



Deputy Chief Minister

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GOVERNMENT PUBLISHES NEW HERITAGE ACT

The Government has today published a Command Paper for a new Heritage Act.

The scope of this legislation includes the conservation, enhancement and enjoyment of Gibraltar's considerable heritage. It will encompass antiquities and objects of archaeological interest, the preservation of monuments and buildings and the designation of conservation areas and archaeological areas. In addition, the Act proposes the establishment of a Heritage and Antiquities Advisory Council, the establishment of the Gibraltar National Archives and the continued existence of the Gibraltar Heritage Trust and the Gibraltar Garrison Library Trust. The scope of the Act will apply within BGTW as well as on land.

All monuments or buildings that would benefit from a regime of protection from damage or alteration through works will be listed. Certain areas will be listed as scheduled conservation areas within which alteration or demolition may only be undertaken if authorised.

Within scheduled archaeological areas, the removal of any antiquity or object of interest will be an offence. Where an antiquity or object of interest is found anywhere in Gibraltar, the finder will have a duty to report it to a police officer, the Archaeological Officer or the Curator of the Museum. The Act also makes it a duty of every public officer or employee who holds public records to select records for preservation and their eventual transfer to the Archives.

The Act also makes provision for the appointment of Chief Executive Officer at the Gibraltar Heritage Trust.

Commenting on the matter, the Minister with responsibility for Heritage Steven Linares said:

"A new Heritage and Antiquities Act has been in the pipeline for more than a decade. When the GSLP/Liberals were in Opposition we would frequently press the then Government on this matter but nothing happened. When we came into office we immediately pursued in Government what we had advocated in Opposition and started to work on the project soon after we were elected. The Command Paper is the result of wide consultation with interested parties inside and outside the Government. I am grateful to my colleague the Deputy Chief Minister Dr Joseph Garcia who

has taken an interest in this in his capacity as Minister for Planning and Land, but also as a historian. I also want to thank the Curator of the Museum Dr Clive Finlayson, the Archaeological Officer Kevin Lane, the Archivist Anthony Pitaluga and the Director of the Garrison Library Dr Jennifer Ballantine-Perera. My thanks also go to the Gibraltar Heritage Trust.

There have been several drafts of the legislation before arriving at the Command Paper that has been published today. This Act has therefore been long overdue. It is a reflection of the Government's commitment to Heritage that the Command Paper has finally been published. This goes hand in hand with the enhancement and regeneration of many parts of our Heritage like Wellington Front and the Northern Defences.

Gibraltar's history, especially its military history, has not been given adequate protection from the weather or from human interference, whether intentional or not. This legislation will give our community the essential tools it needs to protect our physical heritage. It is a good start.'

The Command Paper is open to comments for two weeks and is available on-line on the Gibraltar Government website.