East Dunbartonshire Council

Conservation Area
Appraisals
Old Bearsden

Final report
Prepared by LUC
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Conservation Area Appraisals
Old Bearsden

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Chapter 1
Executive Summary

Introduction

1.1   The special interest of Old Bearsden and the desire to celebrate and preserve its historical importance was recognised in 1989 by its designation as an area of special interest. This conservation area appraisal was produced in December 2020 to document the reasons for the area's designation, considering the character and appearance of the area as it stands today.

1.2   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 Old Bearsden Conservation Area, please refer to the separate 'Conservation Area: Managing Change' document.

Location and context

1.3   Bearsden is located in the parish of New or East Kilpatrick, created in 1649 and named after the settlement containing the parish church. Bearsden is situated approximately six miles north-west of Glasgow city centre, located on the A809 road to Drymen and Loch Lomond, acting as a residential suburb to the city. It lies on the route of the Antonine Wall, which runs

between the Firth of Clyde in the west to Firth of Forth in the east, west of the River Kelvin and north of the Forth and Clyde canal. The conservation area centres on the historic core of the parish at The Cross and parish church, and covers areas of 19th and earlier 20th century villa development extending out from The Cross and Bearsden Station along the core routes of Drymen Road, Thorn Road, Roman Road and Boclair Road.

Historical development

1.4　The structure of modern Bearsden follows the historic east-west route, following the route of the Roman military way south of the Antonine Wall, and the north-south Glasgow-Drymen-Loch Lomond route. One of the 17 principal forts on the Antonine Wall was located just east of Bearsden Cross, and is now designated as scheduled monuments on either side of Roman Road (SM90334 and SM3662). It includes the Bearsden Bathhouse, which is on display as a visitor site.

1.5　The parish of New Kilpatrick was created in 1649 following the division of the then larger parish of Kilpatrick. A hamlet of the same name appears in mapping by the 1750s, based around the parish church on the north bank of the Manse Burn and to its south at the historic crossroads.

1.6　A small number of villas began to be developed in New Kilpatrick from the earlier 19th century. This accelerated dramatically following the arrival of the railway in 1863 and the growing settlement became a desirable residence with easy commuter access to Glasgow, as it largely remains today. The name 'Bearsden', originally belonging to a villa near the station, gradually came to be adopted as the station name and that of the wider settlement.

Summary of defining characteristics of Old Bearsden Conservation Area

1.7　The context and historical development of Bearsden are unique to the settlement 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 Old Bearsden:

■　The conservation area's structure is based around the historic Cross, which remains the focus of activity and contains a notable collection of commercial and public buildings. A series of residential streets, largely following the east-west topography, span off the main routes and contrast with the Cross in their peaceful atmosphere of residential amenity.

■　The great majority of the conservation area is residential, consisting largely of Victorian and later villas in generous grounds. The villas demonstrate a range of scales and forms which represent variations on the essential architectural theme. The collective effect of these buildings over a wide area creates the unique special character of Bearsden and is important as a record of changes in architectural tastes and fashions from the mid-19th century to the 1930s. Groupings of these different types and dates help to create variation across the conservation area.

■　The mature trees and landscaping of private gardens is a dominant element of the area's character. The repeated rhythm of typical villas within their plots, extending along straight streets with a boundary zone of low walls, hedges, gate piers and mature trees, creates the characteristic streetscape vista of the Victorian villa suburb of which Bearsden is an outstanding example.

■　The individuality and diversity of domestic architectural styles and detail is a principal feature of the special interest in the conservation area. Earlier villas tend to be relatively restrained, Classically-derived architecture; Tudor, Gothic and later Arts and Crafts influences introduced a wide range of picturesque roof forms featuring dormers and porches, half-timbered detailing and various decorative flourishes to stonework, eaves and window styles. A relatively restricted palette of sandstone and slate is enriched with timber details, windows in a variety of formats and pane patterns and, in the later, Arts and Crafts-influenced examples, harling, clay tiles, stained glass and carved and sculptural details.

■　Views within the conservation area tend to be relatively short-range, enclosed by the street form and trees and allowing an appreciation of the scale and diversity of the villas. A few more open examples are available around the parish church, former Schaw Convalescent Home and over St Germain's Loch. The wider setting can be experienced from higher viewpoints over the Clyde Valley to the south and the open landscapes to east and west.

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 Old Bearsden that made it ripe for successful occupation.

Location

2.1   The area of 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   Bearsden is situated approximately six miles north-west of Glasgow city centre, located on the A809 road to Drymen and Loch Lomond, acting as a residential suburb to the city. It lies on the route of the Antonine Wall, which runs between the Firth of Clyde in the west to Firth of Forth in the east, west of the River Kelvin and north of the Forth and Clyde canal. As of the

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

2011 census, Bearsden North and Bearsden South had a combined population of just over 27,000, making it the largest settlement in East Dunbartonshire.

2.3 Bearsden is located in the parish of New or East Kilpatrick, created in 1649 and named after the settlement containing the parish church. It is bounded to the north-east by Strathblane, east by Baldernock, south-east by Cadder and Maryhill in Lanarkshire, south by Renfrewshire and west by Old or West Kilpatrick.

Geology & Topography

2.4 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.

2.5 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 by a sequence of lava flows 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.

2.6 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.

