

# Planning Committee

2.00pm, Wednesday, 27 February 2019

## South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal Review

Item number	10.1
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	Southside/Newington
Council Commitments	<a href="#">15</a>

### Executive Summary

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On 22 August 2018, the Committee approved an updated programme of review of the existing conservation area character appraisals. This report presents the revised South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal, including a proposed boundary amendment, for approval. The revised appraisal has been the subject of consultation with local residents, businesses and institutions and city-wide amenity groups.

## South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal Review

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 It is recommended that:
  - 1.1.1 the Committee approves the revised South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal, including the proposed boundary amendment

### 2. Background

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- 2.1 It is a statutory requirement in terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 for local authorities to periodically review conservation area boundaries and consider whether new conservation area designations are appropriate.
- 2.2 The City of Edinburgh Council completed character appraisals for all the conservation areas in Edinburgh between 1998 and 2007. More recently, appraisals have been approved as part of the designation process for new conservation areas. On [3 October 2013](#), the Committee approved a more interactive format for the conservation area character appraisals and a review of the existing character appraisals.
- 2.3 The review was based on a ranking system to allow prioritisation of conservation areas on the basis of their relative need for an updated appraisal. The appraisals for Inverleith, Grange, Portobello, Leith, Queensferry and the Old and New Town Conservation Areas were completed in the new format.
- 2.4 On [22 August 2018](#), Committee approved an updated programme of review of the existing conservation area character appraisals. This was based on the age of the character appraisal, with the earliest being given priority, and development pressure, based on the number of applications submitted for planning permission and the extent of recent housing development.
- 2.5 The resulting priority conservation areas were: South Side, Marchmont and Meadows, Colinton, Merchiston and Greenhill, West End, Coltbridge and Wester Coates, Craigmillar Park and Morningside. Trinity Conservation area was added to the priority list due to local community requests for a review of the boundary of the area.

### 3. Main report

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- 3.1 This report presents the revised South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal, which was approved as the first priority by Committee on [22 August 2018](#). It includes a proposed boundary amendment for approval. The appraisal has been the subject of consultation with local residents, businesses and institutions, and city-wide amenity groups.
- 3.2 The South Side Conservation Area was originally designated in May 1975 and the first character appraisal for the area was approved in 2002.
- 3.3 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 Historic Environment Scotland Policy Statement on the criteria for the designation of conservation areas 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.
- 3.4 The principles of selection for designation as a conservation area include:
  - 3.4.1 areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of specific listed buildings; and
  - 3.4.2 areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of building groupings.
- 3.5 The South Side is one of the most historically and architecturally important parts of Edinburgh with a rich mixture of stages of development and a wealth of heritage interest.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 The revised character appraisal (appendix 1) updates and refines the text of the original appraisal for its final publication as a digital document that will include images, photographs and interactive maps. The review involved a comprehensive re-drafting of the original appraisal and it is not practical to highlight changes.

#### **Proposed Boundary Changes**

- 3.8 An extension of the Conservation Area boundary to include the Royal Commonwealth Pool, the Scottish Widows Building and Pollock Halls is proposed. These buildings form an outstanding group of Category 'A' listed buildings. They are of special architectural and historic importance, distinct character, and significant value as good examples of their architectural styles.

- 3.9 It is also proposed to include the tenement at 186 Pleasance, which dates from 1932. The tenements from the 1930's renewal work in the Southside has been recognised more in recent years as important examples of a local architectural style. The flats at Forbes Street and the St Leonard's Police Station are more recent developments and are proposed for removal from the Conservation Area. The boundary of the proposed extension is shown in appendix 3. It is also proposed that the Article 4 Direction Order should be extended to cover the revised area.
- 3.10 The boundary amendments will require to be advertised in *The Scotsman* and *The Edinburgh Gazette*. The revised Article 4 Direction Order will require approval by the Scottish Government.

### **Consultation**

- 3.11 The draft revised South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal was the subject of a consultation from 30 November 2018 to 31 January 2019. An on-line questionnaire was set up on the consultation hub to capture views on the draft appraisal and boundary changes, and to encourage comments about how well it defines the special characteristics of the Conservation Area.
- 3.12 The Southside Association, the Southside Community Council, local councillors, the Cockburn Association, the Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland and properties directly affected by the proposed boundary changes were informed directly. Posters detailing the consultation were widely distributed throughout the Conservation Area.
- 3.13 The consultation generated 20 responses via the online survey and a letter from the University of Edinburgh. Appendix 2 lists the comments received. The majority of respondents agreed with the contents of the draft revised appraisal and there were no objections to the proposed extension of the Conservation Area boundary. The University objected to the original proposed wider inclusion of the Pollock Halls buildings in the Conservation Area, however had no objection to the inclusion of the listed buildings on the site. The proposed boundary has been amended to reflect the University's comments.

## **4. Measures of success**

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- 4.1 Publication of the finalised appraisal.
- 4.2 Formal re-designation of the conservation area, including the extended boundary.
- 4.3 Better-informed design and decision-making, helping to protect the character of the area.

## **5. Financial impact**

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- 5.1 There are no immediate financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

- 5.2 The new format for the character appraisals is intended to be viewed online. The Council would not stock a traditional, printed version. However, individual copies could be photocopied on request for customers with difficulties accessing the web version. Demand for this service is expected to be low and the minimal additional costs could be absorbed in existing budgets.

## **6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact**

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- 6.1 There are no significant risks associated with approval of the document as recommended. Completion of the review of the appraisal ensures the Council's compliance with its statutory duty to review its conservation areas, as established in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997.
- 6.2 If not approved, the appraisal review would be delayed with a consequent impact on the quality of decision making and outcomes on the ground in the conservation. There may be also be a degree of reputational damage: the Council's relationship with community groups could be affected due to delay or the failure to complete the review process on time.

## **7. Equalities impact**

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- 7.1 The aim of conservation area status is to enhance the quality of the area. This has the potential to improve quality of life and supports sustainable communities.
- 7.2 No infringements of rights have been identified. No negative impacts on equality have been identified.

## **8. Sustainability impact**

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- 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.
- 8.1.1 the proposals in this report will reduce carbon emissions by encouraging the conservation of resources and energy embodied in existing buildings, rather than demolition and reconstruction, major generators of carbon emissions;
- 8.1.2 the need to build resilience to climate change impacts is not relevant to the proposals in this report because conservation of the built environment is not considered to be significantly affected, positively or negatively, in this regard; and
- 8.1.3 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 material 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.

## **9. Consultation and engagement**

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9.1 Information on consultation and engagement is included in paragraphs 3.11 to 3.13.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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10.1 The current [South Side Conservation Area character appraisal](#).

**Paul Lawrence**

**Executive Director of Place**

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## **11. Appendices**

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11.1 Appendix 1 - South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal – final text version.

11.2 Appendix 2 - Consultation responses.

11.3 Appendix 3 - Map of proposed extension to Conservation Area.

# **Appendix 1 – South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal**

## **SUMMARY INFORMATION**

### **Location and boundaries**

The South Side shares a common boundary to the north with the Old Town Conservation Area. However, at this point the two Conservation Areas are overlaid by the World Heritage Site, the boundary of which lies further south and overlaps into the South Side, and Marchmont and Meadows Conservation Areas.

