

World Heritage Committee Meeting In Seville

Planning Committee 6 August 2009

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To report the decisions of the World Heritage Committee meeting in Seville in June 2009 following the delegation visit to Edinburgh in November 2008.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The World Heritage Committee received the draft report from the UNESCO monitoring mission to Edinburgh and accepted the recommendations. The main outcome is that the overall state of conservation in Edinburgh is satisfactory and that inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger is not required.
- 2.2 A number of other comments were made about specific developments and policy issues which the Council will consider and respond to in due course.
- 2.3 A further report to the World Heritage Centre on the state of conservation of the site is not required until February 2011, taking into account the Committee's recommendations.

3 Main report

- 3.1 In July 2008, the World Heritage Committee requested that the UK State Party invite a joint UNESCO-ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to consider the overall state of conservation of the Edinburgh World Heritage Site and to consider the possible impact of developments on the outstanding universal value of the site. Development proposals at Caltongate, St James Centre, Leith Docks and Haymarket were noted as being of particular interest to the mission.
- 3.2 The State party agreed to the monitoring visit, and a mission comprising Dr Rossler from UNESCO and Professor Wedhorn representing ICOMOS, spent three days in Edinburgh from 12 – 15 November.
- 3.3 A draft report was drawn up by the mission and forwarded to the World Heritage Committee for their consideration (see Appendix 1). This report acknowledged comments from the UK State Party.

3.4 The World Heritage Committee accepted the report without discussion at their annual meeting in Seville on 22 – 30 June.

3.5 The report notes that the overall state of conservation in Edinburgh is satisfactory and that inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger is not required. It also makes a number of comments on the Caltongate and Haymarket developments and on other issues, all of which are detailed below.

Caltongate

3.6 Concern was expressed at the demolition of two listed buildings as part of the proposal and at the Jeffrey St/East Market Street component. There was also a suggestion that the public spaces should be redesigned to better respect social needs.

Haymarket

3.7 Concern was expressed over the height of the proposed hotel and that it would have a major visual impact on the World Heritage Site and dominate the St Mary's church towers.

St James Centre

3.8 The Committee were supportive of proposals for St James Centre and welcomed the project.

Skyline Study

3.9 The Committee welcomed the skyline study as an important tool to protect views across the World Heritage Site. They also requested that height restrictions be established across the World Heritage Site on the basis of the key views study.

Buffer Zone

3.10 The Committee requested the formation of a buffer zone around the site in line with advice from operational guidelines.

Outstanding Universal Value

3.11 The Committee requested that awareness should be raised of the Outstanding Universal Value of the site among developers and stakeholders.

Further report

3.12 Finally, the Committee requested the State Party submit a report on the state of conservation of the Site to the World Heritage Centre by 1 February 2011.

3.13 The Council and its partners (specifically Historic Scotland and Edinburgh World Heritage Trust) now require to consider how best to respond to these issues but, at this stage, the following can be said:

- Caltongate has been through due process and has an approved planning consent. This consent remains extant. The developer has however gone into administration and any new developer may wish to take the opportunity to consider changes to the consent.
 - Haymarket – the Scottish Government has not concluded the outcome of the public inquiry on this, which will determine how the partners respond to this issue.
 - The request to establish height restrictions across the Site needs to be considered in the light of the operation of the key views guidance. Additional material has recently been received from the consultants that allows more detailed analysis of each view cone and this will shortly be incorporated onto the UNIFORM system, so all views will automatically be identified for any given development.
 - The review of the World Heritage Site Management Plan is underway and this will focus on a clearer understanding and definition of the Outstanding Universal Value of the Site. It will also address the issue of whether a buffer zone around the site is to be established.
 - The creation of a new World Heritage Site Officer post will further demonstrate the value which the Council places on its world heritage site status. A key role of the post will be to ensure wider understanding of the concept of the Site's Outstanding Universal Value.
- 3.14 The overall outcome from the World Heritage Committee can be viewed as positive. There is a recognition that the Site is managed appropriately and that there is good guidance in place. Many of the issues raised are being addressed through the review of the management plan and progress has already been made on parts of this. The fact that the World Heritage Committee does not seek a further report until February 2011 is another positive sign. (It could have asked for a further report in Feb 2010).

