

NEWSFLASH



Dundee Civic Trust
encouraging the best

50th anniversary dinner

As part of Dundee Civic Trust's ongoing celebrations of its 50th anniversary, a dinner took place at the Woodlands Hotel, Broughty Ferry on Thursday, 4 May 2023. Special guests were Dundee's Depute Lord Provost, Councillor Kevin Cordell, Robin Presswood, Executive Director of City Development, and Fiona Canavan, President of Dundee Institute of Architects. A very pleasant meal and a convivial atmosphere made it a memorable occasion.

Current Chairman of the Trust, Donald Gordon, introduced one of his distinguished predecessors, Jack Searle, to address the company with some very well-chosen and insightful words on the work of the Trust and its relationship with the community and our local government officials. It would have been very difficult to find someone better-placed than Jack to take on this task given his many years of service as a planner and his multifarious contributions to the various activities of the Trust.

Our thanks to all those who attended and for the membership's continuing interest in our city's built-environment and amenities. Here's to the next fifty years!

Steve Connelly



Short-term letting – balancing positive and negative impacts

Barbara Illsley

Attending a meeting of the City Centre and Harbour Community Council recently, I was struck by the strength of feeling there was about the increasing number of short-term lets, particularly Airbnb, within City Quay. A great deal of publicity has been given to the issue of short-term lets in Edinburgh, with concerns about noise disturbance, security, and a loss of homes for local people, but I was less aware of similar worries in Dundee.

People seek out short-term lets for a variety of reasons, for a holiday, when they are moving house, working on a short-term project, or having their homes renovated. Problems arise,

however, when there are concentrations of such lets, impacting on the quality of life of neighbours. What can be done to ensure that a balance is struck between providing sufficient rental accommodation for such needs and protecting residential amenity for existing residents, whether at City Quay or elsewhere in the city?

The planning system provides one way of regulating short-term lets. It has always been possible for councils to require planning permission for short-term letting where the activity constitutes a material change of use of the property. A range of factors will be taken into account in each case, such as: the character of the property including the number of bedrooms; the frequency of arrivals and departures; the number of people staying; the frequency and intensity of noisy or other unsocial activities; the impact on services including car parking and waste collection; and the use of communal areas and shared access (Highland Council website).

These were the kind of issues considered earlier this year when planning permission was sought to change the use of a 2-bedroomed, first floor flat on Marine Parade to a holiday let (The Courier, February 16, 2023). Dundee City Council received nine objection letters, including one from the Community Council on behalf of local residents. Many of the arguments against short-term lets were played out, with letters highlighting the potential disturbance to existing residents due to noise and footfall in and around the property, safety and security issues, the danger that approving this application could set a precedent for further applications and the fact that title deeds already restrict use to private residential accommodation. Setting aside the restriction in the title deeds, which is not a valid planning consideration, the Council rejected the points raised, stating they were not of sufficient weight to justify rejecting the application which complied with the Council's Local Development Plan. This application was approved.



Councils also have new licensing powers. Introduced in October 2022, Dundee's short-term letting licensing scheme currently applies to all new short-term lets and it will be extended to cover existing properties later in 2023. Licences are required for a range of accommodation types including holiday cottages, B&Bs, guest houses, rooms within a home and yurts, and the scheme covers matters such as space standards, safety, security, anti-social behaviour, and noise. Once a property has obtained a licence, it is subject to random inspections and checks.

Councils have one additional option. They now have the power to identify Control Areas to manage high concentrations of short-term lets under the planning system. This would mean that any property in the area being wholly run for this purpose, not just flats, would have to apply for change of use. To date, Edinburgh City Council is the only one in Scotland to identify a Control Area, which in their case covers the whole of the council area, although it has been subject to a recent legal challenge.

These tools undoubtedly give councils greater power to manage short-term letting in their area. It will be some time, however, before we can judge the balance that is being struck in Dundee between meeting the needs of renters and those of residents.

Keiller Shopping Centre: A Beacon of Community Resilience & Renewal

Donna Holford-Lovell

Dundee, like many cities, faces a multitude of challenges in the modern era. The transformation of workplaces, rapid technological advancement, and the pressing issue of rising global temperatures have eroded the city's previously thriving status as a hub for commerce, entertainment, shopping, and politics. In the face of economic difficulties and uncertain times, the Keiller Centre has served as a gathering place for the ordinary people of Dundee, offering solace, affordability, and memories in the city's toughest years.

