

Planning Committee

10am Thursday 15 May 2014

Southfield Estate Proposed Conservation Area

Item number	10.1
Report number	
Executive	
Wards	3

Executive summary

Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. It is a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to periodically review conservation area boundaries and consider whether new conservation area designations are appropriate.

Historic Scotland has requested that Southfield Estate be considered for designation as a conservation area. There has also been support from a local Councillor, a professor at the Edinburgh College of Art, the Saltire Society, the Cockburn Association, the Architectural History Society of Scotland, Dococmomo (The Working Party for the Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement) and local residents.

This report presents an assessment of the area as the basis of a consultation on the potential to designate Southfield Estate as a conservation area.

Links

Coalition pledges [P40](#)

Council outcomes [CO19](#)

Single Outcome Agreement [SO4](#)

Southfield Estate Proposed Conservation Area

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the attached appraisal as a basis for consultation on the potential to designate the Southfield Estate as a conservation area.

Background

- 2.1 Historic Scotland has requested that Southfield Estate be assessed in order to consider the potential for conservation area designation. There has also been support from Cllr Karen Keil, Fiona McLachlan (Professor of Architectural Practice, Edinburgh College of Art), the Saltire Society, the Cockburn Association, the Architectural History Society of Scotland, Dococmomo (The Working Party for the Documentation and Conservation of Buildings, Sites and Neighbourhoods of the Modern Movement) and local residents.

Main report

The Southfield Estate Area

- 3.1 The area under consideration is located on the north-western edge of Edinburgh about four miles from the city centre. It lies to the west of the northern end of Drumbrae North. Access to the site is from Drumbrae North and thence via Craigmount Avenue North or Barntongate Avenue. The boundary includes properties on Craigmount Avenue North, Barntongate Drive and Barntongate Terrace (see Appendix 1).

Criteria for Designation of a Conservation Area

- 3.2 The statutory definition of a conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The Scottish Historic Environment Policy specifies that it is the character or historic interest of an area created by individual buildings and open spaces and their relationship, one with the other, which the legislation covering conservation areas seeks to preserve.

- 3.3 The principles of selection for designation as a conservation area are broadly as follows:
- areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of specific listed buildings and/or ancient monuments;
 - areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of building groupings, which may or may not include listed buildings and/or ancient monuments, and open spaces which they abut;
 - areas with features of architectural or historic interest such as street pattern, planned towns and villages and historic gardens and designed landscapes; and
 - other areas of distinctive architectural or historic character.
- 3.4 In designating a conservation area, consideration also has to be given to the reasons why it is felt that it should be protected. These may include:
- its special architectural and historic importance;
 - its distinct character;
 - its value as a good example of local or regional style;
 - its value within the wider context of the village or town; and
 - its present condition and the scope for significant improvement and enhancement.
- 3.5 The designation of a conservation area must, therefore, be based on the historic and architectural interest of an area. Conservation area status is not intended to act solely as a means of controlling development.

Assessment

- 3.6 The Southfield Estate was designed in 1963–65 by Roland Wedgwood Associates and was completed in 1968. Roland Wedgwood (1929-2011) was an Edinburgh based architect whose designs were characterised by light and space in a career that encompassed a multitude of projects.
- 3.7 The Southfield Estate provided 110 dwellings arranged as a continuous wall enclosing two communal garden areas. The arrangement was innovative with cars and garages pushed to the extremities of the site where there are spacious landscaped turning circles or into garages set at ground level around the perimeter of the housing.
- 3.8 On its completion, it was the first and largest co-ownership scheme in Scotland, and the quality of the development was recognised by a Saltire Society Award for New Housing in 1967.
- 3.9 It is an excellent example of Modernist vernacular architecture, with harled walls and mono-pitch tiled roofs. Accommodation was intended for a community of

mixed family sizes, with seven basic house types, although every dwelling is unique.

- 3.10 There have been a number of inappropriate replacements of original doors and windows. However, the consistency and strength of the original character of the design have not been lost.
- 3.11 The assessment of the Southfield Estate shows that it is notable for its innovative layout, architectural and urban form, social ambitions, form of tenure and its central communal garden. It stands out from similar projects of the time in Scotland and is worthy of further consideration for designation as a conservation area. The draft character appraisal is set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.12 If designated, Southfield would be the second post-war conservation area in Edinburgh and Scotland (the other being the Thistle Foundation Village). It would also be the most recently built in Scotland to achieve conservation area status.

