

Inverleith Conservation Area Draft Character Appraisal

Planning Committee
12 January 2006

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To present a draft of the Inverleith Conservation Area Character Appraisal, for Committee's consideration, before undertaking public consultation.

2 Summary

- 2.1 National Guidelines emphasise the importance of preparing Conservation Area Character Appraisals. The preparation of such an appraisal for Inverleith is part of this Council's programme to cover all its conservation areas, which is required to justify the introduction of Article 4 Directions.

3 Main report

- 3.1 The Committee on 6 November 1997 approved a report that outlined the process to be adopted for the preparation of character appraisals for Edinburgh's 38 conservation areas. This involved inviting local amenity associations, where willing, to contribute information on the character and appearance of their areas, which would form an important input to the character appraisals.
- 3.2 The protection of an area does not end with conservation area designation, rather designation should be seen as a commitment to positive action for the preservation or enhancement of character or appearance. "Users" of conservation areas, which include residents, property owners and developers also have a significant role in the preservation or enhancement of character or appearance. It is, therefore, important that both the authorities and other groups who have an interest in conservation areas are aware of those elements, which must be preserved or enhanced.

- 3.3 One way of getting this message across to professionals and the public alike is through the formulation of conservation area character appraisals. A character appraisal should define the special qualities and architectural and historic interest which warranted the conservation area designation. In particular, a character appraisal should determine the distinctive qualities of the conservation area as a whole, rather than focus only on the constituent parts. They provide the following benefits:
- used in conjunction with existing statutory planning policies, detailed guidance and site-specific development briefs, they can assist the ongoing management of conservation areas;
 - they can form the basis for programmes of enhancement; and
 - they can also provide a sound basis, defensible on appeal, for local plan policies and development control decisions.
- 3.4 National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG 18) stresses that local authorities should consider preparing character appraisals for all conservation areas within their area on a priority basis. The Scottish Executive have declined to approve any new Article 4 Direction Orders until such time as character appraisals for the relevant area have been prepared. This makes the preparation of character appraisals an imperative where planning controls require to be strengthened.
- 3.5 The preparation of the Inverleith Conservation Area Character Appraisal is part of the programme of work to establish a framework for the consideration of an Article 4 Direction and to coincide with the Local Plan programme.
- 3.6 The draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal will be the subject of public consultation within the local area, with local institutions and city-wide heritage based amenity groups.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 Any costs associated with the consultation exercise will be contained within the Department's Revenue Budget.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The draft Inverleith Conservation Area Character Appraisal is part of a programme of work to define the special qualities and architectural and historic interest that warranted the conservation area designation. Public consultation is appropriate before the draft is finalised.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the Inverleith Conservation Area Character Appraisal as a draft for consultation.

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Appendices	Appendix 1: Draft Inverleith Conservation Area Character Appraisal
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Wards affected	8 Craigleith 11 Trinity 17 Stockbridge 19 Broughton
Background Papers	None.

APPENDIX 1

INVERLEITH DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1 INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas

Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, describes conservation areas as "...areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". The Act makes provision for the designation of conservation areas as distinct from individual buildings, and planning authorities are required to determine which parts of their areas merit conservation area status

There are currently 38 conservation areas in Edinburgh, including city centre areas, Victorian suburbs and former villages. Each conservation area has its own unique character and appearance.

Character Appraisals

The protection of an area does not end with conservation area designation; rather designation demonstrates a commitment to positive action for the safeguarding and enhancement of character and appearance. The planning authority and the Scottish Executive are obliged to protect conservation areas from development that would adversely affect their special character. It is, therefore, important that both the authorities and other groups who have an interest in conservation areas and residents are aware of those elements that must be preserved or enhanced.

A Character Appraisal is considered the best method of defining the key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character of an area.

It is intended that Character Appraisals will guide the local planning authority in making planning decisions and, where opportunities arise, preparing enhancement proposals. The character appraisal will be a material consideration when considering applications for development within the conservation area and applications for significant new developments should be accompanied by a contextual analysis that demonstrates how the proposals take account of the essential character of the area as identified in this document.

NPPG 18: Planning and the Historic Environment states that Conservation Area Character Appraisals should be prepared when reconsidering existing conservation area designations, promoting further designations or formulating enhancement schemes. The NPPG

also specifies that Article 4 Direction Orders will not be confirmed unless a character appraisal is in place.

