

Planning Committee

2.00pm, Wednesday, 14 October 2020

Proposed extension to the New Town Conservation Area

Executive/routine	Executive
Wards	11 – City Centre, 5 Inverleith
Council Commitments	15

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee approves the boundary extension to the New Town Conservation Area.

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Report

Proposed extension to the New Town Conservation Area

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On, [17 August 2017](#), the Planning Committee approved the Finalised New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA). This report presents a proposed boundary extension to the New Town Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The proposed boundary extension has been the subject of consultation with Historic Environment Scotland, the West End Community Council and local owners/occupiers through direct correspondence and an online consultation.
- 2.3 This report provides an assessment of an area proposed as an extension of the New Town Conservation Area and concludes that the historic and architectural character of the area is sufficient to merit its inclusion in the Conservation Area.

3. Background

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 The New Town Conservation Area was prioritised, along with the Old Town CACA, to support the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Management Plan and was revised in 2017.
- 3.3 Since then, there have been enquiries concerning the potential inclusion of the small grouping of mews properties to the rear of Belgrave Place which are within an area sandwiched in between the boundaries of the New Town and Dean Conservation Areas.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The New Town Conservation Area was originally designated in October 1977. An amendment in March 1980 transferred Waverley Station to the Old Town Conservation Area. A further amendment was made in 1995 to include Atholl

Crescent and Rutland Square, which were previously included in the West End Conservation Area.

- 4.2 The area identified for inclusion within the New Town Conservation Area falls in the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site, which was inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage Site list in 1995. This was in recognition of the outstanding architectural, historical and cultural importance of the Old and New Towns.
- 4.3 The area under consideration for inclusion in the New Town Conservation Area is located immediately to the west of part of the western boundary of the existing Conservation Area. It is bounded on the east by the rear of Belgrave Place, by Dean Path to the west, the rear of the gardens belonging to Belgrave Crescent to the south and the rear of the gardens including the Bristo Baptist Church along Buckingham Terrace to the north.
- 4.4 Conservation areas are designated under the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Scotland) Act 1997. Conservation areas are areas which have special architectural or historic interest that are considered worthy of protection. The main implication of designation is that consent will be required for specific types of development that would not otherwise require it.
- 4.5 National planning policy sets out that local authorities are expected to ensure that Local Development Plans (LDPs) and Supplementary Guidance (SG) provide a framework for protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing all elements of the historic environment. In this regard, local planning authorities should designate and review existing and potential conservation areas and identify existing and proposed Article 4 Directions. This should be supported by Conservation Area Appraisals and Management. As part of this process, planning authorities are encouraged to undertake a thorough appraisal of any area before designation to ensure that its character or appearance is understood.
- 4.6 Historic Environment Scotland's 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment' 'Interim Guidance on the Designation of Conservation Areas and Conservation Area Consent' states that it is the character of an area, either architectural or historic, created by buildings and open spaces and their relationship with one another which the designation of a conservation area seeks to preserve. Elements such as the street layout, open spaces and the public realm all contribute to an area's special character. To be designated as a conservation area it must meet the criterion of 'special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which is desirable to preserve or enhance', as set out in Section 61 of the 1997 Act. Areas of 'special architectural or historic interest' will be selected based on a range of factors which may include:
 - 4.6.1 areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of specific listed buildings and/or ancient monuments;
 - 4.6.2 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;

- 4.6.3 areas with features of architectural or historic interest such as street pattern planned towns and villages and historic gardens and designed landscapes; and;
- 4.6.4 other areas of distinctive architectural or historic character.
- 4.7 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 simply as a means of controlling development.
- 4.8 The area proposed for inclusion is shown on the 1852 Ordnance Survey plan as forming part of the wider Dean Estate, with a continuous terrace of development where some of the buildings present along the section of Dean Path currently appear. To the north west and south west, the Dean Church and Western Cemetery are included on 1852 Ordnance Survey plan. The former Edgehill Nursery previously located to the west of the Dean Church is indicated on the site where the Dean Cemetery was later laid is also shown on 1852 Ordnance Survey plan.
- 4.9 The late Victorian terraces of Belgrave Crescent, Buckingham Terrace and the eastern sections of Learmonth Terrace appear first on the 1877 Ordnance Survey plan (OSP) with Belgrave Place making its first appearance on the 1897 OSP. Within the 1897 OSP the area proposed for inclusion within the Conservation Area exhibits the spatial arrangement found today, with a grouping of mews buildings along the newly formed lane to the east of Dean Path built in close proximity and appearing to be directly ancillary to the large townhouses along Belgrave Place they were intended to serve.
- 4.10 Existing character within the site comprises:
 - 4.10.1 one and half to two storey traditionally designed slate pitched roofed mews properties with finely detailed polished margins and intricate wallhead dormer windows;
 - 4.10.2 large carriage doors (some converted into windows) with squat first floors and timber framed astragal windows;
 - 4.10.3 attractive Dutch gable, elaborate corbelled features and gothic inspired architraves to windows and doors to the properties addressing the northern entrance to Belgrave Mews; and
 - 4.10.4 traditional granite setted surfaces with carriage entrances and doors directly adjoining the carriageway with random rubble sandstone walls with smooth stone copes to the rear of the buildings along Dean Path.
- 4.11 The essential elements which contribute to the character of the New Town Conservation Area are derived from the outstanding concentration of planned ensembles of ashlar-faced, world-class, neo-classical buildings and typified by formal plan layouts, spacious stone-built terraces, broad streets and an overall classical elegance. The majority of buildings are of a standard type that expresses Georgian ideals of urban living. The standard building form is three main storeys over a sunken basement, normally three bays wide and three storeys high,

including steps from street to basement and cellars under the pavement with a slate covered pitched roof.

