

# Annual Report 2013

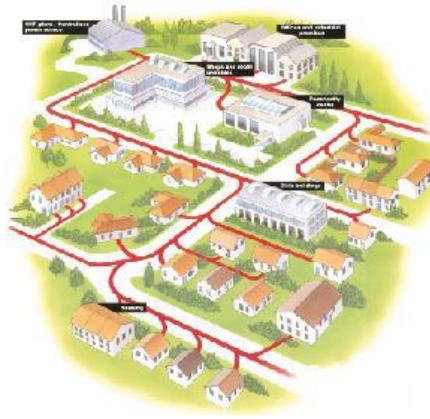


## Another busy year for FCI.

This year we have concentrated on trying to influence the Masterplan that is being drawn up by EDI and 7N architects. We have had very constructive meetings with them and put forward detailed comments on specific aspects such as waterspace and housing. We would still like to see an enlarged canal basin, but the plan has included some water channels into the site and access for small craft. It also now proposes 350 housing units with 25% affordable housing.



EDI have held **three community consultation workshops**. At the last one there was a good turnout. The workshops provided the community with the opportunity to meet the project team and to discuss with the master planners, 7N Architects, what they wanted to see Fountainbridge become. It is clear that everyone wants to step back from the image of the area as an extension to the financial district and to create a new and vital neighbourhood. The next major step will be to apply for planning permission. A public meeting to view the plan will be on **March 27<sup>th</sup> 12-8pm** at the Central Halls, and an exhibition **28<sup>th</sup> March - 11<sup>th</sup> April** in Fountainbridge Library



## Sustainability

From our first community meetings, this has been a key issue for local people. In June, together with Cllr Gavin Corbett's help, we invited experts on district heating and Combined Heat and Power (CHP) to a Round Table discussion to think about the feasibility and technicality of this being developed at Fountainbridge.

There was agreement that this would be possible and desirable. Following this EDI and 7N commissioned a feasibility study which concluded that a heat recovery ground source heat pump was positive and viable on the site. A district heating scheme would save some 25% carbon reduction and reduce fuel bills for people by 20%. It can also 'plug in' to other surrounding developments like the school. Our joint efforts – local councillors, the community and the developers – to bring district heating to the site also got a mention in a Scottish Parliament Debate on reducing carbon and district heating. 'Sustainable Placemaking' in its full holistic sense is now seen as a key part of the Masterplan. The latest report from 7N and EDI outlines

an approach that 'embeds sustainability at its very heart'

## Sounding Board meetings

FCI requested these quarterly meetings with councillors, officials, developers and other organisations. Chaired by Cllr Andrew Burns, Leader of the Council they have provided regular updates and enabled FCI to maintain an ongoing dialogue.

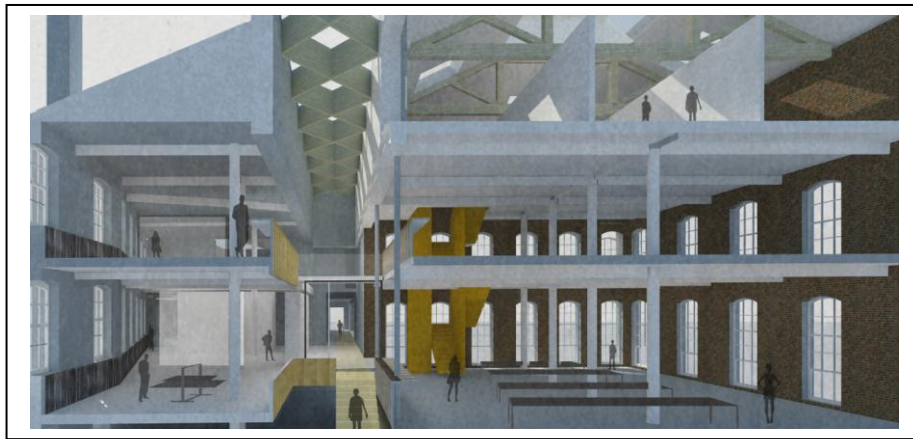
This process has worked well in keeping all parties in regular communication as the site progresses and in terms of enhancing community participation in the development. The active support of our 3 local councillors, Andrew Burns, David Key and Gavin Corbett has been key to this successful process.

