



DEAN CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

*THE DEAN CONSERVATION AREA
CHARACTER APPRAISAL WAS APPROVED BY THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
ON 5 FEBRUARY 2004*

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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, other groups which have an interest in conservation areas, and residents are aware of those elements that must be preserved or enhanced.

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

Dean Conservation Area

The Dean Conservation Area was originally designated on 20th February 1975 and extended on 17th July 1977. Since the adoption of the Central Edinburgh Local Plan in May 1997, the Conservation Area has been extended to its current limits which include the graveyard adjoining Dean Parish Church, the area of Ravelston Park, and St. George's School and its open space.

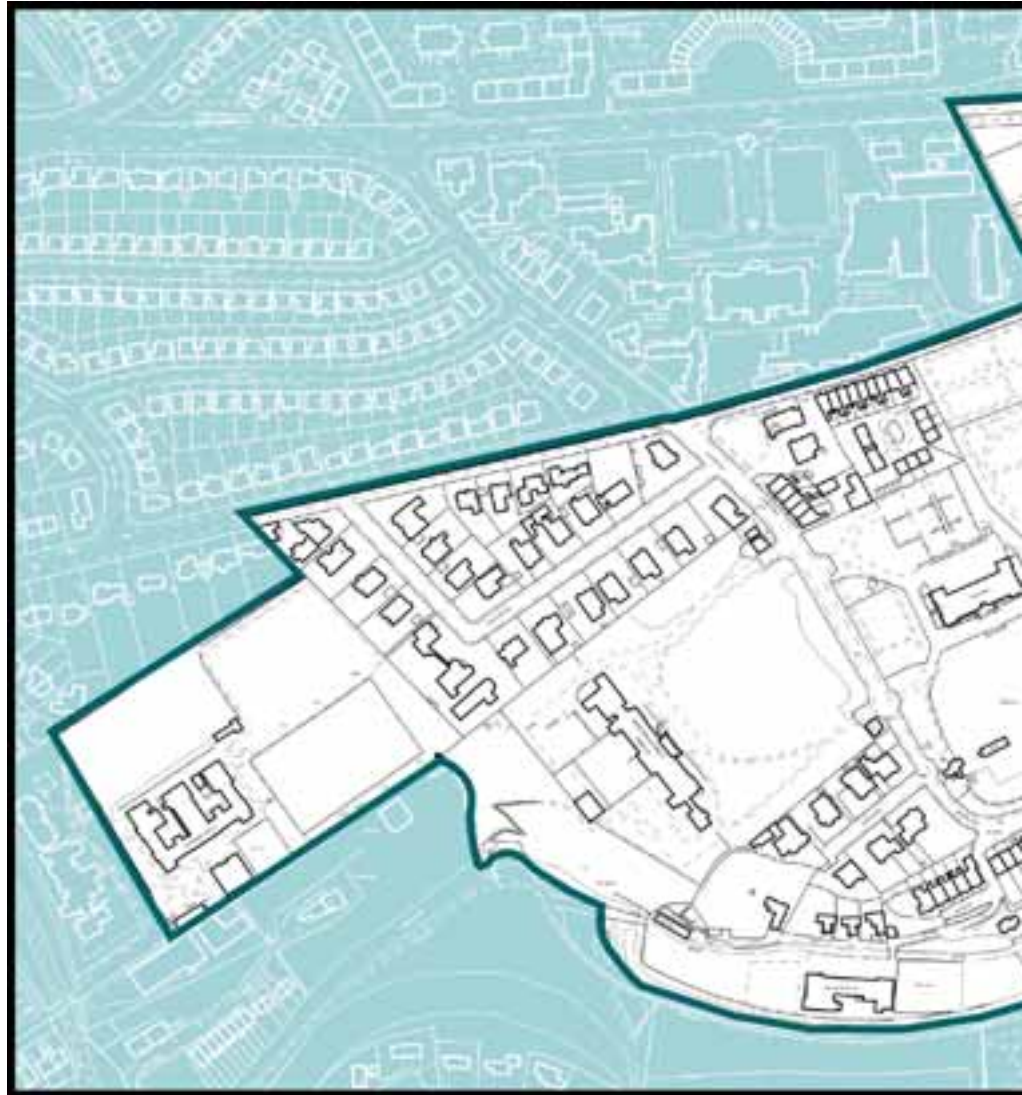
The Conservation Area is half a mile (0.8 km) to the north-west of the city centre and lies to the west of the New Town Conservation Area. It is located in the steep sided wooded valley of the Water of Leith, immediately to the west of the Dean Bridge. On the plateau above the valley are the large institutional buildings, which are now the Art Galleries, and the area of housing between the cemetery and St. George's School.

The Conservation Area extends from the Dean bridge to the west boundary of St George's School. The boundary to the north follows Ravelston Terrace and Ravelston Dykes and a small part of Queensferry Road between Stewarts Melville College and Dean Path. To the south, the boundary follows Belford Road to Belford Bridge, the western boundary of the Gallery of Modern Art and the south boundary of St. George's School.

