



Case information

Case ID	300017403
File Reference	HGP1/P/LB/2
Name of Site	Elvingston

Local Authority	East Lothian Council		
National Grid Reference	NT 461 742		
Designation No. (if any)	GDL00172		
Designation Type	Garden and designed landscape	Current Category of Listing	N/A
Case Type	Removal		

Received/Start Date	2014/2015 [Inventory Refresh Project]
Decision Date	01 Sep 2016

1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, Elvingston no longer meet the criteria for inclusion on the inventory of gardens and designed landscapes. We have removed the garden and designed landscape from the inventory.

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Elvingston was included on the original inventory of gardens and designed Landscapes, published in 1987.

The designed landscape contains four listed buildings:

LB12702 Elvingston House with Stable court (category B)

LB12703 Elvingston Dovecot (category B)

LB12704 Elvingston South Lodge with Gatepiers and Quadrant Walls (category C)

LB13838 Elvingston East Lodge with Gatepiers (category B)

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals which are of significance for the purposes of this review.

3. Assessment

Elvingston was reviewed as part of the Inventory Refresh Project.

Elvingston was visited on 09/06/2015.

All areas within the GDL boundary were seen apart from the interior of the walled garden.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

Elvingston was found to no longer meet the criteria for inclusion on the Inventory.

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 published in the Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement June 2016, Annex 5, pp. 58-59.

<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 Criteria for Inclusion on the Inventory*

Elvingston

1. Description

1.1 Type of site

An 18th-19th century country house estate landscape with tree-lined drives and parkland.

1.2 Main phases of landscape development

Circa 1740s-1760s

Circa 1836-1860

1944-1980

1.3 Location and Setting

Elvingston is located 2.5 km to the southeast of Longniddry, in East Lothian, and 3 miles to the west of Haddington. The A1 dual carriageway road cuts through the southern part of the designed landscape.

The designed landscape boundary, which encloses an approximately rectangular area of land, is formed by the A199 road to the south, an unclassified B road to the east and field boundaries to the north and west.

The house is set at 90m above sea level in a flat agricultural landscape, reclaimed from marshland. The Firth of Forth shoreline lies 4 km to the north. The underlying geology is carboniferous and the soil is heavy but fertile. There are extensive views across the fields, and the woodlands at Elvingston are a notable feature in the surrounding scenery. There is a farm and a later 20th-century buildings along the west boundary.

1.4 Site History

Historic documents and maps chart the early development of the lands of Elvingston (Shirlaw 2002). They confirm the presence of a medieval and post-medieval estate, the building of a mansion house sometime 1543-1580 and the presence of a small enclosed park during the 17th century (Pont 1630; Adair 1682). For a brief time, (1701-1710), Elvingston was in the ownership of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik (1676-1755), who went on to achieve renown as a pioneer in Scottish landscape design.

For the remainder of the 18th century, Elvingston was in the ownership of the Law family. William Law (circa 1714-1806), advocate and sheriff of Haddington, is thought

to have improved and enclosed the lands (Shirlaw 2002: 27). Roy's Military Survey map (1752-55) shows the house and possibly an adjacent walled garden at the centre of a series of rectangular fields or parks. Earlier 19th-century maps (Forrest 1802, Sharp, Fowler and Greenwood 1825) and the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Map (surveyed 1853) show the continuation and development of this overall structure with tree plantings along boundaries and entrance drives, including a long south drive.

Expansion and modernisation took place from 1836, when Elvingston was purchased by Robert Ainslie of Redcoal Mains. Surrounding fields were added to the estate and the old 16th-century house was demolished to make way for a new mansion house and stable range (1837, by John Tait), together with further ancillary structures. It is likely that the Ainslie family also established the shrubbery and added further planting in the parks and wooded shelterbelts (2nd edition Ordnance Survey map, 1894).

In 1944, the well-known agriculturalist, Sir David Lowe, bought the Elvingston estate (Shirlaw 2002: 28-29). He commissioned the restoration of the house, outbuildings and 18th-century dovecot and switched the focus of the grounds to market gardening. He planted a large orchard, which is located to the west of the house and the northwest of the walled garden.

Sir David Lowe had an interest in breeding rare daffodil varieties and areas of daffodil planting survive. Lowe acquired some of his Narcissi stock from the Brodie family and he concentrated his interests on the paler yellow varieties. Lowe died in 1980 and the lands of the estate were mostly divided and sold in lots. The inner designed grounds around Elvingston House and its ancillaries were bought by another private individual in the late 1980s.

In the 1990s, the section of the modern A1 road from Tranent to Haddington was routed through the southern part of the policies.

Other changes include the creation of a circular pond with central sculpture in the grounds in front of the house. To the south of the core garden grounds, a large single storey office building (the Elvingston Science Centre) was opened in 1997.

