



Case information

Case ID	300017987
File Reference	HGH/B/SG/89
Name of Site	Kelburn Castle, including walled courtyard and gatepiers to north and walled garden to northwest, Fairlie

Local Authority	North Ayrshire Council		
National Grid Reference	NS 21710, 56704		
Designation No. (if any)	LB 7294		
Designation Type	Listed Building	Current Category of Listing	A
Case Type	Amendment		

Received/Start Date	April 2016 [Kelburn Castle Estate Listing Review]
Decision Date	17/11/2016

1. Decision

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

Previous Statutory Address	Kelburn Castle Walled Garden Courtyard To North And Gatepiers
Amended Statutory Address	Kelburn Castle, including walled courtyard with gatepiers to north and adjoining garden walls to northwest, Kelburn Castle Estate, Fairlie

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

This building was listed at category A on 14/04/1971.

The buildings are located within Kelburn Castle Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00233).

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

Kelburn Castle was reviewed as part of Kelburn Castle Estate Listing Review 2016.

Kelburn Castle was visited on 06/04/2016.

The exterior and part of the interior were seen. The present assessment is also partly desk-based, using available information and has included reference to recent photographs.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

The building was found to meet the criteria for listing.

An assessment against the listing criteria was carried out. See **Annex A**.

The designation criteria are published in the Historic Environment Scotland policy statement June 2016, Annex 2, pp. 51-53.

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/planning-and-guidance/legislation-and-guidance/historic-environment-scotland-policy-statement/>

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria*

Kelburn Castle, including walled courtyard with gatepiers to north and adjoining garden walls to northwest, Kelburn Castle Estate, Fairlie

1. Description

A composite Scottish country house comprising a late 16th century Z-plan tower house incorporating earlier fabric, a long symmetrical mansion house range (circa 1670-1720) linked at an oblique angle to the northwest and a further later wing to the northeast (circa 1880). Corrugated iron addition to east of tower house section (circa 1910).

The 4-storey tower house section is dated 1581 on the south wall above a double-arched lintel (the former main entrance, now a window). It has full-height conical-roofed stair-towers to the south and north corner angles and conical-roofed turrets to the east and west corner angles. There is a corbelled garderobe projection with a small square window to the west wall and a large wall-head stack to the north elevation. The tower has an irregular arrangement of window openings with predominantly small-paned sash window frames. Cement render was added in the 20th century and this has been decorated with graffiti style murals in 2007-8.

Linked obliquely to the northwest side of the earlier tower house is the North Range which is dated 1700 and 1722 on the leadwork. The North Range is understood to have been partly built by 1672 and extended to its present form by mason Thomas Caldwell of Beltrees and his son William between 1692 and 1700. It is 10 bays long and broadly symmetrical to the north elevation with central advanced bays being taller and gabled. There is a pedimented door piece with date panels and a two-headed eagle crest and a distinctive twin lead rainwater pipe configuration with thistle and rose motifs. The outermost bays have crowstepped gables.

The large, 2 storey and attic, northeast wing addition of around 1885, possibly by William Little, has an asymmetrical-plan with a large corbelled oriel window at first floor to the west elevation. There is a round-arched vehicular porch recess or 'porte-cochere' to the east corner angle. It has crowstepped gables and wall-head chimneys in keeping with the earlier sections of the castle.

The interior (partly seen in 2016) includes exceptional surviving late 17th and early 18th century decorative scheme to the north range, originally conceived as formal state apartments, largely survive as first built. The scheme is designed in a grand Baroque manner, with timber and plasterwork, pulvinated friezes, scrolled, scalloped and modillioned cornices, raised beaded panels and bolection-moulded fireplaces. The former great dining room now the drawing room is particularly noteworthy having fluted Corinthian pilasters, a modillion cornice with intricately ornamented frieze with thistles and rose motifs, and two chimney pieces, one dating to circa 1700 (added in 1890) with a carved inset with the bust of a Roman emperor flanked by engaged Solomonic (spiral) columns and a pedimented portrait frame with panelled sides. The

smaller library room (former state drawing room) to the west of the present drawing room is similarly detailed on a more modest scale. This floor is terminated by the former state bedroom (now the tapestry room). The ground floor rooms of the 16th century tower are vaulted. The first floor contains the former great hall (now the Bastille Room) which has an elaborate chimney piece with paired spiral columned pilasters. The northeast wing of circa 1885 has a large dining room at the ground floor with mirrored-panel chimneypiece and a billiard room above, both with Regency style plasterwork detailing to ceilings.

