

KIRKTONHILL CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

March 2016

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This document was prepared by the Scottish Civic Trust and Sonya Linskaill, Chartered Architect and Consultant.

31 March 2016

1. INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION

1.1. Date and reason for designation

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that conservation areas “are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.” Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas. The Kirktonhill Conservation Area was designated in 1984.

Conservation area status brings the following works under planning control:

- Demolition of unlisted buildings and structures
- Removal of, or work to, trees
- Development involving small house alterations and extensions, the installation of satellite dishes, roof alterations, stone cleaning or painting of the exterior.

It is recognized that the successful management of conservation areas can only be achieved with the support and input from stakeholders, and in particular local residents and property owners.

1.2. Purpose of appraisal

The purpose of the Conservation Area Appraisal is to identify and assess the special architectural or historical interest of the area along with those key elements that contribute to its character and appearance. These can then assist in defining the conservation area boundary and justifying any proposed alterations to it.

In addition, the study provides a basis upon which a programme can be developed by the Council to protect and enhance the conservation area through the identification of opportunities for enhancement and priorities for future management.

Planning authorities have a duty to prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of conservation areas, although there is no imposed timeframe for doing so. The Act also indicates that planning authorities must pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the designated area in making planning decisions that affect the area. A more considered and careful approach is therefore needed in considering development proposals in a conservation area.

This document therefore seeks to:

- Define the special interest of the conservation area and identify any issues which threaten the special qualities of the conservation area
- Provide guidelines to prevent harm and assist in the enhancement of the conservation area
- Provide West Dunbartonshire Council with a valuable tool with which to inform its planning practice and policies for the area

The appraisal conforms to Scottish Government guidance as set out in Planning Advice Note 71: Conservation Area Management (December 2004).

Additional government guidance regarding the management of historic buildings and conservation areas is set out within Scottish Planning Policy (2014), Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP) and Historic Environment Scotland’s series of Managing Change in the Historic Environment Guidance Notes. Please note that SHEP should be read in conjunction with the legislation and regulations set out in the Historic Environment Circular which explained the legislative requirements of the Historic Environment Scotland Act 2014.

This appraisal provides a firm basis on which applications for development within and in the vicinity of the conservation area can be

assessed. It should be read in conjunction with the planning policy framework in the West Dunbartonshire Local Plan (2010) and the Proposed West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan (2015).

1.3. Methodology

This appraisal has been prepared by the Scottish Civic Trust and Sonya Linskaill, Chartered Architect and Consultant. The Trust was contracted in February 2016 to undertake a Conservation Area Character Appraisal of the

Kirktonhill Conservation Area on behalf of West Dunbartonshire Council.

A thorough site survey of Kirktonhill Conservation Area was carried out including a character assessment comprising: setting, views, activity and movement; street pattern and urban grain; historic townscape; the evidence of change from historic photographs and maps; spatial relationships; trees and landscaping; and negative factors.

The conservation area character appraisal and analysis are intended to help understanding and management of Kirktonhill Conservation Area.

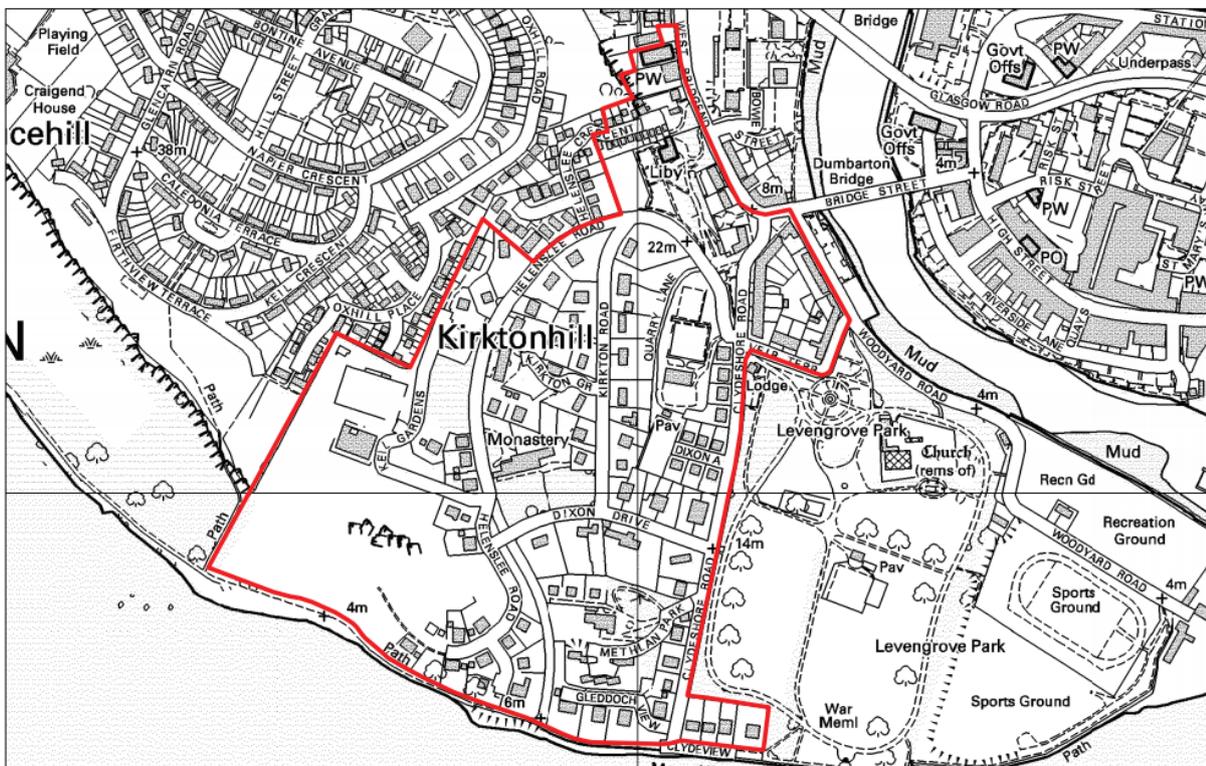


Figure 1 Kirktonhill Conservation Area boundary; source: West Dunbartonshire Council

2. LOCATION AND LANDSCAPE

2.1. Location

The Kirktonhill Conservation Area lies within the town of Dumbarton. Dumbarton is around 15 miles north-west of Glasgow on the north shore of the River Clyde at its confluence with the River Leven. The area is connected to the town centre by the old Dumbarton Bridge (Bridge Street).

The conservation area occupies an attractive site on slightly raised ground bounded by the River Clyde to the south, the River Leven to the north-east, and Levensgrove Park to the west.

2.2. Relationship to Dumbarton

The Kirktonhill Conservation Area is one of two conservation areas in Dumbarton (the other being Knoxland Square) and is separated from the historic burgh by the River Leven. Consideration has been given during the

appraisal process to the possibility of extension of the conservation area with areas adjacent to it. This is addressed in Section 9.5 Boundary Review.

2.3. Geology and Topography

Dumbarton lies on the alluvial plains of the two rivers with the striking volcanic basalt twin-peaks of the Dumbarton Rock marking the meeting point of the two rivers. The area of Kirktonhill lies roughly 130 feet above sea level.

Dumbarton lies on a plateau of carboniferous lava which extends north eastward across the Clyde creating amongst other hill ranges the Kilpatrick Hills. Volcanic vents protrude from this formation the best known being the Dumbarton Rock. A belt of Old Red Sandstone stretches over this area below the Highland Boundary Fault and there are known historic sources of sandstones in the Leven Valley.



Figure 2 Timothy Pont- Detail of Dumbarton from Pont 33 ca. 1583-1601

3. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Early Dumbarton

Dumbarton was founded as a royal burgh in 1222 by Alexander II. The community residing there was granted trading privileges and the right to charge tolls on Clyde traffic. These modest beginnings soon gave way to Dumbarton's expansion into industry.

Kirktonhill occupies an area on the west bank of the Leven in the separate parish of Cardross, which remained outwith the administration of the burgh until 1857. It is likely that the Kirktonhill area was named after the ruins of a medieval church which now lies in Levensgrove Park, literally the 'kirk toun'. This church was the old Parish Church of Cardross, later known as St Serf's, and was used until the 1600s. 'Kirkton' appears in early cartographic records of the area (Ross, 1777), and later a house and quarry site (1st Edition OS, 1864).

3.2. Development in the 18th and 19th centuries

Dumbarton developed steadily from the sixteenth century. In 1505, the first docks were constructed, and by 1516, Dumbarton had grown into a successful country burgh. It possessed a clock, tollbooth, and tron.

Glassmaking was the first main industry of the town. In 1776 Dumbarton Glassworks was set up, bringing its conical towers to the area now occupied by the Health Centre. The works produced bottles before switching production to window glass.

The development of Kirktonhill coincided with the prospering of Dumbarton's industry and expansion of its infrastructure. The first bridge to connect the west bank of the Leven to Dumbarton was constructed in 1765. A ferry had operated before connecting the small settlements

of Bridgend and Kirkton to the burgh. Around this time the local laird (Bontine) gave permission for stone to be taken from his quarry at Kirkton, presumably to be used in construction of the bridge. The bridge must have been a major factor in the ability to travel and develop the west bank of the river.

Dumbarton's elite began to move across the river, constructing houses such as Rosebank, Springbank, and Bellfield along the main route North via Dalreoch (now West Bridgend). The most significant mansion of this period was Levensgrove House on an estate stretching south of Bridgend (Wood, 1818). Built around 1780 it was owned by one time Town Clerk John MacAulay when Robert Burns came to stay in

1787 having been made a freeman of Dumbarton. The estate was then bought by the Dixon family, the wealthy owners of the glassworks between 1817 and 1832. They were involved members of Dumbarton's political life, with three members of the family acting as Provosts successively between 1810 and 1832. The Dixons resided at Levensgrove until the mid-nineteenth century.

Unsuccessfully advertised for sale in 1861, this grand 30-apartment house lay vacant until the estate was purchased by two of Dumbarton's prominent shipbuilding families, Peter Denny and John McMillan. They bought the land in 1880 in order to gift it to the town as a public park. Not long after the house was demolished and in 1885 the Levensgrove Park was formally opened.



Figure 3 Inset on: Charles Ross - A map of the Shire of Dumbarton [bottom section] 1777

Dumbarton's primary industry. Throughout the nineteenth century, around forty shipbuilding companies existed on the River Leven at any one time. William Denny and Brothers (established 1844) and Archibald MacMillan and Son were perhaps the most influential firms, and members of both families were instrumental in the formation of Kirktonhill. Seeking homes near their works, but with the accommodation and setting of a country house in their own secluded grounds, they constructed their new stately mansions there: Levenford House, Helenslee, Methlan Park, Garmoye and Dunmore House (demolished). In this sense, the area which would become Kirktonhill was seen as a healthy refuge for Dumbarton's elite, the town 'west end'.

