

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

NUNWICK

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NUNWICK

Name:	NUNWICK
District:	Northumberland (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Simonburn
label.localisation:	Latitude: 55.061374 Longitude: -2.1902235 National Grid Reference: NY8794874116 <a href="#">Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)</a>
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1001051 Date first listed: 01-Jan-1985

## Details

Mid to late C18 landscape park, laid out along the banks of the North Tyne and set with picturesque eyecatchers.

### HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Simonburn Castle, a C13 pele tower, was owned by the Herons, a prominent Border family. In 1725 Sir Henry Heron sold it to Robert Allgood. In 1738 Allgood's daughter Jane married her kinsman Lancelot Allgood (1710-82), who became one of the leading figures in C18 Northumberland. He was High Sheriff of the county in 1746, MP 1748-53, and as a reward for his strong Hanoverian support he was knighted by George III in 1760.

Allgood built a new house at Nunwick in the late 1740s, siting it 1.5km to the north-east of Simonburn Castle and removing the hamlet at Nunwick to create an imposing setting. The architect of the house is unknown, as is the designer of the landscape. Allgood himself may well have been involved in the planning and design of both house and landscape, having made a Grand Tour in France and Italy between 1736 and 1738.

Two plans of the landscape of c 1760 survive, one showing the executed layout (CL 1956). A ha-ha was constructed to separate the lawns from the park and a drive was laid out to the south of the house, leading over Proctor's Burn. In 1768, kennels, in Gothic style, were built to the south of the house and aligned to lie as an eyecatcher on an axis with the main entrance to Nunwick.

James Allgood succeeded his father in 1782. He was followed by his son Robert Lancelot Allgood, who married Martha Reed, the daughter of his neighbour at Chipchase Castle, 1.5km to the north of Nunwick. The estate remains (2002) in private ownership.

### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Nunwick lies 22km north-west of Hexham, on the east side of the B6329, Chollerford to Wark road, on the west bank of the River North Tyne. The Great Field, which comprises the north park, slopes gently eastwards down to the River North Tyne, but falls more steeply southwards to Proctor's Burn. Proctor's Burn flows from west to east, centrally across the park and issues into the North Tyne 700m east of the house. South of Proctor's Burn, Fairshaw Park rises gradually to the southern boundary, which is formed by a lane leading west/east at Longridge. The landform of the parkland is distinctive, consisting of broad, level terraces immediately adjacent to the deeply incised course of river and burn. Above the terraces, the undulating parkland rises up with its steeper slopes planted with groups of oak.

The house is set some 150m from the west parkland boundary, on a level plateau sheltered on its west and from the public road (B6329) by a grove, The Beeches. Standing on the west edge of The Great Field, it thereby commands panoramic views

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eastwards across sloping lawns and the north park to the North Tyne, with Reiver Crag (150m OSD) forming a landmark on the horizon.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The B6329, Chollerford to Wark road forms the west boundary of the park. The main entrance to Nunwick lies on its east side, directly opposite the road junction some 170m east-north-east of Proctor's Bridge, leading to the estate village of Simonburn. A gateway (c 1800, listed grade II) with end piers and linking quadrant-plan walls marks this west entrance into Nunwick. The approach then leads 230m through woodland to the main entrance front, the south facade of Nunwick.

A second approach leads into the park from the south-east at Longridge. This approach leads across Fairshaw Park, crossing Proctor's Burn by a sandstone bridge (early C19, listed grade II) 450m south-east of Nunwick, then westwards, in part along the north bank of the Burn, and up the hillside to the south front.

Simonburn Castle (scheduled ancient monument, listed grade II), outside the registered area, can no longer be seen from the grounds of Nunwick, due to the intervening tree canopy. When initially laid out, the entrance to Nunwick was aligned on the ruins of the Castle, a ruined C13 tower house 1.5km to the south-west, rebuilt in part in 1766 to act as an eyecatcher at the end of a new avenue.

**PRINCIPAL BUILDING** Nunwick (listed grade II\*) was built c 1745-52. Daniel Garrett has been suggested as the designer, although no documentary evidence of this survives (CL 1956). A series of interior alterations, an entrance porch, and dining-room bay were added by Ignatius Bonomi c 1829. A service court is enclosed to the north-west of the house by ranges; the southern has a clock tower with cupola on an arcade of Tuscan columns.

The Stables (1798-9, listed grade II\*) lie to the west of the public road at Townhead, 80m north of the main entrance (outside the area here registered).

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** A ha-ha (mid C18, listed grade II) encloses Nunwick and its c 6ha pleasure grounds from the park to the east. Built of dressed sandstone, it forms a serpentine wall 1.5-2m high, curving gently southwards from the north-east corner of The Beeches plantation to enclose Nunwick and ending c 50m south-east of the south-east corner of the walled garden.

The pleasure grounds form a series of formal walks laid out axially around the walled garden. On the east side of the walled garden a long walk, oriented north/south, is terminated at its north end by a 2m spiral column, probably Jacobean, set on a medieval base (listed grade II). To the south of the walled garden and set against the outside of its southern wall, is a Camellia House. The south wall shows indications of having been a heated wall. This may date to c 1800, on the basis of the internal sandstone dressings of the entrance, which match the pattern and form of the west entrance gateway (see above). The Camellia House, housing a magnificent, mature, specimen red camellia, forms the centrepiece of an open lawn, once a formal garden and now laid to grass with specimen shrubs. A line of mature Irish yew encloses this area on its east side.

A walk leads south of the walled garden and through a field gate into an informal woodland garden laid out along the banks of Proctor's Burn. An C18 stone well-head, re-erected and relocated from Hermitage, Northumberland (1990s), lies to the south of this entrance. The walk leads across a memorial bridge (2000) over Proctor's Burn to the Old Kennels (listed grade II). These, gothic in style with pointed doorways and windows and battlemented walls, were built to act as an eyecatcher when seen from the house. A datestone is inscribed 'LA 1768', for Lancelot Allgood, and the building complex includes a kennel-man's house, which was occupied until the 1930s (Mrs Allgood pers comm, 2002). Although now a roofless shell (2002), the main kennel block survives as a picturesque landscape feature. A central stone pool stands in the courtyard of the kennels, on an axis with the entrance front of the house.

The woodland garden stretches from the Old Kennels some 100m eastwards to a sharp bend in the course of the Burn, terminating at its eastern limits at a rustic timber bridge.

**PARK** The park extends to c 55ha to the east and south of Nunwick. Laid out in the 1760s, it has changed little. It is enclosed by shelter belts: along its west side by The Beeches, and to the south-west by Turnbull Plantation and Horsleyhill Plantation. East of these plantations, the parkland is planted with mature stands of beech, oak, and sycamore, with groups of trees concentrated

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on the steeper slopes leading down to the lower terraces. On its east side the parkland is enclosed by Boat Banks and The Lineum (outside the area here registered), plantations along the banks of the North Tyne.

KITCHEN GARDEN The brick-walled garden of c 0.4ha in extent lies 170m south-west of Nunwick Hall. It is divided by cross-paths and set with a central range of glasshouses.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 120 (1 July 1956), p 80; (19 July 1956), p 134 N Pevsner and I A Richmond, *The Buildings of England: Northumberland* (1957, reprinted 1974), pp 194-5 B Jones, *Follies & Grottoes* (1974), p 374

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1862, published 1866 2nd edition surveyed 1896

Description written: January 2002 Amended: March 2003 Register Inspector: KC Edited: July 2003

## Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.