The Conservation Area Boundary

2.7 The conservation area is centred around the traditional kirk town centre, known locally as 'The Cross', formed by Roman Road/Thorn Road and Drymen Road. From here the boundary is irregular, encompassing the limits of the growing villa suburbs associated with the development of the railway in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

2.8 To the north of the town centre, the boundary encompasses the grounds of the former Schaw Hospital alongside streets surrounding the historic parish kirk such as Ralston Road and Manse Road. Boclair Road (B8049) runs off Roman Road forming the eastern boundary. The railway line runs east to west across the southern extent of the conservation area, with developments along Station Road, around St Germains Loch, cul-de-sacs of Drymen Road (including Chapelton Avenue and Drymen Wynd), and West Chapelton Avenue. Leading off Drymen Road to the west are residential streets including Ledcameroch Road, Thorn Road, Campbell Drive, Colquhoun Drive and North/South Erskine Park.

Figure 2.1: Map of CA boundary
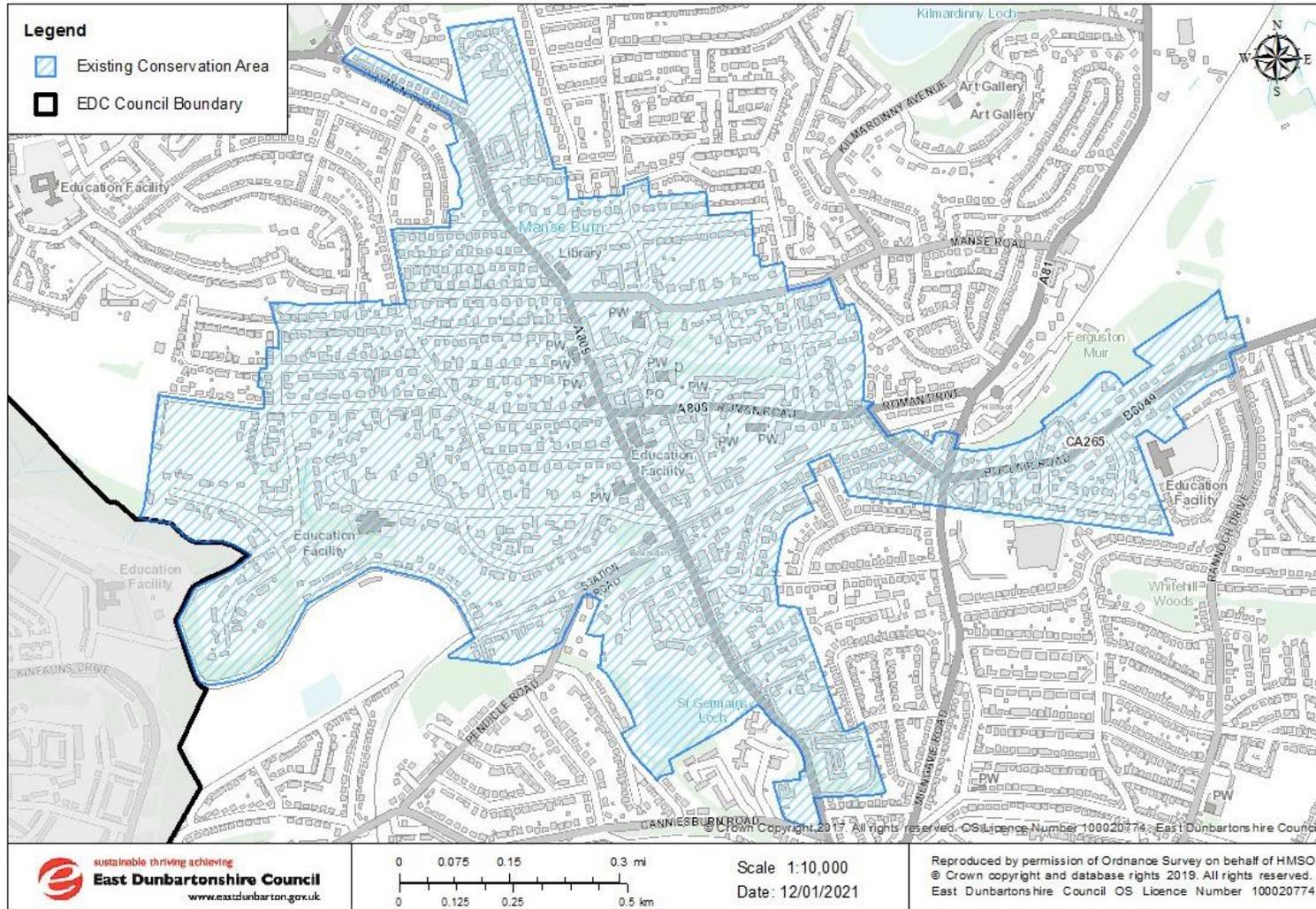
Chapter 3
The Historical Development of Old Bearsden

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 Old Bearsden developed from its earliest origins into the settlement we see today.

The Antonine Wall

3.1　In AD 142, the Antonine Wall was constructed on the orders of the Roman emperor Antoninus Pius, stretching 60km from Old Kirkpatrick on the Clyde to Bo'ness on the Forth. Built by members of three Roman legions, it was constructed of a stone foundation with a banked rampart of turf to a height of 3m. The wall was flanked on the north by a large defensive ditch and outer mound. To the south lay the 'military way', a road linking the various forts and fortlets along the length of the wall providing easy movement of troops and supplies. 19 decorative inscribed tablets, known as distance slabs, were attached to the ramparts along the wall, created by the legions to mark their construction achievements and communicate messages of triumph.

