

Summary for Public Consultation

3 April - 5 June 2017

Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Management Plan



EDINBURGH WORLD HERITAGE



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Old and New Towns of Edinburgh
inscribed on the World
Heritage List in 1995



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Introduction

World Heritage Sites are recognized by UNESCO as places of outstanding cultural, historical, or scientific value and are legally protected by international treaties. As of July 2016, 1,052 sites appeared on the World Heritage List: 814 cultural sites, 203 natural sites, and 35 'mixed' properties, in 165 countries. For each inscription, the Outstanding Universal Value of the site is described. These are the attributes which make it exceptional from a global perspective.

The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site was placed on this list in 1995 and is one of 6 in Scotland together with New Lanark, Frontiers of the Roman Empire: The Antonine Wall, The Heart of Neolithic Orkney, The Forth Bridge and St. Kilda.

Description of the site

UNESCO recognises the striking contrast and quality in architecture between the medieval Old Town and the Georgian New Town. The medieval Old Town has retained its distinctive pattern of narrow passageways, known as closes and wynds. The New Towns are the largest and best preserved examples of Georgian town planning in the United Kingdom and have a large number of the finest neo-classical buildings.

Edinburgh is built on an extraordinary landscape of hills and valleys, formed millions of years ago by volcanoes and ice sheets. Together these factors have created a truly distinctive skyline and stunning views which are recognised around the world.

The Site contains nearly 4,500 individual buildings, of which over 75% are listed due to special architectural or historic interest. The Site also contains Scheduled Monuments, the best known being Edinburgh Castle.

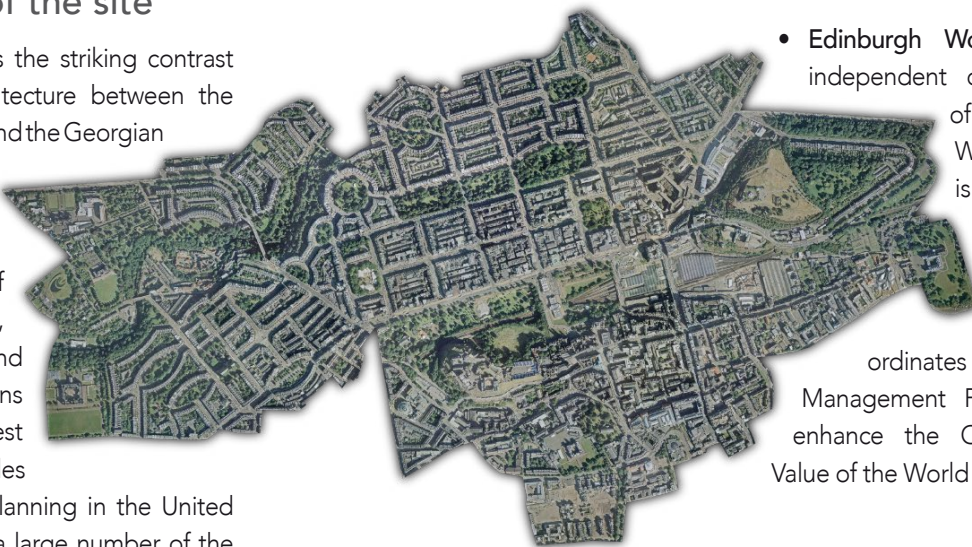
What is the Management Plan for and how does it relate to the 2050 City Vision?

The Management Plan identifies issues and opportunities within the Site, and presents an integrated action plan to be implemented over a five-year period. Issues include care and maintenance of buildings and streets, and awareness of World Heritage Site status. The plan will help inform the 2050 Edinburgh City Vision and the actions that result from this. Public feedback for this longer-term planning exercise has already revealed the high value residents and businesses place on the quality of the historic built and natural environment in Edinburgh.

Roles and responsibilities

Three organisations ('The Management Partners') are involved in the long-term management of the World Heritage Site:

- **The City of Edinburgh Council** is the Planning Authority. It sets the planning framework that governs the Site. The Council is responsible for providing political leadership and governance for a comprehensive range of services across the city.
- **Historic Environment Scotland** is the lead public body established to investigate, care for and promote Scotland's historic environment. The organisation is governed by a board of Trustees, appointed by Scottish Ministers.



- **Edinburgh World Heritage** is an independent charity with the aim of ensuring the city's World Heritage status is a dynamic force for good that benefits everyone.

