



WEST MURRAYFIELD CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

ترجمہ کے لئے ہمارے ترجمانوں کے ساتھ آمنا بھروسہ

بِسْمَاعِنَا تَوْفِيقًا لِلتَّرْجُمَةِ MOZEMY PRZETŁUMACZYĆ 悅樂意翻譯

*WEST MURRAYFIELD
CONSERVATION AREA
CHARACTER APPRAISAL WAS APPROVED BY THE
PLANNING COMMITTEE
10TH APRIL 1986*

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INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas

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

There are currently 39 conservation areas in Edinburgh including city centre areas, Victorian suburbs and former villages. Each conservation area has its own unique character and appearance.

Character Appraisals

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

A Character Appraisal is 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.

West Murrayfield Conservation Area

Designation

The West Murrayfield Conservation Area was designated on 10th April 1986. The boundary was extended on 9th March 2007 to include Beechmount House, 102 Corstorphine Road and its curtilage; the area comprising 33 Ellersly Road and 1 - 5 (consecutive nos.) Guardianswood; and the area comprising 31 - 43 (odd nos.), and 103 Ravelston Dykes Road.

Location

The West Murrayfield Conservation Area lies to the west of Edinburgh, approximately 2 miles from the city centre.



HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

The development of West Murrayfield has taken place over a long period, growing from a predominantly rural backwater into an affluent residential suburb of Edinburgh.

Murrayfield first appears on Adair's map of 1682 under its earlier name of Nisbet's Park. The land was bought from Nisbet of Dean in 1733 by Archibald Murray, later Lord Henderland of the Court of Session. Although Murrayfield House was built in 1735, much of West Murrayfield remained rural up until the early 19th century. Murrayfield Road appears as an old connection between Ravelston to the north and Corstorphine to the south shown on maps of 1753 and 1773. However, the area was not given its current name until the late 19th century when development to the east side of the road was planned.



OS map 1735

West Murrayfield has no buildings of any great antiquity, with most development in the area occurring during the 19th century. Plans indicate that much of the change and underlying spatial structure still visible today was essentially carried out between 1850 and the beginning of the First World War.

Initially, development in the area focused on the construction of large mansion houses with substantial walled gardens set against a rural backdrop. One of the earliest buildings in West Murrayfield was Brucehill, built in the 1720s for Charles Bruce, which stood on the site of the existing Belmont House.

Ravelston House to the north of the existing Conservation Area dates from c.1790 and was built by Alexander Keith in the late Adam manner.

It was not until the early part of the 19th Century that West Murrayfield began to evolve into a spacious suburb. Development of the area during this period focused on Belmont House, a large walled house set in extensive landscaped grounds built in 1828 and designed by William Playfair for Lord Mackenzie. The entrance to the house and estate was originally on Corstorphine Road, but landowner James Miller moved the boundaries back to Ellersly Road during the 1930s and used the land for housing development along Belmont Gardens.

Towards the middle of the 19th Century, West Murrayfield began to grow, particularly to the south-east. From ‘grand’ country houses, development during this period turned to villas of a significant size and quality. However, the north of West Murrayfield remained predominantly rural during this period, with only a large villa known as Rock Villa (later Rockshiel) shown on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1855.



OS map 1855

Although Murrayfield Road had been established on an old connection between Corstorphine and Ravelston during the 18th century, it was not until the 19th century that Murrayfield Road began to develop as the ‘spine’ of West Murrayfield. The 2-storey Georgian villa known as “Innerwick” on the west side of Murrayfield Road was added in 1825-26 along with “Kirkton Lodge” (1855) and “Duncliff”, a large 2-storey stone built villa constructed around 1840 and located on the corner of the rapidly developing Kinellan Road.

Up until the late 19th Century the majority of ground to the east of Murrayfield Road remained rural. However, in 1896 this was converted to form Murrayfield golf course with the clubhouse built at 42 Murrayfield Road in 1897. The life of the golf course on the east side of Murrayfield Road was short. The course was converted for terraced housing during the early part of the 20th century, as the suburb of Murrayfield rapidly expanded eastwards and demand for smaller more compact housing increased. Subsequently, the golf course relocated to the north of Easter Belmont Road. The golf club also vacated their original premises in 1912 moving across the street to 43 Murrayfield Road and into a new Arts and Crafts style clubhouse.