Remembering the Past

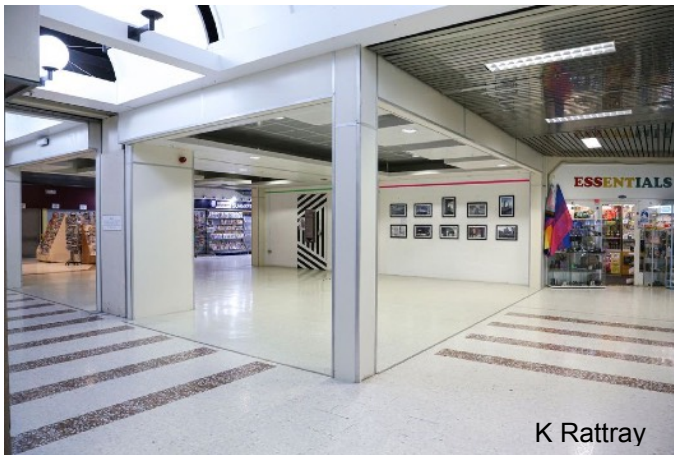
The Centre holds a significant place in Dundee's history, in that it symbolises the transition between the decline of the city's renowned 'Jute, Jam, and Journalism' industries and its present-day efforts at economic and social revitalisation. The Keillers of Dundee factory was built by Alexander Keiller, who was born in 1821 and was the son of the firm's founder, James Keiller. Alexander died in 1877, while returning from a business trip to Spain. His son John extended the factory in 1887. There, marmalade was made for decades until it closed in 1971. The demolition of the factory in 1978 represented an acknowledgment of the need for new purposes for old and defunct spaces, while emphasising the desire for practicality, functionality, and inclusivity. After the site was transformed into the Keiller Shopping Centre, it became an accessible space at the heart of Dundee's city centre that welcomed people from all walks of life.

A Place of Respite

Dundee's Waterfront is undergoing a remarkable regeneration process, but it is crucial to remember the reasons behind this transformation. We must not only recognise the city's successful industrial past, but we must also acknowledge the consequences that came with the subsequent long decline and the rise of late-stage consumer capitalism in the latter half of the 20th century, all of which left countless lives impacted and families without sufficient purpose or secure employment.

During times of high unemployment, meagre incomes, and a lack of opportunities, the Keiller Centre became a safe harbour for Dundonians. It offered more than just a place to shop; it was a gathering place for friends, a venue for dreams, and a source of solace. Whether reminiscing about weekend wanderings or catching up with friends over coffee, the Centre fostered a sense of community and hope. The memories that persist among Dundonians serve as a testament to the Centre's enduring impact on the lives of ordinary people.





K Rattray

Towards a Sustainable Future

The Centre has recently transferred to new management under NEoN Digital Arts and is receiving support from Creative Scotland. The appointment of this company reflects the Centre's potential to address the long-standing issue of limited space which is available to independent businesses in the city. There are on-going discussions surrounding a community-led purchase which would provide an opportunity for local residents to help to shape the future of this favourite space. It is hoped that the Keiller Shopping Centre will serve as a

model for sustainable living, working, and caring - a beacon of hope in a time of transition. As Dundee continues to evolve, the Centre represents the collective power of a community which is determined to preserve its identity and to build a sustainable future. It is a place remembered by all, cherished by many, and is destined to play a vital role in the ongoing narrative of Dundee's renewal.

Join our Journey

Our built environment consists of more than just bricks and mortar. The spaces and places that form the world around us have a profound impact on the communities and individuals who interact with them; and we need your help to do this. NEoN is planning a new future for the Keiller Centre which continues to support its anchoring role in the city's history. Would you like to help us to achieve this? To recognise the site's potential for this broader set of functions? To design a highly adaptable strategy for releasing that potential in an uncertain operating environment? If so, please get in touch with us at info@keillercentre.co.uk

Tour of Dundee Botanic Garden Roderick Stewart

Botanic Garden Curator, Kevin Frediani, most kindly led two groups of our members around the Gardens on Saturday 27th May, as a follow-on from his earlier talk, 'Over the Garden Wall'.

Kevin is only the fourth curator in the Garden's existence and we were greatly privileged to be given a deep insight into the way a space in the west end of Dundee has matured into a special place for people, a home for some of the world's rarest plants and a glorious setting for an exciting array of outdoor art.



