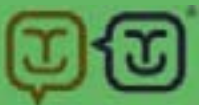




MORNINGSIDE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL



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• EDINBURGH •
THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

*THE MORNINGSIDE CONSERVATION AREA
CHARACTER APPRAISAL WAS APPROVED BY THE PLANNING
COMMITTEE
ON 4TH OCTOBER 2001*

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION2
Conservation Areas2
Character Appraisals2
Morningside Conservation Area.....3
Conservation Area Boundary3

HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT4

ANALYSIS AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER7
Spatial Structure7
Townscape9
Vistas and View Map.....10
Spatial Structure Map.....11
Essential Character:Spatial Structure & Townscape12
Architectural Character.....13
Essential Character:Architectural Character.....15
Activities and Uses15
Essential Character:Activities &Uses15
Natural Heritage16
Essential Character:Natural Heritage17
Opportunities for Enhancement.....17
Role of the Public.....18
Boundary Changes.....18

GENERAL INFORMATION 19
Statutory Policies relating to Morningside19
Supplementary Guidance.....19
Implications of Conservation Area Status20

REFERENCES 22

INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas

Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, describes conservation areas as “... areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The Act makes provision for the designation of conservation areas as distinct from individual buildings, and planning authorities are required to determine which parts of their areas merit conservation area status. There are currently 38 conservation areas in Edinburgh, including city centre areas, Victorian suburbs and former villages. Each conservation area has its own unique character and appearance.

Character Appraisal

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

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

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

NPPG 18: Planning and the Historic Environment states that Conservation Area Character Appraisals should be prepared when reconsidering existing conservation area designations, promoting further designations or formulating enhancement schemes. The NPPG also specifies that Article 4 Direction Orders will not be confirmed unless a character appraisal is in place.

Morningside Conservation Area

The Morningside Conservation Area lies to the south of The Grange Conservation Area and was originally designated in 1996.

The conservation area is situated some 4kms from the City centre and lies within the boundaries of Wards 46 and 51.

The southern boundary of the conservation area runs along the rear of the properties on the south side of Braidburn Terrace and Hermitage Drive, overlooking the Braid Burn and the Hermitage of Braid. The eastern boundary follows Midmar Drive to the north, overlooking the allotments on the slope of Blackford Hill. The boundary then crosses Cluny gardens and Cluny Avenue before following the boundary of the Astley Ainslie Hospital up to Canaan Lane. At this point the boundary turns westwards before turning south to Jordan Lane, running a short distance along the Lane before turning south again to run along the rear of the properties on Nile Grove, to meet up with Morningside Road. The boundary then runs southwards down Morningside and Comiston Roads before rejoining Braidburn Terrace.



HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

The Morningside Conservation Area partly covers an area that was formerly known as the Burgh Muir. This was common ground gifted to the City of Edinburgh by David 1 in the first half of the 12th century. At this time the dense forest of Drumselch lay to the south of the City and it was the major part of this forest that David gifted to the City. The forest stretched from the Meadows southwards to the lower slopes of the Blackford and Braid Hills.

The Burgh Muir stretched from Bruntsfield Place and Morningside Road on the west to Dalkeith Road on the east. The southern boundary was formed by the Pow, or Jordan Burn, flowing through the lowest point of Morningside Road.

Braid, lying to the south of Morningside, and therefore lying outside the Burgh Muir, was owned in the 12th Century by Sir Henry de Brade, sheriff of Edinburgh. His surname derives from the name of his Scottish estate, which is Gaelic for a throat, or gorge.