1.5 Landscape Components

Architectural features:

The focal point of the designed landscape is **Elvingston House**, a three storey mansion house in Scots Jacobean style designed by the architect John Tait in 1837 to replace a 16th-century house. It is category B listed along with the adjacent **stable court**, immediately to the east, which dates from the same period. The 18th-century **dovecot** (listed category B) is situated to the north of the courtyard and is three-tiered, cylindrical and castellated with two porthole windows. The single storey **East Lodge** (listed category B) was built circa 1800. The **South Lodge**, meanwhile, dates to circa 1837 and was probably designed by John Tait alongside his work on

Elvingston House. Other buildings include the **walled garden**, in place by the mid-19th century (Ordnance Survey 1854) and a **Gardener's Cottage**.

Other ancillary buildings and cottages are located further east at Trabroun, just outside of the inventory boundary. These were formerly part of the Elvingston estate, and include the earlier 19th-century **Trabroun steading with dovecot** (listed category B).

Drives and approaches:

The main access to Elvingston House is a short straight drive leading westwards into the grounds from the gate at the East Lodge. The 1st edition OS map shows this entrance as a tree-lined avenue with a second parallel avenue just to the south, of which some of the trees survive. In the 19th and earlier 20th century the principal access to the house was the long straight drive leading north from the gate at the South Lodge. The northern part of this drive remains as a track however access from the South Lodge was cut off in the later 20th century when the A1 trunk road was built, cutting through the south end of the landscape. Elvingston can also now be accessed from the west by a road that leads to the farm steading and an adjacent later 20th century office building. A new drive running east to west across the centre of the landscape gives access to the Gardener's Cottage within the east of the site.

Paths and walks:

There is a path leading from the north of the house around to the southwest to arrive at the walled garden. The former, now redundant, main drive entrance is also now a path track.

Parkland:

The south parkland is used for grazing horses from a livery and stabling business operating from the site and contains some fine parkland trees dating from the earlier 19th century. Younger plantings introduced at various times include some trees planted by Sir David Lowe in the second half of the 20th century. Species include oak, beech, chestnut, elm, silver birch and some later conifers. Some young cherry trees have been planted along the east drive.

To the north of the offices and shrubbery, the north park is under field crop cultivation although some of the park trees remain, including a Monkey puzzle on a field boundary.

Woodland:

Small copses of woodland, parkland trees and shelterbelts at Elvingston contribute to the scenic qualities of the local landscape. Tree species include oak, beech, sycamore, spruce and larch.

Water Features:

A circular pond was installed after 1986. It features a central sculpture of a reclining figure by the Ukrainian sculptor Valentin Znova. It is located on a newly laid out axis on the lawn immediately in front of the house. There is also a small pond next to the lawn area to the west of the house.

The Gardens:

A mature shrubbery immediately to the west of the house was probably planted by the Ainslie family and contains a specimen Douglas fir, a large Cedar of Lebanon and box hedging. The lawn is screened and sheltered by high hedges of yew and laurel and there are ornamental shrubs planted within the garden including rhododendrons and lilac.

Walled Garden

There is a high walled kitchen garden to the west of the house, south of the shrubbery. During Sir David Lowe's ownership of Elvingston (1944-1980), the garden was used for breeding rare daffodils. In 1987 the Inventory record noted the walled garden as having an extensive range of glasshouses along the south-facing wall, some box hedges, a herbaceous border along its north/south axis and many fruit trees. The interior of the walled garden was not seen in 2015 but is understood to contain domestic gardens with lawns, trees and a larger area used as an equestrian manege (an enclosed area where horses and riders are trained). There is a single greenhouse remaining on the north wall.

A large orchard is located to the west and northwest of the walled garden. It was created as part of the market garden venture undertaken by David Lowe from the mid to later 20th century.

2. Assessment Against the Criteria for Inclusion on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

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>]

2.1 Value as individual work of art in its own right

Value: Little

The designed landscape at Elvingston is modest in scale. While the site attained some renown for the quality and extent of rare varieties of daffodils in the second half of the 20th century, there is no known evidence to suggest that Elvingston was otherwise particularly valued as a work of art in its own right during its history.

Designed landscapes that achieve high or outstanding interest in this category are normally associated with a large number of positive written contemporary accounts illustrating how they were viewed and appreciated by contemporary society.

Apart from a brief period in the ownership of Sir John Clerk of Penicuik, Elvingston has no known association with any known landscape designer and there is no evidence to suggest that Elvingston played a trendsetting role for other designed estate landscapes.

2.2 Historic value

Value: Little

Research by Shiplaw into surviving historic documents charts the sequence of ownership of Elvingston from the medieval period to the modern era (Shiplaw 2002).

However, there is no known large or rare collection of archives, maps or documents that relate specifically to the development of the designed landscape itself.

The scale of the landscape is modest and the range of components present is typical for a country house estate of the 18th-19th century. Based on current knowledge, Elvingston is not an outstanding representative of any particular period of the historic development of gardens and designed landscapes and there are no individual components that form an outstanding example of any particular period or style.

