



# EDINBURGH

## UNITED KINGDOM

### KEY FEATURES OF THE CITY

#### *Demographic Facts*

- 487.500 inhabitants in the city
- 778.000 inhabitants in the urban area
- 25,000 residents in the World Heritage area

#### *Urban Figures*

- Juxtaposition of the Old and New Towns as an Expanded Historical Core
- Architecture as the Fabric of the City
- Topography and Skyline
- Planned Alignments
- Paradigmatic Urban Planning

#### *Heritage*

- Registered heritage: Old and New Towns of Edinburgh
- Inscription: UNESCO World Heritage List
- Date of inscription: 1995

### EXISTING GOVERNANCE MECHANISMS

#### *Development and Management Plans*

- Management Plan for the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site 2011-2016
- Action-Plan 2012-2013
- Development Plan: Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan; the Edinburgh City Local Plan; the Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan

#### *Responsible Authorities*

- The City of Edinburgh Council
- Historic Scotland
- Edinburgh World Heritage

#### *Legislation for the protection and management*

- The Town and Country Planning Act 1997
- The Planning Act 2006
- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- The Scottish Historic Environment Policy
- Scottish Planning Policy
- Edinburgh City Local Plan
- Edinburgh Skyline Policy

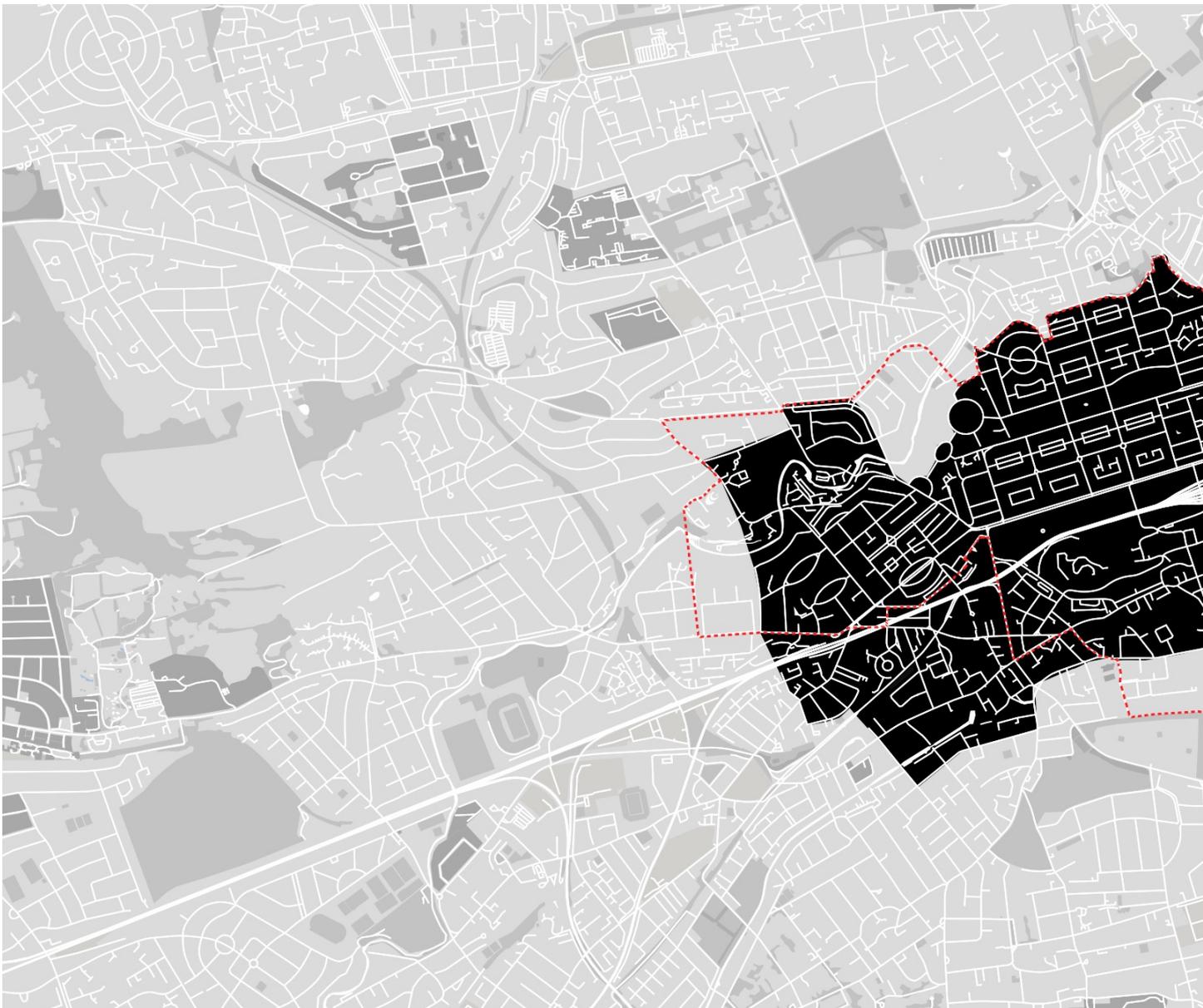
### MAIN ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED

- Changes in funding structures
- Changes in the relationships across the city: engaging with communities
- Changes in preservation schemes: private ownerships and housing



## 8.6 Edinburgh

*Edinburgh — the capital city of Scotland, political and economic heart of the Country, largest financial center in the UK and second largest tourist destination — represents a paradigmatic case of urban development and regeneration based on the concept of an extended historical core. In the Scottish capital, long-term investments in the historic fabric constitute the basis for a regeneration process supported by both public and private sectors, through an integrated action focused on both existing architectural and urban structures as well as new constructions.*



### 8.6.1 *Key features of the city*

Compared to other cities in Britain — radically altered by the explosive growth produced by the Industrial Revolution or by the excess of post-war planning — Edinburgh sought for an alternative route, preserving its urban structure from profound alterations. The clear recognizability of Edinburgh as a historic city — together with the high level of conservation of most of its significant buildings and spaces — is thus mainly due to the balance between a thoughtful form of preservation and the dynamics between citizens and the institutions. From late 1960s onwards, a growing awareness of the relevance of late 18th and early 19th century architecture — and its vulnerability in the face of post-war planning and redevelopment — led to a radical drive for the social, economic and environmental revalorization of its heritage, that thus plays a very significant role in the regeneration of the multiple layers characterizing the city structure. At the same time, the city has been evolving through a process of growth and renewal that has continued until today. This process has been guided by contemporary directions, albeit in the aim to respect and reinforce the distinctive character of the city.



## **Demographic facts**

Edinburgh is the second most populous city in Scotland, and the seventh most populous in the United Kingdom. The whole city numbers 487,500 residents ("Mid-2013 Population Estimates Scotland") and lies at the core of a wider urban zone with a population of 778,000 ("Urban Audit City Profiles – Edinburgh", Eurostat). In reference to Edinburgh's expanded historical core – as recognized in the WHL and described hereafter — nearly 25,000 residents, around 70,000 daily commuters and (2013) around 3.5m visitors can be estimated within the historical area, and the presence of a resident population over the whole site constitutes a key factor to address the regeneration issues.

## **Urban figures**

The historic environment of Edinburgh is of exceptional interest with unrivalled urban and landscape qualities which successfully incorporates all the functions of the capital city. Edinburgh's distinctive character is based on a complex set of features mainly including its topography, architectural heritage and the unique form of its historic environment, which define a highly valuable and recognizable physical identity. The built environment and unique setting of the city centre is internationally acclaimed, constituting a major factor behind its economic success. A complex interplay of elements shaped the character of Edinburgh: landscape, history and architecture are consummately harmonized within the city centre.

**Juxtaposition of the Old and New Towns as an Expanded Historical Core.** In Edinburgh, the juxtaposition of two distinct townscapes — the organic medieval Old Town and the planned Georgian New Town — provides a clarity of urban structure which determines the city's outstanding image. The remarkable coexistence of the two clearly articulated urban planning phenomena – emphasized through the topography of the site – provides a contrast of distinctive urban forms which is a primary distinctive feature of the city.

