

Case information

Case ID	300017077		
File Reference	HGH/B/LA/490		
Name of Site	Dalhousie Land, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh		
Local Authority	City of Edinburgh Council		
National Grid Reference	NT 326353 673706		
Designation No. (if any)	n/a		
Designation Type	Listed Building	Current Category of Listing	N/A
Case Type	Designation		
Received/Start Date	2015 [University of Edinburgh Estates Review]		
Decision Date	28/04/2016		

1. Decision

In our current state of knowledge, Dalhousie Land meets the criteria for listing at category C. It is proposed that the building has been designated (listed).

Existing Statutory Address	n/a
Proposed Statutory Address	Dalhousie Land, 15 St John Street, Edinburgh

2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

Edinburgh Ward, where this building is situated was resurveyed in 2008 as part of the Holyrood Resurvey Part 3 in Ward 34.

The building is located within the Old Town Conservation Area.

2.2 Development Proposals

There are no known development proposals.

3. Assessment

3.1 Assessment information

Dalhousie Land was considered for review as part of the University of Edinburgh Estates Listing Review 2015.

The Dalhousie Land was visited on 12/08/15 when both the interior and the exterior of the buildings were seen.

3.2 Assessment against designation criteria

An assessment against the listing criteria was carried out, see **Annex A**.

The designation criteria are found in the Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP), pp. 71-85. <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep-dec2011.pdf>

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ANNEX A – Assessment Against the Listing Criteria*

Dalhousie Land, 15 St John’s Road, Edinburgh

1. Description

Dalhousie Land is a post-war university building designed in the Festival Style by Esme Gordon and Gordon Dey in 1960-63 with later internal alterations in 1996 by Dodd Jamieson and Partners and further internal alterations in 1999 and 2008. It is a 4-storey and basement, 8-bay rectangular-plan education building with a flat-roofed, 2-storey and 7-bay ancillary section along the east elevation set on pilotis. It is located to one side of a quadrant of multi-phase college campus buildings for Moray House and is joined to an earlier building to its north end with a single recessed bay in traditional stone style and massing which houses a staircase.

The building is constructed of coursed rubble stonework at the ground floor and south gable end; there is smooth rendering elsewhere. The central gable panel and pilotis section is coloured vert-de-gris green. There is a coloured Moray Family shield crest to the gable apex. The external window pattern reflects the varying internal levels to the building: the stepped pattern to the windows at the gable end light the main staircase; the square single windows are closely set to create a horizontal pattern within the large expanse of wall; the second floor housed the former lecture theatre. The small window openings are designed with deep set projecting strip margins.

The building has replacement window frames dating to 1996 and later entrance doors and canopy dating to 2008. The pitched roof of the main block is slated with overhanging eaves. There is a later entrance ramp to the front door.

The interior of the building was seen in 2015 and it has undergone alterations to the plan form and detailing. A former swimming pool to the ground floor and lecture theatre above were remodelled in 1996 when the building was converted from lecture and sporting facilities to provide library and office accommodation. The raked floor of the former lecture theatre is still evident in the main library space; there is also a central sunken floor section which was the former swimming pool.

2. Assessment Against the Listing Criteria (SHEP, 2011) pp74-75

Criteria for determining whether a building is of ‘special architectural or historic interest’ for listing under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 [www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents]

To be listed, a building need not meet all the listing criteria. The criteria provide a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions.

2.1 Age and Rarity

Dalhousie Land was designed in 1960 by the architect Esme Gordon, of Gordon and Dey, for the Moray House College of Further Education. It was opened on 2nd May 1963 by the Rev Neville Davidson, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and built at a construction cost of £119,000. The building was built as an arts education facility for Moray House School of Education which was founded on this site in Edinburgh in 1848 for the purpose of teacher training. When first built, Dalhousie Land included a lecture theatre, art rooms and a swimming pool to the ground. It underwent substantial internal alterations by the architects Dodd Jamieson and Partners in 1996 when the building's use was changed to that of a library. Further alterations were then carried out in 1999 following the merger between Moray House and the University of Edinburgh with these works resulting in the loss of the lecture theatre to create more library and office accommodation. The building still forms part of a group of buildings providing teacher training (2015).

