

Proposed Extension to Grange Conservation Area

Planning Committee
15 May 2008

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report presents the results of the consultation on the proposed extension to the Grange Conservation Area.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The draft extension to the Grange Conservation Area has been circulated for consultation. It is now accepted that the area of the proposed extension is not of sufficient historic or architectural interest to warrant designation.

3 Main report

- 3.1 The Planning Committee on 28 February 2008 agreed a report, as a draft for consultation, which provided an assessment of an area proposed as an extension of the Grange Conservation Area by the Grange Association and local residents. The assessment of the area concluded that the historic and architectural character of the area was sufficient to merit its inclusion in the Conservation Area.
- 3.2 The consultation has involved circulation of the report to residents affected by the proposal and local and city-wide amenity groups. The list of consultees is included as Appendix 1 and the comments received form Appendix 2. Local residents within the proposed extended area object and are opposed to the designation as a conservation area.
- 3.3 The area under consideration is located immediately to the south east of part of the southern boundary of the existing Grange Conservation Area. It is bounded on the west by the rear of Glenisla Gardens, by Blackford Avenue to the east, the railway line to the south and Mortonhall Road to the north.
- 3.4 Conservation areas are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. The main implication of designation is that consent will be required for specific types of development that would not otherwise require it. Planning authorities have a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or

enhancing the character or appearance of the designated area. Therefore, the tests for designation are high.

3.5 The Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Area states that all planning authorities are required from time to time to determine which parts of their areas are of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance, and to designate such areas as conservation areas. It is the character or historic interest of an area created by individual buildings and open spaces and their relationship one with the other that the legislation covering conservation areas seeks to preserve. The Memorandum goes on to state that the principles of selection for designation as a conservation area are broadly as follows:

- Areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of specific listed buildings and/or ancient monuments.
- Areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of building groupings, which may or may not include listed buildings and/or ancient monuments, and open spaces which they abut.
- Areas with features of architectural or historic interest such as street pattern, planned towns and villages and historic gardens and designed landscapes.
- Other areas of distinctive architectural or historic character.

3.6 The designation of a conservation area must, therefore, be based on the historic and architectural interest of an area. Conservation area status is not intended to act simply as a means of controlling development.

3.7 The area proposed for inclusion is shown on the 1893 Ordnance Survey plan as the site of Blackford Farm, Blackford Hill Station and a timber yard. The Blackford Farm building is first shown on the 1893 Ordnance Survey and the building remains on site. Blackford Hill Station was a stop on Edinburgh's South Suburban Railway. This was opened by the North British Railway in 1884. This line headed south from the main line to Glasgow, just west of Haymarket. After continuing south to Morningside the line headed east through the city until it joined the East Coast main line on the western edge of the city. Trains could then complete their circular route back to the city centre. There were stations on this line at Gorgie, Craiglockhart, Morningside Road, Blackford Hill, Newington, Duddingston, Portobello, Piershill, Abbeyhill.

3.8 Existing buildings on the site consist of:

- Two single storey stone buildings on Blackford Avenue, associated with the former railway station use.
- A two storey standard stone-built Victorian villa at 32 Blackford Avenue/1 Mortonhall Road.

- Blackford farmhouse (1-3 Glenisla Gardens Lane). This is the original 19th century two-storey farm building which has been substantially altered by the addition of a mansard roof.

3.9 There are objections against the proposed designation of the area as a conservation area. These are based on the lack of any significant remaining features of Blackford Hill Railway Station, the substantial alteration of Blackford Farm and the lack of general architectural significance and homogeneity.

3.10 On reflection, the objections received to the proposed conservation area designation are apposite. The area was not considered to merit conservation area status at the time of the original designation of the Grange Conservation Area or later reviews. On balance, the area is of marginal heritage importance with no remaining buildings of particular significance, and it is accepted that it is not of sufficient historic or architectural interest to meet the criteria for conservation area designation.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 There are no financial implications resulting from this report.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The area is of marginal heritage importance, and it is accepted that it is not of sufficient historic or architectural interest to meet the criteria for conservation area designation.

