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East Dunbartonshire Council

Conservation Area Appraisal Westerton Garden Suburb

Final report

Prepared by LUC

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East Dunbartonshire Council

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Chapter 1

Executive Summary

Introduction

1.1 The special interest of Westerton Garden Suburb and the desire to celebrate and preserve its historical importance was recognised in June 1987 by its designation as an area of special interest, and subsequently as an 'Outstanding Conservation Area' in July 1997. Additionally, with the exception of the extended property at 66-80 Maxwell Avenue, in June 1988 all properties were listed, either category B or C.

1.2 This conservation area appraisal was produced in January 2021 to document the reasons for the area's designation, considering the character and appearance of the area as it stands today.

1.3 This appraisal is one of a suite of appraisals and documents that consider the importance of conservation areas in East Dunbartonshire and how their special interest should be managed.

- Each conservation area has its own appraisal that considers the historical development of that specific area, along with an analysis of its character based on an assessment of its function and form, spatial qualities, architectural detailing, trees and landscaping and views.
- Further information on why and how an area is designated as a conservation can be found in the accompanying document 'An Introduction to Conservation Areas'.
- For advice on how to retain, restore and reinforce the character of conservation areas, along with specific management issues, opportunities and recommendations identified for the Westerton Conservation Area, please refer to the separate 'Conservation Areas: Managing Change' document.

Location and context

1.4 Westerton Garden Suburb is a neighbourhood on the southwest outskirts of Bearsden, 1km from the town centre, and to the immediate north of the Forth and Clyde Canal and the Argyle Line and North Clyde Lines of the railway network. The conservation area boundary (Figure 2.1) measures an area of approximately 3.4 hectares centred on Maxwell Avenue running north to south. Two streets, North View and Stirling Avenue, branch off it west and northeast respectively. The boundary tightly follows the plot limits of the 1910's and 1930's housing,

Historical development

1.5 The 19th and early 20th centuries were a time of unprecedentedly rapid change in the UK. It was a time of booming industry, mass production, expanding populations, burgeoning cities, and social reform. The constant industrial drive for bigger, better, faster, required an extraordinary amount of human input. It brought with it many serious health and social issues as a result of the sub-standard, overcrowded, high-density housing that was needed to accommodate the workforce. The scale of the problem resulted in politicians, social commentators and religious leaders increasingly recognising the need for broader systematic solutions.

1.6 At the turn of the 20th century, the idea of the 'garden city' and, on a smaller scale, the garden suburb, had started to take root. The idea was to create modest but carefully and beautifully designed and laid out, co-operatively owned housing for the working classes, set in attractive countryside settings. The aim was to relieve congestion in industrial centres and provide workers with healthier surroundings and a more fulfilled, productive, and dignified life.

1.7 Conceived of in the early 20th century and constructed between 1910 and 1930, Westerton is a rare example in Scotland of such a pre-Housing Act garden suburb. It comprises 84 houses and originally incorporated shops and amenities, and was also cooperatively owned. The idea was to create and nurture a community, rather than just individual betterment, through distinct, quality housing and outdoor space. The principles underpinned the design of the area then and continue to shape the distinctive character and appearance of the area today.

Summary of defining characteristics of Westerton Garden Suburb Conservation Area

1.8 The context and historical development of Westerton are unique and it is from this that it draws its individual character. This strong sense of place comes from many facets and the way these elements combine to create a special place of architectural or historic interest – that is, the foremost criteria for conservation area designation. The following features are of particular importance to the character and appearance of Westerton:

- The mix of residential housing and community activity in and around the area creates a lively environment and illustrates the success and purpose of the design in creating a strong sense of local identity.
- The houses are in the Arts and Crafts architectural style, which used the English vernacular cottage as its inspiration. Consequently, dwellings are predominantly made up of symmetrically designed rows of small terraces, 1 ½ storeys in height, rectangular in plan, uniform in arrangement, and with low-slung, steeply pitched roofs incorporating a variety of hips and gables.
- Houses are set back into their plots with a generous front garden and even more generous rear garden. This high proportion of allocated outdoor space is again a result of the design principles of the garden city movement, and the greenery it brings with it helps create the feeling of a semi-rural, agrarian village – which was the design inspiration for the movement and the intent of the architects. The incorporation of trees, planting and open space is an important feature of the area, and the balance of built and natural environment is fundamental to the countryside-meets-town principle of garden suburbs.
- The balanced proportions, positioning and application of a limited palette of architectural details and materials creates the illusion of the buildings being distinctive from each other whilst maintaining a visual consistency across the whole area. This creates a strong identity and sense of place. The quality and finish of materials used is a key part of this effect, all of which give the appearance of being handcrafted rather than manufactured, as was the intention of the Arts and Crafts style. Subtle variations in colour and texture – either deliberate or through the natural patina of age – gives greater depth, warmth and richness to the area, all of which reinforces its modest but distinctive vernacular character.