The western boundary is formed by Middle Meadow Walk leading directly onto the Meadows the northern edge of which continues the boundary of the Conservation Area onto Buccleuch Street where the boundary swings southwards following Sciennes. The boundary then follows Braid Place eastwards onto Causewayside turning south till it meets Salisbury Place and runs along the back of Salisbury Road to meet Dalkeith Road. At this point, the boundary moves generally northwards to rejoin Drummond Street taking irregular extensions eastwards to include Parkside Street, St Leonard's Bank, the Deaconess Hospital and University buildings off the Pleasance.

The Edinburgh World Heritage Site boundary overlaps the South Side Conservation Area. Starting in the middle of Middle Meadow Walk, it runs eastward to include the northern part of George Square before running up the west side of Bristo Street car park and then turns east into Nicolson Square. The boundary then crosses Nicolson Street to run down Hill Place, turns north up Richmond Place and then east down Adam Street to meet the Pleasance. Everything to the north of this boundary is contained within the World Heritage Site.

### **Dates of designation/amendments**

The South Side Conservation Area was originally designated in May 1975 and extended in 1986 to include an area around Forbes Street. A further amendment was approved in 1996 to transfer an area to the north of the Conservation Area to the Old Town Conservation Area and include the Deaconess Hospital within the Conservation Area.

The northern section of the Conservation Area is included within the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site.

### **Statement of Significance**

The South Side is one of the most historically and architecturally important parts of Edinburgh with a rich mixture of stages of development and an abundance of heritage interest.

In 1766, Edinburgh made its first ambitious expansion beyond the city walls with the development of the architecturally unified George Square. The construction of North Bridge in 1772, followed by South Bridge in 1788 was a major factor in the continuing development of the area.

In the fifties and sixties, the South Side was changed by slum clearance programmes and the expansion plans of the University. Large parts of the area were also blighted by uncertainty over road proposals. The designation of the South Side Conservation Area in 1975 reversed the wave of demolition, resulted in the regeneration of the area and the retention of much of its historic identity.

Despite the many changes to the South Side; the history, architectural heritage and mix of communities in the area make it one of the most significant parts of the city. The South Side has made a significant contribution to the rich history of the city.

## **CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISALS**

### **Purpose of Character Appraisals**

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

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

*Physical change in Conservation Areas does not necessarily need to replicate its surroundings. The challenge is to ensure that all new development respects, enhances and has a positive impact on the area. Physical and land use change in Conservation Areas should always be founded on a detailed understanding of the historic and urban design context.”*

From PAN 71, Conservation Area Management.

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20450/49052](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20450/49052)

### **How to use this document**

The analysis of the South Side Conservation Area’s character and appearance focuses on the features which make the South Side special and distinctive. These are considered in terms of:

- Historical Origins and Development;
- Structure, which describes and draws conclusions regarding the overall organisation and macro-scale features of the area;
- Key Elements, which examines the smaller-scale features and details which fit within the structure; and



- **Management:** The Management section outlines the policy and legislation relevant to decision-making in the area. Issues specific to the South Side are discussed in more detail and recommendations or opportunities identified.

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.

## **HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT**

The South Side Conservation Area lies immediately to the south of the line of the defensive walls of the city formed by the Flodden Wall, built between 1514 and 1560, and extended by the Telfer Wall, between 1628 and 1636. A clear space was left on the inside of the wall of 12 feet and on the outside of 24 feet. This external space was used later for roads, forming the street pattern of today. Consequently, the northern boundary of the Conservation Area formed by Drummond Street, South College Street, Bristo Port, Bristo Place and Teviot Place follows the line of the defensive walls.

Gates, or ports, at Potterrow, Bristo Port and latterly Forrest Road punctuated these walls. These gates were served by two roads approaching from the south, one following the line of Dalkeith Road/Pleasance and the other following the line of Causewayside/Buccleuch Street.

In the Middle Ages, Preston Street was known as Mounthooly Loan – it was the road to the Holy Mount, the site of a small chapel which is now occupied by the Scottish Widows building. The site of Preston Street School has a gruesome history, reflected in a later name for Preston Street - Gibbet Loan. During the 16th and 17th centuries, a gallows faced down Dalkeith Road on the site. The mutilated remains of the Marquess of Montrose were buried here, after his execution at the Cross of Edinburgh in May, 1650

Up to 1700, the area lying to the south of Edinburgh, beyond the City walls, was characterised by scattered houses, open fields and some ribbon development. This stretched along the southern approach roads of Potterrow, Buccleuch Street, Pleasance and also Roxburgh Place and Richmond Place, which led to a tower in the Flodden wall.

Very little remains of the period prior to 1700, but there are a number of former 'country' houses dating from the early 1700s that still exist embedded in the urban fabric of the South Side. Hermits and Termites at 64 St Leonard's Street which dates from 1734 has provided a home for two generations of artists, a railway office for an adjacent coal yard and is now fully restored as a residence. Chapel House (1750) and Pear Tree House (1747), the former now used by the Mosque and the latter as a pub and restaurant.

The Act of Union of 1707 and the suppression of the Jacobite uprisings in 1715 and 1745, provided a settled political and social climate that allowed Edinburgh to

contemplate expansion beyond the City walls. The constraints of the Nor' Loch meant that the initial expansion of the city focused towards the south, outside the Telfer and Flodden walls. Several small developments - Adam, Argyll, and Brown Squares - were undertaken. Although there was no overall planning philosophy these schemes were considered as planned developments at the time. The landowners in the South Side, particularly from Causewayside northwards, were numerous and feuing their policies in an unrelated fashion.

After developing Brown Square in the early 1760s, James Brown (1729-1807) drew up plans for George Square - a new development of terraced houses around a central square and the first development of any significant size outside of the overcrowded Old Town. Brown had acquired the site of the Ross Park in 1761 for the development of his 'superior style' houses and the feuing of George Square began in 1776. It was the earliest and most ambitious scheme of development attempted in Edinburgh and a precursor of the New Town. The scale and unity of its design made it an architectural landmark –it was considered to be one of the finest domestic squares in Europe. The design of terraces with individual houses was a new idea in Edinburgh, where flatted tenements were the norm. The layout of the houses around a central semi-private garden was also a relatively new concept in Scotland. It was an immediate success and proved popular with Edinburgh's more affluent citizens – number 25 was the childhood home of Sir Walter Scott. For a time it was the most fashionable residential area in Edinburgh attracting aristocratic and wealthy families from their cramped houses in the Old Town, but by 1800 it had been eclipsed by the New Town. The square was named after Brown's elder brother, George Brown. These were subsequently replaced by Chambers Street in the nineteenth century.

The construction of North Bridge in 1772 followed by the construction of South Bridge in 1788 which linked the New Town, Old Town and South Side directly for the first time were principal incentives to expansion.

The development of Nicolson Street, dates from 1764 when the city was beginning to expand to the South and the land was feued from the estate of Lady Nicolson. Nicolson Street was laid out on the axis of Lady Nicolson's house, which stood in the middle of the road at West Richmond Street, and for many years all traffic had to fork around her mansion. After completion of the South Bridge in 1788, the house was demolished in 1794, allowing Nicolson Street to be extended to Clerk Street. By 1800, building had reached St Patrick Square and Montague and Rankeillor Streets had been laid out.

Up to 1800, the housing that was built was of vernacular style in rubble rather than ashlar, although there were some notable exceptions. By 1830, terraces and villas were being erected as far south as West Mayfield. The housing market was saturated by this time and this, allied to a declaration of bankruptcy by Edinburgh in 1833, resulted in little new building being erected in the South Side for twenty years.