These grand mansions were constructed by some of the leading architects of the period. Levenford House (1852-3) for James Denny was designed by JT Rothead on elevated ground with 'better air' away from the

noxious fumes of the town. Helenslee House (1855-6), perhaps the most prominent mansion in Kirktonhill, was also designed by JT Rothead for Peter Denny, son of William Denny the shipbuilder. It was redesigned and enlarged by architect John Honeyman ten years later with a new stable block and gate house. Garmoye (1890) by architects John Burnet, Son & Campbell, was built for another Denny family member, Lt. Col. John M. Denny. Dunmore House was designed by William Leiper in 1866 for a Director of William Denny Bros, and former Provost John McAusland. Methlan Park (1880-1), however, was designed by a local architect John MacLeod for shipbuilder Robert MacMillan.

By the end of the 19th century the suburb was complete, comprising of grand mansions, small villas, and the more modest tenements and terraces, to the north west of Leven Grove Park (see 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1896-1912, figure 6).

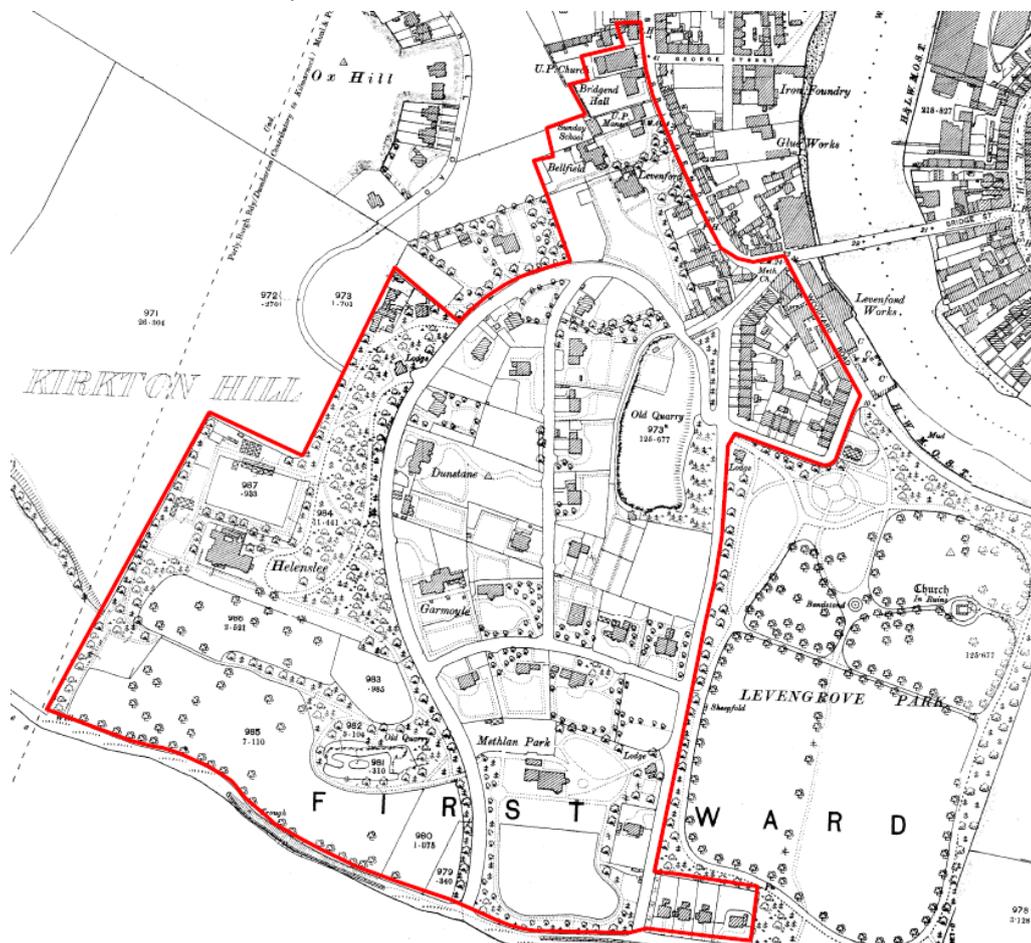


Figure 5 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey 1896-1912; source: West Dunbartonshire Council

3.3. 20th century to the present day

The 20th century was mainly a period of steady decline for the area as shipbuilding, after an increase in demand during the First World War, suffered from a general global economic gloom. With the shrinking of the British Empire, social and economic reconstruction after the Second World War and the challenges of modernisation that the industry struggled to meet, Dumbarton, along with the other settlements that had grown up around shipbuilding faced an uncertain future. However, recent efforts to regenerate the town have had some success but piecemeal development has impacted on the character of Kirktonhill as one of the town's two conservation areas. The two housing schemes in the Castlehill and Brucehill areas to the west of Kirktonhill, originally

Today, Kirktonhill retains its purpose as a suburban settlement, not only for Dumbarton, but also for Glasgow which is easily accessible by

rail for commuters. The small villas retain their residential use but some of the grand residences of the industrialists have generally had to adapt to reuse. Helenslee House remained a residence until 1925 when Keil School, originally based in Southend, Campbeltown, Argyll, relocated to Dumbarton and adapted the house for educational purposes until 2000. The mansion has subsequently fallen into disrepair and part of the land has been redeveloped as housing. The school building lies empty and is currently listed on the Buildings at Risk register. Garmoyle has been used as a Carmelite Monastery since 1934. Levenford House became the County Library from 1938 until 2008 when it was sold to private buyers and returned to residential use. The gatehouse and stables remain in local authority ownership and in very poor repair.

Development in garden grounds and in the parkland settings of larger houses such as Methlan Park and Islay Kerr House has taken place in the last decades.

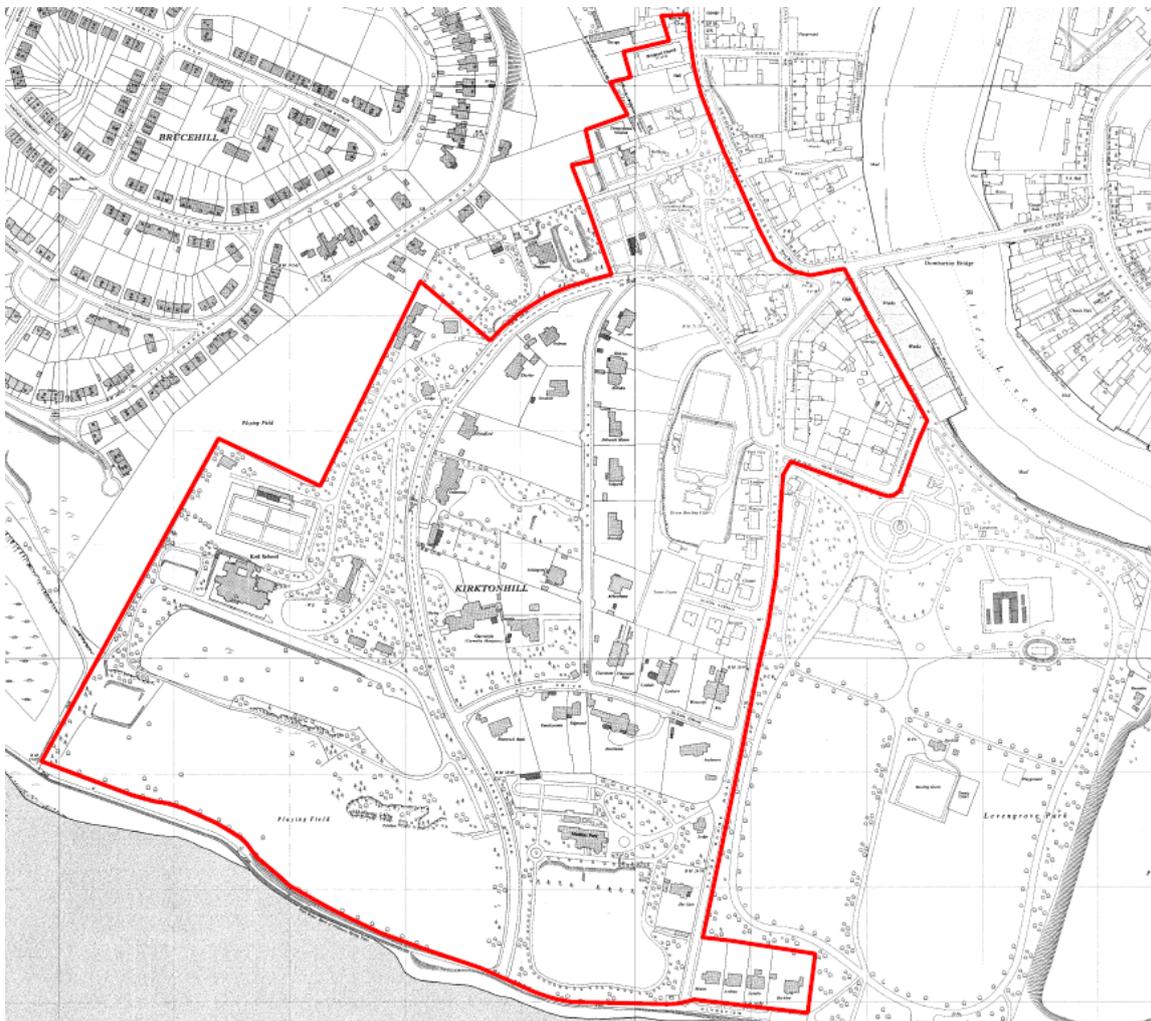


Figure 6 Ordnance Survey 1963; source: West Dunbartonshire Council

4. CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE

4.1. Spatial Analysis

4.1.1. *Layout and Activities*

The Kirktonhill Conservation Area is on the south-west bank of the River Leven opposite Dumbarton town centre. The area is predominately residential with a small run of commercial traditional shop units on West Bridgend just outside the conservation area boundary. The street plan of the area consists of 4 principal streets: Clydeshire Road, Helenslee Road, Kirkton Road and Dixon Drive. The conservation area extends north to encompass Levenford House and the West Kirk on West Bridgend, an early route from the crossing point on the Leven north via the Dalreoch Toll. Some of the earliest villas on this side of the Leven were built along this route before the establishment and release of feus on the Leven Grove Estate. Other than the now Category A listed Levenford House, none have survived. West Bridgend's narrower and winding aspect reflects its earlier origins.