Chapter 2

Location and Context

The character of an area starts to form long before the human interventions of buildings, streets, fields and towns are established: it starts with the geology and topography of a place. These literal foundations are what makes some places suitable for human habitation and others not, what makes some settlements flourish whilst others fade. This section considers what it is about the location and context of Westerton Garden Suburb that made it ripe for successful occupation.

Location

2.1 East Dunbartonshire lies to the north of the city of Glasgow in central Scotland. Bordered by Stirling to the north, West Dunbartonshire to the west and North Lanarkshire to the east, it covers an area of approximately 175 square kilometres and incorporates parts of the historic counties of Dunbartonshire, Stirlingshire and Lanarkshire.¹

2.2 Westerton Garden Suburb (here in known as Westerton) is a neighbourhood on the southwest outskirts of Bearsden, 1km from the town centre, and to the immediate north of the

¹ <https://www.geni.com/projects/Dunbartonshire-Main-Page/16029> [accessed 7th July 2020]

Forth and Clyde Canal and the Argyle Line and North Clyde Lines of the railway network. Initially a separate area surrounded by agricultural land, Westerton is now merged within the boundaries of Bearsden and contains one of the eight primary schools within the town. It is accessed from the north via Canniesburn Road from Canniesburn Toll.

Geology & Topography

2.3 The landscape of the region varies in character, descending from the sparsely populated, rugged uplands of the Campsie Fells in the north-west, through smooth, undulating foothills into the broad, deep lowlands of the Kelvin Valley and on to the rolling, pastoral farmland of the south-east of the region. Punctuating this landscape are small towns and villages, with the largest settlements congregating along the corridor created by the valley lowlands that extend on a gentle incline from south west to west, allowing easy passage across the region. The further south and south-west you travel the more densely populated the region gets as it transitions from its rural hinterlands to become the urban fringes and overspill of the City of Glasgow.

2.4 The change in landscape character can largely be attributed to the geology that underlies this area. For the most part, this comprises sedimentary bedrock formed between 350 and 300 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period. Known as the Clackmannan Group, this layer of rock is made up of a sequence of sandstones, siltstone, mudstones, ironstones and coals overlaid by seams of clays, silts, sand and gravel that were deposited on top of them during the last Ice Age. Over millions of years this rock has eroded, and it is this action that has formed the gentle hills and lowland of the majority of the region.

2.5 This wide band of sedimentary rock that underlies most of the region sits alongside harder volcanic rocks in the north, and it is the nature of these different types of rock formation that directly accounts for the area's topography. Volcanic rock is more resistant to erosion and wears away at a much slower rate than sandstone. The transition between the two – along a line known as the Campsie Fault – has endowed East Dunbartonshire with a beautiful, contrasting and at times dramatic landscape, a defining feature that makes for a strong identity and sense of place.

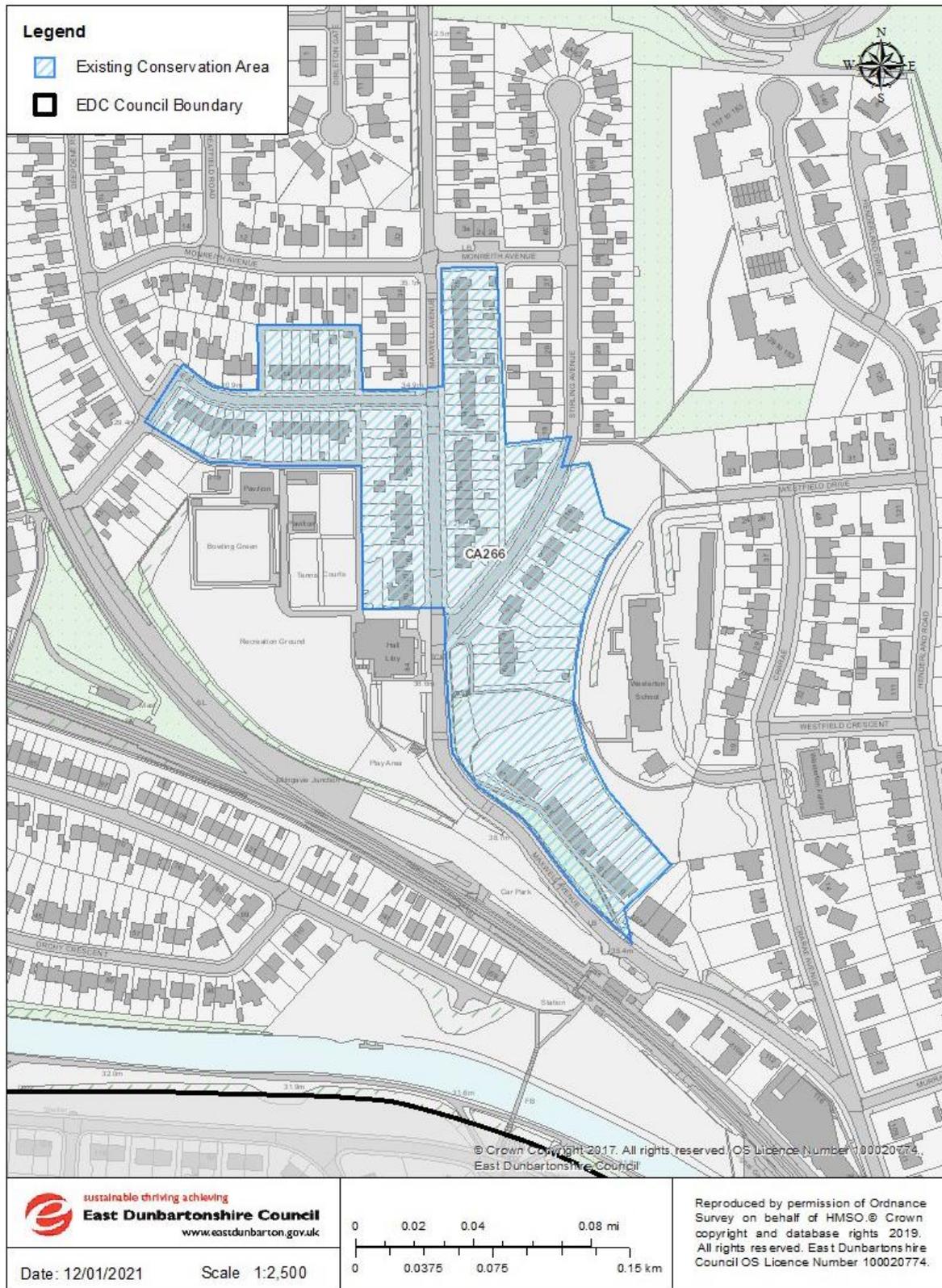
2.6 This fortune extends much further than just visual appeal, however, and has also gifted the region with a plentiful supply of tough and durable sandstones that make excellent building stone, as well as rich deposits of coal that brought landowners in the region much wealth. It is

