

SAWH oX25 – SAWH Online Exhibition 2025 ‘AUTHENTICITY’

SEVILLA

‘Authenticity and World Heritage Cities’

By Julia Rey Perez, University of Sevilla

World Heritage cities represent an invaluable cultural legacy that reflects centuries of history, identity, and social transformation. These are spaces where architecture, urban form, and cultural practices coexist and interact with the present. Beyond their aesthetic or historical value, such cities embody living cultural meanings that must be interpreted and appreciated from multiple perspectives—especially those of the communities who inhabit and sustain them.

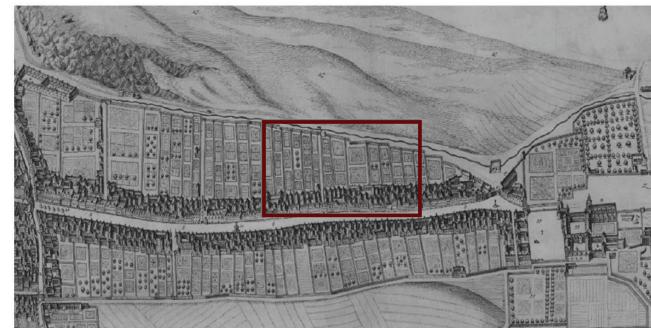
The concept of authenticity has traditionally been linked to the material preservation of buildings and structures. However, this narrow approach risks turning cities into static scenarios, disconnected from their social dynamics. Rethinking authenticity means understanding it as a dynamic process, rooted in values, collective memory, and local ways of life. An authentic city is not merely one that preserves its original form, but one that keeps its

spirit alive over time, in dialogue with the transformations necessary for its cultural, social, and environmental sustainability.

In this context, urban heritage management policies must be closely integrated with urban and territorial planning instruments. They cannot be addressed in isolation or from a purely conservationist perspective. A landscape-based, inclusive, and integrated approach is required—one that connects the physical dimension of heritage with contemporary social, economic, and environmental needs. A central challenge for this kind of management is the inclusion of those who *inhabit* the urban heritage—whose voices are essential to understanding diverse perceptions of authenticity. Embracing heritage narratives that have historically been excluded or marginalized would not only broaden the scope of conservation, but represent a profound shift in how we define and value urban cultural heritage.

SAWH WORKSHOP

“WORLD HERITAGE (AND) OR) AUTHENTICITY”



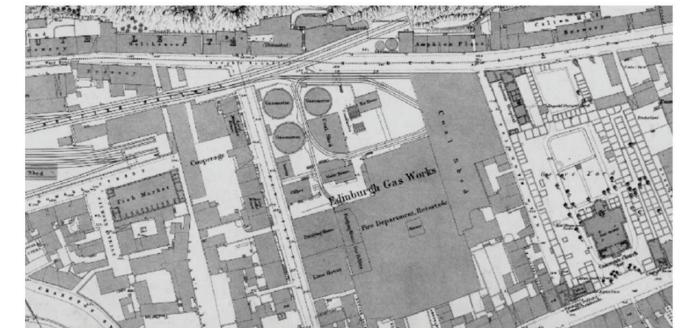
Gordon of Rothiemay Plan, 1647



Charles Thomson Map, 1820



John Bartholomew Plan, 1876

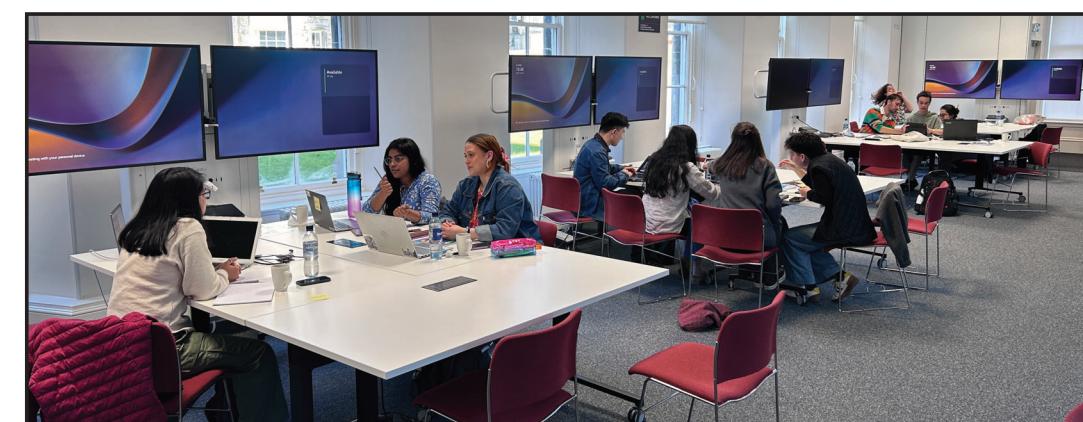


Ordnance Survey Plan, 1881

above : graphics & text by Sevilla students & teams

These panels showcase design responses produced by four students from the University of Sevilla with their respective UK-based multidisciplinary student teams, in the context of a half day Rapid Workshop in April 2025.