3.2　The wall was occupied for around 16 years before it was abandoned and its fort buildings dismantled or burnt, but the earthworks and rampart remaining intact. The wall represented the most northern extent of both the Roman occupation in Britain and frontier of the Roman Empire. It was a component part of a European-wide network of defensive features marking the northern limits of the Roman Empire, also comprising Hadrian's Wall and the German Limes. The wall was inscribed onto UNESCO's World Heritage Site list in 2008 and large sections are

now nationally designated as scheduled monuments to recognise the wall as a major Roman frontier system.

The Wall in Bearsden

3.3   One of the 17 principal forts was located just east of Bearsden Cross and is now designated as scheduled monuments on either side of Roman Road (SM90334 and SM3662). Here it took advantage of local topographical features of defensive value, the higher ground south and southwest of the steeper banks of the Manse Burn. The fort measured 100 metres by 112 metres, with ramparts and an eastern annexe. The fort's ramparts were constructed of stone bases with turf and fronted by a single ditch to the south with triple ditches on the west and east.

3.4   Annexes provided additional space and facilities and at Bearsden this included a bath house, the remains of which are still visible today on the north side of Roman Road. The bath house contained six rooms and two plunge baths contained within a structure 30m long. Unusually for this structure type, the cold room and changing room where constructed of timber with the rest of the building of typical stone. The hot dry room lay to the north of the cold room, the hot steam range to the east and the apsidal cold bath to the south.

3.5   The ramparts for both the wall and the fort were still visible features in mid-Victorian times. However, as the development of Bearsden progressed the archaeological and cultural significance of the wall and fort were not fully appreciated. The remnants were readily built over from Boclair Road to the east to Thorn Drive to the west. Extant remains are only visible at specific locations, most notably masonry associated with the bath house and ancillary buildings in the annexe of the main fort on the northern side of Roman Road. This was discovered during construction of the Roman Court flats in the 1970s (they themselves on the site of four Victorian villas), located east of Bearsden Cross and north of the Roman road.

3.6   When the wall was abandoned the bath house was demolished, but excavation revealed waterproof plaster remained in place on floors and walls alongside evidence for rebuilding during the life of the structure. Next to the bath house was the remains of an earlier building and to the south-east lay a latrine with part of the fort annex rampart surviving. The flat layout was adjusted to allow for the permanent public display of the archaeological remains around the modern housing estate.

Figure 3.1: Remains of Roman bath house

Visible remains of Roman bath house associated with the Antonine Wall fort in Bearsden surrounded by the 1970's Roman Court flats development. The public display is a good example of urban archaeology and how important archaeological remains can be displayed and integrated amongst more modern developments. Examples such as this are rare within the UK but are important to allow for greater understanding and appreciation of our historical past and development of settlements.

Hamlet of New Kilpatrick

3.7   The hamlet takes its name from the surrounding parish, created in 1649 following the division of the then larger parish of Kilpatrick. The second divided part, called West Kilpatrick, centred around the established church and hamlet of Old Kilpatrick on the north banks of the Clyde estuary; the 'new' parish of New Kilpatrick contained at the time the settlements of Milngavie, Canniesburn, Dalsholm, Garscadden, Knightswood and Netherton.

3.8   The earliest map evidence of a settlement at Bearsden is depicted on Roy's Lowlands map from the 1750s, called New Kirk of Kilpatrick. Based around a church on the north bank of the Manse Burn, further historic mapping from the 1790s (Roy Military Antiquities 1793 and Richardson 1796) confirms a small cluster of buildings to the south of the church called 'New Kirkpatrick'. The small hamlet was located on the corner intersection of historic cross routes, influenced by the Antonine Wall military way, allowing the settlement to grow.

Early 19th century

3.9   The present church building (LB22130) was constructed in 1807, a rebuild of the previous building which had been established with the formation of the new parish. Largely paid for by the Duke of Montrose, it was enlarged three times over the following 20-year period before being further altered and extended throughout the 19th century. Initially containing seats for up to 850 parishioners, by the end of the century it could hold over 1,000 people. The associated churchyard to its east contains a number of interesting monuments, including the mausoleum of Campbells of Succoth, alongside parts of the Antonine Wall.

3.10   At the start of the 19th century, over 200 years since the settlement began, Bearsden remained a small hamlet associated with the parish church. It contained a range of small-scale buildings including a manse, post office, stable, school (with space for over 260 children) and several small dwellings. During this time, large villas in substantial grounds began to appear in the locality, many of which were located within the boundary of the conservation area. These included Lochbrae, St Germains, Ledcameroch, Beechwood and Carrickarden, whilst to the north-east outwith the boundary lay Hillfoot and Kilmardinny. Of these villas within the boundary, only the buildings of Croftbank and Carrickarden survive with the others ultimately demolished and built over.

3.11 Between the villas and the central hamlet was a landscape of plantations and shelter belts alongside farm steadings with undulating fields. It was these that, in the second half of the 19th century and early years of the 20th century, were progressively built over to create the present day conservation area.

