

Melville Monument plaque has been replaced

The plaque on the monument to Henry Dundas, The Viscount Melville which towers above St Andrew Square has been replaced with a new one which has the same wording.

The previous one was stolen last autumn, admittedly by The Melville Monument Committee who said that the plaque “represented a grotesquely inaccurate version of history that had no place on the monument or in a public square”. The current Viscount Melville said the City of Edinburgh Council was wrong to object to the removal of the plaque saying it had “no authority to install the plaque without consent of the owners in the first place”. The committee point out that the true owners of the garden area in the square are the owners of the buildings around it.

But the council is adamant that the plaque is important.

Council Leader Cammy Day said: “I’m glad that a replacement plaque has been installed this morning. Since the original plaque was stolen last September, I’ve been clear that we will not allow the actions of a minority to derail the important ongoing work to address the legacies of slavery and colonialism in our city. Following the refusal of the Melville Monument Committee to return the original plaque, we filed an official report with Police Scotland in October. This investigation is ongoing, and our legal team will continue to monitor the situation closely.

“We’ll also be seeking to recover the costs of this replacement plaque from the Melville Monument Committee.

“We’re rightly proud of the steps we’ve taken to properly address the legacies of slavery and colonialism here in Edinburgh. From [conducting an independent review chaired by Sir Geoff Palmer](#), to [carrying out the recommendations through the Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Implementation Group \(ESCLRIG\)](#) under the leadership of Irene Mosota, we’re committed to being a modern, inclusive and welcoming capital city.”



Irene Mosota, Chair of Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy Review Implementation Group attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the statue of Abraham Lincoln in Old Calton

Cemetery on US Presidents Day PHOTO ©2024 The Edinburgh Reporter

Chair of ESCLRIG, Irene Mosota said: "Today is a really significant milestone for our city, with the return of the plaque to the base of the Melville Monument. It's only through properly acknowledging and exploring our collective past that we can address the challenges of the present and putting ourselves in a strong position to shape a positive future.

"This is a very exciting time for ESCLRIG as we now look towards implementing the recommendations of the independent review. Together, I'm confident that we can forge the foundations for a more tolerant, just, and equal Edinburgh that we can all be proud of."

