



Queensferry
Conservation Area
Character Appraisal

Contents

Maps

Historical Map	3
Structure Map	4
Elements Map	5

Summary information	6
Conservation Area Character Appraisals	7
Historical origins and development	8

Special Characteristics

Structure	11
Key elements	17

Management

Legislation, policies and guidance	23
Pressures and sensitivities	26
Opportunities for development	28
Opportunities for planning action	28
Opportunities for enhancement	30

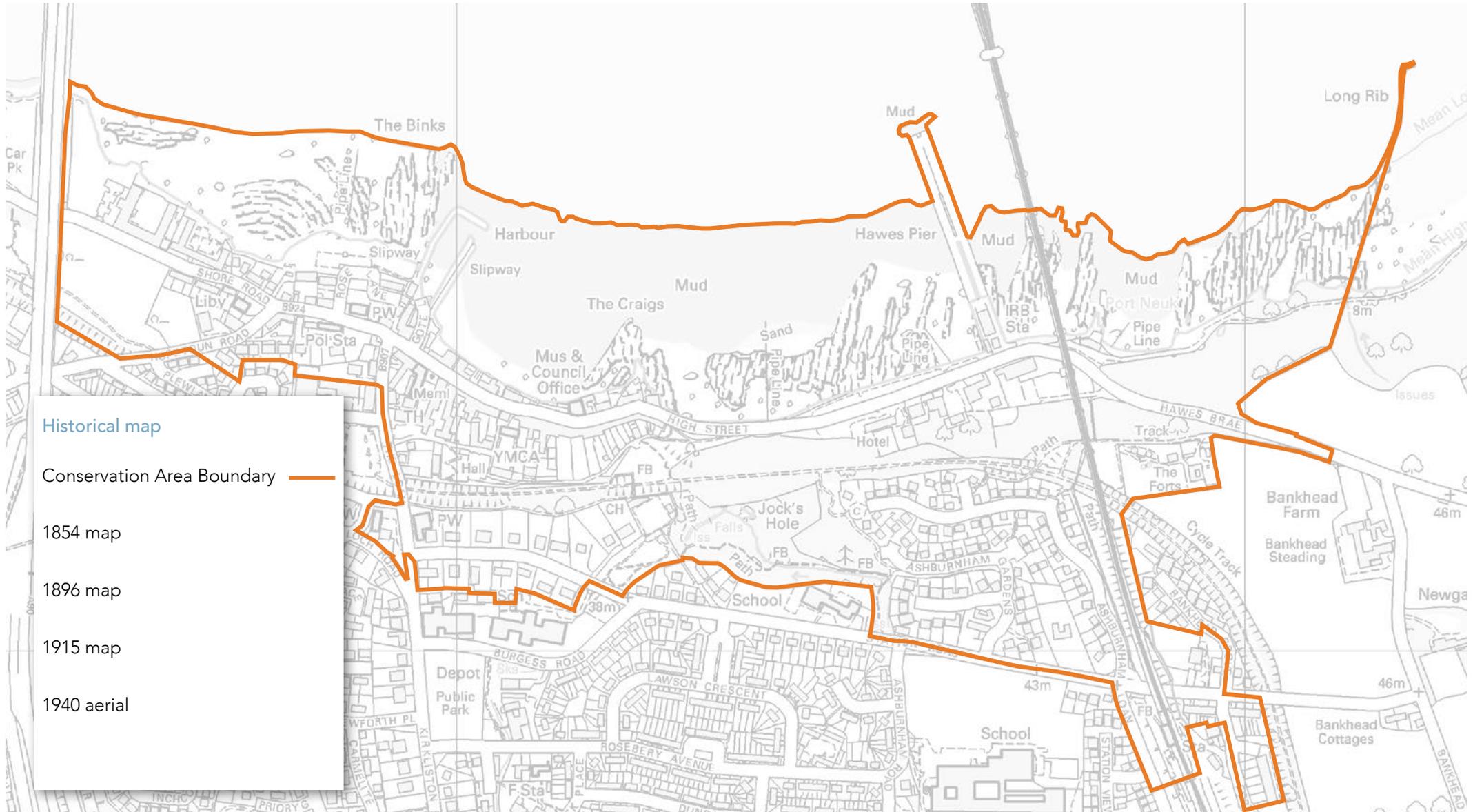
Sources	31
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Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Queensferry
Conservation Area
Character Appraisal



