



# Marchmont, Meadows & Bruntsfield Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Updated February 2020

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## Location and Boundaries

The Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield Conservation Area is situated some 1.5 kilometres to the south of the city centre.

The Conservation Area is focused on the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links. The boundaries include many of the buildings that surround and define these open spaces. These include the former Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh and Victorian tenemental housing fronting the Meadows at Lonsdale, Leven and Glengyle Terraces. To the south, the regular tenemental streets of Marchmont are bounded by the villa conservation areas of Grange and Merchiston & Greenhill.



## Dates of Designation/Amendments

The Marchmont Conservation Area was originally designated on 9 January 1987. The boundary was amended on 29 March 1996 to include the Meadows, Bruntsfield Links and immediately surrounding streets. Article 4 Directions were approved in 1996.

The Conservation Area was amended on the 28 September 2007 to include an area west of Bruntsfield Place, extending to Gilmore Place. The name of the conservation area was amended to the Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield Conservation Area.

## Statement of Significance

The Conservation Area is primarily focused on the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links – the largest recreational open space in the City, with the boundary including many of the buildings that surround and define these open spaces. These include the areas of high-quality tenement housing developed between 1860 and 1900 in Marchmont and Bruntsfield. These tenements were built predominantly in the Baronial style, following guidelines set down in the feu charter. In the second phase, after 1900, the Baronial style is less prevalent and elevations became plainer.

## CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISALS

### Purpose of Character Appraisals

Conservation Area Character Appraisals are intended to help manage change. They provide an agreed basis of understanding of what makes an area special. This understanding informs and provides the context in which decisions can be made on proposals which may affect that character. An enhanced level of understanding, combined with appropriate management tools, ensures that change and development sustains and respects the qualities and special characteristics of the area.

“When effectively managed, Conservation Areas can anchor thriving communities, sustain cultural heritage, generate wealth and prosperity and add to quality of life. To realise this potential many of them need to continue to adapt and develop in response to the modern-day needs and aspirations of living and working communities. This means accommodating physical, social and economic change for the better.

Physical change in Conservation Areas does not necessarily need to replicate its surroundings. The challenge is to ensure that all new development respects, enhances



and has a positive impact on the area. Physical and land use change in Conservation Areas should always be founded on a detailed understanding of the historic and urban design context.”

From PAN 71, Conservation Area Management. [www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20450/49052](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20450/49052)

## How to Use This Document

The analysis of the Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield Conservation Area’s character and appearance focuses on the features which make the area special and distinctive. These are considered in terms of:

- Historical Origins and Development;
- Structure, which describes and draws conclusions regarding the overall organisation and macro-scale features of the area;
- Key Elements, which examines the smaller-scale features and details which fit within the structure; and
- Management: The management section outlines the policy and legislation relevant to decision-making in the Conservation Area. Issues specific to the area are discussed in more detail and recommendations or opportunities identified.

The varying character areas of Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield Links and Bruntsfield within the Conservation Area each warrant analysis separately and independently from one another. The Character Appraisal will therefore address each of these three areas’ historical origins and development; structure and key elements independently, but, with reference to their transition between each other including their immediate contexts outwith the Conservation Area. A summarising statement of essential character for each of the character areas will conclude each section before setting out the management position relevant to decision making within the Conservation Area as a whole.

This document is not intended to give prescriptive instructions on what designs or styles will be acceptable in the area. Instead, it can be used to ensure that the design of a new building, alteration or addition is based on an informed interpretation of context. This context should be considered in conjunction with the relevant policies and guidance from Historic Environment Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council.



## Marchmont

### Historical origins and development

Marchmont was developed by Sir George Warrender, the mid-19th Century owner of Bruntsfield House and the surrounding estate, as a middle class tenement suburb from the 1870s. The first feuing plan was drawn up by the architect David Bryce in 1869. The proposed layout involved the construction mainly of terraced villas, with large detached villas on Marchmont Crescent. The terraced houses on Alvanley Terrace were the only properties built in accordance with the Bryce plan, which was superseded in 1876 by a feuing plan prepared by A Watherston & Son. This plan was more comprehensive and all the proposed buildings were four or five storey tenements.

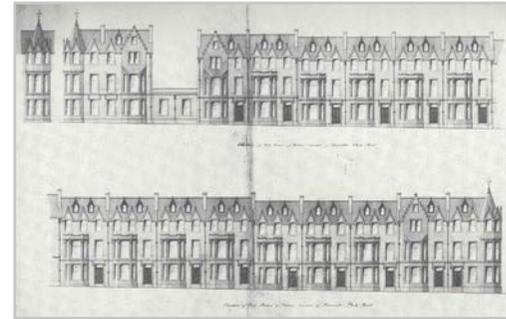
Development commenced on the basis of the Watherston plan in 1876 and was completed by around 1914. The work prior to 1900 conformed strictly to the feu charters which required the use of the Scottish Baronial style. Warrender Park Road and the streets to the north, Marchmont Crescent and Marchmont Road were built during this period. After 1900, Spottiswoode Road and Street, Arden Street and Lauderdale Street were built in a more standardised style.



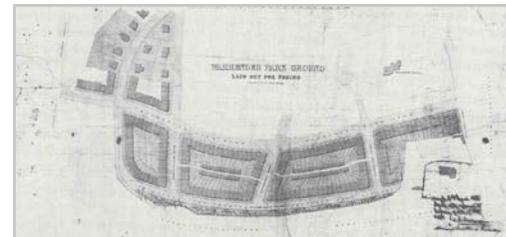
David Bryce, 1869 proposed elevations for Warrender Terrace

Westerhall and New Campbeltown were former communities, immediately to the east of the Warrender estate. Westerhall was bounded by Roseneath Terrace, Street and Place and Argyle Place, separated from the Warrender estate by a stone boundary wall, the line of which divides the north section of Marchmont Crescent and Roseneath Place. It was redeveloped at the end of the 19th century.

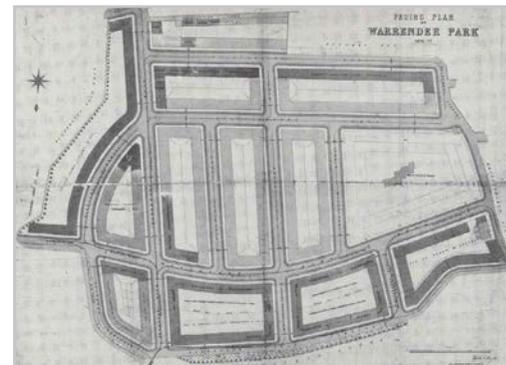
In the early 19th century, the area to the east of Sylvan Place consisted of four large houses. The area was redeveloped from the mid-19th century with the Royal Edinburgh Hospital for Sick Children (1895), Sciennes School (1890) and Livingstone Place and Gladstone Terrace (1865-69).



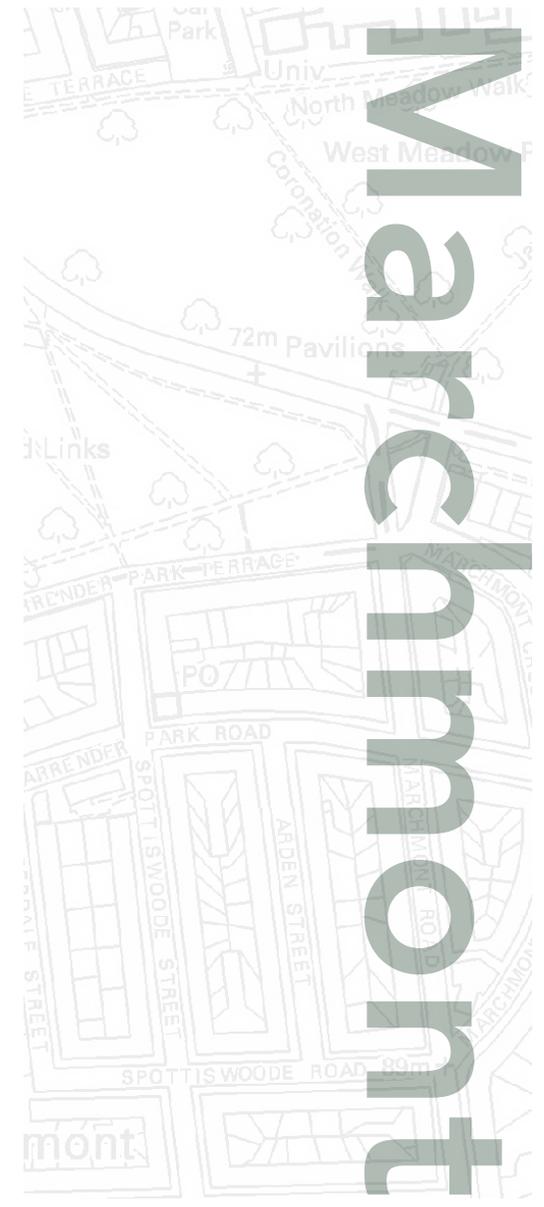
Bryce elevations, 1869 Warrender Park Road



Warrender Park Feuing Plan, David Bryce, 1869



Warrender Park Feuing Plan  
John Watherston & Son 1876-77



## Key buildings

### The Royal Hospital for Sick Children

The original RHSC hospital building was built at the end of the 19th Century on land occupied by the former Trades Maiden Hospital at Rillbank Villa and its former estate that occupied a large plot at the southern end of the Meadows. The Royal Hospital for Sick Children site today incorporates the current extent of the hospital and reflects the hospital's expansion since its opening on this site in 1895, and its incremental occupation of other properties and available land within the former Rillbank Villa plot. Today the site contains groups of listed and historic buildings, including those associated with the original hospital designed by George Washington Browne and earlier Victorian terraces built on the land formerly occupied by Rillbank Villa and not combined to form a distinct urban block with the hospital.

The main hospital building is Category 'B' listed. It has a pavilion arrangement and was built between 1892 - 1895 to designs by George Washington Browne. To the north-east is a Category A-listed mortuary building also designed by George Washington Browne that is contemporary with the main hospital building and contains the first of only three complete interior mural schemes in Scotland by the Arts and Crafts artist Phoebe Traquair. The Category 'C' listed 11-21 Millerfield Place is one of four 1860s terraces of Victoria villas that have been acquired by the hospital to the north of the main hospital building. The hospital is due to relocate to Little France and the site will be redeveloped into a mixed-use development comprising residential, student accommodation with communal space and public realm enhancements.

### James Gillespie's School

James Gillespie's High School was founded in Bruntsfield Place in 1803 as a result of the legacy of James Gillespie, an Edinburgh tobacco and snuff merchant, and was administered by the Merchant Company of Edinburgh. In 1870, the school moved into a larger building on the south side of what is now Gillespie Crescent. In 1908, the Edinburgh School Board took responsibility for the school from the Merchant Company of the Edinburgh Education Board.

In 1914, the school moved into the original Boroughmuir School building on Bruntsfield Links, which was previously used by Boroughmuir High School as an annexe.

In 1935, Edinburgh Corporation acquired Bruntsfield House and its grounds from the Warrender family, with the construction of the school on Lauderdale Street completed



in 1966. The school became a secondary school for 800 girls. The project added three teaching blocks, a separate library, a swimming pool, and a gymnasium to the original Bruntsfield House building.

In 1973, the school became a co-educational comprehensive school, taking in boys and girls and, in 1978, the ownership of the school was taken over by Edinburgh District Council. In 1989, the school moved to one site on the completion of an extensive building and modernisation program. In 2007, improvements were made to the school buildings after a state inspection found significant deficiencies in several of the 1966 structures. Following a campaign and consultation with parents, students, staff, and the wider community, a new school was built on the existing site with completion reached in August 2016.

### Sciennes Primary School

Sciennes Primary School, opened on 1 March 1892, and was exceptionally well equipped for its time, with a gym and a swimming pool built into the basement, and drawing, science, and cookery classrooms on the top floor. Pupils ranged between five and fourteen years old. As is usual for the period, girls and boys were rigorously kept apart, girls entering from the west, and boys, from the east. The playground was also divided by a wall, with each half containing two play shelters (only that to the south remains). The infants were accommodated on the ground floor and juveniles on the floors above. The higher proportion of window to wall, particular to the south, demonstrates the School Board's concern with the health benefits of light and ventilation. Sciennes Evening School for Adults began simultaneously with the day school. Its emphasis on practical commercial, and technical skills proved to be extremely popular.

### Ian Rankins Detective Inspector Rebus

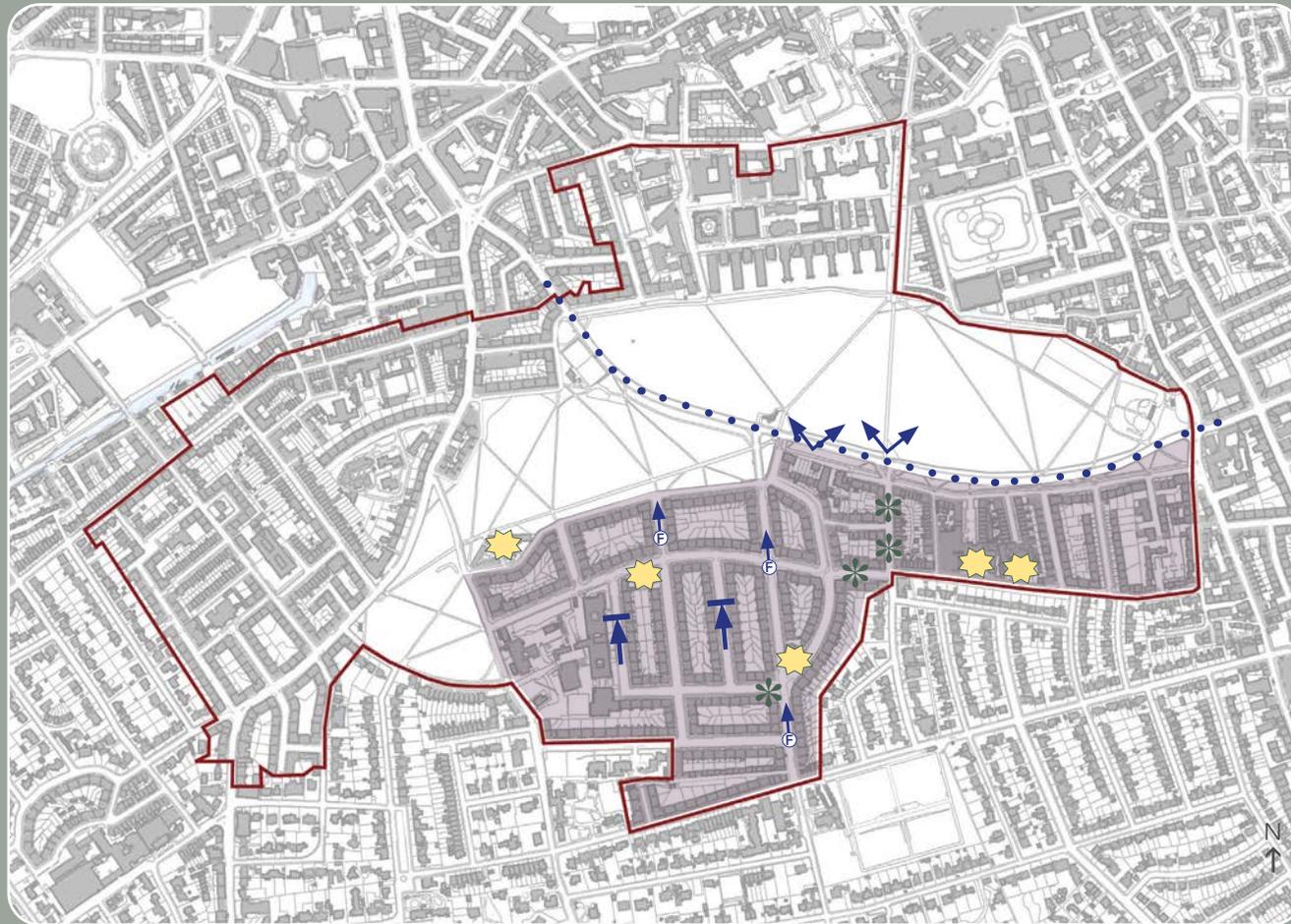
Arden Street in Marchmont is home to the author Ian Rankin's fictional Detective Inspector John Rebus. Rankin was a 24-year-old post-graduate student at Edinburgh University when he conceived his iconic hero. The author, now the UK's biggest-selling crime writer, said:

*"Detective John Rebus was born on the evening of March 19, 1985, in the ground floor apartment I shared with two other students in Arden Street, Edinburgh, Scotland. The idea came to me as I sat by the fire in my student digs. My bedsit would have been the original living room of the flat. It was spacious with high ceilings and freezing. There was a single bed and a desk and chair by the large bay window. Rebus's flat is opposite the building I was living in when I wrote Knots and Crosses, the first Inspector Rebus novel."*