St. Leonards Railway Station served the first rail service between Edinburgh and Dalkeith. The demand for coal in Edinburgh led to the construction of the first railway in the Lothians, when the Edinburgh and Dalkeith Railway opened in 1831. It was known as the 'Innocent Railway' possibly because it was originally horse drawn (until

1846) in an age in which many considered steam engines dangerous. The rate of travel was slow and drivers were warned not to stop and feed their horses between stations. It was designed by Robert Stevenson and constructed by James Jardine for investors including the 5th Duke of Buccleuch. The line passed through Duddingston, Craigmillar, Niddrie, Newcraighall and out to Dalkeith: although passengers simply jumped off when they reached their destination. The line was bought by the North British Railway Company in 1845 and the line is now a cycle path. The service was a great success moving over 300 tons of coal a day with a passenger service, started in 1832, carrying a quarter of a million people by the end of the 1830s. The site was used as a coal yard in the 1960s and has since been developed for housing.

The final expansion of new building in the South Side took place from the 1850s onwards with Hope Park Terrace, Lutton Place and Bernard Terrace all being completed by the 1870s. From the end of the century until the mid-1920s little new building activity occurred. However, in the northern and central sections of the Conservation Area existing tenements were subdivided twice and sometimes three times without regard to amenity.

A scheme for rehousing the population living in the area between the Pleasance and Richmond Place was prepared by the City Architect's Department under Ebenezer James Macrae. Macrae, was City Architect from 1925 to 1946. He was influential, both as an early adopter and promoter of the idea of conservation, and as the creator of numerous inter-war Council housing schemes, many schools and the iconic Edinburgh police boxes. The project commenced in 1931 and was completed by 1938. The work at East Crosscauseway, Buccleuch Street, Simon Square, Gifford Park and St Patrick Square adding up to a considerable amount of housing redevelopment.

In the heyday of cinema going, the South Side could boast numerous local picture houses - the Roxy on Roxburgh Street, the Abbey on Richmond Street, the Lyric and La Scala on Nicolson Street, the Salisbury on Clerk Street, and the Operetta House on Chambers Street. The biggest and most elaborate was the New Victoria Cinema on Clerk Street. The New Victoria opened on 25 August 1930. It was designed by the prominent cinema architect William Edward Trent and is recognised as an exceptional example of an Art Deco picture palace. The name changed to the Odeon in 1964. In August 2003, the cinema closed and was sold to a property developer. There followed a long period of uncertainty about the future of the building. However, at the time of writing, work is underway to refurbish it for use as a cinema.

The site of the Festival Theatre has been occupied by a succession of circuses and performance halls since 1830 and is Edinburgh's longest serving theatre venue. The new Empire Palace Theatre opened on November 7 1892. The creation of the magnificent new theatre was a partnership between two of the great men associated with the theatre at the time - Sir Howard Edward Moss (1852–1912), a major theatre entrepreneur, and the celebrated theatre architect, Frank Matcham (1854–1920) – 'Matchless Matcham'. By 1927, the Empire Palace was beginning to look unfashionable and was suffering from competition from the development of cinemas. In November 1927, the theatre closed and was largely rebuilt to a plan by the

prominent theatre designers William and Thomas Milburn. The new Empire Theatre (the word Palace was dropped from the name), with its Art Deco façade, reopened on 1 October 1928. By the 1950s, the increasing popularity of television resulted in dwindling audiences for theatres. In 1962, the Empire closed, was sold to Mecca and by March 1963 reopened as the New Empire Casino to cater for the new fad of bingo. In 1992, bingo was falling out of favour and Mecca was having financial difficulties. The local authority negotiated the purchase of the building and it was leased to the Edinburgh Festival Theatre Company. The old frontage was replaced with a stunningly modern concave glass and steel façade which forms a glowing night-time landmark on Nicolson Street and encloses the magnificent 1928 auditorium. The theatre reopened on 18 May 1994 as the Festival Theatre.

In the 1920s the Corporation commissioned Sir Frank Mears to prepare a plan for Central Edinburgh. His proposals of 1931 were shelved with the outbreak of war in 1939. In the thirty years following the Second World War, there was considerable Planning activity in the South Side. The first major plan relating to the South Side was the Abercrombie Civic Survey and Plan of 1949. The proposals included a major road development through the area and redevelopment around George Square to cater for the expansion of the University. The survey also concluded that the majority of housing suffered from multiple deficiencies and should be redeveloped.

Dumbiedykes takes its name from Thomas Braidwood's *Academy for the Deaf and Dumb* which he established in a house on the east side of St Leonard's in 1764. The building became known as the *Dummie House*, from the Scots *dummie*, a dumb person. *The Dummie House*, was demolished in 1939. Beaumont Place in Dumbiedykes included the 'Penny Tenement' whose owner tried to sell it for a penny in 1953 to demonstrate the burden on landlords caused by rent controls. No one came forward with a penny and it was offered free to the council, who also declined. On November 21 1958 at 5am, part of the building collapsed, fortunately with no fatalities. The collapse of the 'Penny Tenement' focused attention on Edinburgh's slums. Two extensive clearance areas around Carnegie Street were declared and a hundred families were moved from dangerous homes and re-housed - the beginning of a major slum-clearance drive. In the early 1960s, 1,030 houses were demolished in the St. Leonard's area and an estimated 1,977 people displaced.

The University of Edinburgh promoted plans to integrate the scattered parts of the University and to redevelop George Square, and a wider part of the South Side, as early as 1945. The University believed that the reconstruction of the Square was the only practical solution to their need for expansion. Debate about the proposals went on throughout the 1950s. Planning permission was granted in 1956, but mounting opposition to the scheme resulted in a public inquiry in 1959. The Historic Buildings Council then indicated that they considered George Square interesting, but not comparable to the quality of Charlotte Square and the technical advice was that the buildings in the Square were too dilapidated for re-use. In the mid-1960s, the redevelopment went ahead. In the face of a public outcry, modernist blocks replaced many of the old Georgian buildings. Now only original portions of the original east side and the west side remain. The University's expansion plans resulted in the redevelopment of all of the old buildings between Lothian Street to the north,

Crichton Street to the south, Potterow to the east and Charles Street/Bristo Street to the east.

In 1966, the Quinquennial Review of the 1957 Development Plan recommended the South Side as an action area for comprehensive development. In 1968, the Secretary of State instructed that the proposed Action Area be deleted from the statutory map and that the 1957 zonings be restored. The review was not formally approved until 1974. The considerable delay added to the uncertainty over the future of the South Side.

In 1973, it was decided that renewal work in the South Side should proceed on the basis of a Local Plan rather than a comprehensive development plan. In 1975, the South Side was declared a Conservation Area, with conservation and rehabilitation being the key factors in the Local Plan. This change in policy, allied to the availability of private sector grants, produced a burst of residential rehabilitation activity throughout the South Side. This started in the mid-1970s and continued through the 80s and had the effect of restoring confidence in the South Side.

The single biggest scheme was the partial restoration and rebuilding of a full street block on Nicolson Street between East Crosscauseway and West Richmond Street. The buildings had been acquired in 1960 for a joint project with a development company and the University of Edinburgh. Demolition of the buildings, which dated from the latter part of the eighteenth century, was planned as part of a comprehensive redevelopment scheme. Residents and retailers started to move out and the buildings rapidly deteriorated. In 1975, the proposals were rethought and rehabilitation rather than demolition was seen as the way forward. The group of buildings was named the Pilot Block and the project which followed was to mark a new beginning for the South Side. As part of the Pilot Block project, it was proposed to conserve and restore as many buildings as possible, but where the buildings had deteriorated beyond repair they were to be replaced in a historic style to preserve the character of the area. The buildings at each end were least deteriorated and were restored with new buildings between these 'restored bookends'. Funding for the restoration was made available by the Crown Estate Commissioners, who at the time were accruing substantial revenue from oil developments. Work started in December 1978, and was mostly completed by February 1983. The project resulted in 69 flats, a supermarket, 24 shops and a pub.