The Dean Conservation Area forms part of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site which includes all of the conservation area apart from Ravelston Park, St. George's School and the green valley behind the Gallery of Modern Art. The Edinburgh World Heritage Trust plays a significant role within the World Heritage Site. The Trust have prepared a management plan, an essential part of which will be the inclusion of the Character Appraisals for the conservation areas within the World Heritage Site.

The population of the Dean Conservation Area is approximately 1100.

Dean Conservation Area boundary



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HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT



1836



1849



1855

Dean Village, one of Edinburgh's most ancient and picturesque villages, lies in the deep river valley of the Water of Leith beneath the tall arches of the Dean Bridge. It was originally the largest of Edinburgh's old milling settlements. The present Dean Village was once known as Water of Leith Village, whereas the Village of Dean was the name given to a separate, smaller community, on the north side of the valley, near the gates to the present Dean Cemetery. Early habitation in the area was encouraged by the presence of a ford across the river and the suitability of riverside land for water-powered mills. Early spellings of the name are Dene and Denne, meaning a narrow valley. King David I's 12th century Charter for the Foundation of Holyrood Abbey mentions 'One of my mills of Dene'. The Village was for long associated with the Incorporation of Baxters (bakers), who by the 17th century had 11 mills in the area. The Baxters' Tolbooth, their official meeting place, dates from the 17th century and stands on Bell's Brae.

By the 18th century there were three main 'caulds' or dams holding back the river water allowing it to be diverted into artificial channels or 'lades' leading to the mills which they powered. The highest dam served Bell's Mills, taking water from just north of the present Donaldson's College and directing it into the lade which still runs alongside the lower part of Belford Place. The next dam, just above the present Dean Village, diverted water into a lade that ran along Damside. The 'Great Cauld', just below West Mill, diverted water into a lade which served a number of mills as far as Canonmills over a mile away. The caulds are still visible today and have a considerable influence on the character of the river and the setting of Dean Village and its surrounding areas.

The prosperity and expansion of the first half of the 19th century resulted in the expansion of the Water of Leith Village and Dean Village. New industries were also developed in the area, including the Sunbury Distillery and Dean Tannery.

In the centre of the village is an 18th-century single-arched stone bridge that once carried the old coaching route from Edinburgh to Queensferry. The West Mill, built in 1806 on the north bank of the river, is the only mill building still in existence. The road on the south bank of the river, called Miller Row, was originally lined with mills and other mainly industrial buildings. When Marr's Mill disappeared in the late 19th century, and Lindsay's Mill and a number of cottages in the 1930s, the close-built character of this bank was lost.

Telford's Dean Bridge across the deep ravine of the Water of Leith, completed in 1832, was built to carry the new turnpike road to Queensferry and to attract residents to Sir John Learmonth's proposed residential development immediately across the valley. Prior to this much of the traffic in the Queensferry direction dropped down Bell's Brae into the gorge and crossed the Water of Leith on the narrow, single-arched bridge. This removed most of the through traffic and had a significant effect on the environment of Dean Village. The 17th century Dean House to the north-west of Dean Village was demolished in the 1840s to make way for Dean Cemetery.

Belford Bridge was built by the engineers Blyth and Cunningham in 1885-7 to carry Belford Road, part of an old road from Edinburgh to Queensferry, over the Water of Leith at the site of an old crossing at Bell's Mills.



Bell's Mill Bridge



Water of Leith Village



Mills c.1806



Dean Bridge c.1905



Bell's Brae

The milling uses that underpinned the community's original existence fell into steady decline during the later 19th century as steam driven industry gradually took over from water power and the giant flour mills in Leith were developed. Despite this, the process of redevelopment and renewal continued throughout the century with the building of a village school, Drumsheugh Baths and various churches and residential buildings including Well Court, Dean Path Buildings and Hawthorn Buildings. Industry was kept alive by the Tannery which did not close until the 1970s.

The gradual decline continued during the early part of the 20th century, but accelerated after the Second World War when many sub-standard properties were demolished and the residential population dispersed. This policy led to the increasing dereliction of the remaining property and further decline of the community resulting in the closure of local shops. The process of halting this decline was started in the late 1960s by the renovation or rebuilding of tenements in Dean Path by the Council. After 1970, those substantial old buildings that remained were gradually converted into flats and new development commenced on the north facing slopes of the valley. The Water of Leith Walkway was also constructed in the 1980s providing access to the river upstream of the village. Together these initiatives have resulted in the establishment of the area as a popular residential neighbourhood that also supports various modest professional office activities.



Aerial view of Dean Village c.1971



c. 1954

ANALYSIS AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

Spatial Structure



Context and Views



Dean Path /
Ravelston Terrace

The Conservation Area has a distinct and complex character that makes it clearly identifiable within the context of Edinburgh. This character derives from both the history of the area and the topographical conditions. The area has interspersed development both in the valley and on the high ground, with high and low density. For example, a converted mill, mews and large detached villas. The street pattern is irregular, controlled by two routes across the river, one at Belford Bridge, the other at Bell's Brae/Dean Path. Ravelston Terrace (continued by Ravelston Dykes) and Belford Road link these two routes while other streets provide local access. Lanes, footpaths, footbridges and flights of steps allow pedestrians to circulate more freely.

