



Elgin High Street Conservation Area

Part 4: Heritage Trail Interpretive Plan

Andrew PK Wright
The Scottish Civic Trust
Jill Harden
McLeod & Aitken
Duncan Bryden Associates

February 2012

Elgin High Street
Conservation Area

Part 4 – Heritage Trail Interpretive Plan

Andrew PK Wright

Chartered Architect & Heritage Consultant
16 Moy House Court
Forres
Moray
IV36 2NZ

The Scottish Civic Trust

The Tobacco Merchant's House
42 Miller Street
Glasgow
G1 1DT

Jill Harden

Archaeologist and Historic Environment Specialist
Glaichoile Cottage
Buntait
Glen Urquhart
Inverness-shire
IV63 6TN

McLeod & Aitken

Chartered Quantity Surveyors
Culbard House
22 Culbard Street
Elgin
IV30 1JT

Duncan Bryden Associates

Sheneval
Tomatin
Inverness
IV13 7XY

February 2012

ELGIN HERITAGE TRAIL INTERPRETATION PLAN

CONTENTS

- 0 Executive Summary**
- 1.0 Introduction**
 - 1.1 Purpose of the document
 - 1.2 Project team
 - 1.3 “An ancient citie” and “We can offer the real thing here.”
 - 1.4 Elgin A coherent vision and rationale
 - 1.5 Interpretation is...
 - 1.5 Strategic linkages - The Bronze, Silver and Gold Interpretive Attainment Scenarios
 - Figure 1 - The context of Interpretation and the Heritage Trail in terms of the City for the Future, the BID and Moray Tourism Development visions
- 2.0 The making of Elgin - Significance of the resource**
 - 2.1 Introduction
 - 2.2 “To stand there is to feel the past” – historic environment significance
 - 2.3 In summary
 - 2.4 “People in Elgin’s story” - human heritage significance
 - 2.5 Capturing character
 - Table 1 – Capturing Character
 - 2.6 What have others had to say about Elgin?
- 3.0 Interpretive Objectives**
 - 3.1 Interpretive potential
 - 3.2 Interpretive principles
 - 3.3 Three questions
 - 3.4 Interpretive outcomes
- 4.0 Target markets and audiences**
 - 4.1 Local audiences
 - 4.2 Tourist audiences
 - 4.3 Audience analysis
 - Table 2 - Heritage Attractions in or close to Elgin
 - Table 3 - Visitor numbers to whisky related attractions in Moray
 - 4.4 Future target markets
 - 4.5 Audience motivations
 - 4.6 Young people as a target market for Elgin’s heritage
 - 4.7 Beyond demographics
 - 4.8 Renewal
- 5.0 Review of existing interpretive provision**
 - 5.1 Visitor journey
 - 5.2 Orientation on arrival – a missed opportunity
 - 5.3 Public realm interpretation
 - 5.4 Site based interpretation
 - 5.5 Text based interpretation
 - 5.6 Event interpretation
 - 5.7 Business staff as interpreters
 - 5.8 Barrier free interpretation
 - 5.9 Benchmarking

- 6.0 Relevant sources and available research**
 - Table 4 – Sources
- 7.0 Interpretive themes**
 - 7.1 Central theme statement
 - Figure 2 – Central Themes
 - Table 5 – Theme statements
 - Figure 3 –6 Central Themes, sub themes and message lines
- 8.0 Delivering interpretive content**
 - 8.1 Visitor needs and learning styles
 - Figure 7 – Learning pyramid
- 9.0 Elgin Heritage Trail Interpretive proposals**
 - 9.1 Interpretive context
 - Table 6 - Preparations and making the best use of existing provision
 - Table 7- Implementation of new interpretive features
 - Table 8 – In the longer term
- 10.0 Preparations and making the best use of existing provision**
 - Step 1 - Consultation with target groups
 - Step 2 - Identifying the look and feel of interpretation using an Elgin brand
 - Step 3 - Implementation and management of interpretation
 - Step 4 - Business investment
 - Step 5 - Remove, relocate, reuse and restore existing provision
- 11.0 Implementation of new interpretive features**
 - Step 6 - Clicks and mortar
 - Step 7 - Investment in print
 - Step 8 - Public realm
 - Step 9 - New interpretive infrastructure
 - Step 10 - Event interpretation
- 12.0 In the longer term**
 - 12.1 Ladyhill and the Castle
 - 12.2 City centre
 - 12.3 Cathedral and Cashmere
- 13.0 Interpretive evaluation**
 - 13.1 Evaluation
- 14.0 Management, maintenance and renewal**
 - 14.1 All ability
 - 14.2 Care and maintenance
 - 14.3 Costs
- 15.0 Linking Elgin to local sites, Moray and beyond**
 - 15.1 Local links
 - 15.2 Wider links
- 16.0 Conclusions**
 - 16.1 Fit with objectives
 - 16.2 Moving forward

Epilogue

0 Executive summary

The Elgin Heritage Trail – Castle, Cathedral to Cashmere Interpretive Plan is the fourth of a suite of four related documents which are linked to a number of strategic economic initiatives which are being developed for Elgin. The documents mesh with three of the platforms set out in the June 2011 'Elgin City for the Future' report, specifically 'High Street First', 'The Visitor Economy' and 'Arts, Culture and Heritage'. The preparation of an Interpretive Plan is timely having regard to the measures already underway through the Elgin BID initiative.

The first of the documents, the Conservation Area Appraisal, sets out what was considered to be significant about the outstanding townscape qualities of the city centre of Elgin, while at the same time identifying problems and risks from which it is presently suffering. The second, the Conservation Area Management Plan, identifies the need to preserve the best features of what has survived and sets down conservation standards, measures encouraging sensitive development and suggestions for enhancement of the public realm.

As the Conservation Area Appraisal identifies the centre of Elgin has a wealth of heritage assets and resources with some real gems like the Cathedral. Four interpretive themes – **protection, power, philanthropy and prosperity** - have been identified as representative of Elgin's development over the last 900 years

It is intended that this Interpretive Plan should be of value in showing how interpretive themes and media can be used to tell, for the city's benefit and people's enjoyment, the story of Elgin's historic environment, the events, the people and the characters. It is clearly noted, however, that the potential of the Trail will not be fully realised until wider branding, marketing and visitor experience issues are tackled. Currently, relative to neighbouring areas, visitor numbers to Moray and Elgin are low.

Suggestions are made for developing the process to bring some elements of the Trail forward quickly. These include better utilisation of existing interpretive provision and encouraging businesses and schools to increase staff and pupil understanding of Elgin's historic environment. For these partners the process of development may be as important as the actual Trail.

Improved digital connectivity is seen as essential. A single web portal for Elgin with interpretive material accessible via a click or two will bring the Heritage Trail to far a wider audience than is currently the case. The huge and growing popularity of smartphones means web based materials and dedicated apps are available to many people on the move, increasing opportunities for cost effective interpretation.

Central to the plan is a High Street interpretive facility in line with the City for the Future platform based strategy. Grant Lodge, Ladyhill and the castle are a more challenging prospect but the plan proposes some outline solutions. Welcome developments will strengthen the Cathedral site but closer integration with the Trail is required.

The Plan concludes Elgin has an extensive 'supply' side when considering heritage resources but the 'demand' side is much less developed and the Heritage Trail will have to employ wide reaching and innovative methods to help boost interest.

PART 4 ELGIN HERITAGE TRAIL INTERPRETATION PLAN – 2011

'sic itur ad astra' - "This is the way to the stars" - Elgin motto

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the document

- 1.1.1 This document is the fourth of a suite of four documents focused on the Elgin High Street Outstanding Conservation Area. The documents have been commissioned by a consortium of bodies, which include the City of Elgin BID Company, the Elgin Fund and Historic Scotland, led by the Moray Council. The four documents are listed as follows:

Part 1 Conservation Area Appraisal;
Part 2 Conservation Area Management Plan;
Part 3 Action Plan;
Part 4 Heritage Trail Interpretation Plan.

- 1.1.2 The commission specification has five overall objectives.

1. Improve and enhance the visitor experience of Elgin City Centre;
2. Provide greater access to the local heritage;
3. Create a sense of ownership of and pride in the historical and environmental legacy within Elgin particularly by the younger generation;
4. Improve the economic opportunities within Elgin City Centre;
5. Create the opportunity to conserve & improve the built, historical and social environment.

- 1.1.3 The Heritage Trail and its interpretation should demonstrate their contribution to these objectives. However, it should be noted at the outset that interpretation is an enhancement tool and its effect will be subdued unless the entire visitor and city centre user experience is addressed. Pieces of further work, proposed by the City for the Future strategy, are intended to address destination and visitor management needs in association with the Heritage Trail.

- 1.1.4 This interpretation plan sets out a considered strategy for revealing Elgin's story and meeting the specification with the working title "*Elgin Heritage Trail Castle, Cathedral to Cashmere*," set out in the brief as follows:

- a) The interpretive objectives of the Trail including identifying the relevant target markets. This is likely to include younger generations for whom the mode of delivery will require careful consideration;
- b) A review of existing interpretation in Elgin and integration with that existing offer where appropriate;
- c) A review of relevant sources and available research and, from this, identify both the overarching themes for the Trail and location-specific story-lines;
- d) Consideration of the entire Trail from Castle, Cathedral to Cashmere (Johnstons of Elgin) with a layered solution – for those who just would like a snapshot to the ones with a profound interest in heritage and suggested

- approaches to how the interpretive content of the Trail can be delivered and make an assessment of the cost and maintenance of the delivery mechanisms proposed;
- e) An assessment of programme length to deliver the proposals.

1.2 The project team.

1.2.1 In the preparation of the Interpretive Plan the lead consultant has been Duncan Bryden supported by:

Andrew Wright – Conservation architect and project team leader
Jill Harden - Implications of development on the archaeology of the burgh
Gemma Wild - Public realm improvements

1.3 “An ancient citie” and “We can offer the real thing here.”

*“From thence I went to Elgen in Murray, **an ancient citie**, where there stood a faire and beautiful church with three steeples, the walls of it and the steeples all yet standing; but the roofes, windowes and many marble monuments and tombes of honourable and worthie personages all broken and defaced”. John Taylor, the “Water Poet” and early tourist 1615.*

*“The Johnstons name is very important for the survival of the company. After more than 200 years in operation, it is still the premier mill in Scotland. We bring in the raw fibre, spin it and dye it before sending out the finished product so we have 100% control over what we make. That gives Johnstons a real sense of authenticity. In such a competitive market, people are looking for something extra special and **we can offer the real thing here**.” Susan Priestly-Cooper Design Director Johnstons of Elgin – Heritage Centre Display 2011.*

These two quotes capture the authenticity and the contemporary nature and value of Elgin’s historic environment.

1.3.1 A city’s place in the landscape explains why people settled there and, to a large extent, guides their destiny. Glancing at a map of Scotland will show Elgin as a ‘frontier’ city near to the Moray harbours and their sea roads to Baltic and Low Countries ports, in between the Cairngorm Mountains to the south and the rich, productive Laigh of Moray. A crossroads where Celtic west meets Norman east and, before they were bridged, hemmed in by the Rivers Findhorn and Spey.

“Speak weel o’ the Hielands, but live in the Laigh” Professor Cosmo Innes 1860.

1.3.2 Elgin is arranged on an east/west alignment. Ladyhill, with Elgin Castle and the Gordon monument, dominates the western city approaches and overlooks the old ford of the River Lossie; the mills, powered by the Lossie, adding value to Moray’s raw resources and giving wealth to those that controlled them. The lavish 13th century Cathedral ruins mark the eastern city entrance. Little changed from the market square that formed the heart of medieval Elgin, the Plainstones, overlooked by the church of Elgin’s patron St Giles, in the city centre is still a meeting place for people and gathering space for important events.

1.3.3 Historic tales of triumph and catastrophe tell of Elgin as a changing place of power, protection, philanthropy and prosperity. New shopping and trading habits show Elgin remains on the front line of change and its historic environment must adapt. The world does not stand still and, if Elgin does not seize the moment,

change will happen and opportunities may be lost. As Charles Darwin, the father of evolution, noted:

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change.”

1.4 Elgin – A coherent vision and rationale

1.4.1 Elgin could react passively to the social and economic turmoil currently sweeping Europe. Instead, the Moray Community Planning Partnership in its Moray Economic Strategy has chosen to come out fighting with ambitious economic regeneration plans including - The Elgin City for the Future project – which identifies a performing core city as a main driver for the wider economic well-being of Moray. See Figure 1 below.

1.4.2 This plan sets out a rationale that three of the five strategic platforms for change identified in the City for the Future strategy can be directly influenced through the Heritage Trail project and associated interpretation. The three platforms are:

High Street First
The Visitor Economy
Arts, Culture and Heritage

1.4.3 Central to these three platforms are actions to utilise the 21st-century heritage industry to use Elgin’s unique and authentic historic environment and culture as economic drivers that provides an important reason for their conservation and enhancement.

“Heritage is understood as the act of ascribing present and future values to our inheritance from the past.” (Ben Cowell Assistant Director External Affairs, of the National Trust)

1.4.4 It must be said that the City for the Future Report also gives several reality checks:

“Elgin’s underperformance as the region’s leading urban centre affects the whole Moray economy. Elgin’s underwhelming offer as the regional primary service and retail centre is of considerable concern as is its role in terms of a regional capital, tourist hub and centre for arts and cultural industries.”

“A further challenge relates to the profile of Elgin as a destination regionally, nationally and internationally. There is a general sense that there is a need to develop Elgin’s identity and brand so as to convey the particular assets and attributes of the area.”

At the outset of this plan it is important to understand that if any Heritage Trail is to make a real contribution it needs to be developed in association with significant branding and marketing effort.

1.4.5 To people who have been, Elgin’s heritage assets that catch the eye today are the street pattern, the key buildings and a host of locally distinctive architectural and archaeological features that add character and authenticity to the city. The magnificent Cathedral ruins never fail to impress. Less obvious, but perhaps even more emotionally relevant, are the rich stories embedded in Elgin’s past of

human endeavour, triumph, tragedy and intrigue. They define why Elgin exists and are real sources of pride and passion for the city.

- 1.4.6 Elgin's heritage and its stories are shared by many different people – the community, Moray Council, businesses, agencies and individuals. A plan of the city would show a complex web of responsibility and ownership but stories cut across these boundaries and are relevant to people in search of meaningful experiences and hoping to celebrate and share in what makes Elgin special.
- 1.4.7 This plan has, through a process of literature reviews, interviews and site visits, picked out a small number of strong, vivid and lasting themes that capture and could convey to the world what is unique and special and contributes to making Elgin in the words of the City for the Future vision – **“a compelling destination”**.

1.5 Interpretation is...?

- 1.5.1 Interpretation is everyone's business. It is a process that helps audiences explore, understand and appreciate Elgin's heritage in ways that are broader and more fulfilling than just simple recreational experiences. Heritage interpretation gives people the essence of a place and should be placed at the core of Elgin's business.
- 1.5.2 Interpretation comes in many forms from traditional panels and leaflets, events and exhibitions to inspiring visitor centres and reconstructions. This plan provides interpretive guidance and concepts based on core themes. The suggestions are a set of installation proposals that would enhance audience experiences and help fulfil the Elgin City for the Future vision.
- 1.5.3 To be effective interpretation should engage non- specialist audiences in a vivid and meaningful way that humanises and personalises Elgin's heritage. The reality is that visitors are looking to have a lovely day out, which may not necessarily be a lesson on history or one on Scottish historic buildings, and their shopping and eating patterns are integral to that.
- 1.5.4 People's experiences of Elgin must be enhanced - visitors should return home with positive things to say about the place and their visit. Local people should be encouraged to think more deeply about Elgin, its history and people and the qualities that give it identity and a sense of place.
- 1.5.5 This is a *plan*, not a costed design. An Interpretive Plan provides sufficient information to make decisions regarding funding priorities and the appointment of a designer, or designers, with sufficient information to embark on creative interpretive design solutions.
- 1.5.6 Guidance from the client group has been in the direction of a Plan that articulates aspiration and identifies opportunities for on-going work rather than absolute detail.

1.6 Strategic linkages - The Bronze, Silver and Gold Interpretive Attainment Scenarios

- 1.6.1 The Elgin City for the Future strategy sets out a vision for Elgin over the medium to long term.

The strategy notes that *“The pace and success of the project needs to be matched to the capacity of the partnership, its supporting agencies and the*

private sector who will lead the delivery programme. That capacity cannot be taken for granted and may have to be built or forged from within these relationships. It will take leadership at local authority level and leadership within key agencies and the private sector.”

- 1.6.2 City for the Future identifies three broad attainment scenarios (described as gold, silver and bronze) in a tiered response varying over time and subject to available resource commitments. Identified in association with an Elgin Destination Strategy and a Visitor Management Strategy, the Heritage Trail is considered a ‘bronze’ project (2011 – 2016 timescale) with EBID in the lead role and cost of £350,000 identified. In other words it is ‘high up the list’.
- 1.6.3 For consistency similar scenario attainment level have been used in this Interpretive Plan and three option or progression levels (gold, silver and bronze) have been recognised above an existing ‘status quo’.
- 1.6.4 These levels can be summarised as follows:
- The Status Quo – This is the position as it presently stands and it assumes, because of the current dated and disjointed approach to heritage interpretation in Elgin, achievements related to the overall study objectives set out in 1.1.2 will be subdued at best.
 - Bronze level assumes cooperation on key heritage interpretation projects, mainly in the public realm or as part of existing activities and the delivery of these to a predetermined programme.
 - Silver level assumes the bronze level cooperation on public sector projects but partnered with significant private sector investment.
 - Gold level assumes public sector cooperation with significant private sector stimulus and investment over the longer term. Gold options provide an assertive game changing agenda with the objective of transformational change.
- 1.6.5 This plan outlines the rationale for these levels of interpretation and design in line with the finding of existing studies including:
- Elgin BID Business Plan 2010 -2016 (February 2010).
 - Moray Tourism Development Plan 2010 -2012 (May 2010).
 - Moray Economic Strategy 2011 – 2016.
 - City for the Future Technical Report, Action Plan & Master Plan (June 2011).
 - Elgin High Street Conservation Area Appraisal (December 2011).



Images of Elgin's historic environment – Little things matter

Creates a positive image for Elgin and is part of the brand promoting Morayshire as a great place to both live and visit.

Figure 1: The context of Interpretation and the Heritage Trail in terms of the City for the Future, the BID and Moray Tourism Development visions.

The purpose of interpretation is to develop city interpretation to promote Elgin's vision and brand values and ensure they are appropriately expressed to Elgin's visitors

An economic, community and social focus providing a sense of place and pride in Elgin.

City for the Future Vision A sustainable Economic Model for Moray based on an energised Core City Concept

Elgin will define its role within the north east of Scotland to become a strong and vibrant economic hub of the Moray Region. It will attract investment and people because of its excellent health, education and retail services as well as improved connections, its unique environment and cultural and leisure offer. Key health and education services, including the Life Sciences Centre, will attract and develop skills which will reinforce Moray as a location for commercial health opportunities and world leading companies, while also providing a catalyst for broader business development, diversification and innovation. **The City of Elgin will define itself as a compelling destination.**

MORAY ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Provides an insight into Elgin's authentic historic environment and a quality experience.

BID Vision

A vibrant and vital city centre with a supportive and involved business community with;

- A strong and well marketed reputation as a destination with a joined up and diverse retail and tourism offer reflecting the strengths, heritage and other assets of the area;
- A clean, well maintained and active appearance with adequate and accessible parking, well managed traffic and clear signage for all;
- A diverse programme of cultural, sporting and community events and markets, well Publicised and making optimum use of new technology.

