

Cairngorms National Park Authority

Cairngorms National Park
Historic Designed Landscapes Project

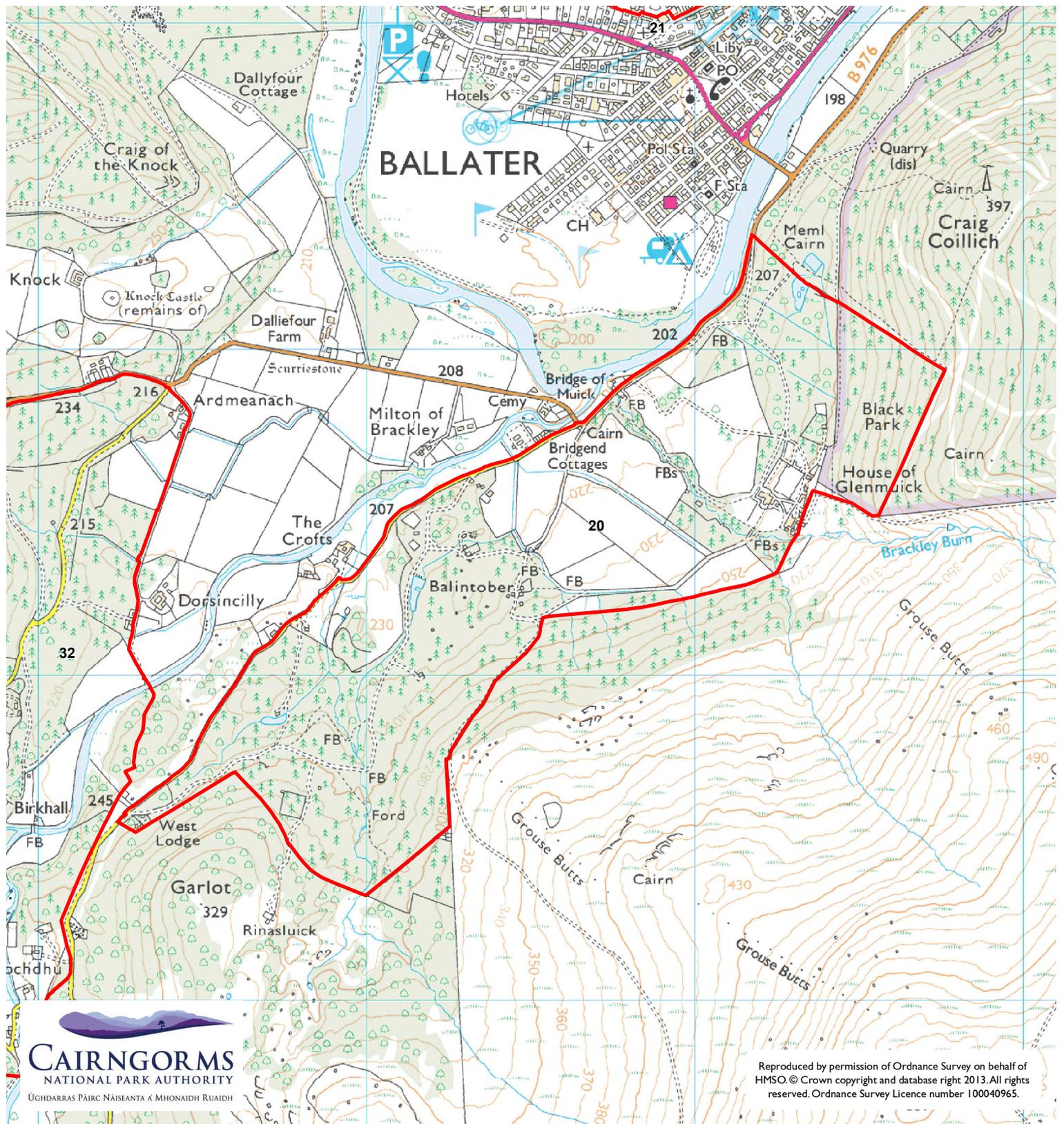
Site Research Report
20 House of Glenmuick (Brackley)

