



Designation Consultation

This designation consultation is open for comment until 26/03/2026

Give us your comments

Historic Environment Scotland consult with those who are directly affected by designation proposals – including owners, occupiers and tenants – and with the planning authority.

We also welcome comments from interested persons or groups.

When we consult about a designation case we will have carried out research and set this out in a **report of handling**. This report is an assessment produced for consultation and it sets out our view, including a proposed decision. The assessment is not intended to be a definitive account or description of the site or place. We consider the comments received before we take a final decision.

We consider comments and representations which are material to our decision-making, such as:

- Your understanding of the cultural significance of the site or place.
- Whether sites or places meet the criteria for designation.
- The purpose and implications of designating the site or place. We consider whether these are relevant to the case.
- Development proposals related to the site or place. Where there are development proposals, we consider whether to proceed with designation in line with our designation policy.
- The accuracy of our information.

You can find more guidance on providing comments and how we handle your information on our [website](#).

Information on how we treat your personal data is available on our [Privacy Notice](#).

How to make a comment

Please send your comments to designationconsultations@hes.scot and provide us with the case reference. You can also make comments through our [portal](#) by clicking on the link 'email your comments about this case'.

If you are the owner, occupier or tenant or the planning authority please email us at: designations@hes.scot.

If you are unable to email your comments please phone us on 0131 668 8914.



Case information

Case ID	300085485
Name of Site	27-29 Ratcliffe Terrace (former Lads' Institute) Edinburgh
Postcode (if any)	EH9 1SX

Local Authority	City of Edinburgh Council
National Grid Reference	NT 26482 71872
Designation Type	Listed Building
Designation No. and category of listing (if any)	N/A
Case Type	Designation

Received/Start Date	15/05/2025
Decision Date	Pending

1. Proposed Decision

Our assessment using the selection guidance shows that the building meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest. **The proposed decision is to list the building at category C.**

Proposed Statutory Listing Address	27-29 Ratcliffe Terrace (former Lads' Institute), Edinburgh	Proposed category of listing	C
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2. Designation Background and Development Proposals

2.1 Designation Background

We previously assessed this building and decided it met the criteria of special architectural or historic interest on 05/09/2025 ([Former Causewayside Lads Institute, 27-29 Ratcliffe Terrace, Edinburgh \(300080279\)](#)). In line with our policy, we did not proceed with a designation because there were development proposals at an advanced stage.



We have made a photographic record of the buildings for the National Record of the Historic Environment which is available on www.trove.scot (NRHE UID: 384946)

2.2 Development Proposals

The building is the subject of the following development proposals:

Full planning permission

- 24/01092/FUL | Demolition of an existing mixed use (office and garage) building and the construction of a six-storey purpose-built student residential development with associated access and landscaping, including change of use. | 27 - 29, 31 Ratcliffe Terrace Edinburgh EH9 1SX
Validated on 13 March 2024 and the current status is 'Withdrawn'.
- 25/02904/FUL | Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a purpose-built student accommodation with associated cycle parking, landscaping and access arrangements. | 27 - 29, 31 Ratcliffe Terrace, 4 South Gray Street, Edinburgh
Validated on 12 June 2025 and the current status is 'Refused' on 03 October 2025.
 - Appeal, Planning appeal reference: PPA-230-2686. Appeal status is 'Appeal Dismissed - Permission Refused' on 17 February 2026.
[Scottish Government - DPEA - Case Details](#)

Permitted development

- 25/05240/PNT| Prior Notification (Telecoms) for the proposed rooftop upgrade comprises the removal of existing antennas and RRU units and the installation of replacement antennas. | 27 - 29, 31 Ratcliffe Terrace, 4 South Gray Street, Edinburgh
Validated on 02 October 2025 and the current status is 'Permitted Development' on 22 October 2025.
- 25/05235/CLP| Certificate of Lawfulness for demolition of existing building on site. | 27 - 29, 31 Ratcliffe Terrace, 4 South Gray Street, Edinburgh
Validated on 02 October 2025 and the current status is 'Application Refused' on 01 December 2025.
- 26/00495/CLP| Certificate of Lawfulness for proposed demolition of existing building on site. | 27 - 29, 31 Ratcliffe Terrace, 4 South Gray Street, Edinburgh
Validated on 10 February 2026 and the current status is 'Awaiting Assessment'.

