

TRINITY CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

1 INTRODUCTION

Conservation Areas

- 1.1 Section 61 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997, describes conservation areas as “...areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. The Act makes provision for the designation of conservation areas as distinct from individual buildings, and planning authorities are required to determine which parts of their areas merit conservation area status
- 1.2 There are currently 38 conservation areas in Edinburgh, including city centre areas, Victorian suburbs and former villages. Each conservation area has its own unique character and appearance.

Character Appraisals

- 1.3 The protection of an area does not end with Conservation Area designation; rather designation demonstrates a commitment to positive action for the safeguarding and enhancement of character and appearance. The planning authority and the Scottish Executive are obliged to protect conservation areas from development that would adversely affect their special character. It is, therefore, important that both the authorities and other groups who have an interest in conservation areas, and residents are aware of those elements that must be preserved or enhanced.
- 1.4 A Character Appraisal is seen as the best method of defining the key elements that contribute to the special historic and architectural character of an area.
- 1.5 It is intended that Character Appraisals will guide the local planning authority in making planning decisions and, where opportunities arise, preparing enhancement proposals. **The Character Appraisal will be a material consideration when considering applications for development within the conservation area and applications for significant new developments should be accompanied by a contextual analysis**

that demonstrates how the proposals take account of the essential character of the area as identified in this document.

- 1.6 NPPG 18: Planning and the Historic Environment states that Conservation Area Character Appraisals should be prepared when reconsidering existing conservation area designations, promoting further designations or formulating enhancement schemes. The NPPG also specifies that Article 4 Direction Orders will not be confirmed unless a Character Appraisal is in place.

Trinity Conservation Area

- 1.7 The Trinity Conservation Area is situated approximately 2 miles north of Edinburgh City Centre on a steep south-facing gradient with outlooks over the Firth of Forth.
- 1.8 The northern boundary of the Conservation Area is formed by the Firth of Forth; to the South, the boundary follows East Trinity Road cutting in at enclaves of residential development; to the East, a clear line is drawn following Laverockbank Road and to the West, Netherby Road and Boswall Road form the main boundary.
- 1.9 The Trinity Conservation Area was originally designated in 1975. The original boundary included villa developments on Russell Place, York Road, and Laverockbank Road. The boundary was substantially extended west of Trinity Road in 1986 to include the Lomond Park development and Boswall Road.
- 1.10 A further boundary change was implemented in 1998 to include villa areas between Boswall Road and Lower Granton Road and at East Trinity Road and Netherby Road; these shared the character of the existing Conservation Area and contributed to the enhancement of the setting of the area. Tenements on Lower Granton Road at the north edge of the Conservation Area were also included to create a more rational boundary.
- 1.11 The 'Outstanding' status of Trinity Conservation Area was confirmed in 1978.

2 HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The site which the Trinity Conservation Area occupies was originally known as Wardie Muir, an area of wasteland between Inverleith and the sea. It was the location of Wardie Castle, a large and ancient house, which was in a ruinous condition by the mid-17th century and from which stones were used to build Cromwell's Citadel in Leith. It was later rebuilt as a mansionhouse and was the property of Sir Alexander Boswall in 1780. A round-towered relic of the original Castle survives at the end of the cul-de-sac formed by Wardie House Lane.

- 2.2 Trinity was part of the lands granted by David I to his new Abbey of Holyrood in about 1128. In 1505, James IV purchased 143 acres from Holyrood, in order to establish a naval base or New Haven; and it was the western part of this Crown land that was acquired in 1713 by Trinity Hospital and developed as Trinity Mains farm. Part of the old farmhouse at Trinity Mains was used to form Hay Lodge on East Trinity Road, which was subsequently demolished. The origin of the place name is, therefore, based on the dedication of Leith's charitable institutions to the Holy Trinity.
- 2.3 Trinity had “all the makings of a fine healthful holiday resort”, and the development of Trinity reflected changes in the settlement pattern and the suburban expansion which occurred in Edinburgh in the mid-19th century. A large part of Trinity was developed around 1830 for the benefit of the growing number of merchants and professionals who were seeking a more secluded environment. Trinity had the advantage of physical separation from the overcrowded medieval city core and offered individual dwellings in a predominantly suburban setting, in contrast to the tenements of the Georgian New Town. The convenience of its situation to the neighbouring port of Leith also presented advantages for the wealthy ship-owners and merchants as an attractive place of residence.
- 2.4 The original scheme for villa development in Trinity was laid out in the 18th century. Building plots on a large site to the north of Ferry Road were advertised in the Edinburgh Evening Courant to a plan 'constructed in a new and beautiful manner as an assemblage of Gentleman's Villas, bounded upon the outer line by a plantation of forest trees and the internal boundaries of each lot by a continuation of flowering shrubs; and each Villa situated in such a manner as not to overlook another.'
- 2.5 This scheme of large villas in substantial garden grounds was not completed and following the initial start to the development, most of the land was subdivided into smaller plots on which an extraordinary variety of mid to late Victorian villas were built, the density increasing with time. Trinity Lodge on Stirling Road is the only surviving building from the original feuing plan. The house was built in 1774 by Robert Johnston, an Edinburgh Merchant, but is now flatted and a modern house has been built within its much-reduced grounds.
- 2.6 Detached or semi-detached houses with their own private gardens bounded by high stone walls provided an attractive contrast to the communal living of the central area, and the fashions and desires of the property owners are reflected in the profusion of architectural styles and individual or idiosyncratic features.
- 2.7 About 1835, Trinity House began feuing the ground at Laverockbank Road, but the short line of villas and gardens at the south east end was not completed. Housing on the opposite side of the street, that can be traced back as far as the early 1830s was