this comparatively easy access to quality stone that makes East Dunbartonshire a region of predominantly sandstone and slate buildings. By no means has this resulted in homogeneity, however: stones ranging in colour from brown, red and pink through to grey, cream and buffs recall the locality from which they were quarried, tying the buildings back to the landscape that they stand on and, indeed, are hewn from.

The Conservation Area Boundary

2.7 The conservation area boundary (Figure 2.1) measures an area of approximately 3.4 hectares centred on Maxwell Avenue running north to south. Two streets, North View and Stirling Avenue, branch off it west and northeast respectively. The boundary tightly follows the plot limits of the 1910's and 1930's housing, excluding the modern Westerton Hall and Library, the pavilion and tennis courts of the original suburb to the west and Westerton primary school to the east.

Figure 2.1: Map of CA boundary



Chapter 3

The Historical Development of Westerton Garden Suburb

Conservation areas did not develop in isolation, and in order to understand what is included within the boundary and why we must look beyond to give the area context. This section considers how Westerton Garden Suburb developed from its earliest origins into the settlement we see today.

The Catalyst for Change

3.1 The 19th and early 20th centuries were a time of unprecedentedly rapid change in the UK. It was a time of booming industry, mass production, expanding populations, burgeoning cities, and social reform. The constant industrial drive for bigger, better, faster, required an extraordinary amount of human input. It brought with it many serious health and social issues as a result of the sub-standard, overcrowded, high-density housing that was needed to accommodate the workforce. The scale of the problem resulted in politicians, social commentators and religious leaders increasingly recognising the need for broader systematic solutions.

3.2 Whilst wealthier individuals, facilitated by the expanded rail and tram networks, were able to relocate outside of towns and cities to new 'villa suburbs' in the countryside, for the majority of people this was not an option; consequently, the idea of bringing the countryside to the town developed.

3.3 The first palpable attempts to implement this idea and address the issues are illustrated by the creation of cemeteries and public parks within cities and towns. Most obviously,

cemeteries provided for a more dignified and hygienic resting place for the dead, but both spaces also aimed to provide fresher air, greenery, and space for outdoor recreation. Although undeniably important and worthy endeavours, these spaces provided the masses with respite from sub-standard living conditions but did not solve them. Ideas of remedying societal ills by improving living standards at home, rather than punishing the poor for the situation they found themselves in, slowly began to take shape towards the end of the 19th century.

3.4 Although delivered a few years after Westerton had begun construction, the following extract from the King's speech to representatives of the local authorities and societies at Buckingham Palace in 1919 encapsulates the growing awareness and urgency of what was rapidly becoming a cause for concern across the board:

“While the housing of the working classes has always been a question of the greatest social importance, never has it been so important as now. It is not too much to say that an adequate solution of the housing question is the foundation of all social progress...The first point at which the attack must be delivered is the unhealthy, ugly, overcrowded house in the mean street, which all of us know too well. If a healthy race is to be reared, it can be reared only in healthy homes; if drink and crime are to be successfully combated, decent, sanitary houses must be provided; if ‘unrest’ is to be converted into contentment, the provision of good houses may prove one of the most potent agents in that conversion.”

