



Edinburgh
Survey of Gardens and Designed Landscapes
Summary Report

November 2009

Consultants

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NOTE Revisions in November 2009 are shown in bold

1 Introduction

Gardens and designed landscapes contribute in many ways to the value of the historic city centre, suburbs and rural hinterland of Edinburgh. A wide range of types of designed green space – from Princes Street Gardens and other New Town Gardens, through public parks, cemeteries and institutional grounds, to former landed estates that survive in various degrees of preservation – contrast with the architecture of the city, contribute to visual and natural diversity and provide valued recreational assets.

An Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland is compiled and maintained by Historic Scotland and identifies gardens and designed landscapes of national importance. The effect of proposed development on a garden or designed landscape is a material consideration in the determination of a planning application. Planning authorities are required to consult with Scottish Ministers through Historic Scotland on any proposed development that may affect a site contained in the Inventory (Scottish Planning Policy SPP 23). National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPPG 23: Natural Heritage) also refers to the gardens and designed landscapes included in the Inventory and their importance in terms of their scenic quality and historic interest, and their often containing valuable wildlife habitats and other features of natural heritage interest.

The value of a more comprehensive record that includes gardens and designed landscapes of regional and local significance is recognised by many planners, conservation groups and historians. In Paragraph 3.7 of its policy statement Scottish Historic Environment Policy (October 2008) Historic Scotland acknowledges the contribution made by these non-Inventory landscapes to the local historic environment and landscape character, and encourages planning authorities to develop appropriate policies for their identification and future management. The purpose of this survey, therefore, has been to list and describe sites of value that are currently afforded neither recognition nor protection from detrimental development under existing official records within the present planning system.

City of Edinburgh Council commissioned Peter McGowan Associates, landscape architects, with Christopher Dingwall, garden historian, to survey gardens and designed landscapes within the Edinburgh area. The principle objective of the study has been, through desk review, research and field survey, to identify all significant gardens and designed landscapes – including those of local and regional value, as well as previously unrecognised sites of national value, and their significant existing features.

2 Methodology

The survey methodology falls into two stages. First, a desk-based search to identify all potential sites of value using a small range of historical maps and published sources. Second, selection of the sites for detailed research and visual survey to produce an individual survey report on each site. For the second stage of the survey, a wider range of historical maps and published sources, both printed and in web-based, was used, although the time allocation for each site precluded primary archival research.

The first stage of the survey produced a long list of **315** sites and included public parks and open spaces, private estates, institutional grounds (schools, university campuses and halls, business parks, hospitals etc), cemeteries, allotments, villa groups, golf courses and vestigial sites. This list includes the eighteen *Inventory* sites within the Edinburgh area and all the New Town gardens (thirty-seven identified, not all of which are covered in a group entry in the *Inventory*). The process of identifying these sites is entirely document based and so no qualitative evaluation has been made of the sites in the long list.

From the long list, forty-eight priority sites were chosen for detailed reports. These sites were selected principally because they are, or are likely to be, the

subject of development proposals or on account of the level of development activity in their vicinity, although some sites were selected for a variety of other reasons, as discussed in Section 5.

All the **315** sites identified in the long list have been plotted in the Council's GIS map base. The forty-eight sites with detailed reports have additional information plotted, covering the built and planted features of the designed landscape, to produce a plan for each site.

Stage 1 and the research for Stage 2 were undertaken during 2006. Most site visits were undertaken in 2007, although some visits continued into 2008-09 where there were access difficulties. Stage 2 site reports were written up during 2008 and early 2009.

3 Consultations

The client department has been City of Edinburgh Council City Development Department and regular planning and progress meetings have been held with the department's representative, Frances Jarvie, Principal Planner, Natural Heritage. At various stages during the survey Historic Scotland and the Garden History Society in Scotland have been consulted. In addition other stakeholders including Scottish Natural Heritage, City of Edinburgh Council Culture and Leisure Department, City of Edinburgh Council Archaeologist, Scottish Natural Heritage and Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) have been consulted on the draft reports. **Public consultation took place during summer 2009 and resulted in three additions to the long list and other minor amendments to this summary and site reports.**

In most cases, owners or occupiers have been contacted regarding access for site surveys, although not in the case of publicly-accessible or communally-owned sites.