Clydeshire Road was established at least by the 18th century and traversed the Leven Grove Estate. This road is recorded on one of the first detailed maps of the area (Great Reform Act Plan, 1832). In 1860 it is illustrated as a tree-lined avenue extending from the bridge end to the River Clyde and bounding the grounds of Leven Grove House (c.1780 – c. 1880). The modern day park boundary and line of the Leven Grove Terrace (built c. 1884) continue this demarcation.

On the rising ground westward of Clydeshire Road are the Victorian villas set out in generous feu plots. The area is encircled by the sweeping curve of Helenslee Road, bisected by Kirkton Road which rises and falls over the centre of the area before meeting Dixon Drive, a narrower intimate street which crosses west to east above the parkland of Methlan House.

The building pattern is defined by the feu plots which appear to have been sold in lots to suit applicants, rather than a formal street plan. As a result the original Victorian villa plots are irregular and vary in size, but all are spacious in which houses are set back from the road behind high boundary walls within large gardens. Houses are orientated for the views and sunlight, to the south (Dixon Drive) or West (Kirkton Road) meaning that houses do not necessarily address the street, many having their rear elevations facing the road which adds privacy. A number of the original villa plots have been subdivided in the later 20th or 21st century including the grounds of Dunstane (Islay Kerr House) and a number of plots on Kirkton Road. Individual new houses within original plots are generally screened by original high boundary walls and mature gardens and do not significantly affect the character of the predominately Victorian suburb.

To the west of this villa core, lies the former estate of Helenslee (later Keil School) occupying almost the same area, and to the south Methlan Park. Both have experienced significant development in the 20th and 21st centuries and there is a current planning application for further dense development to the rear of Helenslee in the former walled garden comprising 12 new build flats and 26 new houses, alongside conversion and restoration of the house itself to create 13 flats. The existing development to the south of Helenslee does not follow the density or pattern of earlier development, and also deviate from the important characteristic relationship of house, garden and street enclosure. Helenslee Road is now diverted and extended to access this new development. This alternate pattern of development is also seen in new housing on the former grounds of Dunmore House

which was lost after a fire in 1973 (now Helenslee Court and Crescent).

4.1.2. *Open Spaces, Trees and Landscape*

The area beyond the eastern boundary of the conservation area is occupied by the Levensgrove Park which was formally laid out and opened in 1885, and contemporary with the suburb's development.



Figure 7 Prominent trees on Helenslee Road

Levensgrove Park is the most significant open space in the area. Its western boundary on Clydeshire Road comprises a low wall and mature trees some of which may date back to the establishment of the Levensgrove House. The park is an important community resource and prominent feature of the area, spanning from the Leven to the Clyde and providing a green setting for the suburb.

The legacy of the larger mansion houses and their parklands is evident in the number of mature trees throughout the area.

Kirktonhill appears as an attractive wooded hillock in views from the Dumbarton Rock and across the Clyde Estuary. There are significant tree groups remaining from the Helenslee estate west of Helenslee Road (stretching to Keil Gardens) and south of Helenslee House; on the Levensford House grounds and around Methlan Park. The private gardens of the smaller villas also make a significant contribution to the character of the conservation area with hedges, mature trees and greenery all adding to the appeal of the leafy, residential area. Significant examples include trees in the gardens of Nos. 1 and 3 Helenslee Road and No. 3 Dixon Drive. The tenement and terraced properties on Levensgrove and Veil Terraces have long front gardens which contribute to the green setting and provide an appropriate setting for the boundary of the Levensgrove Park.

The Dixon Bowling Green occupies the site of a former quarry. It is said to have been established in 1889, and appears on mapping in 1914 on its current Helenslee Road site. Today this deep cutting, adjacent



Figure 8 Kirktonhill from Dumbarton Rock

to the bowling green, is festooned in vegetation and trees screening the Kirkton Road properties above. To the south are tennis courts, again established by 1914. Quarry lane survives to the rear of the quarry but is very overgrown.

The former route of Helenslee Road south of Dixon Drive appears to have been disused for some time and traffic has been diverted onto a new section of road to recent development. The historic route remains now as an established semi-natural green space providing a pedestrian connection to

the walkway and cycle route along the Esplanade. The Esplanade consists of a tarmacked route along the Clyde shore passing the high wall of Methlan Park House and the properties on Clydeview before entering the Levensgrove Park.

The importance of mature trees is recognised in the number of Tree Preservation Orders within the conservation area, however there are other key trees, tree groups and open spaces of importance outwith the TPOs some of which are mentioned above. Key tree groups and TPOs are marked on the Trees map 5.3 on page 26.



Figure 9 Kirktonhill aerial map 2002; source: West Dunbartonshire Council

4.1.3. *Views, Landmarks and Approaches*

From the town centre, the approach to Kirktonhill is across the historic Dumbarton Bridge. Whilst not in the conservation area, the bridge is an important landmark on the river and first physical connection made to the Bridgend and Kirktonhill area. Whilst widened and redesigned over the 250 years since its initial construction, it still provides an appropriate traditional context to arrival in the conservation area. The west end of the bridge is marked by the relative height of the 3-storey tenements at the bridge end and the sweep of Levensgrove Terrace. Approaching from the north, the West Kirk, and adjacent Hall form landmarks at the boundary of the conservation area and mark the transition from modern development north of this point. The long stone boundary wall and gateway of Levensford House is a prominent feature moving southward toward the bridge end. On Kirkton Road, Dixon Drive and the west side of Helenslee Road, plots are bounded by high stone walls, trees and hedging which creates a strong street enclosure, privacy and anticipation as glimpses of the villas appear above walls or through open gateways.

The pattern of development in the conservation area means that landmark buildings are few, however the larger mansions of Helenslee, Methlan Park (especially its 4-storey Italianate Tower) and Garmoye still have a presence and are visible in glimpsed views and in views from outwith the conservation area; for example from the Dumbarton Rock. The former Levensford House stables and gatehouse form a particularly strong landmark, sitting on a high outcrop next to the old quarry entrance.

The attractive landscape beyond the conservation area closes several views and vistas. Looking south on Clydeshire Road with view of the River Clyde; looking east on Dixon Drive the vista closed by Levensgrove Park in the foreground and the Dumbarton Rock beyond.

Views of the high rise flats on the river side of West Bridgend tower above the treeline in glimpsed views north, creating an unusual juxtaposition of Victorian suburb and 20th century modernism.

Views available from public roads are marked on the Views and Approaches map 5.4 on page 27.

4.2. Buildings and Townscape

4.2.1. Townscape Character

The Kirktonhill Conservation Area has a rich and consistent townscape derived from its construction over a relatively short period. The range of building styles and types reflects the area's historic development over the late Victorian period, chiefly in the 1870s and 1880s. This includes large mansion houses and their support buildings (stables, gate houses etc), smaller residential villas, tenements and terraced properties, and one church, its church hall and former manse. There are a number of houses constructed during the second half of the 20th century, and a larger number of recent houses on the west side around the former Keil School.

At the core of the area, there is a uniformity in scale and mass with chiefly 2-storey detached houses, broad streets and large gardens reflecting the suburban development. Beyond these the influence of the former industrialists is seen in the scale of their former homes, Helenslee, Garmoyle and Methlan Park, the latter's 4-storey Italianate tower often glimpsed in views across the area.

With the exception of later 20th century and recent housing which is predominately finished in cement render and white in colour, the traditional buildings use a coherent palette of building materials and techniques, including sandstones, Scots slate and timber windows and doors. There are

exceptions: Garmoyle, designed in Arts and Crafts style uses materials favoured by that style, notably its red Rosemary tile roofs and copper turret. On Woodyard Road, a more industrial survivor, is the short 2-storey block in red brick with cream bands. These buildings add interest but are exceptions. The modest Victorian style of the villas compares with the grander architectural detailing of Helenslee, Levenford (Baronial) and Methlan Park (Italianate) all designed by leading architects of the period (refer Gazetteer below)

4.2.2. Key Listed and Unlisted Buildings

The conservation area contains 15 list entries. Each list entry may cover more than one building. Several buildings are also listed for their group value.

The conservation area contains a significant proportion of unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the conservation area. These are identified on the Listed and Unlisted Buildings Map as 'positive buildings' (see map 5.1, page 24).

Such buildings are generally good examples of relatively unaltered historic buildings where their style, detailing and building materials contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. This principally includes the Victorian villas on Kirkton and Helenslee Roads and the late 19th century tenements and terraces north of Leven Grove Park.



Figure 10 West Kirk and Hall

Key buildings and building groups

West Kirk and Hall Category B listed

Originally the site of the Relief Church (1794), this was replaced in 1859-60 by the West Bridgend Church designed by William Spence. This modest L-plan church with slender stone steeple survives today as the church hall. The current West Kirk on the adjoining plot (originally Bridgend United Presbyterian Church) was designed by local architect John MacLeod and is dated 1887. Its principal east elevation is gabled with a striking 10-light wheel window above its entrance.



Figure 11 Levenford House

Levenford House, boundary walls, entrance gateway, former lodge and stables. House Category A listed, and all other parts Category B.

Levenford House is the oldest surviving mansion in the conservation area. Its grounds still occupy a significant part of the conservation area. The mansion house was designed by J T Rothead for William Denny, the house built c. 1853 including the round-arched and rope-moulded gateway to West Bridgend and enclosing crenellated boundary wall. Conceived as a small tower house, in Scottish Baronial style complete with crowstepped gables, corbelled angle turrets and pedimented dormerheads and 3-storey tower with cap house. Coursed and snecked pink rubble with polished dressings. Major extension and internal re-fitting by Burnet Son and Campbell in 1890. The contemporary dramatic gate lodge set on the slope on Helenslee Road continues the Scottish Baronial theme of the mansion with crowstepped gables and dummy gun ports. The stable block was added c. 1865 by Rothead. Levenford House was gifted to the local authority and became the County Library from 1938 until 2008 when the house was sold to private buyers and returned to residential use. The stable and lodge remain in the ownership of West Dunbartonshire Council.



Figure 12 Levenford House Gate Lodge and Stables



Figure 13 Helenslee



Figure 14 Helenslee

Helenslee, Category B listed including former lodge and stables.