Extract from the King's Speech to Representatives of the Local Authorities and Societies at Buckingham Palace; The Times, 12 April 1919 as quoted by Burnett, J. (1986) A Social History of Housing 1815-1985.

The Garden City Movement

3.5 At the turn of the 20th century, the idea of the ‘garden city’ had started to take root. Its leading advocate was Ebenezer Howard whose book ‘Tomorrow – A Peaceful Path to Real Reform’ was published in 1898, then re-issued in 1902 as ‘Garden Cities for Tomorrow’. The books set out the principle he believed these “cities” should follow for a healthier living environment. They included:

- a maximum population of 32,000 people;
- provision of better standards of housing to all classes of people;
- decent social and educational facilities; and
- that industry should be located on the periphery, encircled by a green belt.

3.6 Howard also advocated a form of community ownership called ‘co-partnership’.

3.7 Development of the first garden city was at Letchworth, Hertfordshire, at the start of the 1900's; however, numerous difficulties in planning and developing these integrated settlements, even at a comparatively small scale, quickly became evident. Consequently, the size, if not the principles, were scaled back, leading to more realistic proposals for ‘garden suburbs’. These would be modest but carefully and beautifully designed and laid out, co-operatively owned housing, set in attractive countryside settings. The aim was to relieve congestion in industrial centres and provide workers with healthier surroundings and a more fulfilled, productive, and dignified life.

3.8 The distinction between the garden city and garden suburb was the topic of a lecture to the Glasgow and Western Scotland branch of the Garden Cities and Town Planning Association in December 1910. Presided over by Sir John Stirling Maxwell, Conservative Member of Parliament and owner of the Cawder and Kenmure estates, the main speaker was Councillor Marr from Manchester. The lecture advocated that garden suburbs were the most practical proposal to help improve housing conditions with contemporary planning and housing legislation allowing for the formation of housing co-operatives to support this.

Glasgow Garden Suburb

Origins

3.9 The lessons learnt from the first garden city and the lecture in Glasgow led to the creation of an association known as the ‘Glasgow Garden Suburb’, which first met in January 1911. The association decided to create their own self-contained, planned and co-operatively owned housing community for the working classes at affordable prices. The first task was to identify suitable ground for the creation of a garden suburb on the outskirts of Glasgow. Three localities were investigated: Cathcart and Giffnock to the south of the city, and Garscube to the north. Giffnock was disregarded due to distance from the nearest train station and the infrequency of train services, and negotiations for Cathcart broke down by May 1911.

3.10 Consequently, 200 acres of farmland and part of the old Canniesburn Golf Club at the Garscube estate, adjoining the North British Railway, was chosen. As part of the prolonged negotiations with the railway company, a commitment was secured for a railway station to first be built near the new suburb, along the already existing Milngavie Junction branch, to transport

building materials then eventually passengers. It was at this point that there was a divergence of the North Clyde Line with one branch leading west to Dumbarton and Helensburgh and the second branch leading north into Bearsden and Milngavie.

3.11 The first general meeting of the housing society 'Glasgow Garden Suburb Tenants Ltd' (GGST) took place in April 1912. They secured the consultancy services of Raymond Unwin, a prominent architect in the Garden City Movement who was heavily involved in the design and layout of Letchworth Garden City and Hampstead Garden Suburb. The main contract architect was J.A.W Grant, whose early career crossed with Charles Rennie Mackintosh and who went on in the inter-war years to design several award-winning municipal housing developments.

3.12 Taking its name from an abandoned farm steading, South Westerton, the plans for Westerton Garden Suburb began to be formed. Upwards of 300 houses were originally envisaged, with 120 planned for the initial phase to be constructed on flatter, lower-lying ground adjacent to the new station. The influences of Unwin on the scheme's design were significant, most obviously in the very English detailing of the buildings.

Construction

3.13 Westerton is first depicted on 1914-23 Ordnance Survey mapping, appearing as an isolated development surrounded by open fields, with access from the north and south. There is a suburban development nearby to the east with the LNER Milngavie branch railway lying to the south-west and west. Subsequent mapping from the following two decades depicts the development laid out in terraces along three tree-lined streets with blocks of three, four or five cottages, and four blocks of semi-detached villas.

3.14 The foundation stone was laid by Lady Campbell of Succoth, owner of the Garscube estate, on the 19th April 1913 at the new Co-op shop in Maxwell Avenue. An extract from the prospectus of the Glasgow Garden Suburb Tenants Ltd 1913 describes the new development:

"Westerton Garden Suburb – This is the name now given to the Co-partnership Garden Suburb now in the process of erection on the Canniesburn Golf Course. It is the first example of a Co-partnership Estate in Scotland. The aim...is the application of garden city ideal to Glasgow. The scheme is on a sound commercial basis and merits the support

of every public spirited citizen who is desirous of seeing a system of housing arise in our midst which makes for better health and improved moral and social conditions."