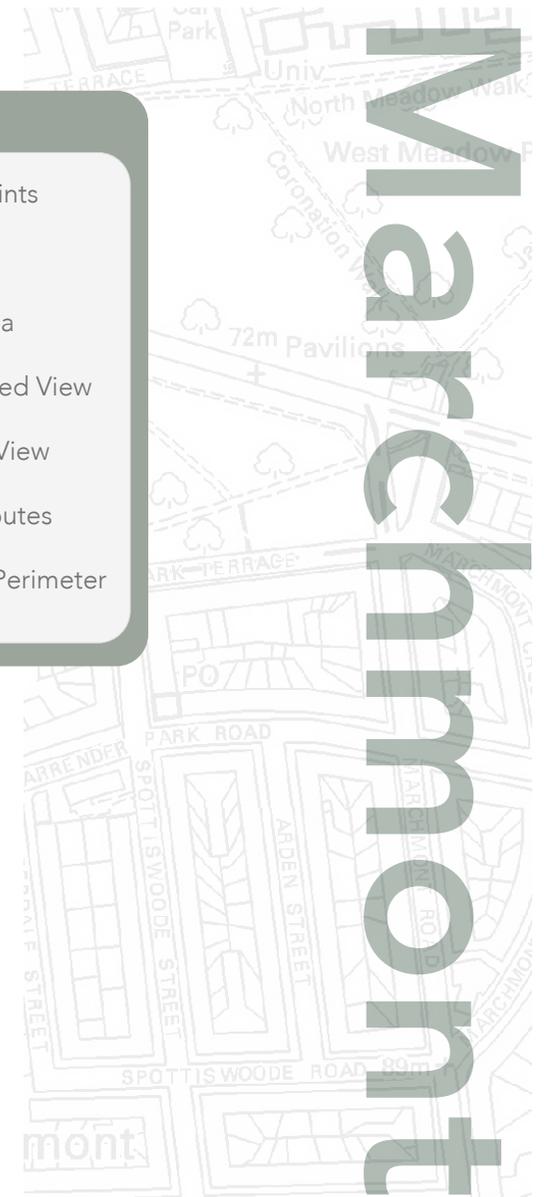
## Marchmont

### SPATIAL STRUCTURE & TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS



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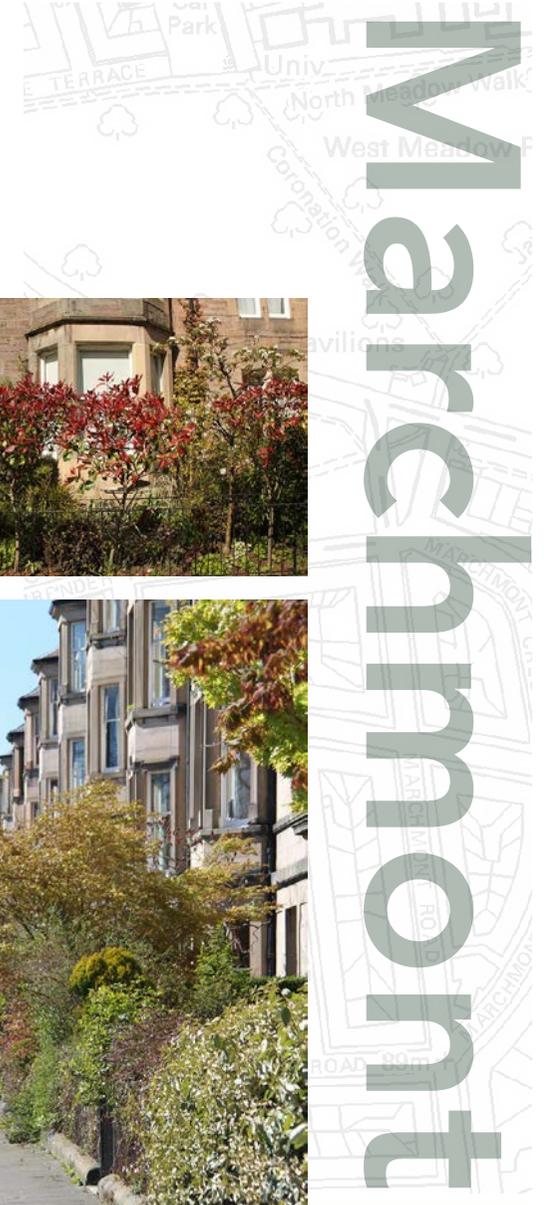
-  Focal Points
-  Activity
-  Panorama
-  Terminated View
-  Framed View
-  Major Routes
-  Victoria Perimeter Blocks



**Structure: spatial character**

The spatial structure of the area is overwhelmingly characterised by a rectilinear grid structure with longer blocks arranged along a north-south axis to allow for views over the Meadows towards Castle Rock, the Old Town and the Firth of Forth. There are also interesting variations to the grid structure, formed by crescents and larger institutional and educational buildings that punctuate the ridged structure. Marchmont is a high-density area of tenements and terraces. These grid layouts, defined by perimeter blocks, were designed with a concern both for buildings and the public realm and the relationship between built form, streets and open spaces. This is clearly evident in the Victorian tenemental properties on an east-west axis flanking the urban parkland of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links on its southern, eastern and western sides.

The principal features of the urban fabric are the Victorian tenemental perimeter blocks interspersed with occasional Georgian terraces along the south side of the Meadows and Georgian villas part lining Bruntsfield Place as it approaches Tollcross. Tenemental front gardens are a key feature; most are well tended and hedged with a variety of species and styles. A few larger front garden trees contribute to this softening effect of greenery between public and private space.



Communal back greens to tenements comprise an essential component of the spatial character of the area. The communal back greens; often tightly enclosed on all sides by adjoining tenements and largely unadorned with additional ancillary buildings/structures or rear extensions to ground floor level flats retain their green and tranquil green space and character setting to the rear of tenements. Maintaining these areas as open green

spaces for the communal benefit of residents not only preserves the special character and appearance of the area, but, provides a much valued level of amenity for residents away from the hustle and bustle experienced from the streets.

Institutional buildings set within more generous plots and set back from regular layout of tenements blocks are scattered throughout the area, a number have been converted or are in the process of being converted for residential – mixed use.



**Structure: Townscape character**

The general height of the Victorian tenemental buildings is four storeys, rising to five storeys on Bruntsfield Links. Georgian buildings vary from three storeys to three and half, with basements. All buildings are constructed from stone and have slated roofs. Most tenements have small front gardens to the street. The exceptions to the latter are where parades of shops occur, with their shop fronts coming down hard on the heel of the pavement.



Many streets are setted and are tree lined, giving the effect of the Meadows penetrating into the streets to the south. The perimeter blocks in the area bounded by Warrender Park Road, Whitehouse Loan, Warrender Park Terrace and Marchmont Crescent exhibit the exuberance of Scottish Baronial architecture. The perimeter blocks to the east and south are generally stripped of Baronial detail and have plain facades to the street. Despite this change in detailing, the area reads as a unified whole.

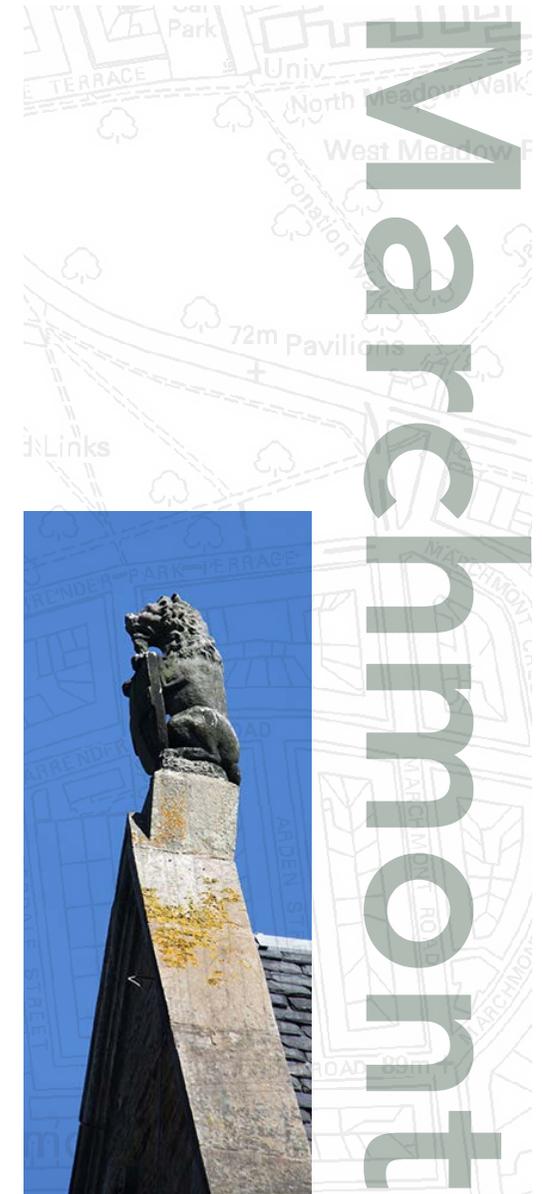


**Key elements: architectural character (predominant)**

The architectural character of Marchmont is typified by well proportioned tenements planned in long blocks that take advantage of the gently sloping site. They are principally in the distinctive Scottish Baronial style, and the pre 1900 tenements in Marchmont represent perhaps the most dramatic use of this architectural style. The success of the Marchmont development is in the diversity of detailing contained within a carefully controlled form. Many of the tenements are Statutorily Listed for their historic and architectural quality.

Many eminent architects were involved in the development of Marchmont, and the Baronial style was well suited to accommodate different designs in the incremental development of street blocks. Street compositions give the impression of unity due to the discipline of height and materials.

Baronial details – pediments, string courses, crowstepped gables, corbelling, carved panels - are used extensively to produce diversity and individuality. Particular emphasis is placed on the design of corner blocks. This is exemplified by the tenement building at the corner of Marchmont Crescent and Marchmont Road which, with its ornate gable and twin corbelled turrets topped by a lion and shield, is a landmark on a naturally commanding location overlooking the Meadows.



The area to the east of Marchmont Crescent is more diverse, with Argyle Place and Sylvan Place forming an attractive town house development of 1825. Thirlestane Lane also has a quite different character from the tenement development. It is an elegant mews lane with a narrow pavement and cobbled street. It was built to house the coaches and coachmen for the large houses of the Grange.

**Key elements: architectural character (prominent individual buildings)**

Bruntsfield House, which is incorporated in James Gillespie's School, is one of the oldest mansions in the city. It dates from the late 16th century with later additions and alterations. A number of features associated with Scottish Baronial architecture - steeply pitched crowstepped gables, carved ornaments, stair towers, and pedimented and finialled dormerheads - are incorporated in its design. The house and James Gillespie's School are surrounded by a high coped rubble boundary wall which is a significant feature at the west end of Warrender Park Road.

The redevelopment of the James Gillespie's School involved the demolition of the informal arrangement of various campus buildings of different height and designs and the incorporation of five new buildings arranged to relate and enhance the setting of the centrally positioned Category 'A' listed Bruntsfield House in views through the site from the north. The new teaching buildings conform to the perimeter block arrangement typical of the Conservation Area and, whilst the design of the new buildings is wholly contemporary, the uniform height and massing reflects and preserves the character of the area.

The former Usher Institute of Public Health occupies a prominent location on the south west quadrant of the junction of Spottiswoode Street and Warrender Park Road. It dates from 1899-1902, is in a distinctive Renaissance palazzo style with Beaux Arts detailing, and is now converted to residential use.



*'The Usher Institute was substantially funded by Sir John Usher for the teaching of public health to students at Edinburgh University, at a time when infectious diseases were common and public hygiene was poor. Completed in 1902, the roadway outside the front of the building was laid with wooden setts to muffle the noise of passing cartwheels and thereby lessen the disturbance to students inside who, no doubt, were eagerly concentrating on their course of learning.'*



The Royal Hospital for Sick Children was designed by George Washington Bowne and dates from 1892, with the addition, in 1903, of the Outpatients Department front Sylvan Place. The main building is in a Jacobean style in red sandstone. A front courtyard to Sciennes Road is formed by gabled wings with octagonal corner towers. The two storey, rectangular-plan Outpatients' Department is in an Edwardian Renaissance style.

The imminent relocation of the hospital to Little France and the sites redevelopment into a mixed-use development comprising residential, student accommodation with communal space and public enhancements received planning permission and listed building consent in February 2019. The redevelopment program will involve the partial demolition of existing buildings along Sylvan Place, erection of new buildings and the change of use and conversion of the principal Browne hospital building and previously converted Victorian terraced townhouses along Rillbank Terrace and Millerfield Place into residential. Should the proposed redevelopment of the site under this consent not come to fruition or undergoes variation, the sensitivity of the sites buildings and their important context be appropriately acknowledged and sympathetically considered in any new development proposals coming forward.



Immediately to the east of the Royal Hospital for Sick Children lies Sciennes Primary School. Designed by Robert Wilson in the Jacobean style, it comprises a two storey building with an attic and basement, arranged on a symmetrical H-plan. The principal south elevation has polished ashlar with bands of squared and snecked sandstone. The high proportion of window to wall, particularly on the south elevation demonstrates the School Boards concern with the health effects of light and ventilation.



Warrender Baths by Robert Paterson and son on Thirlestane Road dates from 1886 and comprises a rectangular-plan swimming baths in eclectic Jacobean style with variety of straight and crowstepped gabled and finialled bays, prominent round arched windows and stone balustrade above its eaves.





The former James Gillespie's Boys School at the junction of Marchmont Crescent and Marchmont Road dates from 1882, and is in a Gothic style with decorated windows. The building was used as a school up until 1973, except during the war years when it was requisitioned by the War Office. More recently it was used by Napier University to house its creative art department, and the interior adapted to accommodate photographic studios and a gallery. In 2008, the building was converted into fifteen contemporary residential apartments that further remodeled the internal space into open plan double height apartments with mezzanines set back from the external and windows allowing the windows and proportions of the high rooms and spaces to still be read from public view.

### Activity and uses

Marchmont is principally residential with shops, cafes and restaurants and other commercial activities occupying ground floor units of tenement properties. It contains a full range of social, commercial, education and community facilities. The area performs an important shopping and service role for people working and living in the area.

An incredibly popular area for a wide range of people including families, older residents and students, Marchmont is situated across the Meadows from the University of Edinburgh, and is also within walking distance of Edinburgh Napier University, and the key office locations in the city centre and west end. Its close proximity to the city centre, as well as the large green spaces on its doorstep and numerous shops, bars and cafes, makes Marchmont a popular place to live.

By its full completion, the Quatermile development at the former Royal Infirmary will comprise more than 650 new residential units, some 30,000 square metres of office space, retail outlets, restaurants, cafes and a hotel. The conversion of the Royal Hospital Sick Children will contribute a further 126 residential units and also, 323 student flats to the area.

The two education establishments make an important contribution to the overall character of the area. They generate activity during school hours and act as a centre for community activities in the evening.



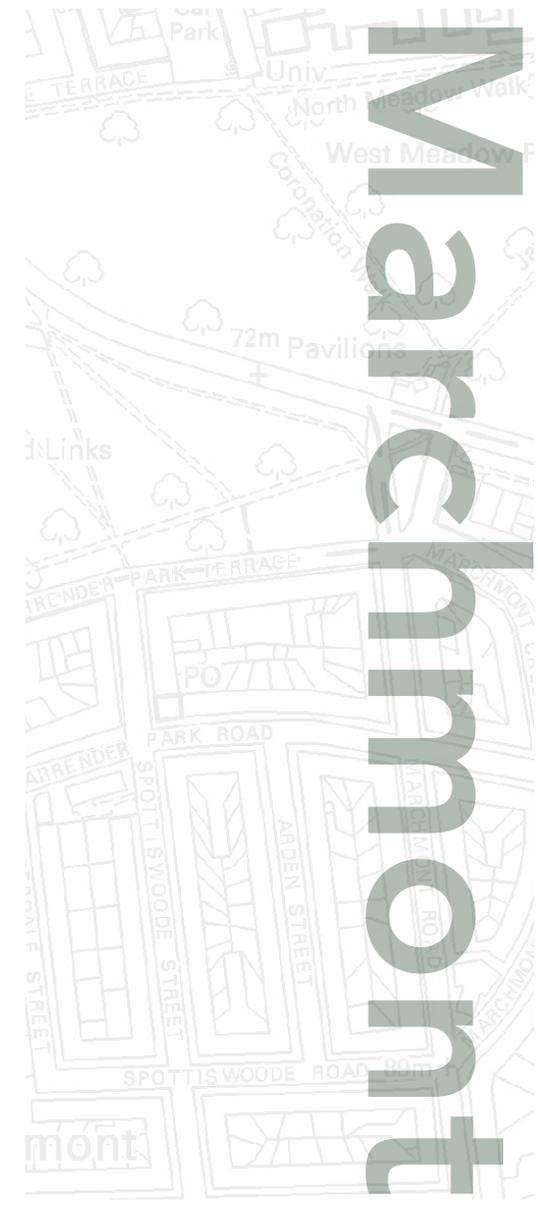
### Marchmont: Essential characteristics

#### Spatial character:

- comprising a high-density area of tenements and terraces, the spatial structure of the area is overwhelmingly characterised by a rectilinear grid structure with longer blocks arranged along a north–south axis to allow for views over the Meadows towards Castle Rock and the Old Town
- grid layouts are defined by perimeter blocks and designed with a concern both for buildings and the public realm and the relationship between built form, streets and open spaces and evident in the Victorian tenemental properties on an east–west axis flanking the urban parkland of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links on its southern, eastern and western sides
- tenemental front and communal back greens comprise an essential component of the spatial structure of the area – providing both a softening effect on the transition between public and private space and tranquil green open amenity space much valued by residents
- institutional buildings set within more generous plots and set back from regular layout of tenements blocks are scattered throughout the area, a number have been converted or are in the process of being converted for residential led mixed use schemes.