The charity coordinates action, through the Management Plan, to protect and enhance the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

Consultation

Over the summer of 2016, over one thousand members of the public took part in a consultation for the new Management Plan and had their say concerning how they felt the World Heritage Site is being run. Engagement took the form of an online questionnaire, stakeholder meetings and discussions at public events such as World Heritage Day and the Meadows Festival.

An analysis of this feedback has revealed six themes of relevance to the management of the World Heritage Site. These themes are set out below, together with suggestions of how the Management Partners plan to tackle any issues and concerns. This will form the basis for the next five-year plan.

Care and maintenance of buildings and streets



“Older existing housing looks scruffy and little assistance is available to owners to carry out repairs and upgrading” Max

Over the past five years, progress has been made in the care and maintenance of public spaces, as well as in conserving many privately-owned buildings such as historic tenements, but more needs to be done.

Past achievements

Scotsman Steps

Over the years, the Scotsman Steps had become dilapidated with graffiti on the walls, damage to the stairs and recurring anti-social behaviour. In 2010, Edinburgh World Heritage and the City of Edinburgh Council worked with the Fruitmarket Gallery to bring this important public route between the city's Old and New Towns back to life.



The steps reopened in 2011.

The City of Edinburgh Council's lighting strategy

A report on the 'History of Street Lighting in the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh' was published in 2012 to inform the City of Edinburgh Council's street lighting strategy.

Historically appropriate lighting was first implemented in Lynedoch Place in 2007 as a joint initiative between the residents, Edinburgh World Heritage and the City of Edinburgh Council. The cost of reinstating the historic lighting was shared equally among the three main stakeholders. The programme will continue to expand across the World Heritage Site over the next five years.



For the future

The public consultation highlighted that more can be done towards the general state of repair and ongoing care and maintenance of historic structures. Many buildings, often privately owned tenements, require urgent repair or maintenance to windows, roofs, stonework or guttering. The Management Plan seeks to address this issue by promoting a range of initiatives, for example the new voluntary Shared Repair Service facilitated by City of Edinburgh Council, and the better promotion of existing grants programmes which have played an important part in the conservation of the World Heritage Site in the past.

Conserving historic fabric

During 2016 a number of historic tenements were conserved using grants from Edinburgh World Heritage. At Bible Land on the Canongate, 6 residents came together to ask for help in conserving this important building.



Control & Guidance and Contribution of New Development

“Edinburgh is a proud international capital city and should not be ashamed to demand the highest quality of new architecture, respecting the quality of the historic townscape” Tony



The themes of Control & Guidance and Contribution of New Development are closely related and are therefore described together.

Past achievements

Better protection of the historic environment in the Local Development Plan.

Whilst the World Heritage Site has been designated since 1995, its protection was only approved as part of the Local Development Plan in 2016. The relevant policy now states:

“Development which would harm the qualities which justified the inscription of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh... or would have a detrimental impact on a Site’s setting will not be permitted. This policy requires development to respect and protect the outstanding universal values of the World Heritage Sites and their settings. Setting may include sites in the immediate vicinity, viewpoints identified in the key views study and prominent landscape features throughout the city.”



For the future

The city is a thriving, living city, important for tourism, the retail sector, business and government as well as the large residential population. It will evolve over time with new trends. The challenge is to ensure that development takes appropriate account of the unique qualities of the Site. Recent new proposals such as the Royal High School, and the St James Centre have divided opinion, and many respondents from the consultation are hoping for architecture that is respectful of the Old and New Town context. Amongst new actions being considered within this theme is the creation of place briefs. These would set out expectations for the redevelopment of key sites.





Our shop window on the world

Edinburgh World Heritage, City of Edinburgh Council and Historic Environment Scotland have partnered to help restore 50 shopfronts over the past 20 years to their original Georgian or Victorian state. During the timespan of the last Management Plan (2011 – 2016) over £180,000 was invested in conserving historic shopfronts.

Advocate's Close

This development was completed in 2014 and created a vibrant new quarter in the Old Town that has combined the rehabilitation of listed buildings and the creation of public space with alterations and interventions that reinforced the area's architectural heritage. New commercial units have been incorporated, including a restaurant, offices and a bar. The creation of a new pedestrian thoroughfare within the site has increased street activity and pedestrian movement, adding vibrancy to the area.

