



Old and New Towns of Edinburgh: Calton Hill

Group 9: Alexandra Breton,
Mary Comer and Camille Maiz Guerra

Authenticity Rebound
World Heritage AC4 AREA11198
Tutors: Dr Ruxandra-Iulia Stoica,
Lama Said and Dr Miles Oglethorpe

MSc in Architectural Conservation 2024-25

Contents

List of Figures	2
Introduction	3
World Heritage Site	4
Significance within national identity	6
Cultural Significance	7
Authenticity	11
Historical development	13
Historical use of the site	15
Current state of conservation	16
Management	17
Complex interaction of nature and culture	19
Impact of contemporary urban pressures on authenticity	21
Tourism and Events	21
Management	28
Table summarising issues and current situational status	30
Conclusion	32
Bibliography	35
Appendix: Description of buildings and monuments on Calton Hill	41

List of Figures

Cover image: aerial view of Calton Hill

1. The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Boundary
2. Edinburgh's OUV qualities from the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site – Management Plan 2017-2022
3. National Monument when the stone was still white, date unknown
4. View of Arthur's Seat from Calton Hill, 2024
5. Dugald Stewart Monument, Playfair's Monument and the Nelson Monument, 2024
6. English Heritage's 'Heritage Values' wheel, 2007
7. View of Calton Hill from the east end of Princes Street by Thomas H. Shepherd, 1829
8. Site maps showing the development of Calton Hill's buildings and monuments
9. Washerwomen on Calton Hill, 1887
10. The National Monument, 2024
11. View from Calton Hill towards Edinburgh Castle, 2024
12. Vehicular access up Calton Hill and the 'authorised vehicles only' sign, 2024
13. Firework Control Zone sign, 2024
14. View of Calton Hill from the north, showing the new Lookout restaurant, 2024
15. Beltane Fire Festival, 2018
16. View of Calton Hill from above, 2008
17. View of Calton Hill from above, 2023
18. Visual assessment of risks, threats and constraints, 2024
19. View of Calton Hill from the Mound by Thomas H. Shepherd, 1829
20. The summit of Calton Hill, 2024
21. Engraving of the Old Observatory, 1820
22. Robert Adam's Floor Plan for the Bridewell, date unknown
23. Calton Jail Complex Ground Plan, overlaying the Bridewell Ground Plan, 1887
24. Royal High School's South Elevation, 1826
25. View showing the National Monument of Scotland (never completed), date unknown
26. Engraving by W Tombleson, 1930
27. Playfair's Monument to the right, with the Royal Observatory in the distance, 1818
28. Burns Monument, 1890
29. Dugald Stewart Monument, 1985

Introduction

Calton Hill is one of the most iconic of Edinburgh's 'Seven Hills', along with Arthur's Seat and Castle Rock, marking Edinburgh's unique urban topography. During its history, Calton Hill has served many different purposes and has become an emblematic site, notably due to the complex relationship between its rich and symbolic architectural design and its picturesque landscape.

Much of Calton Hill's architectural significance derives from Edinburgh's representation as the 'Athens of the North', with the monuments and buildings on the hill serving as tangible representations of this analogy. Beyond its physical features, the hill is also significant in non-tangible ways, as it has long been used as a gathering space and, more recently, as a venue for events for different communities and cultures. This continuity maintains its intangible authenticity, but does it threaten its tangible authenticity?

The purpose of this report is to analyse the various facets of Calton Hill, focusing predominantly on its summit, to understand its significance within the broader Edinburgh World Heritage Site better. We will also explore the concept of authenticity as it applies to our site, and how it may be impacted by contemporary urban pressures.

The report was produced through a combination of desk research and interviews with relevant parties including the Calton Hill Conservation Trust, the City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh World Heritage and Land Use Consultants (LUC). A critical appraisal was employed of definitions, timelines and mapping, analysis of materiality and typologies and the current state of conservation.

World Heritage Site

The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995, having met two criteria (ii) and (iv):

Criterion (ii) – Have exerted great influence, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture, monumental arts, or town planning and landscape design.

Criterion (iv) – Be an outstanding example of a type of building or architectural ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history.¹



Fig 1. The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Boundary.

¹ Edinburgh World Heritage, *Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site: Management Plan 2017-2022*, accessed October 2, 2024, <https://ewh.org.uk/plan/>.

The qualities that led to Edinburgh becoming a World Heritage Site:

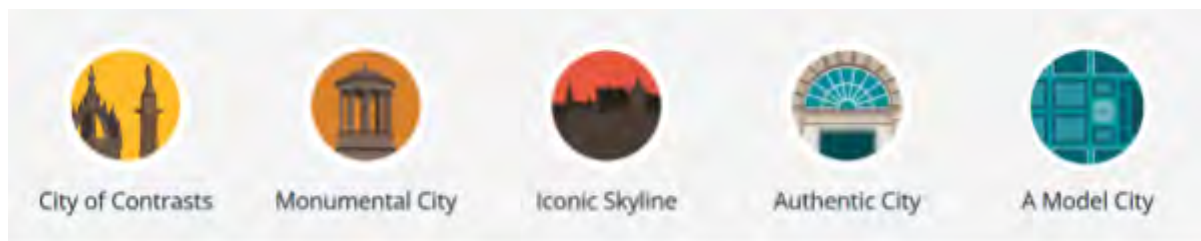


Fig 2. Edinburgh's OUV qualities from the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site – Management Plan 2017-2022.

The most relevant of the above OUV qualities that relate to Calton Hill are:

- its collection of neo-classical monuments;
- its dramatic natural landscape, contributing to Edinburgh's iconic skyline and providing key views of the city; and
- its embodiment of the changes in urban planning, particularly during the Enlightenment, when the interaction between the landscape and the built environment was at the fore of architects' thinking, including that of Robert Adam, William Stark and William Henry Playfair.

Edinburgh's parks and gardens are integral to the New Town's layout and architectural composition. Calton Hill is the most dominant 'designed' landscape within the World Heritage Site, due to its prominence and character.² In *Edinburgh: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*, Charles McKean describes Calton Hill as "every bit as symbolic a location to Edinburgh as the Castle, and even more carefully crafted for picturesque effect – albeit in classical rather than military garb".³ The hill hosts a distinctive array of some of Edinburgh's most symbolic monuments, while offering panoramic views of the city - it was integral to the inscription of Edinburgh as a World Heritage Site in 1995.

² Edinburgh World Heritage, *Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site: Management Plan 2017-2022*, accessed October 2, 2024, <https://ewh.org.uk/plan/>.

³ Charles McKean, *Edinburgh: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*, New edition (Edinburgh: RIAS with the support of Edinburgh District Council, 1992), 101.

In the 19th century, Edinburgh aspired to be the 'Athens of the North' and Calton Hill was considered Edinburgh's version of the Athenian Acropolis, with the National Monument designed as a replica of the Parthenon. This association with ancient Greece, embodied through architecture, became embedded in Edinburgh's sense of identity, particularly during the Enlightenment, when the city emerged as a leader in new thinking and new town planning.



Fig 3. The National Monument when the stone was still white, date unknown.

Significance within national identity

Calton Hill is, through its topography, architecture, and association with the Enlightenment, a potent symbol of National identity.⁴ During the later 19th and 20th centuries, discussions about Scottish identity moved away from being primarily political and became more focused on cultural aspects, including architecture. The physical changes on Calton Hill during this period were less visually significant than in earlier times, but the buildings on the hill

⁴ Kirsten Carter McKee, *Calton Hill: And the Plans for Edinburgh's Third New Town* (Edinburgh: John Donald, imprint of Birlinn Ltd, 2018), 2.

symbolised Scotland's support for the British state in the 19th century. Essentially, Calton Hill's structures were seen as representing Scotland's place within the United Kingdom.

Edinburgh became associated with ancient Greece, while London was linked to ancient Rome. Edinburgh identified itself more intellectually, and culturally, suggesting a political stance that, while not holding governmental power, celebrated its cultural heritage and intellectual contributions. This was reflected by its architectural landscape, particularly on Calton Hill. Additionally, the monuments and buildings on the hill were designed to celebrate the site's (and further, the city's) significance. This suggests that the hill was used to communicate a political and cultural statement of Edinburgh's importance.

Being called the 'Athens of the North' is important because Edinburgh was a leader in new town planning, perfectly encapsulated by the Enlightenment, and it is represented not only on the hill but from the significant viewpoints from it, which are just as noteworthy.

Cultural Significance

In the Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter (2013), cultural significance is defined as "aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects. Places may have a range of values for different individuals or groups".⁵ This is a useful contextualisation of Calton Hill, as its prominence in Edinburgh is not only physical and visual but also cultural. Its famous views of

⁵ International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (Australia ICOMOS, 2013), 2.

Edinburgh feature in several historic paintings and engravings of the city, as do its collection of monuments. Edinburgh World Heritage describes Calton Hill as embodying “the contrast of urban and natural landscapes that makes Edinburgh special. It is a peaceful open-air gallery of some of Edinburgh’s most important monuments and a popular spot from which to view the city”.⁶



Fig 4. View of Arthur's Seat from Calton Hill, 2024.