During the same period, the City Council and Housing Associations began extensive new build housing schemes along the Pleasance and St Leonard's Street where clearance had taken place for the now deleted Bridges Relief Road. By the late 1980s and 90s private housing developers started to erect new housing developments on many of the remaining gap sites, significantly reducing them in number.

Since the original South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal was published in 2002, the gap sites along Crichton Street, identified in the appraisal, have been developed. These include the former Crichton Street car park, which is now the site of the University's Informatics and Dugald Stewart buildings. The refurbishment of Bristo Square in 2018 provides an attractive new setting for the McEwan Hall. The gap site on the south side of the Nicolson Square created by a fire in the early 1990s has also been infilled.

## **STRUCTURE**

### **Topography**

The South Side Conservation Area lies on a gentle south facing slope. It is bounded by the line of the former town walls to the north and constrained by the major open spaces of the Meadows to the west and Holyrood Park to the east.

### **Focal Points and Landmarks**

There are a number of prominent buildings that act as focal points throughout the area. These are principally churches and institutional buildings. They tend to occur along two routes - Nicolson/Clerk Street and Buccleuch Street/Causewayside. With the exception of the two modern tower blocks on George Square, the area is generally characterised by the slender towers of churches and the cupolas and domes of institutional buildings

On Nicolson Street, at the northern boundary of the Conservation Area, the most prominent building at this point is the Old College on South Bridge, which is one of the most notable and important academic buildings in Scotland. The foundation stone of the new building for the University of Edinburgh was laid in November 1789. The existing University buildings on the site were in a dilapidated condition and badly in need of replacement. The design, by the renowned architect Robert Adam, included two internal courtyards. Work began in 1789, but was halted in 1793, with only the north-west corner and main frontage completed, following the death of Adam and the outbreak of the Napoleonic War. In 1818, William Playfair completed the building by retaining much of Adam's design, but with only one large quadrangle. In 1887, the dome, which had been part of Adam's original design for the College, but had been left out as a cost saving, was added. The dome is crowned by the Golden Boy - a statue of youth holding a torch and symbolising knowledge. Although the building lies just outside the Conservation Area boundary; its presence on Nicolson Street is particularly noticeable. Looking northwards, the skyline is dominated by the Tron Kirk and the street is terminated by the dome of General Register House on Princes Street.

From Nicolson Square the dome of the McEwan Hall is glimpsed along with the minaret of the mosque on Potterrow and the spire of Buccleuch and Greyfriars church. The views along West Richmond Street are dominated by the University's David Hume and Appleton Towers.

To the south of St Patrick Square the skyline is punctuated by the spires of the Queen's Hall on Clerk Street, St Peters church on Lutton Place and St Margaret and St Leonard's church on Dalkeith Road.

### **Vistas and Views**

The proximity of Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags and the Old Town Ridge allow dramatic views and glimpses from a large number of points throughout the Conservation Area and the World Heritage Site. The topography of the area means that there are some fine views northwards towards the Castle and the Old Town and eastwards towards Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags.

The central position and historic nature of the South Side make the area extremely sensitive to the effects of high buildings. The skyline of the South Side and its landmarks are particularly distinctive and contribute to the prominence of the World Heritage Site, the boundary of which overlaps the South Side to the north.

It is important that where there are development opportunities lying adjacent to the Conservation Area boundary that views out of the Conservation Area are not disrupted and that the style of building reflects the scale, massing and materials of the Conservation Area. This is particularly true along the eastern edge of the Conservation Area along St Leonard's and the northern area of the Conservation Area where it overlaps with the World Heritage Site boundary.

### **Natural Heritage**

There are two major areas of open space to the east and west respectively of the Conservation Area as well as a number of smaller open spaces and squares within the built up area. Some of these have been designed as an integral part of the urban fabric. The Meadows, on the west side of the Conservation Area, is a major parkland area of open space serving a large part of the population of south Edinburgh. It is a managed open space with recreational facilities including cycleways, tree-lined paths, children's play areas, cricket squares, and tennis courts. It is characterised by large expanses of mown grass, avenues of mature broadleaf trees, with secondary lines of ornamental flowering cherries.

The expansive natural heritage landscape of Holyrood Park, with Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crags, lie to the east of the built up area. The urban edge, which generally coincides with the edge of the Conservation Area, abruptly meets the rougher terrain; tree planted edge and natural vegetation of the steep slopes forming the boundary of the Royal Park.

Scattered throughout the Conservation Area there are a number of formal and informal open spaces and squares. Although many are small they make a contribution to residential amenity, which is disproportionate to their size. Generally each space is visually linked with at least one other providing significant legibility and an enhanced perception of the amount of open space.

## **KEY ELEMENTS**

### **Building Types**

The mixed residential, commercial and institutional buildings of the South Side consist mainly of four to six storeys constructed of stone with pitched, slated roofs. A characteristic in parts of the South Side is the use of wallhead gables in the early vernacular tenements. The general uniformity of building heights provides a background against which important features of the City stand out. Each period of the South Side's history has left buildings of significant interest.

## **Routes**

Three main traffic routes penetrate the area. The principal route, comprising South Clerk Street/Clerk Street and Nicolson Street, runs through the centre of the area and was constructed in Georgian times to link directly to the City Centre and the New Town by way of North and South Bridge. This route acts as a linear 'High Street' for the South Side.

The other main roads were originally the medieval routes to Edinburgh. The easterly route comprising Dalkeith Road/St Leonard's Street and the Pleasance running down to the Cowgate. The second medieval route comprises Causewayside/Buccleuch Street and Potter Row linking with Candlemaker Row and George IV Bridge. East and West Crosscauseway connected these routes, in medieval times.

During the nineteenth century, the street pattern of the emerging Georgian developments were unified into the line of the historic routes.

## **Trees**

The Meadows, East Preston Street Burial Ground and the grounds of St Peter's Church include trees of significant stature. There is limited tree planting in streets with the exception of Lutton Place, which is sufficiently wide to accommodate trees along pavements on each side, and along parts of the Pleasance where street trees have been planted as part of new developments. There are no Tree Preservation Orders within the Conservation Area.

## **SUB-AREA ANALYSIS**

The Conservation Area covers a large area which includes various historical periods and stages of development to form a variety of character areas and spatial patterns. For this appraisal the Conservation Area is split into four sub-areas representing distinctive patterns of growth and development.

### **1.0 FIRST EXPANSION AREA**

The first area lies to the north of East and West Crosscauseway bounded by Potterow up to South College Street where the boundary follows the old town walls and meets up with the Pleasance. The boundary follows the line of the Pleasance to East Crosscauseway, deviating to include the University Sports Centre and the Deaconess Hospital.



## **STRUCTURE**

### **Spatial Structure**

This area is characterised by small, informal street blocks, which provides a high degree of permeability. Some of the blocks have been infilled with larger buildings, such as the Festival Theatre and the supermarket on Nicolson Street.

