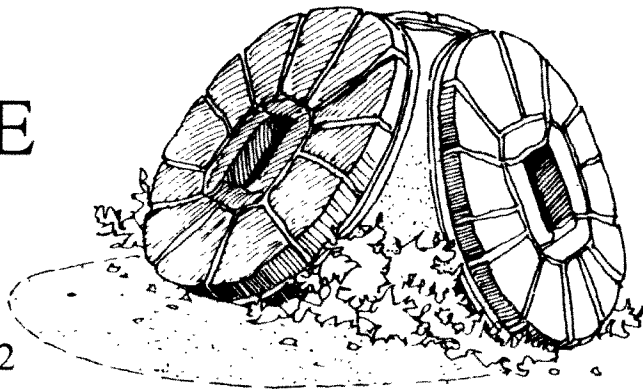


DEAN VILLAGE NEWS



No.103: Summer 1992

A PLAN FOR CENTRAL EDINBURGH

The District Council has issued a draft "Local Plan" for public consultation. It covers not only the central core of the city but also the largely Victorian neighbourhoods which surround it and relate to it.

Here are a few points from a substantial document:

"New developments must achieve much higher standards of architectural and urban design than have characterised most post-war building...The traditional building materials of stone and slate should remain dominant and be widely used in new development, certainly to a greater degree than has been the case in recent years..."

"The height of new buildings should be suppressed where necessary to retain or emphasise the significance of topographical features, including valleys..."

"The quality of the external environment - the streets and the urban spaces - has deteriorated and must be the focus of future renewal effort..."

"A reduction in motor car use in Central Edinburgh is the key to achieving improvements in attractiveness, environmental quality and safety..."

"A fundamental aim of the Local Plan is to improve conditions for pedestrians" not only in the "City Centre Retail Core" but

also in "District Shopping Centres" such as Stockbridge. There are to be new pedestrian and cycle routes through areas of major development, for example at Lothian Road, Semple Street and Morrison Street.

New Conservation Areas are planned for Morningside and Shandon. The Dean Conservation Area is to be extended west and north to take in St George's School, Ravelston Park and the area bounded by Queensferry Terrace, Queensferry Road, Dean Path and Ravelston Terrace. But "the major priority for Conservation Area enhancement for the foreseeable future will be the Old Town."

The sequence of open spaces around Donaldson's School, the National Gallery of Modern Art and the Dean Centre is identified as being of outstanding importance. No development will be allowed. (The people of Belford Terrace can breathe freely again!)

"The Council recognises the...need to achieve a vastly increased amount of tree-planting throughout Edinburgh, on its open spaces and in its streets...It is envisaged that initial projects will concentrate on publicly owned parks and spaces and existing woodlands in need of regeneration. In due course the programme...could be a justification for land acquisition by the Council." The Council is

already seeking to acquire Ravelston Woods by compulsory purchase.

Local shopping centres and other small groups of shops are to be protected in the interests of the residents of central Edinburgh, who have increased in number in the last decade. They are also to be protected against a proliferation of leisure developments: "While the city centre must be a convivial place, it must not become a stressful environment in which to live."

The policy for villa areas (e.g. Belford Park, Ravelston Park) has already been tightened up. Many specific policies are proposed in the draft plan. Once a policy has been adopted, it strengthens the hand of the Council in decision-making, and appeals to the Secretary of State are much less likely to succeed.

A chapter headed "Implementation" applies the policies to 10 "Community Areas", of which one is Craigleith, Murrayfield and Dean. Planning permission has already been granted for a supermarket on the southern part of Craigleith Quarry, and there is outline planning permission for a major office extension to the north of that. As we know, planning permission was granted for a revised version of the office block between Belford Road and Bell's Brae.

We also have a direct interest, of course, in parts of the adjoining Community Areas of West End/Tollcross and the Northern New Town/Stockbridge.

DEAN STUDIO

The Dean Studio occupied the site of the Dean Free Church between Drumsheugh Baths and Drumsheugh Toll in Belford Road for about twenty years from 1890 (see DVN 91). The gate pillars with the name carved on one of them survived the fire which destroyed the building in 1954. We have urged successive developers to incorporate them in any future design for the site but were told that this is impossible. They were recently removed carefully by the present proprietors of the site and conveyed to 'a property in East Lothian'.

The site has once again been put up for sale with planning consent, for an office block with fourteen parking places accessed from Bell's Brae.

THE FISHING

(Items from newsletters of the Water of Leith Conservation Trust)

Honorary Bailiffs have noticed that the sluice blocking the lade which originally served Bell's Mills has been opened up, presumably by residents of the adjoining houses. In consequence a large part of the river's flow is being diverted from the main channel and valuable spawning sites, which are rare in the lower river, are being made shallow and unattractive to trout. Lothian Region's Planning Department are looking into the question of responsibility and jurisdiction in such cases. A second problem at this site appears to be that a fraction of the water is lost from the main channel, perhaps by leakage into the sewer beneath.

A report of salmon and sea trout in the river below the Dean weir could not be confirmed by the Honorary Bailiffs, and there was an unconfirmed report of a dead salmon to the Forth River Purification Board. Complaints to the Board were fewer in 1991 and of relatively minor nature. There were no fish deaths...