But Calton Hill's cultural significance is not constrained purely to the OUV qualities of Edinburgh as a World Heritage Site. Over the centuries, the hill has held special, intangible meaning for different reasons for a diverse range of people. It has been used by different people in different ways – from the grandeur of the National and Nelson Monuments, both important commemorative sites for the nation, to a useful site for drying sheets and grazing sheep in the 19th century and a popular hill for tourists and local people alike to walk up in current times. It was the site of the city's first

⁶ Edinburgh World Heritage. “Calton Hill.” Accessed October 7, 2024. <https://ewh.org.uk/calton-hill/>.

Observatory and a prominent burial ground but also the Bridewell and Calton Prisons. It provides commanding views of Edinburgh and its surroundings but is also an important bit of green space in the city, a focal point with patches of semi-wild vegetation. Its functions over the years have been both 'high' and 'low' but nowhere else in the city is the built environment combined with the natural landscape in such a striking way.

Calton Hill still plays a significant role in the cultural life of the city today, with Collective turning the Observatory into a gallery space, and the Lookout Restaurant having launched in 2018. Various festivals take place on the hill throughout the year and it is a popular spot from which to watch fireworks displays by the Castle.

The majority of the buildings on Calton Hill were built to commemorate people who were culturally significant to Scotland, including:

- the National Monument – intended to commemorate the Scottish servicemen who died in the Napoleonic Wars;
- the Dugald Stewart Monument – built to commemorate Dugald Stewart, a Scottish philosopher and mathematician, regarded as one of the most important figures of the Scottish Enlightenment;
- the Nelson Monument – built to commemorate the death of Admiral Lord Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805;
- the Burns Monument – built to commemorate Robert Burns, a Scottish poet and lyricist; and
- Playfair's Monument – built by William Henry Playfair to commemorate his uncle, Professor John Playfair, who had been the first President of the Astronomical Society.

See Appendix for more detail.



Fig 5. Dugald Stewart Monument, Playfair's Memorial and the Nelson Monument, 2024.

In the context of English Heritage's 'Heritage Values' wheel,⁷ Calton Hill aligns with almost every segment, through its combination of cultural, social, aesthetic and natural significance; its intentionally designed beauty and the sublime; its illustrative and associational history; and its commemorative and communal functionality.

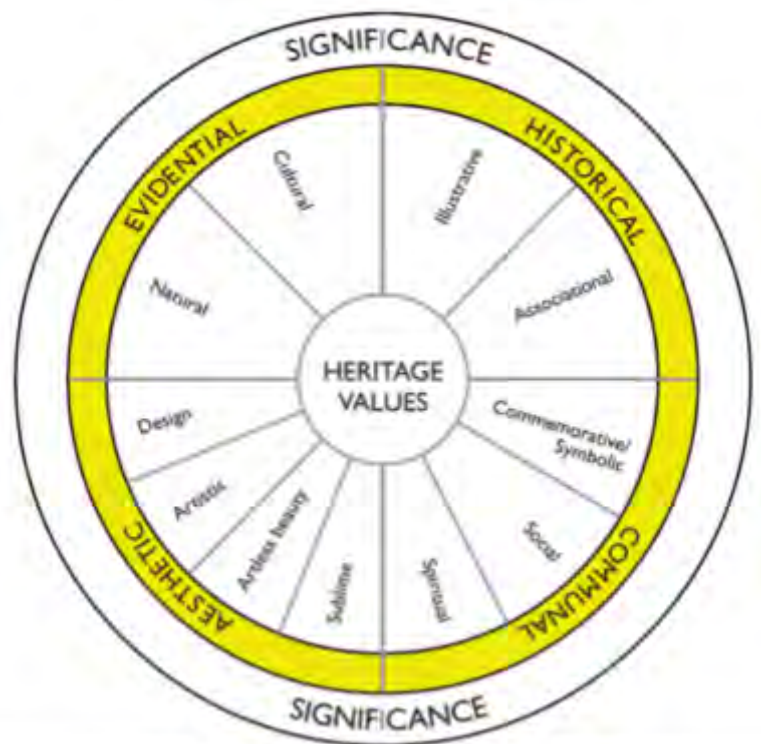


Fig 6. English Heritage's 'Heritage Values' wheel, 2007.

⁷ English Heritage, "Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment". Second stage consultation, 2007.

Authenticity

Edinburgh's setting is an indispensable part of its character and is a key feature of the site's authenticity. The views of, and from, Calton Hill play an important role in the city's setting, as does the high-quality workmanship⁸ evident in the construction of the hill's buildings, another key aspect of Edinburgh's authenticity as a World Heritage Site. In the context of the Venice Charter (1964),⁹ the focus of Calton Hill's authenticity (and heritage conservation efforts) would predominantly have been these buildings. However, the Nara Document (1994)¹⁰ promotes a more inclusive approach to heritage conservation, encouraging the involvement of local communities and stakeholders in the decision-making process. Similarly, UNESCO's *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (2011) promotes a "shift from an emphasis on architectural monuments primarily towards a broader recognition of the importance of the social, cultural and economic processes in the conservation of urban values."¹¹

Evidence of this shift can be found in the recent creation of the Calton Hill Conservation Trust in 2023, which is focused on the authenticity of the site as a whole e.g. trying to re-grow grass on heavily eroded parts of the hill and removing litter and graffiti so that the site can be utilised by a range of different people in different ways, as it traditionally was in previous centuries. Calton Hill has therefore retained its authenticity, through its continued combination of rugged topography, semi-natural vegetation, eclectic monuments, panoramic views and its ongoing significance in the national identity.

⁸ Edinburgh World Heritage, *Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site: Management Plan 2017-2022*, accessed October 2, 2024, <https://ewh.org.uk/plan/>.

⁹ ICOMOS, *The Venice Charter: International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites* (ICOMOS, 1964).

¹⁰ ICOMOS, *The Nara Document on Authenticity* (Nara, Japan: ICOMOS, 1994).

¹¹ UNESCO, "Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape". 2011, 2.

In *Calton Hill: And the Plans for Edinburgh's Third New Town*, Kirsten Carter McKee argues for the authenticity of the site, stating that “the architecture and landscape on this hill represents – and holds a dialogue with – the definition and perception of Scottish national identity throughout the last 250 years....this site has been integral in reflecting the overall consciousness of Scottish identity throughout its architectural and urban evolution”.¹²



Fig 7. View of Calton Hill from the east end of Princes Street by Thomas H. Shepherd, 1829.

¹² Kirsten Carter McKee, *Calton Hill: And the Plans for Edinburgh's Third New Town* (Edinburgh: John Donald, imprint of Birlinn Ltd, 2018), 176.

Historical Development

Timeline of Built Environment



Fig 8. Site maps showing the development of Calton Hill's Buildings and Monuments.¹³

1631 Calton becomes Burgh of Barony. Lord Balmerino granted a deed in favour of Calton which instituted the Incorporated Trades of Calton.

■ 1718 Incorporated Trades purchased half an acre of ground from Lord Balmerino for a burial ground.

1750 Quarries on Calton Hill were exploited for stone for public works.

1775 First circulatory pleasure walk was built round Calton Hill after Council receives petition from David Hume and others.

■ 1776 Council received petition from Thomas Short to build an observatory on Calton Hill. Construction work started in the same year.

1777 David Hume Mausoleum, designed by Robert Adam, built.

1793 Observatory opened in the Keeper's House Tower.

-

1807 Foundation stone of the Nelson Monument, designed by Robert Burn, laid.

■ 1815 Gaol Governor's House completed.

¹³ Timeline data adapted from Law, Dunbar-Nasmith & Partners, *Calton Hill, Conservation Plan* (1999), 7-9.

1816 Nelson Monument completed by Thomas Bonnar.

 1817 Calton Jail and Governor's House (former Edinburgh Gaol) built

1820 New Calton Burial Ground opened.

1821 Royal Terrace development commenced, followed by Regent and Carlton Terraces.

 1822 City Observatory, designed by WH Playfair, completed.

 1825-9 The Royal High School, designed by Thomas Hamilton, built.

 1826 Building work on the National Monument, designed by WH Playfair, began.

1826 John Playfair Monument, designed by WH Playfair, completed.

1828 Observatory Compound Walls built.

1829 Work on The National Monument stopped.

1830 Burns Monument, designed by Thomas Hamilton, built.

1831 Dugald Stewart Monument, designed by WH Playfair, built.

1853 Time-ball installed in Nelson Monument.

1861 Cable linking Nelson Monument to the Castle installed.

1895 City Dome, designed by Robert Morham, completed.

-

1930 Calton Jail Demolished

 1936-9 St Andrew's House, designed by Thomas Tait, built.

1995 Calton Hill included in Edinburgh World Heritage Site designation.

Historical use of the site

Throughout its history, Calton Hill has been used for various purposes and by many users. In the 15th century, records show that during the reign of James II, the low valley at Greenside was used to hold tournaments and open-air plays.¹⁴ In the 18th century, the slopes of Calton Hill provided space for large open-air congregations to hear popular preachers, and the crowd could reach up to 10,000 people.¹⁵ In the 19th century, Lord Cockburn protested, among other things, against the proposal to set aside part of the higher ground of Calton Hill to be used as a public washing green with water laid on, even though the hill had long been a public drying green, as shown in Figure 9. According to Cockburn, this would lead to worn turf and mud, fires, poles and ropes.¹⁶ Records also show that the upper part of Calton Hill was frequently used as a place for beating carpets and washing linen.