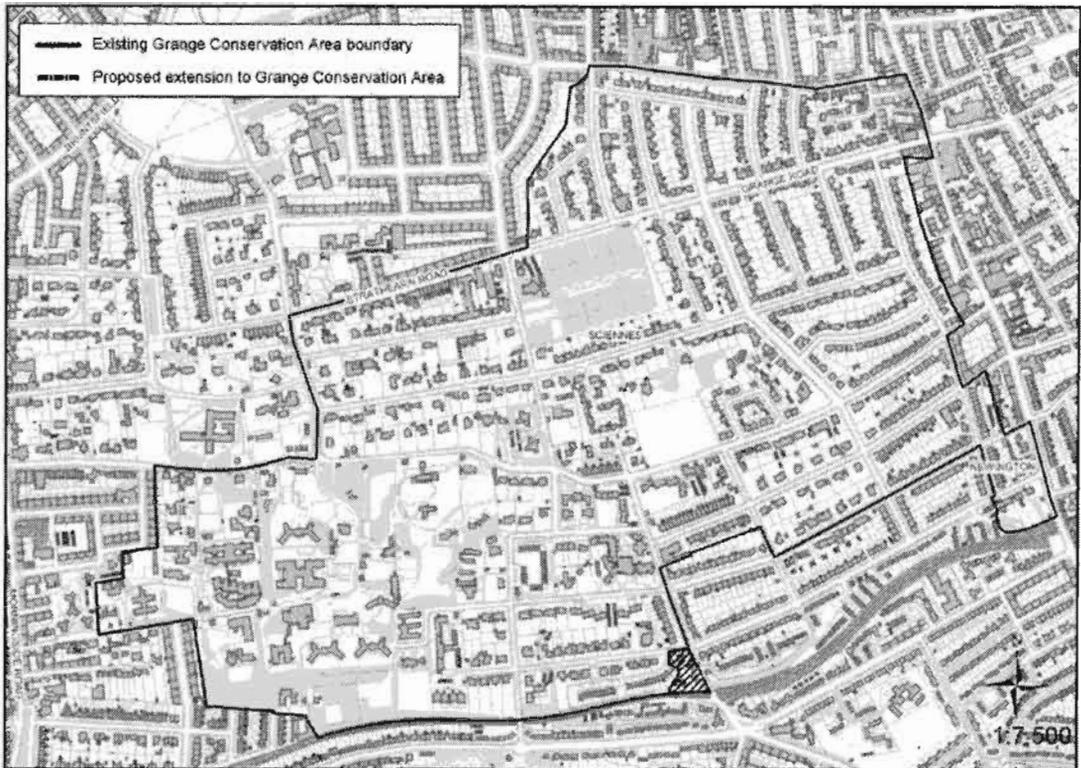
6 Recommendations

6.1 It is recommended that the proposed extension to the Grange Conservation Area is not progressed to designation.



Dave Anderson
Director of City Development

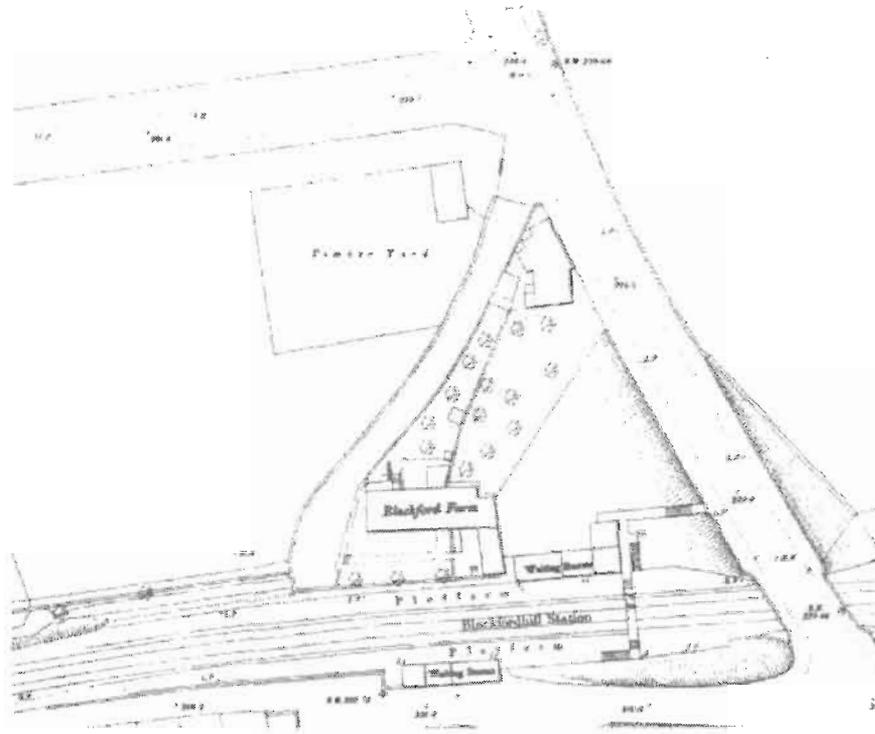
Appendices	Appendix 1: Consultees Appendix 2: Summary of Comments on the Proposed Conservation Area Extension
Contact/tel	Jack Gillon (0131) 469 3634
Wards affected	Ward 15 South Side/ Newington
Background Papers	Letters and emails from local residents and Grange Association.



Grange Conservation Area with Proposed Additional Area



Proposed Additional Area



1893-94: Showing Blackford Farm, Station and Timber Yard



Aerial Photo



Blackford Station 1958



Proposed
conservation area
extension

1. View from Blackford Avenue railway bridge across the site



Nos.34 & 38 Blackford Avenue



Nos. 32 Blackford Avenue and 1 Mortonhall Road



View of 1 Mortonhall Road and corner of Glenisla Gardens



Nos. 1-3 Glenisla Gardens Lane (original Blackford Farmhouse)