Figure 3.2: New Kilpatrick church and graveyard

A Commuter Suburb

Late 19th century

3.12 The large-scale expansion of Bearsden is attributed to the development of the Glasgow and Milngavie Junction Railway in 1863 by the North British Railway company. In order to avoid confusion with the Old Kilpatrick station (which was already well established on the Dumbarton-Helensburgh Line) the railway company named the new station Bearsden rather than New Kilpatrick after the existing hamlet, Bearsden being the name of a dwelling which had to be demolished to make way for the railway station.

3.13 Railway lines, railway stations and residential development went hand in hand in the mid to late 19th century, as professional and mercantile classes sought refuge from the rapidly industrialising and expanding towns and cities of Victorian Britain. As members of Glasgow's business community began looking for suitable locations to reside out with the busy and polluted city, sites began to be identified that were close to the city and most importantly had quick and easy access. With its pleasant, semi-rural environment, parish church and railway station, Bearsden (still known as 'New Kirk' at the time) was an ideal location for those wishing to escape city life.

3.14 By the end of the 1890s, map evidence suggests development progressed rapidly but on a sporadic and small-scale basis. Dwellings for the most part were designed and constructed either individually or in small groups on plots of pre-determined size. Those villas in large grounds that were designed and built 'to order' were predominantly close to the station, such as those on Ledcameroch Road. Smaller groupings of villas were created on the upgraded Thorn Road and Roman Road, alongside new streets such as Collylinn Road and Chapelton Avenue.

3.15 Once separate communities, the hamlet around the parish kirk and the railway suburb steadily coalesced over the course of the late 19th century, with the name Bearsden eventually being applied to both. This cohesion of identity was strengthened as the open land between the two was gradually filled in with development, uniting them spatially. The meaning behind the villa and subsequent place name of 'Bearsden' remains obscure and continues to be subject to investigation and debate as to its meaning and origins.

Figure 3.3: Bearsden Station

Amenities

3.16 Residential development necessitated complementary amenities. Thus by the end of the 19th century new streets with non-residential buildings had been created. This included:

- Eaton Place, which incorporated the post office, and Melville Place with a date stone of 1881

- A tenement block with shops on the ground floor on the north side of New Kirk Road (then known as Stewart Place)

- A golf course with club house to the north west of the conservation area, two football grounds within and in the vicinity of the conservation area, and the bowling green on Station Road

- A bank on Roman Road and a police station just south of junction of Canniesburn Road and Drymen Road, and a public hall on Drymen Road.

3.17 The historic site of the parish church had also been enlarged and an impressive new school building was constructed at the historic crossroads of Roman Road and Drymen Road.

3.18 A United Presbyterian (U.P.) Church and a Free Church were also constructed on the west side of Drymen Road, reflecting the growing population and differing religious beliefs of new residents in Bearsden. For instance, The U.P. church with 400 sittings was erected in 1874 as New Kilpatrick United Presbyterian Church and underwent further extensions in 1882 and 1887. It became the Bearsden United Free Church and Bearsden South Church of Scotland before the building was bombed in 1941 and destroyed, with the present building opened in 1955. The Free Church (LB48595) opened in 1889 with later additions of the gallery, organ and chancel in 1923.

3.19 The impressive Tudor Gothic style Schaw Convalescent Home (LB22134) located on Drymen Road in the north of the conservation area was opened in 1895. It was in use by Glasgow Royal Infirmary as a convalescent home after they received a financial gift from Miss Marjory Shanks Schaw, the sister of a well-known iron merchant Archibald Shanks Schaw. The home provided accommodation for over 90 patients and by World War II it was in use as an overflow unit for patients requiring urgent medical attention. It then had subsequent use as a nursing home before being converted into private dwellings.

Figure 3.4: The C19 Free Church and C21 library

20th century

3.20 The rapid expansion of Bearsden proceeded through the Edwardian period up to the First World War, resulting in a more comprehensive and rounded development than many of the other commuter suburbs of Glasgow. The developments continued to contain large, individually designed villas in extensive grounds, for instance at Camstradden Drive East and Boclair Road. At the same time, small-scale, higher-density speculative developments of villas (detached and semi-detached) and terraces were laid out on undeveloped parcels of ground throughout the

conservation area, for example at Douglas Gardens, South Erskine Park, Campbell Drive and Roman Drive). The success of the low-density villa development model continued into the 1950s on Camstradden Drive West, Upper Glenburn Road and Westbourne Drive to name a few.

3.21 Denser developments began in the mid- to late-20th century with flatted blocks, often occupying the sites or gardens of the earlier villas. Typical examples of this era are the Roman Court development or Beechwood Court, off Drymen Road. Most of these are low-rise, 2-4 storeys but there are also mid-rise examples at Lochside/Norwood Park, unusually tall for the conservation area, taking advantage of the attractive lochside landscape of St Germains. By this time, the construction of now familiar estates of bungalows bordering the conservation area at Kilmardinny, West Chapelton, Westerton, and Hillfoot were also well underway.

3.22 The identity of Bearsden was greatly strengthened in 1958, when it achieved burgh status. The Burgh of Bearsden has since been succeeded, as a local authority, by Bearsden & Milngavie District Council (1975) and now by East Dunbartonshire Council (1996).

