

# Planning Committee

10am Thursday 28 February 2013

## Pilrig Proposed Conservation Area- Appraisal of Historic and Architectural Interest

Item number

Report number

Wards

Leith Walk

### Links

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Coalition pledges

[P40](#)

Council outcomes

[CO19](#)

Single Outcome  
Agreement

[SO4](#)

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# Executive summary

## Pilrig Proposed Conservation Area - Appraisal of Historic and Architectural Interest

### Summary

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The purpose of this report is to invite the Committee to approve a consultation on the potential to designate Pilrig as a conservation area. The basis of the consultation would be the attached appraisal of historic and architectural interest.

### Recommendations

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It is recommended that the Committee approves the attached appraisal as a basis for consultation on the potential to designate Pilrig as a conservation area.

### Measures of success

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The protection of areas of special architectural or historic interest.

### Financial impact

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The designation of a conservation area will increase the number of planning applications that the authority must process. This could create pressure for additional staff resources in the Planning Service.

### Equalities impact

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All venues used for the consultation will be DDA compliant.

### Sustainability impact

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Conservation of the built environment minimises the use of natural resources and helps to reduce carbon emissions. The proposals in this report will help achieve a sustainable Edinburgh because the conservation and management of the historic environment contributes directly to sustainability in a number of ways. These include the energy and materials invested in a building, the

scope for adaptation and reuse, and the unique quality of historic environments which provide a sense of identity and continuity.

### **Consultation and engagement**

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An extensive consultation will be carried out with the local community. The main part of the consultation will take the form of an exhibition, which will be displayed in McDonald Road Library. Open Evenings will also be held at the library which will provide an opportunity for visitors to discuss the proposals with Council officers.

The exhibition and Open Evenings will be promoted by posters in the local area, on Twitter and online. Local and city wide amenity groups, and local councillors, will also be notified and sent copies of the appraisal.

### **Background reading / external references**

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None.

## Proposed Pilrig Conservation Area - Appraisal of Historic and Architectural Interest

### 1. Background

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- 1.1 Local residents in Pilrig have contacted the Council requesting that the area be considered for designation as a conservation area. The proposal is also supported by the local MP and MSP. Local residents have assisted with the preparation of the appraisal of historic and architectural interest.

### 2. Main report

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#### The Pilrig Area

- 2.1 The area under consideration incorporates a mainly residential area to the north west of Leith Walk. The boundary is irregular: to the north west it follows part of Broughton Road from North Pilrig Heights to Stanwell Street, to the north east it follows the boundary of Pilrig Park and the rear of a terraced block on Balfour Street, to the south east it abuts the boundary of the Old Leith Conservation Area at Leith Walk and to the south west it runs irregularly to the western boundary of Rosebank Cemetery. The boundary includes the large open spaces of Rosebank Cemetery and Pilrig Park. The recently approved Pilrig Model Buildings (Shaw's Place) Colony Conservation Area lies immediately to the south of the area.

#### Criteria for Designation of a Conservation Area

- 2.2 The statutory definition of a conservation area is 'an area of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. The Scottish Historic Environment Policy specifies that it is the character or historic interest of an area created by individual buildings and open spaces and their relationship one with the other which the legislation covering conservation areas seeks to preserve.
- 2.3 The principles of selection for designation as a conservation area are broadly as follows:
- areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of specific listed buildings and/or ancient monuments;

- areas of significant architectural or historic interest in terms of building groupings, which may or may not include listed buildings and/or ancient monuments, and open spaces which they abut;
  - areas with features of architectural or historic interest such as street pattern, planned towns and villages and historic gardens and designed landscapes; and
  - other areas of distinctive architectural or historic character.
- 2.4 In designating a conservation area, consideration also has to be given to the reasons why it is felt that it should be protected. These may include:
- its special architectural and historic importance;
  - its distinct character;
  - its value as a good example of local or regional style;
  - its value within the wider context of the village or town; and
  - its present condition and the scope for significant improvement and enhancement.
- 2.5 The designation of a conservation area must, therefore, be based on the historic and architectural interest of an area. Conservation area status is not intended to act solely as a means of controlling development.

