

# Knowledge is power : policy analysis of the World Heritage property of Edinburgh

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# Knowledge is Power: policy analysis of the World Heritage property of Edinburgh

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## Abstract

Current theory defines conservation as 'managing thoughtful change' and recommends a landscape-based approach towards urban heritage management. The recent UNESCO (2011) recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) provides guidance on such a landscape-based approach at an international level. However, it is now up to national and local governments to implement the six steps (A-F) presented in the HUL. By means of a policy assessment, this paper aims to reveal the incorporation of the first step (A), 'mapping the city's natural, cultural and human resources', within the policy of the World Heritage City of Edinburgh.

For this purpose a recently (2013) developed assessment framework by Veldpaus and Pereira Roders was used. The framework is based on the HUL approach and the evolution of concepts in international standard setting documents (1963-2011) leading up to the HUL. Using the framework, Edinburgh's heritage policies were assessed, revealing the state of resource mapping in relation to the HUL recommendation. The results will add to the discussion whether the current policies in Edinburgh are accurate and detailed enough to manage their World Heritage property.

## Keywords:

Edinburgh, World Heritage City; Historic Urban Landscape approach; policy analysis; mapping of resources



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## Introduction

Current theories on cultural heritage management define heritage management as 'managing thoughtful change' and recommend a landscape-based approach towards heritage management (Fairclough et al., 2008; Bloemers et al., 2011; Bandarin and Van Oers, 2012). Over the past decades the definition of heritage management has been evolving from an object-based approach towards a more holistic approach that includes notions such as the intangible, setting and context, and urban- and sustainable development. These notions are accompanied by a greater consideration for the social and economic function of (historic) cities; this approach is known as a landscape-based approach. The recent UNESCO (2011) recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) provides guidance on such a landscape-based approach at an international level [Figure 1, right]. Yet, it is up to the national and local governments to adopt, disseminate, facilitate and monitor its implementation [Figure 1, left]. Implementing a landscape-based approach, such as the HUL, appears to be complicated (Getty, 2010, Veldpaus et al., 2013). The research presented, intends to assist in such an implementation, by taking the HUL approach as a starting point, to analyze in how far current policy already complies with it. This will be very informative to understand how to adapt the general guidelines of HUL for local use and vice versa. To do so, an assessment framework for current policy was developed (Veldpaus and Pereira Roders, 2013). The aim of this paper is to test part of this framework using Edinburgh as a case study.

The Old and New Towns of Edinburgh were inscribed onto the World Heritage (WH) List in 1995 under criteria two and four. The Historic Urban Landscape of Edinburgh is characterized by the juxtaposition of the medieval organic urban structure of the Old Town and the Georgian neo-classical New Town, both of 'exceptional historic and architectural interest' (ICOMOS, 1995).

A joint reactive monitoring mission by UNESCO and ICOMOS investigated the management of Edinburgh's

WH property in 2008. The main cause for the mission was the concern for the impact of urban development on the WH property, caused by the absence of a Buffer Zone as management tool (UNESCO, 2009). According to the management stakeholders in Edinburgh, the WH is adequately protected through layers of protection measures. These layers are presumed to be more suited to the management of the complex Historic Urban Landscape of Edinburgh (Edinburgh World Heritage Site Steering Group, 2011).

Edinburgh World Heritage Trust's urban analyst Chuchra states that Edinburgh has a well established and "efficient system of data exchange between key stakeholders". Furthermore, he underlined that on-going collection of data is required for effective monitoring. The system could be improved by further IT development and unification of existing monitoring indicators, in line with the UK/ICOMOS toolkit for WHS monitoring indicators (Chuchra, 2012; ICOMOS, 2007). However, previous research into the built heritage of Edinburgh's New Town also revealed that existing data is not precise enough to be able to determine changes to resources over time (Bennink et al, 2013 and 2013b).

The main heritage management tools of Edinburgh are the object based 'Listed Buildings', the area based 'Conservation Areas' and a policy developed for a specific cultural attribute 'the Skyline Study'. The Scottish Government is responsible for the national Planning Act, which sets the law for listed buildings and conservation areas (Government of Scotland, 1997). Historic Scotland is the executive agency of the Scottish government responsible for all the listed buildings in Scotland (Historic Scotland, 2011). Conservation areas are the responsibility of city councils (Government of Scotland; 1997, Historic Scotland, 2013; Edinburgh City Council, 2005; Colvin and Moggridge, 2010; Bennink et al, 2013).