Significant redevelopment has taken place in the area, including the City Architect's schemes of the 1930s to address overcrowding including a full street block at Richmond Place/Pleasance and smaller schemes at East Crosscauseway and Gifford Park. The decline that the area suffered from the end of the Second World War up to the mid-1970s, resulted in further redevelopment and a considerable amount of rehabilitation. The largest redevelopment/rehabilitation scheme was at the Pilot Block on the east side of Nicolson Street, between West Richmond Street and East Crosscauseway. All of these schemes have generally followed the grain and height of existing block sizes.

### **Routes**

The main route through the area is Nicolson Street with roads on both sides linking through to Potterow and the Pleasance, and creating an informal grid structure. Nicolson Street is the main linear shopping street running through the area, supplemented by a wide range of restaurants and cafes on Chapel Street, Potterow, West Nicolson Street and Nicolson Square. The main east-west routes are West Richmond Street and East and West Crosscauseway.

Many of the side streets retain setted surfaces. The junction at West Crosscauseway and Buccleuch Street is filled with a pedestrian island and could provide a more formal planned open space.

## **KEY ELEMENTS**

### **Townscape**

Between Nicolson Street and the Pleasance there are a number of streets running from north to south creating smaller blocks and reflecting the fact that there were a large number of individual landowners when the ground was originally feued. Consequently block sizes and plot sizes tend to be small scale providing a lively variety of building types and frontages.

Building lines are generally to the heel of the pavement, the exceptions being Georgian residential streets and squares, such as Drummond Street and Hill Square. New residential developments on the Pleasance tend to have small gardens to the front for privacy. Where new development has occurred on Nicolson Street and Potterow, this has been mixed residential and shopping which has followed the building line.

Generally heights of buildings vary through the area being between three and six storeys. Most buildings built before the Second World War are of stone construction. New post-war development respects the heights and overall massing of the area.

## **Architectural Character**

This area is characterised by a rich, diverse grouping of architectural styles and buildings using primarily stone and pitched, slated roofs. Despite the variety of architectural styles and periods, the area remains generally harmonious in scale, massing and materials.

Architectural character is considered under the following architectural styles.

### **Traditional**

Dating from the 1730s onwards, these buildings are vernacular in style and form a complete and continuous façade, presenting wallhead gables to the front and newel or turret staircases to the rear. Generally these buildings are of rubble construction, harled or rendered. Examples of this style are found on West Nicolson Street and Nicolson Street.

Two former mansion houses in this area have significant historic associations:

- Chapel House, Chapel Street (Category B listed). Chapel House is a distinctive building with rooftop urns located behind the mosque and forming part of the Mosque Kitchen. Chapel House dates from the mid-18th and was originally four storeys high. In 1840, it was purchased by Andrew Melrose, founder of the famous Melrose & Co., Tea and Coffee Merchants. On the death of Melrose in 1855 the house was used by the Edinburgh Royal Maternity Hospital until 1870. The celebrated Professor James Young Simpson, who first made use of chloroform in childbirth, was one of the trustees of the Lying-In Hospital at this time; and
- Pear Tree House, West Nicolson Street (Category B listed). The pub takes its name from the old jargonelle pear tree which grows over the frontage of the building. The house dates from the mid-eighteenth century and the first occupant was Lord Kilkerran, a Court of Session Judge. Lord Kilkerran's son, Sir Adam Ferguson, who was the Member of Parliament for Edinburgh from 1784 to 1790, was the next owner of the house. Sir Adam entertained many eminent celebrities of the time at the house - James Boswell noted in his journal that he 'drank tea at Sir Adam Ferguson's'. In 1823, the house was purchased by the brewer Andrew Usher as a family home and business premises - it is reputed that whisky was first commercially blended on the premises. Prior to its conversion to a pub in 1982, the building was occupied by J & G Stewart, a firm of wine and spirit merchants.

### **Georgian**

The expansion of the city from the 1760s resulted in a number of small planned Georgian classical schemes within the vernacular context of the South Side. These

are represented in this area by St Patrick Square and Hill Square/Hill Place. There is a dignified quality to the architecture of this period complemented by detailed finishes, floorscape and railings. These buildings tend to be five to six storeys in height and finished in ashlar stonework to the front. The transition between vernacular and classical Georgian architecture is demonstrated on the north side of West Nicolson Street.

The Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh is one of the oldest surgical institutions in the world and has its origins in 1505, when the Barber Surgeons of Edinburgh were formally admitted as a Craft Guild of the city. In 1647, they established their first permanent meeting place in rooms in a tenement in Dickson's Close. As they expanded, they required a building with an anatomical theatre and, in 1697, they moved into Old Surgeons' Hall in High School Yards. In 1778, King George III granted a new charter giving the surgeons' corporation the title 'The Royal College of Surgeons of the City of Edinburgh'. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, they had outgrown the building and additional space was required for the large collection of pathological specimens, including a full sized elephant, which had been gifted to the College. A site on Nicolson Street, occupied at the time by the Royal Academy for Teaching Exercise, a Riding School, designed by Robert Adam and built in 1764, was acquired. William Henry Playfair, one of the leading architects of the time, was commissioned to design the new building. The Greek Revival style Surgeons' Hall with its massive Ionic columned portico opened in July 1832.

## **Modern**

Small inter-war housing developments at Richmond Place, Gifford Park and elsewhere, comprising infill and redevelopment were successfully integrated into the fabric of the area by using traditional materials such as stone and slate. These buildings reflect the scale of the area.

A number of more recent mixed use and residential developments, while keeping in scale, have used brick as a finishing material which looks out of place with the general character of the area

## **2.0 GEORGE SQUARE**

Buccleuch Street, Chapel Street and Potterrow turning onto Lothian Street and Teviot Row along its northern edge form the boundary to this area. The boundary then follows Middle Meadow walk linking with the northern edge of the Meadows to connect back to Buccleuch Street.

## **STRUCTURE**

### **Spatial Structure**

This area is dominated by the University, which first moved into George Square in 1914. The principal through route is Buccleuch Street/Potterrow forming the eastern boundary, the routes to the west off this principal route lead directly into the campus and provide no through routes for vehicles. However, the area is extremely

permeable for pedestrians. Bristo Square, which was built in 1983 and remodelled in 2017, provides an appropriate setting to the McEwan Hall,

In the 1960s, the University embarked on a major redevelopment programme around George Square, which is the largest planned open space in the South Side. This involved the redevelopment of the south side of the square and half of the north and east sides. This inward looking Georgian square of small scale residential character has been opened up by modern large scale institutional buildings, which contrast in scale and style with the remaining Georgian properties.

The Georgian tenements of Buccleuch Street and their mews buildings behind occupy the area to the south of George Square. These in turn lead into small informal squares.

While there is more limited vehicular permeability through this area, it is very permeable for pedestrians.

## **Townscape**

The original form of George Square has been disrupted by the construction of major University buildings. The original plot sizes in George Square have been overlaid by twentieth century international style, tower and podium buildings faced in a variety of materials ranging from slate and stone to concrete and mosaic.

To the south of George Square, original building forms with the Georgian terraces on Buccleuch Place consisting of main door and common stair tenement blocks of four storeys, basement and attic. The setted street is one of the grandest in the South Side.

The Buildings on Buccleuch Street generally follow a building line which lies to the heel of the pavement.

The charming Hope Park Square, with a Dutch gabled building of 1725, fronts onto the Meadows, and the triangular Boroughloch Square provides an urban edge to the Meadows.

