

A red transport wheel for the White House Craigmillar

The National Transport Trust has awarded a Red Wheel to the White House in Craigmillar.

The organisation makes the awards to buildings which designate sites of transport heritage, and each wheel has a QR Code that links to the trust's database for more information.

With the support of The City of Edinburgh Council, the Trust has placed a Red Wheel at The White House, 70 Niddrie Mains Road EH16 4BG in recognition of its "art-deco evocation of 1930s motoring along the new arterial roads of that era".

This art-deco building in Craigmillar was first created as a roadhouse offering a place to stop and have a refreshment on the new arterial roads of that era – when drinking and driving was socially acceptable.

John Yellowlees Vice-President, National Transport Trust explained: "One of a number of roadhouses developed in Edinburgh in response to the growth of the [motor car](#) and designed by architect William Innes Thomson of the firm W N Thomson and Co for Jemima Hood Gair. Gair's fifteen-year-old daughter convinced her to request a [Moderne](#) design.

"The White House opened on 18 October 1936. It is a two-storey irregular-plan [International Style](#) and [Modern](#) building with [Art Deco](#) detailing. its [lounge bar bay window](#) has been compared to that of the card room of the [RMS Queen Mary](#). The ground floor featured a [public bar](#), [saloon bar](#), [tea room](#), and [skittle alley](#), while the first floor featured a [billiard room](#) and

lounge bar. The White House was popular due to the shortage of public houses in the [Craigmillar](#) and [Niddrie](#) neighbourhoods of Edinburgh. It later evolved from a roadhouse into a [public house](#) owned by [Tennent Caledonian Breweries](#).

“By the 1970s, it was known for its “happy-go-lucky” clientele, reputedly promising a “pint and a fight”. In 1995, The White House was granted category ‘B’ [listed](#) status by [Historic Scotland](#). The property fell into decline in the late 20th century, eventually closing in 2000. It was added to the [Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland](#) in 2004, but was then the subject of a major fire which destroyed its skittle alley.

“In 2007, The White House was acquired from [receivers](#) by PARC Craigmillar, an arm’s length company of the [City of Edinburgh Council](#). With grants from Historic Scotland and the [Scottish Government](#)’s Town Centre Regeneration Fund, a £1.85M restoration of The White House began in April 2010 and was completed in March 2011.

“The works saw the [building envelope](#) restored, improvements made to the roof and windows, and repairs to internal elements such as the [cornices](#) and staircase, while art deco elements of the interior were restored. The architect for the renovation was Smith Scott Mullan and the principal contractor was Thomas Johnstone. On 18 September 2013, The White House was formally reopened as a community café, art space, and volunteering centre. It is operated by the Community Alliance Trust – a local charity – under a lease from PARC Craigmillar.”





NATIONAL TRANSPORT TRUST

'THE WHITE HOUSE'

CRAIGMILLAR

1936 roadhouse in an International /
Modern style, to which motorists drove
for food and drink, billiards and skittles



TRANSPORT HERITAGE SITE