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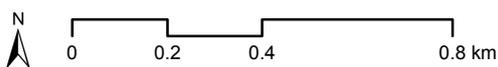
May 2013



Legend
[Red outline] Designed landscape provisional boundary

Site 20

Glenmuick House /
Brackley



May 2013

20 House of Glenmuick (Brackley)

County Aberdeen
Parish Glenmuick, Tullich & Glengairn
NGR NO 358 937 / NO 372 945; OS 1:25,000 Sheet 388 (North)

DESIGNATIONS

Listing Glenmuick Estate, House of Glenmuick including walled garden and pavilion, HB Number 50745 – Category C (2006)
Balintober Cottage, HB Number 50742 – Category C (2006)
East Lodge with gate and gate piers, HB Number 50743 – Category C (2006)
Estate Office, HB Number 50744 – Category C (2006)
Stables and kennels, HB Number 50746 – Category C (2006)

Parts of the woodland on either side of House of Glenmuick are designated as Ancient Woodland.

Parts of the woodland around House of Genmuick are subject to WGS Mark 3, and SFGS Agreements.

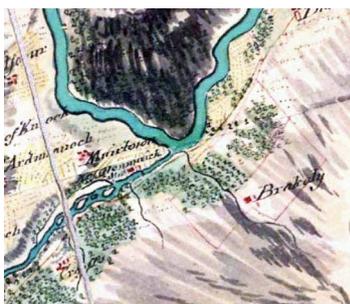
Much of the woodland to the north and east of the House of Glenmuick is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission.

LOCATION AND EXTENT

Although it has not been possible to determine the precise extent of the Glenmuick Estate in the course of this study, the core policies are seen to be grouped around the present House of Glenmuick (formerly Brackley House), which lies on the south bank of the River Dee, just downstream of its confluence with the River Muick. The house is set back some distance from the B976, approximately 1.5km south of Ballater. Brackley House was formerly the dower house for an earlier Glenmuick House which stood some 1.5km to the south-west, in what is now dense woodland to the south of Balintober. This was demolished in 1947 or 1948, after which Brackley House was renamed as House of Glenmuick. Gate lodges for the earlier house are to be found on the unclassified leading up Glenmuick from Bridge of Muick. For the purposes of this report the designed landscapes associated with these two houses are treated as a single entity.



Gordon c1650



Roy's Military Survey c1750

LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

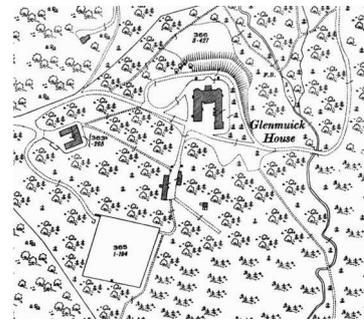
Map and documentary evidence

Although the name is that of the parish, there is no record of a House of Glenmuick prior to the 19th century. Gordon (c1650) marks 'Brachlie' on the site of the present House of Glenmuick (formerly Brackley House – see above), with 'K[i]rk of Glenmuick' on the opposite (west) bank of the River Muick. There is an indication of woodland in Glenmuick. Blaeu (1654) marks 'Glen muick', on the west bank of the River Muick, probably based on the location of the church. Roy (c1750) shows 'Brackaly' as a substantial house with a couple of outbuildings, within a large stone-walled enclosure embracing both woodland and grazing land, with the kirk of Glen Muick on the opposite bank of the river. A road runs south from the confluence of the Muick and the Dee, on the east bank of the former, passing through unenclosed woodland, within which in marked the township or settlement of 'Croft' surrounded by a small area of rig cultivation, close to the site of the future Glenmuick House. Roberston's rather sketchy map (1822) is noteworthy for not naming the several settlements which he marks, save for that of 'Balintober'.