Arguably the most prominent mansion in Kirktonhill. Built in 1855-6 for Peter Denny, son of William Denny the shipbuilder and designed by JT Rothead. The original 2-storey symmetrical house was considerably enlarged in 1866-7 by architect John Honeyman most prominently with the addition of a 4-storey tower and extended eastward with a new entrance porch with banded, Ionic columns. Despite its 'at risk' status, many original features survive such as the decorative cast-iron 1st floor balconies at first and second floors, and stone carved pediment dormers and balustrade to the tower (although the French roof has been lost). It remained a residence until 1925 when it was purchased for the Keil School, remaining as such until its closure in 2000. The mansion must have been impressive in its parkland setting on the Clyde and is still highly visible in views from the south side of the Clyde, although the parkland setting is now partially lost with modern housing below. Part of the original walled gardens remain including a high brick enclosing wall.

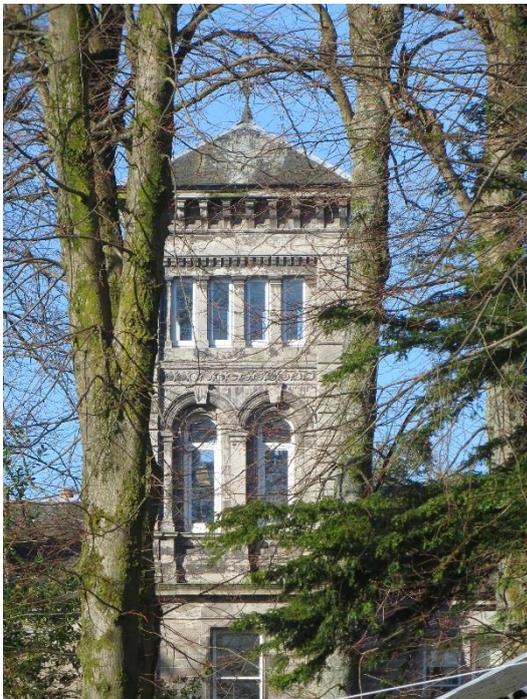


Figure 15 Methlan Park

To the north, on Keil Gardens, the former Gothic style stable block (later the school's technical block) is now converted to residential use. Designed by Honeyman on 1865, it retains its cobbled and walled yard. In contrast, the former gate lodge on Helenslee Road probably also by John Honeyman c. 1865, is a good example of a later 19th century classically designed lodge with fine detailing in the stonework.

Methlan Park Category B listed, lodge and gate piers Category C.

Built in 1880-81 for shipbuilder Robert MacMillan and designed by local architect John MacLeod. 2-storey mansion house, with 4-stage Italianate tower evident in views across the conservation area. Coursed, stugged ashlar with polished dressings. Contemporary single storey L-plan gate lodge, 3 square gatepiers, each with bracketted cornice and decorative cap and decorative wrought-iron gates. From 1935, used to house soldiers and shipyard works and later passing to the Salvation Army. Reportedly vacant from 1993, it is now reinstated as a residence. 28 new accessible 'cottage' flats constructed in its parkland in 2012 for Loretto Housing Association.



Figure 16 Methlan Park



Figure 17 Garmoyle

Garmoyle Category B listed.

Across from Helenslee, Garmoyle contrasts in style and materials. Built for Lt. Col. John M. Denny by John Burnet, Son & Campbell in 1890; since 1934 it has been used as a Carmelite Monastery. This is a large asymmetrical villa in Arts and Crafts tradition with Scots Baronial details. Stugged and snecked pink sandstone with contrasting blond ashlar dressings. Details include crowstepped gables, red Rosemary tile roofs, a conical copper roofed turret and original garden walls with red fireclay copes. Set on elevated ground within large garden grounds, the comparatively low sandstone boundary wall allows open views of the mansion from Helenslee Road.



Figure 18 Garmoyle

Dixon Drive

A number of these villas are thought to have been designed by local architect John MacLeod c.1870-1880. On the north side Nos. 2-12 (all listed) are impressive in their elevated garden grounds: Nos 2 and 4 (The Rectory and Westcroft) a symmetrical double villa; Nos 6 and 8 and Nos. 10 and 12 originally single plots. No. 8 has an impressive large Victorian glass house with semi-octagonal west end, ventilator windows, and cast-iron cresting. All constructed in coursed stugged ashlar, with polished dressings; low stone boundary walls, Nos. 2, 4 and 6 with surviving stone gate piers and decorative cast iron gates. Three further contemporary villas on the south side, No. 15 Shamrockbank is Category C listed. Similar modest villas continue on **Kirkton Road** with architect John MacLeod (1838-1888) having made his home at Overcliffe.



Figure 19 Dixon Drive

Levengrove Terrace Not listed.

A row of 3 storey tenements and 2-storey terraced houses which follow the sweep of an earlier route from the Dumbarton Bridge. Laid out in the 1880s (date stone 1884) on the edge of the former Levengrove House estate.



Figure 20 Dixon Drive



Figure 21 Levengrove Terrace



Figure 22 15 Levengrove Terrace

4.2.3. *Materials and Local Details*



In general the traditional buildings in the conservation area are all mid to late Victorian which is reflected in their architectural detailing and construction materials. Masonry walls most clearly illustrate the period of building, this later Victorian period favouring dressed stonework in a variety of finishes such as polished ashlar and stugged coursed rubblework. There is a predominance of generally buff sandstones, some of which may be from regional quarries. The pink sandstone seen in earlier buildings such as Levenford House could be from local quarries at Dalreoch and Bonhill. There were two quarries within the conservation area (the Bowling Green site and one within the Helenslee grounds) and reference to stone from Kirkton being used for the Dumbarton Bridge. There is also a representation of darker pink/red sandstones, notably the tenements on Veil Terrace and Levenford Terrace, possibly local or from Dumfriesshire, as transportation of stone increased during that period. Levenford House and Garmoyle also use a pink sandstone for rubblework.



Roofs are predominately pitched, commonly with either double pitched or piended (hipped) roofs and finished in Scots slate. Some later Victorian houses have projecting timber eaves with decorative timber gable bargeboards (e.g. 10-12 Dixon Drive). There is embellishment at the roofline in later properties with finials (e.g. Nos. 2 and 4 Dixon Drive), weathervanes and decorative ironwork ridges (e.g. Nos. 6 and 8 Dixon Drive). Cast iron rainwater goods with ogee gutters and cast hoppers.

Roof finishes are generally continuous on principal elevations; some with small cast iron skylights to other pitches (some modern rooflight replacements / additions). Original dormers are not common with some notable exceptions such as the small trussed dormers to Nos. 2 and 4 Dixon Drive. Projecting window bays are common, either canted or bowed such as No. 8 Dixon Drive, No. 2 Kirkton Road and No.1 Helenslee Road with fine slate work to suit. A turret roof turns the corner onto Veil Terrace and a steep turret also features on the Baronial roof line of Levenford House gatehouse.



Chimney stacks were an essential part of traditional properties and remain an important functional and aesthetic feature. This is an important feature of the roofscape and



skyline. Most properties have prominent stacks with several buildings having more elaborate stacks such as those on Levenford House gatehouse. Some chimneys have been removed or lowered which interrupts the pattern of the roofscape on tenement or terraced houses, and the composition of individual villas.

Windows are generally timber sash and case, vertically proportioned and painted white. Reflective of the building period the fenestration pattern of most traditional windows is two over two panes (notably Helenslee House), or one over one.

Timber doors are generally panelled to front elevations and painted in a variety of colours, often with a rectangular lay light or semi-circular fanlights above. Six panel double (storm) doors remain on the majority of Levingrove Terrace with semi-circular fanlights and a hooded consoled moulding above each entrance; a slightly plainer treatment is seen on Veil Terrace which has four panel timber doors.



4.2.4. Public Realm

Road and pavement surfaces are generally tarmac on main routes but notably pavements on both Kirkton Road and Dixon Drive, and sections of Helenslee Road and Clydeshore Road, are not finished in tarmac and have a variety of 'softer' finishes such as whin, gravel or grass. A notable example is Dixon Drive roadway which is composed of a whin chip finish and there is a section of early sandstone kerbs. On Helenslee Road where the pavement areas are wide, some properties have a strip of grass next to boundary walls for example alongside Garmolye; this adds to the attractive green environment softening the tarmac finishes.

Where original road finishes survive this adds historic character and interest. A number of houses retain squared whin setts at the entrance to drive ways, and traditional setts

are also exposed on Clydeshore Road suggesting original finishes remain under the tarmac road. There is an early pend through from Leven Grove and Levenford Terraces, which is laid in setts and larger stone tracks.

Modern finishes and interventions are less successful. The Esplanade has a tarmac walkway and standard galvanised metal railings. On the prominent stairway to Helenslee Road, steps have been finished in a cement screed and metal handrail fitted, not sympathetic in terms of either design or material; the cement may increase erosion of the original sandstone walls. There are some small areas of more recent brick pavements and also patched repair to tarmac. Whilst tarmac surfaces are generally unobtrusive on major routes, they do not enhance the conservation area, and brick pavements can detract from the traditional palette of adjacent buildings and stone boundary walls.





Recycling bins, street lamps and other street furniture are of standard off-the peg designs which do not enhance the conservation area or the setting of the adjacent buildings. Traffic calming measures are found in the conservation area with noticeable '20' signage painted on main routes and speed bumps introduced on Keil Gardens.

Boundary walls from the Victorian period make an important contribution and are a significant factor in the character of the area. These range from high stone walls for example on the south side of Dixon Drive, to mid height walls and lower garden walls often with hedging. There are few examples of original boundary railings (often removed during the Second World War) and there has been later replacement. However, a good number of houses retain original stone gate piers often with carved stonework and decorative cast iron gates. Examples include Nos. 2,4,6 and 15 Dixon Drive, Methlan House and pyramid topped gate piers to the former Dunmore House. There are attractive railings enclosing the bridge over the quarry arch on Helenslee Road.

4.2.5. *Condition*

The vast majority of the buildings within the conservation area are traditionally constructed and remain robust and functional. On observation from the street level, their general condition appears to be

fair, however particularly at high level there are noticeable repair and maintenance issues.

One of the greatest threats to any heritage site is the loss of primary fabric through lack of maintenance or inappropriate repair and replacement, reducing the authenticity of the site. A common significant threat is the use of inappropriate modern materials and details, such as replacement windows and doors, and impervious cement mortars and paints.

Several buildings and boundary walls appear to have cement based repairs. Attention should be drawn to the risk associated with impermeable materials and finishes and opportunities taken to repair in traditional materials when they arise.

A large number of original windows and doors have been replaced particularly on the tenement and terraced properties, for example on Levingrove Terrace only one flat appears to retain its original 2 over 2 pane timber sash and case windows.

