

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

PORTMAN SQUARE AND MANCHESTER SQUARE

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Name:	PORTMAN SQUARE AND MANCHESTER SQUARE
County:	Greater London Authority
District:	City of Westminster (London Borough)
Parish:	Non Civil Parish
label.localisation:	Latitude: 51.515702 Longitude: -0.15576276 National Grid Reference: TQ 28065 81254, TQ 28274 81378 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000820 Date first listed: 01-Oct-1987

Details

Two late C18 town squares within the Portman Estate.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The development of the c102ha of Lord Portman's Marylebone Estate started in the middle of the C18. Henry William Portman succeeded to the estate in 1761 and started to develop the estate after the Peace of 1763. The layout of the squares and associated streets was not to a grand plan but rather, the existing framework of streets determined the general shape and size of the squares. In c1764 work started on Portman Square, the largest square in the development, named after the family estate of Orchard Portman in Somerset. The building of the houses was done speculatively, with the south side first, followed by the west and east sides, all by Abraham and Samuel Adams. The north side was started in 1774 and was the most ambitious of the sides. It included James Stuart's Montagu House of 1777- 82, Home House (no 20) by Robert Adam, built as a uniform block with no 21 (by James Adam for William Locke, now the RIBA Drawings Collection and Heinz Gallery), and further houses by James Wyatt. The central garden was formed in 1780 when an act of Parliament was passed by which trustees were appointed for its regulation and upkeep. A watercolour by Gingal (1794) shows the north side of the square with the garden enclosed by iron railings and the level site planted with mature shrubs and young trees. Horwood's map of 1799 shows the square complete with the enclosed garden. The site was laid out with a central shrub bed flanked to the north and south by a triangular bed. A perimeter path encircled the garden with secondary paths bordering the flanking beds and encircling the central bed. Although Stanford's map of 1887 and Bacon's map of 1888 indicate some alterations to the garden, the 2nd edition OS, 1894-96, shows the design similar to that depicted on the 1st edition OS (1867) with the addition of a fenced in area in the shrubbery to the north of the southern entrance.

The design of Portman Square had not altered from its C18 layout when the 1919 edition of the OS was published and in 1927 a report to the Royal Commission on London Squares described it as an oblong area surrounded by a low privet hedge and a thick shrubbery. The main part of the garden was attractively laid out with well kept lawns and shrubberies. Buildings on the south and east sides of the square were rebuilt in the 1920s and 30s, and the square suffered further losses during WW2

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including the destruction of Montagu House by bombing, and the removal of the railings. The garden was reinstated by 1953 but the paths were laid out to an altered design.

Manchester Square was laid out from 1766 on land belonging to the Portman Estate. Proposals to build a square on the site of Manchester Square were first mentioned in the last years of Queen Anne's reign. It was intended that the proposed square should bear the name of the Queen but before the idea could be put into practice she died and the ground remained wasteland for over fifty years. In c1770 the idea to develop the area was revived and ground leases for the site were sold. The fourth Duke of Manchester, after whom the Square takes its name, obtained the ground lease for most of the north side and employed Robert Adam and others to build on the land. Other ground leases for the site were obtained by builders including the Adam brothers, John Dalrymple, John Pearson, and Godfrey Wilson. The first house to be completed was Manchester House, in 1776, and in 1784 an Act was passed for the regulation and maintenance of the square and its garden. The buildings around the square are shown as completed on Horwood's map of the area, 1792-99. The plans of this date show a simple layout of a circular lawn with a central feature, bounded by a path and a perimeter shrubbery. In 1844 George Lucas published his survey of St Marylebone which showed the garden of Manchester Square. By this date the circular form had been slightly altered to a squarer shape with rounded corners. The first edition OS 1867 shows the garden railed with a peripheral shrubbery and path but with further serpentine paths crossing the centre. The serpentine paths had been removed by the second edition OS 1894 which shows the site laid out as in the late C18 and at present (2002). In 1998 railings were erected around the garden.