#### Townscape character:

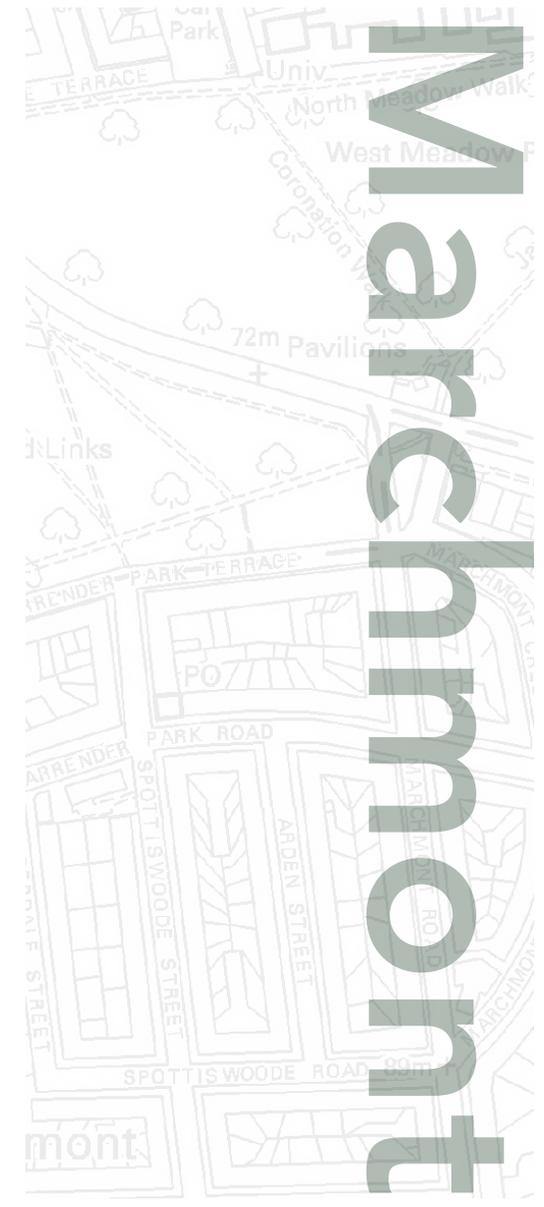
- strong uniformity in building heights, form and materials between the Victorian tenemental and earlier Georgian Terraced properties within the area. Predominantly comprising of tenements and terraces of townhouses constructed with natural blonde sandstone and Scots slated roofs with refreshing instances and variations where warmer red sandstone has been utilised
- strong rhythmic pattern of bays, fenestration and front gardens throughout the area. The exceptions are around principal junctions and streets, where small parades of shops are positioned; many of which retain their original Victorian shop facades; coming down hard on the heel of the footway; and directly addressing the street



- many streets are setted and are tree lined, giving the effect of the Meadows penetrating into the streets to the south
- perimeter blocks in the area bounded by Warrender Park Road, Whitehouse Loan, Warrender Park Terrace and Marchmont Crescent exhibit the exuberance of Scottish Baronial architecture. However, the perimeter blocks to the east and south are generally stripped of Baronial detail and have plain facades to the street
- despite the variations in detailing, the strong arrangement; rhythm; form; and heights of vast number of tenemental properties, the area's townscape character reads as a strong unified whole.

**Architectural character:**

- architectural character is typified by well-proportioned tenements planned in long blocks and principally achieved in the distinctive Scottish Baronial style encompassing renaissance elements preserving many of the features found on the 16th and 17th century Scottish medieval castles and tower houses
- baronial details, such as pediments, string courses, crowstepped gables, corbelling, carved panels - are used extensively to reflect this style and produce diversity and individuality in the different designs utilised in the area's incremental development
- particular emphasis is placed on the design of perimeter and corner blocks, where elaborate architectural features such as ornate gabling, corbelled turrets and intricate decorative features such as lions and shields are used to further emphasis landmark buildings in naturally commanding locations within the townscape.
- street compositions however, give the impression of unity due to the discipline of form, height and materials. The exclusive use of natural Scottish slated roofs and timber framed sash and case windows comprising large-span plate glass positioned in a one over one astragal arrangement, comprise crucial unifying elements that knit together the areas architectural diversity in elevational treatment
- more pronounced diversity provided by the handsome Georgian terraces of Argyle Place and Sylvan Place forming an attractive town house development of 1825. Further parallel terracing of later Victorian townhouses with examples of Italian



Renaissance detailing; full canted bay windows and an open aspect onto the meadows are located further west behind the Royal Hospital for Sick Children

- Thirlestane Lane provides additional architectural variation in the form of an elegant and relatively unaltered group of mews buildings that unusually, were built in separation from the large Grange residences they were intended to serve. Originally built with stalls, coach-houses and harness rooms at street level, with domestic quarters and hayloft above, they are all now converted to dwellings.



Warrender Park Terrace built between 1878 and 1884.



Royal visit to Edinburgh, July 1911.



Thirlestane Road begun in 1878 and completed in 1904.



Warrender Park Road looking E. Edinburgh.



Spottiswood Street, built between 1902 and 1911.



## Meadows & Bruntsfield Links

### Historical origins and development

#### Meadows

The Meadows occupy the site of the former South or Borough Loch. In the 16th century, the loch provided Edinburgh's main water supply until it was acquired by the "Fellowship and Society of Brewers." Several breweries were established beside the small group of houses at the east end of the Meadows in the district still known as Boroughloch. The brewers drew heavily on the Loch and, by the time the Society was dissolved in 1619, the loch had been significantly reduced.

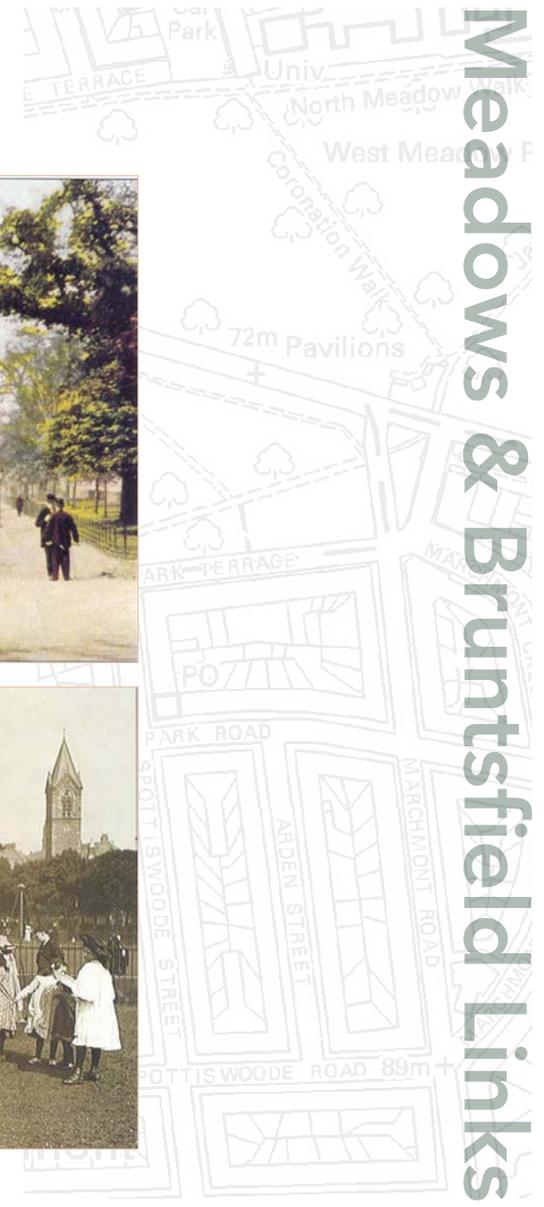
In 1657, the Town Council decided to drain the Loch, and in 1658 John Straiton, a merchant burgess, was given lease of the loch. Straiton's ultimately unsuccessful efforts to improve the half-drained loch's surrounding amenities led to it being renamed Straiton's Park.

In 1722, Thomas Hope of Rankeillor, leased the loch and, at his own expense, attempted to convert the marshland into an ornamental park. One improvement effected by Hope was the formation of Middle Meadow Walk. Edinburgh Town Council began the reconstruction of the Meadows in 1804. However, after many delays, it was not until the mid 19th century that the public had access to the Meadows. In 1858-59, the southern drive was constructed and named after Sir John Melville, who was then Lord Provost.

As the city grew, early concerns about potential development in the meadows resulted in the Edinburgh Improvement Act of 1827. This stipulated that "it should not be competent for the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council, or any other person, without the sanction of Parliament obtained for the express purpose, at any time thereafter to erect buildings of any kind upon any part of the grounds called the Meadows or Bruntsfield Links so far as the same belong in property to the Lord Provost, Magistrates and Council". Further later acts reinforced this firm statement.

#### Bruntsfield Links

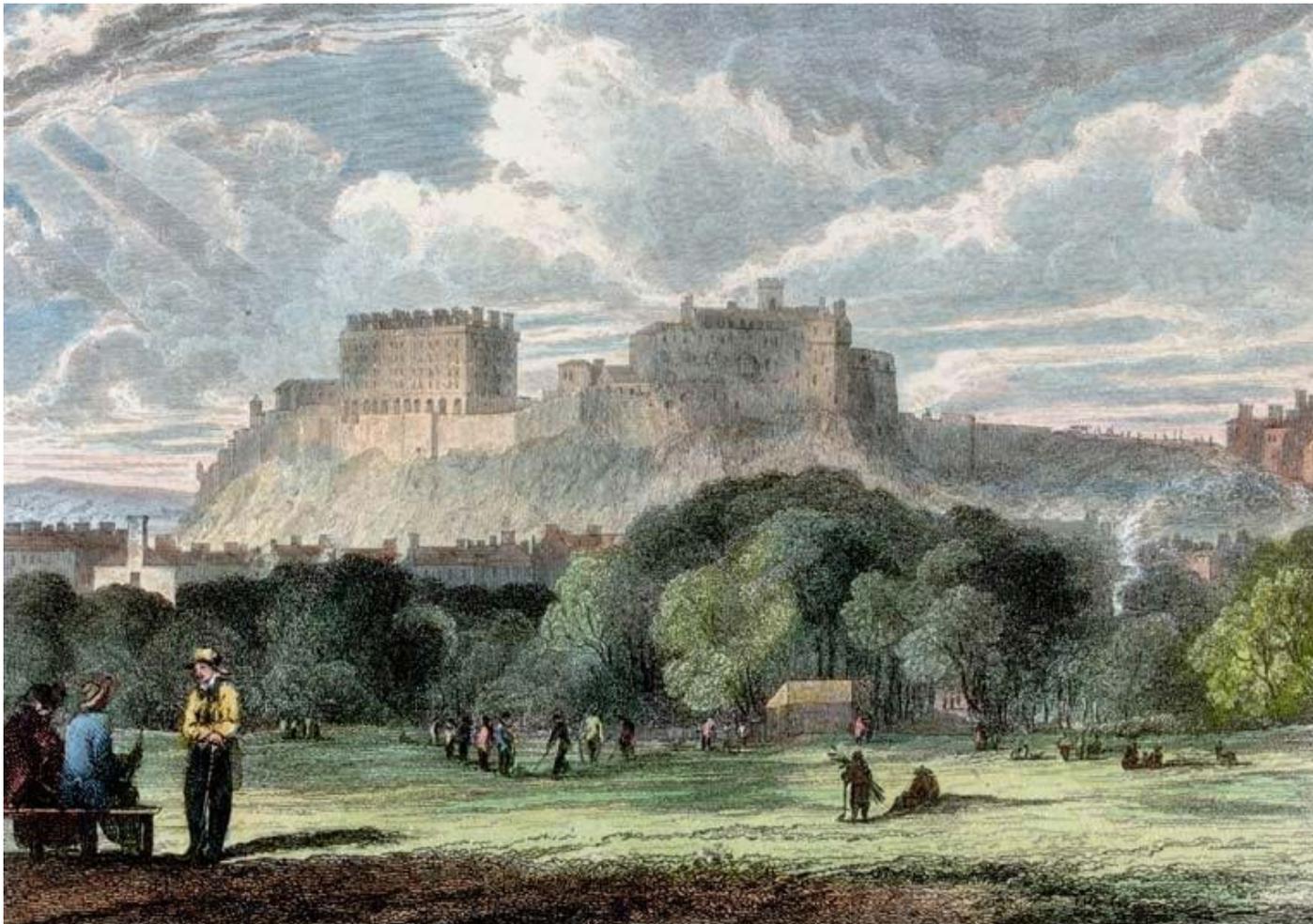
Bruntsfield Links lies immediately to the south west of the Meadows, occupying an area of 36.2 acres (14.6 hectares) bounded by the south side of Melville Drive and extending beyond Whitehouse Loan to Bruntsfield Place, Terrace and Crescent.



## Marchmont, Meadows & Bruntsfield

Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Bruntsfield Links forms the last remaining fragment of the Burgh (Borough) Muir, which once stretched from the Borough Loch (South Loch) to Blackford Hill. There are records from 1599 of stone quarries on the site of the Links. However, golf has long been the main activity associated with Bruntsfield. There are claims that it was Scotland's first golf course. In the 18th century, two clubs, the Royal Burgess Golfing Society and the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, were established at Bruntsfield. The two short hole golf courses on the Links have been established for almost 500 years and form a crucial element of the special character and appearance attributed to this part of the Conservation Area.



## The Edinburgh International Exhibition

Thirty thousand people thronged the Meadows on May 6, 1886 when Prince Albert Victor opened the International Exhibition of Industry, Science and Art. The Exhibition building was an imposing structure comprising a Grand Hall, fronting the main entrance at Brougham Place, with a range of double courts extending eastwards and arranged on either side of a central corridor. The Grand Hall had a 120-foot high central dome decorated with signs of the Zodiac, an impressive collection of statues around the entrance, a Grand Organ and orchestra platform and could hold 10,000 people. By the opening day, 12,000 season tickets, at a guinea each had been sold.

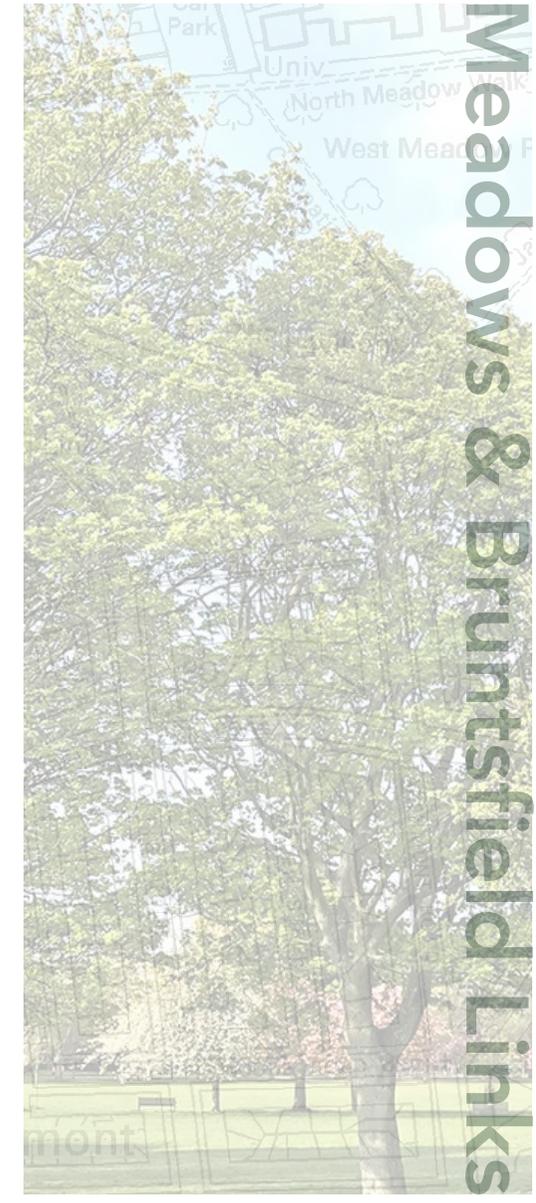
Over 20,000 exhibits illustrated the 'material progress of the age' and there were 1,725 works of art in the fine art galleries. The list of items displayed included 'educational appliances; Italian furniture and marble; violins from Prague; Turkish embroidery; illustrations of mining, pottery, sugar-refining, sea industries, paper-making, printing; and railway, tram-way and other vehicular appliances'. The Women's Industries display ranged through Belgian glove making, Fair Isle, Shetland and Icelandic knitting, Irish linen and artificial fly production.

The grounds were laid out with walks, rockery, fountain and bandstand. The principal open-air attractions were the electric railway which ran between the main Brougham Place entrance and Middle Meadow Walk; the working man's model dwelling-house, which included the most modern appliances for sanitation and convenience; and the refreshment rooms, both temperance and otherwise. The Exhibition buildings and grounds were lit by 3,200 electric lamps in the largest illumination scheme ever attempted in Scotland.

One of the most popular features of the Exhibition was the 'most novel and picturesque'; Old Edinburgh Street consisting of various buildings which existed in Edinburgh during the 17th-century. The Street was entered through a replica of the Netherbow Port, and the buildings were arranged to form a street typical of Old Edinburgh with a short High Street, market place, mercat cross, two closes and a copy of the Old Tolbooth. Architectural styles were apparently reproduced with 'great fidelity and the imitation of old stonework was particularly marvellous'. The ground floors were laid out as forty-four shops and workshops in which attendants dressed in 17th-century costumes sold souvenirs of the Exhibition.

Queen Victoria visited in August, 1886. It was originally intended to retain the Grand Hall and the model dwelling-houses, after the exhibition closed on October 30, but an act of Parliament forbids all permanent buildings within the Meadows, and they were demolished.

Surviving relics include the Masons' Memorial Pillars and Prince Albert Victor Sundial, both at the west end of the Meadows; the Brass Founders' Pillar, now in Nicolson Square Gardens; the six Doulton tile panels depicting great inventors, displayed in the Circle Bar at the Café Royal, West Register Street; and the whale jawbone arch on Melville Drive.