converted into flats during the Second World War. This is a pattern demonstrated throughout the area.

- 2.8 The introduction of a rail link to Trinity gave added impetus to the development of the area. The station stood at the end of Trinity Crescent and the old platform and associated railway cottages can still be seen. The rail link was closed in 1868 as a result of the opening of the New Abbeyhill to Trinity and Granton Line.
- 2.9 The Chain Pier situated opposite the Georgian porticos of Trinity Crescent, feued about 1824, was constructed as a build-out into the water in 1821. The Chain Pier was used by small steamdriven boats that plied up and down the river Forth but, as it did not accommodate larger vessels, was soon abandoned for Granton Harbour. This was also a period when sea bathing was becoming popular at Trinity and the chain pier was the site of 'Great Swimming Competitions'. The Chain Pier Bar now occupies the building that was once the booking office for the pier.
- 2.10 The spatial layout of Trinity was well established by the end of the late 19th Century, affording little opportunity for new development. Change during the 20th century has mainly been associated with conversion of the villas into flats and some development within garden grounds. However, the overall character and appearance of Trinity has not been substantially changed since the 19th century.

3 ANALYSIS AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER

Spatial Structure

- 3.1 Trinity is an almost exclusively residential area located on the coast to the northern side of the city between Newhaven and Granton. It has natural boundaries on three sides, the coast line to the north, Wardie Park to the west and to the south a former railway cutting leading to Leith. There are two busy east – west routes, one along the coast at the foot of a steep slope rising up from the beach, the other to Leith lies well outside both the area itself and the designated conservation area. Much of Trinity is then physically separated from surrounding development and from major traffic routes. It is therefore largely off the beaten track and secluded, though at one time the branch railway line would have brought many visitors to the pier prior to its demolition.
- 3.2 Whilst nowadays there may be more of an emphasis for travel southwards to the city centre these road and rail access routes linked it to the ports at Newhaven and Granton along the shoreline and beyond to Leith. The combination of these accesses, location in proximity to ports, and a topography giving views out to sea of incoming vessels, yet separation from the operation and distribution effects of trade, made Trinity an attractive area for residential development initially by wealthy merchants.

- 3.3 Much of the residential development is in the form of villas and those larger villas remaining from the earliest development of the area are located at the upper level of the slope at a point where the ground appears to give two spurs facing out to sea. In between is located the former station, now converted to residential use but which at one time served residents and visitors to the pier, and the former branch line leading to it, now a footpath and cycle way.
- 3.4 These larger villas are set in what still appear substantial plots, though earlier plans show them to have been in considerably larger grounds at one time. The later subdivision of the feu into plots retains the formality set by the original boundaries and access routes. The boundaries are still marked by high stone walls. Though a general characteristic of Georgian 'suburbs', it may have been a requirement to establish and protect boundaries in this way before any development was undertaken. With such generous spacing to their neighbours to be almost to the point of complete independence, their setting within the plot appears random, but they all have a north – south orientation and are positioned to take advantage of sea views, and presumably south facing gardens. Their gardens contain mature landscaping and are large enough for woodland trees, often of exotic origin and encouraged by the maritime climate.
- 3.5 These early villas are at the north end of Laverockbank and York Roads which run parallel and to the east of the branch line, with Russell Road to the west of it. To reduce costly bridge building, these roads are joined east-west only by Lennox Row. The north-south orientation of this part of the area is further emphasised by the length of frontage and by the height and continuity of the boundary walls. It's layout retains its linear form and it is emphasised by subsequent development.
- 3.6 Open views to the Forth made the coastline route attractive to residential development. With the location of road and rail right to the edge of the water, development is to one side only. This is also linear in character, but given interest initially by terraced villas set round a crescent with later, tenements round a square on three sides.
- 3.7 Subsequent development up to 1914 then mainly continued to the west and south on the 'plateau' above the shore road, with density appearing to gradually intensify. This is demonstrated by the size of plots being halved in width, then in depth and then halved again in both directions. At the same time, property types reduce from detached, to semi-detached to terraced forms. This requires a change in relationship between houses and the street and between houses themselves. The boundary wall becomes a token, houses now address the street, their orientation is set by it and the space between houses reduces.
- 3.8 A new east-west route, Lennox Row, is introduced between the shore and E Trinity Road whilst further new roads maintain a north-south emphasis at right angles to the shoreline. The conservation area then extends west and southwards to take in further

