

Quality And Character Of The Grange Conservation Area

LOCALITY: MORTONHALL ROAD

1 Status

1.1 Both parts of the road are within the Grange Conservation Area.

1.2 The following houses are listed as being of architectural or historic interest

Category A 31 - 35 Mortonhall Road

Category B 4, 8, 20, 23, 24 Mortonhall Road

2 Particular Characteristics To Be Safeguarded

2.1 The following are selected as the special architectural and visual qualities of the area, to be identified in accordance with the Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (Local Plan Policies CD 4,5, 11)

2.2 Open, low density villa development and, in this road, visually almost unchanged since construction (Local Plan Policy CD16)

2.3 Generously scaled family houses with good (classic) proportions, varying in form but all of considerable quality. Alterations to form additional flats by internal subdivision have been modest and in character. At east end, corner houses as in Blackford Avenue.

2.4 Individual gardens at right angles to road with well defined boundaries, generally stone walls, accentuated by planting and substantial mature trees.

2.5 Materials consistent with almost exclusive existing use of natural stone and slate (Local Plan Policy CD17)

2.6 Open view south from road to Blackford Hill (and foreground view of the Grange from Blackford Hill). The ground recently used as allotments was purchased by original villa owners to prevent development and preserve this view. It is the only open space in the Grange apart from the Cemetery and the Calton cricket ground.

2.7 Until the introduction of an end-of-route bus loop, and of traffic calming measures in adjoining streets, a quiet and safe residential road.

3 General Character

3.1 Typical of the Grange generally: predominantly late Victorian detached villas in well defined gardens, with a few semi-detached houses and the end of a terrace at the busier end (Blackford Avenue); a variety of fine mature trees; a mix of active residents of all ages.

3.2 A more local characteristic is lower garden/pavement boundaries and use of cast iron railings (many now gone).

3.3 The open view over steeply falling ground to the burn, the railway and Blackford Hill is unique. The row of poplar trees framing this view is a significant element in the street scene at present; but it was only planted in the late 1950s and is already past its best. Appropriate replacement should be considered now.

3.4 There are two untypical developments in the road, both pre-dating the designation of the Conservation Area:

- Flats by James Miller at 25-27 Mortonhall Road/31 Oswald Road. These were built on the old tennis courts of no. 20 opposite. (south side of road was therefore open apart from no. 23 for some 60 years)

- extension to side of no. 18 - very mediocre, but partially screened by stone wall and planting.

These buildings erode the character and quality of the area, and should not therefore be allowed to be precedents - see Historic Scotland Memorandum of Guidance.

4 History

4.1 Built on feus of Sir Henry Trotter of Mortonhall,

- starting at west end with nos 24, 31-35 by John M Kinross 1888-90 (McWilliam)
- north side nos 6 - 20 c 1890 - 1893 (6,8 show on OS map resurveyed 1893)
- 8 by Frank W Simon 1889 (McWilliam)
- 4 by T T Paterson 1902 (McWilliam)
- 1 - 3 after 1893
- 5 - 11 in 1890 (J Clydesdale, but see 4.2 below)
- 23?

4.2 Feu disposition 11.97 by Sir Henry Trotter for land south of Mortonhall Road to the railway, between Blackford Avenue/Blackford Station and the site now occupied by no. 23 Mortonhall Road.

4.3 It is said that Glenisla Gardens, 1896-99 (Cat B, CEC Listings) was originally intended to be a crescent continuing westwards and that, to prevent this or other development beyond no 11, six of the owners on the north side bought the land opposite. This land was used for grazing until allotment use began during the war. Although managed by the Council, it remained in private ownership. As original owners died, moved away or sold, that original intention weakened and market pressures led to applications for development in 1986 and 1989.

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