Cowdenknowes

EARLSTON | SCOTTISH BORDERS




COWDENKNOWES
HOUSE

History

The present house stands on the site of a Douglas stronghold and is recorded as far back as the 12th Century. In 1489 John Home of Whitrigs acquired "Coldaneknollis" (Cowdenknowes) as part of the barony of "Ersiltoun" (Earlston) and four years later James IV granted a charter to Mungo Home of the "Dominical Lands called Covdenknollis with fortalice and manor placed thereon". The ruinous and reduced garden tower, and probably the buttressed walls to the river, are all that remain of this period.

The earliest part of the existing house is the East Tower dating from 1554, but altered in 1883 with Jacobethan detailing to form the main entrance. A curtain wall probably enclosed a barmkin, or bailey. A more comfortable principal house incorporating earlier fabric was built in 1574 by Sir James Home, by then well established as Warden of the East Marches. His public status allowed him to indulge in ornamentation on a scale that was rare in such a turbulent period. The main south east elevation incorporates Scottish Renaissance pilaster windows, French renaissance doorways, revived Romanesque detailing and a sprinkling of quatrefoil gun-loops. Around the corbel course is an incomplete inscription "*Feir God flie from sinn and mak for ye lyfe everlistying the heir*", also found in an identical carving from 1580 at nearby Holydean Castle.

Subsequent owners extended the house in the later Georgian period between 1784 and 1808, in 1867 under the supervision of Brown & Wardrop of Edinburgh and finally in 1883 by the architects John Watherstone & Son, when elements of the interior were remodelled by contractors Scott Morton & Co to the designs of Charles W Swanston.

Much folklore surrounds Cowdenknowes, mainly fictitious although given credence by 19th Century historians. However, it is recorded that Mary Queen of Scots stayed here on her way to Jedburgh in 1566. The famous Renaissance ballad "The Broom o' Cowdenknowes" was reincarnated some years ago as a Country and Western hit. It is based on a special strain of Scotch Broom, a vivid yellow plant which once covered Black Hill for centuries, virtually dying out in 1852 and now making a comeback on Cowdenknowes's rich volcanic soil. As the ballad put it: "*…a magic shrub from which fairies often spoke*".

Cowdenknowes

EARLSTON | SCOTTISH BORDERS | TD4 6AA





A distinguished country house, rich in history and enjoying a spectacular setting above the Leader Water in the heart of the inspiring landscape of the Scottish Borders. Readily accessible to Edinburgh and Newcastle airports.

Exceptional rooms, presented to a superlative standard throughout.

Accommodation consists of:
Upper Ground Floor: Outer and Reception Halls, Drawing Room, Dining Room, Sitting Room, Library, Kitchen/Butler's Pantry, Cloakroom. Access to Tower Room.

First Floor: Principal Bedroom with En-suite Bathroom, Three Further En Suite Double Bedrooms, Two Dressing Rooms, Two Double Bedrooms and Single Bedroom, Family Bathroom.

Garden Level: Hall, Kitchen/Dining Room connecting to Garden Room and Pantry off, Family Room, Gym, Laundry Room, Shower Room, Rod Room, Wine Cellar.

Formal gardens, two bedroom coach house, tennis court, paddock, American barn, woodland, trout fishing.

Around 48.34 acres (19.56 ha) in all

Earlston 1 mile,
Melrose 6 miles,
Edinburgh 35 miles.
Borders Railway terminus 7 miles.

EPC=G



Joint Sole Selling Agents:

RETTIE
1 Abbey Street, Melrose TD 9PX
Tel. 01896 824070
www.retie.co.uk

Knight Frank
11 Market Place, Lauder TD2 6SR
Tel. 01578 722814
www.knightfrank.co.uk









Situation

Cowdennowes is situated in the heart of the Scottish Borders, in magnificent countryside approximately 1 mile south of the popular village of Earlston. The village has a very good selection of shops and local services. A more extensive range can be found in Melrose (6 miles) and Galashiels (7 miles). Earlston has a good primary school. Its secondary school, Earlston High School, is very well regarded. Cowdenknowes is on the bus route for both schools. Melrose also has its own popular preparatory school St Mary's and, opening in September 2015, the rail terminus at Tweedbank for the new Borders Railway service to Edinburgh. Edinburgh (35 miles), with its international airport and intercity rail service, is within commuting distance. Berwick-upon-Tweed, approximately 30 miles to the east, is on the main east coast line with regular services to both north and south; London is approximately 3½ - 3¾ hours.

