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8.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - Listed Building Reports & Inventory Record

APPENDIX II - Illustrations at A3
1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Thomas Hamiltons’ Royal High School has been described as “arguably the most significant and accomplished Greek Revival building in the UK, it has claims to be amongst the finest on a worldwide stage.”

This conservation plan for Thomas Hamilton’s Royal High School site is the third such report in ten years. As such, it does not seek to repeat what is already known, but aims to re-visit key aspects of the historical development of the site and provide an analysis of significance that develops on those already conducted. In particular, the conservation plan places a re-emphasis on the relationship of the building to Playfair’s Third New Town and wider aspirations of Edinburgh in the first half of the 19th century.

The study area comprises five main buildings: the former Royal High School building itself, designed by Thomas Hamilton (1790-1857), and completed in 1829 (including the east and west pavilions); an 1885 gate lodge designed by the Edinburgh School Board architect, Robert Wilson; an 1885 gymnasium block, also by Robert Wilson, extended and altered in 1894; a luncheon hall and craft block building dating to 1924; and a classroom block dating to 1946. All of these buildings are listed in category A; are located in the New Town Conservation Area; New Town Gardens/Designed Landscape; and within the boundary of the Edinburgh Old and New Towns World Heritage Site.

The interior of Hamilton’s building was extensively altered in the late 1970s by the Property Services Agency in advance of the anticipated Scottish Assembly. The seating and gallery of the great hall were altered, four new staircases introduced and classrooms converted and subdivided into office accommodation. The basement below the great hall was altered to provide a public entrance. This report considers that the majority of these alterations are of lesser significance and are reversible.

The cultural significance of the site is outstanding. In particular, the principal elevations of the Hamilton Building are considered to be of both outstanding historical and architectural significance. In addition to the oft-stated architectural significance of the site, the social significance of the site is also considerable, with strong identifiable links in the wider community to both the understanding of the social history of education in 19th century Scotland, and of evolving Scottish politics in the 20th century. The site is important to the people of Edinburgh and Scotland not just as a building, but as a place of identifiable social and educational purpose.

A detailed analysis of significance in this report argues that specific elements of the site are, however, of lesser significance. This includes buildings and features of negative significance, such as the 1946 classroom block and the 1970s stair extension to the gallery in the great hall. This report highlights areas of greatest significance that require either carefully considered repair and/or alteration, and areas of lesser significance where alterations to suit a new use might be appropriate.
“…buildings such as the Royal High are potent cultural and political artefacts. They generate powerful, lasting sentiments, of communal identity, of shared values and of civic purpose. The very fact that the Royal High is a neo-classical design – the traditional architectural garb of the public realm – gives it that magnetic power in spades.”

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Figure 1 1895 photograph by Henry Bedford Lemere showing the principal elevation of the Royal High School from Regent Road. Reproduced under licence © HES SC683126
https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/683126

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Figure 2 General view of the Royal High School and Calton Hill taken from Salisbury Crags in February 2015. © Tom Parnell, https://flic.kr/p/uYYL7s

Figure 3 General view of the great hall, taken in August 2003. Reproduced under licence © HES SC1265284 http://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1265284
Figure 4  Extract from the Ordnance Survey Explorer series (1:25,000) with site circled. Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright All rights reserved. Licence number 100006772

Figure 5  Vertical satellite view centred on the Royal High School site. © Google 2015
2.0 INTRODUCTION

Figure 6 Detail of a panel dated 1578 relocated to Thomas Hamilton’s 1829 building in 1897. The panel includes the inscription ‘Musis Respublica Floreat’ or ‘Musis Respublica Floret’: The State Flourishes with the Muses. Photograph taken August 2014. © Tom Parnell, https://flic.kr/p/qkJ5rc

2.1 Objectives of the Conservation Plan

This conservation plan has been commissioned by the Royal High School Preservation Trust to inform the conservation, repair, use, management and possible future alteration of the Royal High School site and its immediate setting for use by the St Mary's Music School.

This report includes an appraisal of the heritage value of the site, an examination of main conservation-related issues and guidelines for the buildings.

The conservation plan assesses and sets out in summary what is important about the Royal High School (its significance), based upon readily available information. The information gathered is then considered in an assessment of cultural significance, for
the site as a whole and for its various parts, to be summarised in this report with a statement of significance.

The purpose of establishing the importance of the site is to identify and assess the attributes which make a place of value to our society. Once the heritage significance of the site is understood, informed policy decisions can be made which will enable that significance to be retained, revealed, enhanced or, at least, impaired as little as possible in any future decisions for the site. A clear understanding of the nature and degree of the significance of the building is essential. But it will not only suggest constraints on future action. It will introduce flexibility by identifying the areas which can be adapted or developed with greater freedom.

Based on all of this information and opinion, a set of policies, or guidelines, have been established that will inform the conservation, repair, management and use of the building according to best conservation practice.

Figure 7 Watercolour perspective submitted to the Royal Scottish Academy by Thomas Hamilton in 1831. Reproduced under licence © Royal Scottish Academy

2.2 Study Area

The former Royal High School is located at the centre of Edinburgh on the southern slopes of Calton Hill, a ‘displaced fragment’ of the extinct Arthur’s Seat volcano. The site is on Regent Road which is a continuation of Waterloo Place, itself an early 19th century continuation eastwards from the east end of Princes Street.

The study area focuses on the area currently in the ownership of the City of Edinburgh Council, with the former Royal High School at the centre of the site with buildings to the east and west within the former school boundary. For the purposes of the report, and essential to the understanding of the site, the immediate setting of the former school buildings is also considered.

The study area is shown on Figure 8.

2.3 Heritage Designations

2.3.1 Listed Buildings - Site

The Royal High School is a category A listed building (Reference: 27987). The listing includes both the east and west pavilions (or lodges) designed by Thomas Hamilton, the lodge, and the classroom block, both by Robert Wilson. The other pre-1948 buildings on the site, namely the luncheon hall and 1946 classroom block, are considered to be included within the curtilage of the listed building.

A category A listed building is one that has been identified by Historic Environment Scotland as being of national or international importance, either architectural or historic, or fine little-altered examples of some particular period, style or building type.

A category B listed building is recognised as being of regional, or more than local importance, or a major example of some particular period, style or building type – which may have been altered.

2.3.2 Listed Buildings – Study Area

There are a number of listed buildings in the immediate context of the study area. Regent Road (from west to east):

- Regent Road Retaining Wall – Category B (Reference: 27946)
- St Andrew’s House – Category A (Reference: 27756)
• K6 Telephone Box – Category B (Reference: 49151)
• Burns’ Monument – Category A (Reference: 27801)

Regent Terrace:
• Nos 1-34 Regent Terrace – Category A (For example, No 1, Reference: 29618)

Calton Hill (from west to east):
• Dugald Stewart’s Monument – Category A (Reference: 27835)
• Observatory House – Category A (Reference: 27608)
• City Observatory – Category A (Reference: 27603)
• Playfair’s Monument – Category A (Reference: 27826)
• Nelson’s Monument – Category A (Reference: 27823)
• National Monument – Category A (Reference: 27820)

![Figure 9](image-url) Location map showing listed buildings in study area. Red: Category A; Blue: Category B. The green line indicates the approximate boundary between the New Town Conservation and the Old Town Conservation Area. Crown copyright 2010. Licence no. 100020449. Modified by S&B.

2.3.3 Scheduled Monuments

The site is not a Scheduled Monument, is in the immediate vicinity of a Scheduled Monument.

2.3.4 World Heritage Site

The site is in the centre of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site, inscribed in 1995 by UNESCO⁴, see Figure 10.

---

2.3.5 Conservation Area

The site is located within the New Town Conservation Area, designated in 1977. The study area is close to the boundary with the Old Town Conservation Area, which includes the lower parts of the footpaths leading from the south side of Regent Road down to Calton Road (see Figure 9).

2.3.6 Historic Environment Record

The Historic Environment Record in Edinburgh largely relates to the sites noted by the Historic Environment Scotland’s Canmore database. It is acknowledged that the study area is likely to be of some archaeological interest.

2.4 Structure of the Report


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Figure 10  Map showing boundary of Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site, with conservation areas. Edinburgh World Heritage Trust

5 City of Edinburgh Council; New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal; approved June 2005
2.5 Adoption & Review

This conservation plan is to be used by the Royal High School Preservation Trust, stakeholders, consultants, and by any future users of the site to aid in the sensitive and appropriate management and use of this historic building complex.

2.6 Other Studies

The document builds on the knowledge and understanding presented in earlier studies of the application site – a Conservation Plan by LDN, 2004, and a Heritage Statement by Andrew PK Wright, 2015. Key to the understanding of the site is research conducted by Joe Rock and available on his research pages, and Diane Watters article on Classical School Architecture and Educational Elitism in Early Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh both of which consolidate the educational and architectural histories of the Royal High School.

2.7 Limitations

Access to the former RHS site was limited as the client for this report does not have a lease agreement with the City of Edinburgh Council and the building is not generally open to the public. A detailed survey, which is normally conducted for any conservation plan, was not possible for this report, but the existing arrangement and condition of the building has been extensively discussed in other reports.

2.8 Orientation

For the purposes of this report and convenience, the Royal High School buildings are assumed to be on an east-west axis, with central portico and entrance sequence facing south.

2.9 Project Team

The study team from Simpson & Brown for this report comprised John Sanders, Tom Parnell, and Kirsten Carter McKee. John Sanders is a partner at Simpson & Brown. Tom Parnell is an associate and architectural historian, and Kirsten Carter McKee, Urban Memory, is an academic and freelance Heritage Consultant.

2.10 Acknowledgements

Simpson & Brown gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by the following persons, archives and organisations during the completion of this report (in alphabetical order):

- National Record of Historic Environment Scotland

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7 Watters, D; ‘Classical School Architecture and Educational Elitism in Early Nineteenth-Century Edinburgh’, Architectural History; 2014
2.11 Abbreviations

A number of abbreviations have been used throughout this report and are identified as follows:

- **CEC** – City of Edinburgh Council
- **HES** – Historic Environment Scotland
- **NLS** – National Library of Scotland
- **NRS** – National Records of Scotland
- **RHS** – Royal High School
- **RMA** – Richard Murphy Architects
- **S&B** – Simpson & Brown

2.14 Building Names

Thomas Hamilton’s Royal High School building is currently officially known as New Parliament House, renamed as such after the building was converted in the 1970s. It would also seem that the school never had a Royal Charter, and was more commonly referred to as the High School on both Hamilton’s drawings, on maps, and in contemporary records from the 19th century. Nevertheless, the building remains popularly known as the former Royal High School, and this report continues to use this name.

The current Royal High School is located in Barnton. References to the Royal High School in this report refer to Thomas Hamilton’s building and not to the current school.

The two flanking temple structures either side of Hamilton’s main building are variously referred to as lodges, but to avoid confusion with the 1885 gate lodge, this report refers to them as pavilions, as described in the listed building report.

The gymnasium block of 1885 was altered and enlarged to form a classroom block in 1894, and the latter term is used in the listed building report. In line with other recent reports, this conservation plan refers to this building as the gymnasium block.

The 1924 luncheon block and 1946 classroom block are referred to accordingly.

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**Figure 11** Lower ground floor plan of the Royal High School, as existing. *RMA, Edited by S&B*

**Figure 12** Upper ground floor plan of the Royal High School, as existing. *RMA, Edited by S&B*

**Figure 13** Balcony level plan of the Royal High School, as existing. *RMA, Edited by S&B*
Figure 14  Roof plan of the Royal High School, as existing. RMA, Edited by S&B

Figure 15  Ground floor plan of the gymnasium and luncheon blocks, as existing. RMA, Edited by S&B
Figure 16  Ground floor plan of the lodge and classroom block, as existing. RMA, Edited by S&B

Figure 17  Plans, section and elevation of the belvedere tower. RMA, Edited by S&B
3.0 UNDERSTANDING THE ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL

3.1 Introduction

An understanding of how the building has reached its present form will help determine the importance of various elements of the site, which will then inform policies, or guidelines for management and alterations.

Research was undertaken during the time available for the completion of this report. This conservation plan does not intend to provide a cohesive view of the historical development of the building complex and its urban site, but to consolidate, discuss, and summarise research already carried out.

3.2 Historical Background

3.2.1 Map Evidence

The development of Calton Hill can be readily understood using available map evidence, with a number of key maps produced from the late 18th century and throughout the construction of the Hamilton building.

![Figure 18](image) Extract from Alexander Kincaid’s Plan of the City and Suburbs of Edinburgh, 1784 showing Calton Hill before the construction of Regent Bridge. NLS

One of the earliest maps that is relevant to the study area is Alexander Kincaid’s Plan of the City and Suburbs of Edinburgh, published in 1784 - Figure 18. This shows Calton Hill largely undeveloped, save for James Craig’s 1770s observatory. Regent Bridge carrying Waterloo Place and Regent Road have not yet been developed, and the ‘Calton Bury-ing Ground’ is shown in its original form, accessed primarily from Calton Street (now Calton Hill) leading from what is today’s Leith Street. Paths from the North Back of the Canongate (now Calton Road) lead to the burial ground, with a
‘walk round the hill’ clearly showing the use of Calton Hill for recreational purposes. This is the path that the philosopher David Hume had petitioned for in 1775⁹.

To the west, the recently completed North Bridge (finally opened after a lengthy construction process in 1772) connects the Old Town to the early developments of the New Town. Robert Adam’s General Register House is shown with its first phase completed.

