



Progress report August 2016
Proposed Dean Valley Renovation project

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DEAN VALLEY REGENERATION LIMITED

Company registration number SC515394
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BACKGROUND AND PROGRESS TO DATE

The Dean Valley Regeneration project is a not-for-profit community-led restoration initiative, made up of volunteers seeking to breathe new life into one of Scotland's most important historic landscapes, the Dean Valley in Edinburgh's New Town. Dean Valley Regeneration Limited (DVRL) was set up in 2015 by a group of local residents with a wide range of professional experience, with community engagement, legal, architectural, landscaping, project management and business expertise.

The Dean Valley forms the backdrop to Edinburgh's Georgian city, built from 1767, and represents one of the most significant historical and architectural designed landscape gardens in Scotland. Over the years the City of Edinburgh Council owned linear park has been neglected and is now in urgent need of renovation and care.

The proposed project is an historic landscape renovation, to include the walkway and its built structures of walls, bridges, railings and embankments, creating a community focus, both to improve the shared amenity of the area as well as promoting its sustainability and self-sufficiency for current and future generations.

Significant elements of the landscape on this route are St Bernard' Bridge, St Bernard's Well, the Dean Bridge, Randolph Cliff and the arched retaining structure to the Moray Bank Gardens.

The current landscape includes new planting, self seeded trees, shrubs and plants that have inevitably become mature and overgrown. This new growth impacts on the existing designed planting between it. The climate has also changed with typical annual rainfall figures being far higher than what it was in the early 20th century. This has significantly impacted on the drainage down the sides of the valley and onto the public areas, in particular the 'walkway' which is now a dual purpose foot and cycle path without delineation between the two purposes..

Within the project area the Water of Leith, its banks, the river bed and the footpath and cycle-path are owned by the City of Edinburgh Council. It is bordered on both sides by areas of private gardens, the Moray, Dean and Belgrave Gardens, forming a beautiful backdrop to the public areas. The Moray Bank Gardens adjoin the 'walkway'.

The 'walkway' is owned by the City of Edinburgh Council, though there is an area of land in private ownership in the Dean Village on the river frontage to Miller Row owned by Link Housing Association. The Association has agreed to this area being included in any subsequent landscaping renovation project.

MAINTENANCE

The City of Edinburgh Council has maintenance responsibility for the area it owns, including addressing essential maintenance for public safety and the removal of damaged or diseased trees. Day-to-day maintenance is otherwise covered by a management agreement between the City of Edinburgh Council and the Water of Leith Conservation Trust, which relies on the generous involvement of volunteers.

There are health and safety hazards to the walls fronting the Water of Leith, which currently prevents periodic maintenance. There is tree growth in these walls potentially undermining the stability of the embankments/ sides to the river. Evidence of this is where the 'walkway' has become uneven with tree root development. The 'walkway' is often affected by poor surface water drainage including water from the Moray Bank Gardens and Randolph Cliff.

THE PROPOSED WIDER PROJECT

The renovation could include the walls, bridges, railings and embankments, the removal of trees where these are undermining the structure of the embankments; and the redesign and restoration of the walkway/ cycle path as well as planting up areas which are currently bare.

The redesign of the 'walkway' needs to address the competing demands of cycle and foot traffic. However the overall width of the existing 'walkway' could be increased in places and relate to opening up greater public access to the riverside, and opening up key panoramic views, referred to in the Conservation Statement (2015), through selective removal of some trees and shrubs. Partial separation of pedestrian and cycle traffic could be achieved through varying surface treatment, though the essential quality of the 'walkway' is more rustic than municipal.

Selective removal of trees would reduce the level of overgrowth, reintroducing daylight into the areas currently in shadow and allow for a far greater level of plant and wildlife biodiversity, and additional planting of shrubs and small trees would improve the overall appearance, as well as re-establishing certain key views in the planned designed landscape.

An earlier feasibility study (2010) was undertaken for a small scale hydroelectric turbine at Lindsay's Mill, and we have separately investigated the potential for a cafe/visitor centre as a sustainable environmental and interpretation facility nearby.

None of this would be possible without detailed discussion and negotiation with the City of Edinburgh Council and compliance with a number of current policies. Ultimately we would need to obtain statutory consents from the Council.

WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE STEERING GROUP APPOINTED BY THE STAKEHOLDERS & DEAN VALLEY REGENERATION LIMITED SO FAR

The first stage involved secured funding for and preparing a Conservation Statement in 2015, commissioned by the Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, and funded by Historic Scotland. Other funding came from Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership and private individuals. .

At a stakeholders meeting at Stockbridge Library in February 2015 the initial findings of the Conservation Statement were presented. At that meeting there was consensus about continuing the small working group to develop matters further. This group has since met on a monthly basis and has identified an outline work plan and the necessary actions needed to take the project forward. We set up DVRL as a company limited by guarantee in September 2015 with charitable status in January 2016.

We held a further public meeting in October 2015 to present the Conservation Statement and canvas opinions from the Community. We have spoken to various potential funders, targeting those who support projects with a community-based focus. We have also been

carrying out survey work including monitoring the pattern of use of the 'walkway' with cooperation from Living Streets' counters.

We were awarded a grant by the City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership to undertake a biodiversity scoping study, which was completed in July 2016, and have also completed a review of private land ownership.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The next stage, subject to funding is to develop a feasibility study resulting in more detailed proposals for local residents to comment on in 2017.