Figure 3.1: Westerton Garden Suburb foundation stone



3.15 84 houses (of the planned 120) and a shop with a flat over were completed before construction ceased in 1915 as a consequence of the outbreak of World War I. Tentative steps were taken to resume building at the end of the war; however, progress was slow due to a number of factors. Firstly, local authorities were invested by regulatory powers and resources to

design and build larger-scale municipal-funded council housing schemes, such as Knightswood to the south-east. Increasing affluence and mobility also led to the rapid inter-war expansion of suburbs of more affordable private housing.

3.16 During the 1930's, further semi-detached houses, a public hall, post office, tennis courts and pavilion were constructed on Maxwell Avenue and Stirling Avenue, funded by John Lawrence. Again, expansion was halted by the outbreak of World War II, but the garden suburb continued to be managed on a co-partnership basis. A strong community identity was fostered and maintained, with social events centred around the village hall and recreation ground; the Co-operative store was another focus of community activity. The co-partnership arrangement finally ceased in 1988, at which point the limited company was dissolved and the houses passed into individual private ownership of sitting tenants.

Amenities

3.17 The original village shop, run as a Co-operative, was located at 66-68 Maxwell Avenue and comprised of a ground floor shop and store with a small flat located above. During the interwar years, a new store was constructed on the neighbouring site with both shops having various uses over time, including a post office and butchers.

3.18 Changing shopping patterns in the 1970's led to the decrease in custom at the main store and the butchers (which resided in the original shop). Consequently, the buildings were redeveloped into flats, but retaining the original characteristics of the cottage style of the garden suburb.

Chapter 4

Conservation Area Character Analysis

This section considers how the historical development of the area, as outlined above, is evidenced in the historic environment that is included within the boundary of the conservation area.

Function and Form

Activity and movement

4.1 The motivation behind garden cities was not just improvement for the individual but societal betterment. Proponents of such developments realised that if they were going to succeed as new settlements, this meant not just building nice homes but creating self-sustaining communities. It is for this reason that the suburb was designed from the start to have its own shops, train station and other amenities, but also why it was so important that it was co-operatively owned. This engaged residents with the suburb and each other and ensured community buy in to the scheme.

4.2 Although the buildings within the conservation area are all in residential use now, Westerton is not just a commuter suburb. That strong sense of community and of community activity continues to permeate through the area thanks to use of the library and hall, recreation ground, school, parish church and sports clubs, as well as the comings and goings of residents and people using the railway station. It is this mixture of use and the proximity of residential and non-residential uses that is so important to the spirit of the area.

Scale and Hierarchy

4.3 The Arts and Crafts style drew from the small-scale, vernacular form of the English cottage. Consequently, all houses in Westerton are a modest one and a half storeys, with the first floor partially or completely accommodated in roof spaces. Even the former shop and non-residential buildings within the setting of the area (such as the hall and library) largely conform to this scale. Similarly, the footprint of residential houses and plot sizes are consistent throughout the area and there is no obvious hierarchy. This parity creates a rhythm and coherence to the streetscene, with no one building dominating.

4.4 The overall consistency in scale is fundamental to the character of the conservation area: the harmonious appearance and democratisation of buildings and space is not only visually distinctive but is a physical manifestation of the principles and ideology that underpinned the whole development. The uniformity of height also helps highlight the topography of the area – especially between Stirling and Maxwell Avenues – and uses it to create dynamic contrast and views that are a characterful feature of the area.

Spatial Qualities

Development Pattern, Layout and Density

4.5 Westerton Conservation Area is a formally planned, largely rectilinear development extending north from the station. The main thoroughfare through the settlement is Maxwell Avenue, which was constructed on a north-south alignment. From this central spine extend further residential roads running east to west. Access to the rear of buildings is provided by narrow back lanes that lead off the main roads; narrower still, pedestrian paths connect the back lanes with Maxwell Avenue. This change in character between the busy, wide main routes and the quieter, more intimate back lanes and paths reflects the different functions of the routes and the carefully and systematically planned layout of the development as a whole, set piece.

4.6 The layout and development pattern of the terraces and semi-detached blocks have also been greatly influenced by a desire to utilise the topography of the area to create character. Following the steep contours of the land, the four terraced blocks between 73-107 Maxwell Avenue and houses on Stirling Avenue are located above road level. As a result of their elevated positions, they have ramped or stepped footpaths leading up the front of the houses

alongside retaining walls and smaller front gardens. The curved line of the terrace at 17-31 North View reflects the gentler fall and bend of the contours.

4.7 Although the roads themselves are not exceptionally wide, they have the feel of being more generous than most early-20th century housing due to the verges, pavements and front gardens of the houses, all of which push the buildings back into their plots and away from the pavement edge. The small scale of the buildings compounds this feeling of space by giving them a very human scale and allowing views over and between them. This draws in glimpses of surrounding greenery, which counterbalances the mass of the buildings and ensures they do not dominate the streetscape.

Figure 4.1: Building scale



The 1 ½ storey, cottage-like scale of the houses in Westerton, these on Maxwell Avenue. Note also the how the gentle fall of the road is emphasised by the consistency of heights, which mirror this topography and help to subtly animate the streetscape.