Amenities

3.23 Further complimentary amenities and institutional buildings were constructed to serve the growing settlement and rising population. This included:

- The Parish Council chambers on Roman Road

- A public park at the western end of Thorn Road

- The Douglas Park Golf Course and Club House and 'tennis grounds' at Thorn Road and Jubilee Gardens.

3.24 At Bearsden Cross, the tenement flats and ground floor shops on Roman Road, Drymen Road and New Kirk Road were completed in 1906.

3.25 The recently built 'New School' had also been demolished and replaced with the present stone building that, up until the late 1950's, provided for both primary and secondary age pupils before becoming Bearsden Primary School. A private boarding school was opened in Upper Glenburn Road. The 21st century saw the arrival of the new Library and Community Hub at Drymen Road.

Figure 3.5: Historic development of Old Bearsden

A word cloud created using the above text to illustrate the key factors and defining influences on the development of Old Bearsden..

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 focus of Bearsden's activity remains the historic crossroads where the original nucleus of the settlement began, known locally as 'The Cross'. Despite the expansion of Bearsden as a residential suburb with rail links to Glasgow, the town centre remained modest in size and scale, unlike nearby Milngavie which had a strong commercial centre despite having a similar function as a commuter suburb. The shopping parades of Roman Road, Drymen Road and New Kirk Road contain a variety of relatively small, traditional shop units in a mixture of retail, service and food and drink uses. Their intimate scale, animated by ground floor window displays, creates an attractive and vibrant local commercial centre. A large proportion are independent shops and businesses, which add a locally-distinct character to the centre of the conservation area and its amenities.

4.2 These uses are complemented by larger-footprint commercial units tucked behind the main frontage in Kirk Road and by a range of community facilities nearby such as churches, halls and the Community Hub. The imposing early-20th century primary school adds to the vibrancy and activity of the historic crossroads through the regular sight and sound of children at play. Overall, these act as a reminder that Bearsden is not just a commuter suburb but has an active community character in the town centre. Another, smaller-scale focus of activity is at

the shopping parade associated with Bearsden Station, to the south of the main core, which also has a selection of retail, food and drink and service provision.

Figure 4.1: Activity and movement

The shopping parade of New Kirk Road and the contemporary church – the 19th century Free Church – terminating the view at the end of the row on Drymen Road.

4.3   A former focus of civic activity at the Roman Road/Milngavie Road intersection has altered over time with the former Bearsden Council Chambers (LB43521) now converted to the Boclair House Hotel and the Registrar's Office (LB46096) awaiting re-use, although their impressive architectural expression remains part of the townscape here.

4.4   Movement through the area continues to follow the historic east-west and north-south routeways converging at the main crossroads. The railway line is a key strategic communication but only makes a sporadic contribution to the visual character of the town as it is set down into a cutting, viewed from road bridges, glimpse views between and at the rear of houses and the footpath which runs along its north side between Hillfoot and Bearsden Stations.

4.5   Although largely obscured by modern development, the presence of the Antonine Wall in locations such as the bath house at Roman Court and remains in the parish kirk cemetery attracts visitors to Bearsden. The monument is of national importance for its contribution to an understanding of military life and architecture on what was once the northern frontier of the Roman Empire. It is a high-quality visitor monument which affords a rare glimpse into the quality of life for the Roman occupiers of Scotland. The display of the remains of the bathhouse amongst the modern development is of particular importance as a rare example within the UK of the display of urban archaeology. For both residents of Bearsden and visitors, this allows for a greater understanding and appreciation of the historical past.

4.6   The majority of Bearsden contains residential development surrounding the main town centre and continues to be occupied by a large number of commuters travelling to Glasgow for employment, education and leisure purposes. Although there is variation in the scale of houses and the nature of tenure, the residential parts of the conservation area have a relatively homogeneous character consisting of relatively peaceful, low density, generously-scaled streets with low to moderate traffic activity away from the main arterial routes, and good provision for walking, cycling and access to public transport.

Scale and hierarchy

4.7   The buildings within Bearsden are generally modest in scale; the great majority of the extensive residential areas are 1½ and 2 storeys, with a very few examples of 3, 4 or even more storeys, particularly in the more modern flatted blocks. The important role of the historic core and crossroads is marked by slightly taller buildings, the focal commercial corner tenement having 2½ storeys, built up from the pavement edge and with prominent corner cupolas to express its importance. The primary school is of two, tall storeys with prominent roofline bellcotes, while the ecclesiastical buildings display a range of spires, towers, and vast and variable roof forms to draw attention and mark their function and importance.

4.8 The most prominent building is the imposing former Schaw Convalescent Home which towers over the town from its elevated hillside in the north of the conservation area. Its scale and Tudor gothic design with its striking, pinnacled silhouette was designed to attract attention from Bearsden's main streets, particularly in views of its principal elevation from the south.

Figure 4.2: Former Schaw Convalescent Home

4.9 The relatively uniform scale of the houses means that hierarchies between them are expressed in the size and footprint of the building, the generosity and privacy of building plots

and the provision of ancillary structures such as lodges, stables, outhouses and garden features. These are discussed further at **Building types**, below.

