

## Case information

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<b>Case ID</b>	300016885
<b>File Reference</b>	HGP1/P/LA/6
<b>Name of Site</b>	Millburn Tower

<b>Local Authority</b>	City of Edinburgh Council
<b>National Grid Reference</b>	NT 17124 71767
<b>Designation No. (if any)</b>	GDL00286
<b>Designation Type</b>	Garden and designed landscape
<b>Case Type</b>	Amendment

<b>Received Date</b>	03/04/2014
<b>Decision Date</b>	11/05/2016

## 1. Decision

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In our current state of knowledge Millburn Tower continues to meet the criteria for inclusion on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. The Inventory record will be updated and a minor change to the designation boundary made.

## 2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

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### 2.1 Designation Background

This designed landscape was added to the Inventory in 1971. It was reviewed in 1987. There is no known review of this site since 1987.

There are two listed buildings within this site: Millburn Tower with walled garden, garden store and gatepiers (category B – LB27306) and South Lodge with walls and gatepiers (category B – LB27313).

### 2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

## 3. Assessment

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### 3.1 Assessment information

Millburn Tower was considered for amendment as part of Inventory Refresh Project (2014-15).

A site visit took place on 07/07/2015, and the majority of the designed landscape was seen.

### 3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

An assessment against the criteria for inclusion on the Inventory of gardens and designed landscapes 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 Criteria for Inclusion on the Inventory\***

## **Millburn Tower**

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### **1. Description**

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#### **1.1 Type of site**

An early 19<sup>th</sup> century informal landscape.

#### **1.2 Main phases of landscape development**

1804-1821; 1821-36.

#### **1.3 Location and Setting**

Millburn Tower is situated on the western outskirts of Edinburgh, some 10 miles (16km) from Edinburgh Airport. Although it is very close to the A8 and to built up areas, it is well screened by shelterbelts, and set in agricultural land. Views of the urban edge can only be obtained from the east side of the shelterbelts.

The site covers approximately 30 acres (12ha) along a narrow plot of land, of which the axis runs from north-northeast to south-southeast. The grounds have previously been divided into two plots and now under one ownership. The original design incorporated two circular open areas set in woodland. The Stables are at the north end of the grounds and there were three lochs linked by the Mill Burn which initially flows at right angles to the road and before turning south. Two lochs were at the north east corner of the estate and one due east of the house. From the historical map evidence, it would seem that the pattern of the layout has changed very little over the years and that it has always been secluded and screened from the surrounding shelterbelts.

#### **1.4 Site History**

The designed landscape today corresponds in basic structure to the layout shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey map, surveyed 1852, apart from the loss of the loch features. (On the map two lochs north of the house are shown – but not that to east of the house).

The estate was purchased at some point before 1804 by Sir Robert Liston whose ancestors held land in this area (indicated by the local names such Kirkliston and Newliston). Sir Robert was a diplomat who served initially in Europe but in February 1796 he was appointed British Minister to the newly formed United States of America, the same year in which he married Henrietta Marchant of Antigua (1751-

1828). During the period in the United States the Listons became friendly with George Washington and other high ranking officials as well as George Isham Parkyns, the landscape theorist, writer and garden designer. Liston retired in May 1804.

When the Listons acquired the estate, the main features were the Gogar Burn running in a wide circle around the estate and the Mill Burn running through it. Roy's map of 1752-55 shows two features in this area: 'The Old Mill' and 'Dam Hedd'. Initially the estate was conceived as a small simple rural retreat. The 'little cascade' above the Old Mill was thought to have potential as a garden feature but this was not carried forward. (NLS MS 5608). The first design drawn up for the house was a round structure designed by the architect Benjamin Latrobe in 1800 who met the Listons in the United States. This was not executed and the first building on the site was a thatched cottage. The present tower was added to this and the cottage subsequently demolished as the house was developed over a number of years.

The overall design of Millburn landscape was drawn up by George Isham Parkyns who visited the site in August 1804. Some inspiration came at least in part from friends of Lady Liston, Thomas and Jane Johnes who between 1783 and 1788 had laid out the grounds of Hafod, Cardiganshire in line with 'Picturesque principles' fashionable at the time, with circuit walks allowing the visitor to enjoy a succession of views and experiences. It included an American garden. The Millburn planting scheme, which was a collaborative effort between the clients and Parkyns, survives in outline. Lady Liston had made a collection of transatlantic plants while she was in the United States. Parkyns had practical experience of gardening in the United States where he designed various gardens including Mount Vernon for George Washington.

Sir Robert resumed diplomatic duties in Constantinople in 1811 but continued to develop the estate which was managed by Sir Robert's nephew, Alexander Liston Ramage. A large conservatory was constructed for the American winter garden about this time. The Listons returned to Scotland in 1820. Thousands of trees were planted in the park. They acquired further land at Bavelaw and Listonshiels and intensive tree planting was carried out there in the early 1820s as well.