Throughout the early 20th Century West Murrayfield continued to expand as a residential suburb. Development continued to focus around the construction of large villas, encompassing a varied mix of modern and traditional architectural styles. This is particularly evident to the north of West Murrayfield along Easter Belmont Road. During the inter-war period a number of large individually designed villas were developed along this road. Building on gap sites and redevelopment of existing sites continued in and around West Murrayfield post-Second World War.

ANALYSIS AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

Setting and Access

Setting

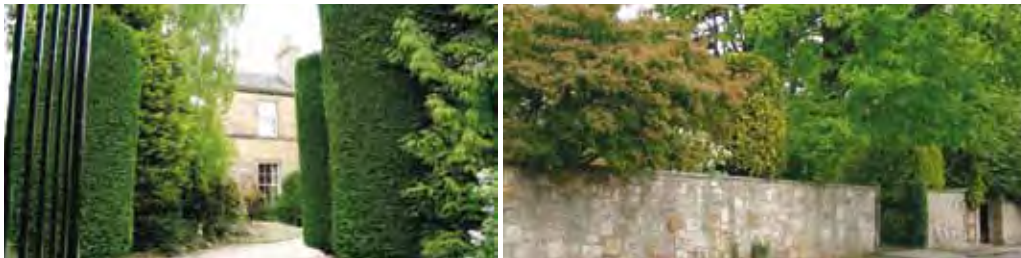
From the Water of Leith and its flood plain, the topography slopes up Windmill Brae and Murrayfield to a ridge along Ravelston Dykes, now on the northern boundary of the Conservation Area. To the west of the Conservation Area Corstorphine Hill rises up more steeply. The attraction of the setting with its south facing slopes and clear views over the surrounding countryside are augmented by its proximity to major access routes out of the city.



Approaches and Access

Murrayfield is connected to the city by the major access route through to the West of Scotland. The route is now more or less continuously built up, which is especially apparent on the south side of Corstorphine Road with its regularly spaced villas and tenements set back behind small front gardens.

This is very different from the north side and whilst the villas, when they can be seen through gateways, facing the street are impressive they are set towards the rear of very generous plots. Mature trees, high stone boundary walls at the heel of the pavement, occasional formal gate piers and lodge houses predominate. These reinforce an impression of grand estates and country houses.



The northern part of Murrayfield Road together with Ellersley Road form a busy traffic link from the south and west. Ellersly Road runs through the historic core of the Conservation Area and like Kinellan Road, the other road in this part of the Conservation Area, much of its length is contained within high boundary walls. Despite this similarity in appearance, the present character of the two streets presents a considerable contrast. Murrayfield Road, with the intrusion of traffic right along it and wide breaks in its walls, contrasts with the relative quietness of Ellersly Road.



At the north end of Murrayfield Road, restricted between two houses, is the turning for Easter Belmont Drive. This is a private road continuing up the ridge towards Corstorphine Hill serving large Edwardian villas. Instead of high stone walls it is lined on each side with beech hedging. Ravelston Dykes Road links Murrayfield Road and surrounding residential suburbs with the city centre. From this, another private road, again with lodge house and archway on the original axis, leads up to Ravelston House.

The roads within the area are distinctive, especially those with stone walls on either side. The height of the walls and the size and lushness of the tree growth almost completely obscures the development within. The street pattern forms an informal grid. Though straight, there are no cross roads, only turns or T junctions which, combined with the height of continuous stone boundary walls, give the impression of seclusion.

The streets are the only public spaces within the Conservation Area. The closest open spaces on its edges are the tennis courts to the south and Murrayfield Golf Club to the north.



ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

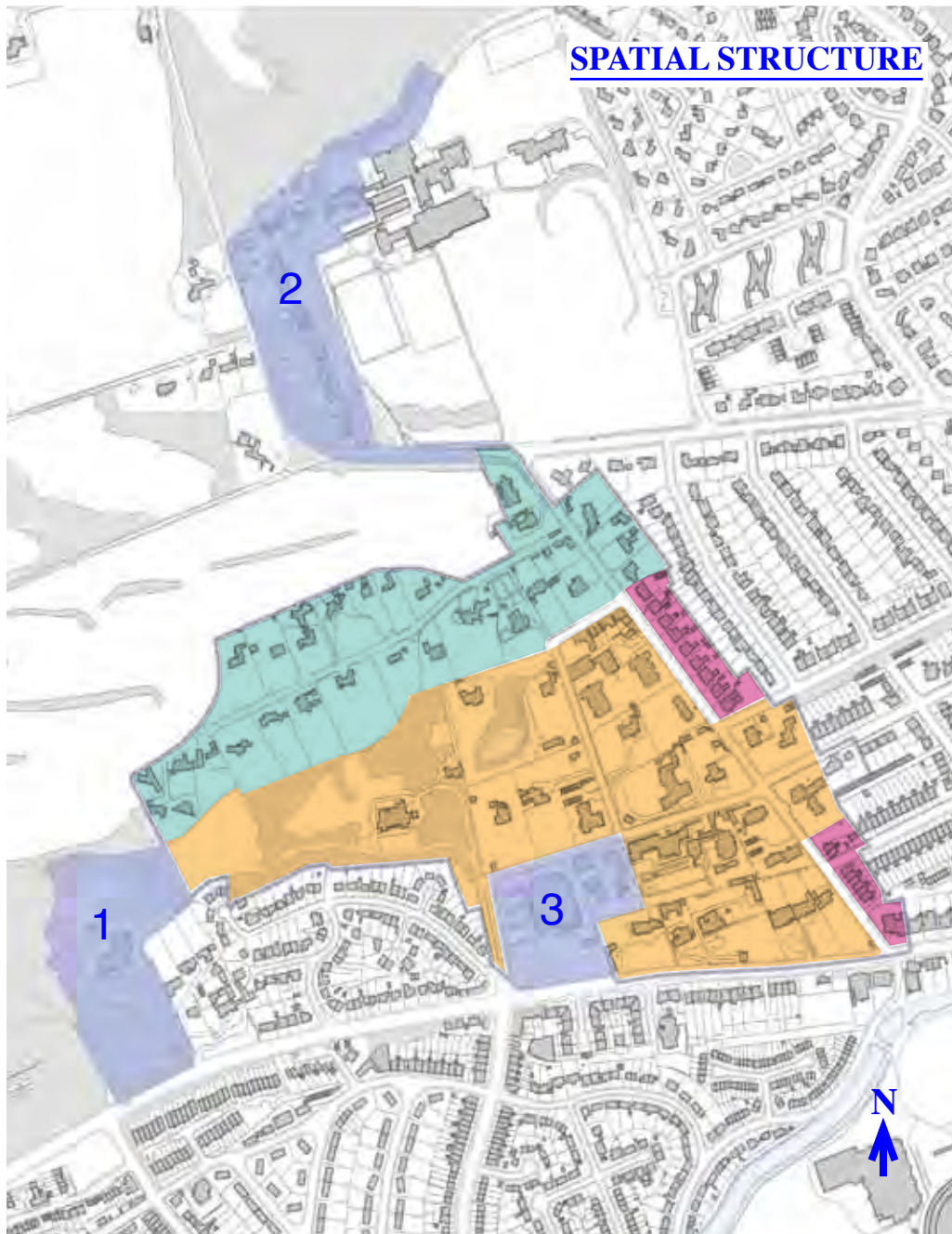
South facing slopes and clear views over the surrounding countryside.





Continuous high stone boundary walls at the heel of the pavement, occasional formal gate piers and lodge houses reinforce an impression of grand country houses.

