the years, abundant self-seeded saplings and other vegetation. It was much too unstable to enter, but even from the outside it was possible to record the many sophisticated details of design and craftsmanship which made this such an ambitious building for its size, and had justified its B listing (withdrawn on 09 March 2018 on account of its ruinous state). Westwood Cottage was an intriguing Scottish example of the Cottage Orné.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	none
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	-
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Developer
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Alder Archaeology Ltd, 55 South Methven Street, Perth PH1 5NX
EMAIL ADDRESS:	director@alderarchaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	HES (intended)

Illus 1

Historic Building Record
Westwood Cottage
Balthayock
Perth and Kinross

Location



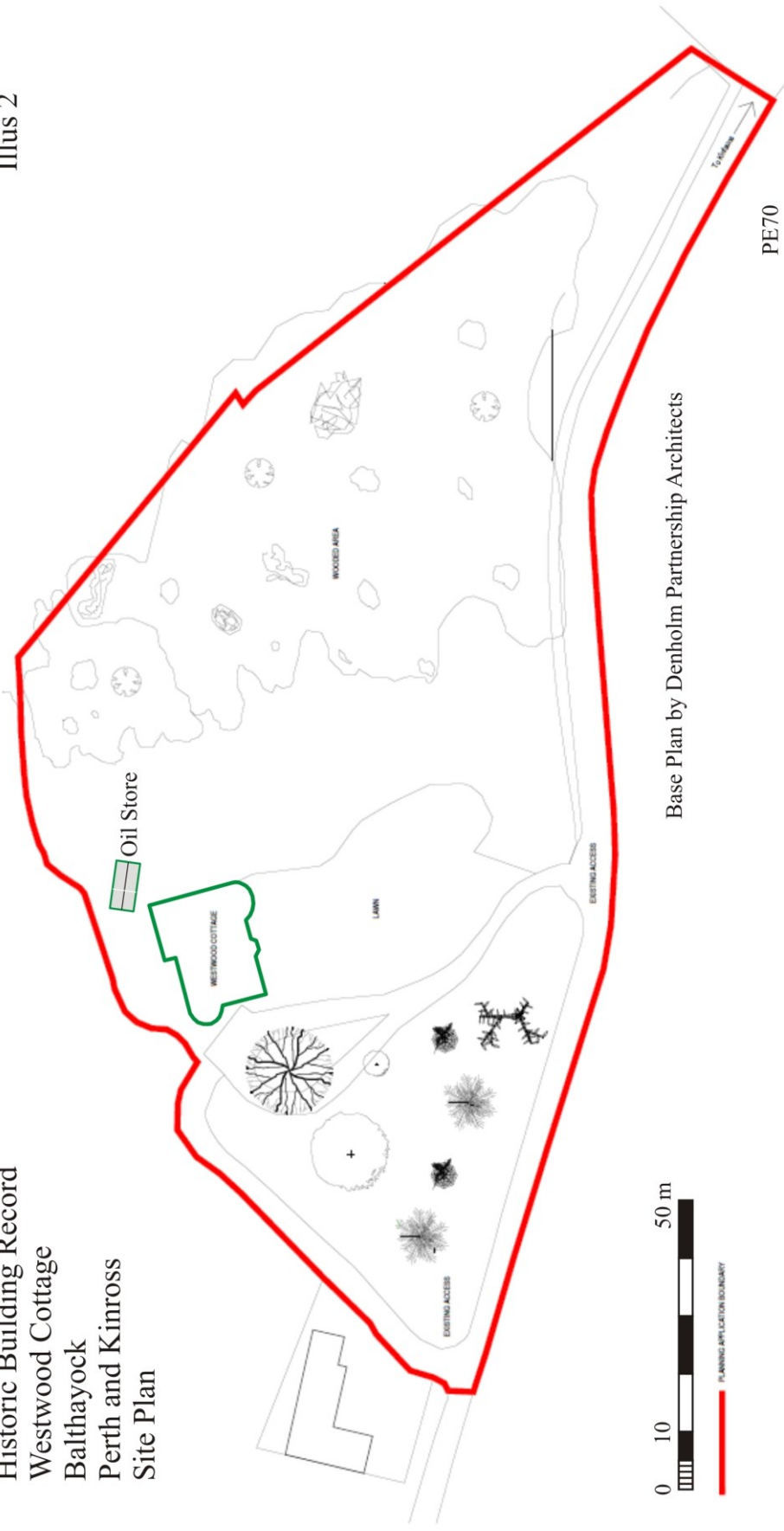
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PE70