The project site was a post-industrial plot at the heart of the Edinburgh World Heritage site, currently under redevelopment. The brief was open, to encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration and future-making on matters of urban ecology, cultural curation and community involvement.



above : photography & texts by JW (SAWH)

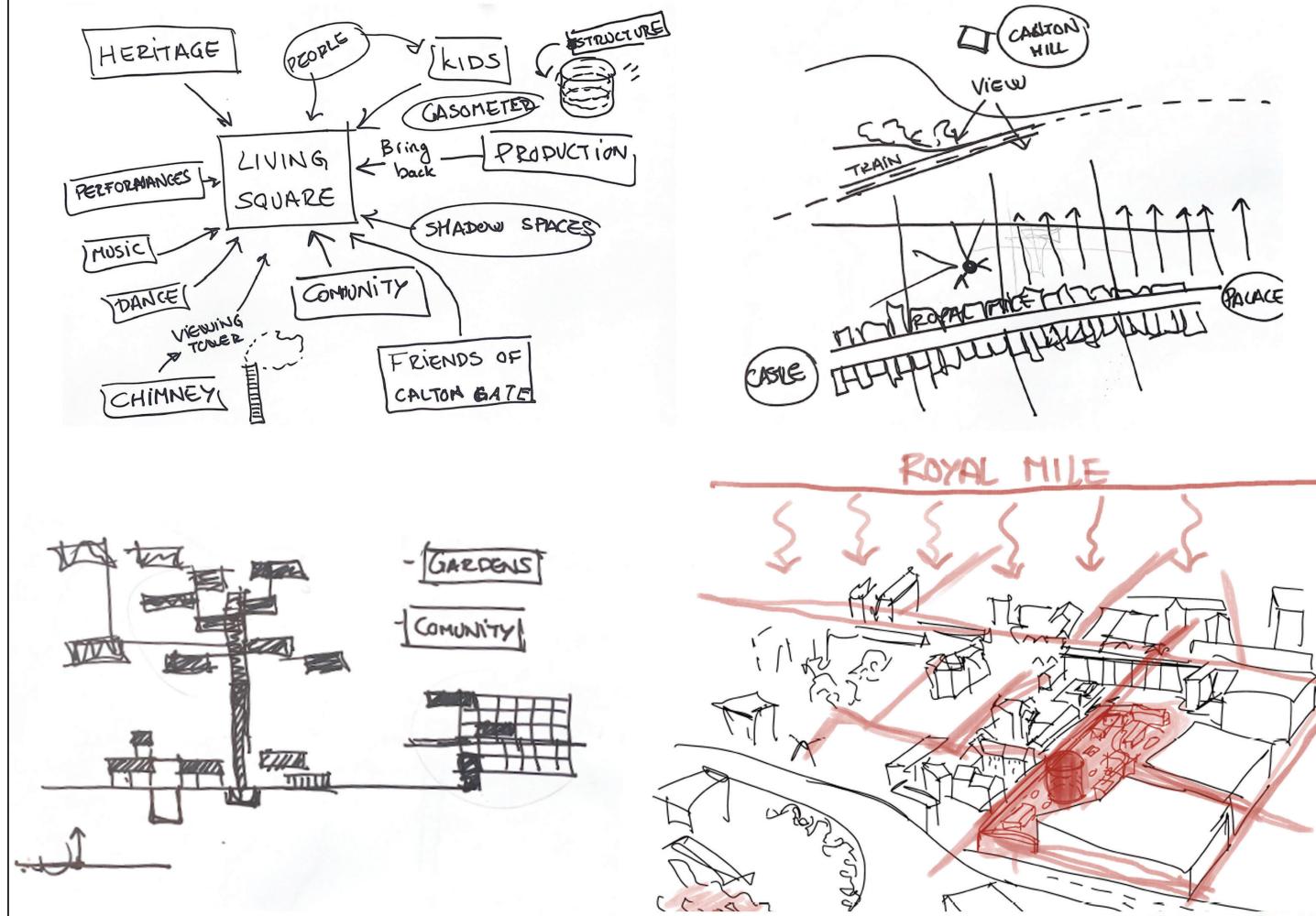
Other participating students came from a range of academic disciplines and institutions across Scotland, thanks to Cohort Development Funding support from SGSAH (Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities)

The event was initiated, co-organized and co-chaired by SGSAH-funded doctoral students* from three Scottish universities, tying into a broader three-day SAWH conference on the theme of 'World Heritage and/or Authenticity'. The event was hosted at the Edinburgh Futures Institute, University of Edinburgh, on 2/04/2025.

