

INVERLEITH CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

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1. Summary information

Location and boundaries

The Inverleith Conservation Area is located to the north of the New Town Conservation Area, 1.5 kilometres north of the city centre and covers an area of 232 hectares.

The conservation area is bounded by Ferry Road to the north, the western boundary of Fettes College, the eastern boundary of Warriston Cemetery and Comely Bank/Water of Leith/Glenogle Road to the south. The boundary includes Fettes College, Inverleith Park, the Royal Botanic Garden, Warriston Cemetery and Tanfield.

The area falls within Inverleith, Forth and Leith Walk wards and is covered by the Stockbridge/Inverleith, Trinity and New Town/Broughton Community Councils. The population of Inverleith Conservation Area in 2011 was 4887.

Dates of designation/amendments

The conservation area was originally designated in October 1977. The boundary was amended in 1996 and again in 2006 to exclude areas which no longer contributed to the character of the conservation area. A conservation area character appraisal was published in 2006, and a management plan in 2010. The Stockbridge Colonies were removed from the Inverleith Conservation Area boundary in 2013 to form a separate conservation area. Article 4 Directions were approved in 1996. The content of the management plan has been integrated into, and superseded by, this appraisal.

Statement of significance

Inverleith Conservation Area consists of a layered pattern of landscaped open spaces, surrounded by development dating principally from the early 19th to the mid-20th century. The quality and variety of spaces for recreational, sporting and memorial use, with their cumulative scenic qualities and views across the city, are the area's most significant feature. High quality, primarily residential buildings in a restricted palette of traditional, natural materials, laid out in a street pattern, density and form reflecting the adjacent open spaces, complement the scenic characteristics.

Acknowledgements

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2. Conservation Area Character Appraisals

Purpose of character appraisals – why do we need them?

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.

How to use this document

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

This document is not intended to give prescriptive instructions on what designs or styles will be acceptable in the area. Instead, it can be used to ensure that the design of an alteration or addition is based on an informed interpretation of context. This context should be considered in conjunction with the relevant Local Development Plan policies and planning guidance. The **Management** section outlines the policy and legislation relevant to decision-making in the area. Issues specific to Inverleith are discussed in more detail and recommendations or opportunities identified.

3. Historical origins and development

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

Origins

The name Inverleith may come from the British or Gaelic *inver* and *leith*, the lower basin of or the mouth of Leith, although some documents refer to 'Inner Leith'.

Inverleith is mentioned in 1128 in David's charter founding Holyroodhouse, and associates the name with the place that was to become North Leith. However, the estate charters in 1315-21 place the centre of the medieval Inverleith estate close to the site of the present Inverleith House. The Inverleith estate was acquired by the Rocheid family in 1665, and the present Inverleith House was built in 1774 for James Rocheid. The farm which occupied much of the estate was reorganised into North and South Inverleith Mains during 18th century improvements.

The Warriston estate, recorded from 1467 onwards, was divided into East and West Warriston estates in the late 18th century. East Warriston House, built in 1818, was later converted into Warriston Crematorium. West Warriston House of 1784 was located to the east of Inverleith Row and cleared for housing in Warriston Grove and Eildon Terrace in 1966. A single gatepier from the house remains on the east side of Inverleith Row, opposite the entrance to the Botanic Garden.

Estates development

With the opening of Canonmills Bridge in 1767, Inverleith Row developed as a key link between the city and Ferry Road, the route linking the Port of Leith with Queensferry. Development started in the south-east corner of the Inverleith and Warriston estates, west of Canonmills Bridge, beginning in 1807 with Warriston Crescent, following the curve of the Water of Leith. The road from Stockbridge into the Fettes estate of Comely Bank was developed with a new terrace of houses in 1817.

The relocation of the Botanic Garden to Inverleith in the 1820s stimulated development of Georgian villas along its eastern and northern edges on Inverleith Row and Inverleith Place. These villas represent some of the earliest suburban houses in Edinburgh. Development was inhibited at the south end by the nearby industries of Tanfield.

During the 19th century, feuing of single house plots continued westwards and northwards around the developing blocks of open space at Inverleith Park, Fettes College and the numerous sports grounds. The busier junctions at the north and south ends of Inverleith Row were developed in the later 19th century with tenement blocks with ground floor shops.

Parks, gardens and institutions

The Royal Botanic Garden began as a Physic Garden on a small site near Holyrood Palace in 1670. By 1676 it occupied an area where the north-east corner of Waverley Station now stands and was known as the Town Garden. The Royal Botanic Garden received a Royal warrant as early as 1699, and in 1763 moved again to Leith Walk in the grounds of what was the old Trinity Hospital.