The Listons had no family and Sir Robert's grand-niece Henrietta inherited from him. She married Sir William Foulis of Woodhall, Baronet in 1843 and was succeeded by their son Sir James. The house was tenanted in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and the photographer William H Talbot lived there from 1861-63 and conducted many of his photoglyphic experiments there. During Second World War the house was used by the Norwegian Consulate and amongst its recorded visitors were Rudolf Hess and Amy Johnson. In 1981 the then owner put the house and eight acres of the grounds on the market and removed to the converted stables. Some alterations to the grounds were made while this owner lived at the house; the cottages forming the southern end of the courtyard were demolished and replaced by a raised garden. The walled garden was cleared apart from some fruit trees and a central hedge along the west-east axis (now gone). At the time of writing (2015), some trees have been replanted. The current owner has restored the house and has future plans for re-establishing the gardens.

## 1.5 Landscape Components

### Components of the designed landscape

**Architectural features:** Millburn Tower was designed by William Atkinson in several phases from 1805. A thatched cottage was the first building on the site followed by a two-storey tower. The single storey section to the south followed in 1815 and 1821. The building is unusual in having all its principal rooms on the ground floor. Other architectural features are the Walled Garden, Stables, South Lodge (perhaps based on scheme by the Latrobe for the round house drawn up in 1800, see under **Site History**) and North Gates.

**Drives and approaches:** The principal drives and approaches are to the north with a bridge over the Mill Burn and to the south.

**Paths and walks:** A number of paths and walks are shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map but some are now overgrown. The main walks were in the area of the lakes at the north of the site, and in the wooded area due west of the house.

**Avenues and vistas:** The two approaches to the house from the north and from the south initially followed straight lines and were flanked by beech avenues. As they approached the house they both took a curving route, the north drive circumventing a large lawn and the south around the walled garden, keeping the visitor in suspense by shielding the view of the house until the last moment when it was revealed. The north approach led the visitor over a bridge which crossed the Mill Burn. The large belt of trees around the estate prevents many outward views although there is a clear vista to the east from the apex of the tower which is focussed on Edinburgh Castle.

**Woodland:** There are dense woodland areas surrounding the house and central lawns and flanking the driveways. Some of this may be contemporary with the development of the garden and house. Documentary evidence shows that the Listons carried out intensive tree-planting here and at Listonshiels and Bavelaw to the south of Millburn.

**Water Features:** Two lakes at the north end of the estate and one due east of the house are still visible in outline although they have silted up. That to the east of the house was engraved and is illustrated in Taylor (1990).

**The Gardens:** The garden was designed by Captain George Parkyns in 1804-5. It had been planned when the Liston were still travelling in the United States and the West Indies. The design was based on the principles established by Capability Brown with serpentine driveways, lakes, one with an island and peripheral belts of trees. At the centre was what was initially a cottage orné but which later expanded into a small scale Gothic style house. The American Garden which was probably located to the north east of the walled garden may have consisted of an informal

scheme of beds but this does not survive. The lakes have silted up and little remains today of unusual plant material. There are some conifers and rhododendron planted to the west of the house as well as some American specimens such as hickory.

**Walled Garden:** The walled garden lies due south of the house. It was developed after 1811. It is unusual in that it is approximately D shaped. The driveway from the south follows the curve of the west wall thus enhancing the approach to the house by keeping the latter from view until very close. Part of the wall could be heated. The garden and the boiler room and bothy remain to the south.

The walled garden contained the American Winter Garden with tender plants. A drawing for the design of this by the gardener John Hay survives among the Liston Papers in the National Library of Scotland. The 1893 edition (published 1895) Ordnance Survey 25 inch map shows a substantial conservatory with a round section at the east end placed against the north wall of the walled garden, east of the entrance which accords with the position suggested by another sketch in the collection. A smaller glasshouse was situated to the west of the entrance but may be more recent date.