### **Assessment**

- 2.6 An appraisal of the historic and architectural interest of the area has been prepared with input from the local community. This is attached at Appendix 1. The appraisal indicates that Pilrig contains a number of interesting buildings and includes areas of high quality residential streets. However, with the exception of Pilrig House, it does not include any buildings of significant architectural or historic interest or distinctive character. The area's value in terms of the wider context of the city appears to be limited. There are also a substantial number of non-original features, such as more modern windows and doors, in many of the properties. The findings of the appraisal do not provide a strong case for the designation of Pilrig as a conservation area in terms of the criteria set out in paragraph 2.3 and 2.4.
- 2.7 The normal procedure is to undertake a public consultation prior to the designation of a conservation area. In this case, the consultation process is of particular significance as it will provide the opportunity to generate additional input on the historic and architectural importance of the area and thereby strengthen the case for designation. It will also allow consideration of issues such as a different boundary or the inclusion of parts of the area in adjoining conservation areas. In

addition, it is important that the local community is supportive of any conservation area designation.

### **Implications of Conservation Area Status**

2.8 Designation as a conservation area results in a number of additional requirements:

- the permitted development rights which allow any improvement or alteration to the external appearance of a flatted dwelling that is not an enlargement are removed;
- conservation area consent is required for demolition;
- alterations to windows are controlled in terms of the Council's policy;
- special attention must also be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when planning controls are being exercised. Most applications for planning permission for alterations are, therefore, advertised for public comment and any views expressed must be taken into account when making a decision on the application; and
- notice is required to fell or severely lop trees within the conservation area.

### **Next Steps**

2.9 A consultation will be carried out with the local community.

2.10 The main part of the consultation will take the form of an exhibition, which will be displayed in McDonald Road Library. Open Evenings will also be held at the library which will provide an opportunity for visitors to discuss the proposals with Council officers.

2.11 The exhibition and Open Evenings will be promoted by posters in the local area, on Twitter and online. Local and city wide amenity groups, and local councillors, will also be notified and sent copies of the appraisal.

## **3. Recommendations**

3.1 It is recommended that the Committee approves the attached appraisal as a basis for consultation on the potential to designate Pilrig as a conservation area.

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## Mark Turley

Director of Services for Communities

### Links

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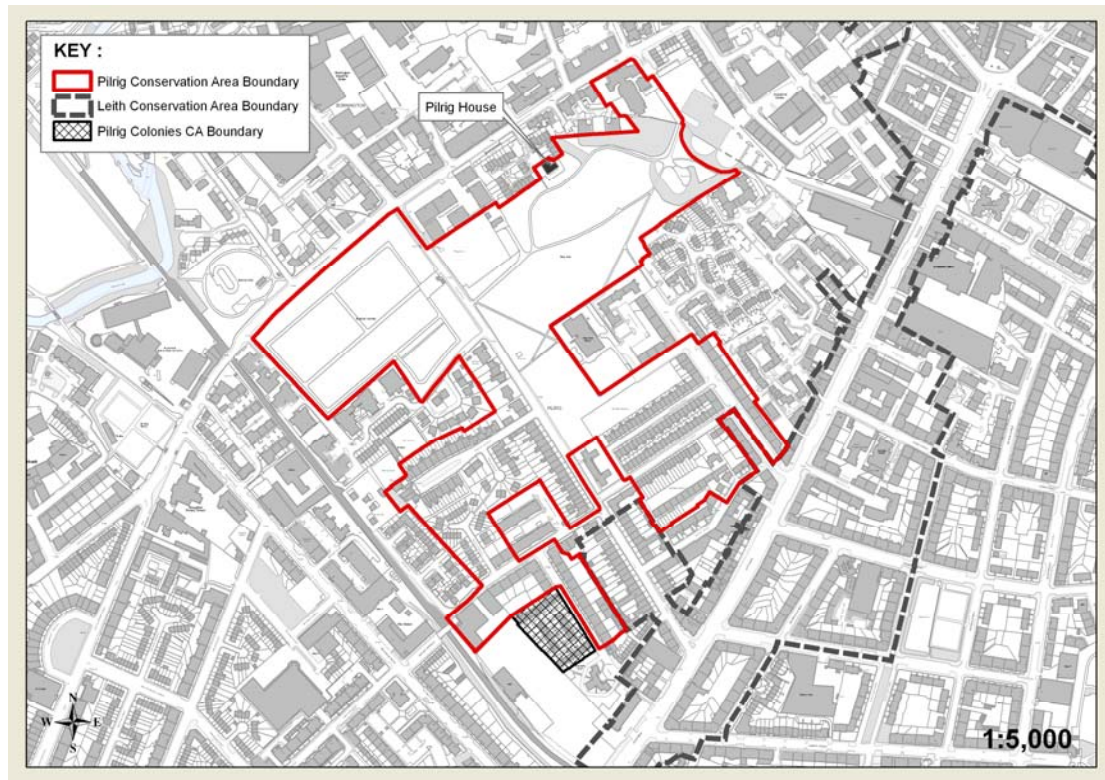
<b>Coalition pledges</b>	P40 Work with Edinburgh World Heritage and other stakeholder to conserve the city's built heritage
<b>Council outcomes</b>	CO19 Attractive places and well maintained – Edinburgh remains an attractive city through the development of high quality buildings and places and the delivery of high standards in the maintenance of infrastructure and public realm.
<b>Single Outcome Agreement</b> *	SO4 Edinburgh's communities are safer and have improved physical and social fabric.

