



# Kinleith Mill, Currie

Design-led urban regeneration





## Executive summary

Built by Cala Homes, Kinleith Mill is the characterful regeneration of the former Kinleith Paper Mill site in Currie, an affluent and highly sought-after suburb of Edinburgh.

Following the paper mill's closure in 1966, the site played host to various industrial operations until its demolition in 1996. Vacant and littered with debris, the brownfield land occupied an 11 acre stretch next to the Water of Leith – a popular walking and cycle route – spoiling what was otherwise a tranquil waterside beauty spot. Cala Homes (East) purchased the site after previous attempts to build on it were thwarted by contamination, constrained access and complex engineering challenges.

Today, this stretch of the river is home to a flourishing new community. Kinleith Mill comprises 89 contemporary homes, 22 of which are affordable, complemented by green open space and tree-lined walkways.

It is an idyllic retreat, situated just off Lanark Road West, allowing excellent access to road and public transport links into Edinburgh and beyond.

Paying homage to the architecture of the historic paper mill, the new homes at Kinleith Mill feature traditional red brick facades, punctuated by distinctive iron railings. Their impressive finish belies the host of challenges that came with transforming this brownfield site, and underlines the power of positive change achieved by well-considered design.



## From deserted industrial ground...

The first records of the Kinleith Paper Mill site date back to the 1700s. Development began at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution with the construction of a paper mill, which was powered by a waterwheel in the Water of Leith. During the 1800s, Kinleith was one of the largest operating paper mills in the UK.

The mill ceased paper production in 1966, and the site was used for plant hire and transportation before being sold to a scrap metal merchant who operated here until the late 1970s.

No longer in use, the industrial buildings and surrounding land soon fell into a state of dilapidation. In 1996 the mill buildings were demolished, leaving a desolate patch in the glorious greenery that surrounds the Water of Leith.



## ...to a new waterside community

As part of the planning process for Kinleith Mill, a full Design & Access Statement was submitted, detailing the design thinking behind the development. Yeoman McAllister Architects were appointed on this development, given their historic involvement in many former mill developments in Edinburgh.

Their experience was utilised in explaining their interpretation of the former mill sites.

With Planning Permission in Principle secured for 89 homes, the brief was to deliver the best possible design, recognising both the constraints and opportunities of the Water of Leith and the adjacent walkway.

The consented design provided the prime opportunity to offer a variety of housetypes, whilst creating a sense of place through design.



# Design approach

It was important to create consistency across the development in terms of overall aesthetics. By using a sensitive palette of materials, the development reflects the heritage of the site. Cala specified a palette that featured distressed red brick, complemented by iron railing architectural detailing, and traditionally proportioned Agate Grey windows and grey roofs in a visual nod to the industrial past. The further use of block hardstanding, and screen walls and fences to both the frontages and within the courtyards, also reflect the mill heritage.

The materials not only provide a sense of maturity, but reflect the locality while sensitively responding to the existing tree and landscaped boundary.

The variety of building types to be used within a cohesive urban structure was also considered. The mixture of Cala's standard housetypes, with elevations adjusted to fit the locality and bespoke designs particular to this site, add interest to the streetscape, whilst being sympathetic to the former mill.

The scale and density of the housing is varied through the use of 2 storey detached homes, 2 and a half storey townhouses and 3 storey apartments. A mixed layout of detached, semi-detached, terraced houses and apartments offer diversity throughout the development. The proportions and groupings of these homes, along with the elevational treatment, echo the original mill buildings that once stood on this site, whilst also being