Constantly outgrowing its various locations, it finally moved to a new site on the east side of Inverleith House between 1823 and 1824. The move from Leith Walk was carried out by William McNab, supervised by the Professor of Botany Robert Graham, and involved the transplanting of some large specimen trees. In 1877 the government and the City bought Inverleith House and its policies from the Fettes Trust and added them to the Botanic Garden. The extension was opened in 1881.

The present day layout largely results from a reorganisation of the plant collection made in 1889 by the then Regius Keeper Sir Isaac Bayley Balfour, although successive improvements followed. A wealth of plant material brought back by collectors, such as Forrest Ludlow and Sheriff from Asian expeditions, helped to establish the Botanic Garden as a major centre for taxonomic research.

Grounds at Tanfield, alongside the Water of Leith, were developed for industry in the early 19th century. Works were erected in the 1820s for two companies manufacturing gas from whale oil. The Oil Gas Company premises was later converted to Tanfield Hall which hosted the historic first General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland in 1843. The former printing works on the site was later incorporated in the development of the Standard Life Offices.

Warriston Cemetery was laid out in 1842 by the Edinburgh Cemetery Company. It was the earliest of the commercial cemeteries laid out in the mid-19th century by David Cousin, and features neo-Tudor catacombs, picturesque grounds and paths.

Fettes College was established in 1870 through a legacy of £166,000 gifted by Sir William Fettes, merchant and underwriter, to provide a school for needy children. The Scottish Baronial-French Gothic masterpiece was designed by David Bryce, the principal Victorian country house architect of Scotland, with sculptures by John Rhind. The Fettes grounds were laid out by Archibald Campbell-Swinton and were enclosed with iron fences by David Bryce in 1874.

Open fields at the north end of Inverleith Row and along Ferry Road were used as nursery gardens during the 19th century. These were later converted to playing fields, in the ownership of many of Edinburgh's prominent schools.

South Inverleith Mains Farm to the west of the Botanic Garden was bought by the City from the Rocheid family in 1889. It was rapidly developed into Inverleith Park with the construction of paths, roadways and drainage, greenhouses, a pavilion, boating pond, gymnasia, bowling greens, tennis courts, and golf courses.

The Grange Club and Edinburgh Academy cricket grounds in Raeburn Place hosted the first ever rugby match between Scotland and England in 1871. Stewart Melville's ground on Ferry Road was Scotland's home ground for rugby from 1899 to 1925 when the Scottish Rugby Union moved to Murrayfield.

4. Special Characteristics

4.1 Structure

- Landscaped spaces dominate the area, contrasting with surrounding, denser development.
- The substantial amount of open space allows panoramic views across to the city skyline.
- The conservation area is layered with playing fields, a public park, cemetery and the Royal Botanic Garden.
- The urban form comprises a finger-like development pattern, with some denser development to the east and around the margins.
- The predominant character is one of large Victorian houses in large plots, with Georgian villas and terraces to the east of the area.
- The street layout follows a loose grid pattern with wide streets.

Topography

The conservation area lies on a south facing slope rising to a ridge formed by Ferry Road which forms the northern boundary.

Setting

Different periods of the City's development frame the conservation area: the New Town to the south, Leith Walk to the east and 20th century suburban development to the west and north. In long-range views towards the conservation area its green character stands out against the more uniformly built-up surroundings.

Views

The conservation area is characterised by panoramic views from various locations southward to the characteristic skyline features of Edinburgh. These views are made possible by the gentle slope down from Ferry Road, long straight streets, generally low-rise built form and significant areas of open space. Views from high points in Inverleith Park and the Royal Botanic Garden are filtered through the framework of their perimeter trees and avenues. In addition, the sports grounds at Eildon Street allow views across to Arthur's Seat.

Framed localised views are also important to the conservation area. The main examples are views of the towers of Fettes College northward along Fettes Avenue and west along Inverleith Place; and south along East Fettes Avenue to the rising tenemental structures of Comely Bank.

Landscape character

The quality and variety of spaces for recreational, sporting and memorial use, with their cumulative scenic qualities and views across the city, are the area's most

significant feature. The open space provides an attractive green setting to the built environment and a high quality townscape. The scale of many open spaces is generous enough to accommodate trees of large proportions to form a landscape structure of a scale appropriate to the buildings.