**Key features / buildings in Meadows and Bruntsfield Links**

**The Prince Albert Victor Sundial**

The sundial at the west end of the Meadows in Edinburgh was designed by Sir James Gowans and erected to commemorate the opening of the International Exhibition by Prince Albert Victor. The sundial is inscribed with masons' marks and appropriate lines, such as:



*"I mark but the hours of sunshine."*

*"Time and tide wait for no man."*

*"Light is the shadow of God."*

*"Time is the chrysalis of eternity."*

*"As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow."*

*"Time, as he passes us, has a dove's wing, Unsoiled and swift, and of a silken sound."*

*"Man's days are as a shadow that passeth away."*

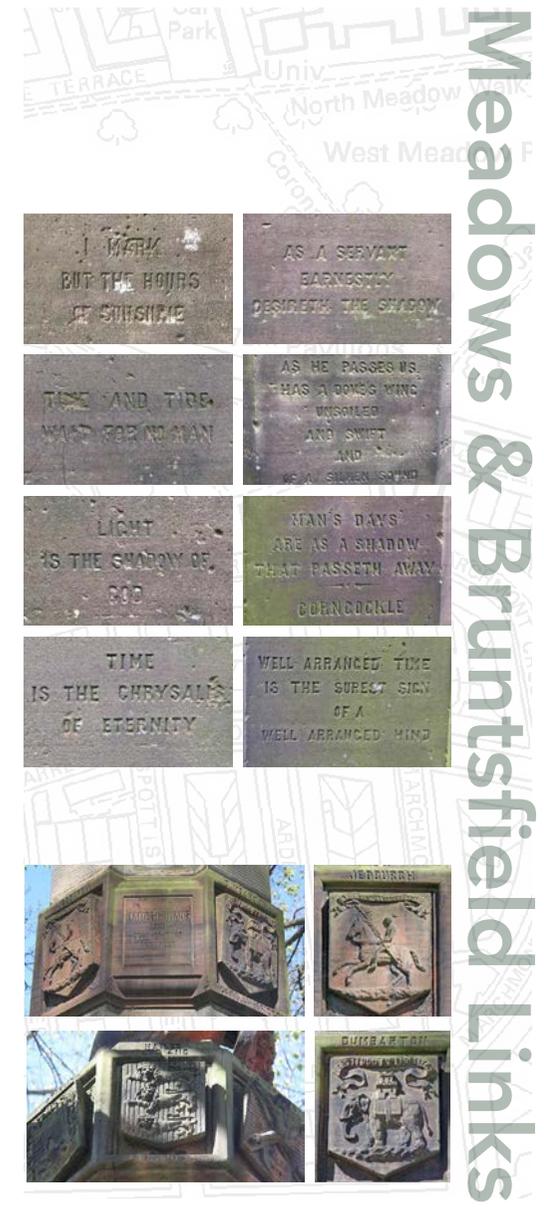
*"Well-arranged time is the surest sign of a well-arranged mind."*



**The Memorial Masons' Pillars**

The two Memorial Masons' Pillars which flank each side of the west end of Melville Drive in Edinburgh were erected as a permanent monument to the International Exhibition of 1886. They were designed by Sir James Gowans and constructed by the Master Builders and Operative Masons of Edinburgh and Leith as a gift to the City of Edinburgh.

The Pillars are octagonal in plan with a moulded base. The centre band and capping stones are decorated with shields displaying the Imperial, Scottish, English and Irish Arms; the coats of arms of nineteen Scottish Burghs; and the crest of The Edinburgh Masons.



Meadows & Bruntsfield Links

The Pillars are 26 feet high and are topped by seven feet high unicorns. The stones in the shaft consist of eighteen courses of stone from seventeen different quarries in popular use at the time. The name of the quarry from which the stone originated is inscribed on each course. The Pillars also exhibit examples of different types of stone finishes. Examples of masons' marks are also shown on the shafts. Gowans intended the Pillars to act as a durability test of the different stones used and a record of quarry history.

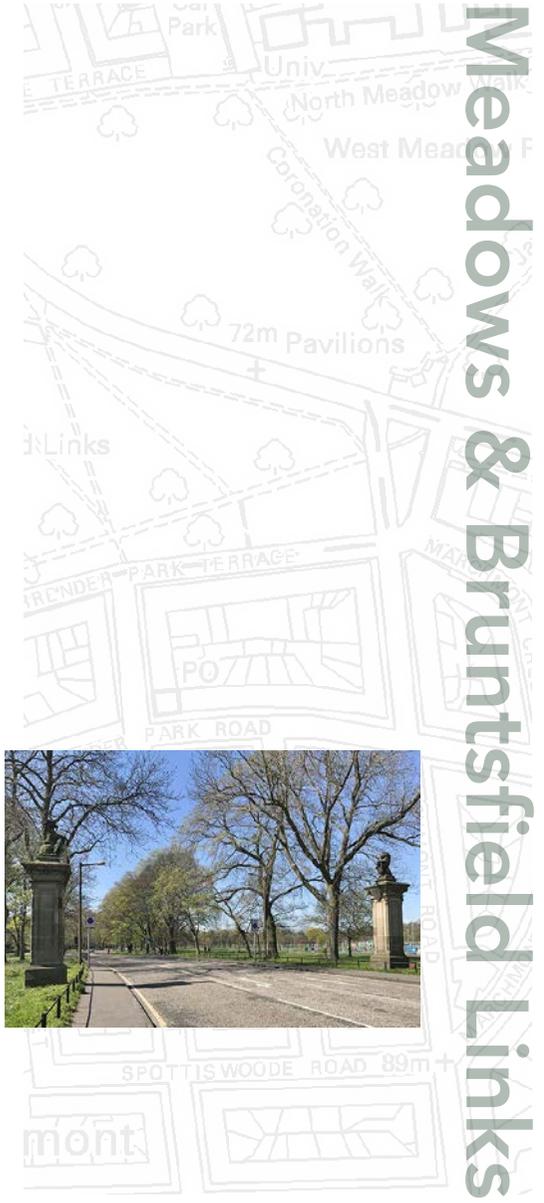
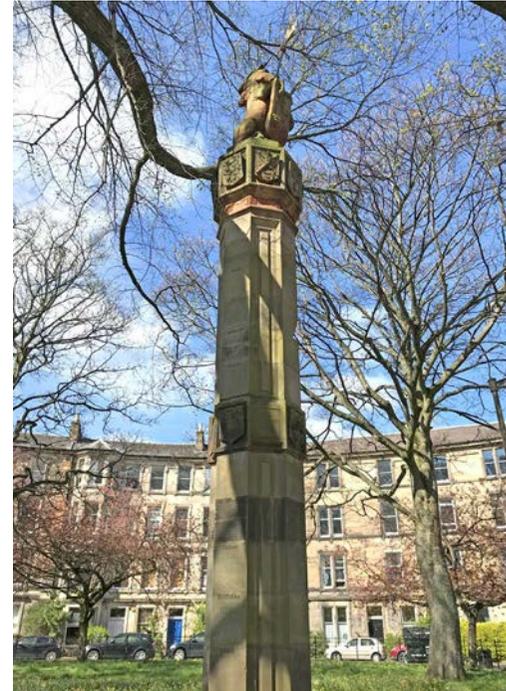
### The Jawbone Arch

The arch at the Melville Drive entrance to Jawbone Walk in the Meadows is formed from the jawbone of a whale and was part of the stand of the Shetland and Fair Isle Knitters exhibition at the International Exhibition of 1886 and they were gifted to the city. The jawbones form an important gateway to the Meadows but, despite ongoing plans to restore and reintroduce them, the jawbones and railings are remain missing. Their absence, therefore detracts from the historical interest of this important gateway route into the Meadows.

### The Nelson Pillars

Printing was historically one of Edinburgh's main industries and in the 1950s the publishing industry employed between 5,000 and 7,000 people in the city. Thomas Nelson's Parkside Works was one of the biggest. Thomas Nelson opened a second-hand bookshop in Edinburgh's Old Town in 1798 from which he started to publish inexpensive reprints of classic books. This proved profitable and his sons, William and Thomas, entered the business in the 1830s. In 1845, they established a printing-house at Hope Park

In 1878, Nelson's works at Hope Park burnt down in a spectacular fire and they were allowed to erect temporary accommodation for the business in the Meadows. The company moved into new premises at their Parkside Works on Dalkeith Road in 1880. In 1881, they donated these pillars at the east end of the Meadows in 'commemoration of the kindness and sympathy shown to them by the magistrates at the time of the great fire in 1878.



### The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links Walks

**Boys Brigade Walk** was set out in 1954 as part of the centenary celebrations honouring the birth of the Boys Brigade founder Sir William A Smith in 1854. There was a ceremony when 75 trees were planted by Boys Brigade members.

**Middle Meadow Walk** was the first of the Meadow walks, set out by Sir Thomas Hope when the parkland was created out of a boggy loch. A contemporary letter praises it as standing comparison to London: 'Mr Hope has beautified the meadow wonderfully and made it another St Jame's Park.'

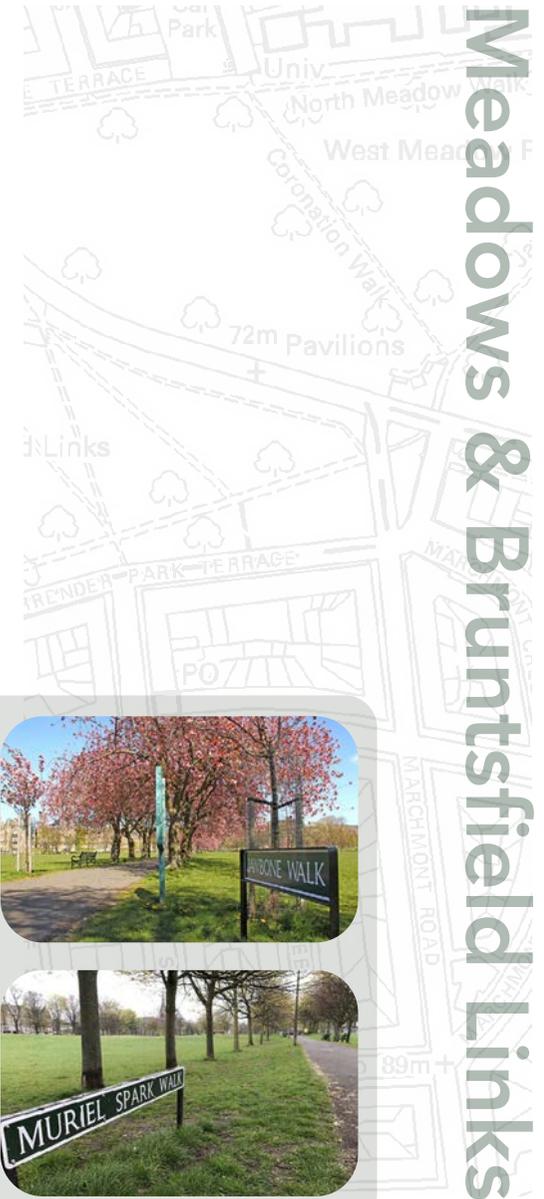
**Coronation Walk** commemorates the coronation of George VI in 1937.

**Jawbone Walk** is called after the iconic arch at the Melville Drive end of the path. The whalebones date back to the 1886 Exhibition where the Zetland and Fair Islands knitters showcased their work by draping it on the jawbones which formed their stand.

**Towns Woman's Guild Walk** was named in 1973, in response to the Guild's gift of the trees that line it.

**General Maczek Walk** on Bruntsfield Links was formally named in April 2019 to mark the contribution he and the Polish armed services gave in World War two.

**Muriel Spark Walk** on Bruntsfield Links was formally named in June 2018 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of her birth.



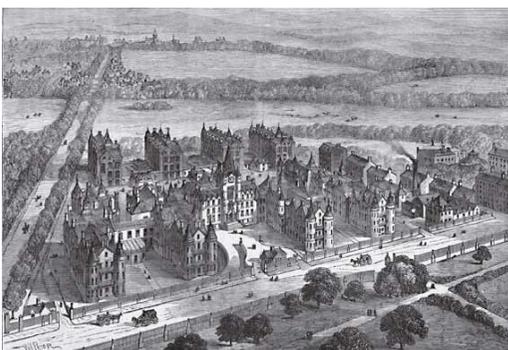
### Meadows pavilions

Constructed in first half of the 20th century, the three pavilions comprise a small grouping of hipped roof single storey buildings finished in horizontally banded timber painted green with distinctive machine made red roof tiles and external porches. The pavilions are arranged in flattened 'C' shape and orientated towards the west, the middle of which, has been converted from changing facilities into a popular seasonal café.



### Edinburgh Royal Infirmary

The foundation stone of the Infirmary was laid by the Prince of Wales in 1870, and it was opened in November 1879. Designed by David Bryce, it shows the influence of the continental pavilion-plan hospitals advocated by Florence Nightingale. It was acknowledged as 'the largest hospital in the United Kingdom, and probably the best planned.' The hospital use has been discontinued, and the site continues to be redeveloped for a mix of uses.



Meadows & Bruntsfield Links

### Bruntsfield Links

#### Former Boroughmuir School (Bruntsfield Links)

Built as Boroughmuir School, one of the new Higher Grade (Science) schools, it became James Gillespie's in 1913 when the new Boroughmuir School, was opened. After the new Gillespie's was opened it reverted back to become the Boroughmuir Junior School. The building is now used as halls of residence for the University of Edinburgh.

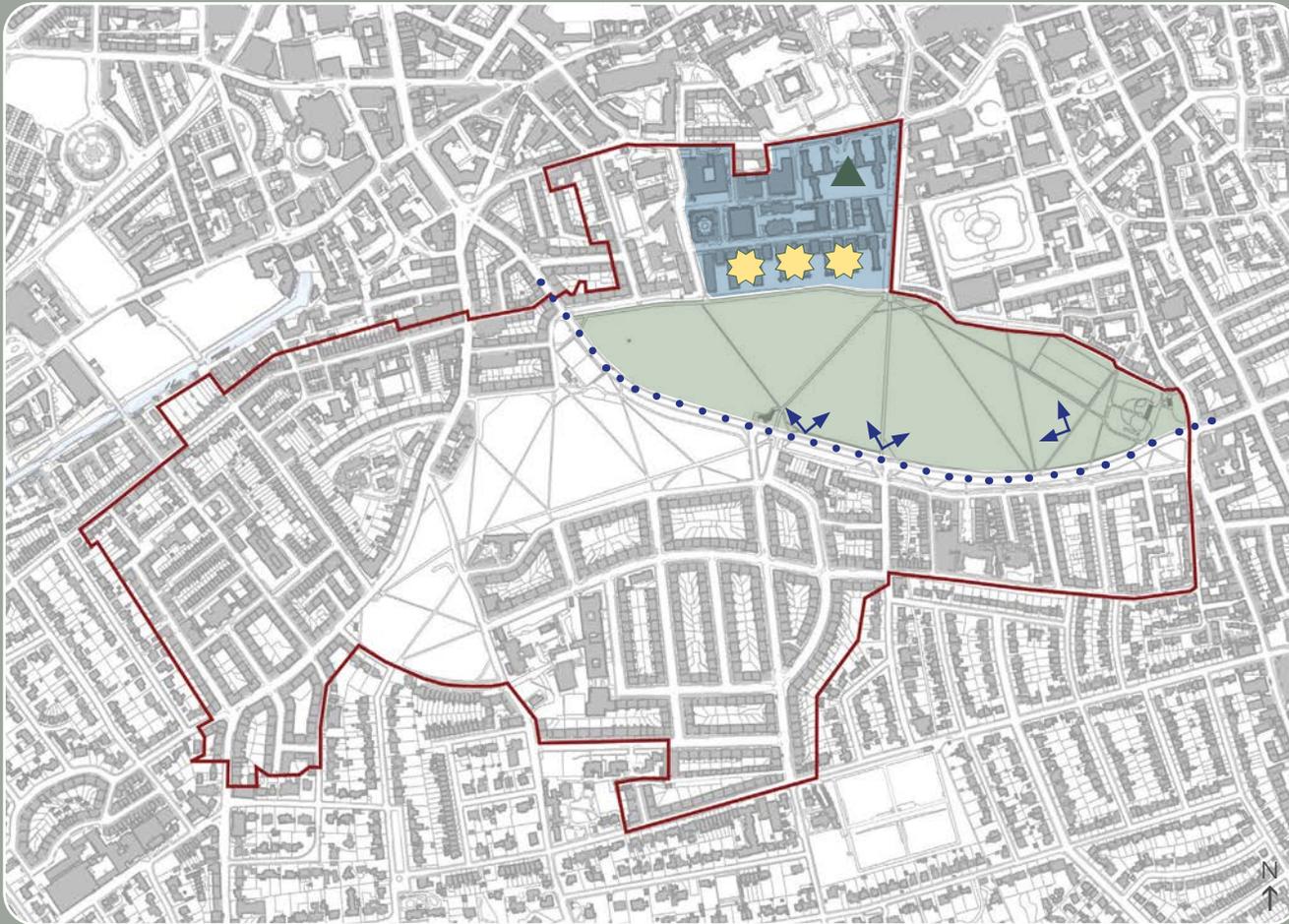
The acclaimed author, Muriel Spark attended the former school building when it accommodated the girls school for James Gillespie's. Born in Edinburgh as Muriel Camberg, Spark lived on Bruntsfield Place and attended the then James Gillespie's School for Girls, where one of her teachers, Christina Kay, was to provide the inspiration for her best-known novel, 'The prime of Miss Jean Brodie' where the elitist Brodie grooms her girls to take the places in life which she has ordained they will fill. The group is selected and specially tutored by her as being in her view 'la crème de la crème'. The irony and, to some extent, tragedy of the novel stems from the fundamental misjudgments Brodie has made not only about the characters of the girls but of her own.

With reference to former school building on the Bruntsfield Links, Spark wrote of it as: 'an Edwardian building, and, for those days, modern inside, with large classrooms, and big windows, that looked out over the leafy trees, the skies, and swooping gulls of Bruntsfield Links.'



## Meadows

### SPATIAL STRUCTURE & TOWNSCAPE ANALYSIS



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- ▲ Landmark Feature
- ★ Focal Points
- ↔ Panorama
- Urban Parkland
- Major Routes
- Former Hospital



**Structure: spatial character**

The spatial structure of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links is overwhelmingly characterised by the open parkland. This urban parkland is flanked to the north by the former Royal Infirmary. The Links and Meadows jointly form the largest area of recreational open space in the city, amounting to 36 hectares in total, traversed by a web of tree lined walks. The Links are divided from the Meadows by Melville Drive, an important east-west transport route.