2 CONSERVATION AREA DETAILS

Designation

The Inverleith Conservation Area was originally designated in October 1977. The boundary was amended in March 1996 to exclude areas, which no longer contributed to the character of the conservation area. Article 4 Directions were approved in 1996. The conservation area is classified as 'outstanding'.

Location

The Inverleith Conservation Area is situated immediately to the north of the New Town Conservation Area, some 1.5 kilometers north of the City centre.

Boundaries

The Conservation Area is bounded by Ferry Road to the north, the western boundary of Fettes College, the eastern boundary of Warriston Cemetery and Comely Bank/Glenogle Road to the south. The boundary includes Fettes College, Inverleith Park, the Royal Botanic Gardens and Warriston Cemetery.

HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Inverleith is mentioned in 1128 in David I's charter founding Holyroodhouse, and associates the name with the place that was to become North Leith. However, the estate charters in 1315-21 place the centre of the medieval *Inverlethe* estate close to the site of the present Inverleith House.

The two farms, North and South Inverleith Mains, which are mentioned in records of 1642 and occupied much of the estate were reorganised into a single farm, Inverleith Mains, during 18th century farm improvements. The Inverleith estate was acquired by the Rocheid family in 1665, and the present Inverleith House was built in 1774 for James Rocheid.

Inverleith Row was laid out with sites for a row of villas along the edge of the Botanic Gardens. Building began in 1823, but development was inhibited at the south end by the nearby industries of Tanfield. The villas in the street represent some of the earliest suburban houses in Edinburgh. House-sites to the north of **Inverleith Place** were feued under the supervision of R. Rowand Anderson.

The **Royal Botanic Gardens** began as a Physic Garden on a small site near Holyrood Palace in 1670. By 1676 it occupied an area where the north-east corner of Waverley Station now stands and was known as the Town Garden. The Royal Botanic Garden received a Royal warrant as early as 1699. It has occupied a number of sites in the city, including a move in 1763 to Leith Walk in the grounds of what was the old Trinity Hospital. Constantly outgrowing its various locations, it finally moved to a new site on the east side of Inverleith House between 1823 and 1824. The move from Leith Walk was carried out by William McNab, supervised by the Professor of Botany Robert Graham, and involved the transplanting of some large specimen trees. In 1877 the government and the City bought Inverleith House and its policies from the Fettes Trust and added them to the Botanic Garden. The extension was opened in 1881.

South Inverleith Mains Farm to the west of the Botanic gardens was bought by the City from the Rocheid family in 1889. It was rapidly developed into **Inverleith Park** with the construction of paths, roadways and drainage, greenhouses, a pavilion, gymnasium, bowling greens, tennis courts, and golf courses.

The **Warriston** estate lay on the east side of the road from Canonmills to Trinity. A single gatepier from Warriston House remains on the east side of Inverleith Row, opposite the entrance to the Botanic Gardens. Warriston House was built in 1784 and demolished in 1966. The site of the estate was developed from the inter-war period.

Warriston Cemetery was founded in 1842 by the Edinburgh Cemetery Company, and was one of a number of commercial cemeteries laid out in the mid 19th century by David Cousin.

A legacy of £166,000 gifted by Sir William Fettes, merchant and underwriter, resulted in the establishment of **Fettes College** in 1870 to provide a school for needy children. The Scottish Baronial-French Gothic masterpiece was designed by David Bryce, the principal Victorian country house architect of Scotland, with sculptures by John Rhind.

The **Stockbridge Colonies** are a monument to the 19th century social housing movement, and one which is generally recognised in histories of working-class housing in Britain. In the mid-19th century, Scottish housing reformers sought an alternative to the traditional tenement and there was a deliberate movement to find a working-class housing pattern which broke with the tradition and gave every family a front door and its own garden ground. The Edinburgh Co-operative Building Company was set up in 1861 to promote owner-occupied artisan housing at a modest cost. Over a third of the original shareholders were stonemasons with many other trades represented. Glenogle Park was their first site and work started in 1861 to a design by the architect James Sutherland, a director of the company. By 1867, the five west

most terraces had been completed and the bulk of the remainder were built within the next five years. The streets are named after those who founded the Company, including geologist and writer, Hugh Miller (1802-56).

Tanfield Hall was erected in 1824 for the Oil Gas Company to manufacture gas from whale oil, and closed in 1835. Part of the structure was adapted as the Tanfield Hall. It was later incorporated in the development of the Standard Life Offices.