Development pattern

The built fabric of the area forms a finger-like development pattern, framing and overlapping the areas of open space. The pattern reflects historic ribbon development outwards from the city centre and peripheral cores of Stockbridge and Canonmills. The concentration of institutional and open/recreational ownership and use preserved the character of the open spaces and forced development around their edges. Later infill residential areas of a more suburban character appear along the eastern edge of the conservation area and to the north of Fettes College.

Grain and density

Density in the conservation area is generally very low with linear strips of single dwellings, either terraced or detached villas in generous garden plots, framing large blocks of open space. Although building styles vary, the plot density and pattern of single dwellings remains relatively consistent through the different construction phases across the area.

The area to the east of Inverleith Row is more densely developed with terraces and maisonettes. Similarly, later development around the perimeters of playing fields at the north-western side of the conservation area tends to be higher in density, in flatted blocks.

Streets

The street layout follows a loose grid pattern surrounding large blocks of open space. Some of the streets are very wide and developed on a single side. Others are enclosed not by buildings but by the visually-permeable edges of playing fields or public open space, often lined with trees, stone boundary walls and railings. These features, combined with the open space and private garden ground, emphasise the spaciousness of the area.

The area is generally very permeable and legible due to the grid pattern of wide streets combined with open spaces allowing visual connections and easily identifiable routes. The Water of Leith Walkway and cycleway routes on the disused railway network provide access to areas further afield.

Spaces

The open spaces in the conservation area vary greatly in their character, function and ownership, and cumulatively dominate the character of the conservation area. As a result it contains the most open space of any conservation area in the city. The area is layered with sports fields and grounds associated with private schools and clubs. Those along the northern boundary of the conservation area consist of flat expanses of grass with few trees, and provide panoramic views from Ferry Road south across to the Edinburgh skyline.

Other sports grounds such as Grange Cricket Club are not easily visible behind their high stone boundary walls but provide an important break in the surrounding building line and an open, green backdrop to the streetscape. Different open spaces are visually linked by lines of trees, enclosed views and gaps in the built form surrounding them to create an overall dominant, open landscape character. The Fettes College grounds provide a picturesque, wooded setting to the listed school building and substantial grass playing fields to the north.

The most significant of the accessible open spaces are Inverleith Park, the Edinburgh Royal Botanic Garden and Warriston Cemetery, each with a markedly different character.

Inverleith Park consists of neatly maintained, mostly flat open grass parkland with a strong framework of mature trees on its perimeter and along its striking avenues. The space is well defined by hedging, perimeter iron railings and grand gated entrances.

The Royal Botanic Garden is contained by walls or railings on all four boundaries and includes part of the former policies of Inverleith House. The east side of the Garden is level, but rises steeply to the hill on which Inverleith House stands, from where there is a panoramic view of the Edinburgh skyline. The site includes extensive outdoor planting of mainly non-native species (although one section is devoted to native flora), glasshouses containing exotic species, an exhibition hall, cafés, shop and visitor facilities. Its primary role is in botanical and horticultural research, but the garden is also a major public amenity and has an important role in education.

The garden is divided into a number of character areas, including the Heath Garden, Rock Garden, Peat Garden, Woodland, Arboretum, Herbaceous Border and Demonstration Gardens. These various areas have plant collections from wide ranging origins and climatic regions including many specimens of rare plants and world famous plant collections such as the Dawson Chinese garden. Three substantial ponds of different character with streams and waterfalls leading to each, combined with wetland areas provide habitats for aquatic and marsh plants. Overall the Gardens have an estimated living plant collection of some 14,000 plant groups. The Botanic Garden's listing on the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes confirms its national historical, horticultural and architectural importance and outstanding significance. The Garden is open daily and has approaching 800,000 visitors a year.

Warriston Cemetery has an overwhelmingly wooded character with a diversity of tree species, and is an important node in the wildlife network. It contains a fine collection of funerary monuments and mausolea, laid out along serpentine walks.

4.2 Key elements

- Georgian and Victorian dwellings of restricted height, generous scale and fine proportions.
- The variety of architectural forms and styles contribute to the overall character.
- Unusual building types such as historic estate houses, educational buildings, churches and landscape features add to the area's interest.
- Fettes College dominates the skyline.
- A common palette of traditional, natural materials gives the area a sense of uniformity.
- Spacious streets, with some surviving traditional detailing and boundaries.
- The predominance of recreational open spaces and parkland uses.
- The contrast between activity in Inverleith Row and the general tranquility in other areas.
- The concentration of educational establishments.