Contributing to safeguarding Elgin's unique and, nationally important, built and cultural heritage for present and future generations to enjoy.

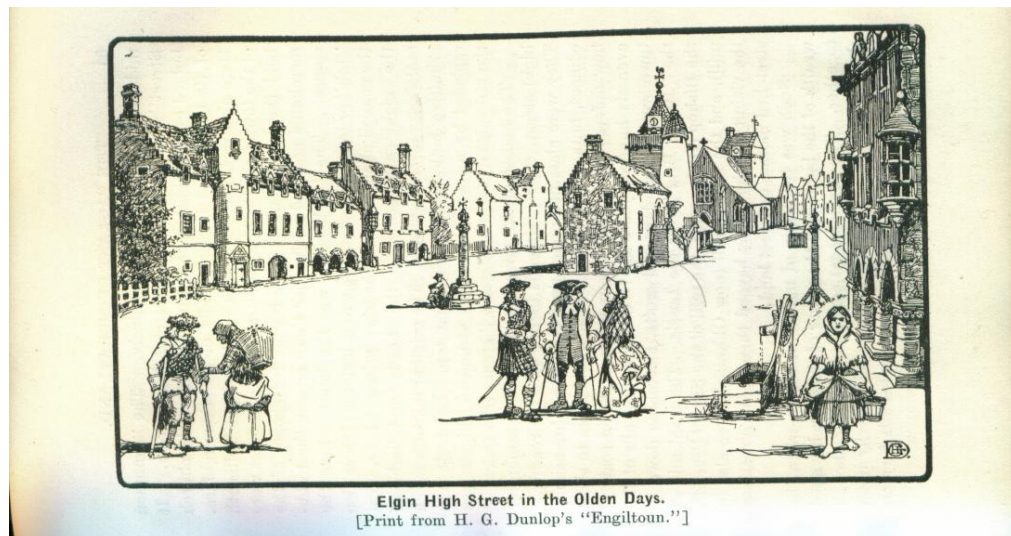
Moray Tourism Development's vision is for the area to become **Internationally renowned as the 'home of malt whisky'**, combining a rich, traditional heritage with modernity and innovation to deliver unique, high value, lifestyle experiences in a destination with a strong sense of place. 4 priorities are to:

1. Raise the profile of Moray as a tourism destination, nationally and internationally through the development and promotion of the Moray Speyside brand.
2. Develop and promote the area's food and drink, nature and **heritage offering**.
3. Support the development of a year round programme of events.
4. Support local tourism businesses to enable them to develop and grow and encourage inward investment.

2 The making of Elgin – resource significance

2.1 Introduction

Elgin has evolved over the last 800 years in response to changes in powerful social and political beliefs. Peel back today's cityscape and there to see are windows which open on historical events and stories showing a compelling historic environment, unique characters and ideologies representing central themes of power, protection, philanthropy and prosperity. No less significant are the tales of everyday Elgin folk – where they lived, what they ate, how they led their lives and how they died.



Print from Engiltoun by HG Dunlop 1913

2.2 “To stand there is to feel the past” – historic environment significance

So what have we got to work with in Elgin? Elgin's historic environment is a unique and authentic tangible legacy left by royalty, churchmen, aristocrats, lairds, merchants, philanthropists and local people; its full significance is clearly set out in a sister document to this plan - the 2011 Elgin High Street Conservation Area Appraisal under the following sections:

2.2.1 Setting

- Topography
- Geology
- Regional context

2.2.2 Historical background and patterns of growth

- The establishment and settlement of the medieval burgh
- Growth of the burgh from 1560 to 1700
- A century of stagnation from 1700 to 1800
- Civic infrastructure improvements and expansion – the burgh from 1800 to 1914

- A regional administrative centre: growth and change from 1914 to the present

2.2.3 Character Assessment

- Setting and views
- Activity and movement
- Street pattern and urban grain
- Historic townscape
- The evidence of historic photographs
- Spatial relationships
- Trees and landscaping
- Character areas
- Negative factors

2.2.4 Buildings analysis

- Standing archaeology
- Gazetteer of selected buildings
- Architectural distinctiveness
- Elgin's architectural dynasties
- Materials and architectural features
- Impact of change on authenticity
- Buildings at Risk
- Redundancy or under-use

2.3 In summary

The significance of Elgin's historic environment can be summarised as:

1. Castle - Royal beginnings; power and control; surveillance; visits of Edward I. What is a burgh?
2. Cathedral and chanonry - Power of the prelates; citadel of the chanonry; vulnerability (The Wolf); vestiges of the great and good; architecturally on a par with European examples.
3. Merchants and townhouses of the nobility - The piazzas and the last surviving townhouses; importance of commerce; leading magnates and their power; the symbols of the trades and guildry, and the armorial panels.
4. Closes - A fascinating survival from the medieval period; full of interest and the tales of former inhabitants. At one time it was believed Elgin had 175 – 200 closes. Today around 40 closes can still be seen.
5. Patronage - Elgin's sons; their association with the place; their philanthropy; and how they amassed their fortunes; why they engaged in patronage of fine buildings and townscape.
6. St Giles Parish Church - Simply one of the finest neoclassical building of its period, the Plainstones – a medieval market place and the crosses - their stories - why they were there and what they represent. Elgin Pillar discovered in 1823 by the kirk perhaps suggests some Pictish activity in the surrounding area.

7. The Cooper Park – An act of philanthropy and a recreational lung; the Grant Lodge and the Seafield Grant and Robert Adam connections; the last rising of the clans!
8. Shops and shopping - At the very heart of the prosperity of the city; variety in the shop fronts from all periods.
9. Elgin's fabulous stone carvings - A long tradition of the finest masons of the north, from the Cathedral and the armorial panels to the wealth of Victorian stone carving tucked away and almost out of sight.
10. Large mills on the riverside dated from 13th century onwards, some are still there today - processing the products of the surrounding rich agricultural lands.

2.4 “People in Elgin’s story” - human heritage significance

History is not merely buildings, history is principally about people. Who are the people who have contributed to making Elgin special? There are many. Here are snapshots of just a few of the characters who, over the last 600 years, have helped to make the Elgin story.

2.4.1 An audience with the Wolf

It’s the 17th June 1390 and if you’re on a peaceful visit to Elgin tell the residents to prepare their lovely city and its majestic Cathedral for some serious rioting and destruction, mediaeval style! The Wolf is coming.

Alexander Stewart, Earl of Buchan, nicknamed the Wolf of Badenoch and grandson of Robert the Bruce, and his horde of “wyld, wicked Heland-men” set fire to “the whole town of Elgin, the church of St Giles, the Cathedral and eighteen ‘noble’ mansions belonging to the Cathedral canons and chaplains.” In dispute with his brother, slighted by the King, excommunicated by the Bishop for infidelity - Alexander was a very, very angry man and Elgin was to pay the price of his fury!

2.4.2 The MacDonalds are coming

Medieval Scottish chiefs, have parallels with today’s Afghanistan warlords, so brace yourselves good people of Elgin - for having spent the last 12 years repairing the Wolf’s handiwork the date is now 1402 and another ‘robber baron’ called Alexander - this time a MacDonald and his band from the West coast is raiding Elgin – probably for no real reason other than the pursuit of plundering booty from this rich city. The Cathedral again takes a battering.

Amazingly, despite their appalling behaviour, both Alexanders were forgiven in return for some penitential patronage of Elgin’s heritage! The Little Cross being one example.

2.4.3 Millionaire surgeon

A surgeon called Dr Alexander Gray, also made his fortune in the employ of the Honourable East India Company. He personally donated the very large sum of £20,000 in 1815 for a building to care for the sick and poor. Born in the city’s White Horse Close, Gray left his mark in the shape of the massive domed hospital

building on the city's western skyline, a working hospital serving the people of Moray that still bears his name today.

2.4.4 Telephone man

Who would have thought 470 years after the Wolf another young man, also called Alexander, would leave his own mark on Elgin and connect the city to the world? Aged just 18, in 1860, Alexander Graham Bell began teaching music and elocution at Weston House Academy (the Comet electrical store now occupies this site). His interest in sound transmission to the human ear led - as many will know - to wireless telegraphy and that everyday essential, the phone. An Elgin story that now touches almost 5.5 billion people, or 77% of the entire planet.

2.4.5 The Pauper Soldier

His father died when he was a small child and it is said that Andrew Anderson lived with his mother in poverty amongst the ruins of Elgin Cathedral. Showing promise, like his soldier father, he joined the Honourable East India Company's private army and progressed through the ranks. By 1811 he was a Major-General and had secured great wealth through his conquests. He left £70,000 - a huge sum by today's standard - to build and endow a magnificent building that still dominates the east end of Elgin. See below.



Anderson Institution

2.4.6 John Shanks a thin, lank, spider-looking being

John Shanks entered into the history books because of his herculean efforts in moving 3000 barrow loads of debris from around the Cathedral ruins, much admired by those who visited the site who never failed to remark upon his presence. Robert Billings encountered him when preparing his drawings of the Cathedral, describing him in the following way: "He was a thin, lank, spider-looking being, clad in obsolete costume, with a quiet, earnest enthusiasm in his

manner – a sort of Old Mortality, whose delight it was to labour among the ruins and tombs.”

2.4.7 The poor had no lawyers

This is the title of a recent (2011) book sub titled ‘Who Owns Scotland?’ but the words belong to Professor Cosmo Innes - Professor of Universal History, Greek and Roman Antiquities at the University of Edinburgh from 1846 until his death in 1874. An advocate, he was Sheriff of Elgin for 12 years and principal Clerk of Session. Innes was described as *the foremost scholar of his generation and his editions of sources are still the everyday tools of the historians of Scotland* by Horn in his Short History of the University of Edinburgh.

2.4.8 Merchant family dynasties

If not a soldier, surgeon, lawyer or inventor, you may have links to the building trade and if your name is Mason, Wright and Smith your predecessors could have had a part in building Elgin. Or, your name might have evolved from other members of the merchants’ guild who financed Elgin’s development - Websters (weaving), Cordiners (shoemakers), Glovers, Baxters (bakers), and the Fleshers (butchers).

Of those **Baxters**, still a local name, and one very ‘well kent’ by the public as a family food company in business since 1868 producing premium brands of marmalade, chutneys and that famous soup. **Johnstons**, another family company, have had their Newmill (sic) site in Elgin for 215 years. They employ 450 people in the city and produce top range fine cashmere and other woollen products. Since 1898 the **Walker** family have been producing their ‘Scotland’s Finest’ short bread, biscuits, cakes and oatcakes. Walkers have two factories in Elgin. **Gordon and Macphail** ‘the world’s leading malt whisky specialist’ is another fourth generation family business in Elgin 116 years in the making.

2.4.9 Emperors and Mountaineers

Remarkably, all these high end brands have won international export awards. And, for example, Johnstons of Elgin is synonymous with the finest quality luxury cashmere in the world. Prized across the centuries by emperors and aristocrats alike, it is worn today by climbers scaling Mount Everest as well as those seeking luxury fashion worldwide.

2.4.10 Strong women

Jessie Kesson, an important 20th century Scottish literary figure, was born, illegitimately, in an Inverness workhouse and spent her early years living in the old closes of Elgin. *"The lane was home and wonderful"*. These childhood experiences shaped her first novel *The White Bird Passes* (1958), which the BBC televised. Jessie produced *Women's Hour* for the BBC, wrote several more novels and over ninety plays for radio and TV.

2.4.11 Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show

The 1st September 1904 must have been a remarkable day in Elgin. The Northern Scot reports Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show, led by Colonel Cody in person, came to town. *“It travels in its own trains, with 800 men, 500 horses, and necessary paraphernalia in 49 cars. The length of the cars will extend*

approximately three-quarters of a mile, and the weight is 1184 tons. The show re-enacts the Battle of Little Bighorn, fought only 28 years previously."

2.4.12 Local characters

Johnnie Frostie, Tam Watson, Punchie Grant, George the Garb King, Peter Porridge Laing and Nelly Homeless are just some of the local Elgin characters who have wandered the city streets in the past. What are their stories?



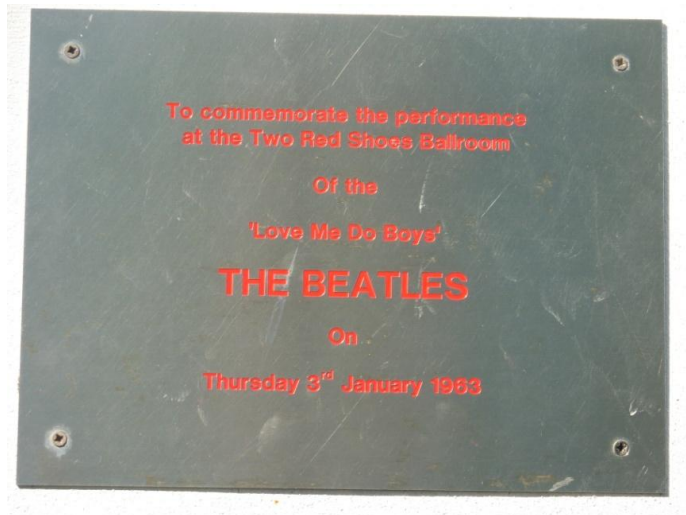
Tam Watson Johnnie Frostie

2.4.13 Hollywood actors

Born and brought up in Elgin, and now living in America, Scottish actor Kevin McKidd has starred in films including *Trainspotting*, *Dog Soldiers* and *Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief*. TV credits include *Grey's Anatomy* and *Rome* and he has voiced over popular video games including *Grand Theft Auto* and *Call of Duty*. Style icons and actresses, Madonna, Gwyneth Paltrow and Kate Moss all wear clothes designed and made in Elgin.

2.4.14 International rock music stars

The Beatles began their first tour of 1963 at 9pm on the 3rd of January with a performance at the Two Red Shoes, a ballroom at the east end of Elgin High Street. They were supported by the Alex. Sutherland sextet and admission was six shillings. According to the Beatle's Bible the band earned £42 and some of the audience could not see the band as the room is L shaped! Now closed, this hall has also seen acts such as The Who, Dusty Springfield, Pink Floyd and the Rolling Stones take to the stage. The Two Red Shoes is a hall of memories and a place where people in Elgin saw their first gig and met that boy or girl.



Plaque at Two Red Shoes Ballroom

2.5 Capturing character

Interpretation based on characters can quickly capture audiences' attention with pen pictures that bring these real individuals to the mind's eye. The Heritage Trail should seek to 'humanise' Elgin's characters researched using contemporary descriptions – for example.

Table 1 – Capturing Character

Who	Physical appearance	Accessories	Personality	Methods	Lifestyle/ income
Wolf of Badenoch	Buck teeth Ginger Unattractive	Swords	Angry	Violence Fear	Robber baron
Alexander Graham Bell	Beard	Scientific equipment	Genius workaholic	Inventions	Workaholic poor health
Jessie Kesson	Strong features Penetrating eyes	Pen, wireless and TV	Tough Resilient	Books Plays	Difficult childhood found success
Johnnie Frostie	Shock of hair and bare feet	Noxious pessimism	Eccentric	Daily dip in the river often fully clad	Gentle beggar

2.6 What have others had to say about Elgin?

1297 Edward I of England

- *Edward I of England visited Elgin at least twice – 1296 and 1303. During his first visit he was impressed by what he saw describing the castle and the town of Elgin as "bon chastell et bonne ville" – good castle and good town.*

1390 Bishop Alexander Barr of Moray

- *When Bishop Barr wrote to King Robert III in 1390, complaining of the wanton destruction done to the building by the King's brother, the Wolf of Badenoch, he describes the Cathedral as "the ornament of this district, the glory of the kingdom and the admiration of foreigners."*

1615, John Taylor, the "Water Poet"

- *"From thence I went to Elgen in Murray, an ancient citie, where there stood a faire and beautiful church with three steeples, the walls of it and the steeples all yet standing; but the roofes, windowes and many marble monuments and tombes of honourable and worthie personages all broken and defaced".*

1717 Daniel Defoe, English Spy and author of Robinson Crusoe

- *"As the country is rich and pleasant, so here are a great many rich inhabitants, and in the town of Elgin in particular; for the gentlemen, as if this was the Edinburgh, or the court, for this part of the island, leave their Highland habitations in the winter and come and live here for the diversion of the place and plenty of provisions; and there is, on this account, a great variety of gentlemen for society, and that of all parties and of all opinions. This makes Elgin a very agreeable place to live in, notwithstanding its distance, being above 450 measured miles from London, and more, if we must go by Edinburgh."*

1773 Samuel Johnson and James Boswell, social commentators and travellers

- *Samuel Johnson and James Boswell seemed perplexed as to why the city had fallen on hard times as they considered the extent and purpose of the piazzas which caught their eye. 'Elgin seems a place of little trade, and thinly inhabited' said Johnson, while Boswell noted 'It must have been a better place formerly'.*

1798 Isaac Forsyth Bookseller, Elgin from A Survey of the Province of Moray

- *"The town consists of one principal street, in a winding course, for little more than a mile from east to west, widening to such a breadth towards the middle of the town as to have the church awkwardly placed upon it and at a distance further on, the town house, a mean building, adjoined to a clumsy square tower, almost without windows, which contains the hall where the courts and county meetings are held and the common gaol."*

1839 Lord Cockburn - Judge

- *In 1839, while on the North Circuit the well-travelled judge Lord Cockburn mused on where he might retire when his career ended. Forthright in his observations, he was notoriously difficult to please. He disliked Nairn, and liked Forres rather better, adding: 'and Elgin would do better still. I am not sure that, except Perth, there is a nicer provincial town in Scotland'.*

1860 Cosmo Innes – Professor of Universal History, Greek and Roman Antiquities University of Edinburgh

- *The little burgh built on the sheltered bank of the Lossie, long before the bishop had chosen it for his seat, was strong in the union of its inhabitants, and secured by the protection which the good King David threw around his burgesses. The King had erected a Castle on the green mound at its western extremity Ladyhill (called so from a Chapel dedicated to the B. Virgin, originally within the Royal Castle, but which survived it)—for defence against marauding pirates from the sea, and the lawless bands from the hills, but still more to support the burghers against the oppression of the neighbouring barons, who were jealous of this little knot of plebeians presuming to be independent—to prefer the government of their own Aldermen, and the jurisdiction of the King's Court, to the tender mercies of the court of the Lord Baron.*

1920 Northern Scot Newspaper 21/2/20

- *“It is nothing short of tragic that such people should be compelled to live in these cheerless unhealthy quarters.”*

1938 Charles Archibald- Life in the Closes Elgin Courant and Courier 25/12/38

- *“An unsavoury and slummy close where people, some of notorious bad character and some queer traits or personal peculiarities lived.”*

1974 Lord Provost of Elgin

- *“The rat infested slums in the closes should be bulldozed to the ground and the tenants moved out.”*

2010 Kevin McKidd – Holly wood actor

- *“Where I’m from in Elgin, Scotland, it’s a thick dialect but I’d have found it hard to get work as an actor if I’d kept that way – no one can understand you. For my role in Rome I had to wear this little skirt, my wife liked that. I must say those scrubs [Grey’s Anatomy] are very comfortable; it’s like walking around in pyjamas all the time. I prefer the scrubs to the Roman tunics.”*

2011 Elgin City for the Future Strategy

- *“Elgin High Street is the most important economic space in the region and this is why the health of central Elgin is positioned at the core of this strategy, with vibrancy and vitality of this space providing the measure of success. It is and must remain the prime civic, retail, cultural and event space in Moray”.*

3.0 Interpretive objectives

3.1 Interpretive potential

- 3.1.1 There are so many stories that could be communicated to the visitor by using a city centre Heritage Trail. The interpretive potential of an enjoyable and flexible route around the city providing a ‘wow’ factor and increasing civic pride is

considerable. A Trail should provide links to important sites around Elgin, providing choice, extending dwell time and boosting spend.