## **2. Assessment Against the Criteria for Inclusion on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes** (SHEP, 2011) pp81-82

<http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf>

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Criteria for determining whether a garden or designed landscape is of 'national importance' for inclusion on the Inventory under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 [<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1979/46/contents>]

*To be included on the Inventory, it is generally the case that the greater the number of outstanding or high values, the more important the site. The criteria provide a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions. The condition of the site today and its overall integrity are important elements of the selection process.*

### **2.1 Value as individual work of art in its own right**

**Value:** Some

The designed landscape and American garden at Millburn attracted a large number of visitors in the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As many as three groups of visitors came each day during the period around 1811. It gained a reputation for the range of unusual plants which were imported not just from America but from as far afield as India and China and which were successfully cultivated. The Earl of Torphichen wrote in 1810: 'Your American garden is unquestionably without rival or parallel in this country with the choice of the plants, in their arrangement and above all in their wonderful beauty and thriving condition' (NLS MS 5617, November 8, 1810.) In 1828 Sir Walter Scott was critical of the design of the landscape as he considered the creation of the lakes as artificial. (NLS MSS; Scottish History Miscellany with image). However Parkyns is described as an 'excellent gardener' by John Claudius Loudon in his 'Gardening Encyclopaedia' (1834) and in his 'Suburban Gardener', Loudon referred to Parkyns as looking 'on gardens entirely with the eye of a painter and poet'. He also mentioned Parkyns and his work for Sir Robert Liston at Millburn

in his 'Gardener's Magazine'. The Millburn garden is thought to have encouraged a taste and interest in North America.

## **2.2 Historical value**

**Value:** Outstanding

There is outstanding surviving documentary evidence on the planning and development of the garden from 1804 to 1836 in the Liston Papers held in the National Library of Scotland. (NLS MS.5510-5721). Correspondence between the Listons, particularly during their absences abroad, and Sir Robert's nephews and nieces who managed the estate on their behalf and a wide range of friends and acquaintances, provide a detailed record of the development of the estate and the range of plants and trees which were being brought in and cultivated. William McNab who was keeper at Kew and then at the Royal Botanical Garden in Edinburgh also oversaw and reported on progress of the plants at Millburn during the Listons' absence in Constantinople about 1814. The garden layout remains a good example of the 'Serpentine' style of garden design which was developed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown but in the inclusion of exotic plants it is more akin to what J C Loudon termed the 'Gardenesque' style.

## **2.3 Horticultural, arboricultural or silvicultural value**

**Value:** High

The woodland areas with mixed deciduous trees and the avenues of beech and lime are still in place. The survival of a number of specimen trees such as maple, hickory, Spanish chestnut and sumach, all part of the American collection, is notable. Millburn has an important place in the history of horticulture as some specimens were the first examples of their sort in the country which had flowered – for example 'mimosa decurrens' which had been cultivated in the conservatory at Millburn. A branch of this in flower was presented to the Wernerian Society in March 1814.

## **2.4 Architectural value**

**Value:** High

The woodland areas, vestiges of the lakes, driveways and specimen trees form a setting for Millburn Tower, listed at category B in recognition of its regional significance. Several other structures, notably the walled garden (c.1810), the South Lodge (both also category B), Stables and the Bridge (all c.1804-5) within the designed landscape, contribute further interest.

## **2.5 Scenic value**

**Value:** Some

Millburn Tower designed landscape occupies a large rectangular plot, on relatively flat ground. While the garden itself is designed to be inward looking and primarily

designed to provide varying views while moving through the garden, its woodland canopy can be seen from the surrounding area, which is farmland, small agricultural businesses and other small estates, such as former estate of Gogarburn.

## **2.6 Nature Conservation value**

**Value:** Some

There are no nationally designated habitats at Millburn Tower. Some value may be derived in this category from the small woodland and copse within the boundary of the property. They provide a habitat for birds and small mammals.

## **2.7 Archaeological**

Value: Some

There are no scheduled monuments within the designed landscape. There is cropmark evidence of a temporary Roman camp to the east side of the estate. Value in this category derives mainly from the potential for any future survey or investigation to reveal further information about the landscape over time.

## **3. Condition and Integrity (SHEP 2011, p82)**

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The condition of the site today and its overall integrity are important elements of the assessment process.

In the case of Millburn Tower, the condition of the existing elements of the garden is good. Some key elements of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century designed landscape have been lost, for example the conservatory and the planting in the American garden as well as the lakes and the gravel walks. But there is sufficient evidence on the ground and in the form of documentary material to be able to reinstate much of the landscape in the future.

## **4. Summary of Assessment Against the Criteria for Inclusion on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes\*\***

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Millburn Tower is a significant early 19<sup>th</sup> century informal designed landscape. Its importance lies in the historic horticultural collection including American and continental specimens. These specimens, though now mostly gone, were gathered and cultivated by the first owners, Sir Robert and Lady Liston. This landscape is also significant for the wealth of historical data about the formation of the collection, for its design by the landscape theorist and garden designer George Isham Parkyns (only one of two in Britain connected to his name), and for the visitors it attracted in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In our current state of knowledge it continues to meet the criteria for inclusion on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.

## 5. Designation Boundary

A small change to the boundary is made to extend it slightly to the south and to remove a pointed section the east. These changes to follow the contour of the woodland.

## 6. Other Information

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N/A

## 7. References

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Roy, W (1752-55) Military Survey of Scotland: the Lowlands.

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