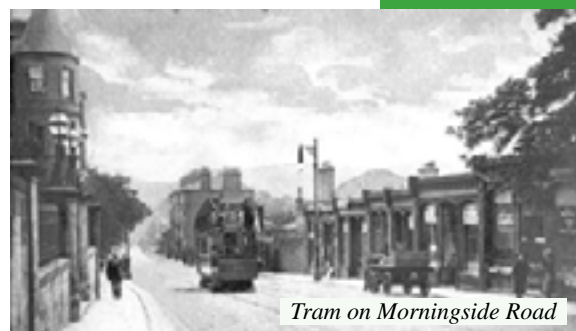
In 1585, Edinburgh was decimated by the plague. The authorities did everything possible to prevent the spread of the disease and make provision for the victims. This proved extremely costly and took the municipal treasury to the point of bankruptcy. In overcoming this financial disaster, the Town Council decided in 1586 to feu out the Wester Burgh Muir. From this decision the districts of Greenhill, Morningside, east Morningside and Canaan slowly emerged.



Morningside, located on the old road from Edinburgh to Biggar, became an agricultural village serving the population of the many neighbouring farms and estates. During the 1700s the village was represented by only a handful of houses. By 1880, the situation was beginning to change. Grant, in “Old and New Edinburgh” stated that Morningside was “once a secluded village, consisting of little more than a row of thatched cottages, a line of trees, and a blacksmith’s forge, from which it gradually grew to become an agreeable environ and summer resort of the citizens, with the fame of being the “Montpelier” of the east of Scotland.”

The gradual transformation of village to suburb was encouraged by the building of a proliferation of villas and mansions which increased the population dramatically. The Edinburgh Transport Act of 1871 permitted the Local Authority to construct, or own a tramway system, but the operation of the system was leased to private operators. This new emerging suburb in Morningside was

one of the first routes to be served with a tram service running from Register House, at the east end of Princes Street, to Morningside.



Tram on Morningside Road

However, by far the biggest spur to new development was the opening, in 1885, of the Edinburgh Suburban and South Side Junction Railway with a station and goods yard located on Maxwell Street. Much of the planning of this successful suburban line was undertaken by Thomas Bouch, designer of the ill fated Tay rail bridge.

The construction of the suburban rail line encouraged increasing numbers of people to take up residence in Morningside and Braid. This was particularly evident in the 1930s when railway transport was at its peak, with this line providing a regular service to Waverley Station. The line was closed to passenger traffic in 1962 under the cuts implemented by Beeching.

For many centuries, Morningside and Braid road formed the main route linking Edinburgh to Biggar until 1830, when a new length of turnpike road, known as Comiston Road, was built to avoid the steep braes of Braid Road. Initially, with the coming of the railway in 1885, farm produce and livestock was brought down this road to the Maxwell Street goods yard for onward transmission to the City. However, by 1890s the northern end of Comiston Road, formerly known as Little Egypt, was being developed for housing. This farm with its biblical name, had given rise to a number of local associated names, such as Jordan, Canaan and Nile. The Braid Estate, owned by the Gordon family, was feued by Sir Rowand Anderson, with Nile Grove being the first street to be developed in 1881. Subsequent streets were named for Braid or other estates owned by the Gordon family. During the 1880s, Cluny Avenue and Gardens, built in 1884 and 1885 respectively, were followed by Cluny Drive, Terrace and Place in the 1890s. From 1900 onwards, Corrennie Gardens and Drive were built, closely followed by a series of streets beginning with Midmar.





Blackford Observatory

By 1910, the Braid Estate, feued by R. Rowand Anderson, had been fully developed up to Blackford Hill, which had been purchased by the Town Council in 1888 to provide the first municipal golf course in Scotland. In 1890, the Town Council sold three and a half acres on the east slope of Blackford Hill to the Government Office of Works to build an observatory.



R. Rowand Anderson



Hermitage of Braid and its estate forms the southern boundary of the conservation area and provides an important recreation area for the City. The house was designed by Robert Burn. Completed in 1785, it has mock battlements and corner turrets in memory of Braid Castle. In 1937, the estate of 42 acres, including the Hermitage, lodge and policies, with dell and valley, was purchased by John McDougal for £11,000. In 1938, John McDougal presented these properties to Magistrates of Edinburgh to be used as a public park, or recreation ground for the benefit of the citizens of Edinburgh.



