

(c) A Walk in The Grange

"A Walk in The Grange", held on the evening of Thursday, 25th June 1981, was organised by the Grange Association with the assistance of the City of Edinburgh Planning Department. The objective was to draw the attention of local residents to some of the architectural and planning aspects of the Study Area. The guides were Mr. David Cameron and Mr. Stuart Eydmann, of the Planning Department, who explained the significance of the planning, architecture and decorative detail of many of the residential and other buildings constructed mostly during the Victorian era.

The walk proved even more popular than had been expected, and was attended by about 50 persons. It lasted one and a half hours, beginning outside Newington Public Library. A variety of leaflets, including a selection from the Planning Department, was distributed. The route of the walk was by Findhorn Place, Dick Place, Lauder Road, Grange Loan, Lovers' Loan, Mansionhouse Road, Grange Road, Grange Cemetery, Palmerston Road and Kilgraston Road to Grange Park House, the interior of which was kindly shown by the owners. The walk concluded at the Carlton Cricket Club ground – the open space formerly known as Little Transylvania. A possible outcome of the walk could be a Grange Town Trail and the Association is at present exploring the possibility of financing this.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

1. The Grange of St. Giles, due to the control exercised by the Dick Lauder family, feudal superiors of The Grange, is now a homogeneous, primarily residential area where most properties are of a high architectural standard. This first-class residential development was achieved by placing strict regulations upon the granting of feus and by restricting the standard and scale of development through an architect-designed plan, which has survived since Victorian times almost unchanged to the present day.
2. The character of The Grange depends not simply upon the buildings themselves, but equally upon their siting in secluded gardens behind long walls in an almost rural atmosphere. There is still a large number of trees from the nineteenth century which are now mature and complement the original buildings. There has been a recent tendency to plant smaller trees which mature more quickly, but they are out of scale with the houses and no longer have the pleasing balance achieved by the combination of the original villas and larger trees.
3. The style of the houses is borrowed from the past. Revivalism was the predominant fashion in Victorian times. Some villas are Classical, others are Gothic or Italianate or Scottish Baronial; but they all have in common a break away from the rigid neo-classicism of the New Town of Edinburgh in favour of originality and individuality of composition. This, in combination with trees and gardens, creates a picturesque composition in the street scene.
4. Recent changes in the economic and social structure are having a profound effect on The Grange. The houses were built in the nineteenth century for the emerging merchant middle class, who had large families with servants in both house and garden. Nowadays, people find these properties costly to maintain. This fact, coupled with the steadily decreasing size of household, increases pressure to sub-divide property into smaller self-contained flats.
5. The scarcity of land available for development in Edinburgh as a whole, due to Green Belt policies and others which affect the City generally, has made the development value of the site far exceed the value of the individual villa. Consequently the pressure to demolish and redevelop is growing enormously. This is reflected in regular approaches to residents from developers seeking to buy their property and gain planning permission. The result may well be blocks of flats out of character with the area, built with little regard for their effect on the skyline and, in certain cases, with unsympathetically chosen materials.
6. Faced with this gloomy picture, which implies destruction of one of Edinburgh's urban assets and a 'lung' for surrounding, less well-wooded areas, it should be concluded that controlled sub-division of villas is preferable to their demolition.
7. Infilling of gardens is also tantamount to destroying the neighbourhood character, as trees and gardens are essential to this character. Many of the larger gardens have already been built upon; those remaining are relatively small – just sufficient to achieve a balanced composition with the buildings.
8. The walls and gates of The Grange, other essential features of the area, are also under threat with the increasing pressure to accommodate cars in garages, or in driveways in the front gardens. If the present garage policy of the local authority, which perhaps is sensible for the City as a whole, is carried out in The Grange, the walls will be pierced in many places, giving way to unsightly

additions, ugly garage doors and cemented front gardens – all to accommodate residents' cars which previously were easily kept in the street. The comparatively recent extension of parking restrictions for the City centre has caused a number of commuters to use The Grange as a giant free car park during the working week, because of its convenient location near bus routes or within walking distance by way of the Meadows of the centre of the City. Over-parking in certain areas of The Grange causes deterioration of the environment and has proved to be one of the greatest nuisances detected in the survey.

9. Besides pressure from redevelopment and sub-division of property, another trend can be detected. As larger properties become vacant, institutions are attracted by the quality of the surroundings and the central location. Some institutional buildings are used only during office hours, and they become vacant in the evenings and at week-ends. The essential residential character begins to change. Parking problems are increased and very soon the new use demands expansion, which means again the threat of demolition, or a proliferation of unsightly additions and an invasion of garden space.

