



Case information

Case ID	300017914		
File Reference	HGH/B/LA/516		
Name of Site	Grotto, Craigiehall, South Queensferry		
Local Authority	City of Edinburgh Council		
National Grid Reference	NT17034 75233		
Designation No. (if any)	LB5562		
Designation Type	Listed Building	Current Category of Listing	C
Case Type	Amendment		
Received/Start Date	2016 [Craigiehall Barracks Listing Review, 2016]		
Decision Date	12/12/2016		

1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, the Grotto, Craigiehall continues to meet the criteria for listing. The statutory listing address and the listed building record has been amended. The category has changed from C to B.

Previous Statutory Address	Craigiehall, Grotto
Amended Statutory Address	Grotto and Bath House, Craigiehall, South Queensferry

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

This building was listed at category C on 30/01/1981.

The building is located within Craigiehall Inventory Garden and Designed Landscape (GDL00113)

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

Craigiehall grotto was considered for amendment as part of the Craigiehall Barracks Listing Review Project, 2016. Only buildings which are in the current ownership of the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) were reviewed as part of this project.

Craigiehall grotto was visited on 28/01/2016 and 30/03/2016.

The exterior and parts of the interior were seen.

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*

Grotto and Bath House, Craigiehall, South Queensferry

1. Description

A 2-storey circular folly with bath house in the lower section situated on the bank of the River Almond and dating from around 1755-60. It is constructed from random rubble with rough rustic masonry, square coping and tooled ashlar dressings. There is an entrance to the northeast with a metal gate, which leads to an internal stone staircase to the lower section. The structure is currently roofless and some of the wall to the south is no longer extant (2016).

The upper section is a circular saloon with large window openings and a segmental-arched fireplace. There is an infilled brick doorway and an oval statue niche to the west elevation.

The lower section was not seen (2016).

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

The grotto and bath house at Craigiehall was constructed around 1755-60 by the owner of the estate at the time, the Hon Charles Hope-Weir. Hope-Weir had completed a Grand Tour of France and Italy with Robert Adam from 1754-55 and returned home with a number of ideas inspired by his travels for ways in which he could improve his estate, particularly the grounds. The grotto and bath house is just one of a number of features he built from 1755-1760. Others include the Craigiehall Temple (1759, LB26928), Craigiehall Grotto Bridge (1757, LB5563) and an ornamental lake (around 1760). He also planted trees along the River Almond.

The grotto and bath house do not appear on a map until the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map, published in 1856, but a drawing of the grotto of around 1790, (CANMORE 50424) shows the structure and the nearby bridge (LB5563), surrounded by trees and with gentlemen fishing in the river. The grotto has a thatched roof in the drawing, but this no longer survives. Also depicted is a statue in a niche on the west side of the grotto and a chimney in the centre. The niche is still extant on the current building. A postcard of the site from around 1904 (CANMORE

50424) also shows the building still with a thatched roof at that date. The building is currently roofless and some of the external wall fabric to the river at the south has been lost.

Hope-Weir travelled with Robert Adam for a year and it is possible that Adam may have designed the grotto, using his sketches of Diocletian's Palace at Spalato as inspiration (Innes 1996). However, there are no Adam sketches of the building at Craigiehall and this attribution cannot be verified.

The current Craigiehall Estate dates predominantly to the construction of Craigiehall House, completed in 1699, by Sir William Bruce for Sophia, Countess of Annandale and her husband, William, Earl of Annandale. There had been an earlier tower house on the estate which was replaced with the current house.

The Earl of Annandale's son James took over the estate in 1715. In 1741, the estate was bought by the Hope-Weir family, who were connected to the estate through the marriage of the Earl of Annandale's daughter, Lady Henrietta Johnstone to Charles Hope, 1st Earl of Hopetoun.

Craigiehall was sold in 1933 to the 5th Earl of Roseberry, who owned the neighbouring Dalmeny estate and who bought it for his son. His son was killed in 1917 and the estate was eventually let in 1926 to James Morton, a textile merchant in Edinburgh. The house became a hotel and country club in 1933. Following requisitioning by the Army in 1939, it was bought by them in 1951.

