

City of Edinburgh Council

**Edinburgh**  
Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

**312 Suntrap Garden, Gogarbank**

**Consultants**

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**312 - Suntrap Garden**



**Key**

Site boundary	Essential setting
Ruined buildings	Site of former house
Principal buildings	Main drive
Gardens	Principal views or vista
Water	Panoramic View
Woodlands	Walled Garden
Parkland	

**EDINBURGH**  
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

**SURVEY OF GARDENS AND  
DESIGNED LANDSCAPES**

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## 312 Suntrap Garden, Gogarbank

Parish Ratho, now Edinburgh

NGR NT 172 708

Owners Institutional

Designations

Listing None

Green belt

### REASONS FOR INCLUSION

20th century demonstration and training garden of high horticultural interest open to the public.

### LOCATION, SETTING AND EXTENT

Suntrap is located on the south side of Gogarbank on the west side of Gogar Bank House (143) and east of Trefoil House (146), accessible either via the Glasgow Road (A8) to the north or Calder Road (A71) to the south. The city bypass lies close by to the east and the M8 to the south. Suntrap is positioned on the north valley side of the Gogar Burn and faces south. Site area 1.25ha.

### MAIN PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Second half of 20th century.

### HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

Suntrap was the home of George Boyd Anderson who selected the south-facing site and started the garden in 1957. Anderson was a great philanthropist, innovator and keen gardener. Many of his novel ideas were incorporated in the garden buildings, particularly those relating to the use of solar energy and insulation. For this reason the garden named was changed to Suntrap from the previous house name of Millbuies. When Anderson died in 1972 his will bequeathed Suntrap to the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) and Lothian Regional Council (LRC) to provide a centre for horticultural advice and to encourage horticultural education.

NTS ran the garden for a number of years and since 1984 the bequest has been carried out by the horticultural staff of Oatridge College and Lothian Regional Council Education Department and with the help of the Friends of Suntrap.



*Pottager or vegetable garden  
with view to Pentland Hills*





*Car park and drive with island beds area on right*

In 2001 the garden became a Centre for Life Long Learning and part of Oatridge College. In addition the following groups are associated with Suntrap: Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, Perennial (Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society), Scottish Gardeners' Forum, Scottish Bonsai Society, Suntrap Garden Club and Breathing Spaces.

### Maps and Graphic Evidence

Millbuies and Suntrap do not appear on maps until the mid 20th century. The land west of Gogar Bank as far as Hermiston Road was an open field until that time.

### COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

Suntrap is a long narrow garden sub-divided into many garden spaces and special theme areas with a general fall to the south and the Gogar burn. A narrow access drive runs beside the east boundary with a widened section providing car parking near the main road. Various paths lead off this route into the garden areas. The garden can be considered to have three main zones from north to south.

1. Relatively flat area of informal themed garden borders, small gardens and a glasshouse at north
2. Central area with the main buildings including Suntrap House, classroom, potting shed, plant sales shed and poly tunnel with peripheral gardens, all on a gently sloping part of the site
3. Lower garden on steeper slope, stepping with retaining walls, including Millbuies House, mainly rectilinearly laid out with Italian and formal gardens, plus a large informal lawn with doocot.

### COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

#### Architectural Features

##### Suntrap House

Single storey 20th century private residence located centrally within site and not accessible by public.

##### Millbuies House

Single storey timber boarded building with garden uses.

##### Other Buildings

A number of functional buildings as noted under 2 above, all single storey and in timber, timber and glass, or of simple construction, plus glasshouses.

In addition in the lower garden a brick built and harled shelter with pantiled roof, and a small stone-built circular doocot with slate roof. Also various pergolas, trellises and temporary structures, including some demonstrating use of recycled materials such as plastic bottles.



*Formal garden and Millbuies House with east boundary trees behind*

*'Glasshouse' using recycled plastic bottles*



*Dooocot*

### Drives and Paths

Single drive on east edge of site with side paths to garden areas, house, with car parking near entrance off main road.

### Gardens

A great range of gardens in different styles, suitable for different situations, for different uses, employing various techniques and based on distinct plant types are represented in the overall garden. Within each a great range of plants particular to that display are grown, including small trees, hedging, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, annuals, water plants, marginal aquatics, herbs, vegetables and fruit, together creating a large and varied collection. Within the overall site of 3 acres, each component is fairly small in scale, realistically showing situations that are typical for many gardeners. The overall effect is disparate while many parts are very attractive with good demonstrations of plant groupings.



*Island beds*



*Pottager*



*Italian Garden and retaining wall*



*Pond*

*Italian Garden and lower lawn  
seen from Formal Garden  
area*

Garden areas include:

- Alpine beds
- Grass border
- Heather bank
- Herbaceous beds
- Italian garden
- Japanese garden
- Oriental garden
- Patio
- Peat walls
- Pottager or produce garden
- Prairie border
- Raised beds
- Sensory garden
- Tactile planting
- Wild flower bank
- Winter border
- Woodland garden

### Trees and Tree Belts

Apart from some larger trees along the east boundary and part of the west boundary, tree planting is primarily of ornamental trees within garden areas.

### Water Features

A small pond planted with marginals and bog garden plants (*Gunnera manicata*, *Hostas*, *Osmunda regalis*, *Peltiphyllum peltatum*) is located near the car park. Gogar burn runs to the south but does not figure prominently in the garden plan.



**Views and vistas**

The nature of the garden means that views are mainly contained. From the south half of the garden views south-east to the Pentland Hills and over the wooded valley of the Gogar burn are possible, together with views into Italian garden and lower lawn. From the formal garden there is a view to fields on the west.

**PUBLIC ACCESS**

The garden is used as a teaching resource and is open all year to the public for a small charge.

The garden provides teaching and demonstration facilities that include classrooms, potting shed, glasshouses, polytunnel, propagation facilities and practical outdoor areas. There is also a small reference library.

Lectures, talks and practical classes are held throughout the year. They range from a course of study leading to a national qualification or classes on topics of interest to amateur gardeners attending on an occasional basis. They include Horticultural Therapeutic Courses, Working with Schools, Evening Classes and Workshops.

**FUTURE MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL**

The whole garden is well planted and maintained to a good standard showing a high level of horticultural skills.

**ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE****Overall**

A garden that provides a valuable local public service in horticultural education and in therapeutic uses that is at the same time an attractive visitor destination.

**Work of Art**

Some

**Historical**

Little

**Horticultural / Arboricultural / Sylvicultural**

High

**Architectural**

None

**Scenic**

Little

**Nature Conservation**

Some

**Archaeological**

None

**Recreational**

High

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**Sources – Secondary**

Suntrap information leaflet

[www.suntrap-garden.org.uk](http://www.suntrap-garden.org.uk)

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