Appendix 1: Proposed Pilrig Conservation Area - Appraisal of Historic and Architectural Interest

## Appendix 1

# PILRIG - APPRAISAL OF HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL INTEREST

## INTRODUCTION



The area under consideration incorporates a mainly residential area to the north west of Leith Walk. The boundary is irregular: to the north west it follows part of Broughton Road from North Pilrig Heights to Stanwell Street, to the north east it follows the boundary of Pilrig Park and the rear of a terraced block on Balfour Street, to the south east it abuts the boundary of the Old Leith Conservation Area at Leith Walk and to the south west it runs irregularly to the western boundary of Rosebank Cemetery. The boundary includes the large open spaces of Rosebank Cemetery and Pilrig Park. The recently approved Pilrig Model Buildings (Shaw's Place) Colony Conservation Area lies immediately to the south of the area.

## HISTORICAL ORIGINS & DEVELOPMENT

Pilrig is shown on maps as early as 1654 and is recorded as *Peilrig* in 1438. The name is Anglian *pyll hrycg*, a ridge by a stream, and Pilrig House, which was built near the centre of the original estate, stands on a ridge near the Broughton Burn. Another potential derivation of the name is from a tower (pil/peel) at the end of a field (rigg). It is also suggested that the name may

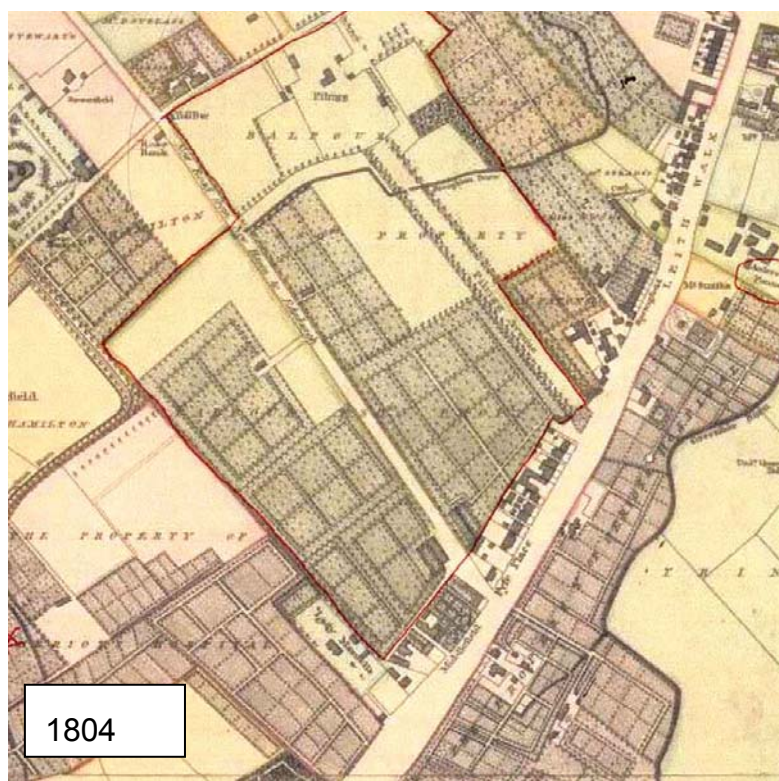


have originated from an earlier building on the present site of Pilrig House as the strength and thickness of the basement walls may have been the foundations of an earlier towerhouse.