The core of the building stock derives from the late 18th and early 19th century. Dean Village's relative isolation lends a very distinctive character to the Conservation Area. It is the most accessible of all of Edinburgh's villages, located only a short walk from the West End. In Dean Village the buildings are mostly between three and five stories high and disposed in a picturesque manner on various levels with a distinctive roofscape. Sunbury is characterised by a series of mews buildings.



From Belford Bridge over Sunbury Mews



From Dean Gallery to Gallery of Modern Art

Moving uphill towards the plateau, there is the beginning of villa development and then the two art galleries set in extensive grounds.

View west from the Dean Bridge



Views from Dean Path



Views

Dean Village is overlooked on the south by the rear facades of Drumsheugh Gardens and Rothesay Terrace and by Belford Road. It is also in the forefront of views from the Dean Bridge. From these external view-points Dean Village derives interest from its landscape setting between steep banks of freely growing forest trees and from its contrast, in terms of building styles, materials and colours, with the New Town areas on either side of the Valley. The picturesque informality of Dean Village, the varied wall finishes and brighter roofing tiles all contrast with the classic regularity of the New Town and its more muted colours of buff and slate grey. Because of its topographical situation the roofscape of Dean Village is of added importance when viewed externally.

The main views out of Dean Village are from the old Dean Bridge to the east towards Dean Bridge and the church at its north end, and to the west up the Water of Leith. Other focal points outside the village are Belford Church and the towers of the Dean Gallery. The towering rear facades of Drumsheugh Gardens and Rothesay Terrace add to the strong sense of enclosure.

The high walls and trees surrounding the gallery buildings give physical protection and also restrict views into the grounds. Some of the best views are from the plateau to prominent buildings or landmark features. From the Gallery of Modern Art there are fine views to Stewart's Melville College, and from the Dean Gallery to Belford Church tower (on the boundary of the Conservation Area at Douglas Gardens) in the foreground and St Mary's Cathedral. From the eastern part of Belford Road there are views through gaps in the buildings across the Water of Leith to Well Court and its clock tower, and to the former village school. From Dean Bridge, there are views of the Castle, Corstorphine Hill and Fife.

The higher ground of the Conservation Area is located on the edge of the city centre ridgeline where land falls away to the north towards the coast. Long distance views from Inverleith and Trinity towards the city centre pick up feature buildings and trees in the Conservation Area as part of the skyline of the city.



View south from the Dean Gallery

Essential Character: Spatial Structure

- *The area is characterised by interspersed development both in the valley of the Water of Leith and on the surrounding high ground.*
- *The organic ‘village’ structure within Dean Village contrasts with the large institutions in their own settings on the higher ground to the west of the Conservation Area.*
- *Apart from the main bridge connections at high level the area is linked by lanes, footpaths, footbridges and flights of steps.*
- *Despite being a short walk from Princes Street the Water of Leith valley has a picturesque, tranquil and rural atmosphere that is emphasised by the heavily wooded slopes that give seclusion.*
- *Magnificent views are afforded across the City from the high plateau above the valley. There are significant glimpsed views between buildings and woodland as the valley is descended.*
- *The informality of views down into the valley is emphasised by the significant features of roofs, bright colours and roof tiles. These features contrast with the classical formality of the New Town that lies above and contains the Conservation Area.*
- *Feature buildings and tree cover within the Conservation Area form an important part of the City skyline in views from the north, set against the distant backdrop of the Pentland Hills.*

Townscape



Topography and Setting



Water of Leith at "the Cauldron"

The Dean Conservation Area is particularly associated with the Water of Leith and Dean Village. It is set in a steep river gorge with lush vegetation and numerous trees. This creates a sense of enclosure and isolation to the settlements by the riverside. The ground rises sharply both to the north and south. The area to the north, which also forms part of the Conservation Area is a plateau with quite extensive formal green areas contained within the grounds of the Gallery of Modern Art, the Dean Gallery and St. George's School.

The area to the south contains many fine Victorian town houses overlooking the valley and the boundary is demarcated by a high retaining wall on Belford Road.

Dean Gallery Gallery of Modern Art



To the east and west, the Water of Leith valley is not as steep as it is within the Conservation Area. The grand institutional buildings command the plateau.

The Conservation Area is generally surrounded by 3 or 4 storey terraced houses and villas along with 2 large institutional buildings (Stewart’s Melville College and Donaldson’s College). About 40% of the Conservation Area boundary is characterised by a long narrow strip of green valley with dense vegetation and terraced gardens. This, along with the dramatic change in ground level sets the area apart and isolates it from adjoining areas particularly to the south and north east.



View from Belford Bridge

Layout

Dean Village is contained within the valley in a bend of the river. The south side of the village is built on the valley side of the river and has a stepped/tiered appearance. The layout of the village varies significantly from area to area and the street pattern is irregular. Buildings abut the pavement and apart from some small backyards, there are few private gardens.



Sunbury Mews

In Sunbury, there are there are rows of distinctive mews, parts of which form a courtyard behind Belford Road. Modern town houses and flats have replaced earlier buildings.

