

Integrating a new paradigm for urban heritage conservation, management and development in the World Heritage cities of Florence (Italy) and Edinburgh (UK)

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The beginning of the 21st century has seen a significant increase in pressures and factors affecting the urban heritage of World Heritage cities. For this reason, the need to balance urban heritage conservation and development has been a central argument in the 21st century international debate. Aware that current urban heritage conservation tools were no longer sufficient to deal with contemporary challenges, the main international organisations in this field (UNESCO, United Nations and the Council of Europe) tried to provide a way to overcome the persisting dichotomy between heritage conservation and development. Through the adoption of relevant international charters, conventions and recommendations, an integrated view of urban management, able to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development (environmental, economic and social), started to be considered as a possible way for reconciling urban heritage conservation with development. In this context, some authors affirmed that a new paradigm for urban heritage conservation and management has gradually taken shape. Focusing on the two World Heritage cities of Florence (Italy) and Edinburgh (UK), this paper aims to demonstrate how some of the key principles of the new paradigm are already integrated into local urban management policies of these case studies. Moreover, the paper discusses existing similarities and discrepancies between different approaches and highlights good practices and critical aspects, useful for other historic urban environments. The research findings that will be presented constitute a step towards understanding whether a revision of existing policies and tools is necessary and how this could be done.