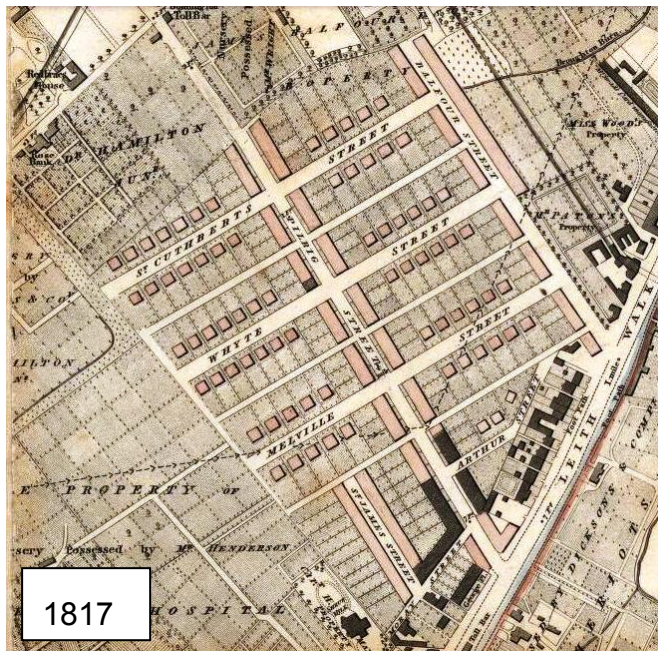
Legend has it that the country house of Mary of Gueldres, Queen to James II of Scotland, stood here in the 15th century, although there is no documentary evidence for this. However, it is known that the land was owned by the family of Monypenny, Lairds of Pilrig, in the 16th century. Recent archaeological excavations in Pilrig Park revealed the remains of Somerset's Battery, or Mount, an artillery fort constructed during the siege of Leith in 1560. This was one of two major forts linked by trenches that encircled Leith, and these are the only 16th Century siege works in Britain. These excavations also uncovered the 17th and 18th century walled gardens and park associated with Pilrig House.

Pilrig House is a late example of a traditional Scottish Laird's house. It dates from 1638 and was built for the Edinburgh goldsmith Gilbert Kirkwood. The original L-shaped plain house, in harled rubble was later embellished with a classical doorway and a curvilinear gable. The house passed through several owners, before being purchased in 1718 by James Balfour with money received in compensation for losses made in the failed Darien expedition to colonise Panama in the late 17th century. The author Robert Louis Stevenson's grandfather Lewis Balfour was born in the house in 1777, and Stevenson mentions it in two of his novels. A plaque unveiled in 1985 on the reopening of the restored building has a quote from Stevenson's novel, *Catriona* - *'I came in view of Pilrig, a pleasant gabled house set by the walkside among brave young woods.'* In 1828, the house was extended by the architect William Burn by filling in the angle of the "L" plan. The house was burned out around 1970 with all the interior destroyed. It was comprehensively restored in 1984-5.

John Ainslie's map of 1804 shows that the Balfour estate covered most of the area of the Pilrig area with the exception of Rosebank Cemetery, which was built on land owned by Dr Hamilton, and part of Shrubhill, owned by the Heriot's Hospital. The estate's northern boundary was the



present Bonnington Road, the western boundary followed the present western boundary of Rosebank Cemetery to Shrubhill House, the southern boundary was up to, but not including, Middlefield and the buildings fronting Leith Walk, and the eastern side was roughly parallel to the western side, ending with the present Balfour Street, called on this map Pilrig Avenue. Pilrig Street, which formed the boundary between the burghs of Edinburgh and Leith, was marked here '*New Road from New Haven to Edinburgh*'. Apart from Pilrig House, the few buildings shown on the estate in 1804 have not survived.



By the beginning of the 19th century, the expansion of both Edinburgh and Leith meant that house building was increasing in the Pilrig area. Kirkwood's 'Edinburgh and Environs' 1817 show the oldest terraced housing which line the Leith Walk end of Pilrig Street already built, plus a possible feuing plan for later additions. Arthur Street, Balfour Street and James Street (now Spey Terrace) follow their present street

pattern. The map also shows three streets that were never built. These crossed and centred on Pilrig Street, and were to be called Melville Street, Whyte Street and St Cuthbert's Street. These streets were to be feued for detached houses, as was Arthur Street. However James Street appears to have been laid out as terraced houses with individual gardens, similar to those already built on Pilrig Street, while Balfour Street was intended to have tenements.

If this plan had been completed, Pilrig might well have developed as a villa area. However from 1825 onwards, there was a progressive decline in the rate of property development in Edinburgh and Leith as the financial crisis of 1825-6 deepened. This meant that there was now an oversupply of land which, although feued for building, remained undeveloped. The history of building in Pilrig confirms this pattern, and the delay in speculative building and the growing industrialisation of the wider area around Pilrig affected the earlier plans for the creation of a residential suburb.