**Architecture as the Fabric of the City.** The two towns constitute an expanded historical core, in which architectural artifacts gain a greater value within the overall structure. In relation to its role of Scotland's ancient capital, Edinburgh contains many uses and representative buildings that reflect this past, including significant civic and national institutions. Due to the complex religious history of the city, among these representative architectures a peculiar value is held by a diverse range of religious buildings, often very close to one another, which represent a great potential for the city also in relation to their current status since many of them are today no longer in church use, so as constituting potential unexplored sites for new uses. A university town since the 1580s, Edinburgh's urban identity is also related to the presence of educational buildings and the related international status as city of learning. This overlapped layout of the city architecture is additionally interweaved with the physical strata of the city, as the long and continuous occupation history of the historical core has left an immense archaeological resource, both standing and buried. As the counterpart of the historical superimpositions of times and functions within the city, new architectures throughout the Site reflect a variety of different approaches to development in historic areas, while respecting their context and wider setting.

**Topography and Skyline.** The topographical arrangement represents an iconic feature of the city: the Old Town stands on a prominent ridge, dominated at its highest end by Edinburgh Castle. The New Town occupies a lower lying ridge to the north. The Old and New Towns both exploit the topography of their site and the value of views both within and out from it to maximum effect. The historic plan forms allied to the topography results in

important terminated and long vistas and landmark features. The result is distinctive and cohesive historic skyline, dominated by The Castle, the spires of the Old Town and Arthur's Seat.

**Planned Alignments.** In both the Old and New Town, houses are laid out in continuous rows along main street frontages, with few gaps, creating a clear rhythm and scale. In the Old Town they form a continuous building line directly abutting the footway (as the result of a careful planning, based on the historic burgage plots) while in the New Town the Streets are laid out in a hierarchical manner around a central axis and the buildings are generally separated from the sandstone footpath by a sunken area protected by iron railings and fronting the basement storey. Successive New Town developments adopted the basic principles of a grid layout.

**Paradigmatic Urban Planning.** The medieval "fishbone" street pattern of High Street and closes running off it constitutes the main character of the city arrangement. Successive interventions in the Old Town, particularly those carried out by Patrick Geddes, have been described as an exemplar of early urban conservation. James Craig's plan for the First New Town, designed with a strong spatial and social hierarchy through an ordered geometrical setting, makes the New Town a complete break with the urban form of the old city, and constitutes one the most extensive surviving example of neo-classical town planning.

### **Heritage**

Edinburgh contains the largest concentration of listed buildings in the UK outside of London and the greatest concentration of built heritage assets in Scotland. Built heritage thus constitutes one the most significant contributions to the city's distinctiveness. The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1995. The World Heritage status highlights the remarkable blend of the two urban phenomena: "organic medieval growth and 18th and 19th century town planning of the medieval Old Town" (UNESCO), recognizing both the outstanding universal value of the site and the great effort up to the point in the restoration of the city. The World Heritage Site identifies a large part of the city centre, including the medieval Old Town and the 19th century New Town, the West End of the city center, parts of the South Side of the Old Town, and the Dean Village, the milling settlement to the north, also involving some certain areas where World Heritage status might be used to inspire careful redevelopment and providing a range of policies covering the setting of the site to protect its outstanding universal value. Initially used to rationalize the way heritage was managed in the city, the status of World Heritage Site became a "planning issue", and often was used to campaign against major developments in the city centre, meant as a tool for "monument" protection and preservation of architectural integrity and authenticity. More broadly, Edinburgh has the greatest concentration of listed buildings in Scotland — around 5000 listed items comprising 31,500 individual buildings. 75% of buildings in the World Heritage Site are listed. Historic buildings throughout the city can have strong cultural meaning by virtue of their architectural quality and character, aesthetic value, strong recognizability as identity features of the place, and intrinsic value in terms of its embodiment of the history of the city. There are currently 49 Conservation Areas (in March 2013) across Edinburgh. These are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which should be conserved or enhanced. A quarter of Edinburgh's urban area lies within a conservation area.

### 8.6.2 Existing governance mechanisms

#### Development and management plans

Currently, the extended historical core of the city is involved in the Management Plan developed by the Edinburgh World Heritage Steering Group: a partnership of the City of Edinburgh Council, Historic Scotland and Edinburgh World Heritage. The first Management Plan for the World Heritage Site was published in July 2005. Then, the 2008 UNESCO Mission to Edinburgh marked an important passage for the Second Management Plan, through the recommendations of the November 2008 joint UNESCO/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to Edinburgh. The current **Management Plan for the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site 2011-2016**, provides a link between the international requirements of World Heritage, the planning process and the wider management issues involved in protecting the Site, by identifying and addressing the key issues and challenges.

