

City of Edinburgh Council

Edinburgh

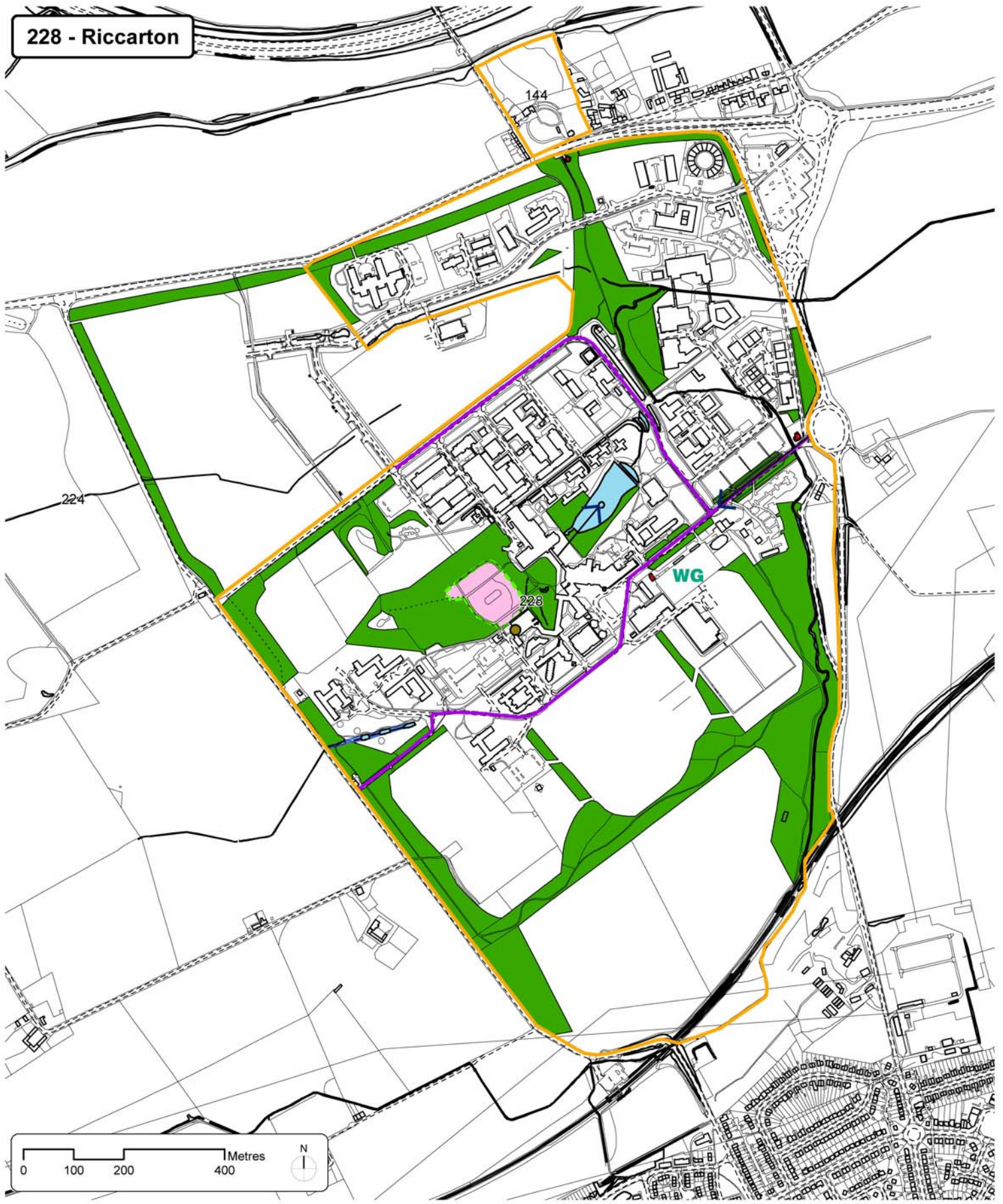
Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

228 Riccarton, Heriot Watt University Campus














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Survey visit: February 2008



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 | | |

228 Riccarton, Heriot Watt University Campus

Parish Currie, later Edinburgh
NGR NT 1743 6920 site of sixteenth century tower house
NMRS No NT16NE 10.00 site of sixteenth century tower house
Owners Heriot Watt University

Designations

Listing Icehouse C (S)
North Gate Lodge A
South strip gate piers B
Gardener's House, boundary wall & railings B
Walled garden B

Green Belt

Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan 2003 Policy ED7 specifically governs HWU Riccarton campus

REASONS FOR INCLUSION

A designed landscape that originated as the setting for large country house and developed as the campus of Heriot Watt University within which many significant features of the old landscape survive to provide the setting for the university teaching, administration and residential buildings, as well as research parks, with the addition of new tree belts and amenity planting.