Belford Place and Belford Park are also contained within a bend in the river with the land rising gently from the river valley. The pattern of development is later, with terraced houses and Victorian villas. The modest terraced houses contrast sharply with the villas set in substantial gardens.



Belford Place



Dean Gallery



Gallery of Modern Art

The grand scale of the two Art Galleries is emphasised by their double entrances and the associated gatehouses. The Dean Gallery sits in an elevated position, taking best advantage of its view point. The Gallery of Modern Art faces the Dean Gallery, allowing the open green space at the front to connect with the design and layout of the green space associated with the Dean Gallery. Herbaceous planting frames the frontage of the Dean Gallery, whilst that of the Gallery of Modern Art is more open with its recently executed sculptured landform around an artificial lake. The deep tree belt, on the boundary of the Modern Art Gallery site adjacent to Belford Road, strengthening the open parkland element.

Dean Cemetery is effectively a continuation of the open amenity space of the Dean Gallery. Several ornamental stone features from the demolished Dean House have been built into the retaining wall above the river. The cemetery has a formal layout with focal points at regular intervals where the path splits to encircle a central feature and many fine trees which enhance the space.



Dean Cemetery

Ravelston Park reflects a more suburban style and regular layout pattern with its villas set along an 'L' shape road. Behind Ravelston Park (to the west) is St. George's School (dating from the 1930s). The school and its grounds reflect the layout of the earlier institutional buildings in the area but on a less elaborate scale. The north boundary of the playing fields has medium size ornate trees and high hedging which reinforces the Conservation Area boundary.

Approaches

There are two road entrances to Dean Village, one at Bell's Brae on the south-east and the other by Dean Path on the north-west. Both approaches slope diagonally down the contours into the village. Kirkbrae House, at the southern end of Dean Bridge, is a prominent feature on the Bell's Brae gateway to Dean Village. The form of this narrow street changes significantly in terms of gradient, building size and type as it winds down to the river and the village centre.



Ravelston Park

The Dean Path approach is framed by a church on the east corner and a lodge house and church on the west. The west side of the street is characterised by a high stone wall with two elaborate recessed entrances and the cemetery lodge house. This road, with its high sweeping stone wall on both sides, rounds the corner gradually, before descending into the village and crossing the river.



Bell's Brae

Belford Road originates at the same fork in the road as Bell's Brae. It runs along the southern boundary of the Conservation Area, where Rothesay Terrace looms high above the large expanse of retaining wall. This street is quite distinctive forming a natural boundary to the Conservation Area. There is a mixed array of buildings on this street e.g. Drumsheugh Baths, tenements, modern residential flats and two large office blocks. Sunbury is accessed from this road before it reaches Belford Bridge where the road climbs uphill before turning sharply to the north. Belford Bridge is a gateway to a more ordered, formal and lower density pattern of development. The nature and character of the area changes on both sides of the road with its stone walls and very large former educational buildings set in extensive grounds.

Whinmill Brae



The street pattern consists of lanes and narrow streets in Dean Village and Sunbury, whilst the rest of the area consists of residential streets accessed from the main feeder road, Belford Road. Pedestrians can circulate freely by way of lanes, paths, footbridges and flights of steps. The surrounding topography, trees and natural vegetation have the effect of physically isolating large parts of the Conservation Area from surrounding areas.

From Belford Road to village



Many of the roadways in Dean Village, Sunbury and Bells Mills are wholly or partly paved with setts, which provide a distinctive character. Convening Court is paved with stone slabs, as are parts of the footpaths in Dean Path and Bell's Brae. There are whin chips on one side of Dean Path. Elsewhere concrete slabs with substantial whin kerbs are the main street surface materials. Sunbury Place has good modern brick paving on both carriage-ways and footpaths. Beyond Belford Bridge, there are tarmac roads and concrete footpaths. The central courtyard in Well Court is finished with concrete.



Sunbury

There are Victorian style lamps in Well Court, a number of original Victorian lamps in Belford Mews, and light fittings on metal posts in the new part of Hawthornbank Lane and in Sunbury Place. Elsewhere, lighting standards are mainly in concrete with low-pressure sodium lamps.

Well Court



Low rubble stone walls are prevalent throughout the village and in Belford Road, especially where there are changes of level. The cemetery and Galleries have elaborate railings and gates.

There are wooden benches near the stone bridge in Dean Village, in the yard/playground adjacent to Dean Path Buildings and in an area off Miller Row where there is a feature formed from three mill-stones on the remains of Lindsay's Mill. A phone box provides a note of colour beside West Mill in Dean Village.

