

Case information

Case ID	300008929
File Reference	HGH/B/GA/81
Name of Site	Garthdee House (Scott Sutherland School of Architecture), Garthdee Road, Aberdeen

Local Authority	Aberdeen City		
National Grid Reference	NJ 91316 03058		
Designation No. (if any)	LB47908		
Designation Type	Listed Building	Current Category of Listing	B
Case Type	Amendment		

Received/Start Date	04/02/2014
Decision Date	05/05/2016

1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, Garthdee House continues to meet the criteria for listing at category B. The statutory listing address and the listed building record has been amended.

Previous Statutory Address	Garthdee Road, Garthdee House (Scott Sutherland School of Architecture), including Terrace Walls and Steps, East and West Lodges
Amended Statutory Address	Garthdee House (Scott Sutherland School of Architecture), including Terrace Walls and Steps and excluding 1956 and later additions to south and east, Robert Gordon University, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Garthdee House, with the East and West Lodges, was listed at category B in 2001. The building is located within Pitfodels Conservation Area.

2.2 Development Proposals

The building is included within Robert Gordon University's Garthdee Masterplan: Development Framework (dated June 2009) which has been adopted as supplementary guidance to the local development plan. This plan indicates the redevelopment of the building to create a central administration hub and the demolition of the 1959 addition is indicated on the block plans for the campus.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

Garthdee House was considered for amendment as part of the Pitfodels Conservation Area Listing Review 2014-16. The building was visited on 04/12/2014, and the interior and exterior were seen at this visit.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

The building was found to continue to meet the criteria for listing.

An assessment against the Listing criteria was carried out, see **Annex A**.

The designation criteria are found in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), pp. 71-85. <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf>

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria*

Garthdee House (Scott Sutherland School Of Architecture), including Terrace Walls and Steps and excluding 1956 and later additions to south and east, Robert Gordon University, Garthdee Road, Aberdeen

1. Description

Designed by William Smith II in 1872 Garthdee House is a 2-storey, basement and attic, 6-bay villa with Jacobean detailing, converted to a school of architecture in 1956-7. In accordance with Section 1 (4A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 the following are excluded from the listing: the 1956-7 additions to the east by Thomas Scott Sutherland and further additions to the south and east by Thomson Taylor Craig & Donald in 1969 and 1971.

Garthdee House has tooled and coursed grey granite ashlar with polished margins. It has a base course and kneelered gables with skewputts, arrowslit openings and stone finials to apexes. Some gables have 2-storey canted windows with a parapet with ball finials.

The northwest (entrance) elevation is asymmetrical with an off-centre and advanced, curvilinear-gabled entrance bay. A 2-leaf panelled timber door with a multi-pane leaded fanlight is set in a chamfered Tudor-arched doorway and a panel above with the inscription "Scott Sutherland School of Architecture". At the first floor is a tripartite window with a hoodmould. To the gablehead is a blind shield and a fleur-de-lys stone finial to the apex. There is a slightly advanced gable to the outer left with buttress detail to the angles, an arrowslit opening to gablehead and spherical finial to apex. There is a single storey billiard room wing adjoining to far left.

The southwest elevation is symmetrical with a recessed centre bay, which has a tripartite rectangular bay window with a balustraded parapet. There is a pair of windows at first floor set below a curvilinear gable with blind shield inset, and a fleur-de-lys finial to the apex. The centre bay is flanked by gabled bays with 3-light canted windows through the ground and first floors, and a parapet with decorative spherical finials at angles.

There are a variety of glazing patterns in timber sash and case windows. The roof has grey slates with lead ridges, and coped stone skews with decoratively moulded skewputts. There are corniced gablehead and wallhead stacks with octagonal cans. There are cast iron rainwater goods with decorative brackets and hoppers to the principal elevations.

The interior, seen in 2014, is arranged around a fine double-height, square-plan hall. This hall has an arcaded gallery at first floor with pilastered round-arched openings and barley-sugar turned timber balustrades. The ceiling is coombed and panelled with a fine leaded skylight at the centre. Round-arched doorways with decoratively panelled timber tympana flank a pilastered and architraved flat-arched opening to the

staircase. The staircase is flanked by bronze statues by A. Carrier on square plinths. The staircase has barley-sugar turned timber balusters, scrolled detail below treads and elegantly carved newel posts. There is a decorative leaded stair window with inset stained glass panels by Daniel Cottier. Panelled timber doors set in deep architraves with panelled rybats led to the principal rooms. The ground floor principal rooms (to the south and west of the plan) have parquet floors, fine cornices and decorative plasterwork to the ceilings. Between two rooms to the west of the plan is a flat arched opening supported on Corinthian fluted columns and pilasters.

To the west of the house are coped granite ashlar retaining walls with squat square-plan piers and stone steps.

2. Assessment Against the Listing Criteria (SHEP, 2011) pp74-75

Criteria for determining whether a building is of 'special architectural or historic interest' for listing under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents]

To be listed, a building need not meet all the listing criteria. The criteria provide a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions.

