



## Case information

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<b>Case ID</b>	300017737
<b>File Reference</b>	HGPI/P/FC/10
<b>Name of Site</b>	St Andrews Botanic Garden

<b>Local Authority</b>	Fife Council
<b>National Grid Reference</b>	NO 50254 16187
<b>Designation No. (if any)</b>	GDL00405
<b>Designation Type</b>	Garden and Designed Landscape
<b>Case Type</b>	Designation

<b>Start Date</b>	25/01/2016
<b>Decision Date</b>	07/11/2016

## 1. Decision

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In our current state of knowledge, St Andrews Botanic Garden is considered to meet the criteria for inclusion on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes. The garden has been designated.

## 2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

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### 2.1 Designation Background

There are no listed buildings, scheduled monuments or nationally designated areas of scenic or nature conservation interest within the boundary of St Andrews Botanic Garden.

Hepburn Gardens Conservation Area (CA171) borders the site to the west and St Andrews Conservation Area (CA170) borders the site to the north.

### 2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

### 3. Assessment

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St Andrews Botanic Garden was visited on 15/04/2016.

#### 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**) and St Andrews Botanic Garden was found to meet the criteria.

*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\***

## **St Andrews Botanic Garden**

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### **1. Description**

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

A long-established university botanic garden, relocated to its present site in 1960, and internationally recognised for its diversity, special collections and educational exchange programmes.

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

1960–1970

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

St Andrews Botanic Garden covers a total of 7 hectares (18.5 acres) of former agricultural land to the southwest of St Andrews town centre. There is a natural slope down towards the tree-lined gully of the Kinness Burn, running 0.5 kilometres along the northwest boundary of the garden. The trees lining the burn were planted in the 1890s. The garden is further sheltered from winds by a thick belt of tall conifers that defines the southwest perimeter of the garden. A 300m-long embankment of a disused railway viaduct bounds the site to the east, while the Canongate road defines the south boundary. The embankment of the viaduct has been planted with trees to further increase shelter from winds.

The gardens are laid out over a series of individually contrasting areas. The natural topography has been landscaped to emphasise and separate garden areas, including a rock garden, water garden, heather garden, woodland valley, glasshouses, plant family order beds and herbaceous borders. There are distinct microclimates towards the centre of the garden, created in part by tree and shrub planting. This encourages a range of more than 8000 species of herbaceous plants, ferns, shrubs and trees to flourish.

The glasshouses, covering an area of 2000 square metres, are located to the west of the site, near the public entrance and the car park accessed from Canongate.

The church spires of the central St Andrews townscape are visible from the formal bedding areas of the garden.

## 1.4 Site History

St Andrews Botanic Garden, owned by the University of St Andrews, is the third oldest established botanic garden in Scotland (after Edinburgh and Glasgow). The development history is well known and has been most recently recorded by Robert John Mitchell in his book 'The Botanic Garden in St Andrews, The History of 125 Years, 1889-2014' (2015).

During these years, three men provided an almost continuous management and maintenance role for the garden: Dr John Hardie Wilson (from 1889 to 1920), John Lanchbury Mowat (from 1925 to 1967) and Robert John Mitchell (from 1962 to 2015). Diversity has been a key theme of the botanic garden at St Andrews throughout its history.

St Andrews University has a distinguished history of botanical studies beginning in 1825. The first Botanic Garden in St Andrews dates from 1889 when Dr John Hardie Wilson laid out 78 'order beds' for teaching and research purposes in a walled garden at St. Mary's College in South Street and Westburn Street. Order beds consist of plants from the same botanical group grown together to demonstrate evolutionary theory in flowering plants. Hardie's beds contained 828 plants based on Bentham and Hooker's classification for the plant kingdom.

John Lanchbury Mowat was appointed 'First Gardener' in 1925 and was closely involved in the development of the garden until his retirement in 1967. During his tenure, the St Andrews Botanic Garden joined the International Botanic Garden Seed Exchange in 1933, helping to establish an international reputation.

During the Second World War the collection was partly dispersed across the gardens of various university-owned sites in the town including Dyer's Brae and Westburn Lane before relocation to its present permanent home. Robert John Mitchell played a leading role in the move to the present site from 1960 and was curator of the garden until 2015.

The present site at Bassaguard was largely developed between 1962 and 1970. Access roads were laid in 1963 and various areas readied for planting using distinct soil types including clay loam, sand, gravel and peat. In 1967, twelve established trees were transplanted from the St Mary's College site as a historical link with the old garden and to provide structure and maturity in the new garden from an early stage. Many of these survive in the present garden. Further tangible evidence of this continuity is the ongoing use of order beds at the Bassaguard site. A number of trees from further afield, including the Royal Botanic Garden of Edinburgh and from England were transplanted between 1964 and 1970, with many others grown from seed.

The university was in charge of development of the garden at its current site until 1987 when Fife Council was granted a 25 year lease to manage the garden. The

Friends of the Botanic Garden was founded by Robert Mitchell in 1981 as a support organisation.

In 2015 the university, Fife Council and the Friends of the Botanic Garden agreed to the formation of the St Andrews Botanic Gardens Trust to take over the management of the garden.

At the time of writing, the Trust corresponds with more than 420 botanic gardens around the world (2016). It continues to play a strong educational role for university students of botany and schoolchildren alike, while also providing amenity to the local community and the visiting public.

## 1.5 Landscape Components

### Paths and walks:

There is a main path or avenue running southwest to northeast through the centre of the garden. To either side of this avenue, serpentine pathways connect each distinct themed area as they merge into one another. Some paths have been designed to exploit the natural topography of key areas such as the rock, water and peat gardens, with paths leading to elevated areas to take in scenes of contrasting scale and plant variety. For the woodland walk, see under Arboretum below.

### The Gardens:

There are currently over 300 trees in St Andrews Botanic Garden including a collection of more than 50 recorded champion trees. There are 6 British champions including a Koehne mountain ash and an apricot tree, 14 Scottish champions and 39 county champions. Many of these trees were planted after 1970 and are growing fast as a result of the microclimates purposefully created as part of the garden design.

The garden has a significant number of individual species collections including 111 varieties of *berberis* and 156 varieties of cotoneaster. Other collections include *sorbus*, rowan, rhododendron, honeysuckle (*caprifoliaceae*), heather (*ericaceae*), and rose (*rosacea*).

Geographical collections include groups of Chinese, Western South American and Sino-Himalayan plants. In 2012 a survey by Plant Heritage ('Conserving Cultivars', Sept 2012) identified 43 plants in the gardens rare enough to be threatened in cultivation of which 23 were cultivars unique to St Andrews Botanic Garden.

Distinct themed areas within the garden include:

The **Water Garden** (established 1974-76) which is situated on sloping ground to the north of the rock garden and forms a centrepiece of the garden. It has a sequence of three cascades, stepping down into small ponds and terminating in a fifty foot pond, located on lower ground near the Kinness Burn. Water gathered at this location prior

to the construction of the garden, so the water garden is evidence of the designers working with and embellishing the natural topography of the site.

The **Order Beds** are laid out according to the Cronquist taxonomic system, with 134 plant families divided into five major groups in a triangular-plan bedding plan, radiating outwards from the earliest plants at the centre to the more recently evolved species at the furthest edges. Plants from the same botanical group are grown together to illustrate the characteristics they share, and to demonstrate evolutionary theory in flowering plants.

The **Rock Garden** (developed 1964-67) was inspired by the great rock garden at Edinburgh and the former rock garden at St Mary's College. The rock garden area has terraces, cliffs and scree slopes, interspersed with limestone pavement.

The **Heath Garden** is located in a sheltered area near the centre of the garden and contains a wide range of heaths, heathers and small conifers.

The **Woodland and Rhododendron Garden** covers a sloping and terraced bank of peat soil with pathways containing around 80 dwarf rhododendron species, trees and ericaceous plants.

The **Glasshouses** (established 1966-71) contain themed collections, with plants from temperate to tropical climates and covering a wide geographical range. The four main glasshouses, which were relocated from nearby Craigtoun Park in 1966, are linked by a corridor under glass to the north with succulents, cacti, alpines, Mediterranean species and an area housing some of the less robust rhododendrons. Educational facilities are housed within two of the glasshouses. There is also a herbarium with 10,000 specimens, a seed bank and a plant record database.

The rectangular-plan **Herb Garden** to the east of the glasshouses is more formal, set out on a Saltire Cross pattern.

There is a specimen conifer grouping in the **Arboretum (Woodland Walk)** to the narrow, east corner of the garden.

