



# Netherplace House Archway and Avenue Archaeological Fieldwork

5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Following last year's search for the remnants of William and Andrew Smith's Boxworks factory, Archaeology Scotland will be returning to Mauchline this June to investigate the site of Loudoun Street archway and avenue that led to the former Netherplace House. Across 3 days the site will be investigated through a programme of vegetation clearance, archaeological test pit excavation and recording to discover the degree of in-situ archaeological preservation.

## Background

Netherplace House was a 17<sup>th</sup> century mansion set within a designed landscape. The oldest part of the house was erected by Mungo Campbell in 1620. At this time Netherplace was probably an L-shaped Scots tower house with 3 storeys. In 1747 Netherplace appears on Roy's map. Extensive additions were made in 1827 and in 1873 an archway over the south-east drive that led to Netherplace House from Loudoun Street was added by Charles Hamilton-Campbell. Until this time the avenue had been open, forming, it is believed, a major artery north to south through Mauchline before the New Road was constructed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A lodge was also situated to the west joining the archway. Two further estate entrances and lodges were located to the north and south-west (Fig. 1).

In the mid-1950s, more than 325 years after it was first built Netherplace was demolished and the early 1960s saw much of the estate lands the site of a major new housing development.

The north and south-west lodges survive and are still occupied. The archway lodge was demolished and only fragmentary remains survive of this structure, including the south-facing wall, blocked windows, door jamb and some internal brick features. The archway survives and the avenue surface leading north-westwards may still be present underneath vegetation (Figs. 1, 2 and 3). Anecdotally, the road surface was constructed from red blaze.

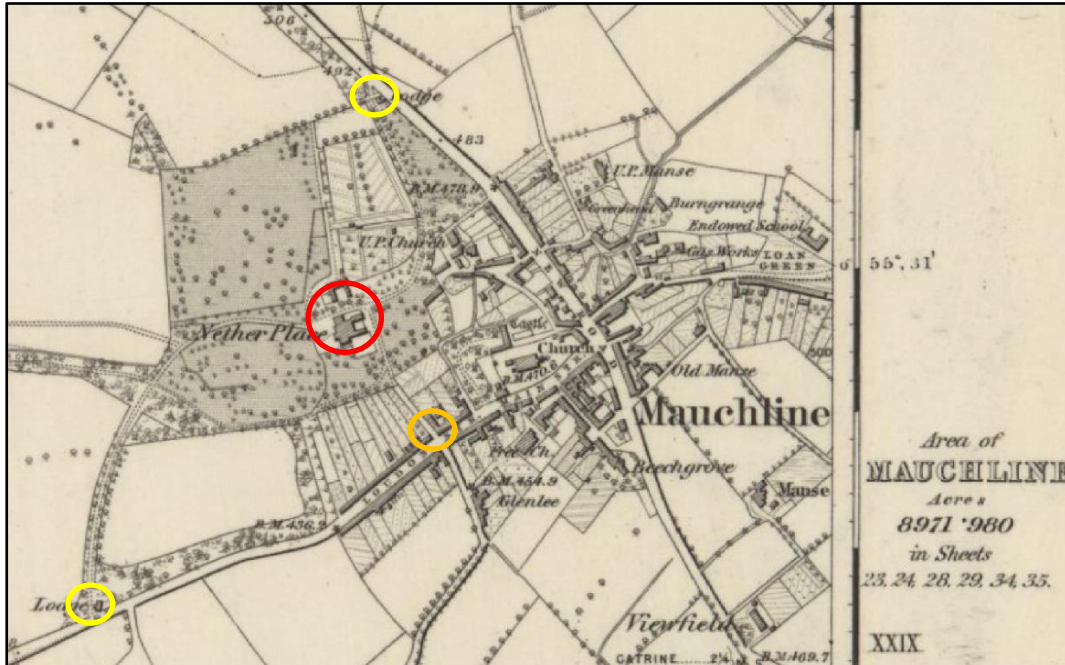


Figure 1: OS Six-inch 1<sup>st</sup> edition map of Ayrshire, Sheet XXVIII, published 1860. The map shows Netherplace House (indicated in red), the location of the archway (in orange) and the north and south-west lodges (in yellow)