Historical map

Conservation Area Boundary

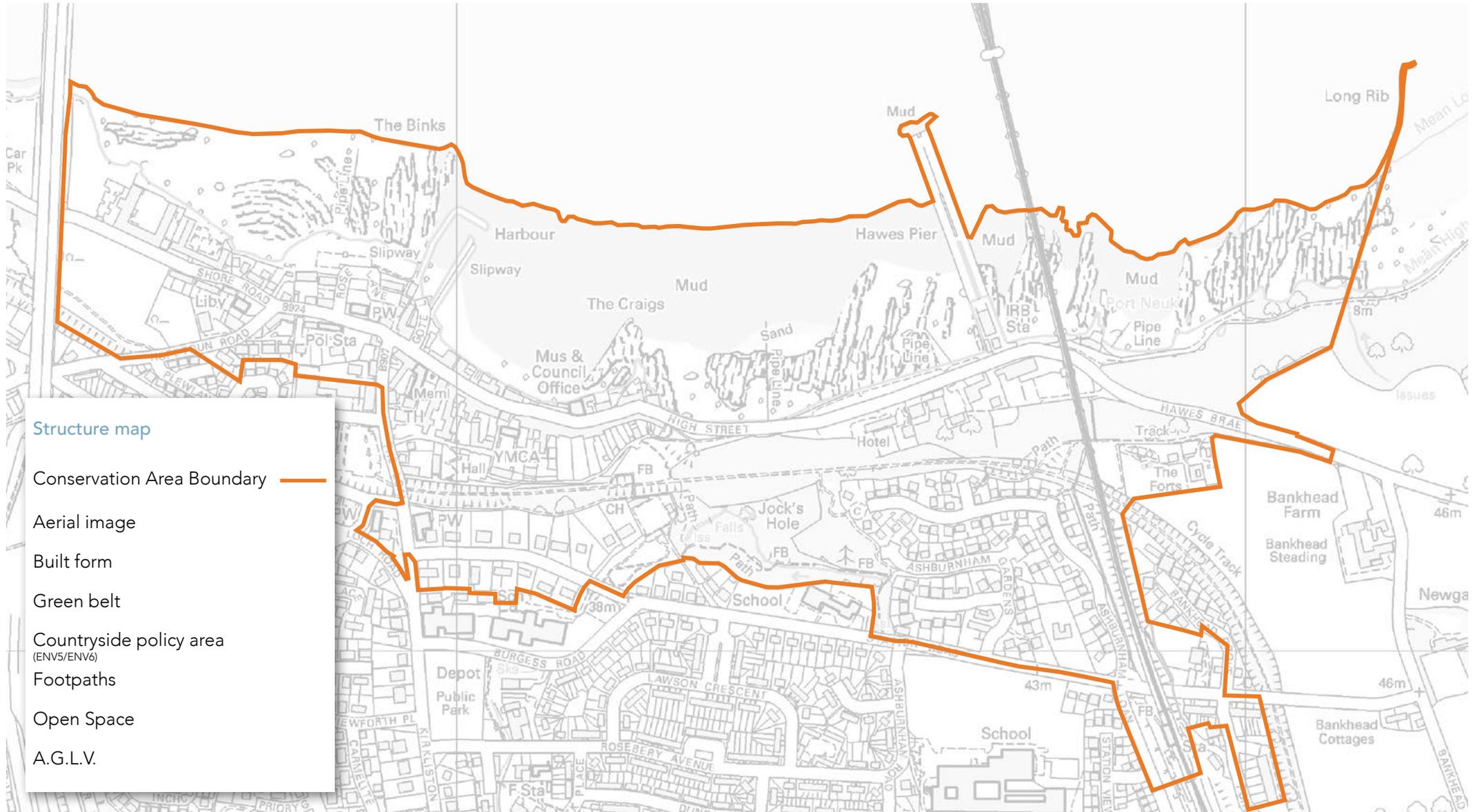
1854 map

1896 map

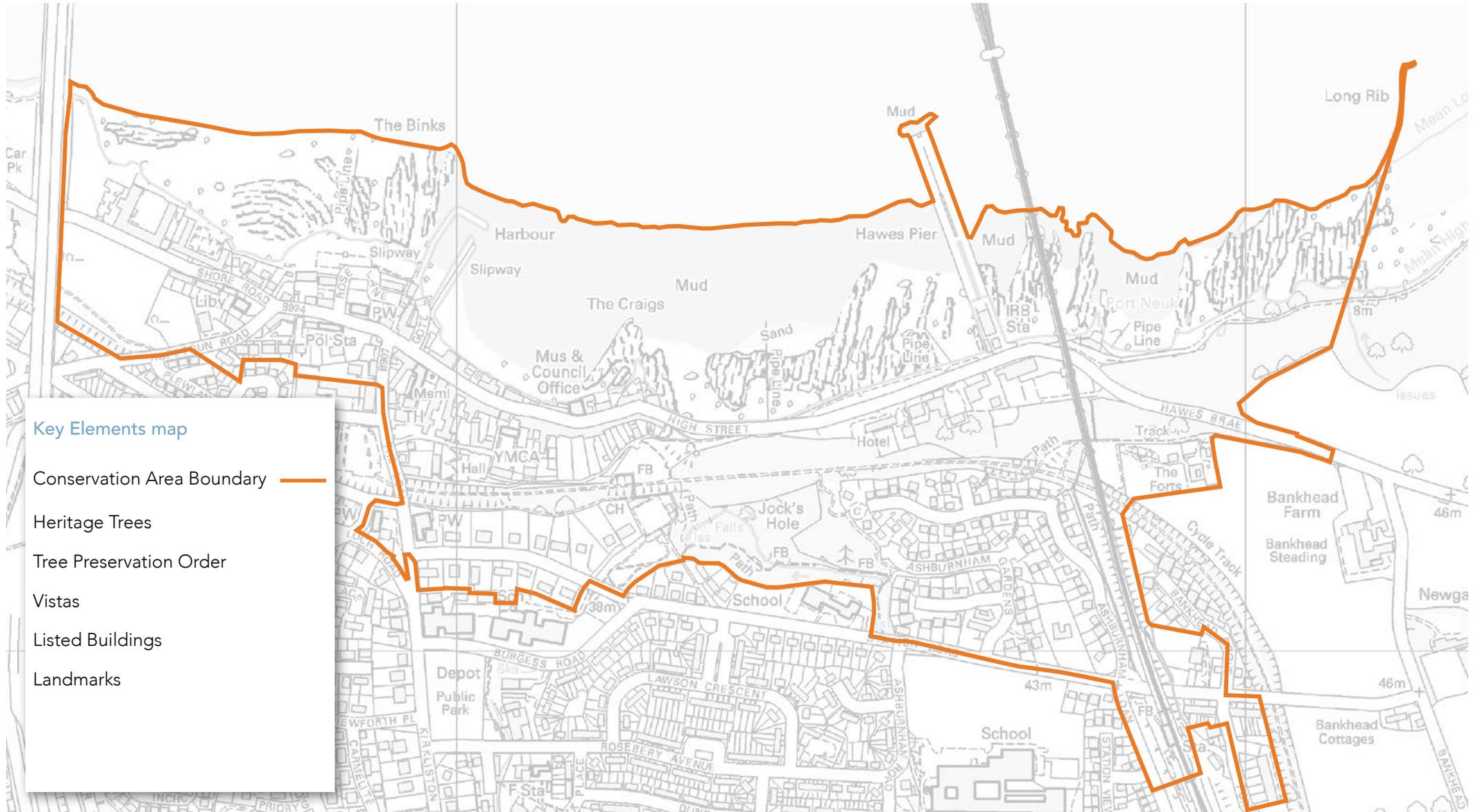
1915 map

1940 aerial

Queensferry
Conservation Area
Character Appraisal



Queensferry
Conservation Area
Character Appraisal



Key Elements map

- Conservation Area Boundary —
- Heritage Trees
- Tree Preservation Order
- Vistas
- Listed Buildings
- Landmarks

Summary information

Location and boundaries

Queensferry lies on the south shore of the Firth of Forth, around 13km west of the centre of Edinburgh. The nucleus of the conservation area is formed by the historic old town, and also includes Ravel Bank, the heavily wooded area of the Hawes, and an area of land east of the Forth Bridge known as Gallondean which all contribute to the landscape setting of the town.

The conservation area is bounded on the north by the City of Edinburgh Council boundary at the mean low water spring; on the west by the Forth Road Bridge; along the south by the southern line of the disused railway, Hopetoun Road and Station Road (excluding 19-33 Station Road and St. Margaret's Primary School). The boundary then includes Dalmeny Station and Rosshill Terrace before turning north and eastwards to a point on the shore known as Long Rib east of the Forth Bridge.

The area falls within Almond ward and is covered by the Queensferry and District Community Council. The population of Queensferry Conservation Area in 2011 was 937.