Implications of Conservation Area Status

- 3.13 Designation as a conservation area results in a number of additional requirements:
 - planning permission would be required for any improvement or alteration to the external appearance of a flatted dwelling;
 - conservation area consent would be required for demolition;
 - replacement windows may require planning permission and would be assessed in line with Council guidance;
 - special attention must also be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when planning controls are being exercised. Most applications for planning permission for alterations are, therefore, advertised for public comment and any views expressed must be taken into account when making a decision on the application; and
 - notice is required to fell or severely lop trees within the conservation area.

Next Steps

- 3.14 It is proposed that a consultation exercise will be carried out with the local community and other interested parties.
- 3.15 The main part of the consultation will take the form of an exhibition, which will be displayed in Blackhall Library. Open Evenings will also be held at the library which will provide an opportunity for visitors to discuss the proposals with Council officers.

- 3.16 The exhibition and Open Evenings will be promoted by posters in the local area, on Twitter and online. Local and city wide amenity groups, and local councillors, will also be notified and sent copies of the appraisal.

Measures of success

- 4.1 The protection of areas of special architectural or historic interest in line with Government and Council policy.

Financial impact

- 5.1 The designation of a conservation area would increase the number of planning applications that the authority must process. However, this proposed conservation area would include just over 100 properties and is unlikely to create any significant pressure on staff resources in the Planning Service.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The designation of a conservation area would result in a change to the requirements for planning permission and result in an increase the number of planning applications submitted to the Council.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 The aim of conservation area status is to enhance the quality of the area. This has the potential to improve the quality of life and supports sustainable communities. There are no predicted negative impacts on equalities.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impacts of this report in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties have been considered, and the outcomes are summarised below.
- Conservation of the built environment minimises the use of natural resources and helps to reduce carbon emissions.
 - The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because the conservation and management of the historic environment contributes directly to sustainability in a number of ways. These include the energy and materials invested in a building, the scope for adaptation and reuse, and the unique quality of historic environments which provide a sense of identity and continuity.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 An extensive consultation exercise will be carried out with the local community and other interested parties.

The main part of the consultation will take the form of an exhibition, which will be displayed in Blackhall Library and at the Drumbrae Hub. Open Evenings will also be held which will provide an opportunity for visitors to discuss the proposals with Council officers.

The exhibition and Open Evenings will be promoted by posters in the local area, on Twitter and online, and through the Drumbrae Hub. Local and city wide amenity groups, and local councillors, will also be notified and sent copies of the appraisal.

Background reading / external references

PAN 71 Conservation Area Management.

