

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority

Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park
Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

09 Balloch Castle

Consultants

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Legend

- Designed landscape boundary
- Neighbouring sites
- Notable views
- Main drives
- Principal building
- Scheduled ancient monument
- Gardens
- Former garden
- Walled garden
- Woodland
- Parkland



0 0.05 0.1 0.2 km

Site 09

**Balloch
Castle**

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June 2011

09 Balloch Castle

County Dunbartonshire

Parish Bonhill

NGR NS 390 830; OS 1:25,000 Sheet 347

Designations

Listing Balloch Castle (HB No. 123): Category A
 Balloch Castle, north lodge, gatepiers and boundary wall (HB No. 43220): Category C(S)
 Balloch Castle, south lodge, boundary walls and gatepiers (HB No. 43221): Category B
 Balloch Castle, walled garden (HB No. 43222): Category B

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland – Balloch Castle
 (Site No. 42)

Scheduled Ancient Monument – Site of Balloch Castle

Ancient Woodland – majority of trees and woods

National Scenic Area – north boundary of designed landscape marches with
 Loch Lomond NSA

Substantial proportion of woodlands covered by SFGS grant scheme

REASON FOR INCLUSION

An Inventory site that is an excellent example of a medium-sized well preserved estate landscape that has been adapted to public use, operating as a County Park.

LOCATION AND EXTENT

A medium sized, near-rectangular designed landscape, located at the south end of Loch Lomond, on the east side of its outflow to the river Leven. The landscape lies to the north of the A811. The south gates on Balloch Road, which runs parallel to and to the north of the A811 Lomond Road, provide pedestrian access for visitors, with the public transport terminuses, car parks and facilities of Balloch adjoining. Vehicular access to internal car parks (located in the north part of the site) and for services and maintenance is via the unclassified Mollanbowie Road and north gates. The site occupies west-facing slopes, steepening towards the north, giving outstanding views across the loch from many parts.

Boturich Castle designed landscape (01) adjoins to the north and the site faces Cameron House designed landscape (14) across the loch, with other sites further north.

*Balloch Castle seen from
 west shore of loch near
 Auchendennan (07)*



LANDSCAPE HISTORY

Maps and documentary evidence

Blaeu (1654) marks 'Bellach', immediately to the south of 'Pitturichs' (Boturich Castle). Roy (c1750) shows 'Ballach' as one of several groups of buildings (fermtouns?) in the area, each with an indication of rig cultivation and a small amount of woodland. Another settlement named 'Ballach Boat' is located further south on the east bank of the river Leven. Ross (1777) also marks a settlement and surrounding woodland as 'Ballich', with 'Baloch' marking the crossing point on the river, opposite 'Ferry Hill' on the west bank. 'Balloch' appears with 'Boat of Balloch' on Ainslie (1821), though without an indication of the castle or policies. 'Balloch Cas' appears for the first time on Thomson (1823), with both south and east approaches marked, and an indication of associated planting. The designed landscape, comprising castle, court of offices, walled garden, parkland and policy planting, is well seen on the 1st edition OS and subsequent maps. The website www.valeofleven.org.uk attributes the design of this landscape to Lugar, but this has yet to be supported by documentary evidence. The present landscape, largely unchanged from that recorded by the OS 150 years ago, is now a Country Park.

Building history and ownership

Coventry (2000) describes the original 13th century castle of Balloch, property of the Earls of Lennox, as having been "a stronghold with a ditch", of which the only remains are some earthworks. Coventry records its passage to the Stewarts of Darnley, following the forfeiture of the estate by the Earls of Lennox in 1425. The Ewings of Balloch are recorded in the 16th and 17th centuries, before the property passed into the hands, first of the Colquhouns of Luss in 1652, and later into those of the Buchanans of Ardoch at the start of the 19th century. It was John Buchanan of Ardoch, Glasgow merchant and banker, who commissioned London architect Robert Lugar (who had already begun work on neighbouring Tullichewan Castle in 1808 and who went on to design Boturich Castle (Site 01) for John Buchanan in 1830), to build the present Balloch Castle in 1809, described by Gifford & Walker (2002) as "a picturesque effusion of mock medievalism". With John Buchanan's move to neighbouring Boturich, Balloch passed briefly through the hands of Gibson Stott, before its sale to the Dennistoun-Brown family, who eventually sold it to Glasgow Corporation in 1915. In 1975 the park was leased to Dumbarton District Council, before its registration with the Countryside Commission for Scotland as a Country Park in 1980. The park, which is now maintained by West Dunbartonshire Council, was the subject of a £2.4 million Lottery-funded restoration project in 2003-2006.