Dates of designation/amendments

The original Queensferry Conservation Area was designated on 13 October 1977. A conservation area character appraisal was completed in 2001. The boundary was amended in 2003 to include the villa area at Station Road and again in 2015 to include the group of dwellings around Rosshill Terrace and Forth Terrace, associated with the construction of the Forth Bridge.

Statement of significance

The architectural form and character of Queensferry is rich and varied with many fine historic buildings dating from its origins as a medieval burgh and following through several periods including Georgian and Victorian, to the present day. The materials are traditional: stone and harl, slate and pantiles, timber windows and doors. The roofscape is important with its variations in form and features, such as crow-step gables, a variety of dormer styles and chimneys with cans. The shoreline setting embraces the waterfront buildings and the historic settlement is framed within the Victorian rail bridge and the 1960s road bridge.

Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Acknowledgements

This document has been produced with the assistance of Queensferry and District Community Council; Queensferry Ambition; Queensferry History Group and Queensferry Trust.

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. www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/12/20450/49052

How to use this document

The analysis of Queensferry’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. **Management** outlines the policy and legislation relevant to decision-making in the area. Issues specific to Queensferry are discussed in more detail and recommendations or opportunities identified.

Historical origins and development

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

Origins

The settlement of Queensferry probably has prehistoric origins and owes its name and existence to the ferry passage across the Forth. Its Gaelic name, *cas chilis* or *cas chaolas* means a fast-running strait. The linear rock formations of the foreshore created natural landing points and were later enhanced with piers and harbours. Queen Margaret, wife of Malcolm III (Canmore), King of Scotland 1057-1093, endowed the ferry crossing with boats, hostels and a right of free passage for pilgrims travelling to St Andrews and Dunfermline Abbey. As a result the crossing became associated with her royal title. This association was strengthened by her own canonisation in 1250 and interment in Dunfermline.

A Carmelite Friary was established close to the ferry landing, possibly as early as 1330, and a church and monastery were built c.1450. At the Reformation the Carmelite church building became the parish church. This was abandoned when worship moved to the Vennel in 1635, and was then restored in 1889 to form the current Episcopal Church, known as the Priory Church. It is the only medieval Carmelite church still in use in the British Isles.

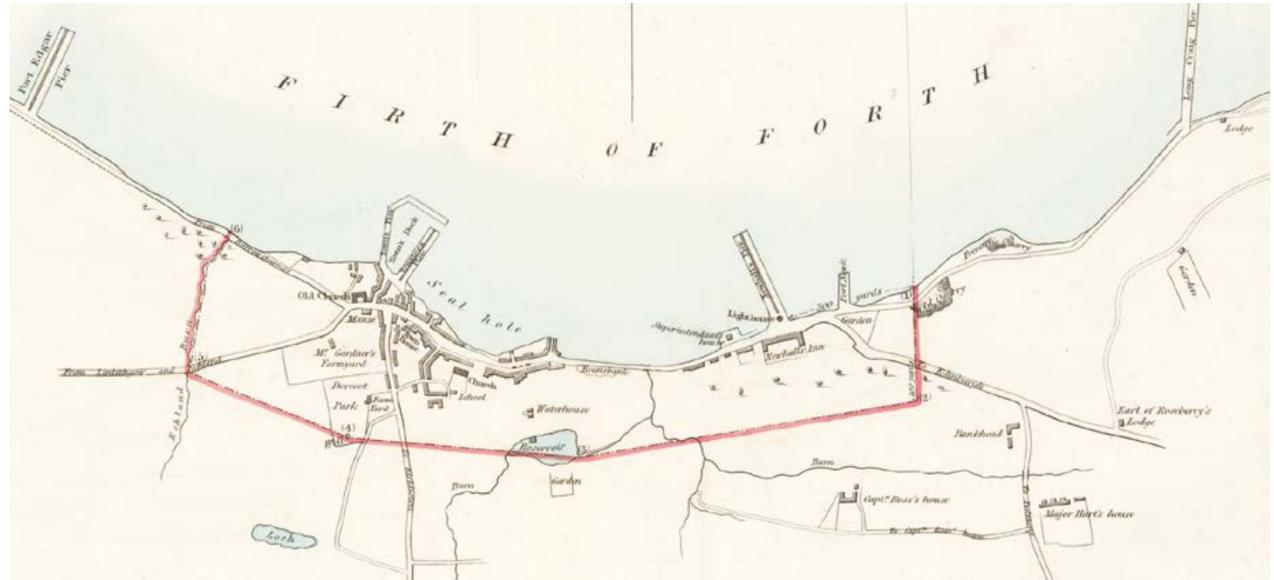
Growth and trade

By the early 14th century, Queensferry had emerged as one of four Burghs owing allegiance to Dunfermline Abbey and in 1576-7 was made into a 'Burgh of Regality', with certain privileges of trading and customs. By the 1630s, Queensferry had become a flourishing seafaring town and in 1636 it became a Royal Burgh. Its leading burgesses were captains and shipmasters whose vessels were chartered, often by Edinburgh merchants, to carry cargoes such as timber, salt, fish and wine to and from other parts of Britain, Europe and Scandinavia. Their prosperity is reflected in the number of 17th century buildings in the town and tombstones surviving in the Vennel kirkyard marked with ships, anchors and navigational instruments.

Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal



Queensferry c.1832

In the late 17th and 18th centuries the merchant fleet dwindled and the Burgh's revenues fell. Fishing and herring salting brought intermittent prosperity. 18th century turnpike roads and fast stagecoach services from 1765 brought more trade to the ferries and this resulted in demands for greater efficiency and better landings. During the latter half of the 18th century, innovations in agricultural methods began to change the face of the rural landscape. The former open field system gave away to an enclosed field system and many woodlands, tree belts and estate landscapes around the area such as the Dalmeny and Dundas Estates date from this period.

The hamlet of New Halls to the east of the original settlement developed a pier and inns catering for the crossing traffic. Its name evolved into Hawes and it was eventually amalgamated into the Royal Burgh. It later became the base for construction yards and workers' accommodation for the Forth Bridge.