4 Stage 1 Survey

The main purpose of Stage 1 was to provide a basic and comprehensive list of sites from which to select sites worthy of further investigation. A range of site categories was included, as shown below. The sites also varied widely in terms of size and quality, although the process of identification did not include a qualitative assessment. The resulting list and their mapping in the GIS database therefore covers sites of a great range of values that may be significant at local, regional or national level in terms of the Inventory parameters of aesthetic, historical, horticultural, architectural, scenic, nature conservation and archaeological values. Included in this list are sites such as playing fields and allotments of local value that will rate very lowly, as well as nationally important parks and estate landscapes that will have high or outstanding values.

The categories and numbers of sites are as follows.

Allotment sites	19
Cemetery sites	23
Commercial (offices, hotels, exhibition ground etc)	7
Fragmented with mixed use	2
Golf courses	15
Institutional (schools, universities, hospitals etc)	35
New Town gardens	35
Private gardens and estates	49
Public parks and open spaces (incl. Royal Park & Royal Botanic Garden)	101
Utilities	1
Vestigial sites	16
Villa groups (large houses and gardens with group value)	12

The schedule of sites, with brief notes on each site, is included as Appendix 1. The schedule also identifies the Stage 2 priority sites with detailed reports.

5 Stage 2 Site Reports

The priority sites selected for detailed reports relate to the value to be gained from each report rather than an aim to study a representative sample. The detailed report sites are unevenly spread between the site categories and in location across the city. The selection of sites was undertaken by Council representatives and the consultant with the following priorities.

- Sites in areas of the city zoned for development or with high development pressures, notably in the Gogar/Ingliston and Balerno areas of rural west Edinburgh
- Other sites of known quality affected by active or predicted development proposals, including sites being marketed with possible use changes
- Institutional sites with a history of regular additional development or change of use, from hospitals to university campuses
- Sites with a perceived need for conservation or understanding of conservation requirements, including historic and 19th century graveyards
- New town gardens that lie outside the group boundary in the *Inventory*
- One individual *Inventory* site was included – Hatton – due to its conservation needs and to investigate the boundaries given in the *Inventory*.

As a result, the forty-eight sites that were selected are in the following categories. The number of sites was determined by the available budget.

Cemetery sites	7
Commercial (offices, hotels, exhibition ground etc)	5
Fragmented with mixed use	1
Golf courses	2
Institutional (schools, universities, hospitals etc)	13
New Town Gardens	2
Private gardens and estates	13
Public parks and open spaces	4
Villa groups (houses and gardens with group value)	1

In terms of distribution, the forty-eight sites lie within the following Local Plan areas.

Central	12
North-east	0
North-west	7
Rural west	20
South-east	6
South-west	3

The site reports are loosely based on the format of the *Inventory*, adapted to reflect the differences the Edinburgh sites. Each is between six and twelve pages long, is illustrated with a site plan, historical maps and graphic representations, and with survey photographs. The report text is arranged under the following headings:

- Reasons for Inclusion
- Location, Setting and Extent
- Main Phases of Development

- History of Landscape Development
- Components of the Designed Landscape
- Public Access
- Future Management Potential
- Assessment of Significance
- Sources

6 General Observations

The forty-eight sites are an unrepresentative sample and so it is difficult to draw findings or conclusions that have any general application. Studies in other areas of Scotland have shown that *Inventory* sites typically represent about 10 to 20% of all historic gardens and designed landscapes nationally, there being many other sites of local or regional value in all parts of the country. The information from the two stages of the Edinburgh survey confirms these findings.