Grottos and bath houses became popular in the 18th century amongst landed estate owners as structures both to decorate their gardens and wider landscapes and, in the case of bath houses, as providing a means of bathing in cold water. Decorating a landscape with interesting architectural features which could be viewed from a distance, or visited on a tour around an estate was fashionable at this time. Meanwhile, cold water bathing was thought to promote good health... Bath houses were built in a variety of forms, from simple open air plunge pools to elaborate decorative structures including several pools, and were usually situated close to a lake or by a river. In this way, the water would be as cold as possible. Bathing naked was thought to be most effective, and changing rooms were usually incorporated (Rolf 2011).

It was also fashionable at this time to appreciate dramatic aspects of nature, for example, steep waterfalls, deep gorges or fast rivers. To enhance the experience of being in these dramatic natural places, the landowner would often place small, rustic grottos, made out of natural materials where a visitor could sit and admire the view. The bath house at Craigiehall also fulfils this role, as the upper storey could be used to sit and experience the rushing of the River Almond below, even if the plunge pool was not being used.

Few examples of bath houses survive in Scotland and most date to the 19th century or later. An early example is the (now ruined) bathhouse included in the garden at Edzell Castle of 1604 (Scheduled Monument, SM 901136) and there is an 18th

century bath well at Rosneath Castle (LB46425), which is classical in style. The bathing complex at Culzean Castle on the Ayrshire coast (LB7609), is later and dates from the early 19th century. At Knockbrex, in Dumfries and Galloway, the bath house was built after 1915 (LB3395).

The listing criteria state that the older a building is and the fewer of its type survive, the more likely it is to present special interest. All buildings erected before 1840 which are of notable quality and survive predominantly in their original form have a strong case for listing. Grottos and bath houses are an important building type as they tell us something about the aspirations of contemporary landowners when planning their estates as they wanted to incorporate both decorative and practical structures into the landscape and wished to emulate the grandeur of ancient Roman civilisation. The buildings, whether designed in a formal architectural language or in an informal rustic design, are also tangible architectural representation of the intellectual and philosophical ideas of the 18th century Enlightenment period relating to man's relationship with nature. Craigiehall grotto and bath house is an early and rare surviving example of its building type which, although roofless, has retained a number of features characteristic of its 17th century date. The building still remains in its wooded, riverside setting (see Setting below).

2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest

Interior

The interior was not seen and has not been taken into account in this assessment. However, photos held by Historic Environment Scotland from 1997 show a segmental-arched fireplace to the upper section. Gifford (1998) describes the lower section as barrel vaulted. A building survey completed in 2007 indicates that the lower room has a large square plunge bath and that most of the mechanism used to feed water through a rock-cut channel via a wooden sluice gate from the river to the bath survives. It also describes a small, rectangular chamber with an iron bar attached, which may have been used to hang a filter to prevent large objects entering the bath.

As interior access was not possible at the time of the site visit we have not been able to determine if these features remain.

Plan form

Bath houses were built in a variety of plan forms. A small circular plan form as used for Craigiehall was likely chosen to allow for an informal rustic design. The placing of a lower section to be used as a plunge pool with a dressing room above is not unusual. The fireplace would most likely have served to warm the person after bathing.

Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality

Although they were built in a variety of forms, including formal classical such as small temple designs, the rustic form of the stone work and the thatched roof were often the style and materials of choice when an owner wanted to enhance the atmospheric, or picturesque, experience of being near to a dramatic natural feature. The random placing of large stones, not flush with the wall increase the rustic appearance of the building and aim to create the illusion that it is more natural than designed. Classical statues were sometimes included in bathing houses to signify an intellectual understanding and appreciation of Roman precedents and Craigiehall Grotto once included an oval niche on the west elevation where a statue was likely placed.