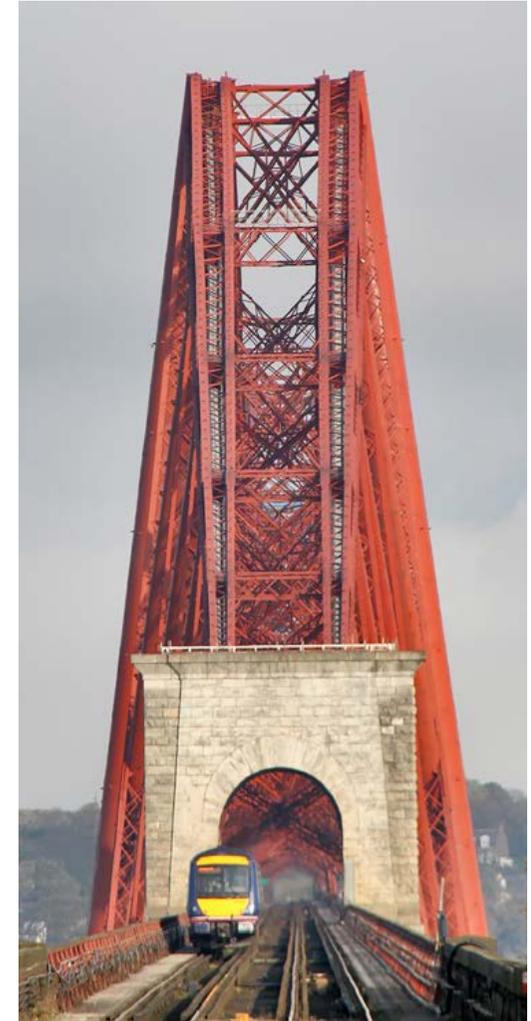
Crossing the Forth

An Act of Parliament in 1810 introduced a Board of Trustees to take control of the ferry service. The Trustees were empowered to build new piers, buy new boats and generally to improve the quality of service. It is recorded that during the year 1810-11, four large sailing boats and four smaller yawls carried 1,515 carriages, 4252 carts, 18,057 cattle and 25,151 sheep, plus an average of 228 passengers per day. Sailing ships were gradually replaced with steam vessels, however, rail ferry links via Granton and Leith had captured much of Queensferry's passenger trade by the mid 19th century. From 1878, a rail steamer service linked Edinburgh and Dunfermline via the Trustees pier at Port Edgar. This seems to have been used by local traffic and in 1890 the opening of the Forth Bridge made it redundant.

Bridges

Another brief but significant boom came in the 1880s and 90s, with the construction of a rail bridge by the Forth Bridge Railway Company. The workforce of 4,600 men and tourists who came to see the work in progress brought trade and prosperity to the town. Workers and engineers employed on the Forth Bridge were accommodated in purpose built housing adjacent to the construction yard, at Rosshill Terrace, Forth Terrace and Forthview.

A report on possible routes for a road bridge was commissioned in 1929, but plans were not approved until 1947, with the bridge opening in 1964. The arrival of the Road Bridge brought an end to the car ferry passage at Queensferry. In 2011 construction began on a third bridge, to the west of the Road Bridge and intended to relieve pressure on it, to be named the Queensferry Crossing.



Twentieth and twenty-first centuries

The naval base at Port Edgar, commissioned in 1917, a distillery and the shale oil works at Dalmeny benefited the town during the 20th century. Beyond the Burgh boundaries, the surrounding landed estates provided a steady source of trade and employment. The 1975 Local Government (Scotland) Act reorganised local authority boundaries and Queensferry's status as a Royal Burgh was removed. Electronics, tourism and the Hound Point tank farm and oil-loading facility have been more recent sources of employment for the area.



Summary

The medieval core of the Queensferry Conservation Area, with its rigg development pattern, remains fairly intact. Alternating periods of modest prosperity and gentle decay have left a richly varied townscape spanning five centuries. As a result, significant evidence of each phase of the town's history can still be read in the street pattern and buildings surviving today.



Special Characteristics - Structure

Queensferry
Conservation Area
Character Appraisal

Topography and Setting _____ Views _____ Development Pattern _____

Unique setting framed by the Forth, steep rising landscape, the Forth Bridge and Forth Road Bridge.

Open views down from the bridges onto the picturesque roofscape.

Bridges form gateways at east and west ends of town.

Grain and Density _____ Streets _____ Spaces _____

Sculptural, multi-level townscape form.

Dense medieval core in a linear pattern with riggs running north and south.

Woodland and open space surround the core of the town to south and east.

Special Characteristics - Structure

Topography

Queensferry is located at one of the narrowest points of the Forth estuary before it broadens out eastwards to the sea, explaining its long history as the preferred crossing point. The early part of the town is located on the shoreline, at the foot of a steeply sloping bank and within a bay formed by two promontories, the Binks to the west and the Craigs to the east. The historic core is therefore set back from the Forth within a natural harbour and shelter. From Victorian times the town expanded at the top of the slope, first along the main access roads and more recently along the north bank in a semicircle around the old town.

Setting

The historic core of Queensferry is bounded by areas of woodland extending from the Gallondean/Hawes Brae in the east, through Jock's Hole and Back Braes to the former railway lands between Hopetoun Road and Shore Road. These areas have a high amenity and biodiversity value to the town and are included within the conservation area boundary.

The conservation area as a whole is bounded by twentieth century residential areas to the south and west and by the Forth Road Bridge and Port Edgar to the west. To the east and in its wider setting the protected gardens and designed landscapes of the Dalmeny, Dundas and Hopetoun estates add to the area's historic character. The historic estate village of Dalmeny to the south-east is designated as a separate conservation area. To the north, most of the coastline and islands of the Forth are protected by national and international designations covering important habitats, species and geology.



Queensferry Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Special Characteristics - Structure

Views

Views of the Firth of Forth and Forth Bridge originating in Edinburgh city centre are defined by the Council's Skyline Study. Prominent development within and around Queensferry would potentially impact in the fore- and middle ground of several key views. A similar system of viewpoints and associated policies is being developed to support the protection of the setting of the Forth Bridge.

In more local views, the sheltering topography of Queensferry means that its historic core is only visible in longer views from its piers and on the water. Views down from the rail and road bridges and from pathways at the upper levels of Back Braes and Ravel Bank provide panoramas of the town's picturesque roofscape against the backdrop of the Firth.

Within the conservation area, mid- and short-range views are important along the gently curving High Street and out towards the Forth, the Fife coast and the bridges through gaps in the northern building line and from the Hawes Promenade. Glimpse views along pends and narrow lanes, of the harbours and Forth to the north and gardens to the south, add to the picturesque qualities of the townscape.



Special Characteristics - Structure

Development pattern

Topography dictated the earliest development of the town within a restricted strip between the harbour and the southern escarpment. Development along the High Street follows a linear pattern and reflects the curve of the bay. The gentle curve in the street is emphasised especially on its south side by raised pavements. The building line forms an unbroken terrace wall, but widens and narrows in places such as the Black Castle. To the south, the narrow rigg ownership pattern radiates back from the High Street up the banks towards the former railway line.

