Sussex Gardens Trust

Parks and gardens of local importance in Sussex

Parks and Gardens of the Sussex Coast
Research and Recording project

HOWARD SQUARE EASTBOURNE



c1940s



2022

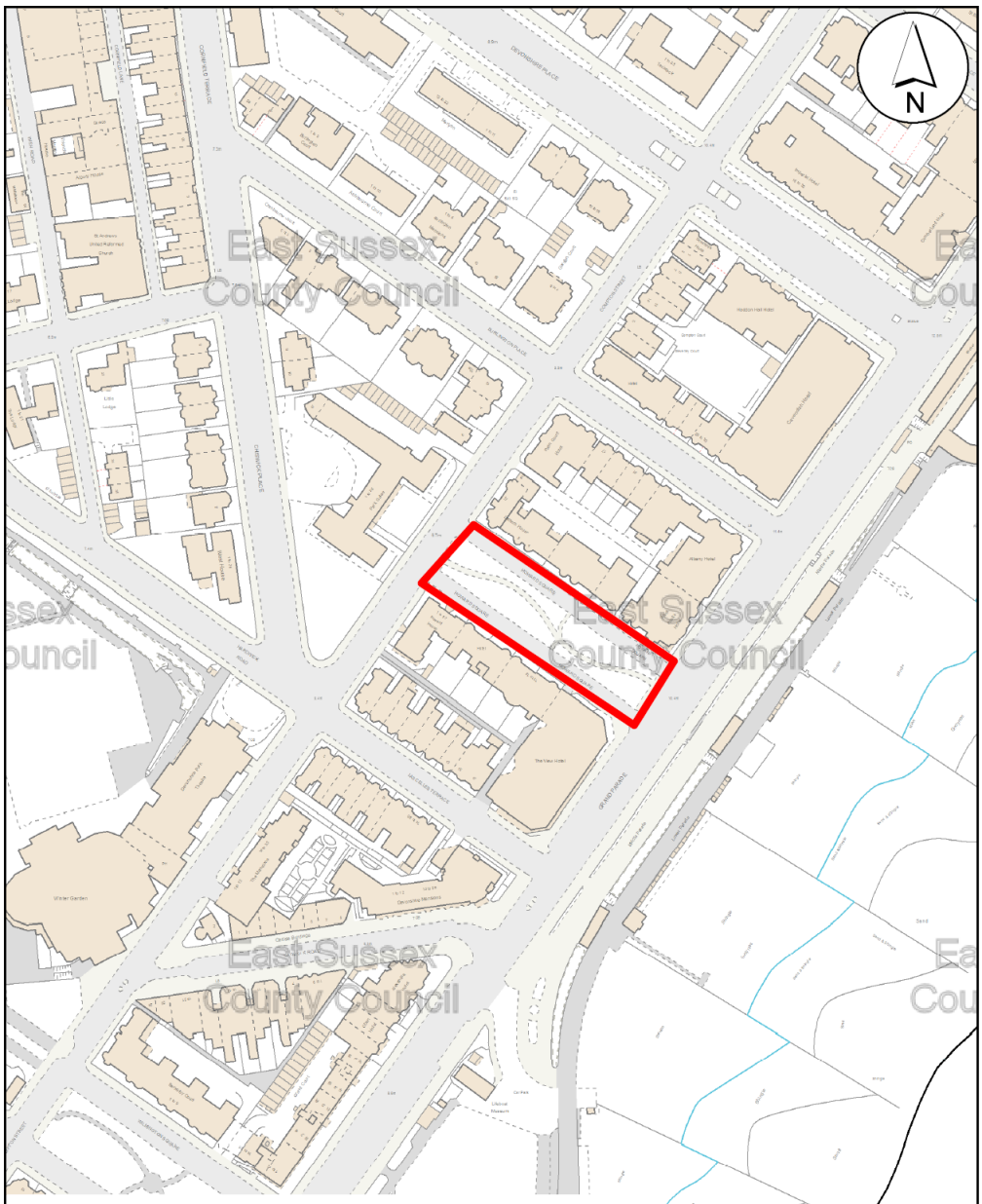
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SITE BOUNDARY (1)



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Howard Square, Eastbourne - Representing the boundary of the area of designed historic interest	Scale: 1:2,000
East Sussex Historic Environment Record (ESHER) and Sussex Garden Trust working in partnership	Date: 06/12/2022

East Sussex County Council

SITE BOUNDARY (2)



INTRODUCTION

Background to the 'Parks and Gardens of the Sussex Coast' Project

Our project aim, to research and record the parks and gardens of the Sussex coast, began in 2013 and is nearing completion. Most of the sites recorded are now in public i.e. local authority ownership where their special historic development is not necessarily recognised and therefore conserved. We hope our reports will help improve knowledge and guide their future management.

