

# INVERLEITH CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 defines conservation areas as “areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance” and places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these areas. The implications of conservation area status are detailed in the Section 6.
- 1.2 The Inverleith Conservation Area was designated in October 1977. The boundary was amended in March 1996 to exclude areas which no longer contributed to the character of the Conservation Area. Article 4 Directions were approved in 1996. A plan of the Area is attached to this Management Plan.
- 1.3 The Conservation Area is situated immediately to the north of the New Town Conservation Area, some 1.5 kilometres north of the City Centre. The Conservation Area covers an area of 232 hectares with a population of 5,187. It is bounded by Ferry Road to the north, the western boundary of Fettes College, the eastern boundary of Warriston Cemetery and Comely Bank/Glenogle Road to the south. The boundary includes Fettes College, Inverleith Park, the Royal Botanic Garden, Warriston Cemetery, Tanfield Hall and Stockbridge Colonies.
- 1.4 The historical and architectural importance of the Inverleith Conservation Area is reflected in the concentration of Statutorily Listed buildings in the area: there are 82 items, covering 745 individual addresses.
- 1.5 The Inverleith Conservation Area Character Appraisal, approved by the Planning Committee in August 2006, identified the following as essential character elements of the Conservation Area:
  - The high quality residential amenity.
  - The high proportion of open spaces to built environment within the area. The layering of playing fields, a public park and the Royal Botanic Garden provide a substantial amount of open space, allowing panoramic views across the City skyline.
  - The high quality mature landscape structure with large scale trees in gardens and open spaces creating a setting for the built environment.
  - The 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.

## **2 Aims of the Management Plan**

- 2.1 The Management Plan sets out how the character of the Conservation Area will be retained and enhanced in any future use, alteration or repair. The Management Plan will be a material consideration in determining proposals. The detailed objectives and actions set out in the Management Plan are, therefore, intended to complement the more general policy objectives of the Edinburgh City Local Plan and should be used in conjunction with it.
- 2.2 The Management Plan establishes a framework for improvement within the area. The aim of the Management Plan is to ensure that mechanisms are in place to protect, enhance and promote Inverleith's built and natural heritage, and safeguard existing residential character and amenities.
- 2.3 The Plan will be implemented by the determination of planning applications in accordance with Government guidance, the Edinburgh and the Lothians Structure Plan and the Edinburgh City Local Plan. These are supplemented by non-statutory guidance approved by the Council, the Conservation Area Character Appraisal and other material considerations. Planning applications are considered against this framework. The objective is to ensure that changes to the physical surroundings – buildings and land – are right for their purpose and location.
- 2.4 The objectives that will influence the Conservation Area's management are identified below. All of the objectives are interconnected and will impact on other parts of the Management Plan. They are intended to act as a basis on which future management will be based. Actions are also proposed as a practical means of supporting and enhancing the adoption of the objectives.

## **3 Townscape**

- 3.1 The general townscape character of most of the Conservation Area is of high quality residential amenity, with development forming the edge to significant areas of open space.
- 3.2 The quality of the townscape is a critical factor in the enhancement of the Conservation Area. Respect for design should be demonstrated in the way new buildings are inserted into the existing townscape framework; respecting the scale and form and producing contemporary architecture of the highest quality.

3.3 Architectural form and building heights must, therefore, be appropriate to location and function, taking account of the design standards and objectives set out in the Edinburgh Standards for Urban Design.

3.4 The Inverleith Conservation Area is layered with sports fields and grounds associated with a number of private schools located both within and without the area. These open spaces allied to the publicly owned Inverleith Park, the Royal Botanic Garden and Warriston Cemetery dominate the Conservation Area.

3.5 The Conservation Area is characterised by panoramic views from various locations to the topographic and townscape features characterising Edinburgh. This is exemplified by the views to the Edinburgh city ridge from Ferry Road across the expanses of playing fields, from Inverleith Park through the framework of its perimeter trees and from the high points of the Botanic Gardens southward.

### 3.6 Objectives

- To preserve and enhance the existing townscape character, and pursue the highest architectural and urban design quality, incorporating social; environmental and economic needs.
- To preserve existing residential character and amenities.
- To protect areas of open space from erosion by piecemeal development.

### 3.7 Actions

- Ensure that development proposals contribute to the special character and appearance of the Conservation Area. A contextual statement will be required for any application which has the potential to adversely affect the residential amenity of the Conservation Area.
- Ensure that new development reflects and interprets the particular character of Inverleith; responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development, townscape, landscape, scale, materials and quality.
- Ensure new development strengthens the context of the existing Conservation Area, respecting the residential amenity, topography, physical features, views and vistas.
- Ensure that the townscape character of parks and green spaces in the Conservation Area is not eroded by new development and consider the overall effect created by successive developments. Where developments are intended on school campuses, playing fields or other substantial green spaces such development will

require to be placed in the context of an overall masterplan for future change of the site. Due to the large number of artificial playing surfaces in the Conservation Area, there will be a presumption against any further proposals for such development.