Essential Character: Townscape

- *The steep river gorge with lush vegetation and trees, creates a sense of enclosure and isolation, which contrasts with the more open and larger scale development on the surrounding higher ground.*
- *The Conservation Area is generally surrounded by 3 to 4 storey terraced houses along with 2 large schools and 2 art galleries.*
- *Mews and mill buildings give a distinctive character to the area.*
- *The old road (Bell's Brae and Dean Path) through the village is framed by significant buildings.*
- *Many of the roadways within Dean Village are wholly, or partly, setted.*
- *The distinct village character of the streetscape within Dean Village.*

From Dean Bridge

Architectural Character

The architectural character of the Conservation Area derives from its heritage of high quality buildings and its distinctive topography. There are many historic, prominent and significant buildings which are a vital part of the overall character of the area. The range, quality and interest of these reflect its long history and the early development of Dean Village as a milling centre. Careful restoration of the older buildings has helped to maintain the distinctive character.

Many of the buildings have been constructed at significantly differing dates, using a variety of materials and architectural styles, and no single building typifies the area as a whole. The character of the area is less dependent on architectural consistency than on its quiet secluded site within the Water of Leith valley, and on numerous details from its skyline down to the iron railings and stone setts.

*Dean Path*

The roofscape in Dean Village, which is often viewed from above, also makes an important contribution to the architectural character of the Conservation Area. The result is architecturally and visually attractive, and enhanced by the natural

contours of the ground, which, in places, obstruct a full view of a particular building, but compensate with a glimpse of another. The limited range of building materials, mainly local stone and slate, also produces a conformity which is one of the most important factors in the visual unity of the area.

The elegant segmental arches of Dean Bridge carry Queensferry Road 32m (106 feet) above the steep valley of the Water of Leith, with the prominent and idiosyncratic Kirkbrae House at its southern end. In 1892, ornamental additions were made to this old 17th century inn to convert it into a Baronial style house. The new part of the house is tucked in behind the old inn and towers above the Water of Leith. The house acts as an architectural gateway to the steep descent into the gorge and Dean Village, and from the river valley it rises five storeys above the precipice.



Kirkbrae House

Beside the Dean Bridge, Bell's Brae descends steeply into Dean Village. There is much evidence of the Village's history as a milling community and the occupation by the 'Baxters' (bakers) of Edinburgh. Number 6 Bell's Brae dates from 1881 and was built as stables bent to the curve of a very narrow site. It was converted into an office by Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall & Partners for their own use in 1972. At the foot of the brae is a four-storey range of buildings dating from 1675, known as Baxters' Tolbooth, built as a granary; it is inscribed: 'God bless the Baxters (bakers) of Edinburgh who built this house'. Number 17 (Bell's Brae House) is an early 18th-century L-plan dwelling with a stair projection in the angle, restored and partly altered in 1948 by Basil Spence.



Bell's Brae

The 18th-century Water of Leith Bridge, at the centre of the Village, is rubble built with a single span. Across it, on the north side of the river, is West Mill which was built in 1805, and is considered the best surviving burgh grain mill in Scotland. It has four floors and an attic storey, and is solid and plainly constructed with a roundel carving of a wheatsheaf. In 1972, new floors were inserted for conversion of the building to flats. The symmetrically fronted Gothic inspired former Dean Board School forms a prominent feature on the north side of the river. Dating from 1874-5, it was converted into residential flats in 1985. Damside leads to the site of the former Tannery, demolished in 1976 and now replaced by harled flats and linked villas.



Water of Leith as it leaves conservation area



Well Court was built in 1883-5 and forms a quadrangle of small flats with a detached social hall (now used as offices) around a central courtyard. The development was a philanthropic venture by John R. Findlay, the then proprietor of 'The Scotsman' newspaper who also wanted to improve the view from the rear of his house in Rothesay Terrace. The design by Sidney Mitchell reflects the interest in traditional Scottish vernacular architecture at that period. The building is constructed in sandstone with red sandstone dressings and a red tile roof.



The small astragalled windows, crowstep gables, turrets and flamboyant roofscape are derived from Scottish Renaissance forms which make Well Court the most picturesque building in Dean Village. The five-storey clock tower of the former community hall with its elaborate lead roof, gunloops, and corbelled battlements is an important local landmark. Patrick Geddes included Dean Village in the Survey of Edinburgh as an example of the positive results philanthropic initiatives can achieve.

Hawthorn Buildings



A footbridge provides access to the south bank of the river. Hawthorn Buildings by Dunn & Findlay are conspicuous along the riverside and add visual interest with yellow harling and a half-timbered upper floor under the eaves. They were restored by Philip Cocker & Partners in the late 1970s. Numbers 10-12 Hawthornbank Lane



are simple early 19th century cottages to the front with two more storeys below and a more notable elevation to the river at the back. Bell's Brae House is an early 18th century L-plan building which was restored by Basil Spence in 1946-8.

Dean Cemetery



Dean Path Buildings immediately to the north of Well Court is in the same general style as Well Court, but with a slated roof. Dean Path, which climbs the valley following the ancient coach route, retains several restored late 18th-century houses. Dean Path returns to Queensferry Road at the Dean Cemetery which was laid out by David Cousin in 1845 and extended later. Sculptured details from Old Dean House were built into the south retaining wall of the cemetery. It contains many fine monuments and has good wrought-iron railings and gates.