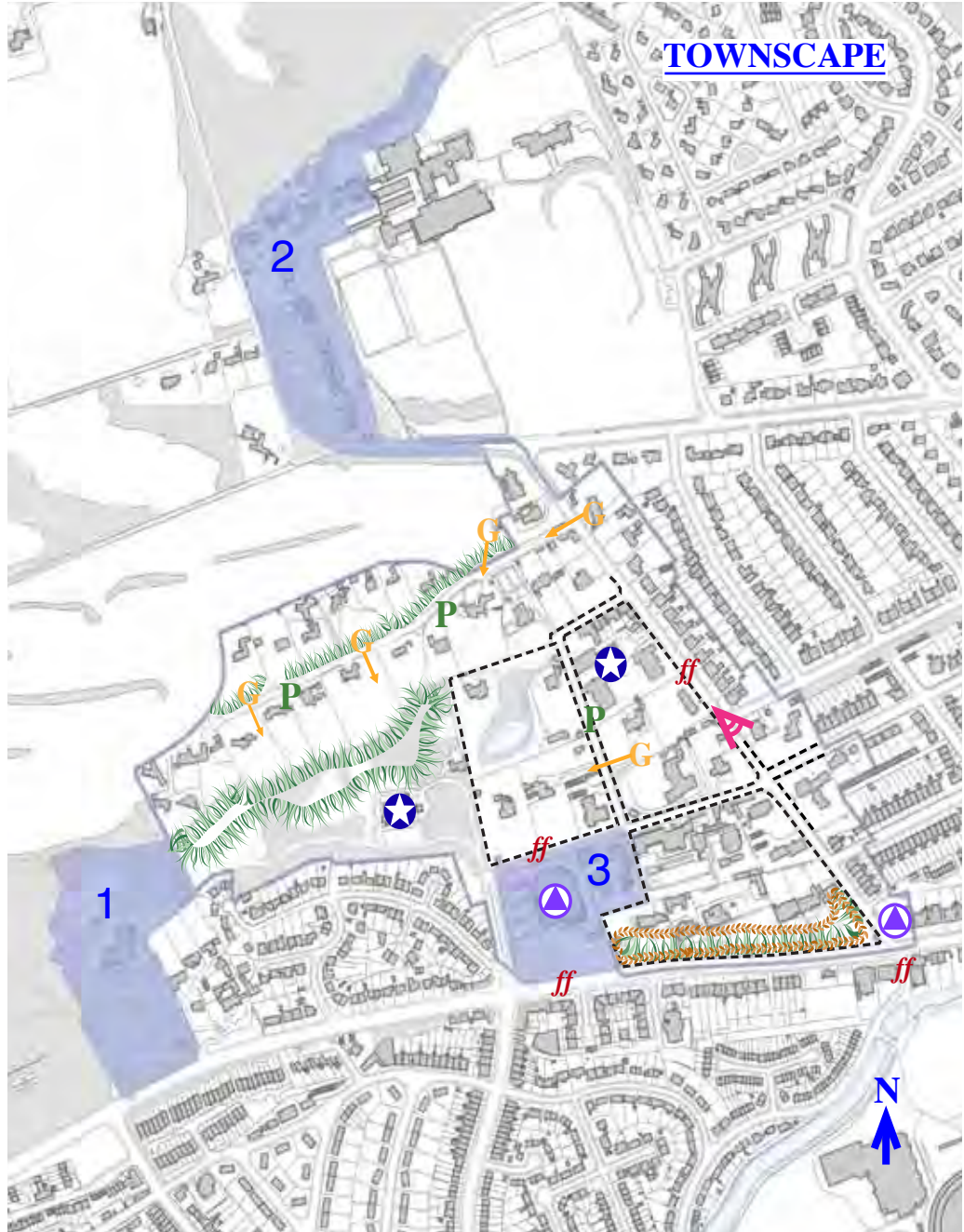
The height of the walls and the maturity of the tree growth almost completely obscures development within, giving an impression of seclusion and privacy.









The streets are the only public spaces inside the conservation area.

There are significant contrasts in spatial structures with those of surrounding development.



- | | |
|---|--|
|  extensions to Conservation Area |  arts & crafts villa sub area |
|  Victorian villa sub area |  “country house” sub area |



- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|----------|---|------------------|
|  | Extensions to Conservation Area | <i>ff</i> | Activity |  | Glimpse |
|  | Focal Point | P | Peace |  | High stone wall |
|  | Landmark |  | Vista |  | Mature tree belt |
| | | | |  | Enclosure |

Character Area Analysis

Three Character Areas have been identified. These include the walled ‘country house’ areas, the formal layout of Victorian villa development along the east side of Murrayfield Road and the ‘Arts and Crafts’ era villa development along Easter Belmont Road. Though these three character areas overlap in places, it is intended to consider them separately in order that their essential character can be more easily identified and protected.

SUB AREA A – Walled Country Houses

Spatial Structure

These large country houses are bound together by high stone boundary walls. However, the main interest is not so much their relationship to each other but more the layout within their own grounds. The original layout was dictated by the aim of achieving separation, rather than any intention to establish a formal planned relationship. A gradual process of subdivision of the grounds has led to relationships being established, but they remain houses either free standing in generous plots or latterly more uniformly laid out in smaller plots along Corstorphine Road.



The houses are located at the north end of their plots, which is due to later subdivision of the grounds. The 1855 plan indicates they once enjoyed a more ‘central’ location in their grounds with small lodge houses on their nearest access route.

Townscape

This area does not conform to traditional townscape analysis, but provides an insight into popular tastes and concerns of the time. The individual nature of these country houses demonstrate a concern for design, with buildings built in a range of styles popular at the time or period.