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Roy c1750



Thomson 1820

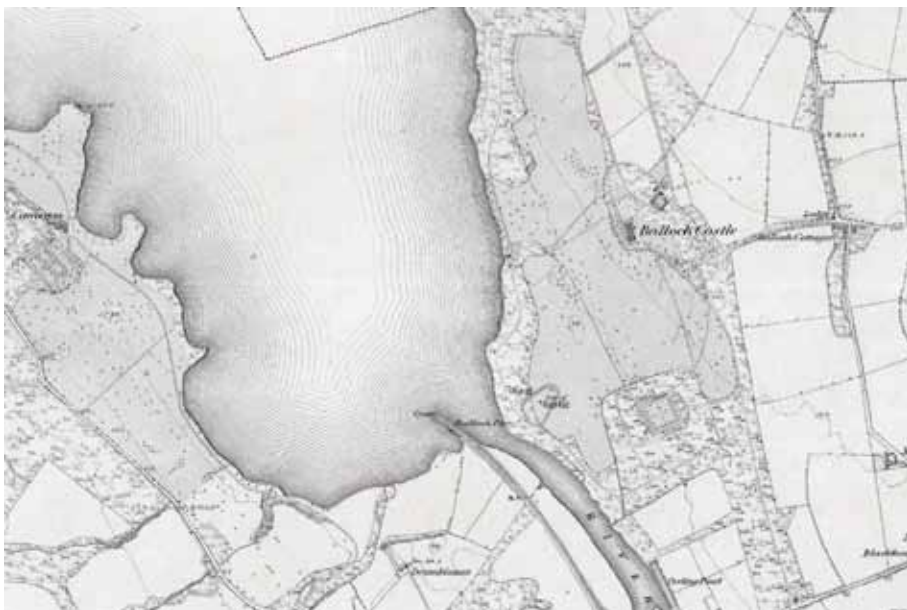


Ordnance Survey Popular
edition map 1923



Ordnance Survey 25" map
1861

Ordnance Survey 6" map
1861





Balloch Castle, Neale engraving, 1820s



Balloch Castle, Valentines postcard, 1930s



COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

Architectural features

Balloch Castle (listed Category A)

The castle is positioned centrally within the site in a commanding position that benefits from the best views and can be seen from many places within the parkland and from across the loch. Designed by Robert Lugar, built 1808-09 in castellated Tudor-gothic style, with slugged squared sandstone, ashlar margins and dressings. Stringcourse; hoodmolds; battlemented parapet; battered base course; blind cruciform arrow slits.

East elevation, facing arrival court: slightly concave 5-bay near-symmetrically elevation with lower service wing at angle to right. *Porte-cochère* at centre, broad segmental arch, framed by octagonal, dome capped columns, battlemented blocking course; half-glazed door. Round clock tower to outer right, machicolated parapet, ashlar bellcote. Parapetted screen wall to castle yard recessed to outer right, 3-centred arch coach door, pedestrian door to left.

West elevation facing park and loch: 5-bay asymmetrical main block; 5-bay service block recessed to outer left. Octagonal tower advanced at centre, machicolated battlemented parapet.

The designs for the three castles built by Robert Lugar in Dunbartonshire were published in 1811 and were influential in the development of secular Gothic style. Balloch apparently incorporates an earlier plainer building. The house is currently underused with no public access and the café closed; some office use. A high level of car parking in the forecourt, packed with cars while the main car park was virtually empty at time of visit.



South gateway and lodge



Lochside path and boat-house (Slipway café)

South lodge and gateway

(South lodge with boundary walls and gatepiers, listed Cat. B)

Earlier to mid 19th century lodge, remodelled early 20th century. Single storey, rectangular-plan lodge. Bull-rock-faced rubble with droved sandstone dressings.

Gatepiers and boundary walls: 2 pairs of Tudoresque gatepiers, central main gate flanked by pedestrian gates; octagonal ashlar piers, moulded cap. Rock-faced quadrant walls with moulded coping; outer square pier.