LOCATION, SETTING AND EXTENT

Riccarton lies in the rural fringe south-west of the city just beyond the city bypass (A720). It is entered from a roundabout on Riccarton Mains Road adjacent to the North Gate Lodge, with Calder Road (A71) forming the north boundary. The land is fairly flat with minor undulations, gently rising towards the south. The Murray burn runs through the campus. Site area approx. 146ha.

MAIN PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

Riccarton House – early-16th century; early-17th century; early- and mid-19th century; house demolished 1956. Heriot Watt University 1969 onwards.

*Main concourse and
reception building with 1854
statue of James Watt and
mature conifers behind*



HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

The first written reference to Riccarton dates from 1296, when Marjory of *Ricardestone* was among thousands of Scottish landowners forced to swear loyalty to King Edward I of England. In 1315, Robert Bruce gave the lands of *Richardtoun* as a dowry on the marriage of his daughter Marjory to Walter, High Steward of Scotland.

By 1508, the Wardlaw family, who held Riccarton as tenants in chief from the King, had built a substantial fortified tower to protect themselves and their land. In 1610, the Craigs, a family of wealthy lawyers, bought Riccarton and owned it over two centuries (1608-1823). The Craigs built up an extensive estate including adjoining Hermiston, linked to Riccarton via the north drive, and lands in Currie. Sir Lewis Craig extended the tower-house in 1621, transforming the fortified tower into a fashionable home.

In the late 18th century Thomas Craig introduced agricultural reforms that brought prosperity to the estate and its tenants, enclosing land and planting shelter belts that remain a distinctive feature of the campus.

In 1823, the estate passed to the Gibsons, inherited by James (1765-1850), the son of William Gibson and Cecilia Balfour. In 1827 James Gibson-Craig commissioned William Burn to remodel the house in the latest Scottish Baronial style. James Gibson-Craig became a baronet in 1831 and was a Writer to the Signet, law agent and a leading Whig.

James Gibson-Craig's son William (1797-1878) succeeded in 1850, and was MP for Midlothian 1837-41 and for Edinburgh 1841-52. Both Sir James and Sir William 'enhanced the house and gardens' with Sir James undertaking construction of the walled garden and artificial loch. Sir William Gibson-Craig went on the Grand Tour in 1814-22 and would have gained ideas and inspiration for the development of the house and its grounds. He also introduced many exotic trees from north-west USA. According to McWilliam (1978, 405) 'the Craigs of Riccarton have an important place in the history of Lothian estate improvement.' In 1930 the estate passed through the female line to the Sudlows.

During the war years of 1939-45, Riccarton House was the battle headquarters of Scottish Command. After the war it was used as a resettlement camp and from 1947-54 as the headquarters of the Royal Artillery 3rd Anti-Aircraft Group. By the mid-1950s it had fallen into a state of disrepair and become structurally unsound and was demolished in 1956. In 1967, the Sudlows sold the estate to Midlothian County Council, which gifted the estate to Heriot Watt University in 1969. The campus development plan was drawn up by Alan Reiach, Eric Hall & Partners and all the early buildings except the library are their work. The landscape architect for the campus was Professor Arnold Weddle of Sheffield University. The university library by Sir Basil Spence, Glover & Ferguson is built on the site of the former house to the south-west of the lake.

The existing mature woodland, lawns and loch were a major asset to be conserved and enhanced in the development plan for the University campus, while at the same time creating ease of movement across the campus. Site planning of the campus was centred on retention of high quality landscape features such as the loch, gardens and lawn. While the University development added massive built forms to the landscape, new spatial experiences were created by features such as the enclosed bridge link passing over the valley at the west end of the loch. The University was built using an unobtrusive brown brick to blend into the landscape and not stand out as a landmark design statement. The *spine and spur* design of the academic buildings and the link to the administrative buildings was intended to allow people to move around campus protected from the Scottish winter weather. Planning restrictions limited the height of the buildings to a maximum of four storeys because of the proximity of Edinburgh airport, enabling much of the campus to be screened behind tree belts and minimising visual impact in the green belt.