- 3.1.2 Our fascination with historic figures and places is long standing, deep and the subject of many television programmes. We have always loved gazing at the rich, and powerful, the ruthless and the quirky while exploring the cultural legacy of a more distant past. People should also understand Elgin was a place of contrast. Just yards from the opulent Victorian buildings on the High Street poverty, filth and overcrowding in the closes was commonplace.

"I suspect that 90% of the history that people in Britain learn about comes from visiting old buildings, not through teaching. So the responsibility of the heritage industry to get its history right is immense." Sir Simon Jenkins - Chair of the National Trust of England and Wales, 2010.

- 3.1.3 Once confined to a refined elite, heritage has grown into a popular pastime for many audiences that offers real direct economic opportunities and provides a backdrop and canvas for urban regeneration and boosting civic pride.
- 3.1.4 Other Scottish burghs, royal like Elgin or otherwise, are not short on heritage and engaging residents and attracting visitors has become a very competitive industry. To be successful the heritage offer, including interpretation, has to be both authentic and integrated with an entire quality visitor experience if it is to deliver real long lasting benefits. Sir Simon Jenkins, Chair of the National Trust of England and Wales, is described in the summer 2010 English Heritage Conservation Bulletin as saying *"As a passionate enthusiast for old buildings he has become frustrated by a mismatch between the dictates of the traditional curator and the expectations of the modern family visitor."*
- 3.1.5 Interpretation should also recognise the small numbers of tourists who visit Elgin are there by choice and, like people in general, are not often specialists or enthusiasts. On the whole, visitors are emotional rather than rational and perhaps more self-centred than community minded in their principal motivation to visit Elgin.

3.2 Interpretive principles

We propose three principles for interpretation;

3.2.1 ***P1 Good quality visitor facilities have to be in place for interpretation to be fully effective***

For most people engaged on a leisure trip certain factors have to be satisfied before they can take site interests 'on board' – a basic lesson as Abraham Maslow¹ recognised in his theory on personal 'needs'. Hence facilities like clear signage and sufficient car parking spaces are important to ensure people arrive on site in good humour. Cleanliness, tidiness, good toilets, food/drink, safety for family and friends and shelter from the elements are basic self-interest expectations that have to be met before people can focus on what they hoped to get out of their visit and how good the experience really was. [Legislation also requires reasonable measures to be in place to accommodate physical and intellectual access for all.]

¹ Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory – *Motivation and Personality* 1954

3.2.2 P2 Interpretation must have empathy with all the ages, learning styles and needs of Elgin audiences.

Only a small proportion of visitors are willing and able to put time, effort and some degree of study into their historical research before visiting. Elgin's inherent attractiveness and heritage plus narratives on its special but more predictable or accessible cultural, natural and recreational features are keys to the success of the more general visitor experience. Making the experience empathetic and enjoyable to all visitors is central to successful communication. Empathy is about fun, love, awe and wonder, and interpretation should make people feel good and take action because they want to, and not because they have to.

3.2.3 P3 Creative interpretation solutions should be deployed to develop Elgin's position as compelling destination

The term city is derived from the Latin, *civis* a citizen. Elgin as a city is, by definition, a people focused place and it attracts visitors, many from quite close by. Interpretation should encourage an increase in day visits to Elgin, and turn day visitors into staying visitors, creating an enjoyable, high quality experience that will lead to good 'word of mouth' marketing of Elgin both as a 'destination' in its own right and as base for exploring Moray's heritage. For members of the local community, interpretation should raise awareness of Elgin's heritage as an economic asset, and inspire long-term protection and care.

3.3 For Elgin three questions usefully encapsulate what interpretive messages should be based on.

3.3.1 Q1 What Elgin needs and want to communicate.

In Elgin a coalition of community, public and private sector business partners are committed to collectively improving the business and trading vibrancy of the city centre. The historic environment provides important assets in helping Elgin attract new visitors.

3.3.2 Q2 what are Elgin's most significant stories?

The most significant stories are those connected with the core themes of power, protection, philanthropy and prosperity.

3.3.3 Q3 what might motivate people to visit Elgin?

People visit Elgin city centre for social interaction with family and friends, shopping and accessing services. Meaningful, vivid and compelling stories can contribute to the motivation that drives repeat visits, attracts new ones and engenders civic pride in those who live here.



St Giles Church – Elgin City Centre

3.4 Interpretive outcomes

3.4.1 There are many ways of thinking about effectiveness in interpretation. Definitions of effectiveness may be linked with specific purposes and responses such as affecting visitors' learning or emotional behaviour or meeting a desired behavioural outcome. Interpretation in Elgin should be outcome led.

3.4.2 In simple terms interpretation for Elgin city centre should contribute to one of the following five purposes as set out in the brief.

1. Improve an enhanced visitor experience of Elgin City Centre;
2. Provide greater access to the local heritage;
3. Create a sense of ownership of and pride in the historical and environmental legacy within Elgin particularly by the younger generation;
4. Improve the economic opportunities within Elgin City Centre;
5. Create the opportunity to conserve & improve the built, historical and social environment.

The purposes can be further clarified using the following three interpretive outcome headings.

3.4.3 Learning Outcome s (LO): We want people/businesses to know and understand:

- More about the people, their actions, and the buildings that have given Elgin its unique heritage;
- That Elgin's unique historic buildings are facing threats;
- That Elgin city centre is being managed for the wider interest by a coalition of community, public and private interests;

3.4.4 Emotional Outcomes (EO): We want people/businesses to experience and feel:

- Connected to the cultural heritage of Elgin;

- Enjoyment, pleasure and wonder in visiting and learning about Elgin;
- Empathy and pride in the work being done to enhance the city centre;

3.4.5 Behavioural Outcomes (BO): We want people/businesses to:

- Take responsibility for the sustainable stewardship of Elgin's historic environment;
- Enjoy their visit to Elgin, extend their visit, suggest it to others and return;
- Support, in practical terms, heritage interpretation on their own site or business;
- Recognise and assist with physical and intellectual access to Elgin's heritage and to comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requirements;
- Help link Elgin's heritage with Curriculum for Excellence educational goals and outcomes;
- Help link Elgin's heritage with lifelong learning opportunities;

3.4.6 Heritage Trail interpretation should meet these Learning, Emotional and Behavioural Outcomes. Visitors and residents, for the most part, will undertake self-directed or informal interpretive activities and in doing so contribute in different ways to the outcomes but engagement is unlikely to be neat and linear and outcomes should be seen more as a framework. Businesses and other groupings and agencies should be promoting the outcomes through their own planning and delivery mechanisms.

4.0 Target markets and audiences

4.1 Local audiences

4.1.1 Moray's population in 2009 was an estimated 87,660, a 1% increase on the 2001 figure and 4% higher than the 1991 population. Elgin's population of 21,200 has fallen by 1%. Population growth over the past 25 years has been boosted by the in-migration of armed forces personnel and support staff, and more recently by a significant increase in migrant workers. The recent announcement of Army personnel relocating to the Kinloss base will bring a new audience, their friends and their relatives, to Moray.

4.1.2 Moray's resident demographic structure is similar to other rural areas in Scotland with a relatively low proportion of people of working age and a higher proportion of people over 65 years old relative to the national average. In comparison to Scotland, Elgin's workforce is less well qualified. 27% of the region's working age population are educated to degree level, considerably lower than across Scotland as a whole (34%). In 2009 30% of the population were under 24.

4.1.3 There are approximately 2500 school age young people in Elgin. Elgin is served by seven primary schools – Bishopmill, East End, Greenwards, Mosstowie, Seafield, St Sylvesters and West End with a collective roll of 1492 in September 2011. Elgin has two secondary schools. Elgin Academy is one of the oldest schools in Scotland and can trace its origins back to the 1500s with the Academy being formed in 1791. For session 2011/12 it has a roll of 1006. A new Elgin Academy building is opening in 2012. Elgin High School, the other secondary in the city, has a roll of 615 pupils.

4.2 Tourism audiences

- 4.2.1 Judged by visitor attraction numbers and anecdotal evidence, overnight visitors to Elgin on holiday are relatively small in number, in part, because there is an under-provision of serviced accommodation in Elgin. Tourism statistics suggest people on business in Elgin represent a greater proportion of visitors than the Scottish average. The Town Centre Regeneration case study for Elgin shows that the local area's tourism sector employed around 1,200 people in 2008, representing a decline of 19% since 2004. This rate of decline was faster than the regional area (-15%) and in stark contrast to the increasing positive national trend for Scotland (+5%). Moray is operating from a low, and possibly declining, base of visitors and tourism businesses.
- 4.2.2 The VisitScotland (2010) visitor research for the Aberdeen and Grampian area, which includes Moray, reveals 54% are on holiday, 36% are on business and 9% are visiting friends and relatives. The research suggests typically that they:
- Are likely to be from the UK (81%) made up of Scottish residents (58%) and English residents (46%);
 - If from overseas, are more likely to be from Norway (13%), US (10%) followed by French (7%);
 - Stayed, on average, 3.7 (UK), 6 (overseas) nights in the area during their visit;
 - Were likely to be travelling by car (71%), by train (14%);
 - Were likely to be staying in serviced accommodation – hotel, guesthouse, B&B (35%) or staying with friends or relatives (42%);
 - The main reasons people visit the area were scenery and landscape, peace and relaxation and nice walks in the countryside and to places of interest;
- 4.2.3 In summary, the findings suggest that the dominant profile of visitors to the north east on holiday is one of UK based adults aged over 45 travelling as a couple by car and staying with friends and relatives with interests in general sightseeing countryside walks and visiting places of interest.
- 4.2.4 Because of its location on the western edge of Grampian and Moray, Elgin visitor profiles may have more in common with those of Highlands and Islands visitors whose trip patterns and visitor profiles are markedly different to those found in Aberdeen and Grampian, where business related trips are more prevalent. Therefore, some caution should be applied when interpreting these figures and characteristics.

4.3 Audience analysis

- 4.3.1 Compared to many other parts of Scotland, Elgin attracts a low number of tourists, either those staying in the city or nearby. Traffic flows on the A96 in the Elgin area show a peak in the main August holiday month of approximately 25% on the January figure, equivalent to an additional 3000 vehicle movements per day through the city. Some of these must be visitors to the area but figures again suggest penetration into this visitor flow is limited.
- 4.3.2 The VIC in the library, signposted off the A96, recorded 16,570 people from January to the end of October 2010 and 14,665 over the same period in 2011, a decline of 11.5%. (Average decline in visits to North Highland VICs was 2.1%). The number of recorded visits to Elgin VIC is comparable to the number visiting Dunvegan and Thurso VICs and about 8% of those using Fort William, the busiest North Highland VIC. Elgin also attracts day visitors, not tourists as defined by VisitScotland, but people resident in the surrounding area, perhaps from up to two hours' drive time away – as far as Inverness and Aberdeen.

- 4.3.3 Equally Moray residents are very mobile and will readily travel out of the area for shopping and leisure. Interestingly, ASVA figures comparing June 2010 with June 2011 show what could be considered a response to the prevailing economic times with the Cathedral reporting a 38% increase and Johnstons a 13% decline.
- 4.3.4 Tourists staying overnight and especially those from overseas will generate the greatest economic benefit for Elgin and Moray but numbers are constrained by the range of available accommodation. Spending by day visitors already resident in the north of Scotland is more frequently seen as displacement. A shortage of attractions – see table 2 – and floor space at venues to hold events further limits opportunities to increase tourism and day visitor expenditure.

Table 2 Heritage Attractions in or close to Elgin (Source: Visitor Attraction Monitor 2009 – not all sites may submit their figures for each year: E is for estimate)

Attraction	2010	2009	2005
Johnstons of Elgin		202,200	
Elgin Cathedral		23,267	24,308
Ballindalloch Castle			16,892 E
Brodie Castle		18,705	16,738
Elgin VIC in library	16,570		
Falcolner Museum - Forres		14,677	7,698
Elgin Museum	6,810	7,486	8,938
Spynie Palace		6,932	4,670
Balvenie Castle - Dufftown		5,321	6,101
Fochabers Folk Museum		1,946	

- 4.3.5 For tourists and day visitors visiting Elgin or passing through, Elgin's attraction appears to be fourfold. First, Elgin's reputation built around world leading food, drink and clothing brands. Johnstons Cashmere Heritage Centre reports over 200,000 visitors to their site off Newmill Rd; although at the other end of the town, the Glen Moray Visitor Centre reports only 4,500 visitors. This figure and those in Table 2 suggest that the counting regime at Johnstons may be recording local shoppers and regular visitors to the restaurant in addition to actual textile 'tourists' as defined by VisitScotland.
- 4.3.6 Despite Elgin's location in close proximity to Scotland's main concentration of whisky distilleries, with the honourable exception of Gordon and Macphail's shop in South Street – an attraction in its own right – the whisky theme in Elgin is quite muted. Whisky tourism is a major theme for Moray as shown in table 3 although collectively visitor numbers at nine sites do not match those of Johnstons and there is evidence of a decline. However, visitor spend per head by 'whisky tourists' at these sites is likely to be high.

Table 3 Visitor numbers to whisky related attractions in Moray (Source: Visitor Attraction Monitor 2009 – not all sites may submit their figures for each year: E is for estimate)

Attraction	2009	2005
Glenfiddich	Not public	78,000 E
Glenlivet Distillery, Glenlivet	40,939	
Strathisla Distillery, Keith	11,998	12,462
Macallan Distillery, Craigellachie	11,926	13,000 E

Dallas Dhu, Forbes	11,619	13,511
Glen Grant Distillery and Garden, Rothes	10,375	22,381
Glenfarclas Distillery, Ballindalloch	9,081	10,274
Aberlour Distillery Visitor Centre, Aberlour	7,178	
Cardhu Distillery Visitor Centre, Knockando	4,973	
Glen Moray Distillery Visitor Centre, Elgin	4,514	

(Note: The Scotch Whisky Heritage Centre, in Edinburgh's Royal Mile, recorded 238,542 visitors in 2009. This shows a solid visitor interest in whisky's heritage but considered as proportion of Edinburgh's visitors the numbers demonstrate whisky is a strong niche market for Scotland whereas in Moray it is a core tourism product.)

- 4.3.7 Secondly, Elgin's long and attractive history centred on the Cathedral, a building of international importance, with some 23,000 visitors per annum, clearly provides a draw for many people.
- 4.3.8 Thirdly, Elgin contains a concentration of infrastructure, designed mainly to support its administrative and commercial functions, but of interest to tourists. These include railway station, hotels, restaurants and those related to local identity services like churches, museum and the heritage centre, other historic buildings, other monuments and formal open spaces for markets and recreation. The museum attracts 7000 people per annum and the heritage centre around 3000.
- 4.3.9 Fourthly, the continued presence of two large military sites close to Elgin points towards a 'Visiting Friends and Relations' or VFR presence in the area. See section 4.2.1. This group tends to be relatively low spending as their principal motivation for coming to the area is a social one, however, they may visit regularly. They are likely to be attracted to 'day out' destinations with associated gift and 'coffee shop' opportunities while in the area.

4.4 Future target audiences

- 4.4.1 We note that there is no single way of segmenting potential audiences for interpretation (and accurately identifying unique needs and expectations) without extensive audience research and development work. Different visitors will have different needs when in the city. This also makes it very difficult to accurately prioritise audiences – especially for a scheme, like the Trail, developed explicitly for all Elgin's users. Moray Tourism Development identifies whisky, outdoor activities and ancestral tourism as key activity segments – the historic environment is not specifically identified.
- 4.4.2 A 2009 HEACS² report showed tourism expenditure in Scotland attributable to the historic environment is estimated to support some 37,000 FTE employees in Scotland and nearly £1.3 billion in respect of GVA. The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport for the DCMS³ showed that between April 2008 and April 2009 the kinds of historic place that people in England visited included 51% going to a

² HEACS – Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland (Abolished by Scottish Ministers in 2010)

³ DCMS – Department of Culture Media and Sport – England and Wales

city or town with historic character and 36% went to a monument such as a castle, fort or ruin.

- 4.4.3 The importance of Scotland's heritage to its tourism industry is demonstrated by the 2008 Visitor Experience Survey that recorded culture and history to be an important or very important factor for 70% and 67% of visitors respectively. The same survey recorded 89% of overseas visitors and 67% of UK domestic visitors to Scotland visiting an historical attraction as part of their trip. Those who have visited Elgin will have formed their own impressions but getting people to come who have never been is a different matter.

- 4.4.4 Markets for Elgin city centre in the future can be summarised as:

Tourists

- First time visitors to Moray, Grampian and the Highlands;
- Repeat visitors to Moray, Grampian and the Highlands;
- Niche markets with an interest in the historic environment;
- People investigating genealogical links to Elgin;

Day Visitors

- Existing regular users from within a 45 minute drive time radius;
- Infrequent or current non users from within a 90 minute drive time radius i.e. to include Aberdeen and Inverness;

Residents

- Members of the local community with an interest in heritage;
- Sections of the community who do not have an interest in heritage but with a belief in local pride and community activities;
- Children and families;
- Younger people;
- Older people;
- People with disabilities;
- Shoppers;
- Schools;

Note:

1. Residents may also choose to leave Elgin in search of other leisure opportunities.

- 4.4.5 Amongst the tourists, target consumer segments need to be identified. Visit Scotland undertook research in 2006/7 which identified a number of consumer segments offering the best potential for increasing the volume and value of domestic tourism to Scotland. Given the importance of the domestic tourist audience, who currently account for 81% of visitors to Moray, it is proposed to highlight four of these key demographic segments, three of which were identified by VisitScotland to be particularly relevant to Moray. The top three consumer groupings identified for Moray are:

4.4.6 **Affluent Active Devotees**

- 1.4 million households in UK, Northern based (48% Scottish);

- Have strong emotional connection to Scotland;
- Well-travelled experience seekers, enjoy active pursuits;
- 2nd highest total holiday spend;
- 85% visited Scotland in last year;

Why are they a priority grouping for Elgin?

With an average age of 50, and typical of the 'older yet younger' active experience seekers, this grouping are well suited to Moray and Elgin's offering in terms of their interests, inherent warmth to Scotland, disposable income and opportunity to travel. Many of them will be 'empty nesters' treating themselves to the finer things in life, preferring to stay in hotels and enjoying good food and drink.

4.4.7 Younger Domestic Explorers

- 2 million households in UK, Northern based (70% Yorkshire & above);
- Strong advocates of holidaying in own country;
- Believe Scotland is accessible, plenty to see and do and is good value;
- Aged between 25-45, 36% with school age children;
- 81% visited Scotland in last 2 years;

Why are they a priority grouping for Elgin?

Younger families and single couples in this target profile are increasingly looking for more traditional holidays; a recent YouGov study noted 75% of parents plan to include wholesome, authentic activities on their next holiday such as cycling, walking and visiting museums etc. This group are also interested in wildlife, culture, genealogy and general touring. This trend and mind-set has a good fit with the wider Moray offering, not just the more family focussed activities.