On the north or seaward side, development largely fronts the High Street, turning its back to the harbour. There are a few survivals of L-shaped buildings with gables facing the coastline, typical of Scottish fishing villages. The building line is interrupted by wider breaks giving an awareness of the lower plane of the beach. These different levels following the coastline give the High Street a strong sculptural character. This multi-layered effect is continued with the spectacular separation in height between the rail or road deck levels of the bridges and the streets below. This gives a sense of calm isolation to the town, protected from the high-speed traffic flying past above.

The three road approaches on the landward side of the conservation area follow the historic routes connecting the town with Linlithgow, Kirkliston and Edinburgh. The road bridge at the west and the rail bridge in the east act as gateways and provide a sense of arrival. Seals Craig creates a kink in the line of the road and forms an inner gateway and shelter to the High Street. The parish church and manse, and St. Margaret's Church on either side of the top of the Loan (Kirkliston Road) also function as a gateway.

The Hawes and the developments along Station Road are notable for their physical separation and contrasting character from the High Street. Their separation from the historic core allows the woodland to almost reach the water's edge, provides amenity and acts as a visual break between these areas of different character.

The former Forth Bridge Railway Company housing towards the east end of Station Road has a distinct character, closely defined by the two adjacent rail routes and Dalmeny Station. Victorian villa development at the west end of Station Road created a generous suburban layout with wide streets and large plots. Station Road forms an interesting approach and edge to the conservation area, with contrasts between modern development, historic houses and railway infrastructure, large expanses of open space and mature treescapes.



Queensferry Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Special Characteristics - Structure

Grain and density

Density of development within the historic core is high, consistent with its constricted site and the relatively crowded character of medieval urban development. The solid building line conceals the open spaces of rear plots from the High Street except in glimpse views. Some of these riggs are divided into small garden courts, while others still retain early development, creating intimate groupings of small-scale spaces, buildings and narrow access ways. This is particularly evident on those plots that back on to Hawthornbank.

The Hawes is of a much lower density, with large Edwardian villas facing the spectacular view. Many of these have been converted to hotels, cafés and gift shops catering for visitors. Kirkliston Road, Station Road and Stewart Terrace have a strongly coherent pattern of well-spaced, detached villas set in generous, rectangular plots. These villa plots stand out from both the narrower but often longer plots of the historic core and from the smaller and denser pattern of later 20th century suburban development. The Forth Bridge Railway Company housing around Rosshill Terrace consists of three terraces of modest cottages with long strip gardens, plus a pair of larger villas.

Streets

The sinuous curve of the High Street is reflected by its street surfacing and the alignment of pavements, terraces, railings and building frontages. Vertical circulation, formed by steps, closes and wynds, connects the various levels of beach, High Street, terraces, gardens and upper brae beyond. Station Road and the pedestrian links leading from it are important in connecting Dalmeny Station both with the High Street and the wider suburbs to the south.

20th century traffic engineering altered the townscape at the west end of the High Street, isolating Hopetoun Road from the main town centre and creating an artificial gateway at the Bell Stane.



Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Special Characteristics - Structure

Spaces

Queensferry has an abundance of open space with a variety of roles and characteristics. Private open space of gardens and courtyards play a significant role, softening the density and hard frontages of the historic core and providing visual relief and glimpse views.

Urban, public open space is less prominent but there are examples of small squares and formal gardens such as the garden around the Provost's drinking fountain next to Rosebery Hall, and the square opening onto the beach access steps between Mid and West Terrace. The Hawes esplanade is the most significant example of this type of space. Its value as amenity space is eroded by the visual dominance of parking alongside it. A small public park and bowling green are located within the conservation area, just off Station Road, as well as a playspace to the south of Forth Terrace. The beaches, harbours and piers provide distinctive spaces within the town and spectacular, panoramic viewpoints.

Woodland and landscape amenity space are critical to the character of Queensferry, enclosing the historic core and providing visual breaks between contrasting areas.



Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Special Characteristics - Key elements

Queensferry
Conservation Area
Character Appraisal

Scale_____ Building Types and Styles_____ Landmarks_____

Overall unity created by regular scale and proportions.

Buildings dating from 17th to mid-20th century reflecting gradual evolution.

The bridges are the dominant landmarks in long range views; local landmarks are more evident from within the High Street.

Materials and Details_____ Trees and Gardens_____ Streetscape and Activity_____

Restricted palette of materials given variety through differing treatments and architectural styles.

Gardens preserve historic rigg features.

Good quality historic and more recent streetscape and boundary features.

Special Characteristics - Key elements

Scale

Buildings are mainly 2 to 3½ storeys in height. Narrow frontages set up a rhythm along the street, and vertical planes are emphasised by the subtle variation of heights which expose parts of gables. The continuity of frontages and narrow proportions of the street create a strong sense of enclosure. The buildings are also relatively shallow in depth. This results in regular contrasts of enclosure to openness, revealed in views down narrow wynds and low close entrances.



Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Special Characteristics - Key elements

Building types and styles

The earliest surviving secular buildings are the merchants' houses of the 17th century, such as Plewlands House and the Black Castle. These are characterised by an L-plan form of main range and projecting jamb, steeply-pitched roofs with straight or crowstepped skews, small windows and, occasionally, surviving forestairs. Elements of buildings of this period are likely to survive elsewhere, disguised by later alterations and additions.

Georgian and early Victorian buildings predominate within the historic core and provide its underlying coherence through the largely continuous building line, the uniformity of building type, similar heights, narrow frontages, solid to void relationships and window sizes. It is difficult to distinguish which buildings are flatted, except possibly over shops, and those which are town houses.

Later insertions into the High Street largely conform to the earlier pattern of scale, building line and materials but add variety of style and decoration. These include the Baronial Clydesdale Bank at 35 High Street, and the Rosebery Memorial Hall built in the Scots Renaissance style in 1894. The Council offices and museum at 53 High Street form an eye-catching, white-harled block with some Arts and Crafts features. The municipal housing at Hill Court, built in 1964, forms an

L-plan at the corner of the High Street and The Loan. This is an interesting example of architecture of its date, and relates to the contemporary regeneration of historic fishing communities in Fife such as Dysart and Burntisland. However its siting and mass disrupt the strong historic pattern around it.

The Hawes and Station Road villa areas share some characteristics, being large dwellings set back from the road frontage in generous grounds. Apart from the Hawes Inn these buildings date from the Victorian and Edwardian expansions of the town. Station Road villas are relatively uniform in layout, scale and character, generally having formal, symmetrical front elevations, pitched roofs, large plate-glass sash and case windows and tall stacks. Tudor-inspired multi-gable forms also feature. The Hawes villas are more varied with no predominant style, although all have been heavily altered and extended reflecting their change from original domestic use to hotels, public houses and restaurants.