Scale

The predominant built character consists of large Victorian houses in substantial gardens. Georgian villas and terraces occur on the eastern side of the conservation area. Residential properties are mostly of two to three storeys, sometimes with attics or basements. The tenements of Inverleith Row and Goldenacre, and later flatted blocks in the west of the area, generally have four storeys. Wide roads and pavements, and the open landscapes spread through the area, give a sense of openness and generosity of scale.

Building types and styles

The architectural character is dominated by rows of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraces. The villa streets are complemented by the profusion of mature trees, extensive garden settings, stone boundary walls and spacious roads. The villas are in a considerable variety of architectural styles, unified by the use of local building materials - sandstone and slate. Many of the large Victorian houses in Inverleith Place have been converted into flats.

This prevailing villa pattern breaks down at the north end of Arboretum Road and the north side of Kinnear Road, with a variety of twentieth century, low-density development in the form of bungalows.

From the south side of Kinnear Road and westwards, flatted blocks dating from the early twentieth century onwards become more common. Often of three to four storeys these denser blocks make use of their height to allow views over the open

spaces to the south. The playing fields in this area therefore tend to be characterised by taller, denser boundary development and overlooking than those of the eastern side of the conservation area.

Two of the original estate houses of the area, Inverleith House and East Warriston House, survive in new uses and both remain the focus of their respective grounds. Inverleith House, now offices, gallery and café, dominates the central mound in the Royal Botanic Garden. The House is a severe mansion of three storeys and basement with a broad elliptical bow staircase and pedimented entrance porch. East Warriston House of 1818 was converted into Warriston Crematorium in 1928-29 by Lorimer & Matthew. The south side was completely remodelled with tall arched windows and a south east cloister. The north west cloister is part of Esme Gordon's modern extensions of 1967.

South Inverleith Mains farm also survives, converted to offices within the maintenance yard of Inverleith Park. The park also contains interesting built features including a memorial fountain (1900) in the form of a granite obelisk and formal north and east gates of 1891 by Sydney Mitchell.

The Royal Botanic Garden houses a unique and self-contained collection of buildings, notably the range of palm houses and glass houses dating between 1834 and the 1970s; the Laboratories (1909), an octagonal classroom and museum building (1848-51), the former Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society Hall (1842), the Herbarium and Library (1960-64) and the more recent additions of the John Hope Gateway and Alpine House (2009 and 2013).

The Baronial presence of Fettes College is outstanding within the conservation area in terms of its size and architectural distinction. Built in a mix of Scottish Baronial and French Gothic styles, with distinctive soaring spires and turrets, it consists of a three storey block with tall central tower and smaller flanking towers. The architectural composition forms a stunningly romantic symmetrical feature which dominates this part of the north west city skyline, with its massive central tower centred on Fettes Avenue.

Ancillary buildings to the school uses in the area are another distinctive feature of the conservation area. These include gates, lodges, boarding houses and sports pavilions. Fettes College in particular contains a very distinguished collection of associated buildings in a variety of dates and styles, ranging from the David Bryce gates, railings and boarding houses of the 1870s, in an anglicized baronial style with canted bays and barge boarded gables, to the 1967 William Kininmonth dining hall.

The following churches add to the architectural character of the area:

- Inverleith Parish Church, Ferry Road (1881) is in a Gothic style by Hardy and Wight.
- St James Episcopal, Inverleith Row (1888) in a Gothic style in red Corsehill stone by R. Rowand Anderson.

- St Serf's, at the corner of Ferry Road and Clark Road (1901) in a Decorated Gothic style with polygonal apse to the east.
- St Stephen Comely Bank (1901), red sandstone with Neo-Perpendicular detail by J.N. Scott and A. Lorne Campbell.
- Former First Church of Christ, Scientist, Inverleith Terrace (1910-11) in a tall and compact Scots Romanesque style by Ramsay R. Traquair, based on Old St Giles at Elgin. Now offices.
- True Jesus Church, East Fettes Ave (1907-8), Neo-Romanesque former St Luke's Parish Church by P. Macgregor Chalmers.

The mid-twentieth century housing developments in the grounds of the former Warriston House, around Eildon Terrace/Warriston Drive, are of a generic type found in many suburbs of Edinburgh and are not of particular special merit. The four-in-a-block maisonettes of Warriston Avenue and Warriston Gardens however have an attractive rhythm and uniformity with good quality detailing and materials including six-over-one pane glazing, timber doors, red sandstone dressings and regular boundary treatments.

Landmarks

The spires of Fettes College add a distinctive feature to the city skyline, and provide the most prominent landmark feature in the conservation area.

Vertical features on a smaller scale, including the numerous churches and the Palm House of the Royal Botanic Gardens, act as important local markers.