Although some of the fabric from the south side of the building has gone, and the building is roofless, this rustic character and appearance is still clearly evident.

Setting

The grotto sits on the river bank amongst overgrown vegetation and is not visible from the house. Its setting would have been both practical and decorative. The idea of having cold running water through a plunge pool was considered ideal and so its position close to the river would allow for this. It is situated on a steep site, close to a bridge, which is built in a similar, rustic style, (LB5563). The bath house would have been visible only from the bridge, or from the other side of the river. Together, the two structures would have formed one of the destinations in any tour around the grounds. The structure is currently mostly hidden by overgrowing vegetation and the former dramatic visual appearance of the building has been reduced to some extent (2016).

It is part of a group of associated estate structures which, although affected by later development, still visually conforms to innovative 18th century ideals in landscape design. The building is one of a number of estate buildings associated with the house including the walled garden, the former stable court, two sundials, and a grotto and is an important part of this wider estate.

The majority of the estate to the north and northeast has been taken up by the various additional buildings constructed for the military headquarters since the 1950s.

Regional variations

There are no known regional variations.

2.3 Close Historical Associations

There are no known associations with a person or event of national importance at present (2016).

The 2nd Earl of Annandale, and later the Hope-Weir family are closely associated with Craigiehall. People of significant social standing commissioned houses and the

development of 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 Craigiehall Grotto has particular interest under a, b, c and d.

- a. The grotto at Craigiehall is a rare and early surviving example of its building type.
- b. This grotto forms part of a wider estate group of buildings around Craigiehall House and makes an important contribution to this architecturally significant group.
- c. Other contemporary and near-contemporary estate buildings, which are also listed and are located within the former policies, add to the special interest of the bath house. These include Craigiehall (LB45432), the Doocot (LB5560), Grotto Bridge (LB5563), Stable Court (LB5561), Sundials (LB5559) and Walled Garden (LB45433).
- d. The grotto has lost some of its 18th century fabric, but retains the majority of its external circular form with its rustic masonry and internal staircase.

4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria**

The grotto and bath house at Craigiehall is a rare, early surviving mid 18th century bath house built in a classical, rustic form and which, although partially concealed by vegetation, retains its dramatic setting. The structure has retained several characteristic features of a rustic landscape building of the time including its circular form, statue niche and viewing windows. Bath houses are not a common building type in Scottish estates and this one helps our understanding of the way contemporary landowners viewed their wider landscapes. The building still forms an integral part of the 17th and 18th century designed landscape.

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: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/listed-buildings/what-is-listing/>

Craigiehall grotto and bath house is a rare and early example of its building type. There are few remaining examples of bath houses found in Scottish designed landscapes. The building at Craigiehall is among the earliest of the known listed examples. The building has, however, lost some of its integrity in the loss of its roof and also some fabric to the walls. The growth of vegetation has lessened its impact in the landscape. Category B is considered the most appropriate category, because of the early date and rarity of building type.

6. Other Information

N/A

7. References

Canmore: <http://canmore.org.uk/> CANMORE ID 50424

Maps

Ordnance Survey (Surveyed 1854, Published 1856) Linlithgow Sheet VII.6. 25 Inches to the Mile map. 1st Edition. Southampton: Ordnance Survey.

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Buxbaum, T. (1989) *Scottish Garden Buildings. From Food to Folly*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing

Cooper, S. A. (2000) *A History of Ornamental Buildings and Structures in Scotland's Gardens and Designed Landscapes*. Phd. Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot-Watt University.

Gifford, J. et. al. (1988) *The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh*. London: Penguin Books. p.592.

Innes, C.B. (1996) *Craigiehall: the story of a fine Scots country house*. Typescript.

Rolf, V. (2011) *Bathing Houses and Plunge Pools*, Oxford: Shire Publications

Internet Sources

Hickman, C. *Taking the Plunge*. <http://www.buildingconservation.com/articles/bath-houses/bath-houses.htm> [accessed 29/06/2026].

* 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/>