

Caledonian Brewery now on the open market

After a long period operating under capacity, Heineken UK announced its proposal to close Caledonian Brewery in Edinburgh in May.

At the time it had entered into an agreement in principle with Greene King to continue brewing Caledonian's brands, including Deuchars and Maltsmiths, at its Belhaven brewery in Dunbar.

The company said it would consult on the proposals with the 30 employees who worked at the brewery and their trade union/colleague representatives.

Matt Callan, Supply Chain Director for HEINEKEN UK said in May: "We've not taken this decision lightly. We're acutely aware of what the brewery represents in Edinburgh, and its role in the history and heritage of brewing in Scotland – this is something we're incredibly proud of. Our primary focus is the 30 colleagues based there and we'll now enter into a period of consultation."

"The sad fact is, its Victorian infrastructure means significant inefficiencies and costs, particularly as it is operating below capacity. To modernise the brewery, and to meet our own sustainability commitments, would require considerable ongoing investment, which would make operating the brewery economically unviable."

The hope was that the brewery had been saved but Heineken sent a letter to Lothian MSP, Miles Briggs earlier last week saying that their search to find a buyer who would take on the

brewery as a going concern was at an end.



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caledonian_Brewery_\(geograph_2625438\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caledonian_Brewery_(geograph_2625438).jpg)

The 1.91 acre site is now on the open market. It sits within the Local Development Plan urban area and could be used for residential, employment, student accommodation, hotel and mixed use development all subject to planning permission.

Of the 30 employees only seven are left looking for new jobs. While the brewery will not be sold to Greene King the main Caledonian brands will be transferred to the brewer and so kept in Scotland.

Lothian MSP Miles Briggs said: "It is disappointing that Heineken were unable to secure a buyer to keep the Caledonian Brewery in operation." "Heineken have done a good job in transitioning employees of the brewery into new roles, but they must continue to support the people who are still looking for alternative roles." "It is important that we get input from the local community on the best use of this land and that the historic listed parts of the brewery are maintained."

Following Heineken's announcement, Sarah Boyack MSP commented: "I'm deeply disappointed at the loss of this important local employer and the skills and jobs that will be lost to our economy."

"I welcome that Heineken have already supported a number of employees to find alternative work, however, there is still a number of employees looking for new employment so I encourage Heineken to continue to engage with those employees and their union until all employees have alternative employment."

"Caledonian Brewery is an historic, iconic building so I will be taking an active interest in proposals to keep the building in use going forward."

"If the building gets repurposed, we must keep the interests of local residents and small, local businesses at the heart of our decisions, now and in the future."

Joanna Cherry, KC MP, for Edinburgh South West said: "I am shocked to hear of these proposals by Heineken and the loss of skilled brewing jobs for the city is greatly concerning. Retaining brands by outsourcing production under licence to Deuchars/Greene King in East Lothian is no substitute for the loss of jobs and the heritage of brewing in Edinburgh."

"I am calling on the company to think again. Edinburgh has a proud history of brewing and a fantastic stream of highly qualified graduates from Heriot-Watt's international centre for Brewing and Distilling."