2.1 Age and Rarity

Garthdee House was designed by William Smith II in 1872, for John Moir Clark, a successful local businessman who was a pioneer in the canning and curing business. Garthdee House is first shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1901. This map shows the building set in its own grounds with gate lodges to the east and west. Map evidence indicates that the footprint of Garthdee House remained largely unchanged until it was enlarged in 1956-7 for use as the Scott Sutherland School of Architecture.

In 1953 Thomas Scott Sutherland (1899–1963) bought the 20 acre Garthdee estate and lived in Garthdee House. Scott Sutherland was an Aberdeen School of Architecture graduate, who became an architect and entrepreneur and gifted the estate to Robert Gordon's College in 1953 for the building to be used as the college's School of Architecture. Scott Sutherland vacated the house in 1955 and an addition extending to the east of the house along the existing terrace was added by Scott Sutherland at a cost of £95,000. The Scott Sutherland School of Architecture was formally opened on 24 May 1957, by Thomas Galbraith, Lord Strathclyde, Minister of State at the Scottish Office.

Administration, research and post-graduate rooms, library, small lecture room and student and staff common rooms were accommodated in Garthdee House, with the main studio and large teaching rooms housed in the new wing. The furniture was specially commissioned and attention paid to light levels.

Changes in architectural education from 1958 and increased demand for courses in surveying put pressure on the school's accommodation and the building was extended in two phases by the Aberdeenshire architectural practice Thomson,

Taylor, Craig and Donald. In 1969 a large lecture theatre, and a laboratory and workshops block was added to the south and in 1971 two large blocks were added to the east, creating a small quadrangle in the middle. The 1960s/early 1970s extensions were in a very different style to the 1957 section, constructed in white concrete and brick, with dark ceramic tiled detailing and a sawtoothed roofline.

This gift of the Garthdee estate was decisive in the history of Robert Gordon University. The relocation of Gray's School of Art to Garthdee in 1967 marked the beginning of the development of the campus, and since then further land has been purchased and the campus is now the centre of the University as all other departments have relocated here. The origins of Robert Gordon University can be traced back to 1729 when Robert Gordon, an Aberdeen merchant trader, founded Robert Gordon's Hospital, to educate the young sons and grandsons of the Burgesses of the Guild who were too poor to send them to school. In 1881 the hospital became Robert Gordon's College with a secondary day school and separate adult education college. Since 1881 the training work of various other institutes and societies were transferred to the college, leading to various name changes until it was awarded university status in 1992.

Post-war tertiary education buildings are not a rare building type. In the 1950s there were significant university building programmes underway at Dundee and Edinburgh, and the Robbins Report, published in 1963 provided a further impetus for change. The report recommended the expansion of the universities as a priority as well as new universities. The campuses of the newly established universities of Stirling and Strathclyde are characterised by their post-war architecture. The design and construction of the 1956 and later 2 storey additions to Garthdee House are typical for their date and are not considered of special interest in listing terms at the time of the review (2014-16).

Garthdee House is situated in the Pitfodels area of Aberdeen. The rural Pitfodels estate, which stretched from Cults to the Bridge of Dee, was owned by the Menzies family since the 15th century. From 1805 the last laird, John Menzies began to feu some of the estate and when he died in 1843, without any descendants the remaining estate was purchased by the Pitfodels Land Company. Brogden, in his book *Aberdeen, An Illustrated Architectural Guide* (1998), notes that the plots varied in size, but were as large as 8-10 acres along the side of the River Dee, where Garthdee is situated. An 1895 account describes it as follows "...The greater part of the lands of Pitfodels is now studded with beautiful mansions and villas, each of which stands amid well laid out and carefully kept grounds. They mostly belong to manufacturers and gentlemen engaged in business in Aberdeen, and retired gentlemen." (Mackintosh, p.29). Large villas surrounded by trees were erected in a number of the larger plots and these continue to be a feature of this area.

The period from 1870 -1905 was a boom time in the construction of domestic architecture in Scotland and villas were a popular building type, particular in the suburbs of cities. In terms of age Garthdee House is therefore not rare but is notable within its late 19th century building type, and in particular for its good granite detailing

and its fine, largely unaltered, interior decorative scheme which is also associated with a significant designer (see below).

2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest

Interior

The interior largely retains its late 19th century decorative scheme, and has a particularly fine hall and gallery and well detailed public rooms. The retention of such detailing is remarkable for a building that is now used as offices and teaching spaces. The internationally renowned designer and artist, Daniel Cottier (1837-91) is known to have furnished and decorated the interior of Garthdee House. The extent of Cottier's work is not known but of particular interest are his stained glass inset panels to the stair window.

Daniel Cottier was born in Anderston, Glasgow and worked closely with contemporaries such as William Leiper, predominantly as a stained glass artist, decorator and furniture designer during the second half of the 19th century. His earliest documented interiors were in Aberdeen, for the miller collector and art critic Dr James Forbes White, and Cottier went on to furnish and decorate the interiors of other houses for the Aberdeen elite, including Kepplestone, the Elms in Arbroath and Garthdee and houses across Scotland, such as Holmwood near Glasgow. Cottier spent much of his career abroad and is credited with introducing the Aesthetic movement to America (where he worked with Louis Comfort Tiffany and John La Farge) and Australia.

