

Quality And Character Of The Grange Conservation Area

LOCALITY: BLACKFORD ROAD

Particular Characteristics To Be Safeguarded

- 1 Distinctive grain and rhythm arising from original plot widths and house style together with the subsequent infilling of free-standing single houses
- 2 The street and treescape and cars accommodated off street
- 3 Rear green envelope of private gardens retaining original scale and privacy
- 4 Low density single house character at the west end

History

Currently there are 16 dwellings on the north side of Blackford Road and 24 on the south side; 13 are conversions into flats.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1855 does not show the road.

By 1861 (Lancefield) all the houses on the north side and three at the south west end had been built; leaving however a large unbuilt frontage between numbers 4 and 6, of some 210 feet, which remains to this day.

The 1886 Bartholomew map shows the development on the south side completed with large individual houses, one of which (no 11, now nos. 23 - 27) having an extensive garden frontage on to the road of 380 feet.

General Character

Between the turn of the century and 1950 no further development took place and the character was established: on the north side with generous frontages with a screen of mature trees between them and the road; on the south side, where the ground sloped away from the road, less continuous building, several of the unbuilt frontages being the back gardens to the very large villas on Whitehouse Terrace. These villas were well set back from the road with very long front gardens and therefore come unusually close to the buildings on the south of Blackford Road.

In the last thirty years five individual houses have been built on the vacant frontages, two of them of considerable size. This has not spoilt the character of the street scene, rather it has reinforced it by the unobtrusive siting and

appropriate scale.

Further development of this nature would be in character.

No. 35-39 is B listed and was designed by Sir George Washington Browne (1853-1939) for his own use. The house is interesting in that the aspect to the road, facing north, is somewhat harsh with few windows, while those facing the garden on the south are generous and more attractive. This was a well considered response to the site and it contributes to the character of the street whereby the south facing houses on the north side appear more attractive.

The other substantial houses on the south side were designed to sit on large plots ("Dunedin", no. 23-25, used to own almost 50% of the frontage) and the current situation of the majority of the new build being substantially lower continues this theme.

The large new property a no 17 picks up the rhythm of large and small: the house is also similar to 35-39 in its street elevation having small though interesting windows, while to the south and west it has large expansive windows.

No 15 was originally the stables to "Harlaw" (now SNH Office in Hope Terrace) while Thistle Cottage (no 29) was the coach house and gardener's cottage for 23-25.

A further element contributing to the character of the street is the array of mature trees, overhanging the street itself, in front and rear gardens and alongside properties. The trees are mixed: forest and deciduous, large conifers, monkey puzzle and black pine and walnut, with smaller scale flowering, decorative and fruit trees. The gazetteer in "Trees in the Grange" lists eight major species as visible from the road.

Overall the character of the street arises from the particular mix of Victorian villas and post-1950s two storey houses. Any further development or redevelopment should retain this character, and this can only be achieved by continuing the two storey individual house scale that has been adopted to date.

In a letter, P/PP AILAI917 of 1.11.94, the Reporter considered an appeal against refusal of an application to join the house at no. 19 with its adjacent garage. In dismissing the appeal the Reporter commented "When seen in the context of the large dwelling at no. 17, it results in uncharacteristic overdevelopment of this part of Blackford Road. I am unable to say that the proposal either preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the conservation area. I believe that its effect would be harmful."