The quadrangular courtyard (circa 1700) is orientated north to south and has high rubble-built walls. A pair of tall rusticated ashlar gatepiers with ball finials flank the approach drive to the north, framing the broadly symmetrical north range additions to the castle. There are bifurcated steps with ball finialled piers at the southwest corner and a large quadrangular-plan walled garden or 'pleasance' adjoining to the west, with a bowed projection at its west wall.

2. Assessment Against the Listing Criteria (HES Policy Statement, 2016) Annex 2, pp. 51-52

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

Kelburn is among the oldest ancestral country seats in Scotland to have been continuously inhabited by successive generations of one family, having been in the Boyle family (formerly 'de Boyville') since the 12th century. Kelburn has a prominent coastal setting to the south of the town of Largs with views from the castle across the Firth of Clyde to the Isles of Cumbrae and Bute and southwest to the Isle of Arran. The Kel Burn runs through the estate, passing through a wooded ravine and over a 15 metre high waterfall into a naturally carved pool to the southwest of the castle.

The medieval tower house section of the building, with stair towers at opposing corners forming the classic 'Z-plan' was remodelled circa 1580 by the then Laird of Kelburn John Boyle. The Z-plan tower house survives in largely its 16th century form with surviving vaulted ground floor and great hall to its upper floor. The thicker walls to the north, west and east sides of the tower are indicative of an earlier construction date and may date to around 1500, making use of existing structural fabric from an earlier building on the site.

Religious upheaval and political and economic uncertainty during the early 17th century saw comparatively less new building taking place. The climate stabilised by the end of the century, leading to an increase in large-scale domestic building across the country with concerns of space and privacy supplanting the need to build for defensive purposes. The restoration of Holyrood House by William Bruce in 1671

had a significant impact on the planning and extensions of great houses and estates across Scotland whose aristocratic owners sought to emulate the monarchy and elevate their standing by planning state apartments. At the same time they strived to build comfort and commodity into their existing properties. Extending rather than building completely new houses was common to Scotland where the tradition of building in stone made this a more practical option.

Kelburn Castle, like Stair House in Ayrshire (LB14372) and Blair Castle in Perthshire (LB6074), is a multi-period building which demonstrates the transition from the medieval tower house tradition towards the new fashion during the Renaissance period for domestic, non-fortified buildings. The designs for these new buildings were classically inspired and often included a formal suite of rooms or apartments.

The broadly symmetrical north range addition at Kelburn was built in at least two stages from circa 1672 for Crown Commissioner John Boyle (d.1685) and completed by 1722 by his son David Boyle (1666–1733), lawyer and member of the Parliament of Scotland who was created Lord Boyle of Kelburn in 1699 and later, 1st Earl of Glasgow in 1703. The 1st Earl was one of the commissioners who supported and helped negotiate the Act of Union between England and Scotland in 1707.

Masons worked with landowners to fashion new buildings and would sometimes refer to recently published sources. Thomas Caldwell of Beltrees and his son, William, were masons active in the late 17th century (Dictionary of Scottish Architects). A written 'agreement betwixt Kelburn and Thomas Cadwell' dating from 1692 outlines additional works to 'the new house already built' (MacGibbon and Ross, p.30). Gow notes that Kelburn 'demonstrates how the design of a new building was the result of a predetermined plan' (Gow, p.65). The extension, ostensibly a new house incorporating state apartments, represented the break in the 17th century from the fortified tower house and catered to the new taste for an obviously domestic architecture and is an expression of a modernising aristocrat who was moving up the ranks in society. As was common in the 16th and 17th centuries, the existing tower house was adapted and enlarged to provide better accommodation and circulation and to express, through Renaissance decorative enrichment, the status of the owner 'espousing the new classical fashion' (BoS, 44-5). The walled courtyard to the north, quadrangular-plan walled garden or 'pleasance' garden and ball finialled steps also reflect the fashion for formal, classical landscape design in early 18th century Scotland.

In 1869, the 6th Earl of Glasgow inherited Kelburn along with a significant number of other estates in Scotland and this coincided with a significant phase of development and building improvement across the estate around this time including the building of new gate lodges and gatepiers, a new gardener's cottage, gamekeeper's cottage and kennels. Another significant extension to the castle was also added around this period.