3. Assessment



3.1 Assessment information

We originally received a proposal to designate 27-29 Ratcliffe Terrace on 15/05/2025. We have published the application form on our portal.

Our policy states that ‘our assessments may involve a site visit and will aim to make use of the best available evidence.’ (See [Designation Policy and Selection Guidance](#), p.7.) We decide on a case by case basis whether a site visit is required to inform our assessments.

In this case we considered that a site visit was required to inform our assessment of the building’s special architectural or historic interest. We visited the 27-29 Ratcliffe Terrace on 08/07/2025 and saw the exterior and interior. We saw the garage to the rear (31 Ratcliffe Terrace) from the exterior.

We issued a decision on 05/09/2025, which set out our view that the building is of special architectural or historic interest and our decision not to list at that time in line with our policy.

We have become aware of the recent refusal of planning permission and the subsequent dismissed appeal. We have therefore decided to consult on a proposal to list the building.

3.2 Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

We carried out an assessment using the selection guidance to decide whether the site or place is of special architectural or historic interest. We have reviewed our previous assessment, [published on 05/09/2025](#), and have not found any new evidence or information to change our view on the special architectural or historic interest. We have found that the building meets the criteria for listing. See **Annex A**.

The listing criteria and selection guidance for listed buildings are published in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019), Annex 2, pp. 11-13, <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

3.3 Policy considerations

The policy that informs our decision-making is set out in Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (DPSG), <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

How we assess sites and places

We decide on a case-by-case basis whether we will take forward a designation assessment. Our policy states (DPSG, p.7):



In this case, we carried out an assessment in 2025, which we are taking forward to a consultation now.

Development proposals and designation

Our policy states (DPSG, pp. 7-8):

“The legislation that sets out what can be designated is brief. It allows us to designate regardless of other factors such as development proposals. However, in carrying out designation work, we will act in line with the Scottish Regulators’ Code of Practice. This code expects that the functions will be transparent, accountable, consistent, proportionate and targeted where needed.

“In practice, this means we will normally avoid intervening unnecessarily in the planning process or other regulatory processes where there are development proposals by adding a new designation.

“We consider the individual circumstances of each case. In deciding whether to designate a site or place or amend an existing designation while there are ongoing development proposals, we will consider:

- the implications of designation on development proposals;
- the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the site or place; and
- the extent to which plans have been developed for the site or place – where these are particularly advanced, we will not normally list or schedule.”

The exception to this practice is when a Building Preservation Notice (BPN) has been served. Our policy states (DPSG, p.8):

“In urgent cases, planning authorities may consider serving a BPN if it appears to them that a building is of special architectural or historic interest and is in danger of demolition or alteration which would affect its character. This a form of temporary listing. Once a BPN has been served we have six months to assess the building for listing. We may list a building in these circumstances even if there are development proposals at an advanced stage.”

The building was the subject of an application for demolition when we issued our report in 2025 (see 2.2 Development Proposals). We considered that these development proposals were at an advanced stage and in line with our policy, we did not proceed with a proposal to designate the building.

We are not aware of a BPN affecting this site.

We are aware that recent proposals affecting the building have been refused, and subsequent appeals dismissed. Based on our current understanding of the status of



the development proposals for this site, we are now consulting on a proposal to list the building.

How we list

Our policy states (DPSG, p.12):

“The extent to which a building or structure survives is a consideration when assessing it for listing. However, the present condition of the surviving fabric is not a factor when deciding whether it is of special architectural or historic interest.

“Factors such as financial issues, proposed future use, or a building no longer being in its original use will not be taken into account.”

4. Consultation

4.1 Consultation information

Consultation period: 05/03/2026 to 26/03/2026.

We have consulted directly with the: owner(s) and the planning authority.

The consultation report of handling is published on our portal for comment from interested parties.

4.2 Designation consultations

Comments we consider

We will consider comments and representations which are material to our decision-making, such as:

- Your understanding of the cultural significance of the site or place and whether it meets the criteria for designation.
- The purpose and implications of designating the site or place. We consider whether these are relevant to the case.
- Development proposals related to the site or place. Where there are development proposals, we consider whether to proceed with designation in line with our designation policy.
- The accuracy of our information.