bisecting routes. The area changes from a formal Georgian origin to a subsequent and more informal Victorian expansion, with the arrangement of roads and the buildings along them setting up an irregular 'grid iron' spatial structure.

- 3.9 In this later development, there is also a transfer of open space from the private realm to a more public one, acting as a focus either as a central square or as a termination to a street. Ironically Lomond Park, an example of the former, is private to those living around it. The original fine ornate Victorian gates and stone pillars to Wardie Park terminate the view at the end of Lennox Row, though they are now the frontage to a modern chalet style house which closes access off to the Park.
- 3.10 The former railway routes form attractive cycle and walk ways. These also help to add to the already mature landscaping and wooded character of the area and contribute to its natural heritage and bio-diversity. Much of these routes are set in cut which allow roads to pass over without changing level, so minimising visual intrusion of bridges and retaining privacy. Unfortunately, it limits the places and suitability for pedestrian and cycle connection points. The removal of bridge and lines along the sea front offer scope for further enhancement and appreciation of the city's coast line.
- 3.11 Trinity is characterised by changing spatial structures with low-density villa development in a variety of forms and settings. The reducing plot size, changing relationship to the street and intensification of development radiate out from those original grander villas, and impact to change the emphasis of spatial structure from a linear to a grid pattern. Despite this, the spatial pattern of one area is not of a scale to dominate the other, the change is softened by the irregularity of the grid, by frequent changes in building forms, the maturity of the landscaping and a unity in its townscape.
- 3.12 The changes from a formal linear layout with individually designed houses to an informal grid structure with increasingly formalised and standardised house designs reflect the changes in patronage and in society from architectural design to meet an individual client brief towards more repetitive and speculative designs for a broader market.
- 3.13 The coastal location, seclusion from surrounding areas and traffic offer the same attractions throughout Trinity's development. The changes in spatial pattern offer variety, provide a high quality residential environment with a sense of space and grace and a setting in which to appreciate the townscape.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER : SPATIAL STRUCTURE

- **Much of Trinity is physically separated from surrounding development and from major traffic routes**

- **The combination of access, location in proximity to ports, and a topography made Trinity an attractive area for residential development initially by wealthy merchants.**
- **Most of the residential development is in the form of villas**
- **The original larger and detached villas are set in substantial plots with generous spacing to their neighbours and a north – south orientation and to take advantage of sea views**
- **The length of frontage, the height and continuity of stone boundary walls emphasise the linear structure of early development.**
- **Intensification is achieved by the gradual reduction of plot size and villa types from detached, to semi-detached to terraced forms**
- **The area changes from a formal Georgian origin of villas set in generous grounds in a linear pattern to a subsequent and more informal Victorian expansion, with the arrangement of roads and the buildings along them setting up an irregular ‘grid iron’ spatial structure.**
- **a transfer of open space from the private realm to a more public one, acting as a focus either as a central square or as a termination to a street**
- **The changes in spatial pattern offer variety, provide a high quality residential environment with a sense of space and grace and a setting in which to appreciate the townscape.**

Townscape

- 3.14 Leaving the denser tenemental forms of the city centre, there is an area of transition through the mix of terraced villas and tenements of Inverleith before reaching Trinity. The main access road from the city centre then diverts to Granton around the edges of Trinity. The roads accessing Trinity have to cross over bridges, over the former railway cutting, before the area is reached. These are almost symbolic gateways to the area and are like so much of Edinburgh which is joined by bridges. Though these bridges may be less obvious, there is an immediate feeling of a different, characteristically quieter place on entering Trinity.
- 3.15 This is created by the predominantly residential nature of the area and by the almost complete absence of other commercial or institutional facilities. An impression of ‘arcadian seclusion’ is accentuated by the enclosure created by high stone boundary walls

right to the pavement edge down the whole length of older streets. Often pedestrian access to the house beyond is through narrow ornamental cast iron or timber gates under the continuing stone cope of the wall. Sometimes the opening is shrouded by overhanging shrubbery or trees, their shade reinforcing the sense of seclusion. At times this is with an almost gothic air, but in better weather the profusion of public and private greenery softens the hard edges of these walled plots and gardens.