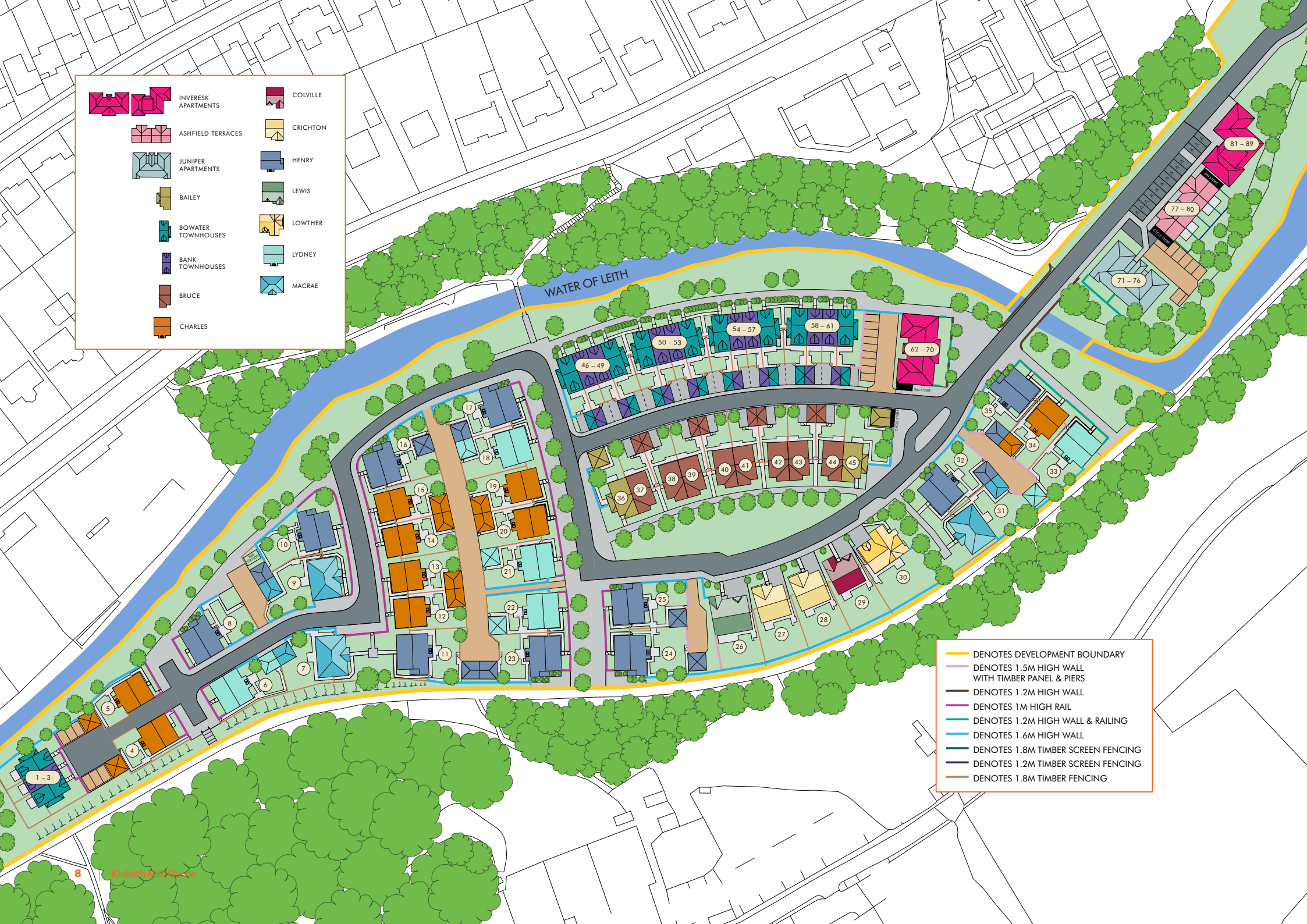
placed to afford the site a strong sense of arrival and pedestrian permeability throughout.

The layout of the development sits comfortably within the context of the surrounding area, maximising the amount of square footage that can be plotted for each home, as well as the opportunities presented by the waterside location.





	INVERESK APARTMENTS		COLVILLE
	ASHFIELD TERRACES		CRICHTON
	JUNIPER APARTMENTS		HENRY
	BAILEY		LEWIS
	BOWATER TOWNHOUSES		LOWTHER
	BANK TOWNHOUSES		LYDNEY
	BRUCE		MACRAE
	CHARLES		



	DENOTES DEVELOPMENT BOUNDARY
	DENOTES 1.5M HIGH WALL WITH TIMBER PANEL & PIERS
	DENOTES 1.2M HIGH WALL
	DENOTES 1M HIGH RAIL
	DENOTES 1.2M HIGH WALL & RAILING
	DENOTES 1.6M HIGH WALL
	DENOTES 1.8M TIMBER SCREEN FENCING
	DENOTES 1.2M TIMBER SCREEN FENCING
	DENOTES 1.8M TIMBER FENCING





- 32 Four and five bedroom detached homes
- 10 Three and four bedroom semi-detached homes
- 19 Three bedroom townhouses
- 6 Three bedroom apartments
- 18 One and two bedroom affordable apartments
- 4 Three bedroom affordable homes





# Reconnecting with the surrounding community

The site's central green spine is strongly linked to the wider community. Improved access to the Water of Leith walkway has been provided via several new connections throughout the development, linking to the existing bridge across the Water of Leith.

