St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh

The research, design, specification and implementation of an award winning project for the conservation and redesign of the gardens of St Andrew Square Edinburgh in the setting of the first New Town within the UNESCO designated World Heritage Site.

Submitted by Brian Mark Evans
Output No. 1
The St Andrew Square project was established as part of a major initiative to improve the public realm throughout the World Heritage Site in Edinburgh. The programme was promoted by a consortium of public bodies and led by the Edinburgh City Centre Management Company later renamed Essential Edinburgh.

The Capital Streets programme was begun in the early 2000s after strategy work undertaken for Scotland’s capital city found that the quality of the public realm in Edinburgh failed to live up to the quality of public space that was experienced in other major cities in Scotland, the UK and Europe.

Edinburgh’s townscape is recognised worldwide as being of outstanding quality and this has been recognised by the designation of central Edinburgh on the World Heritage Register owned and promoted by UNESCO – the United Nations Environment and Scientific Committee. However, the cherished nature of this townscape also meant that improvements to streets and spaces became the subject of controversy as interested parties — usually but not exclusively — heritage bodies on one side and traffic authorities on the other.

The competing aims of heritage approval processes, traffic systems and the promotion of economic development had led to stalemate whereby little or no improvement work could be agreed to public spaces.

In 2002, the City of Edinburgh Council representing the people of Edinburgh and in particular the planning and traffic systems formed a consortium with Scottish Enterprise (the economic development agency) and the World Heritage Trust in order to establish a system whereby a consensus could be reached about the aesthetics and functional quality of public space in central Edinburgh in order for a series of high-quality improvement projects could be designed and implemented.

The work began with an exemplar project in Castle Street within the First New Town and this was followed by projects for St Andrew Square and the Grassmarket and is now continuing today with projects for Rose Street and Princes Street. The competition for the first projects was won by the Glasgow Studio of Gillespies LLP.
St Andrew Square and Charlotte Square are the two public squares that lie at the east and west ends of George Street. Most commentators from Youngson onwards agree that this combination of street and squares at the centre of the Craig Plan for Edinburgh’s new town represent the epitome of townscape quality in Scotland that is recognised internationally as an outstanding work of civic art.

The two squares were originally built as Georgian pleasure gardens owned jointly and severally by the owners of the properties around the square. Charlotte Square, with owners including the British Government (XXX House by Robert Adam is the official residence of Scotland’s First Minister) was better cared for and is opened periodically for the benefit of the public. ST Andrew Square at the East end of George Street had more frequent public accessibility, but had suffered a series of inappropriate interventions over the second half of the twentieth century with inappropriate planting and the erosion of the setting of the Melville monument – the centerpiece of the square.

The St Andrew Square project was established to achieve permanent opening to the public, with the following objectives:

1. To recovery of the original qualities of the Georgian Square;

2. To provide permanent opening to the public throughout the seasons and throughout the week;

3. To become a focal point for use during the Edinburgh International Festival;

4. To ensure that design and access was appropriate to 21st century standards; and

5. To fit the Square within the principal desire lines of the present new town to ensure activity in us.
OUTPUT

Physical Designed Artefacts (Architecture & Landscape Architecture)
Name: B. Evans
Output Type: Conservation Management Agreement, Design, Realised artefact
Media of Output: Constructed garden & café pavilion; written & photographic material, public exhibition, award citations
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Investigation of how to conserve an historic and dilapidated private garden within a public square (St Andrew Square) within the UNESCO designated World Heritage Site of Edinburgh New Town in order to establish a priori case for the garden to be opened to the public. The research was X-fold:

1. Investigation of the design intent behind the original scheme as an expression of James Craig's plan for the first Edinburgh New Town;
2. Investigation of factors required to conserve the character and quality of the original intent whilst establishing opportunities to open the garden to the public;
3. Interdisciplinary research with private owners and public heritage agencies in order to establish the objectives for design intervention; and
4. A designed response to achieve the objectives for conservation and use.
METHODOLOGY

The research output is concerned with:

1. An in-depth inquiry into the original design intentions for the Georgian Square;
2. Factors required to ensure the conservation and enhancement of the existing historic artefact;
3. Establishment of pre-conditions for designed intervention to ensure that a contemporary public square and the historic private square could co-exist.

Research collaborators included Gehl Architects, Urban Quality Consultants of Copenhagen, Denmark, the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, Historic Scotland, the private owners of St Andrew Square.