- 3.16 The area has a wealth of detached villas, from small arcadian lodges to grand baronial villas, ranging in inspiration from greek, roman, venetian, to gothic ideals. Many of the early Georgian examples are of a restrained approach, with those of classical styles appearing particularly severe in their interpretation. Their cut down simplicity and integration of detail from boundary railing to principle elevation, however, convey a sense of scholarly and almost philosophical calm. “Choice villadom” indeed, as *The Buildings of Scotland* describes the area.
- 3.17 Later and Victorian villas are mainly semi-detached and terraced and though largely restrained and subtle in their individual design, they are of particular character as integrated building forms addressing street frontages to establish a broader or area context. Their bay frontages set up different rhythms along the street depending on the frontage width. The effect of a reduction in plot size is most vividly demonstrated by the difference in the number of houses along almost equal length sides of the block between Stirling Road and Netherby Road. On Stirling Road there are 12 semi-detached houses, on Netherby Road there are 26 terraced houses. The visual impression of the lengths of the two streets is in stark contrast to the fact that they are in fact almost equal.
- 3.18 There are though other elements that distinguish the variation in villa types and sizes. The denser the form the greater the respect for a building line and the closer it comes to the pavement edge with the front boundary walls diminishing gradually to ever smaller dwarf walls and railings. The area of house footprint, and the space between footprints, also reduces with the size of the plot.
- 3.19 The short block lengths in the grid structure create small building groups which whilst uniform in themselves often tend to vary from block to block. This gives the impression of variety but a better term might be hierarchy. The similarity of villa form, semi-detached or terraced, predominant two storey height and lack of significant contrast with change in size creates a unity of appearance. The pattern of original rear house extensions, a constant element except for the largest detached houses, seems to reduce in mathematical proportions to that of the house type to which it is joined. The small block size may have had another advantage in that one builder could complete the whole of that part of the street frontage. Many of these street frontages show integral design composition and offer a variety and an interest in demonstrating how to turn and end streets which we could still learn from today.

- 3.20 This combination of a lack of dramatic change yet subtle variation provides a well mannered and high quality context. The extensive use of a restricted palette of natural stone, slate and cast iron details and similarity of proportions throughout early and late, restrained and exuberant designs, detached and terraced forms help to provide a unity of character to the area. Individuality is restrained to details, for example pilastered wall head parapets, decorative cast iron roof finials and carved barge boards, colourful stain glass or garden planting.
- 3.21 Despite the lack of any identifiable centre with a variety of uses and building forms, and apart from the more typical landmark of Wardie Parish Church, a range of townscape features are still offered by more exuberantly designed and usually detached villas. Some of them, more randomly set in their larger plots and less restrained in their design, are visible from parallel streets where their semi-detached neighbours retain a generous spacing, where roads change alignment and occasionally as at the east end of Lennox Row terminate the vista.
- 3.22 Standing out against the broader context to provide this interest these more exuberant villas are in the 'venetian' or 'gothic' style or are once restrained villas with more picturesque later additions. These provide glimpsed views to first floor conservatories, varying roof forms, square or gazebo towers and spires punctuating the skyline. Contrast and interest is also given by a wealth of mature trees, some like the monkey puzzle trees looking positively exotic all year round, whilst other deciduous and evergreen trees bring changes of colour reflecting the seasons or a variety of textures.
- 3.23 Roads running north – south give contrasting views, to Arthurs Seat and the Old Town skyline to the south and out over the coast to Fife to the north. The large villas are particularly prominent in views into the Conservation Area from the seashore.
- 3.24 Individual properties are considered in more detail in the next section, but a significant contribution to the townscape of the area is made by its architectural surprises and delights. The Gothic House, Grange House and the Lodges in York Road, St Helens in Russell Place, Trinity Grove and Silverton in Trinity Road and the three symmetrically composed villas including Boswall House at the centre to create a linked 'palatial' frontage are all offer distinctive elements and interest to the townscape. Mayville Gardens with its walled termination, "cottagey terraces" and deep eaved entry pavilions, almost has the character of a mediaeval ecclesiastical 'close' or 'cloister'.
- 3.25 There are also some fine bridges remaining from the era of the railway, though the attraction of the pier has been long gone. The Starbank Inn and The Old Chain Pier offer a still rare opportunity to enjoy the city's coast line and the Firth of Forth. The latter though remains today as a sanitised successor in both name and deeds to its wilder predecessor, its walls and ceilings, once lined with nautical trophies from Saigon to Honolulu.

