

Council hopes to preserve Edinburgh Colonies for the future



Next week's planning committee will hear the result of the consultation undertaken earlier this year about our unique sets of colony houses in Edinburgh. These 19th century rows of workers' houses constructed by the Edinburgh Cooperative Building Company have been assessed for their historical and architectural importance, and locals have now had their say.

Residents raised with the council problems relating to altering the size of their garden sheds, and the cycling campaign organisation, Spokes, asked for any restrictions on this to be removed. Now, all applications for sheds will be considered individually in future if the council adopts the recommendation of the report.

The proposal is that all of these special groups of houses (except the Leith Links colonies) will be designated as Conservation areas in the future (from January 2013 if approved at the meeting), and is based on the 126 responses to the online survey. What is meant exactly by Conservation status? It will designate the area as being of special interest for historical or architectural reasons, and largely controls the changes to the outside of these houses. It will not impose any further controls over interior alterations in addition to planning controls already in effect.

The controls in conservation areas are intended to protect the 'character' of the areas:

- 1. The permitted development right which allows any improvement or alteration to the external appearance of a*

flatted dwelling that is not an enlargement is removed.

2. Special attention must be paid to the character and appearance of the conservation area when planning controls are being exercised. Most applications for planning permission for alterations will, therefore, be advertised for public comment and any views expressed must be taken into account when making a decision on the application.

3. Within conservation areas the demolition of unlisted buildings requires conservation area consent.

4. Alterations to windows are controlled in terms of the Council's policy.

5. Trees within conservation areas are covered by the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. The Act applies to the uprooting, felling or lopping of trees having a diameter exceeding 75mm at a point 1.5m above ground level, and concerns the lopping of trees as much as removal. The planning authority must be given six week's notice of the intention to uproot, fell or lop trees. Failure to give notice renders the person liable to the same penalties as for contravention of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).

[We visited the Abbeyhill colonies earlier this year](#), and perhaps this will give you a taste of the uniqueness of the houses and the people who live in them.

The consultation followed a motion at a council meeting on 30 June 2011 by former councillor Gordon Buchan who asked that the planning status of all colonies was brought into line. It appeared that some colonies were protected by conservation area status and others were not, and that the position should be streamlined.

Leith Links colonies do not meet many of the criteria for conservation area status and may be designated as a standalone

development separately, all subject to separate consultation.

The council recommendation is as follows:-

3.1 It is recommended that the Council:

a. designates the following conservation areas: Pilrig Model Buildings (Shaw's Place) Colony Conservation Area, the Rosebank Cottage Colony Conservation Area, the Stockbridge(Glenogle Park) Colony Conservation Area, the North Fort Street (Hawthornbank) Colony Conservation Area, the Abbeyhill Colony Conservation Area, the Dalry Colony Conservation Area, the Lochend (Restalrig Park) Colony Conservation Area, and the Slateford (Flower) Colony Conservation Area;

b. agrees that the Leith Links (Industrial Road) Colony group is not taken forward for conservation area designation at the present time pending further assessment; and

c. agrees that the motion by Councillor Buchan is discharged.

View [Colony Houses](#) in a larger map

There is also a lovely video about the Colonies here

And the council report is here

[Edinburgh's Colonies](#)