
VICTORIA PARK CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1. INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas

- 1.1 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
- 1.2 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

- 1.3 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 Ministers are obliged to protect conservation areas from development, which 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, which must be preserved or enhanced.
- 1.4 A character appraisal is seen as the best method of defining the key elements, which contribute to the special historic and architectural character of an area.
- 1.5 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.**

- 1.6 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.

Victoria Park Conservation Area

- 1.7 The Victoria Park Conservation Area was originally designated on 16 March 1998.
- 1.8 Victoria Park lies approximately three miles north of the centre of Edinburgh and one mile south of the Firth of Forth.
- 1.9 The Conservation Area is based around Victoria Park with Victoria Park House and the Dudleys residential area opposite.
- 1.10 The Conservation Area is bounded on the west by Craighall Road, to the south by Ferry Road, on the north by the footpath on the disused railway line behind Dudley Crescent and to the east by Dudley Avenue, including Victoria Park and Victoria Park House, Trinity Academy, the Dudleys and Summerside Place.
- 1.11 The Conservation Area falls within the ward boundaries of Newhaven and Harbour.

2. HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Origins

- 2.1 Victoria Park was created in the name of the monarch in 1919 and passed to the Council in 1920. The park traces its history through a number of confusing name changes. It was originally known as Bonnington Park and was part of an estate that included Bonnington Park House. The house was built in 1789 and remains today but its name changed to Victoria Park House, when the park became Victoria Park.

Development

- 2.2 The lands of Bonnington, which include the Victoria Park Conservation Area, dominated the north-east area of the City, as shown on Kirkwood's plan of 1759. The area at this time was rural with only a few houses alongside the two routes to Leith and Newhaven. The area remained predominately farmland into the early 19th century, contrasting with the more concentrated urban settlements at Leith and Newhaven.
- 2.3 However, an ambitious building programme was proposed for the lands that surrounded Bonnington Park House, known as Summerside and Allanfield. The proposed layout as shown on Kirkwood's map of 1817 was started, but it was never completed. Between 1827 and 1851, Anchor Field Burn, flowing through the lands of Bonnington was culverted. This culverting allowed land within the Bonnington area to be more extensively developed. By the mid-19 century, there was a number of grand Georgian and Victorian villas set in extensive gardens. The increasing number of properties tended to be focussed around the park and along the main roads, now Ferry Road and Newhaven Road.
- 2.4 Comparisons between Johnston's plan of Edinburgh and Leith in 1851 and the Ordnance Survey map of 1896 show a significant amount of building in this period. By the end of the 19th Century, the area south of Newhaven and west of Leith was becoming more urban, with numerous residential developments. This increase in building was intrinsically linked with the development of the railways and trams. The Caledonian Railway Company built a station at Craighall Road in 1878, from which a train service ran to Leith and Edinburgh. A tramline was also in operation going from Newhaven to Leith. The excellent transport links would have made housing in the area very attractive to the growing middle class of merchants and professionals of the time, and would have satisfied their demands by providing a more secluded environment in which to raise their families.
- 2.5 In 1881, a well-known local businessman, Henry Ward, acquired the land to the east of Newhaven Road. He ventured into building as a result of concerns about the difficulty of buying a self-contained house for a price less than £500. His first houses built in 1888, formed part of Dudley Avenue. These were followed with twenty villas at Summerside Place. Dudley Avenue was completed next and, to meet an increasing demand for this type of house was followed by houses in Dudley Gardens. Dudley Crescent was completed by 1894. Ward also provided for the recreational needs of the residents by including a bowling green and tennis courts in the development.

The area became known locally as 'the Dudleys'. It is thought that the streets were named after the Earl of Dudley after Ward discovered that he bore the same family name as himself.