## **KEY ELEMENTS**

### **Architectural Character**

Despite the major redevelopments that have taken place in George Square there is still a wealth of architectural styles and buildings in this area, the majority using stone and pitched, slated roofs.

### **Traditional**

The traditional, vernacular buildings occur to the south of the area, reflecting the fact that Buccleuch Street was one of the main medieval routes into the city. The

buildings forming the Buccleuch Street side of Boroughloch Square include wallhead gables to the street and stair turrets to the rear.

## **Georgian**

Classical Georgian buildings, originally residential, occur on George Square, Buccleuch Place and Buccleuch Street, which were all laid out by James Brown in the 1760s and 70s. These buildings retain their original railings.

The Archers' Hall built in 1776 and extended in 1900 sits in a tarmac forecourt set back from Buccleuch Street. The Royal Company of Archers has functioned as the Sovereign's Body Guard in Scotland since 1822, performing duties at the request of the Queen at state and ceremonial occasions. The foundation stone of the Archers' Hall was laid on 15 August, 1776, by William St. Clair of Roslin on the edge of Hope Park (now the Meadows) where access to public archery butts was granted by the sovereign. The original building was extended in 1900. When the building opened in 1777, it was used as a tavern and meeting place for dancing assemblies. In January 1785, the dancing assemblies moved to the 'George's Square Assembly Rooms' in Buccleuch Place and the tavern closed. Each archer is obliged to equip himself with 'sufficient shooting graith (equipment)' and display in his bonnet the Company's seal and arms. Their charter empowers the Archers to convene in military fashion and meet 'at least once every year about midsummer to shoot arrows with a bow at a butt'.

## **Victorian**

Buildings from this era tend to occur in the north of this area and are mainly institutional in nature:

- The McEwan Hall was funded by Sir William McEwan (1827-1913), the Edinburgh brewer who established the successful Fountain Brewery in Edinburgh in 1856. McEwan was the Member of Parliament for central Edinburgh and gave £115,000 to the University of Edinburgh to erect a graduation hall. The design for the building was selected by competition and the eminent architect, Sir Robert Rowand Anderson, was so determined to win that he made a rapid tour of public buildings in England and the continent before submitting his entry;
- The Medical School, Teviot Place. Medicine has been on the curriculum at the University of Edinburgh from the beginning of the sixteenth century. The Medical School was established in 1726 and is one of the oldest in the world. The building was completed in 1888 to a design by Sir Robert Rowand Anderson; and
- Teviot Row House. The students of the University of Edinburgh celebrated the opening of Teviot Row House on 19 October 1889 with a torch-lit procession through the city. The students themselves had set out to raise the funds to build the Students' Union, which takes its place in history as the oldest purpose built Students' Union building in the world. The original imposing

design by Sydney Mitchell & Wilson is influenced by sixteenth century Scots-Renaissance architecture.

## **Modern**

The George Square campus of the University constitutes the largest concentration of 1960's buildings in the Conservation Area and represents a major project produced by Basil Spence and Robert Mathews. The University Library building on George Square is recognised as a major work by Spence and its category 'A' listing reflects its national importance.

## **3.0 THE THIRD EXPANSION AREA**

East and West Crosscauseway form the northern boundary of this area. The boundary then runs south on St Leonard's Hill before moving east to include the former James Clark School. St Leonard's Bank is included and the boundary then runs along the back of St Leonard's Bank, excluding the new residential developments on the former goods yard, and returns to the Pleasance taking in Hermits and Termits house. The boundary then takes in Parkside Street before moving west to return to the Pleasance. Bernard Terrace and Hope Park Terrace form the Southern boundary before meeting the eastern boundary formed by Hope Park Crescent and Buccleuch Street.

## **STRUCTURE**

### **Spatial Structure**

Although there is some irregularity in the street blocks in the north of this area, between St Leonard's Street and Buccleuch Street, the blocks generally become more regular towards the south, resulting in a greater degree of formality. Infilling occurs with the Odeon and the Queens Hall on Clerk Street. Pockets of residential redevelopment on former gap sites have also taken place on a number of streets.

The garden at St Patrick Square is the only area of public open space within the area. However, the formal planned parkland of the Meadows forms the western side of Hope Park Crescent and Holyrood Park defines the eastern edge of this area. The single sided, St Leonard's Bank has an open view over Queens Drive to Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat.

### **Townscape**

Clerk Street is the major linear shopping street with ground floor shopping interrupted only at St Patrick Square. The shops, cafes, and venues on Clerk Street, combined with its function as a major transport link into the City Centre, result in a lively street scene. The open space at St Patrick Square relieves the general line of four storey classical facades. Buccleuch Street is also a busy, more local street, and St Leonard's Street has a number of local shops along its west side. The four streets connecting Clerk Street with St Leonard's to the east are all residential in character.

Building lines on the three main north south routes are mainly to the heel of the pavement. The east to west routes have small front gardens separated from the street by low stone walls with a multiplicity of fencing materials.

The area is dominated to the east by views down streets to Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat. The spires of the Queen's Hall, St Peter's, and Buccleuch and Greyfriars churches are prominent landmarks punctuating the roofscape.

As with the other areas there is a variety in building heights between three and six storeys, however, the average height tends towards four storeys. Buildings erected before the Second World War are generally in stone and natural slate finished pitched roofs. Post-war buildings in this area are a mixture of brick and harled construction, which respect the general massing and heights.

St Patrick Square and West Crosscauseway retain their setts.

## **KEY ELEMENTS**

### **Architectural Character**

The South Side's variety and diversity of architectural styles and buildings continues to be reflected in this area. The use of stone, harling and slated roofs was universal up to the 1970s and defines the character of the area. More recent developments in brick are less appropriate in the area.

### **Traditional**

There are a number of vernacular buildings along East and West Crosscauseway and on the returns down Buccleuch Street and St Patrick Street. These tend to be five storeys in height with typical wallhead gables and rear turret stair towers.

Buccleuch Pend completed in 2001, adopts the same style.

Hermits and Termits at 64 St Leonard's Street dates from 1734. The small elegant mansion was built for the solicitor William Clifton in the 1730s. The name possibly derives from association with the Abbey of Holyrood (Hermit) and the word for a farm overseer (Termit). In 1807, the house was occupied by the Edinburgh engraver, Robert Scott. Scott's son, William Bell Scott, was an artist. The Edinburgh and Dalkeith Railway Company acquired the building in 1828 and the house was used as accommodation for the stationmasters. The building was vacated in 1968 and fell into dereliction due to road proposals that blighted the area. Hermits and Termits was restored as a house in the early 1980s.

### **Georgian/Victorian**

The majority of this area is Georgian with streets lined by droved ashlar tenements. St Patrick Square was built in 1800 to a unified scheme and Clerk Street, begun in 1810, continues the line of Nicolson Street. The north sides of Montague Street and Rankeillor Street were built from 1817. These streets were completed in the 1860s, with bay windowed tenements on Rankeillor Street. The most prominent building of

this period is the former church on Clerk Street now occupied by the Queen's Hall and built in 1823 by Robert Brown.

## **Modern**

Between the wars, some redevelopment occurred with the City Architect providing new housing on East Crosscauseway, St Patrick Square and Gifford Park. In 1930, an Art Deco cinema was inserted (into the street façade) on Clerk Street.

From the 1970s, numerous infill residential schemes have been completed, particularly in the St Leonard's area. These schemes are a mixture of brickwork, blockwork and render with the blockwork and render developments being most appropriate.