Hermitage Lodge

ANALYSIS AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

Spatial Structure

The topography of the conservation area, sitting across a valley running west to east, originally formed by the Pow or Jordan Burn, divides the area into two distinct areas. This valley is now occupied by the south suburban rail line which carries freight only. Morningside Road, which forms the western boundary of the conservation area, runs down the south facing slope to meet the clock and the green “square” sitting at the foot of the road, in front of Morningside Parish Church. This south facing slope forms part of the heart of the original Morningside village.



Green Square

Once the rail line is crossed, Morningside Road changes to become Comiston Road which skirts the north west facing slope of the Braid Hills. The original main route of Braid Road separates off from Comiston Road at its southern end and climbs the steep north facing slope of the Braids. This southern junction forms the collection point for four separate roads.

Comiston and Morningside Roads form one of the major arterial routes from Edinburgh to the south west. Only one other road runs right through, but not beyond the conservation area on a north south axis, this being Woodburn Terrace, changing to Braid Avenue once the railway is crossed to the south.

The northern boundary of the conservation area zig zags between Jordan Lane and Canaan Lane. In this small area there is a small eclectic mix of buildings and periods, ranging over vernacular single storey buildings, to Georgian detached buildings and Victorian tenements. Part of this northern boundary is shared with the Grange Conservation Area at Astley Ainslie Hospital.

South of this enclave, the conservation area is characterised by solid, substantial, Victorian residential properties ranging over terraces, semi detached and detached houses, with tenements occurring on Comiston Road.

The southern boundary is formed by the rear gardens of Hermitage Drive which overlook the woodland park of Hermitage of Braid. Hermitage Drive forms a flat ridge line before descending the steep slopes of Hermitage of Braid. The eastern boundary is formed by Midmar Drive which is a single sided street overlooking extensive allotments, which in turn are overlooked by the mass of Blackford Hill lying to the east.



South Suburban Rail Line

The principal features of the urban fabric are characterised by a loose grid layout dividing the area into unequal rectangular perimeter blocks, which are lined by semi detached and detached houses to the east of Braid Road. The area from Braid Road to Comiston Road forms a long triangle with five separate roads penetrating between the two roads, giving good permeability. The effect of this is to create irregularly shaped perimeter blocks upto Braidburn Terrace.



Mature Tree

With the exception of Comiston Road, the overall density of the conservation area is low with individual front and rear gardens to the majority of the buildings within the conservation area. Generally, there are smaller gardens to the front and extensive gardens to the rear, both containing mature trees. The gardens are well tended and are particularly important in terms of greening the area and offering a mature landscape setting. Most gardens are defined by low stone walls and hedging.



Development at Braid Avenue

There are two recent developments, one being a brick built terrace on Midmar Drive and the other being an extensive block of flats turning the corner of Braid Avenue and Hermitage Drive. The latter site was developed after the original single villa was burnt down and now contains two large blocks of flats. Both of these developments respect the scale and general massing of the area. Their use of render with red pre-cast concrete margins to windows in one case

and particularly brick in the other, do not reflect the materials characteristic of the area.



Modern Terrace at Midmar Drive

Townscape

The primary north – south route through the area is Morningside Road, which acts as the main shopping street for the area. Once the railway line is crossed, the principal road becomes Comiston Road. The original main route of Braid Road separates off from Comiston Road at its southern end, rejoining Comiston Road at Buckstone.

The principal east – west through route is Cluny Gardens, which begins at the junction where Comiston and Braid roads separate. Cluny Gardens skirts round the northern foot of Blackford Hill before connecting with Mayfield.