- 2.6 The houses were remarkably advanced for their time. Ward was acutely aware of the importance and necessity of effective drainage and cleanliness. The houses boasted of having a "complete and effective system of sanitation" and had hot and cold water throughout with internal bathrooms. Not only did the houses incorporate advanced fittings, including heated towel rails, but also had a stylish external appearance.
- 2.7 The Dudleys area continued to be popular during the 20th Century due to the good public transport links available into the centre of Edinburgh. Trams were still in use until the early 1960s and the Dudleys was served by the tramway running along Newhaven Road. Trains also served the area, operating on the South Leith Caledonian link, which opened in 1903. From an ordnance survey map of 1908, the railway dominated Victoria Park. The line ran north west under Ferry Road into the grounds of the Park before splitting west towards the Newhaven junction and east behind Bonnington Park House under Newhaven Road towards Leith. The line was singled in 1917 and finally closed in the 1960s.
- 2.8 Victoria Park was dominated by the presence of the railway but in 1983, Edinburgh District Council embarked on an ambitious environmental improvement programme. The railway line that bisected the park was removed and landscaped. This work necessitated the redesign of the park's footpath network and the planting of trees. More recently the derelict tennis courts were converted into all-weather sports courts, and also new children's play areas with safe soft surfaces have been erected.
- 2.9 There are elements of change within the area. With the decline in the level of public transport, the private car has become to dominate. New development has been introduced around the park and some of the Dudley houses have lost aspects of their architectural detailing. However, Victoria Park remains the focus of the conservation area and as an attractive public park, it plays an important role in the daily lives of the community. The original Georgian and Victorian villas still have a presence around the park and the Dudleys remain a fine example of Victorian housing. In essence, the area retains the charms of a Victorian suburb, secluded from the rest of the City.

3. ANALYSIS AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

Overview

- 3.1 The Conservation Area centres upon Victoria Park, which is surrounded by a mixture of housing and institutional uses and is dominated by the buildings of Trinity Academy. Facing onto the park are a mixture of Georgian and Victorian villas, many of architectural interest and often set in large and well landscaped grounds. Housing in the Dudleys is characterised by the uniformity of design – two storey terraces decorated with stone urns and cast iron cresting, much of which has survived to the present day.

Topography and Setting

- 3.2 The Conservation area is situated on the southern edge of a localised ridge that rises between the Water of Leith valley to the south of the area, and the Firth of Forth coastline to the north. As a result of this topography, the Conservation Area rises in level from the south to the north along the former railway line.
- 3.3 The area would have originally been part of the gently rolling lowland terrain along the coast of the Firth of Forth.

Spatial Structure

- 3.4 The main accesses are still Ferry Road which linked the ports of Leith and Queensferry on the east-west axis and Newhaven Road which linked Bonnington Mills with the harbour at Newhaven on the north – south axis. The various railway cuttings around the area, though now converted to walkways, still act as physical boundaries to three sides of the conservation area separating it from surrounding development.
- 3.5 The spatial structure of the area is largely dominated by the park, the historic routes, the gradual increase in villas at the edge of the park along these routes and the subsequent Victorian suburban development of the Dudleys. There are two distinct areas in terms of spatial structure. The open park is largely surrounded by grand scale villas that are set in varying plot sizes with spacious garden grounds. This is in contrast with the density and uniformity of the Dudleys, which are laid out in long terraces.

Spatial Structure – Essential Character

- **The original estate house , lodge and tree lined avenue are still evident though the setting has been compromised**
- **Disused railway cuttings form physical boundaries around the wider Victoria Park area**
- **The scale of the park, enhanced by the removal of railway lines, is a considerable and prominent feature and forms half of the Conservation Area**
- **Large villas set in generous garden grounds are located around three sides of the park**
- **Victorian suburban development of narrow streets with terraced villas comprise a more compact and intimate form of residential development to make up the other half of the area**
- **Close proximity accentuates the contrast between open parkland and compact development**

Townscape

- 3.6 The majority of the main accesses into the conservation area are over bridges. This act of crossing over accentuates a sense of transition and arrival. On Ferry Road, the 'gateway' from the west at the end of the bridge, is emphasised by the start of tenements that contrast in age, height and building to the more recent and generously spaced development preceding it. There are further characteristics that highlight the importance of these 'marker' tenements. Between them at either end of this section of Ferry Road and as it passes the park are villas which are in the conservation area, so the sense of these tenements forming gateways is also perceived from the inside the Conservation Area. They also form subsidiary gateways from which there are glimpsed views through into the Dudleys.
- 3.7 Despite a larger set back to the north side, Ferry Road still appears constricted as it passes through the conservation area, as do parts of Newhaven Road. At both ends these tenements come right to the heel of the pavement before the building heights on both sides drop down again with the building line then dropping back to give increasingly generous front gardens.