The Forth Bridge development around Rosshill Terrace consists of three rows of cottages and a pair of villas. Forth Terrace is unusual in that it has no conventional front elevation. This may indicate that amenities like kitchens and bathrooms were added after the initial purpose was over with completion of the bridge, as the workforce had a communal dining hall.



Special Characteristics - Key elements

Landmarks

The Forth Bridge and Forth Road Bridge are the outstanding landmarks, dominating the town and the wider area with their sheer scale and presence. However, the bridges are often hidden from view within the enclosure of the High Street, allowing local landmarks to become more evident. These include the Tolbooth steeple, the Seals Craig Hotel and the spire of the parish church, viewed on the skyline from the north.

Materials and details

A significant level of uniformity is achieved from the use of local building materials, despite the considerable range of building styles. The predominant materials form a restricted palette of rubble and dressed sandstone, render and slate roofing. The variety of treatment provides interest with decorative tooling and carved stonework, often reflecting maritime connections, pediments, doorframes and marriage lintels, dressed or rendered margin bands, chamfered corners, gable windows and crowsteps, cast iron signs and railings.

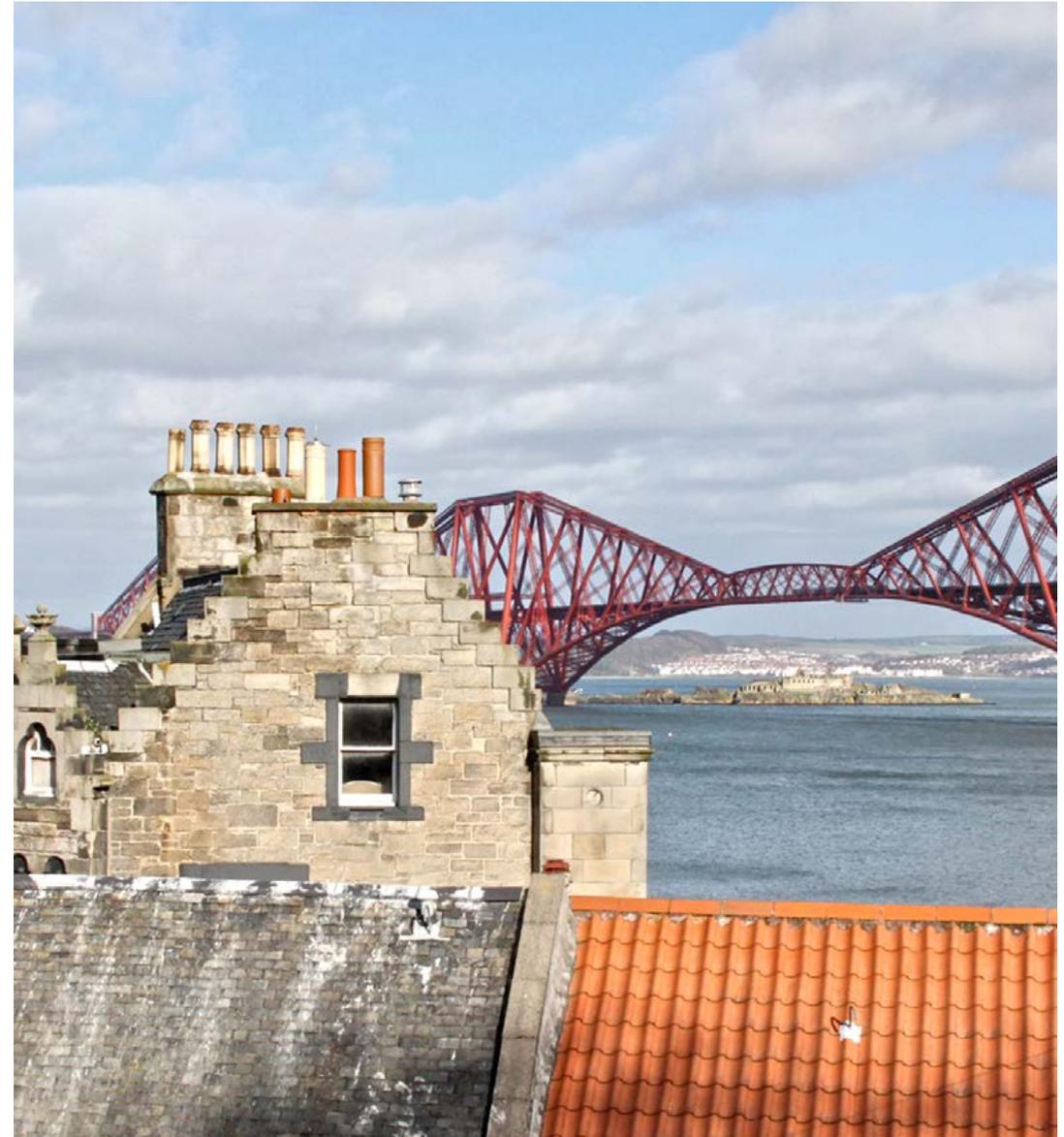
The later villas are built in a more sombre and formal dressed stone and with more intricate and decorative detailing of entrances, bay windows, dormers and front gables projecting out on exposed decorative trusses. There are also examples in the Arts and Crafts style with white render, painted timberwork and complex roof forms.

The historic buildings in the Rosshill Terrace area contrast with most of the conservation area, constructed in a palette of brick with shallow slate roofs, tripartite windows with narrow margin lights, arched detailing to ground floor openings and paired, recessed porches. Forth Terrace has undergone more significant change but retains its unusual mansard roof form with raised party walls. Although some detail and materials have been eroded, such as by painting or replacement of roof materials, the overall impression remains of an intact grouping from a single historic phase of development, with regular massing and rhythm.

Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal



Special Characteristics - Key elements

Trees and gardens

Gardens and landscapes are a dominant feature of the conservation area, both private gardens and publicly-accessible green spaces. The garden ground relating to the High Street preserves the historic rigg pattern of the medieval burgh. The managed, domestic scale and character of these spaces, along with the profusion of ornamental species, provide a rich green environment.

The large plots of the villa areas have a more open character with formal garden landscaping with prominent individual mature trees and hedges. The former gardens of large houses in Station Road, such as Rosshill and Ashburnham House, have been developed for housing but preserve some of their trees and boundary features.

These areas contrast with the informal, semi-wild planting and sinuous pathways of the Ferry Glen and Back Braes. The profusion of trees at various stages of maturity, along with the rich biodiversity they support, are important for their extent and cumulative effect rather than any single specimen or specific area.



Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Special Characteristics - Key elements

Streetscape

The raised terraces of the High Street, providing pedestrian access across the roofs of ground-floor shops to terraced entrances above, are one of the outstanding streetscape features of Queensferry. Natural stone treads, paving, setts and cast iron railings survive along their length, although in poor condition in places. Examples of modern ironwork along the High Street have also added to the quality of detail in this area.