Figure 19 Extract from John Ainslie’s Old and New Towns of Edinburgh, 1804. NLS

A significant amount of change can be seen in the study area in the intervening twenty years between Kincaid’s map and John Ainslie’s Old and New Towns of Edinburgh of 1804 - Figure 19. The most notable development is Robert Adam’s 1790s Bridewell on the south crags of Calton Hill, overlooking the Old Town. One important fact delineated by Ainslie is the extent of the area owned by the City of Edinburgh – highlighted in green.

⁹ LDN; Calton Hill Conservation Plan; 1999; pp7, 12, & 30
Robert Kirkwood’s Plan of the City of Edinburgh and its Environs - Figure 20 - from 1817 contains “all the recent and intended improvements” – i.e. including projects not yet completed. South of the study area, on Calton Road, various competing proposals for canals linking Edinburgh to Leith are shown, an important indicator of the growing status of the docks at Leith and the recognition of their strategic importance to Edinburgh’s growth.

More specifically, the Regent Bridge carrying Waterloo Place to what is delineated as the ‘Great London Road’ is shown, although it was not completed until 1819. The ‘Calton Old Burying Ground’ was split into two sections by the new road, and the ‘Calton New Burying Ground’ is showing to the east. Immediately adjacent to Adam’s Bridewell, and in between that and the burial ground is Archibald Elliot’s ‘Felon’s Jail’ and Governor’s House, which opened in 1817 – the latter is the only part of the jail complex that remains today. A further jail building – ‘Debtors Jail’ – is shown in pink to the east. Elliot was the architect responsible for much of Regent Bridge and Waterloo Place, and his buildings flanking Waterloo Place are clearly shown in pink (‘proposed’).

On Calton Hill itself, the circular walk around hill has been joined by a new approach route from east of the Bridewell, adjacent to ‘The Baxters or Millers Know’, a knowe, or small hill protruding from the south slopes of Calton Hill. Playfair’s ‘proposed scientific observatory’ is shown in pink - the foundation stone of the city observatory was laid in 1818 and the building completed in 1822. Nelson’s Monument, completed by Thomas Bonnar in 1816, is clearly shown, along with what appears to be a small villa or cottage to the north east.
A further map by Kirkwood, produced four years later, shows further development—Figure 21. The new observatory building – then nearing completion – is clearly marked ('T'), and the debtors’ jail, ‘Y’, has changed shape. The most interesting change is to the east of the survey area. The ‘Calton New Burying Ground’, which had opened in 1820 is now clearly depicted, as is the site of the ‘Proposed Burns’ Monument’. On the north side of the Great London Road is the earliest depiction of Playfair’s proposed new terrace of houses.

John Wood’s Plan of the City of Edinburgh Including Latest and Intended Improvements from 1823 - Figure 22 - is interesting, but as the name suggests, it also shows features that had not yet been constructed. This map is the first to show the High School building – although by 1823, the locating of the proposed new High School had not yet been confirmed here, suggesting the date of the map is not entirely accurate (or that 1823 refers to a survey date, but was published later with amendments). Hamilton had not yet even produced drawings for the earlier proposed site at the Excise Office on St Andrew Square (produced in May 1824\(^ {10} \)). Although Burns’ Monument is also shown (the foundation stone was not laid until 1831), it had been discussed for many years previously, and the similar monument in Alloway (also by Hamilton) had been completed in 1823. Wood also shows the renaming of the Great London Road as Regent Road and the completed Debtors Jail. On Calton Hill, the National Monument – still described by Wood as the National Church – is shown, with the foundation stone having been laid in 1822.

Wood’s plan was reprinted in 1831 - Figure 23 – and this part of the map is largely identical to the same area shown in 1823, but with the addition of hand-colouring.

\(^{10}\) https://sites.google.com/site/joerocksresearchpages/thomas-hamilton-architect/royal-high-school-chronology; accessed 30-Oct-2015
Figure 22 Extract from John Wood’s *Plan of the City of Edinburgh Including the Latest and Intended Improvements*, 1823. This is the first map to show the High School, albeit too early for the date of the map. NLS

Figure 23 Extract from John Wood’s *Plan of the City of Edinburgh Including the Latest and Intended Improvements*, 1831 – largely identical to Figure 22, but hand coloured. NLS
Figure 24 Extract from James Kay’s Plan of Edinburgh, 1836 showing Playfair’s early proposals for additional development on the Earthen Mound. NLS

Although loosely depicted on William Hunter’s map of 1828, the first accurate depiction of the Royal High School is on James Kay’s Plan of Edinburgh from 1836, Figure 24. This shows the footprint in the correct position, with the approach stairs and flanking pavilions, as well as the belvedere tower and site boundary. Kay shows the incomplete National Monument, as well as the small house or cottage adjacent to the Nelson Monument last shown by Kirkwood.

The first OS large scale Town Plan of the study area was surveyed 1849-53, and is the first large scale detailed map of the site - Figure 25. The map sheet was surveyed in 1852. This series of maps – drawn at a scale of 1:500 – also shows the interior layouts of public buildings.

The layout of the Hamilton Building is clearly shown, with the seating arrangement of the great hall depicted. All the main rooms are shown with chimney pieces, apart from those immediately adjacent to the great hall, and the north and south rooms of the west range. The two original stairs are shown, along with the short flight of stairs in the east and west ranges at the side entrances. The playground areas to the west, north and east are entirely clear, with a line of shelters against the retaining wall in the north east. Planting is shown in the areas adjacent to Regent Road. A small bank of steps adjacent to the west pavilion is shown.

In the wider study area, the three main blocks that then comprised the ‘Edinburgh Prison’ are clearly shown. The arrangement of the paths from the then North Back of Canongate (Calton Road) is largely as continues to exist today, as is the arrangement of Burns’ Monument, Calton New Burial Ground and Regent Terrace. On Calton Hill itself, the small cottage, with adjacent summer house in what appears to be a private garden continues to be shown to the east of Nelson’s Monument. The twelve columns of the ‘unfinished’ National Monument are those that still stand today.
A more detailed extract from the same map, Figure 26, shows the internal layout of Hamilton’s building more clearly. The school is referred to as the ‘High School of Edinburgh.’
The Town Plan was updated by the OS in 1876-77 - Figure 27. This shows little change in the intervening years, although the entire prison site is left blank, in line with common practice to not show prisons or military sites. The interior and immediate setting of the Royal High School is largely unchanged, except the narrow areas of ground either side of the entrances on Regent Road is shown without planting.

On Calton Hill, the house and garden to the east of Nelson’s Monument has been demolished and the site largely cleared. The largely single-track tramway from Princes Street to Portobello is shown on Regent Road.

A further update to the Town Plan was made in 1894 - Figure 28. The interior layout of public buildings are no longer shown. The most apparent change is the new gymnasium block and janitor’s house that have been constructed along the north boundary of the site. The playground shelter seen in the earlier map sheet has been replaced with one to the west of the new gymnasium block. The school is names the
‘Royal High School’ for the first time by the Ordnance Survey. The small flight of steps adjacent to the west pavilion has gone, with the planting extended up to the pavilion. There are few changes in the wider setting, although a change in character to Regent Road – which now has a twin-track tramway – is indicated with an avenue of trees on the south side.

Figure 29 Detail of the OS National Grid series, surveyed 1945. NLS

Jumping forward fifty years to the OS National Grid series – the first comprehensive resurvey immediately after World War II – a number of changes have taken place. The map shows the later 19th century additions and alterations to the gymnasium block and the 1924 luncheon hall. It was surveyed before the construction of the 1946 classroom block.

In the wider setting, the prison site has been cleared and St Andrew’s House constructed on the site.

3.3 The Royal High School – History and Meaning

The Royal High School is the embodiment of a social and cultural dialogue. There are three specific aspects to this dialogue:

- Edinburgh as the Athens of the North
- The role of Calton Hill within the city landscape and topography
- The decision to site The Royal High School on Calton Hill in the 1820s.

These aspects found a focus in Hamilton’s Greek Revival design.
3.3.1 The Athens of the North

Parallels between the intellectual community of the Scottish Enlightenment and that of Ancient Athens appeared from the mid-18th century onwards. But the concept that Edinburgh’s urban realm would exhibit the idea of ‘The Athens of the North’ did not become common until the early 19th century. This urban idea came to focus on Calton Hill and its environs as the Third New Town of Edinburgh. This third new town was designed in 1819 by the architect William Henry Playfair. It was influenced by broader discussions surrounding urban development in the British Isles during, and immediately after, the Napoleonic wars.

The landscape of Athens and Edinburgh was paramount in the comparison of the two cities. Cambridge Geologist, Edward Daniel Clarke, had first pointed out similarities between the topography of the two cities in his 1818 publication. “Edinburgh exhibits a very correct model of a Grecian city and with its Acropolis, Town, and Harbour, [as] it bears some resemblance to Athens and the Piraeus.” This relationship between Piraeus and Athens and Clarke’s comparison to Leith and Edinburgh is key to defining Edinburgh’s ambitions as a northern Athens. From 1800 onwards, grand plans to expand Leith docks were being executed by the City of Edinburgh. The development of the Third New Town and widening Leith Walk formed a route between the waterways of the Firth of Forth at Leith, and the administrative and financial centre in Edinburgh. With this connection the city could become a significant naval stronghold.

11 “The setting up of further learned institutions such as a Riding school will render Edinburgh the ‘Athens of Britain’ where instead of the monkish pedantry of the old-fashioned Universities, young gentlemen will be initiated in the principles of useful knowledge and liberal accomplishments which qualify a man to appear in the distinguished spheres of life.” Allan Ramsay to Sir William Dick of Prestonfield, 1762. Taken from Lowrey, “From Caesarea to Athens Greek Revival Edinburgh and the Question of Scottish Identity within the Unionist State ”.

12 It was about the time [the period directly after the Napoleonic Wars] that the foolish phrase “The Modern Athens,” began to be applied to the capital of Scotland; a sarcasm, or a piece of affected flattery, when used in a moral sense; but just enough if it meant only a comparison of the physical features of the two places. The opportunities of observing, and the practice of talking of, foreign buildings in reference to our own, directed our attention to the works of internal taste, and roused our ambition. Cockburn, Memorials of His Time. The Ordinance Gazeteer of Scotland of 188(0?) notes that Edinburgh is called the Athens of the North by Stuart of Stuart and Revett.

13Edward Daniel Clarke; Travels in Various Countries of Europe, Asia and Africa, (Vol. 6); London; London; 1818; p378
within the British Isles. It could protect the mainland from attack by the French and allow more cargo from the colonies to pass through Edinburgh’s administrative realm.

Figure 31 Detail of Playfair’s proposals for “laying out the grounds to the east of the Calton Hill”, December 1819. Note the radial streets focussed on the National Monument on Calton Hill.

NLS

Playfair’s plans for the Third New Town emphasised the comparison with Athens. They demonstrated how Edinburgh considered its place within the British State. By using allegorical allusions to Greek Classicism in many of the public buildings and commemorative monuments, as well as the streetscapes of his proposed urban landscape Edinburgh is seen to be supporting the British cause without being subordinate to it.14 (As opposed to Roman classicism which was being adopted in London during this period to allude to London’s ambitions as an imperial force). The National Monument; a replica of the Parthenon on the summit of Calton Hill, promoted the use of Greek Revival rhetoric in the name of British glory. It served to further cement the visual connection between the city and Leith by assisting its comparison to Athens.15 This link between architectural style and a Romantic understanding of Scotland’s identity is one that continued throughout the 19th century as Scotland defines its place within the British State and its role within British Imperial ambition.16

3.3.2 Calton Hill’s relationship within the city landscape

As an urban park within the city, Calton Hill played a wider role in connecting the medieval Old Town and the classical New Town of Edinburgh. It ranks above the densely developed parts of the city. The dramatic topography of the Waverley Valley is emphasised by contrast and creates a dialogue between the hill and the surrounding Lothian landscape.

Playfair’s proposals for his classical Third New Town to Leith addressed this relationship between the urban realm and the rural hilltop by providing appealing glimpses of the hill’s leafy northern slopes through vistas created by the axial layout

14 John Lowrey
15 Its [Edinburgh’s] position on a rock in the middle of a fertile and champagne country the vicinity of the sea and the disposition of the town at the base of the fortress resemble in the most striking manner the situation of Corinth Athens Argos and most of the Grecian capitals. Sir Archibald Alison, “On the Proposed National Monument at Edinburgh,” Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine; 28, July 1819; p385.
16 For further discussion see Diane Watters (article) and Glendinning, MacInnes and Mackechnie; A History of Scottish Architecture; Chapter 5.
of the streets. This was intended to create an element of curiosity and intrigue and draw people arriving from Leith, up Leith walk to the city itself.\textsuperscript{17}

\par

\textbf{Figure 32} Oblique aerial view from the west showing Calton Hill and the completed phases of Playfair’s third new town, July 2015. Reproduced under licence © HES DP216996

https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1482867

\textsuperscript{17} This was never fully realised, as the railway was developed in the 1850, which stopped all development between Calton Hill and Leith.
On the southern face of the hill where The Royal High School sits, the steep and rugged nature of the topography provided a much more dramatic relationship between the rural and the urban landscape of the city. The rocky, rugged quality of the southern slope maintains a visual connection with the wild nature of Arthur’s Seat and Salisbury Crags on the other side of the valley. The contrast between the hill face and the adjacent burgh of the Canongate at the hill foot, further emphasises the picturesque nature of the juxtaposed rural and urban landscapes. The importance of retaining a connection with the broader landscape, and maintaining the drama of the contrasting adjacent sites was recognised in early discussions over the development of Calton Hill at the beginning of the 19th century and maintained throughout its development.