Many of the houses qualify as landmarks but at best only fleeting glimpses reveal them. The upper levels and terraces of the Italianate style Belmont House by

W. H. Playfair and the stair towers of the contemporary Scottish and Newcastle Headquarters by Robert Matthew are the only two significant buildings visible from any distance. Otherwise it is the trees that predominate in views right up to the skyline.

With the predominance of individually designed country houses, there are few generalisations that can be made about their physical characteristics. Houses are usually no more than three storeys and most commonly two storeys, most adopt a south facing orientation, but some are west facing. The size of houses and the use of proportion in their detail design of entrances, bays, windows is in the main commensurate, especially in early sub-divisions, with the generosity of their plots.

The older villas facing on to Corstorphine Road, which are substantially larger than their Victorian counterparts along Murrayfield Road, show some recognition of each others presence.

There has been extensive tree planting to complement the setting of Corstorphine Hill. Some of the gardens are known to have been designed and in general there is an interest in horticulture from the range of trees, especially non-native specimens, and original decorative conservatories, a feature too of the Victorian villas. A continuing interest and concern for the natural setting is clearly indicated by a high degree of maintenance.



**SUB AREA A - WALLED COUNTRY HOUSES
ESSENTIAL CHARACTER**

The underlying spatial structure of the area is one of large ‘country houses’ in generous grounds close to main city access routes.

The area is bound together by high stone boundary walls with houses less concerned with their relationship to each other, but more with their own design and layout within their grounds.

Despite a gradual process of subdivision of the grounds, houses remain either free standing in generous plots or more uniformly laid out in smaller plots.

Imposing gates set into boundary walls mark a transition from public to private, and retain an effect of privacy.

There are examples of sympathetic reuse and restoration and new build demonstrating respect for the topography and listed buildings.

A continuing interest and concern for landscaped gardens and woodland trees is clearly indicated by a high degree of maintenance.

SUB AREA B – Villas east side of Murrayfield Road

Spatial Structure

The development pattern along the east side of Murrayfield Road is not entirely uniform, there are points along it where patterns carry over from both earlier and later ‘Arts and Crafts’ developments across the road.

The former can be seen at Campbell Avenue and Murrayfield Drive, where two large houses formerly stood in grounds similar to those that remain in Ellersly Road opposite. The introduction of new flatted development into their grounds, modelled on villa forms, reinforces the predominant ‘villa’ character along the eastern side of the street. The other point of difference is at the top end of Murrayfield Road at the junction with Ravelston Dykes. Here the former golf club house, now subdivided, and the houses immediately around it, can be seen as continuing the character of Easter Belmont Road.

The predominant pattern, is created by terraced and detached villas. The repetition and regularity of feu sizes, is still in the main quite generous but very different in size to the older houses. This sense of order and ‘planning’ when compared to the west side of Murrayfield Road is reinforced through their design and townscape qualities.



Townscape

The Murrayfield Hotel, with its three storey tower, marks the corner with Corstorphine Road, acting as one side of a gateway to Murrayfield Road. This sense of creating a structured approach into the Conservation Area is continued by a short terrace of villas, which is repeated along Kingsburgh Road to the east. The street frontage returns to a high boundary wall before the more formal ‘grouped’ character is continued between Campbell Avenue and Ellersly Road. Whilst these two villa groupings differ in form from terrace to detached they are characterised by low stone walls to front gardens, at one time topped by railings.

The frontages, especially to the main grouping maintain a building line, their matching two and a half storey heights and their regular spacing establishes a rhythm which rises gently with the topography. This is echoed by their repeating window bays topped by battlement detailing, original dormer designs and main door surrounds. Their size, proportions, detailing and use of contrasting stone colour look almost too grand for the size of plots in which they stand. The intricate tracery detail in the stone surrounds to the front doors, the central circular glazed dormers and mansard roofs give a French ‘Empire’ character.



Upper floors provide considerable views across the Conservation Area to Corstorphine Hill beyond and south towards the distant Pentland Hills. Today the attraction of these visual connections is intruded by the noise of traffic, nonetheless this area is still one of very considerable amenity and character.



SUB AREA B - VILLAS ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

The predominant pattern is created by terraced and detached villas. The repetition and regularity of feu sizes, still in the main quite generous but very different in size to the older houses, makes a marked difference. This gives a sense of order and ‘planning’ when compared to the previous sub area.

The Murrayfield Hotel, with its three storey tower, marks the corner with Corstorphine Road, acting as one side of a gateway to Murrayfield Road.

Whilst the two villa groupings differ in form from terrace to detached, they are characterised by low stone walls to front gardens which continue the wooded or green setting across the road.

