

1.1 Introduction

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Research supporting restoration of historic landscape features at

Method

The Green, Silloth

1.2 Overview

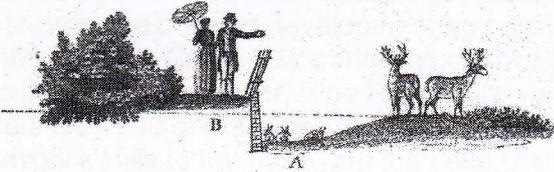
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The design of the railway was by the architect John Dobson who placed a station at Silloth. The station was built on the site of the old station which was built on the site of the old station.

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1.0 Introduction

The research was commissioned to inform restoration proposals for key historic landscape features on The Green, Silloth. This is required for the Stage II of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund under the 'Parks for People' Programme.

1.1 Method

The history of the designed landscape of The Green is described in the Conservation Management Plan and has provided initial information regarding the development of character areas and historic features of the park. In order to consolidate this information and compile detailed planting plans and proposals various published sources have been consulted and are listed below.

1.2 Overview

In 1853 the Carlisle and Silloth Bay Railway and Dock Company issued a prospectus for a Floating Dock and Harbour at Silloth Bay to be connected to Carlisle by a new railway line. The Marshall Dock, Silloth Harbour and Port of Carlisle were opened in 1859. The expansion of the town occurred during this period and the layout was shown on Lonsdale's plan printed in the Silloth Gazette in August, 1860.

The design of the town is attributed to the Liverpool architects J.W. & J. Hay, who planned a seaside resort with the green as focal point providing an area for promenading and playing games. This is an early example of town planning in north-west England. There was a growing interest in this discipline, fostered by the recognition by local authorities that they had a responsibility to organize building development and discourage ad hoc expansion of towns. The Green was partly laid out using spoil from the dock which was mounded to give shelter, 'The Pagoda' (a viewing shelter) was built on the mound c.1860 and allowed views across the Solway Firth to the Criffel and Kilavorick Hills to the north and the Lake District to the south, and salt water public baths were located in the centre of the Green.

In 1879 a catastrophe occurred at the harbour and the dock gates and piers collapsed. This event initiated a New Dock which was opened in 1885. A North British Railway poster shows grand formal gardens with parterres and fountains on The Green, however, they were crossed out as evidently the proposal was not fulfilled. Bulmer's Directory describes the Green in 1883 as covering 36 acres ... laid out as a promenade, for the benefit of visitors. Here they may play at various games, if so minded; or, whilst inhaling the invigorating sea breeze, they may enjoy the distant prospect of the Scottish hills over the Solway Firth. In 1897 the 'Solway Pavilion Company' proposed a grand pavilion but eventually there was only a group of small buildings in the region of the existing sewage pumping station and entertainments were run by Holme Cultram UDC rather than a company.

By the 1890s illustrations show new shrub beds on the green and the ordnance survey (1900) shows the mounding planted with conifers, an avenue of shrub beds leading to the baths and oval flower beds along the edge of Criffel Street. The green also includes a lawn tennis ground by this

time. These works, although not recorded in the archive, were probably funded by Holme Cultram Local Board as they were funding other environmental improvements in the area. In 1901 Bulmer's Directory records cricket, tennis, football and other games on The Green. The Ladies lavatories were built in 1910. In 1911 a shelter was built to mark the Coronation of King George in 1911 and The Green was used for a firework display and procession. The 1926 Ordnance Survey shows there was a putting green adjacent to the tennis courts which had increased in number by that time. A pair of kiosks had also been added to service the outdoor entertainment and concert party area 'Happy Valley'.

