



The Grange Association

Covering the Grange Conservation Area

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 1990

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: 5th DECEMBER, 1989.

Last year the **Annual General Meeting** was held in a new venue, St Catherine's Argyle Church Hall, which was very well filled. The Chairman, Mrs Leonard, introduced the speakers and guests, and outlined the agenda as follows: Firstly, the Business Meeting was to include reports on the social activities of the Association, Neighbourhood Watch, the traffic calming scheme, tree planting, planning applications, finance and elections to the committee; secondly, talks by the guest speakers would be on **Planning** and on **The New Policy for Development in Villa Areas**.

The subjects reported on in the Business part of the Meeting are described on pages 2 and 3. As regards the talks, we were very fortunate in having, as guests and speakers, Councillor Cairns, Chairman of the District Council Planning Committee, and Mr David Cameron of the Planning Department who has a special interest in conservation. Councillor Cairns, whose service to local planning goes back to 1974, emphasised that, as regards conservation schemes, Edinburgh is ahead of all other cities in both Scotland and England. Indeed, some of them have already approached the Edinburgh Planning Authorities about the new Villa Policy Scheme, (see *Newsletter*, Summer, 1989). He discussed the difficulties in implementing planning controls overall, and, while admitting that mistakes are sometimes made (who likes crude blocks?), said that there were also successes, as in the new policy for Villa Areas, and in good examples of modern architecture (e.g. new housing in the Pleasance).

After conveying apologies from Mr Graham Duncan, Director of Planning, Mr Cameron spoke on the same theme. He began with some interesting statistics about population changes, density, types of houses, etc., (available on request from the Committee). In The Grange, there were more owner-occupiers and older buildings than throughout the city; but, surprisingly, a smaller proportion of villa-dwellings. Further perusal, however, has shown that in this case the figures are not completely relevant because the survey covered a part of Marchmont as well as The Grange. Nevertheless, the division of large villas into flats and the recent rash of flat-building has affected the character of the district.

Mr Cameron went on to say that The Grange might be affected by **new suggestions made by the Historic Buildings Council**. There are thirty conservation areas in Edinburgh, of which eighteen are considered "outstanding". The difference is that, in the "outstanding" areas, listed buildings are eligible, in certain circumstances (which are relatively rare), for

maintenance grants; whereas the ordinary conservation areas are distinguished from non-conserved areas by the more rigorous application of planning controls. The Grange is not at present an "outstanding conservation area", but the Historic Buildings Council (NOT The Grange Association) has considered that certain parts of it should be given this status; the other parts would no longer be "designated", and would therefore be unprotected. This possible change of status was illustrated on maps displayed around the hall, which the audience examined with interest. There are some anomalies, e.g. the Lauder Wyverns would be excluded from "outstanding conservation"; the H.B.C. has spent a considerable sum on restoring Sciennes Hill House, yet it would be in an "excluded" area. A report on the proposals for the Local Plan is due to be published in June.

Both Mr Cameron and the Chairman, Mrs Leonard, urged that residents should express their views in letters to the Committee. Briefly:

(1) do you think that the historic boundaries specified in *The Grange: a Case for Conservation (1982)* should be maintained so that conservation policies can continue to apply in the whole of our district?

Alternatively, (2) do you think that only the smaller area of the oldest villas should be designated as an "outstanding conservation area", with the advantages which would theoretically obtain in that case, leaving the rest of the area unprotected?

The Grange Association Committee supports the first of these options.

Mr Cameron announced that a conference on "Civilising the City" relevant to the points which he had mentioned, is to be held at George Heriot's School from 29 March to 1st April, 1990.

The Traffic Calming Scheme: The Committee has been working on this subject for some time, in co-operation with the Highways Department which has analysed our traffic survey. A major problem has been identified: cars travel through The Grange district at comparatively high speeds. The Grange Association, working along with the Highways Department, has produced suggestions for road narrowing at certain strategic corners, and the use of trees to indicate and ensure that local streets are not to be treated as race tracks. The particular sites were shown on maps displayed around the hall. One committee member has collated details of all underground public utility services in order to facilitate the implementation of the scheme. Detailed plans (and costings) are being made and will be carried out.

Regional Councillor Mrs MacLaren, who spoke from the audience, was concerned about conditions throughout South Edinburgh. In The Grange, she mentioned the need to control speed in Sciennes Road, and the possibility of having one-way traffic in Sciennes House Place. She described proposals for a cycle route, partly through The Grange, from the University Old Quad to King's Buildings. Mr Roland Paxton of the Highways Department, also in the audience, confirmed that this authority was very interested in all the proposals. Great interest was evinced by everyone present, and discussion continued long after the formal end of the Meeting.