The aim of this paper is bi-fold. First, it aims to test the functioning of the first part of the HUL Assessment Framework, called 'mapping resources'. Second, this research aims to assess the degree to which the World Heritage City of Edinburgh complies with the guidelines

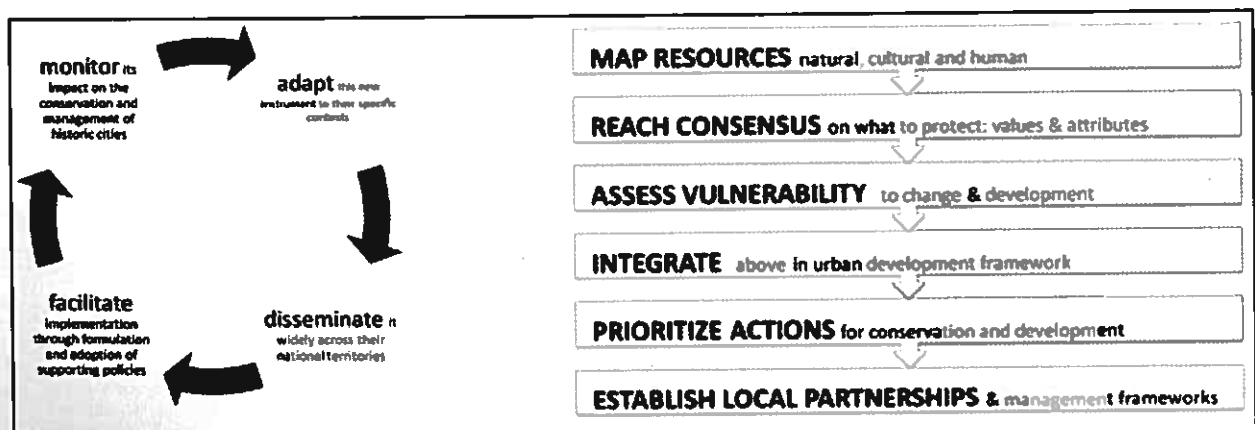


Fig. 1 : Implementation of HUL (left) and the critical steps of HUL (right) (adapted from UNESCO, 2011)

of the HUL, in terms of mapping resources.

**Researched documents**

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act is the main planning law of Scotland. It describes both the obligations of the authorities and the citizens. It consists of two parts: provisions regarding listed buildings and provisions regarding conservation areas. The Secretary of State is responsible for compiling or approving lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Experts are consulted before compiling or approving any list. The term 'listed building' reflects on buildings that are on this list. Anything fixed to the building or within the curtilage of the building is seen as part of the listed building. Buildings can be listed in three categories: A, B and C. The status reflects on their cultural

significance, not on the level of control put on them. Listed building consent is needed, besides planning permission, for certain alterations to listed buildings. Areas that are of architectural and/or historic interest of which the character or appearance is worth preserving can be designated as Conservation Areas by the planning authorities (Government of Scotland, 1997).

The listed buildings of Edinburgh can be found on the website of the city council via an interactive city map linking to descriptions of the listed building on the website of Historic Scotland. The online descriptions of listed buildings are solely textual. For the purpose of this research the descriptions of the listed buildings in the research area of previous research (Bennink et al, 2013) in the Stockbridge area of the New Town were reviewed.