Materials and details

A common palette of traditional, natural materials gives the area a sense of uniformity. However the variety of treatments, dressings and decoration allows variety and a sense of changing tastes and technologies over time.

The earliest terraces and houses of the Georgian period, at Inverleith House and the developments in the south-east corner of the conservation area, tend to be fairly severe in treatment. Surfaces are in rubble or polished ashlar with simple, rectilinear dressings to openings and a strong vertical and horizontal rhythm of window openings, parapets and chimney stacks. The larger villas along the west side of Inverleith Row also have a strict symmetrical character but often with more showy architectural detail such as double-height pilasters, classical doorpieces, Venetian windows or ornate pediments with ball or obelisk decorations.

Most six-over-six pane sash and case glazing survives, along with historic doors and fanlights. Very few dormers have been introduced to break the regular rooflines. Front boundaries are generally formed by tall cast iron railings around areas in the terraces, or dwarf walls with low railings (often replaced in simplified form since the Second World War) to front gardens in the villas.

The later Victorian tenement blocks in Inverleith Row and Goldenacre retain the simple material treatment of the earlier development but with added features of

applied Classical decoration or canted bay windows and plate glass glazing. A good collection of historic shopfronts survives in this area.

West of Inverleith Row, the typical villa development of the conservation area consists of single or paired houses of a very generous scale in sandstone rubble or ashlar with slated roofs. Two common types prevail: simpler, more classically-inspired styles and more ornate, picturesque styles. The classical types often have shallow roofs, pedimented doorpieces, asymmetrical bay windows and cast-iron brattishing to rooflines. The latter type are reminiscent of Arts and Crafts architecture with steeply pitched roofs, complex roof forms with gables, bay or oriel windows, exposed rafter ends and half-timbered detail. Red sandstones are common for main walling and detailing, as well as the blond Craighleith type more typical of Edinburgh. Red or yellow clay cans and six-over-one pane glazing are common in both types.

The earlier examples of flatted blocks in Kinnear Road maintain the materials and detailing of the nearby earlier villa development. Later examples around the northern end of East Fettes Avenue vary more widely, often incorporating traditional features but applied over larger-scale blocks. More recent, late twentieth and early twenty-first century examples tend to be more contemporary in character, using some traditional materials such as sandstone in cladding but modern in detail and form.

Trees and gardens

The significant open spaces contrast between the heavily wooded or parkland character of Inverleith Park, the Royal Botanic Garden, Warriston Cemetery and Fettes College, and the remaining open space in use as playing fields which are largely treeless apart from perimeter planting.

Trees in private gardens also make a significant contribution to the landscape character of the area, with particularly fine, mature examples in Inverleith Place and Inverleith Terrace. Many streets have the character of tree-lined avenues although strictly these trees are mostly located within property adjoining the footway, rather than being street trees, within the public realm.

Streetscape

Broad, generous streets are typical of the area, sometimes with surprisingly narrow footways. This is a reminder of their historic role as broad carriage drives but can lead to a feeling of car and parking dominance where road markings and junction details are not sensitively handled. Surfacing materials are mostly modern but there are some surviving whin kerbs, setts at junctions and channels, and horronisation. Royston Terrace, Inverleith Place Lane and Inverleith Terrace Lane retain the majority of their setted surfaces. Most of Inverleith Row is paved in grey concrete slabs in a large, rectangular format and staggered bond, emulating traditional flags. The majority of street furniture is of modern, generic design but a few historic postal pillar boxes remain in place.

Footways are generally bounded by stone dwarf walls and gate piers with railings and/or hedges. Boundaries are generally low or visually permeable, enhancing the sense of spaciousness of the streets. Some excellent historic ironwork survives, particularly around Fettes College and the Georgian terraces of Inverleith Row/Warriston Crescent. The northern edge along Ferry Road has a slightly bleaker character, dominated by heavier traffic. The road is bounded by taller boundary walls than those common elsewhere, topped with high ball-stop fencing to playing fields.

Activity

Recreational open space and parkland uses predominate with a fringe of good quality residential uses. The conservation area contains some of the most attractive areas of open space in the City. The Royal Botanic Garden is an important recreational area and Scotland's national botanic garden, providing a centre for research, education, and the conservation of plant life from across the world. Inverleith Park accommodates a variety of uses and activities including sports pitches and club pavilions, bowling greens, allotment gardens, a play area, a boating pond containing a wetland area, Council offices and depot. The playing fields in the conservation area cater for various sporting activities. The Water of Leith valley, Warriston Cemetery and the disused railway network are used extensively as an area for play, walking, jogging and dog exercising.