The variety and period of sites is huge, from C19 and early C20 town squares, 'Old English' and Italianate-style gardens with ponds, pergolas and seating, gardens with salt-resistant traditional bedding and C21 ecological planting, to large parks which began life as farmland owned by influential local families and aristocracy and provided the recreation and leisure space for new urban development.

The administrative areas covered are: Worthing and Adur jointly-run DC, Arun DC, Brighton and Hove City Council, Eastbourne and Lewes jointly-run DC, Rother DC and Hastings Borough. Only Brighton and Hove and Hastings hold a list of local heritage assets (see Historic England's guidance for a definition of local heritage assets and how to identify and protect them . https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/local-heritage-listing-advice-note-7/)

Brighton and Hove City Council's list is the most comprehensive (https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/planning/heritage/local-list-heritage-assets) so our project has not addressed their sites although we may select a few of the more major ones for a deeper level of research in the future.

Content

All research – in local and national archives and on site – is undertaken by a team of volunteers who have received training from professionals expert in appraising designed landscapes who have worked extensively for English Heritage (now Historic England) on sites on its National Heritage List for England. All reports are peer-reviewed.

Each report comprises the following:

- A site boundary map drawn on the current Ordnance Survey map.

- The area within the boundary represents the area of designed historic interest; it does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.
- A current aerial photograph with the boundary shown.
- An overview and statement of significance based on the guidance set out in the *National Policy Planning Framework* – the government's guidance for local planning authorities in discharging their planning responsibilities.
- A written description, derived from documentary research and a visual site survey, the format following that used by Historic England for sites on the national *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest* 2nd edn.

Supporters and Acknowledgements:

The Trust would like to thank the volunteers, owners, local authority staff (especially the East and West Sussex Historic Environment Records) and the many Friends groups who have participated in this project and given time and effort to completing this challenging task.
Further information is available from: www.sussexgardenstrust.org.uk

HOWARD SQUARE

COUNTY East Sussex

ESCC HER REF MES39105

DISTRICT Eastbourne

OS REF: TV 613 985

OVERVIEW

Comprising a simple rectangular lawned space open to sea views at the southern end and quartered by paths the square's surrounding terraces were developed as one of many joint enterprises in the town of the Cavendish and Gilbert families. Begun in 1874 and completed by 1900, the garden's planting and state of enclosure was altered several times. The name Howard derives from the maiden name of the wife 7th Duke of Devonshire, Lady Blanche Howard (Spears, 1972).

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architectural/Artistic: The architecture of the Square's buildings and layout of its garden especially are far less grand and complex than those of Brighton, perhaps reflecting the conservative influence of Decimus Burton on Currey. The buildings and form of the garden survive largely unaltered. The original planting of perimeter trees typical of C19 garden squares (in this case conifers) has not survived.

Historic: Howard Square is representative of several squares and terraces built by the Duke of Devonshire and his architect and agent Henty Currey as part of the Cavendish family's drive of the expansion westward of Eastbourne in the mid to late C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Howard Square, laid out in 1874, was a further part of the building of Eastbourne's seafront, works comprising a sea wall, Grand Parade and Cavendish Place having begun in 1851 as an enterprise of the Cavendish and Gilbert families. These two long-established local dynasties owned all the surrounding land (around 6,000 acres (2,400 ha)) and their joint decision to release land for carefully controlled development

from 1850 onwards allowed Eastbourne to grow gradually into a "well-manned type of garden city, fully exploiting [its] marine setting and [its] varied and attractive landscape". William, 2nd Earl of Burlington, who inherited the title of 7th Duke of Devonshire in 1851 (and was resident at Compton Place) drove much of the early growth, advancing money to help schemes such as Cornfield Terrace and Seaside Road get underway, and ensuring that the sea-facing Grand Parade was developed early and designed well.

