

Edinburgh World Heritage announce new project in Canongate

A B-listed development in the Canongate designed by architect Sir Basil Spence is to be the subject of a new energy efficiency project by Edinburgh World Heritage (EWH)

Funded through a government programme SEEP – Scotland's Energy Efficiency Programme which wants to encourage local authorities to find ways of reducing emissions and tackling fuel poverty. The City of Edinburgh Council is also a partner.

This will be the first time that EWH has worked on a post-war building.



The three blocks of flats were completed in 1969 and occupy a historic location in the Old Town. But despite the architecture the houses now need upgraded to meet modern

standards. The cost of heating will be reduced and the building will be made wind and watertight in a project which might allow EWH to demonstrate conservation along with sustainability. The heating bills in the development are around 15% higher than they could be so increasing its carbon footprint.

“We believe that sustainability and conservation work hand-in-hand, and so the opportunity to combine these fields and make improvements both to the building and to the quality of life for its residents is one we’re excited to explore,” said Adam Wilkinson, Director of Edinburgh World Heritage. “There is the potential for this project to serve as an exemplar to similar post-war buildings elsewhere.”

“The opportunity to conserve a modern building from the 1960s rather than the older 18th and 19th century buildings that dominate the World Heritage Site represents a moment for us to apply our conservation expertise in a different context.”

Lauren Mairs, who has lived in the Canongate Housing complex for two and a half years, welcomed the new initiative. “We have loved living here, however due its age and building materials, the mould is becoming hard to manage and the flat is becoming increasingly expensive to heat. We were delighted when Edinburgh World Heritage approached us and our neighbours with this project, and explained their vision for conservation and energy efficiency works in a way that made sense. We are very excited to be part of this initiative and watch it progress over the coming months.”

Maggie Dowdell, the owner of Clarinda’s Tea Room, a commercial unit in the building, said: “It’s especially exciting for us at Clarinda’s to be part of the work as we have been making scones and serving tea from this spot for over 40 years. Visitors come in their thousands to the Canongate, so being able to showcase our building with the much needed conservation and rejuvenation work will really highlight what

a splendid structure it is.”

Transport & Environment Convener Lesley Macinnes, said: “Energy efficiency in buildings and the development of heat strategies are important priorities for us to help alleviate fuel poverty, develop wider job opportunities as well as reducing carbon emissions. We’re delighted to be in partnership with Edinburgh World Heritage on the second phase of the Scottish Energy Efficiency Programme which aims to deliver more energy efficient homes and buildings.

“As well as meeting key Council objectives and targets, conserving these post war buildings in this historic part of the city will bring great benefits to residents and businesses as their fuel costs are reduced and their homes are significantly improved. As well as helping to alleviate fuel poverty, projects like this also help to create local jobs and more sustainable communities.”