

## Newsletter February 2018

There's been a long gap since the last Newsletter as there has been a long gap in getting to the delivery stage of this development and not a few twists and turns behind closed doors! But to report on some of the activities:

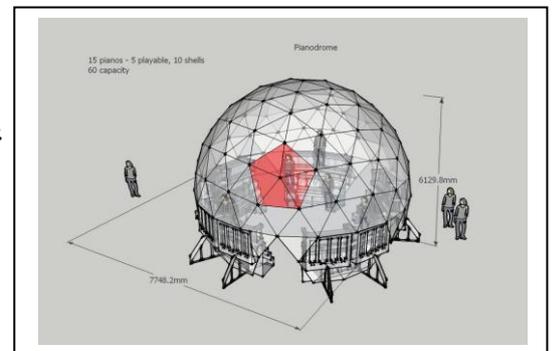
### Meanwhile projects

The temporary projects which sprang up on the site over the last few years have all blossomed, developed, and moved on even though we are sad they are still not around!

The **Grove 2 Community Garden** moved off the site last year after getting the message from EDI that work was going to begin. An impressive effort by the Grovers to get their gardens away, even though the proposed timetable for development on site didn't materialise. Luckily Edinburgh Council made a new site available for them in Harrison Park ( just off Bryson Rd West) next to the playground. **Grove in the Park** has gathered good local support and is flourishing, which 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. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheGroveFountainbridge>

**The Forge** has been carrying on, becoming a SCIO, and continues to hold open workshop sessions on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons. If and when they have to move, they are looking at space at Bridge 8 or in Granton:Hub. <https://edinburghforge.com/>

The wonderful **Pianodrome** project [www.pianodrome.org](http://www.pianodrome.org) are in their new studio in the Custom house Leith. They are now constructing Wedge No. 2 on the way to the full 'Pianodrome in the Botanics' for this year's Festival. Hundreds of visitors have dropped in to their studio on Saturday open days - and support has been coming- pianists filling the studio with music, offers to lend a hand with the build, potential funding leads and structural engineering.



The **Scrapstore** has moved north to Granton:Hub, an exciting group of projects which offer space for people to meet, enjoy, participate and learn <http://www.edinburghscrapstore.org.uk/>



And last but not least, our little **Wikihouse** which has been left marooned on the site has at last got lift off. This week, after long months of frustration and phone calls, we had a meeting with the developers Bowmer & Kirkland organised by the Council, and they will move it before the end of March. Alice Brown, Head teacher of Tollcross Primary School, who retires at the end of this term, is delighted to see some progress and sees the Wikihouse as being well used by children as an outdoor classroom. As someone who has always been supportive to FCI we wish her well and hope the move will be a lovely goodbye present!

## Changes in ownership

The eastern section of the site is privately owned and has changed hands a few times already. It is currently owned by Vastint, a property company linked to the IKEA Foundation. They are in the process of buying another triangular portion and after meetings with them to look at their plans, we are encouraged that they want to build a good mixture of housing units, 25% affordable and reduce the extent of the office accommodation. They are happy to be linked to the District Heating scheme and have reduced the canal-side houses to 3 stories, rather than the 7 that had already been agreed in previous planning decisions. So we wait to see, but their willingness to talk and to allow a reduced rent unit for community facilities, is a welcome change!



## And changes in Council's proposals!

FCI became concerned last year that both EDI and Grosvenor( building on the north side of Fountainbridge) were coming forward with major housing proposals which would be wholly rental in tenure. These plans seemed likely to consist of "high-end" rental rates in predominant one/two bed flats, which would be targeted at a transient ,mobile, professional profile. Although they were obliged to build 25%affordable housing, there were fears that these new housing proposals would not be accessible to a significant range of local people. A predominant high end rental mono-tenure along with the substantial student developments would increase the transient, mobile, nature of the area, and negatively impact on the long term social and community cohesion of the new Fountainbridge.

The block nature of the designs also seemed to encourage elements of isolated individual "gated" communities. Traditional community investment has consisted of local people long term renting and buying their own homes , giving them a real stake in the area and these plans would provide little opportunity for local people to do so. We submitted a paper voicing these issues to the Sounding Board but heard no more until we learnt that EDI was going to be wound up and the development taken in house by the Council. A meeting towards the end of last year was very positive and we understood that the rental model was not likely to go ahead and that affordable housing would be slightly increased on the site - which we strongly supported.

At the last Sounding Board meeting, however, we became aware that some of the councillors on the new Housing & Economy Committee were pushing to re-visit this and wanted to put 3 options back on the table: to sell off the site; to go ahead with the EDI rental model; or to proceed with the new suggestion of building more affordable and mixed tenure housing on the site. As FCI was formed in 2011 to campaign for the Council NOT to sell off the site, and the implications of all the plans since then supported this, it felt like a retrograde step. We made a **deputation** to this committee on 18th January and a decision will be made at their next meeting on 22nd March. Many thanks to Merchiston and Tollcross Community Councils for their support. If you feel strongly about this, you can attend these committee meetings, e-mail the councillors or watch the Council webcasts.