- 3.8 This air of restraint, or lack of ostentation, is a characteristic that permeates the whole area. There are now few distinctive landmarks or focal points other than the Park and those that do exist are mainly later and Victorian. They include the towers, which flank the former railway line to Waverley, on the Victoria Park Hotel and its neighbour on the other side of the line, the extensive villa, Agra Lodge. The tower of the Hotel does form a focal point within the park as it is framed by the avenue of trees down the main entrance path and terminates the vista.
- 3.9 This lack of built landmarks may also be due to the development of the areas as a residential suburb with much of its property being domestic, private and smaller scale. Much of the housing facing onto Ferry Road after the four storey tenements is three storey tenements or two and a half storey terraced villas, in the majority of cases with housing on the ground floor. For the most part, the façade design is simple and repetitive but this forms a backdrop against which more subtle variations stand out. This includes the Georgian bow fronted corner into Summerside Place, the magnificent and generous curved Dutch gables of 202 Ferry Road flanking one side of the entrance into the Park and the almost Victorian gothic paired semi-detached villas which follow.
- 3.10 Around the park are Georgian and Victorian detached or semi-detached two storey villas set in reasonably generous gardens with stone boundary walls. These are in distinct and contrasting architectural styles.
- 3.11 The Dudleys are two storey and exclusively terraced villas, the repeating bay windows in their narrow frontages setting up a rippling rhythm down streets. This is echoed in the consistent eaves detailing of “fancy iron crests and urn or ball finials weaving in and out over the bay windows”. Different degrees of weathering, repair, stone cleaning or indeed stone colour introduce some variety in to this pattern but somehow the consistency is reinforced by the almost complete absence of pitched roofs which makes it reminiscent of an English town.
- 3.12 Many of the external railings have been lost but, and as also has been mentioned, the Dudleys still retain almost in their entirety their cast ironwork ‘brattishing’ at eaves level. This is a distinguishing feature that is not matched in extent elsewhere in the city. Together with the ball and urn features at the party wall division, which have not always fared so well, they are reminiscent of roof level balustrades or even garden walls in large country houses. Possibly the intention was to unify and group the plain elevational designs of the individual houses into a grander but picturesque whole.

- 3.13 The park retains its statue of King Edward VII, surrounded by some attractive art nouveau railings, and a small ornate drinking fountain. The bowling greens look immaculate but some of the railings and edge treatments around the park need repair or replacement. The considerable scale of the park in which it is almost impossible to see one side from the other quickly leads to a realisation that the bustle of Ferry Road has been forgotten.
- 3.14 Despite the more prevalent suburban house forms around the park, the original estate house is partially visible through the trees. Although it has been altered, the house retains its grandeur with its gateway entrance marked by a small lodge house and tree lined avenue leading to the house itself. With the park remaining in front, the original country estate is still discernible.
- 3.15 In general, the area combines with some fine examples of Georgian and Victorian architecture to give an air of distinction to the mainly residential nature of the conservation area. The semi-detached and terraced villas in Summerside and the Dudleys, whilst of more intimate size and settings, achieve a subtle, more domestic charm and human scale. The generous, colourful and mature plants in private gardens, the number of trees around the park and the cottage set along the line of the old burn rather than the street all create an atmosphere of rural retreat. Only the longer range and often panoramic views, from the park, down the longer streets and the old railway line, to Leith, Calton Hill and the city centre skyline remind one of the area's true location.