SITE DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM AND SETTING The two squares, Portman Square and Manchester Square, are laid out on level ground. They are located in the grid of streets within the south-east quarter of the Portman Estate, which occupies a large area of Marylebone in Central London. The Estate lies to the south of Euston Road (prior to 1948 the estate extended to the north of Euston Road), north of Oxford Street, west of Marylebone Lane, and east of Edgware Road. Montagu and Bryanston Squares (outside the areas here registered) lie to the north-west, and Dorset Square (outside the areas here registered) lies to the north, on the far side of the Euston Road. Portman Square, a private garden of 1ha, retains its original stretched oval shape. It is enclosed by wrought iron railings, which were reinstated in the 1970s, with four entrances. The north, south and west entrances have reproductions of the original wrought iron gates with overthrows, and the east entrance has a wrought iron gate and standard lamp. A drinking fountain (listed grade II) in memory of Sir James John Hamilton, 1876, stands outside the railings, immediately south of the east entrance. The gardens and railings are surrounded by the buildings of the square, which are on a rectangular plan. Three C18 buildings survive, No 20 Portman Square (Home House, listed grade I, built by Robert Adam for the Countess of Home in 1775-7), no 21 (listed grade I, now the Heinz Gallery and RIBA Drawings Collection, built by James Adam for William Locke c1772, altered 1866), and a house on the corner of Seymour Street (by Abraham and Samuel Adams). All the remaining buildings are C20 including an hotel (on the site of James Stuart's Montagu House of 1777-82), Orchard Court (occupying the entire east side), and Portman Court on the south side. Baker Street runs down the east side of the square, and Gloucester Place runs down the west side. Upper Berkeley Street, Fitzhardinge Street (leading to Manchester Square), Seymour Street, and Wigmore Street enter the square from the north-west, north-east, south-west, and south-east corners respectively.

The private garden of Manchester Square, 0.34ha, is oval in shape. It is enclosed by late C20 railings, and has a single entrance on the east side (originally there were four entrances). The gardens and railings are surrounded by the buildings of the square, which are on a square plan. The buildings in the square date from c1776-88 (Nos 1-3, 4-7, 8-11, 12-14, 22-25, and 26, all listed grade II) except for the north-west corner which has mid C20 buildings. Hertford House (listed grade II, with drinking fountain in the forecourt listed grade II*, and forecourt walls, gate piers and railings listed grade II), houses the Wallace collection and stands on the north side of the square. It was built as Manchester House in c1776, and altered from 1872 by Sir Richard Wallace. Streets enter the square from the centre of the east, south, and west sides of the square (Hinde Street, Duke Street, and Fitzhardinge Street (leading to Portman Square), respectively). Two streets enter the square on the north side, Manchester Street to the west of Hertford House, and Spanish Place to the east of Hertford House.

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GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Portman Square is laid out with shrubberies on mounds around the edge, and a central lawn, intersected by the 1950s path system. The path system bears little resemblance to the original design, and the perimeter path has been replaced by winding paths between the entrance gates and around the central lawn. There are mature trees including large planes in the shrubberies and around the edge of the lawn. A late C20 tennis court is situated on the west side of the garden, and there is a late C20 children's playground on the east side. There are two early C20 wooden shelters overlooking the central lawn. An enclosed compound for the gardener is situated to the south of one of the shelters, between the shelter and the southern entrance.

Manchester Square is laid out very simply, to a design similar to the C18 layout. A perimeter shrubbery with mature trees encloses the garden, which has a circular lawn bounded by a gravel path. There are four mature plane trees scattered on the lawn, a C20 wooden shed on the east side near the entrance, and a stone urn on the edge of the lawn on the south side.

REFERENCES E B Chancellor, *The History of the Squares of London* (1907) E Cecil, *London Parks and Gardens* (1907) Report to the Royal Commission on London Squares, 1928

Maps John Rocque, *An Exact Survey of the City of London, Westminster.....and the Country near Ten Miles Round*, 1747 Richard Horwood, *Plan of the Cities of London & Westminster, 1792-9* Richard Horwood, *Plan of the Cities of London & Westminster*, 2nd edn 1813 Richard Horwood, *Plan of the Cities of London & Westminster*, revised 1819 Peter Potter, *Survey of St Marylebone*, 1832 G Lucas, *Survey of St. Marylebone*, 1846 Stanford's Library Map of London and its Suburbs, 1862 Stanford's Library Map of London and its Suburbs, 1877 Bacon, *Map of London*, 1888 OS 60" to 1 mile 1st edition surveyed 1867 2nd edition published 1894 3rd edition published 1919 1953 edition 1991 edition 1994 edition

Date written: 1998, amended 2002 Register Inspector: LH, CB

Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.