- 3.26 The wealth of architectural character makes different selections possible and any such exercise should not be seen as lessening the importance of the context established by more repetitive house forms. These examples are raised to indicate that in the absence of institutional or other building types more usually associated with giving legibility to an area, variation in residential design offered by differing architects and clients can also stand out to offer a distinctive interpretation of townscape of local importance and charm.
- 3.27 The 1960-70's did see flatted developments that have not respected the prevailing built forms or materials, but for the most part these are located on back land sites which are not visible from main vantage points. The exceptions are the treatment to the settings of Boswall House and Mayfield House just outside the Conservation Area. The coast road remains a very busy route at the edge of the area and regeneration proposals could add to this. To the south there are villa groupings, some similar in style to those within the current Conservation Area boundary and offering some of the most consistent use of red sandstone, and tenements with jaunty cast iron balconies giving, and celebrating, sea views. These, and other boundary areas, will be investigated further.
- 3.28 At first, outwardly uniform in residential use and repetitive in form and materials, Trinity has a permeability which allows appreciation of a wealth of residential forms, styles and features, of its mature landscaped setting and of its visual connections to city and coast. Despite lacking a traditional focus, it shows how one predominant building type can be designed to offer townscape variety, interest and contrasts in a layout that gives human scale, amenity and yet a sense of seclusion.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER : TOWNSCAPE

- **The roads accessing Trinity have to cross over bridges which are almost symbolic gateways to the area**
- **Tranquillity due to lack of through traffic and pedestrian activity and predominantly residential nature.**
- **The impression of seclusion is accentuated by the enclosure created by high stone boundary walls**
- **The area has a wealth of detached villas, from small arcadian lodges to grand baronial villas, ranging in inspiration from classic to gothic ideals conveying a sense of scholarly and philosophical calm**
- **Victorian villas are of particular character as integrated building forms addressing street frontages and blocks to establish a broader area context**

- **Extensive use of a restricted palette of natural stone, slate and cast iron details, similarity of proportions and villa forms help to provide a unity of character to the area**
- **Standing out against the broader context to provide are more exuberant and picturesque villas providing varying roofscapes and spires punctuating the skyline**
- **A significant contribution to the townscape of the area is made by its architectural surprises and delights**
- **Trinity has a permeability which allows appreciation of a wealth of residential forms, styles and features, of its mature landscaped setting and of its visual connections to city and coast**

Architectural Character

- 3.29 The style and mix of Georgian and Victorian villas in Trinity is unique in Edinburgh; some are embellished with Gothic details, and ornamental ironwork; others have towers and attractive stone porches. Although the area is overwhelmingly domestic in scale and suburban in nature, it includes more variety than other stone built Edinburgh suburbs. The buildings are complemented by the profusion of mature trees, spacious garden settings, stone boundary walls and green open spaces. Despite the variety of architectural styles, a significant degree of unity of appearance is achieved by the predominant use of local grey sandstone for buildings and garden walls and natural slates for roofs.
- 3.30 The over-riding architectural form is villa development in a variety of architectural styles, which contribute to and enliven the character of the area. The diversity of styles ranges from classical villas on the east side of Newhaven Road, terraced villas on the east side of Laverockbank Road, Gothic in Russell Place and at 24 York Road, Elizabethan at Mayville Gardens. An abundance of eclectic Victorian picturesque styles and features prevail in Lennox Row and York Road.
- 3.31 Villa development also afforded the opportunity for architectural enrichment. This includes cast iron railings, evident throughout the conservation area, with particularly well detailed ironwork at Boswall Road, and hand carved decoration in polished ashlar. Finials, trellis, towers, gazebos and campaniles are evident throughout the area and all contribute to the overall character.
- 3.32 In areas such as York Road and Laverockbank Road, houses are concealed by trees and walls. The walls provide definition to the street layout and create a clear distinction between public and private spaces.