The principal features of the urban fabric are the pavilions of the former Victorian Royal Infirmary that dominates the northern boundary of the Meadows. Bruntsfield Links and Tollcross are dominated by Pilkington’s Barclay Viewforth Church in what has been described as a Transylvanian gothic style, with a spire which forms a distinctive feature of the city’s skyline. The wide expanse of recreational open ground offers panoramic views across the city to the north and east, from the Castle across the Old Town’s roofscape to Salisbury Crags and Arthur’s Seat.



The Meadows is flanked to the north by the Old Town Conservation Area, with the former Royal Infirmary giving way to the 17th century Heriot’s School, which is flanked by a Georgian perimeter block on Lauriston Place. The eastern boundary is shared with the South Side Conservation Area, where the standard scale of the perimeter blocks of Marchmont give way to a more irregular urban pattern.



**Key elements: Architectural character of structures and buildings**

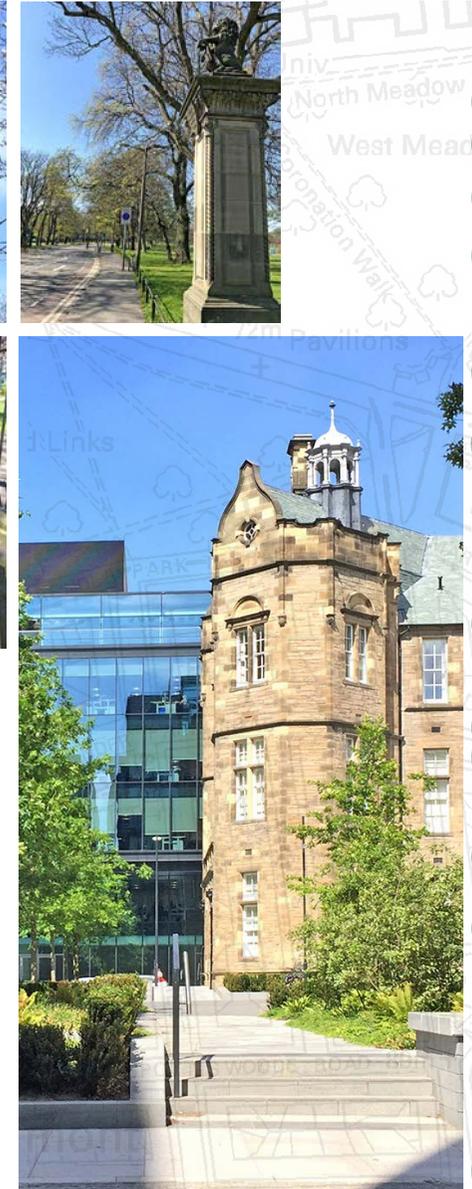
A number of key artefacts remain from the time of International Exhibition in 1886:

- The pillars at the west end of Melville Drive consist of eighteen courses of stone from different quarries as a durability test.
- The octagonal sundial at the west end of the Meadows was erected to commemorate the opening of the exhibition by Prince Albert Victor and was named after him.
- The whale jawbone arch is positioned at the Melville Drive entrance to Jawbone Walk is currently undergoing restoration. Close to the Jawbone is a small fountain dedicated to Helen Acquoroff, the blind Edinburgh musician and singer.
- The two tall ornamental pillars at the eastern entrance to Melville Drive were gifted by Nelsons the Publishers in appreciation of being given temporary accommodation on the Meadows after their premises were destroyed by fire in 1876.

The redevelopment of the former Edinburgh Royal Infirmary Site involved the demolition of all unlisted buildings and accretions to listed buildings. In addition, the Florence Nightingale Nurses Home, the Simpson's Memorial Pavilion, the Queen Mary Nursing Home and the George Watson's wing of the Surgical Hospital have been demolished. The demolition of the unlisted accretions to the original building has significantly improved the spatial integrity of the site.

The masterplan for the former Infirmary site was developed to maximise pedestrian permeability to re-integrate the site with the city. The site is laid out in a series of grids, which divides the zones and uses, creating a residential zone in the south, with the majority of the commercial uses in the north. A north-south orientation of buildings is repeated throughout, linking in with the listed buildings retained.

As well as the north-south opening up of the site, with pedestrian routes opened directly on to the Meadows, east-west access is also created, with a major pedestrian space to the rear of the hotel. This leads to a focus within the site on the main pedestrian spaces in the centre of the site. In terms of design, the new build elements are uncompromisingly modern in their treatment. Infill towers introduce spires across the site, reflecting the fact that the existing buildings are heavily spired with strong verticality to the site.



Meadows & Bruntsfield Links

## Natural Heritage

The Meadows, with an area of 24.5 hectares and Bruntsfield Links, 15.1 hectares form one large green space. The Meadows became the popular space it is today for sport, celebration, meeting friends or taking a stroll. The Meadows was designated a Millennium Park in 2000.

The Meadows and the Bruntsfield Links have distinct topographies. The Meadows, a former shallow loch that was gradually drained over the last two hundred years, is flat with heavy soil. The Links, lightly quarried for sandstone over two hundred years ago, forms a north-sloping and undulating, mostly well-drained area, with thin soil-cover and very small rock outcrops at the south-western extremity on Bruntsfield Place. Roughly 90% of the area is grass, with the other 10% wooded along Melville Drive, Whitehouse Loan, most paths, and around much of the edge. All the paths are straight; they are traced from the original 19th Century plans, and by the desire-lines of people crossing the area.



### Trees and vegetation

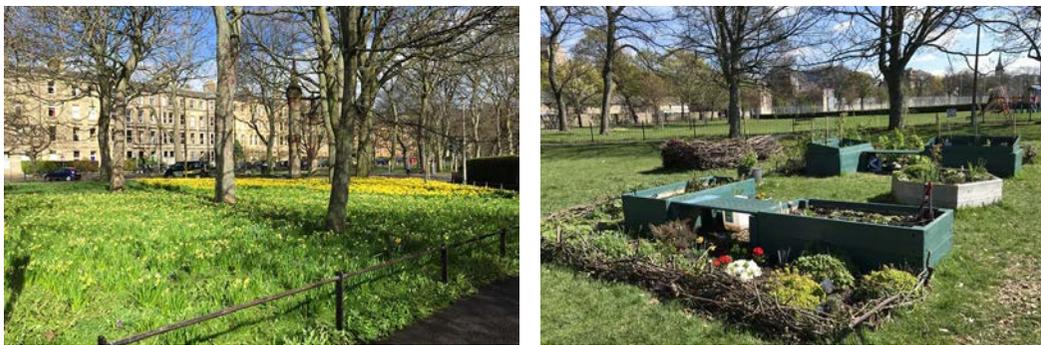
In the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links as a whole, there are 1731 trees; consisting of 28% elm, 25% sycamore, 12% cherry, 10% maple, 6% ash, 6% lime, 4% whitebeam, 3% hawthorn, and smaller numbers of other species. A phased tree planting programme designed to ensure existing gaps are filled and produce a balance of age and species over a five to ten year period is promoted.



Around another 200,000 natural bulbs have been planted by both council staff and volunteers over the years

There is now a lot more community input within the park which ranges from a community garden at the Cricket Pavilion, the former police box at the end of Middle Meadow Walk, a community vegetable flower and fruit garden next to the tennis courts with further fruit trees and bushes next to the Magnet play area .

Several wildflower meadows have also been created by Friends of the Meadows and other community groups at Lonsdale Terrace and just off Leamington Walk. These projects have been carried out not just for welcoming colour but also to improve the biodiversity value of the Meadows and to try and increase the butterfly and bee population within inner city sites. School children have also been encouraged to be involved and several of the local schools actively take part in many of these projects.



Meadows & Bruntsfield Links

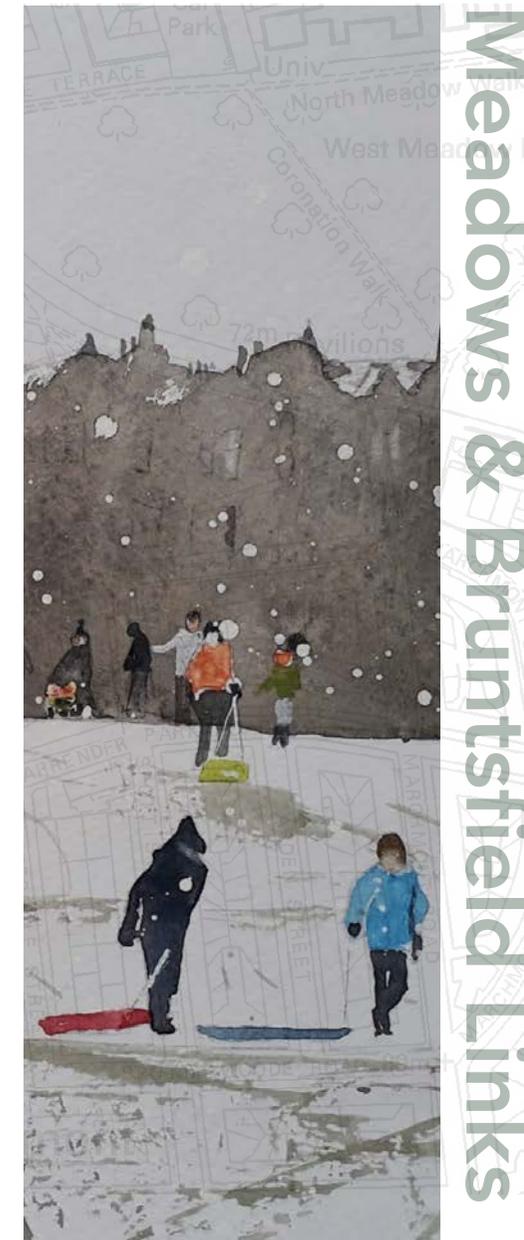
## Activity and uses

The park provides an essential greenspace in the heart of the city with a design that lends itself to a great range of activities. The layout of the park provides healthy and safe routes into the city along tree-lined paths for residents of the south side of the city. The design provides large open spaces which can accommodate a range of activities including sport, play, leisure activities, and other events. There are a number of stakeholders who are associated with the park and provide a good cross section of public and commercial use. These are as follows:

- Local community
- Community groups
- Community Councils (Tollcross, Southside, Marchmont and Sciennes, Merchiston)
- Friends of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links (FOMBL)
- Schools (Primary Schools: Sciennes, James Gillespies, Bruntsfield, Tollcross; High Schools: James Gillespies, Boroughmuir, St. Thomas Aquins)
- Sports Clubs
- Quatermile Development (commercial)
- Edinburgh University
- Local shops and businesses
- Edinburgh Leisure
- Commercial fitness instructors and programmes
- The seasonal café at the Cricket Pavilion
- The use of the Meadows for festival 'big tent' events in recent years, and for fairground rides around twice annually

Members of the public use the park in many ways, but it is generally used for leisure: walks, jogging, cycling, dog walking, commuter walking/cycling routes, and picnicking. The park is a fantastic attraction all year round, but most of all on warm, sunny days. A great number of people flock to its grassy expanses to enjoy the warm sun in the open.

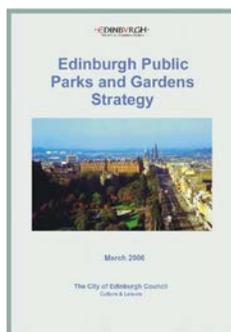
A number of organised sports are enjoyed within the park: these include cricket, short-hole golf, croquet, bowls, tennis, and football. The local schools use these good quality facilities as part of the school curriculum. The park also lends itself to a very high number of informal sporting activities, including those enjoyed by the local university students and other sports groups; it not unusual to see football, rugby, shinty, cricket and volleyball matches being played, with jackets as goalposts! In addition, it is often used as an area for flying frisbees, kites and quidditch!





One of the greatest attractions in the park is the children's play areas, in particular the fairly recently built Magnet play area at the east end of the park where the equipment caters for children of ages ranging from 3 to 16 years. The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links offer three play areas: The Magnet, a smaller area on the west of the park on the links side, and a child friendly area just off Middle Meadow walk which is grass covered and mainly caters for very young visitors with its smaller pieces of apparatus.

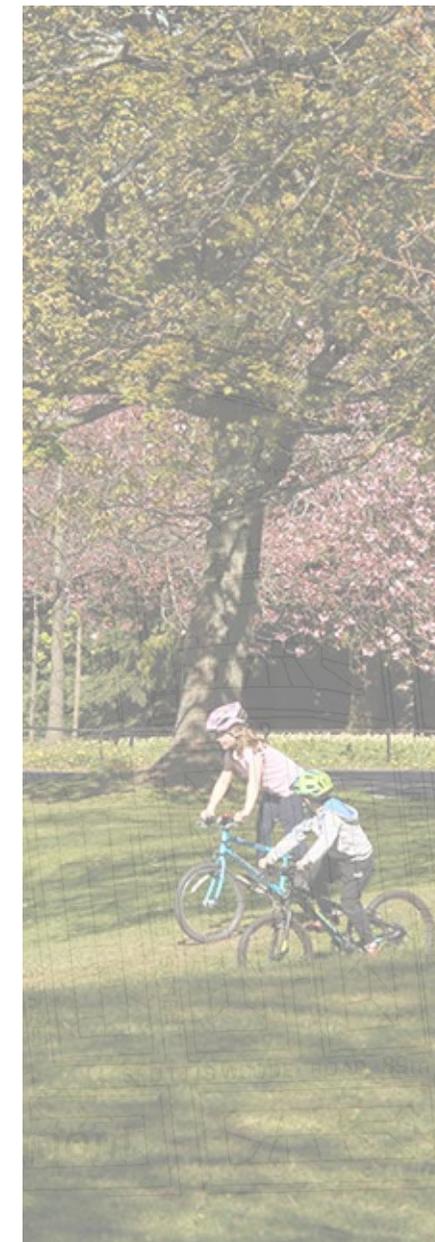
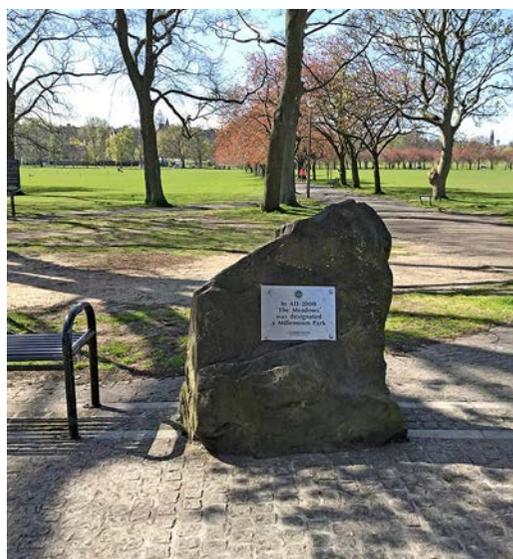
Several organised events are held in the park for community, charity and commercial use. These events can at times eliminate open use of the green space, however steps have been taken within the Edinburgh's Parks Manifesto to take cognisance of this and as a result events in the park has been reduced to four major events per year.



The cultural, aesthetic and recreational value of the park for the citizens of Edinburgh is immense. Almost every citizen will probably use or visit it at some time in their life. The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links are specially valued by those living in the adjacent Community Councils areas of Southside, Tollcross, Marchmont and Sciennes, and Merchiston. The original entrance to the park was along Middle Meadow Walk, and although it is not enclosed, it has several boundaries, and a number of local roads which bound the park and give it an enclosed feel.

The Meadows and Bruntsfield Links are classified within the Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy as "Premier Parks" with a Parks Quality Standard (PQS) rating of 76% Grade B in the 2018 report. It is the largest park in the strategy. Premier Parks are defined in the Edinburgh Public Parks and Gardens Strategy, 2006 as, "high quality parks, offering a wide range of facilities aimed at international and national visitors as well as local and city-wide users. These will often be areas with significant resources of cultural or natural heritage and may themselves be of historical importance. Design quality should be optimal and unique to each park. Standards of maintenance should be very high thus dictating the need for designated site based maintenance teams. The overall impression should be able to bear comparison with the best regarded parks anywhere in the world".

In December 2000, The Meadows was designated a Millennium Park. The move by the City of Edinburgh Council followed an approach from the National Playing Fields Association (Scottish Branch), now known as Fields in Trust (FIT), which will ensure that the park will be protected in perpetuity as community open space. The Council will maintain them in good condition and report to FIT the level of use by the general public. A commemorative plaque is situated on a presentation stone at the Middle Meadow Walk to mark the new designation for the Meadows.



Meadows & Bruntsfield Links

The designation of areas as large and important as the Meadows means they will be protected in perpetuity. There are too few places left where people can just enjoy open space, fresh air and leisure, and this is what makes the Meadows so vital. The need to protect the 58.4 acres of The Meadows, originally the site of the Borough or South Loch, was recognised more than 170 years ago with the Edinburgh Improvement Act of 1827 and by subsequent acts. The designation of Millennium Park status enhances that protection.

### Meadows and Bruntsfield Links: Essential characteristics

#### Spatial character:

- overwhelmingly characterised by the open parkland, the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links are traversed by a web of scenic tree lined walks jointly form the largest area of recreational open space in the city, amounting to some 36 hectares in total
- wide expanse of recreational open ground offers exceptional panoramic views across the city to the north and east, from the Castle across the Old Town's roofscape to Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat
- principal features of the urban fabric include the pavilions of the former Victorian Royal Infirmary dominating the northern boundary and the Transylvanian gothic style Barclay Viewforth Church by Pilkington commanding a distinctive presence over Bruntsfield Links with its spire also forming a distinguishing feature in the cities skyline
- the demolitions and redevelopment of the former Edinburgh Royal Infirmary has significantly improved the spatial integrity of the site. to maximise pedestrian permeability to re-integrate the site with the city. Laid out in a series of grids, which separates the zones and uses, creating a residential zone in the south, with the majority of the commercial uses in the north. A north-south orientation of buildings is repeated throughout, linking in with the listed buildings retained
- as well as the north-south opening up of the site, with pedestrian routes opened directly on to the Meadows, east-west access is also created, with a major pedestrian space to the rear of the hotel. This leads to a focus within the site on the main pedestrian spaces in the centre of the site.