Illus 2

Historic Building Record
Westwood Cottage
Balthayock
Perth and Kinross
Site Plan

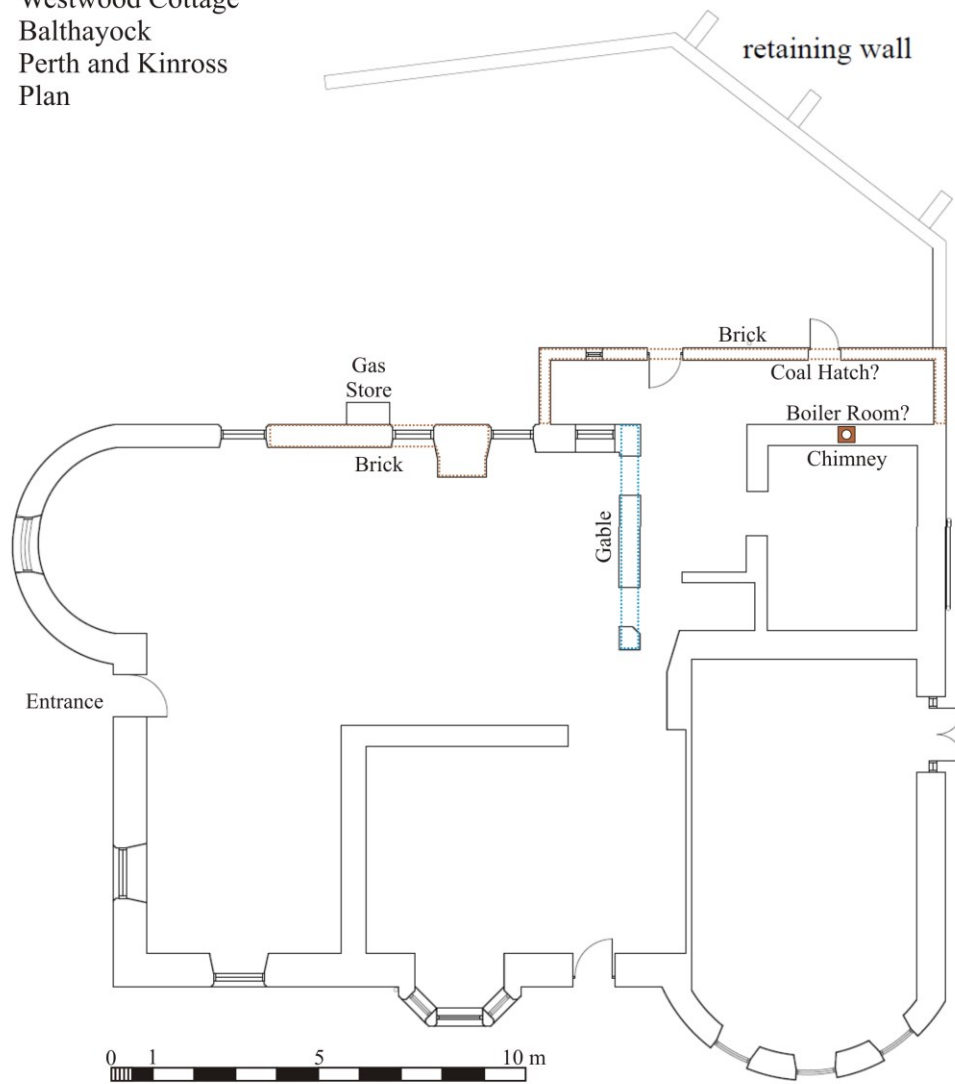


Base Plan by Denholm Partnership Architects

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Historic Building Record
Westwood Cottage
Balthayock
Perth and Kinross
Plan