William Stark, a respected Glasgow based architect was asked to comment on proposals for the development of Calton Hill. He emphasised that Calton Hill is prominent within the city landscape and any development should be carefully and thoughtfully executed. He argued that the contours of the site should be the starting point, and that the introduction of new architecture should enhance and exploit the natural landscape rather than dominate it.\textsuperscript{18} Playfair’s design for Calton Hill were founded on this idea, allowing for sweeping streetscapes to be introduced at contours around the hill.

3.3.3 The Royal High School move to Calton Hill

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{figure33.png}
\caption{Engraving showing the High School of Edinburgh’s 1777 building, drawn 1819. Reproduced under licence © HES SC1244782 \url{https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1244782}}
\end{figure}

Before the Calton Hill site, the School had maintained a close proximity - virtually and academically - to the University of Edinburgh. The two institutions having been established within five years of each other in the 16th century.\textsuperscript{19}

\textsuperscript{18} ...the site is so well calculated to display either all its beauty or deformity... To a community like that of Edinburgh, where a taste for fine scenery is so generally prevalent, it is impossible that such situations should not have high attractions, if adorned with buildings worthy of them and combined so as to retain even a portion of their local beauties and splendid views. Ibid. p16.

\textsuperscript{19} The Royal High School has been established in the city since the 12th century. It had been housed in a number of locations throughout its 700 year lifespan.
By the early 1820s, discussions were held by the Town Council to re-locate the High School to a new site. This decision was a response to a demand for a larger premises needed to accommodate the growing numbers of pupils as a result of the expansion of the city in the 18th century. A more ‘centrally’ located building was needed for pupils coming from all corners of the expanding city.20 It was considered inappropriate that pupils were exposed to the insalubrious nature of life in the Old Town.21 However,22 the real push came from a rival proposal. The new Edinburgh Academy was to be built at the north end of the New Town.23 Its location, along with the Academy’s high fees, would exclude people in the Old Town.24 The majority of High School pupils in the early 19th-century lived in the New Town,25 and it was considered that the exclusivity of the Academy would appeal to those in the higher class of society, and would be to the detriment of the High School.26

The Town Council wanted to retain control over the city’s educational establishments. In 1822 it was proposed that the new Academy be under the aegis of the High School. Two separate schools would be created: the original Old Town premises, and a newly-built establishment in the New Town.27 Thomas Hamilton was commissioned to prepare designs for the new High School building, which was proposed for a site then owned by the Excise Office behind Robert Adam’s Register House.28 This proposal was dismissed due to concerns over the elitism that would result from having two separate schools in different areas of the city.29 In any case, the Royal Bank of Scotland successfully bid £35,000 for the site, beyond the budget of the city.

20 “...[T]he extent and population of Edinburgh have of late years increased very much and ...the present high school is too remote from many parts of the city, particularly the new town...The facts stated furnish...very strong reasons for removing the present school to a more centrical situation where more ample, and all necessary accommodation, may be afforded for the suitable education of the youth from all quarters of the city.” "A Letter to the Lord Provost on the Mischevous Tendency of a Scheme for Abolishing the High School of Edinburgh." p2.
21 Ibid. 3.
22 Edinburgh Town Council Minutes, SL1.
23 This was later to become Edinburgh Academy, built by William Burn. Lowrey, "The Polis and the Portico: The High School of the Athens of the North."
24 Only the most elite of Edinburgh society would be able to afford to send their sons there, in fact, the whole set up of the establishment was geared for the elite, including the curriculum. See Committee of Contributors to the Edinburgh Academy, "Report by Committee," (Edinburgh April 1823). and John Campbell, "Prospectus of an Educational Institution, on Christian Principles, Proposed to Be Established in Edinburgh.," (1825). Also, Lowrey, "The Polis and the Portico: The High School of the Athens of the North."
26 “The first objection which occurs to the scheme of establishing another “Great School,” instead of removing the high school, is, that, according to the plan proposed, the expence of education at the proposed Academy will be so great as to exclude all but the very highest and most wealthy classes of community from its instructions.” "A Letter to the Lord Provost on the Mischevous Tendency of a Scheme for Abolishing the High School of Edinburgh." p22
27 Edinburgh Town Council Minutes, 10th July 1822, SL1.
28 David Walker, ed. Scottish Pioneers of the Greek Revival ([Edinburgh]: Scottish Georgian Society,1984). 32-33. Further information on the style of this structure is also discussed in Section 2, Footnotes.
29 “It is most desirable that no class, however humble, should be excluded entirely from the means of attaining the best education.” "A Letter to the Lord Provost on the Mischevous Tendency of a Scheme for Abolishing the High School of Edinburgh." p4.
The proposers of the school also intended to provide an exclusive style of education. For a number of years, there had been concerns over the Latin style of classical education offered by the High School - in particular, the ‘Scots’ pronunciation of Latin, and a preference for Latin over Greek in its classical curriculum. The Academy was to provide a more Etonian, anglicised education so that pupils from elite families in Edinburgh would be able to challenge the perceived stranglehold of the public schools on Oxford and Cambridge Universities. They hoped to access the influence and power that an Oxbridge education fostered. It was a challenge to an English stronghold on establishment power in Great Britain and Empire.

A further suggestion to ‘convert[ing] the Parthenon of Athens into the great hall of our National Academy’ on the Mound into the new Royal High School, 30 which would ‘…combine the splendour of classic, with the glories of our own times, in the young and ardent associations of our sons’ was a direct response to this proposal for the Academy. By 1822, the location of the National Monument in Edinburgh had not been decided upon, but the sentiment of using the development of Edinburgh’s urban realm to demonstrate the city’s allegiance to the glory of the British State had been established. The development of a new Royal High School therefore was to be much more than a feeder school for Edinburgh University. It was an establishment built to educate Scots as the British leaders of tomorrow. 31 Subscribers to the National Monument in Edinburgh were asked to raise support and funds for the new High School to be part of the National Monument; “…there is no purpose to which it can be supplied so appropriate as the erection of a great national school, in which the youth, not of Edinburgh, but from every quarter

30 “It has been suggested…that the new high school shall be erected on the earthen mound, or in its vicinity, as the best situation in every point of view for accommodating the whole population of the city… It is disposed therefore, not as an indispensable part of any plan for removing the High School to the only open space in the midst of the city, but as a subject for consideration that the great hall or national monument be placed near the north end of the Earthen Mound, opposite to the opening of Hanover Street. In that situation it would be visible from a great many parts, and over a considerable extent of the Old and New Town: it would add another to the very few public buildings which it contains, while it would not interfere with any other view or object, but would give, in the very bosom of the city, a character more truly attic to our metropolis than any other edifice which it contains. Above all it would unite utility with ornament…” "A Letter to the Lord Provost on the Mischevous Tendency of a Scheme for Abolishing the High School of Edinburgh." pp22, 25.
31 Ibid. p25.
in Scotland, are to be trained to serve their country in all departments of public life… let the fabric be connected with the youth of the country.”

Figure 35 Lithograph based on drawing by George Meikle Kemp showing National Monument as proposed. Reproduced under licence © HES DP103848 https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1244164

The Town Council did not complete the National Monument in time to satisfy the subscribers to the new Academy building. William Burn was commissioned to design the structures on their original plot at the north end of the New Town. This allowed the Town Council to develop a new High School building on their own terms on Calton Hill. Despite the rivalry with the Academy, the design of the High School was still intended to meet the aspirations of its elite students. The proximity of Calton Hill to the location of the National Monument and its situation within Playfair’s imperial landscape of the Third New Town were part of a message of civic and imperial duty. Rather than the route to the city school passing insalubrious characters of the Old Town, its pupils would walk along Waterloo Place, past retaining walls for the Old Calton Burial ground, in which would be placed memorial busts and statues of characters of great inspiration, piety and patriotic valour. On reaching the school, they would be confronted by “an erection…of ornamental character…[which would] be a conspicuous object from many points, and particularly prominent on entering the town by the splendid approach of the Regent’s Road…[which] harmoniz…[es]… with the magnificence of the surrounding scenery.”

32 This was proposed to be “adorned every side with statues and other memorials of Abercromby, of Moore, of Burns, and of other lights in the Land either gone or not yet faded away – would be an arrangement which ought to reconcile the views of all parties, and to secure for this monument the deserved and distinctive epithet of national.” Ibid "A Letter to the Lord Provost on the Mischewous Tendency of a Scheme for Abolishing the High School of Edinburgh." p24.
33 These niches follow the wall all the way along into Regent Road and would no doubt have created a walk of contemplation, similar to that established by the arches at George Heriot’s School on the south side of the city. Giovanna Guidicini, " A Scottish Triumphal Path of Learning at George Heriot's Hospital, Edinburgh," International Review of Scottish Studies p35 (2010).

32 Royal High School, Edinburgh – Conservation Plan
The chosen site used the development of the urban fabric to elevate a local institution, to a national level of patriotic valour. By removing its geographical association with the University and placing the structure on Calton Hill, the school no longer sat in the shadow of Academia, but instead basked in the celestial light of Imperial grandeur.

3.3.4 The Design in Context

The space afforded by siting the building on Calton Hill was large enough to accommodate the whole school population. It removed the need to split the school between two sites in the Old and New Town. The size of the site, and its location halfway up the summit of Calton Hill, allowed Hamilton to create a structure with a horizontal dominance that satisfied William Stark’s contention that structures are “finer when seen from a moderate elevation…skirting the brow of the hill.” Hamilton’s long, low design sits on a curve in Regent Road hugging the hillside. It maintained the connection between the rugged nature of the south face of Calton Hill and the Waverley Valley, by creating a semi wild landscape which flowed from the classical summit to the medieval Canongate and up to the Salisbury Crags.

Hamilton’s interpretation of Le Roy’s Propylaea - the gateway to the Athenian Acropolis – as the design for the building, provided opportunity for the Royal High School to become part of the discourse surrounding Edinburgh’s claim to be the Athens of the North within the development of its urban realm. The Propylaea’s purpose as a gateway building to the Acropolis provided appropriate references to the placement of the National Monument on the summit of Calton Hill, and the School’s location at the southern end of the Third New Town along the new entrance route into the city. Most importantly, however, this use of Greek Revival style emphasised the role of the Royal High School in providing education as a gateway into the furtherance of the Imperial cause, and all the opportunities and glory that this would bring to the British State and the city of Edinburgh, for generations to come.

35 William Ross, on his monograph of the High School notes that it was the salubrious air, and space available for the building and its grounds at Calton Hill general that determined the site of the new School. William C. A. Ross, *The Royal High School* (Edinburgh, 1934), pp31-32.
37 “There is in bending alignment of streets much beauty. Public buildings break upon the eye the most favourable point of view, showing at once a front and a flank” Quoted in Fisher, "Thomas Hamilton." 39 Taken from Stark, *Report to the Right Honourable the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Council of the City of Edinburgh, and the Governors of George Heriot’s Hospital ... On the Plans for Laying out the Grounds for Buildings between Edinburgh and Leith.* p8.
Figure 36 Plan and sections of the Acropolis, Athens. *Copied from Sir Banister Fletcher’s A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, 6th Edition, 1921, p75*
Figure 37 Plans, sections, elevations and details of the Propylea, Athens. Copied from Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, 6th Edition, 1921, p110
Figure 38 Plans, sections, elevations and details of the Theseion (now known as the Temple of Hephaestus), Athens. *Copied from Sir Banister Fletcher's A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method, 6th Edition, 1921, p85*
3.4 Later Developments & Alterations

3.4.1 Changes to Hamilton’s Designs

Thomas Hamilton prepared a number of signed drawings that are now held by the National Record of HES. These date to May 1826, early in the Calton Hill scheme project. They are of particular interest as they show the building as intended by Hamilton. The construction process was complex, however, and a number of changes from the original plans were made throughout the construction process. The changes are summarised, below.

Figure 39 Plan showing lower ground level of the ‘New High School’ prepared by Thomas Hamilton, May 1826. Reproduced under licence © HES DP038200

At the lower ground level there were only a few alterations made. Worthy of note, however, are the five oculi on the south elevation, the purpose of which would appear to be to light and/or ventilate the fourteen toilets placed below the portico. Note also the fact that this area below the portico was only accessed from the side courts, with the only connection to the main building being through the central ‘furnace chamber’, a route which would presumably not have been for general use. The drawing has also been edited to omit the two inward-facing windows on the east and west wings, both of which would have lit ‘private rooms’ off the central class rooms. The omission of these could have been to continue the intended adherence to the general rule of Greek temples being constructed without windows.
At the upper ground level more deviations from the original plan were made. Again, side windows on the east and west wings are shown as being omitted, with the subdivision between the two rooms in the east wing being removed and the location of the fireplace altered to be centred on the full-width room. Of greater note is the omission of the walls that formed the octagonal ‘writing class room’ on the east side of the great hall, leaving a square room that mirrored the same space on the west side. Further edits to the drawing include small additional rooms in the ‘library’ and ‘classical museum’, which sit either side of the writing classroom – presumably inserted to compensate for the loss of the small rooms off the octagon.
The section (‘A-B’) is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, it demonstrates Hamilton’s clever use of the split level section in order to accommodate the two-storey classroom blocks at the side wings of the main building, with the lower level partly sunk with embankments allowing light without pushing the blocks too high in the overall composition. The early stepped parapet design for the two end blocks (based on the Choragic Monument of Thrasyllus\textsuperscript{38}) was later simplified. The section also shows the use of north-facing and clerestorey windows and rooflights to light the central rooms. The gentle rake of the seating in the great hall is also shown.