- 3.33 Trinity is predominantly a residential area with few public buildings, and it is essentially the quality of the individual buildings that establish the character of the area. The following are a few examples:
- 3.34 Wardie Parish Church, Primrose Bank Road (Category B Listed). The only practising church within the area which is prominently located at the corner of Primrose Bank Road and Netherby Road. It is a rectangular-plan gothic church with octagonal-plan towers in a snecked grey sandstone, and dates from 1892.
- 3.35 118 Trinity Road, former Christ Church Episcopal Church (Category C (S) Listed). A simple gothic church dating from 1854 with south-facing entrance porch and small spired tower to the Southwest. The church is no longer in use for ecclesiastical purposes following its conversion in 1980 to a private dwelling.
- 3.36 'Silverton' 90 Trinity Road (Category B Listed). A large 2-storey house with 17th century Scottish references. Its gables, bay windows and tall open topped gazebo tower typify the solidity and substance of Victorian Edinburgh. It has been converted into 3 flats, with a further 15 flats in the garden.
- 3.37 Gothic House 24 York Road (Category A Listed). A 2-storey, 3-bay Tudor Gothic House dating from 1820 with pinnacled porch-projecting windows and Tudor arched lights with timber mullions to the principal elevation.
- 3.38 Gothic Cottage 24 Russell Place (Category A Listed). An elegantly detailed early example of a Gothic cottage ornee.
- 3.39 North and South Gothic cottage (Category C (S), B Listed). The cottages form part of the early 19th century projected development on the lands of Trinity Mains by the lawyer Alexander Scott.
- 3.40 St Columba's Hospice, Boswall Road (Category B Listed). An austere Greek Revival 3-bay villa with Greek Doric portico dating from 1825. Its former occupation by naturalist and oceanographer Sir John Murray gives it historic significance. It was converted into a home for disabled children before being extended in 1978, to become St Columba's Hospice.
- 3.41 Along the periphery of the conservation area the south side of East Trinity Road contains 4-storey tenements dating from the late 19th century. There are also tenements within the conservation area on lower Granton Road and Trinity Crescent. The tenement buildings contrast in mass, density and scale with the main area of villa development.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER: ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

- **The architectural significance of individually designed villas in the area.**
- **The variety of architectural styles that contribute to the overall character.**
- **High quality stone-built architecture of restricted height enclosed by stone boundary walls which define the visual and physical seclusion of the villas.**
- **The significant degree of uniformity resulting from the predominant use of traditional building materials : of local sandstone for buildings and boundary walls and Scots slate for roofs.**

Natural Heritage

- 3.42 The topography in Trinity is orientated on a north-facing gradient, which slopes down towards the Firth of Forth. The slope is gradual but steepens towards the seafront providing panoramic sea views for dwellings on the seafront and for those in higher prominent positions.
- 3.43 The composition of the landscape consists of a variety of private garden grounds, wide roadways (some with mature trees) and public/semi-private open spaces. The abundance of mature trees in garden grounds unifies the Conservation Area and makes an essential contribution to the overall character. Large trees are of particular importance as they provide a setting and screening for houses, a habitat for wildlife, and other environmental and aesthetic benefits.
- 3.44 The cycleway that runs through the eastern side of the Conservation Area following the line of the old railway links is an Asserted Right of Way. Areas of woodland and a rich diversity of grass and tall herbs provide a variety of habitats and a valuable corridor for wildlife and recreation.
- 3.45 The shoreline between Granton Harbour and Star Bank is a site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which provides statutory protection for its ecological importance.
- 3.46 Significant areas of open space are mainly within the gardens of individual dwellings.
- 3.47 Two principal areas of public open space also contribute to the character of the area:

Lomond Park is a recreation ground with tennis courts and a bowling green, and lawn area with tall trees (rowan, elm, lime and horse chestnut). It was formed towards the end of the 18th century as a cricket ground and is situated towards the western boundary of the Conservation Area. Lomond Park provides the only large expanse of open space

within Trinity. Although access to the Park is limited to subscribers, it still contributes to the overall amenity of the area. Its surroundings of large detached dwellings typify many suburban park settings. The use of wrought iron railings makes it a defensible and definable space, and it improves the perception of permeability in the area.

Starbank Gardens are situated on the eastern boundary of the conservation area, adjacent to Laverock Bank Road. Laid out on the shoreward slope of the garden of Starbank House in the late 19th century, this public open space, characterised by large star shaped flowerbeds and enclosed on one side by high sandstone walls, maintains a sense of privacy and quiet from the through route of Trinity Crescent. An attractive public amenity which tries to welcome visitors with its open gates and low wrought-iron railings, making it visually accessible from the coastal road.