Replacements in uPVC and/or non-traditional fenestration patterns and opening methods have a negative effect on both the character and quality of individual buildings and a cumulative impact on the character of the conservation area as a whole.

A number of gable walls show signs of water ingress at high level below chimneys; this may be the result of a number of repair and

maintenance issues (erosion of pointing or stone, defective flashings around the chimney, defect haunching, chimney pots not vented or capped appropriately).

Some boundary walls, pavements and road surfaces are also in poor condition or repaired inappropriately.

A number of roofs on Leven Grove Terrace have been re-roofed in concrete tiles which is not in keeping with the character of the conservation area and particularly noticeable due to the topography of the site and views across the roofscape from higher ground.

There are four entries within the conservation area on the Buildings at Risk Register, compiled by Historic Environment Scotland.

These are:

- Helenslee (Former Keil School)
- Levenford House: Garden Walls and Gateway, West Bridgend
- Levenford House: Stables, Helenslee Road (Council ownership 2013)
- Levenford House: Lodge, Helenslee Road (Council ownership 2013)

The three buildings are in poor condition, roofless or partially roofless and suffering from decay as a result. The Levenford House boundary walls are in need of repair and removal of ivy growth from the gatehouse.

4.3. Character Areas

An analysis of the Kirktonhill Conservation Area indicates that it does not require to be divided into character areas as the historical development, street pattern, built form, uses and activities are similar throughout. There is variation within the conservation area namely:

- The layout along West Bridgend is slightly earlier and chiefly encompasses Levenford House and the West Kirk.
- The tenements and terraces around bridge end have a higher density.

Modern development south of Helenslee will be discussed in section 9.5 Boundary Review.



Figure 23 Water penetration below chimneys is seen on a number of properties



Figure 24 Leven Grove Terrace, original windows with replacements and concrete tile roof replacement; central chimney also looks to have been removed

5 MAPS



5.1 Listed and unlisted buildings

A		Positive	
B		Neutral	
C			

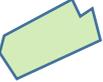


5.2 Buildings analysis

Pre-1860		1914-1937	
Pre-1896		Post-1937	
1896-1914			

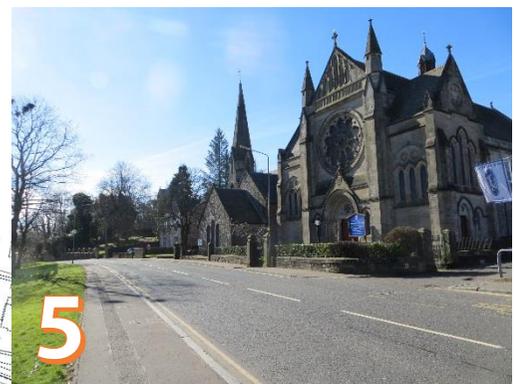
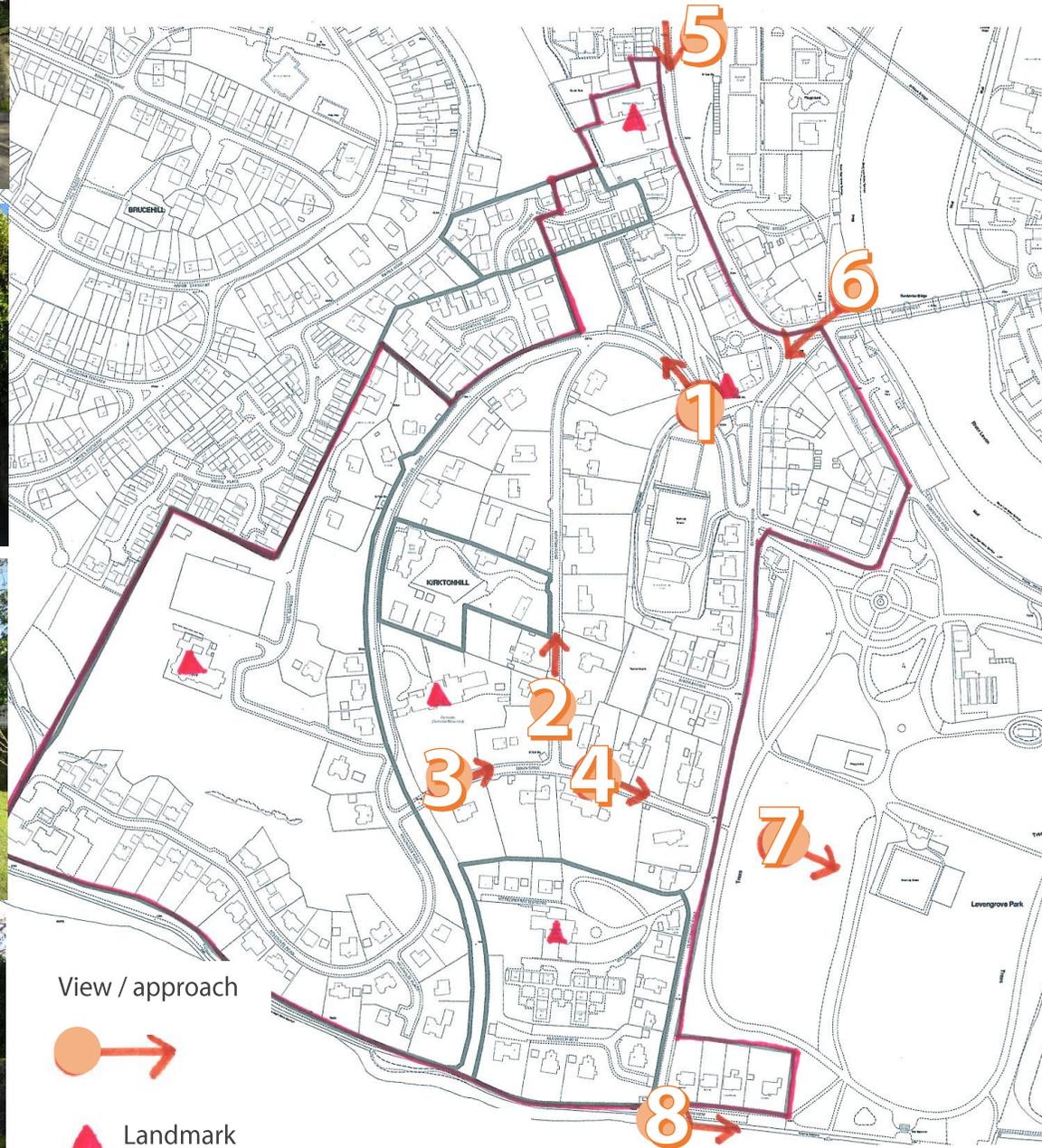


5.3 Trees

TPO 

Tree groups 

5.4 Views and approaches



5.5 Boundary review



6. KEY FEATURES / ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Having carried out an assessment of the conservation area it is now possible to identify the key features that define the special architectural and historic character of the area. These are:

- A coherent Victorian suburb of Dumbarton developed from the mid to late 19th century.
 - An attractive riverside setting above the Clyde Estuary and alongside the Levensgrove Park.
 - Chiefly residential use excepting the West Kirk and Hall.
 - Three principal building types:
 - Large mansions of the Victorian industrialists set in substantial grounds often with ancillary buildings surviving;
 - Modest residential villas set back from the road on large irregular gardens plots screened by boundary walls and mature gardens and trees;
 - Traditional tenements and terrace properties often with front gardens addressing the street and communal rear gardens.
 - Helenslee Road, Kirkton Road and Dixon Drive form the residential heart of the suburb.
 - The work of several prominent architectural firms of the period and a significant number of buildings designed by local architect John McLeod, who lived in Overcliffe, Kirkton Road.
 - Use of buff and red sandstones (possibly local), slate roofs, and traditional sash and case windows and timber panelled doors.
 - Traditional boundary treatments with considerable architectural detail including boundary walls, stone gate piers and decorative cast iron railings.
- An attractive mature green environment with trees, hedging and private gardens, and some traditional road surfaces.

7. CONSERVATION ISSUES

A number of conservation issues have been identified which have the potential to have a detrimental impact on the conservation area. These are listed below. These form the basis for the Sensitivity Analysis and the Opportunities for Enhancement.

- The replacement of traditional materials and elements has led to a loss of historic fabric and a negative impact on the character of the conservation area.
- The conservation area contains four entries on the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland which are some of the most significant in terms of the social and architectural development of the area and can be described as landmark buildings.
- Maintenance and repair requirements have been identified for properties and the historic built environment.
- Modern development in the area is not always sympathetic to the character of the area in terms of materials, design, plot size and density. This has had a significant impact on the character of the conservation area on the former Helenslee and Dunmore House estates.
- The public realm is in some parts utilitarian in character and can detract from the high quality historic built environment. In other areas the more traditional streetscape is in need of repair.
- Development in the grounds of both large mansions and smaller villas has resulted in the loss of some mature trees and green space with the introduction of hard landscaping and

loss of traditional boundary enclosures and screening.

8. SENSITIVITY ANALYSIS

8.1. Loss of original architectural details and building materials

Although the majority of the buildings in the conservation area appear to be in fair physical condition the area as a whole is at risk from small changes which can cumulatively dilute the special character of the area. Examples which have adversely affected some of the buildings in the conservation area include the replacement of original timber windows or doors with inappropriate materials such as uPVC or unsympathetic designs or methods of opening; the replacement of natural roof slates; and removal, inappropriate repair or poor modern equivalents of boundary treatments. These changes in detailing and the loss of original features effect both the external appearance of individual buildings and the local streetscape. It is important that future changes are managed, ensuring that appropriate materials and designs are used, in order to protect and enhance the character of the conservation area.

8.2. Buildings at Risk

Four buildings within the Kirktonhill Conservation Area have been identified as Buildings at Risk. These are:

- Helenslee (Former Keil School)
- Levenford House: Garden Walls and Gateway, West Bridgend
- Levenford House: Stables, Helenslee Road (Council ownership 2013)
- Levenford House: Lodge, Helenslee Road (Council ownership 2013)

As stated in section 4.2.4, the three buildings are in poor condition, roofless or partially

roofless and suffering from decay as a result. This is a considerable concern considering the social and architectural significance of these buildings. Exposure to the elements will lead to rapid decay and loss of original fabric. Measures should be taken to secure a future use for these buildings and in the interim undertake measures to protect the fabric and secure the building. The Levenford House boundary walls and gatehouse would benefit from careful removal of ivy growth followed by appropriate stonework repair and repointing.