One of the key differences to the interior that is shown on the section that was not implemented in the final design was the proposed brackets supporting the balcony in the great hall – these were omitted and cast iron columns used instead, most probably as these would have been simpler to construct and likely cheaper as a result.

Further drawings from May 1826 are shown in Figure 42-Figure 44.

\textsuperscript{38} LDN; Royal High School Conservation Plan; 2004; p50
Figure 42 Ceiling plan, sections and elevation of the ‘New High School’ prepared by Thomas Hamilton, May 1826. Reproduced under licence © HES DP038205
Figure 43 Sections of the ‘New High School’ prepared by Thomas Hamilton, May 1826.
Reproduced under licence © HES DP038204
Figure 44 Plan, sections and elevation of the east and west pavilions (referred to as lodges on the drawing) of the ‘New High School’ prepared by Thomas Hamilton, May 1826. *Reproduced under licence © HES*
3.4.2 Hamilton’s Submission to the Royal Scottish Academy

Figure 45 Watercolour perspective submitted to the Royal Scottish Academy by Thomas Hamilton in 1831. Reproduced under licence © Royal Scottish Academy

This drawing is particularly important to the understanding of the Hamilton Building as it demonstrates Hamilton’s vision for the building. It was submitted to the Royal Scottish Academy in 1831, two years after the building opened to the public, but is widely accepted as having been repeatedly altered and amended over a number of years.

The perspective drawing demonstrates Hamilton’s exemplary skill in draughtsmanship. The view is marginally off the central axis of the building, likely a deliberate tool to make the image more dynamic. The first message that the drawing conveys is that Hamilton imagined a much more richly decorated building. Features that were excluded from the scheme include the carved statuary in the tympanum of the portico, the relief panel below (although a finely-finished albeit blank ashlar panel was placed here), large likely bronze statuary either side of the portico and six decorative, likely cast iron, but shown here as mimicking bronze, pinnacles. Railings – not often shown in architectural drawings – have been carefully delineated at ground level (which notably does not show the sloping street). Above the colonnades, the shadows of a total of twelve statues can still be seen, despite having been erased from the composition. The pediment is shown decorated with acroteria.

3.4.3 Construction and Completion

The foundation stone of the new building was laid on the 28th July, 1825. However, by this date, the funds required to commence construction of the building had not been raised. At this point, it was anticipated that the building would cost in the region of £17,000, although inflation costs of both wages and materials was adding to construction costs. It was anticipated that the then existing school site would sell for around £7,000, and that after a contribution from the Town Council of around £2,000, that the remainder would be raised by public subscription. By June of the following year, the sums raised by subscription allowed for work on the foundations to commence. Stone from the Craigleith quarry was used in the construction of the
building. Joe Rock details the early problems in construction which meant that construction continued through 1827 and 1828. The new High School was officially opened on the 23rd June, 1829.

“The new High School, one of the most classical and perfect edifices to be seen in Europe, was opened yesterday, under the most favourable auspices. The sky, which had lowered and almost threatened, during the earlier part of the day, drew up its curtain of clouds just before the procession moved from Infirmary Street; and as the sun burst forth in all its glory, the streets, and not only the streets but the houses and public buildings of Edinburgh, windows and balustrades, presented a most interesting spectacle…. When the Lord Provost, magistrates and Council were introduced to their seats and received by Mr. Hamilton the architect…”

![Ground floor plan prepared and annotated by Thomas Hamilton showing the ground floor plan of the Royal High School as completed. The great hall is annotated as 'public hall'. The west square classroom below the octagon is the ‘rector’s classroom’ (with the rector having a small room to the side), with the east square room noted as the library. Other rooms are listed simply as ‘principal class room’ or ‘side classroom’. The west pavilion is the ‘Janitor’s Lodge’ and the east pavilion contains the ‘writing classroom’.](https://sites.google.com/site/joerocksresearchpages/thomas-hamilton-architect/royal-high-school-chronology; accessed 30-Oct-2015)

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40 Whilst the original contract for these works suggested blasting of the rock would take no more than two months, it was not completed until June 1827. By that date, works had started on the wings. In early 1828, the main building company for the new building, the firm of John Dickson, was declared bankrupt. In May, John Dickson himself died. This caused inevitable delays to the project. It would seem that around this date, the stepped parapets of the wings was simplified: [https://sites.google.com/site/joerocksresearchpages/thomas-hamilton-architect/royal-high-school-chronology; accessed 30-Oct-2015](https://sites.google.com/site/joerocksresearchpages/thomas-hamilton-architect/royal-high-school-chronology; accessed 30-Oct-2015)

Figure 47  Perspective prepared by Thomas Hamilton showing the Royal High School as intended. The drawing shows the later design of the wings, without the stepped parapet, but retains the additional decorative features that were not implemented. *Copied from Wilhelm Steven; The History of the High School of Edinburgh; 1849; Frontispiece*

Shortly after the building was completed, it was noted that the pavement of the portico was leaking. The Arbroath stone originally used was replaced with Craigleith stone in 1841.

In response to complaints from the fuars of the adjacent Regent Terrace, gates were added at each of the doorways on Regent Road, and a stone cope with iron railings added to the front elevation *‘in a line with the projecting buttresses in front of the two lodges’*. These additional railings are shown in contemporary photographs. It is not clear how these new railings helped to dissuade the described ‘nuisances’.

Figure 48  Calotype credited to Robert Adamson, and stated by the accompanying catalogue entry to have been printed on the 17 May 1843. This shows the railings between the gateways and the pavilions, and between the pylon doors at both levels below the portico, but not the later railings in front of the entrances or pavilions. *National Galleries of Scotland PGP HA 958*
3.4.4 Gymnasium & Lodge

A single storey gymnasium and lodge were designed by the chief architect to the Edinburgh School Board, Robert Wilson, in 1885. The lodge, located just inside the site from the west entrance is described by the Buildings of Scotland series as a ‘good imitation’ [of Hamilton]. The gymnasium was a long narrow rectangular block located in the north-east corner of the site, the outline of which is depicted on the 1893 OS Town Plan (Figure 28). After the janitor moved from the west pavilion, it was converted into a swimming pool.
3.4.5 Gymnasium Alterations

In 1894 plans were prepared that extended the gymnasium block into the approximate external form that survives today. The building was extended westwards and had additions to the south. The swimming pool was relocated to the eastern part of the building, with the art room above. The Buildings of Scotland series describes the architecture of the altered building as “quietly following the style of the main building.” Indeed, it has been pointed out that the two projecting blocks are a deliberate inversion of the three projections of the Hamilton Building.

3.4.6 Luncheon Hall and Classroom Block

The first part of the present luncheon hall to be built was a single-storey craft room block that was constructed in the east playground, directly south of the gymnasium block. Drawings were presented to the Dean of Guild in July 1924. The building was extended with a luncheon hall in 1935.

The classroom block in the west playground was designed in 1946.

3.4.7 War Memorial

![Figure 51](image)

Figure 51 Drawing showing proposed memorial doorpiece and brass tablets, printed in Roll of Honour of the Royal High School of Edinburgh, 1920. Reproduced under Creative Commons licence, courtesy of NLS, http://digital.nls.uk/rolls-of-honour/pageturner.cfm?id=100545099

In 1920 the publishers Oliver & Boyd printed a short publication titled Roll of Honour of the Royal High School of Edinburgh. In the editorial note, William C A Ross notes that the record of former pupils serving in the war was commenced in 1914. By 1920 the list had contained 929 names, with the number who fell noted as being 174. A 1922 update increased these numbers to 1024 names with 180 who died.

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42 J. Gifford, C McWilliam & D Walker; The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh; 1984; p441
43 https://sites.google.com/site/joerocksresearchpages/thomas-hamilton-architect/royal-high-school-chronology; accessed 01-Dec-2015
44 A 1922 update increased these numbers to 1024 names with 180 who died.
The Greek Doric doorpiece was completed in 1923, and was constructed using a fine marble. The upper architrave is inscribed with the phrase “ΟΥΔΕ ΤΕΘΝΑΣΙ ΘΑΝΟΝΤΕΣ” - they died but are not dead.

Figure 52 c1930 Scottish Colorfoto image of the great hall showing the 1923 war memorial doorpiece and brass plaques. Reproduced under licence © HES SC1223121
https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1223121

3.4.8 Proposed Extensions

Figure 53 Plan and sections showing proposed classroom block, designed by John L Paterson and Robert Steedman, dated 1958. Reproduced under licence © HES DP204332
https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1462132
Despite the additional classroom block constructed immediately after the war, the pressures on space at the Royal High School continued to grow. It is interesting that in the collections held by HES, there is a drawing dating to 1958 that shows a sizeable classroom block with twelve classrooms arranged over three levels\textsuperscript{45}. What is particularly important about this proposal is that it is not for the main school site, but for the sloping ground on the south side of Regent Road, immediately to the west of Burns’ Monument. This demonstrates that it was both recognised that the main site was not large enough to accommodate the needs of the school, but also that building a larger building on the still empty west playground was not considered to be an option – this area had to be left free of development.

3.5 From School to Scottish Assembly

3.5.1 The School in the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century

\textbf{Figure 54} The Queen and Duke of Edinburgh visiting the Royal High School, as seen in a photograph published in July 1954. Note the use of the processional route from the south portico, and the white-painted railings. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk

Figure 55 Pupils entering the Hamilton Building, in a photograph published in *The Scotsman* in March 1959. This would appear to show the pupils arriving from the west gates rather than from the south entrances. © *The Scotsman Publications Ltd*. Licensor [www.scran.org.uk](http://www.scran.org.uk)

Figure 56 c1909-10 photograph of the great hall, looking southwards showing the arrangement largely as built 80 years before, including the original south door to the portico and the flight of steps either side to the gallery. Reproduced under licence © HES SC1358901 [https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1358901](https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1358901)
Figure 57 Photograph of a lecture in the great hall published in *The Scotsman* in February 1959. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk

Figure 58 Photograph of the annual concert in the great hall published in *The Scotsman* in July 1959. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk
Figure 59 Photograph of the prize-giving ceremony in the great hall published in The Scotsman in July 1961. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk

Figure 60 Photograph of “An Edinburgh Fancy” in the great hall taken by The Scotsman in August 1965. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk
Figure 61 Photograph of America golfer, Gary Player, giving a demonstration in the great hall, taken by The Scotsman in October 1968. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk

Figure 62 c1909-10 photograph of the library. This is the square room to the east of the great hall, which is shown as octagonal in Hamilton’s 1826 floor plan. Reproduced under licence © HES SC1462135 https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1462135
Figure 63  Photograph of a pupils in the library published in The Scotsman in February 1959. Note the large panel showing four buildings of the school above the chimneypiece. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk

Figure 64  c1909-10 photograph of the art room. This is the first floor room above the swimming pool at the east end of the 1894 gymnasium block. Note the architrave of the door which has been designed to complement Hamilton’s Greek Revival detailing. Copied from James Trotter; The Royal High School; 1911
Figure 65 Photograph of a pupils in a workshop - likely the upper room in the west pavilion - published in *The Scotsman* in June 1953. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk

Figure 66 Photograph of the 1894 swimming pool in the gymnasium block - note the blind window bay where the block was extended on the south elevation - published in *The Scotsman* in July 1975. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk
3.5.2 Move to Barnton

In 1961 sketch plans were prepared by the practice Reid & Forbes who had designed a number of schools in Edinburgh and the Scottish Borders. By March of 1964 it was announced that the City of Edinburgh Corporation was to spend £670,054 on a replacement building for the Royal High School, and in April the scheme was approved by the education committee. By this time, J D Cairns & Ford had taken over the practice of Reid & Forbes and they were responsible for the scheme built at East Barnton Avenue.


The new Royal High School building was completed in 1968. The Buildings of Scotland series describes it as a “four storey brick main building, just like a decent office block.”

To provide continuity of remembrance, and an architectural link to the Calton Hill site, the 1923 war memorial door was relocated to the new building.

![General view of the current Royal High School building. "Royal High School, Barnton, Edinburgh" by Xanthoxyl - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Commons -](https://commons.wikimedia.org)

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48 J. Gifford, C McWilliam & D Walker; The Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh; 1984; p548
3.5.3 City Arts Centre

Figure 69 Survey photograph from the Property Services Agency collection, likely mid-1970s. Reproduced under licence © HES SCI466226 https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1466226

For a short period in the 1970s, the former Royal High School was used to display art from the city collection, particularly during the Edinburgh International Festival.

The collections displayed in the former Royal High School building were later displayed at the City Art Centre which opened in a converted building on Market Street in 1980.

3.5.4 Proposed Scottish Assembly

Figure 70 Photograph of then Prime Minister, Jim Callaghan, visiting the former Royal High School in August 1976, published in The Scotsman. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk
Although the referendum was not held until 1979, the former Royal High School was purchased from Edinburgh District Council for £650,000 in 1976. The idea of a Scottish parliament had been recommended in the report of the Kilbrandon commission that was published in 1974. The 1974 Labour government had a very small majority. As a result, the government relied of the support of the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru: a referendum on devolution was promised. A White Paper presented in 1975 would appear to have been the impetus to purchase the former Royal High School. Works commenced in 1978, and William Pritchard was the project manager for the PSA.

Figure 71 Photograph of Donald Dewar, George Robertson and John Home Robertson outside the former Royal High School in February 1979, published in The Scotsman. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk

Figure 72 Photograph of press photographer visit to view the conversion works in progress in November 1978, published in The Scotsman. © The Scotsman Publications Ltd. Licensor www.scran.org.uk

49 Although education had been the responsibility of Lothian Regional Council since 1975, it would appear that the district council had retained the former Royal High School building.