Fig 9. Washerwomen on Calton Hill, 1887.

¹⁴ Law & Dunbar-Nasmith et al., "Calton Hill, Conservation Plan," 1999, 11.

¹⁵ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 5-6.

¹⁶ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 6.

The current state of conservation

Calton Hill, which encompasses its buildings, monuments and landscape, is a Scottish cultural asset that attracts many people every day. However, the general state of the site does not always reflect its importance, especially in the broader Edinburgh World Heritage Site. Reports of vandalism, antisocial behaviour, rubbish being left during peak periods and noise disruption can give a rather negative image of the site, while its grassland, access points and infrastructures are all said to be in a declining condition and suffering from a lack of resources.¹⁷

However, due to Calton Hill's particular status as part of the wider Edinburgh World Heritage Site, different layers of protection exist as it is managed, protected and promoted through a partnership comprising Edinburgh World Heritage, Historic Environment Scotland and the City of Edinburgh Council.¹⁸ Moreover, since 2014, Historic Environment Scotland has a statutory duty to consider the OUV of the site when assessing the impact of development proposals.¹⁹ Calton Hill is also part of the New Town Gardens, which are in Scotland's Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes.²⁰ The Edinburgh Local Development Plan (2016) has listed protective policies notably regarding the Protection of Important Remains and Open Space Protection. The Edinburgh Skyline Study has also been put in place to identify the key views of the city, four of them being from Calton Hill, and forms the basis for the guidance on protection measures to implement.²¹

¹⁷Brian Ferguson, "Edinburgh's Calton Hill landmarks under threat, finds report", *The Scotsman*, June 15, 2018, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/crime/edinburghs-calton-hill-landmarks-under-threat-finds-report-2471965>.

¹⁸ Edinburgh City Council, "New Town: Conservation Area Character Appraisal", (Edinburgh, 2015), <https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s60279/8.1b%20-%20Conservation%20Areas.pdf>.

¹⁹ *idem*.

²⁰ Historic Environment Scotland, "The New Town Gardens". Accessed on October 28, 2024, <https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,GDL00367>

²¹ Edinburgh City Council, "The Skyline Study", (Edinburgh, 2007). Accessed on October 28, 2024, https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/Data/Planning%20Committee/20071004/Agenda/edinburgh_skyline_study_-_consultation_report.pdf.

Management

Calton Hill has three groups caring for it, each with different roles. The primary authority is the City of Edinburgh Council, which includes several different departments; the second is Edinburgh World Heritage; and the third is the Calton Hill Conservation Trust, formerly the Friends of Calton Hill.

The City of Edinburgh Council is the main body responsible for all major decisions on Calton Hill, including budget allocation, event regulation and maintenance. In addition to this, it provides guidance to volunteering programmes that assist in park maintenance and conservation works.²² David Kyles, Interim Parks and Greenspace Officer (South East), described the Council's focus for Calton Hill as "making it safe, welcoming and environmentally friendly."²³ As a site of special scientific interest, the Council is keen to protect and promote Calton Hill's biodiversity. It wants to bring the paths and drainage systems back up to a good standard. Improving the furniture on the hill is also part of the Council's vision: for example, replacing the lamps with more historically accurate ones; replacing the bins with more sturdy ones of a uniform colour; upgrading the interpretation and display cases; and installing a water tap, bike station and defibrillator at the top of the hill.²⁴ However, the Council's funds are limited, so Parks and Greenspaces does not have the budget to do all of the above at once.

The Council aims to ensure that conservation and maintenance are tailored to the particular elements of the landscape and that appropriate conservation skills (and materials) are employed in the works. This involves employing conservation specialists and including essential conservation

²² LUC, "Calton Hill Management Plan," 2018.

²³ David Kyles, City of Edinburgh Council, interview by authors, November 7, 2024.

²⁴ *idem*.

guidance / specifications. In the 2018 Management Plan, responsibilities were divided across three departments: Parks and Greenspaces, the Culture Service, and Locality. The tasks these departments are responsible for range from care of the monuments and signage to litter management and water drainage, amongst many others.

The second group, Edinburgh World Heritage, is tasked by UNESCO to promote the World Heritage site and to protect its Outstanding Universal Values. This group can oppose any events taking place on the hill if they believe it affects the OUV. They can also offer grants for conservation efforts. Edinburgh World Heritage's aim for the site, as expressed in our interview with Silke Schneider and Fiona Rankin, is to make it feel genuine. For example, ideally, having the buildings serve functions aligned with their historic functions; having lighting on the hill resemble that of the original lamp posts by installing replicas; and, finally, for there to be no new developments. However, Edinburgh World Heritage has no legal authority to enforce these aims.²⁵

Finally, the Calton Hill Conservation Trust, formerly known as the Friends of Calton Hill, is a registered charity founded in 2023. It is run by volunteers whose goal is "to make the hill a cleaner, safer, and more beautiful place."²⁶ They contribute to the management process through volunteering, fundraising, organising events, and involvement in management forums with the City of Edinburgh Council. They arrange regular litter picks, remove graffiti, and apply for grants for restoration projects to improve the condition of the hill and its facilities. Their goal is similar to that of Edinburgh World Heritage: to conserve.

²⁵ Silke Schneider and Fiona Rankin, Edinburgh World Heritage, interview by authors, October 28, 2024.

²⁶ "About Us - Calton Hill Conservation Trust," Calton Hill Conservation Trust, accessed on October 17, 2024, <https://caltonhilltrust.org/about-us/>.

Complex interaction of nature and culture

The hill is a semi-natural space, with areas of thick vegetation and significant biodiversity. The Calton Hill Conservation Trust (CHCT) has organised guided walks of the hill, led by naturalists, during one of which 65 plant species, 24 bird species and 38 species of invertebrate were identified.²⁷ There is also an extensive bat population.

Less formal and structured than Princes Street Gardens, and wilder than other parks in the city, Simon Holledge, Chair of the CHCT, is concerned that people think Calton Hill “takes care of itself in some way”.²⁸ However, visitor numbers appear to be rising²⁹, with the increase in commercial operations through Collective’s various businesses having a direct impact on the hill’s natural beauty, predominantly through erosion and litter. The non-traditional setting poses challenges for park maintenance e.g. the wind regularly blows over the litter bins and the tarmac often freezes and cracks, affecting the viability of waste collection services.

The buildings themselves have proven to be fairly resilient, particularly the National Monument with its relatively plain structure. But they are all approximately 200 years old and subject to the same risks of deterioration as other buildings



Fig 10. The National Monument, 2024

²⁷ Sarah McArthur, “Calton Hill helped shape Edinburgh’s identity, but now ‘it is neglected’”. *Edinburgh Inquirer*, January 13, 2024. Accessed on October 26, 2024.

<https://www.edinburghinquirer.co.uk/p/calton-hill-helped-shape-edinburghs>

²⁸ *idem*.

²⁹ “Leisure and Tourism,” Office for National Statistics. Accessed on November 4, 2024.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism>

that age, exacerbated by their exposed situation at the top of a hill and, in the case of the National Monument, being climbed up by people daily for sightseeing and photographic opportunities. They are also surrounded by vegetation, some of which has embedded itself in structural cracks and is taking hold.

Nature and culture continue to interact on Calton Hill; Steven Orr at LUC describes the site as a “liminal space that continues to be all things to all people”³⁰. The somewhat incongruous collection of important and unique monuments, combined with the commercial offerings and events that take place on the hill, ensure that it continues to hold meaningful cultural significance within the city. These are situated within a natural landscape that offers unparalleled views of Edinburgh's old and new towns, while playing an integral role in the overall ‘look’ of the city and its iconic skyline.



Fig 11. View from Calton Hill towards Edinburgh Castle, 2024.

³⁰ Steven Orr, LUC, interview by authors, October 11, 2024.

Impact of contemporary urban pressures on authenticity

Tourism and Events

UNESCO's *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (2011) notes that due to "demographic shifts, global market liberalisation and decentralisation, as well as mass tourism, market exploitation of heritage and climate change, conditions have changed and cities are subject to (greater) development pressures and challenges" than in the past.³¹ The *Recommendation* goes on to suggest that "when properly managed through the historic urban landscape approach...services and tourism are important economic initiatives that can contribute to the well-being of the communities and to the conservation of historic urban areas and their cultural heritage... Failing to capture these opportunities leads to unsustainable and unviable cities, just as implementing them in an inadequate and inappropriate manner results in the destruction of heritage assets and irreplaceable losses for future generations".³²

These are considerations that apply to the entire World Heritage Site of the Old and New Towns of Edinburgh, not just to Calton Hill. In 2023, Edinburgh welcomed 2.3m international visitors, representing a 28% increase from the previous year and exceeding 2019 pre-pandemic levels by 4%.³³ This was supplemented by a further 2.6m domestic visitors, bringing the total number of visitors to Edinburgh to 4.9m in 2023.³⁴

In terms of Calton Hill itself, there is limited data about the number of visitors who go up it, however it is 12th in Tripadvisor's top attractions in Edinburgh

³¹ UNESCO, "Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape," 2011, 1.