Illus 3



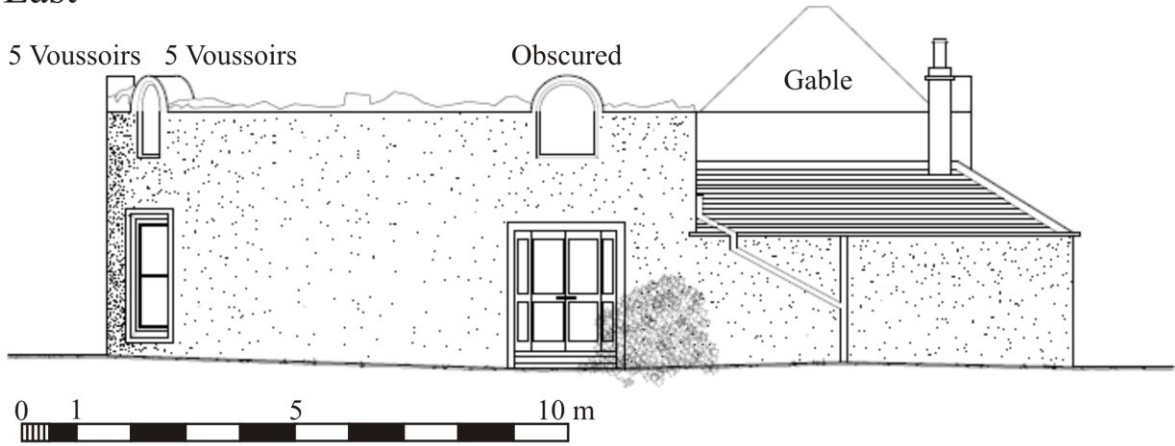
Base Plan by Denholm Partnership Architects

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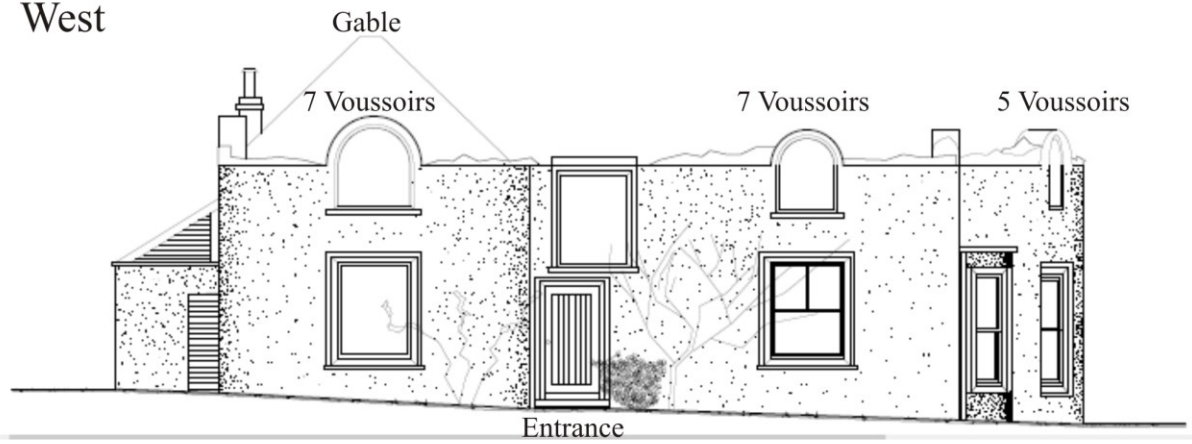
Historic Building Record
Westwood Cottage, Balthayock
Perth and Kinross
East and West Elevations