[https://edinburgh.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast\\_interactive/294004](https://edinburgh.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/294004)

## The new Boroughmuir High School

On 21 February, pupils and staff move into the new school on the towpath. The old building on Viewforth, opened as a school in 1913, will become an empty shell, awaiting development. It seems most likely that this will be for housing - small apartments - supplemented by some additional units in a new-build block. Many local people will have fond memories of the old school, and it has certainly provided a base for a great team of teachers to deliver excellent educational opportunities.

We all hope that the new school will be equally successful - and judging by the fantastic facilities, perhaps surpass its predecessor! One thing we do know, it will need additional space very soon, to accommodate a larger school population. The Council is currently looking at different locations for this.

The new school, with over 1,200 pupils plus the teachers, will have a significant impact on the neighbourhood. The spending power of the pupils will shift from Bruntsfield Place, so we can expect new food outlets to be established. The number of pedestrians down the length of Viewforth will be huge, and their safety will have to be monitored very carefully. The crossing at Gilmore Place, and the hump-back bridge over the canal are particular points of concern. Stringent control of parking and traffic regulations will be essential.

FCI wishes the school well and welcomes it as a new neighbour on the canal, and we urge local residents to be alert to any problems that arise, and to be the eyes and ears for your local Councillors. <http://boroughmuirhighschool.org/the-new-school/>



**The Edinburgh Printmakers** continue to raise the roof - with beautiful refurbished windows and a loving restoration of this handsome old Brewery office building which will be opening in 2019. They are looking into creating an open air 'gallery' down Gilmore Park to the canal, and have just announced their successful bid in attracting funds for a Fountainbridge Heritage Mural. This will be created by young local people age 14 + who will work with Blameless Art Collective to create a community mural inspired by the social and industrial

heritage of Fountainbridge, in particular the North British Rubber Company (NBRC).

The mural design will be developed with young people from the local community. They will use archive photographs, pamphlets and artefacts from the NBRC, some of which have been donated by family members of former employees, who still live in the Fountainbridge/Dalry area. They will also aim to involve FCI local history experts in the research days.

Production of the mural will take place over 6 days, involving groups of 4 young people at a time working with Blameless on sections of the mural which relate to their interests emerging during the research and development days. The mural is aiming to be completed with the Union Canal Festival 2018 on Saturday 16 June.

Edinburgh Printmakers will consult with existing and new community partners including Edinburgh City Council Lifelong Learning to identify young people to take part in the project. Blameless will be involved in pre-planning with community partners.

See more <http://castle-mill-works.edinburghprintmakers.co.uk/castle-mill-works>

## And more History!



In 2013 the FCI history group produced panels showing the history of the site for the Canal Festival. Although they were a temporary installation, they have only recently disintegrated. They have been incredibly popular - nearly every day you can find someone or a little huddle looking at them and talking about them - often from their own memories of the area. The hoardings themselves are very worn so the Council will be replacing most of them and providing a lot of new panel spaces for us to refresh these old ones and add more information panels: - about FCI,

the Grove, the Edinburgh Printmakers and what is happening on the site. The towpath is a busy route to work and a recreational space at weekends so the hoardings around the site offer a perfect space for the public to find out what has, and what is, going on.

## District or Community Heating

Plans are under way to possibly use the heat from a large sewer that crosses the eastern end of the site to provide energy for the planned homes, hotels and offices. A preliminary study indicates that this would be feasible. This could both reduce carbon emissions and the heating costs, making the development very attractive for residents. The technology has been proved in the Borders College in Galashiels, which has been using the waste energy from a sewer to heat the college since 2015. A Canadian-owned company called SHARC designed and installed the system in partnership with Scottish Water.

Preliminary studies on the Fountainbridge site indicate that the same technology should be feasible and that the flow in the sewer is large enough. Waste water typically has a temperature of 12 to 20 degrees Centigrade. Passed through a heat exchanger, its energy heats clean water whose temperature is then raised by a heat pump and used in a conventional central heating system.

Heat which would otherwise go to waste can be used to heat the entire development and nearby existing buildings in the area like the new school. Anna Christopherson, owner of Akva Bar on the Basin, and founder of the Green Bar movement has already indicated her support. For the lucky future residents of Fountainbridge, money down the drain will give them more cash in hand!

## Events for your Diary

### Living Wild' Sat 24th Feb

9.45 - 12.30pm

Kings Church 104, Gilmore Pl EH3NPL

A chance to help us develop a Green Plan for the public realm within this large site.

### FCI's AGM

Tues 17th April 6.30pm Kings Church

