

Rocheid Path

working towards a plan for making improvements now and in the future

One quite radical suggestion has been to tarmacadam the path from the East to the West gate and erect street lights, as has been done on the path between Warriston and Goldenacre.

However, it may be easier to consider the area in smaller chunks. There are quite significant differences in the character of the path and its surroundings along its length.

Consideration of six zones which have more or less distinct topography and character should help to generate ideas for what we want to see in a long-term improvement plan. The boundaries of the zones as described below are a rough indication and not intended to be precise demarcations.

A East

The area from the entry points to the path – end of Inverleith Terrace Lane and the bridge from Canonmills/Glenogle Road – to just before Bell's Bridge.

B Rocheid Bank

The area north of the Path up to the boundary wall at the rear of the properties along Inverleith Terrace (Nos 21-35).

C Holly Grove

The area at the western end of the Path which seems to have been cleared before being planted with holly trees.

D Rocheid Dell

The area between the Path and the river to the west of Bell's Bridge up to the bend in the river south of the Rocheid path gate to Arboretum Avenue.

E Arboretum Triangle

The triangle of land at the bend of Arboretum Avenue.

F Arboretum Bank

The area opposite Reid Terrace, from the bend in the river south to the Falshaw Bridge.

Contributors might find it helpful to think about what could be achieved in each of these areas by reference to their physical characteristics and the issues which currently cause concern.

This should provide a way of working towards agreement on long-term objectives which could underpin a plan for a programme of work to improve the path and its surroundings. Here is a first shot for any comments, and represents a variety of views so far expressed:

Zone A (East)

Issues –

- entry points are rather non-descript and fail to give any indication that the RP is a special place;
- the purpose and justification for the railings along the river side is highly questionable give the path a very hemmed in feeling; and
- (unnecessarily) enclose and restrict access to the river bank;
- vegetation lacks diversity, in particular the area has been widely colonised by laurel shrubs which appear to eliminate growth of any other plant species

Possible short-term actions –

- remove most or all laurel
- (as elsewhere) more mature trees would benefit from attention

Longer-term

- removal of all railings along river bank
- plant more suitable tree and plant species
- provide some information near entrance points

Zone B (Rocheid Bank)

Issues –

- many trees in need of attention (ivy, storm damage etc)
- informal paths/routes to upper parts of bank have increased erosion
- little ground cover growth and limited diversity

Possible short-term actions –

- removal of most or all laurel and other invasive species
- action to improve condition of trees removing ivy and seriously damaged limbs
- removal of excess debris

Longer-term

- implement a planting scheme including substantial replacement trees
- consider providing some steps and delineated routes to upper areas of bank

Zone C (Holly Grove)

Issues –

- holly trees lack character and are likely to become very large and over-dominant
- absence of plant diversity
- nothing at entry point to Path to indicate that it is in any way special
- visual impact of sub-station is quite strong

Possible short-term actions –

- remove at least half of the holly trees, or possibly all except one, to create space for alternative planting

Longer-term

- implement a planting scheme including specimen tree and better visual integration of sub-station

Zone D (Rocheid Dell)

Issues –

- railings along riverbank create an unpleasant and unnecessary barrier
- responsible access is inhibited by wooden fence at Bell's Bridge and by lack of delineated routes connecting to main Path at upper level
- walking route along riverbank and connection to Arboretum Bank obstructed or inhibited by overgrown areas and drainage structures
- recently planted vegetation appears to have failed and other species have invaded turning this into undistinguished scrubland

Possible short-term actions –

- clear vegetation and failed trees, leaving those that are well established and in keeping with the idea of a woodland area
- remove wooden fence and delineate an "accepted" path route through the area

Longer-term –

- remove railings along riverbank, they are dangerous and unsightly.
- provide for (and if necessary consolidate) path connecting to Arboretum Bank
- implement a wildlife friendly planting scheme with flowering plants and other species specifically suited to its riverside site
- provide a marked path (?on stepping stones or similar) through middle of area

Zone E (Arboretum Triangle)

Issues –

- area will need to be completely re-instated following completion of flood protection works which presents an opportunity to completely re-consider how it should be used and laid out
- in its previous state the triangle was a separate enclosed space cut off from the adjoining open spaces by, providing little value or benefit

Possible short-term actions –

- investigate current CEC/Lagan plans for re-instatement and ensure that they are compatible with long-term plan for RP

Longer-term –

- re-integrate the triangle with adjoining river bank areas; including
- re-alignment of railings so that they run alongside the main roadside pavement only; and
- provide for access to the riverside areas from the pavement at this point
- remove unnecessary railings
- implement a planting scheme to include some feature(s) specimen tree to enhance the outlook from Reid Terrace
- consider the planting of a community orchard. Apples, plums, cherries would all do well.

Zone F (Arboretum Bank)

Issues –

- railings along Arboretum Avenue emphasise the narrowness of the green space
- entry points from the road are only available at the extreme ends of the area
- there is no direct or easy connection to the next section of the Water of Leith path beyond Falshaw Bridge
- holly trees are unsuitable – they are now too large and beginning to encroach seriously on the available space and walkway
- siting of benches on Arboretum Avenue seems curious

Possible short-term actions –

- remove some of the larger holly trees and other unsuitable overgrown shrubs
- remove one or more sections of railings to provide alternative access points to space

Longer-term

- consider alternatives to continuous run of railings along Arboretum Avenue
- re-orientate /relocate benches within green space rather than on Arboretum Avenue pavement

- provide for a more direct access to upstream section of Water of Leith path connecting south end of Arboretum Bank (? walkway at river level under Falshaw Bridge as at eg Belford Road Bridge; or gated opening through wall adjacent to bridge parapet)
- remove holly trees and implement a more suitable planting scheme

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March 2012