Illus 4

East



West

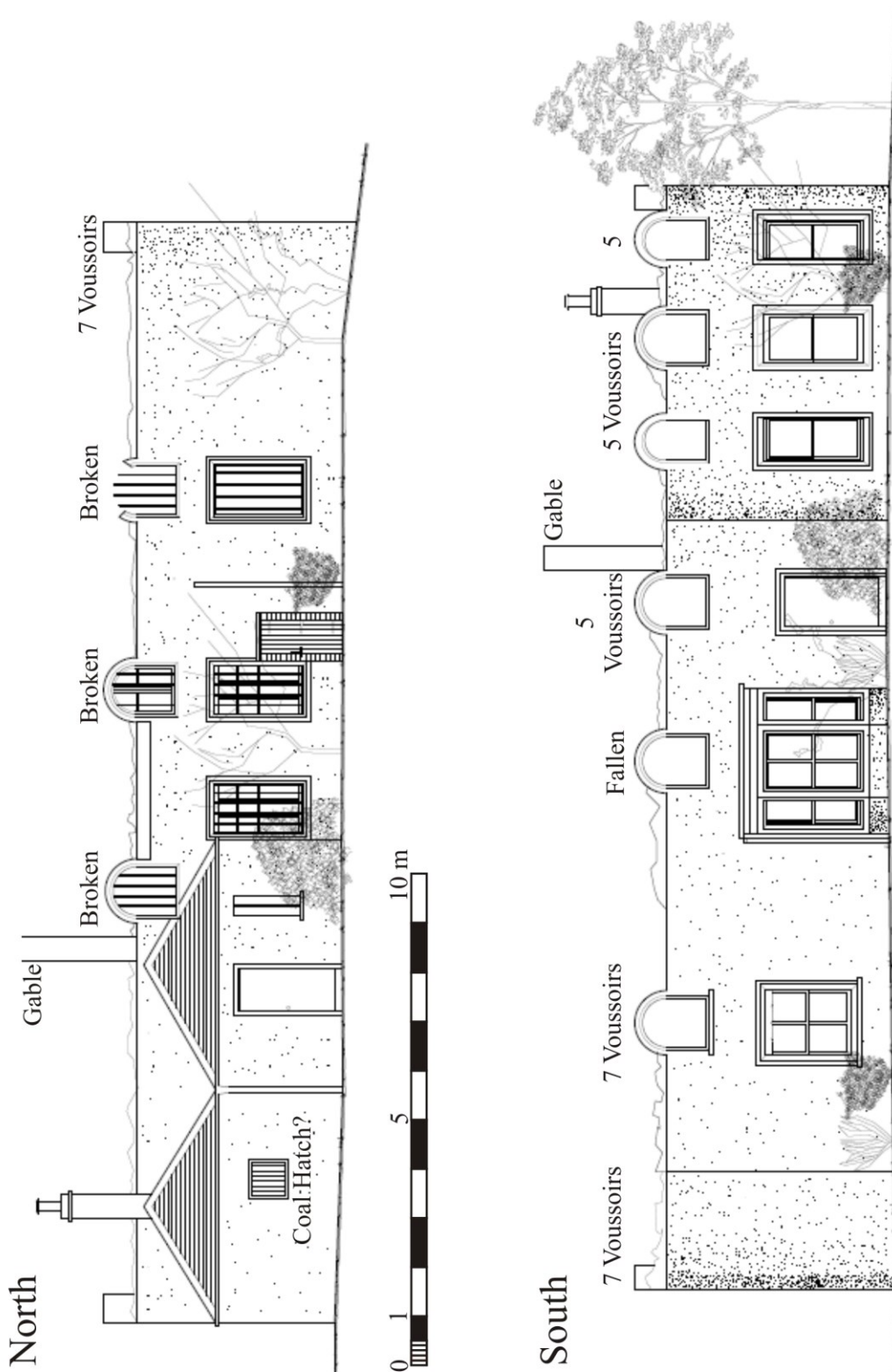


Base Drawings by Denholm Partnership Architects

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Illus 5

Historic Building Record, Westwood Cottage, Balthayock
Perth and Kinross North and South Elevations



Base Drawings by Denholm Partnership Architects

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Illus 6 S elevation.



Illus 9 E end of S elevation. Round-headed dormer.



Illus 7 Central bay window.



Illus 10 Dormers in apsidal end.



Illus 8 Detail, internal partition.



Illus 11 SW corner and W elevation.



Illus 12 W elevation, with apsidal NW corner.



Illus 13 N wall. .



Illus 14 N Elevation and internal gable.