Spatial Qualities

Development pattern, layout and density

4.10 The Antonine Wall, hamlet of New Kilpatrick, and the pre-railway mansions and villas clearly influenced the pattern of development in the conservation area. This can still be discerned in the layout and built form, which form the basis for its historic character and appearance. The present day Roman Road, eastern section of Thorn Road and southern section of Thorn Drive trace the alignment of the wall's Military Way, which continued as a historic route where the hamlet first grew. It was here that the crossroads of the historic routes from Glasgow to Drymen and the east banks of Loch Lomond, and an east-west route from Balmore/Torrance towards Duntocher/Clydebank and Old Kilpatrick formed. The back streets north of Roman Road, around New Kilpatrick Church, retain the small-scale character and winding road pattern of the pre-expansion hamlet.

Figure 4.3: Development pattern and layout

A road sign to the south side of the railway on Drymen Road.

Bolclair Road as it descends to meet the junction with north-south Milgavie Road and the east-west Roman Road. The former Bearsden Council Chambers can be seen to the right.

4.11 Demonstrating the impact of pre-19th century villas on the layout, Ledcameroch Road follows the historic driveway to Ledcameroch House and its grounds, now demolished and built over. This is also reflected in numerous streets and other place names such as New Kirk Road, Ledcameroch Road, Roman Road and the Manse Burn.

4.12 It was the coming of the railway and the transformation of the hamlet into the railway suburb of Bearsden that had the greatest influence on the development within the conservation area. The chronological sequence of building can still broadly be discerned, spreading out gradually from the station, with the earlier examples being individually-designed, generous villas in large plots, and later 19th century, higher density speculative development of detached and semi-detached dwellings in groups and streets, first extending along the pre-existing arterial routes and then into newly-created side roads.

4.13 The Victorian villas and smaller villa cottages are well set back from the road and well separated from each other. Density is generally low, even where later and taller infill development has occupied former garden ground, allowing the whole area to retain a very spacious, leafy character.

4.14 The underlying topography makes its presence felt in the layout and character of the conservation area: the dominant east-west street pattern developed along the contour lines; the deep gulley of the Manse Burn creates a green, undeveloped corridor cutting diagonally across the middle of the settlement; the secluded water feature of St Germain's Loch and the large, early development plots around it give this part of the conservation area a particularly expansive, private and privileged character; and expansive southerly views are available from some of the more elevated sites, such as Ledcameroch Road/Crescent and the Schaw Convalescent Home.

Public and private space

4.15 The majority of the conservation area is private space formed of gardens for dwellings, which range in size and proximity to main roads. The individually designed villas were set in

large grounds, often separated from the main street by a large front garden, main driveway and boundary walls. This contrasts with the smaller 'cottage style' detached or semi-detached dwellings that have narrow frontage and limited separation from the street and narrow rear gardens of considerable depth. As development continued through into the 20th century, higher density layouts created smaller garden space and less separation from the street. There are wooded corridors along the Manse Burn and the route of the railway, although these are mostly not publicly accessible.

Figure 4.4: Varied private space

Drymen Road

Milngavie Road

4.16 Public space generally takes the form of roads, streets and paths, with some areas set aside for pedestrians with encouragement to sit and use the space, such as in New Kirk Street and in church grounds. The striking, sculptural war memorial in front of the primary school is set within a small but prominent formal public space. Small pockets of public park or leisure greenspace exist at Thorn Road Recreation Ground, at the corner of Manse Road and Drymen Road and a number of bowling and tennis clubs.

Setting

4.17 Bearsden is located within a setting which contributes to our understanding of its development. To the south, the town largely blurs into the suburbs of Glasgow with minimal sense of separation. To the north, it relates closely to the town of Milngavie, with which it shared in the benefits of the Victorian railway expansion; unlike the south side coalescence with

Glasgow suburbs, later-20th century green belt policies have kept a slight sense of separation between Bearsden and Milngavie, preserving their separate identities. The landscape setting of Bearsden is more evident to the east and west. Views out to the east from Boclair Road illustrate the agricultural character of the rural hinterland around Bardowie and Baldernock, an important reminder of the area's more modest, rural origins. To the west is more enclosed and manicured, with views over Colquhoun Park and Bearsden Golf Course, within the dramatic valley of the Garscadden Burn. However, these aspects of setting can only be experienced from the edges of the conservation area and higher points; within its core the street form, topography, mature trees and heavy planting largely curtail any longer-range views.

Figure 4.5: Setting

View over Colquhoun Park from Station Road

View east from Boclair Road

Architectural Form and Detailing

Building types, form and materials

House types

4.18 As a commuter suburb, the majority of buildings within the conservation area are houses. The individuality and diversity of domestic architectural styles and original architectural detail is a principal feature of special interest in the conservation area.

4.19 The basic, repeated dwelling unit is the villa: a residence usually of generous scale within its own private grounds, with a level of refined architectural expression in its design, providing a high level of amenity and comfort. Inspired by large mansions or country houses for the upper classes, the villa form was adapted by developers of growing suburbs across the UK to attract middle-class, professional families. The form was highly adaptable and could vary widely in scale and complexity to cater to a range of tastes and budgets. In Bearsden, generally the earlier pre- and immediate post-railway developments are at the larger, more exclusive end of the scale while later developments offer a wider range of sizes and types. Typical examples range from:

- **Large villas** of two storeys, sometimes with a sprawling, multi-winged plan, with extensive grounds and multiple ancillary buildings such as lodges and stables. Examples are Abbotsford, Drymen Road, now a care home; Carrickarden, Drymen Road (one of the earliest surviving in the conservation area) and Chesters, Thorn Grove.