The survey shows that there are many gardens and designed landscape of considerable heritage value in Edinburgh in addition to the *Inventory* sites, with sites such as Ratho Park, Norton House, Gogar Mount, Mortonhall and Edmonstone retaining much of their character, many features and a major contribution to the landscape quality of their vicinity. However, these represent the best sites and all have been affected by development and loss of features to a degree and they are unlikely to be considered of sufficient quality to merit addition to the national *Inventory*.

It is not that Edinburgh did not have more notable gardens and designed landscapes – Dreghorn Castle would be of national importance if it had survived intact – but in an urban or urban fringe location few sites derived from estate landscapes survive in anything like their optimal form. Inevitably, with urban growth through the 20th and early 21st centuries, sites have been developed for residential and institutional use, subject to industrial uses, converted to golf courses and adapted to other uses.

Given the scale of urban growth, what is remarkable about the designed landscapes in Edinburgh is their resilience and the importance that they still play in the urban form and rural scenery of the urban fringe, in accommodating current uses and in the lives of local people. Of the forty-eight sites investigated in detail, two-thirds were significant estate or large villa designed landscapes in the 19th century and all remain in a recognisable form, albeit with areas of development, changed uses and loss of features in some cases. The most resilient of features is the landscape structure of tree belts and woodlands, which survive in areas where other features have been lost, for example within the suburban housing areas east of Dreghorn and west of Mortonhall. The importance of the mature avenues, tree belts and woodlands that continue to play an important role in the cityscape and local scenery cannot be over-emphasised.

The resilience of designed landscapes is evident in a more emphatic way in several campus-type sites where development has, arguably, added to the cultural value of what were fairly ordinary urban fringe designed landscapes. High quality landscape and building design to accommodate new uses of high cultural or commercial value have been achieved at sites as diverse as Riccarton, Gogarburn, Corstorphinehill and Pollock Halls to deliver a modern phase in the history of these sites where their current cultural values far outweigh that of the typical 19th century mansion settings that they replace.

Designed landscapes can be seen to be not only resilient but also highly adaptable. Two hospital sites, that started life as the setting of a tower-house and a farmhouse, have been converted to campuses for Napier University at Craighouse and Craiglockhart. Ratho Park, and to a lesser extent Hanley

(Gogarburn Golf Course), have converted to golf course use with much of their mature parkland character intact, although affected by the common problem of the character of new planting. Many of Edinburgh's public parks started life as estate landscapes, including Inch Park, although it is much reduced in extent and landscape quality. Mortonhall, one of the largest sites and still a privately owned estate, has adapted to its greenbelt position by a diversity of uses, with a high level of public access and including conversion of the mansion-house to apartments. Similarly large, Dreghorn remains a fine spacious setting for good quality barracks architecture, even if the core is divorced from its extensive woodland enclosure. The third landscape of this scale, the Barnton/Cramond sites, have evolved in a more diverse and fragmented way providing a setting for housing as well as golf courses and public open spaces. Of all the highly adapted sites, perhaps Ingliston has fared least well through its phases of use as a motor-racing circuit and exhibition grounds with very little tree structure remaining. The most recently adapted site works more with the historic fabric – the creation of a sculpture park in the grounds of Bonnington House, opening to the public in 2009.

Since WW1 the traditional estate designed landscape has been progressively less viable in its uses of farming, forestry and private recreation, and the extensive built and planted features increasingly expensive to maintain. As the Edinburgh sites show, designed landscapes make very attractive sites for a variety of modern uses – particularly housing, golf courses and institutional uses. In urban fringe situations, the pressures from the expanding urban area are impossible to resist in the long term and this pattern is likely to continue, except where strictly limited by green belt or other policies.

About ten of the report sites are designed landscapes that have survived as private estates where encouragement needs to be given to owners to retain the traditional uses and their built and planted features. This is expensive to do and with low incomes from traditional estate sources – or where productive land may have been sold off – other means of financing upkeep are often necessary. Conservation and green belt policies, listing status and other designations can reduce the opportunities for new sources of income through development. Planning policy in relation to these sites needs to reflect both the need to encourage owners to maintain traditional uses with a viable income and the long-term inevitability of change in these landscapes.