10. The local planning authority has exercised an enlightened development control in this area, which otherwise could have been destroyed long ago if left entirely to existing pressures. However, it is perhaps now necessary to use the provisions of the Civic Amenities Act 1967 to afford an effective conservation of The Grange.

Recommendations

In view of the extensive study and analysis of the special historic and architectural qualities of The Grange, together with the serious threats identified in this report, The Grange Association recommends:

1. That The Grange should be designated a Conservation Area with boundaries as shown in the map on page 68.
2. That the following initial policies should be adopted for the effective conservation of its existing character:
 - a) Every effort should be made to ensure the preservation of the residential character of The Grange.
 - b) Proposals for the demolition of existing villas should follow the procedure for Listed Building Consent.
 - c) Any extension to existing villas should be restricted to a height of three storeys or the height of the existing building, whichever is the lower.
 - d) The scale of the extensions should be controlled within the following framework:
 - d.1 the extension should not represent an increase of overall (gross) floorspace greater than 20% of the existing building.
 - d.2 the total site covering of the existing building plus the proposed extension should have regard to the garden size and should not in any case exceed 30% of the site area.
 - d.3 no extension should protrude beyond the front elevation of the existing building.
 - e) The massing and fenestration of any extensions should be guided by principles of good design.
 - f) Building materials used for the repair, extension or addition to existing stone buildings must be of approved dressed stone for the walls, and of approved natural stone slate for the roofs; and their colour, texture and scale should be in the character of the original building. Rain-water pipes and gutters should be in cast iron when visible. All cleansing, resurfacing, or rendering in cement, "making good", colouring (including painting) of exterior stone work should be referred to the planning authorities before work is undertaken.
 - g) The sub-division of existing properties will be acceptable, provided that
 - g.1 the external appearance of the existing building is not materially altered.
 - g.2 the internal work is acceptable in relation to any special architectural features in listed buildings, and to any other planning considerations concerning amenity.
 - h) New building construction should be controlled as follows:
 - h.1 any new building should be restricted to the height of adjacent buildings, or the height of the three storeys, whichever is the lower.
 - h.2 the total covering of the site should not exceed 40% of the site.
 - h.3 the new building should not protrude beyond the building line of adjacent buildings, nor should any part of the new building be less than 20 feet from the street.
 - h.4 building materials should have regard in scale, colour and texture, to the character of the Conservation Area.
 - h.5 trees should be planted and gardens laid out in unbuilt portions of the site, and any existing trees, stone walls, railings and gates of the original site should be retained.
 - i) Since all trees would be protected, there should be a close liaison between the planning authorities and the residents to foster good tree husbandry.
 - j) A special garden walls policy should be adopted for the protection of such special features as garden walls, stone gateways and iron railings.

- k) A number of buildings should be proposed for inclusion in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. A special survey has been carried out and will be submitted to the Planning Authorities.
- l) Any proposals affecting the character of the Conservation Area, whether concerning Listed Buildings or not, should be advertised and made available for public examination.
- 3. An Enhancement Scheme should be prepared for The Grange, which could include among other items:
 - a) The main street of The Grange (Lauder Road) should be made into a pedestrian-preferential street with a special pedestrianisation scheme designed to reduce the road width, widen pavements, introduce planting of trees and shrubs and provide seating, so that these measures positively restrain the entry of traffic except for residents' and service vehicles.
 - b) The special treatment of Lauder Road should be carried out in the section from Hatton Place to Grange Loan, effectively linking visually and functionally the North and South sections of the Grange.
 - c) Traffic management measures, as proposed in Chapter 5 above, should be adopted for the North and East sections of The Grange.
 - d) A "Town Trail" should be worked out on the basis of the "Walk in the Grange", as a positive asset in helping to assert the identity of The Grange and enhance the tourism potential of the city.
- 4. All areas of The Grange not included within the proposed Conservation Area boundary should be protected by careful development control. No building should be permitted in these areas higher than three storeys or the height of adjacent buildings, whichever is the lower.
- 5. The participation of residents should be encouraged in the maintenance and improvement of existing buildings, trees and gardens in the proposed Conservation Area.

CHAPTER 11: BIBLIOGRAPHY

Introduction

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Chapter 2: Historic Background

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