4.4.8 Mature Devotees

- 1.9 million households in UK, Northern based (80% Yorkshire & above);
- Most loyal group to holidaying in Scotland;
- Oldest segment, traditional in outlook;
- Like to revisit places, tour local area & watch wildlife;
- 81% visited Scotland in last year;

Why are they a priority grouping for Elgin?

Mature Devotees continue to be important to tourism in Moray but more on a retention front. Creatures of habit, they are less open to trying new areas but are more loyal to favoured areas. Therefore, they are deemed more of a 'safe group' from a marketing perspective.

4.4.9 Affluent Southern Explorers are not specifically identified by VisitScotland's research but with Moray's assets and product base they could be attracted.

- 2.3 million households in UK, Southern based (39% in London);
- Spend most nights away on holiday, tend to take longer breaks;
- Enjoy outdoors and love things Scotland has to offer on a break;
- 3rd highest total holiday spend;
- 84% visited Scotland in last 2 years;

Why might they be a priority grouping for Elgin?

As the most affluent segment and the ones most likely to take longer holidays, this group are of definite commercial interest to Elgin, especially luxury products like whisky, knitwear and food. Whilst affluent, they are not overly materialistic and like to fit in with local culture when on holiday. They are explorers and Scotland has a definite appeal to them. They like to discover new places, broaden their minds and are open to suggestions of new things to do.

4.5 Audience Motivations

- 4.5.1 Cultural story-telling provides the greatest potential for interpreting Elgin. Buildings in the city may be unusual, still quite complete and with many unique features, but unless the underlying reasons for their heritage or cultural purpose are well presented they probably have limited wider public appeal beyond those people primarily interested in historic buildings.
- 4.5.2 However their combined presence does give an almost intangible atmosphere to a place like Elgin that many visitors will appreciate even if the detail goes unrecognised. The popularity of television programmes like *Grand Designs* also indicates that creative presentation of people and styles can capture the public imagination. Although not run in Moray recently, the success of *Doors Open Day* demonstrates public appetite for the investigation of historic buildings.
- 4.5.3 The 2009 HEACS report suggested *“cultural value could, for instance, be divided into a number of elements, such as: aesthetic; spiritual; social; historical; symbolic; and authenticity.”*
- 4.5.4 Gilmore and Pine in their 2007 book *Authenticity: What Consumers Really Want* noted *“goods and services are no longer enough: what consumers want today are experiences – memorable events that engage them in an inherently personal way. As paid for experiences proliferate people now decide where and when to spend their money and their time – the currency of experiences – as much if not more than they deliberate on how and what to buy “*

4.6 Young people as a target market for Elgin’s heritage

“Children often grow up with virtually no understanding of the rich, natural and cultural heritage in their towns” (Brochu and Merriman National Association for Interpretation USA) 2008

- 4.6.1 Given the choice of attractions available and children’s sophisticated use of technology as their entertainment, (as every parent knows) it can be difficult to get children out of their bedrooms to enjoy real experiences and learn about heritage by actually seeing, feeling and taking part. Firing the imagination of families, children and young adults is a real challenge for sustainable heritage.
- 4.6.2 Provision for the under 12s or for family groups has already been more readily accommodated by heritage sites than interpretation for the ‘in-betweens’ – a much maligned, often scary, but potentially creative and passionate group of young people. Teens are not children and have to be treated differently. The HEACS 2009 *Report and suggestions on strategies for engaging young adults in the historic environment* recognises that young adults clearly do engage in the historic environment but the current level of engagement is relatively modest. It is also disproportionately weighted towards those in further and higher education.
- 4.6.3 However, teens are perhaps not so very different from other adult markets. A recent report from Nielsen.com (2010) describes ‘teens’ as *“the digital natives, super-communicators and multi-taskers we hear so much about, but they are also the TV viewers, newspaper readers and radio listeners that some assume they are not. What we have found, across a variety of studies, is that teens embrace new media not at the cost of traditional media, but in supplement to it. Taken on whole teens exhibit media habits that are more similar to the total*

population than not.... The averages will show you that teens can often be reached by the same means as their parents. To best engage this segment in marketing, civic and cultural pursuits, you must discard the notion that they are alien. Instead examine the nuances of their media behaviour as you would any demographic segment."

- 4.6.4 So teens are not all techno-geeks, but using technology to engage the young persons' market in Elgin's heritage will be important in the future. For example, in the UK the age group 15-24 in the period January-June 2010 reported that 64% of them used a feature phone and 36% a global smartphone. They spend less time searching the internet than adults but more time on Facebook. (Source: www.nielsen.com) Facebook and other social media is a principal source of peer suggestion for young people.

4.7 Beyond demographics

"There are three classes of people: those who see; those who see when they are shown; those who do not see." Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519).

- 4.7.1 Demographics only really describe visitor characteristics. More informative, with respect to targeting interpretation, is understanding motivation, values and attitudes influencing behaviour and decision making by people acting to satisfy their needs. Clearly visitor awareness, prior knowledge and experience, cultural identity, and perception of quality and value are factors that affect their motivation to visit and select heritage experiences.
- 4.7.2 As suggested by those who visit Johnstons Cashmere Heritage Centre, some of Elgin's heritage consumers appear to love authenticity, innovation in creativity, technology, and luxury. It is uncertain, however, how many of Johnstons' visitors find their way to the city centre. Product (cashmere) analysis suggests they are well educated on the whole, they probably vote for economic leadership but support progressive social views, like the countryside and the arts, are immersed in the Internet and social media, believe food is a celebration of the day, earn more, spend more and demand more from just about everyone. These characteristics need to be considered in order to attract them elsewhere in Elgin.
- 4.7.3 Some visitors come to Elgin because they are motivated to find out about and experience the historic cityscape. To communicate with them, clear thinking and planning are needed on what facts and information are presented to them if concise and clear interpretation, that really will increase their knowledge and understanding, is to be achieved. This requires a depth and richness of interpretive material which allows people to pick and choose their own engagement level.
- 4.7.4 A second, probably much larger, group of visitors are those who stroll or 'dip in' to Elgin's heritage apparently in an aimless fashion. The French term 'flaneur'⁴ describes them quite well. This aimlessness disguises a level of interest that probably is not classifiable as formal learning but is symptomatic of a general engagement in built and cultural heritage and 'interesting places' but in a more impulsive, fun and self-fulfilling way.

4.8 Renewal

⁴ Urry J 2002 *The Tourist Gaze* 2 ed Sage, London.

- 4.8.1 Heritage interpretation like all businesses needs constant investment in new products and rapidly changing lifestyles mean that we need to be constantly researching the profile and interests of our potential future audiences.

5 Review of existing interpretive provision

5.1 Visitor Journey

- 5.1.1 Pre-arrival touch points like web sites, social media, leaflets or signs should begin well before a visitor arrives in Elgin. These should provide the visitor with choice and, as far as possible, be barrier free. For first time or infrequent visitors these are important signals as they set the tone for the visit by informing and creating expectations.
- 5.1.2 However, Elgin's web presence is sparse and confusing to the consumer with a mixture of branding and messages and currently the paucity and location of signs near to or in the city centre may present barriers to visitors even finding sites like Ladyhill. The online Moray tourism presence with sites like moray-tourism.info, www.visitmoray.co.uk and www.moray.gov.uk is underdeveloped.



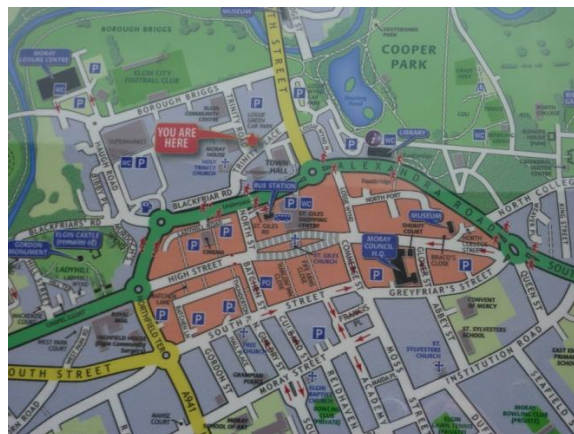
Elginscotland.org screen shot



Elgin entry sign

5.2 Orientation on arrival – a missed opportunity

- 5.2.1 On arrival visitors encounter orientation maps in a consistent, if rather plain, format and style; ubiquitous to many urban locations. Map boards have been erected in car parks in the City Centre – Lossie Green, Northfield Terrace, Moray Street, and Ladyhill and at the A96 underpass. Not interpretation per se, and while they do offer a welcome, they are perhaps a missed opportunity to generate excitement and enthusiasm about Elgin's historic environment.



Map board in Lossie Green Car Park with detail

- 5.2.2 For the first time visitor key sites like the castle and, to a certain extent, the Cathedral, are not clearly signed and many heritage features are hidden. The extent of the survival of the medieval close pattern off the High Street is not immediately obvious to the casual visitor.
- 5.2.3 The A96 cuts through the city and crossing points, near to the city centre, on this busy road are confined to an underpass and an over bridge. Neither fit well with the obvious Trail route.

5.3 Public realm interpretation

- 5.3.1 Public realm interpretation is a 'mixed bag' of plaques, panels and dating from recent decades. See Clause 6.5 in the Conservation Area Appraisal and 4.34 in the Conservation Area Management Plan.
- 5.3.2 Many are not well placed and some are in poor repair. Some are of historic interest, and should be preserved and repaired as required. They mostly present factual information and there are rarely interpretive themes presented.



Selection of plaques

- 5.3.3 Two other sites of interpretive note in the vicinity of the Heritage Trail route are the Anderson Institute Gardens and Batchen Lane.



Batchen Lane panel



Anderson Institution Gardens

- 5.3.4 Street installations offering map based information and orientation rather than interpretation in 'heritage' style cast black and gold mounting carrying the city crest are located in car parks and the city centre. Bollards, lighting columns, tree guards, seating and utilities boxes, litter bins and planters are in the same style. See Clauses 6.1.7 in the Conservation Area Appraisal and 5.11 the Conservation Area Management Plan. Being of a ubiquitous style, common to many other urban areas across the UK, as with the map boards they are, perhaps, a missed opportunity to project and interpret the essence of Elgin's character.



'Heritage' street furniture

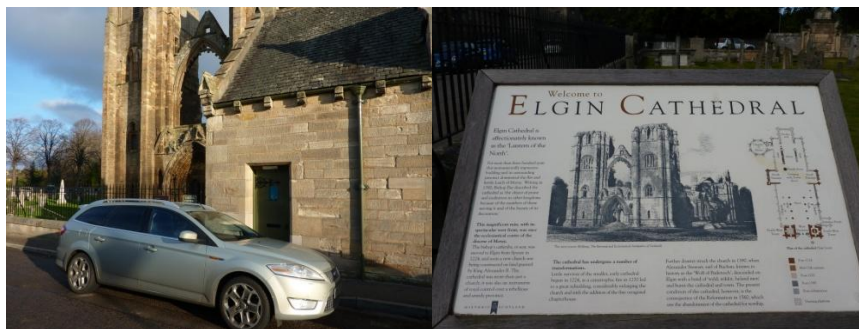
- 5.4 Site based interpretation

- 5.4.1 The castle only has a traditional plaque carrying 20 words affixed to the cottage wall at the foot of Ladyhill, with a corresponding one for the Duke of Gordon monument. There is a simple viewfinder panoramic plinth erected on the hill top in 2010. See the photographs above.
- 5.4.2 Ladyhill is a scheduled ancient monument and subject to strict legislative protection. Anything other than very minor works on the hill would be unlikely to receive consent. From time to time grass strimming is undertaken and litter is collected. Known as a place where alcohol and other substances are consumed, the presence of drinkers can make the site a little intimidating to visitors. There is no physical protection to the exposed remains and the remnants of the castle walls are slowly breaking down. Hence, although providing an excellent view point over the city assisted by a recently installed indicator and getting up close to the Duke of Gordon's tower, the Ladyhill experience is far from ideal. The condition of the hill has been a source of concern in the past and newspapers record complaints about the state of the hill in 1886, 1888 and 1893.
- 5.4.3 A modern panel interpreting 'Medieval Elgin' including the castle and illustrated by a colourful artistic rendition is located on a low lectern style sandstone plinth at the northern entrance to the under pass from the Boroughbriggs car park. Some superficial damage was evident.



Underpass panel and Ladyhill indicator

- 5.4.4 The entrance to the Cathedral Visitor Centre is rather small and unobtrusive with parked cars right in front of the door – see below. Open all year, Historic Scotland has provided interpretation on the Cathedral in the ground floor room and around the viewing platform on the north tower. The emphasis is on the building and its architecture rather than on people associated with the Cathedral and its place in Elgin's heritage. Little in the visitor centre, at present, provides much incentive for visitors to explore Elgin further.



Elgin Cathedral entrance to Visitor Centre and panel

- 5.4.5 Cathedral visitors are presented with a large number of facts in substantive text based panels with topic based titles like – the founding, the building, architectural context, religious life and the Reformation. There is a useful model showing the original structure. Interpretive panels on the site appear to be from several different periods with varying use of fonts, colours, illustrations and mountings. Many of the surviving carved stonework fragments are in storage off site. The Bishop's House is not currently accessible by the public.



Information Panels Elgin Cathedral

- 5.4.6 The mosaic on the Plainstones, by Allan Potter, installed in 1996, was in poor condition and has now been removed. Remaining and apparently on the site of the Old Tollbooth, is Potter's pyramid shaped structure, topped by a crown, symbolising the royal burgh, and sitting on a Hopeman sandstone plinth with carved heads of a stag, salmon, bull and ram. See picture below.
- 5.4.7 Cast bronze images depicting Elgin's development and text with a Braille translation run around the pyramid base. Although entitled 'Tollbooth Interpretation' basic factors like the size of the font used in the text and the patina on the bronze reducing the contrast of the three dimensional images mean its interpretive effectiveness is muted. As public art the structure has some merit, but it is not interpretation.



Tollbooth Interpretation – city centre Elgin

- 5.4.8 Johnstons Cashmere Heritage Centre includes a well-designed 'corporate' display telling the story of the company and, in part, the story of woollen textiles, especially cashmere. Of relevance to the hills and moors of Moray is the story of sporting tweed produced by Johnstons.

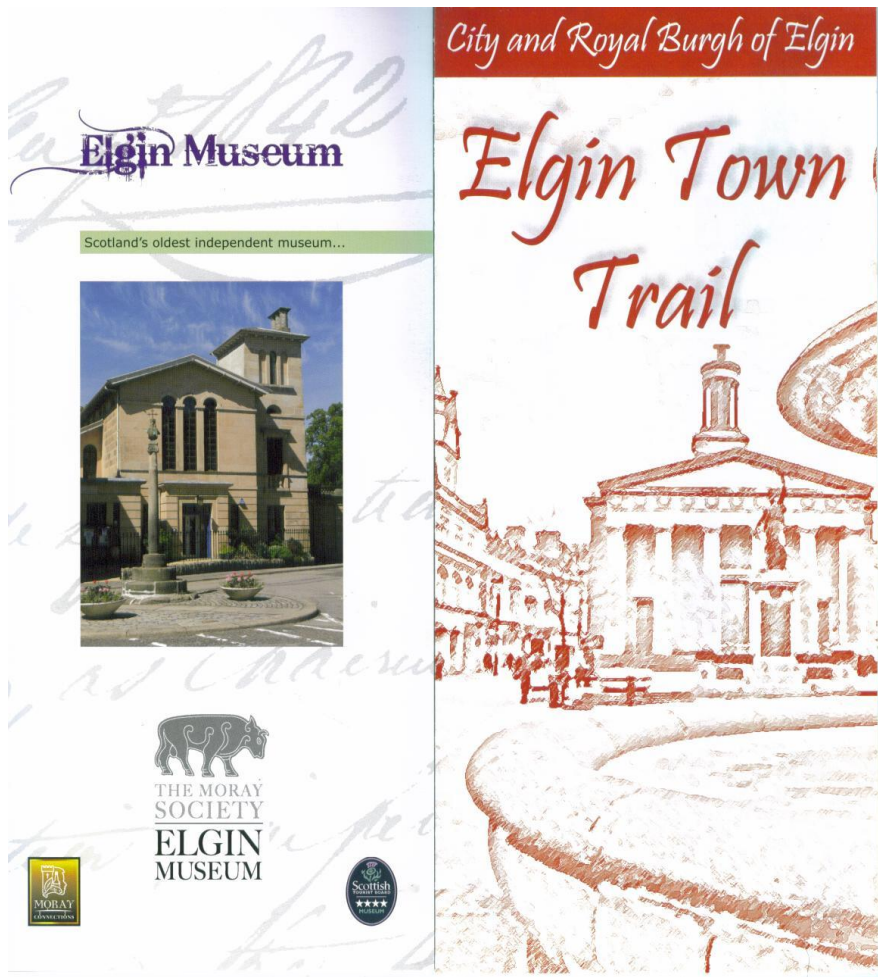


Johnstons Cashmere Mill and Visitor Centre

- 5.4.9 Elgin Museum provides an interesting set of displays and artefacts in a formal museum setting. Owned and operated by the Moray Society (1836), the museum is described as Scotland's oldest independent museum (1843).
- 5.4.10 Refurbished in the 1980s, in 2003 Elgin Museum received £500,000 from the HLF to further develop displays. Visitor numbers for 2010 were around 6800 but the trend appears to be downwards. The museum has an entry charge and is closed over the winter. A volunteer conducts heritage tours around the city on a Saturday during the summer season. The museum has a promotional leaflet – see below.

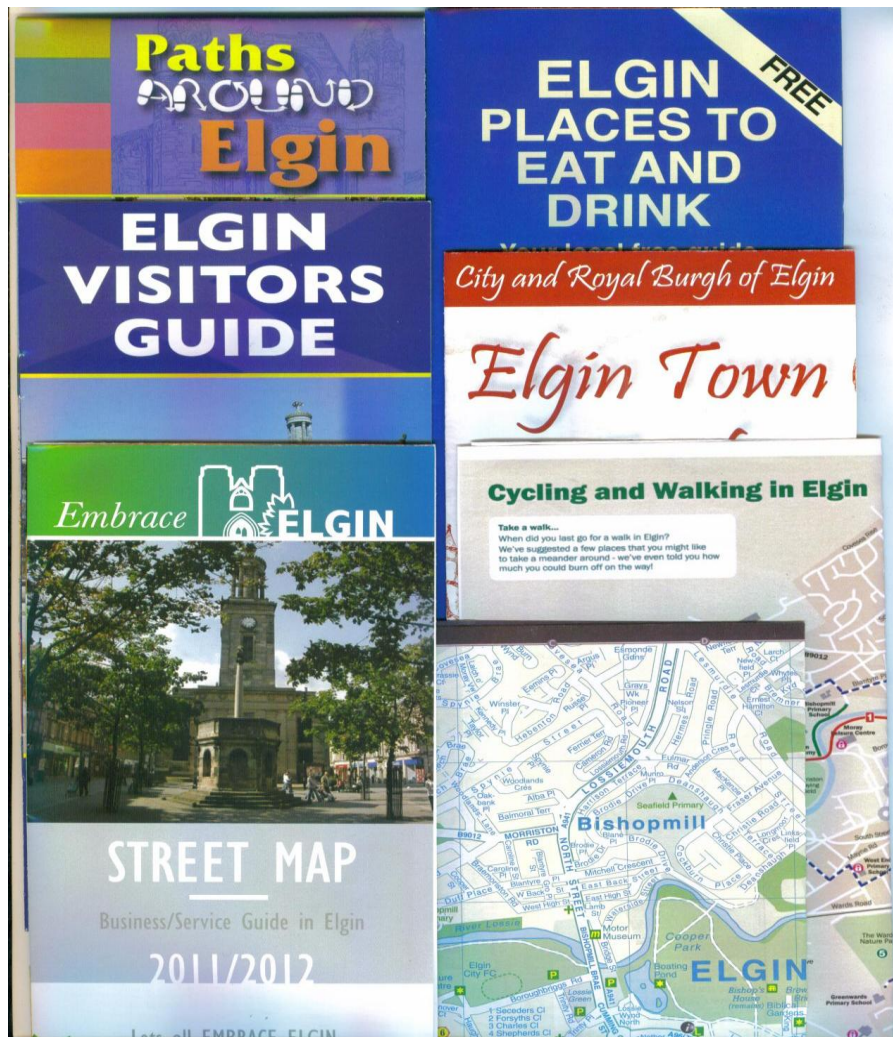
5.5 Text based interpretation

- 5.5.1 There is an existing Elgin Town Trail leaflet dated 1983 which identifies 21 sites in Elgin based around a walk of approximately 1.5 hours. It contains detailed historic information rather than interpretation – see below.
- 5.5.2 The leaflet was re- published by Elgin Business Action in cooperation with the Moray Society and is available on request at the TIC in the library and at the museum.