  The large grounds of these houses often came under pressure for infill development during the later 20th century, changing the settings of the villas, sometimes dramatically. Ancillary buildings are also often separated off to become separate dwellings. The grounds, lodges and boundaries of the larger villas often survive in cases where the principal house has been demolished and help shape the character of the site, even where contrasting, modern development has been inserted. This is particularly the case in the area around St Germains Loch and the south end of Drymen Road.

Figure 4.6: Large villas

Abbotsford

Converted stables, Carrickarden

Figure 4.7: Medium sized villas

Classical villa, Drymen Road

Arts and Crafts villa, Roman Road

- ■ **Medium-sized villas** consisting of detached, yet still generous houses on a compact footprint. These are probably the most common type in Bearsden, and the most variable in style. The earlier, mid-to late-19th century examples around Grange Road and south of Thorn Road are typically two storey, in a fairly plain, Classically-inspired style, sometimes with bay windows, on a rectangular plan with a shallow-pitched, piend (hipped) roof. Alexander Thomson's austere Greek Revival style had an influence in this area, such as at 9 Ralston Road. Some, particularly the older examples, have ancillary buildings on a modest scale to the side/rear or attached to the main block as rear outshots.

More picturesque examples of this type were developed around Thorn Drive, still on a compact footprint but often of 1½ storeys with more complex roof forms incorporating gables, dormers and porches. These were inspired by rural 'cottages orné' of the Romantic period and continued into the early 20th century with Arts and Crafts influences being particularly strong in Bearsden; particularly fine examples are at the west end of Thorn Road and around Boclair Road, but other examples are mixed in among other styles, mostly in development north of Roman Road.

- ■ **Semi-detached houses**, giving the impression of one villa from the exterior but efficiently accommodating two separate households. These vary in a similar way to the detached, medium-sized villas, most often adopting Classical or picturesque expressions. Most examples are found in the parallel streets west of Drymen Road and north of Thorn Road.

Figure 4.8: Semi-detached houses

West Chapelton Crescent

Colquhoun Drive

■ **Smaller houses or cottages**, sometimes semi-detached or in terraces, often of 1 to 1½ storeys and adopting the complex gabled roofs, dormers and porches of the larger, picturesque villas. Examples are found at Station Road, Douglas Gardens, Milngavie Road and the northern end of Drymen Road.

Figure 4.9: Smaller types

Milngavie Road

Drymen Road

4.20 The collective effect of these buildings over a wide area creates the unique special character of Bearsden and is important as a record of changes in architectural tastes and fashions from the mid-19th century to the 1930s. Groupings of these different types and dates help to create variation across the conservation area.

Other building types

4.21 Given the great majority of Bearsden is residential, other types of buildings contribute to Bearsden's character by adding points of interest, visual accents and contrast. These consist mainly of churches, institutions and commercial buildings. Churches form a loose cluster around the original parish church of New Kilpatrick, spreading along Drymen Road and Roman Road. They announce their presence in a relatively modest way within the townscape, through their overall scale, large, imposing pitched roofs over nave and chancel and a feature tower or spire. The smaller examples are more pragmatic hall-forms, usually without a taller landmark feature.

4.22 Bearsden Primary School and the former Schaw Convalescent Home are two of the most imposing buildings in the conservation area, using their relative height and high-quality, eye-catching architectural detail to announce their importance. They are both set within generous space set well back from the street, which enhances their impressive character and contrast with the surrounding townscape.

Figure 4.10: The Cross

School and War Memorial   Commercial tenement

4.23 Commercial buildings focus around the Roman Road/Drymen Road junction, the main example being the impressive 1906 tenement block with ground floor shops which dominates the crossroads. Its continuous, terraced façade and large footprint over two adjoining perimeter blocks is more city urban in character than most of the rest of Bearsden. The commercial terrace at Bearsden Station is smaller, at 2 storeys, but again helps to announce the presence of the station with its shopfronts and atypical, terraced form.

4.24 Given its importance in the development of Bearsden and its continuing vital transport role, Bearsden Station is relatively self-effacing and makes a visual contribution only when viewed within its cutting from the Drymen Road viaduct. However, despite accretions of modern railway infrastructure and lean-to extensions, the main station building retains its mid-19th century character of a plain, linear office and station house building with shallow piend roof and platform awning.

4.25 Other commercial and institutional uses in the area, such as Scotus College, tend to occupy former residential buildings and are discussed in relation to that building type, above.

Distinctive architectural style and detailing

4.26 Each house in the conservation area reflects architectural styles in vogue at the time of design and construction, both in terms of overall design concept and the more detailed ornamentation. It also reflects the specific architectural tastes of the individual developer and their architect/builder, if commissioned as a 'one-off'' design, or if constructed on a speculative basis of the size, design and finishing that would attract households to the healthful yet well-connected environs of Bearsden. A degree of licence permitted the individualistic architectural design and detailing that is such a distinguishing feature of the conservation area.