8.3. Repair and maintenance

Notwithstanding the condition of the Buildings at Risk in the conservation area, there are properties and boundary walls in need of repair and maintenance. This is important to prevent the loss of original fabric and details and to ensure buildings are energy efficient and safe.

8.4. Quality of new development, alterations and extensions

There is a significant proportion of new development in the conservation area, the majority of which is very recent. Sensitive development maintaining the scale and density of the conservation area can be accommodated reasonably well and this is seen where large plots in Kirtkon Road have individual houses. However, continued development of these garden plots will erode the historic pattern of development, diluting the historic interest of the conservation area.

Where larger modern developments have occurred they have not always been sympathetic to the local character. This is discussed further in the boundary review.

8.5. Quality of public realm

The utilitarian character of the some parts of the public realm does not reflect the character and significance of the conservation area. It is vital to ensure that public works and traffic management measures do not detract from the otherwise high quality historic environment. Where traditional and original finishes and architectural detail such as wall and railings survive these should be appropriately maintained and repaired.

8.6. Protection of trees, hedges and traditional boundaries

Trees make an important contribution to the landscape and enhance the setting of historic buildings and the conservation area as a whole and should be properly managed and protected. Hedges, railings, gates, gate piers and boundary walls also make a major contribution and similarly need to be retained. There are a few instances of poorly maintained boundaries and the use of inappropriate or poor quality materials for walls or gates, which detracts from the character of the conservation area.

Tree groups such as the green space between Helenslee Road and Keil Gardens are important to maintain the landscape atmosphere of the conservation area and contribute to screening later development.

9. OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRESERVATION AND ENHANCEMENT

9.1. The control of unlisted buildings

As part of the appraisal process, unlisted but 'positive' buildings have been identified (see map 5.1). Generally, these are individual or

groups of traditional buildings which contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. As with listed buildings, there is a general presumption in favour of their retention. Any application for the demolition of a building which is deemed to make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area will therefore need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification as to why the building cannot be retained, similar to that required for a listed building. The owner must also have made positive efforts to market the building, or to find a suitable new use, before an application can be determined.

The Council will consider applications for change to 'positive' buildings extremely carefully and should refuse any which adversely affect their architectural or historic interest.

Further reading:

- [Managing Change Guidance Notes \(Historic Environment Scotland\)](#)

9.2. Quality of new developments, building alterations and extensions

In assessing planning applications within the Kirktonhill Conservation Area or which might impact on its setting, the Council shall consider them in relation to the Local Plan and Proposed Local Development Plan policies. Particular attention will also be paid to the following requirements:

- New development, building alterations and extensions should be in accord with the prevailing form of historic development, including the scale, massing and historic layout of buildings using traditional and compatible materials

- New development, building alterations and extensions should not impinge on the setting of existing buildings
- There will be a presumption against backland development within the original plots in the conservation area and new development should follow existing plot ratios
- New development should protect significant views within the public realm
- Original or historic features should be retained wherever possible
- New development, building alterations and extensions should use materials which are high quality, durable and which complement the palette of materials traditionally found in the conservation area (the use of UPVC, aluminium, concrete tiles or other non-traditional materials are not considered appropriate)
- Where stonework is not currently painted or rendered, a coating should not be applied
- Colours should be muted and in keeping with the rest of the conservation area
- Trees and private gardens should be maintained and managed as an important townscape asset. New development should protect important trees, hedges, boundary walls and other established boundaries
- Hard landscaping, roads and pavements should be maintained and where repair or resurfacing is required, careful consideration should be made to the choice of materials respecting the original character of surfaces. There should be a reluctance to approve the removal of green space for hard landscaping
- New boundary treatments should use traditional materials and be of appropriate design to suit the locality
- Historic photographs may be consulted

to inform the design of new development, building alterations and extensions

Where necessary, the Council will require applications for new development which may have an impact on the Conservation Area to be accompanied by a Design Statement explaining and illustrating the principles and concept behind the design and layout of the proposed development and demonstrating how the proposal relates both to the site and its wider context. Applicants can use this Character Appraisal to assist them in this.

Further reading:

- [New Design in Historic Settings \(Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Government and Architecture + Design Scotland\)](#)

9.3. Building maintenance and repair

It is important that historic buildings are adequately maintained and repaired using traditional materials and techniques and property owners are encouraged to get specialist professional advice.

West Dunbartonshire Council's planning team can provide advice on traditional repairs. The council will encourage owners of historic buildings to use traditional materials and repair techniques through advice and publications. Advice can also be obtained from Historic Environment Scotland.

Further reading:

- [Maintaining your home - A short guide for homeowners \(Historic Environment Scotland\)](#)
- [INFORM Guides \(Historic Environment Scotland\)](#)

9.4. Buildings at Risk

Historic Environment Scotland maintains a Register of buildings that are at risk from deterioration due to neglect, vacancy or threat of demolition (the Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland). This is updated as necessary and the Council has powers to protect all listed buildings and also, in certain instances, unlisted buildings in a conservation area, where they make a positive contribution to the area's special character.

Where the condition of an historic building deteriorates to a point where it is considered vulnerable and detrimental to the character of the area then West Dunbartonshire Council in conjunction with the Scottish Ministers will consider appropriate action to enable its return to a reasonable state of repair. The Council will encourage the reuse of existing vacant buildings over new build construction where possible.

Further reading:

- [The Buildings at Risk Register for Scotland](#)

9.5. Boundary Review

As part of the assessment, the boundaries of the conservation area were inspected. In considering any review of the content and boundary of a conservation area, it is important to establish criteria against which decisions can be assessed. An overarching principle comes from the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997. In defining Conservation Areas and the role planning authorities have in considering development proposals within them, four main themes are identified. These are: a. architectural interest; b. historic

interest; c. character; and d. appearance.

As shown in the historic maps on page 9 (Figure 5 2nd Ed OS with CA boundary) the existing boundary currently encompasses the Victorian development from West Bridgend to the boundary of the Helenslee and Dunmore House estates. It excludes the Levensgrove Park and the slightly later turn of the 20th century development of Oxhill Road.

Areas considered were:

- Levensgrove Park
- Oxhill Road
- New developments within the boundary
- Clarification of boundary line

Levensgrove Park was laid out during the development of the suburb and makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The case for inclusion in the conservation area of Levensgrove Park is based on two main principles: historic development and setting.

Historic development

Firstly, the origins of the area which date back to at least the medieval period when a chapel was built for the parish of Cardross. Secondly, the predominant period of development of the conservation area is in this case was over the course of the second half of the 19th century (mid to late Victorian period). The suburb was in place by the time of the 2nd Ed OS, surveyed in 1896.

Levensgrove Park has relevance and importance in the historic development of the area on four counts:

1. The site of the early chapel of Cardross (St Serf's), presumably the origins of the early Kirkton settlement and from where the area's name derives. The ruins of

this site remain within the Levensgrove Park today and are a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

2. The park grounds were part of the Levensgrove Estate. In the 18th century this was the site of the first significant mansion in the area, Levensgrove House. The construction of this house marked the first 'new development' of the area beyond what we understand was the small settlement of 'kirktoon' and houses at the ferry crossing on the route to Dalreoch. This move across the River Leven set the standard which the wealthy industrialists of the 19th century would follow.
3. Estate lands adjacent to Levensgrove House were feued in 1867 to create the suburb of Kirktonhill which now forms a significant part of the conservation area. In addition, the terraces and tenement properties on Levensgrove, Veil and Levenford Terraces were set out in the 1880s on the former garden grounds of Levensgrove House (after the sale and demolition of the house). The remaining significant portion of the Levensgrove Estate was purchased in 1880 and set out as a public park opened in 1885 and gifted to the burgh. The park and suburb are therefore contemporary with one another in terms of the architectural and spatial development of the area and this is still evident on the ground today.
4. The social history of the area is also important. This includes the ownership of the Levensgrove Estate by the Dixon family of the Dumbarton Glassworks in the early 19th century, and the later purchase and gift of the Levensgrove Park by two of Dumbarton's prominent shipbuilders, Peter Denny and John McMillan. The establishment of a

Victorian public park, was typical of the philanthropy of the period, and the park will have been the scene of numerous community events over the one hundred years of use. It remains an important public recreational asset for the town today.

Setting

The conservation area occupies a strip of land extending from north to south from the banks of the River Leven to the Clyde Estuary. The site is slightly elevated above the two rivers and as such Kirktonhill appears as an attractive wooded hillock in views from the Dumbarton Rock and across the Clyde Estuary. Levensgrove Park occupies a large site to the east of the conservation area defined on its western boundary by the tree lined Clydeshire Road which dates back to the establishment of the Levensgrove House. Levensgrove Park therefore contributes both to the immediate setting of the conservation area, and also to the wider landscape setting of Dumbarton and the Dumbarton Rock, providing a green buffer to the urbanisation of the town. The physical relationship of suburb to park, and the original boundaries of Levensgrove Park remain unchanged today.

Therefore there is a strong case to be made to include the original extent of Levensgrove Park in respect of its historic development and its current contribution. Parks and other green space were often not included in earlier conservation area designations which were more focussed on the built environment. However the contribution of these green spaces to the character, appearance and atmosphere of a conservation area is now recognised and it is not unusual to include such areas when revising boundaries. Both built and landscape elements complement each other

and should be considered as a whole in any development management, public realm improvements etc. Conservation Area designation would recognise the contribution the park makes both to the Kirktonhill Conservation Area and also to Dumbarton as a whole, and offer additional management controls to enhance and protect this important public asset.

Oxhill Road contains a number of more modest semi-detached late Victorian houses and a small number of Edwardian houses. There has been considerable incremental change to these properties and they are also physically detached from the conservation area by the topography of the site and the modern development which separates the two areas. Oxhill Road was not laid out as part of the Kirktonhill suburb but has been considered due to the age of the properties. There is no strong case to be made for its inclusion at this time.

There are two significant areas of **new development**:

- On the former Helenslee parkland in particular the extended Helenslee Road;
- On the former Dunmore House grounds on Helenslee Crescent.

The development around the T junction of Helenslee Road and Keil Gardens is not in keeping in terms of materials (although some sandstone detailing has been included). The modern white render finishes stand out predominately in a surrounding palette of subdued natural colours. The housing development further south on Helenslee Road are not in-keeping with the character of the area in terms of materials, plot size,

house positioning and density. The lack of boundary walls and appropriate planted screening further emphasises the different character of this development. A current Planning Application for housing to the rear of Helenslee in the former walled garden comprising 12 new build flats and 26 new houses, whilst not determined, proposes another high density development. This former mansion, its associated buildings and its grounds were very important to the development of Kirktonhill. Helenslee remains one of its most important buildings and the context of the house (including its remaining parkland and walled garden) should be protected. It is therefore recommended that the mansion, its walled garden and remaining grounds to the front and rear of the house are retained in the conservation area, and that the new housing development to the south is removed from the designation.