#### Architectural character

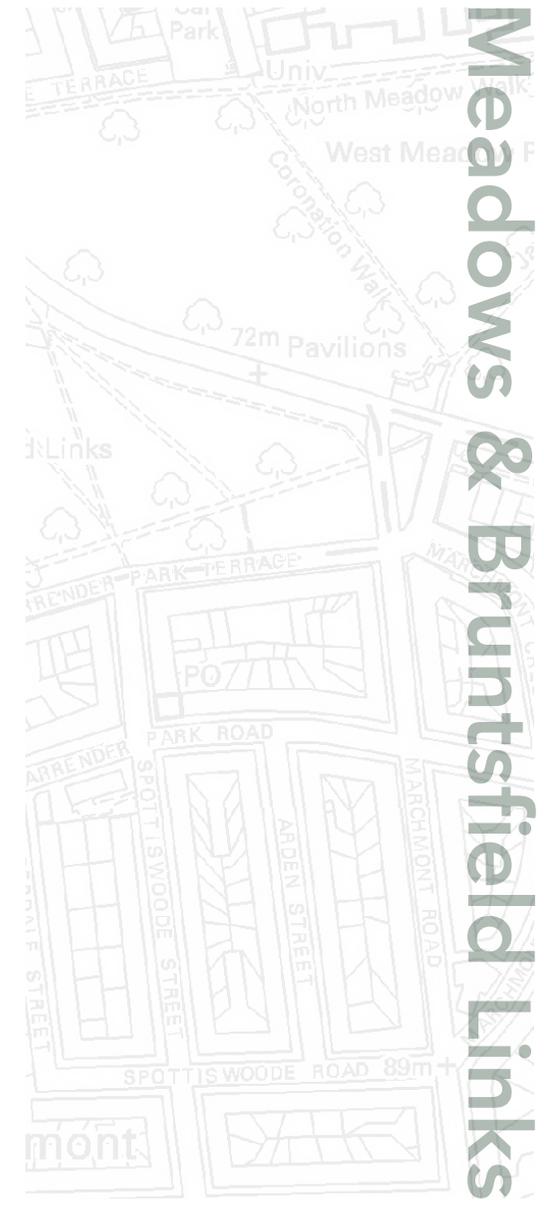
- surviving relics of the of International Exhibition include the Masons' Memorial Pillars and Prince Albert Victor Sundial, both at the west end of the Meadows. Further decorative elements in and around the Meadows includes the two tall ornamental pillars marking the eastern entrance to Meadows along Melville Drive



- the demolitions, redevelopment and design utilised within the former Edinburgh Royal Infirmary site incorporates new build elements that are uncompromisingly modern in their treatment. Infill towers introduce spires across the site, reflecting the fact that the existing buildings are heavily spired with strong verticality to the site
- the former Boroughmuir School on Bruntsfield Links was designed in the Free Renaissance style comprising three storeys and attic set within a steeply pitched roof. Constructed from bull-face orange sandstone with decorative features and dressings in cream sandstone, the building sits within a commanding position within the rolling landscape setting of the Links.

**Natural heritage:**

- comprising of approximately 40 Hectares, the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links combine to create the largest recreational open space in the City and provide the primary focus for the surrounding townscape and Conservation Area as a whole
- the Meadows and the Bruntsfield Links have distinct topographies. The Meadows formerly a shallow loch is flat with heavy soil and Bruntsfield Links, formally quarried is north-sloping and undulating, mostly well-drained, with thin soil-cover and small rocky outcrops
- roughly 90% of the area is grass, with the other 10% wooded along Melville Drive, Whitehouse Loan, most paths, and around much of the edge. All the paths are straight; they are traced from the original 19th Century plans
- with approximately 1,750 trees of various varieties; individual beds for flower, fruit and vegetable gardens; and several wild-flower meadows including widespread bulb planting around its perimeter. The area has a rich diversity of natural heritage that provides colour, interest and improves the biodiversity value of the Meadows and Bruntsfield Links
- the park provides an essential greenspace in the heart of the city with a design that lends itself to a great range of activities. As well as providing safe and attractive routes into the city centre from the south, its large open spaces can accommodate a range of activities including sport, play, leisure activities, and other events.





## Key buildings in Bruntsfield

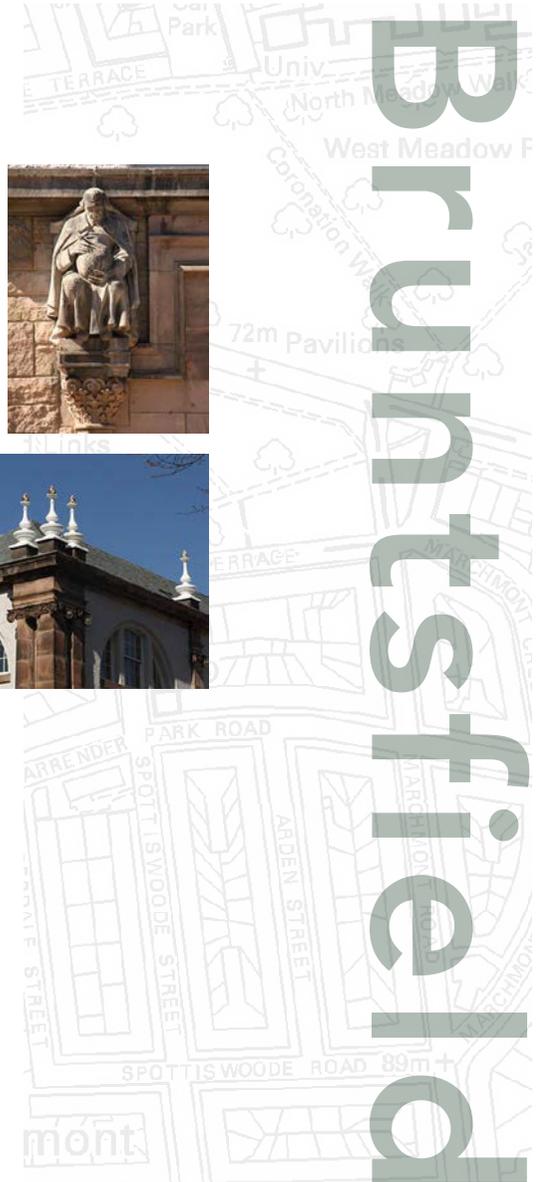
### Boroughmuir High School (Viewforth)

The former Boroughmuir High School building was constructed between 1911-1914 to a design by architect JA Carfrae. It occupies a position set back from the surrounding tenements to the east side of Viewforth. The building has a symmetrically designed rectangular double quadrangle-plan with giant ionic columns and incorporates both Renaissance and Byzantine influences. Following the schools recent move to a new site to the northern end of Viewforth beyond the Union Canal, planning permission and listed building consent for the redevelopment of the building into residential flats was granted. The redevelopment also involved the erection of a new build element in the former front playground to the north of the site.



### Alexander McCall Smith's Isabel Dalhousie

*Bruntsfield is home to the character Isabel Dalhousie in The Sunday Philosophy Club series of books by Alexander McCall Smith which includes The Right Attitude to Rain and The Careful Use of Compliment. Isabel is a philosopher turned detective, who lives a "lady of leisure" lifestyle in a Bruntsfield townhouse. She frequents the quaint shops of the district, often visiting her niece who works in the local delicatessen.*





**Structure: spatial character**

The land form slopes to the north in an even gradient. There is a rectilinear grid structure to most of the streets with interesting variations, formed by cul-de-sacs and a square, within the structure. It is a high density area of tenements and terraces, with a tight urban structure. Bruntsfield Place, the main arterial route, with its associated tenements and villas frames the southern side of the area.

There are significant views to the north, encapsulated in the naming of the street - Viewforth. Other views north are restricted either by the street layout or by buildings. To the south-east, Bruntsfield Links provides a sweeping vista across to Marchmont and down towards Melville Drive, with the Bruntsfield Hotel and the Barclay Viewforth Church forming landmark features.

The main vistas are across the Links and up and down Bruntsfield Place, with the view down to Tollcross framing the Castle. The view down Viewforth also provides a fine aspect, albeit restricted. There are several smaller scale views of importance - down Gillespie Crescent, down Bruntsfield Avenue, and onto the crossroads and churches at Holy Corner.

**Structure: townscape character**

The sweep of five storey tenements along upper Bruntsfield Place dominates the area, forming an edge and framing the route to the south. They continue down into the adjacent streets of Bruntsfield Gardens, Forbes Road, Bruntsfield Terrace and Merchiston Place. Their individual variety provides character and a classic view, with the Barclay Viewforth Church to the right and the Castle in the centre background.

Bruntsfield Gardens derives significant character and interest from its enclosed end and an art deco block of flats. The culs-de-sac of Hartington Place and Hartington Gardens exhibit a calm settled air with their rhythmic pattern of bay windows, front gardens, and steps as the gradient rises slightly along the terraces. Front garden parking has resulted in some disruption to the pattern of front boundary enclosures. Other terraced housing in the area builds on this solid, urban character, and forms links between the tenements.

The tenements in the north part of the area have more of a rectilinear framework. Montpelier Park displays coherence, in terms of virtually full tenemental design on both sides of the street, however, even with this, there are differences in colour. Bruntsfield Avenue has a similar coherence, with tenements on both sides framing the compact, yet large Victorian Primary school. The other tenements radiate out from the main arterial roads of Bruntsfield Place and Gilmore Place.



The tenements at Viewforth Square are surrounded by housing of a lower scale, and the adjacent Boroughmuir School. The curve of Gillespie Crescent draws the eye round into the landscaping of the adjacent Viewpoint Housing Association site. Westhall Gardens, Admiral Terrace and Leamington Terrace contain three storey flats which blend in well with the mix of taller tenements and terraced housing.

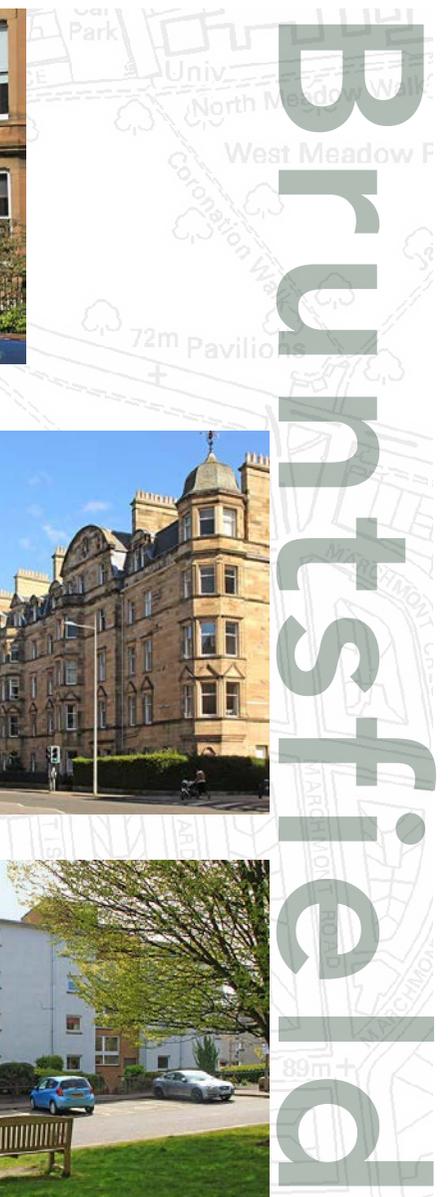


**Key elements: architectural character (predominant)**

The architectural character of the area is dominated by Victorian tenements. The tenements vary in scale, from three to five storey, each having an integrity of purpose and definition. The five storey tenements are concentrated along or near the main roads. The stylishness and exuberance of the tenements varies from the corbelled wall-head chimneys of Viewforth/Viewforth Square and George Washington Browne's blocks on Bruntsfield Place, to the plainer but still coherent three storey blocks.



There is a more eclectic mix of houses in the northern part of the area - in Gilmore Place and Viewforth Terrace. However, these are mainly all high quality stone buildings of significant character.



Gillespie Crescent - both post-war new-build. The substantial tenement blocks at the top of Bruntsfield Place have been described as echoing the grand mansion flats of London. Hippolyte Jean Blanc designed the blocks at 155-192 (built 1882) and George Washington Browne developed the style further for those at 131-151 (built 1887). The blocks at 198-206 Bruntsfield Place/1 & 3 Montpelier Park are in the style of George Washington Browne. There are also tenement blocks in the area by Edward Calvert, Dunn & Findlay and James Miller.

The terraced housing, whilst often not having special individuality, compensate for this with rhythm and solidity - their patina creating a permanence and sobriety which belies the small variety within the built form. The classic Victorian bay windows repeating up a street add a human scale.

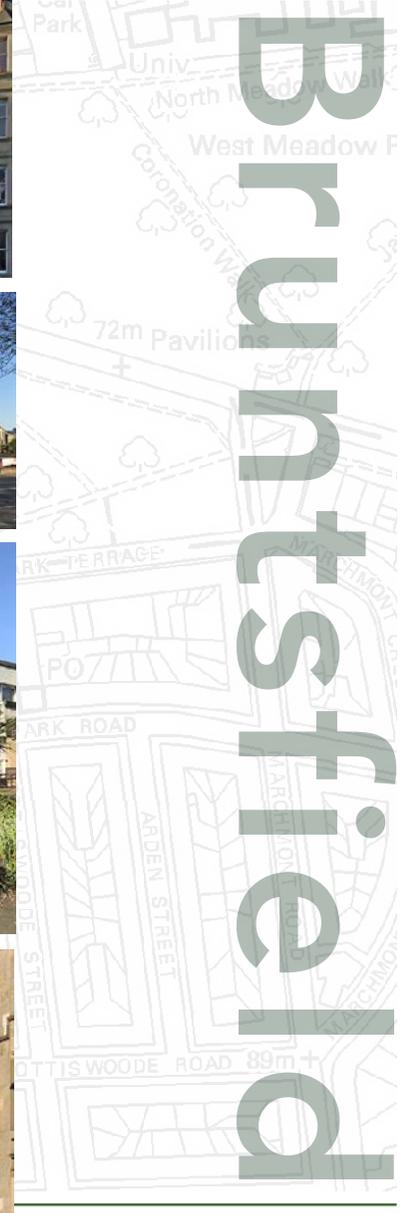
The Georgian villas between 46 and 65 Bruntsfield Place are a link with the older roots of this area. The Bruntsfield Hotel provides an interesting anchor/change point where the Georgian Villas meet the tenements on Bruntsfield Place. Glengyle Lodge, at 65 Bruntsfield Place, is an early Victorian detached house built around 1860 by W M MacGregor. Viewforth Square was designed by Edward Calvert in 1891-5, and with its corbel-topped bays and ladder-like chimneys, is very similar to the Bruntsfield Avenue tenements.

The tenements at 2-24 Viewforth were designed by R M Cameron in 1885. R M Cameron also designed the tenements in Bruntsfield Avenue which face down to Bruntsfield Primary School and continue round to Bruntsfield Place. 6-28 Montpelier Park has spired bays and was designed by Dunn & Findlay in 1893.

The Art Deco apartment block in Bruntsfield Gardens/Forbes Road built between 1936 - 39 fits well within the tenement housing. It is designed purposefully round the 'L' shaped site and makes a fitting statement to match the adjacent tenements.

The low-rise flatted development by Viewpoint Housing Association on the Gillespie Hospital/Royal Blind Asylum workshop site provides a modern theme to this locality, and includes high quality landscaping.

The consistent use of grey sandstone, slate roofs, timber sash windows, substantial front doors, and stone boundary walls unifies the varied built forms. The low stone walling to the front of buildings is an important feature of the area, particularly where enhanced by traditional railings and gates which add rhythm and character.



**Key elements: architectural character (prominent individual buildings)**

**Ecclesiastical buildings**

The Barclay Viewforth Church is an important landmark, and one of the most visually exciting churches of the city. It is built on a slight incline with its rear elevation open to Bruntsfield Links. Its three stage 250-foot-high tower dominates the landscape from the Meadows and towers above the road to Bruntsfield, each side showing off new aspects of its intricate design. The detailing with its use of foliage and varied natural forms was inspired by the ideas of John Ruskin.

The Bruntsfield Evangelical Church (formerly the United Presbyterian Church) by J Russell Walker in 1882-3, on the corner of Leamington Terrace and Westhall Gardens is described as a 'tough, early French Gothic' style.

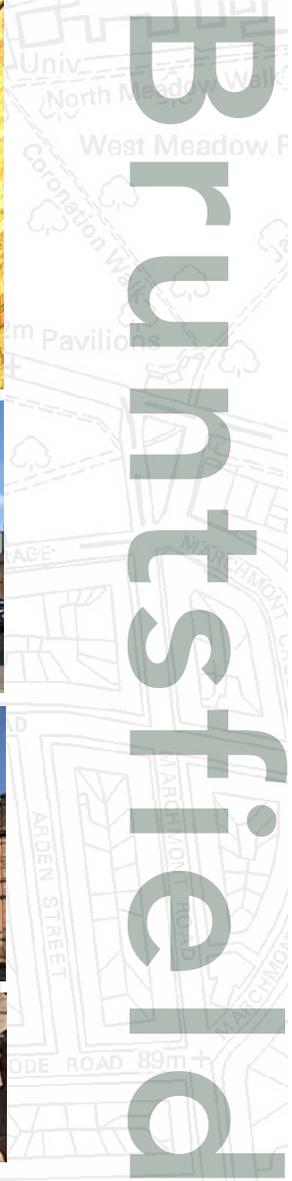
The former Episcopal Church on the corner of Montpelier and Montpelier Park provides another firm anchor to the neighbourhood, with its towering spire.