North lodge and gateway

(North lodge with gatepiers and boundary wall, listed Cat. B)

Earlier to mid 19th century. Single storey, 3-bay, T-plan Tudor- detailed lodge. Rubble with harl-pointing, stugged ashlar margins and dressings.

Gatepiers and boundary walls: square piers with deep square caps; sandstone wall with semicircular coping.

Stables and offices

Single storey courtyard of red sandstone buildings located to the east of the castle; used for park management and maintenance purposes.

Messy material storage area on east of drive, open to public from drive.

Boat-house

Located centrally on loch shore below the castle; simple gable-ended single storey red sandstone building with slate roof. Now used as 'Slipway' café. Adjoining boat launching slipway.

Walled garden (listed Cat. B)

Early 19th century square walled garden. Squared and snecked rubble, harl-pointing; red sandstone quoins; sandstone slab coping swept up towards main wall. Droved red sandstone margined doors, cast-iron gate. Large depressed arch gate in E wall; cast-iron gates.

Boundary and field enclosures

Stone wall along south boundary and drystone wall along north boundary; east boundary not seen.

Drives and paths

Main drive – leads north from the South gateway in a straight then gently sweeping line as it approaches the castle; the broad route is impressive passing through wooded areas featuring large conifers, then opening out to views of the loch across parkland, with large mature oak and elm along the route. The route divides before the castle with branches serving the castle forecourt and stables

Main (south) drive



Car park



Walled garden central path



ABOVE Two views of Chinese garden

areas. North of the castle a narrower route leads past the former orchard (? , now young woodland) to Horsehouse Wood and the north of the site.

Car park – located to north of stables; access via North drive.

Lochside path – attractive route running close to the water from near the walled garden to the north boundary; linked to the Main drive at south by a cross path and with various other links.

North drive – provides service and visitor vehicular access to castle area and visitor car park north of the stables. Car park formerly in South wood with access via South gate.

The path along north boundary in Fairy Glen links with 3km of paths on Whinney Hill Wood managed by the Woodland Trust within Boturich designed landscape (01).

Gardens and policy planting

Balloch has a simple layout within its rectangular form with woodland areas to the south and north and broad irregular tree belts along the east and west, with a wide area of parkland on west facing slopes centrally, opening to the loch below the castle.

Gardens

Two high quality and well-planted ornamental garden areas are major attractions for visitors, centred on the walled garden to the south of the castle and the formal shrubbery to the north.

Walled garden – traditional quartered layout with broad borders along walls, sub-divided by yew hedges along path, with gravel paths, lawns, trellised walks and central mosaic paving (by Maggie Howarth); borders planted with mixed shrubs and herbaceous plants. Originally built c1808 at the time of the castle; footpath system as seen on 1st edition OS maps. Restored in 2005 with HLF funding.

Secret Garden – name given to ornamental garden outside the walled garden to the south laid out in 1915 when Glasgow City Council purchased the estate. Laid out formally with rock-edged small paths both side of a central axis and planted with choice species of trees and shrubs including Acers and camellias. Restored in 2005 and replanted with similar species.

Chinese Garden – added in the late 19th century; an area of terraced paths in a D-shape that enclose a seating area; former site of pond and fountain. The whole is planted with rhododendrons and azaleas in variety and specimen trees, including a pair of Monkey-puzzles and some large specimen rhododendrons providing an impressive display in spring. Here and elsewhere there are many fine



specimen trees that have been listed in a tree trail leaflet (not known if currently available); Alan Mitchell measured over 50 of the trees.

Quarry pond, rock and water garden – feature to east of stables; remains of rockwork, pool and planting; poor condition.

Parkland

Parkland is a particular and extensive feature of Balloch and is well stocked with large mature broadleaves, including oak, beech and lime, and younger planting of smaller species including birch and ornamental varieties; large Holm oak on west side of castle. The central part of the parkland is close mown while areas to the north and south are occasionally mown grass / wild flower meadow.

Woodland

South woods (Moss o’Balloch plantations) – mixed broadleaves including oak, beech, elm and ash, yew, with scattered exotic conifers particularly near the main drive, including silver firs, cypresses, Wellingtonia and Douglas fir.

North woods (including Horsehouse wood and Fairy Glen) – more natural broadleaved woodland than that to south, including oak, beech, lime, sycamore and holly; younger trees in south part where former parkland is now wooded; more mature to north, with occasional conifers. The Burn of Balloch valley beside the north boundary is called the Fairy Glen and is a typical Picturesque feature of the 19th century adapted from the natural glen with paths and viewpoints. Alder is dominant along the lochside.

Water features

Loch, Fairy glen and Quarry garden are the main features, covered elsewhere.



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*Parkland trees including
mature forest species and
younger planting*

North woods



Quarry pond



Lochside woodland



Fairy Glen, Horsehouse wood

Play areas

*View from Balloch Castle to
Cameron House (14) and
Auchendennan (07)*



Play facilities

Two well-equipped play areas for different age groups are located near the shore path, west of the castle.

Views and vistas

Views from the castle and landscape across the parkland to loch and its opposite shore are many and varied, with those from the west front of the castle, the Main drive and the Chinese garden being the most notable. The Lochside path gives a different viewpoint.

The site's closeness to Balloch and all its visitor facilities and to the designed landscapes on the west shore at the south end of the loch, and visibility from the many boats and steamer active in this area and from sections of the A82 on the west, gives this designed landscape high visibility and an outstanding contribution to the scenery of this part of the loch, together with Boturich adjoining to the north.

Visual intrusions

The only intrusive features of note are the extent of car parking at the forecourt of the castle and a materials storage yard open to public view and entry beside the drive east of the stables. More extensive disturbed areas and soil bunds lie in the south part of South woods that will need restoring to woodland in time.

Archaeology

The site of the original castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, some earthworks are all that remains to mark the site.

The only Scottish Sites and Monuments records for the site relate to the 18th century Dumbarton-Tyndrum military road to the south of the site and a crannog identified offshore close to the original castle.

PUBLIC ACCESS AND EVENTS

Balloch Castle is a popular place attracting large numbers of people, due to its outstanding landscape and setting, good range of facilities and programme of events, attracting visitors by car, coach and train, as well as more the locally-based population. There is no charge for entry.

As well as the extensive opportunities for walks in the woods, parkland, lochside and gardens, facilities provided include a Ranger Service and guided walks, play areas and sailing facilities. Café at the slipway. Good quality directional and information signs are provided, with new seating.

Balloch park is host to the annual Balloch Highland games each summer. In June 1991 Scottish folk-rock band Runrig played to an audience of 40,000. Oasis played a gig to 80,000 people over two nights here in the summer of 1996. BBC Radio 1 roadshow was used as a location for their annual live shows

in the 90s. In 2007 the first Live at Loch Lomond music festival took place in the grounds of the park.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL

Although in public ownership for almost 100 years, Balloch Castle retains its original character as a country house designed landscape, with little sign of the municipalisation that can affect similar more urban sites. Public investment in various periods has insured that the landscape has continued to evolve and the tree population has been diversified in age and species. Following a programme of HLF-funded improvements, in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council, LLTNP and Forestry Commission Scotland and Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire, in 2001-06, the park looks very fine and is an excellent example of a designed landscape in public ownership, with only a few problem areas (see Intrusive features above) and less than perfect spaces (Quarry pond). The lack of access to the castle and its former interpretation facilities and café is the major negative feature at present. The approach through a housing area to the North lodge for visitor in vehicles has also been criticised, although this has to be offset against the outstanding and traffic-free approach for walkers along the Main drive and the convenience of public transport (bus terminus and train station) and car parks near the South gate.

A development and management plan was prepared in 1980 but was not implemented. After a period of decline a new Conservation Management Plan was produced c2002 and formed the basis of the 2005 restoration. The park now appears to be in good heart, although vigilance will be required to avoid financial cutbacks and decline in quality affecting this outstanding designed landscape and visitor attraction.