Mark Turley

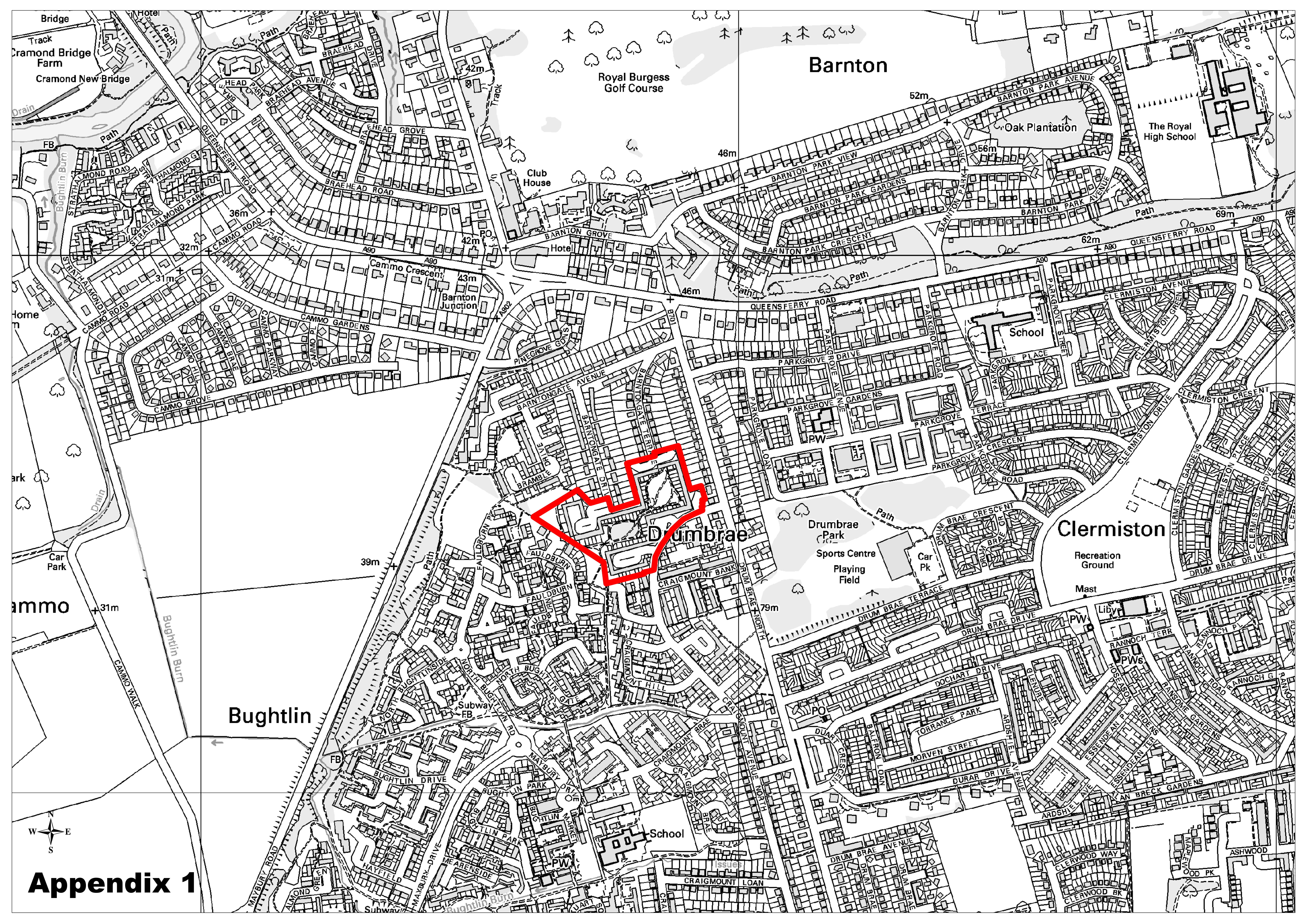
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Links

Coalition pledges	P40
Council outcomes	CO19
Single Outcome Agreement	SO4
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Southfield Estate location plan2. Southfield Estate: draft Conservation Area Character Appraisal



Appendix 2

SOUTHFIELD ESTATE: DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

Contents

1. Summary information
2. Conservation area character appraisals
3. Historical origins and development
4. Special characteristics
 - 4.1 Structure
 - 4.2 Key Elements
5. Management
 - 5.1 Legislation, Policies and Guidance
 - 5.2 Opportunities for Enhancement
6. Sources

1. Summary information

Location and boundaries

The Southfield Estate is located on the north-western edge of Edinburgh about four miles from the city centre. It lies to the west of the northern end of Drumbrae North. Access to the site is from Drumbrae North and thence via Craigmount Avenue North or Barntongate Avenue. The boundary includes properties on Craigmount Avenue North, Barntongate Drive and Barntongate Terrace.



Statement of Significance

The Estate was designed in 1963–65 by Roland Wedgwood Associates and was completed in 1968. It illustrates the major principles which underline Wedgwood's work.

The Southfield Estate is an example of Modernist vernacular architecture which stands out from similar projects of the time in Scotland because of its innovative layout, the social ambitions of the project, and the way in which the architecture was developed to support these aims. It is notable for its architectural and urban form, social ambitions, form of tenure and its central communal garden.

2. 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).

[Hyperlink to <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20450/49052>]

How to Use this Document

The analysis of the Southfield Estate’s character and appearance focuses on the features which make the area special and distinctive. This is divided into two sections: **Structure**, which describes and draws conclusions regarding the overall organisation and macro-scale features of the area; and **Key elements**, which examines the smaller-scale features and details which fit within the structure.

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 an alteration or addition is based on an informed interpretation of context. This context should be considered in conjunction with the relevant Local Development Plan policies and planning guidance (see **Management** for more detailed references).

3. Historical Origins and Development

A review of the historical development of the Southfield Estate is important in order to understand how the area has evolved in its present form and adopted its essential character.

In late 1963, the Adam Housing Society was offered a 9 acre (3.6 hectare) north-sloping site on which to create a co-ownership housing scheme to be financed under Section 11 of the 1962 Housing (Scotland) Act. The Act established a £3 million pound fund from which loans could be made to approved housing associations to provide homes on a co-ownership basis.