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

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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>]

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

**Value:** Some

While the botanic research and educational value of this garden are of primary concern, the garden has also been designed with a long-term aesthetic and amenity value in mind. It has been described in the national and local press as ‘a hidden gem among gardens of Scotland’ (The Scotsman, 08/11/2015). Robert Mitchell was largely responsible for the design and setting out of the garden, the layout of which is a purposeful mix of organic, naturalistic areas with more formal areas which exploit the natural topography of the sloping site. A flow of serpentine pathways help to define each themed area as they merge into one another. It is a good representative example of a purpose-built, late-20<sup>th</sup> century botanic garden in Scotland.

## **2.2 Historic value**

**Value:** High

St Andrews is the third oldest botanic garden in Scotland after Edinburgh and Glasgow and its history is well known (Mitchell 2015). Documentation and recording of the garden collection by J. H. Wilson in the 1880s, J. A. Macdonald during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and more recently by R. J. Mitchell provides important historic evidence of its early and ongoing development.

Although the garden was moved from its original site in St Mary’s College in the 1960s, the present site contains tangible evidence of its earlier history including a number of established trees moved from the earlier garden, most of which survive in the present garden (2016). The pioneering use of order beds, first established at St Andrews and at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, provides a tangible link and continuity with the historic development of horticultural and botanical classification and theory. No other botanic gardens in Scotland continue to cultivate order beds in this fashion.

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

**Value:** Outstanding

The founding principle of botanic gardens is the acquisition of plants for teaching, research and conservation purposes. St Andrews Botanic Garden contains large specialist collections and some unusual and rare species of known wild origin, some of which are endangered or seldom seen in cultivation. The diverse botanic collection at St Andrews is of outstanding value, with over 8000 plant species or ‘taxa’ represented, including more than 50 champion trees, special collections, rare cultivars, herbarium and plant records. The collection is in good condition, is being propagated and is well documented.

## **2.4 Architectural value**

**Value:** Little

There are no listed buildings in the garden. Sections of rubble wall associated with an earlier agricultural use of the site are the only built structures that predate the

relocation of the botanic garden in 1960. The glasshouses, including four that were relocated from Craigtoun Park in 1996, are of a standard design for their size and age.

## **2.5 Scenic value**

**Value:** Some

The garden occupies a low-lying site surrounded by suburban development. Protective belts of conifer and shrub planting around the perimeter of the compact, 7 hectare site largely inhibits long-range scenic views of the garden or the mixed deciduous tree canopy. The trees around the perimeter provide a contrast with the surrounding landscape, which is mainly residential.

## **2.6 Nature Conservation value**

**Value:** Some

Diverse garden areas within a relatively small area provide distinct habitats for a variety of birds and other wildlife including herons, amphibians and bats.

## **2.7 Archaeological value**

**Value:** Little

There are no scheduled monuments or any other known archeological sites in St Andrews Botanic Garden. At present, value in this category derives only from the potential for future survey or investigation to reveal further information about the landscape over time.

## **3. Condition and Integrity**

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

St Andrews Botanic Garden has had long-term and ongoing dedicated stewardship, management, ownership and investment over a 125 year period by the University of St Andrews, Fife Council and, after 2015, by the St Andrews Botanic Garden Trust. As a complete and diverse botanic garden collection, the site has a high level of integrity and is actively maintained to high standards.

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

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The diverse living tree and plant collection at St Andrews is of outstanding horticultural value, with over 8000 plant species or 'taxa' represented from around the world, some of which are endangered or seldom seen in cultivation, and skillfully laid out amidst trees and shrubs, ponds and waterfall, outstanding rock and peat gardens, a herb garden, herbaceous borders and extensive glasshouses.

Extensive documentation and recording of the garden collections by J.H Wilson in the 1880s, J.A Macdonald during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and more recently by R.J Mitchell provides important historic evidence of its early and ongoing development.

There are more than 50 champion trees including 6 British Champions, special collections, rare cultivars, and a herbarium. The botanic research and educational value of this garden are prioritised, with the garden corresponding with other botanic gardens around the world. The garden has been designed to provide a strong educational role for university students of botany and schoolchildren, while simultaneously providing long-term aesthetic and amenity value for the local community and the visiting public.

In our current state of knowledge it meets the criteria for designation.

## 5. Other Information

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N/A

## 6. References

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### Map Sources

Ordnance Survey (Surveyed 1896, Published 1898), 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 25 Inches to the Mile, London, Ordnance Survey.

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Mowat J. L. (1959) *University Botanic Garden, St Andrews*. Journal, Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society 1959, pp38-48.

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### Web-based Sources

St Andrews Botanic Garden website: <http://www.st-andrews-botanic.org/> [accessed 12/06/2016].

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