Plan form

Garthdee House is arranged around a central hall with larger south facing public rooms on the ground floor and this plan form is not unusual for a late 19th century villa. There are some later subdivisions but many of these are moveable and are not extensive considering the change of use. The plan form has been altered by the various 20th century additions, however the 19th century footprint of the building is still discernible.

Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality

Garthdee House is constructed from granite at a time when it was possible to achieve high quality, intricate detailing in this hard material. However because of the expense of achieving such detailing in this hard material, it was more common on public and commercial buildings, than on private houses. Garthdee has some good stonework details, such as the distinctive entrance bay, with corbelled out corners, the shaped gables and canted bays with parapets and ball finials. A circa 1900 photograph of the southeast elevation shows a conservatory which has been demolished. This elevation, and particularly the northeast elevation have been altered by the 20th century addition but late 19th architectural section is still evident, most notably the stair window.

William Smith II (1817-1891) was a prolific Aberdeen based architect. In 1845 he became a partner in his father's firm, and his major commission was Trinity Hall on Union Street, Aberdeen, in 1846 (listed at category B). The practice's work was wide ranging with public buildings and private houses, most notably Balmoral Castle in 1852 (listed at category A) for Prince Albert, consort to Queen Victoria. Many of the

practice's houses are designed in the Scots Tudor-Jacobean idiom which John Smith had developed from his association with William Burn's schemes for Robert Gordon's College in Aberdeen, Fintray House and Auchmacoy. Brodgen notes that the composition and Jacobean detailing of Garthdee House is derived from Burn's design for Auchmacoy House in Logie-Buchan Parish (listed at category B).

Setting

Garthdee House is at the centre of an estate which has been redeveloped into a university campus. The immediate setting of the building has been altered by the various 20th century additions and in particular the south (garden) elevation is now largely obscured.

Regional variations

Garthdee is constructed from granite, which is the predominant building material in Aberdeen for civic, public and private architecture, particularly in the 19th century.

2.3 Close Historical Associations

None known at present.

3. Working with the Principles of Listing (SHEP 2011, p76)

In choosing buildings within the above broad headings particular attention is paid to:

- a. *special value within building types*
- b. *contribution to an architecturally or historically interesting group*
- c. *the impact of vernacular buildings*
- d. *authenticity*

When working with the principles of listing Garthdee House has particular interest under a and b.

- a. It is a well detailed example of a later 19th century large villa which has good granite Jacobean detailing and a fine interior decorative scheme, which has not been significantly altered.
- b. It is the principal building of the former Garthdee estate and forms a good group with the associated pair of entrance lodges (proposed to be listed separately at C). The survival of this group of buildings informs our understanding of this late 19th century estate which has been redeveloped into a university campus.

4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria**

Garthdee House dates to 1872 and was designed by William Smith II, an eminent Aberdeen based architect. The interior largely retains a very fine late 19th century decorative scheme, including well-detailed plaster and timberwork to its central hall and ground floor former public rooms. The stained glass inset panels to the stair window are designed by the internationally renowned designer and artist, Daniel Cottier. The exterior of the property has a number of distinguishing granite details,

such as the entrance bay, with corbelled out corners, the shaped gables and canted bays with parapets and ball finials.

In our current state of knowledge it continues to meet the criteria for listing.

5. Category of Listing

Categories of listing are non-statutory and buildings are assigned a category (A, B or C) according to their relative importance following the assessment against the criteria for listing.

Category definitions are found at: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/listing

Category B indicates buildings of regional or more than local importance, and major example of some particular period, style, or building type which may have been altered. In comparison to other late 19th century villas, the interest of Garthdee House in listing terms is considered to be of regional significance and has been altered, therefore category B remains the most appropriate category.

6. Other Information

N/A

7. References

Canmore: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 149554.

Maps

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1899, published 1901) Kincardineshire 007.02 (includes: Aberdeen; Banchory-Devenick; Nigg; Peterculter). 2nd Edition. 25 inches to 1 mile. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

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Fiddes, J (2005) Pitfodels and an Early History of Garthdee in Aberdeen Town and County History Society Magazine, Vol I, pp. 25-33.

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Dictionary of Scottish Architects. Garthdee House at http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building_full.php?id=213217 (accessed 17/04/2015).

Mackintosh, J. (1895) History of the valley of the Dee, from the earliest times to the present day at http://www.archive.org/stream/historyvalleyde00mackgoog/historyvalleyde00mackgoog_djvu.txt (accessed 17/04/2015).

SCRAN. Garthdee House at <http://www.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-000-662-589-C&scache=3y784ai5qu&searchdb=scran> (accessed 17/04/2015).

* This assessment is based on our current state of knowledge and has been prepared for the purpose of consultation or to provide a view on the special interest of a building. This assessment is a consultation document and will form the basis of any new or updated listed building record should the structure be listed. The content of this assessment may change to take into account further information received as a result of the consultation process.

** A building may be found to meet the listing criteria but in some circumstances may not be added to the list. See 'When might Historic Scotland list a building' at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings/whatwelist