The repeating design of frontages, especially to the main grouping, maintain a building line, their matching two and a half storey heights and their regular spacing set up a rhythm rising gently with the topography.

Intricate detailing, circular glazed dormers and mansard roofs give these detached villas a French ‘Empire’ character.

This sub area has considerable amenity and character.

SUB AREA C – Easter Belmont Road

Spatial Structure

Situated at the top of the south facing slope of the ridge that leads on to Corstorphine Hill, the road at first squeezes past Belmont Lodge and the golf course. The road entrance is so narrow that it could easily be taken for a driveway similar to those further down Murrayfield Road. This adds to a sense of exclusivity.

The high stone walls are replaced by beech hedges, but these echo a sense of enclosure and give a sculptural quality to the lane as it gently rises uphill. These, together with clipped grassed verges rather than pavements lining either side of the road, resemble a narrow country lane only occasionally punctuated by gateways and the original diminutive street lamps. Mature woodland scale trees overhang like a canopy from either side, their profusion and colours contrasting with the neat and uniform appearance of the hedges and lane below.



Despite a sense of seclusion, there is a regularity of generous plot sizes and house spacing. These qualities indicate an underlying if picturesque sense of planning associated with the Arts and Crafts era. Houses on both sides of the lane tend to be set to the north end of plots, with their gardens taking full advantage of the southern aspect

Townscape

The houses could be described as villas, in the main two storeys using a limited palette of materials including rendered walls, stone detailing and slated roofing. The character of this area is more about the design of the houses and their individuality rather than their similarity.

Some with roof pitches extending almost to ground level are reminiscent of designs by Voysey; others with careful detailing of gates, rain water goods, external lighting are more directly crafts influenced. Others reflect an even earlier 'Jacobean' or 'Georgian' inspiration; others are described in 'Buildings of Edinburgh' as being inspired by Monte Carlo vernacular; or more 'civilised Mediterranean'. The house Lishmor has metal windows giving a horizontal emphasis; smooth render finishes and flat roof reflecting a more modern 'International' style. Others with their large conservatories echo seaside retreats.



The hill top location, south facing aspects, the large, wooded and landscaped gardens, the open views to the country side surrounding the city and the easy access to the adjacent golf course indicate a concern for the outdoor life and leisure as well as privacy and seclusion. The absence of through traffic, the separation from the bustle of the city and the almost rural character of the setting are other features.

SUB AREA C - EASTER BELMONT ROAD ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

The obscured access and surrounding country side give a sense of exclusivity.

Beech hedges echo a sense of enclosure and give a sculptural quality to the access road, which has the appearance of a country lane as it gently rises up hill.

Mature woodland scale trees overhang the lane like a canopy from either side, their profusion and colours contrasting with the neat and uniform appearance of the hedges and lane below.

Houses on both sides of the lane tend to be set to the north end of plots with their gardens taking full advantage of the southern aspect and distant views over the suburban plain to the Pentland Hills beyond.

Despite a sense of rural seclusion, there is a regularity of generous plot sizes and house spacing.

Villas, in the main two storeys using a limited palette of materials including rendered walls, stone detailing and slated roofing which demonstrate a wide variety of architectural styles and influences. The character of this area is rather more about the design of the houses and their individuality rather than similarity.

Architectural Character

The architectural character of West Murrayfield is dominated by large villas and mansion houses in a variety of architectural styles. The buildings are complemented by the profusion of mature trees, extensive garden settings, stone boundary walls and restricted roads and closes.

The diversity of styles ranges from Edwardian villas in a mix of architectural styles and influences along Easter Belmont Road, to large walled Victorian and Georgian country houses and villas on Kinellan Road, Ellersly Road and Murrayfield Road.



Many of these villas are important to the historical development of the suburb during the 19th century and occupy prominent locations either on corner sites or junctions or on slopes above West Murrayfield. These villas also capture the essential character of an area based around detached villas fused with large landscaped gardens providing a tranquil semi-rural environment just outwith Edinburgh's urban centre. West Murrayfield is predominantly a residential area with no public buildings, and it is essentially the quality of these large individual buildings that capture the character of the area. The following are a few examples:

Belmont House (Playfair 1828) - The oldest building within the conservation area and one of a number of mansion houses built during this period. Italiante in style and built in ashlar. Belmont House occupies a prominent position set high on a hill to the western edge of West Murrayfield, overlooking the Pentland Hills to the south. (Category A listed)