Townscape – Essential Character

- **A ridge location is accentuated by most of the access roads crossing bridges**
- **A sense of arrival is created by gateway tenements and contrasts in the urban form**
- **There are now few built landmarks other than towers or turrets to larger Victorian villas**
- **The repetitive design of narrow frontage widths, bay windows and eaves details set up undulating rhythms down streets in the Dudleys**
- **The continuity and entirety of cast iron 'brattishing' eaves detailing with stone ball and urn features in the Dudleys as a unique characteristic**

- **Away from the main road the occasional view to Calton Hill and the city centre skyline are the only reminders that the area is part of a city**

Architectural Character

Buildings

- 3.16 The majority of the buildings located within the Victoria Park Conservation Area, are Georgian or Victorian constructed in stone with slate roofs.
- 3.17 The Conservation Area can be split into three areas with regard to the buildings and materials;
- Houses around the Park
 - The Dudleys
 - Main Public Buildings

Houses around the Park

- 3.18 Given the rural origins of the area, some of the earliest buildings in the area were farmhouses and workers accommodation. The house at 176 Newhaven Road, dates from 1815 and was originally Old Newhaven Farmhouse. It is set diagonally towards the street facing south west because the farmhouse originally sat on the banks of the culverted Anchor Field Burn. It later became known as Northfield Cottage and is two storey, 5-bay symmetrical built in cream rubble sandstone with a rubble boundary wall.
- 3.19 Before the more intensive period of building in mid-19th Century, the area had many grand houses set in extensive gardens built for the successful traders and merchants of Leith. One such property is 219 Ferry Road known as Taap Hall, which is Category B listed. It is named after the Dutch sea captain who built it in 1790. Its straightforward design consists of a symmetrical and 7 bay wide sandstone house of four storeys. Now closely built up too on both sides at first glance it gives the impression of a tenement but it must have been very imposing in it's original setting. The elevation facing Ferry Road is formal and plain with the front elevation to the 'rear'.
- 3.20 The Conservation Area includes housing that dates back to the early 19th century, some of which were built as part of the ambitious scheme proposed for the area in 1830, long before the construction of the Dudleys started in 1888.

- 3.21 At the corner of Summerside Place and Ferry Road, there is a classical three storey and basement corner tenement, with bowed corner, dating from 1825 which is category B listed. It was built using grey ashlar sandstone with tripartite windows to first and second floors.
- 3.22 The house at 148 Newhaven Road dates from 1840 and is a two storey, 3-bay symmetrical rectangular-plan plain classical house. It has squared and snecked yellow rubble sandstone with polished surroundings to openings and droved long and short rubble quoins. It retains the Georgian 12-pane timber sash and case windows and has a grey slate roof.
- 3.23 The villa at 184 Newhaven Road, known as Ramsay House, is category B listed, along with its mirror at 186, and dates from 1831. It is a two storey, 3-bay symmetrical neo-Creek set back from the road. The house at 186 Newhaven Road is a mirror image of 184, and this creates an imposing feature opposite Trinity Academy. The properties are constructed using polished ashlar to the façade with architraved openings, advanced central bay and recessed ashlar quoins. The entrance to the houses have a grand entrance feature, stone steps up to a central doorcase and fluted Ionic columns to the left and right. The windows are 4-pane timber sash and case with decorative cast iron window guards to the first floor windows.
- 3.24 The Victorian period featured the building of several grand villas in the area. At 200 & 202 Ferry Road there is a symmetrical pair of three storey, 3-bay classical houses set back from street within gardens dating from 1860 which are category B listed. They were built with polished cream ashlar sandstone on the main elevation with squared and snecked rubble to the gable and rear elevations. The houses have round-arched stair windows on both elevations and curvilinear gables which sweep down to first floor at rear, with grey slate roofs and 8-pane sash and case windows. The houses are located adjacent to the former entrance to Victoria Park House.
- 3.25 Opposite Victoria Park on Craighall Road sits a large free-style villa, which dates from 1878 and is category B listed. The villa combines Gothic and Renaissance features and is two storey, with a 3-bay front. It features an elaborate open porch in re-entrant angle with Peterhead granite columns, and has extensive gardens.