The referendum was held on the 1st March 1979. Although a majority voted in favour (51.62%), this represented only 32.9% of the electorate, thus failing an imposed requisite of 40% of the electorate voting for the Act. The Scotland Act was repealed later in the year after the change in government. Almost immediately, New Parliament House became a focus for a campaign for devolution51. The works to convert the former Royal High School were completed in 1980.

The building remained in government ownership and was used for meetings of the Scottish Grand Committee – the committee of MPs representing Scottish constituencies – and for other organisations like the Council for Scottish Local Authorities. After the 1992 general election the Vigil for a Scottish Parliament commenced, and continued for 1,980 days until the referendum held in September 1997.

51 For example, in October 1981 six members of the ‘79 Group’ – a faction of the Scottish National Party – broke into the Royal High School as a deliberate act of civil disobedience in order to stage a debate. A further protest was held at the gates, after a request to access the building was denied. See D Torrance; Salmond: Against The Odds
3.5.5 Recent Use

The City of Edinburgh Council purchased the building from the Scottish Office in 1994. It was suggested that this was a deliberately political and provocative move in response to the then Scottish Office declaration that the building was ‘surplus to requirements’ – i.e. that no devolution would be forthcoming. When the building had been sold to the Scottish Office, a reversion clause stated that the City of Edinburgh Council would have first refusal if it was to be sold again. The council purchased the building for £1.75 million. It might have been anticipated that were a further proposal for devolution be forthcoming, that the building would be best retained in public ownership. The referendum of September 1997 resulted in a vote in favour of establishing a devolved Scottish Parliament with tax-varying powers. However, a later

George Kerevan, now an SNP MP for East Lothian was a Labour councillor in the City of Edinburgh Council and chair of the Economic Development committee at the time of the sale of New Parliament House. He recalls the decision to purchase the building and the politics before in a 2010 article “High hopes dashed by a lack of cultural foresight”; http://bit.ly/1M181c8; accessed 30-Nov-2015
site selection process ultimately decided against placing the new devolved institution in the Royal High – most famously dismissed by Donald Dewar as a ‘nationalist shibboleth’. In reality, the building was simply far too small to accommodate a 21st century legislature. Lord Sewel stated in a parliamentary debate in the House of Lords that:

“Many people understandably assumed that the Old Royal High School building on Calton Hill would be the automatic choice for the site... Clearly, there is great sentimental attachment to it in the hearts of the people of Scotland. However, time has moved on since then, in much the same way as our vision of a parliament has evolved... In particular it is unsuitable at present as a permanent home for the parliament and lacks the flexibility needed for successful conversion... once one starts trying to convert it in order to make it suitable, one loses the whole ethos, charm and grandeur of the place”

Figure 76 The Hamilton Building in use as office accommodation in 2003. Reproduced under licence © HES SC1265295 https://canmore.org.uk/file/image/1265295

In 2001 a proposal to convert the building for use as the Scottish National Photography Centre was announced. The proposal would cost £20million, and had the support of the City of Edinburgh Council. The project received a project planning grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2003. It was this project that initiated the 2004 Conservation Plan by LDN. In 2007, a rival proposal from the One O’Clock Gun Association for a military museum and museum of the Scottish diaspora was announced, but this was unsuccessful. Despite widespread support, a bid for lottery funding was later withdrawn and in March 2009 it was announced that the scheme had effectively been abandoned.

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55 http://www.edinphoto.org.uk/10/12_scottish_national_photography_centre_-_page_2.htm; accessed 01-Dec-2015
At the time of the 2004 conservation plan, a number of organisations were based in the building: “Currently, the buildings on the site are occupied by a number of worthy organisations sponsored by the Council, including Young Scot, Sporting Chance, Social Work, Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, the International Children’s Parliament, City Centre Management, and the Demarco European Art Foundation.” It was described by one tenant who was based in the building between 2000 and 2006 as a ‘business centre for social enterprises.’ The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monument of Scotland – now part of HES – recorded the building in 2003 with a number of photographs showing the building in use.

In March 2009 the City of Edinburgh Council launched a competition to find a new use for the site.

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56 LDN; Royal High School Conservation Plan; 2004; p76
3.6 Summary Historical Development

Figure 77 Ground floor plan showing indicative historical development. Not to Scale.
Figure 78  Lower ground floor and gallery level plan showing indicative historical development S&B. Not to Scale.
3.7 Architects' Biographies

3.7.1 Thomas Hamilton (1790-1857)

A full biography, including a list of buildings and designs is available on the Dictionary of Scottish Architects' (www.scottisharchitects.org.uk) entry for Thomas Hamilton. A more extended article was written by Gavin Stamp for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

Thomas Hamilton was born in Glasgow in January 1784. His father, also Thomas, was a mason and builder. The Hamilton family moved to Edinburgh in 1790, and Thomas (younger) attended the Royal High School at its High School Yards building from 1795-1801. Thomas worked as an assistant to his father, but by 1816 had adopted the title 'architect'.

Early in his career, Thomas Hamilton received a number of commercial commissions, including the Norwich Union Insurance Company building on Princes Street (now demolished) and on George Street – both projects that marked the early 19th century change from residential character to commercial.

Thomas Hamilton won the commission to design the monument to Robert Burns in Alloway, in 1818. Based on the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates, it was a design that he later modified for his later (1830s) monument to Burns on Regent Road in Edinburgh.

Undoubtedly, his most renowned commission was the new High School building on Calton Hill – tempered though it was by a both long construction process and later arguments about its cost.

Other major cultural and civic works in the city included the Hopetoun Rooms in Queen Street, and the Orphan Hospital near the Dean Bridge, now National Galleries Scotland’s Modern Two gallery. Gavin Stamp argues that his last significant commission, the Royal College of Physicians on Queen Street, ‘was his most delicate and sophisticated’.  

Hamilton was best known for working in both the Roman and Greek Revival styles, but, as at the Orphan Hospital, he displayed skill with light-touch Baroque, and in Gothic Revival with a number of churches across Scotland, particularly for the then newly-established Free Church of Scotland in the 1840s.

Thomas Hamilton died at his home in Howe Street in Edinburgh in February 1858.

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58 G Stamp; Thomas Hamilton (1784-1858), architect; http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12131; accessed 02-Dec-2015
59 Ibid.
3.7.2 Robert Wilson (1834-1901)

A full biography, including a list of buildings and designs is available on the Dictionary of Scottish Architects’ (www.scottisharchitects.org.uk) entry for Robert Wilson.

Robert Wilson was born in 1834, the son of the architect Patrick Wilson and his wife, Catherine Peddie. Robert followed his father in to architecture, joining the office at 2 Queen Street as an apprentice from c1849 to c1854. Patrick Wilson designed a number of residential and ecclesiastical buildings, including the Pilrig Model Dwelling Company Buildings, and a number of buildings for the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church.

After working in his father’s practice, Robert entered the Trustees Academy School of Art, then based in rooms in the Royal Institution building (now the Royal Scottish Academy) on The Mound. He then moved to London, but returned in 1871 on the death of Patrick, to take over the practice. In the mid-1870s he became the chief architect to the Edinburgh School Board. The Dictionary of Scottish Architects highlight the continuing early influence of his years in London with his use of “quiet but distinctive London Gothic manner with attenuated details”[60]. One of his first projects for the school board was the Dean Board School, but several dozen school projects were carried out by him (and later with his assistant John Alexander Carfrae) in the latter decades of the 19th century, including the School Board Offices on Castle Terrace (now demolished). When Wilson died in 1901, Carfrae inherited both the practice and the position as architect to the school board, having taken over most of the design work since around 1893[61].

3.7.3 Property Services Agency

Formed in 1972, the Property Services Agency’s role was to “provide, manage, maintain, and furnish the property used by the government.”[62] The agency had been formed from the functions of the Ministry of Public Building and Works that had been absorbed by the Department of the Environment in 1970. This effectively continued the role of H M Office of Works that had been formed in 1909, and which had been renamed the Ministry of Works in 1943.

By 1977 the PSA employed c50,000 staff. The PSA was headquartered in Croydon, but this was supplemented by offices throughout the UK, including an office for Scotland based in Edinburgh – as its predecessor organisations had since before 1911.

After an inquiry into corruption in the early 1980s, the then government proceeded to split the PSA into separate organisations in the lead up to privatisation in the early 1990s, and encouraged the contracting out of architectural services. Ultimately, the management of existing buildings became the responsibility of individual government departments, with the PSA ceasing to exist in 1993.

In Edinburgh, the PSA had been responsible for a number of new buildings such as Meadowbank House and at the University of Edinburgh’s King’s Buildings campus, as well as alterations of existing buildings – such as the late 1970s extension to the National Gallery of Scotland and the conversion of John Watson’s School in 1982 to form the Gallery of Modern Art which was a collaboration with RMJM. One of their last projects in Scotland was the Procurator Fiscal’s office in Falkirk, in 1992.

3.8 Timeline of the Greek Revival

The purpose of this section is to place Thomas Hamilton’s project for the Royal High School in a national and international context. For a detailed chronology of the development of the Royal High School, see Joe Rock’s timeline on his research pages.

The timeline demonstrates how the different strands of the Greek Revival in four main countries relate to each other, how it survived in Scotland much later than in England, and how wars in Europe and North America affected changing attitudes to the style, and access to original prototypes.

Text in black refers to general dates; in green to United States of America; in yellow, Germany; in red, England; and in blue, Scotland.

1755 James Stuart and Nicholas Revett return to London from their trip to study Classical Architecture in Greece.

1758 James Stuart’s Doric Temple in Hagley Park is constructed in the style of the Thesion as one of the first real Greek Revival structures in the British Isles.

1758 Ruines des Plus Beaux Monuments de la Grece by David Le Roy is published.

1762, ’87 & ’94 The Antiquities of Athens and Other Monuments of Greece, by James Stuart and Nicholas Revett is published. This is a seminal work, showing exact measured drawings derived from an archaeological analysis of Ancient Greek structures. This antiquarian encourages a more scholarly approach to Ancient Greek Architecture which is then perpetuated in Greek Revival structures throughout the British Isles until classicism falls out of fashion in favour of Gothic Revival architecture in the 19th century.

1775 – 1783 American Wars of Independence

1788 Brandenburg Gate in Berlin is built by Carl Gotthard Langhans. This starts a tradition of Greek Revival in Prussia and Bavaria, which is reflective of the discourse surrounding concepts of patriotic nationalism found in these states.

1803 Napoleonic Wars start

1804 Downing College, Cambridge is designed by William Wilkins. This is the first real example of Greek Revival style within an urban context in the British Isles.

1805 East India College, Haileybury is designed in the Greek Revival style by William Wilkins. This cements a connection between the Greek Revival style and Education, designed to perpetuate and strengthen Imperial ambition.

63 https://sites.google.com/site/joerocksresearchpages/thomas-hamilton-architect/royal-high-school-chronology; accessed 01-Dec-2015
1809  Covent Garden is designed in the Greek Revival style by William Smirke. This popularises the Greek Revival style in the urban realm in Britain.

1815  Napoleonic Wars end

1816  The Glyptothek is designed in Munich by Leo Von Klenze, to house the Antiquarian collection of King Ludwig I.

1818-1835  Edinburgh develops Calton Hill and the Third new Town in a Greek Revival style as a political commentary on its role in British Empire, in light of its participation in the victories of the Napoleonic Campaigns.

1818  The Neue Wache is designed in Berlin by Karl Frederich Schinkel as a guardhouse for the troops of the Crown Prince of Prussia.

1821  The Schauspielhaus is designed in Berlin by Karl Frederich Schinkel as a national theatre.

1822-1830  The Altes Museum in Berlin is designed in Berlin by Karl Frederich Schinkel. This building was built to educate the general public and give access to the arts.

1821-33  Greek Wars of Independence

1821  British Museum is designed by Sir Robert Smirke (Completed 1847)

1829-  The north portico of the Whitehouse in Washington, DC is built by Benjamin Henri Latrobe in the Greek Revival Style. This year marks the first real attempt at building in a true Greek Revival style in America, as up until this point, the Palladian classicism of ‘American Regency’ had dominated. The engagement with the Greek Revival style in America is associated with the Jeffersonian ideals of the New World.

1829  Forks of Cypress,Florence, Lauderdale County, Alabama by William Nichols and Brown – Simmons-Shug House is built in Monroville, Ohio. (Architect Unknown)are built as private residences in the Greek Revival style. These structures appear to mark the beginning of the boom years of the popularisation of the Greek Revival style in America, which reflected the utopian aspirations of the American people.

1830-1842  A ‘Walhalla’ in Munich is designed by Leo Von Klenze. This structure was to commemorate important individuals from the Bavarian state.

1856 – 1875  Alexander ‘Greek’ Thomson designs residential and public buildings in Glasgow. Its popularity was a reaction to the Anglican dominance of Gothic Revival during the mid 19th
century, which was contrary to the puritan outlook of Scottish Calvinism.

1861-1865  American Civil War

1870  San Francisco Mint is built by Arthur B Mullet. This marks the end of the Greek Revival Era in America which was brought about, in part, by a shift in societal outlook after the Civil War.
4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Introduction

The Burra Charter provides the following definition of cultural significance:

Cultural significance means aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects.64

The following assessment of the heritage value of the Royal High School site is based upon an analysis and understanding of the historical development of the site, including the tangible documentary and physical evidence, as well as intangible historical, and social associations.

The assessment of significance establishes the importance of the buildings as places of cultural heritage. In order to establish parameters for appropriate and sensitive reuse of the buildings and site, whilst respecting the historic fabric, the grading of significance will help to identify key elements of the building, as well as those which may be of an intrusive nature – that is, those that adversely impact upon the appreciation of elements of greater significance and should be removed or changed.