APPENDIX 1

Consultees

Mr & Mrs A Smith	1 Glenisla Gardens
Mr & Mrs Hart	32 Blackford Avenue
Mr & Mrs Campbell	34 Blackford Avenue
The Avenue Store	36 Blackford Avenue
The Cat Clinic	38 Blackford Avenue
Ms Marzuttini	1 Glenisla Gardens Lane
Owner/Occupier	2 Glenisla Gardens Lane
Owner/Occupier	3 Glenisla Gardens Lane
Cockburn Association	
Architectural Society of Scotland	
Historic Scotland	
The Grange Association	
Councillor Cameron Rose	
Councillor Steve Burgess	
Councillor Ian Perry	
Councillor Gordon Mackenzie	
City Centre Team	
Mrs Ruth Baird	2 Glenisla Gardens
Mr & Mrs D Tiller	3 Glenisla Gardens
Mr & Mrs E Lucey	4 Glenisla Gardens
Mr Keith Revels and Mr Jonathan Young	5 Glenisla Gardens
Mrs Margaret Cummings	1-3 Glenisla Gardens Lane
Mr M Affolter	1 Mortonhall Road
Councillor Sue Tritton	Grange and Prestonfield Community Council

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Comments on the Proposed Conservation Area Extension

John & Helen Hart, 32 Blackford Avenue – Are owner-occupiers of one of the houses affected by the proposed extension. They are opposed to the proposal on the basis that it is unwarranted and unnecessary. They consider that the proposed boundary extension has been prompted by a small number of letters from members of the Grange Association and is based on concerns relating to the recent sale of property in the area. Consider that the properties affected by the proposed extension are not of special interest or merit and that the basis of the proposal is a desire to tidy up the boundary.

Graham Dickson, 108 Relugas Road – Commends the proposals.

Ruth Baird, 2 Glensila Gardens – Supports the proposed extension.

The Cockburn Association - Consider that the proposed extension can only be a good thing, as it will extend a level of protection in development terms to an area that includes buildings of architectural and historic merit.

M T Affloter, 1 Mortonhall Road – Considers that the extension is not justified. Notes that the area was not previously included in the conservation area at the time of the original designation or later reviews. Considers that the area lacks any remaining historical interest or architectural merit, and that the main motivation of residents promoting the proposed extension is the introduction of stricter planning controls.

Councillor Cameron Rose – Considers that the proposed addition to the conservation area does not meet the tests for designation as a conservation area and opposes the extension. Councillor Rose makes the following points:

Historic Merit:

- Paragraph 3.8 of the report to the Planning Committee draws attention to the proposed area being the site of the former Blackford Hill Railway Station (opened 1884). The station no longer exists and, as far as I can discover, did not have any unique or special features. In any event it is well documented photographically and historically, and there is no suggestion of valuable historical remains still to be recovered.
- The 'Blackford Farm' is distinctive. However, it has been modernised and substantially altered and, indeed, has recently undergone a renovation. There is nothing to suggest it has such historical interest sufficient for the conservation area status. I note it first appears on the 1893 Ordnance Survey map of 1893. Whilst a farm in such a residential area may be of interest, this building has long been simply a residential building.

- Blackford Road/1 Mortonhall Road is a stone-built Victorian villa which, whilst architecturally fitting the Grange surrounding area, does not have special historic characteristics.
- The two single storey stone buildings in Blackford Avenue, whilst originally associated with the Railway Station, have no special historic value.
- The sloping open ground which makes up a significant part of the proposed extension (open space is included in criteria for designating a conservation area) does not appear to have any visible or known special historic interest.

Architectural Merit:

- Nos 34 and 38 Blackford Avenue are, if anything out of keeping with the remainder of the area. I do not see in them 'special' architectural interest.
- The fine stone-built villa at 32 Blackford Road/1 Mortonhall Road is very much in keeping with the pattern of similar villas in the Grange area.
- The Blackford Farmhouse building (1-3 Glenisla Gardens Lane) has already undergone substantial alteration which has improved the premises as residential accommodation. Those alterations appear to me to have added to its sustainability and viability as a residential building. Once again there is nothing in its architecture which raises it to the special level of designation required.

Lack of requirement to change the designation: The Grange Conservation Area was originally designated in 1983 with the Astley Ainslie Hospital grounds included in 1996. It is not clear to me why this area was not included at either of those stages. In any event, as the report to the Committee makes clear, 'the tests for designation are high'. It is not clear what changes of circumstances, if any, justify adding this to the conservation area now.

Conservation and enhancement: The conservation and enhancement of an area is the key criteria in the *Memorandum of Guidance*. There are aspects of this area which it is desirable to conserve. However it is my view that the buildings and open space represent a variety of styles. In some of these component parts there is opportunity for improvement - though I am of the view that improvement should not necessarily be of a style which reflects the pattern and characteristics of the Grange Conservation area. The location and topography of the segment in particular, set it apart from that area.

Jonathon Young, 5 Glenisla Gardens

As a boundary neighbour to the proposed extension, is delighted to support the proposal. This extension will complete the conservation area, as the existing exclusion does not protect the character of this small plot of land. The nature of the plot is very similar to the existing conservation area and it will benefit from the enhanced protection you propose.

Mr & Mrs IL Campbell, 34 Blackford Avenue

Considers that the area does not meet the criteria specified in the *Memorandum of Guidance* for inclusion in a conservation area, in terms of historic or architectural interest.