With Cowdenknowes being located so centrally in The Borders it is therefore an ideal base for those wishing to work in Edinburgh or locally. The Borders is renowned for its beautiful landscape and wildlife. Cowdenknowes is also an ideal base for those who enjoy game fishing, shooting, walking, cycling and riding.

Location

Cowdenknowes is located in wooded policies with recently restored and enhanced gardens close to the house, bounded on two sides by a steep-sided burn and a rocky shrub-clad slope to the River Leader. There is a formal garden, pond and gravelled parking area at the rear, connected by steps to the main driveway approach at first floor level. The property enjoys a marvellous long view to the South across the remains of a 15th Century tower downriver almost to where it meets the famous River Tweed, the outlook framed by the extinct volcano of almost 400ft known as the Black Hill, and a lovely rolling landscape to the West towards the nearest of the three Eildons, the Romans' Trimontium.

The precipitous fortress bank to the river and the sheltered wooded policies are a haven to wildlife and flora, the huge windows of the drawing room and the dining room providing an exciting viewpoint unobserved by the birdlife below.

Description

In recent years Cowdenknowes has undergone a complete programme of restoration and refurbishment which has preserved its exceptional historic fabric whilst transforming the house into a comfortable, fully modernised family home. The external works have been completed to an exacting standard to ensure that the original character of the house has remained unmolested, whilst great sensitivity and verve has been employed in the choice of kitchen and bathroom fittings and the interior design.

Accommodation

Protected by specially commissioned wrought iron electric gates, the main driveway approach arrives at a gravelled parking and turning area at the 16th Century tower, adapted three centuries later to provide a vaulted, stone flagged entrance opening directly to the principal, upper ground floor of the house. Studded oak door to panelled outer hall with access to two tower rooms with fireplaces and parapet walk. Twin part glazed doors to a fine inner reception hall of over 60' and cloakroom off. Fireplace with oak surround and inset silver safe.

The magnificent drawing room's focal point is a deep bay window with spectacular 180 degree views from Black Hill to the Eildons, as well as an elaborate oak fireplace and flooring. Adjacent is the west-facing dining room, its large oriel window almost overhanging the River leader and its Gothic-style 18th century sandstone fireplace rescued from the Minto House. Dumb waiter to kitchen and stair access to garden level.

A succession of characterful reception rooms look South East over the gardens: the sitting room has a Victorian fireplace with marble inset and a pass door to a recently re-fitted Butler's Pantry forming a useful server kitchen at this level with Esse stove, two drawer dishwasher and Belfast sink. The L-shaped library has a large bay window overlooking the front driveway, an arched alcove and exceptional joinery, including extensive bookshelving. Chimneypiece with striking pink Verona marble surround, William de Morgan tiles and oak mantel.

From the inner hall an imposing sandstone staircase with oak banister rises in easy stages to the first floor. Large double window overlooking the gardens to the rear of the house.
















S·I·H·V·K·H·1574

Principal bedroom suite with outstanding Southerly views. Marble fireplace and walk-in closet created from adjoining "pepper pot" turret room. Door to en suite bathroom with glorious roll top bath and Edwardian shower enclosure over as well as a generous walk-in contemporary power shower, twin pedestal wash hand basins and WC in circular turret. Across the landing is a fully fitted dressing room.

The chief guest suite overlooks the driveway via a bay window. It has its own dressing room, direct access to a bathroom with freestanding cast iron bath and shower over and also a pass door to an adjoining single bedroom, extending its versatility.

Also at first floor level are two further bedroom suites. One has a double aspect to the river and to the North as well as an en suite bathroom, whilst the other overlooks the gardens and benefits from a cleverly fitted shower room and separate WC. Two additional double bedrooms, the single room adjoining the guest suite and a family bathroom complete the accommodation at this level.

The garden floor is reached either via a 16th Century turnpike stair from the inner hall, or via a service stair next to the dining room. Impressive flagstone floor to lower hall, with back door to rear parking area.