3 ANALYSIS AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

SPATIAL STRUCTURE

The Inverleith Conservation Area is layered with sports fields and grounds associated with a number of private schools located both within and without the area. These open spaces allied to the publicly owned Inverleith Park, the Royal Botanic Garden and Warriston Cemetery dominate the conservation area which contains the most open space of any conservation area in the City.

The conservation area lies on a south facing slope rising to a ridge formed by Ferry Road which presents the northern boundary of the area. The views back to the City skyline from numerous points within the area, as well as from Ferry Road itself, are spectacular due to the prevalence of significant areas of open space.

The principal feature of the urban fabric is its finger like development through the conservation area incorporating a wide diversity of styles and ages. The urban form outside the boundaries of the conservation area is denser and lacks the amount of open space inside the area.

The earliest developments within the conservation area occur in the southeast corner with the curved Georgian elegance of Warriston Crescent, following the Water of Leith, and terminating in Warriston Cemetery. The relocation of the Botanic Gardens to Inverleith in the 1820s stimulated development of Georgian villas along the eastern edge of the Botanic on Inverleith Row. The remainder of Inverleith Row is a mix of Victorian tenements and interwar and post war housing extending to the disused railway to the east, which is now a public cycleway and footpath. The area to the east of Inverleith Row is more densely developed. Eildon Street transforms from a Victorian tenemental form, into a terrace of Edwardian houses.

Inverleith Terrace, on the southern edge of the Botanic Garden, is a single sided street beginning with a short Georgian terrace continuing with substantial Victorian Houses overlooking the Botanic Gardens to the front and the Water of Leith to the rear. Mid Victorian Colonies

housing, forming the southern boundary of the conservation area, lie on the southern bank of the Water of Leith.

The western boundary from East Fettes Avenue to Crewe Road South, excluding Telford College, is occupied largely by Fettes College and its extensive grounds. Its spires add a distinctive feature to the city skyline, and provide the most prominent landmark feature in the conservation area. During the 1990s, some of their playing field provision for the College was developed for two equally sized residential developments, separated from each other by an access from the college to a large playing field on Ferry Road. The views from Ferry Road back to the city sky line were considered of such importance that the residential sites were excavated to allow an uninterrupted view across the schemes.

The northern boundary formed by Ferry Road is lined with extensive playing fields up to Arboretum Road. Fettes Rise and Kinnear Road, lying to the south of these playing fields display an eclectic mix of old and new development. These range from a vacant 1970s office block and a severe brick terrace of townhouses on Fettes Rise, to 1920s bungalows, Victorian houses, purpose built late Victorian boarding houses for Edinburgh Academy, and a modern block of flats.

The remainder of the conservation area is characterised by detached Victorian houses sitting in their own grounds. The conservation area is flanked to the south by the New Town Conservation Area incorporating Comely Bank to the south west running through the Raeburn estate and Stockbridge to Canonmills in the south east.

TOWNSCAPE

The street layout follows a loose grid pattern with the majority of the streets being very wide and this, with the prevalence of open space and garden ground to the houses, emphasises the spaciousness of the whole area. Trees are found in Inverleith Park, the Royal Botanic gardens and Warriston Cemetery, the remaining open space is devoted to various forms of recreation and therefore treeless.

Although the area has a diverse mix of styles and ages the predominant character is made up of large Victorian houses sitting in large gardens with Georgian villas and terraces occurring to the east of conservation area. These properties vary in height from three to three and half storeys and are constructed of stone with slated roofs.

The two modern residential schemes adjacent to Telford and Fettes Colleges are composed of flats and town houses and do not reflect the materials and massing found generally in the conservation area.

Essential Character: Spatial Structure and Townscape

- The conservation area is layered with playing fields, a public park and the Royal Botanic Gardens. This substantial amount of open space allows panoramic views across to the City skyline.
- The urban form largely comprises fingers through the area, with denser development at the margins.
- Fettes College dominates the skyline of the conservation area.
- The predominant character is one of large Victorian houses throughout and Georgian villas and terraces to the east of the area.
- The street layout follows a loose grid pattern with wide streets.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The conservation area contains a total of 91 Listed Buildings. The architectural character is dominated by rows of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraces which form boundaries to extensive blocks of public and private open space. The villa streets are complemented by the profusion of mature trees, extensive garden settings, stone boundary walls and spacious roads. The villas are in a considerable variety of architectural styles, unified by the use of local building materials.

