



Czech National Trust

Innocastle  
Interreg Europe



# Practitioners in Partnership: Sharing best practice across the INTO network

3-5pm on Monday 5 November 2018

20 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DH

We no longer live in a 'command and control' world. We live in the age of partnership. Not only have INTO members joined together with other like-minded organisations to build mutually beneficial partnerships, but INTO itself is a partnership that comes together to share expertise, ideas and resources. Many of the issues we address can benefit from the involvement of multiple stakeholders and communities. This workshop will highlight the successes of a number of INTO member organisations and give us an opportunity to learn more about the role and value of heritage trusts today.



## PROGRAMME

- 3pm *INTO the future*  
Catherine Leonard, Secretary-General, International National Trusts Organisation
- 3.10pm *A Conservation challenge in Tblisi*  
Donald Hankey, Kevin Hallaway & Peter Nasmyth, National Trust of Georgia
- 3.30pm *Establishing a Czech National Trust*  
Irena Edwards, Chairman
- 3.40pm Discussion
- 4pm *Bridging design thinking and site development*  
Margit Bal, General Manager, Herita (Belgium)
- 4.20pm *Learning from the Innocastle project*  
June Taboroff, Heritage Resource Specialist
- 4.30pm *Pro Patrimonio Foundation*  
Nicolae Raitu, Trustee
- 4.40pm Discussion about the role and value of heritage partnerships and trusts
- 5pm Reception







INTO is the umbrella body for the worldwide family of National Trusts which come together to share experiences, ideas and resources. Set up in 2007 to promote the central role of National Trusts in heritage conservation, it aims to grow the capacity of existing trusts, establish new trusts in countries where they don't currently exist and provide a global voice for matters of common concern.



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Georgia possesses a large number of historic sites worthy of saving and promoting, either as tourist venues, or workable businesses that will pay for the structure's (or land's) upkeep. However the country currently has no independent national organisation that enables individuals to express their concern and affection for the nation's heritage. A National Trust of Georgia will provide this alongside a practical means of helping to preserve buildings and land. Its knowledge base and experience will help show private owners many methods of saving their own properties, not as yet demonstrated by the state, plus offer a means of expressing their pride for their nation – by joining as Trust members. You can read more about Kevin and Donald's work on the Tbilisi project overleaf.



The Czech National Trust promotes and supports the conservation, protection and maintenance of cultural heritage in the Czech Republic; a cultural heritage of international importance. It aims to inspire, foster and promote the development of an effective voluntary and donor culture in the Czech Republic.



Herita is a network that brings together and supports everyone involved with historic buildings, landscapes and archaeological sites. Herita wants to contribute to an increasing social involvement in monuments and other kinds of heritage:

- by making people aware of valuable historic places in their daily environment
- by inspiring people to discover and experience monuments and other kinds of heritage
- by supporting people taking care of heritage and making it accessible to the public



Innocastle –Innovating policy instruments for preservation, transformation and exploitation of heritage castles, manors and estates.

European historic castles, manors and estates have the potential to become local catalysts for regional development and innovation. Innocastle prepares them for the future by stimulating resilient policies for conservation, transformation and exploitation. The consortium of partners is composed of: National Institute of Heritage in Romania (lead partner), University College Ghent in Belgium, Province of Gelderland in the Netherlands, Regional Government of Extremadura in Spain and the National Trust in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (knowledge partner). The project is financed by Interreg Europe, with a total budget of €1,120,335.00 (85% ERDF, 15% co-financing).



Pro Patrimonio Foundation is an international non-profit non-governmental organization with branches in Romania (Bucharest), Great Britain and France. The foundation dates from the year 2000 and has a series of on-going projects whose main mission is the conservation, rescue and reactivation of cultural heritage, especially in architecture. The actions focus on palpable projects meant to protect and rehabilitate heritage and on involving and raising awareness in communities regarding their own identity, memory and inherited cultural values.

Pro Patrimonio Foundation supports the idea that each citizen is responsible for heritage and that the latter represents an element that shapes social identity. In the view of the Foundation, tradition is not a set of inflexible values, it teaches us to learn about the identity and culture that has shaped us, still models us today and encourages critical thinking adapted in a balanced and practical way to contemporary life





## Donald Hankey and Kevin Hallaway Redesign Tbilisi Property for National Trust of Georgia

Donald Hankey, former President of ICOMOS UK and architect, veteran of numerous prestigious heritage projects around the world, was in Georgia with structural engineer Kevin Hallaway in June, volunteering their time to help the new National Trust of Georgia (NTG) restore its first building and help the approach of the local professionals to restoration and reuse of the local professionals.

Located at 33 Mefe Solomon Brjenis Street in the Avlabari district of Georgia's capital, the unique mid-19th century house will undergo extensive investigation and restoration should the works be funded. Donald Hankey sees great potential and has said as much in the report he has prepared for potential sponsors with Kevin.

GEORGIA TODAY went to meet the two Englishmen at the property to find out more.