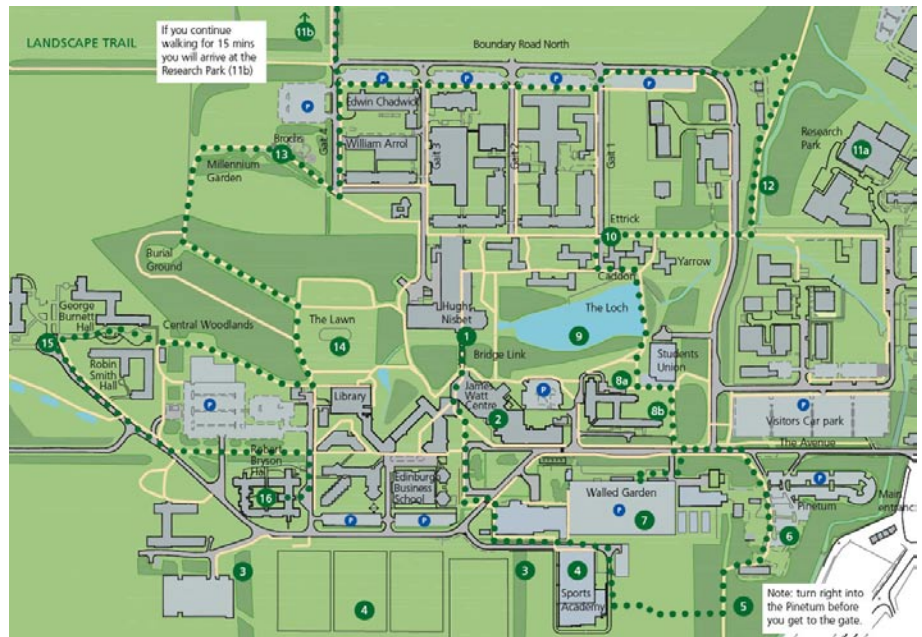


Riccarton House from the south, Scotsman/RCAHMS



Lawn and gardens, Scotsman/RCAHMS

Plan of Riccarton campus highlighting features on the Landscape Trail (HWU)



The Walk is the main pedestrian thoroughfare shared by pedestrians and cyclists. It separates the residences to the south from the academic buildings to the north. No cars are allowed in the central area, and car parking is located at the perimeter of the site.

Early History of the University

Heriot-Watt University is the eighth oldest higher education institution in the UK. It originated in 1821 as the Edinburgh School of Arts, the first Mechanics Institute to give ordinary people access to education in science and technology. Acclaimed as the first true *people's college*, the Watt Institution was a pioneer of equal opportunities, with female students being welcomed as early as 1869, 20 years ahead of other institutions.

The name Heriot-Watt commemorates two iconic champions of innovation, enterprise and education. In 1852 the School bought its own building with money raised by a campaign to build an Edinburgh monument to celebrate the achievements of James Watt (1736-1819), the pioneer of steam power. In his honour, the School changed its name to the Watt Institution and School of Arts. In 1885, a trust bequeathed by George Heriot (1563-1623), financier and benefactor of education in Edinburgh, assured the institution's future.

In 1966 the Queen granted the Governors of Heriot-Watt College a Royal Charter to found a University. Three years later, Midlothian Council's gift of the parkland estate at Riccarton allowed the University to expand on a new purpose built campus. In 1998 the University merged with the Scottish College of Textiles, Galashiels, an institution with its own century long tradition of excellence in specialist education.

Heriot-Watt University is home to Europe's first Research Park that provides a location for companies to undertake the development of new products, processes and services with access to the services and facilities of the University.

Maps and Graphic Evidence

Riccarton is shown as a house with twin towers and trees on Adair's manuscript map of 1682. Roy's map of c1750 shows *Riccarton* with red boundary lines superimposed within a square over an unenclosed landscape of cultivation rigs. Planting is limited to the burn valley east of the centrally positioned house and along field boundaries to the north-west. Knox's map of 1816 shows a square estate rigidly defined by shelterbelts and bisected by an east-west drive and avenues with the house and a pond to its north. Little planting is shown internally. The 1st edition OS maps of the 1850s show substantial development of a large



Roy's map c1750

Knox 1816





Ordnance Survey 6" map
1852-53

walled garden and major tree belts extending north to a new lodge and south along the course of the Murray burn. The rigid belts have been 'naturalised' south of the house, with clumps and individual trees in the parkland and extensive gardens, shrubberies and woods made north and north-west of the house, with a summer-house on a formal axis.

COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

Architectural Features

Former Mansion House

Riccarton House began life as a square tower house of the 16th and 17th centuries around which the later house was built, probably by Sir Lewis Craig c1621; the tower was located at the western end of the building (Groome V3 254). The house was greatly extended in the *Jacobethan* style by William Burn in 1823-27 for Sir William Gibson-Craig. Demolished 1956.

Stables

East of former house, present on Knox 1816 map; demolished 1975.

North Lodge

The early 19th century North lodge, Jacobethan in the style of William Burn and David Bryce; located beside A71. Fine stonework, walls, gate piers and decorative chimney.

East Lodge

Located at the end of the principal entrance drive, but much altered and extended with pantiled roof, double glazing and road level raised in front.

West Lodge

West boundary; predates North and East lodges.

Walled Garden and Gardener's House

The walled garden is about 100m x 50m with doors in the west and south walls; the inside is brick, the outside sandstone rubble. Used as an all-weather sports pitch and a central area overspill car park.

The gardener's house adjoining the north wall of the walled garden is thought to be by Burn, c1823; now houses the University's Public Affairs Office. Single

North lodge (HWU)



East lodge

Gardener's cottage



storey with shallow-pitched wide-eaved roof, diamond latticed windows and boundary railings, shallow veranda at front door and prominent central chimney

Sculpture

A seated statue of James Watt is positioned in front of the University main reception building. The statue was made in 1854 for the University's predecessor, the Watt Institution and School of Arts, by Peter Slater, who taught ornamental modelling there. The statue was originally displayed outside the Watt Institution building in Adam Square, was moved first to Heriot-Watt College in Chambers Street, then in 1990 to its current position.

About a dozen other sculptural works, mostly contemporary, are located around the central area of the campus.

Ice-house



Ice-house

An early 18th century ice-house is located close to the east bank of the former burn; stored ice collected from the loch during the winter.

Estate walls

Sections of low estate wall remain along much of the perimeter built in squared rubble with a half-round cope. Other parts employ a drystone half-dyke construction. Two listed 19th century stone gate pier remain on the south boundary.



*Estate wall and gate piers,
east boundary*

University Buildings and Landscape

No attempt is made here to summarise the number and range of university teaching, administration and residential buildings. The early rigour of horizontal forms marked by strong verticals, in a limited palette of materials – brown



*Bridge link with view to loch
beyond*



*The Walk, shared by
pedestrians and cyclists*

brick, concrete and glass – has been varied to a degree in later work (more so in the research park) but in overall massing a degree of unity prevails. The mature landscape structure of avenues and tree belts give a strong sense of unity internally, although the northern edge of the developed area remains stark. Characterful new planting along main routes and details such as beech hedges screening car parks have added to the palette of landscape planting and further integrate old and new. New trees and shrubbery are now well established and the distinction between young planting and established policy planting is gradually disappearing.

Drives and Paths

The East drive survives in the line of the principal road access to the campus, lined by double rows of lime trees with a path between. At the time of survey the outer trees had been lopped to re-invigorate the crowns. The road is terminated by the main reception building, Edinburgh Conference Centre, Edinburgh Business School, and other administrative buildings, and by the bus terminus. Beyond this, the main distributor road takes a different route to the former West drive.

The North drive survives in a form along the Hermiston Walk that leads via the Research Park to the North lodge.

The outer part of the campus on the east is dominated by extensive car parks that have extended into available spaces, although well contained by planting including beech hedges.

Internally a great variety of routes are available for movement through the site, the majority being segregated footpaths.

Gardens and Policy Planting

Gardens and the Lawn

The old gardens of Riccarton House are at the heart of the campus. The front lawn is where the Henry Prais building now stands. The Lawn is a tranquil haven close to the centre of the campus, contrasting with the large-scale development and business of much of the site. The Lawn is a remnant of the 18th century pleasure gardens of Riccarton House, now much simplified in layout for reduced landscape maintenance. The Lawn is the venue for a garden party after the graduation ceremony that takes place in July each year.