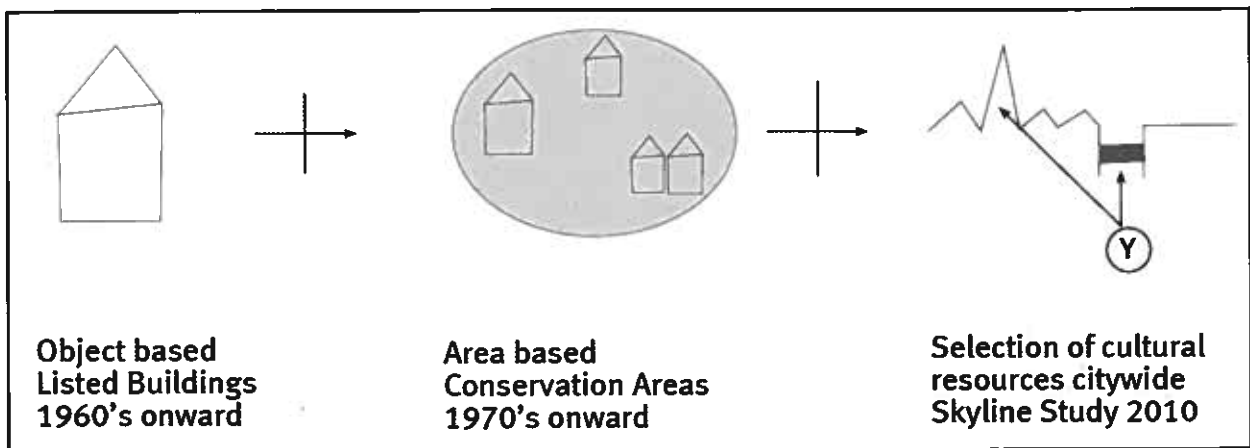


Fig. 3 : The main heritage management tools of Edinburgh

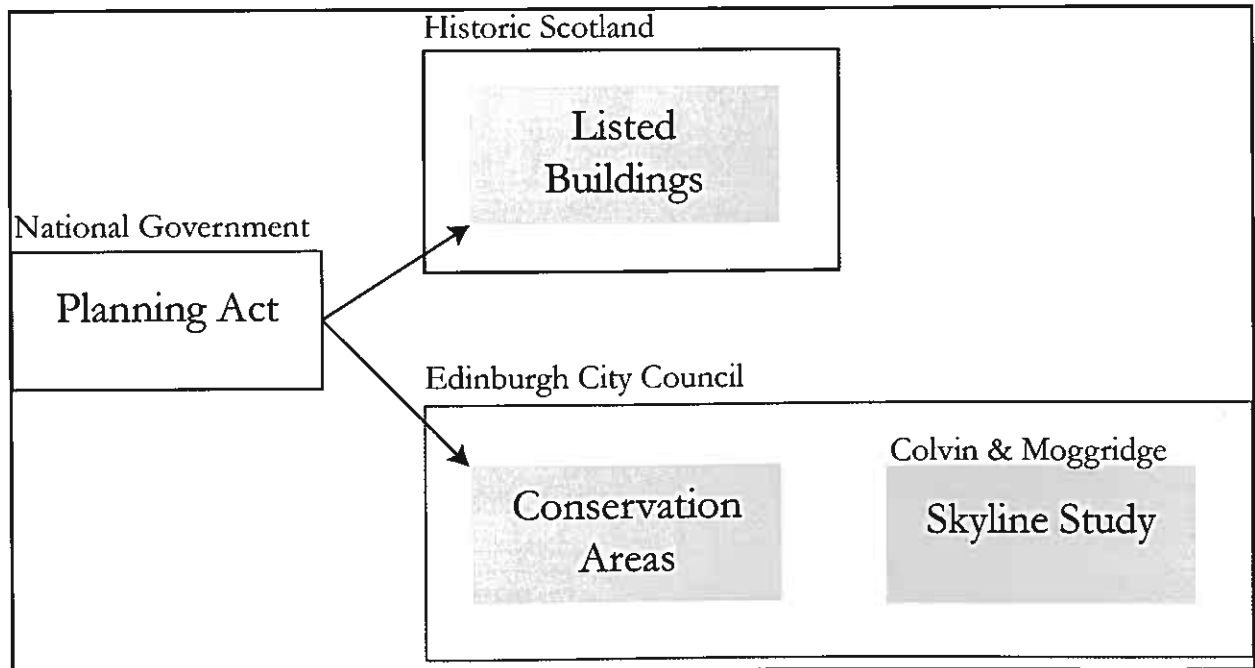


Fig. 4 : The researched documents, their relations and the responsible agents

The designation and management of Conservation Areas in Edinburgh are the responsibility of the Edinburgh City Council. Each Conservation Area has its own Character Appraisal (CACA), which describes the character of the area in detail. Article 4 directions, restricting change, apply to the area as a whole. Any applications for building permits will be reviewed with the character of the area, as described in the CACA, in mind. The CACA of the New Town is reviewed in this research, fitting with previous research into the New Town of Edinburgh (Bennink et al, 2013).

The Skyline Study identifies key-views and main characteristics of the Edinburgh skyline. The study has been under development since 2004 and was adopted as policy in 2010. The study was conducted in cooperation with the main stakeholders in the management of the WHS of Edinburgh (Colvin & Moggridge, 2010).

The relations of the researched documents is summarized in [figure 4].

**Methodology**

The focus of the research is the analysis of both heritage

policy and urban development policy. The heritage management structure of Edinburgh is used as a base for the selection of policy documents to be researched. The researched documents reflect on policy documents of a national and local level, and on their respective outputs.