³² UNESCO, "Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape," 2011, 3.

³³ "Leisure and Tourism," Office for National Statistics. Accessed on November 4, 2024.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism>

³⁴ "Edinburgh and the Lothians," VisitScotland, accessed on November 4, 2024.
<https://www.visitscotland.org/research-insights/regions/edinburgh-lothians>

(2024)³⁵ and Simon Holledge estimates that the hill sees between 500,000 and 1m visitors per year.³⁶ Since the opening of the Collective gallery and Lookout restaurant in 2018, it is anecdotally believed that footfall on the hill has significantly increased in recent years.³⁷ Many stakeholders view the gallery and restaurant as positive developments on Calton Hill, particularly as the gallery occupies the long-empty old Observatory, and the restaurant brings more visitors up the hill at night, thereby diluting the air of abandonment that has sometimes led to antisocial behaviour and violence in the past.³⁸

Others, however, point to issues arising from the gallery and restaurant's requirement for vehicular access and, therefore, continued use of the hill's access road. Although signs at the bottom of the hill clearly indicate that only authorised vehicles should access the road, the gate is currently left open and there is no-one manning this entry point to the hill, so it is possible for any vehicle to drive up the road if they choose to. This is compounded by the fact there are currently no parking regulations at the top of the hill.³⁹



Fig 12. Vehicular access up Calton Hill and the 'authorised vehicles only' sign, 2024.

³⁵"Things to Do in Edinburgh," Tripadvisor, accessed on November 4, 2024.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attractions-g186525-Activities-Edinburgh_Scotland.html

³⁶ Sarah McArthur, "Calton Hill helped shape Edinburgh's identity, but now 'it is neglected,'" *Edinburgh Inquirer*, January 13, 2024. Accessed on October 26, 2024.

<https://www.edinburghinquirer.co.uk/p/calton-hill-helped-shape-edinburghs>

³⁷ Steven Orr, LUC, interview by authors, October 11, 2024 and Simon Holledge, CHCT, interview by authors, October 17, 2024.

³⁸ David Kyles, City of Edinburgh Council, interview by authors, November 7, 2024.

³⁹ *idem*.

The City of Edinburgh Council enforced a firework control zone between 1-10 November 2024, during which road access was restricted by rangers manning and locking the gate. These measures come with financial costs and were therefore temporary; the Calton Hill Conservation Trust would like to see a more cost-effective modern automatic system implemented, on a permanent basis. One of their suggestions is that tourist buses and taxis could continue to drive up the hill but that they should be charged for access; the income generated from this could go towards maintenance of the hill.⁴⁰



Fig 13. Firework Control Zone sign, 2024.

In Edinburgh, measures claimed to better manage the growing tourism sector – including the imminent introduction of a tourist tax and the creation of a sustainable tourism strategy – are underway.⁴¹ The levy is expected to raise £45-50m a year by 2028/29,⁴² which is intended to be reinvested directly into initiatives that benefit residents and enhance visitor experiences. After administration and contingency costs, a fixed annual amount will be assigned to housing and tourism mitigation (£5m) and participatory budgeting (2%).

⁴⁰ Simon Holledge, CHCT, interview by authors, October 17, 2024.

⁴¹ Sarah McArthur, "Calton Hill helped shape Edinburgh's identity, but now 'it is neglected,'" *Edinburgh Inquirer*, January 13, 2024. Accessed on October 26, 2024.
<https://www.edinburghinquirer.co.uk/p/calton-hill-helped-shape-edinburghs>

⁴² "About proposals for a visitor levy," City of Edinburgh Council. Accessed on November 4, 2024.
<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/business/visitor-levy-edinburgh/2>

The remaining funds will then be split across three investment streams:

- city operations and infrastructure (55%);
- culture, heritage and events (35%); and
- destination management (10%).

Edinburgh World Heritage would like to see a significant proportion of this revenue “ringfenced for conservation and heritage”.⁴³ One direct application of this could be to recruit more park rangers for sites such as Calton Hill. There is a logic to this; as things stand, any money that is currently spent on the maintenance of Calton Hill is public money (via Council Tax) but relatively few locals go up the hill compared with the number of tourists who do so and whose visits could be more effectively monetised.

There are some who feel that the Lookout restaurant's building (the only new building on Calton Hill's summit since 1895) alters the view of the hill from the north east, especially when lit up at night. This may, in their opinion, go against UNESCO's recommendation that “special emphasis should be placed on the harmonious integration of contemporary interventions into the historic urban fabric”.⁴⁴



Fig 14. View of Calton Hill from the north, showing the new Lookout restaurant, 2024.

⁴³ Silke Schneider and Fiona Rankin, Edinburgh World Heritage, interview by authors, October 28, 2024.

⁴⁴ UNESCO, “Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape,” 2011, 4.

Another concern is that the operation of the restaurant at night may potentially lead to the hill becoming overlit, which can reduce the ability to view stars in the night sky and can have a negative effect on the hill's biodiversity. One suggestion on the latter point, from Simon Holledge, would be to use low-level, infrared light, which is more nature-friendly.⁴⁵

As well as the day-to-day visits from tourists and restaurant patrons, Calton Hill plays host to various events throughout the year. The Beltane Fire Festival, a reinterpretation and modernisation of an ancient Iron Age Celtic ritual, takes place on the hill every April and the Dusherra Hindu Festival takes place every October. Until recently, the hill was part of a torchlight procession on new year's eve, the opening event in Edinburgh's annual Hogmanay celebrations; although the route has changed in recent years, the hill remains a popular spot from which to watch the fireworks at midnight, as well as viewing the Northern Lights when they are visible.



Fig 15. Beltane Fire Festival, 2018.

⁴⁵ Simon Holledge, CHCT, interview by authors, October 17, 2024.

The LUC *Calton Hill Management Plan* (2018) highlights the need for an “Events Programme and Framework which responds to the carrying capacity of the park (and neighbourhood) and the ability to address maintenance and remedial work requirements”.⁴⁶ Erosion of the hill and the dropping of litter are exacerbated by large numbers of visitors during events; the lack of in-ground services, due to the bedrock being so near the surface, necessitates the use of generators and imported facilities with potential pollution and noise impacts.

Not all the events on Calton Hill are official, however; unauthorised groups will sometimes drive up to the summit with their own amplifiers and generators to host raves or to launch their own fireworks. Most of the time, though, the hill is generally quiet and dark at night, other than visitors to the restaurant, so it is used by some as a place to meet discreetly. This was particularly the case before homosexuality was decriminalised in Scotland in 1981, when the hill was known as a cruising spot for gay men at night.

The negative impacts of tourism and events on the hill, both authorised and unauthorised, are predominantly erosion of the grass at popular vantage points e.g. Trig Point, South Viewpoint and in front of the National Monument, and the dropping of litter. There is some risk of damage to the National Monument from people climbing up it for photo opportunities, which also carries health and safety risks, due to the potential fall height.⁴⁷ The Council's position on this is that climbing on the Monument is not allowed, however there is no signage to convey this and no permanent supervision, so it is difficult to enforce.⁴⁸ There is a reluctance to affect the Monument's authenticity by, for example, installing railings around it but one option could

⁴⁶ LUC, “Calton Hill Management Plan,” 2018.

⁴⁷ *idem*.

⁴⁸ David Kyles, City of Edinburgh Council, interview by authors, November 7, 2024.

be to raise the ground in front of the Monument, making it easier to access without damaging the lower, more exposed stonework.

In 2023, the Calton Hill Conservation Trust released satellite images demonstrating the rapid erosion of the hill in recent years:⁴⁹



Fig 16. View of Calton Hill from above, 2008.



Fig 17. View of Calton Hill from above, 2023.

⁴⁹ "Erosion on Calton Hill," Calton Hill Conservation Trust, accessed on September 28, 2024.
<https://caltonhilltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Erosion-on-Calton-Hill-2023.pdf>

In Sarah McArthur's article *Calton Hill helped shape Edinburgh's identity, but now 'it is neglected'* (January 13, 2024), she notes that “without intervention, this kind of topsoil erosion can be permanent. After grass is worn away by high footfall, bare soil dries and is quickly blown or washed away, leaving no opportunity for regrowth in eroded areas”.⁵⁰

However, there are also some positive impacts of the ‘contemporary urban pressures’ described above. The new commercial operations create an environment with more investment, for example, and the increase in nighttime visitors to the restaurant makes it feel safer and more welcoming on the hill at night. The National Monument, while regularly climbed on, is fairly resilient because it is such a plain structure, with no rainwater goods to gather water or in which vegetation can start to grow.⁵¹ The new LEZ zone in the centre of the city should result in a reduction in emissions which should, in turn, reduce the impact of modern urban activity on the hill and its buildings.