The Management Plan informs a separate Action Plan, and may be a material consideration for decisions on planning matters. The **Action-Plan 2012-2013** – developed in October 2011 — translates the objectives from the Management Plan into actions which will ensure that the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site is protected and promoted through an effective management system. The actions provide a general outline of the projects, areas of work and processes that will be undertaken by the management partners, with the support of stakeholders, over the coming five years. One of the main aims of the Action Plan is to strengthen the Edinburgh World Heritage Partnership.



The **Development Plan**, prepared by The City of Edinburgh Council together with Historic Scotland, consists of the Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan; the Edinburgh City Local Plan and the Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan, establishes the long term vision for land use in the city. It includes general policies focused on the city-wide built heritage as well as specific guidance regarding the World Heritage Site.

### **Responsible authorities**

The **City of Edinburgh Council** is responsible for providing political leadership and governance for a comprehensive range of services across the city. A World Heritage Site Officer works within the City of Edinburgh Council's structure to bring a focus to World Heritage issues.

**Historic Scotland** is an executive agency of the Scottish Government and is charged with safeguarding the nation's historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment on behalf of Scottish Ministers (Department for Culture, Media and Sport). Historic Scotland has a strategic interest in the management of World Heritage Sites in Scotland. In Edinburgh, Historic Scotland manages conservation and maintenance at Edinburgh Castle and the Palace of Holyrood House. Historic Scotland also offers technical expertise, support and significant funding to the historic environment throughout Scotland. Historic Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council work closely on the management of the Site.

**Edinburgh World Heritage** (EWH) is an independent charity works in partnership with the municipality, the City of Edinburgh Council, and the Scottish Government's Heritage Agency, Historic Scotland, in the management of the World Heritage Site. EWH was



established in 1999 by the City of Edinburgh Council and Historic Scotland through a merger between the Edinburgh New Town Conservation Committee and the Edinburgh Old Town Renewal Trust. It is formally charged by the City of Edinburgh Council and Historic Scotland with facilitating the work of the World Heritage Steering Group, overseeing the implementation of the Management Plan, and establishing close links to the different communities within the Site. This mission is delivered through three broad work streams: conservation, repair and enhancement; learning and outreach; influencing decision-making. The organization is supported by the City of Edinburgh Council and Historic Scotland to deliver three core activities covered by Edinburgh World Heritage's business plan which overlaps with the Action Plan: education, interpretation and promotion of the World Heritage Site; influencing decision making across the city and the World Heritage Site; conservation and repair of buildings and monuments in the World Heritage Site through the Conservation Funding Programme.

### **Legislation for the protection and management**

The **Town and Country Planning Act 1997** and the **Planning Act 2006** define the framework for local and regional planning policy and act as the principal primary legislation guiding planning and development in Scotland.

The **Planning Act 1997** (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) and the 1979 **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act** protect individual buildings, monuments and areas of special archaeological, architectural or historic interest.

The **Scottish Historic Environment Policy (SHEP)** is the primary policy guidance on the protection and management of the historic environment in Scotland.

**Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)** sits alongside the SHEP and includes the Government's national planning policy on the historic environment. It provides for the protection of World Heritage Sites by considering the impact of development on the Outstanding Universal Value, authenticity and integrity.

**Edinburgh City Local Plan** contains local policies specifically protecting the property.

A **Skyline Policy** has also been adopted by the City of Edinburgh Council that defines key views across the city with the aim of providing planning control that will safeguard them. This control of tall buildings that might impact on the city centre provides appropriate protection to the setting of the property. It also safeguards its world-renowned silhouette and views from the Site outwards to such crucial topographic features as Arthur's Seat and the Firth of Forth.

### **8.6.3 Main issues to be addressed**

By virtue of Edinburgh's status as one of the UK's most affluent cities, the main challenge for city governance and partnership is to manage growth and to try to include the city's larger public sector housing estates – characterized by problems of poverty and physical decline - in the city's prosperity. At the same time, although since the late 1980s a series of local area regeneration initiatives have been established – and also some comprehensive approaches have been applied already in 1995 through the formation of Edinburgh Capital City Partnership – a strategic approach to regeneration across the city still represents a main issue to be addressed. According to these premises, some key topics can be identified, mainly

related to three areas: forms of funding for regeneration actions, engagement of the communities about heritage issues, role of private ownership in the management of World Heritage buildings.