4.8 Like the roads they line, building plots in the area are set out in a carefully planned and uniform arrangement, with buildings orientated at right angles to the roads. The houses stand about a quarter of the way back into their plots with a large garden to the rear and a small parcel of garden to the front. Across most plots, the house to garden ratio is approximately 1:3, which is a considerable amount of outdoor, green space, especially compared with the small and/or shared yards that usually accompanied the ubiquitous workers' terraces and tenements in industrialised towns at that time. This high proportion of allocated outdoor space is again a result of the design principles of the garden city movement, and the greenery it brings with it helps create the feeling of a semi-rural, agrarian village – which was the design inspiration for the movement and the intent of the architects.

4.9 Although the overall impression of the area is one of spaciousness, Westerton is actually quite high-density housing; it was, after all, still working-class housing, just of a better quality, and yet there is something about the form and design of the building that makes it appear capacious and exclusive. This perception is created by architectural sleight of hand, by applying forms, detailing and symmetry that on the surface emulate the character of larger properties, whilst internally managing to subdivide the accommodation into more residences than is suggested in the external appearance. This was extremely subtly and cleverly done, and continues to perform exceptionally well at elevating the standard and dignity of the housing and shaping the character of the area.

Figure 4.2: Development pattern and layout



The pedestrian route from around the library up towards the school.



The terraces of 81 – 107 Maxwell Avenue, elevated above road level.

Figure 4.3: Form and density



At first glance, this seems to be one dwelling: the symmetry of the elevation and the large gable draws the eye to this central bay, which contains what appears to be the single entrance into this three-bayed property. However, to the right-hand side where you might expect to find a single front door into the adjacent property there are in fact two. This suggests that these three bays are actually two dwellings rather than one, but that cannot be the case as to split them in two would require a party wall down the centre of the gable window. It is only from further down the street that the recessed third entrance on the left return is revealed, and it becomes clear that this is three properties. For most people passing through though, this architectural dexterity is enough for them to assume it is one large property – and not question that assumption – and so the illusion created is one of a modest but spacious and respectable area.

Public and Private Space

4.10 Being residential in nature, a significant proportion of space within the conservation area boundary is private; in fact, the only public spaces in the area are the network of roads, lanes and paths running through it and the steep grassy bank between the library on Maxwell Avenue and the primary school. This informal green space adds to the verdant character of the area and feeling of openness and space (see Figure 5.2).

4.11 Following the garden city principles for healthy living, all houses have both front and rear gardens enclosed by privet hedges, originally of a standardised, low-level height. This is an important characteristic of the area as it allows views of the properties and their front gardens, which visually connects them with the road and each other. This has given the conservation area a more open and cohesive appearance and reinforces its semi-rural and idyllic 'cottage' character.

4.12 Some of the end terraces and the semi-detached houses have had private driveways added, but the removal of hedging and introduction of hardstanding is out of character and has detracted from the modest character and original form of the development, which as early-20th century workers' housing would not have provided private parking for cars. A few original slatted timber pedestrian gates with arched tops and concrete posts remain, although many have been replaced in different styles and materials.

Setting

4.13 The provision of quality family housing in an attractive setting was a specific objective for the garden city movement and Westerton as originally planned was surrounded by fields. However, the continuing expansion of Glasgow and Bearsden has subsumed the suburb, which is now enclosed by later development, and so the contribution of the area's setting to its character and appearance has been much diminished.

4.14 That said, the area still has a strong feeling of being semi-rural due to the presence of green space and planting within the area also replicated in its immediate surroundings, which creates a fringe of greenery that appears between buildings and above the roofline of houses (see Figure 5.1, for example). Along Stirling Avenue too are long-reaching views out across the suburb and its urban setting to the Kilpatrick Hills in the distance, a surprising view and apt reminder of the proximity of a more wild and rugged landscape.

4.15 South-west of the conservation area between the hall and the railway line are the tennis courts, bowling green and sports field. Throughout the history of the suburb this space has always been open, although historic OS maps indicate that it was just that – incidental open space – rather than a planned, designed feature of the suburb’s layout. Although rarely visible from within the boundary of the area, its open character provides a green buffer to the suburb and respite from the busy road – as well as bringing activity into the area as already discussed – and in that respect it contributes to the experience of the area.

Figure 4.4: Setting



View towards the open space of the sports fields from the elevated footpath of 81 – 107 Maxwell Avenue.

Architectural Detailing

Building types and form

4.16 The buildings are all a take on a simple cottage style, developed as 12 separate terraces of three to eight houses, alongside four pairs of semi-detached houses on Stirling Avenue. They are 1 ½ storeys in scale of modest floor-to-ceiling heights. They are overwhelmingly rectangular in plan form, most adapting the footprint of a basic two-up two-down to incorporate a dedicated bathroom. The buildings consist of various wall head designs with half-timber detailing, with flat, hipped and gabled roofs. In typical Arts and Crafts style, the roofs are low-slung with a steep pitch, which occasionally sweeps over the ground floor windows and doors to form canopies.