Westerlea House including gardens, walls and stable yard - a large complex of buildings and yards built between 1860-69 by Campbell Douglas and J J Stevenson as a dwelling house and later converted to a school for disabled children. (Category B listed)

Tor Nursing Home - Dating from 1866 is a 2-storey Neo-Jacobean mansion house standing in a prominent position along Corstorphine Road to the south east of West Murrayfield. (Category B listed)

33 Murrayfield Road - Kinellan House and Lodge, R and R Dickson dating from 1846, is one of the earliest villas built along Murrayfield in the mid 19th century as West Murrayfield developed into a leafy suburb of Edinburgh. (Category B listed)

Innerwick Lodge- this fine Georgian villa occupies a prominent corner position between Ellersly Road and Murrayfield Road. The building is important, as it is one of the earliest buildings in West Murrayfield, built circa 1825 when West Murrayfield was rapidly developing as a suburb of Edinburgh.

42 Murrayfield Road “Glion and Crossways”- late 19th century 2 - storey Old English styled villa with painted elevation, brick dressings and half-timbered features. The building was formally used as Murrayfield golf club but converted to a dwellinghouse in the 1930s. (Category C (S) listed)



“Lishmor”- 11 Easter Belmont Road - Early Modern building by Kininmonth and Spence (1935) with a strong horizontal emphasis. The building is typical of the mix of individually styled villas found along Easter Belmont. In terms of its style, Lishmor contrasts with no 4 Easter Belmont (also by Kininmonth and Spence), which has a strong vertical emphasis. (Category B listed)

In streets such as Kinellan Road and Ellersly Road, houses are concealed by trees and walls. The walls provide definition to the narrow street layout and create a clear distinction between public and private spaces.



Although West Murrayfield is predominantly characterised by large villas and mansions houses, a number of terraced properties and smaller detached villas skirt along the eastern edge of Murrayfield Road. These early 20th century developments are more closely associated with the Victorian terraces to the east of Murrayfield Road, in terms of their design and character. These properties provide a buffer between two very different architectural styles and layout, as the spacious villas of West Murrayfield merge into the Victorian terraces of east Murrayfield.



The section of the conservation area just to the south of Murrayfield Golf course retains a mix of large idiosyncratic Edwardian villas in a variety of architectural styles. These buildings are within a rural setting with mature trees and beech hedges either side of the road affording enclosure to the street.

The large landscaped gardens and the low density of development give the impression of houses set in a landscape, rather than the landscape being ancillary to the houses.



**ESSENTIAL CHARACTER
ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER**

A cohesive inner suburb characterised by a range of high quality villas dating from the early 19th century to the mid-20th century.

High quality, largely stone-built architecture of restricted height enclosed by stone boundary walls, which define the visual and physical seclusion of the villas.

Narrow vertical streets enclosed by high stone walls and overhanging vegetation and trees.

Importance of Easter Belmont Road, a street of individually designed villas.

Belmont House is a focal point in the Conservation Area, and significant in terms of its historical development, setting and topographical position.

No dominant architectural style, buildings are individually designed and influenced by popular styles of the time or period.

Victorian terraces on the east side of Murrayfield Road represent the move towards more compact terraced housing during the late 19th century.

Activities and Uses

Although some leisure, institutional and commercial activity exists along Kinellan Road and Corstorphine Road, West Murrayfield is predominantly residential in character.

The general atmosphere of most of the area is of high amenity and serenity. However, this is in contrast to the main through routes such as Murrayfield Road, which are characteristically places of activity in terms traffic movement.



**ESSENTIAL CHARACTER
ACTIVITIES AND USES**

The predominance of residential uses within the area.

The contrast between activity on the through routes and general tranquillity in the main villa areas.

The existence of some leisure, institutional and commercial activity along Kinellan Road and Corstorphine Road.

Focus to the north is on Murrayfield golf course and club house.

Natural Heritage

Open Space

There is no publicly accessible open space in the Conservation Area, although private open spaces, mainly within the gardens of individual dwellings, provide a setting for the urban area. For example, Murrayfield Golf Course to the north (designated Green Belt and Area of Great Landscape Value) provides a setting for the Easter Belmont Road properties and gives a rural feel to Ravelston Dykes Road.



Views and vistas

The conservation area rises gradually from Corstorphine Road northwards. This is almost imperceptible because of the high walls and houses allowing few views outward. From the rise, however, there are intermittent views to the Pentland Hills and Edinburgh Castle, providing the area with a context within the city and visual links to the contrasting landscape of more open Green Belt areas.