The seven cemetery sites are obviously a distinct and separate group. The once-private 19th century cemeteries have been through a difficult period of neglect but now receive a regular if basic level of care, limited by Council resources, with additional inputs from friends groups. However, this is insufficient for their long-term conservation and major problems, like the safety of gravestones, remain. Active graveyards and crematoria, as at Mortonhall, have different problems and lessons may be learned from the privately run crematorium at Warriston.

A category of designed landscape that is quite distinctly of Edinburgh are the grounds of private schools and *hospitals* or charity schools (*pauper palaces*), mostly characterised in strongly-expressed architectural styles with dramatic skylines. Among the detailed reports Fettes College is in this category of site.

Deterioration of the built fabric is a widespread problem. While buildings have often been demolished, many others have been converted to new uses with an assured future life. The extensive features of estate walls, hahas, terraces, garden walls, bridges, garden buildings, gateways and lodges are often neglected, and may be severely deteriorated and dangerous. Ways need to be found to conserve these important features that define site boundaries and add to their richness.

7 Recommendations

- **Many of the 315 sites and all of the forty-eight sites covered by detailed reports are of value as cultural landscapes at a local, regional or national level. This value need to be recognised in the planning process.**
 - **Sites of value at a local, regional or national level should be recognised and related to a policy in Local Plans. Planning policy should encourage their conservation and enhancement, protect them from inappropriate development and promote sensitive new design**, in line with advice from the Scottish Government, as set out in Paragraph 3.8 of Scottish Historic Environment Policy (October 2008).
 - The survey should not be seen as comprehensive or conclusive. The 'long list' covers a great range of sites of varying quality and was produced as a rough trawl from which to select sites for detailed study. The forty-eight sites with detailed reports are an unrepresentative sample of some of the more significant sites. For the survey to be of use in planning and management generally the long list should be refined and other significant sites added to the forty-eight sites so that all known sites of regional value are recorded. In addition:
 - other potential new sites of merit should be assessed and included, particularly smaller garden sites
 - entries should be extended and updated as new information becomes available; primary sources may be accessed under a programme of further research.
 - Conservation Management Plans, following the guidelines of bodies such as Historic Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund, should be required for sites where development is proposed and to coordinate management of sites with fragmented or divided ownership. Such plans can provide the context for successful new development while retaining the features of sites that make them special.
 - Tree belts and woodlands are the most persistent feature of designed landscapes and in many cases they survive where buildings and parkland have been lost. Their value in urban form needs recognition and protection through Conservation Area and TPO designations. However, resources also need to be directed at management both on publicly and privately owned sites. Care of mature trees, particularly in respect of health and safety of ageing and potentially dangerous trees, and restocking with young trees for the future are two equally important aspects of management.
 - Encouragement should be given also for increased public access, where appropriate, related to core path network planning and the other provisions of the Land Reform Act.
 - The survey is of local history interest and should be publicly accessible, on the web and in libraries. Site interpretation of the history of landscape development and social history will also be appropriate in several cases.
 - Most of the individual reports include important site-specific recommendations regarding future management that expand on these general issues.
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Sources used for Stage 1

Published Sources

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Maps

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- Charles Thomson *Plan of the Town of Leith and its Environs* 1822 NLS
- Lancefield, *Johnston's Plan of Edinburgh & Leith* 1851 NLS
- James Knox, *Map of the Shire of Edinburgh* 1816 NLS
- Sharp, Greenwood and Fowler *Map of the County of Edinburgh* 1828
- John Thomson *Atlas of Scotland* 1832 NLS
- Ordnance Survey First edition 1850s
- Ordnance Survey Parish map 1898-1904
- Ordnance Survey Third edition c1912-15

Sources used for Stage 2, including maps, primary and secondary sources, are given with each site report



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