Distinctive architectural style and detailing

4.17 The design of the housing within the conservation area reflects the influence of Raymond Unwin and the English Arts and Crafts architectural style, as well as the concerted effort of the tenants’ association and the architects to create complementary but individual character houses. Again, the architectural dexterity of the designer comes to the fore in creating this perception of individuality. When broken down into their constituent parts, there is not as much variety as there first appears: chimneys are rendered or red brick; windows are tall, timber sashes or casements with horizontal emphasis; there are two principal styles of timber panelled front doors, both incorporating a viewing window; roofs are slate or clay tile. The trick comes in combining this limited palette in different formations, which gives the illusion of the buildings being distinct whilst maintaining a visual consistency.

4.18 Although not all houses incorporate all features, where they are used they are of a consistent and carefully balanced size, proportion and positioning. On the principal elevations this includes the placement of doors, windows, dormers and chimneys. Chimneys are symmetrically spaced and their proportions unnecessarily but attractively tall, given the size of the houses they heat. Similarly, windows and doors have been positioned, proportioned and sometimes paired to give each façade balance and rhythm which, consequently, visually unites the whole area.

4.19 There is also subtle architectural variation according to the elevation: more expensive sash windows and flat-roofed dormers on front-facing elevations are common, whereas skylights with a central glazing bar are found to the rear, alongside slightly less expensive, multi-paned casement windows to both floors. Where the original casements survive, they generally comprise two horizontally adjoining frames of six panes, whereas sashes tend to be a multi-paned upper light over a single pane below.

Figure 4.5: Architectural form and detailing



This symmetrical terrace on North View has paired flat-roofed dormers, paired original doors, paired gables that bookend the façade, evenly spaced tall, red-brick chimneys, tripartite 6-pane timber casement windows (also paired) and projecting eaves in the centre of the roof to form a door canopy. These evenly proportioned and spaced features give the façade a rhythm and sense of balance, but it is by no means dull, with the varied forms of the different elements and the contrasting but harmonious variety in the use of textured and coloured materials providing just enough animation and interest.

4.20 There is also a host of smaller, seemingly insignificant detailing that connect the buildings, including cast-iron rainwater goods (such as rhones, gutters and hoppers and lead flashings), ridge and hip tiles, and timber features such as brackets, barge boards and gates. While not as prominent as the chimneys, gables and windows, for example, they are just as important in maintaining a depth of character for individual buildings and the area as a whole.

Use of Materials

4.21 The materiality of Westerton deserves a specific mention, as it is the carefully chosen palette of materials and their application that underpins the vernacular style of the development.

4.22 External elevations are without exception harled or covered in a wet dash render: a direct reference to traditional vernacular domestic buildings in Scotland. Roofs are invariably slate with the exception of the terraces at 41-49 and 58-64 Maxwell Avenue, which are finished in correspondingly sized red clay tiles. Where chimneys remain exposed they are red brick, but of more slender proportions than now standardised brick sizes, in imitation of the proportions of handmade bricks. The contrasting colour of timber, rough harl finishes, slate and red clay tiles and chimney stacks enlivens the streetscape, with pops of colour accentuating the detailing, drawing the eye and animating the scene.

4.23 It is not just the materials but their finish too that is important, and subtle variations in colour and texture – either deliberate or through the natural patina of age – gives greater depth to the area. The slate, for example, is small and thickly set with a textured surface and tooled edging, and includes hues of warm greens, greys and heather. The colourings, proportions and finish are reminiscent of Westmorland slate, and the finish gives the impression of craftsman's hand having shaped and laid it. This imparts a richness to what is a very visible, large expanse of roof. Rather than being an indulgence, the attention to detail is fundamental to the character of the area: if it were replaced by the more uniform, smooth, blue-black tones of

Welsh slate or some imported slates, the appearance of not only individual buildings but of the whole area would be greatly diminished.

4.24 Similarly, timber has a natural warmth to it and is used extensively throughout the area. Aside from the plain bargeboards, timber gates and windows, the exposed timber framing is perhaps the most prominent feature. Despite being machine sawn, that inference of the human hand in the construction of the buildings is again subtly intimated through the visible use of timber pegs to secure joints in the frame (see Figure 5.3). All of this gives the appearance of being crafted rather than manufactured, as was the intention of the Arts and Crafts style.

4.25 The effect of this meticulously thought through use of materials on the character of the area is that it prevents the repetition of architectural details and forms from feeling soulless and mass-produced. It creates the appearance of irregularity, of the imperfection of human intervention and craftsmanship, and it is this that imparts a particularly special depth of character and sense of individuality to the area.

Figure 4.6: Building materials and detailing



As in Figure 5.5, the symmetry, balance and rhythm of the façade is created through the careful positioning of different architectural features. Even at this distance, the textured finish of the render and of the slates adds depth, colour and character. This is complemented by the patina of age, which adds warmth, variation and individuality to what is in fact a carefully composed façade.