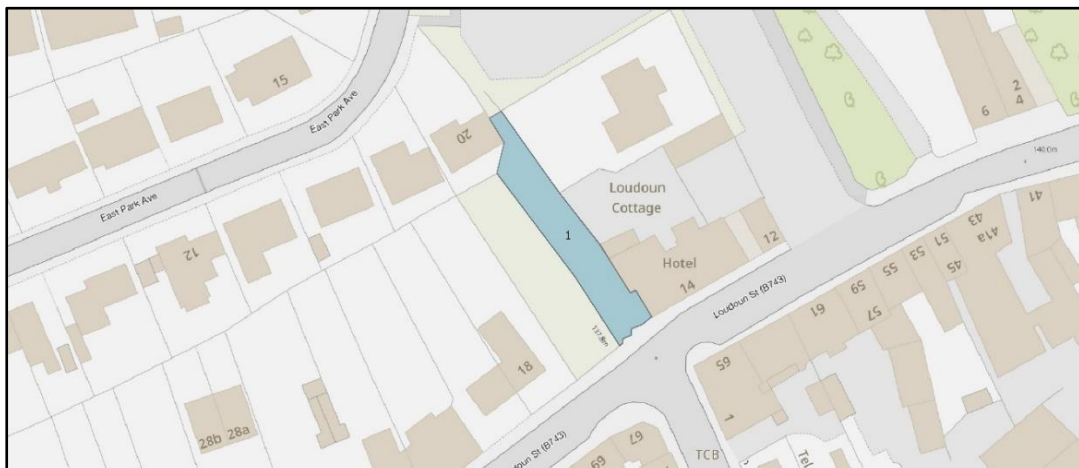


Figure 2: Location of the archway and avenue (shaded blue) leading north-west to the former Netherplace House (centred on grid reference NS 49680 27154)





Figure 3: The archway south-east of Netherplace House can be seen in the left of this photograph. Image courtesy: Burns House Museum, date unknown

### Fieldwork Programme

An area of vegetation will be cleared from the archway in a north-westerly direction roughly approximate to the width of the archway. Currently, the site is overgrown so loppers, shears and secateurs will be used to cut the vegetation back (Figs. 4 and 5).



Figure 4: Vegetation behind the Archway on Loudoun Street, Mauchline, looking south-east, March 2024

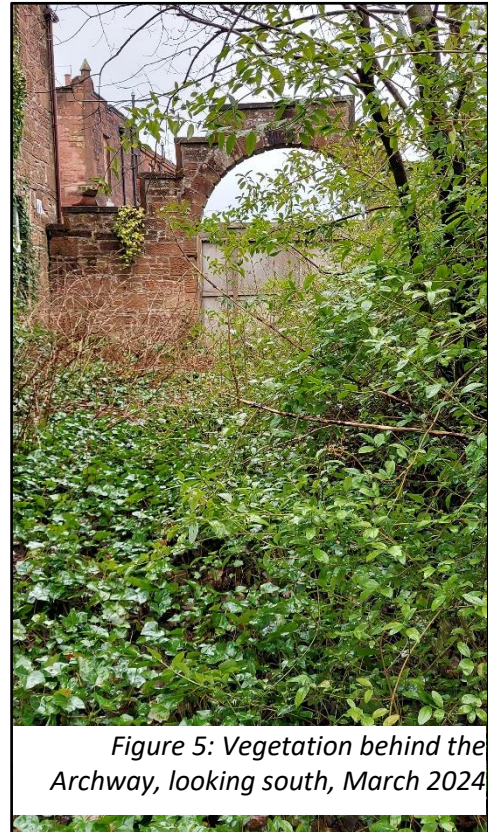
A number of test pits measuring 1m x 1m will be excavated across the known avenue. The test pits will be located across areas identified as having the most potential of archaeological material being discovered, for instance across what may be ascertained as a road service or other noticeable features.

Test pits will be excavated by hand using hand tools. The primary aim will be to characterise the structure of the avenue, identify road surfaces and materials and determine the degree of archaeological preservation.

The pits, archaeological deposits and findings will then be documented through accurate written, digital, and photographic records and then backfilled.

The fieldwork will also provide training opportunities in excavation and recording for volunteers. No previous experience is necessary. All tools will be provided.

All archaeological work will be undertaken to Archaeology Scotland's standard operating procedures and will be conducted in keeping with the current Code of Conduct published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and best practice guidelines. The fieldwork will be led by Archaeology Scotland. At least one qualified First Aider will be on site each day.



*Figure 5: Vegetation behind the Archway, looking south, March 2024*

### Timetable

The proposed work will take place between the **5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> June 2025**. Work will take place each day with volunteers on site between **10am and 4pm**.

Day 1	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> June	vegetation clearance
Day 2	Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> June	excavation/recording- Closed site (school visit)
Day 3	Saturday 7 <sup>th</sup> June	excavation/recording/backfill

### Volunteers

There will be space for **10 participants per day**. To book please contact Andrew Jepson, [a.jepson@archaeologyscotland.org.uk](mailto:a.jepson@archaeologyscotland.org.uk)