Elgin Museum Leaflet and Town Trail Leaflet

- 5.5.3 There are seven different styles of Elgin street map currently in circulation. See below:



Examples of Maps or Leaflets including maps referring to Elgin

5.6 Events programme

5.6.1 The link between city centre events and heritage themes appears to be more implicit than explicit and no formal evaluation of events is available. However, at face value, many of the current events seem to have good potential links with one or other of the proposed core themes of protection, power, philanthropy and prosperity. The food festival, summer festival and continental markets on the Plainstones have significant historic pedigrees and could form an interpretive sub theme in their own right.

5.7 Business staff as interpreters

5.7.1 No formal evaluation was carried out but it is to be assumed staff in shops, pubs and cafés may be asked questions about Elgin by visitors. These are critical customer touch points and it is uncertain what, if any, clear messages on Elgin's city centre heritage are given to visitors by staff in these businesses.

5.8 Barrier free interpretation

- 5.8.1 Linked to interpretation, all ability access is a legislative requirement, often a condition of public sector funding, and an underlying principle of effective interpretation. Access is not merely physical but includes social and intellectual access too.
- 5.8.2 Current interpretation in the city has employed Braille on at least two more recent installations, but some are not user friendly in terms of location and content. Plaques are hidden from view or located high up on buildings away from sight lines. There is evidence of decay. The lettering on the new black and gold finger posts is rather small for people with visual disabilities or too high to be clearly seen by those confined to wheelchairs.



Obscured text on Tollbooth Interpretation

5.9 Benchmarking

- 5.9.1 Of relevance to interpretation planning and wider visitor management for Elgin is an international visitor attraction benchmarking exercise by Scottish Enterprise. This found investment in visitor attraction management systems delivered a high quality experience connecting people with the attraction is characterised by seven elements.
1. Attractive, unambiguous and a strong sense of arrival with accurate information, signage and good first impression;
 2. High standards of service by customer focused motivated staff;
 3. On site staff who have a genuine pride in the attraction and themselves;
 4. Clean well maintained amenities grounds and landscaping equipment and exhibitions (nothing broken, looking fresh and no litter);
 5. A product appropriate to its market which is promoted with a strong sense of place, innovation and regular revamping;
 6. High quality retail and catering attractively presented;
 7. Real emphasis on entertaining the guest through activities, events and animation;
- 5.9.2 Few attractions in the SE study had invested large sums in capital development like high cost intensive exhibits. Instead, small scale innovations, novel events and effective marketing alongside consistent high quality customer service had been preferred. Knowing and understanding and staying close to the customer and capturing their feedback are essential.
- 5.9.3 The benchmarking exercise emphasised useful lessons for Elgin:
- The importance of appealing to the widest possible audience;
 - Identifying unique selling point is important;
 - All ability access is important to meet 5 star standards;

- Extending the season can present alternative interpretive opportunities;
- It is important that events, clubs and activities are linked to core purpose, well promoted and their effectiveness monitored;
- A strong volunteer base and local support is an important success factor;
- Active innovative marketing is a key factor, in attracting visitor numbers;

6 Relevant sources and available research

6.1 Sources

- 6.1.1 Elgin has a wealth of written material in archives, books and pamphlets, architects plans, genealogical records, newspapers and maps. Newspaper articles are a rich source of features recorded in everyday language. There are over 20,000 photographs in Moray's records – many of them relevant to Elgin. Clause 1.33 of the Conservation Area Appraisal lists sources.
- 6.1.2 Valuable for interpretation, are personal historical accounts of visits to Elgin by noted travellers including among others, Taylor, Defoe, and Johnson and Boswell.
- 6.1.3 Artists and illustrators like Pont, Slezer, Alexander in the 1830s and Billings have provided some wonderful contemporary images of the city and its development. George Souter (1845 -1920) painted a number of closes, mostly now gone, showing their condition during the Victorian period.
- 6.1.4 In terms of accounts that can add authentic detail and colour to interpretive content the following sources have been identified. This is not an exhaustive list. The challenge is to filter out key themes and storylines from this wealth of detail.

Table 4 Sources

BOOKS	AUTHOR
The Story of Elgin's High Street and Closes	Mary Byatt 2006
Victorian Elgin	Mary Byatt
Lost Moray and Nairn	Bruce Bishop
Elgin from Old Photographs	Jenny Main
A History of General Anderson 1745 – 1824	Peter Willis
The land and people of Moray Parts 6 and 7	Bruce Bishop 2002
Burgess, Merchant and Priest Burgh Life in the Scottish Medieval Town	Derek Hall 2002
The White Bird Passes	Jessie Kesson 1958
Life in the Closes	Charles Archibald 1938
The Pageant of Morayland	James Ritchie 1932
Elgin Past and present	H B Mackintosh 1914
The History of the Province of Moray	Lachlan Shaw 1882 (new ed)
The Great Moray Floods of 1829	Sir Thomas Dick Lauder 1873
Sketches of the past and present state of Moray	William Rhind 1839 - editor
PAPERS	AUTHOR
The archaeology of Elgin:	Derek Hall, et al - Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1998
Dogs, cats and horses in the Scottish medieval town.	C Smith - Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1998
Responses to epidemic disease in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Scotland.	Richard Oram, Centre for Environmental History, University

	of Stirling.
WEBSITES	
http://www.elginscotland.org/	

7 Interpretive themes

7.1 Central themes statements

- 7.1.1 The overriding aim of interpretation for Elgin is to engage visitors in better understanding Elgin's significance amid their many motivations for visiting. People remember themes - they forget facts. Elgin city centre central heritage interpretation theme statements are based around four interlinked words **protection, power, philanthropy and prosperity**. See Table 5.
- 7.1.2 These themes are, in essence, the underpinning values and mind-set of the people who made Elgin's heritage since its inception as a Royal Burgh during the reign of David 1st (1124-53). They are what visitors today should know, share and take away with them as the heritage framework that has and still does make Elgin a special place. Interpretation should foster debate about Elgin, its legacy of heritage and relevance today.
- 7.1.3 **On their own the words have little specific meaning but the theme statements have been worked in Table 5 and are accompanied by their rationale.**
- 7.1.4 Critical to the themes of **protection, power, philanthropy and prosperity** are the storylines involving people – both everyday folk and historical characters.

Figure 2 Central themes

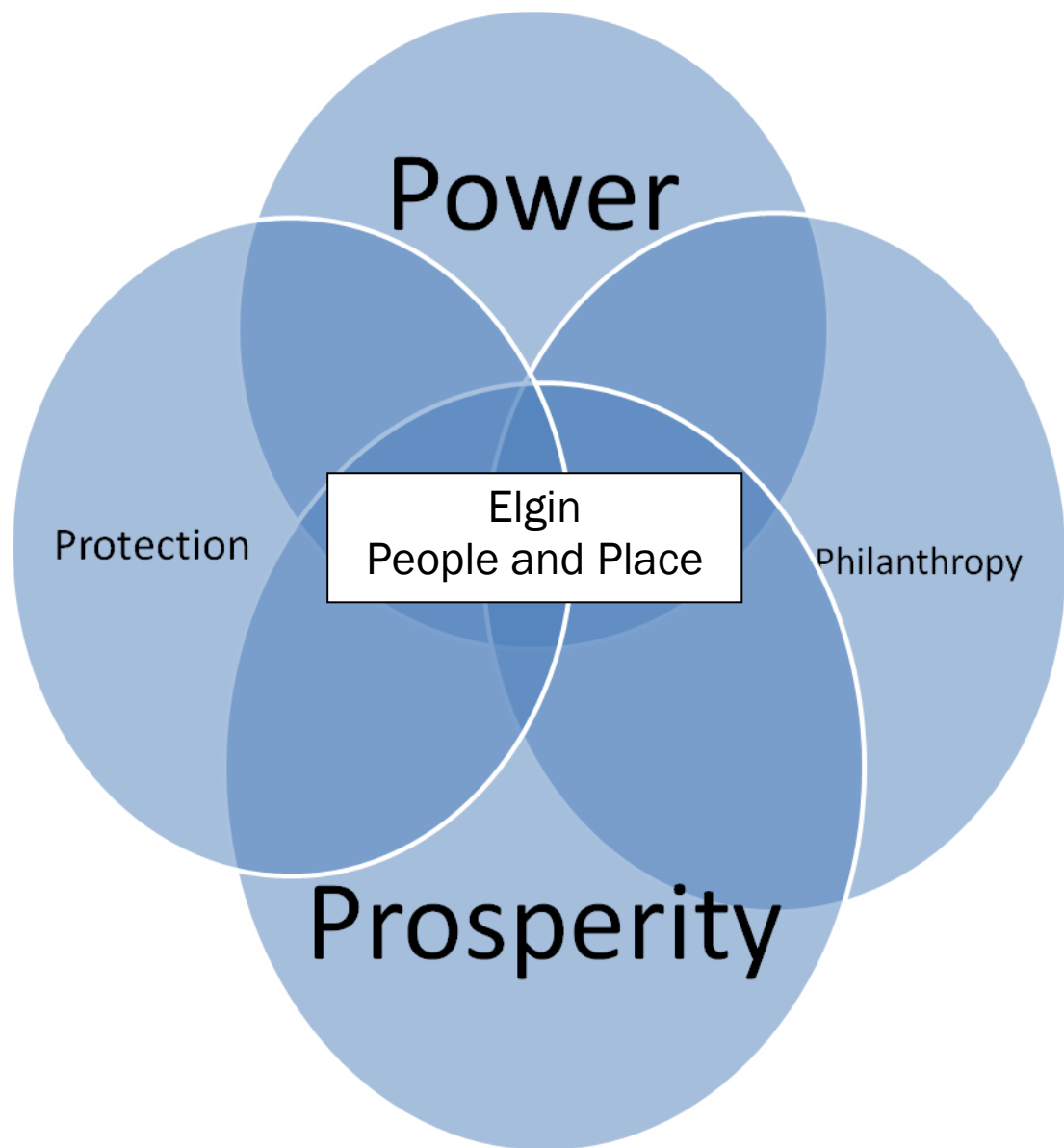


Table 5 Theme Statements and rationale

PROTECTION

Elgin's castle provided the essential protection and security this frontier settlement needed to be established. The medieval pattern of forelands and backlands off a single main street, still clearly seen in the city today, arose under this protection.

- Giving security to people and place the castle protected the burgh and the ford over the River Lossie.
- Responding to climate and weather in this part of Scotland Elgin's narrow streets and closes still protect and shelter people in a local micro-climate.

POWER

Elgin Cathedral is of European importance and its remarkable stonework and setting provide a vivid picture of the extraordinary power of the church and the bishop in medieval Scotland.

- Elgin has the potent symbols of a medieval power base – the royal castle set upon its motte at one end of the historic burgh, and at the other, the Cathedral which demonstrates most vividly the power and influence invested in the church and the prelates.
- Elgin is remarkable for having enjoyed a long and close association with the most influential families of Scotland and the North East and the buildings and monuments the left behind are clear markers of rank and esteem.

PHILANTHROPY (and Patronage)

People from humble Elgin backgrounds made their mark on the world but never forgot their city roots with, what would be today, multimillion pound philanthropic gestures. Fortunes won in far off places were reinvested in Elgin's fine building fabric and echoes of Roman and Greek styles still dominate the High Street and skyline. Penitential patronage was encouraged by the pre reformation church.

- Elgin's sons made a public statement of their rags to riches fortunes and demonstrated their philanthropy and patronage through fine buildings with allegory and echoes of classical empires – Rome in particular. By the first decades of the 19th century Elgin's citizens, flushed with pride, invested in the rebuilding of their city.
- An astonishing, and hitherto unrecognised legacy for today's and future generations, is the remarkable display of carved stonework which adorns the buildings of the city centre. It reflects a long tradition of highly skilled craftsmanship.
- War memorials, fountains and other features point towards enlightened civic pride
- Philanthropy may have come at a cost with involvement in less attractive elements of empire – soldiering and slavery

PROSPERITY

A wealth of historic buildings, stonework and stories tell of unique and prosperous past times and point to future opportunities for Elgin.

- City centre prosperity is demonstrated in the variety of shop fronts, from all periods, showing that the trading and consumer exchange process has gone on for centuries.
- Elgin has always made effective use of the natural resources of the surrounding countryside's products of barley, wool, timber, stone, with value added by industrial processes using water driven mills as a source of power.
- Architecture, sculpture and now brands of woollens, food and whisky show Elgin is a place of enduring quality of workmanship and product.
- Nothing is more important or powerful than reputation. A strong reputation helps lever opportunity and success. Elgin's prosperity is based on solidity and reliability – this has to be safeguarded.
- Times were not always good – disease, poverty and crime were part of Elgin's history
- The lives of everyday Elgin folk contribute to the story – their attitudes, food, clothes, health, jobs, houses and animals.

Figure 3. Around each of the central themes there are a series of primary themes and sub themes illustrating the many story lines and significances that could be communicated through the Heritage Trail.

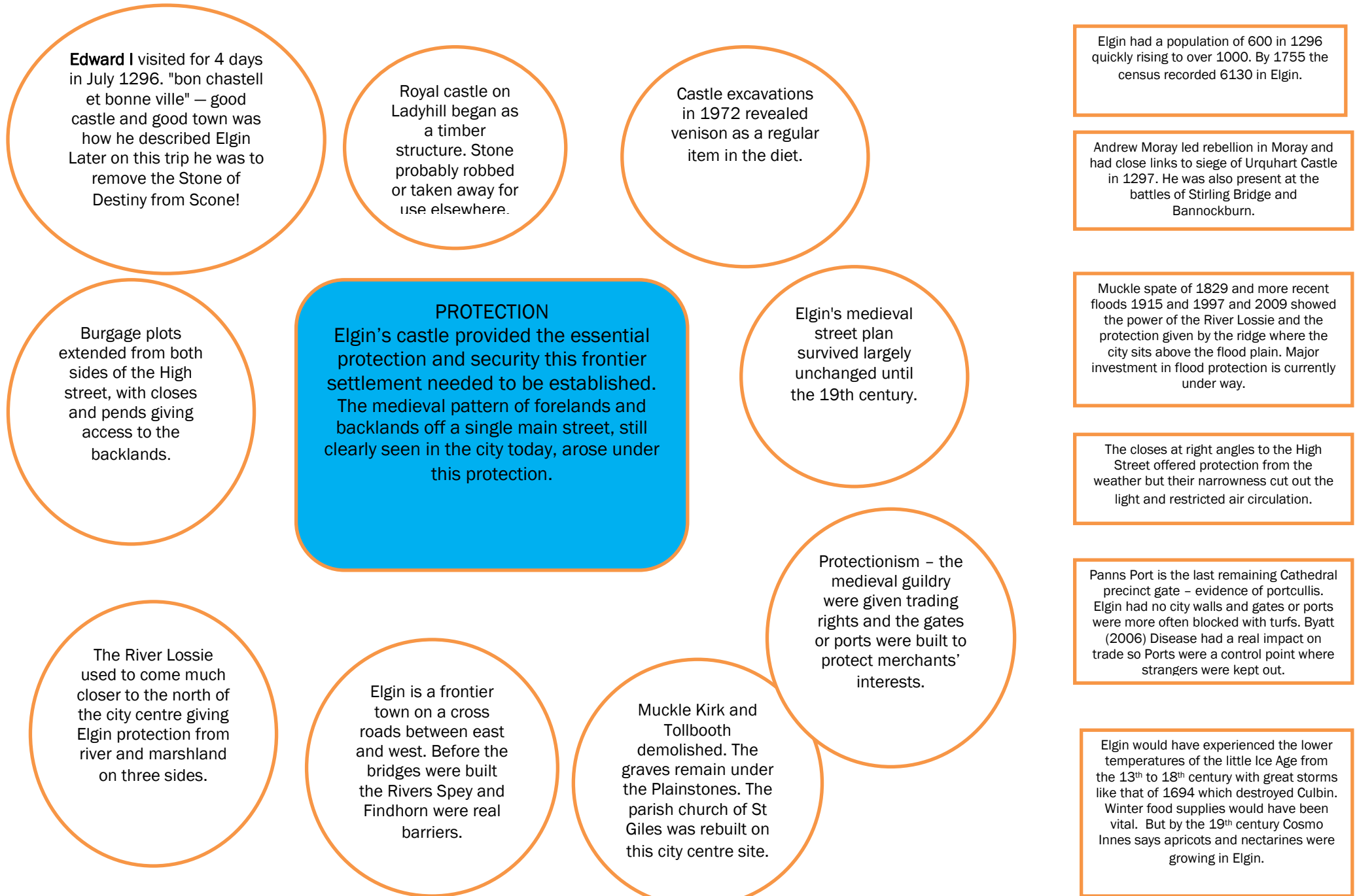


Figure 4.