Although the area has a diverse mix of styles and ages, the predominant character is made up of large Victorian houses sitting in large gardens, which give an air of spaciousness. These properties vary in height from three to three and half storeys and are constructed of stone with slated roofs. Morningside and Comiston Roads evidence a more traditional tenemental form. On Comiston Road, tenements are set back from the heel of the pavement with small front gardens. At the points where shops and offices occur, the front garden the building line of the tenement is carried through producing a wider pavement in front of the shops. Four churches feature in the area acting as focal points.

Views through the conservation area are important. Travelling from south to north views are given along streets towards Blackford Hill and the Braids giving an indication of wilderness areas. In the direction south to north, the skyline of Edinburgh is glimpsed, particularly from the ridge formed by Hermitage Drive, where the streets leading north are subtly aligned on the castle by slightly skewing the street blocks. A particularly fine townscape vista is offered down



Cluny Gardens



Victorian Villa

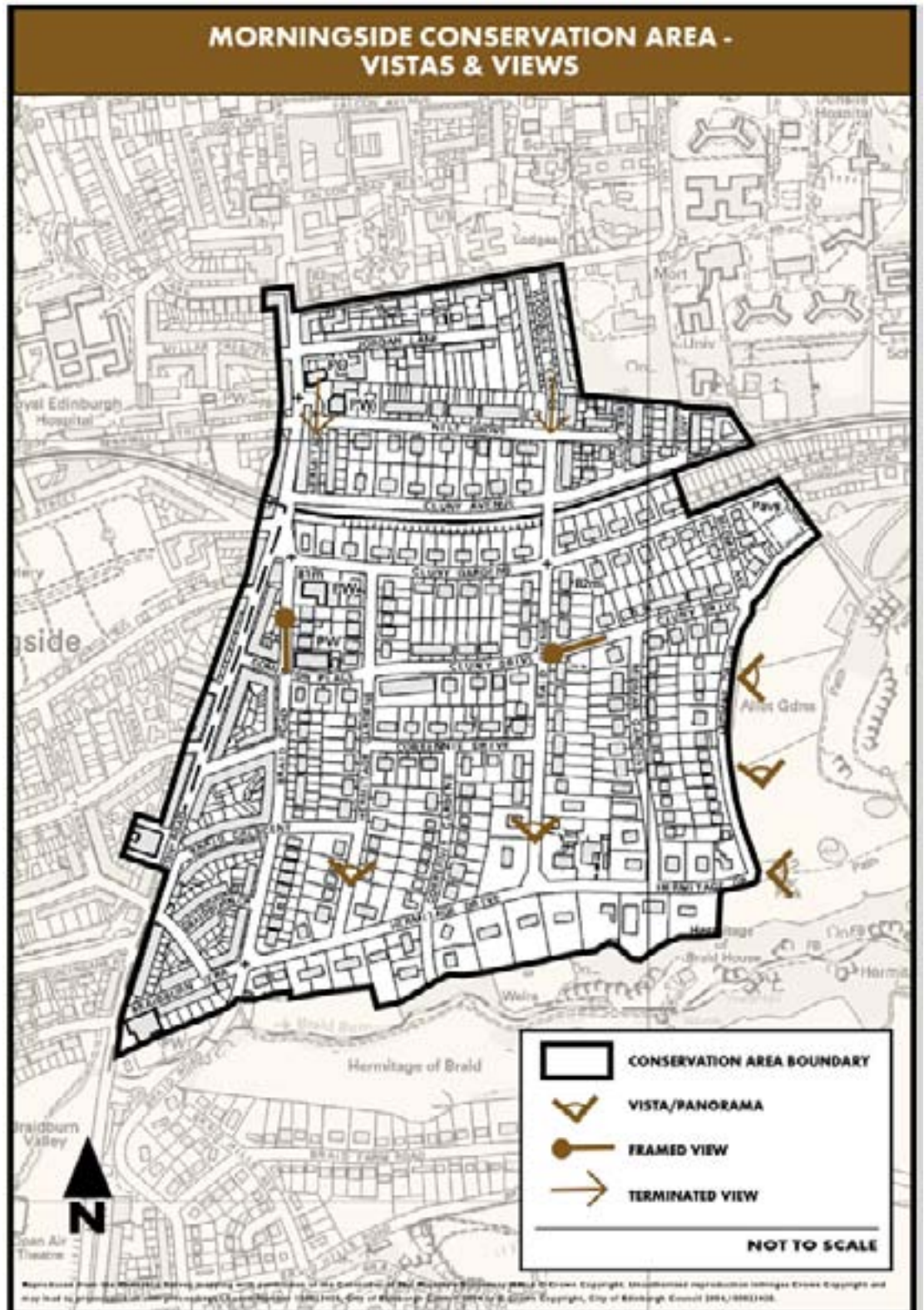


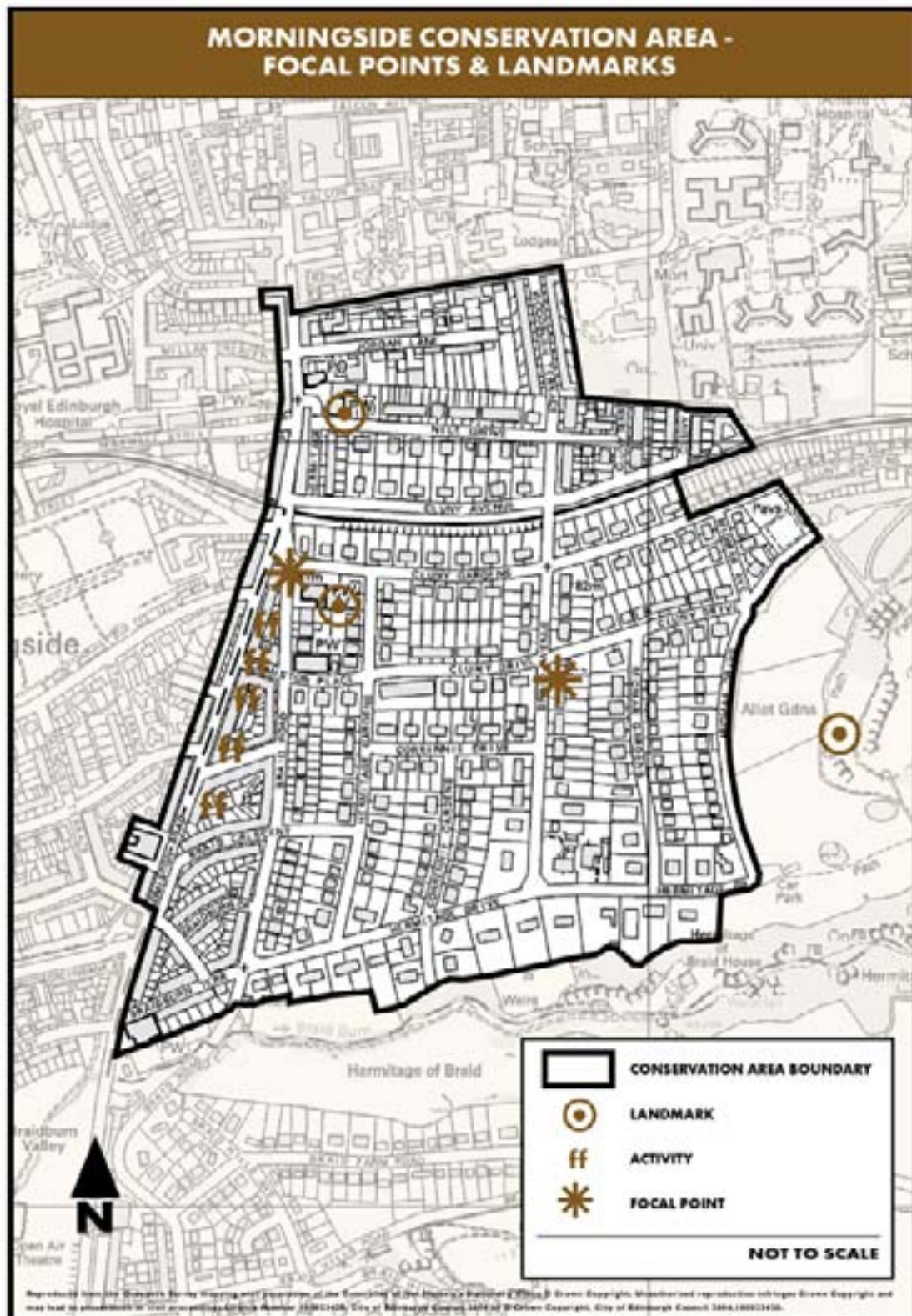
Tenement on Comiston Rd



View to Blackford Hill

Braid Avenue. A spectacular panoramic view is offered at the one sided Midmar Drive which immediately overlooks popular allotment gardens, with Blackford Hill in the immediate background and the City skyline to the north.