The Duke's architect and agent, Henry Currey (a pupil of Decimus Burton), was responsible for much of the planning of the town in this period, this connection probably reflected in the restrained or conservative nature of the development.
By 1879 (OS first edition map) the Square is shown, along with the adjoining roads, with a terrace of buildings in place only on its north-eastern side but with its garden lined on all four sides by conifer trees. With the building of the terrace on the south-western side, the whole Square was finally completed by 1900 (OS 2nd edition map). Nos 1 to 6 and 9 to 12, which are listed grade II, may possibly be attributed to George A. Wallis (Historic England listed building entry), the first mayor of Eastbourne (also believed to have designed the building which is now Eastbourne's Heritage Centre). The name Howard derives from the maiden name of the wife 7th Duke of Devonshire, Lady Blanche Howard (Spears, 1972).

SITE DESCRIPTION

Location, Area, Boundaries, Landform, Setting

Howard Square is located immediately off Grand Parade c550m south-west of the pier. Its unenclosed garden square, 94m x 15m (1500sq in area) on land which slopes gently inland from the seafront, is surrounded by roads on all sides. Grand Parade, beyond which the Square looks out to the seafront and sea, runs along the south-east end. Compton Street, running along the north-west end, looks out onto a C20 block of flats. The roads enclosing the two long sides separate the terraces from the garden and are lined by car parking on the garden side and pedestrian footways on the side serving the terraces. The setting of the Square (which lies within the town centre and seafront conservation area (Murphy Associates, 2017) is urban in character comprising adjoining terraces of similar late C19 origin and later C20 blocks of flats.

Principal buildings

Howard Square's houses 'mildly Italianate' in character form a sea-facing square orientated north-west/south-east. Each has four storeys with a three-window range, the centre of which is narrower. Each entrance is flanked by pilasters which support a

cornice below the first floor. The fronts are cemented. Few alterations have occurred to their original design.

Entrances and approaches

The Square's garden is unenclosed, with open access from the all points. The main approaches are from Compton Street to the north-west or from Grand Parade to the south-east.

Garden

The garden is laid to grass with a tarmac, serpentine path bisecting it both lengthways (unequally) and widthways, quartering the grass area which is maintained as close cut lawn. Two flowerbeds situated in each of the larger lawn areas, of matching size and shapes (11m x 4m) are planted with pink shrub roses. There is one tree situated at the Compton Street end 4.5 m high.

The garden seems to have undergone a number of alterations over the years. The widely- spaced conifer trees shown lining the garden's perimeter in 1879 (OS 6" map 1st edition) seem to have gone by 1900. Later OS editions show a line marking a fence or other barrier dividing the garden area into 3 equal sections; this remained in place until at least 1938 (revised OS edition of that date). A print (undated but likely to be late C19) shows the garden enclosed by shoulder height railings backed by shrubbery of mixed height with no trees apparent. By the 1920s and 30s two (undated) photographs taken from Compton Street show, in one, an enclosing hedge and a square area of low bedding and in the other the same low hedge but with the longitudinal serpentine path in place. By the mid C20 (undated photograph) the hedge is still in place but car parking down the long sides of the garden has appeared.

REFERENCES

Books, articles and publications

Historic England listing 1043637*, 1-6 Howard Square*, 1971.

Lannadine, David, *Lords and Landlords: The Aristocracy and the Towns 1774-1967* (Leicester University Press, 1980).

Murphy Associates, for Eastbourne BC, *Draft Conservation Area Appraisal: Town Centre and Seafront* (2017).

Spears, Harold, *Some of the Street Names of Eastbourne with notes on their historical associations* (1972).

Maps

OS 1st edition surveyed: 1875 to 1876 published 1879.
OS 2nd edition Revised: 1898 published 1900.
OS 4th edition revised: 1925, Published: 1927.
OS 7th edition Revised: 1938, Published: ca. 1947.

Illustrations

Photographs, mostly undated but from early-mid C20.

Research:	**Completed:**	**Editor:**
Barty Meredith-Hardy	October 2019	Virginia Hinze