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

5 Environmental Impact

- 5.1 There is no adverse environmental impact arising from this report.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 The World Heritage Committee has agreed that the World Heritage Site should not be placed on a List of World Heritage in Danger. A number of recommendations have been made by the World Heritage Committee, many of which are already being addressed. The Council and its partners will have to consider how best to respond to the Committee's comments on Caltongate, and Haymarket once the outcome of the public inquiry is known.

7 Recommendations

7.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the contents of this report.



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Appendices	1 United Kingdom Reactive Monitoring Cases 2009. Report to World Heritage Committee.
Contact/tel/Email	Will Garrett tel 0131 469 3636 Will.garrett@edinburgh.gov.uk
Wards affected	All
Single Outcome Agreement	Supports National Outcome 12 – We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations. Supports Local Outcome - The development of a quality built and natural environment is well supported.
Background Papers	

APPENDIX 1

UNITED KINGDOM REACTIVE MONITORING CASES, 2009 (taken from WHC09 33 COM 7B)

127 Old and New Towns of Edinburgh (United Kingdom) (C 728)

Year of inscription on the World Heritage List

1995

Criteria

(i) (iv)

Year(s) of inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger

N/A

Previous Committee Decisions

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/decisions/66428> **COM 15B.101**; **32 COM 7B.117**; **32 COM 8B.100**

International Assistance

N/A

UNESCO Extra-budgetary funds

N/A

Previous monitoring missions

November 2008: joint World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission

Main threats identified in previous reports

- a) Impact of fire at Cowgate;
- b) Major development projects, including the Caltongate development.

Illustrative material

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/728>

Current conservation issues

In response to the request from the World Heritage Committee at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008), a World Heritage Centre / ICOMOS joint reactive monitoring mission to the property took place in November 2008. Its purpose was to consider the overall state of conservation of the Edinburgh Old and New Towns, and particularly the impact of the Caltongate development on the integrity and Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property, as well as the outline proposals for Leith Docks, the St

James Centre, and other current proposals. The World Heritage Committee also requested the State Party to submit a report on the state of conservation of the property, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 33rd session in 2009.

The State Party submitted its report on 30 January 2009 noting that it had yet to see the report of the reactive monitoring mission, and subsequently responded to the mission report on 13 March 2009.

The mission found that the overall state of conservation of the property is satisfactory and that inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger would not be required. However in spite of finding that the property is managed adequately in accordance with Scottish and British law, and the use of a consultative skyline study as a planning tool, the mission was concerned at the lack of a defined buffer zone. The mission report recommends that this be addressed as part of the State Party's proposed forthcoming review of the management plan.

The mission report notes that management of the property would be improved by smoother co-ordination between the relevant agencies; greater involvement of stakeholders in master planning; the use of architectural competitions for key projects, and the awareness raising and information of all stakeholders about the clearly defined Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage property, its integrity and authenticity as a critical basis of all future developments.

The mission report makes a number of recommendations in relation to the development projects that have resulted from Edinburgh's success in terms of its commerce, economy and population growth. It notes the need for careful planning for the increased traffic that the large development projects can be expected to generate.

Caltongate

Of the proposed projects within the World Heritage property the mission expresses some concerns about the detail of the Caltongate development. It concludes that to avoid the development having an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity of the World Heritage property, it recommends the integration rather than demolition of two listed buildings, the total redesign of the town quarter Jeffrey street/Eastern Market Street to keep the interactivity between the urban structure and the open space and important views in the urban landscape, the redesign of public spaces to better respect social needs, and the review of any impacts on views from Carlton Hill.

St James Centre

The mission supports the proposed demolition of the 1970s St. James Centre, whose unfortunate impact on the Outstanding Universal Value and integrity of the property was already noted at the time of inscription.

Cowgate Fire site

The proposed re-development of Cowgate following the fire of 2002 is still in the design and consultation phase. The mission recommends carefully taking into account proper volumes and scale of this re-development and its integration into the town quarter through "translating" the historical pattern of the facades into contemporary architecture.

Leith Docks

Of the projects outside the World Heritage property boundary, the mission report concludes that the Leith Docks re-development will have no major or direct impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property because it is 2.5 kilometres from its boundary.