The Formal Garden that lay immediately north of Riccarton House date back to before 1750. The globe-shaped golden yews, over 200 years old, are a remnant of the garden, planted symmetrically about the north axis. The site of a former pond is evident from a depression in the lowest part of the lawn that was used as a curling rink. During the 19th century, the Gibson-Craigs re-modelled the gardens and introduced many new tree varieties. In 1850, the garden extended further northwards with shrubberies, specimen trees, ponds, an informal path system, a summer house (removed 1913) and a family Burial Ground. Much of



*East drive and lime avenue,
with lopped outer rows*

*The lawn with formally
arranged golden yews and
outline of curling pond*



the garden area is now woodland as trees have developed in height and spread. The Lawn area is still botanically interesting, with a bank of rhododendrons on the north side and many of the most interesting trees (see XXX) in the woods to the north and north-west. The Velvet Walk is a garden terrace leading to the private burial ground of the Gibson-Craig family.

One of the earliest gardeners at Riccarton was James Young. He earned renown around 1830 by developing a new fuchsia, named *Fuchsia magellanica* 'Riccartonii' after the estate. It has become a common variety and remains a versatile feature of borders around the campus.

Gibson-Craig Burial Ground

Iron railings and gate mark the entrance to the family burial ground in the north-west of the site that was laid out as an extension to the gardens in the mid-19th century. The burial ground still belongs to the descendants of the Gibson-Craig family.

Trees and Tree Collection

The Gibson-Craig family were avid collectors of exotic trees. Sir William Gibson-Craig (1797-1878) was a member of the Oregon Association which sponsored plant collectors, including William Lobb and John Jeffrey, who made many introductions of plants and seed from north-west USA in the 1850s. His son, Sir James Gibson-Craig 3rd Baronet (1841-1908) continued the tradition. In 1884, he invited the Scottish Arboricultural Society to view his collection and many of the trees seen and recorded that year were already large specimens.

The woodland surrounding the Lawn still contains several specimen trees from the collection and some of the exotic species are dated between 100 and 150 years old. The oldest trees on the estate are the native or naturalised hardwoods

Mature Cedar of Lebanon





Mature trees on north side of lawn including large Scot's pine

– beech, ash, and sycamore. The Riccarton Sweet Chestnut, at the southern edge of the lawn, is possibly the oldest tree on the campus at over 250 years old. It comprises a group of stems that originated from a single old tree that died back leaving peripheral shoots.

Specimens of less common tree species include the following.

Broadleaves

<i>Aesculus flava</i>	Yellow buckeye chestnut
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i> 'Purpurea'	Copper beech
<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Tulip tree
<i>Magnolia acuminata</i>	Cucumber tree
<i>Quercus frainetto</i>	Hungarian oak

Conifers etc

<i>Abies grandis</i>	Grand fir
<i>Abies pinsapo</i>	Spanish fir
<i>Abies procera</i>	Noble fir
<i>Araucaria araucana</i>	Monkey puzzle or Chile pine
<i>Athrotaxis cupressoides</i>	Small Tasmanian cedar
<i>Cedrus libani</i>	Cedar of Lebanon
<i>Chamaecyparis pisifera</i> 'Plumosa'	Sawara cypress
<i>Cryptomeria japonica</i> 'Sinensis'	Japanese red cedar
<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	Western yellow pine
<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	Douglas fir
<i>Sequoia sempervirens</i>	Coast redwood
<i>Sequoiadendron giganteum</i>	Wellingtonia
<i>Taxus baccata</i> 'Adpressa'	Adpressa yew
<i>Taxus baccata</i> 'Aurea'	Golden yew
<i>Taxus baccata</i> 'Fastigiata'	Irish yew
<i>Thuja standishii</i>	Japanese arbor-vitae

In addition, good or ancient (over 200 years) specimens of common trees include:

Broadleaves

<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway maple
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
<i>Betula pendula</i>	Birch
<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Spanish chestnut
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Cherry
<i>Quercus robur</i>	English oak

Conifers

<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scot's pine
<i>Pinus nigra</i> 'Maritima'	Corsican pine
<i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i>	Lawson cypress
<i>Tsuga heterophylla</i>	Western hemlock
<i>Thuja plicata</i>	Western red cedar

Gales in 1968 and 1972 removed many of the trees recorded in 1884, particularly in the Pinetum.

Pinetum

On the south of the main drive is the Pinetum, one of the neglected over-mature woodlands that the University inherited, where the many of original conifers were blown down in the 1968 gales. Several old Scot pine, Wellingtonia, cedars etc remain and a collection of new exotic conifers is developing, but the area is compromised by car parking areas.