Comments we don't consider

Designation consultation



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We do not consider comments and representations on non-relevant/non-material issues, such as:

- Economic considerations
- Abusive or offensive remarks
- Whether you personally like, or do not like, a proposal

Our video about consultations explains how you can comment on our designations decisions, and what we can and can't take into account when considering your views. <https://youtu.be/ZlqU51tRA6g>.

Designations Service

Heritage Directorate
Historic Environment Scotland

Contact	designations@hes.scot , 0131 668 8914
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ANNEX A

Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

Building name

27-29 Ratcliffe Terrace (former Lads' Institute), Edinburgh

2. Description and historical development

2.1 Description

Designed and built in 1906 in an Arts and Crafts style, by James Linton Lawrence and Victor 'Spig' Spiganovicz, as a community building with later alterations, set on a main street in the southside of Edinburgh. A symmetrical, three-storey purpose designed former Lads' Club built in brick with a glazed brick band course to the ground floor and rendered walls above. The ground floor is made up of a central shop-style window flanked by a shallow-arched, glazed entrance doorway to the left and an open white glazed brick wide vehicular pend to the right. The first floor has three tall windows to brick faced central section; flanking rendered bays with shallow arched windows, rising to shouldered gablets with blank stone oval their apex. The gablets flank a deeply set overhanging dentilled eaves. The roof was altered in the 1950s and has pitches to the north and south each with large banks of glazed rooflights, and it is likely the two box dormers were also added at this time. The large flat roofed section to the centre has two tall stacks which may be casings for telecommunications equipment.

The rear elevation (east) is brick and has an irregular window pattern of large classroom style windows to the left of the first floor with smaller ancillary windows to the right. The south elevation is blank with render to the upper floor and brick below outlining the former gable of the demolished 19th century building that predated and adjoined it.

The interior plan form retains its early layout of large open hall/gymnasium spaces from when it was used as an institute as well as a good number of decorative features dating to the time of construction and its early use. The larger spaces have some later partition walls at the first floor level. There is a large open stair to the left with an Art Deco style handrail and at the first-floor landing there is a full width and height hardwood glazed timber screen with scalloped timber detailing and mottled glass. There is a yellow and black tiled Vitrolite bathroom to the first landing and similar Vitrolite detailing in a room above. The top floor has an open plan single room with mid-20th century cast-iron columns supporting a girder roof and glazed rooflight strips to the north and south.

2.2 Historical development



The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map (revised 1893, published 1896) shows an earlier building on the site with a gap to its south allowing access to a long courtyard of buildings to the rear around the north, east and south borders of the site. The current building replaced this and first appears on the third revision of the Ordnance Survey Map (revised 1912, published 1914) and is shown with its pend with some of the buildings still surviving to the rear.

Victor 'Spig' Spiganovicz established the Causewayside Lads' Institute in 1903 with temporary premises on Duncan Street to provide a boys club offering recreation, practical training and education for young males. Within six months, 50 boys had enrolled, and a committee was set up to provide a permanent building. The *Edinburgh Evening News* published an article in February 1905 advertising that the Institute was trying to buy a premises on Causewayside to convert the site into a Lads' Club building with a hall, gymnasium, reading refreshment and work rooms. They were seeking to raise £2150 and an anonymous donor had already donated £500. A design for the building was drafted by Spiganovicz's friend, James Linton Lawrence, and Spiganovicz is believed to have carried out the detailed work on the design. The project cost £1500 to build and opened in mid-1907.

An aerial photograph (NHRE Ref: 384946) from 1929 shows the Institute flanked by the 18th century buildings that predated it. Spiganovicz wrote a memoir called *"Mystery Man Again: reminiscences of a Tramp by a Tramp in the Scottish Lowlands"* and a photograph within it shows a close up of the newly built Lads Institute. The front elevation is depicted as largely unchanged from its current form, apart from alterations to the roofline. He describes that the building would *"enable the boys to become good and useful citizens worthy of the beautiful city in which they lived"*.

Spiganovicz was also integral in setting up the first Boy Scout movement in Scotland forming one of the first scout groups in the 4th (Midlothian) Troop with Lawrence in Duncan Street, near to the Lads' Institute. The two men were credited with owing much to the Scouting movement in Scotland.

The loss of many of the Spig's lads to the war effort during the First World War led to the Institute's closing and in 1919 it was taken over by the YMCA organisation, which had similar ambitions to the original use. Information from the owner (2025) states there was a fire in the roof in the 1950s after which the roof was replaced with the iron structure and included the large banks of rooflights. A newspaper reference to the building from 1972 states 27 Ratcliffe Terrace was for sale or let as offices. Similar advertisements have been published since then and in many cases noting the top floor was well lit as a drawing office.