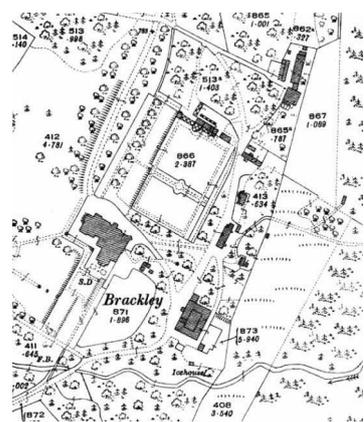


Glenmuick House - near Ballater -

Glenmuick House and walled garden in 1880 soon after completion (RCAHMS)



*Ordnance Survey 1:2,500
1924 (Glenmuick House, now demolished)*



*Ordnance Survey 1:2,500
1923 (Brackley, after Thomas Mawson's involvement)*

'Braichlie' appears on the OS First Edition (1868) as a substantial house, with a walled garden, approached by a road or drive from the north, separating woodland to the east from several large fields to the west, straddling the Braichlie Burn. To the south and west is a substantial area woodland on the east bank of the River Muick, stretching up the glen. Apart from a small sheepfold, there are no other features to be seen in this area prior to the building of Glenmuick House in 1870 by architect Samuel Morton Peto. The OS Second Edition (1900) and contemporary photographs show this to have been a very large mansion, set on a balustraded terrace overlooking Strathdee, with outbuildings and a large walled garden to the rear/south. Long drives guarded by gate-lodges on the Glenmuick road – East Lodge and West Lodge - gave access to the new house. At the same time Brackley (House), which served as the dower house for Glenmuick, saw an expansion of its walled garden and pleasure grounds, with design input from the well-known English landscape architect Thomas Mawson.

In 1947 Glenmuick House and associated buildings were demolished, and the private Chapel of St. Nathalan partially demolished, though the two gate lodges on the Glenmuick road survived. Soon after this Brackley (House) was re-named House of Glenmuick. While Brackley / House of Glenmuick shows little sign of change in the last century, the site of Glenmuick House is now entirely obscured by dense commercial forestry plantations, although contemporary map and aerial photographic evidence would suggest that the walled garden may survive, albeit planted over with trees.

Building history and ownership

Timperley (1976) records James Farquharson of Invercauld as owner of lands around Ballater in the c1770, including part of the lands of 'Braichlay'. At some point prior to 1870, the property was acquired by flamboyant textile magnate and India trader James Thompson Mackenzie, who commissioned the English architect Samuel Morton Peto to build Glenmuick House on what was then a greenfield site on the Glenmuick Estate. Knighted in 1890, James Mackenzie died later the same year, with the estate passing to his son Sir Allan Mackenzie, who employed the English partnership of architect Daniel Gibson and landscape architect Thomas Mawson to aggrandise Brackley (then dower house to Glenmuick) and its gardens. The estate is currently advertised by Okeover Estates for sporting lets, offering stalking, shooting and fishing, and accommodation for shooting parties.

*Aerial view of Glenmuick and
Ballater, House of Glenmuick
to right (SCRAN)*



APPENDIX

Historical notes

McConnochie 1900 stated that “Glenmuick House occupies a commanding position. Built of granite in the Tudor style of architecture, the north, which is the principal elevation, has a handsome portico with a covered-in carriageway, surmounted by a massive looking square tower 75 feet in height”.

Waymark 2009 observed that “working in Scotland in the late 1890s [Thomas Mawson’s and Daniel Gibson’s] abilities were recognised by the ‘tyrannical’ but generous Sir William Cunliffe-Brooks of Glen Tanar in Aberdeenshire, who wanted improvements on his estate. Before he died, Sir William had recommended Mawson to three further clients in Aberdeenshire [including] ... Sir Allan Mackenzie at Brackley, in Ballater, for whom the harmonious partnership of Mawson and Gibson worked in 1900, adding terraces and an avenue as well as gardens and extensions to the house”.

Geddes 2001 describes (Old) Glenmuick House as “a vast house for Sir James Mackenzie, Aberdeen silk merchant in India, [which] formed three sides of a square, nine bays long on the sides, dominated by a 25m water tower over the *porte cochère*. The main façade had bay windows in the gable-end bays and at the centre”.