Enhancing Construction sites - The New Waverley Fund

The New Waverley Community Fund was created as a joint project between the City of Edinburgh Council and Artisan Real Estate Investors, the developers of New Waverley. Community groups in Edinburgh have been encouraged to submit bids for grants to enhance the area of the Old Town around the New Waverley site. The initial bids resulted in six projects being funded including a community garden, an art installation and a project celebrating the literary history of the area.



Awareness of the World Heritage Site



'There is good awareness in some quarters but the importance of World Heritage status is not necessarily that well known or understood' Diana

Past achievements

World Heritage Business Opportunity Guide

A recent report has shown that Edinburgh's World Heritage site has a value of between £1.2 – £1.4 billion.

The World Heritage Business Opportunity Guide was a joint project between the Edinburgh Tourism Action Group (ETAG) and Edinburgh World Heritage to help local businesses take advantage of this economic potential. The aim was to illustrate how our World Heritage status can help local businesses better meet the needs of visitors. A selection of case studies was included illustrating how the city's heritage can be appropriately leveraged to grow local businesses.



For the future

Although respondents during our consultation rated World Heritage status as important, many were mostly unaware of what it meant and what the benefits were. We believe that the long-term conservation of the Site depends on its understanding and appreciation by current and future generations.

A comprehensive annual programme of public engagement will help address this issue. One example is 'Edinburgh in 101 Objects', one of the city's main initiatives for the 2017 Year of History, Heritage and Archaeology. This programme, which will start in April 2017, will tell the story of the city to visitors and residents through a collection of diverse historic objects located throughout the city. Objects range from the Stone of Destiny, to Bonnie Prince Charlie's travelling canteen, to an original script for the film *Trainspotting* signed by Ewan McGregor.

Georgian Shadows

'Georgian Shadows' was a lumière interpretative trail through the city to mark and celebrate the 250th anniversary of the New Town.



Visitor Management



'While tourism is to be encouraged, there needs to be a balance between commercialism and character' Susan

Past achievements

A large range of heritage trails have been produced to encourage residents and visitors to explore hidden corners of the World Heritage Site and deepen understanding and enjoyment. A Food Heritage Trail produced by Edinburgh World Heritage revealed the hidden links between the city's built heritage and its rich culinary traditions. Over 20,000 visitors and residents took up the challenge to explore the 'nooks and crannies' of the World Heritage Site and discover its gastronomic delights.

The 'Edinburgh Up Close: Footsteps Through Time' App was launched in 2015 and enabled residents and visitors to choose their own walking tour through the warren of

closes connected to the Royal Mile. Users, including those with visual impairments, were able to trace the history linked to these streets and hear stories about the alleyways, the surrounding buildings and their famous or infamous residents.

For the future

The balance between visitor and resident needs was a source of many comments during our consultation. While the increased number of visitors to the World Heritage Site is seen as a positive development for the city, concerns were expressed over whether the right balance is being struck between the tourist economy, and the needs of the local community. These concerns range

from short-term holiday lets to the ability of services to cope with fluctuations in visitor numbers during the year.

These problems are not a direct consequence of World Heritage status, however, they have the potential to impact on the special qualities of the Site. To understand what can be done to address these issues, the Management Partners will investigate best practice in sustainable tourism and explore how World Heritage status can be used as a tool to help solve issues. The City of Edinburgh Council has initiated research into the short-term lets sector and will consider the planning position of short stay commercial leisure apartments or 'party flats'.



Influence and sense of control



'More should be done towards encouraging education and participation in the planning and development process, to better shape our places and cities'
 Kyle

Feedback suggests that people sometimes feel frustrated that their voice is not being heard when decisions are being taken concerning our heritage and the historic environment. We are committed to addressing this concern.

Over the summer of 2016 more than one thousand members of the public had their say on how they felt the World Heritage Site is being run through an online questionnaire, stakeholder meetings and discussions at public events such as World Heritage Day and the Meadows Festival.



Have your say

The Management Partners for the World Heritage Site are committed to ensuring that the people of Edinburgh have their voice heard when it comes to the management of the World Heritage Site. We'd like to hear your views on this new plan, specifically whether you feel we are doing enough to protect and enhance the Site, and any other ideas or suggestions which you may have.

Please follow this link if you'd like to comment on the plan:

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/onte-whs-draft-plan>



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