Essential Character: Spatial Structure and Townscape

- *The principal feature of the urban fabric is a subtle Victorian grid structure responding to the topography by setting up views to the castle and dividing the area into unequally sized rectangular perimeter blocks.*
- *Perimeter blocks are surrounded by substantial Victorian housing composed of individual, semi detached and terraced housing that exhibit continuity through their uniform heights, massing and use of stone and slated roofs.*
- *Gardens with mature trees predominate throughout the area, having a strong greening affect throughout the area.*
- *Northern views along streets to Blackford Hill and the Braids and southern views back to the City skyline are important.*



View down Braid Road

Architectural Character

The conservation area contains a total of 44 Listed Items. The architectural character is largely composed of Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraces which form boundaries to extensive blocks of private open space. The villa streets are complemented by the profusion of mature trees, extensive garden settings, stone boundary walls and spacious roads. The villas are in variety of architectural styles, unified by the use of local building materials. The northern part of the area within Jordan and Canaan Lanes contains a more varied architectural mix of buildings ranging over traditional village dwellings, Georgian villas and tenements.

The first phase of the development of the Braid estate from 1880 had Rowand Anderson and George Washington Browne as the main architects. Rowand Anderson remained the feuing architect of the extended scheme south of the railway line until the early 1900s.

Four churches provide focal points in the conservation area:

- The octagonal, Italianate Braid Church 1886 by George Washington Browne, lying on the corner of Hermitage Terrace and Nile Grove, forms part of the first phase of the Braid Estate, overlooking the open space fronting Hermitage Terrace.
- Cluny Parish Church 1889, is a red sandstone church lying on the grassy terraced corner of Braid Road and Cluny Gardens by Hippolyte J. Blanc in 1889. A tower at the north west corner was proposed, but never built.
- Cluny Church Centre 1890, on the corner of Cluny Drive and Braid Road is a confident, red sandstone, mixed gothic building by Rowand Anderson. Its square north west tower becomes more elaborate in stages. In the mid 1970s the interior was divided to form small rooms and offices on the ground floor.
- Greenbank Church, on the corner of Braidburn Terrace and Comiston Road, is a bland building built in the Gothic manner with red sandstone margins. Built in 1927, it was designed by A. Lorne Campbell. The hall to the east was built in 1900 and used as a temporary church until the main building was erected in 1927. More recently, a new entrance from Braidburn Terrace and a new multi purpose hall, by the Lee Boyd partnership, were erected in 2000.



