

Housing

Over the last year, there have been some major uncertainties about housing on the Council owned section of the site (west of the lift bridge) to which we have responded actively.

The drive by EDI, the arms length development company, to build blocks of flats to rent in 2016 was opposed strongly by FCI on the grounds this would add even more to the total being built on the north side of Fountainbridge and was targeted at the 'high end' rental market. What we have always campaigned for is mixed tenure and homes for our nurses, teachers, carers and lower paid people and families.



In March 2017, the Council decided to wind up EDI. One of the reasons given was that EDI depended upon a supply of land and the council felt that what it wanted to do with their land from now on was to primarily build houses, which they could do themselves. After the May 2017 elections we heard that the whole development was to be put back on the table again with three options being considered: a) to sell off the site b) to continue with EDI's commercial build to rent model or c) to build more affordable and social housing.

Appalled at the idea the site could be sold off, we took a deputation to

the Housing & Economy Committee and many FCI members sent in letters urging the councillors to vote for the last option. Support also came from Merchiston and Tollcross Community Councils and we were delighted that at the end of March at the Housing & Economy Committee unanimously voted for this option.

The council will lead on this mixed tenure scheme with 40% affordable rent and 60% market homes for sale. The number of socially-rented homes is double that of the EDI scheme. The Scottish Green Group amendment also called for further increases in social housing to be looked at and for ways of ensuring that the homes for sale remain occupied as people's only and principal home.

Sustainability

District or community heating also appeared to slip off the agenda last year and FCI made strenuous efforts to ensure it was put back on. We alerted the Council to the benefits of using waste heat from the major sewer that runs across the site and were encouraged that this was taken up promptly and a feasibility study has showed that this would provide a good return - low carbon scheme and lower costs for residents. This model is still being developed in Scotland with Scottish Water taking a lead and Fountainbridge could play its part in a unique heating system.

New Ownership

Vastint, linked to the IKEA Foundation, are the new owners of the eastern end of the site, between the lift bridge and the canal basin. Although planning permission was in place for them to



develop up to 7 stories along the towpath, after discussions with FCI and others, they very readily agreed this would dwarf the canal and consequently reduced most of the housing to 3 stories.

This will make an enormous difference to the quality of the canal area around the historic lift bridge and allow more light into the development. They will be building 25% affordable housing, are willing to link into the community heating system, are interested in the idea of a Green Plan and are exploring the possibility of space for a community facility. We are very encouraged by the constructive dialogue that has developed.

New Boroughmuir High School

After many stops and starts, the school finally opened its doors in February this year. The successful Open Day in March allowed members of the public to see inside and enjoy the light airy spaces that have been created for the pupils. We hope to create stronger links with the school over the next year.

Edinburgh Printmakers

When other plans seemed to stall, the Printmakers building kept our hopes alive that beautiful and exciting initiatives were being realised on the site. Their work on developing public knowledge about the historic industrial past of the site has been excellent and art installations such as the Rust

Garden, in conjunction with the Grove Community Garden, inspiring. Their new history mural project, will continue this over the coming months - led by Blameless artists working with local young people. Once the design is complete and ready to transfer to the hoardings around the site, a team of young people will join Blameless to start painting the mural on site, aiming to finish in time for the **Canal Festival on Saturday 16 June**. This lovely building will be open for print making in 2019.

Hoardings around the site

As well as the Printmakers mural, we have been in discussions about replacing and renewing the history panels that were designed in 2013 and meant only to last for a year! These have always been popular with passers-by and as the towpath has become more popular, these temporary hoardings offer a lively space for public art, culture and information.



This year the Council and Vastint will replace the scrappy old hoardings with new ones and we will renew the panels and add more about FCI, the Grove Community Garden, the Edinburgh Printmakers and what is happening on site. Over May/June Toni Dickson from the Scrapstore together with local artist Natasha Russell will also be working with pupils from Boroughmuir School to create some beautiful box panels or 'diaramas' out of re-cycled materials following the themes from the Living Wild event.

Meanwhile Activities

The temporary activities supported by EDI and the Council over the last few years have proved a

positive experience for all.

The **Pianodrome** project has moved to a studio in the Custom



House Leith. The second wedge of the 100 seater auditorium has been built which will be ready for 'Pianodrome in the Botanics' for this year's Edinburgh Festival. The **Scrapstore** has moved north to Granton Hub, an exciting group of projects and the **Wikihouse** will provide an outdoor classroom for Tollcross Primary School by the end of April.

The **Grove Community Garden** moved off the site last year after being told that work was going to begin. Even though the proposed timetable on site didn't materialise, the Council made a new site available for them in Harrison Park next to the playground and now **Grove in the Park** has attracted local support, has 63 pallet gardens and shows what a great model the Grove has become. Another mini - Grovelet sprang up outside Summerhall which is gradually transforming the overgrown and untidy plot there. The work and effort put in by key members of the Grove is to be applauded.

The Forge has become a SCIO, and continues to hold open workshop sessions. They are looking at space at Bridge 8 or in Granton:Hub when building starts.

Visit from Government Division

In September last year we were asked to provide a presentation and tour of Fountainbridge for the Scottish Government's Planning & Architecture Division's away-day as an example of urban planning, design issues and community engagement. We also applied for

support from the Scottish Government's 'Making Places' programme and will be in discussions over the coming year.

Gilmore Place & Lochrin Residents Association

In March, a re-formed association was created for residents to have a common voice on development on the south side of Fountainbridge and to create more sense of community. FCI are pleased to link with this active group.

Living Wild Jan 2018

After so many years focusing on the buildings, we decided to raise the prospect of a community led 'greening' of the whole site which would be for the enjoyment of future residents and local people.



A grant from the South West Neighbourhood Partnership enabled Anna Canning to run workshops with Tollcross Primary School pupils who took walks along the canal and considered what type of green spaces they would like to see. Council officers from Parks Department, Place Directorate councillors, developers and their architects came to provide information and 12 local groups shared their experience of gardening, growing and bio-diversity. Over 80 people and 16 children came to this lively event and a 'Green Fountainbridge Plan' will be an ongoing collaboration with the Council and developers.

FCI now have 105 members and over 350 on our mailing list.

Our monthly Steering Group meeting is open to all. Come and join us!

Fountainbridge Canalside Initiative

www.fountainbridgeci.org.uk

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