Social Activities (1989); Neighbourhood Watch: These two subjects, on which the Chairman reported in detail at the start of the Meeting, have been fully described in previous *Newsletters*, except for the social meeting on 25 September, 1989, when Sheriff Nigel Thomson spoke on *Law and Order in The Grange*. His witty comments on crimes ancient and modern (including the abduction of Lady Grange) and remarks about the judicial scene were most amusing and also very informative; we laughed and learned a lot. As regards **Neighbourhood Watch**, it was announced that eleven signs were to be put up in our area; this has now been done.

Tree Planting: The association has given seven more trees to the District Council; they were planted in The Grange Cemetery on 1st November, and complement the four planted there two years ago. As some of the older trees on this site are due for replacement, this contribution to replanting is particularly welcome.

Planning Applications: The Chairman briefly summarised the types of planning applications monitored by The Grange Association Committee during the past year, and described two important cases in detail: 15-17 Hatton Place and 63-69 Grange Loan. Both are the subject of appeal. She also warned the audience that developers, who want to obtain building land where public utilities are already established, have sometimes approached house-owners with a view to buying the latter's property, even though the houses are not for sale. Inflated prices have been offered; the developers hope to make more profits from blocks of flats erected in the gardens, possibly without realising (or deliberately ignoring) the conservation status of the area. Strict controls, and constant vigilance, are necessary; the new Villa Policy Scheme should help. For news since November, see below.

Finance: The Treasurer, Miss Matheson, reported that the financial position of The Grange Association was satisfactory overall. Copies of balance sheets were available in the hall, and may still be obtained from the Treasurer on application (address below). The Association is most grateful to Mr W. Fraser Raeburn for auditing the accounts. Since the A.G.M. he has estimated his intention of retiring from this task; Miss Matheson would be very glad to hear from any residents or other interested people who would be able and willing to succeed him.

The Committee: Mrs Crosbie and Mrs Marshall are retiring. The Association is indebted to them for all their help, interest and service. Mrs Crosbie's organisation of the *Newsletter* distribution has been excellently efficient. We record our very grateful thanks to her and to every individual distributor.

Two new members, Mrs Forbes and Mr Reid, were proposed, seconded and duly elected; in addition, Mrs Cantley was co-opted.

The Committee for 1990 will therefore be as follows:

Mrs Sofia Leonard, 12 St Albans Road, (667 2339) Chairman

Mrs Dorothy Ryle, 33 Manshionhouse Road, (667 1444) Secretary

Miss Marjorie Matheson, 6/2 Dalrymple Crescent, (667 3234) Treasurer

Mrs Marion Cantley, 59 Fountainhall Road, (667 8074) (Newsletter Distributor)

Miss Mary Cunningham, 18 Dick Place, (667 4174)
Mrs Maria Forbes, 41 Grange Road, (667 6162)
Miss Caroline Fortescue, 5 Seton Place, (667 1291) (Newsletter Editor)
Eric Hannah, 84 Findhorn Place, (667 2779)
Mrs Ann Hepburn, 22 Mansionhouse Road, (667 7767)
Professor Paul Jowitt, 22 Fountainhall Road (667 5696)
Dr Derek Lyddon, 38 Dick Place, (667 2266)
Donald Millar, 8 Seton Place, (667 5071)
Archibald Reid, 108 Findhorn Place, (667 4876)

SPRING NEWS

(1) RECENT NEWS ABOUT PLANNING

3 Sciennes Gardens. An application has been lodged for a single-storey extension to this semi-detached stone villa, which has already had a two-storey extension erected in 1986. A metal-framed patio door, designed to face on to the street, looks incongruous on the submitted plan.

15-17 Hatton Place. Laboratory extension. The appeal is still before the Secretary of State.

33 Hatton Place. Planning consent to "erect a dwelling block" in the garden has been refused.

The Royal Bank of Scotland, Staff College, Kilgraston Road. The Association is critical of the double glazing with white polyester slim frames, incongruous in the setting of a Victorian villa. The configuration of opening windows is usually at variance with the pattern typical of The Grange area.

Causewayside Office Development. The scheme already under construction will affect some houses in Findhorn Place. The Association believes that tree planting on all new developments as part of a condition of planning consent could help to maintain the character of The Grange, and should be extended into new schemes on the edge of the area.

SPRING NEWS

(2) FORTHCOMING EVENTS

TUESDAY, 13th MARCH, 1990, at the British Geological Survey, Murchison House, West Mains Road, at 7.30 p.m.; a talk by Dr Stewart Munro on *Geology and the Edinburgh Environment with reference to the local area*. Please telephone 667 4876 if you would like transport.

WEDNESDAY, 25th APRIL, 1990. Visit to the National Library of Scotland, Causewayside. Meet at 7.00 p.m., at entrance.

TUESDAY 8th MAY, 1990, at Grange Park, 38 Dick Place, at 7.30 p.m. Illustrated talk on *Grange House and the Dick-Lauders* by Ian Gow, of the National Monuments of Scotland.

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