During the Second World War the shelters and Baths were requisitioned by the Home Defence. After the war the owners of The Green, LNER Railway Company, handed the site over to the Wigton Rural District Council. A renovation plan was proposed in 1949 and improvements included car parking, a paddling pool, shelters, a swimming pool and concert hall. It was not until 1953 that work began including, a shelter and two lavatories, paddling pool, two shelters, restoration of hard tennis courts, Rose Garden and seats on the dock wall promenade. In 1954 a commemorative rose garden, designed by the County Surveyor, was built to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. After deliberations in 1963 the Old Baths were finally extended in 1973. The crazy golf was relocated to a variety of sites on The Green until the 1970s after which it has stayed in the current location. The sewage pumping station was built in 1978 as part of a new sewage scheme for Silloth. In 1984 a tree maze was planted to celebrate 50 years of Silloth being part of Wigton Rural District Council. The maze was unsuccessful owing to vandalism and the tree posts were disliked, it was therefore removed from The Green. The schools in Silloth celebrated the Millennium by building a view-finder on the hill above the paddling pool. They also made a circular mosaic which was installed on The Green opposite Waver Street. The centenary of the Royal International was commemorated by the planting of an oak tree opposite the Golf Hotel in 2005. The District National Association of Round Tables installed a wishing well during that period on the edge of Criffel Street.

Planting

The first planting which was introduced on the green was a swath of pine trees on the sandhills to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The 1900 Ordnance Survey shows that structure tree planting and shrub beds had been in place in various locations on The Green by that time. The linear beds along the edge of Lawns Terrace which were planted during this period also included pine trees. Additional pine trees were also planted on the sandhills at the north end of The Green. Oval shaped beds were laid out opposite road junctions with Criffel Street which joined at 90 degrees. The avenue leading to the baths was planted with shrubs. An early 20th century photograph shows a graduation in height in the shrub beds suggesting the inner sections were planted with herbaceous plants.

The planting approach was common in many small town parks and apart from a small reduction in shrub beds was virtually unchanged until the 1950s when a rose garden was added north of the public baths. Some of the beds adjacent to Criffel Street were extended during the 1970s and commemorative trees have been planted over the years.

Significance

The Green, Silloth is a park of *considerable significance* as it is part of a small group of public parks deliberately developed in tandem with the newly introduced railway network during the mid nineteenth century. These parks, such as Cleethorpes Promenade developed during the 19th century (improved in 1904 to become Sidney Park) and Blackpool Promenade and North Shore (which were developed after Talbot Road station opened in 1846) drew large numbers of visitors in search of entertainment.

The layout for the town of 1857, attributed to the Liverpool architects J.W. & J. Hay, shows the town was planned as a seaside resort with the green as prominent area contributing to the overall plan – providing an area for promenading and playing games. This is an early example of town planning in north west England. There was a growing interest in this discipline, fostered by the recognition by local authorities that they had a responsibility to organize building development and discourage ad hoc expansion of towns and this is of *considerable significance*.

The integration of the park with the surrounding infrastructure of the town, the tree lined avenues and cobbled streets, shows an enlightened approach to the aesthetics of the newly developing town planning principles of the period and this is also of *considerable significance*.

The long standing commitment of the local authority to sustaining the park as a major attraction in Silloth is of *considerable significance* and is reflected by the phases of new features and facilities at The Green. To date the park represents three phases of development 1860s, 1900 and 1950s and enjoys continued commitment from the town council and local community.

The original pine plantations at Silloth Green were planted on spoil heaps from the docks to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee and this is of *considerable significance*

The park was built in a location which took advantage of spectacular views across the Solway Firth to the Criffel and Kilavorick Hills to the north and the Lake District to the south. The location of Silloth is an enduring tourist attraction and this is of *considerable significance*.

1950s Shelter

Apart from the pavilion there are three shelters in the park one of which was added in the 1950s and is of *considerable significance*. Built in modernist style, the shelter is redolent of the post war era of reconstruction in Britain at the time. The concrete and metal construction shows use of new building technology.

The Edwardian Toilets

The Edwardian Toilets are almost intact in their original form. The building is beautifully detailed and includes 6 cubicles with the original cast iron cistern. The wash basins stand below a four panelled mirror which is also original. All the joinery is polished oak and screens (one curved) hide the w.c. area from

the doorway. The brick floor is laid in a herringbone pattern and the walls are formed with glazed tiles. The survival of this building is of *considerable significance*.