The former Dunmore House grounds have been redeveloped in the later 20th century with new housing which forms Helenslee Court and Helenslee Crescent. Part of Helenslee Crescent remains within the conservation area boundary and is a typical 1980s residential cul-de-sac. This development appears distinctively different from the character of the conservation area due to its street plan, plot density and materials (precast stone and red tile roofs). It is recommended for removal from the designation.

There is also development around the former Helenslee stables, Dunstane House and Methlan Park House. Development has been better screened within these existing

grounds and therefore does not have a significant adverse effect on overall character.

There is a small section of land on West Bridgend next to the West Kirk which is within the existing conservation area. This is the former site of the 18th century Black Bull Inn which was delisted in 2009 and has since been demolished. There is now a car service and repair garage on this site and it is recommended that it be removed from the designation.

It was therefore considered that the following amendments should be made.

- Consider adjusting the boundary to the north of Levenford House to remove the modern housing on Helenslee Crescent.
- Consider exclusion of the former site of the Black Bull Inn.
- Consider inclusion of Leven Grove Park and the Esplanade

9.6. Public realm enhancement

The council should consider a public realm audit to fully record the existing fabric and plan accordingly for future management, change and enhancement opportunities.

Any new public realm design should be considered in conjunction with surrounding areas, which provides the opportunity to emphasise and coordinate the public realm across a broader area.

Further reading:

- [Designing Streets \(Scottish Government\)](#)

9.7. Trees and landscape

West Dunbartonshire Council will continue to enforce the relevant policies to ensure that the very special qualities of the Kirktonhill Conservation Area are protected from unsympathetic change. New development should protect important views, trees, hedges, boundary walls, gates, and other established landscape features.

Further reading:

- [Inform guide - Domestic Boundary Walls \(Historic Environment Scotland\)](#)
- [Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Boundaries \(Historic Environment Scotland\)](#)
- [Managing Change in the Historic Environment - Setting \(Historic Environment Scotland\)](#)

9.8. Article 4 Direction and planning controls

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992 (known as the GPDO) sets out certain types of development that do not require planning permission, known as permitted development rights. In line with guidance, it has been common practice among planning authorities to extend control within Conservation Areas by way of an Article 4 Direction. Essentially, this requires planning permission to be sought for certain specified types of development where this would not normally be required.

The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2011 Householder Permitted Development Rights changed the permitted development rights for homeowners, and in conservation areas.

These changes came into force in February 2012 and further restricted permitted development rights for dwelling houses and flats in conservation areas.

It is therefore considered that the existing Direction in relation to Class 1 (Development within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse) is no longer required and could be cancelled. The other classes (2, 12 and 16) will remain.

West Dunbartonshire Council will monitor unauthorised changes in the conservation area and will use its statutory powers of enforcement where necessary.

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This document should be reviewed every 5 years from the date of its formal adoption by West Dunbartonshire Council. It will be assessed in the light of the proposed West Dunbartonshire Local Development Plan and government policy and guidance on the historic environment. A review should include the following:

- A survey of the conservation area including a photographic survey to aid possible enforcement action
- An assessment of whether the various recommendations detailed in this document have been acted upon, and how successful this has been, particularly in relation to:
 - Protection of unlisted 'positive' buildings
 - Quality of new developments and building alterations re: Section 9.2
 - Buildings at Risk
 - Tree works
 - Protection of views
- The identification of any new issues which need to be addressed, requiring further actions or enhancements
- The production of a short report detailing the findings of the survey and any necessary action
- Publicity and advertising

It is possible that this review could be carried out by the local community under the guidance of a heritage consultant or the council. This would enable the local community to become more involved with the process and would raise public consciousness of the issues, including the problems associated with enforcement. Work towards the review will be taken throughout the period leading up to the formal review.

11. FURTHER INFORMATION AND LINKS

Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP)
www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/shep

Historic Environment Scotland's Managing Change

Guidance Note series

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/managingchange

Historic Environment Scotland - Advice for Owners of

Listed Buildings

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/heritage/historicandlistedbuildings.htm

Historic Environment Scotland's INFORM Guides

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/learning/freepublications.htm

Historic Environment Scotland's Knowledge Base website

<http://conservation.historic-scotland.gov.uk/home/resourcecentre.htm>

Historic Environment Scotland - Grants

www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/grants

Funds for Historic Buildings

www.ffhb.org.uk

Scottish Civic Trust

www.scottishcivictrust.org.uk

Heritage Lottery Fund

www.hlf.org.uk

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12. ADDENDUM

Planning Committee report, November 2016: on following pages.

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Strategic Lead - Regulatory

Planning Committee: 23 November 2016

Subject: Kirktonhill Conservation Area

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek approval of alterations to the boundary of the Kirktonhill Conservation Area.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:
- a) approves the following changes to the Kirktonhill Conservation Area boundary:
 - the inclusion of Levensgrove Park;
 - the removal of Helenslee Crescent; and
 - the removal of the garage at West Bridgend.
 - b) submits Appendix 1 to the Scottish Ministers as the new boundary of the Kirktonhill Conservation Area.
 - c) notes that the Kirktonhill Conservation Area Appraisal (March 2016) will be a material consideration in the determination of future planning applications affecting the conservation area.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act 1997 states that conservation areas are 'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify and designate such areas. The Kirktonhill Conservation Area in Dumbarton was designated in 1984 and is one of five conservation areas in West Dunbartonshire, and one of two in Dumbarton, the other being Knoxland Square.
- 3.2 Kirktonhill is West Dunbartonshire's largest conservation area and is an area where significant development has occurred since its designation over 30 years ago. The Scottish Civic Trust was commissioned by the Council in January 2016 to undertake an appraisal of the Kirktonhill Conservation Area.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1 The June Planning Committee was advised that a Conservation Area Appraisal for Kirktonhill Conservation Area had been undertaken by the Scottish Civic Trust and approved its publication for consultation. On the

basis of the appraisal, the Civic Trust recommended the following changes to the boundary of the conservation area:

- The inclusion of Levensgrove Park within the conservation area - due to its historic development as part of, and current contribution to the setting of the Kirktonhill suburb, the park is considered worthy of conservation area status.
- The removal of Helenslee Crescent from the conservation area - this area in the northern part of the conservation area was formerly the grounds of Dunmore House, but has been redeveloped with late 20th Century housing, which is distinctively different in character and appearance to the rest of the conservation area.
- The removal of the area of modern housing on the southern stretch of Helenslee Road – the character and detailing of this modern housing development is different to the historic parts of the conservation area, in terms of materials, plot size, house positioning, density and boundary treatments.
- The removal of a commercial car garage on West Bridgend – the Black Bull Inn formerly occupied this site, but has been demolished and replaced by a modern building not in keeping with the conservation area.

The existing boundary and the new boundary suggested by the Scottish Civic Trust are shown on the map in Appendix 2.

Consultation approach and responses

- 4.2** The appraisal was published on 24 June 2016 with comments sought by 16 September 2016. The appraisal was made available on the Council's website and leaflets were sent to all of the properties within the conservation area. Residents were advised of the proposed changes and were invited to a drop-in information session at West Kirk Church Hall held on 23 August from 4pm to 8pm. The exhibition was attended by approximately 20 local residents, and employees of the Scottish Civic Trust who had been involved in the appraisal work, along with Council staff, were available to answer questions.
- 4.3** Twelve written responses to the consultation were received. Eight of the responses opposed the removal of the houses on Helenslee Road from the conservation area. Three comments were received in relation to the removal of Helenslee Crescent from the conservation area - one in support of its removal and two against. Six responses supported the inclusion of Levensgrove Park in the conservation area. One response opposed the removal of the garage on West Bridgend from the conservation area

Proposed change – Levensgrove Park

- 4.4** The appraisal recommends the inclusion of Levensgrove Park within the conservation area and this is supported by the Planning Service and most of the respondents. The park was laid out during the development of the

Kirktonhill suburb and makes a significant contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The park is of historical significance as the site of the early chapel of Cardross, a scheduled ancient monument, and its grounds were part of the original Levensgrove Estate. It contributes to the setting of the conservation area and to the wider landscape providing a green buffer. Parks and other green spaces were often not included in earlier conservation area designations which were more focused on the built environment. However, the contribution of these green spaces to the character, appearance and atmosphere of a conservation area is now recognised. The Conservation Area designation would recognise the contribution the park makes to both the Kirktonhill Conservation Area and to Dumbarton as a whole. The designation of Levensgrove Park as part of the conservation area is also considered complementary to the Council's project to restore the historic character of the park through the Heritage Lottery Fund project.

Proposed change – Helenslee Crescent

- 4.5** The appraisal recommends the removal of Helenslee Crescent from the conservation area and this is supported by the Planning Service. The layout and design of this modern residential development is distinctly different in character from the majority of the conservation area. Only part of Helenslee Crescent is located within the conservation area and it is considered that the removal of the entire street from the conservation area is justified. One comment was received that specifically did not support the removal of Helenslee Crescent with the reason given that there would be no benefit to the residents of the street, and the only potential beneficiary could be the resident of the adjacent Levenford House where there is currently a planning application to develop the grounds. However, the residents of Helenslee Crescent would benefit by having increased rights to carry out minor work to their properties without the need to apply for planning permission. Levenford House would remain within the conservation area and as it is a listed building there would still be controls in place to ensure that any development within its grounds would be appropriate. There was another response that opposed all removals from the conservation area, including Helenslee Crescent. Another comment supported the removal of Helenslee Crescent. A Tree Preservation Order will remain in place over that part of Helenslee Crescent removed from the conservation area.

Proposed change – Helenslee Road

- 4.6** The appraisal recommends the removal of the area of modern housing at the southern end of Helenslee Road. The appraisal identifies this as an area of significant new development and describes the housing as not in-keeping with the character of the area in terms of materials, plot size, house positioning and density. The lack of boundary walls and appropriate planted screening further emphasises the different character of this development. All of the comments received from Helenslee Road residents oppose this change as they believe there is no reason why these houses should be treated differently from similar modern properties within the conservation area. Residents also argue that the conservation area status protects this part of the street from inappropriate development and helps to maintain the architectural and

historical character of the area. Conservation area status was regarded by some as a positive attribute that implied a better quality of area and some concern was raised that removal from the conservation area could impact on house prices. The view of the Planning Service is that the properties are within an area that forms an important part of the setting of the conservation area and that whilst the houses are of a more modern design and layout, the area does have a role to play in contributing to the character of the conservation area giving grounds to maintain stricter management of the type of development that can happen there. There has also been strong opposition to the removal of the area from the conservation area and no support. For these reasons it is considered that the southern part of Helenslee Road should remain within the conservation area.