Trees and Landscaping

4.26 In his designs for the suburb, Unwin took into account the existing features of the site, incorporating and adding to existing trees to add to the character. Trees and shrubs were also donated from the Pollok estate by Sir John Stirling Maxwell, which were planted in Maxwell Terrace. The importance of trees to the greenspace character is demonstrated by the whole conservation area being covered by a tree preservation order.

4.27 The three principal streets of North View, Stirling Avenue and Maxwell Avenue have varying sizes of grass verge and tree species. Stirling Avenue has lime trees planted in the roadside grass banks, whilst to the southern end of Maxwell Avenue are sycamore and flowering cherry trees. North View has the greatest variety of tree species, including birch, hawthorn, rowan, purple plum and whitebeam. During the 1990's, a lot of the trees on Maxwell Avenue were removed to accommodate double-decker buses using the route.

4.28 The private gardens contain a variety of planting with annual, perennial and shrubs with some smaller trees species. They are enclosed by privet hedges throughout the suburb, forming both the front street boundary and division between plots. Like the carefully chosen palette of building materials and the repetition of architectural details, the hedges and trees are a visual constant across the area, adding rhythm and coherence to the streetscape.

Figure 4.7: Trees and planting



Street trees and privet hedging along North View.



The hedges and lime trees at the junction of Maxwell and Stirling Avenues.

Views

Types of View

4.29 Whilst all senses are engaged in our experience of place, human reliance on the visual does mean that views play a major role in our understanding and perception of character, and Westerton is no exception. Views tend to come in different shapes and forms depending on whether they are designed or fortuitous; framed, contained or open; fleeting or enduring. Broadly, however, they tend to belong to one of three categories:

- **Static views** – these types of views tend to be – although not always – designed or intentional, or at least self-aware. They are a specific, fixed point from which a particular aspect of the area's character can be best appreciated.
- **Glimpsed views** – these types of views are often enclosed and fleeting, and principally incite intrigue or surprise in those that notice them that add to the experience of an area.
- **Dynamic views** – these are views that steadily reveal different aspects of a place's character and continually evolve as we experience them. These may be panoramic views from a fixed point or kinetic views that are revealed as the observer moves through the area. These views are influenced by both constant features (not necessarily dominant features but those that remain present throughout) and transient features (accents in the view that come in and pass out of views at different points

Examples of views in Westerton Conservation Area

4.30 There are a number of striking views within Westerton, but the seemingly mundane have their role to play too in conveying the character of the place. Below are some examples of the more obvious and noteworthy views in the area – in that they are the ones that clearly embody important characteristics of the conservation area – but it is important to remember that experience is entirely personal and the value placed on views subjective; as such, there will be many more that are not noted here that portray the sense of place equally well.

Static

4.31 There are few obvious static views in Westerton, which is unsurprising given the history of the area: the suburb was designed to be experienced as a set piece, with parity and a cohesive character throughout that reflected the creation of a community. As such, there are no single buildings or features that shout above the rest. Instead, it is the collective impact of all elements working together that causes one to pause and take in a view. The example here is looking west along North View. From here, the combination of built and green infrastructure and the importance of the balance and relationship between the two – as was part of the original design intent – can be appreciated. They frame the view down the street, creating a comfortably rhythmic and charming, inviting scene. Also note the survival of original timber gates to some of the properties.

Figure 4.8: Static view – North View



Glimpsed

4.32 A fleeting view down the back lane behind Maxwell Avenue, viewed from Stirling Avenue. The smaller scale, enclosed character of this back lane contrasts with the wider, busier environs of the principal roads, creating a more unassuming and intimate atmosphere. The view provides a glimpse of more private rear elevations and gardens, a less encountered view that stimulates natural human curiosity. Although some fencing has been introduced, boundary hedges also survive which, along trees and planting within plots and those in near distance, soften the view and make what could be an intimidating environment more welcoming.

Figure 4.9: Glimpsed – Maxwell Avenue back lane



Dynamic

4.33 A kinetic view of Stirling Avenue, culminating in a panoramic view out over distant countryside. The mature limes, tall retaining walls and dense planting enclose the view and accentuate the sharp change in topography. Further up the slope, the semi-detached houses on the south side of the road start to come into view. These are just glimpsed views, however, and the buildings remain largely obscured until the observer is straight on, at which point the whole architectural composition of the paired dwellings can be appreciated. Turn 180 degrees

though and the intimate and contained character of these views gives way to more open, far-reaching views across the area's rooftops and on towards the dramatic scenery of its setting.

Figure 4.10: Dynamic – Stirling Avenue



4.34 *Static, glimpsed and dynamic* cover the types of views you might find, but their relevance to the significance of the conservation area lies firmly in what those views contain; that is, what they can tell us about the history of the settlement or the area, or how they influence our experience of its character. And, of course, all of these views have their own, varying degrees of aesthetic appeal, degrees that are dependent on the time of day, the time of year and, above all, the viewer and what they find pleasing as much as established criteria of visual aesthetic or artistic appeal.

4.35 Furthermore, these views are not mutually exclusive: one asset or feature may contribute to the character and appearance of the area in different ways in different views, and views may transition, interrupt and develop concurrently with one another.

Chapter 5

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