The Baronial presence of **Fettes College** is outstanding within the conservation area in terms of its size and architectural distinction. Built in a mix of Scottish Baronial and French Gothic styles, with distinctive soaring spires and turrets, it consists of a three storey block with tall central tower and smaller flanking towers. The architectural composition forms a stunningly romantic symmetrical feature which dominates this part of the north west City skyline, with its massive central tower centred on Fettes Avenue.

The headmaster's house at the west end has crowstepped gables, an octagonal turret on the corner and tall chimneys. The chapel, at the cross-bar of the H-plan is decorated with flying buttresses and traceried gables. Between the chapel and the south range, corner octagonal turrets with spires point up towards the main tower. Architectural details include: gargoyles, elegant wrought-ironwork along the roofline, with the school motif (bumble-bees), elaborate scrollwork and fine carving.

The grounds were laid out by Archibald Campbell-Swinton and were enclosed with iron fences by David Bryce in 1874. David Bryce also designed the main south gate, the terraces, the east and west lodges and the three first boarding houses, Moredun (1869-70) to the east of the main gate, Carrington(1871-2) balancing it to the west, and Glencorse (1873) further to the east. All are in an anglicized baronial style with canted bays and bargeboarded gables.

Further ancillary buildings include:

- The War Memorial (1919) to the east of the main building by W. Birnie Rhind.
- Concert hall and plain brick swimming baths (both 1878) by John Bryce.
- Cricket pavilion (1906) with a red roof and Roman Doric verandah to the north by *W. L. Carruthers*.
- The red-roofed Gothic North Lodge and Malcolm House (both 1880) by R. Rowand Anderson.
- Kimmer-ghame (1928) to the south west was designed by A.F. Balfour Paul is in the architectural style of the original building.
- The dining hall (1967) by *William H. Kininmonth* with its simple glazing, deep lead fascia and battered slate base contrasts gracefully with the main building.

Inverleith Park is quartered by two paths with a memorial fountain (1900) in the form of a granite obelisk at their intersection. The serpentine path to the south leads to a pond and small formal garden, and the 18th century former South Inverleith Mains farmhouse. The gates to the park are of architectural merit: the North in the form of a pedimented arch and East with rusticated piers, both dating from 1891 and designed by Sydney Mitchell.

Inverleith House dominates the grounds from the highest central point of the **Royal Botanic Gardens**. The House is a severe mansion of three storeys and basement with a broad elliptical bow staircase and pedimented entrance porch with urns on the north courtyard side. The south and principal façade has a view across the lawns and up to the Old Town. The façade consists of five bays with a central doorpiece, and a dormer window flanked by tall chimneys.

Within the **Royal Botanic Gardens**, the New Palm House, of 1858 by Robert Matheson, has a rectangular planned base with full height arched windows between Doric pilasters, and a two-stage convex glass and iron support roof. It is 30 metres tall. To the east of the New Palm House is the octagonal Old Palm Stove, of 1834, with a glass wall

between stone mullions and a domed glass roof. Both these older buildings are joined to the mansard profiled New Glass House (1965-7), and on the raised walkway between them is Robert Adam's Linnaeus Monument (1778) in the form of an oval urn on a square pedestal. Ancillary buildings include: the Laboratories (1909), an octagonal classroom and museum building (1848-51), the Herbarium and Library (1960-64) and the former Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society Hall in a cottage style with low-pitched roofs, at the south east by the Rock Garden.

Warriston Cemetery has a fine collection of funerary monuments and mausoleums, and well laid out serpentine walks. However, the cemetery has been the subject of vandalism suffers from general neglect.

Warriston Crematorium, Warriston Road the original square plan, two storey building is the former East Warriston House dating from 1818. It was converted in 1928-29 by *Lorimer & Matthew* who completely remodelled the south side with tall arched windows and designed the south east cloister. The north west cloister is part of *Esme Gordon's* modern extensions of 1967.

The **Stockbridge Colonies** are a small development of eleven parallel terraces beside the wooded bank of the Water of Leith on the north side of Glenogle Road. All the terraces form blind alleys on the north side facing the Water of Leith, except the most easterly terrace, which has a footbridge with a rustic parapet crossing the river. The picturesque semi-rural setting by the Water of Leith and its walkway adds to the area's attractiveness. The overall scale of the layout and the detailed control of the design of the Colonies are outstanding. Each terrace consists of two storeys, one cottage on the ground floor and one above. The ground floor is entered from one side of the terrace, and the upper cottage by means of outside stairs on the opposite side. Each house has a garden plot in front. Among the individual details of architectural interest are the commemorative and trade symbol plaques on the mainly rockfaced gables to Glenogle Road.