Each element of the building and the site overall has been graded according to its significance as an individual item within the overall context of the site.

This information informs policies, or guidelines, which should be met in order to ensure that in any future changes to the building appropriate respect is paid to the site and its components.

It should be noted that the significance of the collections is being assessed in greater detail in a separate conservation plan.

4.2 Historical Significance

Historical significance encompasses the importance of the relationship of a site to the evolving pattern of our cultural or natural history, or has a strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in our cultural or natural history.

A site may have historical value because it has influenced, or has been influenced by, a historical figure, event, phase or activity, or as the site of an important event. For any given place the significance will be greater where evidence of the association or event survives in situ, or where the setting is substantially intact, than where it has been changed or evidence does not survive. However, some events or associations may be so important that the place retains significance regardless of subsequent treatment.

The site has outstanding historical significance. The Royal High School itself as an institution, widely accepted as dating to the 12th century, is one of the oldest such institutions in Scotland and Western Europe. The historical connections of the institution – and by extension, this site itself – to the historical development of Edinburgh, the Scottish monarchy, the Scottish education system and the wider British empire of the 19th century are particularly strong.

64 Marquis-Kyle P. & Walker M; The Illustrated Burra Charter: Good Practice for Heritage Places; Australia ICOMOS; 2004; p11
There is also considerable historical significance of the site to one of Scotland’s most celebrated and talented architects of the 19th century, Thomas Hamilton.

The former Royal High School site holds particular historical significance in its role played as part of the changing political ambition and political constitution of Scotland. Although the building never played host to an Assembly or Parliament, it was often seen as the centre of the campaigns from the 1970s onwards. Much of this significance is linked to wider social significance (discussed below), but the historical aspects of the changing nature of Scotland in the last quarter of the 20th century is of particular interest, and the former Royal High School is directly linked to this.

4.3 Architectural, Aesthetic and Artistic Significance

The importance of the site in terms of its contribution to an understanding of the architectural development of the site and broader context locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Aesthetic value includes aspects of sensory perception such as consideration of the form, scale, colour, texture and material of the fabric.

The Hamilton Building is widely recognised as being of outstanding architectural significance, as one of the finest examples of Greek Revival architecture in Scotland, UK, and in the world. It is widely acknowledged to be a particularly fine and inventive composition by Thomas Hamilton, whose skill and judgement produced a building that confidently used erudite sources from Greek antiquity in what was then a thoroughly modern and creative way.

Aesthetically, the building is often linked to the popular association of Edinburgh as the Athens of the North. However, as this report points out, this is more accurately a historical connection in origin. Nevertheless, the powerful identity of the aesthetic significance of this moniker is now impossible to deny. The aesthetic significance of the site as part of the wider Calton Hill complex - classical monuments in a landscape context - is part of what people around the world identify as being ‘Edinburgh’.

Some parts of the site are of lesser architectural significance. Robert Wilson’s lodge of 1885 is of considerable significance, and it contributes well to the composition of the site as a whole. It has previously been criticised as blocking views of the Hamilton Building, but this is only from certain very specific spots – views open up on arrival to the site at the west gates, and from Calton Hill Road at the higher level.

Robert Wilson’s gymnasium and classroom block of 1885 and 1894 is now of lesser significance, largely as a result of less sensitive alterations since the school closed, but also because it is an awkward hybrid of two phases of development, neither of which are demonstrative of Robert Wilson’s skill in school design. There are many examples of Robert Wilson’s designs elsewhere in the city that are better examples of his practice. Nevertheless, when first constructed, there were some features of note, and he did cleverly repeat elements of Hamilton’s designs, both in interior fixtures, and in the general form of the building that mirrors the main Hamilton Building. It is unfortunate that this building was built in front of Hamilton’s belvedere tower and retaining wall which is not visible, and largely covered in vegetation – as parts of Hamilton’s original scheme, these are arguably of greater architectural significance.

The craft and luncheon hall block is not of any architectural or aesthetic significance. The 1946 classroom block is poor quality and detracts from the site.

Other aspects of the site that are of lesser significance include the general poor quality of the outdoor spaces and wider public realm. The car parking, tarmac-covered open
spaces, concrete-paved spaces, lamp-posts, overgrown vegetation of the site all detract from the Hamilton Building. In the wider public realm, the car parking, street lighting, ground surface treatments and crash barriers create an actively unappealing context for one of the city’s finest buildings.

4.4 Social Significance

*Social value represents the strong or special association of the site with a recognisable community or cultural group for social, spiritual or cultural reasons.*

It is possible to argue that the former Royal High School has outstanding social significance on a par with the architectural and aesthetic significance of the site, particularly in a Scottish context. This is not only a result of the use of the building as a school, and ongoing association of the site for that purpose amongst former pupils, but in the political identity of the building in the latter decades of the 20th century.

The site has strong associations with the educational ideal of Edinburgh and Scotland in the early 19th century. As a representation of the principle of the importance of free education in a school managed by the local authority for the benefit of the wider community, it is hard to think of an equal comparator elsewhere in Scotland.

The construction of such a prominent educational building reflects the competition that the city faced from the establishment of the Academy, and the determination of the city to ensure that education – albeit for boys only – was to be accessible to those from both the Old and New Towns, both in terms of physical location, and in terms of financial ability. Since, the building has come to represent the importance of education to a city in the age of enlightenment, and of civic endeavour and cultural ambition.

As a social and civic purpose, schools hold special associations for many in the community, whether they are pupils or related to pupils or not. Schools – generally inaccessible to most apart from those attending the institution – often serve as the civic focus of a community. Despite the lack of frequent use by most, they still represent the importance of education in a civic society. The former Royal High School buildings are particularly demonstrative of that – and the fact that the former name of the site has continued despite being officially known by another name for more than three decades underlines the importance of this aspect of the site’s identity.

Since the mid-1970s, the building has become inexorable linked to the political movements aiming for devolved powers for Scotland and the establishment of a Scottish Assembly or, as eventually delivered, Scottish Parliament. The high-profile conversion of the building in the late 1970s was used by campaigners, and the strong aesthetics of the building was likely seen as a powerful tool in their campaigns. The result of the 1979 referendum appeared to only strengthen the social significance of the building – it became a focus of protest right up until the 1997 referendum. Furthermore, it is interesting that it continues to play a role in the wider public imagination as a building that ought to have been the home of the reconvened Scottish Parliament. This is perhaps indicative of the ongoing residual ‘memory’ of the wider public of the building’s connection to this political function, but is equally indicative of a wider social significance of the site.
5.0 SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Royal High School site, as a complete entity in its site and landscape context, is of outstanding cultural significance. This is a result of its architectural, aesthetic, social and historical values: the architecture of the buildings; their contribution to the remarkable townscape in this part of the World Heritage Site; the cultural value of both former and previously proposed uses to the people of Scotland; and the historical links that the site has to developing educational, social and political, artistic and social themes of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The architecture of the site is alone of outstanding significance. Thomas Hamilton formed an architectural set piece of remarkable quality, that when combined with the spectacular landscape setting and nearby buildings of Calton Hill offers a major contribution to the character of the city and its inscription as a World Heritage Site.

However, the Royal High School site also contains considerable significance for its contribution to the historical and social developments of Edinburgh in the early 19th century. The relocation of the High School to this site was the result of considerable debate about the purpose and requirement of education in the city, and the political ambition of educating the city’s boys to be enlightened citizens of not just Edinburgh, but the UK as a whole and of the emerging, expanding and developing British Empire. The building is inexorably linked to the wider aspirations of Edinburgh in the early 19th century, primarily through the recognition as Edinburgh being the Athenes of the North: not through its architectural embellishments, but through its economic status as a port city and ambition to be second city of Empire. The architectural ambition reflected this economic and social status, and was not the driver of the title as is often suggested. It is further important to recognise the townscape significance of Calton Hill and Playfair’s Third New Town – this was a city building on the success of the first and second new towns, but, crucially, rotating the axis of the city towards a greater connection to Leith, and by extension, to the world.

Although the Royal High School itself relocated to a new site in 1968, the significance of the building either architecturally or socially did not diminish. Indeed, arguably, in addition to the retained social significance to former pupils who today continue to remember it as a school, significance has extended beyond Edinburgh and to Scotland as a whole. The building became a key focus for discussions on political change in Scotland, and the push for a devolved administration throughout the 1970s and beyond – right up to the re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. It is demonstrable of the power of the image and identity of the building, that despite being proven to be far too small for the 21st century functions of the reconvened Scottish Parliament, it is repeatedly popularly referred to as a preferred focus of political devolution, despite the Holyrood building now having been a key fixture of the city for over ten years.

It is determinedly a civic building in the imagination of the Scottish people, despite physical access to the building always having been limited. Again, that this lack of physical public purpose can be seen to be largely irrelevant – its imagined place in the social fabric of the city has always been pre-eminent. This is testament to the architectural, historical and social significance of the building.
6.0 GRADING OF SIGNIFICANCE

6.1 Introduction

The various elements of the building have been assessed and graded to assist with the future conservation and management of the site and its elements.

Grading of the individual elements of a site is based on the contribution each element makes to each component of significance, (i.e. historic, archaeological, architectural and aesthetic, landscape, social and spiritual etc) whether it be at a local (Edinburgh), regional (Scotland), national (United Kingdom) or international level.

6.1.1 Elements of Outstanding Significance

A building or element of international importance, or a fine, intact (little altered) example of a particular period, style or type that embodies the importance of the building or site overall.

6.1.2 Elements of Considerable Significance

A building or element of regional (Scotland) or national (United Kingdom) importance, or a good example of a particular period, style or type with a high degree of intact original fabric that contributes substantially to the importance of the building or site overall.

6.1.3 Elements of Moderate Significance

A building or element of local (Edinburgh) importance, or an element that contributes to, but is not a key element to the importance of the building or site overall.

6.1.4 Neutral Elements

An element which neither contributes, nor detracts from the importance of the building or site overall.

6.1.5 Negative Elements

A building or element which detracts from the overall significance of the building or site overall.
Figure 80  Perspective view of the former Royal High School showing assessment of significance  S&B. Not to Scale.
Figure 81  Ground floor plan showing assessment of significance S&B. Not to Scale.
Figure 82  Lower round floor plan showing assessment of significance S&B. Not to Scale.
### 6.2 Graded Elements

The grading of significance informs policies contained within section 7.0 of this report.

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<th>Element</th>
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<td><strong>Hamilton Building - Exteriors</strong></td>
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<td>Overall</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
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<td>South elevation</td>
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<td>Portico</td>
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<td>Roof of great hall</td>
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<td>East and west pavilions</td>
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<td>South entrance gateways and flanking walls</td>
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<td>Quadrant walls linking pavilions to main building</td>
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<td>East and west elevations</td>
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<td>North elevation</td>
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<td>Floor and roof surfaces of south entrance gateways and flanking blocks</td>
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<td>Gates and gatepiers</td>
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<td>Belvedere tower</td>
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<td>Retaining walls to east and west wings</td>
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<td>Parts of south elevation not visible from Regent Road</td>
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<td>Octagon roofs</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
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<td>Roofs behind parapet walls</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railings below portico</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Not part of Hamilton’s original design intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSA stair projections either side of the great hall</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Should be removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hamilton Building - Interiors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Hall - overall</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Hall – ceiling</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Element</td>
<td>Grade</td>
<td>Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Hall – presiding officers’ seats</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Should be salvaged and offered to appropriate museum or public institution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Hall – oval seating</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Should be removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Hall – east and west balconies</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Hall – cast iron balcony supports</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Not part of Hamilton’s original design intention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Hall – south balcony</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Should be removed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large square rooms below octagon clerestoreys</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre classrooms in east and west wings</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Sub-divided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton stairs</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Stairs between the square classrooms and each wing, on the south side of the building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSA stairs</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Either side of the great hall and straight flights in each wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other interiors, including PSA-era fixtures and fittings</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Includes architraves, lowered ceilings, plasterwork etc. All of good quality, but not of historical significance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Later Buildings on the Site**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1885 gate lodge</td>
<td>Considerable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885/1894 gymnasium block</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924/1935 craft and luncheon hall block</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946 Classroom Block</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.0 CONSERVATION ISSUES & POLICIES

7.1 Introduction

Key policies from 1999 Conservation Plan for Calton Hill (produced by LDN), adopted by the City of Edinburgh Council were repeated in the 2004 Conservation Plan for the Former Royal High School. The report acknowledges these as sound policies for the long-term management of the site and does not contradict them. However, this report includes set of policies that should be seen to supplement and support the earlier reports. The key policies cited in the earlier documents are as follows:

- An appropriate sustainable long-term new use for the Hamilton’s High School must be identified. Such a use must reflect the exceptional cultural significance of the building and its physical and symbolic relationship to Calton Hill.
- Hamilton’s High School is an integral part of any presentation and interpretation of Calton Hill
- Any future use of Hamilton’s High School should safeguard and encourage public access.

On the basis that a “preserve as found” approach should be refuted the principal conservation strategy for the High School should be to:

- protect, enhance, and reveal the most significant parts of the building and its setting whilst allowing the alteration, conversion and demolition of less significant aspects necessary to accommodate appropriate and viable new uses essential to the building’s revitalisation and long-term survival.