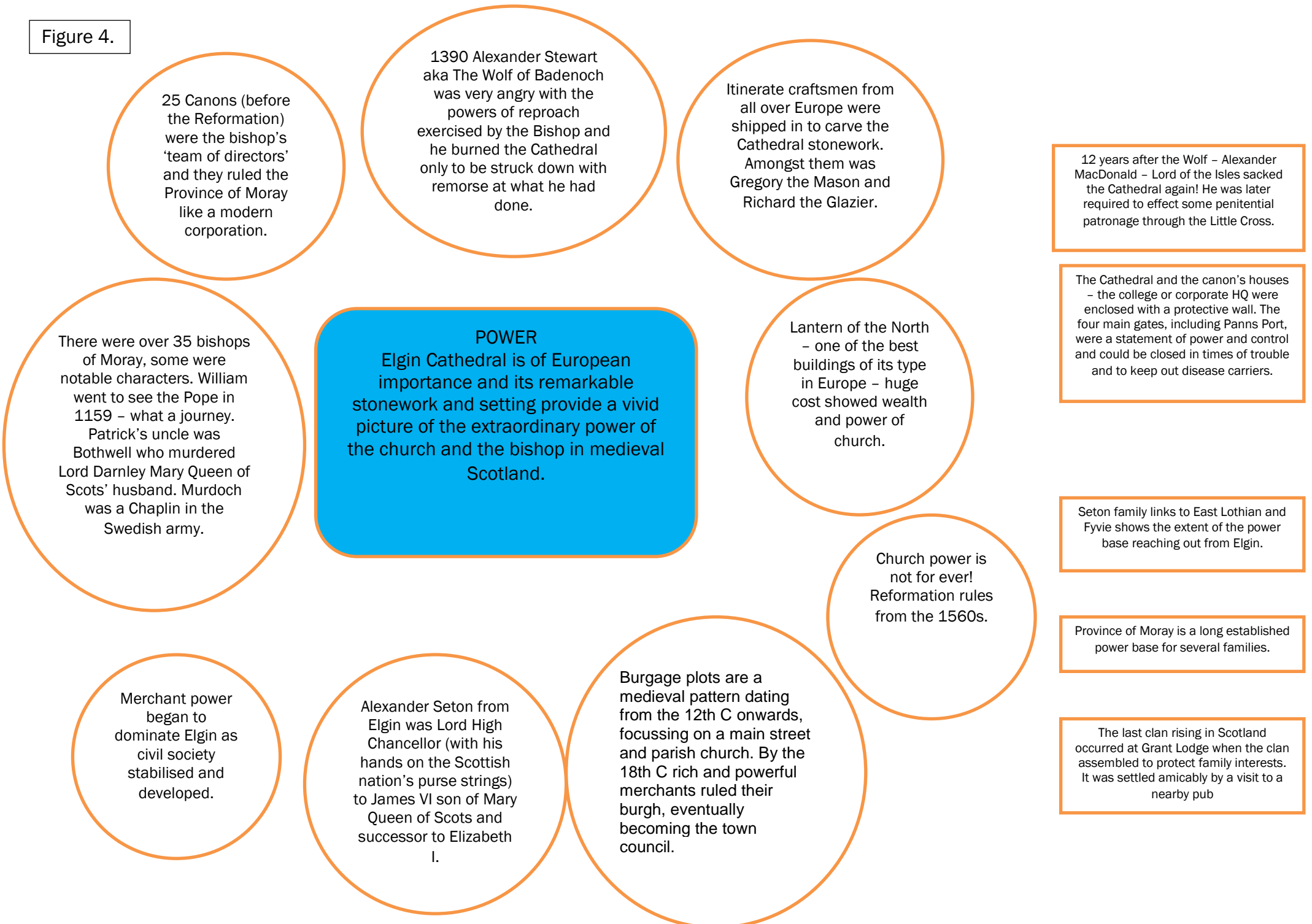


Figure 5.

The Duke of Gordon's monument on Ladyhill. Is this a philanthropic city monument or an expression of power and rank?

General Andrew Anderson's Institute for the Education for the Young and care of the elderly was funded by a huge gift of £70,000.

Born in an Elgin close Dr Alexander Gray, a surgeon, large donation of £20,000 provided for new hospital in Elgin.

1836 Elgin and Morayshire Scientific Society was formed. By 1843 Elgin had one of the first private museums in Scotland.

PHILANTHROPY (and Patronage)
People from humble Elgin backgrounds made their mark on the world but never forgot their city roots with, what would be today, multimillion pound philanthropic gestures. Fortunes won in far off places were reinvested in Elgin's fine building fabric and echoes of Roman and Greek styles still dominate the High Street and skyline.

Civic pride – the old St Giles Church or the Muckle Kirk was demolished in 1826 and replaced by the neo classical St Giles Church. The Tollbooth was taken down in 1843 and replaced by a fountain.

Public Art in Elgin was frequently provided by wealthy benefactors. Sculptures – crosses (penitential patronage), fountains, war memorials etc.

Land was given in medieval times to Black and Grey Friars - Dominican and Franciscan - who in return provide some social services.

PATRONAGE
Patronage is perhaps an early form of philanthropy. The giver of patronage often expected something in return. The Bishops and the Church used patronage to help maintain their power.

Shaw, in 1760, complaining about architectural change - "But the luxury and vanity of our times know no bounds."

Cosmo Innes complaining in 1860 about the 'vulgar modernity' of new buildings described the loss of Elgin's early architecture as a 'veritable orgy of destruction.'

Links to Muckle Kirk remain in the history of the Big Bell that rang out from the Muckle Kirk and is now in the Elgin museum.

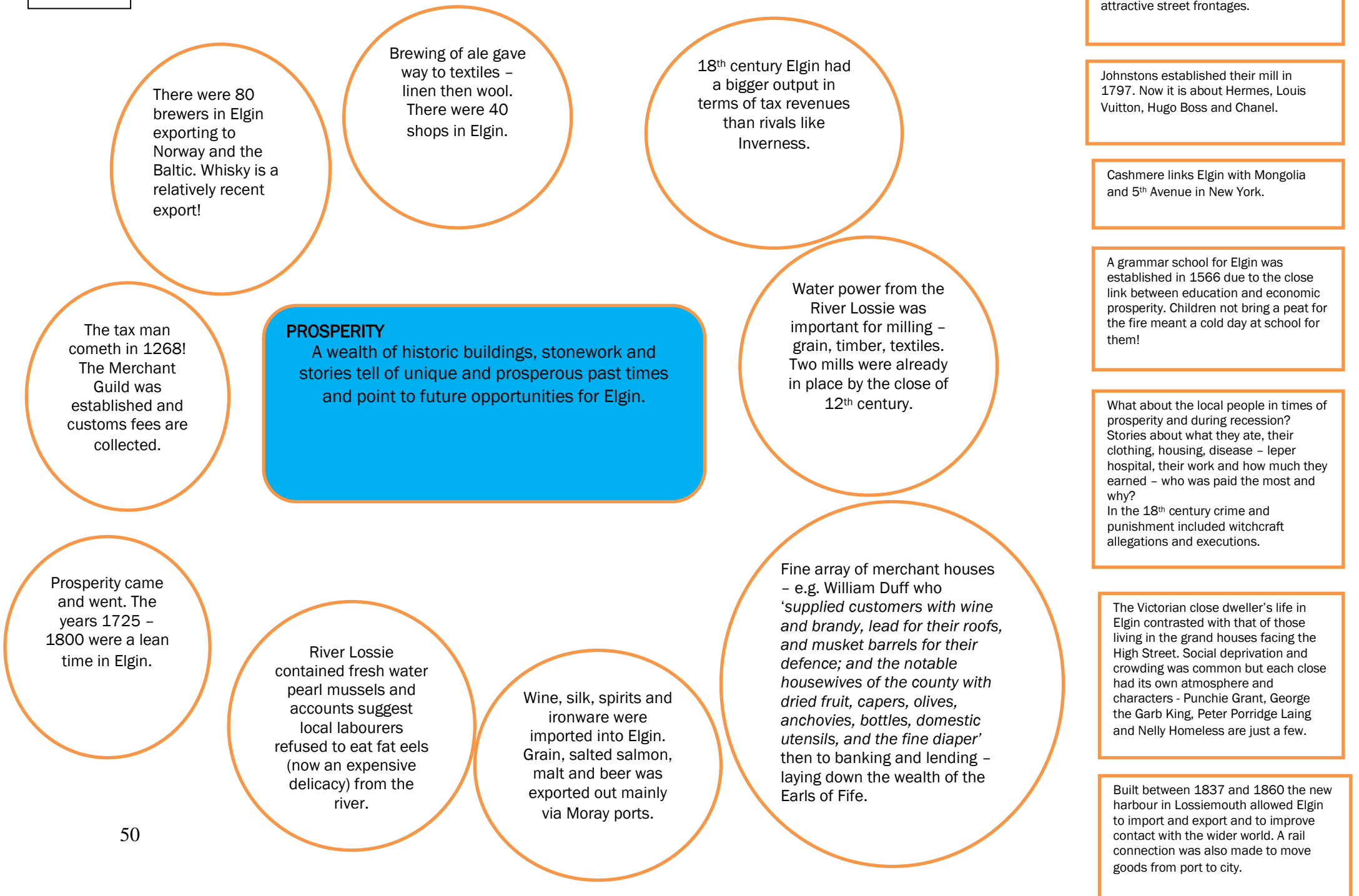
General Anderson and Dr Gray both found fortune with the Honourable East India Company. The HEIC was the first 'corporate' joint state/business venture in the world. Adam Smith denounced the Company as 'a bloodstained monopoly: "burdensome", "useless" and responsible for grotesque massacres in Bengal!

Less attractive elements of wealth creation – like slavery. Large estates around Elgin benefited from investment in places like Demerara in modern Guyana.

Welcome was the name of a black domestic servant at Innes House who was probably the first black face seen on the streets of Elgin and perhaps in the north of Scotland.

I fear they were ill-housed, ill-clothed, ill-fed, not considered by their masters, except as hewers of wood and drawers of water. The beasts of their plough, though starved also, were somewhat better off—their hide, at least, was thicker. It fared ill with such a population in seasons like this, for a bad harvest surely brought famine, and famine brought pestilence; and the marsh fever and ague swept off those whom hunger and the plague spared. For the most part they were slaves, bound to the soil, and bought and sold with it. Cosmo Innes 1860.

Figure 6.



8 Delivering interpretive content

8.1 Visitor needs and learning styles

8.1.1 Most visitors to Elgin will come in their own leisure time and are seeking an enjoyable experience. There are many debates around how people behave in leisure situations with much dependent on the circumstances of satisfying need. In providing interpretation it is intended to layer content and include flexibility and change in order to broaden the choice of how people can satisfy their needs. Two simple learning models are worth bearing in mind in the context of interpretation.

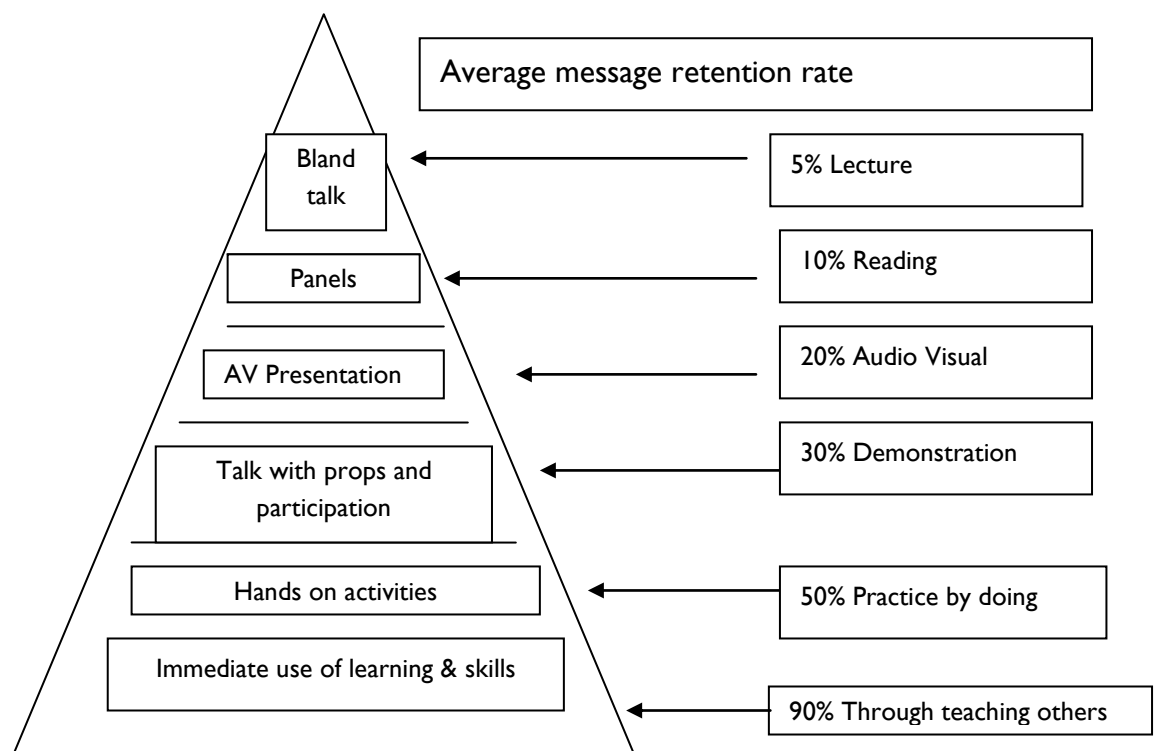
8.1.2 Tell, show, involve model

- Tell me and I'll forget;
- Show me and I may remember;
- Involve me and I'll understand;

8.1.3 The Learning pyramid or Cone model

The percentages in the model are likely to vary and should not be taken as definitive but the principle has some merit and can be a useful guide to exhibition designers, trainers and interpreters.

Figure 7 Learning Pyramid



9 Elgin heritage Trail interpretation proposals

9.1 Interpretive context

9.1.1 The City for the Future Strategy identifies its number one platform for Elgin as the 'High Street First'. Any proposals should provide all visitors with choices to follow and opportunities to engage with a core Heritage Trail linking Ladyhill to the Cathedral via the High Street, visiting Johnstons Cashmere Mill and Cooper Park if they wish.

9.1.2 However, such a Trail must include three elements:

- a) Some kind of striking welcoming, orientation and interpretive facility located in the city centre. This is crucial to the promotion of the Heritage Trail project beyond merely a line marking the Trail on a city map. Signature visitor facilities and visitor orientation are highlighted in the Moray Economic Strategy as being important. This facility should provide both.
- b) Improved digital connectivity promoting the Elgin brand and hence the Heritage Trail to a wider audience. Investment here should be a high priority to encourage visitors and promote footfall in these difficult economic times.
- c) Trail development in association with marketing and enhancement of the entire Elgin visitor experience.

9.1.3 Across the A96 from the city centre in Cooper Park is the unused Grant Lodge, an important piece of Elgin's heritage. The Moray Economic Strategy earmarks Grant Lodge for 'the Moray Story', in association with a Genealogy facility and a Visitor Information Centre. Moray Council and partners have recently agreed to commit funding to the restoration, extension and reuse of Grant Lodge in association with an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund.

9.1.4 From a Heritage Trail perspective, Grant Lodge could complement the city centre facility by interpreting a wider Moray story. The themes of **protection, power, philanthropy and prosperity** could be extended, taking the Province of Moray as a geographical dimension giving the Heritage Trail depth and context. Visitors should be encouraged to explore Moray further. Grant Lodge could provide a fourth Trail node (City centre, museum, Cathedral) to focus interpretation and 'wet weather' provision.

9.1.5 Physically, connections between Grant Lodge and the east west axis of the High Street need improvement. The current A96 over bridge to Cooper Park and the road crossing between the museum and Cathedral (close to the original gate to Grant Lodge) are far from ideal for pedestrians and are off putting for new visitors. To avoid isolating the museum and successfully linking it with Grant Lodge and the Trail from the Castle, along the High Street to the Cathedral good signage, way marking and appropriate road crossings will be essential.

9.1.6 Some comment has been made on the need for several different Trails. It is our view that there is insufficient evidence to suggest demand for, say, a mill Trail or a close Trail or a medieval Trail at this stage. Interpretation on a future web site may allow for greater individual choice by topic but the audience analysis suggests visitors have a more general interest and a single core Trail will deliver the greatest benefits and should be given priority.

- 9.1.7 In preparing this Interpretive Plan a number of key players have contributed their views on the Heritage Trail. The central four themes of **protection, power, philanthropy and prosperity** seem to have broad support and this plan provides a range of supporting Trail sub themes.
- 9.1.8 The Heritage Trail requires compartmentalised, but complementary, interpretive experiences that facilitate visitor engagement with Elgin's historic environment. Interpretation should not proscribe, but provide the visitor with choices. Visitors can then engage with city heritage sites in their own way. A number of steps are proposed. These are summarised in Tables 6, 7 and 8. Each step is further explained in the three subsequent sections.
- Preparation and making best use of existing provision - Section 10;
 - Implementation of new interpretive features - Section 11;
 - In the longer term (dependent on footfall and resources) - Section 12;
- 9.1.9 Bronze proposals are the 'quick win' scenario to get the Heritage Trail up and running. Silver and gold options are akin to further phases requiring additional significant planning and investment.

Table 6: Preparation and Making Best Use of Existing Resources

PREPARATION AND MAKING BEST USE OF EXISTING RESOURCES			
Title	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Step 1 Consultation with partner groups			
Young people's focus groups	X		
Communicating with other partner group	X		
Step 2 Identifying the look and feel of interpretation under an 'Elgin brand'			
Hold a creative workshop	X		
Agree use of branding	X		
Agree title for the Trail	X		
Step 3 Agree management of interpretation			
Creative consultants group	X		
Agree Heritage Trail lead	X		
Step 4 Help businesses gain relevant interpretation skills and benefits			
Heritage Training	X		
Familiarisation trips & Discounted tickets	X		
Retail products & interpretive labelling		X	
Step 5 Remove, relocate, reuse and revitalise existing provision			
Remove and relocate interpretation	X		
QR codes on existing plaques	X		
School engagement with heritage	X		
3D Resin Model		X	
National displays and exhibits		X	
Cathedral site investments	X		

Table 7: Implementation of New Interpretive Features

IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW INTERPRETIVE FEATURES			
Title	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Step 6 Investment in interpretive technology			
Enhanced web presence	X		

Elgin App		X	
MP3 Downloads	X		
Texts from the past		X	
YouTube video for web site	X		
Step 7 Investment in traditional print items			
Base Map	X		
Guidebook	X		
Print materials	X		
Step 8 Investment in public realm interpretation			
Four interpretive panels	X		
Murals – closes	X		
Pavement signs – closes	X		
Pavement Panels		X	
Enhanced lighting regime		X	
Step 9 Interpretive infrastructure			
City Centre Facility		X	
Further investment in Cathedral site		X	
Pavement markers (coin type symbols)		X	
Step 10 Event interpretation			
Events		X	
Costumed guided walks		X	

Table 8: In the Longer Term

IN THE LONGER TERM			
Titles	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Grant Lodge – Heritage and Genealogy			X
Links with sites out of Elgin		X	
24/7 Touchscreens			X
Games app		X	
Augmented reality digital binoculars		X	
Digital footage			X
Interpretive sculpture		X	
Ladyhill virtual interpretation		X	
Ladyhill interpretive facility			X
Cathedral immersive interpretation		X	
Bespoke city centre facility			X
Better links – Cathedral to Johnstons		X	

10 Preparation and making best use of existing resources

10.1 Step 1 - Consultation with partner groups

10.1.1 Initial consultation with the key players likely to be involved in Trail implementation, promotion, delivery and support has been carried out. There are other important groups and partners who should be involved at an early stage.

Young people

- 10.1.2 If teenagers advocate something their friends might just listen. Engaging teens in the preparation and delivery of Elgin's interpretation could be the key to meeting the central project objective of:

"A sense of ownership of and pride in the historical and environmental legacy within Elgin particularly by the younger generation."

- 10.1.3 Specifically it is suggested some age range **focus groups** perhaps 15 -17 and 18 – 23 be convened to consider Elgin's heritage offer. The group would be asked to consider the welcome, interpretive materials and the historic environment to establish what is relevant to these age groups. The Elgin Youth Café has a 'Delta Force' of committed and interested young people that meet monthly and could form the basis for the consultation. Moray College may be a source for the older group.
- 10.1.4 It is further suggested on-going consultation with a younger age group as part of the project, a more modern design style may be required, perhaps influenced more by commercial trends than established historic ones so young people can relate to the historic environment on their own terms and feel able to contribute.