## Canal Festival

This year we saw soaring temperatures in July and crowds came out for a lovely day. The festival, co-ordinated by Re-Union Canal Boats is a truly local event with help from local people



to construct 'duck pools', to volunteer as stewards, to erect a stage, belly dance, play music, make a raft and for local groups to raise some funds and promote themselves. This year it will be on **Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June**. Contact [pat@re-union.co.uk](mailto:pat@re-union.co.uk) for more information and to get involved.



### The Old Rubber Factory

FCI strongly supported retaining this only remaining old building on the site and were delighted that Edinburgh Printmakers are going to move their base here. There will also be room for other creative organisations in this historic and handsome old building. Together with other local community groups we wrote detailed letters of support for this Project and we are all hopeful of bringing this major arts development to the site. Their plans for renovation show a spacious and light workspace created for all of us to enjoy.

### History of Canal

The history of the Union Canal has always been important to local people. A FCI history group produced a set of panels for the Canal Festival with beautiful illustrations done by Viv McDermid – which produced a lot of interest and discussion. This coming year we will be working on a leaflet from these designs that will be of interest to local people and visitors.



### New Boroughmuir High School

Over the autumn period members of FCI attended stakeholders meetings at the city chambers and at the school. We were able to make our comments on the design. Our three concerns were with the access to the school over the Viewforth Bridge, the eastern elevation creating a canyon effect down Viewforth, and the design of the public park by the canal side which is to be shared space with the school. We are not sure how this will work and want to push to keep the idea of this public green space an attractive and significant feature. Building will start in 2015.

### Meanwhile Activity

We fully support the idea of temporary activities on the site that are being planned by EDI. Once the hoardings surrounding the site have come down, walkways will be built that re-create the eventual walkways through the area. It is hoped that temporary pop up shops, a vintage market, festival events, and shipping container workshop spaces can be created to start creating a Fountainbridge 'village'.

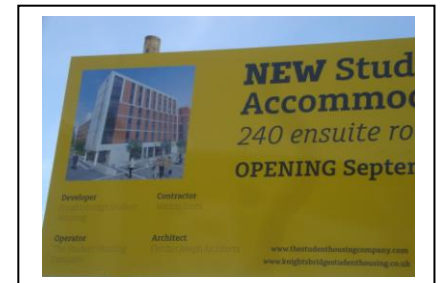
### More Growth!

The Grove Community Garden has continued to flourish and expand. Like FCI, the aim of this project is to grow an active community - as well as growing food together. The Grove wants to stand as example of humanized urban development. They now have over 90 members

and a waiting list of 24 people wanting to garden! The current site is being extended to allow those on the waiting list to get their hands on soil. Its success is to be replicated on the Fountainbridge site, with a Grove 2 community garden coming onto the empty site in the coming month. This will also include young saplings and some planting on the walkways. More power to your trowels!

### A balanced population

The growth of student accommodation and apart-hotels has been a worrying development around Fountainbridge. FCI are not anti-students or visitors but the building of new student hostels at the east and west end of the site, in addition to two other large blocks in the immediate area are excessive. In addition the encroachment of apart hotels which in themselves are not a bad form of accommodation, unfortunately tend to attract hen and stag party visitors who can sometimes be extremely noisy and drunk.



This has brought misery to local residents and distorts the local population balance which has a knock on effect on the social and retail environment. FCI will continue to support local groups and protest against this impact on the local area.

FCI now have 44 full members, a supporter's mailing list of 192 and 29 local organisations. Our monthly Steering Group meeting is open to all. Come and join us!

### Fountainbridge Canalside Initiative

[www.fountainbridgeci.org.uk](http://www.fountainbridgeci.org.uk)