- 3.48 There are five Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs); two on Boswall Road, two on York Road and one adjacent to the corner of Spencer Place and Trinity Road.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER: NATURAL HERITAGE

- **The importance of wildlife and the SSSI**
- **The importance of Lomond Park as a central area of open space.**
- **The spacious and uncluttered streetscape.**
- **The significant numbers of mature garden trees.**

4 ACTIVITIES & USES

- 4.1 Trinity is primarily a residential area with few shops, public houses and other community buildings. The general atmosphere of the area is of calmness, high amenity and serenity and this is reinforced by the larger open spaces of Lomond Park and Starbank Gardens. St Columba's Hospice in the former Challenger Lodge provides a health care facility of regional importance.
- 4.2 In contrast to the central villa area, the coastal road is characteristically a place of activity both in terms of traffic movement, and places of public amenity such as the two public houses. There is also greater pedestrian movement resulting in more activity than in the central part of Trinity.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER: ACTIVITIES & USES

- **Predominance of residential use.**

- **Contrast between activity on the coastal road and general tranquillity in the main villa area.**

5 OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENHANCEMENT

- 5.1 **Landscaping Improvements to the Coastal Road:** The coastal road in the Conservation Area is formed by the conjunction of Starbank Road, Trinity Crescent and Lower Granton Road. Lower Granton Road has an area of under utilised open space which is located on the former site of the railway line, the strip is situated between the coastal footway and the roadway. This area would benefit from landscaping improvements, with the key aim of encouraging greater pedestrian and cyclist use of this coastal promenade. It would also have the potential to improve links to the existing cycleway that runs through Trinity.
- 5.2 The landscaped area located centrally in Victoria Place is predominantly unused by local residents, because of its design layout. Increasing permeability and providing seated views towards the Firth of Forth would substantially enhance residential amenity.
- 5.3 **Encouraging Greater Use of Starbank Gardens:** Starbank Gardens appear at times under used particularly to the rear of Starbank House. Community views will be sought on the potential for improvements to the gardens.
- 5.4 **Encouragement of Proper Repair and Maintenance:** The main essence of the character of the Conservation Area is maintained through good and regular upkeep of the built fabric. It is the responsibility of owners to properly maintain their property, though to help achieve good maintenance the advice of the Council and specialist contractors should be sought. *The maintenance of roads and pavements in the area was raised an issue during the consultation process.*

Role of the Public

- 5.5 Is essential that property owners accept their maintenance responsibilities. The emphasis should be on the repair rather than the replacement of original features, as these contribute to the Conservation Area as a whole. Alterations or additions should be sympathetic to the original style and of an appropriate scale.

Boundary Changes

5.6 *The Denham group consists of good quality red sandstone, well detailed terraced villas, and they are considered to have sufficient merit to justify their inclusion within the conservation area.*

6 GENERAL INFORMATION

Statutory Policies relating to Trinity

6.1 The NorthEast Edinburgh Local Plan contains policies that apply to the Trinity area. These policies aim to help guide and maintain quality development, and preserve and enhance the special character of the Trinity Conservation Area.

6.2 Trinity is designated as a “Housing and Compatible uses” area; this designation is intended to protect the high level of residential amenity enjoyed by the neighbourhood. Consequently, the impact on residential amenity is a determining consideration for all development proposals, including changes of use.

6.3 Development proposals must be compatible with the maintenance of the existing residential character, and preferably contribute positively to community life. The Local Plan supports the protection of public facilities such as local shops, post offices, churches and schools. In light of this, major industrial, office or commercial developments will not normally be acceptable for reasons of detriment to residential amenity.

6.4 The policies of the Local Plan are designed to effectively manage change and development in the Trinity area. These policies have been formulated in response to pressures that could threaten the residential amenity and / or the physical quality of the Conservation Area.

6.5 The key pressures that threaten the essential character of the area are as follows:

- **Development of Villa Garden Grounds:** as many villas in Trinity are set within extensive gardens grounds, there has been pressure to erect new dwellings with in villa grounds. Before Trinity was designated a Conservation Area, this led to inappropriate / unsympathetic contrasts in architectural style, use of inappropriate features and materials, the loss of mature trees and the loss of high quality boundary treatments. These changes even on a minor scale could have a grave effect on the existing character of the area. The unsympathetic subdivision of and alterations to villas can often erode the quality of a building's form and proportion. If such alterations proliferate, the rhythm and unity between building groups could be lost.
- **Loss of Mature Trees:** as previously mentioned, both public and private mature trees contribute greatly to the soft residential character of Trinity. The contrast in light and shade combined with the variation in seasonal colour make the trees an invaluable

asset. Large trees are also essential in creating the appropriate scale in Trinity's wide streets and large villa grounds. Mature trees are also very important in supporting a variety of bird and other wildlife, which contribute to the area's character.