The Dudleys

- 3.26 The Dudleys housing is of a uniform design on two storeys with front and rear gardens, built in a continuous terraced layout, though some of the houses in Summerside Place are semi-detached. All have stone wall forming the boundaries along with either railings or hedges. The first properties on Dudley Avenue were built using Craigleith stone, with different sandstone used later. The houses have projecting stone bay windows extending over the two storeys. There are instances of turret slate roofs with ornate cast iron thistle finials on the top of the turrets. However, all the houses feature striking ornamental cresting or brattishing on the top edge of the roof in different styles. The designs are similar in appearance to the artisan craft work produced by William Morris. Many of the properties retain their original one over one-pane windows, with a smaller top pane.
- 3.27 Dudleys originally had cast iron railings on the boundary wall and cast iron gates. The patterns of these cast iron railings were very ornate and four different styles originally existed within the area. Three of these patterns can still be found within the area but only isolated sections remain due to their removal during the Second World War. The cast iron gates also had different patterns and many do still exist today. Another feature of the houses are the stone urns and ball finials set on chimney like plinths present on the roofs of the houses. The loss of the majority of the railings gave the opportunity to replace fencing with hedging. This hedging softens the urban townscape of the Dudleys and this greening is now an important feature.

Main Public Buildings

- 3.28 The institutional buildings located within the Conservation Area are of a large scale and they dominate the northern boundary of Victoria Park Conservation Area.
- 3.29 The house that was built within Bonnington Park, today known as Victoria Park House, is Category C (S) listed. The classical style, two storey, 3-bay symmetrical central block was constructed, along with Victoria Park Lodge in 1789 but extended and made a-symmetrical in the late 19th century. The principal elevation is polished sandstone with raised margins and rusticated long and short ashlar quoins to ground floor. The lodge is single storey, in a classical lodge style, 3-bay, symmetrical square-plan. The house is presently used as a Children's centre and it still remains a key building, both historically and architecturally, within its surroundings.

- 3.30 Originally the main entry to the house from Ferry Road was via a tree-lined avenue, which today remains discernible along the west side of Newhaven Road. The 1855 Ordnance Survey map shows a quartered formal garden to the west of the house.
- 3.31 Trinity Academy is Category B listed and was designed by George Craig. The three storey, 15-bay symmetrical school was constructed using rubble finished squared and snecked red sandstone with contrasting polished sandstone dressing. Begun in 1891, Craighall Road School was opened in 1893. It is a Renaissance style school with Venetian detailing and has a charming sandstone statue of Youth holding the Torch of Learning.

Materials

- 3.32 The predominant use of local cream and yellow sandstone ashlar for the buildings and walls, and natural slate for roofs contributes to a significant degree of architectural unity with the Victoria Park Conservation Area, despite the considerable range of building styles.
- 3.33 The majority of the boundary walls are stone often with cast-iron railing, although many have been removed. The original windows are single-glazed timber sash and case and the pattern depends upon the period of the building.
- 3.34 The street surfaces within the conservation area are all modern.

Activities and Uses

- 3.35 The Victoria Park Conservation Area is predominately residential, characterised by the variety of different housing styles located around the public park in the middle. The area has a relatively quiet situation, but is still served by public transport. The area is busy with traffic, Ferry Road in particular, as it is a major thoroughfare for the City, linking Leith and the east of Edinburgh with routes out of the City. There are some commercial properties, generally on the ground floor, on Ferry Road.
- 3.36 The Institutional uses namely Trinity Academy, Trinity Primary School and Victoria Park Children's Centre gives the area a busy feel on a daily basis. The public park attracts the pupils from the schools and the children's play area and all-weather pitches are regularly used. The park is popular with dog walkers, joggers and cyclists, especially as access can be gained via the park onto the walkways/ cycleways of the old railway lines. The park is also a junction for a number of sign-posted city walks. The Conservation Area has three separate bowling clubs, which provide key recreational facilities.

Landscape

Victoria Park

- 3.37 Victoria Park is a traditional urban park characterised by mature trees and areas of grass, with recreational facilities including a bowling green and children's play area. It is important as part of the green network through the city both for recreation, setting and natural heritage/ biodiversity of the City.
- 3.38 The park today has a number of hard pathways, with trees and shrubs – sycamore, ash, chestnut, poplar, cherry, rowan, birch, oak, fir, elder, potentilla, flowering current, roses and an avenue of whitebeam – making attractive features.
- 3.39 The Park provides a mature landscape setting to the surrounding area with its dominant tree coverage. Many of the trees will be over 100 years old and will be associated with the layout and development of the original use for the area as a park/ estate for the landowner's house. This scale of trees is achieved because many of these trees are native species such as lime and oak. These trees tend to achieve greater stature than more ornamental species. This treescape is visible at the end of many of the vistas from the surrounding area that forms part of the Conservation Area.
- 3.40 The City of Edinburgh Council's Recreation Department currently manages Victoria Park. There are problems with vandalism, which has particularly affected new tree planting. A Management plan exists for the Park, which includes ongoing maintenance requirements and long term management proposals.