Currently (2025) the building is vacant offices and the pend continues to give access to the separate commercial garage at the rear (No. 31 Causewayside).



3. Assessment of special architectural or historic interest

To be listed a building must be of 'special architectural or historic interest' as set out in the [Planning \(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas\) \(Scotland\) Act 1997](#). To decide if a building is of special interest for listing we assess its cultural significance using selection guidance which has two main headings – architectural interest and historic interest (see Designation Policy and Selection Guidance, 2019, Annex 2, pp. 11-13).

The selection guidance provides a framework within which judgement is exercised in reaching individual decisions. The special architectural or historic interest of a building can be demonstrated in one or more of the following ways.

3.1 Architectural interest

The architectural interest of a building may include its design, designer, interior, plan form, materials, regional traditions, and setting and the extent to which these characteristics survive. These factors are grouped under two headings:

3.1.1 Design

The former Lads' Institute principal façade is designed in a contemporary Arts and Crafts style, characterised in the proportions of the windows and gables, the curved detailing of the original central ground floor window, the elongated windows, and use of half-rendering and red brick. The gentle angle of the lower part of the slate roof and its deep overhanging bracketed eaves is also typical of the style. The design of the elevation, although proportioned to house communal recreation hall areas, retains a domestic character, typical of the Arts and Crafts movement, and would likely have been specifically designed to be welcoming to its young patrons.

The Arts and Crafts movement began in England with the theories of William Morris as a reaction to the increased industrialisation in 19th century society and embraced new ideas about the place of art and beauty in daily life. Architectural designs aspired to a more simplified informal style which broke with the more formal building and interior design that preceded it. The Arts and Crafts movement gained momentum in Scotland from the late 1880s, and architects such as Robert Lorimer, Frank Deas and A G Sydney Mitchell became well-known proponents of the style. The style was popular for domestic buildings but was also used widely in schools, churches and public buildings such as town halls up until the 1920s.

Although the Lads' Institute's design was a collaboration between Spiganovicz and Lawrence, rather than by experienced architects, it successfully uses elements and motifs inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement of the time.

The purpose-built plan form of its large communal rooms remains readable despite some later partitions. The use of rendered brick in the construction was likely to keep costs down, however, the design also incorporates flourishes of more detailed



elements in the exposed glazed brick to the ground floor and the carved stone window surrounds.

The interior retains high quality, early features which remain in situ and add to the authenticity of the building. It has a large open staircase which gives some grandeur to the design for a boys' social club. The YMCA may have carried out interior alterations such as the high-quality Art Deco bespoke glazed doorway with scalloped carved details as well as the Vitrolite bathroom which survives largely as it was first designed.

The input of Spiganovicz, the founder of the Lads' Institute, in the building's design is also of special interest. Victor James de Spiganovicz was born in Odessa in 1881, the son of Baron Spiganovicz, a Polish-Lithuania nobleman, and his wife, Lyudmilla Elizabeth Prout. Upon his father's death in 1892, his mother moved to Edinburgh with the family and Victor attended the Royal High School before training as an architect. He worked for the Edinburgh School Board architects Robert Wilson and John Alexander Carfrae. From 1908 he spent several months in America before starting his own practice Edinburgh and he was admitted to LRIBA in 1911 when his office was at 1 South Charlotte Street. The Dictionary of Scottish Architects records a small list of works, perhaps because he focussed more on philanthropic actions for youth after being exposed to poverty when working for the school board. A pamphlet by him entitled 'Modern Humanity' had been published by J Bain & Sons earlier that year and was described in *The Scotsman* as 'a descriptive essay which touches lightly, yet thoughtfully, on the characteristics of the various ages of man, and on the pleasures and riddles of life'. His autobiography was entitled '*Mystery man again - Reminiscences of a Tramp*' (1924) and in 1960 he was the subject of "This is Your Life" television programme.

James Linton Lawrence has a small entry on the Dictionary of Scottish Architects with no jobs listed although it does note he had offices local to the Lads' Institute on both Salisbury Place and South Clerk Street.