Phytophthora lateralis, a pathogen that kills the roots of its host trees, was confirmed in Lawson cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) trees in the Country Park in 2010. *P. lateralis* had not previously been found in Britain, although there have been recent outbreaks in other European countries and of other *Phytophthora* types (see Ross Priory, 04). *Phytophthora ramorum* is also present at Balloch. *P. lateralis* usually kills most Lawson cypress trees that it infects, and is the main cause of mortality in Lawson cypress in its native range (western USA). About 80 Lawson cypresses in the park were dying or in poor condition and it is highly likely that *P. lateralis* was the cause. About 27 yew trees (*Taxus baccata*) have also been affected by *P. lateralis*. An Outbreak Management Team has been set up including representatives of Forestry Commission, West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) and LLTNPA. 117 Lawson cypress and yews have been felled and burnt, and £30,000 spent by WDC in controlling the outbreak (March 2011 figures). A joint seminar on the problem was held at Balloch in March 2011.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overall

Balloch Castle is an outstanding designed landscape that rates highly on all the values that make these places important culturally and as a recreational resource by society. Its contribution to local scenery is limited only by its relatively modest size, although when considered with its neighbour Boturich to the north its has a major effect. It is also an excellent example of a site in public ownership

Work of art

High

Historical

High

Horticultural / arboricultural / sylvicultural

High



Country Park information sign



Material compound east of stables



Work area in South wood

Architectural

Outstanding

Scenic

Outstanding

Nature conservation

High

Archaeological

Outstanding

Recreational

Outstanding

Primary Sources – Maps

J. Blaeu, *Levinia Vicecomitatus or the Province of Lennox* [after T. Pont] (1654)
– NLS Ref. WD3B/28

W. Roy, *Military Survey of Scotland* (1747-1755) – BL Refs. 14/2f & 04/8c via SCRAN

C. Ross, *Map of the Shire of Dumbarton* (1777) – NLS Ref. EMS.s.182

J. Ainslie, *Map of the Southern Part of Scotland* (1821) – NLS Ref. Newman 732

J. Thomson, *Dumbartonshire* (1823) – NLS Ref. EMS.s.712(15)

Ordnance Survey, *6" to the Mile : First Edition* (1860) – Dumbartonshire Sheet XVIII

Ordnance Survey, *1" to the Mile : Popular Edition* – Loch Lomond (1923)

Primary Sources – Other

Ordnance Survey, *Object Name Book for the Parish of Bonhill* – Dumbartonshire
Book 4, p.25 (1860)

J.P. Neale, *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen in ... Scotland*
(1818-1823)

H. Macdonald, *Days at the Coast* (1857)

W.& A.K. Johnston, *Balloch Castle* – Lithograph (c.1879)

Secondary Sources

M. Coventry, *The Castles of Scotland* (2006)

J. Gifford and F.A. Walker, *The Buildings of Scotland : Stirling and Central
Scotland* (2002)

F.A. Walker & F.J. Sinclair : *RIAS Illustrated Architectural Guide ; The North Clyde
Estuary* (1992)

Historic Scotland, *Scheduled Monument : Balloch Castle Ref. 3385* (1973)

Historic Scotland, *Listed Building Reports 123* (1971), 43220 and 43221 (1996)

Land Use Consultants, *An Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in
Scotland – Vol. 2* (1987)

Forestry Commission Scotland, 'GLADE Land Information Search' website

'Vale of Leven' website

APPENDIX

Historical Notes

Loretta Timperley's *A Directory of Landownership in Scotland c.1770* (1976) notes lands 'in Balloch' as being divided between David McIntyre, Robert Ewing, Alex[ander] Ewing, John Ewing and Daniel Thomson.

In J.P. Neale's *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen in ... Scotland* (1818-1823) it is noted that "...the present house is situated on rising ground, a short distance to the north of the site of the old castle, upon the east bank of the lake, and about a quarter of a mile distant from it ... The grounds are laid out with taste, and the view from the terrace and from the drawing room is very fine, commanding to the westward Loch Lomond, its opposite banks studded with gentlemen's seats, and to the south the beautiful Vale of Leven ... The walks along the lake and the rising ground, which are beautifully wooded, continue to a great distance, and trees interspersed in the park connect the plantations near to the castle, and extend up the hill behind".

Hugh Macdonald, in *Days at the Coast* (1857) described Balloch Castle, seen from a steamer on Loch Lomond as "...peeping over its great girdle of foliage, in fine relief against a gentle range of undulating hills".

The *OS Object Name Book* (Dunbartonshire Book 4 p.25) recorded Balloch Castle "... A residence so-called in the castle style of architecture, having extensive ornamental ground, gardens and offices attached, the property of and occupied by A.J.D. Brown" .