A new, double-width bridge provides the single point of vehicle access from Blinkbonny Road, while the first buildings reached on the new access road are the affordable homes. This part of the site was preferred as the location for higher density of homes within the approved character zone plan. The sloping topography of the surrounds has been used to its best advantage, creating seclusion from the main road, Lanark Road West.

The layout responds to the Scottish Planning Policy Statement – Designing Places and Designing Streets – to ensure that the proposal creates a people and pedestrian friendly, traffic calmed area.

Vehicle access for many properties is to the rear, for instance via a mews lane.

Other buildings are served by rear parking courtyards. This keeps open spaces free of cars, promoting an open streetscape and allowing the creation of both a 'village green' and a new riverside walkway as valuable additions to the public realm.

The Western tip of the site, at Poet's Burn and Mill Lade, required sensitive treatment.

A strong 'stop end' has been designed, to address both sides of this narrow part of the site, as mentioned in the Edinburgh Urban Design Panel report of September 2012.





“ Kinleith Mill has been an exciting and bespoke challenge due to the location, new design, materials and history off the site, and see it receive such a high volume of industry acclaim is just fantastic. Increasing interest in brownfield sites and regeneration is a key property development trend going forwards, and something we mastered very well at Kinleith Mill. We’re very proud of the final outcome, which has brought a unique living environment to the ever popular and desirable area of Currie. ”

John Higgins,  
Civils Manager at Kinleith Mill

# Overcoming key engineering & building challenges

- Over the first months of the development schedule, many hurdles and difficulties were overcome, including the discovery of 25 skips worth of structural steel – all of which was safely recovered and recycled.
- Archaeological and environment assessments were performed, given the site's industrial past, and underground relic buildings, hardstanding and bunds from the old mill were recycled as structural fill, minimising the import and transportation of materials on and off site.
- During investigations, a large chimney previously used at the mill was uncovered and, as a result, plans for the original foundations had to be altered.
- Working with highly-specialised contractors, Cala undertook extensive contamination remediation works to eliminate asbestos, hydrocarbon and invasive species from the site. As the development progressed through the build programme, regular samples were taken and tested to ensure complete safety for the new community.

- A new bridge at the entrance of the development was constructed to enable it to deal with any potential rising water in the winter months. Previous flood bypass channel works addressed former flooding concerns at this stretch of water, which Cala further augmented through forming a sustainable flood bypass channel.



This system ensures surface water is dealt with sustainably via filter trenches, a series of attenuation tanks and a hydro break manhole system, which treats surface water run-off for diffuse pollutants while also providing storage to limit the discharge of it, thus ensuring the Water of Leith and its ecology are not impacted.

“A Flood Risk Assessment was undertaken and licence obtained for the localised re-profiling of the river embankment where existing retention was removed and new retaining walls introduced. A new bridge crossing for vehicles and pedestrians was created downstream of the existing bridge, integrating the existing sewer into the new crossing, thereby removing the need for a separate pipe bridge. This eliminates the associated flood risk from the existing vehicular and pipe bridges. The transformation of this site has been a true regeneration, in all senses of the word.”

Jamie Baxter,  
Technical Director at Wardell Armstrong LLP



# Community consultation & planning process

Although Planning Permission in Principle had already been secured on the site for 89 properties, Cala continued to undertake meaningful community consultation. Cala's mission was to deliver the best possible design, while recognising both the constraints and opportunities of the Water of Leith and its walkway, which form the northern and southern site boundaries.

One of the main focuses of the community consultation was how best to approach the existing Public Right of Way that runs through the development, without compromising it. Improved access to the Water of Leith Walkway was provided, enhancing the Public Right of Way through Kinleith Mill and linking the site directly to the walkway, and up onto Lanark Road West to the local amenities.