Fettes College is one of the premier public schools in Scotland with a reputation for academic and sporting excellence. The Edinburgh Academy also has a prominent presence within the conservation area.

The general environment of most of the area is of high amenity and serenity. However, this is in contrast to Inverleith Row, the main through route, which is a place of activity in terms of social and commercial uses, and which carries northbound traffic from the city centre to the busy artery of Ferry Road. The southern end of Inverleith Row houses a cluster of speciality shops, while Goldenacre, an area of tenements with shops at the ground floor, is the main retail centre of the conservation area.

5. Management

5.1 Legislation, policies and guidance

Conservation areas

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that conservation areas "are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas.

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.
- Permitted development rights, which allow improvements or alterations to the external appearance of dwellinghouses and flatted dwellings, are removed.
- Works to trees are controlled (see [Trees](#) for more detail).

The demolition of unlisted buildings considered to make a positive contribution to the 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 considering applications for development within conservation areas.

Listed buildings

A significant proportion of buildings within Inverleith 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.

National policy

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

The development plan

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

In broad summary, the key policy areas affecting the Inverleith Conservation Area are:

Design of new development DES 1, 3, 5, 11, 12
Listed buildings ENV 2-4
Conservation areas ENV 5-6
Historic gardens and designed landscapes ENV 7
Archaeology ENV 8-9
Trees ENV 12
Natural heritage and nature conservation ENV 10-16

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

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

- [Guidance for Householders](#)
- [Guidance for Businesses](#)
- [Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas](#)
- [Developer contributions and affordable housing](#)
- [Edinburgh Design guidance](#)
- [Communications Infrastructure](#)
- Street Design Guidance – *in draft, published May 2014*

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

GPDO and Article 4 Directions

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 dwellinghouses 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. Inverleith Conservation Area has Article 4 Directions covering the following classes of development:

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

- 38 Development by statutory undertakers for the purpose of water undertakings
- 39 Development by a public gas supplier
- 40 Development by an electricity statutory undertaker
- 41 Development required for 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 (etc) 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 TPO. The removal of trees for arboricultural reasons will not imply that the space created by their removal can be used for development. Tree Preservation Orders apply in Warriston Cemetery and Eildon Terrace.

Trees in the city [\[link\]](#) contains a set of policies with an action plan used to guide the management of the Council's trees and woodlands.

Landscape and Biodiversity

The Council has an obligation to take account of the impact of development on species protected by legislation and international commitments. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on all public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity as far as is consistent with their functions. The conservation area's rich parkland landscape and open spaces give it a high amenity and biodiversity value. The area is protected by a range of local and national landscape and natural heritage designations:

The Royal Botanic Garden is included in the national Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes for its national significance as the second oldest botanic garden in the UK, hosting a vast plant collection and interesting architectural features. Landscapes of regional or local importance in the area are Fettes College, Tanfield, Warriston Cemetery and Warriston Crematorium. Inverleith Park and the Royal Botanic Garden comprise the Inverleith Special Landscape Area (SLA).

The roof garden of the former Standard Life building at Tanfield is a good example of how green roof technology can mitigate the effects of development in a sensitive area in terms of biodiversity, visual and Sustainable Urban Drainage System issues.

Local nature conservation: The Water of Leith corridor, the former railway line, Warriston Cemetery and the Royal Botanic Garden are local nature conservation sites forming part of a wider wildlife corridor network. These are recognised for their nature conservation, amenity and recreational value. They link many other important sites allowing otherwise isolated populations to survive natural and other fluctuations and are of city wide as well as local importance.

A river habitat survey of the Water of Leith was undertaken in 2002 as baseline data for the preparation of the Water of Leith Flood Prevention Scheme. This survey provides details of the botanical and species interest of adjacent habitats. The survey shows that as well as woodland cover there are small pockets of botanical interest along the stretches of the river within the conservation area. There are signs of mammals and these are favourable stretches of the river for foraging bats, with potential roosts in trees and stone buildings and bridges. A significant problem along the river in this area is the invasive species Japanese Knotweed. Measures are in place for its eradication although a long term programme is required to keep it under control.

The disused railway network is used extensively as a cycling and walking resource. Mature woodland is found along some sections and scrub dominated by goat willow and birch has grown up in others. These habitats provide important cover and nest sites for many species of birds while providing safe feeding areas for winter visitors. Mammals such as badgers, foxes and hedgehogs use the network extensively for both travelling between larger sites and for breeding. Development is the most serious threat to these sites with dumping of garden refuse and other household waste being a problem in some sections.

