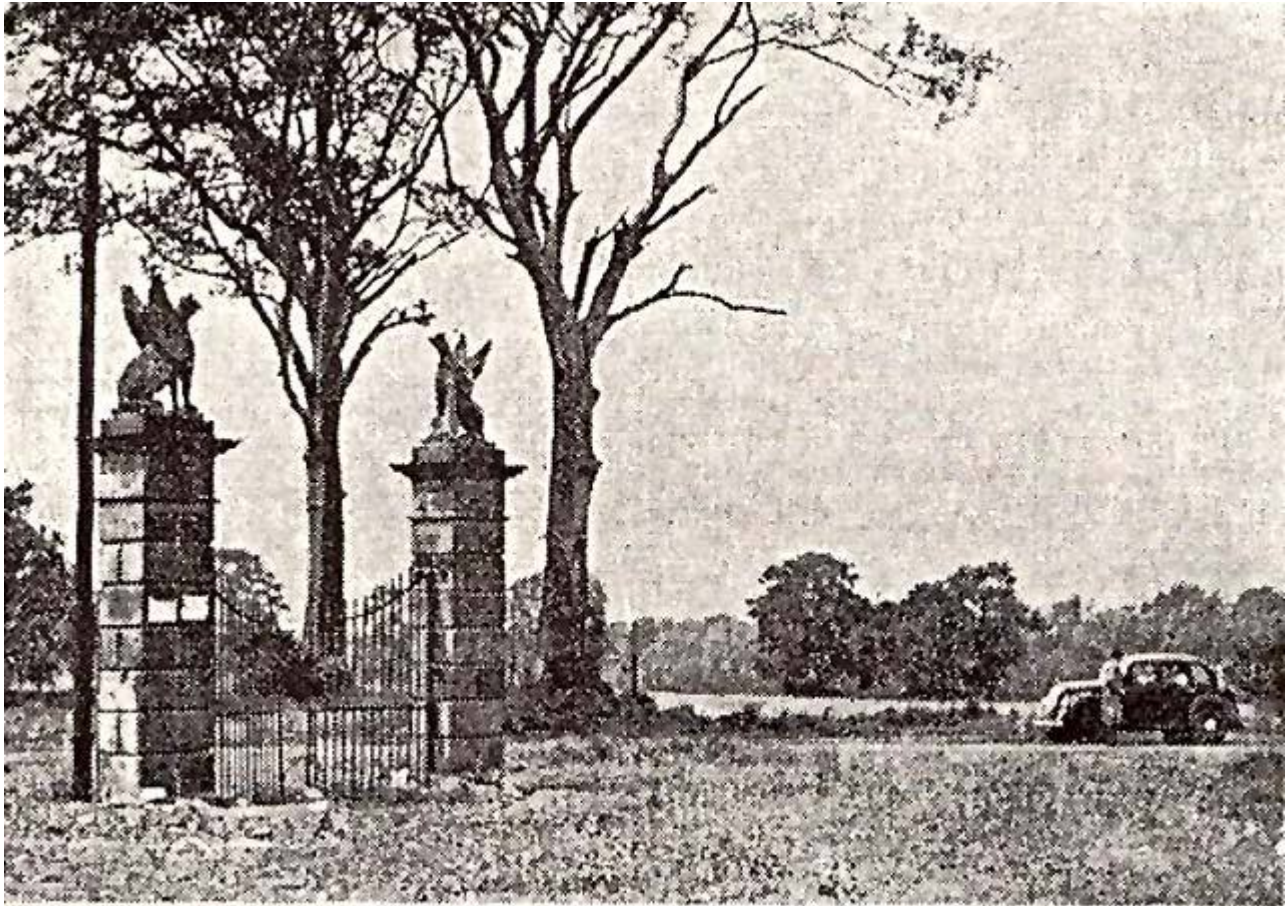


Statues will take their place on new housing development

Gothic statues salvaged from a historic Edinburgh estate will take pride of place in a new council housing development which will be built this year.

After spending 70 years in storage, two Griffin stone sculptures which once stood at either side of the entrance to Muirhouse Mansion will be restored and returned to the area.

Plans for 142 affordable homes to be built on land just south of the A-listed tudor mansion were approved by councillors earlier this year. The project forms part of the council's regeneration of Granton Waterfront.



Griffin Gates Image: The City of Edinburgh Council

The 19th century Griffins which previously stood on top of ten-foot high gate posts on Marine Drive will be relocated on site for 'historic interpretation' the council said, in an effort to 'safeguard the interests of archaeological heritage'.

John Lawson, City Archaeologist, said bringing the "historically important" statues back would "provide a connection" between the new development and Muirhouse House, the estate's 17th century manor which was situated closer to where the new homes will be than the newer Mansion.

As part of the work to demolish and remove the ruins of Muirhouse House in the 1950s, the imposing half-eagle, half-lion sculptures were removed from the estate's gates and have remained in council storage ever since.