Management

Having various managing powers for the same site has become an issue, specifically within the Council. The LUC Management Plan establishes a problem with accessing management: “The range of services involved in the management of Calton Hill can make it difficult for the public and other organisations to understand who is responsible for what, and who has overall responsibility for coordinating actions.”⁵² The plan recommends establishing a “lead” party with overall responsibility for coordinating actions by the City of Edinburgh Council Services. Within the City of Edinburgh Council specifically,

⁵⁰ Sarah McArthur, “Calton Hill helped shape Edinburgh's identity, but now 'it is neglected,'” *Edinburgh Inquirer*, January 13, 2024, accessed on October 26, 2024.

<https://www.edinburghinquirer.co.uk/p/calton-hill-helped-shape-edinburghs>

⁵¹ Steven Orr, LUC, interview by authors, October 11, 2024.

⁵² LUC, “Calton Hill Management Plan”. 2018.

since 2018, there have been budget cuts and fewer people.⁵³

Some actions from the Management Plan have yet to be considered, such as providing opportunities for stakeholder organisations to be involved in the management process, for example, periodic workshops with the City of Edinburgh Council forum. The multiple departments within the Council responsible for aspects of the hill (including Parks, Greenspaces and Cemeteries; Museums, Galleries, and Monuments; Waste Services; and Roads, Transport, and Network Services) are a possible barrier to getting things done. Additionally, with three changes in management within the last 15 years, continuity has been disrupted, which has impacted the execution of a coherent, long-term strategy.⁵⁴

The Council's management approach reveals a potential conflict between conservation and the need to raise funds. Both Edinburgh World Heritage and the Calton Hill Conservation Trust want to preserve the site, but it is more complicated for the Council. While there is a commitment to protect the site, revenue generation is still a factor, leading to regular events and some development that may undermine conservation goals. The Council has not entirely taken the Management Plan into account, and for a management plan to effectively work, it has to be inclusive but have a clearly defined authority / leadership.

⁵³ Simon Holledge, CHCT, interview by authors, October 17, 2024.

⁵⁴ Silke Schneider and Fiona Rankin, Edinburgh World Heritage, interview by authors, October 28, 2024.

Table summarising issues and current situational status

Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Architectural heritage ● Contribution to Edinburgh's cityscape ('7 Hills') ● Views and picturesque qualities ● Cultural significance ('Athens of the North') ● Natural heritage significance (Special Scientific Interest) ● Tourist attraction ● Public park ● Venue for events ● Collective Gallery ● Community engagement (Calton Hill Conservation Trust)

Risks, Threats & Constraints	Needs & Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Footfall grass erosion ● Antisocial behaviour / personal safety threats ● Vandalism, graffiti and fireworks ● Unauthorised events ● Visitor 'congestion' ● Bins and trash management ● Limited maintenance resources ● Loss of views (overgrowing vegetation) ● Lack of inclusive accessibility ● Uncoordinated and unsympathetic furniture ● Potential future impacts of vehicular access to the Observatory ● Lack of integrated management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Management of visitor pressures ● Improve access control ● Improve inclusive accessibility ● Improve litter management ● Improve site interpretation and displays ● Personal safety / security (ie: lighting and patrols) ● Safeguard and restore views ● Prioritised public realm / landscape enhancements ● Infrastructure conservation and repairs ● Improve facilities for visitors and site users ● Establish integrated management ● Manage desire paths ● Designated conservation area (West side)

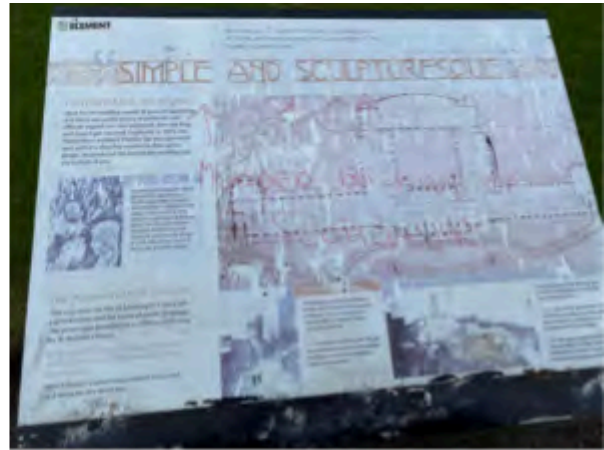
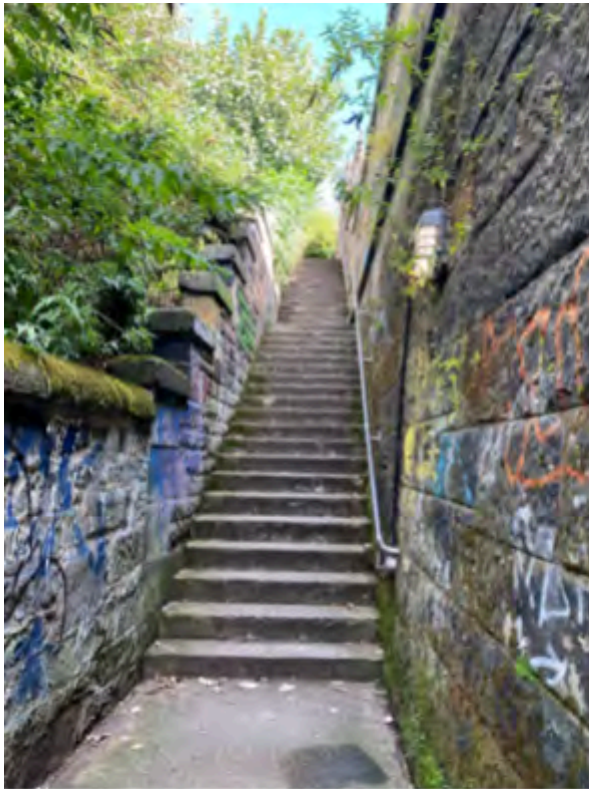


Fig 18. Visual assessment of risks, threats and constraints, 2024.

Conclusion

The complex interaction between nature and culture has always been at the heart of Calton Hill's authenticity and this remains true in its present state. A near-perfect example of the 'picturesque', it features time and again in paintings, photographs and writings about Edinburgh over the last 300 years. It plays an integral role in the overall 'look' of the city and its iconic skyline, a factor which is as important today as it was 200 years ago, when the 'Committee for Feuing Calton Hill Grounds and Co' did not approve any of the submitted plans for a third New Town to be sited to the east of Leith Walk.



Fig 19. View of Calton Hill from the Mound by Thomas H. Shepherd, 1829.

One of the judges, William Stark, was critical of the fact that none of the proposals had considered using the hill's natural assets to enhance the layout of the site. Instead, most sought to remove or build over them.⁵⁵ Carter McKee notes that "Stark's focus on giving precedence to existing

⁵⁵ Kirsten Carter McKee, *Calton Hill: And the Plans for Edinburgh's Third New Town* (Edinburgh: John Donald, an imprint of Birlinn Ltd, 2018), 61-62.

topographical features of Calton Hill brought a more sensitive approach to the retention of the landscape by designing an urban framework around existing rural features".⁵⁶ This was in contrast to the design of the first New Town and, as described by Charles McKean in 'Twinning Cities: Modernisation Versus Improvement', sought to "respond to the landscape rather than dominating it....(elevating) the values of landscape, contour, prospect and trees above the seduction of geometry",⁵⁷ an aspect of the hill that remains the case today.

Other than a busy period of construction on the hill between 1776-1831, very few interventions have been made to the site's summit. Simon Holledge, Chair of the CHCT, believes that, in many ways, the hill "has benefitted from the neglect of the last 15-20 years" and that, as a result, "it is as authentic as it has ever been".⁵⁸ Time will tell whether the redevelopment of the Royal High School, with increasing visitors to the new National Centre for Music and the proposed public spaces surrounding it, will have a positive or negative impact on the site and its authenticity.

Useful guidance for a comprehensive and integrated approach towards urban conservation and management can be found in UNESCO's *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape* (2011), which suggests that "emphasis needs to be put on the integration of historic urban area conservation, management and planning strategies into local development processes and urban planning".⁵⁹ Civic engagement tools; knowledge and planning tools; regulatory systems; and financial tools should all be used, in an

⁵⁶ Kirsten Carter McKee, *Calton Hill: And the Plans for Edinburgh's Third New Town* (Edinburgh: John Donald, an imprint of Birlinn Ltd, 2018), 62.

⁵⁷ Charles McKean, "Twinning Cities: Modernisation Versus Improvement," in *Edinburgh: The Making of a Capital City*, ed. Brian Edwards and Paul Jenkins (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 55 as cited in Kirsten Carter McKee, *Calton Hill: And the Plans for Edinburgh's Third New Town* (Edinburgh: John Donald, an imprint of Birlinn Ltd, 2018), 63.

⁵⁸ Simon Holledge, CHCT, interview by authors, October 17, 2024.