The brief for the Southfield site required high quality houses, at least to Parker Morris Standards (Note 1), incorporating a wide variety of size and type with an emphasis on the needs of the larger family. Since this would be the first and largest co-ownership scheme in Scotland special efforts were to be made to explore its potentialities, such as communal open space, district heating, resident caretaker gardener, communal TV aerial, common room/clubhouse.

Roland Wedgwood was appointed as project architect just as he was about to leave the Housing Research Unit at Edinburgh University and set up in private practice. Roland Wedgwood had been the first appointee to the Housing Research Unit which was established in 1958 by Robert Matthew, ex chief architect for London County Council.

During the five years that Wedgwood spent at the Housing Research Unit there was considerable debate about the merits of Radburn planning for housing areas, but little research on how it worked in practice. Radburn planning is a housing layout designed to segregate motor vehicle and pedestrian movements first developed in 1929 in Radburn, a satellite town of New York. Houses were grouped around culs-de-sac with service court access to one side. The other side had communal gardens and pedestrian walkways leading to a central park.

Wedgwood decided to investigate the pros and cons of Radburn and was accepted as a PhD student researching the problem of motor vehicles in housing areas. Southfield embodies some of the results of this research and demonstrates his conclusion that 'inside every car lurks a pedestrian waiting to get out.'

Wedgwood visited all the early Radburn schemes in the US and many inspired by them in Britain, such as those in Cumbernauld New Town. He concluded that the Radburn layout had a number of shortcomings, particularly in relation to access for service vehicles and a failure to provide safe places where young people could play.

His research led to new principles on the separation of vehicles which were included in the Southfield Estate layout. The aim was to keep the mixing of pedestrians and vehicles relatively safe by reducing vehicle traffic volumes and speeds, designing out situations where pedestrians could suddenly

appear in the path of vehicles, enabling all vehicles to turn in forward turning circles and providing safe play areas for children.



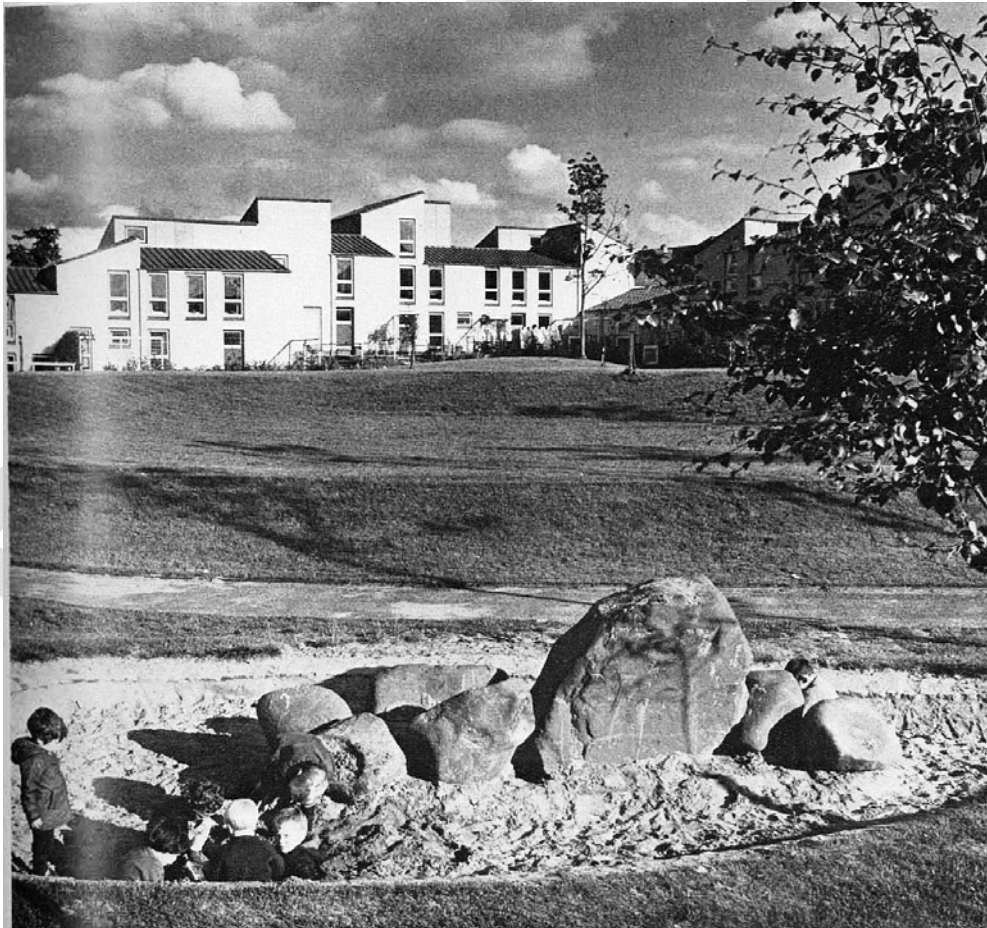
Wedgwood also studied and visited Scandinavian Housing Association schemes to gain first-hand experience of designing and building joint ownership or co-operative housing as an alternative to private and local authority ownership. This resulted in the establishment of the Adam Housing Society to offer co-ownership housing opportunities.