An affordable housing scheme including a mix of social housing and mid-market rent properties at 14 Muirhouse Parkway – the site of Silverlea Care Home until it was bulldozed in 2017 – was recommended for approval when it was submitted to planners

in January last year.

Planners requested detailed proposals for locating the Griffins in the new housing estate before work begins in 2023.

They said: "The two salvaged stone Griffin gate pier finials that once existed on the site and which the council have title to and are presently storing, shall be reinstated on the site."

Mr Lawson said: "The new development has given as a welcome opportunity to place back the two 19th century stone Griffin's removed for safe keeping by the Council in the 1950's.

"These impressive statues, which originally stood either side of the main gate, are historically important and will provide a connection between the new development and the demolished Muirhouse Mansion built in 1832."

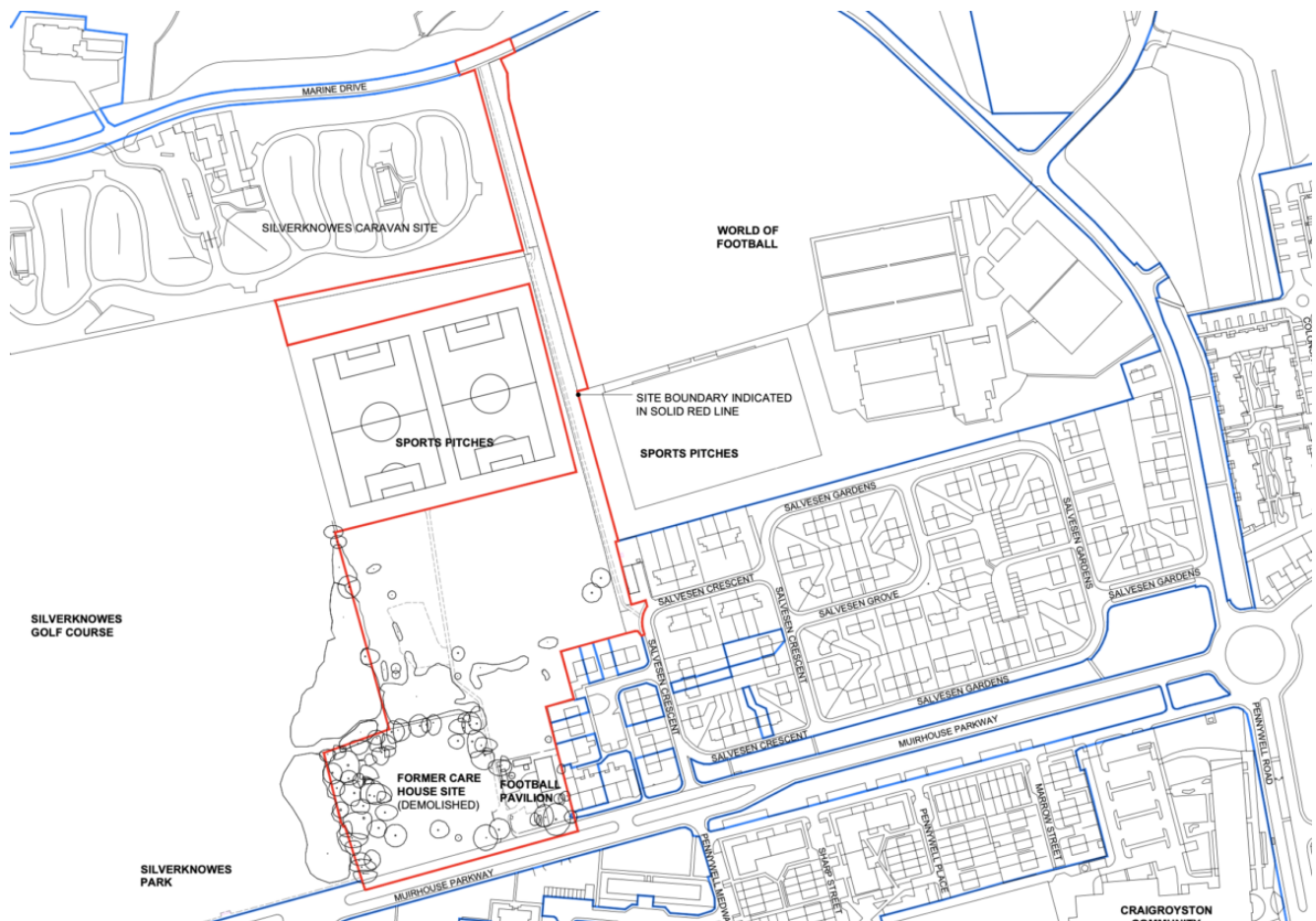
The planning sub-committee gave the plans unanimous backing on 10 August, despite local residents' raising concerns at the meeting about the impact on local wildlife, trees and development on the green belt.

Planning officers justified the controversial move to build on protected green belt land however, arguing the site was "unkept" and often targeted by fly-tippers.

They added there was "public benefit" in delivering more affordable housing in line with the council's targets.

by Donald Turvill

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Location of the new housing development to be constructed by Cruden for the council