In this context the following Conservation Policies are appropriate:

General:

1. An appropriate sustainable long-term new use for Hamilton’s High School must be identified. Such a use must reflect the exceptional cultural significance of the building and its physical and symbolic relationship to Calton Hill.
2. Hamilton’s High School is an integral part of any presentation and interpretation of Calton Hill
3. Any future use of Hamilton’s High School should safeguard and encourage public access.
4. All conservation work should be carried out in accordance with accepted national and international conservation principles.
5. Wherever work is executed, recovery of significance and avoidance of detrimental intervention must be the first priority.
6. Preparation of proposals and decision making should be based on appropriate professional advice. Work should be carried out only using experienced contractors and craftsmen.
7. All work proposed should comply with statutory requirements including legislation covering heritage protection in all its forms, national and local planning policy and requirements imposed by building, health and safety and other regulations.
8. A regular programme of fabric inspection and repair should be instigated and maintained.
9. Ownership of the building should not pass to any other organisation if it places the long-term future of the building at a greater risk than at present.
10. Proposals should be developed in order to fully explain and interpret the significance of the site.\textsuperscript{65}

7.2 **Base Policies**

There are general points for setting out the conservation strategy for a category A listed building.

7.2.1 **Strategy, Resolution & Vision**

A firm resolution to act in a conservation-led way should be set out to ensure the principles of ‘informed conservation’ are key elements of its future. This base policy should encourage the protection and enhancement of the significance of the site and the reduction of risk to fabric, character and setting.

**Policy 1 – Strategy**

As with any site of such importance, a clear strategy for the use, conservation and management of the building should be established and appropriate balances struck as a framework for the making of individual decisions.

**Policy 2 – Resolution**

A conservation-led approach to the repair, conservation and management of the building should be adopted by all interested parties, based on a sound understanding of its significance.

**Policy 3 – Vision**

Through active and informed conservation, enhancement and interpretation, the Royal High School should continue to be appreciated by the general public as an established and valued part of the heritage of Scotland.

7.2.2 **Adoption**

Adopting the conservation plan establishes a formal arrangement and allows policies within the plan to be actively used to help protect and enhance what is important. It places an onus on the staff, managers and trustees to use the plan as a basis for decision making.

**Policy 4 – Adoption**

This conservation plan should be adopted by all interested parties and actively used to help guide the future use and development of the Royal High School building.

7.3 **Conservation Philosophy**

7.3.1 **Introduction**

It is important that the significance of the former Royal High School, of its components and of its setting, is respected, retained and enhanced where possible in future use and management of the site.

\textsuperscript{65} LDN; Royal High School Conservation Plan; 2004; pp94-95
There have been a number of phases of construction of the buildings on the site within the main high school building and setting which relate to specific functions. There was a significant and comprehensive phase of alteration completed in 1980. Some elements of building fabric have been designed to be ‘primary’, such as the main facades and the interiors of the great hall; whilst others are clearly designed as ‘secondary’. Not all phases of work, individual rooms and spaces, or elements of fabric are of equal significance.

Part of the purpose of the significance assessment is to determine whether or not, for the purposes of the conservation plan, each phase or type of construction of the building is of equal importance, or whether one phase of development, either for its historical associations or architectural quality (for example), is more important than another. Within this, it then needs to be decided whether or not the ‘primary’ elements of each phase are of equal weighting in terms of significance to any ‘secondary’ elements of the building.

The buildings were designed and developed to be a school. Each room and subsidiary element of the buildings works together to form a working building.

With this in mind, the view has been taken for this conservation plan that the physical and operational relationships between the different parts of the building, in particular public spaces and working areas, should be maintained so that this relationship can remain legible.

However, this does not mean that changes cannot be made within the building for functional reasons, particularly when they enhance the operation of the building for its original purpose. This means that changes must be based on sound understanding and should be made with proper consideration and care. Conservation is said to be the ‘management of change’.

7.3.2 Significance

**Policy 5 – Work of Outstanding Significance**
Great care should be taken so that work considered to be of outstanding significance is not adversely affected or changed by any future works, use or management.

**Policy 6 – Work of Considerable Significance**
Works of considerable significance should generally be retained and respected. These parts of the building may be altered, with care, to make them suitable for a new use. However, any proposed alterations must be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriateness of the proposal and the need for mitigation.

**Policy 7 – Work of Lesser Significance**
While there should be a general presumption against change, areas of lesser significance can be regarded as being capable of being altered, providing such alteration can be justified by making them suitable for a new use or by being necessary to protect part of the building with higher significance.

The work should be planned and executed with appropriate consideration, skill and care. All alterations should be recorded
7.3.3 Primary & Secondary Elements

The ‘primary’ elements of the building relate to the elements or spaces that have been designed to present the public face of the building. These include the south facing exterior elevations of the building and the great hall.

Policy 8 - Primary Elements

It is important that the ‘primary’ elements, or fabric, of the building are retained and conserved and not adversely affected by alteration within the building that would lessen the appreciation and understanding of these elements.

‘Secondary’ elements of the original and PSA phases, such as offices, basement areas, storage etc are also important for understanding the use of the building, but their fabric was not designed to be seen by the public. These spaces are generally finished in a utilitarian fashion – for practical purposes rather than decorative.

Policy 9 - Secondary Elements

‘Secondary’ elements from the original phase must be respected, retained and conserved wherever possible. Some change may be permissible, but proposed alterations should be examined on a case-by-case basis to determine the impact of the proposed change on historic fabric and any mitigation that might be required.

All changes should be recorded.

7.3.4 Overall Principles

Good conservation principles should be followed when considering alterations to the building. Conservation principles, such as those in BS 7913 for works to historic fabric should be sufficiently flexible to achieve an appropriate balance between the need to protect the significance of the building and the need for it to be altered and ‘earn its keep’.

Harm could result from differing approaches or standards in different parts of the building, such as changes in appearance or character. As the buildings are large and comprise several different parts, a holistic approach will be crucial to prevent acting against the interests of any one part.

Policy 10 – Fabric Conservation Principles

- In general, all work should be carried out in accordance with the British Standard Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings BS7913:2013. The definitions of terms used in this conservation plan are those set out in the Standard.
- Minimum intervention – No change should be effected without proper consideration, justification and good reason.
- Repair should be preferred to replacement.
- Repair should use like-for-like techniques and materials. Materials should be salvaged and re-used where possible.
- Priority should be given to maintaining and enhancing the integrity of the historic fabric over other regulations and requirements.
- New work should not be intrusive, and should be of the highest quality in terms of design, material and workmanship. It can be in a matching or contrasting style, but should be clearly identifiable as such by having a common character.
so that they can be interpreted as being part of a single datable campaign of alteration. Where possible, the alteration should be reversible.

- Adequate historical research, investigative opening-up (where required), recording and sampling should be carried out before and during work to inform good design and technical solutions and professional advice should be sought.
- The design of repair works should be undertaken with a thorough knowledge of traditional construction history and practice.
- Repair work should be designed to be carried out safely and consideration should be given to safety issues arising from the continued maintenance of the building.
- It is essential that conservation work is carried out by experienced tradespeople. The repair work should be designed, specified and inspected by a suitably experienced conservation architect. A large part of the success of any project is in the understanding of the task and sharing of experience between all professionals and all the tradespeople involved.
- Whether in repair, restoration or alteration, an intervention should not draw attention unnecessarily, but should be identifiable to a discerning eye.
- All interventions should be carried out in the same style to ensure that the overall design of interventions is one of cohesion.
- Particular attention should be paid to matters of detail to help preserve and enhance fabric and character including, for example, specific choice of materials, detailed location of services, methods of fixing, etc.
- Fabric or spaces to be altered or removed should be adequately recorded before works, following relevant guidelines and the record lodged with an appropriate public archive, such as the national collection held by HES.
- Detailed design development should precede implementation of all on-site works.
- Any compromises proposed to the above principles should flow from an options analysis and should be fully justified and agreed by all interested parties.

Policy 11 – Intactness & Composition
The Royal High School and its setting on Calton Hill should be considered as a whole. This will ensure that component elements and spaces, and the relationships between them are protected and enhanced where possible.

Policy 12 – Retention & Demolition
There should be a presumption in favour of retaining and conserving in situ all significant building components at the site.

Policy 13 – Restoration
Restoration may be appropriate where there is sufficient evidence.

7.4 Use of Surrounding Land
This iconic building forms an important landmark within the urban landscape of Edinburgh.
7.4.1 Views

Policy 14 - Views

It is important to maintain existing views to and from the Royal High School. Change is inevitable at the centre of the city but changes should not obscure the qualities that make the buildings, their setting and the setting of other buildings in the city significant. The building must retain its landmark character.

7.4.2 Trees

Policy 15 - Trees

The position of all trees should be considered and it might be considered advisable in terms of the aesthetic significance of the Royal High School buildings to remove some trees to open up views and establish the character of the building and its context on Calton Hill.

7.4.3 Public Realm

Policy 16 - Paving

Paving around the building should be to the highest standards of Edinburgh New Town paving. The paving material should be sandstone laid in a traditional pattern, granite or whin kerbs, sets or horonised paving would be permissible.

7.5 Specific Policies

7.5.1 Roofscape

The roof is designed so that none of the leaded or copper decks are visible from the areas around the building and in most significant views except where it was unavoidable from Calton Hill. The roofs becomes visible in some views from Calton Hill. These roofs are hidden by the stone parapet around each side of the building. The roofs are of secondary importance to the elevations.

The arrangement of rooflights, vents and pipes on the flat roof surface could be altered, as long as they do not rise to such a height that would impact on the general profile of the building when seen from a distance. Generally a flat roof with a lot of fixing positions and hidden from inspection it is more likely to have undiagnosed leaks over an extended period than a flat roof which is not punctured and can be fully inspected.

Some alterations to the roof might be needed to help with the safe clearance of gutters behind the parapets and safe inspection generally. It is desirable to remove the roofs over the stair extensions added in the late 1970s to either side of the great hall.

Policy 17 - Roofscape

The general arrangement of the flat roofs should not be altered apart from the removal of the 1979 alteration. Alteration of other parts of the roof might be possible, but alterations should not impact on the general profile of the building when seen from a distance.

Policy 18 – Railings and Lamps

The railings and lamps around the buildings should be retained and restored, including the colour.
7.5.2 **Fixings and signs**

The exterior walls are disfigured to a minor extent by cable fixings and other metal fixings. As well as a visual disruption, these fixings can cause damage to the masonry. The building has been designed to balance areas of complex detail with areas of plain ashlar, fixing points, either current or past, leave an unfortunate scar on the areas of plain masonry. It is possible that some iron fixings have been left in the masonry when a fitting has been removed and pointed up. This is likely to cause cracking and damage to the stone by rust heave in the longer term.

All redundant fittings and cable should be removed. A careful assessment should be made of cable and fittings which are still active to see if they are needed, whether they need to be in that particular position or could be relocated, and whether they can be replaced with a cable run internally or otherwise hidden. The fixing holes that are no longer needed following this assessment and associated work should be raked out to remove all ferrous material, repointed with lime mortar tinted to match the colour of the stone and carefully finished so that the visual disruption is at its minimum possible extent. New fixings should be avoided.

*Policy 19 - Fixings*

*It would not be appropriate to make fixings onto the main elevations of this category A listed building.*

If new fixings are shown to be unavoidable then all fixings must be made in non-ferrous metal so that the future risk of stone damage by rust heave is avoided.

7.5.3 **Stone Cleaning**

There has been a trial for stone cleaning on the south wall using a chemical method. This has irreversibly damaged the masonry on the building. There may be future proposals for stone cleaning and they should be carefully considered and carried out in consultation with appropriate consultants and with the local authority and Historic Environment Scotland. Historic Environment Scotland’s [INFORM guide on Cleaning Sandstone](https://www.historicenvironmentscotland.gov.uk/cleaningsandstone) is a useful source of reference for initial discussions. Careful cleaning of the water-stained stonework in the colonnade to the west of the central block might be considered.

*Policy 20 – Stone Cleaning*

*Stone cleaning has the potential to cause irreversible damage and should only therefore be considered where necessary, for example to remove localised staining that detracts from the overall appreciation of the building as a whole. Larger scale stone cleaning projects are unlikely to be acceptable.*

Specialists should be appointed, and discussions held with both the local authority and HES before any cleaning is carried out.

7.6 **Workmanship & Conservation Planning**

Inexperienced or amateur workmanship can cause irreversible damage to historic fabric, no matter how well intentioned.
Policy 21 – Skilled Workmanship

Appropriate professional or craft skills and experience should be used in all work including inspection, maintenance and repairs. All contractors and consultants should have relevant historic environment qualification and experience. Earlier inappropriate repairs and materials should be reversed providing doing so will not cause further irreversible harm to the significance of the site.

Relevant skills may include archaeologists; structural surveyors/engineers; conservation architects and conservators.

Policy 22 – Conservation Plan

The conservation plan is designed to provide a framework to inform the management, use, protection and conservation of the building and should be adopted by the owner and users of the building.

It is not expected that the conservation plan could ever be sufficient in detail to provide for every eventuality or answer every question that might arise. It should not be used as a substitute for professional conservation advice. Any professional conservation advice sought should use the conservation plan as a guide.

A conservation plan is also a dynamic document that should be adapted and updated as required when further information is located or the situation of the building changes.

7.7 Access & Interpretation

7.7.1 Access

As a building that could be open to the public, easy accessibility has to be ensured, but requires to be balanced with conservation needs of the building.

Policy 23 – Access

It is important that public access to the building is possible, but carefully managed for the wellbeing of the building.

Policy 24 – Access Audit

An Access Audit should be used to assess the potential impact on historic fabric in parallel with the Conservation Plan. The implications of conforming to the Equality Act (2010) should be carefully considered with regard to its potentially intrusive effect on the architectural integrity of the Royal High School, and on the surviving historic fabric in particular.