Co-ownership housing schemes were financed by a government loan (through the Scottish Development Department) at a fixed interest rate for 60 years. Houses could only be let to members of a housing society, and an application for membership required a minimum share of £5 in the society. Successful applicants deposited 5% of the cost of the dwelling and then paid an annual rent of between £250 and £460 for maintenance, insurance, gardening and other services. When a co-owner vacated a property they received their 5% deposit and a sixtieth of the capital cost of the house for each year of occupancy. The scheme was described as: 'a little bit of renting and a little bit of owning – with the benefits of both.'

The original client for Southfield, the Adam Housing Society Ltd, established a new client body – Southfield Housing Society Ltd – in 1963, to develop and manage the project. The Society worked with the design team in the initial stages and was tied to negotiating a contract for the construction with Weir Housing Corporation which had sold the site to the Housing Society.

Southfield was officially opened by Lord Hughes, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Scotland. Lord Hughes noted the potential importance of this form of tenure which could make a significant contribution towards solving the Scottish housing problem and achieving a better balance in the types of new housing. He also considered that it would meet the need for attractive houses at reasonable cost for managers, scientists and technicians who were coming to Scotland as a result of changes in the industrial structure.

On its completion Southfield was the first and largest co-ownership scheme in Scotland. The Estate was run in co-ownership for fourteen years, then in 1982 with the occupants' consent, all houses were transferred to private owner-occupation. The shared amenities, including the central gardens, continue to be managed and maintained by an annually elected Residents' Association. The shift towards individual owners has diluted some of the original aims, but the Residents' Association, which publishes a newsletter, is still strong and is the social focus of the Southfield Estate.



The development won the Saltire Society's Award for New Housing in 1967. The judges said: 'This is a fine scheme whose size allowed the designer to establish a consistent language through a whole environment.'

A study of the estate in 1970 by the Architectural Research Unit, intended to find out who chose to live at Southfield and what they thought about the

quality of housing, environment and investment, showed that the principal residents were mainly young, under thirty, families with pre-school children. Nearly two thirds were professional and over a quarter were architects or planners. The reason for the interest by architects and planners was based on the concepts incorporated into the design of Southfield.



4. Special Characteristics

4.1 Structure

Topography and views

- The development makes use of the steep north-facing hillside on which it is located.
- Specific views are generated by the architectural form.

Development pattern

- The houses are laid out as a continuous wall along the perimeter of the site, enclosing two large communal gardens.
- The concept of a continuous 'wall' of housing and joint ownership were means of co-ordinating the wide range of dwellings.

Grain and density

- The scheme provided 110 dwellings on a 3.6ha site at a density of 5 bed-spaces per acre (23 beds per hectare).

Streets

- Cars and garages are pushed to the extremities of the site.

Spaces

- The wall of houses encloses extensive communal gardens.

Topography and Views

The layout of the Southfield Estate makes use of the steep north-facing hillside on which it is located. Specific views are generated by the architectural form - glimpses through pends offer distant views, and the exterior form folds along the hillside to keep the scale intimate along the paths that hug the external edge of the housing.