The documents are being assessed using the HUL Assessment Framework, as developed by Veldpaus and Pereira Roders (2013). The framework is being developed to review urban and heritage management on a local level. The framework consists of five components: what, why, who, how and when. 'What' reflects on resources, 'why' on significance, 'who' on the stakeholders involved, 'how' on the used strategies and 'when' reveals the evolution in time and is applied to all other components. This paper will focus solely on the first component: 'what', the 'mapping of resources'.

The HUL Assessment Framework builds upon the Leopold-matrix method (Leopold et al., 1971), a proven method to relate (project) activities to (environmental) parameters (Thompson, 1990; Jiang et al, 2012). The activities are the six steps of the HUL approach, A through F (UNESCO, 2011). The parameters are defined by

Table 1 : Framework (WHAT component) evolution of intangible attributes (Veldpaus and Pereira Roders, 2013)

	asset			use			society		process	
	period/ style	character	built context	typology	use, functions	relation with society; man	people, community	human practices, traditions	development	evolution
A: mapping resources										
B: reach consensus on what to protect										
C: assess vulnerability										
D: integrate A, B, C in urban management										
E: prioritize actions										
F: define partnership										

Table 2 : Framework (WHAT component) evolution of tangible attributes (Veldpaus and Pereira Roders, 2013)

	object			ensemble/ complex		area demarcation		cultural landscape demarcation	urban settlement (no demarcation)		
	building elements	building	urban elements	groups of buildings	building(s) + context	district/ townscape	selection of cultural attributes	interchange of cultural and natural attributes	collection of cultural attributes	layers	everything (all levels of significance)
A: mapping resources											
B: reach consensus on what to protect											
C: assess vulnerability											
D: integrate A, B, C in urban management											
E: prioritize actions											
F: define partnership											

Table 3 : Range of HUL incorporation - assessment scale (Veldpaus and Pereira Roders, 2013)

X don't know
0 no never
1 yes once for one project
2 yes once for multiple projects
3 yes multiple times for one project
4 yes multiple times for multiple projects
5 yes always for everything

research on the evolution of the definition of heritage in international standard-setting documents.

For this research the policy documents were subjected to text analysis using the framework. Any reference to the mapping of resources was singled out and grouped according to the parameters of the (What-component of the) HUL Assessment Framework. The research assessed both the intangible [Table 1] and tangible [Table 2] components of step A: 'mapping resources', of the Framework. The term activity is used to refer to the action 'mapping of resources'.

Interviews with local management stakeholders were conducted in order to corroborate the results of the textual analysis and gain more insight in the workings of the urban and heritage management system of Edinburgh. In

these interviews first the context and terminology of the framework were explained. Then the framework was filled while the interviewees gave examples and argumentation supporting their assessment, making sure the framework and legend were used in a consistent manner. The Management Stakeholders selected for interviews represent three segments dealing with heritage management within the Edinburgh City Council : a World Heritage Site specialist; a planner for policy and a Built and Natural Heritage specialist.

A scale is used to evaluate each parameter of the HUL assessment framework, in terms of the occurrence and nature of the projects of 'mapping of resources' [Table 3]. The scale indicates the 'range of application' of the HUL, varying from the '0: no never' to '5: yes, always for everything'. The highest rating represents the most ideal situation, according to the HUL approach. The range is based on the number of times (once or multiple times) a certain project within a specific parameter is mapped, as well as the number of activities (one or multiple projects) that are mapped. As such the framework will reveal if a certain activity is done as a pilot (rating 1 or 2) or in a more structural manner (rating 3 or higher). The parameters receive a rating per assessed document as well as a cumulative rating, in which the activities of all documents are jointly assessed.

The mapping of resources consists of multiple stages (Pereira Roders and van Oers). A differentiation in stages of mapping is made in order to achieve a higher degree of preciseness in analyzing the activity 'mapping of resources'. The differentiation in stages of mapping is

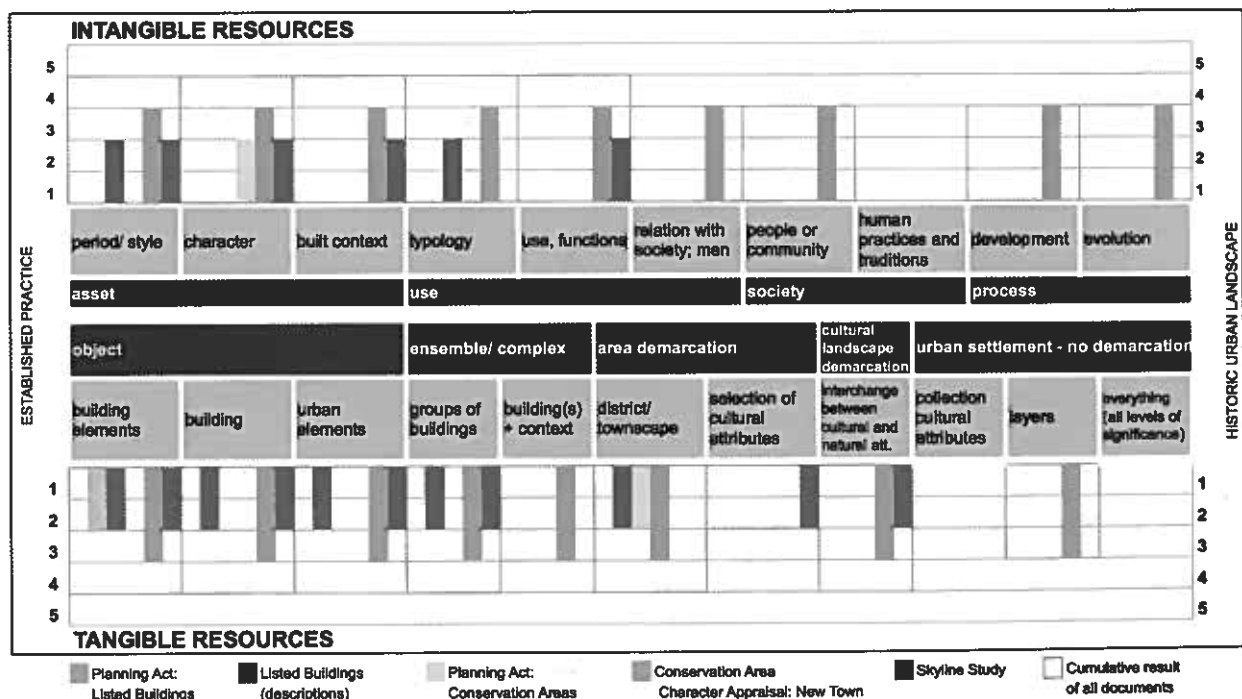


Figure 5 : HUL Assessment Framework showing level of HUL approach incorporation into local heritage policy on the y-axis (rating 0-5)