Belford Road runs west-wards from the top of Bell's Brae to Belford Bridge. Steps and footpaths between buildings provide access to the riverside from Belford Road. Drumsheugh Toll by George Washington Browne is in a Tudor style and dates from 1891. Its base course, which is stamped with a Gothic capital 'H' (for Charles Martin Hardie, the original owner), the leaded glass and decorative iron-work all contribute to its architectural character.

Nearby are the Drumsheugh Baths, designed by John J Burnet in 1882, in a Moorish style. The building presents a squat profile to Belford Road, but incorporates three separate floors on the north side facing the Water of Leith. The arcaded frontage with cast iron screens is deeply shadowed under low-pitch stone-bracketed wide eaves.

Belford Road



Looking east along Belford Road



The few traditional tenement blocks in the Conservation Area are situated westwards on Belford Road. There is a large group of modern flats at Nos 48 and 49, finished in white harl and orange render. The height of the modern corner block at Belford Road/Sunbury emphasises its location.

Sunbury is now a neighbourhood of mews buildings lying on flat ground between the Water of Leith and Belford Road. It takes its name from Sunbury House and the associated distillery that once stood on this site. Sunbury is a 'haugh' or 'land in a curve formed by a river', and is first mentioned in 1761 when William Loch built his house here.

Sunbury Street



Sunbury Street is paved with whin setts and starts with a distinctive round-turreted building and leads down past a row of mid 18th century mews houses to Whytock & Reid's Sunbury Works, a three-storey cabinet works and showroom built in brick and dating from 1886. The adjoining neo-Jacobean Belford Mews, a row of red sandstone terraced cottages with mansard roofs and pedimented dormers, was built as workers' housing in the late 19th century.

Belford Mews

Belford Road continues with buff brick flats and houses at Sunbury Place dating from the 1980s. Belford Bridge, with crenellations along the parapet, spans the river in one large stone arch between pilaster buttresses which carry the coats of arms of Edinburgh and Scotland set into panels.

Belford Bridge



Bell's Mills House



Bell's Mills was a water-powered mill on the Water of Leith, which was still powered by water until the 1970s, when it was destroyed by an explosion. Only the classically designed rubble-walled granary of 1807 and the late 18th century miller's house survived. The site was redeveloped for a hotel in 1978 incorporating the granary which sits at the foot of a slope beside the river bank. Bell's Mills House is an attractive villa dating from circa 1780.

Ravelston Park



Belford Place is the first small enclave of houses after leaving the West End. Belford Park and Ravelston Park are late Victorian stone villa areas. Ravelston Place is a short terrace of elegant houses with bay windows. The villa, Edgehill, occupies a large corner site. Back Dean, off Ravelston Terrace, is a small courtyard development of buff brick houses and flats with mansard roofs.

Ravelston Place



The western part of the Conservation Area contains three substantial school buildings, two now converted to nationally important art galleries, set in parkland:

- St. George's School occupies an eleven acre wooded campus on the westerly extreme of the Conservation Area. The building is Neo-Georgian and dates from 1911-14. The boundary treatment of the playing fields particularly those on the north form a distinctive edge with a manicured hedge in between trees set at a uniform distance from each other.
- John Watson's School was built as a school 'for the maintenance and education of destitute children' and opened in 1828. The architect was William Burn who designed this Greek Doric building, in a semi-rural setting. The building was converted to the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art in 1981-4.

To the rear of the gallery is a rubble tower which is the remains of a windmill. Vaulted-tower mills in Scotland all have circular towers with vaulted chambers running out from the base. The vault gave access to the mill when the sails were turning, and served as a granary.

- The Dean Gallery stands in wooded grounds on the rise to the north of Belford Bridge. It was designed by the architect Thomas Hamilton in 1833 for the Orphan Hospital Trustees, as their new building, on land that once was part of the Dean estate. Its long distinctive facade is focussed on a pedimented centrepiece consisting of a four-columned Tuscan giant portico surmounted by a Baroque roofscape with a scrolled clock flanked by grouped chimney stacks. In 1999, the building was opened as a permanent home for the works of the Leith-born sculptor, Eduardo Paolozzi, and for other exhibitions of modern art. The conversion was by Terry Farrell and the building is administered by the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art.



Dean Gallery

Dean Parish Church



Dean Parish Church at the north-west corner of Dean Path and Ravelston Terrace dates from 1902-3 and was designed by Dunn & Findlay. It is a cruciform plan Gothic church with a spired tower to the north east.

The former Dean Free Church (Belford Road and Douglas Gardens) and Holy Trinity (Queensferry Road at Dean Bridge) are just outside the Conservation Area, but are important landmark buildings. The prominent location and English perpendicular style of Holy Trinity Church at the north end of Dean Bridge make it a important landmark building in many views from within the Conservation Area.

St Andrew's Roman Catholic Church, at the junction of Edgehill villa and Ravelston Terrace was built of timber in 1902 as it was intended to be a temporary structure.