Tertiary or higher education in Scotland underwent a period of expansion in the post-war period particularly between 1957 and 1970 as seen in Edinburgh by the expansion in Edinburgh University campuses such as at George Square, The Kings Buildings and also at Moray House College. Significant change was led by the Robbins Report, a government paper by the Committee on Higher Education which was published in 1963 and which set out the recommendations for expansion. Significant university building programmes were however already underway in the 1950s with Dundee and Edinburgh being the earliest in Scotland to undertake extensive building programmes. Dalhousie Land was built during this period of development. Its form is also representative of a specific period when there was a shift towards building design reflecting new philosophies in teaching, a movement which had begun in earnest from the 1930s onwards. In the post-war period, both independent schools and universities had identified the importance of design-led architectural provision and often appointed recognised high profile contemporary architectural practices to produce campus masterplans and high quality purpose-built buildings. Dalhousie Land is an example of one of these buildings and is a good example of architecture inspired by the Festival of Britain as well as contemporary interest in Scandinavian modernism (see Architectural or Historic Interest Below).

The Dalhousie Land building appears to have taken inspiration from a number of contemporary tertiary education buildings in Scotland: Gordon's Dalhousie Land is contemporary with and in similar design to significant buildings by Basil Spence in Glasgow and Walter Ramsay at the University of Edinburgh which were also influenced by Scandinavian modern and mid-century design ideas (see Age and Rarity section below).

The Dalhousie Land building is a relatively rare example of a mid-20th century purpose-built educational building in Festival Style remaining substantially in its original form to the exterior.

2.2 Architectural or Historic Interest

Interior

The original interior of the building contained a swimming pool to the ground floor, art rooms and a raked lecture theatre to the upper floor. The interior was comprehensively remodelled in two phases from 1996 to 1999 which resulted in the loss of the as-built interior detailing and plan form. The alterations included the conversion of the swimming pool area to form library accommodation and the loss of the lecture theatre. The only element of the early 1960s interior detailing that remains is the open stair with windows to the south gable of the building. The interior of the building is therefore substantially altered and is not significant in listing terms.

Plan form

The plan form of the building remains largely as it was first built with ancillary accommodation projecting out the side elevation arranged on pilotis creating a covered area underneath. Whilst internally it is still possible to determine the original ground floor plan of the building where the former swimming pool area now forms a sunken part of the library, the changes to the internal plan are otherwise significant and are not of interests in listing terms.

Technological excellence or innovation, material or design quality

The external form of Dalhousie Land is largely unaltered externally apart from minor changes to the entrance and the window materials a small ground floor infill addition under the pilotis. The building has an unusual irregular pattern of external glazing which is typical for Festival Style buildings of the period, however the pattern is also of interest in listing terms as it clearly demonstrated the internal planning of the building when built. There are irregular floor heights to the swimming pool and lecture theatre and off-set floor levels to the gable marking the stair half landings. The building has a good external elevational composition reflecting the interest in Festival of Britain and Scandinavian modern style which is similar to the near-contemporary buildings at Pollock Halls built in 1959.

The 1951 Festival of Britain inspired a new style of architecture across Britain. One of the leading architects was Basil Spence who was directly involved in the Festival of Britain. The style replaced the previously prevalent Art Deco and Moderne styles that had continued into the 1940s from the austerity of the interwar and immediate post-war period. The Festival Style was a direct antidote to this austerity promoting a move towards brightness and optimism as illustrated by design details such as spindly railings, jaunty balconies, smooth cladding and stone bases and the occasional use of bright colour. Dalhousie Land shows many of these in its design particularly in the uses of the brightly coloured smooth render. The design of a main block with an ancillary section to the side on pilotis creates a distinguishable architectural composition in the Festival Style.