Braid Church



Cluny Parish Church



Cluny Church Centre

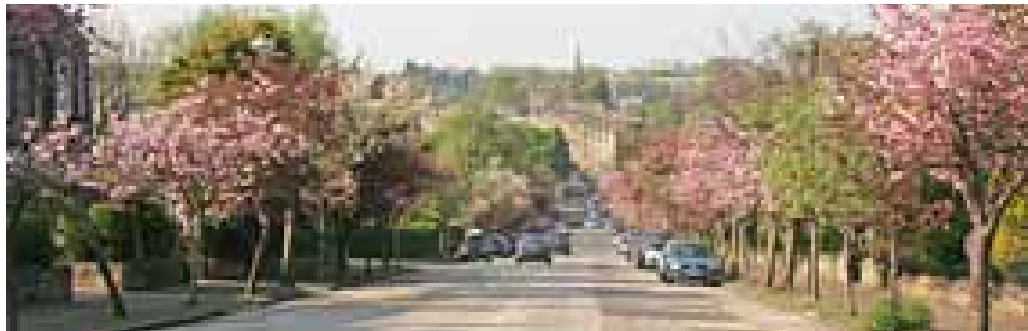


Morning Glory

Comiston Road starts with a giant red sandstone Renaissance block of 1889, including the richly sculpted, formerly named, Hermitage Bar, now called Morning Glory, all sitting at the southern join with Braid Road. Braid Crescent lying between Comiston and Braid Roads has the grandest two storey bay windows in Edinburgh, each crowned with an octagonal lead dome. The long airy roads of the Braid Estate, to the east, were controlled in design terms by the feuing architect Rowand Anderson, with the tree lined, Braid Avenue, running north south, being the grandest road in the estate.



Braid Crescent



Nile Grove and Hermitage Terrace formed part of the development of the Braid Estate from 1880 onwards, with Wardrop Anderson and George Washington Browne as the main architects. The Braid Estate was Edinburgh's answer to Bedford Park in London. Browne who had returned from London in 1883, after working on the Queen Anne development of Kensington Court, brought the Queen Anne style to the Braid Estate and with Rowand Anderson developed its Scottish, masonry based variant.



Queen Anne Style at Cluny Avenue

The houses on Cluny Place and Cluny Avenue formed a later phase (mid 1890s) in the development of the Braid Estate. Designed by Rowand Anderson, the Queen Anne style made way to a more wholehearted adoption of what became "stockbroker tudor".

Essential Character: Architectural Character

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

Activities and Uses

Residential uses predominate throughout the area, producing a peaceful Victorian environment of high quality and high amenity. Intermixed in this quiet suburb there are four churches and a residential care home on Cluny Drive.

This is contrasted with Morningside Road and Comiston Road, the main through route which is a place of activity in terms of social and commercial activities. Morningside Road in particular is the main shopping street for the area containing a full range of shops and services. Comiston Road has less activity, which begins to fall off towards the south.



Essential Character: Activities & Uses

- *The contrast between activity on Morningside and Comiston Roads and the general tranquillity in the residential hinterland of the conservation area.*
- *The peaceful Victorian environment of high quality and high amenity residential uses.*

Natural Heritage



Tennis Courts

Within the boundaries of the conservation area, the environment is predominantly residential and there are very few areas of public open space. Only two areas exist within the conservation area and these consist of; the small narrow area of grassed and railed open space sitting in front of Hermitage Terrace, which contains a number of mature trees; and the Braid Estate Recreation Ground consisting of tennis courts and a bowling club, sitting at the northern foot of Midmar Drive and spanning through to Cluny Gardens.



Green Square at Hermitage Terrace

Despite this lack of public open space within the conservation area, the predominant townscape nature of substantial Victorian properties with their associated large gardens, containing many mature trees, provides an environment of lush greenery. These private gardens are particularly important in providing suitable habitats for bird and wildlife.

It is therefore important that where mature trees are removed due to disease, or old age, that they are replaced, not only to maintain the green character of the area, but also to sustain wildlife.



House on Braid Avenue

Lying immediately outwith the boundaries of the conservation area, to the east, is Blackford Hill which provides a visually dominant backcloth from many points within the area. Hermitage of Braid lies immediately to the south of the conservation area and while this area is not as visually prominent, it is of equal importance in terms of providing easily accessible recreational open space.