⁵⁹ UNESCO, "Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape," 2011, 1.

integrated way, to support and facilitate decision-making processes within a framework of sustainable development.⁶⁰ This echoes the belief of Edinburgh World Heritage that what Calton Hill needs is a group of stakeholders who stick to a management plan, with accountability for actions and specific funding allocated for conservation.⁶¹

There is justifiable concern that greater footfall from tourism and events leads to greater erosion of the hill and potential damage to its monuments. However, the impact on Calton Hill as a site is different to the impact on its authenticity. In terms of the latter, the hill would be largely recognisable to residents of the city from 200 years ago. There are almost no new buildings on its summit and the views remain broadly familiar. The National Monument remains incomplete as, perhaps, was always the intention.⁶² Large tour buses, which used to threaten the site's authenticity, are no longer allowed to drive up Calton Hill.⁶³ Multiple events catering to a broad range of audiences are hosted on the hill throughout the year. Its continued use by both local people and visitors to the city, keen to experience this liminal space and the unique views it offers of Edinburgh, is a testament to its continued authenticity. Calton Hill is a dynamic, living, authentic space, not a museum.



Fig 20. The summit of Calton Hill, 2024.

⁶⁰ UNESCO, "Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape," 2011, 4-5.

⁶¹ Silke Schneider and Fiona Rankin, Edinburgh World Heritage, interview by authors, October 28, 2024.

⁶² Charles McKean, *Edinburgh: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*, new ed. (Edinburgh: RIAS with the support of Edinburgh District Council, 1992), 103.

⁶³ Silke Schneider and Fiona Rankin, Edinburgh World Heritage, interview by authors, October 28, 2024.

Bibliography

Calton Hill Conservation Trust website, accessed on October 17, 2024,
<https://caltonhilltrust.org/>

Carter McKee, Kirsten. *Calton Hill: And the Plans for Edinburgh's Third New Town*. Edinburgh: John Donald, imprint of Birlinn Ltd, 2018.

City of Edinburgh Council, "About proposals for a visitor levy", (Edinburgh, 2024), <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/business/visitor-levy-edinburgh/2>

City of Edinburgh Council, "New Town: Conservation Area Character Appraisal", (Edinburgh, 2015),
<https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/documents/s60279/8.1b%20-%20Conservation%20Areas.pdf>.

City of Edinburgh Council, "The Skyline Study", (Edinburgh, 2007),
https://democracy.edinburgh.gov.uk/Data/Planning%20Committee/20071004/Agenda/edinburgh_skyline_study_-_consultation_report.pdf.

Cundall, "Calton Hill Observatory Refurbishment", accessed on Nov. 8th 2024,
<https://www.cundall.com/projects/calton-hill-observatory-refurbishment>.

Dobash, Russell P. "Labour And Discipline In Scottish And English Prisons: Moral Correction, Punishment And Useful Toil." *Sociology* 17, no. 1 (1983): p. 11.

Edinburgh World Heritage, "City Observatory", accessed on November 8, 2024, <https://ewh.org.uk/city-observatory/>.

Edinburgh World Heritage, "The National Monument", accessed on November 8, 2024. <https://ewh.org.uk/the-national-monument/>.

Edinburgh World Heritage, "The Nelson Monument", accessed on November 8, 2024, <https://ewh.org.uk/the-nelson-monument/>.

Edinburgh World Heritage, "Twelve Monuments", accessed on Nov 8th 2024,
<https://ewh.org.uk/twelve-monuments/#:~:text=The%20Twelve%20Monuments%20project%20also,Monument%20of%20Lysicrates%20in%20Athens>.

Edinburgh World Heritage. *Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site – Management Plan 2017-2022*. <https://ewh.org.uk/plan/>

English Heritage. *Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment (Second stage consultation)*. 2007.

Ferguson, Brian. "Edinburgh's Calton Hill landmarks under threat, finds report". *The Scotsman*, June 15, 2018, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/crime/edinburghs-calton-hill-landmarks-under-threat-finds-report-2471965>.

Historic Environment Scotland, "Calton Hill, Off Regent Road, Dugald Stewart's Monument", accessed on November 8, 2024, <https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,LB27835>.

Historic Environment Scotland, "Calton Hill, Off Regent Road, Playfair's Monument", accessed on November 9, 2024, <https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,LB27826>.

Historic Environment Scotland, "The New Town Gardens", accessed on October 28, 2024, <https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,GDL00367>

ICOMOS. *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance*. 2013.

ICOMOS. *The Nara Document on Authenticity*. 1994.

ICOMOS. *The Venice Charter*. 1964.

LDN. *Calton Hill Conservation Plan*. 1999.

LUC. *Calton Hill Management Plan*. 2018.

Kinghorn Sandy. "Edinburgh Bridewell - Influences: Jeremy Bentham - Panopticon, or the Inspection House" SCRAN, accessed on November 8, 2024.

https://sites.scran.ac.uk/ada/documents/castle_style/bridewell/bridewell_jeremy_bentham_panopticon.htm.

McArthur, Sarah. Calton Hill helped shape Edinburgh's identity, but now 'it is neglected'. *Edinburgh Inquirer*, January 13, 2024.

McKean, Charles. *Edinburgh: An Illustrated Architectural Guide*. New edition. Edinburgh: RIAS with the support of Edinburgh District Council, 1992.

Mitchell, Ann K. *The People of Calton Hill*. Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993.

Museums & Galleries Edinburgh, "Auld Reekie Retold ; The Edinburgh Bridewell and its hidden treasure", 23 Nov 2021, accessed on November 8, 2024.

<https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/stories/auld-reekie-retold-edinburgh-bridewell-and-its-hidden-treasure>.

Office for National Statistics, "Leisure and Tourism", accessed on November 4, 2024.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/leisureandtourism>

Royal High School Preservation Trust. *The History Of The Thomas Hamilton Building: The Old Royal High School*. 2023.

Tripadvisor, "Things to Do in Edinburgh", accessed on November 4, 2024.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attractions-g186525-Activities-Edinburgh_Scotland.html

UNESCO. *Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape*. 2011.

VisitScotland, "Edinburgh and the Lothians", accessed on November 4, 2024.

<https://www.visitscotland.org/research-insights/regions/edinburgh-lothians>

List of Figures

Cover page: Collective Architecture. "Collective, Calton Hill, Edinburgh". Accessed on October 2, 2024.

<https://www.collectivearchitecture.co.uk/projects/city-observatory>.

Fig 1. The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site Boundary. "Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site: Management Plan 2017-2022". Edinburgh World Heritage. Accessed on October 2, 2024. <https://ewh.org.uk/plan/>

Fig 2. Edinburgh's OUV qualities from the "Old and New Towns of Edinburgh World Heritage Site – Management Plan 2017-2022". Edinburgh World Heritage. Accessed on October 2, 2024. <https://ewh.org.uk/plan/>

Fig 3. National Monument when the stone was still white, date unknown (RIAS Collection). Charles McKean, "Edinburgh: An Illustrated Architectural Guide". New edition. Edinburgh: RIAS with the support of Edinburgh District Council, 1992. p. 101.

Fig 4. View of Arthur's Seat from Calton Hill, 2024. By authors.

Fig 5. Dugald Stewart Monument, Playfair's Monument and the Nelson Monument, 2024. By authors.

Fig 6. English Heritage's 'Heritage Values' wheel. English Heritage, "Conservation Principles: Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment". Second stage consultation, 2007.

Fig 7. View of Calton Hill from the east end of Princes Street, 1829. Thomas H. Shepherd, "Waterloo Place, The National & Nelson's Monuments, Calton Hill. &c. Edinburgh" in *Modern Athens! Displayed in a Series of Views, or, Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century: Exhibiting the Whole of the New Buildings, Modern Improvements, Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of the Scottish Metropolis and Its Environs*. [Revised edition]. London: Frank Graham, 1969.

Fig 8. Site maps showing the development of Calton Hill's buildings and monuments. By authors.

Fig 9. Begbie, Thomas. "Washerwomen on the Calton Hill". 1887, Glass negative. <https://www.capitalcollections.org.uk/view-item?i=11677&WINID=1731264014118>.

Fig 10. The National Monument, 2024. By authors.

Fig 11. View from Calton Hill towards Edinburgh Castle, 2024. By authors.

Fig 12. Vehicular access up Calton Hill and the 'authorised vehicles only' sign, 2024.
By authors.

Fig 13. Firework Control Zone sign, 2024. By authors.

Fig 14. View of Calton Hill from the north, showing the new Lookout restaurant, 2024.
By authors.

Fig 15. Beltane Fire Festival, 2018. Copyright Gordon Veitch for Beltane Fire Society.
Accessed on November 4, 2024. <https://beltane.org/about-beltane/>

Fig 16. View of Calton Hill from above. "Oblique aerial view centred on the Calton Hill with St Andrew's House adjacent, taken from the air". Canmore, Historic Environment Scotland, 2008. Accessed on November 16, 2024. <http://canmore.org.uk/collection/1129742>

Fig 17. View of Calton Hill from above. Google Maps, 2023. Calton Hill Conservation Trust. Accessed on November 16, 2024.
caltonhilltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Erosion-on-Calton-Hill-2023.pdf

Fig 18. Visual assessment of risks, threats and constraints, 2024. By authors.

Fig 19. View of Calton Hill from the Mound, 1829. Thomas H. Shepherd, "North Bridge, Calton Hill &c from the Bank of Scotland, Edinburgh" in *Modern Athens! Displayed in a Series of Views, or, Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century: Exhibiting the Whole of the New Buildings, Modern Improvements, Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of the Scottish Metropolis and Its Environs*. [Revised edition]. London: Frank Graham, 1969.