**Institutional buildings**

The two key educational buildings each have a setting that reinforces their presence:

**Bruntsfield Primary School** was opened in 1893 and designed by the School Board Architects - Robert Wilson and his successor John A Carfrae. It stands almost hidden within the townscape, but is a hive of activity on schooldays. Its location, now confirmed with road restrictions, is a safe space, tucked away from the bustle of Bruntsfield Place and the other busy through-routes.

**The former Boroughmuir High School** on Viewforth nestles to the gradient of the site, with the classic structure well framed by the playground. It is a compact tight structure, with elegant decorative flourishes. With the recent opening (June 2018) of the new Boroughmuir High School on the former site of the Scottish and Newcastle Brewery in Fountainbridge, the former school building received planning and listed building consent for its redevelopment into 104 residential apartments – 17 of which, will be accommodated within a new building to be constructed within the former front playground to the north of the site.



A further institutional building, the post-war Early Years Centre in Viewforth Terrace is one of only a few post-war intrusions within the area. It is archetypal with its flat roof, acres of external slabbing and large horizontal defining elements.

### Activity and uses

The area is principally residential with shops, cafes, restaurants or other commercial activities occupying ground floor units of tenement properties on the principal roads. Bruntsfield Place forms part of the important Bruntsfield / Morningside town centre with an extensive range of retail facilities. The commercial units along Gilmore Place are more marginal. In the stretch along Gilmore Place between Viewforth and Viewforth Terrace, several of the commercial units have been converted to flats.

The two education establishments make an important contribution to the overall character of the area. They generate activity during school hours and act as a centre for community activities in the evening.

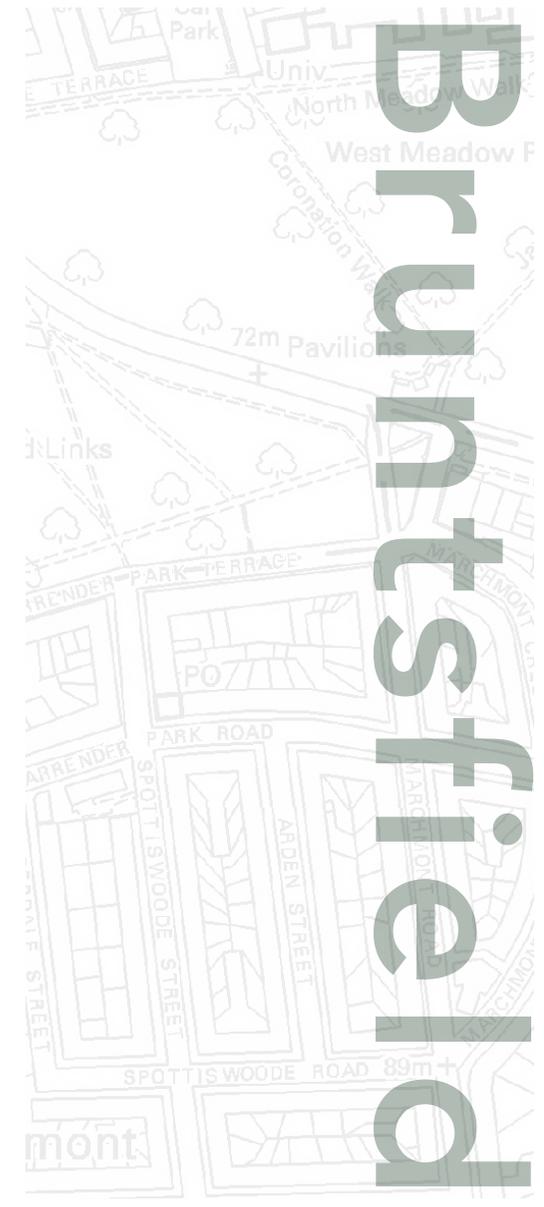
There are a few examples of other uses such as Bed & Breakfast, Hostel, Nursing Home, Private Nursery within the main residential framework. These generally retain the original domestic setting of the buildings and are not intrusive at their current scale. There is also a small garage on Viewforth Terrace, which has been a long-standing occupant of the site within the area.



### Bruntsfield: Essential characteristics – summary statements

#### Spatial character

- high density area of tenements and terraces, with a tight urban structure set on land form sloping to the north in an even gradient
- the area comprises a rectilinear grid structure to most of the streets with interesting variations, formed by cul-de-sacs and a square with Bruntsfield Place, the main arterial route, with its associated grand tenements and villas framing the southern side of the area
- small tenemental front and communal back greens comprise an essential component of the spatial structure of the area – providing both a softening effect on the transition between public and private space and tranquil green open amenity space much valued by residents
- Institutional buildings set within more generous plots and set back from regular layout of tenements blocks are scattered throughout the area, a number have been converted or are in the process of being converted for residential led mixed use schemes
- there are significant views to the north and south-east, such as at Viewforth towards the Firth of Forth and where Bruntsfield Links provides a sweeping vista across to Marchmont and down towards Melville Drive, with the Bruntsfield Hotel and the Barclay Viewforth Church forming landmark features
- the main vistas are across the Links and up and down Bruntsfield Place, with the view down to Tollcross framing the Castle. There are several smaller scale views of importance - down Gillespie Crescent, down Bruntsfield Avenue, and onto the crossroads and churches at Holy Corner.

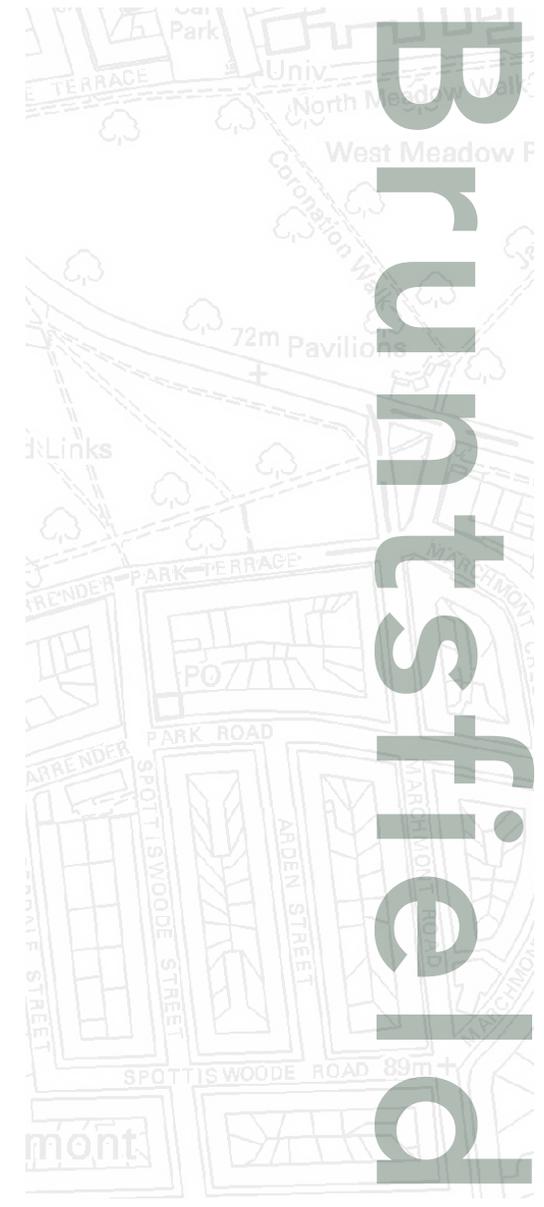


**Townscape character:**

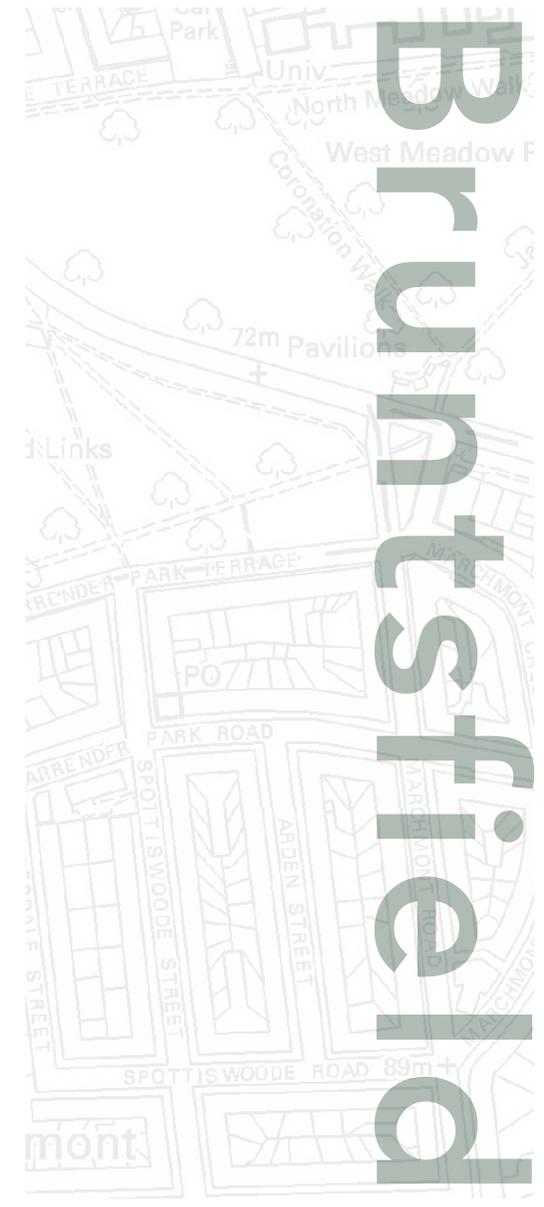
- the sweep of five storey tenements along upper Bruntsfield Place dominates the area, forming an edge and framing the route to the south. They continue down into the adjacent streets of Bruntsfield Gardens, Forbes Road, Bruntsfield Terrace and Merchiston Place. Their individual variety provides character and a classic view, with the Barclay Viewforth Church to the right and the Castle in the centre background
- Bruntsfield Gardens derives significant character and interest from its enclosed end and an art deco block of flats. The culs-de-sac of Hartington Place and Hartington Gardens exhibit a calm settled air with their rhythmic pattern of bay windows, front gardens, and steps as the gradient rises slightly along the terraces. Front garden parking has resulted in some disruption to the pattern of front boundary enclosures. Other terraced housing in the area builds on this solid, urban character, and forms links between the tenements
- the tenements in the north part of the area have more of a rectilinear framework. Montpelier Park displays coherence, in terms of virtually full tenemental design on both sides of the street, however, even with this, there are differences in colour. Bruntsfield Avenue has a similar coherence, with tenements on both sides framing the compact, yet large Victorian Primary school. The other tenements radiate out from the main arterial roads of Bruntsfield Place and Gilmore Place
- the tenements at Viewforth Square are surrounded by housing of a lower scale, and the adjacent Boroughmuir School. The curve of Gillespie Crescent draws the eye round into the landscaping of the adjacent Viewpoint Housing Association site. Westhall Gardens, Admiral Terrace and Leamington Terrace contain three storey flats which blend in well with the mix of taller tenements and terraced housing.

**Architectural Character:**

- architectural character of the area is largely dominated by Victorian tenements of vary scales with the taller five storey tenements situated along or near to the areas main roads. The stylishness and exuberance of the tenements varies from the corbelled wall-head chimneys of Viewforth/Viewforth Square and the large 'mansion flat' blocks on Bruntsfield Place, to plainer but still coherent three storey blocks



- particular emphasis is placed on the design of perimeter and corner blocks within the Bruntsfield Place where elaborate architectural features such as ornate gabling, corbelled turrets and intricate decorative features are used to further emphasise landmark buildings in naturally commanding locations within the townscape
- terraced housing, whilst often not having special individuality, compensate for this with rhythm and solidity - their patina creating a permanence and sobriety which belies the small variety within the built form. The classic Victorian bay windows repeating up a street add a human scale
- street compositions, give the impression of unity due to the discipline of form, height and materials. The exclusive use of natural Scottish slated roofs and timber framed sash and case windows comprising large-span plate glass positioned in a one over one astragal arrangement, comprise crucial unifying elements that knit together the area's architectural diversity in elevational treatment
- further variation in the mix of houses found in the northern part of the area – such as the high quality stone buildings located in Gilmore Place and Viewforth Terrace helping to provide further diversity of architectural character to the area
- Georgian villas between on Bruntsfield Place provide a link with the older roots of this area with the Bruntsfield Hotel providing an interesting anchor/change point where the Georgian Villas meet the tenements on Bruntsfield Place.



## Management: legislation, policies and guidance

### Conservation areas and listed buildings

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that Conservation Areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas.

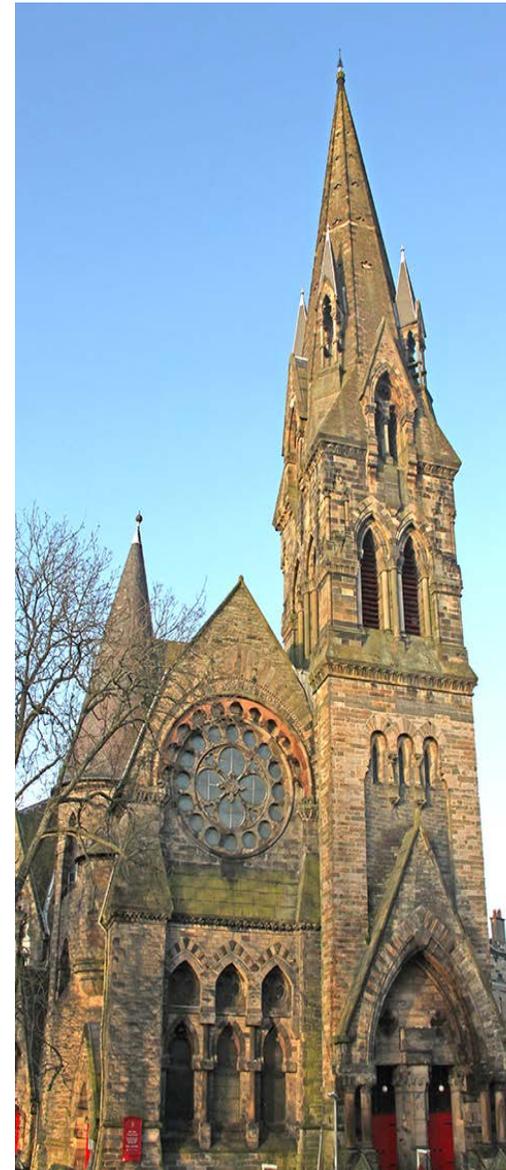
Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area when planning controls are being exercised. Conservation Area status brings a number of special controls:

- The demolition of unlisted buildings requires Conservation Area Consent;
- Some permitted development rights, which allow improvements or alterations to the external appearance of dwelling houses and flatted dwellings, are removed; and
- Works to trees are controlled (see Trees for more detail).

The removal of buildings which make a positive contribution to an area is only permitted in exceptional circumstances, and where the proposals meet certain criteria relating to condition, conservation deficit, adequacy of efforts to retain the building and the relative public benefit of replacement proposals. Conservation Area Character Appraisals are a material consideration when assessing applications for development within Conservation Areas.

Alterations to windows are also controlled in Conservation Areas in terms of the Council's guidelines.

A significant number of buildings within the Conservation Area are listed for their special architectural or historic interest and are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. Listed building consent is required for the demolition of a listed building, or its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its special character.



### Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement & Guidance

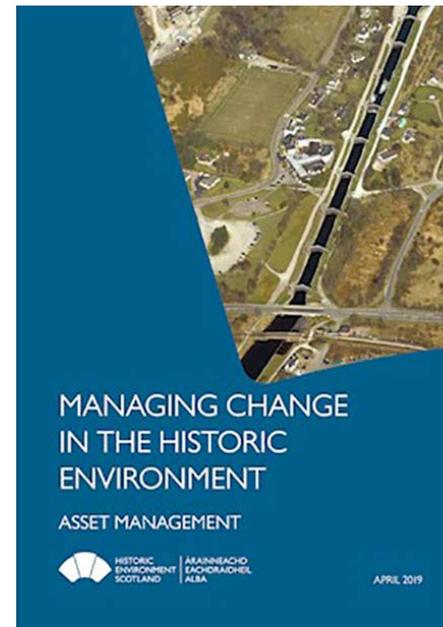
The [Historic Environment Policy for Scotland](#) (HEPS) sets out how to approach decisions in the planning system affecting the historic environment. While it is not a statutory requirement, HEPS is a material consideration and should be taken into account in the planning system whenever a decision will affect the historic environment.

The [‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment’ guidance series](#) provides best practice advice in assessing development proposals against the HEPS and are the primary guidance documents planning officers should be referring to when considering applications for listed building consent and planning permission against the HEPS in meeting the statutory test set out in Section 14 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 which states:

“In considering whether to grant consent, special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. For the purposes of this issue, preserve, in relation to the building, means preserve it either in its existing state or subject only to such alterations or extensions as can be carried out without serious detriment to its character”

The following Historic Environment Scotland Managing guidance relevant to development within the Marchmont Meadows & Bruntsfield Conservation Area comprise:

- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Demolition of Listed Buildings’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Setting’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Extensions’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Windows’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Doorways’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Roofs’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: External Walls’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: External Features’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Shopfronts and Signs’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Boundaries’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Accessibility’
- ‘Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Asset Management’



There are also relevant documents providing interim detailed guidance on the application of HEPS to applications effecting listed buildings and conservation areas - setting out the principles that Historic Environment Scotland recommend are followed in the Scottish planning system. These should be read alongside HEPS and the Managing Change guidance series:

[Interim Guidance on the Principles of Listed Building Consent](#)

[Interim Guidance on Conservation Areas \(Designation and Conservation Area Consent\)](#)



### City of Edinburgh Councils' Local Development Plan & Planning Guidance

The purpose of the policies relating to conservation areas within the Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) is to protect and, where possible, enhance the character and appearance of Edinburgh's many conservation areas. By controlling the demolition of buildings and ensuring new development is of appropriate design and quality, their aim is to protect the City's heritage for future generations.