St Andrew's Church

Essential Character: Architectural Character

- *The architectural character of the Conservation Area derives from its heritage of high quality buildings and its distinctive topography.*
- *Many historic, prominent and significant buildings which are a vital part of the overall character of the Conservation Area.*
- *The limited range of building materials, produce a conformity which is one of the most important factors in the visual unity of the area.*
- *The roofscape in Dean Village makes an important contribution to the architectural character of the Conservation Area.*

Activities and Uses

Residential use predominates throughout most of the Conservation Area. Within Dean Village, there are a number of small offices/businesses and workshops mixed in with the residential uses. There are two large offices on Belford Road, east of the bridge.

The area has a strong cultural, educational and amenity element. The historic and picturesque nature of Dean Village makes it an important tourist attraction attracting both visitors and locals. The hotel and sports club at Belford Place are attractions for visitors. St George's School for Girls is an Independent School for day and boarding students aged between 2 and 18 with over 950 students and 150 academic staff. The area also contains two art galleries of national importance:

- The Dean Gallery displays world-class holdings of Dada and Surrealist art.
- The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art maintains a collection of more than 5000 items of outstanding modern art works ranging in date from the late 19th century to the present. The grounds of the gallery contain a number of important art works, with a large earth sculpture by Charles Jenks forming an entrance feature at the gallery.



Dean Gallery

The Water of Leith is an important amenity feature and recreational asset. The Water of Leith Walkway, created in the 1980/90s, provides an important recreational route linking the area with Leith and the Pentland Hills at Balerno. The walkway has links with other pedestrian and cycle routes through the Conservation Area forming important connections between open spaces across the city.



*Water of Leith /
Belford Bridge*

Essential Character: Activities and Uses

- *Predominance of residential uses.*
- *The area has a strong cultural, educational and amenity focus.*
- *The Water of Leith Walkway, a city-wide recreational resource, passes through the area.*

Natural Heritage



Green corridors and open space, both above and within the valley, are important elements of the Dean Conservation Area's setting, and contribute to the picturesque character of the area. This natural heritage provides a strong sense of place.

The Water of Leith is central to the Conservation Area and the valley is a key landscape element and an important amenity asset that reinforces the unique character of the area.



The Water of Leith Valley has a strong, well-defined landscape character, which it derives from the river itself and from the steep wooded banks. Below Dean Village the valley narrows almost to a gorge with steeply sloping banks. In the Dean Village area, the valley opens out as a result of the broad meanders in the river. The river is still the central feature, while the wooded banks, which run along the north side of the river, provide a back-drop of mature trees.

The Water of Leith is recognised in the Central Edinburgh Local Plan as being of city-wide as well as local importance. The river corridor is an urban wildlife site and is recognised for its nature conservation, amenity and recreational value. The contribution that the river corridor and the open spaces associated with the galleries and Dean Cemetery make to the city are recognised in their protection as *Open spaces of outstanding landscape quality and townscape significance* in the local plan.



The Dean Cemetery is noted in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes published by Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage as "*An Important example of a mid-19th century cemetery. Existing planting demonstrates the picturesque theories of landscape design applied to 19th century burial grounds. The cemetery provides the setting for a number of significant funerary monuments*". The trees within the grounds of the Gallery of Modern Art are protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

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 the 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 the stone buildings and bridges. A significant problem along the river in this area is Japanese Knotweed. Measures are in place for its eradication although a long term programme is required to keep it under control.

The woodland is managed through felling and replanting. The areas under Council responsibility at The Cauldron and between Belford Bridge and Damside, have been heavily supplemented with young trees over recent years.

The Water of Leith is currently covered by the Water of Leith Integrated Management Plan. This brings together a number of agencies and Council Departments to consider the management of many environmental issues associated with the river corridor in conjunction with the Water of Leith Conservation Trust.

The river valley exhibits a variety of characteristics through the Conservation Area. At the western end the river valley is wide with an extensive flood plain at 'The Cauldron'. The river itself is fast flowing with exposed gravel banks and bed. The Mill Lade for Bell's Mills still runs from the weir, and discharges into the river upstream from the hotel at Belford Bridge. Within this lower area there is a feeling of extensive open space along with enclosure from the wooded slopes on both sides of the valley. Only rooftops of buildings are visible above the trees on the ridge. There are long views along the river before it meanders. The experience of the Walkway along the river here is of tranquillity and a rural environment.





Downstream from around Bell's Mills the river channel is canalised with stone/brick and concrete. Wooded slopes dominate the immediate river's edge, first on the right and then on the north side, below Belford Bridge. Footpaths linking with the Water of Leith Walkway follow these steep wooded slopes. Urban development prevails on the side of the river opposite these woodlands, although the river corridor maintains its natural effect with trees and shrubs and is only occasionally punctuated with buildings right up to the river's edge. At Bell's Mills, the river corridor is secluded from the surrounding urban development and there is a strong rural character to the valley.



Where the river meanders around to Damside and leaves the village towards Dean Bridge there are two major weirs. These weirs lead to a dramatic drop in the level of the water over a relatively short distance. Exposed bedrock is more evident along this stretch as the river cuts its way through, close to the centre of Edinburgh and the more urban environment of Dean Village. The built development fronts the river here, on the low lying 'haugh', and the wooded valley sides are fringes above the urban form.