Development Pattern

The houses are laid out as a continuous wall along the perimeter of the site, enclosing two large communal gardens. In 1969, Edwin Johnston, the architecture critic of the Scotsman newspaper, provided the following description of the development:

'The Southfield Estate is a new housing development which breaks away from the conventions of suburbia. In the tradition of any good Roman wall, Wedgwood's terrace straddles its way across the contours, relentlessly following the boundary of the site by cranking to and fro through a military

sequence of right angle turns. Within the staggered form of the perimeter wall, communal, traffic free, landscaped gardens fulfil a similar function to the urban gardens of Georgian Edinburgh.'



From the outside, Southfield is a meandering wall of deliberately protective appearance. The development pre-dates the listed Byker Wall in Newcastle which is also characterised by an inhabited perimeter wall. The design is intended to emphasise the concept of the larger inclusive group rather than the any single unit – the community over the individual.

Much low rise social housing in the early 1960s was a reaction against contemporary high-rise solutions, and generally sought to explore ideals of community within low-rise developments. Southfield adopted this anti high-rise stance, expressed through the forms and materials – dry dashed greyish walls and staggered mono-pitch rooflines, concrete tiles, alleys, pends and carefully composed irregular windows. These features, along with the grouping and stepping of the buildings, deliberately reference the Scottish burgh vernacular.

The concept of a continuous 'wall' of housing and joint ownership were means of co-ordinating the wide range of dwellings and providing the right conditions for the use of an oil-fired district heating system with a central boilerhouse serving all dwellings in the original scheme. This was abandoned in the 1980s, due to the increasingly expensive cost of oil, and gas heating with individual boilers was installed. A new dwelling was formed in the original boiler room which enabled the original caretaker's post to be dispensed with.

Grain and Density



The scheme provided 110 dwellings on a 3.6ha site at a density of 5 bed-spaces per acre (23 beds per hectare). There were ninety-eight one, two and three-storey maindoor houses of three to six rooms each with a small private garden and twelve four-storey one and two bedroom flats. Seventy-one dwellings have integral garages and the rest share forty-one grouped lock-ups. The intention was that co-owners could move from one house to another as circumstances changed and, as a result, the mix of accommodation needed to be varied.

Streets

Cars and garages are pushed to the extremities of the site where there are spacious landscaped turning circles or into garages set at ground level around the perimeter of the housing.



Spaces

The wall of houses encloses extensive communal gardens, designed by the landscape architect, Dr John Byrom, which create a pleasant space to be in and to look out on. There are very few entrances to the shared gardens, most access is through the houses, but upper flats have access through lockable gates for which only residents have keys.

The grassed common areas were mounded with spoil from the house excavations and shaped with slopes of not more than 1 in 4 to allow convenient close cutting during the growing season and to discourage ball games. Beech hedges which edge the private gardens were intended to create the same effect as stone garden walls providing strong overall unity, but allowing wind shelter and privacy to suit individual needs by adjusting the cutting height. Floor-length windows in key rooms strengthen the relationship between outside and inside.

The central communal gardens were one reason why so many young families initially moved into the estate. The ability to leave children unattended in a car-free safe haven, yet in view of someone's window was seen as an extremely positive feature. The gardens remain the social and visual focus for the housing with the residents coming together to celebrate special events throughout the year. It is rare in a housing development to see such an emphasis on the contribution of landscape and shared ground.



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4.2 Key Elements

Scale

- Two storeys with linking three storey blocks

Building Types and Styles

- The houses are designed on a strict 10ft 6inch (3.2m) square grid.

Materials and Details

- There is a deliberately limited palette of materials – harled walls with grey concrete pantries.

Trees and Gardens

- The scale of the central communal gardens is large enough to accommodate forest trees.
- The small private gardens are enclosed with beech hedging.

Streetscape

- Spacious landscaped turning circles at the extremities of the site.

Activity

- A residential area with a large enclosed communal garden.

Scale

The scale is generally two storeys with linking three storey blocks.

Building Types and Styles

The houses are designed on a strict 10ft 6inch (3.2m) square grid, setting the proportion of all rooms - two squares make a living room and set the overall depth of the terrace. There are seven basic house types, but the adoption of the controlling grid rationalised the components to only one common joist length, one internal door type, one ceiling joist, one stair component and only two window types.

Materials and Details

There is a deliberately limited palette of materials – harled walls with grey concrete pantries. Openings are simply defined and timber is chunky and stained rather than painted. These features are demonstrable links with Scandinavian architecture and Wedgwood acknowledged the strong influence on his design of various housing association schemes in Finland, Sweden and Denmark.