The re-creation of Buccleuch Pend, copying the original vernacular Georgian style with a wallhead gable to the front and a turnpike stair to the rear, and the modern infill residential scheme on Buccleuch Street behind the former Odeon cinema, illustrate two approaches to infill.

## **4.0 THE FOURTH EXPANSION AREA**

Hope Park Terrace and Bernard Terrace form the northern boundary of this area, linked to Summerhall and Sciennes on the west. The boundary then follows east along the back of the properties on Sciennes House Place, before linking with Causewayside and moving south to meet Salisbury Place and Salisbury Road. The northern corners of Salisbury Road at each end are included, but the boundary runs along the rear of the properties in the centre section. The eastern boundary returns northwards along Dalkeith Road taking in Parkside Street and St Margaret's and St Leonard's Church before re-engaging with Bernard Terrace.

## **STRUCTURE**

### **Spatial Structure**

This area is typified by larger block sizes which reflect the larger feuing pattern and provide a degree of uniformity and solidity. This more formal block pattern reduces permeability and gives a more urban feeling to the area. This uniformity is broken on the east side of Newington Road by Georgian tenements set back from the pavement and a terrace of individual houses on the opposite side of the street.

The City Architect's redevelopment work of the 1930s occurs on the corner of Dalkeith Road and Bernard Terrace. Other redevelopments are mainly residential infill developments on East Newington Place, Sciennes and Causewayside. There is no formal open space contained within the area, although the meadows abuts the north-west boundary. Preston Street Burial Ground provides a green area. It dates from 1820 and includes the grave of Jean Lorimer, Robert Burns 'Lassie wi' the lint-white locks'.



## Townscape

The principal route through the area is South Clerk Street and Newington Road. This is crossed by East and West Preston Street linking Causewayside with Dalkeith Road (the other principal north/south routes). The effect of this is to create four large blocks, which are only subdivided in the south west and north east blocks. Blackwood Crescent and Oxford Street, which are quiet tenemental streets, subdivide these blocks. Summerhall Place, South Oxford Street and East Newington Place are quiet cul-de-sac street.

Building lines are to the heel of the pavement on South Clerk Street and Causewayside. Elsewhere there are generally small front gardens to the front of tenements and new flatted developments, giving a degree of privacy. A significant departure from the building line occurs on Newington Road. The east side has a Georgian terrace set back from the building line; with the exception of one plot these original front gardens are now occupied by single storey shops. On the west side of Newington Road, between West Preston Street and West Newington Place, there is a terrace of three storey houses set back from the building line with front gardens now completely given over to parking.

Building heights vary across the area from two-and-a-half to five storeys, with an average height of four storeys. As with the rest of the South Side, all buildings erected up to the Second World War are of stone construction with pitched slated roofs. More recent buildings, from the 1980s onwards, tend to use a blockwork or a harled finish. Brick buildings are not so common in this area, as in the rest of the Conservation Area. However, the triangular block formed by Sciennes and Causewayside has been fully redeveloped with brick finished flats.

South Clerk Street and Newington Road are the main shopping streets, with a break in retail uses on the west side of Newington Road where there is a terraced range of small hotels. There is a change from retail uses to residential on the southern boundary of the Conservation Area, where Minto Street begins. Causewayside has more specialised shops.

Institutional uses are represented by Historic Environment Scotland's offices at the former Longmore Hospital on Salisbury Place and a new office block on Bernard Terrace. The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies (or the Dick Vet as it was more commonly known) was founded by William Dick (1793-1866), who studied anatomy in Edinburgh and attended the London Veterinary College. In Edinburgh, he established his own veterinary school – the first in Scotland- at Clyde Street in 1819. A much respected practitioner, Dick was appointed Veterinary Surgeon in Scotland to Queen Victoria in 1842. In 1906, the College was named the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College by Act of Parliament. The College moved to custom built premises at Summerhall in 1916. In 2011, the School moved to the Easter Bush campus. The building is now in use as *Summerhall*, an arts hub.

## **KEY ELEMENTS**

### **Architectural Character**

There is a continuing variety and diversity of architectural styles throughout this area.

#### **Traditional**

There is one significant vernacular building, dating from the late 1700s with two wallhead gables, at 21–25 Causewayside.

#### **Georgian**

The group of buildings on the west side of Newington Road was started in 1805 and continued over the next 20 years. They vary in height from two to three storeys and Victorian shop units have been built in the once generous front gardens. East Newington Place is an incomplete terrace which was built from 1835.

#### **Victorian**

In the early part of this period development continued in the Georgian manner in streets such as Lutton Place and Oxford Street. As the Victorian period progressed mansard roofs and bay windows began to appear. Later buildings introduced gablets and spired towers, some of which are particularly exuberant - the tenement block on Parkside Terrace and on the corner of Dalkeith Road and Salisbury Road are good examples.

St Peter's on Lutton Place and St Margaret's and St Leonard's on Dalkeith Road are particularly significant, with prominent spires that can be seen throughout the Conservation Area.

#### **Modern**

Twentieth century buildings include the 1937 international style former garage on Causewayside designed by Basil Spence, which is now an off licence. More recent developments include infill schemes on Causewayside and Sciennes, Blackwood Crescent, and East Newington Place. The more recent residential schemes are generally harmonious in scale and massing.

## **MANAGEMENT**

### **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.

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

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

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

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

### Listed buildings

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

### Planning guidance

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

- *Guidance for Householders*
- *Guidance for Businesses*
- *Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*
- *Developer contributions and affordable housing*
- *Edinburgh Design guidance*

In addition, a number of statutory tools are available to assist development management within the Conservation Area.

### Article 4 Direction Orders

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

planning permission and special attention will be paid to the potential effect of proposals.

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

Class 7 - the erection, construction, maintenance, improvement or alteration of a gate, fence, wall or other means of enclosure.

Class 38 - water undertakings.

Class 39 - development by public gas supplier.

Class 40 - development by electricity statutory undertaker.

Class 41- development required for the purposes of the carrying on of any tramway or road transport undertaking.

### Trees

Trees within Conservation Areas are covered by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning Act 2006. This Act applies to the uprooting, felling or lopping of a tree having a diameter exceeding 75mm at a point 1.5m above ground level. The planning authority must be given six weeks' notice of the intention to uproot, fell or lop trees. Failure to give notice will render the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). Tree Preservation Orders are made under planning legislation to protect individual and groups of trees considered important for amenity or because of their cultural or historic interest. When assessing amenity, the importance of trees as wildlife habitats will be taken into consideration. There is a strong presumption against any form of development or change of use of land which is likely to damage or prejudice the future long term existence of trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order. The removal of trees for arboriculture reasons will not imply that the space created by their removal can be used for development.

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

### **Assessing Development within the South Side Conservation Area**

The richness of the South Side's built heritage is considerable. It is this complexity and diversity which make it attractive, yet make these qualities hard to define. It also has a fragility and human scale which often does not sit easily with the demands of present day development requirements. These are qualities and conflicts that must be resolved if the character of the South Side is to be sensitively interpreted and enhanced.

### General Criteria

General issues to be taken into account in assessing development proposals in the Conservation Area include the appropriateness of the overall massing of development, its scale (the expression of size indicated by the windows, doors, floor heights, and other identifiable units), its proportions and its relationship with its context i.e. whether

it sits comfortably. Development should be in harmony with, or complimentary to, its neighbours having regard to the adjoining architectural styles. The use of materials generally matching those which are historically dominant in the area is important, as is the need for the development not to have a visually disruptive impact on the existing townscape. It should also, as far as possible, fit into the “grain” of the Conservation Area, for example, by respecting historic layout, street patterns or existing land form. It is also important where new uses are proposed that these respect the unique character and general ambience of the Conservation Area, for example certain developments may adversely affect the character of a Conservation Area through noise, nuisance and general disturbance. Proposals outside the boundaries of the Conservation Area should not erode the character and appearance of the South Side.