The Pagoda

The Pagoda is of *exceptional significance* and is the most significant feature at Silloth Green as it is a purpose built structure dating from the inception of the park. The pagoda may have been designed by J.W. & J. Hay. These wooden park buildings varied widely in design but the overseas theme was popular in public parks for example a pagoda was placed on an island in Victoria Park, London in 1848. The Silloth pagoda may equally have echoed the Roman Boat House or Swiss Bridge at Birkenhead Park, Wirral, both installed during the 1840s and close to Liverpool where the Hays ran their practice.

Happy Valley

The location of Happy Valley is not immediately apparent but it seems that it was actually on an area now under the depot. A photograph of a pierrot show illustrates the stage in 'Happy Valley' was located adjacent to a curved bank which is also evident on the Ordnance Survey. The folk memories of Happy Valley are strong and this is of *some significance* as activities held there are well represented in local history records.

The Sunken Rose Garden

This was constructed to mark the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 and is of *considerable significance*. The rose garden is redolent of the garden design style of that period. The idea of creating precincts was an important consideration for public space and construction materials and planting also reflect the era. The elliptical enclosure relates strongly to the ovoid metal supports on the 1950s shelter nearby. The walls and paving are well crafted from an attractive local stone. Horticultural interest in roses was strong in the 1950s and new roses introduced at the time included floribundas such as 'Queen Elizabeth' (1954) and 'Garnette' (1951) also hybrid teas such as the iconoclastic 'Peace' (1946) and Mme. Louis Laperriere (1951).

Shrubs suitable for The Green c.1900

Berberis darwinii
Berberis stenophylla (*darwinii* x *empetrifolia*)
Berberis thunbergii

Buddleia veitchii

Cornus alba
Cornus sanguinea
Cornus spathii

Crateagus oxycantha 'Rosea'
Crateagus oxycantha 'Paul's Scarlet'

Deutzia cremata

Genista hispanica

Grisolinia littoralis

Juniperus communis oblonga pendula

Laburnum anagroides

Olearia x haastii

Pyrus salicifolia

Rosa rugosa

Santolina chamæcyparissus

Skimmia oblate

Spirea aguta

Symphoricarpus laevegatus (*rivularis*)

Syringa vulgaris

Herbaceous plants suitable for The Green c.1900

Achillea filipendula
Achillea ptarmica

Anaphalis margaritacea

Anemone japonica

Aquilegia canadensis
Aquilegia vulgaris

Artemesia abrotanum
Artemesia arborescens
Artemesia pontica

Aster amellus

Centaurea macrocephala

Cheiranthus

Crambe maritime

Crocsmia aurea

Echinops ritro

Eryngium maritimum
Eryngium giganteum

Euphorbia characais
Euphorbia myrsinites
Euphorbia nicaensis

Gaillardia aristata
Gaillardia pulchella

Gentiana asclepiadea

Geum chiloense

Helenium autumnale
Helenium 'Riverton Gem'

Hemerocallis fulva

Inula ensifolia
Inula glandulosa
Inula helenium
Inula hookeri
Inula occuls-christi
Inula royleana

Kniphofia uvaria

Lavendula angustifolia

Lychnis coronaria

Limonium latifolium

Lobelia cardinalis

Lobelia fulgens

Lychnis chalcedonica

Papaver orientale

Rudbeckia laciniata

Rudbeckia hirta

Santolina chamaecyparissus

Synsacrum douglassii

Tradescantia virginica

Veronica incana

Veronica spicata

Veronica gentianoides

Roses for 1950s rose garden at Silloth Green

<i>Rosa 'Baby Mermaid'</i>	1950
<i>Dunwich Rose</i>	1950
<i>Elmshorn</i>	1951
<i>Fruhlinganfang</i>	1950
<i>Ballerina</i>	1937
<i>Desprez a fleurs jaunes</i>	1935
<i>Ena Harkness</i>	1946
<i>Hidcote Gold</i>	1948

Sources

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August 2010