The following churches contribute to the architectural character of the area:

- **Inverleith Parish Church, Ferry Road** is in a Gothic style by Hardy & Wight, and dates from 1881. The pinnacled NE tower adjoins the centrally buttressed north gable.
- **St James (Episcopal), Inverleith Row** in a Gothic style in red Corsehill stone by R. Rowand Anderson,
- **St Serfs, Ferry Road** at the corner of Clark Road dates from 1901 in a Decorated Gothic style with polygonal apse to the east.

- **St Stephen**, Comely Bank. Obliquely sited at the corner of East Fettes Avenue. Red sandstone with neo-Perpendicular detail by *J.N. Scott & A. Lorne*.
- The tall and compact **First Church Of Christ Scientist, Inverleith Terrace** is in a Scots Romanesque style by Ramsay R. Traquair. It dates from 1910-11, and is based on old St Giles at Elgin. There is a picturesquely composed service wing with a 'pencil' chimney to the south-east.

Essential Character: Architectural Character

- **High quality stone built architecture of restricted height, generous scale and fine proportions.**
- **The variety of architectural forms and styles that contribute to the overall character.**
- **The significant degree of unity resulting from the predominant use of traditional building materials: local sandstone for buildings and boundary walls and Scots slate for roofs.**

ACTIVITIES AND USES

Recreational open space and parkland uses predominate with a fringe of good quality residential uses. The general environment of most of the area is of high amenity and serenity. However, this is in contrast to Inverleith Row, the main through route, which is a place of activity in terms of social and commercial activities, and which carries northbound traffic from the city centre to the busy artery of Ferry Road.

Fettes College is one of the premier public schools in Scotland with a reputation for academic and sporting excellence. The Edinburgh Academy also has a prominent presence within the conservation area.

The conservation area contains some of the most attractive areas of open space in the City. The Royal Botanic Gardens are an important recreational area and Scotland's national botanic garden, providing a centre for research, education, and the conservation of plant life from across the world. A range of outdoor activities are available at Inverleith Park, and the other playing fields in the conservation area cater for various sporting activities.

Essential Character: Activities & Uses

- **The predominance of recreational open space and parkland uses within the area.**

- **The contrast between activity on the Inverleith Row and the general tranquillity in the other parts of the conservation area.**
- **The concentration of educational establishments in the area.**
- **The high quality residential uses.**

NATURAL HERITAGE

Landscape Character

The Conservation Area is characterised by a high proportion of open space providing an attractive green setting to the built environment and a high quality townscape. The scale of many open spaces is generous enough to accommodate trees of large proportions to form a landscape structure of a scale appropriate to the buildings.

Open Space

The open spaces in the area vary greatly in their character, function and ownership.

The many privately owned playing fields, although not publicly accessible, contribute significantly to the visual character of the area. Those along the northern boundary of the Conservation Area consist of flat expanses of grass with few trees, and provide panoramic views from Ferry Road south across to the Edinburgh skyline.(these grounds are variously owned by Telford College, Heriots at Goldenacre, and Edinburgh Academy at Arboretum Road.). The playing fields between Eildon Street and Warriston Crescent, although behind the façade of Inverleith Road, provide localised extensive views towards Arthur's Seat.

The Grange Club and Edinburgh Academy cricket grounds in Raeburn Place are not easily visible behind their high stone boundary, wall but provide an important break in the building line along the main road and form a visual link through the fine line of mature trees on their boundary to Inverleith Park to the north. The Fettes College grounds provide a well wooded setting to the listed school building and substantial grass playing fields to the north.

The most significant of the accessible open spaces are Inverleith Park, the Edinburgh Royal Botanic Gardens and Warriston Cemetery, each with a markedly different character.

Inverleith Park extends to 21.8 hectares of neatly maintained mostly flat open grass parkland with a strong framework of mature trees on its

perimeter and along its striking central and other avenues. Overall it is a well defined space with perimeter iron railings and grand gated entrances. The park accommodates a variety of uses and activities including sports pitches and club pavilions, bowling greens, allotment gardens, a play area, a model boat pond and also Council offices and depot. On its southern boundary sloping ground accommodates more ornamental shrub planting.

Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden has been on its current site since the early 1820s. The grounds are contained by walls or railings on all four boundaries and include part of the former policies of Inverleith House. The East side of the Gardens is level but ground rises steeply to the hill on which Inverleith House sits, from where there is a panoramic view of the Edinburgh skyline. The site includes extensive outdoor planting of mainly non-native species (although one section is devoted to native flora), glasshouses containing exotic species, an exhibition hall and bookshop. Its primary role is that of botanical and horticultural research, but the garden is also a major public amenity and has an important role in wider education.

The present day layout largely results from a reorganisation of the plant collection made in 1889 by the then Regius Keeper Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour, although successive improvements followed. A wealth of plant material brought back by collectors, such as Forrest Ludlow and Sheriff from Asian expeditions, helped to establish the Botanic Gardens as a major centre for taxonomic research.

A number of character areas were developed, including the Heath Garden, Rock Garden, Peat Garden, Woodland, Arboretum, Herbaceous Border and Demonstration Gardens. These various areas have plant collections from wide ranging origins and climatic regions including many specimens of rare plants and world famous plant collections such as the Dawson Chinese garden. Three substantial ponds of different character with streams and waterfalls leading to each, combined with wetland areas provide habitats for aquatic and marsh plants. Overall the Gardens have an estimated living plant collection of some 14,000 plant groups.

The Botanic Garden's listing on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes confirms its national historical, horticultural and architectural importance and outstanding significance.

The Gardens are open daily and attracts some 500,000 visitors a year.

Warriston Cemetery is bordered by the Water of Leith on one side and parts of the disused railway network on the other. The cemetery has an overwhelmingly wooded character with a diversity of tree species and is an important node in the wildlife network. The cemetery still functions as a memorial ground in its north western parts and while many graves are still visited and maintained, the remaining two thirds is

in a state of some neglect with no signs of positive management. The area is used extensively in association with the disused railway system as an area for play, walking, jogging and dog exercising. There is minimal management for most of the site other than improvement to the occasional grave, removal of diseased elms and management of invasive species.

Within the **Water of Leith Valley**, the river forms a long straight section from Arboretum Avenue to Tanfield flowing through a shallow valley with steep sides with a strip of informal parkland on its north, and Rocheid Path and the Stockbridge Colonies to the south. The river is initially fast flowing but becomes slower on the straight stretch. At Tanfield the former Standard Life office complex dominates both sides of the river. Two footbridges cross the river between Falshaw and Canonmills; the “rustic bridge” between Rocheid Path and the Colonies, and the newer bridge just upstream of the Standard Life building linking Rocheid Path to Canonmills. This section has a quiet calm atmosphere and sense of enclosure with restricted views from Rocheid Path to the New Town through the Colonies.

From Tanfield to St Marks Bridge the river bends north and then north east in a shallow valley, its right bank formed by the Warriston Road flood prevention wall. The left bank is defined by the rear of the gardens to Warriston Crescent and the edge of Warriston Cemetery, which are well lined with mature broadleaf and coniferous trees. The walkway route follows Warriston Crescent over the viaduct to link with the route through the mature woodland of Warriston Cemetery. The riverside route can be rejoined in St Marks Park at the Warriston Road entrance.

Views

The conservation area is characterised by panoramic views from various locations to the topographic and townscape features characterising Edinburgh, largely made possible due to topography, and its long straight streets.

This is exemplified by the views to the Edinburgh city ridge from Ferry Road across the expanses of playing fields, from Inverleith Park through the framework of its perimeter trees and from the high points of the Botanic Gardens southward. In addition the sports grounds at Eildon Street allow views across to Arthur’s Seat. Framed localised views northward along Fettes Avenue and west along the well treed Inverleith Place to the towers of Fettes College and south along Fettes Avenue to the rising tenemental structures of Stockbridge.

Access

The area is generally very permeable and legible thanks to a grid pattern of wide streets combined with open spaces allowing visual

connections and easily identifiable routes. In addition, access to the Water of Leith walkway and the cycleway routes on the disused railway network provides access to areas further afield.

Biodiversity

The different types and scales of spaces contribute in various degrees to the biodiversity and wildlife value of the area. Playing pitches by virtue of their main usage are areas of extensively closely mown grass, contributing more to the visual aspects of townscape than to botanical richness. However many have perimeter boundaries of mature trees that do contribute to wildlife habitat, and as open undeveloped spaces they provide important connections within the wildlife habitat networks.