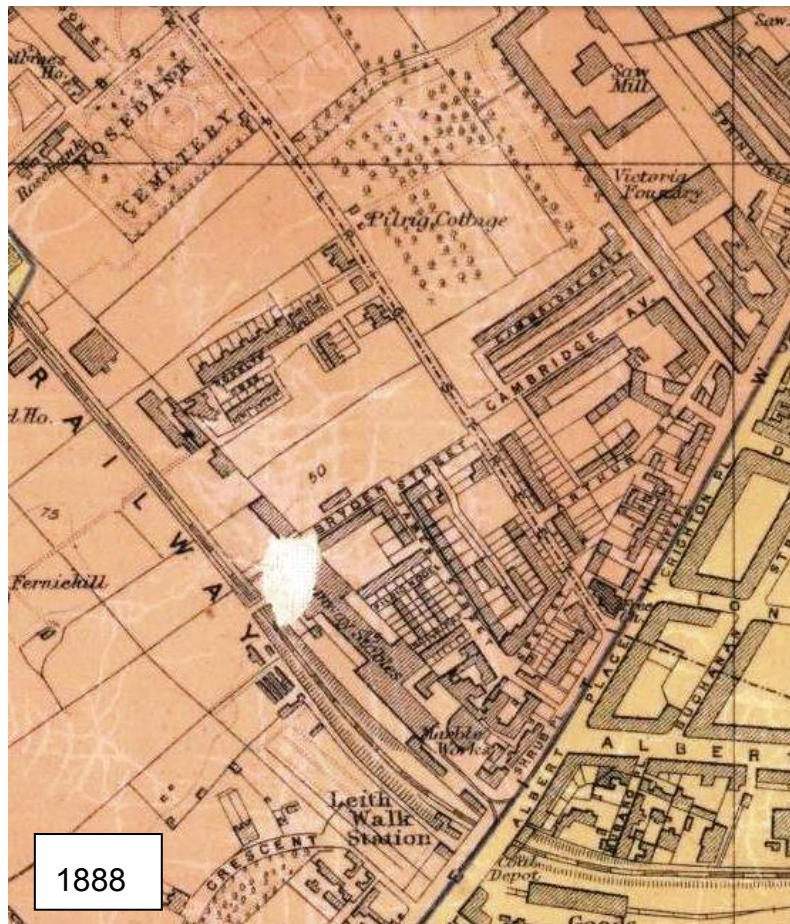
The next area to be feued was land beside Arthur Street, where detached villas had been envisaged in 1817. Here a row of terraced cottage-style dwellings, called Pilrig Cottages, was built by Robert Simpson, mason, who

retained Number 1 and advertised on 26th November 1862, Numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 for sale or let as '*Now finishing, Private entrance from Arthur Street, Leith Walk. These Cottages have good Family Accommodation with Water Supply, Gas, Grates, W.C., Flower Plot, and Right to Green*' (Scotsman 26/11/1862).

The allotments between the cottages and the present Cambridge Avenue date from the time when Pilrig Cottages were built and in 1933, twelve plots were registered here; there are now seven.

The scale of building in these small and almost rural streets of Pilrig can be contrasted with the increasing industrialisation of the surrounding areas in the 1850s and 1860s.

In the Bonnington area to the north of Pilrig House, the old cottages and nursery-gardens were gradually removed, and tenement blocks and factories began to fill the space between Bonnington Road and the Water of Leith. The opposite boundary of the Balfour estate had also become surrounded by building on neighbouring properties, and Johnson's Plan of Edinburgh and Leith of 1851 shows the Shotts Foundry built beside the Leith Walk end of the original driveway to Pilrig House. The main entrance to the house was now opposite the Edinburgh and Leith (later Rosebank) Cemetery on Pilrig Street. By 1868, the railways had arrived on the edge of Pilrig (built on the land owned by Heriot's Hospital) when a passenger station for the the Edinburgh, Leith and Newhaven railway line opened at Leith Walk.



The then Laird, John Balfour, now began the systematic feuing of more of his property. This involved the most easterly section, in the angle formed by Leith Walk and Pilrig Street. In 1868, a feuing plan was drawn up by the architect R Rowand Anderson. Anderson's elevations deliberately followed the old Scottish style of architecture of Pilrig House and thus preserved in the proposed new streets *'a certain resemblance to the ancient mansion which will probably ere long be elbowed out of its place. While reproducing the picturesque forms of a bygone age, the architect has shown no little skill in adapting those forms to the requirements of modern life'* (Scotsman 16/6/1870 'Feuing at Pilrig'). The feuing plan had as the main artery the present Balfour Street, which followed the line of the old tree-lined avenue leading from Leith Walk to Pilrig House. The new street was to be about 75 feet wide and it was expected that it eventually would cut through to Bonnington Road. By 1878, there were 13 tenements of working men's houses on the north side of Balfour Street.