Vegetation

Trees and shrubs are fundamental to the character of the Conservation Area, contributing to the landscape quality and amenity and complementing the built environment. The larger trees are of particular importance as they partially obscure dwellings from public view and add to the ‘enclosed’ feel of streets such as Kinellan Road.

The Conservation Area relies on the vegetation and mature trees within gardens for its leafy character and robust landscape structure. The gardens within the conservation area are unusually large, for example in Belmont House and the larger villas along Kinellan Road and Ellersly Road.

There are a wide variety of tree species including both native and exotic, large and small, old and young.

High stone walls enclose gardens, which provide a habitat for wall species such as ivy leafed toadflax. In Murrayfield Road, where the character of housing changes and the gardens are not characterised by stone walling, the gardens have high hedges providing a similar degree of privacy. The species here vary and include privet, golden yew, holly and beech.



Areas to the north of Easter Belmont Road, including Mary Erskine School Ground and Ravelston Woods, are also designated Urban Wildlife Sites and Open Spaces of Outstanding Landscape Quality.

There are currently no Tree Preservation Orders within the Conservation Area.



ESSENTIAL CHARACTER NATURAL HERITAGE

No public open space.

Predominantly private and enclosed feel to area due to high enclosures; either of distinctive high stone walls or hedges.

Stone walls, hedges and mature trees all contribute to biodiversity value.

Mature trees in large gardens make a significant contribution to the landscape framework and leafy character of area.

Views restricted to those from Easter Belmont Road, Southwards to Pentland Hills through occasional gaps; southward down the length of Murrayfield Drive to Corstorphine Road, and from the northern edge of the Conservation Area northward to the more open Green Belt landscape of the Golf Course and to the expansive grounds of Mary Erskine School with their woodland backdrop of Ravelston Woods.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

Despite this wealth of character, not all contributions have been successful, though it has to be remembered that at one stage the retention and restoration of large houses in the City posed considerable difficulties. In retrospect, the subdivision and enabling development that accompanied saving, for example, Kinellan House or Ellersly (now the Ramada Jarvis Hotel) brought excessive development within the grounds. With our current standards, it could be argued that such developments have not shown sufficient respect for the setting of the main listed buildings nor for the prevailing spatial and townscape character.



Recent flatted developments given a ‘villa’ appearance have tended to fill the sites in which they are located. Wide gaps for car access have been opened in the stone boundary walls, revealing a building mass out of proportion with its setting and barely disguised by the thin lines of planting at their edges. With the development pressures the City faces, it is critical that an informed approach to development in the conservation area is adopted.

Fortunately, the examples are few and the erosion of character is limited by the generous tree planting retained in adjacent properties. New development, when considered appropriate, should contribute its own amenity and not rely on that of neighbours.

However, there remain a number of threats and pressures, which could potentially undermine the character of the Conservation Area:

- Removal of mature trees without replacement planting.
- Loss of vegetation due to subdivision of garden grounds.
- Removal, lowering or alteration of original high stone walls.
- Increase in traffic and parking levels on Murrayfield Road.
- Subdivision of gardens ground for residential and other developments, increasing the overall density of villa grounds and adversely affecting the character of an area based around spacious villas. This should be avoided by strict application of the villa policy or, if necessary, through the preparation of design statements.

Enhancement opportunities

- The maintenance and restoration of original high stone boundary walls.
- Any new tree planting should be native species.
- Restoration and maintenance of original street lamps along Kinellan Road, Easter Belmont Road and within the grounds of Belmont House.

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.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Statutory Policies

The Central Edinburgh Local Plan (1997) includes West Murrayfield within the areas of the city within a broad 'Housing and Compatible Uses' policy allocation, in which the primary concern of the Plan 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 relevant policy advice on a range of matters. In relation to proposals within the conservation area, for example, development will only be allowed where all features that contribute to the special character and appearance of the area are retained. Development proposals in the conservation area are required to take into account the area's special interest and how its character and appearance may be preserved or enhanced.

There are a number of listed buildings within the West Murrayfield Conservation Area and the Local Plan includes policies which seek to ensure that proposals affecting listed buildings are considered for their effect on their character, including their setting. An important consideration is that alterations, extensions or changes of use should not diminish the architectural integrity of the building.

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.
- 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 West Murrayfield 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 38	water undertakings
Class 39	development by public gas supplier
Class 40	development by electricity statutory undertaker

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- 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 render the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a TPO.

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