Other partners

- 10.1.5 Consultation has identified a range of other interested parties including 'Friends of Grant Lodge', mill restoration enthusiasts, community groups and others. It is suggested that they could be kept up to date with Heritage Trail proposals through a regular e bulletin.

10.2 Step 2 - Identifying the look and feel of interpretation using an 'Elgin brand'

- 10.2.1 The heritage of the city centre is based on at least 800 years of evolution and so getting the **right look and feel** for interpretive communications elements in the city centre is vital and will have a significant impact on how visitors and local people perceive the Heritage Trail project; its values, quality and objectives.
- 10.2.2 In this respect it is suggested the components of interpretive colour, typography, materials, mapping, words, imagery and illustrations and 3D design are carefully considered and developed. Logically these should work closely with the Moray Speyside brand and guidelines developed by Moray Tourism Development in 2010 and Elgin city BID brand development work. A coordinated events and promotions strategy are highlighted as important by the Moray Economic Strategy.



Logos already used in the city centre

10.2.3 It is suggested a **creative workshop** should be held with partner organisations and Heritage Trail stakeholders to understand and agree what components best reflect the Trail spirit and objectives. There should be a consistent **customer facing** look and feel to all the interpretive material (including off site provision such as websites) that sits comfortably with established brands. Existing logos connected to city centre heritage are shown above.

10.3 Step 3 – Agree management of interpretation

10.3.1 **Consistent implementation and management – content and style** - of the Trail should be the responsibility of the Elgin Bid with partnership support for the entire Trail in addition to partners developing own sites. Businesses should be encouraged to develop their own interpretation within the 4 P framework. Close collaboration with Moray Tourism Development is vital as a healthy Elgin is a healthy Moray and vice versa. Customers wish to see a seamless journey for which confusing logos and styles are not generally helpful.

10.3.2 Specifically, in due course, it is suggested that a group of young people might be invited to become **Creative Consultants** to the project. Ideally they may have access to artefacts and resources relating to Elgin's heritage. They are, after all, responsible for Elgin's future.

10.3.3 The working title for this Interpretive Plan is Elgin Heritage Trail Castle, Cathedral to Cashmere. Since 1801 Elgin Academy has used 'sic itur ad astra', "**This is the way to the stars**" the city motto, as its own and perhaps, along with the 'Lantern of the North' moniker and the image of the huge circular window in the Cathedral ruins here may lie a defining image and style for the Heritage Trail. Other suggestions for the Trail might include:

Elgin Heritage Trail ...

- Carved in stone, clothed in Cashmere;
- The lady, the Wolf, and the cloak of wool;

- Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Surgeon;
- Set in Stone.

10.3.4 It is suggested that the Elgin BID consider capturing further creative ideas for the Trail from businesses and the public. For example, a competition could be run to agree a name for the Heritage Trail?

10.4 Step 4 – Getting business buy in and investment

10.4.1 For the Heritage Trail to be successful, businesses in the city centre need to ‘buy into’ the project. It should not be seen purely as a public sector project.

10.4.2 It is suggested the BID develop **heritage training** through an Elgin heritage ambassador scheme. Frontline staff could be encouraged to develop their own Don’t Miss! Elgin Heritage Interpretation ‘Bucket’ list; **the 10 best things to see and do in Elgin**. They should be encouraged to improve their knowledge of Elgin’s unique historic environment.

10.4.3 **Heritage training** should be extended to Moray Council staff and VIC staff who have direct contact with visitors.

10.4.4 Details of previous familiarisation trips are unknown but staff could usefully visit sites around Elgin, perhaps encouraged by a **discounted ticket** for goods and experiences along the Trail so they can then advise visitors.

10.4.5 Businesses should be encouraged to develop their own **retail products or labelling and packaging** to help interpret Elgin. An Elgin whisky is a more obvious product but jewellery, pottery and even food products like pies could be used to tell the story and be part of the Heritage Trail.

10.4.6 Brighter St Andrews is a visitor payback initiative that has used similar products to interpret the town – for example, a local business has produced a jewellery range inspired by badges worn by pilgrims on their journey to St Andrews.

10.4.7 Empty shop units could house window displays on local heritage prior to re-letting.

10.5 Step 5 - Remove, relocate, reuse and revitalise what we have

10.5.1 A programme is suggested to agree **removal and relocation or refurbishment** of existing interpretive installations, damaged plaques and signs removed or repaired; others relocated to more visible places.

10.5.2 Advice on the relocation and refurbishment of plaques should be part of the public realm strategy. Interpretive plaques are costly to design and produce, and the amount of information displayed is limited by the size of the sign.

10.5.3 **Quick response (QR) codes** like this one are becoming widespread around the world, and particularly in museums and visitor centres. They are small pixelated black and white squares ‘tailor-made for quickly and easily linking to content on smartphones with cameras – including iPhones, Android devices and BlackBerries. They can, for example, be used to launch websites or download files. They also offer an alternative virtual display to costly touch screens, instead allowing the viewer to



engage with the product from within the comfort of their mobile device. It is suggested a small project be piloted in Elgin.

10.5.4 QR codes could be attached to existing plaques allowing people with smartphones to scan the code and access more interpretation. Codes can be created for free do not take up much space, simple to attach and the web content they link to can be updated more easily than a sign or display. A QR code can link people to an online game, a feedback poll, a video or a picture gallery which complements the display and offers the curious visitor extra information. Attaching QR codes to some of the existing plaques is a cost effective way of increasing their interpretive potential.

10.5.5 A suggestion might be that consideration be given to a hard wearing 'bronze style' resin **3 D model of the city centre** replace the 'Potter pyramid' but mounted on the existing sandstone plinth.



Edinburgh Old Town 3D model

10.5.6 Elgin already has a **lighting regime** to help highlight and interpret some key buildings. This should be reviewed through the lighting strategy for the public realm to ensure appropriate features are included. Suggestions are given in Clause 5.12 of the Conservation Area Management Plan.

10.5.7 The Elgin Museum relies on volunteers who work hard with dedication and good humour. Anecdotal evidence suggests many Elgin residents, especially young people, do not regularly visit the museum. Reported visitor numbers show a downward trend with 2010 figures 9% down on those in 2009 and almost 25% down on 2005 figures. As the museum and the Heritage Centre have, potentially, a key role in the Heritage Trail, it is further suggested they be invited to participate in a visitor attractions benchmarking exercise similar to that outlined in section 5.9.

10.5.8 The Cathedral is close to the museum. Simple measures like joint ticketing and promotion could encourage more of the 23,000 people who currently visit the Cathedral to also visit the museum and the city centre.

10.5.9 It is to be welcomed that Historic Scotland are currently upgrading all of the graphics in and around the Cathedral and intend using the Bishop's House for guided tours and plan additional graphic displays in relation to those carved stones which will not be displayed in the Cathedral itself. Ideally this is an opportunity to better link the Cathedral to the city.

Interpretation through Elgin schools

10.5.10 History plays a special role in helping young people understand the present and predict the future by developing their ability to make judgements in light of an understanding of the processes of change. The Trail partners could set the target of ensuring every S1 Elgin school pupil undertakes a guided walk from Castle, Cathedral to Cashmere via the Elgin museum and is exposed to the extent of Elgin's historical evidence from books to films and photographs.

10.5.11 The change to the Curriculum for Excellence presents an opportunity for Elgin's schools to study and use the Heritage Trail for fieldwork. Learning Teaching Scotland's website Scotland's History, SCRAN, Glow, BBC Learning, Scottish Screen and the Heritage Education Forum are all rich sources of digital materials on the historic environment. Space should be made available in any visitor centre and museum for school project work interpreting the historic environment to be displayed.

10.5.12 It is suggested the Heritage Trail project should seek a link with the UHI through Moray College; perhaps linking with undergraduate teaching and postgraduate research projects. Any visitor facility in the High Street may offer an opportunity for hospitality training in association with interpretation.

11 Implementation of new interpretive features

11.1 Step 6 - 'Clicks and Mortar' - Investment in interpretive technology

11.1.1 A **refreshed and focused Elgin web presence**, in association with a wider Moray site is, probably, the most essential element in providing an interpretive platform for the 4 Ps themes to enable visitors to research the destination, download materials and contribute their own content. **Adoption of a good combined ICT portal with search engine optimisation has to be an absolute priority for the Heritage Trail** and the basis of multimedia interpretation. Blogs and podcasts by local writers, interpreters and enthusiastic heritage managers and visitors could be used to keep the site fresh and up to date. The site could combine all the interests of the Elgin partners – public, private, community and voluntary.



Screenshot of Linlithgow – Historic Burgh

11.1.2 Portable web enabled media devices like smartphones allow visitors to make ‘virtual’ **interpretive content** available in situ. General applications or ‘apps’ are downloadable software packages that sit on the user’s device. The downside is that each one has to be tailored to one of the many operating systems used by smartphones. Web ‘apps’ rely on cloud computing with users downloading as required to any device provided there is mobile phone signal. Seeking confirmation of technical possibilities along the Trail route is suggested.

11.1.3 Increasingly web based materials can be viewed via mobile smartphones. This trend is likely to continue. An **Elgin app** could be used to convey tourism information and provide access to interpretive web sites. A free iPhone app has recently been established to help visitors explore Edinburgh’s World Heritage Site. An app for Cairngorms National Park has attracted over 10k page views per month. Visitors can ‘shop’ by site as they progress along the Trail.



Edinburgh Heritage Phone app

11.1.4 **MP3 down loads** to personal media devices are well established but require the user to do some preparation beforehand. Once downloaded, users can take a tour in their own time and at their own pace, taking as long as they want at each point of interest. Alternatively customers can rent or borrow pre-loaded devices.

More sophisticated arrangements can use GPS to trigger interpretive content at specific points on a Trail. Podcasts on elements of Elgin's heritage made available online for downloading are one suggestion.

11.1.5 Texts from the past. In Britain text messages are a highly popular type of communication and over 250 million are sent every day and are available on most phones. In a pilot project it is proposed that visitors might be given the opportunity to 'text' the past and engage with Elgin's historical characters through an electronic messaging service that could provide some of the quotes and context identified in section 2. Costs involves on going line rental.

11.1.6 Young people should be encouraged to contribute to the Heritage Trail via the production of a particular product like a young person's audio Trail downloadable to smartphone or iPod, a short **YouTube** film or display or exhibition; the youth group could be loaned equipment to make this happen. Facebook also offers opportunities for interpretive delivery to a younger audience. Possible options through the Elgin Youth Café, who have expressed interest in being involved, should be explored.

11.2 Step 7 – Developing print items

11.2.1 A new versatile, **user friendly base map** of the city centre be prepared that should be available for use by everyone in print, online and on site and could replace most of the seven different ones currently in circulation. Other heritage Trails have adopted a panorama oblique style that is more user friendly for most people who are unused to maps.

11.2.2 There are a number of local authors who have, over the last decade or so, produced excellent books on Elgin's historic environment. It is suggested that an experienced guidebook author could be invited to help coordinate the preparation of a new contemporary interpretive **Elgin guidebook** including classic historical maps, plans, images and illustrations for those who like a more conventional and tactile way of accessing information. Much of the material and images appears to be readily available. Produced in electronic format downloadable from the web site, a small print run could be a saleable 'souvenir' product and a civic 'gift' item. Businesses could be encouraged to have a copy for their staff to use and schools could also have copies.

11.2.3 In our electronic age print materials still have a place. **Two print items** are suggested for consideration:

- (a) A branded one third A4 style leaflet based around a city map and 4P themes that can be placed in standard racks.
- (b) A leaflet that could be based around a tabloid newspaper style format, called for example the "Elgin Times" which will allow the wealth of quirky stories/ drawing and photographs about everyday life in Elgin gleaned from the historic Burgh statutes and records – but presented in a contemporary style. Common in many tourist destinations including historic towns, seaside resorts and National Parks and funded by advertisements and advertorials these are often produced in association with a local newspaper.

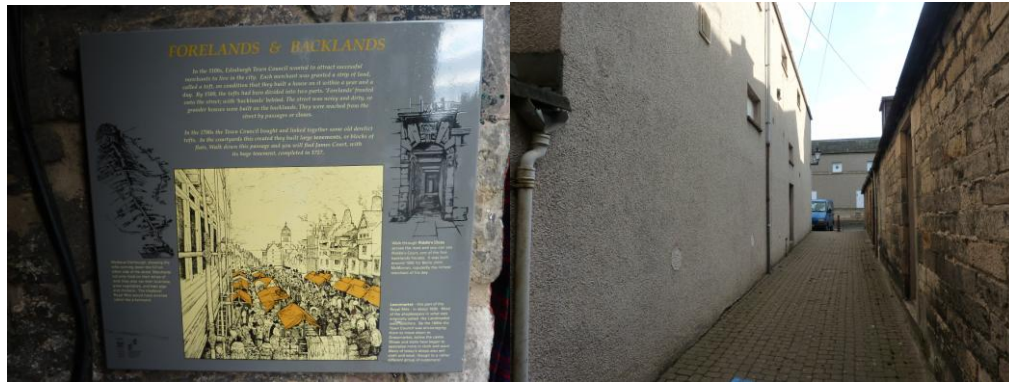
In some destinations this style of interpretation through quirky, fun stories has extended beyond display space onto items like menus and table tops in the café and banners and packaging in the retail space.

11.3 Step 8 - Developing public realm interpretation

- 11.3.1 The network of closes is a strong feature of the historic townscape with the potential to recall aspects of how medieval Elgin used to be. Some Elgin close names already exist in paving. It is suggested a more systematic **installation of engraved signs** with the close name set into the pavement at the entrance to each close with small interpretive panels at selected closes carrying a brief commentary on features of interest. Closes off the Royal Mile in Edinburgh have been highlighted by such signs. Consideration should also be given to reinstating gates at the entries to the closes where these have been removed, which could include images which are relevant to the former names and historic functions of the closes.
- 11.3.2 Modern buildings in closes have resulted in large blank walls where historic buildings once stood. It is suggested that consideration be given to installing **a series of murals** in selected closes displaying life from several periods of Elgin's history. These installations will add colour and life to the closes and encourage visitors to explore further. Murals will carry QR codes to allow visitors to access commentary via their smartphones. Prestonpans in East Lothian is a historic burgh that has developed a mural Trails based on its built and cultural heritage.
- 11.3.3 To celebrate Elgin's rich literary heritage or events (for example where Johnson and Boswell were purported to have had a poor meal) it is suggested **pavement engravings** are installed along the High Street carrying quotes from writers and others relevant to Elgin. These have been used very effectively outside the Writers' Museum in Edinburgh.
- 11.3.4 New **interpretation panels** are suggested for installation at four key locations along the Heritage Trail. Firstly a panel at the foot of Ladyhill telling the castle story and the source of the Ladyhill name, then one at either end of the Plainstones area – the first about the forelands and backlands associated with closes and the second about the Market Square and how St Giles replaced the Tollbooth and the Muckle Kirk. The final one would be about the Cathedral and the walled college, located near the museum, with sight lines to High Street and Cathedral. Panels could include a base map of the city (see 11.2), a zinc rubbing plate for children and subject to noise issues and potential vandalism could possibly include a wind up MP3 player to provide audio interpretation.



Engraved signs and literary quotes set into the pavement



Interpretive panel on close wall in Edinburgh
Blank wall in Elgin close that could accommodate a mural

11.4 Step 9 - New interpretive infrastructure

- 11.4.1 At present, there is a distinct lack of any sense of arrival or welcome in the city centre. This is coupled with a general lack of orientation and a revelation of Elgin's fascinating story in situ – particularly significant for first time visitors asking 'Where am I?', 'Why is this place so significant?', 'What can I do here?'
- 11.4.2 To address this it is proposed that at the heart of the Trail should be **a new city centre facility**. This could be a 'shop window' for Elgin's historic environment. It could also help to broaden the role of the High Street from being a retail place into a mixed leisure and retail destination. Partners and stakeholders should come together to identify a High Street location for an interpretive facility (based on the 4 P themes), possibly with revenue from catering and retail plus a retail offering of local food and craft products. A facility of approximately 75m² would cater for around 30 people based on a space of 2.3m² per person.
- 11.4.3 The facility should provide an essential introduction to Elgin's heritage and house an interactive exhibition and a Visitor Information Centre. A wide range of interpretive media is available to present Elgin's historic environment in an entertaining and innovative manner.



A 'Social floor' installation at the Scotch Whisky Experience – constantly changing set of images projected onto the floor where people walk.

- 11.4.4 To address displacement catering and retail could be offered as a local franchise to an existing business or as a hospitality training arrangement with Moray College (as mentioned in the City for the Future strategy) with a requirement to provide interpretation as part of the commercial arrangement. There could be space for local artists/design students to exhibit and sell their wares. The space should be more 'shop window' than gallery. The core 4P themes could form part of part of the interior décor and the facility could include examples of stonework, textiles, whisky, museum artefacts and characters signposting the Heritage Trail. In addition there could be a theme that "Little Things Matter" – a visual celebration of the detail contained in stone and sculptures on buildings in Elgin, designed to make people look more closely at the unique detail and features.

11.4.5 Historic Scotland is planning welcome additional investment in the Cathedral site, improving graphics and, in particular, displaying more of the carved stone remnants. This could have the potential to offer a real opportunity to encourage more visitors and enhance the connections between the Cathedral and the city centre and beyond to the Johnstons Cashmere Centre. It is suggested that Heritage Trail partners explore collectively interpretive options that utilise the 4P themes to;

- a) **Help increase the footfall into the Cathedral** by – for example
 - Giving a ‘human tale to the ruins’ by telling the story of other important figures associated with the Cathedral and Elgin, notable bishops (power), General Anderson’s childhood (philanthropy), and John Shanks;
 - Exploring if the Cathedral grounds could be made more available for a wider range of suitable events and activities attractive to both residents and visitors;
 - More off season free entry days for local people;
- b) **Develop the links to and from the Cathedral to other sites** by, for example:
 - Visitors could be guided between the castle and the Cathedral by **brass markers (or stars - “This is the way to the stars”)** set into the pavement. The city of Gent in Belgium has installed a Trail marked with brass coins set into the pavement to guide visitors between sites.
 - Exploring opportunities for joint ticketing and site promotion with Elgin Museum and packaging up entry with other sites E.g. buying tickets at Johnstons. Pricing policy may also influence demand as single adult entry to the Cathedral and Museum is £5 and £4 respectively where as a joint Cathedral and Spynie Palace ticket is £6.50. (2011 prices)
- c) **Off-site interpretation that gives a context to the Cathedral and encourages entry to the site**
 - Panel as noted in 11.3.4

11.4.6 In the working title of this project – Castle, Cathedral to Cashmere - the partners have identified the castle as a key element in the programme. This site, although a cornerstone of the Trail, is currently its weakest element. Linking both this and Ladyhill physically to the Heritage Trail will pose a number of challenges. In particular a strong interpretive ‘hook’ would be required to consolidate the castle element within the Trail. To access the castle on Ladyhill from the city centre, visitors have to cross two busy roads and ascend several sets of steep, uneven stone steps. Without improvements being considered this part of the Trail will receive fewer visitors although there is an excellent view of the city and of the surrounding countryside to be enjoyed from the top.

11.4.7 Given the constraints of topography and the designation of the site as a scheduled ancient monument, making Ladyhill fully accessible could prove very difficult. In the meantime, installation of a panel at the foot of the steps as noted in 11.3.4, obvious minor physical improvement works to the steep stone steps onto the hill and additional imaginative lighting schemes should be further explored. Further options for Ladyhill are proposed in section 12. Given the importance of Ladyhill to the Trail these options need active consideration.