2.3 Horticultural, arboricultural or silvicultural value

Value: Some

Elvingston has some older parkland trees marking the remnants of its previous avenues to the south and east of the house, and some mature specimen trees in the grounds. There are also a large quantity of daffodil bulbs. These relate to daffodil collection and propagation by the owner of the estate from circa 1944-1980 and are of some interest.

Otherwise, there is no outstanding or scientific collection of plants, shrubs or trees that is distinguished by its variety, or inclusion of unusual species or rarities. There are no known county or national champion tree specimens at Elvingston.

(www.treeregister.org).

2.4 Architectural value

Value: High

The designed landscape forms the setting for Elvingston House, which is listed at category B in recognition of its architectural and historic interest. Other buildings of note include Elvingston dovecot (LB12703), Elvingston South Lodge with Gatepiers

and Quadrant Walls (LB12704) and Elvingston East Lodge with Gatepiers (LB13838).

The B listed dovecot relates to the earlier house on the site and is a rare example of a building of its type. There is a walled garden and Gardener's Cottage to the south of the main house which also contribute some architectural value to the overall site.

2.5 Scenic value

Value: Some

The parklands, shelterbelts, remains of tree-lined avenues and architectural features, including the lodges, signify the presence of a historic designed landscape and provide some visual contrast to the open arable grounds within this coastal margin landscape. Elvingston is one of a number of historic designed landscapes that help to define the overall landscape character in this region.

The loss of some large-scale features, including the parkland area to the north of the house and the former parkland trees, together with the introduction of new developments of the business complex within the designed landscape, and the A1 dual carriageway have lessened the scenic value of Elvingston although it still probably merits 'some' value in this category.

Designed landscapes that are of high or outstanding value in this category will make a major contribution to the quality of the surrounding landscape by virtue of their size, location or nature, or are particularly prominent because of rarity or contrast with the surrounding landscapes. They may have extensive policy woodlands or distinctive landscape features (such as the avenue at Haddo House in Aberdeenshire, for example), or be particularly distinctive in long-distance, panoramic views, (such as Brodick Castle on the east coast of the Island of Arran).

2.6 Nature Conservation value

Value: Some

There are no nationally designated habitats within the Inventory boundary. However, there is some inherent nature conservation value within the site due to the variety of habitats present, including mature and large standing dead wood trees, and the large orchard.

2.7 Archaeological value

Value: Little

There are no scheduled monuments at Elvingston.

Trial trenching in 2007 advance of development around the Elvingston Science Centre revealed an area of rig and furrow, which is of minor interest. Otherwise,

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

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

Although the wider estate was divided and sold in lots in the 1980s, Elvingston House retained its core, inner designed grounds and ancillary buildings. The surviving buildings, garden components, shelterbelts, parkland areas and some tree alignments contribute to the legibility of Elvingston as a historic designed landscape that was mainly created in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Twentieth century changes in the landscape have however had some impact on the overall integrity of the landscape. These include the conversion of former parkland to arable fields and the development of business facilities with modern buildings and access arrangements. The construction of the A1 from Tranent to Haddington in the 1990s cut through the south drive, divorcing the core of the estate from former access points via the south gates and lodge.

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

Elvingston is a modest estate landscape in East Lothian, created during the 18th and 19th century. William Law improved and enclosed the lands in the 18th century, while Robert Ainslie expanded and modernised the estate from 1836. Market gardening and daffodil breeding were features of the grounds in the mid-later 20th century. More recent additions include a pond and ornamental fountain to the south of the house.

This assessment has found that the landscape has high architectural value as the setting for a category B listed house and for the survival of other 18th and 19th century ancillary estate buildings, including an 18th century dovecot. Other surviving components, including parkland trees and shelterbelts contribute some scenic interest, while the old orchard and other habitats provide some nature conservation value. The daffodil collection is of some horticultural interest. Research into the history of Elvingston from available documentary sources is also of minor historic interest (Shiplaw 2002).

However, this assessment also found that the scale of the landscape is modest and the range of components present is typical for a country house estate of the 18th-19th century. Elvingston designed landscape is not an outstanding example of its period or style, and contains no individually outstanding elements. It is unlikely to have performed a trendsetting role for landscape design and there is no evidence for the involvement of a well-known designer. There are no plant, tree or shrub collections of any great horticultural significance. While policy parklands and architectural features contribute some scenic value to this part of East Lothian, the landscape is

not sufficiently large or distinctive to make a major contribution to the scenic quality of the area.

Later 20th-century changes to the landscape have had some impact on the overall integrity of the design, most notably the construction of the modern A1, which has severed the former access to Elvingston from the south (see Condition and Integrity, above).

In our current state of knowledge, Elvingston is no longer considered to meet the criteria for designation and will be removed from the inventory.

5. Designation Boundary

N/A

6. Other Information

N/A

7. References

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