

## **AAH/REH Group – Note on Walkabout at AAH on 13 October 2011**

(AAH = Astley Ainslie Hospital; REH = Royal Edinburgh Hospital)

### **Present**

Sarah Sandow	Vice-chair Marchmont & Sciennes Community Council
Alison Service	Treasurer Marchmont & Sciennes CC (MSCC)
Dorothy Ryle	Member Marchmont & Sciennes CC & Grange Association
Jean Thompson	Chair Morningside CC
Goff Cantley	Planning Morningside CC
Tony Reeves	Grange Association
Sue Tritton	Secretary Grange/Prestonfield CC & Grange Association
Alison Bramley	Member Grange/Prestonfield CC & Grange Association
Tony Harris	Vice-chair & Planning Grange/Prestonfield CC (GPCC)

### **Location**

AAH lies wholly within Marchmont & Sciennes CC area and adjoins the SE corner of Merchiston CC at the Newbattle Terrace/Whitehouse Loan junction. The NE corner of Morningside CC area abuts AAH and the Napier University Lothian College of Health Studies (former Nurses Home) off Canaan Lane is within Morningside CC area. Grange/Prestonfield CC has a western boundary with AAH. REH lies wholly within Morningside CC area and adjoins the southern boundary of Merchiston CC terminating at Myreside.

### **Planning Status**

AAH is within the Grange Conservation Area and those areas in the northern and southern parts of the site not covered by buildings and hard landscaping are shown on the Edinburgh City Local Plan as Open Space. The southern and western parts of the REH site not covered by buildings etc are also shown as Open Space on ECLP but the REH site does not have conservation area status. These landscaped Open Space areas in both sites are recorded in the Open Space Audit as Institutional (not accessible), in total 9.18ha for AAH and 3.31ha for REH, plus 5.20ha natural open space at the west end of REH (in both cases excluding bowling greens). The buildings and hard landscaping are not safeguarded in ECLP for any specific purpose. Some features on both sites are listed by Historic Scotland (See Appendix). The southern boundaries of both sites abut the South Suburban Railway in places and this is shown in ECLP as safeguarded for railway and cycleway/footpath purposes. The South Central Open Space Action Plan identifies the scope for green corridor access eastwards from Myreside along the REH southern boundary, not currently part of the Edinburgh Core Paths system.

### **Background Note**

NHS Lothian intends to concentrate at REH some services at present provided at AAH by reprovisioning the REH site leading to disposal of some or all of the AAH assets. It is understood that it is not intended to dispose of any of the REH site. The proposals for REH will require planning consent and it is understood that pre-application discussions are ongoing with CEC Planning, leading to a planning application in about 9 months time. A master plan for the REH site has been prepared. The timetable for any AAH site disposal is not at present known or whether this would be preceded by any planning application for change of use etc. The future location of NHS service provision and the

timing and what is proposed for the AAH and REH sites are to be explored at a meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> November by representatives of this Group and others and NHS Lothian.

### **The Walkabout**

This was arranged so that issues could be identified which would be of concern to local communities in the event of disposal and/or change of use of the AAH site. The REH site will be considered on a separate occasion perhaps linked to the planning timetable. The AAH walkabout commenced at the main vehicle entrance off Grange Loan, covered all accesses into the site, and finished at the pedestrian/cycle access opposite Whitehouse Loan. Pedestrian and cycle activity was noted through the site in particular east-west associated with St. Peter's School (Canaan Lane/ South Oswald Road) and James Gillespie's (NW/SE - Whitehouse Loan/South Oswald Road). There are many buildings of character on the site in some cases diminished by later unsympathetic additions and alterations, in an attractive landscaped setting.

**AAH Site:** Points noted for consideration and/or action arising from any site disposal:-

1. Seek funding for a photographic record of buildings, walls and other features, including significant trees and areas of landscaping.
2. New gates to AAH recently installed at the Blackford Bank Lane corner of South Oswald Road cause difficulties for both cyclists and pedestrians. The alternative pedestrian route alongside Barnardo's is awkward for pedestrians, especially with children or buggies and impracticable for cyclists, who have to go round by the road. Immediate action: The gates were installed to assist management of the medical waste bins adjacent and the AAH Facilities Management is to be asked what can be done to help pedestrians & cyclists, eg by only closing gates when the waste bins are being opened. (Later Note: this action is being taken forward by John Palmer, GPCC Chair - see minutes GPCC meeting 19 October 2011).  
Longer Term: secure cycle/pedestrian access at this corner in any redevelopment with vehicle access only at the end of South Oswald Road. Liaise with schools PTA.
3. Pedestrian/cycle access to AAH opposite Whitehouse Loan. Crossing Grange Loan from Whitehouse Loan is difficult and potentially dangerous with poor sight lines for pedestrians trying to cross.  
Immediate Action: Try to secure funding for either Pelican crossing and/or round out the footway on the Grange Loan/ Whitehouse Loan corner to improve sight lines and offer more refuge for pedestrians. Liaise with Gillespie's PTA for support. (Note: Email 1st November from Derek Roden, CEC Road Services South to Sarah Sandow confirms that a footway build out and pedestrian island is proposed for construction early in 2012 – drawing available via Sarah or TH)  
Longer Term: improve access to AAH eliminating use of side portico/sentry pavilion and using main gates but limiting access only to pedestrians and cyclists in any redevelopment.
4. Cluny Place/Egypt Mews: closed gates at the end of Egypt Mews, access to AAH off Cluny Place past boiler house states "no unauthorised access".  
Longer Term: In any redevelopment open up and improve access for cyclists and pedestrians with vehicle access limited. (Emergency services?)

5. South Oswald Road – closed gate in boundary wall. The nailed up gate was noted, understood to have been done to stop flytipping.  
Longer term: Reinstate gate under security control with improved paths to it within AAH.
6. Future development and access. Ensure free access for local people with paths as at present to segregate pedestrians and cyclists from vehicle routes, limiting vehicle accesses as at present. How to ensure the best of the existing buildings are beneficially reused, getting rid of poorer clutter and maintaining the landscaping.
7. Rights of way across the AAH site – do any exist or have any been established?  
(Subsequently followed up by Goff Cantley via Scotways – none known)
8. Investigate how to integrate AAH pedestrian/cycle accesses with Open Space Action Plan and green west/east corridor and Core Paths and ATAP expansion.
9. After the meeting on 17 November, agree the best way to monitor developments at AAH and REH affecting the local communities.

### **Further References**

- a) Lothian Health Services Archive – LHB35 Astley Ainslie Hospital – brief history and online listings: [www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk/collections/lhb35](http://www.lhsa.lib.ed.ac.uk/collections/lhb35)
- b) “Between the streamlet and the town: a brief history of the Astley Ainslie Hospital” by Charles J. Smith. Edinburgh: AAH 1989.
- c) Historic Scotland – historic & listed buildings – statutory list: the features currently listed at AAH can be accessed on line via [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk) following links using address: 143 Grange Loan AAH.

### **Site Maps**

Existing maps published for the use of visitors to AAH and REH are attached.

### **Distribution**

Attendees as listed

Marianna Clyde	Chair Merchiston CC
John Palmer	Chair GPCC
Alastair Philp	Secretary MSCC
Phil Noble	CEC for information re ATAP etc
Chris Brace	CEC for information
Spokes	

Note prepared by TH