11.5 Step 10 - Event interpretation

- 11.5.1 The link between the existing Events Programme and the 4 P interpretive themes and their outcomes could be made more explicit and events could be formally evaluated against interpretive outcomes.
- 11.5.2 **More innovative first person interpretive activities** – costumed and theatrical – may help to attract new audiences and to re-engage regular city centre visitors. Visitors could be given a proper sense of arrival to the city centre through the use of costumed interpreters re-enacting scenes from Elgin's past on high days and holidays. A pilot programme could be investigated.



Costumed tours in Edinburgh

- 11.5.3 Opportunities exist for more **'theatrical' guided walks** based on the Heritage Trail, perhaps with costumed characters from the past telling stories of famous or infamous Moravians. The city has its share of witches, criminals, fraudsters and gangsters! Dr Johnson and James Boswell stayed at the Red Lion Inn in the close of the same name and complained about the food. In 1995 23 skeletons were located in graves under the Plainstones. Most people going shopping on a Saturday afternoon will not realise they are walking over an old graveyard.

12 In the longer term

12.1 Ladyhill and the Castle

- 12.1.1 In the longer term the best opportunity to interpret Ladyhill may lie at the base of the steps. The two unoccupied war veteran's cottages, named Sulva and Messines, and the commemorative garden are in Common Good Fund ownership. Consideration should be given to creating **an interpretive experience at this site focused on the castle** but with more display space for art and literary exhibition/events.
- 12.1.2 The garden space could be used for display of salvaged Elgin stonework, as the sheltered arcade was originally intended to do. The connection with Sulva Bay on the Gallipoli Peninsula where men from the Elgin squadron of the Scottish Horse Regiment died in one of WW1's most futile campaigns should not be lost. Messines Ridge near Ypres was a key WW1 battle after the Somme. Removed in 1940, Ladyhill was the location for a 'Russian' cannon apparently donated by the 'Secretary at War' in 1858.
- 12.1.3 The literature (Jessie Kesson's accounts in particular) and local anecdotal accounts hold evidence that Ladyhill was an important recreational site for children growing up in the west end of Elgin. This piece of green space fired their imagination and raised their spirits. This local sense of place needs to be captured in the interpretation alongside Ladyhill's historic context.



Ladyhill Elgin – note two cottages and arcades

- 12.1.3 Consideration should be given to an option to reopen the Duke of Gordon monument on its Tuscan column for managed public access in similar way to the Glenfinnan monument operated by the NTS. Access up the column, as Cosmo Innes describes in 1860, is by a *‘wheeling stair leading to the top, from which is a most extensive panoramic view, extending from Covesea to Cullen, and also the shores of the Caithness coast’*.
- 12.1.4 To make the best of the view **augmented reality digital binoculars**, installed on the top of Ladyhill, could be used to take visitors back in time, revealing layers of Elgin’s history when the townscape was dramatically different.
- 12.1.5 There have been a range of archaeological investigations on Ladyhill (1858 and again 1970 and 1972) and, before developing further proposals, a review of that work and documentary research as well as an assessment of significance of the area as a whole would be worthwhile. Consolidation of what is left of the castle would also be an important next step. The dominance of the Duke of Gordon’s monument is such that focusing interpretation on it and its environs might be the most achievable and easily understood way forward.
- 12.1.6 Having made these proposals for Ladyhill a strong note of caution should be sounded. A lack of safe pedestrian road crossings to this site presents a major barrier as does the difficulty of providing all ability access. Critically the economic viability of another interpretive facility would also require close examination. An option might be to have a ‘virtual’ experience from Ladyhill, viewed remotely in a visitor centre, giving the visitor a panoramic tour of the Elgin skyline.

12.2 City centre

- 12.2.1 Elgin has a good quality of public realm. A contemporary twist to this public space could be added by considering an **interpretive sculpture** of a notable Elgin

character like, for example, Alexander Graham Bell seated on a bench in the High Street – perhaps examining a mobile phone to give a slightly humorous historical link. Quirky statues of comic characters have been used to great effect in public spaces in Dundee.

12.2.2 Elgin architect Charles Doig, was famous for designing the pagoda roof a malt whisky distillery's most instantly recognisable feature. Future design of **street furniture and installations in the public realm** could draw more extensively on this concept giving Elgin much more of whisky flavour in line with Moray's key theme. Care will be required to ensure any design does not detract from the quality of the public realm.

12.2.3 To supplement the electronic tourist information point kiosk installed in Elgin in 2011, further **touchscreens** in key locations would provide visitors with heritage Trail interpretation 24/7 when conventional facilities may not be open. The existing kiosk might also supply Trail based interpretive information.

12.2.4 **Commissioned digital footage** illustrating dramatic events in Elgin's history – along the lines of fire, flood, pestilence, famine or reconstruction of individual events like murder and ghosts could be used in interpretive materials online or in displays.

12.2.5 A cutting edge interactive iPhone or Google Android smartphone enabled **Elgin heritage app** with a good gaming element, a high definition audio visual sequence and CGI content might be worth developing. Gaming has seen huge growth, in recent years across a wide audience spectrum, particularly in mobile gaming linked to popularity of smartphone. Successful gaming company Hunted Cow Studios, based in Elgin, may be able to provide useful advice. <http://www.huntedcow.com/>.

12.2.6 Longer term there may be a requirement for **a bespoke facility** in the city centre. An Lanntair in Stornoway, Caithness Horizons in Thurso. Kirkcudbright Arts and Crafts Trail and the Heart of Hawick (*People, Process and Products* were their themes) are example of historic towns where this approach has been adopted. Typically, towns have sought to integrate some or all of displays, catering, archives, public services, tourist information and performance venue in one single 'High Street' location - either a refurbished historic building or in a purpose built venue. Savings in staffing costs have been achieved.

12.3 Cathedral and cashmere

12.3.2 It is acknowledged there is limited space at the Cathedral. But, providing an 'immersive audio/visual experience' at the Cathedral based on the Wolf's raid could be used to draw in target tourism groups for Elgin, especially family groups. This could possibly take the form of a Culloden Battlefield Project type surround projection or a more occasional event with images projected onto an exterior screen.

12.3.3 Johnstons is a successful attraction in its own right with over 200,000 visits. In contrast the Cathedral attracts around 11% of this figure. Access improvements to guide visitors to and from the Cathedral, past the biblical garden and over the Brewery Bridge, and safely across Newmill Road to the Cashmere Heritage Centre are required to make the best Cashmere connection with the Trail. Further brass symbols in the pavement along this route would help.

12.3.4 Informal comment suggests many people wander from the Cashmere Centre to the east side of the Cathedral, peer through the railings, but do not enter. Additional access and signage in and out of the Cathedral grounds from the east might facilitate visitor movements and attract more of the Johnstons audience. At present this would have implications for staffing and conventional ticketing and may not be possible but in due course developments in electronic ticketing etc. could open up new possibilities for an exciting through Trail element.

12.4 Grant Lodge

12.4.1 As previously noted in sections 9.1.3 – 9.1.5 Grant Lodge is to be the subject of an HLF bid and Moray Council and partners have already identified funding packages for its restoration. Interpretation in Grant Lodge could convey the wider Moray story and link effectively with Genealogy or ‘roots’ tourism attractive to the Moray diaspora. Scotland’s second Year of Homecoming in 2014 has been identified as a provisional target for the reopening of Grant Lodge.

13 Interpretive evaluation

13.1 Evaluation

13.1.1 There are three key forms of evaluation relevant to the proposed interpretation:

- Front-end analysis aims to find out what the audience might feel or know about a theme.
- Formative evaluation to be done with design mock-ups/ proofs to test that graphics, text, and design work as intended.
- Summative evaluation is carried out when interpretation is in place in order to find out if and to what degree the desired outcomes are being achieved.

13.1.2 Of these, formative evaluation is the most applicable and cost effective since it can become part of a project during implementation. It is therefore suggested that during implementation of the proposed phases, an **allowance for the formative evaluation** of the proposed contents and design is included.

13.1.3 Within these forms of evaluation there are a number of quantitative and qualitative techniques that could be applied including:

- Audience questionnaires that test levels of knowledge and interest in a theme.
- Focus group discussions which test responses to proposed text, illustrations or physical locations. For public realm installations, these are best done on site.
- Quantitative counts of visitor numbers visiting sites along the Trail, attending events or web site hits, downloading the app or using publications.
- On-site questionnaires that test what different visitor groups have learnt or feel about the city centre heritage. Behavioural observers can use a checklist of behaviours such as ‘reads panel’, ‘talks to companion’, ‘listens to audio’, or ‘watches video’ to measure what proportion of visitors read or interact with the interpretation.
- Behavioural observation using ‘stopping power’ and ‘holding time’ – as measures of an installation’s effectiveness.
- Feedback from businesses on customer perceptions (Trip Advisor, Facebook) and business performance.

14 Management, maintenance and renewal

14.1 All ability access

- 14.1.1 In common with best practice adopted by Historic Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland, and by other historic towns and cities it is suggested information and interpretation on Elgin should be **available for visitors with disabilities** through a single source guide. Based on a downloadable online version with large print, colour contrast etc. The guide should carry interpretation plus information for visitors with mobility, visual and hearing impairments. In particular the guide will include information on car parking, toilets and physical limitations of historic buildings and locations.

14.2 Care and maintenance

- 14.2.1 Great care will be required to ensure interpretive media remains up to date and compelling. Scotland has many provincial heritage facilities that have benefited from significant up front capital investments but several years some are languishing, visitor numbers are declining and they not meeting customer needs.
- 14.2.2 The future care, maintenance and management of all interpretive installations must be carefully considered at both planning and implementation stages. Design and robust structures and materials, with good longevity and inherent vandal resistance are essential
- 14.2.3 Any website, online material, QR codes etc. will need regular monitoring and updating, especially to manage the social networking elements (if chosen for implementation), check all download links are functioning correctly, and provide updated news for special interest and general visitors.

14.3 Costs

- 14.3.1 Capital and revenue investment will be required for the Heritage Trail over and above investment in Elgin's historic fabric. The City for the Future strategy identified £350,000 and Moray Council have identified £120,000 over the next three financial years.
- 14.3.2 Indicative costs of significant projects for budgeting purposes. It is proposed priority be given to high impact (wide coverage but lower cost) projects designed both increase footfall and interpret.
- 14.3.3 Alongside an appropriate design approach however, the organising and funding of maintenance is crucial. As a 'rule of thumb' it is suggest an annual maintenance budget is allowed for of around 2-3% of the capital cost of an installation.
- 14.3.4 Funding for maintenance should be identified in the budgets of the partner organisations and departments, and planned for in each funding cycle.

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Action	£,000	£,000	£,000
Workshops – in house?	1		
Training – may need trainer	2	1	1
Familiarisation Visits – in house	?		
Repair and removal	5		
Develop and host interactive web site – on going search engine optimisation	15	5	2
QR codes for smartphones at key sites – linked to web site materials	1	1	1
Audio files on web site and MP3 Downloads – oral interpretation	5		5
Print items	5	8	10
Base map	3		
Develop new Elgin phone app		8	
Young persons’ video	5		1
Design and install 4 panels and mounts@£5,000 each		20	
Commission and install 5 murals for closes	10	5	
Pavement engraving	3	2	
Fit out of new city centre facility @£2,000 per square metre.		10	155
Pavement markers to link trail locations		20	
5 mins of digital footage		20	
Other interpretive features – eg sculpture			20
Moray Council - £120k	40	40	40
Partnership funding - £230k	15	60	155

15 Linking Elgin’s Heritage Trail to local sites, to Moray and beyond

15.1 Local Links

- 15.1.1 The Moray Economic Strategy identifies Elgin being Moray’s ‘main town’ as having a gateway role. It is suggested that it should be made possible via print or web based materials for visitors to easily link city heritage thematically to other heritage sites in Moray. Nearby sites like Quarrelwood – a Woodland Park west of the city and the source of much of Elgin’s building stone or Lossiemouth could be easily accessed by bicycle.



Welcome Panel at Quarrelwood Woodland Park, Elgin

15.1.2 Discussions should be sought to exploit the links between Elgin, Spynie Palace and Duffus Castle using the themes of power and protection. Similarly the story of Elgin's links with Loch Spynie and then the port of Lossiemouth would link well to the main prosperity theme.

15.2 Wider links

15.2.1 It should also be made possible, assisted and informed by interpretation, to follow important characters, connected with Elgin, to other locations, for example, Andrew Moray from Elgin to Urquhart Castle or the Wolf to Lochindorb and to Randolph, Ear of Moray who fought at Bannockburn, where the 700 year celebrations are being prepared for 2014.

15.2.2 A total of 197 burghs were founded in Scotland between the 12th and 17th centuries. Along the Moray coast the historic burghs of Dingwall, Inverness, Nairn, Forres, Elgin, Cullen and Banff could collectively seek to attract visitors and be usefully linked through their common origins through web based interpretation.

15.2.3 There are also links to be exploited with the castles at Balvenie and Auchindoune that once protected the gateways to Moray. Huntly Castle in Aberdeenshire, given the historic association with the Gordons, is an important associated power base for Moray. All three are Historic Scotland properties with public access.

15.2.4 Links to the major merchant families associated with Elgin, and still providing a major source of prosperity to the area, could form the basis of a contemporary interpretive story. Fashion, international food and drink brands and household names give a relevance to audiences perhaps less motivated by actual historical links. In textiles, Johnstons can link with attractions like the Knockando Woolmill when it opens in summer 2012. The story of estate tweeds is covered in the Johnstons display but could benefit from a wider telling, with obvious additional retail opportunities.

15.2.4 Outlying sites and attractions like the Roman Catholic Seminary at Scalan in Glenlivet could provide visitors to Elgin with an opportunity to link interpretation of the city's historic environment with associated themed exploration and walking. This type of mixed activity, coupled with good interpretation, is very attractive to the type of audience segments most aligned with the Moray product.

16 Conclusions

16.1 Fit with objectives

16.1.1 The Elgin Heritage Trail project should aim to contribute to five objectives set out in Clause 1.1.2.

1. Improve and enhance the visitor experience of Elgin City Centre;
2. Provide greater access to the local heritage;
3. Create a sense of ownership of and pride in the historical and environmental legacy within Elgin, particularly by the younger generation;
4. Improve the economic opportunities within Elgin City Centre;
5. Create the opportunity to conserve & improve the built, historical and social environment.

16.1.2 Transformation of historic environments into successful visitor destinations is seldom straight forward. Elgin has an extensive and unique 'supply side' when considering heritage resources but the 'demand and visit planning side' is much less developed. The Heritage Trail will have to employ wide reaching and innovative methods to boost visitor demand and provide timely, appropriate, and accurate interpretation and information to both local people and visitors.

16.1.3 All the strategic documents note that improving visitor numbers and their experience of Elgin are vital to developing the economic opportunities. The Heritage Trail will not realise its potential fully unless, and until, these improvements begin to take place.

16.2 Moving forward

16.2.1 This report lists an extensive set of suggestions. Their potential has been highlighted. Not all will be taken up, but some 'quick wins' have been identified and prioritised.

16.2.2 Digital and electronic interpretive connectivity have to be the way forward to quickly engage a wider audience, and young people in particular.

16.2.3 Businesses should be encouraged to explore the interpretive potential of the historic environment and to make it work profitably and sustainably for them. The first step is for them to understand more about the resource. The second is to stimulate demand. The third is to deploy interpretation.

16.2.4 There are plenty examples of places, similar to Elgin, exploiting their heritage as a source of civic pride, leading to enhanced revenue from tourism. Elgin should learn from these places. Businesses should also be supported in gathering better market intelligence on their customers and what they want.

16.2.5 The public sector can provide a lead in innovation, setting quality standards and in piloting schemes to test out new interpretive techniques.

16.2.6 The Trail will only deliver a programme of agreed objectives through joint ownership of the concept, and in partnership from within a collaborative approach between the public, private and community sectors.

Epilogue

A short break!

It is October 2020. Steve and Diane had heard good things about Elgin. Several of their friends had taken a short break in the city and now they were on the train north to see for themselves. Children off to university – freedom! Flights to Europe were so expensive; York and even Edinburgh were becoming too busy. Small cities in Scotland were ideal.

*Diane's smartphone held their ticket and outline itinerary. Background reading, from Historic Scotland's e bulletin on the Cathedral and all the little closes of the High Street was on Steve's tablet; automatically down loaded as part of their single ticket short break package **Elgin - medieval city in miniature – Cathedral and cashmere**.*

The couple's boutique hotel, once home to the Elgin Club, just oozed authenticity. First stop – Way to the Stars centre in the old St Giles Kirk in the High Street. Coffee in hand standing in the 'Real Thing' an immersive interpretive experience, voiced over by Kevin McKidd, the Hollywood actor, born in Elgin. In a few short minutes Steve and Diane had an audience with the Wolf in a burning Cathedral, went to 18th century India with a surgeon and a soldier, then to their amazement discovered the story of their smartphone began in Elgin. Wow! Steve admired a wool jacket in the 'try before you buy' Flavours display area. Scanned for size his print out gave the availability of suitable jackets at nearby historic Johnstons Cashmere Heritage Centre. They would go tomorrow.

Swiping a 3D map app onto their smart phone the couple headed off to explore the closes off the High Street – each one with its name carved in stone on the pavement at the entrance. Up the closes the backlands were engaging as were the little shops. Up the closes empty walls had been transformed with murals showing scenes from the lanes in past times. In several lanes Diane used her phone to scan the QR codes and hear extracts from Jenny Kesson's book describing her childhood in the lanes.

*Ladyhill beckoned and the Interpretation of the royal castle on top of the hill provided a real insight into the **protection** offered to the emerging burgh 700 years ago. Thinking about all the deer bones unearthed during excavations suggested to the couple they might order venison at dinner that night.*

*Steve and Diane walked through tranquil Cooper Park, past the new Visit Moray centre towards the Cathedral. Their e ticket let them straight into a ruin more splendid than they had imagined. Even by today's standards the Cathedral is a magnificent building – already familiar with the Wolf the couple climbed the tower and began to understand the full extent of the **power** exerted by the church. Seen from the top Elgin's skyline and the mountains beyond were superb. Noting the carefully positioned staging and lighting in the grounds Diane checked the internet for the next Cathedral performance noting the short costumed interpretive presentations regularly on offer and the full scale plays and concerts in this great setting.*

*The brass Elgin symbols marking the heritage Trail in the pavement took the couple past the Anderson Institute and, sitting in the gardens more QR codes on their phone filled out what they had heard in the Flavours some hours previously of the massive **philanthropy** that built this classical structure. More symbols led them to the museum – a little gem - with the added bonus of a national travelling display of paintings and pencil drawings by Norman Wilkinson famous for his sea, landscape and railway posters. A bluetooth connection on Diane's phone told them his role in camouflage in WW2.*

*Wandering back towards the Flavours Steve suddenly noticed the arcaded 17th Century townhouses lining the High Street. Both working in sales he and Diane could visualise the bustling trade and **prosperity** that provided the wealth in this neat little city. Photographed for his Facebook page leaning on a whisky barrel litter bin Steve joked this would keep him quiet for a while. Back in the city centre shopping took priority. First stop the best whisky shop in the world - Gordon and McPhail's whisky emporium then around the famous Elgin craft shops. Tomorrow it all begins again - hire cycles, check out the jacket at Johnstons and follow the Elgin to Lossiemouth cycle heritage Trail. Having fun, learning new stuff and buy some quality gear – what could be better?*

