

City of Edinburgh Council

Edinburgh
Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes

164 Rutland Square














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Survey visit: May 2007

164 - Rutland Square



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

164 Rutland Square

Parish Edinburgh

NGR NT 2458 7350

Owners Private, The Rutland Square and Street Association

Designations

Listing 1, 2-4, 5-11, 12-22, 23-29, 30-32 Rutland Square, including railings and lamp standards, A (nothing in the central square itself)

New Town Conservation Area

Edinburgh World Heritage Site

REASONS FOR INCLUSION

Rutland Square lies within the New Town Conservation Area and Edinburgh World Heritage Site, but outwith the boundary drawn for the New Town Gardens in the *Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland*. All the New Town communal gardens merit inclusion in this survey on account of their role in the urban form of the various phases of the New Town, their individual layout and features, and their continuing use and value to residents. Rutland Square is included here to make up for this anomaly; it is the intention to properly list and include all the New Town communal gardens in the survey in time.

LOCATION, SETTING AND EXTENT

Rutland Square lies in the West End of the city centre just west of Princes Street and to the south of Shandwick Place (A8) and west of Lothian Road (A700). Access is via Rutland Street entered from Lothian Road. Site area 0.14ha.

MAIN PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

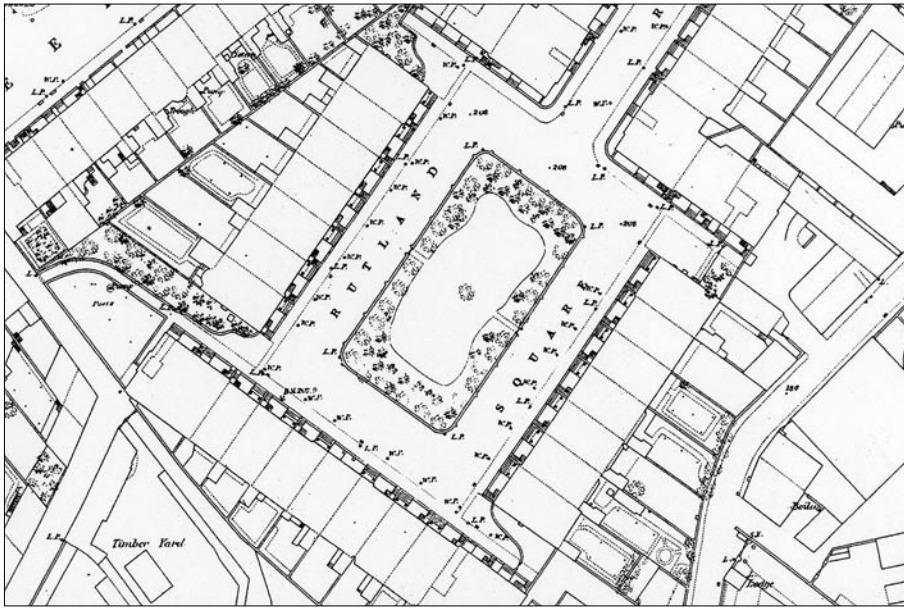
1830s; loss and replacement of railings in 1940s but no major changes.

HISTORY OF LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

This site was known as 'the lands of Kirkbraehead' on a plan of 1836 (RCAHMS DP 008073), a name that referred to the area north of St Cuthbert's kirk and the early name for Queensferry Street. Kirkbraehead was 'originally part of the lands of Coates' (Byrom 358). From her husband's death in 1777 until at least 1804, a Mrs Stewart, widow of James Stuart of Dunearn, one-time Lord Provost of the city, owned a house and gardens on the central part of the later Rutland Square site (Byrom 358, Ainslie map 1804). In 1819, the Stuarts' grandson James Stuart,



Rutland Square garden and
north-west terrace



Ordnance Survey 1:1050 map
1849-53

'a speculating lawyer' (Gifford 359), commissioned Archibald Elliot to produce a plan – thought to be Elliot's one venture into urban design (Byrom 358) – the layout of which is shown on Kirkwood's map of the city of 1821.

Building work did not begin until 1830, when a later provost, John Learmonth, owned the land (since 1825). Learmonth's architect, John Tait, modified Elliot's designs (Colvin 946) but the resultant layout was largely to Elliot's. Rutland Street was the first part to be developed (1830), followed by Rutland Square in 1832 or 1834. The imposition of David Cousin's church of St Thomas (1842-43) and the Caledonian station and hotel complex swept away the southern part of Rutland Street. The station was opened to freight in 1861 and the associated hotel was built between 1890-93 and 1899-1903 (Gifford 267). Rutland Square escaped unaffected (HS).