We have however secured funding for half of the feasibility study funding from Sustrans (Sustainable Transport Scotland), matching monies raised by us at a fundraising event and by securing a grant under the City of Edinburgh Council cycling development grants. This is to meet the costs of reviewing the 'walkway' footpath and cyclepath options. This work will be commissioned from a landscaping consultant through a small tender process based on tenderers carrying out the following:

- Identifying a timetable and workplan
- A survey of the 'walkway' in relation to its current condition
- A review of the Dean Valley Conservation Statement, Biodiversity Scoping Study, and Land Ownership Issues reports, specifically those parts that impact on, or are relevant to the 'walkway' upgrading
- An initial meeting with DVRL, and subsequent meetings where appropriate
- Developing recommendations and an outline design for the footpath, including a specification and indicative costs to support a possible capital grant application
- Developing a draft final and final report
- Completion of work by 31 January 2017, if not earlier

The tender period is 1-15 September 2016. A decision on the selection of the successful tender will be made by 29 September 2016.

The balance of the feasibility study is subject to securing additional funding to employ a consultant to complete the design and cost options for the project to position us favourably to support the Council to secure capital grant funding, including a possible application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

CHRONOLOGY

Stakeholder meetings

7th January 2013

Purpose: to reach a community consensus on how to proceed.
A steering group was set up.

26th February 2015

Purpose: to present the draft Conservation Statement and ask for stakeholders to make comments over next 2 months.

Conference

26th September 2014

'*The Scottish enlightenment as manifested in the Gardens and Squares of the New Town*' -
Managed by Historic Scotland on behalf of the Garden History Society at the George Hotel,
George Street

Purpose: to engage the wider community in the importance of the gardens as equal to the built environment of the New Town and produce proceedings.

http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org/publications/journal/edinburgh-squares-issue_43-sup/

Public meetings

16th March 2013

Purpose: to report to the general public on the stakeholders meeting of 7.1.13 and to canvas public response.

31st October 2015

Purpose: to present the *Conservation Statement* and canvas public response

Community Engagement meetings and events

7th December 2011 Doune Terrace residents

14th October 2013 Doune Terrace residents

May 2015 Stockbridge Primary year 4 expedition (various dates)

1st September 2015 Dean Terrace and Upper Dean Terrace

2nd September 2015 Saunders Street and the Grants

28th September 2015 Dean Village Association

30th September 2015 Stockbridge Primary Eco warriors

21st October 2015 Stockbridge Community Council

28th April 2016 Dean Gardens Association

10th May 2016 Dean Village Association

13th May 2016 Belgrave Gardens Association

<u>27th July 2016</u>	Moray Gardens Feuars
<u>2011- 2016</u>	Edinburgh World Heritage Trust
<u>2011- 2016</u>	on going meetings with Lord Moray
<u>2014-2016</u>	on going meetings with City of Edinburgh Council Natural Heritage Department and the Water of Leith Conservation Trust

Fundraising

City Centre & Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnerships

City of Edinburgh Council

Historic Scotland

SUSTRANS

Private Trusts

Private individuals

4th February 2016 Fundraising event at Bonhams George Street.

Conservation statement

13th May 2013

Purpose : Meeting at Historic Scotland to discuss securing grant aid to fund the *Conservation Statement* and to commission it.

15th February 2015 draft Conservation statement produced by Peter McGowan and published in August 2015

<http://www.gardenhistorysociety.org/post/agenda/valley-of-the-water-of-leith-between-stockbridge-and-dean-village-update-2015/>

Biodiversity Scoping Study

Purpose: to summarise existing knowledge, and to identify the scope for further investigation and potential issues between biodiversity interests and designed landscape management in relation to recommendations in the *Conservation Statement*.

Funded through a 'community grant' from the City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership.

Commissioned in March 2016 and completed July 2016 (to go online in September 2016 on the Dean Valley Regeneration Limited website)

Land ownership review

September 2105 – to July 2016

Purpose: to identify areas of private/ other ownership, which would impact on any project development and implementation, including land on Dean Terrace and Miller Row (Link Housing Association). This has been written up as a Land Ownership Issues paper July 2016 and will be available online in September 2016.

Usage of walkway

From September 2015 – to date

Purpose: to quantify walkway usage.

Weekly monitoring of usage of the walkway in September & December 2015, March, June & August 2016, based on monitoring technology loaned by Living Streets

Councillor walk

2nd March 2015

Purpose: to explain to the Inverleith and City Centre Councillors about the project and canvas their opinions.

CEC Officer walk and discussion

11th January 2016

Purpose: to familiarise the Officers of CEC with the project and discuss way forward

Neighbourhood partnership meetings

24th August 2015 Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership

3rd September 2015 City Centre Neighbourhood Partnership

8th February 2016 Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership Business Meeting

Charitable and company details

11th September 2015 Company limited by guarantee registration completed

19th January 2016 Charitable status awarded

Partnerships

City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh World Heritage Trust, Water of Leith Conservation Trust, Dean Village Association, Historic Scotland, Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, Inverleith Neighbourhood Partnership, City Neighbourhood Partnership, Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh, National Galleries for Scotland, Stockbridge Community Council, Edinburgh & Lothian Greenspaces Trust.

Website and facebook

Currently under development going live in September 2016

Purpose: To promote the project and community engagement; to act as an environmental education and interpretation facility; to provide an information forum; to inform the public and grant funders; to conduct surveys; to provide access to publications; and to act as an interface with the public

Feasibility study development

March 2016- to date

Purpose to favourably position the Council to apply for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund