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 buildingsshould 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/Tolleross 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.
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 ‘Disney- fication’ 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

Chairman: Mrs Barbara Mackay, 8 Damside
Vice-Chairman: Miss Josie Mobbs, 6 Dean Path
Secretary: Miss Dorothy Forrester, 13 Belford Road EH4 3BL
Assistant Secretary: Miss Mary Macdonald, 5 Rothsay Terrace
Treasurer: Mr R J C Parkin, 1B Belford Park EH4 3DP
Dr John Handlay, 13 Sunbury Place
Mr Callum McCulloch, 22 Lynedoch Place
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