Because Balfour intended that the remainder of the new housing should reflect that already built in the area, the aim was not to follow the main tenemental building form of Leith Walk but to retain the character of the existing self-contained houses, and provide accommodation for well-to-do artisans. It was said that *'So various streets of little pleasant dwellings sprang*

*up in the neighbourhood of Pilrig Street. He (Balfour) refused to make haste to be rich by accepting every bid for ground'* (The Balfours of Pilrig).

From Balfour Street, three cross-streets 50ft wide (similar to the earlier feuing plan shown on Kirkwood 1817) were to be carried at right angles through the broad strip of ground between Balfour Street and Pilrig Street. The spaces between the cross streets were to be occupied by two main oblong blocks of dwelling houses plus several smaller blocks of houses were to fill up the angular spaces between Leith Walk, Balfour Street and the northern end of Arthur Street. However the layout of this plan was amended, when the land was feued to James Shaw in 1881 for the erection of the two storey terraced houses at Cambridge Avenue and Cambridge Gardens, which were advertised in January 1886 as '*small self-contained dwelling houses, well built and carefully painted*' at a price of between £300 for the corner flats and £500 for the houses. In the same advertisement, the development was described as being '*central and convenient with all the amenity and quiet of a country residence*' (Scotsman 30/1/1886).

The growing population in the area in the 1860s and 1870s meant that there was pressure on schools. The Balfour family took a particular interest in education, and Mrs. Balfour formed a committee to start a school at Bonnington Hall until the new Board School on the edge of the Balfour estate was completed. The Education Bill of 1872 put the care of the children under the School Boards, and Bonnington School was opened in 1875.

Building on the Edinburgh side of Pilrig Street continued during the 1880s, first with Rosslyn Crescent and Rosslyn Street (1888). This development was followed by two storey terraced houses along Pilrig Street, with three storey tenements at the corners of the cross streets such as Dryden Terrace.

In 1922, the Council purchased twenty acres of the Balfour Estate for recreational use by the '*population of the congested area in its neighbourhood with Pilrig House*'. (Scotsman 11/1/1921). This also fulfilled a condition of the Extension Act of 1920, when Edinburgh and Leith were amalgamated, which required Edinburgh Council to provide and maintain a public park in close proximity to the Leith district.

Under the terms of the sale to the Council, the house and ground in its immediate vicinity (approximately 5.6 acres) were not to be transferred until the death of the last of the Balfour spinster sisters who lived there. The surviving sister, Miss Balfour-Melville, died in 1941 and the house was gifted to the Council with the intention that it became a museum or a charitable institute. It was subsequently used as a civil defence centre, a boys' club and a firemen's hostel and in 1946 provided emergency accommodation for ten

homeless families. By 1954, it was vacant and in the early 1970s fires destroyed the roof and upper floors. The fortunes of the house improved in 1983 when, following an architectural competition, restoration and conversion to six flats was undertaken by Michael Laird Architects.

The Caledonian (Goods) railway branch, which was built in 1903 from Newhaven to Leith Docks, ran diagonally on an over-bridge across the intersection of Pilrig Street/Newhaven Road and Bonnington Road. The railway track ran close to the back of Pilrig House and diagonally across the present Pilrig Park. The railway embankment which used to enclose the Park on its west and north sides, was removed in the 1980s. An earlier railway line, the Edinburgh, Leith and Newhaven Railway (later the North British Railway) had a station at Leith Walk which opened in 1868. The station was closed to passengers in 1930, but traces of the platform remain near Shrubhill.

Rosebank Cemetery (previously the Edinburgh and Leith Cemetery) at the north end of Pilrig Street was one of six cemeteries opened in Edinburgh between 1843 and 1847 (the others are Warriston, Dean, Newington, Dalry and Grange) by a number of speculative cemetery companies.. The cemetery that is now Rosebank was laid out by the Edinburgh and Leith Cemetery Company to a plan by David Cousin and opened on 20th September 1846.



The Cemetery contains monuments to several minor historical figures, including the grave of Christian Salvesen and a tombstone erected by Queen Victoria to the memory of a maid who died in 1854 on a visit to Edinburgh. The main historical interest is the Gretna Memorial, erected in 1916, to those who died in the Gretna Rail

disaster. This occurred on 22nd May 1915 at Quintinhill near Gretna, and involved a south-bound troop train which crashed into a stationary local train and was then hit by the north-bound express. There were 226 fatalities, the greatest loss of life ever for a rail crash in Britain. The dead included 214 soldiers from the 7th Battalion, the Royal Scots, on their way to Gallipoli. The soldiers were known as the 'Leith Battalion' due to the large number who came from the area. 107 of the dead were brought to the former Drill Hall in

Dalmeny Street, which was used as a temporary mortuary. A service was held there (the *Scotsman* reported that painful and heartrending scenes were witnessed) followed by a funeral procession down Pilrig Street, which was lined with crowds of people, to Rosebank, where most of the dead were buried in a mass grave. An annual remembrance service is held at the Cemetery. A plaque on the gates of the cemetery incorrectly gives the date of the disaster as 1916.