Trees and Gardens

The scale of the central communal gardens is large enough to accommodate forest trees. This has allowed the design to develop into a deciduous native woodland of ash, whitebeam and birch, which has the effect of screening summer heat gains, maximising winter daylight and reducing wind.

The small private gardens are enclosed with beech hedging.

Streetscape

Spacious landscaped turning circles at the extremities of the site.

The design concept was that there would be no lampposts, with all lights being wall-mounted to reduce clutter on the streets. These have since been removed and replaced with freestanding lampposts.

Activity

The Southfield Estate is a residential area with a large enclosed communal garden.



5. Management

5.1 Legislation, Policies and Guidance

Conservation areas

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.

[hyperlink: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/9/contents>]

Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when planning controls are being exercised in a conservation area. Unlisted buildings require conservation area consent for demolition. Fewer types of development benefit from permitted development rights than outwith conservation areas. Proposed works to trees require notification to the Council.

National Policy

The Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) is the strategic statement of national policy relating to the historic environment.

[hyperlink: <http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/policy/shep.htm>]

The Development Plan

The Edinburgh City Local Plan sets out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in the City. The policies in the Plan are used to determine applications for development.

[hyperlink:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_strategic_development_plans/1005/edinburgh_city_local_plan]

In broad summary, the key policy areas affecting a conservation area are:

- Design of new development DES 1, 3, 5, 11, 12
- Conservation areas ENV 5-6
- Historic gardens and designed landscapes ENV 7
- Trees ENV 12
- Natural heritage and nature conservation ENV 10-16

The proposed City of Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) contains broadly similar policies and is a material consideration in current planning decisions.

[hyperlink:

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/178/local_and_strategic_development_plans/1019/local_and_strategic_development_plans]

Planning Guidance

More detailed, subject-specific guidance is set out in Planning Guidance documents. Those particularly relevant to the South are:

- [Guidance for Householders](#)
- [Edinburgh Design guidance](#)
- [Communications Infrastructure](#)
- Street Design Guidance - draft to be published in 2014

In addition, a number of statutory tools are available to assist development management within the conservation area:

Trees

Trees within conservation areas are covered by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. 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, 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 will render the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

TPOs are used to secure the preservation of trees which are of significant stature, in sound condition, and prominently located to be of amenity value to the public at large. When assessing contribution to 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 TPO. The removal of trees for arboricultural reasons will not imply that the space created by their removal can be used for development.

Further information on trees and woodlands.

[[hyperlink:http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/495/parks_gardens_and_open_spaces/767/trees_and_woodlands/2](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/495/parks_gardens_and_open_spaces/767/trees_and_woodlands/2)]

Landscape and Biodiversity

The Council has an obligation to take account of the impact of development on species protected by legislation and international commitments. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity as far as is consistent with their functions. The area contains no nature conservation designations but its open spaces at give it a high amenity and biodiversity value.

Further information on landscape and biodiversity.

[[hyperlinks: http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/1044/landscape-character_assessment/558/landscape_and_scenery_and](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/1044/landscape-character_assessment/558/landscape_and_scenery_and)

http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/94/wildlife_conservation/550/wildlife_conservation_and_biodiversity]

5.2 Opportunities for Enhancement

Many residents have replaced the original doors, which were very simple close-boarded timber, with insulated panelled doors which jar with the simplicity of the original design. Replacement windows have been more carefully selected and are, in most cases, true to the original proportions, even if in uPVC.

Extensions, in general, conform to the original design. Enlargements of the units had not been an issue under co-ownership when tenants could move within the scheme to a larger house.

The legal title deeds to each dwelling following 'privatisation' contained a Deed of Conditions which set out a series of obligations more onerous than normally associate with a private dwelling. The Residents' Association relied on these conditions to remind residents to cut hedges, maintain their property or to stop extensions which were not considered sympathetic. Some extensions were halted by the Residents Association by invoking the following section of the Deed of Conditions, 'totally in keeping with the rest of the estate and not taking away too much garden space. Single level extensions need not have sloping roofs but multi-storey ones should have them. The extension should match existing features.'

The restrictions placed on residents through the Southfield Deed of Conditions no longer apply, following the end of feudal superiority in 2004.

6. Sources

1. Co-ownership Housing, Roland Wedgewood and Pat Bagot, Architects' Journal, November 1970.
2. Inside out: Social Housing at Southfield, Fiona Mclauchlan, Architectural Research Quarterly, Vol 7, No 1, 2003.