7.7.2 Interpretation & Signage

Means of interpretation such as signs, leaflets or web-based information are a way to communicate the importance of the building to the public. This forms an integral part of raising appreciation and awareness for the conservation of the building.

There is an opportunity for increased interpretation at the Royal High School to provide additional information for the public as to the historical development of the building and its importance in a local, national, and international context.

The 3D CAD model prepared for the St Mary’s Music School project could form an important part of such interpretation.
**Policy 25 - Interpretation**

Interpretation of the building itself and its importance is recommended to further promote the building and enhance the appreciation of such an important site.

Banners between columns and advertising on railings is used on some public buildings but would not be appropriate at the Royal High School.

**Policy 26 – Minimal Impact**

Any future interpretation, signs and advertising should fully respect and not visually intrude or physically impact upon the appreciation of the exterior of the buildings, nor its important interior spaces. Interpretation, as a general rule, should have minimal impact on the building.

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**7.8 Recording & Research**

Opportunities for recording of the building and further research into its physical and documentary evidence need to be considered as part of the overall conservation of the building.

**7.8.1 Building Recording**

Building recording ensures that an accurate record of the historical development of the building is kept for the future.

**Policy 27 – Building Recording**

Building recording should take place in advance of and during repairs and alterations to the building. A programme of building recording should be developed in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland and the City Archaeologists of City of Edinburgh Council.

**7.8.2 Research**

There are some areas for further research for the building. These can be summarised as follows:

- Assessment of material that was inaccessible or considered too widespread to be studied for the present report such as administrative archives of the Royal High School.

- Physical research into the paint history of the external joinery and iron paint layer and the decorative history of the most significant interior spaces. This will help to understand determine the history of the decorative schemes for each part of the building, their design and the extent of fabric that survives from each period of alteration.
Further research should be undertaken for the Royal High School as opportunities arise. Any new information obtained should be used to inform ongoing management of the building and to update the conservation plan as appropriate.

### Archaeology

**Policy 29 – Watching Brief**

A watching brief should be maintained during all ground breaking works associated with development. This will involve the appointment of a qualified archaeologist to be on site and guide any excavations completed by the contractor.

Prior to any development works commencing, approval of the methodology proposed must be sought from City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) through their acceptance of a Written Scheme of Investigation. It is unlikely that excavations would be to a sufficient depth to reveal any features or artefacts pre-dating the construction of the Royal High School.

**Policy 30 – Archaeological Findings**

The results of the archaeological involvement must be presented to CECAS through the completion of a Data Structure Report, outlining the project’s findings.

### Priority Repair Works & Maintenance

#### 7.9.1 Introduction

The condition of the Royal High School should be assessed as part of a five-yearly cycle of inspection. Works should be identified and listed according to categories of urgency.

This report should categorise items of work as ‘urgent’, ‘necessary’ and ‘desirable’ for the conservation and upkeep of the Royal High School buildings. Urgent works are items which are causing actual harm to the building fabric and require attention now to prevent further damage. Urgent work should be carried out within one year of the date of inspection. Necessary works while not causing actual damage may become urgent within five years and should be addressed before this period has elapsed. Desirable works are repairs of a long-term nature and works concerned with the restoration of the original appearance of the building.

**Policy 31 - Urgent Works**

Urgent works should be undertaken within six months of the date of a condition report to prevent further deterioration of the fabric.

**Policy 32 – Condition Assessment**

Detailed recommendations contained within the condition report should be followed as part of future repair and maintenance programmes for the Royal High School.
7.9.2 Inspection and Maintenance

It is essential as part of the ongoing management of the building to develop a maintenance plan for the site. Ongoing appropriate maintenance will prevent further decay of building fabric.

Policy 33 – Maintenance Plan

A maintenance plan should be prepared and specialist input obtained from advisors as required. The maintenance plan should be agreed with the owner and lessee and implemented by maintenance staff or by specialist contractors as required.

Every building needs regular maintenance to keep the wearing and weathering surfaces in good order and to protect the vulnerable internal fabric from consequent damage. Systematic care based on good maintenance and housekeeping is both cost-effective and fundamental to good conservation. Early action can often prevent decay and avoid the need for major repair later.

Regular maintenance and good housekeeping is required to maintain the buildings and their surrounding landscape structures such as walls, piers and railings in good repair. Particular attention is needed at roofs. An annual sum should be set aside for inspection and maintenance purposes, and an allowance made for inflation.

Policy 34 – Inspection

Regular inspections should be made. A maintenance regime for the buildings should be prepared by a conservation-accredited professional. The regime should be formally adopted as part of the overall management strategy for the building by both the owners and occupiers.

- A normal watch should be kept from the ground for leaks, overflowing gutters, blocked downpipes, drains etc;
- Every six months, at the end of the autumn and in the spring, the roofs and rainwater goods should be inspected and the gutters cleaned out, as required; drains should be rodded out;
- Every year, the whole building should be inspected with the aid of a tradesman. All roof spaces and coverings, installations, fittings and woodwork should be examined, and particular attention paid to any sign of damp, insect or fungal attack;
- Fire extinguishers and all other appliances are to be serviced annually;
- Every five years there should be a conservation-accredited architect or surveyor's 'quinquennial' inspection. The recommendations of the inspection should be adopted and implemented;
- Electrical wiring and other installations should be tested every five years.
- The cycle of external painting should be completed every ten years.
### 7.11.3 Items Removed from the Building

**Policy 35 - Items Removed from the Building – Hamilton Phase**

Any historical fabric that is removed either permanently or temporarily from the building should be kept in secure storage for future reinstatement or reuse within the site.

**Policy 36 - Items Removed from the Building – PSA Phase**

Consideration should be given to the appropriate salvage of items relating to the PSA phase of the building, and their re-use – most likely for interpretive purposes – elsewhere. In particular, the presiding officer’s seat and adjacent seats should be on public display. Items of lesser significance – for example joinery work or the bench seating from the debating chamber – should be sent to architectural salvage.
8.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX I - Listed Building Reports & Inventory Record

5 and 7 Regent Road, Former Royal High School, including Lodge, Classroom Block, Retaining/Boundary walls, Gateposts and Railings

New Town Gardens Inventory Record
Listed Building

5 AND 7 REGENT ROAD, FORMER ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL, INCLUDING LODGE, CLASSROOM BLOCK, RETAINING/BOUNDARY WALLS, GATEPOSTS AND RAILINGS

Reference: UBR1867

Structure Designated:

Document:

Summary:

Description:


ELEVATION:

Elevation: Central pavilion of pedestal. Slight left shift. Stairs from iron-headed section. Advanced inner panel and larger panel with lower level. Exterior main door. Extensive masonry in white sandstone. Interior main door.

INTERIOR:

Predominantly symmetrical plan. Central hall by small rooms leading to ladies' rooms in Long Classroom Block. Central hall by main door. Extensive masonry in white sandstone. Interior main door.

RETURNING WALLS, GATEPOSTS AND RAILINGS:

Predominantly symmetrical plan. Central hall by small rooms leading to ladies' rooms in Long Classroom Block. Central hall by main door. Extensive masonry in white sandstone. Interior main door.
GLASGOW Sets profoundly in brick and stone, with a new and concise face. Traditional motifs such as the stair window and the ornate brickwork are retained.

CLASSROOM BLOCK. Classical, multi-use building with 2 and 3-storey blocks linked by a covered way. The blocks contain a single-storey 3-storey core with single-storey wings to the left and right. The core contains the main access to the building.

The building is decorated with ornate brickwork, including a decorative brick pattern on the bird and ornamental grillwork on the doors. The building also features a central staircase with a decorative balustrade.

Statement of Special Interest

The former Royal High School is a unique and historically significant building. The building was designed by the architect and engineer Sir Robert McAlpine, who was also responsible for the design of the nearby Edinburgh College of Art.

The building was constructed in the late 19th century and features a combination of classical and Gothic architectural elements. The building is notable for its use of brick and stone construction, as well as its decorative brickwork and ornate detailing.

The building has been listed as a Category A listed building under the provisions of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. This means that the building is considered to be of special interest and is protected by law.

The building is currently home to the Royal High School, a prestigious independent school located in Edinburgh. The school was founded in 1875 and has a long history of academic and cultural achievement.

The building is open to the public and is a popular destination for visitors to the city. The building is well worth a visit for anyone interested in architecture or history.

References

THE NEW TOWN GARDENS
Reference: GD008387
Status: Designated

Documents

Summary

The New Town Gardens are a series of 18th and 19th century private gardens, squares and parks. Although broadly contemporary with other developments in Edinburgh, the New Town Gardens are the most extensive system of public and private open space designed in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Type of Site

A series of 18th and 19th century formal gardens, squares and parks, together with the surrounding buildings that collectively form the New Town, and the result of coordinated town planning. The gardens range in size from large formal gardens (18ha) and regular squares (8ha) to smaller squares and plots of Rabbitlaw Terrace (1ha) and West Bow (6ha).

Relevance to Landscape Character

James Craig (1730-1796) was appointed Surveyor for the 1st New Town in 1766 and succeeded in developing over a period of about 70 years. Plans for the second New Town were prepared by the early 19th century and new developments were to be built on the vast tracts of land comprising the New Town. In this era, the New Town was to be used as a public park and a recreational area for the people of Edinburgh.

Importance of Site

As an example of the landscaping requirements for its location and integrity, and for its importance of significance. The sites were included in Annex 5 of the Scottish Heritage Inventory - Policy (December 2014). The sites are generally of local interest and they have not been ranked at a national level, but they contribute to the character and identity of their location.

Worship

Outstanding

The New Town Gardens are integral to the planning and fabric of the city and are an outstanding example of an outstanding example of a public open space.

Architectural

Outstanding

The New Town Gardens are highly significant in the history of town planning, and for their contribution to the later idea of the garden city. The history of their design and the development of these gardens are particularly well documented and are among the most significant in the UK. They are also important in terms of social history, as they are a substantial collection of 19th century public parks and open spaces.

Ecological

Outstanding

The New Town Gardens are also an outstanding example of a public open space and are an important part of the greenspace network. The various uses of the open space are consistent with the character of the New Town.

Nature Conservation

Outstanding

The New Town Gardens are located in the south of the city and are part of the scheduled area of Edinburgh Castle. In recognition of their high nature conservation value, the New Town Gardens have been given the status of a scheduled area.

Archaeological

Outstanding

The area of the New Town Gardens is located in the south of the city, and it has a high density of archaeological remains. The New Town Gardens are an outstanding example of a public open space and are an important part of the greenspace network.

Location and Setting

The New Town gardens are located on the east side of the Edinburgh Castle, and the various uses of the open space are consistent with the character of the New Town.
The public and private open spaces, gardens and squares, which are part of the historic and cultural fabric of Edinburgh, are often visually interconnected. Characterisation of the topography and urban form is relatively straightforward. However, the detailed analysis of the character of the New Town, which the 18th and 19th centuries are primarily responsible for, is more complex. The New Town extends from the North Bridge and Old Town looking northward to Arthur's Seat looking northeast from the Royal Scottish Botanic Garden looking southeast from nineteenth century.

The following list of gardens are described in detail: Queen Street Gardens, part of the New Town; Reid Gardens, part of the New Town; Old Town; and Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, part of the New Town.

There are views from West and East Queen Street Gardens, and the surrounding streets, in the central Queen Street Gardens which are highlighted in this text.

The position of the New Town, Edinburgh Botanic Gardens, Reid Gardens, and Old Town, as well as the surrounding streets, are shown on the map.

Landscape Components

The Gardens

Queen Street Gardens

Crawley path provides a wide and formal setting on the north of Queen Street. It is a notable feature in the city, having been designed by John Nairn in 1763.

The garden on the west side is designed for public use, while the eastern part is for private use. The garden is separated from the street by a solid wall.

The path is paved with stone flags, and is a notable feature in the city. It is a notable feature in the city, having been designed by John Nairn in 1763.

The garden on the west side is designed for public use, while the eastern part is for private use. The garden is separated from the street by a solid wall.

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Royal High School, Edinburgh – Conservation Plan

"Colin had an object of public welfare, considered either as a leading feature in the general memory of Edinburgh or as a pleasing and attractive spot, offering a succession of the most splendid and diversified views towards to as round approaches in the immediate vicinity of any Edinburgh..."

His approach started at a corner of the property of Sir William Burnet (1758-1837), one of his staff. Originally the influence was vested in the Lord, but it is never

The site is divided into two main areas: a central area and a southern area. The central area is dominated by a large, rectangular building, which houses the school's main library and administrative offices. The southern area is occupied by a series of smaller buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, and gymnasiums. The central area is accessed through a series of archways and entrances, leading to a courtyard flanked by stone walls and large, ornate gates. The southern area is more open and includes a large, grassy quad surrounded by a low wall.

REFERENCES

Bibliography

References

Footnotes:


About Designations

Inventory of Scheduled and Designated Landscapes

The information provided gives an indication of the significance of this site. The inventory record is a descriptive account of the complete description of the garden and designed landscape. The record is intended to be informative and not to provide a technical specification. The site is designated as a Scheduled Monument and is protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. The inventory record includes detailed information on the history, development, and current condition of the site. The inventory record is intended to assist in the formulation of conservation policies and to provide a basis for the management of the site in the future.
The New Town Gardens

Designation Reference: GDL00357
Date of Inclusion: 31/03/2001
Council: Edinburgh
Map Scale: 1:25,000

Garden and Designed Landscape Boundary
APPENDIX II - Illustrations at A3