Within the **Royal Botanic Garden** the most striking natural asset are vegetation and seed heads providing food and shelter for its bird population. Hawfinches visit regularly during winter as do redwings and fieldfare. Plentiful nectar plants attract many species of butterfly and other insects. Water features throughout the garden are used by breeding wildfowl such as mallard, moorhen and coot with occasional visits from others, most notably swans. There is also a large breeding population of frogs.

Warriston Cemetery is an important node in the wildlife network, bordered by the Water of Leith on one side and parts of the disused railway network on the other. The main botanical value of the cemetery is its diversity of tree species.

The boundary of the cemetery abutting the Water of Leith has some remnants of interesting aquatic vegetation, which may return in full if invasive species are controlled. Mammal records for the cemetery include foxes and badgers both no doubt accessing the area by way of the disused rail line. Bats have been spotted and

a wide range of bird species make use of the extensive area of woodland. Common garden species abound, and tawny owls and sparrow hawks are also present.

The value of the site is severely threatened by the spread of invasive non-native species including giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam. The Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan 2010-2015 includes tasks for management of these species. Over mature, diseased or dangerous trees should be felled as a matter of good management and to encourage the development of an under storey and young trees while retaining the wooded character of the area.

Further information on landscape and biodiversity:

[Biodiversity in Edinburgh](#) [link]

[Edinburgh Landscape and Scenery](#) [link]

[Local Nature Sites and Protected Species](#) [link]

Archaeology

Inverleith largely consisted of estates in agricultural use prior to significant development starting in the early 19th century. Its south-eastern edges, adjacent to the New Town, contained a cluster of industrial uses relating to the Water of Leith and its associated mill lade. The area may therefore contain the remains of a range of post medieval sites and uses including lades, weirs, mills, factories and gas works; brewing and distilling; farming structures and activities such as steadings, horse mills; nurseries, ponds and quarry sites. Railway infrastructure remains at the eastern edge of the conservation area where the Edinburgh, Perth and Dundee Railway passed through Warriston.

Remains of these structures may survive below existing development, although the extent of their survival is currently unknown. Depending on the scale and impact of any development proposal, the City of Edinburgh Council Archaeology Service (CECAS) may recommend a pre-determination evaluation in order to assess the presence and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits and to determine the scope of any required mitigation including preservation. Similarly for works affecting standing structures of historic significance, a programme of archaeological building assessment and recording may be recommended.

There are no scheduled monuments located within Inverleith Conservation Area.

5.2 Pressures and sensitivities

The following pressures are associated with development proposals which conservation area designation, together with the Council's policies and guidance, are designed to manage. The Edinburgh Design Guidance, Guidance for Householders and Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas explain the Council's approach to design in historic contexts.

Townscape

The area is characterised by a high proportion of open spaces which provides the green setting to the surrounding built environment. The most important of these are the Royal Botanic Garden and Inverleith Park but a significant contribution is also provided by school playing fields. In recent years, a number of grass playing fields have been converted to artificial playing fields with associated installation of floodlighting and changes to boundary treatments. There may be pressure for more of these types of developments.

Another pressure on the setting of open spaces is the erection of contemporary flat roof flatted developments on or adjacent to existing playing fields, such as on Bangholm Terrace, Kinnear Road and Fettes Avenue. These types of developments contrast with the traditional appearance of the area and there may be continuing pressure for such development proposals, justified on the basis that they represent a significant improvement from the existing site. This justification could have a negative cumulative effect on the character and setting when viewing development proposals after completion.

Recommendations:

Due to the large number of artificial playing surfaces in the conservation area, there will be a presumption against any further proposals for such development.

Where developments are intended on school campuses, playing fields or other substantial green spaces, such development will require to be placed in the context of an overall masterplan for future change of the site. Schools and other major landowners are encouraged to have a long term strategy in place to constructively manage land release or playing fields conversion as oppose to ad hoc management. See also: Opportunities for Development.

Respect for design should be demonstrated in the way that new buildings are to be inserted within existing townscape framework; respecting the scale, form and producing architecture of highest quality. Development proposals should consider the overall effect created by successive developments to ensure that the character and setting of parks and green spaces, and key views, are not eroded.

Proposals for artificial lighting will be assessed in terms of local development plan policy and Scottish Government guidance, Controlling Light Pollution and Reducing Lighting Energy Consumption (2007). Bad neighbour development involving artificial lighting which will affect residential property will be advertised in terms of Schedule 2

of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992.