Haymarket

The mission expressed considerable concern about the height of the proposed hotel in the Haymarket development. The Haymarket project is immediately outside the boundary of the World Heritage property. It was the view of the mission that the proposed 17 storey hotel would have a major visual impact on the property and dominate the St Margaret's church towers from several key viewpoints.

The State Party's response to the mission report agreed that the review of the management plan offers a potential forum for dialogue about the buffer zone, while indicating lack of conviction on the necessity of a buffer zone due to the statutory planning controls already in place. The State Party acknowledged concern over the proposed development at Haymarket and confirmed that the development had been called in for review by Scottish Ministers. A public enquiry will take place in May/June 2009. The State Party would like the views of the mission to be made available to the enquiry.

The State Party provided update information via letter of 13 March 2009 and will continue to work with developers and the City of Edinburgh to guarantee that projects respect the historic environment and avoid any adverse impact on the property. It also informed that Edinburgh Council resolved to approve the proposals for the Cowgate Fire site, and approved on 4 March 2009 the application for the planning Permission for St James Centre. On 24 April 2009, another letter was received from the State Party informing that the developer of the Caltongate site went into receivership on 23 March 2009 and that solutions are being sought.

The World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies consider:

- a) There is a need for a declared buffer zone in accordance with Paragraph 103 of the *Operational Guidelines*, particularly in view of the apparent failure of the current planning mechanisms to deter proposals such as the 17 storey Haymarket hotel in the area immediately adjacent to the World Heritage property;
- b) The recommendations of the reactive monitoring mission should be made available to the forthcoming public enquiry into the proposed Haymarket development;
- c) There is a need for clear policies in relation to height controls within the World Heritage property to protect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property which should be developed on the basis of key views and vistas from within and outside the property;
- d) There is a need to raise awareness among potential developers and stakeholders about the Outstanding Universal Value of the Edinburgh Old and New Towns World Heritage property, and what this means for future development. The section of the Statement of Significance which says: "The dramatic topography of the Old Town combined with the planned alignments of key buildings in both the Old and the New Town, results in spectacular views and panoramas and an iconic skyline" is particularly relevant in this regard.

- e) There is a need to an overall smooth coordination and management of the property, by the City Council, Historic Scotland, and Edinburgh World Heritage;
- f) It would be desirable to improve the involvement of stakeholders to ensure transparency and particularly best practice consultation in master planning approaches;
- g) That in order to enhance design, quality and diversity, consideration should be given to using architectural competitions for certain projects.

Draft Decision: 33 COM 7B.132 [Edinburgh]

The World Heritage Committee,

1. Having examined Document WHC-09/33.COM/7B,
2. Recalling Decision **32 COM 7B.117**, adopted at its 32nd session (Quebec City, 2008),
3. Notes the results of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the Edinburgh Old and New Towns World Heritage property of November 2008 and the State Party's response;
4. Urges the State Party to take into account the recommendations by the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission, specifically addressing improvements for the Caltongate and Haymarket development; and requests that the mission's findings on the Haymarket development are made available to the public enquiry;
5. Welcomes that the St James Centre project improves the integrity of the property with the demolition of a building block impacting on the values and integrity of the property;
6. Also welcomes the skyline study as an important tool in future development and planning of the site to protect important views in compliance with Paragraph 104 of the Operational Guidelines;
7. Also requests the State Party to establish a declared buffer zone for the Edinburgh Old and New Towns World Heritage property in accordance with Paragraph 103 of the Operational Guidelines, in which height restrictions are established on the basis of key views and vistas from within and from outside across the property;
8. Further requests the State Party to establish clear policies in relation to height controls within the property on the basis of key views and vistas from within and outside the property;
9. Requests furthermore the State Party to raise awareness among potential developers and stakeholders of the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and the meaning of this for development projects within the property and its buffer zone;
10. Also requests the State Party to submit to the World Heritage Centre, by **1 February 2011**, a report on the state of conservation of the property taking into account the recommendations of the joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to the property, and on progress with the review of the management plan and establishment of the buffer zone, for examination by the World Heritage Committee at its 35th session in 2011.