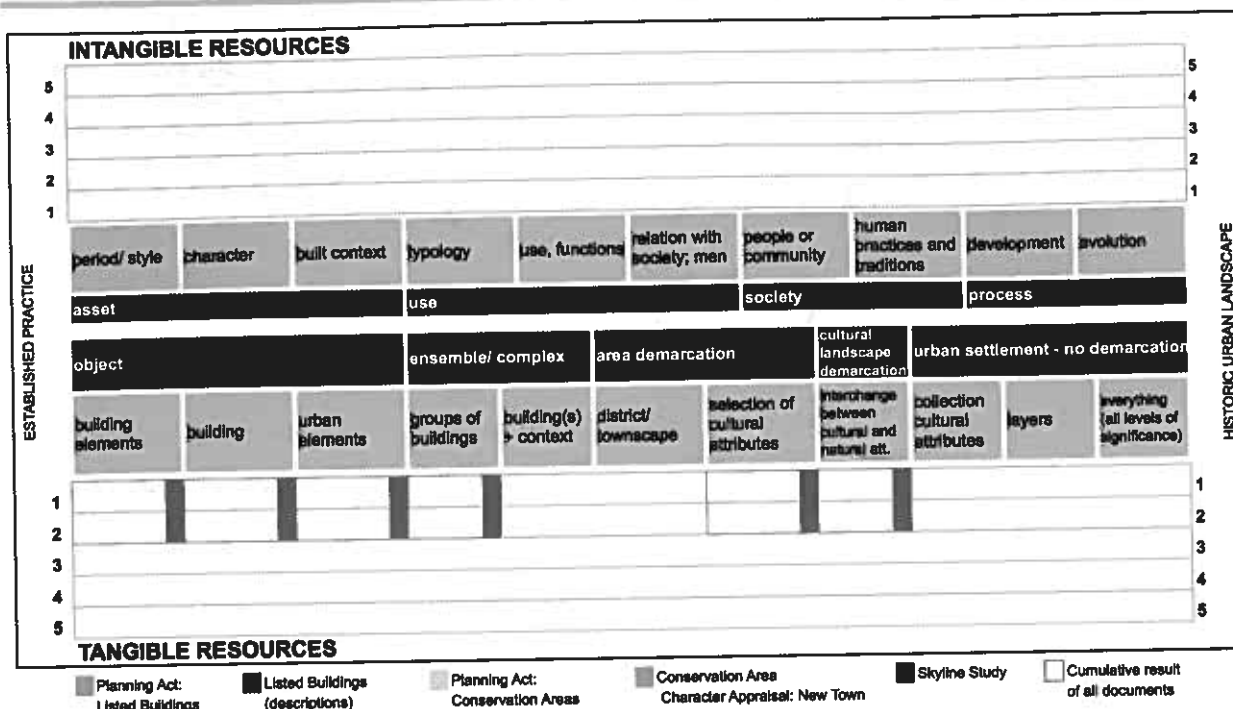


Fig. 6 : HUL Assessment Framework showing level of HUL approach incorporation into local heritage policy on the y-axis (rating 0-5)

incorporated in this research by making a distinction between the textual mentioning of resources and the precise documentation and locating of resources.

**Results**

**Results framework: textual references to resources**

Figure 5 shows the textual references to resources in the researched policy documents categorized per parameter.

Nine out of ten intangible parameters and nine out of eleven tangible parameter are mentioned in these documents. 'Human practices and traditions', 'collection of cultural attributes' and 'everything (all levels of significance)' are not mentioned. The mentioned resources categorized by parameters are found in more documents on the left hand side of the framework than on the right side, accumulating in higher joint results. An

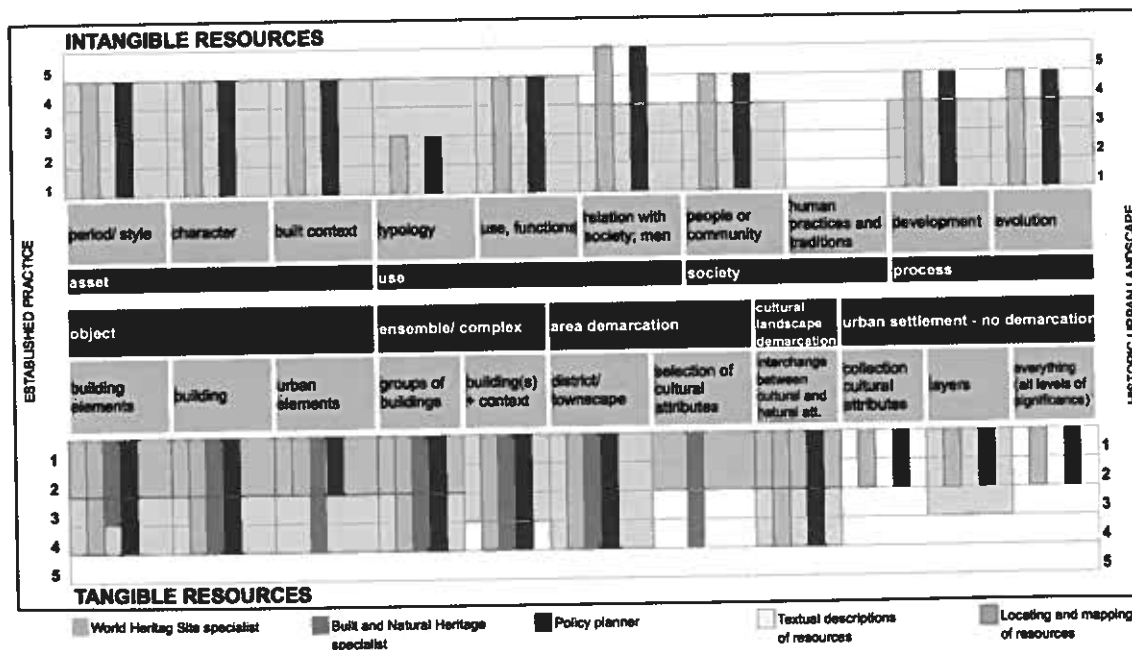


Fig. 7 : HUL Assessment Framework showing level of HUL approach incorporation into local heritage policy on the y-axis (rating 0-5)



example of the use of the rating: if a document mentions that two different resources within the same category of the framework were both mapped once, the category gets a '2' rating. If those two different resources were both mapped over a period of time (multiple times), the category would get a '4' rating.