The architectural practice of Esme Gordon (1910-1993) and Gordon Dey (1911-1997) began in 1946 when Gordon, who was already a sole practitioner, took Dey on as a partner. After his training at Edinburgh College of Art Gordon's early career was with Burnet, Tait and Lorne and he worked on St Andrew's House, Edinburgh and the 1938 Empire Exhibition. The practice mainly concentrated on Eventide Homes and small church commissions in the earlier years with a definite shift moving towards education and college buildings from the 1950s with several commissions for Heriot Watt as well as those commissions for Moray House. Esme Gordon is acknowledged as a leading architect in mid-20th century Edinburgh.

The architectural practice Gordon and Dey had a longstanding relationship with Moray House having designed a number of buildings in the college's estate as well as being involved in alteration schemes to existing buildings over a 28-year period. The first building the practice designed for the College was the Sports Pavilion (1952), followed by the Speech Therapy Department (1954), Gymnasium (1968-70), Charteris Land (1971) and St Mary's Land and Chessel's Land (1980).

Setting

Dalhousie Land is on St John's Road off the main Holyrood Road and to the centre of a group of buildings that were all built as part of Moray House College. The rear of the building forms part of a square with other earlier college buildings including Thomson's Land, Paterson's Land and the former Moray House nursery building, (see separate listings). This multi-period collection of buildings is typical of educational buildings in an urban campus setting and Dalhousie Land is prominently set within this group.

Regional variations

There are no known regional variations.

2.3 Close Historical Associations

None known at present.

3. Working with the Principles of Listing (SHEP 2011, p76)

In choosing buildings within the above broad headings particular attention is paid to:

- a. special value within building types*
- b. contribution to an architecturally or historically interesting group*
- c. the impact of vernacular buildings*
- d. authenticity*

When working with the principles of listing Dalhousie Land has particular interest under a and b.

- a. Dalhousie Land is among a small number of mid-20th century public buildings in Scotland to have been built in the Festival Style.
- b. Dalhousie Land is one of a group of buildings in a densely built up area of Edinburgh that formed the former Moray House College (now part of the University of Edinburgh). The buildings are of varying dates and architectural styles and together form a coherent group demonstrating the development of the site for the provision of educational over the past 200 years.
- d. While extensive interior alterations have taken place the exterior is largely intact.

4. Summary of Assessment Against the Listing Criteria**

Dalhousie Land was built during the post-war expansion of university and higher education provision and is a notable example of its building type. Its design was influenced by the Festival of Britain style as well as modern Scandinavian design and is one of a relatively small number of public buildings designed in this style in Scotland. Its exterior has been largely unaltered and it forms a good group with other buildings within its campus setting.

In our current state of knowledge the building may meet the criteria for listing.

5. Category of Listing

Categories of listing are non-statutory and buildings are assigned a category (A, B or C) according to their relative importance following the assessment against the criteria for listing.

Category definitions are found at: www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings/listing

It is proposed that Dalhousie Land is listed at category C to reflect its level of interest as a good example of its building type that has been moderately altered.

6. Other Information

N/A

7. References

Printed sources

Gifford, J. McWilliam, C and Walker, D (1984) *The Buildings of Scotland, Edinburgh* Edinburgh: Penguin p184.

Haynes, N. (2013) *Building Knowledge; An Architectural History of the University of Glasgow*. Edinburgh Historic Scotland p132-145.

Historic Scotland (2009) *Scotland: Building for the Future Essays on the Architecture of the Post-War Period* Edinburgh p40

Online sources

Dictionary of Scottish Architects:

http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=202411 [accessed 8 October 2015]

* This assessment is based on our current state of knowledge and has been prepared for the purpose of consultation or to provide a view on the special interest of a building. This assessment is a consultation document and will form the basis of any new or updated listed building record should the structure be listed. The content of this assessment may change to take into account further information received as a result of the consultation process.

** A building may be found to meet the listing criteria but in some circumstances may not be added to the list. See 'When might Historic Environment Scotland list a building' at www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/historicandlistedbuildings/whatwelist