Tree Preservation Orders

Given the dominance of open spaces in the area combined with the many large scale gardens, substantially sized trees are a major characteristic of the public realm with many streets being tree lined avenues. Tree Preservation Order designations apply to those in Warriston Cemetery and Eildon Terrace.

Urban Wildlife Sites

Several sites within the conservation area are designated Urban Wildlife Sites under the Edinburgh Nature Conservation Strategy. These consist of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Warriston Cemetery, and two wildlife corridors (the Water of Leith Valley and the disused railway network).

Within the **Royal Botanic Gardens** the most striking natural asset are vegetation and seedheads providing food and shelter for its bird population. Hawfinches visit regularly during winter as do redwings and fieldfare. Plentiful nectar plants attract many species of butterfly and other insects. Water features throughout the garden are used by breeding wildfowl such as mallard, moorhen and coot with occasional visits from others, most notably swans. There is also a large breeding population of frogs.

Bordered by the Water of Leith on one side and parts of the disused railway network on the other, **Warriston Cemetery** is an important node in the wildlife network. The main botanical value of the cemetery is its diversity of tree species. The boundary of the cemetery abutting the Water of Leith has some remnants of interesting aquatic vegetation, which may return in full if invasive species are controlled. Mammal records for the cemetery include foxes and badgers both no doubt accessing the area by way of the disused rail line. Bats have been spotted and a wide range of bird species make use of the extensive area of woodland. Common garden species abound and tawny owls and sparrowhawks are also present.

The value of the site is severely threatened by the spread of invasive species. Dense stands of giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam dominate large areas. Over mature, diseased or dangerous trees should be felled as a matter of good management and to encourage the development of an understorey and young trees while retaining the wooded character of the area.

Wildlife corridors in the conservation area include the Water of Leith Valley and the disused railway network both recognised for their nature conservation, amenity and recreational value. They link many other important sites allowing otherwise isolated populations to survive natural and other fluctuations and are of city wide as well as local importance.

A river habitat survey of the Water of Leith was undertaken in 2002 as baseline data for the preparation of the Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme. This survey provides details of the botanical and species interest of adjacent habitats. The survey shows that as well as woodland cover there are small pockets of botanical interest along the stretches of the river within the conservation area. There are signs of mammals and these are favourable stretches of the river for foraging bats, with potential roosts in trees and stone buildings and bridges. A significant problem along the river in this area is the invasive species Japanese Knotweed. Measures are in place for its eradication although a long term programme is required to keep it under control

The disused railway network is used extensively as a cycling and walking resource. Its main wildlife interest is in its function as wildlife corridor and many stretches have important wildlife value in their own right. Mature woodland found along some sections and scrub dominated by goat willow and birch grown up in others. These habitats provide important cover and nest sites for many species of birds while providing safe feeding areas for winter visitors. Mammals such as badgers, foxes and hedgehogs use the network extensively for both travelling between larger sites and for breeding. Development is the most serious threat to these sites with dumping of garden refuse and other household waste being a problem in some sections.

The roof garden of the former Standard Life building at Tanfield is a good example of how green roof technology can mitigate the effects of development in a sensitive area in terms of biodiversity, visual and Sustainable Urban Drainage System issues.

Essential Character: Natural Heritage

- **Mature landscape structure with large scale trees in gardens and open spaces.**
- **High proportion of open spaces to built environment**

- **Public open spaces with variety of facilities**
- **High nature conservation value with Urban Wildlife Site designations and wildlife corridors of especial importance.**
- **Area traversed by strategic pedestrian and cycle access routes**
- **Panoramic views to Edinburgh townscape and topographic features.**
- **High landscape quality overall with trees and woodland cover creating a setting for the built environment.**
- **High quality public amenities in terms of recreational resources, access, and visitor/tourist attraction.**
- **Quiet environment in Water of Leith Valley and disused railway network.**

4 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

The scale, design and materials of new developments should reinforce and protect those features that give the conservation its special character. Any development should take into consideration the spatial pattern, scale, proportions and design of traditional properties.

Any development, either within or outside the conservation area, should be restricted in height and scale in order to protect the key views of the conservation area. New development should protect the setting of individual buildings and the historic environment as a whole. Opportunities for introducing further trees and replacing trees that are lost to age should be considered throughout the area.

Traditional materials should be used in repair and new build. Modern substitutes generally fail to respect the character of the area. The stone boundary walls and railings are a key feature within the conservation area, and they should be repaired and reinstated where appropriate. Original architectural features should be preserved wherever possible.