The "Tbilisi brick" house, dating back to the 1830s, is clearly in a very serious state of disrepair. The façade is cracked, with evidence of subsidence at both front corners and, inside the building, the fact that the rear extension of the property is breaking away from the main structure is apparent on entrance. The décor shows an eclectic mix of flowered wallpaper in several layers and paint and shoddy masonry fix ups. No-one has lived here for decades. Yet Donald Hankey is optimistic and has a design in mind that retains historic values and provides flexible modern use.

"The wooden floor is in excellent condition- nothing a polish can't sort once the foundations are fixed," he tells us. "The whole of the front wall has subsided due to subsoil water drainage. The rear is also subsiding and is 'unfit for service.' We have a plan from 1953 and can extrapolate a lot from that as to the original layout. It shows a lot of outbuildings in the garden [no longer present]. The Russian occupation and Shevardnadze period then saw the property packed with different families with no money available to maintain it, leading to natural damage from careless occupation. The building that is actually very important relic of earlier Russian occupation and has clear influence from Imperial St Petersburg, as seen by the star medallion and classical arches on the front elevation".



We asked what use he thought the building had had. "I've suggested it might have been a military barracks. Other opinions are that it was housing for the head of the local Armenian church [now destroyed] or a residence."

Donald Hankey insists the roof space and staircase layout lends more to it having been an observation platform over major reception spaces. This remains to be established by the Georgians.

"It has a more formal Russian background, I believe, and this is something we need to puzzle out with the local historians. We must also evaluate the building's fabric- much of which is very good. There's a lot of style hidden here- the Persian fireplaces, wooden floors and details ..."

We asked him about his plans for the future of the building.



"Sustainability requires the building to have a range of potential uses - but what those uses are is up to the NTG to decide. We can only look at potential reuse in relation retaining cultural and historic values. Our objective is to leave a functional building- deciding which walls to keep and take out, for example, or which parts to alter, in order to leave it as a valuable series of useable spaces."

One idea Donald Hankey has is to reconstruct and build up the cellar in the garden which runs along one of the adjacent streets, which could perhaps be opened as a specialty book shop, adding character to the street and bringing financial benefit to the property owners.

Also vitally important is to bring the property up to current safety standards. "In order to ensure fire resistance and means of escape to the vertical

circulation, we propose removal of the two existing staircases and build a new staircase on the central axis," Donald Hankey says. Tbilisi is in a seismic zone and it is important to improve the earthquake resistance of the building.

One obstacle, or challenge, to any changes planned for the rear of the property is a Mulberry tree which is suspected to be older than the building itself.



“We can go up,” Donald Hankey states. “But a bit of a haircut is needed and we must be careful not to damage the root structure.”

“If you don’t reuse such historically important buildings, they fall to bits because nobody has any interest in keeping them alive,” he points out. “Reuse is very important. Our job here is not to define a specific use but to leave it available for multiple uses- domestic, office, or institutional. In this particular building, the quality of the original joinery and finishes demonstrate the need to upgrade and repair rather than leave it to decay.”

The NTG website says of the building: “In October 2017, the Trust took over a unique, unusually unmolested 18th -19th century property in the Metekhi cliffs area of the city, adjoining Avlabari. The property is large enough to act as the Trust’s headquarters on a permanent basis, as well as contain space for exhibitions and events. Like so many properties in Georgia this three-story building is in a poor state of repair, but it can slowly be restored and used as an example for locals to have courage in keeping their old buildings effectively and with historic sensitivity. There will be an exhibition inside the building illustrating how this is achieved.”



We had heard before meeting Donald Hankey that this was his first trip to Tbilisi but that his wife had been here before and taken home her enthusiasm for the beauty of the place. We asked him what he thought now he was here.

“Tbilisi always inspired me with its fabulous history and wonderful geographical setting. If not restored it might demonstrate how much the modern generation is prepared to undervalue the past and how much great enthusiasts like Peter Nasmyth [author, founder-member of the NTG] and ICOMOS, are willing to support local cultural identities through maintaining the historical buildings of the city. It was from the 1960s that we in the UK, coordinated by Lord Kennet of the Labour Party, began to work to preserve English heritage, realizing how important it is to maintain our major buildings and sense of history and place.”

We asked him if Tbilisi had met or disappointed his expectations and he told us he was “inspired” to see the architecture in Tbilisi. “I’ve seen historic buildings all over the world in dreadful states and I’ve got so used to seeing them, and the challenge doesn’t faze me at all. So Tbilisi demonstrates the principle that if we can prove the potential of the historic buildings to be satisfactorily reused, you can get enthusiasm from the locals and investors to save the buildings.”

Within our conversation, the idea came up to try and enthuse youth to get involved in the historical investigation of Tbilisi’s old buildings, and for them to begin to think in terms of reuse. Fabrika, a sewing factory converted into a multi-use space for bars, cafes, art studios and work spaces, is the latest prime example of such a project for reuse.

“I would be very happy to come and speak if such a program were set up,” Donald Hankey said.

### **About the National Trust of Georgia**

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By Katie Ruth Davies

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