

Two 'New' Renfrewshire Estate Surveys

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Estate papers and surveys are one of the most valuable resources for local history. They often provide a detailed picture of the landscape well before the Ordnance Surveys of the mid-Victorian era. Unfortunately, as estate papers are often part of family archives, they are rarely available in a central source, and each estate tends to be in a different location or archive.

In February 2012 the National Library of Scotland (NLS) held an educational event in East Renfrewshire. This included a talk by Chris Fleet, the map librarian. During subsequent discussions, Chris revealed that NLS held two relatively unknown sets of Renfrewshire Estate Surveys, covering Finlayston and Houston estates. These sets were subsequently scanned by NLS and circulated to interested parties.

Both sets are in colour and cover large areas. Figs 25 and 26 summarise their coverage. The cover of the Journal gives an extract of the policies around Finlayston House. This note gives a brief guide to their coverage.

Houston

The Houston surveys, though not widely known, survive also as black and white copies in the estate archives. The surveyor is, as yet, unknown. The surveys are particularly important as they predate the demolition of Houston castle and show the traditional village before the laying out of the planned village. This dates the set to pre-1780. Other features on the estate include Castle Sewn, numerous coal pits on Wester Barshagray (Goldenlee), and the policies and avenue of Houston House/Castle.

Finlayston

The Finlayston plans are bound together in a book and were surveyed by Charles Ross of Greenlaw, a well known local figure, who carried out various estate surveys of Renfrewshire, plus a county survey. They are dated 1770. The cover of this Journal shows the heart of the estate around Finlayston house.

The figures below provide an overview and anybody interested in the estates can view the original plans by contacting the committee.



Figure 25: Key Plan of Finlayston Surveys (1770)

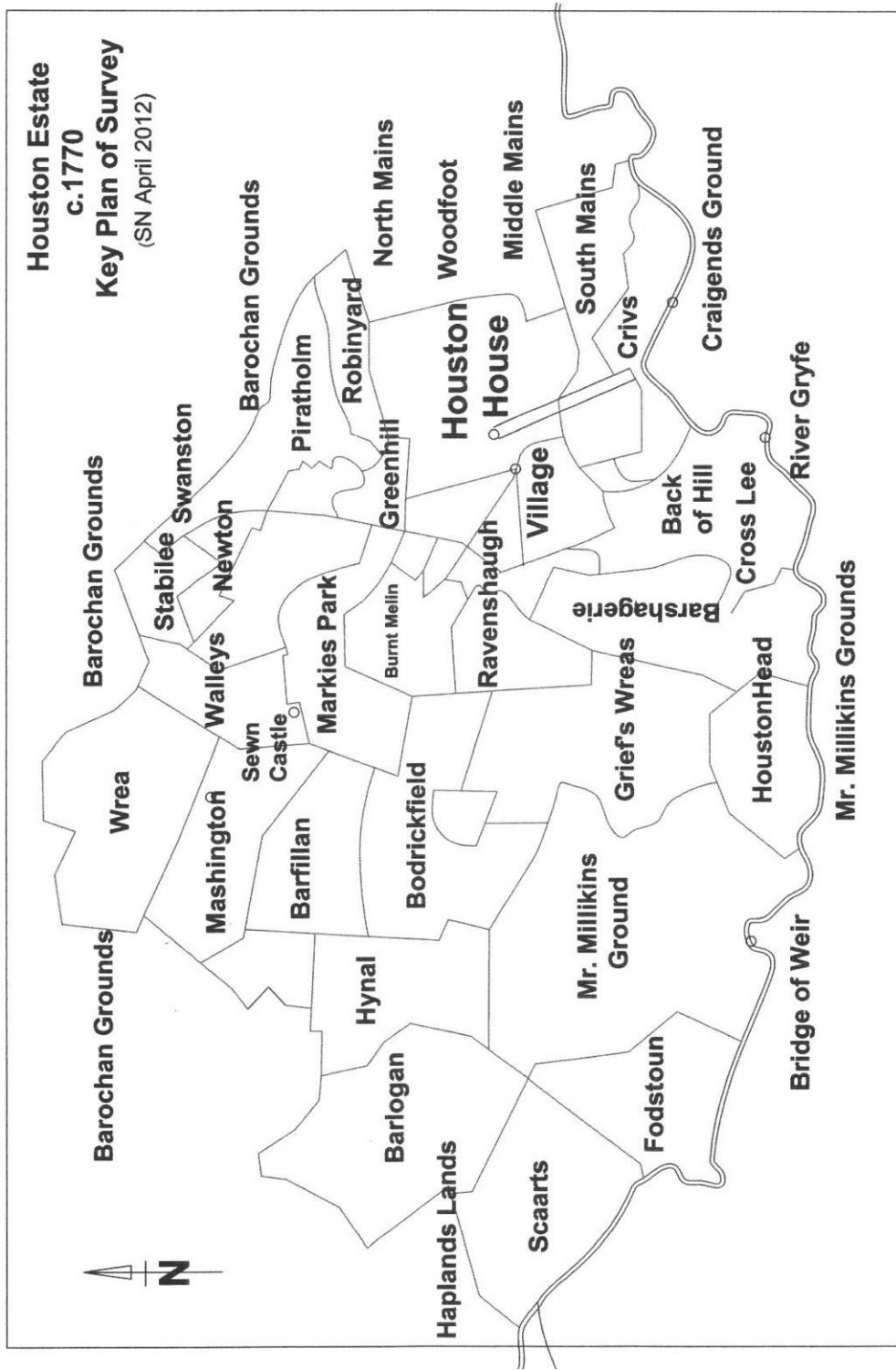


Figure 26: Key Plan of Houston Surveys (c.1775)