### New Buildings

New development should be of good contemporary design that is sympathetic to the spatial pattern, scale and massing, proportions, building line and design of traditional buildings in the area. Any development within or adjacent to the Conservation Area should restrict itself in scale and mass to the traditionally four/five storey form. New development should also reflect the proportion and scale of the traditional window pattern. The quality of alterations to shop fronts, extensions, dormers and other minor alterations should also be of an appropriately high standard.

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

### Alterations and Extensions

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

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

Conservation Areas are places of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The character of an area is the combination of features and qualities which contribute to the intrinsic worth of an area and make it distinctive. Special character does not derive only from the quality of buildings. Elements such as the historic layout of roads, paths and boundaries, paving materials, urban grain and more intangible features,

such as smells and noises which are unique to the area, may all contribute to the local scene. Conservation Area designation is the means of recognising the importance of all these factors and of ensuring that planning decisions address these qualities. Appearance is more limited and relates to the way individual features within the Conservation Area look.

Care and attention should be paid in distinguishing between the impact of proposed developments on both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT**

Development opportunities for infill or replacement may arise within the area, and will be considered in terms of the relevant guidance. The Edinburgh Design Guidance, Guidance for Householders and Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas explain the Council's approach to design in historic contexts.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLANNING ACTION**

### **Conservation Area Boundary Proposed Amendments**

An extension of the Conservation Area boundary to include the Royal Commonwealth Pool, the Scottish Widows Building and Pollock Halls is proposed. These buildings form an outstanding group of Category 'A' listed buildings. It is also proposed to include the tenement at 186 Pleasance, which dates from 1932.

The Scottish Widows Fund and Life Assurance Society Building (Category 'A' Listed) is described as 'a major achievement of international status'. In 1970, the Scottish Widows Fund and Life Assurance Society bought a site, beside Holyrood Park, on Dalkeith Road for their new head office. The site had previously been occupied by Thomas Nelson's Parkside printing works. Sir Basil Spence, Glover & Ferguson were commissioned as architects for the new building in 1972. The striking design was planned to be in harmony and scale with the site and its surroundings. It incorporates a series of interlocking hexagonal prisms varying in height from one to four storeys, which were intended to act as a geological analogy, reflecting the structure of the basalt columns of Salisbury Crags - from where the design is best appreciated. The building, which is finished in a continuous curtain wall of brown solar glass, stands partly in a moat-like pool and the main access from Dalkeith Road is over a bridge. Dame Sylvia Crowe, the leading landscape architect of the period, was commissioned to design the grounds. The office was opened in March 1976 and its status as a building of international importance was recognised by the 1977 RIBA Award for Scotland and the American Landscape Award in 1978.

The Royal Commonwealth Pool (Category 'A' Listed). The building, designed for the Commonwealth Games held in Edinburgh in 1970, is an outstanding example of a late twentieth century building and it is one of the most successful designs of John Richards, partner from 1964 to circa 1990 in the internationally renowned and prolific practice Robert Matthew, Johnson-Marshall and Partners.

University of Edinburgh, Pollock Halls of Residence (Category 'A' Listed). Rowand Anderson, Kininmonth and Paul, 1956-1964. An important grouping of university residence buildings and considered a key work of Scottish Modernism. The first two

phases were executed in an idiom often described as Festival Style, owing much to pre-war Swedish design, while attempting to acknowledge Scottish architectural tradition. These buildings are the best extant example of this style in Edinburgh and possibly Scotland.

Salisbury Green, a Baronial mansion in the grounds of Pollock Halls, is already included in the Blasket Conservation Area. It is proposed that Salisbury Green should be transferred to the South Side Conservation Area when the Character Appraisal for the Blasket Conservation Area is approved.

The flats at Forbes Street and the St Leonard's Police Station are more recent developments and are proposed for removal from the Conservation Area. It is proposed that the existing Article 4 Direction should be amended to cover the proposed new boundary of the Conservation Area.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT**

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

### **Streetscape**

Careful consideration needs to be given to floorscape which is an essential part of the overall appreciation of the South Side's rich townscape heritage. Repair and renewal work to street surfaces should be carefully detailed and carried out to the highest standards using quality natural materials.

### **Shop Fronts**

Whilst there are many fine shop fronts in the Conservation Area, there are also a number which are unsatisfactory and ignore the architectural form of the buildings of which they form part. Encouragement should be given to improving the quality of the shop fronts in the area, particularly that minority of shop fronts which are particularly poorly or inappropriately designed or badly maintained.

### **High Buildings**

The South Side has generally consistent heights and is particularly susceptible to buildings that break the prevailing roof and eaves height and impinge on the many important views. It is also important to protect the character of the Conservation Area from the potentially damaging impact of high buildings outside the Conservation Area.

## REFERENCES

Gifford J, McWilliam C, Walker D, Wilson C, *The buildings of Scotland – Edinburgh* (Penguin Books, 1984)

Gray, John G, *South Side Story* (W.F.Knox & Co, 1962)



### South Side Conservation Area Character Appraisal: Analysis of Survey Results

The consultation ran from 30 November 2018 to 31 January 2019. Twenty respondents (including the Cockburn Association and South Side Community Council) completed the evaluation of the draft appraisal and the proposed boundary changes by answering four questions.

#### **Q1 Do you agree with the content of the Character Appraisal?**

Nineteen respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the content of the Character Appraisal. One respondent neither agreed nor disagreed.

#### **Q2 Do you have any suggestion for changes to the Character Appraisal?**

There were three suggestions for changes to the Character Appraisal. These related to a request that the flumes should be reinstated at the Commonwealth Pool and a comment that student housing should be restricted in the conservation area. The Cockburn Association note that the separate character areas identified in the document, which they support, would benefit from more detail on urban form and character in order to better emphasise the distinctions identified.

The Southside Community Council considered consultation at a meeting on 14 January and were are very supportive of the character appraisal

Response: The comments regarding flumes and student housing are not directly relevant to the content of the Character Appraisal. The different character areas will be clearly identified on a map in the final appraisal document.

#### **Q3 Do you agree with the proposed changes to the boundary of the Conservation Area?**

Nineteen respondents agreed with the changes to the Conservation Area boundary. One respondent disagreed, but gave no reasons why.

#### **Q4 Do you consider that any other changes to the boundary are required?**

One respondent suggested that Salisbury Crags should be included in the Conservation Area.

The Cockburn Association welcome and support the proposed inclusion of the Scottish Widows/Commonwealth Pool/Pollok Halls and the 193'0s tenement on The Pleasance.

The Cockburn Association advocate consideration of the 1970's development on the Pleasance/Bowmont Place.

The South Side Community Council welcome the inclusion of all the proposed new areas.

Response: Holyrood Park and the Craggs contain no significant built heritage and are a different character from the South Side Conservation Area. They are also protected by Natural Heritage designations.

The Pleasance/Bowmont Place is a reasonable quality brick building dating from the 1970s. However, it is not considered of sufficient quality for inclusion in the Conservation Area, at the this time.

# SOUTH SIDE CONSERVATION AREA PROPOSED BOUNDARY AMENDMENTS

## Appendix 3