Architectural Character

The area is characterised by the rows of Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian villas and terraces in a variety of styles, with the use of local building materials as a unifying quality. Contemporary developments through new-build and extensions have mainly utilised non-traditional materials that could threaten the character of the area if used indiscriminately or excessively. Multiple such developments in close proximity can have a negative cumulative effect on character.

Recommendations:

The design of interventions should be based on a sound understanding of context. Policy DES1 of the Edinburgh City Local Plan and Proposed Local Development Plan requires that design should be based on an overall design concept that draws upon positive characteristics of the surrounding area to create or reinforce a sense of place.

The Council's planning guidance generally states a presumption for sandstone and other traditional, natural materials where these form the predominant palette in the surroundings of the development. High quality, innovative modern designs and materials are not precluded, but proposals must be able to demonstrate their respect for the historic character of the host building and the area. The cumulative effect of multiple developments within the same street or area should be taken into account.

Natural Heritage

The area contains some of the most attractive areas of open space in the city, with each having a markedly different character. There is a need to ensure that the landscape, natural and wildlife heritage of the conservation area are protected, acknowledged and understood as integral elements of the conservation area's value.

Recommendation:

Developments should take account of The Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan objectives for urban green space and ensure that the identity and quality of the landscape, and its natural and wildlife elements, are not eroded or damaged.

5.3 Opportunities for development

Small-scale development opportunities for infill or replacement may arise within the area, and will be considered under the policies and guidance listed at 5.1.

No sites within the conservation area are identified for significant housing or other development through local development plans. Development on a significant scale is unlikely to take place within the conservation area. However it is recognised that ad-hoc development has changed the character of parts of the conservation area over time, particularly at the peripheries of private open spaces and playing fields, and further pressure for this type of development may arise in future.

Where developments are intended on school campuses, playing fields or other substantial green spaces, such development will require to be placed in the context of an overall masterplan for future change of the site. Schools and other major landowners are encouraged to have a long term strategy in place to constructively manage land release or playing fields conversion as oppose to ad hoc management. See also 5.2, Pressures and sensitivities.

5.4 Opportunities for planning action

Conservation area boundaries

A number of suggestions for changes to the conservation area boundaries were received during the initial consultation process. These mostly involved areas of modern development or those not considered to make a positive contribution to the character of the area: Werberside/Rocheid Park; Ettrickdale/Liddesdale Place; Warriston Drive/Eildon Terrace; areas to the north of Ferry Road between Boswall Drive and Clark Avenue, and Warriston Cemetery and Crematorium.

Most of these areas are not considered suitable candidates for removal from the boundary. Warriston Cemetery and Crematorium are considered essential elements in the series of significant landscapes which make up the conservation area and are not therefore considered appropriate for removal. Some of the more recent 20th century housing developments have not been particularly sympathetic to the character of the conservation area. However, they are either isolated away from existing boundaries and therefore cannot be removed without creating damaging gaps within the conservation area, or have appropriate mitigation measures in place such as screening landscaping which preserves the character and setting of their context.

The only area which may be appropriate for removal from the boundary is the strip of development to the north of Ferry Road. The characters of the two sides of Ferry Road are quite different and this area is considered to relate more closely to the developments to the north, in Trinity, than to the character of Inverleith. Most of the buildings are of good quality but not particularly special or unique to Inverleith. The better examples of villa development here are already protected by listing. Any development would be required to take into account the settings of these listed buildings and of the Inverleith Conservation Area. The principle of removal of this area from the boundary will be tested through further consultation.

5.5 Opportunities for enhancement

Roads and transport

Road safety, traffic management and parking are identified as priority issues in the Inverleith Neighbourhood Plan along with enhanced walking and cycling opportunities. The unique characteristics of the streetscape of the area should be protected and enhanced in any roads and transport proposals. Interventions should be planned and designed taking account of their broader context in order to reinforce the sense of place. This will also involve minimising visual clutter, avoiding generic, 'off-the-peg' solutions, and protecting traditional surfacing materials and design details.

Natural environment

Similarly, enhancing the walking and cycling environment provides an opportunity to promote the unique and valuable open space and landscape characteristics of the area. The aims of the Edinburgh Biodiversity Action Plan should be considered in any enhancement proposal throughout the area.

Warriston Cemetery

The cemetery has suffered long term neglect although it still functions as a memorial ground in its north western parts, and many graves are still visited and maintained. Progress has been made in the clearing of invasive and non-native species. The Friends of Warriston Cemetery was formed in 2012 to bring the site back into a good state of repair, focusing on public access to family burial grounds, encouragement of biodiversity and the site as a local history resource.

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