Fig 20. The summit of Calton Hill, 2024. By authors.

Fig 21. "The Old Observatory (Calton Hill)". Drawn, engd. and pubd. by J. and H.S. Storer, Chapel Street, Pentonville, March 1, 1820. Courtesy of HES. Illustration in *Views in Scotland*. Accessed on October 20, 2024.
<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1228548>

Fig 22. "Bridewell Prison, Edinburgh". Ground plan by Robert Adam. Copyright: Sandy Kinghorn, Cadking Design LTD. Accessed on November 4, 2024.
<https://www.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-000-596-600-C&scache=128xdq98d8&searchdb=scran.>

Fig 23. Calton Jail: "Bridewell Prison, Edinburgh", 1887. Historic Environment Scotland. Accessed on November 4, 2024.

<https://www.scran.ac.uk/database/image.php?usi=000-000-596-734-R&cusi=000-000-596-734-C&scache=5fklu5k93f&searchdb=scranl>.

Fig 24. "Edinburgh, Regent Road, Royal High School. Digital image of drawing showing south elevation". RCAHMS. 1826. Accessed on November 4, 2024.

<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/807264>.

Fig 25. "Speculative view showing the National Monument of Scotland (unbuilt) and Royal High School". G.M. Kemp. Accessed on November 4, 2024.

<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/924509>.

Fig 26. "View of Nelson's monument, Calton Hill, Edinburgh". Violet Banks. 1930.

Courtesy of HES (Violet Banks Collection). Accessed on November 4, 2024.

<https://canmore.org.uk/collection/2690458>.

Fig 27. "Royal Observatory & Playfair's Monument from the west side of Calton Hill." 1818. Edinburgh City Libraries.

<https://www.scran.ac.uk/database/record.php?usi=000-000-098-831-C&scache=3uvv9q98da&searchdb=scran>.

Fig 28. "Burns Monument, Edinburgh". William Notman. 1890. Courtesy of HES (William Notman Collection). <https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1168878>.

Fig 29. "Dugald Stewart Monument, Calton Hill, Edinburgh, Lothian". Scottish Development Department. 1985. <https://canmore.org.uk/collection/1826092>.

Appendix: Description of buildings and monuments on Calton Hill

The Observatory



Fig 21. Engraving of the Old Observatory, 1820.

The idea of making Calton Hill the site for an observatory was first proposed by Thomas Short, whose brother James Short manufactured telescopes. An observatory was originally designed by James Craig and its construction began in 1776, but it was never used as an observatory, rather it was used as

a lodging.⁶⁴ A New Observatory was designed by William Playfair and was built in 1818.⁶⁵ It took its inspiration from the Greek Revival style, with a Tuscan Doric pedimented pavilion in the design of a Greek Cross, each wing having two pilastered bays, a hexastyle portico and a central observatory dome on an octagonal drum.⁶⁶ Playfair took inspiration notably from the Greek Temple of the Winds in Athens.⁶⁷

One of the features of the Observatory is that the ceiling had a full-length 'transit' slot used for the main telescope, which was aligned with the local meridian line so stars could be used to keep the Observatory's clock accurate, which was also linked to the time ball on top of the Nelson Monument.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 8-9.

⁶⁵ *idem*.

⁶⁶ Edinburgh World Heritage, "City Observatory," accessed on November 8, 2024, <https://ewh.org.uk/city-observatory/>.

⁶⁷ Cundall, "Calton Hill Observatory Refurbishment," accessed on November 8, 2024, <https://www.cundall.com/projects/calton-hill-observatory-refurbishment>.

⁶⁸ Edinburgh World Heritage, "City Observatory," accessed on November 8, 2024, <https://ewh.org.uk/city-observatory/>.

Bridewell and Calton Prison

The first known building on the current St Andrew's House site, was Bridewell Jail, Edinburgh's first dedicated prison for young offenders, prostitutes and beggars. Robert Adam was appointed for the design and produced several plans for the site, including a design to build a bridge linking the Old and New Towns, but eventually only the Bridewell was constructed. The building's foundation stone was laid on 30 November 1791 and the construction work was completed in 1795.⁶⁹

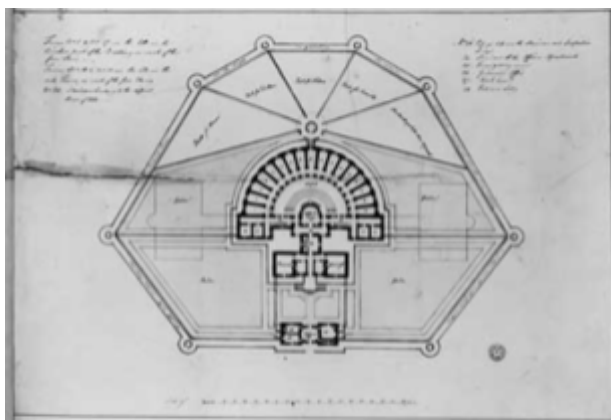


Fig 22. Robert Adam's Floor Plan for the Bridewell, date unknown.

The architecture of the building uses the idea of Bentham's panopticon and appears to have been the closest approximation ever constructed of his concept.⁷⁰ The idea was that all cells are visible, but without the observer being visible in return.⁷¹ Hence, the building was shaped as a four-storey semi-circle,

each having 13 working cells facing inward toward the central inspection tower, and 36 separate sleeping cells facing the exterior of the building. The tower was in the middle of the D and allowed for constant supervision of the prisoners.⁷² However, throughout the 19th century, the prison soon became overcrowded and a bigger building was needed, which led to the

⁶⁹ Museums & Galleries Edinburgh, "Auld Reekie Retold ; The Edinburgh Bridewell and its hidden treasure", November 23, 2021, accessed on November 8, 2024,

<https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/stories/auld-reekie-retold-edinburgh-bridewell-and-its-hidden-treasure>.

⁷⁰ Dobash, Russell P. "Labour And Discipline In Scottish And English Prisons: Moral Correction, Punishment And Useful Toil," *Sociology* 17, no. 1 (1983): 11.

⁷¹ Sandy Kinghorn, "Edinburgh Bridewell - Influences: Jeremy Bentham - Panopticon, or the Inspection House" SCRAN, accessed on November 8, 2024.

https://sites.scran.ac.uk/ada/documents/castle_style/bridewell/bridewell_jeremy_bentham_panopticon.htm.

⁷² Dobash, Russell P. "Labour And Discipline In Scottish And English Prisons: Moral Correction, Punishment And Useful Toil." *Sociology* 17, no. 1 (1983): 11.

demolition of the Bridewell and the construction of the new Calton Jail, which opened in 1817 and was at one point the largest prison in Scotland.⁷³ It was based on the designs of Archibald Elliot, known for his classical, Greek Revival style. The prison was also known to attract crowds to Calton Hill for the execution of prisoners from a platform on its roof, and the last public hanging, in 1864, of George Bryce, was watched by a crowd of more than 20,000.⁷⁴ The Calton Jail facility closed in 1927 and all the buildings, except the Governor's House, were demolished in 1935 to make way for the construction of St Andrew's House.⁷⁵

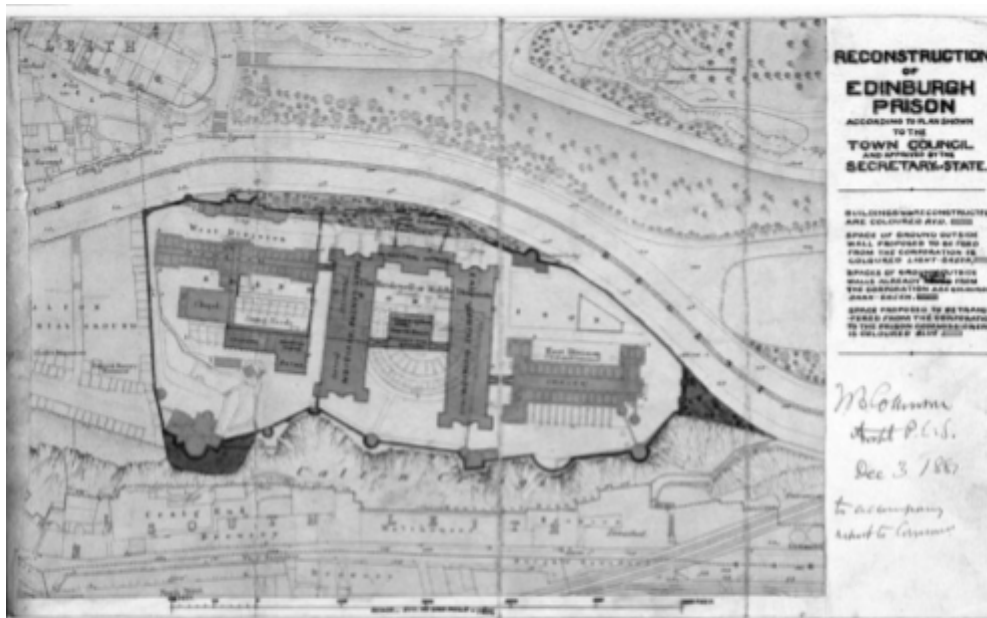


Fig 23. Calton Jail Complex Ground Plan, overlaying the Bridewell Ground plan, 1887.

