

# New allotments planned in the city centre

✘ Planning approval was granted today for an overgrown corner of the New Town which is now set to be transformed into community allotments and gardens. You can read the planning permission and see all related documents and drawings [here](#).

A row of Georgian tenements on MacKenzie Place was demolished in 1967 – only leaving behind a line of bricked-up cellars. The site had sadly deteriorated due to fallen trees and crumbling walls.

Now, The City of Edinburgh Council in partnership with Edinburgh World Heritage will turn the waste land into community allotments and gardens. The Council recently announced a special strategy as the waiting list for the allotments has grown significantly over the last decade.

In 1998, around 400 people were on the waiting list for an allotment but this number has increased spectacularly to over 2000 in 2010.

With 21 new allotments to be built on-site at MacKenzie Place, half will be offered to local people while the others will be given to people on the Council's waiting list.

Working in partnership with local residents, the Council now plans to use the £40,000 grant from Edinburgh World Heritage to turn the cellars into storage space for tools. The Council has also contributed £50,000 to the project which is expected to be finished later on this year.

[The Guardian Edinburgh](#) carried the story of the allotment hut which was originally planned for the site, and which raised many objections. But the new plan which has been approved appears to only carry a note of a proposed site for a future

development of an allotment hut. Before any work commences however there is a requirement to carry out some archaeological research.

Councillor Robert Aldridge, Environmental Leader, said: "This is great news that a disused plot of waste ground is being turned into something useful. The project will not only benefit the local community but other Edinburgh residents on the allotment waiting list. We recently launched a new allotment strategy for the city which recognises our support to the increased number of people on the allotment plot waiting list. Allotments are excellent for contributing to a year-round healthy lifestyle and help to promote sustainability and well-being. People enjoy growing their own vegetables and flowers and these new allotments will benefit the community and be a permanent feature for years to come."

Adam Wilkinson, Director of Edinburgh World Heritage said: "A touch of lateral thinking means that rather than building a mass of allotment sheds, we're able to use a relatively small grant to bring these redundant cellars back into use after 40 years as an altogether more elegant form of storage. We're delighted to be able to support the community of the World Heritage Site in this way, and reduce the distance people have to travel to allotments, while tidying up a previously unloved space."

Work has already started on clearing the site of undergrowth and investigating the soil conditions. Sections of a retaining wall will also be restored, and the cellars opened up and repaired with new doors fitted.

Local resident Kate Kelly, who lives on Saunders Street, said: "I am delighted to see that after so many years this unsightly and neglected patch of land is to be returned to practical use. I am most impressed with the way the Council has got the project underway so quickly and efficiently and has kept Saunders Street residents up to date with developments.

Allotments would seem to be the best possible use of the space and it is gratifying to know that Edinburgh World Heritage is giving their support. I hope it will encourage local residents to become more involved with the care and maintenance of their surroundings."

Here are our photos of the site which lies on the south side of the Water of Leith and Upper Dean Terrace.

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Edinburgh[/googleMap]
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