Proposed change – West Bridgend

- 4.7 The appraisal recommends the removal of a relatively modern car workshop on West Bridgend. There was one comment received that objected to all removals from the conservation area including this West Bridgend site. The Planning Service supports the removal of this site from the conservation area as the building is not in keeping with the character of the conservation area.

Other comments

- 4.8 A response was received drawing attention to various matters that were considered to contribute to the untidy and derelict appearance of the conservation area e.g. Levenford Lodge, neglected footpaths and roads (in private ownership), parking on footpaths, lack of bins. This information will be shared with the relevant Council services. Another response stated the respondent was not happy with the whole conservation area appraisal but gave no further detail.

Conclusion and next steps

- 4.9 Taking into account the findings and recommendations contained within the conservation area appraisal, and the responses received from members of the local community it is considered that the proposed boundary changes with regard to Helenslee Crescent, Leven Grove Park and West Bridgend should be accepted, while the houses at the southern end of Helenslee Road should remain within the Conservation Area.
- 4.10 If agreed, notification of the new conservation area boundary (Appendix 1) will be advertised in a local newspaper and the Edinburgh Gazette and submitted to the Scottish Ministers.

5. People Implications

- 5.1 There are no personnel issues associated with this report.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial issues associated with this report.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 It was not considered necessary to carry out a risk assessment on the matters covered by this report.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 A screening has been undertaken and no equalities issues have been identified.

9 Strategic Environmental Assessment

9.1 A pre-screening notification has been sent to the SEA Gateway. However, the boundary changes are not considered to have any significant environmental impacts, so it is not anticipated that an SEA will be required.

10. Consultation

10.1 Details of the consultation undertaken are set out in paragraph 4.2.

11. Strategic Assessment

11.1 The guidance is considered to support the Council's strategic priority of improving local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure.

Peter Hessett
Strategic Lead - Regulatory
Date: 1st November 2016

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Appendices: Appendix 1 - Proposed Kirktonhill Conservation Area boundary.

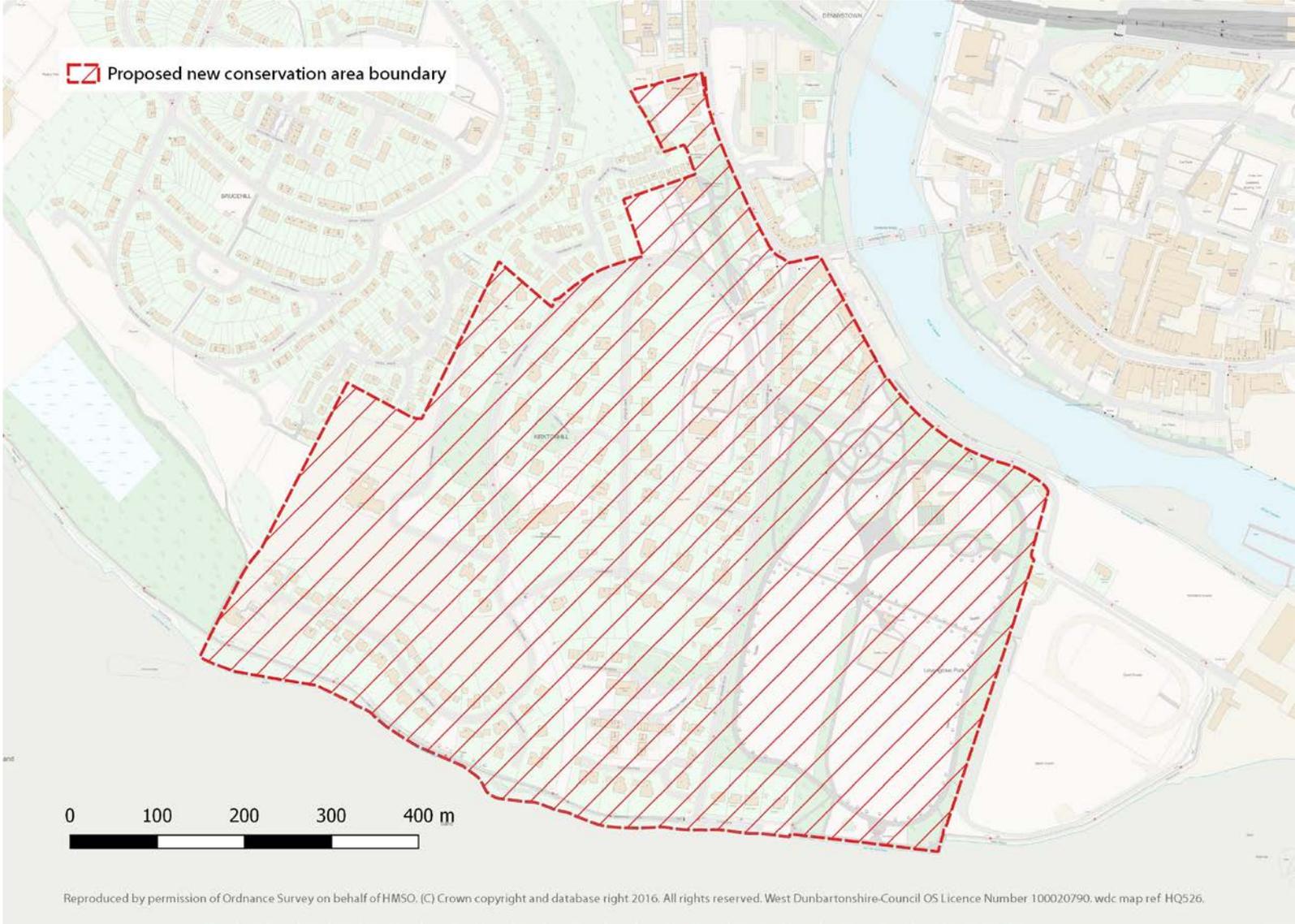
Appendix 2 – Scottish Civic Trust recommended changes to Kirktonhill Conservation Area boundary.

Background Papers: Kirktonhill Conservation Area Appraisal, March 2016, The Scottish Civic Trust.

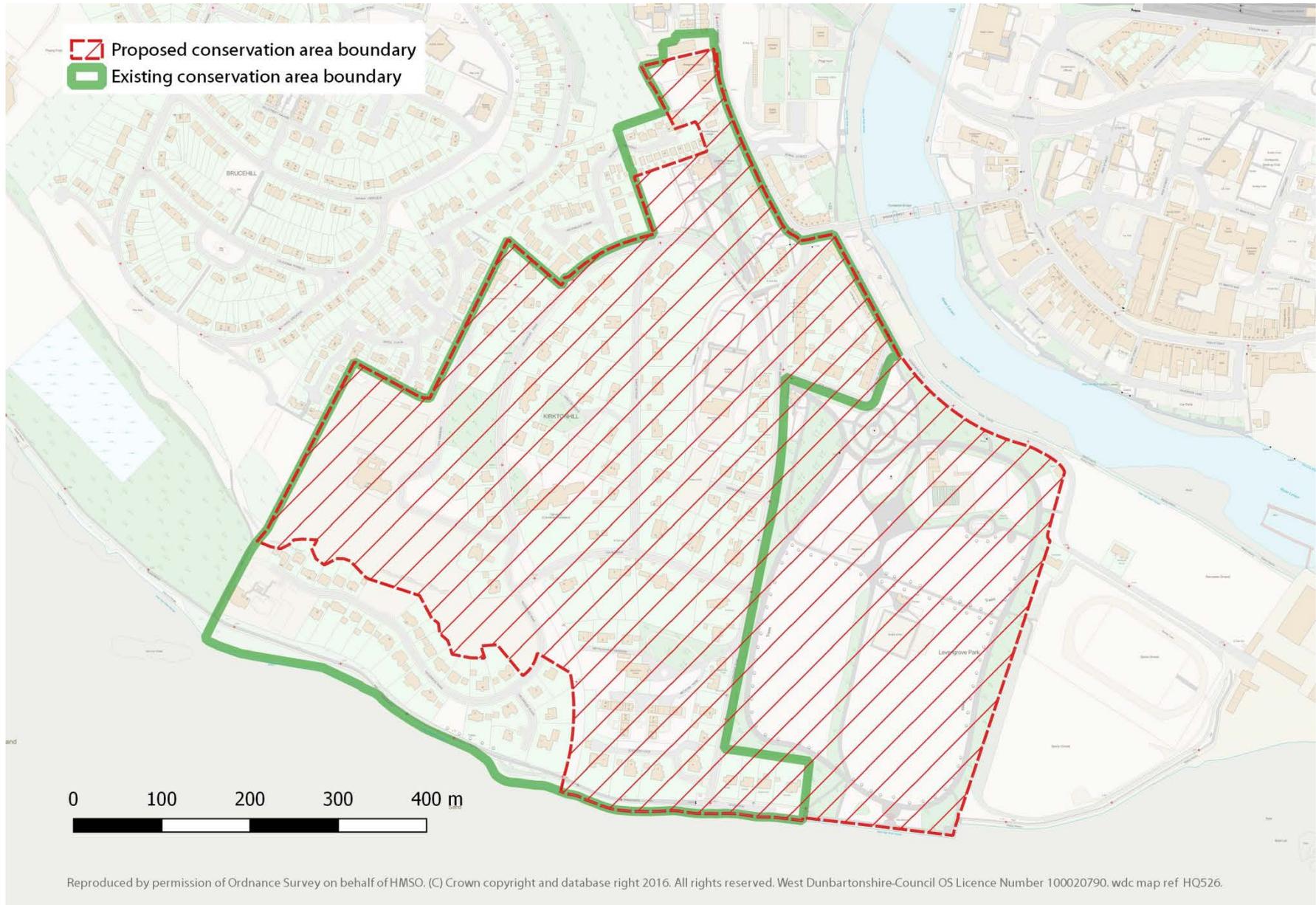
Report to Planning Committee on 22 June 2016 – Kirktonhill Conservation Area Appraisal.

Wards Affected: Ward 3 – Dumbarton

Appendix 1: Proposed new conservation area boundary



Appendix 2: Existing conservation area boundary and boundary proposed by the Scottish Civic Trust Conservation Area Appraisal





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