3.1.2 Setting

When built, 27-29 Ratcliffe Terrace was surrounded by 18th century houses and shops and was the tallest building within its neighbouring group of buildings. Its setting has been altered since the time it was built, and the earlier buildings have been replaced by a 1930s brick garage and a gap site. However, its distinctive Arts and Crafts principal elevation is very prominent within its immediate setting.

3.2 Historic interest

Historic interest is in such things as a building's age, rarity, social historical interest and associations with people or events that have had a significant impact on Scotland's cultural heritage. Historic interest is assessed under three headings:

3.2.1 Age and rarity



Lads' Institutes were set up as recreational and sports clubs in the early 20th century to cater specifically to younger boys who were not settling into the school system and differed from other reforming types of clubs that had previously been for working men. Only a few purpose-built premises for such organisations were ever built throughout Britain but notably, there were two established in Edinburgh (Fountainbridge Institute), and another was set up in an existing building (Pleasance Trust). Only a small number of Lads' Institutes are known to have existed across the rest of Britain, the most well-known was the Salford Lads' Club which is a purpose-built recreational and sports club for young men, opened in 1904 one of only two listed in England.

Other organisations of a similar purpose known in Scotland include working men, seamen or mechanics institutes, which were set up to provide accommodation, training and gainful employment for young working men. The Lads' Institute in Ratcliffe Terrace was founded for younger boys of school age who were not attending school and is a rare example of its specific building type.

3.2.2 Social historical interest

Social historical interest is the way a building contributes to our understanding of how people lived in the past, and how our social and economic history is shown in a building and/or in its setting.

The building has special social historical interest because it directly represents the move towards social reform in Scotland in the early 20th century. The sentiment and philanthropic basis of the organisation is complemented by the use of the Arts and Crafts style, which was also aligned with social reform ideals during this period.

3.2.3 Association with people or events of national importance

There is no association with a person or event of national importance, however Victor Spiganovicz was a well-known local figure in Edinburgh and had some national recognition during his lifetime.

4. Summary of assessment

The former Lads' Institute at 27-29 Ratcliffe Terrace Edinburgh meets the criteria of special architectural or historic interest for the following reasons:

- The building's good Arts and Crafts design is representative of the style and is little altered. The interior also retains some good design features from the early 20th century.
- The interest of the designer, Victor Spiganovicz, is of special interest as he was directly involved in the establishment of the Lads' Institute movement in Edinburgh.



- As a purpose-built Lads' Institute, it is a rare example of its building type. Only a very small number are known to have been built, most dating to the early 20th century.
- It has social historical interest for its association with the reforming aims of the institute which promoted the improvement of young boys.

5. Category of listing

Once a building is found to be of special architectural or historic interest, it is then classified under one of three categories (A, B or C) according to its relative importance. While the listing itself has legal weight and gives statutory protection, the categories have no legal status and are advisory. They affect how a building is managed in the planning system.

Category definitions are found at Annex 2 of Designation Policy and Selection Guidance (2019) <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/designation-policy>.

5.1 Level of importance

27-29 Ratcliffe Terrace's the level of importance is category C.

Buildings listed at category C are defined as 'buildings of special architectural or historic interest which are representative examples of a period, style or type.

Taking into account the level of architectural interest which is representative of Arts and Crafts design of the period, category C is considered to be the most appropriate level of listing.

6. Other Information

N/A

7. References

Trove.scot – Place Record UID: 384946 <https://www.trove.scot/place/384946>

Maps

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1905, published 1908) Edinburghshire III.12 25 inches to the mile. 2nd Revision Southampton: Ordnance Survey

Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1912, published 1914) Edinburghshire III.12 25 inches to the mile. 3rd Revision Southampton: Ordnance Survey



Ordnance Survey (surveyed 1947, published 1949) National Grid Maps NT2671NW
Southampton: Ordnance Survey

Online Sources

Dictionary of Scottish Architects, Victor Spiganovicz at [Architects | Dictionary Scottish Architects | Part of Historic Environment Scotland](#) [accessed 16/07/2025]

Threadinburgh *The Thread about the Causewayside Lads Institute and the wonderful life of Victor de Spiganovicz, self-described “Mystery man”* @ <https://threadinburgh.scot/2024/04/13/the-thread-about-the-causewayside-lads-institute-and-the-wandering-life-of-victor-de-spiganovicz-self-described-mystery-man/> [accessed 16/07/2025]

8. Indicative Map

A map of the proposed listed building is attached separately.