1. Contextual analysis
2. Investigation of historic intent;
3. Analysis of climate;
4. Precedent studies;
5. Design Development;
6. Overall Design;
7. Space in Use
Methodology 1: Contextual Analysis
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.
What we are looking at in the context of the project.
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
sun & shade
pedestrians

saturday november 10am - 2 pm
Relative use

First New Town character & use
seating

*Pedestrian traffic in Edinburgh City Centre.*
Pedestrian counts – 3 October 2003 – 10 am to 6 pm
Missing links – in the pedestrian network

- Complicated crossing
- Interruptions to pedestrian flows
- Weak beginning/end of major promenade route
- Important pedestrian link
- Potential for important new connection
Photograph courtesy of Patricia Macdonald
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.
Methodology 2: Historical Investigation of Designed Intent
CHAPTER XXII
ST. ANDREW SQUARE.

ST. ANDREW SQUARE—LIE OF THE ROYALTY.

St. Andrew Square is not the residence of many families of the first rank and position. It measures 150 feet by 230. Almost all of it was converted into a place for public offices. St. Andrew Square was the residence of many families of the first rank and position. It measures 150 feet by 230. Almost all of it was converted into a place for public offices. St. Andrew Square was the residence of many families of the first rank and position. It measures 150 feet by 230.

The police court, though not the original houses still exist, has undergone such changes that it

CHAMBERS, 

"The time is far too distant when the whole of this district will meet with a fair

similar to that which we have to record respecting the Creswigs and Comyns, and when the idea of

modern conceptions, strange as that of their

living in the Merc Chan." 

The following is a list of the first denominations for squares, between its completion in 1778 and

1785:-

1. Major-General, Lord.  
2. The Earl of St. Andrews.  
3. Lord Castlereagh, who died in 1780.  
5. Lord Ashburton (1791).  
6. Lord Ashburton, who died 1794.  
7. Lord Ashburton, afterwards Lord Ashburnham.  
8. John Campbell of Braid, the Earl of Bute.  
12. Robert Murray of Kilmarnock.  
15. Lord Murray of Kilmarnock.  
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Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.

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Proposed interventions overlaid on historic plans indicating their sensitive based on historic research.
Methodology 3: Analysis of Climate
South side sunny
North side shaded
560x108 Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
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RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
Methodology 4: Precedent Studies
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Methodology 5: Design Development – reconciliation of contrasts

- Architecture
- Hard
- Formal
- Public
- classical
- Active - Day
- Lively - Movement
- Sun - Dry
- Exposed
- Landscape
- Soft
- Informal
- Private
- contemporary
- Passive - Night
- Tranquil - Rest
- Shade - Wet
- Enclosed
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.
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Geometrically constructing the Golden Section, first by extension, and then by division.

\[ \frac{AB}{BC} = \phi \]
\[ BC = a \]

\( \phi \) \text{ - GOLDEN SECTION}
\[ \phi = \frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2} \approx 1.618 \]

MACKINTOSH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
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RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
Methodology 6: Overall Design
Evolution of Final Design
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
SPACE IN USE
Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
Edinburgh New Town
1945
Edinburgh New Town
2005
Edinburgh New Town 2012 – showing completed St Andrew Square Garden as a contribution to the landscape of the UNESCO World Heritage Site.
DISSEMINATION

The project has received several awards and commendations covering all stages of its design implementation & use.

These include the inclusion of the design at the Royal Scottish Academy summer exhibition in 2007, awards for the design & implementation by the Landscape Institute, the Royal Town Planning Institute and the Civic Trust.

The project in use has been included in the Landscape Institute's Guide for Clients.

The Landscape Institute Guide for Clients, 2012

The Landscape Institute President’s Award for the Best Landscape Design Project in the UK, 2009

Best Landscape Design Under 1 Hectare, Landscape Institute 2009

Commendation, Civic Trust Awards, 2009

Commendation, Scottish Planning Awards, 2009

Royal Scottish Academy of Art & Architecture Annual Summer Exhibition, 2007
2009
Best Landscape Design Under 1 Hectare, Landscape Institute
President’s Award (Best Landscape Design Project in the UK), Landscape Institute
Urban Green Space, Runner up, Local Government News,
Street Design Awards
Civic Trust, Commendation
Scottish Planning Award, Commendation

2007
Exhibited at the Royal Scottish Academy of Art & Architecture,
Annual Summer Exhibition

President’s Award
The Landscape Institute President’s Award is made for the best landscape architecture scheme of the year.

St. Andrew Square, Edinburgh – Designed by Gillespies

"The landscape architect has produced a confident and convincing design for this world heritage site in the heart of Edinburgh. The completed scheme has proved a source of delight to local people and visitors alike, and is a splendid example of public space fulfilling its potential and contributing to the life of the city. The simplicity and elegance of the design belies the complexity of working in the public realm. It is an achievement to be proud of”.