⁷³ Museums & Galleries Edinburgh, "Auld Reekie Retold ; The Edinburgh Bridewell and its hidden treasure", November 23 2021, accessed on November 8, 2024, <https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/stories/auld-reekie-retold-edinburgh-bridewell-and-its-hidden-treasure>

⁷⁴ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 33-34..

⁷⁵ Museums & Galleries Edinburgh, "Auld Reekie Retold ; The Edinburgh Bridewell and its hidden treasure", November 23, 2021, accessed on November 8, 2024, <https://www.edinburghmuseums.org.uk/stories/auld-reekie-retold-edinburgh-bridewell-and-its-hidden-treasure>.

Royal High School

The old Royal High School was built between 1826 and 1829 from the designs of Scottish neoclassical architect, Thomas Hamilton.⁷⁶ He was commissioned by the City Council to design a new school on the newly built Regent Road and the foundation stone was laid in 1825.⁷⁷ In 1945, the school was extended with the acquisition of no.1 Regent Terrace and, soon afterwards, nos. 2 and 4, which were to be used as classrooms.⁷⁸ In 1958, further extension work was considered with the possibility of acquiring four acres of the private Regent, Royal and Carlton Terraces Gardens, but the opposition from neighbouring private proprietors put an end to the project which was replaced by an extension between the existing school and the houses of Regent Terrace. Finally, in 1961, the Royal High School moved to Barnton and the old buildings up on Regent Road were adapted to house a future Scottish Parliament which did not end up occurring.⁷⁹ The building has since been unused for more than four decades.⁸⁰ Many discussions and projects for the site's further use have been presented in the last decades. The current approved plans are for the building to house Scotland's National Centre for Music.

⁷⁶ Royal High School Preservation Trust, "The History Of The Thomas Hamilton Building: The Old Royal High School", PDF. P.1

⁷⁷ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 36.

⁷⁸ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 39.

⁷⁹ *idem*.

⁸⁰ Royal High School Preservation Trust, "The History Of The Thomas Hamilton Building: The Old Royal High School", PDF. P.1



Fig 24. Royal High School's South Elevation, 1826.

Monuments

National Monument

One of the largest and most imposing structures on the top of the hill is the National Monument to commemorate men who had fallen in the Napoleonic Wars. The intention was to express Scotland's national identity, although as part of the British Empire.⁸¹ The initial design was by Archibald Elliot but was soon replaced by a design by William Playfair, which was to be a replica of the Parthenon of Athens, with each stone being the same size as the originals in Greece.⁸² The foundation stone, weighing six tons, was laid in 1822 by the Duke of Hamilton and it was reported that it would have taken 12 horses and 70 men to move some of the larger stones up the hill.⁸³ By 1829,

⁸¹ "The National Monument". Edinburgh World Heritage. Accessed on November 8, 2024. <https://ewh.org.uk/the-national-monument/>.

⁸² *idem*.

⁸³ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 13.

the project remained incomplete due to lack of funds, and the resulting 'ruin' of twelve pillars remains a prominent part of Edinburgh's skyline.⁸⁴ However, according to Charles Kean, the National Monument may never have been intended to be finished, as the contract drawing only specified the existing 12 columns to be built.⁸⁵ The monument's architectural style largely contributed to Edinburgh's reputation as the 'Athens of the North'. Over the years, several unsuccessful proposals have been made to complete the monument, but none have been realised, as it would probably take away from the visual aesthetic of the site.



Fig 25. View showing the National Monument of Scotland (never completed), date unknown.

⁸⁴ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 13.

⁸⁵ Charles McKean, "Edinburgh: An Illustrated Architectural Guide". New edition. Edinburgh: RIAS with the support of Edinburgh District Council, 1992. p 103.

Nelson Monument

The monument in honour of Admiral Lord Nelson was designed by Robert Burn in the shape of Nelson's inverted telescope. The foundation stone was laid in 1807 and construction was completed in 1815, when Thomas Bonnar added an accommodation at the base, although the principal tower had been nearly finished in 1808.⁸⁶ Its most important and distinctive feature is the time-signal ball, installed at the top of the monument in 1852 by Professor Piazzi Smyth.⁸⁷ The time ball was dropped at 1 pm, allowing ships in the Forth to set their chronometers. In 1861, the ball was linked to a gun in Edinburgh Castle, which would also go off at 1pm. James Ritchie, a clockmaker from Leith Street, erected a steel wire directly connecting the Castle with the Nelson Monument, measuring 4,020 feet.⁸⁸



Fig 26. The Nelson Monument, 1930.

In 2009, the Nelson Monument and its time ball were restored as part of the Twelve Monument Project; the stonework was conserved and the time ball was carefully removed for specialist restoration. The internal gearing mechanism also needed attention after more than 150 years of use. All the work was completed using only traditional materials and retaining as much of the original as possible.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 9.

⁸⁷ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 11.

⁸⁸ *idem*.

⁸⁹ Edinburgh World Heritage, "The Nelson Monument", accessed on November 8, 2024, <https://ewh.org.uk/the-nelson-monument/>.

Playfair Memorial

The Square-plan Greek-style monument, with its Greek Doric columns and pyramidal stone roof, was built as a monument to Professor John Playfair, uncle of architect William Playfair.⁹⁰ The monument was first proposed in 1822 but it was not constructed until 1825. In 1828, it was incorporated into the surrounding wall of the Observatory.⁹¹

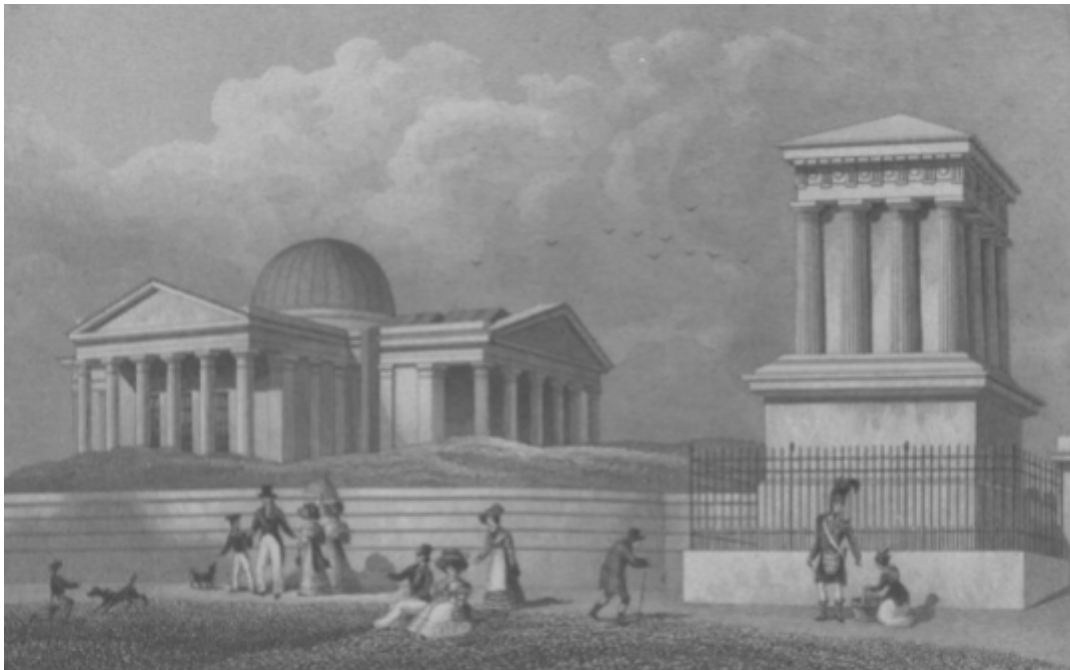


Fig 27. Playfair's Monument to the right, the Royal Observatory in the distance, 1818.

Burns Monument

The monument to Robert Burns was built in 1831 and was designed by Thomas Hamilton in the style of a circular Greek temple,⁹² with a central cylindrical structure, rising through a Corinthian colonnade to be capped with a domed roof with intricate stone carvings and winged lion sculptures. The monument is located on the south side of Regent Road near the new

⁹⁰ Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 9.

⁹¹ Historic Environment Scotland, "Calton Hill, Off Regent Road, Playfair's Monument", accessed on November 9, 2024, <https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,LB27826>.

⁹² Ann Mitchell, *The People of Calton Hill* (Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1993), 40-41.

based on the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens,⁹⁶ with its circular podium supporting an open Corinthian colonnade and topped with a shallow domed stone roof. It was built in honour of Dugald Stewart, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Edinburgh University from 1786-1828, who was considered one of the leading philosophers of his time.⁹⁷



Fig 29. Dugald Stewart Monument, 1985.

⁹⁶ Historic Environment Scotland, "Calton Hill, Off Regent Road, Dugald Stewart's Monument," accessed on November 8, 2024.

<https://portal.historicenvironment.scot/apex/f?p=1505:300:::::VIEWTYPE,VIEWREF:designation,LB27835>.

⁹⁷ *idem*.