The effect of through traffic and parking on residential streets is a significant issue for local residents and the quality of the historic environment.

The following enhancement opportunities have been identified:

- Enhancement of biodiversity and ecological value of urban open space for both wildlife and people; for example in allotments and on the margins of playing fields.
- The control of invasive species.
- Replacement of trees with those of appropriate scale
- Carry out of repair work to structures in graveyard.
- Control of sycamore regeneration and planting of more native species.
- Conservation and enhancement of character of the river valley.
- The protection of the river valley from development.

Boundary Changes

The more recently developed housing schemes to the north of Fettes College are not compatible with the general character of the conservation area. However, in order to retain the green area to the north of these developments within the conservation area, no boundary changes area proposed.

5 GENERAL INFORMATION

Statutory Policies

The Inverleith Conservation Area is contained within three local plans: The Central Edinburgh Local Plan (1997), the North West Edinburgh Local Plan (1998, alteration 2004) and the Draft West Edinburgh Local Plan (2001). Each includes the conservation area within a broad 'Housing and Compatible Uses' or 'Urban Area' policy allocation, in which the primary concern is to safeguard existing residential character and amenities. Consequently, effect on residential amenity will be the determining consideration for all development proposals, including changes of use.

The Central Edinburgh Local Plan also identifies a significant amount of the Inverleith Conservation Area within 'Open Spaces of Outstanding Landscape Quality and Townscape Significance', where no development is allowed. In addition, the Royal Botanical Gardens are designated as an 'Urban Wildlife Site', and is to be protected from potentially damaging development.

The Local Plans contain relevant policy advice on a range of matters. In relation to proposals within the conservation area, for example, development will only be allowed where all features that contribute to the special character and appearance of the area are retained. Development proposals in the conservation area are required to take into account the area's special interest and how its character and appearance may be preserved or enhanced.

There are a significant number of listed buildings within the Inverleith Conservation Area, and the Local Plans includes policies which seek to

ensure that proposals affecting listed buildings are considered for their effect on their character, including their setting. An important consideration is that alterations, extensions or changes of use should not diminish the architectural integrity of the buildings.

Supplementary Guidelines

The Council also produces supplementary planning guidance on a range of development control issues. These are contained within the Development Quality Handbook.

Implications of Conservation Area Status

Designation as a conservation area has the following implications:

- Permitted development rights under the General Development Order are restricted. Planning permission is, therefore, required for stonecleaning, external painting, roof alterations and the formation of hard surfaces. The area of extensions to dwelling houses which may be erected without consent is also restricted to 16m² and there are additional control over satellite dishes.
- Under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, the planning authority can seek approval of the Scottish Executive for Directions that restrict permitted development rights. The Directions effectively control the proliferation of relatively minor alterations to buildings in conservation areas that can cumulatively lead to erosion of character and appearance. Development is not precluded, but such alterations will require planning permission and special attention will be paid to the potential effect of proposals. The Inverleith Conservation Area is currently covered by the full range of Article 4 Directions:

Class 1	enlargement, improvement or other alteration to a dwelling house
Class 3	provision or alteration of buildings or enclosures within the curtilage of a dwelling house
Class 6	installation, alteration or replacement of a satellite dish
Class 7	construction or alteration of gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure
Class 30/33	local authority development
Class 38	water undertakings
Class 39	development by public gas supplier
Class 40	development by electricity statutory undertaker

- Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when planning controls are being exercised. Most applications for planning permission for alterations will, therefore, be advertised for public comment and any views

expressed must be taken into account when making a decision on the application.

- Buildings which are not statutorily listed can normally be demolished without approval under the Planning Regulations. Within conservation areas the demolition of unlisted buildings requires conservation area consent.
- Alterations to windows are controlled in terms of the Council's policy.
- Trees within conservation areas area covered by the Town and Country (Scotland) Act 1972, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Act applies to the uprooting, felling or lopping of a tree having a diameter exceeding 75mm at a point 1.5m above ground level, and concerns the lopping of trees as much as removal. The planning authority must be given six weeks notice of the intention to uproot, fell or lop trees. Failure to give notice render the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a TPO.
- Grants may be available towards the repair or restoration of historic building The Council runs a conservation grant scheme. Such grants are normally dependent on comprehensive repair and restoration of original features and priority is given to tenemental housing and prominent buildings.

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