In 1893, Edinburgh Corporation started to replace all the horse-drawn tram routes with cable power. This was a different system to that used in Leith, which had electrified trams since 1905. Pilrig was the point where passengers going between Edinburgh and Leith had to change trams from Leith's electrified system to Edinburgh's cable system. This inconvenience was known as the "Pilrig Muddle" and remained until Edinburgh's cable cars were replaced by electric trams in June 1922, allowing a through journey between Edinburgh and Leith.

## **SPATIAL STRUCTURE AND TOWNSCAPE**

The (proposed) Pilrig Conservation Area lies midway between Edinburgh and Leith to the west of Leith Walk and is intersected by Pilrig Street, which formed the historical boundary between the two burghs. In spite of the fact that the area was governed by different town councils until 1920, when Edinburgh and Leith were amalgamated, the layout of the area reflects its long history as a coherent entity as the former Balfour family estate.

The spatial structure of the area is characterised by its varied street pattern and terraced properties, contrasted with the green space of Pilrig Park and Rosebank Cemetery. The scale is set by two storey housing.

The area is situated on the gentle slope down to Newhaven and Leith, with the large area of open space of Pilrig Park and Rosebank Cemetery in the northern half, and most of the housing and former industrial development in the south. This reflects the Balfour family's aim to maintain the rural setting of Pilrig House by first feuing land for housing development nearer to Leith Walk. The area was planned incrementally and the spatial structure is characterised by varied street patterns and different scales of the mainly terraced housing, built from the early 19th century until the 1930s.

The area is relatively low density, given its proximity to central Edinburgh, and although there are some streets, such as Balfour Street, Dryden Place and Spey Street which follow the traditional tenemental scale of Leith Walk, other streets consist mainly of stone-built terraced housing. The larger houses are along Pilrig Street, with the early 19th century housing at the southern end of the street and infill Victorian development towards the north. Pilrig Street is

built up on the western side, with the houses having a pleasant open view over Pilrig Park. The cross streets, as a contrast to this, have a sense of enclosure, with speculatively built small-scale housing for skilled artisans and lower middle class owner occupation. At an even smaller scale, some of the streets that were built in the mid 19th century for rental take the form of urban cottages. The wide spectrum of housing, from rather grand terraced housing to urban cottages and small flats, has resulted in an unusually high level of social mix in the area.

The area is mainly comprised of low rise residential development. The predominant height is two storeys but there are a small number of flatted elements of mainly three and four storeys. The buildings are complemented by garden settings and stone boundary walls. The stone boundary walls give definition to the street layout and create a clear distinction between public and private spaces.

### **Essential Character: Spatial Structure and Townscape**

- Tranquillity due to lack of through traffic within the residential streets;
- Extensive use of a restricted palette of natural stone, slate and cast iron details, similarity of proportions and terraced forms provide a unity of character to the area;
- Most of the residential development is in the form of terraces; and
- Residential streets separated from surrounding development and from major traffic routes.

### **VISTAS**

The area contains two of the key protected views across Edinburgh to Calton Hill, from the north-east corner of Pilrig Park and from Pilrig Street, near Bonnington Road and Pilrig House. There are also views of Nelson's Monument and the National Monument from the north corner of Pilrig Park and from the centre of the Park a particularly fine view of these monuments, the City Observatory and the open sky space beyond Calton Hill.

Cutting through the area, the view down Pilrig Street towards the green space of Pilrig Park (which is bordered along the Pilrig Street side by a strip of community woodland) is attractive, as is the view down the tree-lined Balfour Street to Pilrig House.



## Essential Character: Vistas

- A number of important key views within the area.

## ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER



The key building in the area is the restored category 'A' listed Pilrig House which dates from 1638 and forms a dominating feature in Pilrig Park. The main (south-east) elevation overlooking Pilrig Park has a 3-bay elevation with a

curvilinear gable of circa 1700. The early 19th century columned doorway at first floor level is accessed by stone stairs with carved steps. Single windows flank the stairs at ground floor and there are two single windows at second floor level with a bull's-eye window to the gablehead. There is a modern, square, wall-mounted sundial to outer left at second floor level, over a carved armorial stone with angel heads. Aspects of the house, for example the crowstepped gables, influenced the design of other buildings in the area, particularly some of the Balfour Street tenements.