The northeast wing of the castle, possibly by William Little, was added circa 1880 for the 6th Earl, partly to house the then tenant and Member of Parliament for Renfrewshire, Alexander Crum. The architectural character of the addition blends in with the earlier phases. William Little (1805–1894), an architect/builder of Kirkcaldy

designing primarily churches and church buildings in Fife, was commissioned by the 6th Earl of Glasgow to re-front Crawford Priory in Fife, shortly before the addition at Kelburn was carried out. The 6th Earl contributed significantly to the building of a number of Episcopal churches across Scotland and by 1888 was deeply in debt, leading to the sale of Kelburn estate at auction. His cousin, David Boyle of Stewarton, later the 7th Earl of Glasgow, sold his land to buy back the Kelburn estate.

By 1979 the south estate offices and stables were converted into the Kelburn Country Centre with an information office and tea room in the old stables, a craft shop in the former laundry and workshop areas in the old byre, among other facilities. In 2007, four Brazilian graffiti artists painted the concrete-cement rendered walls of the castle with colourful murals and this painted scheme remains in place (2016).

Kelburn Castle (LB 7294) is an architecturally rich, multi-period domestic building of considerable complexity, incorporating structural fabric dating possibly to the 12th or 13th century. It is among the oldest and most important ancestral country seats in the west of Scotland, continuously inhabited by successive generations of one family since at the least the 13th century. The principal phases of addition are distinctly identifiable and the successive additions from the early Scottish Renaissance to the present day represent the changing political and cultural values as well demonstrating a significant transition in Scottish domestic architecture at this time.

2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest

Interior

The survival of exceptional interior schemes throughout the castle is of outstanding significance in listing terms. The grand Baroque decoration dating to the early 18th century to the former state apartments is particularly fine and its survival on this scale is rare.

The impressive and recently fashionable well stair (as also found at Holyrood Palace) and the great dining room, now drawing room with its panelling, giant Corinthian pilasters with their capitals shadowed in the cove above the cornice and plaster frieze with rose and thistle motifs show John Boyle expressing his status as well as his commitment to the Union. The smartly panelled interiors, particularly in the tower, may have influenced the new classically detailed panelling in the chamber range at Rowallan Castle (LB12523), similarly receiving classicising improvements after it was inherited by Dame Jean Mure (d.1685), John Boyle's second wife.

Plan form

The main building phases at Kelburn Castle are still clearly visible in plan as the extensions here did not radically rebuild or erase the earlier buildings. The resulting arrangement in plan is therefore an unusual survival. It is significant that the Z-plan tower house retains its vaulted ground floor and its great hall above, a typical arrangement for this building type.

The broadly symmetrical elements of the circa 1670-1720 North Range is consistent with architectural thought and fashion of that period in Scotland. The plan of the state apartments set out in the North Range carefully follows contemporary convention for sequential procession starting with a grand stair, a great dining room, a withdrawing room terminated by the state bedroom. The large rectangular plan drawing room at Kelburn has cleverly rotated its plan through 90 degrees, using the floor-space created within the projecting north and south gables.

The garden courtyard, integral with the early 18th century extension of the house, was conceived to frame the new, symmetrically laid out entrance to the castle.

Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality

The main phases of development at Kelburn Castle demonstrate changes in Scottish architectural thought and fashion over a prolonged period of history. These include the conical stair-towers, corbels and turrets of the 16th century, and the symmetrical north range and other formal Scottish Renaissance details of the 17th century.

The later 17th century/early 18th century additions reflect the significant changes at large estates where remodelling along classical architectural lines followed current taste for rational classical architecture but as noted above catered to the owners' desire to improve their status by accommodating important guests and providing them opportunity for the conspicuous display of wealth and knowledge.

Extension rather than rebuilding was common to Scotland but there remained considerable scope for architecture to reflect the modernising intentions of the owner, and the move away from fortified living. The gabled arrangement of the new extension at Kelburn Castle still shows the transition from the baronial style with its crowstepped gables and rendering, but its symmetry, plan and interior decoration demonstrates a move towards classical house design.

The later 19th century wing addition evidences an interest in a more relaxed domestic arrangement with a large first floor window disposed to take in views towards the Firth of Clyde, and also adds to the significance of the building in terms of its composite design, developed over centuries.

Setting

Kelburn Castle is prominently sited on the west coast of Scotland, south of the town of Largs with views from the castle over the Firth of Clyde to the Isles of Cumbrae and Bute and southwest to the Isle of Arran. The castle is the key building within a group of associated buildings and structures located across the estate including former stables offices, lodges, gates, walled gardens, sundials, monuments and estate cottages, all of which tell us much about the development of Kelburn over more than 500 years, and contribute collectively to the history of the estate.