Both Blackford Hill and Hermitage of Braid form part of the Green belt, part of an extensive green wedge stretching into the countryside well beyond the city boundary to the south. They are also both classed as Areas of Great Landscape Value and Wildlife Sites, whilst also being classed as a Local Nature Reserve.



Hermitage of Braid

Blackford Hill is geomorphically important and is covered by an SSSI designation due to the presence of Agassiz rock, named after the Swiss geologist Louis Agassiz who determined in 1840 that the grooves in the rock were the result of glacial action. This

discovery was not only important in establishing an understanding the nature of glacial action generally, but also in understanding how the Hermitage valley and Blackford Hill had been formed. The allotments butting against Midmar Drive are a popular facility and extensively used. These too are covered by the Green Belt and AGLV designations.



Essential Character: Natural Heritage

- *The predominance of large gardens with mature trees, being important in terms of their townscape value and their provision of a habitat for wildlife. It is important that where mature trees are removed then they should be replaced.*
- *The dominating nature of Blackford Hill providing significant views.*
- *The easy public access to Hermitage of Braid and Blackford Hill which both provide an important natural, recreational facility.*

Opportunities for Enhancement

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

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

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



The grassed area in front of Hermitage Terrace offers an opportunity for enhancement in terms of railing reinstatement and encouraging greater public use.

Role of the Public

It is essential that property owners accept their maintenance responsibilities. The emphasis should be on the repair rather than replacement of original features, as these contribute to the conservation area's character as a whole. Alterations or additions should be sympathetic to the original style and of an appropriate scale.

Boundary Changes

Boundary changes are proposed at the northern and western edges. It is proposed that the boundary to the north, which zigzags between Jordan Lane and Canaan Lane, moves to the rear of the tenements lining Morningside Road up to and including the tenements on the southern corner of Morningside Park. It is also proposed that the western boundary runs behind the tenements lining the western side of Morningside Road and Comiston Road. At present, the boundary runs down the middle of this main thorough fare where the buildings on the east side, which are within the conservation area, are largely mirrored by similar buildings on the western side. This thorough fare also provides the principal shopping street for the conservation area.



GENERAL INFORMATION

Statutory Policies

The Morningside Conservation Area is contained within The Central Edinburgh Local Plan adopted by the Council in 1997, which includes the conservation area within a broad 'Housing and Compatible Uses' or 'Urban Area' policy allocation, in which the primary concern is to safeguard existing residential character and amenities. Consequently, effect on residential amenity will be the determining consideration for all development proposals, including changes of use.

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

Blackford Hill and Hermitage of Braid, which both lie adjacent to the conservation area boundaries, are contained in the South East Local Plan adopted by the Council in 2005 which contains policies relating to their significance in terms of policies relating to:

- The Green Belt.
- An area of Great Landscape Value.
- A Wildlife Site.
- A Site of Special Scientific Value.

Supplementary Guidelines

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

Implications of Conservation Area Status

Designation as a conservation area has the following implications:

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

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

-
- Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when planning controls are being exercised. Most applications for planning permission for alterations will, therefore, be advertised for public comment and any views expressed must be taken into account when making a decision on the application.
 - Buildings which are not statutorily listed can normally be demolished without approval under the Planning Regulations. Within conservation areas the demolition of unlisted buildings requires conservation area consent.
 - Alterations to windows are controlled in terms of the Council's policy.
 - Trees within conservation areas are covered by the Town and Country (Scotland) Act 1972, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Act applies to the uprooting, felling or lopping of a tree having a diameter exceeding 75mm at a point 1.5m above ground level, and concerns the lopping of trees as much as removal. The planning authority must be given six weeks notice of the intention to uproot, fell or lop trees. Failure to give notice renders the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a TPO.
 - Grants may be available towards the repair or restoration of historic buildings. The Council runs a conservation grant scheme, however, such grants are normally dependent on comprehensive repair and restoration of original features and priority is given to tenemental housing and prominent buildings.

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