The majority of the traditional, natural stone finishes of the High Street are the result of streetscape enhancement works of the 1990s. However, the general design and material palette reflect the historic character of the street and respond to its distinctive features. Footway and carriageway surfaces elsewhere are generally in modern finishes.

In the Hawes and villa areas, property boundaries are generally formed by rubble walls – dwarf walls with hedges and gate piers in the villa area, and more substantial, high walls at the Hawes and Edinburgh Road. Stubs of traditional railings removed for the war effort occasionally remain. Relatively low, timber picket-style fences predominate in the Roshill Terrace area. The Hawes waterfront is bounded by 1930s esplanade railings, adding to its distinctive, seaside air.

Activity

Queensferry is the largest settlement in rural west Edinburgh with four primary schools, a high school, library, churches, community centres, a leisure centre, museum, police station, health and welfare services. The High Street retains a variety of shops, bars and restaurants although most residents' convenience shopping is done in the larger supermarkets outwith the historic core of the town.

This sense of activity along the High Street contrasts with the peace and quiet of the villa area on the ridge above. The high ground behind the High Street to the south is used for informal recreation such as dog walking, walking and running. The Gallondean to the west has a coastal path linking with Cramond.



Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Visitors are a major factor in the town's activity, drawn by views of the bridges and access to the water. The Hawes Pier is used by boat trippers to the islands in the Forth and the harbour is used for private boat moorings. The Firth of Forth is one of Scotland's busiest commercial shipping channels and performs a key role in Scotland's economy given its link as major export location for Scotland's oil and gas. It is also a destination for Cruise liners which berth in the Firth and ferry passengers to Hawes Pier. In addition, a range of watersport activities take place within it. Dalmeny Tank Farm is situated in the Firth of Forth and linked by a pipeline to the tanker terminal at Hound Point. The works depot and yards adjacent to Dalmeny Station remain the main hub of activity for maintenance of the Forth Bridge.

Management - 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 Queensferry 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 Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan (RWELP) sets out policies and proposals for the development and use of land in and around Queensferry. The policies in the Plan are used to determine applications for development. In broad summary, the key policy areas affecting Queensferry Conservation Area are:

- The Coastline E12, E13

- Designed Landscapes E14
- Trees and Woodland E15, E16
- Nature conservation and biodiversity E17-E22
- Archaeology E29-E31
- Historic buildings E32-E34
- Conservation areas E35-E40
- Design of new development E41-E44
- Open space E51-E52
- Economic development and tourism ED2, ED11
- Transport TRA5-TRA7
- Retailing R1-R3, R5

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

Planning guidance

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

- Guidance for Householders
- Guidance for Businesses

Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

- 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. Queensferry 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
- 18 The carrying out on agricultural land in an agricultural unit of works for the erection, extension or alteration of a building; the formation, alteration or maintenance of private ways; or any excavation or engineering operations, for the purposes of agriculture.
- 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

Trees (elements key)

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. One Tree Preservation Order applies within the conservation area, off Station Road between Ashburnham Gardens and St Mary's RC Primary School.

Vegetation management to protect and restore important viewpoints of the Forth Bridge is listed as an action in the Forth Bridge Management Plan. Trees in the city contains a set of policies with an action plan used to guide the management of the Council's trees and woodlands.

Landscape and Biodiversity (structure map)

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 rich wooded landscapes, open spaces and foreshore of the conservation area give it a high amenity and biodiversity value. The conservation area boundary overlaps with the local biodiversity sites of Hopetoun Road, Dalmeny Estate and the Newbridge to South Queensferry Walkway. The Gallondean forms part of the Leuchold Wood ancient woodland.

The Firth of Forth is protected by a range of local, national and international landscape and environmental designations including a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the Firth of Forth Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site. In accordance with the Habitat Regulation any development affecting the Firth of Forth SPA may be subject to a Habitats Regulations Appraisal (HRA) to determine that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the site.

Three historic landscapes included in the national Inventory of Gardens and Designed

Landscapes surround Queensferry Conservation Area: Dalmeny, Dundas Castle and Hopetoun House. The wider coastal landscape including the Cramond coast, Lauriston policies, Dalmeny policies and Queensferry waterfront, forms the Southern Forth Coast Special Landscape Area (SLA).

Archaeology

Queensferry has been continuously inhabited for in excess of 1000 years. Its current townscape contains surviving elements from at least 700 years and there may be evidence of earlier occupation surviving below existing structures or landscapes. Canmore notes various discoveries of bones, funeral urns, etc in Queensferry and its immediate neighbourhood. Several cists, with skeletons and other remains of interment were reported found during railway construction from the 1850s and onwards.

The area may contain the remains of a wide range of historic sites and uses including the Carmelite friary complex, medieval (and later) ferry landings and facilities for pilgrims and travellers, maritime industries, activities associated with the rig system, post-medieval land-based industries such as brewing and distilling, shale oil extraction, quarry sites, railway infrastructure and sites

associated with the construction of the rail and road bridges. Marine archaeology is also present along the foreshore.

Remains of these structures may survive below existing development, although the extent of their survival is currently unknown due to the lack of modern archaeological investigations in the area. 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 Queensferry Conservation Area.

Management - Pressures and sensitivities

In contrast with many conservation areas, the main pressures in Queensferry Conservation Area are not principally a result of private development but relate to infrastructure and the public realm. Their central role in the character and appearance of the conservation area makes all of the following issues key opportunities for enhancement.

Many of these issues are longstanding in origin, and solutions must involve community engagement and creative collaboration between multiple agencies. Community-led efforts to resolve some of these are already underway. The recommendations made below assume the historic environment is used as the starting point for creative decisions.

Historic streetscapes

Queensferry has a rich legacy of historic ironwork, complemented by high quality modern examples. The raised terraces unique to Queensferry are deteriorating in places, risking the loss of quality and special character of the High Street. The vennels leading north and south from the High Street are also at risk from privatisation of access, blocking of glimpse views and pedestrian routes, and erosion of traditional surfacing materials.

Recommendation: Historic surfacing materials, ironwork and detailing should always be retained and repaired where they survive. Lost features should be reinstated where there is evidence. Training and education in specification and maintenance of appropriate materials would assist in protecting these features in the longer term.

Development of riggs and gardens

The secluded green spaces of the historic riggs are a key amenity for the conservation area. Development of gardens and backland spaces has the potential to impact significantly on the area's special character, landscape quality and biodiversity. Archaeological remains may also be impacted by development.

Recommendation: The character, density and pattern of the context must be respected in any development proposal. Standing remains should be recorded and understood before proposals are developed. Where development is acceptable in principle it should be deferential in scale, appropriate in its use and enhance the distinctive character of the space.