Downstream from the village, the river enters a more natural environment. The Victorian designs for Dean Gardens on the left bank and Moray Gardens on the right combine the native woodland with open parkland and flower gardens on the valley sides. The built development is only appreciated from the views of the tops of houses and buildings rising above the trees on the ridge of the valley. Longer views along the river are possible again at the eastern end of the Conservation Area where the river corridor straightens out.

Open Space, Gardens and Boundaries

Beyond the river and its natural environment large trees are an important feature of the Conservation Area. Significant trees and tree groups play an important part of the environment of the two galleries and the Dean Cemetery, many of these being ornate and unusual specimens.

The properties on Belford Place and Ravelston Park also maintain significant trees within generous gardens. They have mature and leafy landscapes and open space settings, with stone boundary walls and railings, enclosing generous gardens. There are glimpsed views into the grounds at gateways and entrances.

The open spaces on the more elevated parts of the Conservation Area afford panoramic views across the city to the north.

In the centre of Dean Village the landscape structure is more urban and there is more hard landscaping. Gardens are smaller and there are fewer trees. Some properties at Sunbury have gardens and open spaces that connect with the river corridor, retaining a sense of open space in this location. The mews areas and new developments exhibit more creative approaches to landscape with planters and pots which enhance the streetscape, creating private spaces close to residences.



Essential Character: Natural Heritage

- *The topography of the meandering valley provides a dramatic contrast between deeply incised sections and the flatter flood plain and ‘haugh’.*
- *The significance of the woodland and river habitats in creating the setting to the river corridor and providing important areas for wildlife.*
- *The Water of Leith and its corridor are central to the Conservation Area and play a crucial role in the natural heritage asset of the city for access, recreation, amenity, biodiversity and open space.*
- *Significant green spaces on the northern and western side of the Conservation Area and garden areas alongside the river create a sense of open space and connection to the river corridor outside the main village and urban area.*
- *The contrast between the rural and urban sections of the river valley through the Conservation Area and the importance of maintaining this balance.*
- *Mature tree groups and specimens are important for their contribution to landscape structure, local recreational value and a sense of seclusion within the busy urban scene.*

OPPORUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT



The Conservation Area has both strengths and weaknesses. Its strengths are the identifiable historic plan form and spatial pattern, buildings of both historic and architectural character and the quality of the natural environment.

The weaknesses of the area are in those parts where the character and appearance have been eroded by unsympathetic developments. Parts of the village would benefit from environmental improvements.

The scale, design and materials of the modern developments have often failed to respect the particular character of the area. Closer attention must be given to encouraging designs that reinforce those features that give the Conservation Area its special character. It is also important that any new development protects the existing elements. *The maintenance of the weirs is an important factor in maintaining the character of the Conservation Area.*

The following provide potential themes for enhancement within the conservation area:

- The management of the woodland and other habitats throughout the Conservation Area as part of the intended review of the Water of Leith Integrated Management Plan in association with the Water of Leith Conservation Trust.
- Improvements to street furniture including street lighting and pavements.
- Increased opportunities for the introduction of art works and seating within the village and along the river corridor.





- Repairs to boundary walls and enclosures to gardens and properties.
- Improvements to the areas around the hotel so that the original house/granary buildings are afforded an improved setting.
- Upgrading and unifying the railings and barriers to the river.



Boundaries

It is proposed to amend the boundaries of the Conservation Area to include the area defined by Queensferry Road and Queensferry Terrace which includes Stewart's Melville College.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Statutory Policies

The Central Edinburgh Local Plan identifies the Conservation Area as lying within an area of ‘Housing and Compatible Uses’. Selected areas around the Water of Leith stretching from Windmill Brae to Dean Bridge and areas to the north including the grounds of the Gallery of Modern Art and Dean Cemetery and gardens are designated as lying within an ‘Area of open space of outstanding landscape quality and townscape significance’. Additional areas around the Water of Leith stretching from Windmill Brae in the west to the Dean Bridge in the east lie with a designated ‘Urban Wildlife Site’.

Within parts of the Conservation Area designated for ‘Housing and Compatible Uses’, the Council seeks to protect the high level of amenity enjoyed by the neighbourhood. Consequently, effect on residential amenity is a determining consideration for all development proposals, including changes of use. Within the areas of the Conservation Area designated as an ‘Area of open space of outstanding landscape quality and townscape significance’, the Council will not permit development. Furthermore, those areas that lie within a designated ‘Urban Wildlife Site’, will be protected from potentially damaging development.



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 Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 are restricted. Planning permission is, therefore, required for stone cleaning, 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 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 Dean Conservation Area has Article 4 Directions covering the following classes of development:

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 development by local authorities

38 water undertakings

39 development by gas suppliers

40 development by electricity undertakers

41 development by tramway or road transport undertakings

67 development by telecommunications undertakers

- 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 a Conservation Area are covered by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The act applies to 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 Tree Preservation Order (TPO).
- Grants may be available towards the repair or restoration of historic buildings. The council runs several conservation grant schemes. One scheme, the 'Main Conservation Grant' is dependant on the comprehensive repair and restoration of original features with priority given to tenemental houses and prominent buildings that are either listed or located within conservation areas.



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