The site sits lower than the Water of Leith Walkway, so at two storey height, the detached properties have a pedestrian scale, with additional windows to the gables and rear elevations, providing casual surveillance and a connection between the development and the walkway.

The detached properties also afford views through into the development, promoting use of the new pedestrian links. This was received well by the local community and Currie Community Council.

The appointment of Yeoman McAllister Architects, the experts behind a number of developments on historic mill sites, coupled with the engagement of local residents, ensured a development that was sensitive to the location's unique heritage and reconnected the derelict land with the Water of Leith and the wider community and provided a sense of arrival and attractive street scenes.



“Over the last few years Currie and Cala have entered into what we consider to be an extremely beneficial community partnership, most recently with the Kinleith development. Community engagement is at the core of this partnership. We may not always agree with Cala, and indeed we don't, but any disagreements or objections are resolved in a manner that tries to take the community wishes into consideration. Cala also sponsor our extremely popular Beer festival, have recently donated a life saving defibrillator and continue to support local charities and groups. They have truly become part of our community. We look forward to strengthening this partnership over the coming years with some interesting projects being considered.”

Allister McKillop,  
Currie Community Council



“Very pleased to see a quality housebuilder such as Cala homes being associated with the currently dangerous eyesore of a site. Also very encouraged with their choice of architect... Good to see a mix of plot sizes. As a regular walker and cyclist I welcome the proposals for increased permeability, integration, green space and riverbank improvements.”

Local resident feedback,  
acquired through community consultation, 7th April 2014



## PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENT



# Strengthening ties with our neighbours

## Case study

The volunteer-run Ravelrig Riding for the Disabled Association (Ravelrig RDA) exists to provide life-improving experiences to its riders, and required funds to build an indoor arena to provide a safe and covered environment for riding all year round. Run solely by volunteers and dependent on its own fundraising efforts and donations, Ravelrig RDA would not be able to continue providing riding therapy without continued support.

Cala Homes (East) made a sizeable donation, and urged other local organisations to follow suit to help the charity meet its shortfall.



“We fully understand that we are a very visible presence in the area with our Kinleith Mill development in Currie. It is important to us that we are able to support the communities in the areas we build or new homes. We have had a close relationship with the charity for a long time, and have witnessed first-hand the positive impact on the lives of those who come to use it. The team are so incredibly hard-working and to be able to support them in this way is a really positive step.”

Derek Lawson,  
Land director for Cala Homes (East)

# Affordable homes - golden share properties

The development features affordable 'Golden Share' homes, run in conjunction with Edinburgh City Council, to enable and assist local first time buyers and those looking to take the next step on the property ladder, to do so at Kinleith Mill. 22 of the plots on the development were sold as 'Golden Share' homes; this is where buyers purchase their homes at 80% of the market value, and the remaining 20% is retained by the local authority. Benefits of the discount will also pass to future owners.

Demand was high for these homes, with first time buyers keen to secure the one and two bedroom apartments to enable them to stay close to home, without having to purchase a property at full market value. Upon the release of the second phase of these apartments, Cala had acquired a waiting list for these plots, with six of them selling immediately off plan. The three bedroom terrace homes were very popular with young families looking to move from an apartment into a two-storey home with garden space. Occupiers of all four of these properties had sent their applications to Edinburgh City Council within a week of the homes being released for sale.

The 'Golden Share' homes are placed in two locations around the development, and benefit from open views to the south, alongside the highest level of sunlight, daylight and quality of open space.



# Sales success

Kinleith Mill is one of Cala Homes (East's) most successful developments. Eight homes were sold off plan in two months, prior to the showhome launch and the development then averaged sales at a rate of 3.75 homes per month throughout the year.

Due to the variation in house types, sizes and styles, there was a wide range of prices available, offering opportunities to a diverse range of buyers, including young professionals, young families and established families; Cala's trademark, proven to build strong communities.

Kinleith Mill was also recognised at the prestigious Homes for Scotland Awards ceremony and was named 'Private Development of the Year (Medium)', having faced some tough competition.

Homes for Scotland is the voice of the home building industry in Scotland, representing some 200 companies and organisations, which together deliver 95% of new homes built for sale each year.





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