Residential areas

- 3.41 The landscape of the surrounding residential areas is related to the domestic scale. Newhaven and Craighall Roads are lined with garden hedges and only occasionally there are large specimen trees. The scale of the houses allows for more generous front gardens that can accommodate larger trees. As a result these trees are very important part of the urban fabric and provide a softening of the streetscape. The trees also create accents along with other feature buildings as one looks along the street. The existence of large mature trees and garden landscaping also provides an integration of the buildings in the streetscape. Loss of these trees and garden vegetation would be detrimental to the character of the area.

- 3.42 Off the main roads the streets are of a smaller domestic scale. Landscaping was not originally part of these streets, with a preference for railings as boundary treatments. Landscaping would have been confined to the more formal layout of garden plants and beds instead. This boundary have been altered in more recent times and the introduction of hedgerows, generally privet, have softened the image of the streetscape and provides people who desire it greater privacy to their property as a result. There however is a lack of consistency to boundaries as a result, which does not complement the formality of the buildings.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

- 3.43 The Victoria Park Conservation Area has many qualities, which are important to protect, conserve and enhance. It is crucial to protect what is already there, to manage new changes appropriately and to ensure that any new development in the area is sympathetic in terms of design, scale and setting.

Boundary Changes

- 3.44 The Conservation Area boundaries should be reviewed. In particular, there may be scope for including the old railway line/ cycleway on the northern boundary, between Victoria Park and Newhaven Conservation Area, as the railway was important in terms of the development of the area.
- 3.45 A number of 'gateways' into the conservation area have been identified including the bridges. It may be appropriate to consider extending the boundaries to include them.
- 3.46 There are a substantial number of buildings of architectural quality around the boundary of the conservation area. *In particular, Craighall Terrace and Craighall Gardens have a clear relationship with the distinct Victoria Park area. It is suggested that these streets are included within the conservation area.*
- 3.47 *The former railway station including the bridge is category C (s) listed and given the importance of the railway to the development of the area; it should be also brought into the conservation area.*

Alterations

- 3.48 *Many of the houses in the Dudleys have suffered from inappropriate repairs including cement rendering of defective stonework, painting of house façades, removing of embellishments and decorative metal work, stone ball and urn removal, painting of house façades, removal of original timber sash and casement windows, removal or altering of outer storm doors and inner glazed doors and replacing original cylinder glass.*
- 3.49 *It is recognised that the stone used to build the Dudleys is inconsistent in its character and has significantly eroded on certain properties. It is important that the stone work is repaired in the most appropriate manner that preserves and enhances the character of the stone work. The method of repair will depend upon the level of erosion and structural concerns.*
- 3.50 *Features such as original windows, doors, ironwork, the stone urns and balls all make a significant contribution to the historic and architectural character of the individual properties and the conservation area as a whole. The loss of these features can have a cumulative impact on the conservation area that is detrimental to its appearance. It is important that these traditional features are retained or restored to ensure that the visual unity and character of the conservation area is preserved and enhanced.*

Conservation Grants

- 3.51 *The loss of architectural detailing and unsuitable repairs has been identified as undermining the character of the conservation area. To encourage residents to re-instate original features and undertake appropriate forms of repair, grant assistance should be made available. There is an existing budget for conservation area enhancement and a proportion of this could be allocated to a small grants scheme within the conservation area.*

Article 4 Directions

- 3.52 *There are instances where alterations have eroded the character of individual properties and the broader area. Any additional controls on public and private development would help to prevent erosion of character through minor alterations and inappropriate development.*

New Development

- 3.53 Any new development within the Conservation Area needs to be sympathetic, by respecting and interpreting the townscape in a sensitive way. There is limited new development within the conservation area, predominantly the modern school building. Development around the edge of the area has not always taken cognisance of its impact on the character of the Conservation Area. Redevelopment opportunities in the conservation area appear few, but any development, either within or outside the conservation area, should be restricted in height and scale in order to protect its setting and the key views out of and into the conservation area. New design must respect the existing spatial pattern, massing and traditional materials.