At this level is the wonderful kitchen/ breakfast room with 4-oven dual fuel Aga and adjacent module. Twin Belfast sinks inset into light granite worktop with bespoke joiner-built floor cupboards and wall display cabinet with plate rack. Stone steps to large pantry with useful fitted cupboards and deep ceramic sink. Direct access from the kitchen to fully glazed garden room serving as a summer dining room with travertine tiled floor, exposed brick walks and double doors to terrace and garden. Access to small outhouse, ideal for dogs.

Off the lower hall is a gym at the base of the turnpike stair with direct garden access and equally suited as a play room. Beyond is a vaulted family room with a stone fireplace and a large South-facing window, whilst also at this level are a shower room, a sizeable laundry room with sink, plumbing and a ceiling clothes pulley, an extensive wine cellar with stone lined bins and an internal rod room.

Outside

There are two driveway approaches to Cowdenknowes: one is fully owned, and the other carries full vehicular access rights. Wrought iron electric gates protect the final approach.

A two bedroom cottage has been converted by the current owners from the coach house, and provides useful holiday letting income. This appealing building with a clock cupola has an eat-in kitchen with Aga on the ground floor and steps up to a first floor living area, two double bedrooms and a bathroom. Adjoining is a double garage with double timber doors.

A substantial timber built American style barn is divided into a feed and machinery store, an open fronted area utilised for drying logs and a secure, concrete floored garage. The barn could be readily adapted to form stabling, and is alongside the enclosed grass park paddock of just over 5 acres. Also here is an all-weather tennis court with a versatile pavilion with electricity and plumbing ideal for hosting outdoor parties.

The gardens at Cowdenknowes have benefited from a benign micro climate and a series of devoted plantsmen over the years. In the mid-20th Century the gardens were open under Scotland's Gardens Scheme, showcasing floral treasures dating from the 1890's and the 1930's. At last 25 species of daffodil have been recorded in the grounds, whilst the splendid wisteria on the main elevation was reputedly planted around 1850.

A spectacular terrace alongside the kitchen and garden room overlooks the river, whilst the principal lawns are to the South of the house, edged with mellow stone walling and colourful shrubs. The remains of a separate tower, said to date from the 15th century now provide a sunny sitting-out area making the most of the views. This allegedly housed Napoleonic prisoners of war within a bottle dungeon set into the floor of a vaulted chamber now reached via external stone steps. Records suggest a secret passage may have led from here under the river, although this remains undiscovered.

The established woodland close to the house contains many fine specimen hardwoods, including a huge Thuja, a noble Copper Beech and a lovely Californmian yellow buckeye. The present owners have purchased over 30 acres of adjoining land in their time at Cowdenknowes, providing additional protection and amenity within sycamore and mixed woodland with clearings alongside the river and almost a mile of trout fishing rights.

Directions

Turn east off the A68 in Earlston onto the A6105 signposted to Kelso. Turn right at the square in the middle of Earlston onto the B6356. About 1 mile beyond the village, the entrance to Cowdenknowes is on the right beside a lodge. A drive leads via wrought iron gates to the front entrance, with a spur providing access to the back door and the coach house cottage.

General Remarks

Fixtures and Fittings:
Only items specifically mentioned in the particulars of sale are included in the sale price.

Services:
Mains electricity. Mains water supply and private drainage system. Oil fired central heating.

Driveway Access:
The north drive alongside the paddock to the B6356 between Points A and B on the boundary plan is fully owned, whilst there are full vehicular access rights along the south drive to the lodge between Points B and C.

Right of Pre-Emption:
Cowdenknowes benefits from a right of pre-emption over the former Gardener's Cottage, currently in separate ownership.

Sporting Rights and Public Access:
The sporting rights over the gardens and paddock are reserved to an adjoining owner, with the shooting rights restricted to beating and retrieving game away from the house itself. The sporting rights over the woodland are in hand. The riparian trout fishing rights on the Leader Water are included.

There are public rights of way over the access drives and through the woodland, as well as to the footbridge over the River Leader.

Statutory Listings:
Cowdenknowes is listed Category A by Historic Scotland in recognition of its outstanding historic or architectural merit.

Outgoings:
Council Tax Band Category H

The seller(s) will be responsible for any rates, taxes and other burdens for possession and for the collection of monies prior to the agreed date of entry. Where necessary, these will be apportioned between the seller(s) and the purchaser(s) as at the date of entry.

Local Authority:
Scottish Borders Council, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose TD6 0SA Tel: 01835 824000

Offers:
Offers should be submitted in Scottish Legal Form to either of the joint selling agents Rettie Borders LLP at 1 Abbey Street, Melrose, TD6 9PX (Tel 01896 824070, Fax 01896 824079) or Knight Frank LLP at 11 Market Place, Lauder, TD2 6SR (Tel 01578 722814, Fax 01578 722815). A closing date by which offers must be submitted may be fixed later. Please note that interested parties are advised to register their interest with the selling agents in order that they may be advised should a closing date be set. The seller reserves the right to accept any offer at any time.

Servitude Rights, Burdens & Wayleaves:
The property is sold subject to and with the benefit of all servitude rights, burdens, reservations and wayleaves including rights of access and rights of way, whether public or private, light, support, drainage, water and wayleaves for masts, pylons, stays, cable, drains and water, gas and other pipes whether contained in the title deeds or informally constituted and whether or not referred to above.

Important Notice:
Rettie & Co, Knight Frank and their clients give notice that:
1. They are not authorised to make or give any representations or warranties in relation to the property either in writing or by word of mouth. Any information given is entirely without responsibility on the part of the agents or the sellers. These particulars do not form part of any offer or contract and must not be relied upon as statements or representations of fact.
2. Any areas, measurements or distances are approximate. The text, photographs and plans are for guidance only and are not necessarily comprehensive and it should not be assumed that the property remains as photographed. Any error, omission or mis-statement shall not annul the sale, or entitle any party to compensation or recourse to action at law. It should not be assumed that the property has all necessary planning, building regulation or other consents, including for its current use. Rettie & Co. have not tested any services, equipment or facilities. Purchasers must satisfy themselves by inspection or otherwise and ought to seek their own professional advice.
3. All descriptions or references to condition are given in good faith only. Whilst every endeavour is made to ensure accuracy, please check with us on any points of special importance to you, especially if intending to travel some distance. No responsibility can be accepted for expenses incurred in inspecting properties which have been sold or withdrawn.

Particulars dated June 2015
Photographs taken December 2014, February, April and June 2015

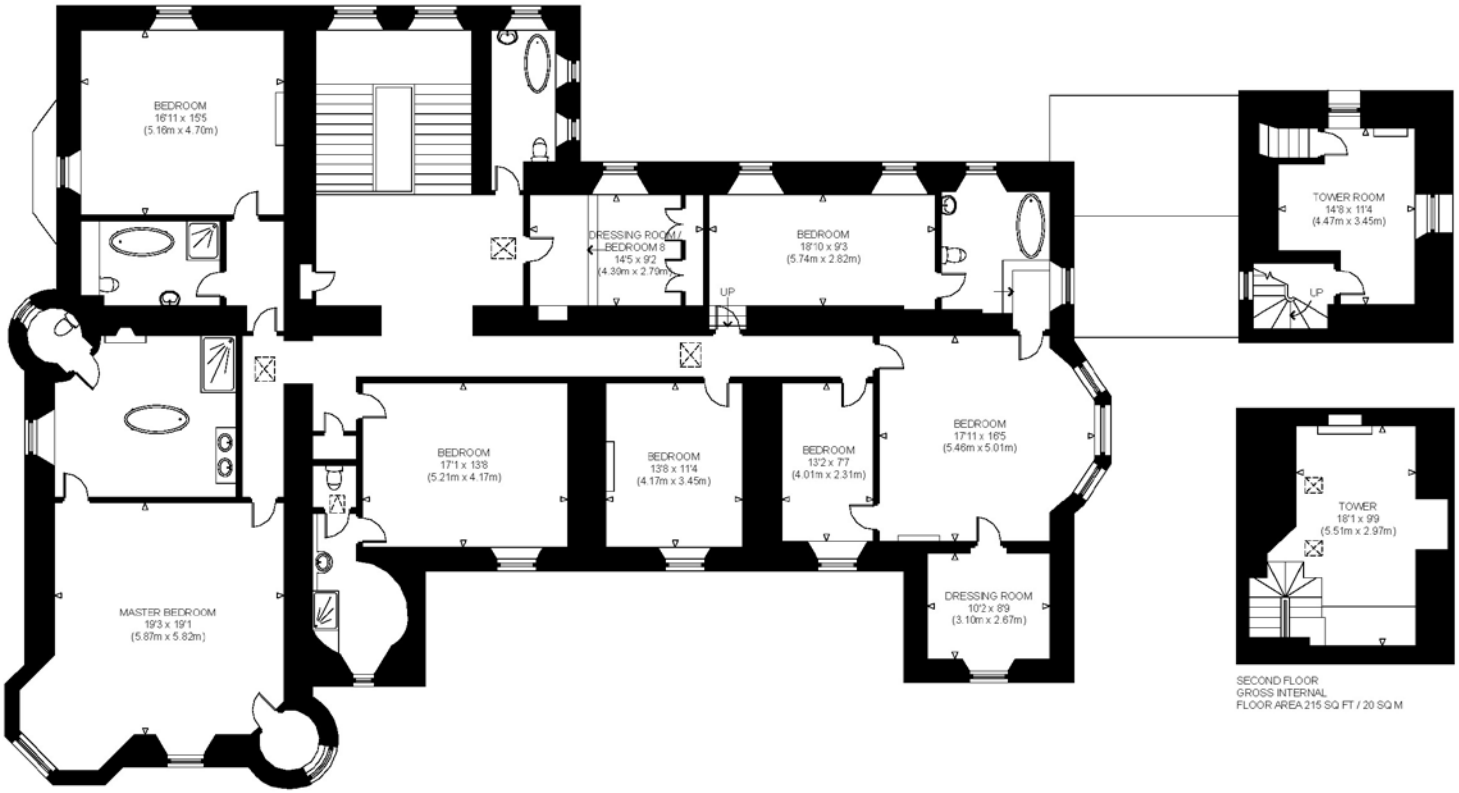




GARDEN LEVEL
GROSS INTERNAL
FLOOR AREA 3423 SQ FT / 318 SQ M

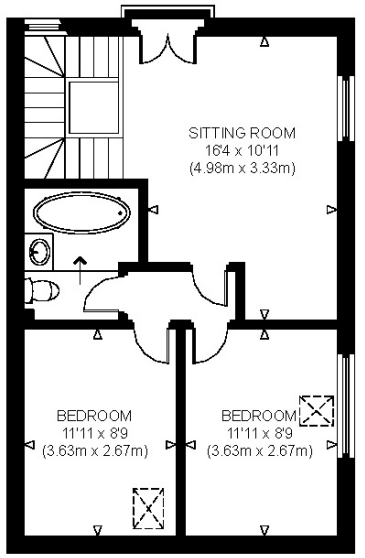


GROUND FLOOR
GROSS INTERNAL
FLOOR AREA 3690 SQ FT / 340 SQ M

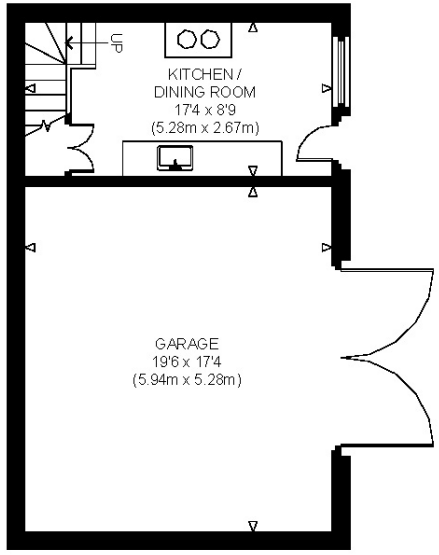


FIRST FLOOR
GROSS INTERNAL
FLOOR AREA 3703 SQ FT / 344 SQ M

SECOND FLOOR
GROSS INTERNAL
FLOOR AREA 215 SQ FT / 20 SQ M



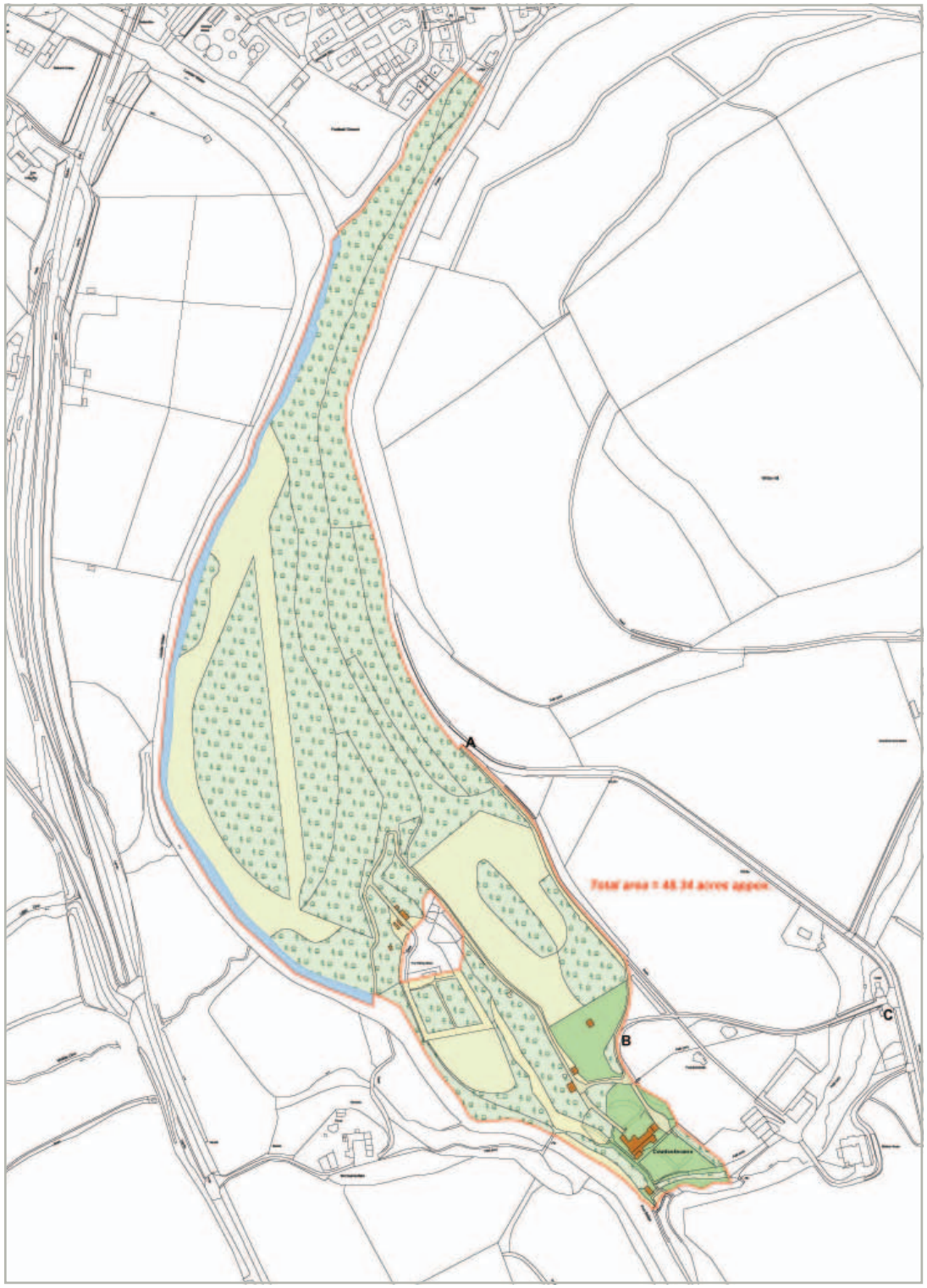
COTTAGE
GROUND FLOOR
GROSS INTERNAL
FLOOR AREA 517 SQ FT / 48 SQ M



COTTAGE
GROUND FLOOR
GROSS INTERNAL
FLOOR AREA 495 SQ FT / 46 SQ M




EDINBURGH
PORT SETON
PRESTONPANS
MUSSELBURGH
HADDINGTON
TRANENT
DALKEITH
BONNYRIGG AND LASSWADE
Gorebridge
LAUDER
GALASHIELS
INNERLEITHEN
MELROSE
SELKIRK
JEDBURGH
A1
A68
A7
A697
A72
A6091
A68
Southern Upland Way
MOORFOOT HILLS
LAMMERMUIR HILLS
LAUDERDALE
ETTRICK FOREST


A
B
C



RETTIE

1 Abbey Street, Melrose TD 9PX
Tel. 01896 824070
www.retie.co.uk

Knight Frank

11 Market Place, Lauder TD2 6SR
Tel. 01578 722814
www.knightfrank.co.uk