Use of materials

4.27 There are common materials used throughout the conservation area, with it likely that conditions of sale would have prescribed houses of a minimum value to be constructed of suitable, durable materials. Sandstone, red or grey, is almost universal for walls, door and window margins, as are slate roofs. Treatment of the stone varies according to the formality of the elevation and the status of the building, from smooth ashlar in large blocks for formal elevations on the grander houses, through squared and finished rubble for principal elevations

of intermediate status houses and random field rubble for rear elevations and ancillary buildings without a public face or function. Other ancillary structures such as lodges helped to project the level of grandeur intended by the main building and also received a polite, polished finish.

4.28 Additional materials and detailing are then used to express the variety of architectural styles:

Victorian Villas

4.29 The Classical-style villas tend to have large-paned, plate-glass sash and case windows, sometimes with arched windows to stairs, and eaves either projecting out on exposed rafter ends or concealed by a parapet or ogee gutter. Ornamentation is often relatively plain and restrained, including pedimented or consoled doors, bay windows, ashlar quoins and string courses.

4.30 The more picturesque villas, semi-detached and 'cottage' style houses employ a range of detailed ornamentation taken from historical sources including gothic and Tudor styles. Typical features include sash and case windows with astragalled upper sashes; multi-gabled roofs with expressed timber framing or timber brackets; dormers with a variety of roof forms; canted bay windows; canopied vestibules and porches. Chimney stacks are often prominent and treated decoratively with detailed clay cans.

Figure 4.11: Contrasting Victorian villa detail

Greek Classical, Ralston Road   Picturesque Tudor/gothic, Thorn Road

20th century

4.31 Many common details and design approaches continued from the Victorian period into the earlier 20th century but began to incorporate influences from the Arts and Crafts movement and, later, the Modern movement. There was a move away from exclusive use of stone for exterior walls towards harled or rendered finishes, sometimes in combination with exposed stonework and, occasionally in this area, brick. Half-timbered detailing to gables and red clay 'rosemary' tiles often feature, sometimes hung as wall cladding. Window openings are relatively small and sometimes horizontally proportioned with small-paned timber or metal-framed casement windows, sometimes featuring richly-coloured leaded glass. The Arts and Crafts influences include flamboyant roof forms with catslides, projecting eaves, bell-cast profiles and corner turrets; crow steps and sculptural treatment of string courses, chimney stacks and window- and door-framing. As the century progressed the ornamentation tended to become plainer and more restrained, expressing the 'cleaner' lines of the modern architectural style.

Figure 4.12: Arts and Crafts-influenced houses

Boclair Road

Thorn Road

Trees and Landscaping

4.32 Trees would have been a feature of the conservation area from the start, as ornamental features in the grounds of the early-Victorian villas and mansions and as remnants of earlier

plantations and shelterbelts. As the private gardens, tree cover and planting matured, the leafy, green environment became one of the most distinctive and valued characteristics of the area.

4.33 The repeated rhythm of typical villas within their plots, extending along straight streets with a boundary zone of low walls, hedges, gate piers and mature trees, creates the characteristic streetscape vista of the Victorian villa suburb of which Bearsden is an outstanding example. Trees are almost exclusively located in private gardens, within church grounds and along the railway and burns. The only street trees are in New Kirk Street.

Figure 4.13: Classic villa suburb streetscape

4.34 Public landscaped spaces are not a particular feature of Bearsden. Those public spaces which do exist tend to differentiate themselves from the private gardens by their lack of trees, creating open 'breathing spaces' predominantly for leisure purposes, with simple grass and paths and little formal landscape design. There is no formally laid out ornamental public park or garden as in other Victorian and Edwardian towns.

Views

Types of views / Seeing character in the view

4.1 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 Bearsden 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 Old Bearsden Conservation Area

4.2 There are a number of striking and beautiful views within Bearsden and toward it from its setting, 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

4.3 A large, individually designed, quirkily detailed villa on Thorn Road, incorporating details inspired by several different historical architectural styles. Its design has been heavily influenced by its location on a corner plot: the principal entrance is approached from the street on the diagonal and announced by the corner tower. Because of this arrangement, it also has two principal elevations of equal architectural status; only from this point can the entrance and both elevations be admired as a complete composition.

Figure 4.14: Static view – Thorn Road Villa

Glimpsed

4.4   The viewer's experience of most of Bearsden's residential streets is as a pedestrian, passenger or cyclist, moving along with continually changing glimpses of its varied and distinctive architecture through the foreground screen of trees, shrubs, hedges and gates.

4.5   Similarly, the evocative New Kilpatrick Parish Church and its graveyard are experienced via glimpses from surrounding streets. These involve a combination of glimpsed and dynamic view.

Figure 4.15: Glimpsed views – villas and the parish church

Filtered view of villa, Grange Road

Parish Church from the north

Dynamic

4.6   The enclosed character of streets and building plots in the area, along with mature planting, limits the number of dynamic views within the conservation area, but there are some: expansive southerly views over the Clyde Valley are available from some of the more elevated sites, such as Ledcameroch Road and Crescent and the Schaw Convalescent Home, whilst views along the arterial routes are animated by a variety of building scales and uses. One other such view is from Rubislaw Drive eastwards across St Germains Loch. The tranquil surface of the loch reflects the villas placed high on the opposite bank, with their wooded and landscaped grounds running down to its edge.

Figure 4.16: Dynamic view – St Germain's Loch

4.7   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.

4.8   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.

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