Within the range of *intangible resources* the Conservation Character Appraisal of the New Town (CACA) mentions all resources more than once, except for 'human practices and traditions' which is not mentioned. The rating of these resources is 'three' since the researched CACA is in itself a single project. The section on Conservation Areas within the Planning Act only refers to 'character' as a resource that should be mapped. The parameter 'period/style' is often referred to in descriptions of Listed Buildings, as well as the 'typology' of the described listed buildings. Neither is mentioned in the section on Listed Buildings in the Planning Act. The Skyline Study mentions 'period/style', 'character', 'built context' and 'use/functions' as resources. Especially the use and/or function of buildings contributing to the skyline are quoted as an important parameter.

Within the range of *tangible resources* the CACA reflects on most, 8 out of 11, parameters of the researched documents. The Listed Buildings descriptions mention all object related parameters, such as 'building elements', 'building' and 'urban elements'. Groups of buildings can be jointly listed as an ensemble and the district in which the Listed Building is located is described. The Skyline Study reflects on all tangible resources that are part of the skyline of Edinburgh. The natural/geographical underlay and surroundings of the city play an important part in the formation of the skyline. The CACA of the New Town was last updated in 2005. Whether Listed Building descriptions are updated, and if so when, is not disclosed in their descriptions.

#### **Results framework: locating and precise documenting of resources**

Figure 6 shows the results of the analysis of policy documents on the activity of mapping that locates and precisely documents the resources. Only the recently developed and as policy adapted Skyline Study maps resources in a more precise manner.

Solely *tangible resources* are mapped in this precise manner. The Skyline Study documents resources contributing to the Skyline of Edinburgh through drawings representing sections of the built and natural resources, through a map showing the topography of the city and its surroundings and through photographs.

*Intangible resources* and their values are described textually [figure 5] without locating or documenting them in a precise manner [figure 6]. The Skyline Study has not been updated since its adaptation as a policy in 2010.

#### **Results framework: interviews**

Figure 7 shows the results of the interviews with

management stakeholders of Edinburgh. The interview with the World Heritage specialist is captured in light grey, the interview with the specialist of built and natural heritage is depicted in a darker shade grey and the results of the interview with the policy planner are shown in black. The results of the interviews with the World Heritage specialist and the policy planner are exactly the same. The results of the interview with the built and natural heritage specialist are solely concentrate within the left side of the tangible resources.

The results from the textual analysis of policy documents serve as a background to the results of the interviews. The cumulative results of the textual descriptions of the mapping of resources are marked in orange. The results of the precise locating and documenting of resources are marked in purple. The results of the interviews match by and large the results of the textual descriptions of resources. The outcomes of the interviews show higher ratings on the right hand side than were found in the textual analysis of documents, for both tangible and intangible resources. The parameters of 'collection of cultural attributes' and 'everything, all levels of significance', on the right hand side of the tangible resources, both received a rating of two by the WH specialist and the policy planner, indicating that the activity has taken place once for multiple projects. Whilst 'selection of cultural attributes' received a rating of four by the Built and Natural Heritage specialist and a rating of two from the textual analysis for both describing and more precise mapping of the attribute. The category of human practices and traditions is not represented in any of the results.

### **Conclusions and discussion**

The research is stooled on the notion that "Knowledge is Power". For this research this means that knowledge gives power to make thoughtful/meaningful/good management: you can only manage resources and the factors affecting them effectively if you know what they are. There are limits to the amount of knowledge that can be gathered for practical and financial reasons.

#### **Researched documents**

The choice of researched documents is based on the heritage management structure of Edinburgh and thus compliments previous research into Edinburgh's WH property. The outcomes of the assessment of the documents are complimentary to each other, as can be expected of complimenting policies. Since it would not have been feasible to research all (policy) documents of Edinburgh, some other documents that may be relevant were disregarded. Documents that may be relevant for future research are the Periodic Report and the Local Development Plan. The Periodic Report is sent every six years to UNESCO to give an update on the State of Conservation of the property. The management stakeholders of Edinburgh jointly compile the Periodic Report, under the direction of Historic Scotland. The

Local Development Plan is a document written by the development department of the Edinburgh City Council on future urban development of the city. A section on World Heritage is included in the most recent version. However, the choice of researched documents seems to be representative of Edinburgh's WH management, because the results of the textual analysis of the documents and the results of the interviews match to a large extent.