- 4.12 Craig's New Town contained lanes that were composed of artisans' dwellings, but as the expansions of the New Town took place, the original purpose of the lanes transferred to the provision of mews. These provided accommodation for stabling and coaches, usually associated with the town houses on the streets that they lay behind. They are usually one and a half stories high, with a carriage entrance and sometimes a hayloft, both on the lane side. They were usually built with a formal high-quality design facing the house and an informal rubble elevation facing the lane of the mews.
- 4.13 The proposed area is of historic interest as the buildings and lane were laid out as a mews in direct association with the large townhouses built along Belgrave Place and Crescent of which the majority of the mews buildings directly address through their rear elevations backing onto the rear gardens of those townhouses. The buildings on the site have greater degree of formality than many of the traditional buildings within the mews lanes of the first New Town which contribute to the architectural character of the New Town Conservation Area. The overall character of the area is, therefore, considered to be of sufficient architectural interest to merit inclusion in the Conservation Area.
- 4.14 It is, therefore, concluded that the area is of sufficient architectural and historic character to merit designation as an extension to the New Town Conservation Area in terms of the criteria specified by Historic Environment Scotland's 'Managing Change in the Historic Environment' 'Interim Guidance on the Designation of Conservation Areas and Conservation Area Consent'.
- 4.15 The proposed extension to the New Town Conservation Area was the subject of a consultation with Historic Environment Scotland and West End Community Council. They reviewed the justification for the proposed extension and submitted comments which have informed this report.
- 4.16 The proposed extension to the New Town Conservation Area was also the subject of a public consultation from 13 January to 24 February 2020. An on-line questionnaire was set up on the consultation hub to capture views on the proposed extension to the Conservation Area and to encourage comments about whether the boundary should be extended to encompass Belgrave Mews and whether the area is reflective of the special characteristics of the Conservation Area.
- 4.17 The consultation generated 10 responses via the online survey. Appendix 1 lists the comments received. The vast majority of respondents agreed with the proposal to extend the boundary of the Conservation Area.
- 4.18 It is normal practice to notify ward members of proposals such as these. It appears in this instance that this has not been carried out.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Once approved, the proposed extension to the New Town Conservation Area will be initiated through formal designation procedures.

6. Financial impact

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

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The proposed extension to the New Town Conservation Area was the subject of a consultation with Historic Environment Scotland and the West End Community Council. The aim of conservation area status is to preserve and enhance the quality of the area. This has the potential to improve quality of life and supports sustainable communities.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [Report to Planning Committee of 22 August 2018, Review of Conservation Area Character Appraisals.](#)
- 8.2 The current [New Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Analysis of Survey Results.
- 9.2 Appendix 2 - Map of New Town Conservation Area with area of consideration for inclusion.

Appendix 1

New Town Conservation Area Boundary Extension: Analysis of Consultation Results

The consultation ran from 13 January to 24 February 2020. Ten respondents completed the evaluation of proposed boundary extension to the Conservation Area by answering two questions. Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and the West End Community Council (WECC) submitted their responses to the consultation individually by way of a formal written response. These responses are included within the analysis.

Q1 *Do you agree with the proposed extension to the New Town Conservation Area to include Belgrave Mews and Dean Path within its boundary?*

Nine out of ten respondents agreed that the New Town Conservation Area should be extended to encompass Belgrave Mews / Dean Path within its boundary. One respondent disagreed with the proposal, leaving comments within their answer to the second question.

Within the two written consultation responses received from Historic Environment Scotland and the West End Community Council, both organisations strongly agreed with the proposed boundary extension to the New Town Conservation Area.

Q2 *If you don't agree with the proposal to include the area selected for inclusion within the New Town Conservation Area, can you provide reason why?*

Only one out of ten respondents disagreed with the proposal to extend the boundary of the New Town Conservation Area to include the area selected for consideration. The respondents reasoning made reference to the other core functions of the Council as requiring attention and improvement before considering the scope and extent of already established conservation areas.



SOUTH LEARMONTH GARDENS

LEARMONTH TERRACE

BUCKINGHAM TERRACE

BELGRAVE CRESCENT

BELGRAVE CRESCENT

Dean

Pav

Dean Bridge

Weir

DAMSDICK

BELLS BRAC

LYNE DOCH PL LA

Gov Off