The category 'C' listed Bonnington School was designed by James Simpson in 1875, with additions in 1907. It is a large two-storey T-plan school, built in cream sandstone with gothic details, together with a detached single storey janitor's house and play shelters. The rear block has a narrow linking section and separate doorways inscribed 'Girls' Entrance' (NE) and 'Boys' Entrance' (SW) to each side of the link.

The category 'B' listed Rosebank Cemetery has a near rectangular plan, was designed by David Cousin and opened on 20th September 1846. It has sandstone rubble coped and stepped boundary walls enclosing and dividing the site. The headstones are predominantly later 19th century, with several column memorials (with urns surmounting some). There is a central walled pend to the middle of the site and some gravestones are now set in the boundary wall, The Gretna War Memorial is on a granite plinth to the south-

east and there is also notable pink sandstone gothic memorial, 1911, to Christian Salvesen.

Pilrig Street is characterised by terraced housing dating from the late 19th century.



The two storey Baronial villa at 94 Pilrig Street dates from 1857 and is category 'B' listed.



Rosslyn Crescent/Street is a bottle-shaped development of mainly two-storey terraced houses surrounding a narrow central garden space.



Cambridge Gardens and Avenue consists of terraces of bay-windowed single storey houses with slate mansard roofs.



The surviving remains of the industrial development at Shrub Place – the Shrubhill Tramway Workshops and Power Station are of industrial archaeological interest. The oldest buildings were built in 1898. The original buildings are red brick with sandstone bands and have a number of interesting features, such as large round arched recessed openings, shaped pediments and circular windows. Internally, there is a grand painted brick interior with recesses through from the exterior arches and an exposed steel roof construction with a clerestory band. The chimney is included in the listing, although it was reduced in height around 1975. The gabled retaining wall to Shaw's Colonies has been kept after demolition of the tram works.

The predominant building material within the area is grey sandstone. A few of the traditional buildings are also harked. The boundary walls throughout the area are in natural stone. The most widely used roof covering is grey slate. A significant number of original sash and case windows and timber doors have been replaced throughout the area.

### **Essential Character: Architectural Character**

- The architectural significance of individually designed villas in the area;
- The variety of architectural styles that contribute to the overall character;
- Quality stone-built architecture of restricted height enclosed by stone boundary walls; and
- The significant degree of uniformity resulting from the predominant use of traditional building materials: local sandstone for buildings and boundary walls and Scots slate for roofs.

### **NATURAL HERITAGE**

There is a high proportion of green space for an area close to the centre of Edinburgh. Pilrig Park is an extensive area with many mature trees and play areas which is used for a variety of recreational activities. Rosebank Cemetery also makes a significant contribution to the extent of green spaces in the area.



There are large areas of allotments behind Cambridge Gardens, with 30 plots, and more allotments behind Pilrig Cottages. Allotments, especially those in built up areas, contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the urban environment, providing food and shelter to many plant and animal species, as well as functioning as an important link in the greenspace network.

Private gardens are particularly important for providing suitable habitats for birds and wildlife and there is also a recently designated Community Garden for Cambridge Gardens and Cambridge Avenue.

### **Essential Character: Natural Heritage**

- The biodiversity importance of the allotment sites;
- The importance of Pilrig Park as a central area of open space; and
- The significance of mature trees.

### **ACTIVITIES AND USES**

The area is predominantly residential with Pilrig Park forming a significant area of open space. The main retail spaces in the area are on Leith Walk, with small corner shops for daily needs on Dryden Street/Spey Terrace and Balfour Street/Cambridge Avenue.

One of the earliest groups of immigrants to the area were migrants from the Northern Isles. This resulted in the formation of the Edinburgh and District Shetland Association in 1928. In 1962, premises at 11 Pilrig Street were

purchased as their headquarters and named the Zetland Hall. Although this was sold in 1983, the heritage lives on in the fiddle classes for local children held in the hall of Pilrig Church and the designation of the (former) Bonnington School as the new Gaelic primary school for Edinburgh.

### **Essential Character: Activities & Uses**

- Predominance of residential use; and
- Contrast between activity on Pilrig Street and general tranquillity in the residential streets.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The appraisal of the historic and architectural interest of the area indicates that Pilrig contains a number of interesting buildings and includes areas of high quality residential streets. However, with the exception of Pilrig House, it does not include any buildings of significant architectural or historic interest or distinctive character. The area's value in terms of the wider context of the city appears to be limited. There are also a substantial number of non-original features, such as more modern windows and doors, in many of the properties.