## Results Framework

Most parameters of the framework are covered in the researched policy documents, indicating a large degree of incorporation of the HUL approach into Edinburgh's policy, in terms of the first step recommended by HUL, mapping resources. However, the parameters on the left hand side, representing more established practice, are still dominant over the parameters on the right-hand side. The sections in the national Planning Act on Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings give little guidance on the mapping of resources. The management of Conservation Areas is the responsibility of the Edinburgh City Council and the management of Listed Buildings is the responsibility of Historic Scotland. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) of the New Town maps most resources as identified by the parameters of the HUL assessment framework, much more than any other researched document. The CACA Town and the researched listed building descriptions describe resources and their values in a textual manner. As such, the resources are mapped in a manner that does not precisely locate or document them on a map. The Skyline Study, newly adopted as a policy, does locate and document a number of resources in a more precise manner, using a combination of text, maps, sections and photographs. However, this is only true for tangible resources, intangible resources are solely textually mentioned in the Skyline Study. For obtaining listed buildings consent, applicants need to comply with a range of demands including site plans, drawings and photographs. This indicates that more information is present. Nevertheless, it seems that this information is primarily reviewed on a project-need basis and not in a structural manner. This is confirmed by interviews with management stakeholders.

## HUL Assessment Framework

The HUL Assessment Framework is a recently developed tool for the analysis of policy on the incorporation of the landscape-based approach (Veldpaus and Pereira Roders, 2013). The tool is used, not only to analyse local policy, but also to test the tool itself. It can be concluded from this case that all parameters of the framework are shown to be relevant in comparing it with previous research on the attributes conveying cultural significance in Edinburgh and with the interviews conducted. Recommendations for future use of the framework relate to the clarification of the position of step A 'mapping resources' of the 'What' part of the framework within the framework as a whole.

Recent research (Bennink et al, 2013) identifying

Edinburgh's attributes of cultural significance, has shown that these attributes populate all parameters of the HUL Assessment Framework [Table 1 and 2] thus corroborating the relevance of these parameters and strengthening the hypothesis that in order to protect Edinburgh's cultural significance, all parameters should be represented in the local policy documents.

The framework consists of six steps or activities. In this research the first step (A) 'mapping resources' was investigated for the case study of Edinburgh. It proved difficult at times to disentangle the first step from the other five steps. Also, the six steps are portrayed as a consecutive process [figure 1], which is not always the case. For example, step B, 'reach consensus on what to protect' is often interwoven with step A, when decisions to map certain resources are based on the outcomes of step B.

This research focused primarily on the question 'What' resources are mapped. Other parts of the HUL assessment framework are 'Why' 'Who', 'How' and 'When'. 'When' is expressed in the assessment scale, used in the analysis of all components. Within the research it proved necessary to make a distinction between two stages of 'mapping of resources', thereby also incorporating the 'How' component into the analysis of the 'What'.

The used assessment scale aims to reveal whether activities take place continuously, on a structural basis, incidental, on a pilot base or never. Monitoring of built heritage is in practice almost impossible to reach, as there is in practice always more that can be mapped more often

The HUL Assessment Framework is used in this research both for the textual analysis of (policy) documents and as a tool for interviewing management stakeholders. It provided structure to the interviews and thereby revealed more detailed information on possible gaps in policy, than was revealed with just the textual analysis. A prior understanding of the management structure of Edinburgh and its policies proved useful in the interviews. This supports the use of the framework for textual analysis in conjunction with interviewing management stakeholders.

## Final Remarks

'Mapping of resources' occurs in Edinburgh in a structural manner that covers most aspects of the HUL, when it comes to textual description of resources. More precise mapping of resources, that locates and documents the state of conservation of resources, occurs on an incidental need-base. The term 'mapping of resources' seems to be predominantly understood by the management stakeholders as the textual description of resources. The consequence of this particular way of mapping is the absence of an overview of where resources are located, their state of conservation and their evolution over time. Previous research shows that with the currently available data it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine changes

that have occurred over time to resources in Edinburgh (Bennink et al 2013).

This difference in understanding what 'mapping of resources' is can impede its analysis. Therefore it seems important to integrate not just 'When' but also 'How' in the analysis of 'What'. On the other hand, by disentangling the complex process of heritage management using the HUL Assessment Framework, possible shortcomings in specific activities or parameters may be more easily revealed. The challenge for the future use and development of the framework is to further balance usability and accuracy of results.

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