Neil Williamson FLI
President
APPENDIX – Web Coverage

http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/PDF/Contribute/TOPLANDSCAPEAWARDSFOREDINBURGHSQUAREANDOLYMPICPARK.pdf

http://www.edinburghoutlook.co.uk/2010-01/yourarea/citycentre/2661.aspx

http://www.edinburgharchitecture.co.uk/st_andrew_square.htm


http://www.landscapeinstitute.org/casestudies/casestudy.php?id=52

http://www.urbanrealm.com/practices/portfolio/357/pictures/St_Andrew_Square:_Edinburgh.html/?next=1

http://www.urbanrealm.com/buildings/420/St_Andrew's_Square.html


http://www.landengineering.co.uk/Case_Studies/st_andrew_square_gardens


http://www.essentialedinburgh.co.uk/ee-subpage.aspx?pageID=62
Landscape Institute - Awards

St Andrew Square

Lead landscape architect

GILLESPIES LLP
21 Carlton Court
Glasgow
G5 9JP
UK
Telephone: 0141 420 8200
Fax: 0141 429 8795
Email: admin.glasgow@gillespies.co.uk
Website: www.gillespies.co.uk
BIM Level: Undeclared
Full practice details

Image one & a description of what we are looking at in the context of the project.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014
Case studies

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 case study matching your criteria.

Search again

St Andrew Square

Edinburgh

Creation of a publicly accessible garden and major new space within Edinburgh city centre, providing an oasis of tranquility, and an improved pedestrian route. The scheme was also intended to address anti-social behaviour by improved lighting and planting.

Full details of St Andrew Square

Showing 1 to 1 of 1 case study matching your criteria.
Civic Trust – Awards

St Andrew Square, Edinburgh

Level of Award:
Commendation

Region:
Scotland

Local Authority Area:
Edinburgh, City of

Owner:
Edinburgh City Council (technically the council has leased the square on a long term lease)

Entrant:
GILLESPIES LLP

Architect:
Gillespies

Developer:
Edinburgh City Centre Management Company

Landscape Designer:
GILLESPIES LLP

Services Engineer:
(Consulting engineer) Parsons Brinckerhoff

Structural Engineer:
Dewhurst MacFarlane (for the cafe pavilion only)

Contractor:
Land Engineering

Primary Use Class:
E Public Realm

Photography Credit:
Click photo to view a slideshow of images.

You are here: Home > Winners > 2009
Urban Realm - coverage

St Andrew's Square

St Andrew Square Gardens had been privately owned by the surrounding property owners for over 200 years. The Gardens had fallen into disrepair in recent years and were rarely used. In 2007, the City of Edinburgh Council established a 50-year lease of the Square and put plans in place to preserve the green and tranquil space while providing greater access to the public.

PROJECT: St Andrew's Square
LOCATION: Edinburgh
CLIENT: City of Edinburgh Council
ARCHITECT: Gillespies
STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: Parsons
SERVICES ENGINEER: Land Engineering

2009
Urban Realm - coverage

St Andrew Square, Edinburgh

GILLESPIES

Contact Details

Phone: (0)141 420 8200
Fax: (0)141 429 8796
Email: steve.nelson@gillespies.co.uk
Website: http://www.gillespies.co.uk
Address:
21 Carlton Court
Glasgow G5 9JP
No. of architects: 17
No. of staff: 22

Principal Contacts

Partner:
Steve Nelson

Skills

Environmental assessment
Landscaping design
Masterplanning
Landezine - coverage

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21,423 people like Landezine.
St Andrew Square Garden

Dating back to 1770 and designed by James Craig as an integral part of his New Town Masterplan, St Andrew Square Garden was previously only accessible to residents and businesses in the surrounding area. Now everyone visiting or working in the city centre can enjoy the tranquil retreat.

St Andrew Square Garden was transformed into a haven in the heart of the city centre as part of a programme of improvement works funded by the City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Enterprise. The Garden now features a striking modern pavilion, which houses a Coffee Republic Delicatessen. The £2.6million refurbishment has included extensive work to preserve the Melville Monument in the centre of the Garden, construction of a network of pathways through the Garden accessed through two existing and two new gates, a reflective pool and new lighting.

Filming
Essential Edinburgh manages and maintains St Andrew Square Garden. Permission is required from Essential Edinburgh to utilise the Garden for anything out with “normal” usage.
Land Engineering – Landscape/Engineering Contractor

St Andrew Square Gardens

Key info

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<th>Contract Value</th>
<th>£2,800,000</th>
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