At 0.14ha, the garden was small and comprised grass lawn encircled by trees and shrubs, enclosed with railings, but now serves acts as an effective foil to the surrounding buildings on account of its mature trees. After the garden was opened to key holders in 1864, the small space proved unable to cope with the wear and tear imposed on it, and this arrangement was discontinued. Access was revived later to play lawn tennis, which continued up until the First World War (access was restricted to members of the tennis club). In the Second World War six air raid shelters were constructed. After the war funds were raised to erect the present railings and the garden's role returned to communal green space. Most of the houses on Rutland Square are now offices rather than homes and, since 2001 or before, the gardens have been owned by The Rutland Square and Street Association (Shorter 9).

In 1912 a new road into or from the square was made at the west linking to the new Canning Lane and to Shandwick Place. This also resulted in two small planted spaces (one new, one altered) with railings beside the road link. Another small incidental original space lies in the north corner of the square.

Maps and Graphic Evidence

Central Edinburgh benefits from many maps showing the development of the New Town in the late 18th and 19th centuries. The most detailed and informative are:

Ainslie 1804 showing the houses and gardens on Kirkbraehead at the west end of Princes Street before the construction of either Shandwick Place or Rutland Street / Rutland Square.



Ainslie 1804



Lancefield 1851

Three editions of Edinburgh Town Plan by the Ordnance Survey: large scale maps up of 1:1050 or 1:500 scale, the earliest of which in 1849-53 shows the rectangular space apparently enclosed by a plinth and railings, entrances on the north-west and south-east sides, a perimeter row of large trees, smaller trees or shrubs and one central tree.

Lancefield 1851 showing the completed streets and square and a layout of trees and beds within the central green space, that may be just a pattern for effect when compared to the way other gardens are treated.

There are also extant feuing plans from 1819 and 1836 showing the property layout and the central green space. A modern topographic survey has been prepared (2007) organised by Richard Shorter Architects for The Rutland Square and Street Association in connection with a Conservation Plan and restoration proposals.

There are a number of historic photographs and aerial views of the square, although none have sufficient detail or are of appropriate periods to be informative about the original layout and detailing.

COMPONENTS OF THE DESIGNED LANDSCAPE

Architectural Features

Buildings of the Square

Rutland Street and Rutland Square form a symmetrical composition arranged around the axis of the street and square. The terraces that form three sides of the square are of three storeys with occasional dormers. The principal pavilions at the entry into Rutland Square from Rutland Street have fine giant order Corinthian pilasters and cornices; lesser pavilions at the ends of the terraces are simply treated, but all have roof parapet balustrades. The houses round the square have Ionic porches with linking trellised first floor cast iron balconies. The railings to the basement areas and house steps have spear-headed balusters and dog bars set into stone plinths and pine cone finials to the gate posts.



*Garden railings, mowing strip
and trees*

Police Box

Located outside the railings on the north-east side of the square: typical disused blue-painted Edinburgh police box.

Railings

The present mild steel railings (erected c1947) lack a stone plinth common to most other New Town gardens (Shorter 5). The paired balusters that serve as posts and the twin top-rail create some style and the two sets of double leaf gates are embellished with acanthus motifs.



Garden gates

Around the square, arrow-headed railings front most of the properties, replaced according to the original pattern. It is not known whether the central gardens had matching a matching pattern of railings. Shorter notes that the railings to the communal gardens in the New Town are generally larger than the house railings.

Dr Byrom relates that the feuers living in the Street and Square were responsible for enclosing the gardens 'with a parapet and iron railing' and that 'A fairly lightweight rail was originally erected but proved insufficiently robust ... In 1872 it was replaced by a stronger rail which survived until the Second World War.'



House railings

Three large scale OS maps were published between 1849 and 1893 seem to indicate changes in the furnishing of the Square. On the 1849-53 map the central garden is as described by Dr Byrom with a perimeter planting of trees and a plinth wall with regular small 'buttresses' and gates in the north-west and south-east sides. All details of the garden seem to have been removed on the 1876-77 map (which may or not represent what was present, although the layouts of other gardens are still shown in this edition of the map). By the 1893-94 map, trees have reappeared around the perimeter and the entrances are in



Interior of garden, trees and mixed planting bed

the centres of the north-east and south-west sides, roughly as they are today, presumably indicating the second set of railings erected in 1872.