Policy Env 5 'Conservation Areas – Demolition of Buildings' of the LDP stresses that applications for demolition will be permitted only where this does not erode the character and appearance of the conservation area. The general presumption will be in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area, particularly where it can be demonstrated that the building is able to support a new viable use, or might be capable of such in the future. Conservation Area Consent may be subject to conditions or a legal agreement to link demolition works to the provision of the proposed replacement building or, in exceptional circumstances, to require temporary landscaping.

Design statements are required for new developments in a conservation area. This statement should include reference to the Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield conservation Area Character Appraisal and show how these have informed the proposed design.

More detailed, subject-specific guidance is also set out in [Planning Guidance Documents](#). Those particularly relevant to the Marchmont Meadows and Bruntsfield Conservation Area are:

- 'Guidance for Householders'
- 'Guidance for Businesses'
- 'Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas'
- 'Affordable Housing'
- 'Edinburgh Design Guidance'
- 'Developer Contributions & Infrastructure Delivery'



### Article 4 Direction Orders

In addition to the policies and guidance from HES and the City of Edinburgh Council, a number of statutory tools are available to assist development management within the Conservation Area.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, amended 2012, (abbreviated to GPDO), restricts the types of development which can be carried out in a Conservation Area without the need for planning permission. These include most alterations to the external appearance of dwelling houses and flats. Development is not precluded, but such alterations will require planning permission and special attention will be paid to the potential effect of proposals.

Under Article 4 of the GPDO, the planning authority can seek the approval of the Scottish Ministers for Directions that restrict development rights further. The Directions effectively control the proliferation of relatively minor developments in Conservation Areas which can cumulatively lead to the erosion of character and appearance. The Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield Conservation Area has Article 4 Directions covering the following classes of development:

- 7 The erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure;
- 38 water undertakings;
- 39 development by gas suppliers; and
- 40 development by electricity undertakers.

### Trees

Public and private mature trees contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. Larger trees are also complementary to the scale of the areas wide streets, large open spaces and pedestrian/cycle routes surrounding and transecting them.

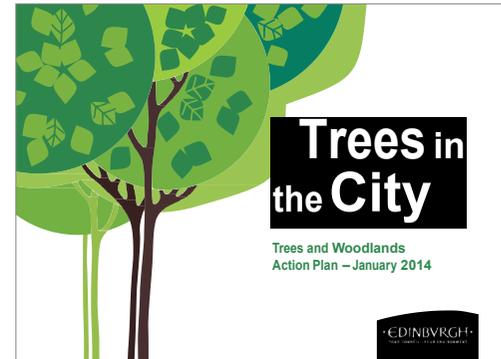
Trees within Conservation Areas are covered by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006. This Act applies to the uprooting, felling or lopping of a tree having a diameter exceeding 75mm at a point 1.5m above ground level. The planning authority must be given six weeks' notice of the intention to uproot, fell or lop trees. Failure to give notice will render the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

Tree Preservation Orders are made under planning legislation to protect individual and groups of trees considered important for amenity or because of their cultural or historic



interest. When assessing amenity, the importance of trees as wildlife habitats will be taken into consideration. There is a strong presumption against any form of development or change of use of land which is likely to damage or prejudice the future long-term existence of trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order. The removal of trees for arboriculture reasons will not imply that the space created by their removal can be used for development.

*“Trees in the City”  
contains a set of policies with an action  
plan used to guide the management of  
the Council’s trees and woodlands.*



### Assessing Development within the Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield Conservation Area

#### Context statement

The richness of Marchmont, Meadows and Bruntsfield’s built heritage is considerable. It is the complexity and diversity which make it attractive, yet make these qualities hard to define. Nevertheless, particular emphasis is attached to its contribution as a vast group of finely detailed stone tenements defined by their continuity in form and arrangement but, differentiated in their detailing and decoration.

Larger institutional buildings punctuate this continuity of block plan and form, but generally adhere to the planned arrangement and orientation of buildings within the area – allowing a greater level of appreciation of their architectural interest within their more generous settings.

The Conservation Area also has a fragility and human scale which often does not sit easily with the demands of present day development requirements. These are the qualities and conflicts that must be resolved if the character of the Conservation Area is to be sensitively interpreted and enhanced.

#### General Criteria

General issues to be taken into account in assessing development proposals in the Conservation Area include the appropriateness of the overall massing of development, its scale (the expression of size indicated by the windows, doors, floor heights, and other identifiable units), its proportions and its relationship with its context i.e. whether it sits comfortably. Development should be in harmony with, or complimentary to, its neighbours having regard to the adjoining architectural styles. The use of materials generally matching those which are historically dominant in the area is important, as is the need for the development not to have a visually disruptive impact on the existing



townscape. It should also, as far as possible, fit into the “grain” of the Conservation Area, for example, by respecting historic layout, street patterns or existing land form. It is also important where new uses are proposed that these respect the unique character and general ambience of the Conservation Area, for example certain developments may adversely affect the character of a Conservation Area through noise, nuisance and general disturbance. Proposals outside the boundaries of the Conservation Area should not erode the character and appearance of Marchmont, Meadows or Bruntsfield.

### New Buildings

New development should be of good contemporary design that is sympathetic to the spatial pattern, scale and massing, proportions, building line and design of traditional buildings in the area. New development should also reflect the proportion and scale of the traditional window pattern. The quality of alterations to shop fronts, extensions, dormers and other minor alterations should also be of an appropriately high standard.

The development of new buildings in the Conservation Area should be a stimulus to imaginative, high quality design, and seen as an opportunity to enhance the area. What is important is not that new buildings should directly imitate earlier styles, rather that they should be designed with respect for their context, as part of a larger whole which has a well-established character and appearance of its own. Therefore, while development of a gap site in a traditional terrace may require a very sensitive design approach to maintain the overall integrity of the area; in other cases modern designs sympathetic and complementary to the existing character of the area may be acceptable.

### Alterations and Extensions

Proposals for the alteration or extension of properties in the Conservation Area will normally be acceptable where they are sensitive to the existing building, in keeping with the character and appearance of the particular area and do not prejudice the amenities of adjacent properties. Extensions should be subservient to the building, of an appropriate scale, use appropriate materials and should normally be located on the rear elevations of a property. Very careful consideration will be required for alterations and extensions affecting the roof or within the curtilage of a tenement property, as these may be particularly detrimental to the uniformity of character and appearance within the Conservation Area.

### Definition of ‘Character’ and ‘Appearance’

Conservation Areas are places of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The character of an area is the combination of features and qualities which contribute to the intrinsic worth of an



area and make it distinctive. Special character does not derive only from the quality of buildings. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries, paving materials, urban grain and more intangible features, such as smells and noises which are unique to the area, may all contribute to the local scene. Conservation Area designation is the means of recognising the importance of all these factors and of ensuring that planning decisions address these qualities.

Appearance is more limited and relates to the way individual features within the Conservation Area look. Care and attention should be paid in distinguishing between the impact of proposed developments on both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### Development pressures within the Conservation Area

#### Attic conversions

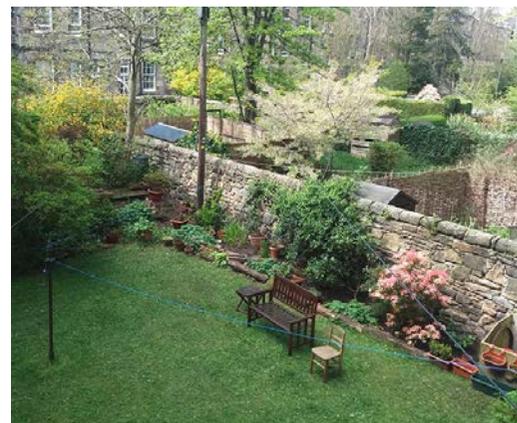
There has been pressure to increase the size of top floor tenement flats by extending their accommodation into the roof space above. The unsympathetic addition of rooflights to facilitate conversions has the potential to negatively impact on key aspects of the roofscape, and key views – essential components of the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Particular sensitivity must be taken in considering their impact on public views, including those from the Meadows to Warrender Park Terrace. Development proposals to install rooflights require careful consideration, taking full cognisance of context, views, size, positioning and design. Where considered acceptable, rooflights should comprise appropriately sized timber ‘conservation style’ design and relate positively to the fenestration pattern below.

#### Basement conversions

There has also been pressure to increase the habitable accommodation available to ground floor tenement flats through partial excavation of front and/or rear garden areas to create basement wells to allow for the installation of windows for light penetration. This too, can significantly erode the quality of the buildings form and detailing where the consistent form and detailing of traditional tenements within tight garden plots comprises part of the essential townscape and architectural character of the conservation area.

#### Tenement front and rear gardens

Tenement front gardens and their communal back greens are key features that comprise an essential component of the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Most front gardens are well tended and hedged with a variety of species and styles and contribute to this softening effect of greenery between public and private space. The



communal back greens are largely unadorned to retain their open and tranquil green space and character setting to the rear of tenements. There has been pressure in places within the Conservation Area to develop extensions or ancillary garden structures/buildings that can erode the quality of the tenement buildings; the street scene; and the open nature of the green garden space. Maintaining these areas as open green spaces for the communal benefit of residents not only preserves the special character and appearance of the area, but also, provides a much-valued level of amenity for residents away from the hustle and bustle experienced from the streets.

### Commercial frontages

There are examples within the Conservation Area of shop fronts that have been altered or replaced with poor quality results. If it is considered that an old shop front is not of sufficient quality to merit complete retention, but retains architectural features such as pilasters, stallrisers and a frieze, retention is strictly advised. This assists in visually linking the new work with the old building. Uncomplementary additions such as large deep fascia boards and other claddings concealing original features should be removed and original features reinstated.

The restoration or reinstatement of traditional shop fronts must be considered as the first option in cases where they would complement the architectural form or relate to the upper floors of the building. This should normally be based on sound historical precedent in terms of archival evidence or surviving features.

### Window replacement

There has been pressure to install double glazing within the Conservation Area. While the need to improve sustainability and reduce heat loss via the installation of double glazing is recognised, there are examples of inappropriate window replacements as a result of their design, detailing or the materials utilised. In this regard, the use of standard modern uPVC framed double glazed windows is inappropriate as they have eroded the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area in places. It is therefore crucial that any replacement windows are timber sash and case windows positioned in one over one astragal arrangement in order to compliment the strong rhythmic pattern of bays and fenestration that window design comprises a key component of within the Conservation Area.

For listed buildings within the Conservation Area, it should be noted that improvements in energy efficiency of existing windows can be achieved by draught-proofing, internal secondary glazing, and use of shutters and lined curtains. Some types of double-glazing can be incorporated within existing window joinery and may be acceptable where



no historic glass remains. Where a window is of limited interest or beyond repair, its replacement should be permitted. New double-glazed windows may be acceptable, if they can closely match the original window design, detail and materials.

### Infill or replacement development

Development opportunities for infill or replacement may arise within the area, and will be considered in terms of the relevant guidance. Historic Environment Scotlands' 'Managing Change Guidance series and the Councils 'Edinburgh Design Guidance' and 'Guidance for Householders and Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas' explain the approach advocated by the Council to design in historic contexts.

### Opportunities for enhancement

The character appraisal emphasises the more positive aspects of character in order that the future can build on what is best within the Conservation Area. The quality of urban and architectural design needs to be continuously improved if the character of the Conservation Area is to be enhanced. The retention of good quality buildings (as well as listed buildings) and the sensitive interpretation of traditional spaces in development are of particular importance.

### Streetscape

Careful consideration needs to be given to streetscape which is an essential part of the overall appreciation of the Conservation Areas rich townscape heritage. Repair and renewal work to historic setted street surfaces should be carefully detailed and carried out to the highest standards using quality natural materials.

The streetscape character within the Conservation Area streets has suffered from the installation of additional structures associated with refuse collection, bike storage and signage. Careful consideration should be given to resisting further insertions and reducing their scope within the Conservation Area. The consistent traditional quality of the public realm within the Conservation Areas cannot be understated and careful consideration must be taken to ensuring its traditional quality and consistent arrangement is maintained and enhanced.

While it is recognised that the installation of communal refuse and recycling bins are clearly vital, their location and position within the public realm requires careful consideration as well as effective maintenance if they are not to detract from the traditional quality and consistent arrangement of the historic public realm. The installation of further facilities,



such as cycle storage, reinforces the requirement for careful consideration and effective maintenance of the public realm within the Conservation Area.

### Large scale redevelopment

For larger scale redevelopment schemes, a place brief to guide development should be prepared collaboratively by various Council services and involve extensive engagement with the local community and other stakeholders to help inform proposals at the application stage.

The format of the brief is based on the six qualities of successful places set out in the Scottish Government document 'Creating Places':

- Distinctive;
- Safe and pleasant;
- Easy to move around;
- Welcoming;
- Adaptable; and
- Resource efficient.

For each of these six qualities, the brief should include design and placemaking principles for the site. Future planning applications will be expected to address these principles to ensure that development helps to create a good place. Once approved, the brief will have the status of non-statutory planning guidance and will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning applications. The brief and the consultation report can also be used by other Council services and Locality partners to inform decisions on investment priorities and other actions.

The preparation of place briefs for larger development schemes within the Conservation Area will help to ensure that redevelopment proposals support the delivery of high quality places that enhance the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### High buildings

Notwithstanding the area's ecclesiastical and institutional buildings, the Conservation Area has generally consistent heights and is particularly susceptible to buildings that break the prevailing roof and eaves height and impinge on the many important views. It



is also important to protect the character of the Conservation Area from the potentially damaging impact of high buildings on the periphery out-with the Conservation Area.

### Short term commercial letting

The use of housing stock within the Conservation Area for short-term letting has grown significantly and has the potential to impact on the special character of the Conservation Area. That character does not derive only from the quality of buildings or public realm; intangible features, such as how the area is used, contribute to its unique local character. Although Marchmont and Bruntsfield have traditionally been popular locations for students who attend the University of Edinburgh and Napier University, the practice of letting out entire properties on a short-term basis has increasingly proved financially attractive for investors with property assets within the area. This has the potential to cumulatively impact on the special characteristics of the Conservation Area in ways that more traditional, longer-term rentals have not. Adverse impacts include overcrowding, for example associated with renting out flats with three bedrooms to seven or more people. The growth of regular 'party flats' is another undesirable trend.

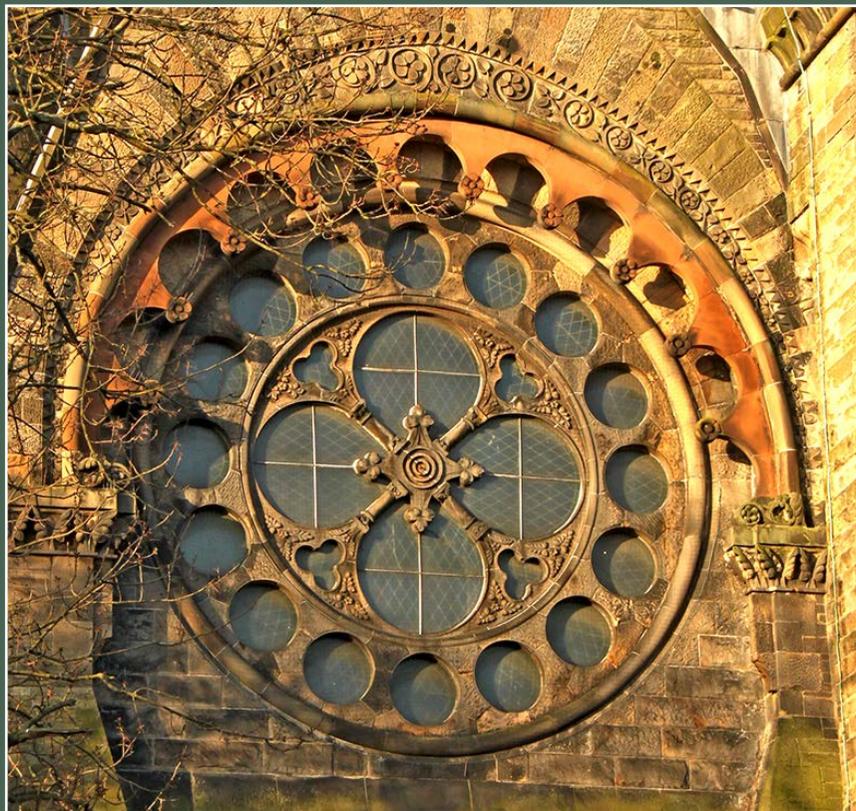
Analysis published in April 2019 by the Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) has shown that there were over 350 entire homes registered within the areas of Marchmont East & Sciennes, Marchmont West, and Bruntsfield on the Airbnb website. Within the Conservation Area as a whole, the number of Airbnb properties has continued to grow each year from 2009. The Airbnb report suggests that 39% of the 350 entire properties registered for let in 2017 operated in excess of 90 days, which would indicate they are no longer being used on a residential basis.

The use of the housing stock within the Conservation Area for short-term letting has the potential to adversely impact on available housing supply. It could also erode the sense of community and regular short-term lets are generally not considered suitable for tenemental properties where noise and antisocial behavior created by guests would have a more pronounced impact on the amenity of neighbouring residential users. Care should therefore be taken in assessing applications for planning permission for a change of use from residential to a short-term let, given the potential cumulative adverse impact unregulated short-stay lets could have on the special character of the Conservation Area.

### Repair, Maintenance and Alterations

The character of the Conservation Area is maintained through regular maintenance of the built fabric in appropriate quality materials. Owners of buildings are encouraged to repair and maintain their properties without loss or damage to their character or integrity. Repairs should be considered as the preferred option, with replacement only where it would enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.





**Marchmont, Meadows & Bruntsfield**

Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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