- **Unsympathetic Alterations to Listed or Non-Listed Buildings:** alterations to buildings within the Conservation Area are regulated more stringently than in areas outwith. The regulation of development becomes even tighter when dealing with a listed building. Alterations to buildings within the area must be carried out with the utmost respect for original features and materials.
- **Listed Buildings:** There is also a presumption in favour of the retention of a listed buildings original use. This is to protect the existing residential character of the individual building and the wider area.
- **Use of Inferior Quality Materials and Loss of High Quality Original Features:** Trinity has suffered from a degradation of some of its original features and many new developments and alterations have been carried out using inferior quality materials. Key examples have been the complete loss of original cast iron fencing, gates and ornamental features on some properties or their replacement with inferior modern alternatives. Replacement windows are often of a lower quality or not of an appropriate Victorian or Georgian sash and case style. The use of PVC windows has had a negative impact on the areas character and must be avoided.

6.6 The Local Plan contains the following policies that are intended to assist with the effective management of change and the above mentioned pressures and issues:

- **Conservation Areas:** the retention of all features that contribute to its character and appearance, including unlisted buildings of townscape interest, boundary walls and railings etc.
- **Tree Protection:** development proposals must show consideration for any tree on or around a site; the survival and retention of healthy trees must be accommodated.
- **Listed Buildings:** proposals affecting a listed building, including its setting will be considered for their effect on its character and if appropriate their contribution to its care and restoration.
- **Villa Policy:** new development in the garden grounds of detached or semi-detached houses of a traditional and usually stone built character (villas), if acceptable in principle, must conform with the approved guidelines which seek to regulate its form and layout.

- **Window Alterations:** the alteration or replacement of windows in tenement and flatted properties in the conservation area will be carefully controlled to protect their special character and appearance.
- **Open Space:** there will be a presumption in favour of retaining areas of open space.
- **Materials:** A consistent approach in using traditional materials should be adopted to ensure that the character of the area is retained.

Supplementary Guidelines

6.7 The Council also produces supplementary planning guidance on a range of development control issues. These are contained within the Development Quality Handbook.

7 IMPLICATIONS OF CONSERVATION AREA STATUS

7.1 Designation as a conservation area has the following implications:

- Permitted development rights under the General Development Order are restricted. Planning permission is, therefore, required for stonecleaning, external painting, roof alterations and the formation of hard surfaces. The area of extensions to dwelling houses which may be erected without consent is also restricted to 16m² and there are additional control over satellite dishes.
- Under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992, the planning authority can seek approval of the Scottish Executive for Directions that restrict permitted development rights. The Directions effectively control the proliferation of relatively minor alterations to buildings in conservation areas that can cumulatively lead to erosion of character and appearance. Development is not precluded, but such alterations will require planning permission and special attention will be paid to the potential effect of proposals.
- The original part of the Trinity Conservation Area has been covered by an Article 4 Direction since 1976 controlling development within the curtilage of dwellings, minor operations and development by local authorities (Classes 1,3,6,7,30). The Local Plan proposes to extend the degree of control under the Article 4 Direction to cover the following classes of development (as defined under the 1992 General Permitted Development Order) over the whole of the Conservation Area as amended:

39 development by gas suppliers

40 development by electricity undertakers; and

67 development by telecommunication

- Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when planning controls are being exercised. Most applications for planning permission for alterations will, therefore, be advertised for public comment and any views expressed must be taken into account when making a decision on the application.
- Buildings which are not statutorily listed can normally be demolished without approval under the Planning Regulations. Within conservation areas the demolition of unlisted buildings requires conservation area consent.
- Alterations to windows are controlled in terms of the Council's policy.
- Grants may be available towards the repair or restoration of historic building The Council runs a conservation grant scheme. Such grants are normally dependent on comprehensive repair and restoration of original features and priority is given to tenemental housing and prominent buildings.
- Trees within Conservation Areas are covered by the Town and Country (Scotland) Act 1972, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Act applies to the uprooting, felling or lopping of a tree having a diameter exceeding 75mm at a point 1.5m above ground level, and concerns the lopping of trees as much as removal. The planning authority must be given six weeks notice of the intention to uproot, fell or lop trees. Failure to give notice renders the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a TPO.
- TPOs are used to secure the preservation of trees that are significant stature, in sound condition, and prominently located to be of amenity value to the public at large. When assessing contribution to amenity, the importance of trees as wildlife habitats will be taken into consideration. There is a strong presumption against any form of development or change of use of land that is likely to damage or prejudice the future long term existence of trees covered by TPO. The removal can be used for development.

JKG/FM/PLANCOM/Trinity Cons Area Char Appraisal-Appendix 1
13 September 2001