* Anna Stacey (QMU & Edinburgh), Cristina Chiran (Glasgow), James White (SAWH & Edinburgh)

GROUPWORK

Proposal 1



above : project proposal by Sevilla students & team

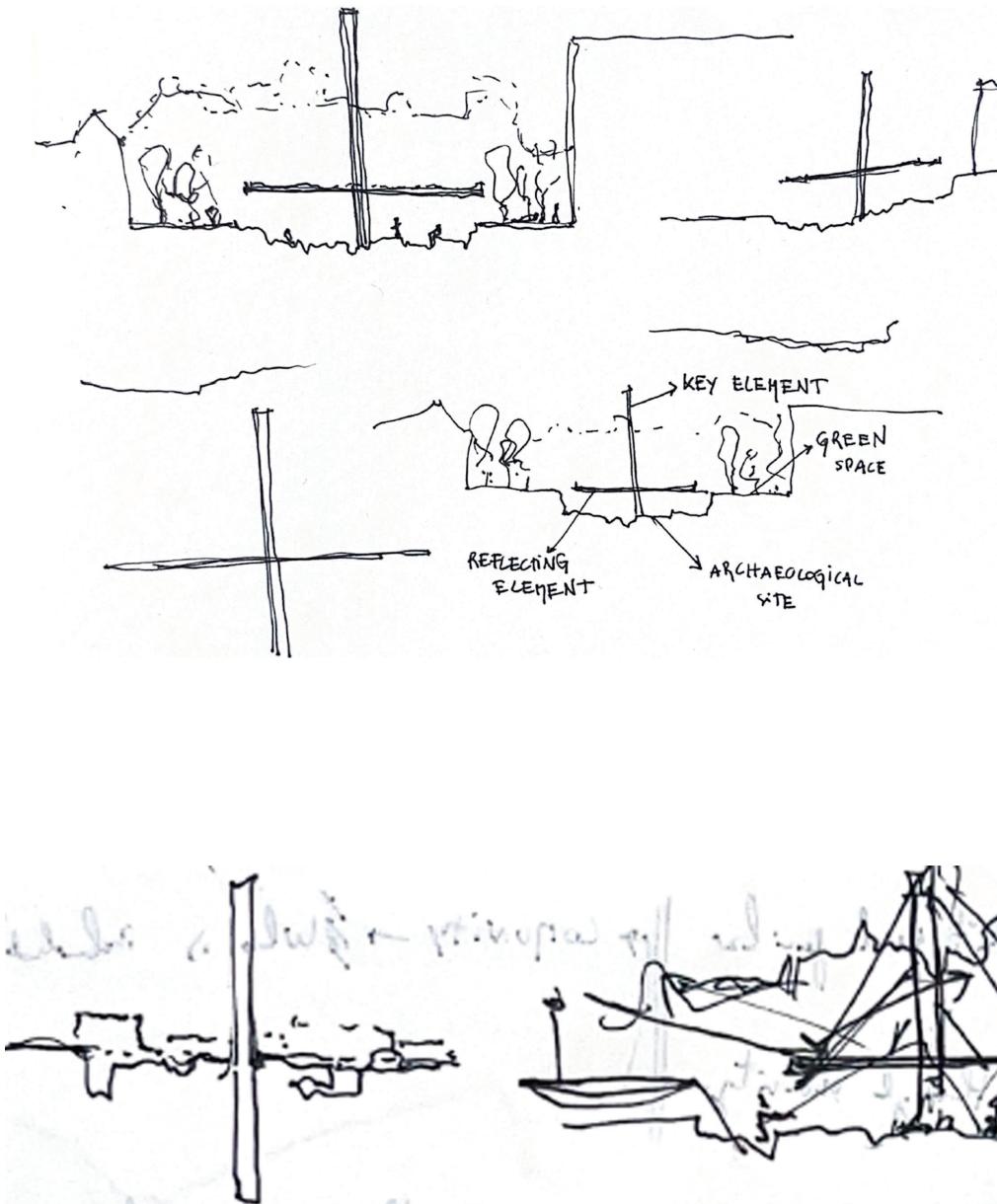


above : photography by JW (SAWH)

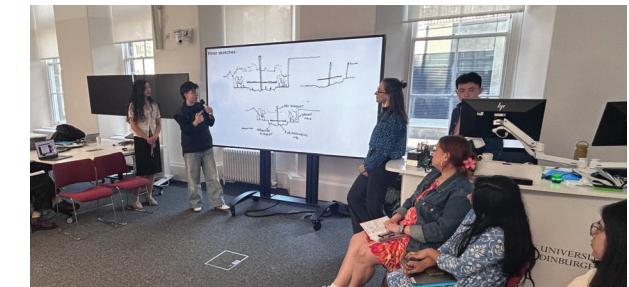


SAWH RAPID WORKSHOP 2025 - GROUP 1 : Leo Dominguez (Sevilla), Carlos Lopez (Sevilla), Ipsita Seth (Edinburgh)

Proposal 2



above : project proposal by Sevilla students & team



above : photography by JW (SAWH)