Victoria Park

- 3.54 The park is generally well used and is an important recreational facility that should be protected. However, there instances of vandalism and there is a need to consider the management of the park. A review of the Management Plan in the context of the Character Appraisal should be considered and a revised Plan developed that would reflect the findings of the Appraisal. Consideration should also be given to implementation of any enhancement works that are identified.

Children's Centre Garden

- 3.55 *There is an original par terre garden at the rear of the Children's Centre, formerly Victoria Park House. This is currently overgrown and in a state of disorder. Ideally, the garden should be restored and re-established for its historical interest and relationship to the listed building.*

Trees

- 3.56 *Trees are an integral part of the character of the conservation area, not just within Victoria Park, but within the mature gardens of the villas around the park. It is important that these are maintained and replaced where necessary.*

Railway Bridges

- 3.57 The former railway bridges are an important feature and reminder of the past, they highlight one of the fundamental reasons for the area developing as it did.

The bridges could be repainted in the colours of the former Caledonian Railway Company, and this done in conjunction with the proposed external refurbishment of the former railway station on Craighall Road. Such action could enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area.

Signage

- 3.58 The Conservation Area has no signage, which brings it to the attention of the residents, users or visitors to the area. Victoria Park could be the location of an information board showing a map of the Conservation Area and items of interest.

4. GENERAL INFORMATION

Statutory Policies relating to Victoria Park.

- 4.1 *The North East Edinburgh Local Plan contains policy advice on a range of matters relating to the preservation and conservation of the character and appearance of the Victoria park Conservation Area.*
- 4.2 The Local Plan identifies Victoria Park as lying wholly within a “Housing and Compatible Uses” land use designation. Within the residential area, the Council seeks to protect the high level of amenity enjoyed by the neighbourhood. Consequently, impact on residential amenity is a determining consideration for all development proposals, including changes of use.
- 4.3 The Local Plan exercises special control over new development in the garden grounds of villas and other areas of traditional and largely uniform suburban quality in order to protect the character and amenity of these areas.
- 4.4 The Plan encourages the development of facilities, which enhance the provision of local community facilities and services. Within the area, major office, industrial or other commercial development will not normally be allowed.
- 4.5 Victoria Park is designated as an area of Open Space, of which there is a presumption of retaining. There are no TPOs within the area given that the majority of the trees are within the Council-owned park.

- 4.6 *A number of the buildings are listed. In dealing with proposals for the alteration or development of listed buildings, the retention and restoration of architectural and historic character will be the overriding consideration. Consent will not be granted for demolition. Alterations or development in the surrounding area will not be permitted if likely to affect adversely the character of such buildings.*

Supplementary Guidelines

- 4.7 The Council also produces supplementary planning guidance on a range of development control issues. These are contained within the Development Quality Handbook.
- 4.8 *The Memorandum of Guidance on listed buildings and conservation area (Scottish Office Development Department Circular No.13/1998) provides guidance for the consideration of conservation and listed building matters.*

Implications of Conservation Area Status

- 4.9 Designation as a conservation area has the following implications:
- Permitted development rights under the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992* 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 restricted 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 Ministers* for Article 4 Directions that restrict permitted development rights. These 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. Part of the purpose of this conservation area character appraisal is to have Article 4 Directions approved which will restrict the following classes of development in the Victoria Park Conservation Area:

- 1 enlargement, improvement or other alteration of a dwelling house
- 3 provision or alteration of buildings or enclosures within the curtilage of a dwelling house
- 6 installation, alteration or replacement of satellite antennae
- 7 construction or alteration of gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure
- 30/33 development by local authorities
- 38 water undertakings
- 39 development by gas suppliers
- 40 development by electricity undertakers and
- 67 development by telecommunications code system operators

- 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 Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. Within Conservation Areas the demolition of unlisted buildings requires conservation area consent.
- Alterations to windows and doors are controlled in terms of the Council's policy.
- Trees within conservation areas are covered 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 buildings. 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 listed buildings.

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