The castle is set within a designed landscape (Kelburn - GDL 00233). Before 1750 it was formally laid out on axial avenues focusing views towards higher ground to the north. A change in the layout of the designed landscape occurred between 1750 and 1780, evolving toward a more natural, informal scene that accords with the romantic and picturesque waterfall and wooded ravine setting the character of which remains today. 500 acres of woodland within the estate, planted with both coniferous plantations and deciduous trees adds further to the estate setting.

Regional variations

There are no known regional variations.

2.3 Close Historical Associations

None known at present.

Kelburn is among the oldest country seats in Scotland to have been continuously inhabited by successive generations of one family, the Boyles. The family crest and initials of various family members are represented in the stonework at Kelburn Castle. People of significant social standing commissioned houses and the developed their estates and the association with these people is not a significant factor in this assessment for listing.

3. Working with the Principles of Listing (HES Policy Statement, 2016) Annex 2, pp. 53

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 a grouping of buildings*
- d. authenticity*

When working with the principles of listing Kelburn Castle has particular interest under a, b, c and d.

a. Kelburn Castle is an architecturally rich, multi-period building of considerable complexity. It is among the oldest and most important ancestral country seats in the west of Scotland, continuously inhabited by successive generations of one family since at the least the 13th century.

b. The castle is the principal building in a cohesive group of associated estate buildings and structures scattered around the estate including lodges, walled gardens, bridges, sundials, former stable blocks, monuments and worker's cottages, all which tell us much about the development of Kelburn over more than 500 years.

c. The castle and its walled courtyard, pleasance garden, gatepiers and separately listed sundials are inter-visible forming a largely intact historic core at Kelburn.

d. The distinct and recognisable principal phases of addition, from the medieval period through the Renaissance to the late Victorian period, with much 17th and 18th century structural and decorative fabric largely survives.

4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria**

Kelburn Castle is an architecturally rich, multi-period domestic building of considerable complexity, incorporating structural fabric dating possibly to the 12th or

13th century. It is among the oldest country seats in Scotland to have been continuously inhabited by successive generations of one family.

Kelburn Castle demonstrates a decisive break with the tower house tradition in Scotland with the erection of a completely new building which was clearly separate from the existing tower house and conceived to provide a fine suite of state apartments which, as at Holyrood House, were a self-conscious revival of stately royal traditions in Scotland.

The principal phases of successive addition, from the early Scottish Renaissance to the present day, are distinctly identifiable and represent the changing political and cultural values as well as the economic fortunes of Scotland within a single building. The grand Baroque decoration dating to the early 18th century to the former state apartments is particularly fine and its survival on this scale is rare.

The castle is the focal point of a coherent group of associated estate buildings and structures including sundials, former stable offices, monuments, lodges, bridges and worker's cottages, all which contribute to our understanding of the development of this historically significant ancestral seat over more than 500 years.

In our current state of knowledge Kelburn Castle 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: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/what-is-listing/>

Taking the above findings into account, the current category A listing, denoting national significance is considered to continue to be the most appropriate category of listing.

6. Other Information

N/A

7. References

Canmore: <https://canmore.org.uk/site/41169/kelburn-castle>

Maps

William Roy, Military Survey, circa 1750 - Lowlands

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1855; published 1857) Ayrshire, Sheet VI (includes: Cumbrae; West Kilbride) 6 inch to 1 mile, 1st Edition. Southampton: Ordnance Survey

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1895; published 1897) Ayrshire 006.04 (includes: Largs) 6 inch to 1 mile, 2nd Edition. Southampton: Ordnance Survey

Archives

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Close R. and Riches A. (2012) *Buildings of Scotland – Ayrshire and Arran*. London: Yale University Press. pp.392-399

Close R. (1992) *Ayrshire and Arran - An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. Edinburgh: Royal Incorporation of Architects in Scotland, p.82

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Gow, I. (1990) *Architectural Heritage Vol. 1 – William Adam*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p.65

MacGibbon and Ross (1892, reprinted 1977) *Castellated and Domestic Architecture of Scotland Vol IV*. pp.24-31

Tranter N. (1962-70) *The fortified house in Scotland - Vol.3*. Edinburgh, pp.38-40

Online sources

Dictionary of Scottish Architects

http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building_full.php?id=418585

[Accessed 18/05/2016]

http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=406655

[Accessed 18/05/2016]

Kelburn Estate and Country Park

<http://www.kelburnestate.com/> [Accessed 18/05/2016]

* 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 Environment Scotland list a building' at <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/what-is-listing/>