

3 Caring for the Environment

170 Protection of the historic and natural environment for the benefit of future generations is an important role of the planning system. The purpose and context of Edinburgh's most important environmental designations including the World Heritage Site, Conservation Areas and Green Belt are explained in Part 1 of the plan. Policies Env 1 – Env 22 will be used in assessing planning applications to meet the following objectives;

Objectives

- To ensure that the unique qualities of the city, its historic environment and the character of its urban areas are safeguarded for the future
- To protect important landscape and natural features of the environment, including the city's Green Belt setting
- To protect and enhance the nature conservation and biodiversity interest of the city
- To protect natural resources



The Historic Environment

171 Policies Env 1 – Env 6 will be used to assess proposals affecting Edinburgh's world heritage sites, conservation areas and listed buildings. The Council's guidance on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings provide further advice. Policy Env 7 relates to historic landscapes and policies Env 8 and 9 cover archaeological resources.

Policy Env 1 World Heritage Sites

Development which would harm the qualities which justified the inscription of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh and/or the Forth Bridge as World Heritage Sites or would have a detrimental impact on a Site's setting will not be permitted.

172 This policy requires development to respect and protect the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Sites and their settings. Setting may include sites in the immediate vicinity, viewpoints identified in the key views study and prominent landscape features throughout the city.

Policy Env 2 Listed Buildings - Demolition

Proposals for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building will only be supported in exceptional circumstances, taking into account:

- a) the condition of the building and the cost of repairing and maintaining it in relation to its importance and to the value to be derived from its continued use
- b) the adequacy of efforts to retain the building in, or adapt it to, a use that will safeguard its future, including its marketing at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.
- c) the merits of alternative proposals for the site and whether the public benefits to be derived from allowing demolition outweigh the loss.

Policy Env 3 Listed Buildings - Setting

Development within the curtilage or affecting the setting of a listed building will be permitted only if not detrimental to the architectural character, appearance or historic interest of the building, or to its setting.

Policy Env 4 Listed Buildings – Alterations and Extensions

Proposals to alter or extend a listed building will be permitted where

- a) those alterations or extensions are justified;
- b) there will be no unnecessary damage to historic structures or diminution of its interest; and
- c) where any additions are in keeping with other parts of the building.

173 In determining applications for planning permission or listed building consent, the Council is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. Applications for the demolition or substantial alteration of a listed building must be accompanied by a thorough structural condition report demonstrating that the proposals are necessary or justified. Information must be provided on the proposed replacement building; these should be of comparable quality in terms of construction and design. The loss of a listed building will only be justified in exceptional circumstances. Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and Council guidance provide further advice for applications relating to Listed Buildings.

Policy Env 5 Conservation Areas – Demolition of Buildings

Proposals for the demolition of an unlisted building within a conservation area but which is considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the area will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances and after taking into account the considerations set out in Policy Env 2 above.

Proposals for the demolition of any building within a conservation area, whether listed or not, will not normally be permitted unless a detailed planning application is approved for a replacement building which enhances or preserves the character of the area or, if acceptable, for the landscaping of the site.

Policy Env 6 Conservation Areas - Development

Development within a conservation area or affecting its setting will be permitted which:

- a) preserves or enhances the special character or appearance of the conservation area and is consistent with the relevant conservation area character appraisal
- b) preserves trees, hedges, boundary walls, railings, paving and other features which contribute positively to the character of the area and
- c) demonstrates high standards of design and utilises materials appropriate to the historic environment.

Planning applications should be submitted in a sufficiently detailed form for the effect of the development proposal on the character and appearance of the area to be assessed.

174 The purpose of the above policies is to protect and, where possible, enhance the character and appearance of Edinburgh's many conservation areas. By controlling the demolition of buildings and ensuring new development is of appropriate design and quality, their aim is to protect the City's heritage for future generations.

175 Applications for demolition will be permitted only where this does not erode the character and appearance of the conservation area. The general presumption will be in favour of retaining buildings that make a positive contribution to the conservation area, particularly where it can be demonstrated that the building is able to support a new viable use, or might be capable of such in the future. Conservation Area Consent may be subject to conditions or a legal agreement to link demolition works to the

provision of the proposed replacement building or, in exceptional circumstances, to require temporary landscaping.

- 176 Design statements are required for new developments in a conservation area. This statement should include reference to the relevant Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Council guidance on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings and show how these have informed the proposed design.

Policy Env 7 Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes

Development will only be permitted where there is no detrimental impact on the character of a site recorded in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, adverse effects on its setting or upon component features which contribute to its value. Elsewhere, adverse effects on historic landscape features should be minimised. Restoration of Inventory sites and other historic landscape features is encouraged.

- 177 This policy aims to protect sites included in the national Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes (shown on the Proposals Map) and other historic landscape features elsewhere across the Council area. An understanding of how the landscape has evolved can help inform a development proposal. A historical landscape appraisal may be requested from applicants to allow full assessment of the implications of development and identify restoration opportunities.

Policy Env 8 Protection of Important Remains

Development will not be permitted which would:

- a) adversely affect a scheduled monument or other nationally important archaeological remains, or the integrity of their setting
- b) damage or destroy non-designated archaeological remains which the Council considers should be preserved in situ.

Policy Env 9 Development of Sites of Archaeological Significance

Planning permission will be granted for development on sites of known or suspected archaeological significance if it can be concluded from information derived from a desk-based assessment and, if requested by the Council, a field evaluation, that either:

- a) no significant archaeological features are likely to be affected by the development or
- b) any significant archaeological features will be preserved in situ and, if necessary, in an appropriate setting with provision for public access and interpretation or
- c) the benefits of allowing the proposed development outweigh the importance of preserving the remains in situ. The applicant will then be required to make provision for archaeological excavation, recording, and analysis, and publication of the results before development starts, all to be in accordance with a programme of works agreed with the Council.

- 178 The objective of the above policies is to protect and enhance archaeological remains, where possible by preservation in situ in an appropriate setting. In some cases, depending on the nature of the remains and character of the site, the Council may require provision for public access and interpretation as part of the proposed development. When preservation in situ is not possible, recording and/or excavation followed by analysis and publication of the results will be required.

- 179 Developers should seek early advice from the Council's Archaeologist for sites where historic remains are known or thought likely to exist. Where a development may affect a scheduled monument or its setting, early contact should be made with Historic Environment Scotland.