Fishing in the Water of Leith is free but the angler must obtain and carry a permit. It explains the fishing rules, including bag and size limits (6 fish and 8 inches), season (April 1st to September 30th) and restriction of bait fishing (worm and maggot) to the river below Slateford Bridge.

The river has been stocked with 1000 brown trout which should be well spread out by the beginning of the season. With no water being stored at Harperrig Reservoir over the winter, because of the need to work on the dam in the Spring, the riverbed had a good flush out and conditions are expected to be good for April.

COATES

Do you know Coates Haugh? Yes, you do: its modern name is Sunbury. The Coates estate extended to the Water of Leith.

Old Coates House still stands in the shadow of St Mary's Cathedral. The oldest part was built in 1615, in a rural setting, of course. (It is suggested that the name is derived from "sheep-cotes"). The builder was John Byres, a corn-merchant, who no doubt found it convenient to be near the mills at the Water of Leith.

An excellent pamphlet* tells the history of the building and - with many drawings - describes and explains the complex structure which has resulted from centuries of alterations and additions.

John Byres' son, Sir John Byres of Coates and Warristone, fought on the Royalist side in the Civil War and was killed on the eve of the Battle of Worcester. His son - a man of the Restoration period - was "much addicted to gallantry and pleasure and, having an expensive turn, spent his estate." So it is not surprising that the house and lands passed out of the hands of the Byres family.

Around 1800 William Walker, advocate, ('Walker Street' and 'William Street'), bought up bits and pieces of the old Coates estate, where the house was now called Easter Coates Manor, which sounds like an anglicised affectation. (Hence "Manor Place"). William's son, Sir Patrick, was evidently an avid collector of historic carved stones from the Old Town, which were incorporated into his house. As well as a number of inscriptions there is a round-arched doorway and an elaborate double window with a pediment above, which is said to have come from the French Ambassador's Chapel in the Cowgate.

Sir Patrick died without issue in 1837. His unmarried sisters, Barbara and Mary, lived in Drumsheugh House (on the South side of Lynedoch Place Lane) which was demolished after the death of the last survivor, Mary, in 1870. The Walker fortune, derived from the feuing of the Coates and Drumsheugh lands, was left for the building

of St Mary's Cathedral on the valuable site which the sisters had preserved for that purpose.

*Ishbel M. Gray: Old Coates House - a history, published by St Mary's Cathedral. 75p.

LYNEDOCH PLACE LANE

It may be very old, for it was the boundary between two properties, on one of which Lynedoch Place was built in the 1820s.

In the mid nineteenth century, it was called Drumsheugh Lane: "A narrow lane leading westward from Melville Place. In it is Drumsheugh Cottage. There are also several stables and coach houses...It is macadamised and lighted up with gas." (Ordnance Survey Name Book 98, 1852)

Drumsheugh Cottage was also called Drumsheugh House: "A neat built cottage two stories high having offices attached. Occupied by Miss Walker who is also proprietor. It is situated on the south west side of Drumsheugh Lane." (O.S. Name Book)

After Miss Walker's death in 1870 her house was demolished to make way for the Victorian phase of the development of the extensive Walker properties. You can see the awkward angle at the beginning of Drumsheugh Gardens. When James Gillespie Graham designed a feuing plan for the estate, he would have liked to demolish Lynedoch Place in order to include that area in his design.

The red telephone box beside the West Mill has been repainted and not replaced by a modern one but retained, as the DVA asked.

Douglas Crescent Gardens: Additional members will be welcomed, if they don't want to take dogs in. The subscription of £60 may be reduced to £45 for pensioners. Contact Miss Jean Macnab, 337 4331.

SPENDING

The Association has contributed £1000 towards the cost of Victorian-style lamps for Well Court. We expect them to be installed by the council by the time this newsletter appears.

The information boards which we would like to install at Well Court and Bell's Brae require a lot of careful preparation as well as applications for planning consent and the permission of proprietors. They may not be ready this summer.

DISSENT

"I am concerned that an information board... would contribute further to the 'Disneyfication' of the area... I don't much like the idea of living in an architectural museum, where the buildings are labelled for gawping visitors... I feel very strongly about pandering to excessive tourism, and in the case of Dean Village there isn't even an economic

argument for encouraging more visitors - there isn't yet (thank goodness) any souvenir shop in the village selling plastic replicas of Well Court or the Dean Bridge" (But Mrs Kirkwood at 19 Well Court sells guides to the village and postcards on behalf of the DVA and it is hoped to have a Sunday Art Market in due course. Ed.)

Another member has suggested that some of the buildings should be floodlit.

GUIDED WALKS ON SUNDAYS

From Cabbie's Antiques on the Dean Bridge at 2:15 on **June 7, July 5, August 2, September 6.** Adults £1 Children 50p

STOP PRESS

Tom Ponton has been elected councillor for Dean Ward on Edinburgh District Council. He remains the representative for Dean/Murrayfield on Lothian Regional Council.

DEAN VILLAGE ASSOCIATION

Committee 1992-93

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Mrs Nan McLaren, 23/18 Lynedoch Place

Miss Kathryn Muir, 6 Dean Path

Mrs Peggy Valentine, 31/2 Belford Road

Subscriptions

Ordinary: £3.00 (or £3.75 with postage)

Senior Citizen: £1.50 (or £2.25 with postage)

Life membership: £30.00