Management - Pressures and sensitivities

Pedestrian connectivity

As a result of topography, maintenance and some 20th century traffic management decisions, disparate areas of the town centre have become isolated from each other. Access difficulties particularly affect vulnerable age groups, those with mobility problems, and visitors with no prior knowledge and in need of orientation. This reduces the attractiveness, vibrancy and active economic use of the historic town centre, which in the long term threatens its economic health and the protection of its character.

Recommendation: Historic routes and connections should provide the basis for enhancements to connectivity. Historic features can help to re-join fractured areas of the town and provide an appropriate context for new development. Sensitive traffic engineering and wayfinding should redress the balance between vehicular and pedestrian users, in conjunction with other infrastructure improvements such as parking.

Traffic management and parking

Existing pressures from visitors, residents and workers, along with projected increases in visitors as a result of enhanced interest in the Bridges, create serious pressures on existing traffic routes and parking areas.

Recommendation: The historic character of the town is a key amenity for all users of the town. Potential solutions for roads and parking must therefore respect the character of the conservation area. A variety of solutions are likely to be necessary, including investigating new, peripheral parking areas, incorporating environmental enhancements into new or redesigned central parking areas and removing pressure from vehicular traffic by investigating alternative, sustainable transport methods where possible.

Shoreline, piers and harbours

The approach to Queensferry from the Forth was historically of central importance but this aspect of its character has been diminished since the loss of the ferries and fishing trade. Greater appreciation of the town from the water, piers and shoreline could create additional viewpoints as draws for visitors and generate interest in fuller, more productive, income-generating use of these facilities. The treatment of

waterfront facades is also of key importance in protecting the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Recommendation: Proposals to develop and regenerate waterfront features should protect and repair historic fabric, and reinstate lost features where there is evidence for them. The historic character of these areas should be emphasised in proposals for change of use or development. The outstanding landscape and natural environment significance of these spaces will also be a critical consideration.



Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal

Management - Opportunities for development

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

Development on a significant scale is unlikely to take place within the conservation area although a number of sites on its peripheries may be affected, such as Port Edgar, the Corus site adjacent to the Forth Bridges Contact and Information Centre and at the wider edges of the settlement, particularly when the Queensferry Crossing comes into use. In most instances development is unlikely to have a significant visual impact on the setting of the conservation area or the Bridges owing to the topography, domestic scale and intervening development. However, proposals will be monitored to ensure the sensitivities of these features are taken into account. View protection (discussed below) also has a role to play in this issue.

A development brief has been produced for Port Edgar.

Management - Opportunities for planning action

The Forth Bridge as a potential World Heritage Site

World Heritage Sites are places of outstanding universal value for their cultural, natural or combined qualities inscribed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) under the World Heritage Convention. There are currently five World Heritage Sites located in Scotland.

The UK Tentative List of potential world heritage sites was reviewed in 2010/11. The Forth Bridge was included in the shortlist of eleven candidate sites, and was subsequently chosen as the first site from that list to be submitted to UNESCO for consideration. An intensive period of research and consultation resulted in a nomination dossier being submitted in January 2014.

The nomination document makes the justification for the site's inscription, based on the criteria set out by UNESCO, includes a description of the site, details on the existing protection and management of the site, its state of conservation, and information on known threats and potential opportunities. This will undergo a demanding 18-month process of scrutiny and evaluation by UNESCO and its advisory body ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites). The earliest possible date for a decision will be at the

meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in the summer of 2015.

Statutory designations surrounding the bridge, particularly those covering the bridgehead communities of North and South Queensferry, will be the principal means of protecting the outstanding universal value of the Bridge and its setting.

This document aims to demonstrate the safeguards given by the planning authority to the setting of the bridge. It also offers a means for communicating local community support and interest in its historic environment.



Queensferry Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Management - Opportunities for planning action

Conservation area boundaries

The boundaries have been re-examined through the appraisal process. Suggestions were considered for various changes, both to include wider areas (such as Port Edgar, the wider suburbs of the town or the historic Bridge construction yard and workers cottages at Forth Terrace) and to reduce its size (for example by removing modern development along Station Road).

The current extent of the boundary, adopted in 2003, was carefully considered in order to encompass the most distinctive architectural and historic features of the settlement, and to include a suitable belt of the wooded landscape surrounding the core of the town. This is considered to provide a zone of suitable breadth and quality to protect both the historic town core and the immediate setting of the Bridges. Reductions in its extent are not considered appropriate.

Most of the suggested areas of expansion are not considered to meet the criteria of being of special architectural or historic merit. Port Edgar however is considered to be of interest in its own right. Its national significance as a naval base, and the evidence for that history remaining in situ in the form of historic buildings, spaces, street layout, piers etc. potentially meet the criteria for selection and would merit further research.

However, its character contrasts with that of the main town of Queensferry and it is not considered appropriate as an extension of Queensferry Conservation Area. The majority of its significant structures are already protected by listing and the planning brief above sets out the key considerations for its potential future development. The merits of designating this area as a separate conservation area will be considered further as plans for its development evolve.

The area of the historic Forth Bridge construction yard and workers' cottages at Forth Terrace and Rosshill Terrace, east of Dalmeny station, is also considered to potentially meet the criteria for designation. The three terraces of cottages to the south of Station Road and the area including Forthview West and East to the north are surviving evidence of the construction and development of the Forth Bridge and its impact on the development of the town. They form an interesting grouping of buildings and gardens, related to the existing railway line, the station and the disused line to the west now used as a footpath and cycleway. They are not protected by listing and may be at risk from uncontrolled demolition or erosion of character. However some degree of unsympathetic alteration and infill development has already occurred.

It is recommended that the merits of expanding the boundary to include the Rosshill Terrace area are investigated further, including consultation with owners, the wider community and other interested groups.



View protection framework

Historic Scotland has carried out a study of key viewpoints and viewsheds around the Forth Bridge. This will help assess the impact of development proposals and inform its nomination as a World Heritage Site. The key viewpoints identified in the nomination document are a material planning consideration. If the nomination is successful, the merits of adopting a formal view protection system, complementing that already in place for the neighbouring Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site, will be considered.

Queensferry Conservation Area Character Appraisal

Management - Opportunities for enhancement

The pressures and sensitivities listed on page 26 are considered the key opportunities for enhancement of the conservation area. Solutions, or improvements, to these issues would make a significant difference to the quality and vitality of the historic environment in the town. Quality of life would be enhanced for residents and other users, and the visitor experience would be improved.



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Queensferry and District Community Council



Queensferry

Conservation Area

Character Appraisal



Queensferry Conservation Area Character Appraisal

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