- Proposals for artificial lighting will be assessed in terms of Local Plan policy and the Scottish Government Guidance - Controlling Light Pollution and Reducing Energy Consumption. Bad neighbour development involving artificial lighting which will affect residential property will be advertised in terms of Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development)(Scotland) Order 1992).

## **4 Architectural Character**

4.1 Inverleith's architectural character is dominated by rows of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraces which form boundaries to extensive blocks of public and private open space. The villa streets are complemented by the profusion of mature trees, extensive garden settings, stone boundary walls and spacious roads.

4.2 Although the area has a diverse mix of styles and ages the predominant character consists of large Victorian houses sitting in large gardens with Georgian villas and terraces occurring to the east of Conservation Area. These properties vary in height from three to three and half storeys and are constructed of stone with slated roofs. The variety of architectural styles, is unified by the use of local building materials.

4.3 Objective

- Reinforce the architectural character of the Inverleith Conservation Area.

4.4 Actions

- Ensure that the scale, design and materials of new development reinforce and protect the setting of individual buildings, the special character of the Conservation Area, and protect key views.
- Ensure that repair and maintenance to historic structures is carried out with appropriate traditional materials and to a high standard of workmanship. Original architectural features should be preserved wherever possible.

## **5 Natural Heritage**

5.1 The Conservation Area is characterised by a high proportion of open space providing a green setting to the built environment. The

Conservation Area contains some of the most attractive areas of open space in the City.

- 5.2 The dominance of open spaces combined with the many large scale gardens, make substantially sized trees a major characteristic of the area. Tree Preservation Order designations apply to those in Warriston Cemetery and Eildon Terrace.
- 5.3 The most significant of the accessible open spaces are Inverleith Park, the Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden and Warriston Cemetery, each with a markedly different character.
- 5.4 **Inverleith Park** extends to 21.8 hectares of neatly maintained mostly flat open grass parkland with a strong framework of mature trees on its perimeter and along its avenues. Overall it is a well defined space utilising hedging and perimeter iron railings, and grand gated entrances.
- 5.5 **Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden** is an important recreational area and Scotland's national botanic garden. The Botanic Garden's listing on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes confirms its national historical, horticultural and architectural importance and outstanding significance.
- 5.6 **Warriston Cemetery** has an overwhelmingly wooded character with a diversity of tree species and is an important node in the wildlife network.
- 5.7 **Privately owned playing fields**, although not publicly accessible, these contribute significantly to the visual character of the area. Those along the northern boundary of the Conservation Area consist of flat expanses of grass with few trees, and provide panoramic views from Ferry Road south across to the Edinburgh skyline. The Fettes College grounds provide a well wooded setting to the listed school building and substantial playing fields to the north.
- 5.8 Access is also available to the Water of Leith walkway and the disused railway network which is used extensively as a cycling and walking resource. These also provide important wildlife corridors.
- 5.9 Several sites within the Conservation Area are designated Urban Wildlife Sites under the Edinburgh Nature Conservation Strategy. These consist of the Royal Botanic Garden, Warriston Cemetery, and two wildlife corridors (the Water of Leith Valley and the disused railway network).
- 5.10 Objective

- To ensure that the landscape, natural and wildlife heritage of the Conservation Area, are protected, acknowledged and understood as integral parts of the Conservation Area's value.

#### 5.11 Actions

- Ensure that development enhances the gardens, parks and similar open spaces within the Conservation Area, taking into account The Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan objectives for urban green space.
- Ensure that landscape, natural and wildlife elements are not eroded or damaged through new development.
- Maintain and enhance the identity and landscape quality of the open spaces.

## 6 Implications of Conservation Area Status

### 6.1 Designation as a conservation area has the following implications:

- Permitted development rights under the Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 are restricted. Planning permission is therefore required for stone cleaning, external painting, roof alterations and the formation of hard surfaces. The area of extensions to dwelling houses which may be erected without consent is also restricted to 16m<sup>2</sup> and there are additional controls over satellite dishes.
- Under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, the planning authority can seek approval of the Scottish Ministers for 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 Inverleith Conservation Area is currently covered by the following article 4 directions:
  - Class 1: Enlargement, improvement or other alteration of 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 satellite antennae;

- Class 7: Construction or alteration of gates, fences, walls or other means of enclosure;
  - Class 38: Water undertakings;
  - Class 39: Development by gas suppliers; and
  - Class 40: Development by electricity undertakers.
- Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when planning controls are being exercised. Most applications for planning permission for alterations will, therefore, be advertised for public comment and any views expressed must be taken into account when making a decision on the application.
  - Buildings which are not statutorily listed can normally be demolished without approval under the planning regulations. Within conservation areas the demolition of an unlisted building requires conservation area consent.
  - Alterations to windows are controlled in terms of the council's policy.
  - Trees within conservation areas are protected by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2006 and the Town and Country Planning (Tree Preservation Orders and Trees in Conservation Areas (Scotland) Regulations 1975. 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.