**Changes in funding structures.** Since 2008, the economic crisis and consequent budget cuts – after a period of stable funding which supported the Edinburgh World Heritage organization through external sponsors – had been determining changes in funding structures and has necessitated innovative approaches to the management of the World Heritage city. Now that the city centre is no longer economically weak this goal assumes new meanings.

**Changes in the relationships across the city: engaging with communities.** As a consequence of the economic crisis and the related change in funding structure, also the internal urban relationships have changed. The need to support the management of the relationships across the city by balancing the needs of residents, business, visitors and the historic built environment is thus a recurring issue now, requiring to reason about the delicate balance between the possibility that allowing one element to dominate will impact the other areas, and the need to involve residents, businesses and visitors to deliver crucial social, environmental and economic benefits.

**Changes in preservation schemes: private ownerships and housing.** Edinburgh is a challenging historic city to conserve due to its high number of monuments and building of historic importance. Many of those buildings — over 4000 — are privately owned, and with around 25,000 residents, most are in residential use. As a consequence, a well integrated approach is increasingly required, together with an effort of all relevant partners operating in the historic city centre, also taking into account that the nature of land ownership in Scotland means that within an apartment building with residential use there can be multiple ownerships (usually around 10). A double level reasoning thus may be applied to Edinburgh heritage: on the one hand, at the scale of architecture, it is necessary to identify historic buildings which are at risk from neglect and disuse, in order to involve them into appropriate actions; on the other hand, at the urban scale, it is needed to take into account the historic, architectural and landscape character of conservation areas, which are the subject of Character Appraisals, and to involve the local community in the preparation of these sort of documents.

#### ***8.6.4 Key aspects of the culture-based regeneration strategies***

While Edinburgh has not formally adopted the Historic Urban Landscape approach, a heritage-led urban regeneration is taking place in the city, starting from the mutual relationship between individual monuments and the urban landscape.

Despite the distinctiveness between the organic growth of the Old Town and the planned terraces and squares of the New Town with the wide landscaped valley between, overall the urban arrangement forms a remarkably consistent and coherent entity which has developed and adapted over time, whilst preserving the key attributes of outstanding universal value within the site.

The integrity of the skyline, which represents one of the key issues of the preservation policies, strictly relates to the authenticity of a city centre made of buildings of all dates which have been conserved to a high standard and the layout of streets and squares maintain their intactness.

Edinburgh's historic centre continues to retain its historic role as the administrative and cultural capital of Scotland, the regeneration strategies also address some different issues, related to a variety of approaches to the many challenges of the city.

Issues related to the private housing are in the process of being addressed through specific financial tools, as well as the "12 monuments", which also involve different forms of partnerships. Partnerships and new approaches also concern the strategies for adaptation of historic buildings to the contemporary conditions. Economic reasons guide the involvement of the shop fronts, while civic engagement tools act as interpretative tools, and knowledge and planning tools influence decision-making processes.

#### ***8.6.5 Outcomes and lessons learnt***

The case study demonstrates the results of the inclusive approach — based on a dialogue between local and city interests — characterizing the heritage-led urban regeneration framework. In Edinburgh, the strand towards an Historic Urban Landscape Approach finds in the values of "authenticity" and "integrity" in both the tangible and intangible dimensions of its inherited structure of stratified layers.

The dynamic overlapping of the different actors involved in a multi-level governance framework results in regeneration partnerships whose nature and extent of the vertical linkages is a peculiar character of the city's strategy.

The integration of social, economic and environmental aspects in the heritage-led regeneration approach — undergoing a gradual and challenging adaptation process appears to be a real progress and a valuable reference for heritage cities with such a state of conservation and wide urban context.

#### ***8.6.6 Perspectives for the future***

In the perspective of future developments, one of the main aims characterizing the case-study is a needed comprehensive understanding of the peculiar coexistence of heritage, townscape and landscape assets.

Starting from these premises, the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention represents one of the expected outputs, also in relation to the current issue concerning to what extent the ongoing construction projects — including high-rises — affect the "outstanding universal value" of the city.