The lack of substantial raised plinth on the line of the railings means that manoeuvring cars damage the railings and soil from a broad bare strip around the perimeter of the garden spills onto the road surface.

Paths and Roads

There are no paths in the present garden layout. A perimeter band of bare earth or cinders, presumably acting as a mowing strip, is unattractive and of no value as a path.

In the public part of the square, the road and parking spaces are asphalt surfaced forming a large expanse of patched blacktop. Footways are of concrete slabs.

Garden Planting

Byrom (2005) describes the design of the gardens as simple 'trees and shrubs planted around the perimeter (elm, plane, hawthorn and lime) and the interior grassed.' She notes that two of original trees remain – a plane and an elm.

The 19th century OS maps in 1849-53 show a perimeter row of trees, additional smaller trees or shrubs at the north-east and south-west ends, and one central tree. The 1893-94 edition also shows a perimeter tree row, some of which are only small, suggesting that they may not be the same trees as the first OS. The intervening OS map of 1876-77 shows nothing in the garden, but presumably is not a true representation if Byrom's opinion is correct that two original trees remain.

Planting now present includes seven mature limes and one mature plane, four hawthorns, three gean or flowering cherries and one small Metasequoia. Two large sumps signify lost trees. Some replanting has been done with maples, whitebeam and rowan (need stakes removed).

Two mixed planting beds lie in the south-west part of the garden, next to the railings, and include a large range of species including shrubs – Ceanothus, Genista, Japanese maple, Juniper, Pieris, privet, stag's-horn sumach, contorted hazel and willow, Senecio, Weigela – and herbaceous plants and annuals – iris, wallflowers and others.

Views and Vistas

The small space has no particular views. The axial view down Rutland Street is significant, although not expressed in the garden layout.



Mature lime trees



View on Rutland Street axis

*Gardens with south-east
terrace and 1990s office
development behind*



Visual Intrusions

Parked cars, expanses of asphalt, poor quality railings and poor detailing (lack of plinth) all contribute to a feeling of mediocrity in the square while not being overtly intrusive. Office buildings from the 1990s rise above the 3-storey south-east side of the square and are intrusive in views at the terrace ends, although well-planned in so far as pedestrian routes through to Lothian Road etc are provided.

PUBLIC ACCESS

Private gardens; no public access.

FUTURE MANAGEMENT POTENTIAL

A Conservation Plan has been prepared together with proposals for reinstatement of the plinth, railings and gates, and for associated landscape works. Replacement planting for the large tree species (lime, elm, plane) in scale with the square is an issue, rather than new planting of short-lived small stature ornamental trees. Public use of the space close to very busy parts of the city could require major reconsideration of the layout and surfacing.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Overall

The A-listed Rutland Square is described as 'a significant surviving part of the most important and best preserved examples of urban planning in Britain' by Historic Scotland. It lies within the New Town Conservation Area and the Edinburgh World Heritage Site. Although a distinctly separate and smaller space compared to the gardens and squares of the main New Town phases north of Princes Street, it has outstanding significance as a component of the New Town.

Work of Art

High (considering the whole composition of buildings and space)

Historical

Some

Horticultural / Arboricultural / Sylvicultural

Little

Architectural

Outstanding (considering the whole composition of buildings and space)

Scenic

Some

Nature Conservation

Little

Archaeological

None known

Recreational

Some

Sources – Primary**Maps**

John Ainslie *Old and New Town of Edinburgh and Leith with the Proposed Docks* 1804 NLS

Kirkwood, *Plan of the city of Edinburgh and its environs* 1817 NLS

Wood & Brown *Plan of the City of Edinburgh* 1831 (Colour) NLS

Ordnance Survey *Edinburgh Town Plan* 1849-53 NLS

Lancefield, *Johnston's Plan of Edinburgh & Leith* 1851 NLS

First edition Ordnance Survey (1852) Sheet 2 NLS

Ordnance Survey 1877/1885 Sheet 2 NLS

William & Keith Johnston's *Plan of Edinburgh, Leith & Portobello* 1888 NLS

Unpublished

Shorter, Richard May 2006 *Rutland Square, a Conservation Statement*

Sources – Secondary

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Gifford, John et al 1984 *The Buildings of Scotland, Edinburgh*: Harmondsworth, Penguin

Harris, Stuart 1996 *The Place Names of Edinburgh*, Gordon Wright Publishing, Edinburgh

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