Remains of Pinetum

Lime Avenue

The principal East drive is lined by double rows of lime trees, planted in 1882, with a path between. A West Avenue may have been replanted at the same time although this was removed in the 20th century. At the time of survey the outer rows of trees had been lopped to re-invigorate the crowns.

Woodlands

Several over-mature woodlands and young conifer plantations were inherited by the University in 1969 and are now managed for increased species and age diversity. Glades of new hardwood planting are being established and valuable wildlife habitat created. The University continues the long tradition of conserving and replanting Riccarton's woodland with over 250,000 trees planted since 1969.

The campus woodlands total 33ha with the main woodland belts around the lawn in the north-west, along Hermiston Walk and adjoining belts to the north and south, and along the east boundary. The older woodlands have a wide species and age diversity and provide excellent mature wildlife habitat. Woods are managed under a rolling five year Woodland Management Programme, with felling and replanting taking place every year.

Millennium Garden

Located in the north-west of the campus in an elevated position with a distant view to the Forth bridges. The project used construction spoil and sculptural stone walled *brochs* providing 'a place for celebration of the University's progressive development' as well as a place for memorials.

Parkland and Playing Fields

Much of the former parkland south of the house is now playing fields. The playing fields were the first major landscape project at Riccarton, two years in advance of the arrival of the first students, and are seen as an essential part of the campus landscape experience. The Sports Academy is one of the most recent additions to the campus.



*Playing fields over former
parkland area*

*Walkway over loch dam**Fire pond**Murray burn*

Water Features

The loch is the feature of the historic landscape that continues to act as a focus in the campus layout with the link bridge and several other buildings overlooking it and a main walkway across the dam end. The Fire Pond was constructed as a convenient source of water for use in the event of fire in the mansion house. The adjacent Carriage Drive was the service approach to the house from the stables, with a footbridge overhead connecting the house and gardens.

In addition the Murray burn and its feeder burns, including the loch supply, have a marked presence in the landscape running through the Hermiston Walk belt and other tree belts close to paths as well as having important drainage functions.

Research Park

The campus is home to Europe's first Research Park in the north-east of the site, developed from the 1980s onwards, with a current turnover in excess of £70 million and 2,000 employees, 80% of which are graduates. Landscape infrastructure of planting and ponds and swales for sustainable drainage have been established in advance of building construction for all phases, with high quality planting for individual building projects.

Views and Vistas

Many of the former planned views have gone with the loss of the house and construction of new University buildings. Several good views remain and new ones have been created including: the view along East drive; view from and under link bridge; view from the dam path at the east side of loch; views over lawn from south and terrace on north.

*Pathway planting in research units developed by former Scottish Development Agency in 1980s**Landscape associated with SUDS drainage scheme in latest research park development*

Visual Intrusions

In a site as varied and well planted as the Riccarton campus, the idea of visual intrusion does not really apply. The exposed northern flank of the University complex is an issue, as is the extent of car parking related to the east entrance.

Archaeology

Archaeological records relate only to the former tower house and other features of the estate described above.

PUBLIC ACCESS

The campus is an open site and freely accessible to the public, although in practice will be used most by students and staff. Excellent bus services, and footpath and cycleway links, as well as abundant car parking, mean that it is readily accessible. Attractive open spaces, particularly around the loch and lawn, and many well-planted routes, both adapted from the historic layout and entirely new creations, provide a variety of fine walks. In addition, there are waymarked trails for Trees, Landscape, History Art and Birds for which the University provides leaflets and a booklet.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL

A campus that places high importance on the quality of its designed landscape and its historical continuity with the earlier estate landscape, that is maintained to a high standard with good interpretation of its history, gardens and planting.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overall

A campus development in which the designed landscape plays an essential role in the overall quality of the environment and in which the older estate landscape has been integrated with the newer and now well-established landscape layout for University use showing that adaptability and change is possible for estate landscape particularly where located in the urban fringe.

Work of Art

High

Historical

High

Horticultural / Arboricultural / Sylvicultural

High

Architectural

High

Scenic

Some

Nature Conservation

High

Archaeological

Some

Recreational

High

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NLS National Library of Scotland www.nls.uk

NMRS National Monuments Record of Scotland

SCRAN Scottish Cultural Resource Access Network www.scran.ac.uk

Plans at National Archives of Scotland (NAS), Register House Plans (RHP)

RHP 550/1 1772 Plan of the lands of Riccarton

RHP 550/3 1800 Plan of the estate of Riccarton

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