R Stewart

We were presented with challenging ideas about biodiversity, space and place, embodied heat, and much more, and it was delightful to see how convincing the Tayside habitats have become, each complete within its own small space and each happily populated by what are so easily dismissed as 'weeds'. The weather was kind, there were many surprised comments from irregular visitors about how the garden had developed and it was highly satisfactory to see DCT Members signing up as Friends of the Garden afterwards. A most enjoyable and informative afternoon; very many thanks to Kevin Frediani and his staff.

Dundee Civic Trust Student Award 2023 Bill Lynch

Dundee Civic Trust's Student Award scheme is in its fourth year of a five year commitment to award a monetary prize for projects by fourth year students in Architecture at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design. The overall winner of the Dundee Civic Trust Student Award 2023 was Lucy Taylor. Her submission was entitled: 'Designing mental health (former College of Commerce building on Constitution Road)'. Lucy presented a really worthwhile attempt at transforming the dilapidated College building, that has lain empty for some years and becomes more and more of an eyesore, into something worthwhile, and a sorely needed addition to the mental health estate.

As an architectural end-product, this project looks sound, and in the design the student has taken on board ideas of retro-fit, BREEAM and Passivhaus. The provision of allotment spaces to assist with treatment is also welcome. This is a prominent building in a prominent position in Dundee and it merits being saved. By settling on faience tiles for the cladding this would give a real presence on Dundee's skyline. Here the student demonstrates a nod to the past, remembering the iconic art-deco Robertson's building in Dundee that recently burnt down, with a further nod to New York's latest skyscraper, the Steinway building, which also incorporates faience terracotta tiles on its façade.



The runner-up was Brendan Kerrisk, whose work was entitled: 'Reviving the Art School (Crawford Building)'.

The Crawford Building has numerous and significant problems, with woeful accessibility and poor circulation with endless, anonymous looking corridors and stairs. Brendan provides a good piece of documentation of the existing fabric of the building and shows a thorough understanding of the building and its functions, and he reports helpfully on the views of users. Only a small number of students responded to Brendan's survey through the use of QR codes dotted around the building, but he is to be congratulated for using this approach. The crux of his approach to the building is that of a retro-fit using the old core of the building but knitting in a modern atrium and improving the dismal thermal properties of the existing building. This is a competent piece that illustrates demolition isn't always necessary nor certainly the most sustainable.

Station house at a crossroads? Hugh Macrae

One of the Buildings at Risk in Dundee is the Crossroads Station House in Clepington Road. Originally part of the Dundee and Newtyle Railway, which opened in 1831, the Station House is one of the few remaining reminders of that line.

After the railway closed, the Station House became part of the King's Cross Hospital complex. It was used as a residence for many years before becoming vacant. Sitting in the north west corner of the King's Cross site and adjacent to houses on Clepington Road to the west, it is currently deteriorating but might still be restored.

Some little while ago, the Trust's Secretary contacted NHS Tayside about their future plans for the building. Eventually, a meeting was held with James Henderson, then Property Manager with the Board, at which the possibility of a sale of the Station House on sensible terms to a restorer was discussed. Potential problems in relation to planning restrictions and road access were identified and were the subject of subsequent positive discussions with the local authority. It was also stated that the Health Board were examining the entire King's Cross site as part of a wider Estates Strategy.



James Henderson then moved on to a post with NHS Scotland. Following this, contact was made with John Paterson, Head of Estates for NHS Tayside to establish progress. This resulted in confirmation that the Board do not intend to invest in the building (perhaps understandably) but that they are not willing to consider selling the property at the present time as the future development of the Kings Cross site might be compromised by any sale. No timeframe for the Estates Strategy or the redevelopment of the Kings Cross site have been given.

Needless to say, considering the historical significance of the building, this is extremely disappointing. It is hard to imagine that selling off this small corner site would disadvantage any redevelopment at Kings Cross bearing in mind the scale of the whole site. It seems almost inevitable that the building will be beyond any restoration in a few years time.

Readers may recall the saga of Cornhill House on the Perth Royal Infirmary site which was also owned by NHS Tayside and allowed to deteriorate to the point where demolition was inevitable. At least in that instance, the Board had a plan for medical facilities on that significant part of the PRI site.

The ownership of historic properties by public bodies is clearly problematic when the buildings are no longer usable for their purposes. It can be difficult for such bodies to justify spending money on such properties instead of on their primary functions. However, with ownership comes responsibility, and in the instance of the Station House there is a potential solution which would allow the NHS Board to live up to that responsibility and to preserve a small part of Dundee's heritage. We hope that they will move swiftly to permit this to happen.



B Illsley

Interested in the environment?

These Broughty in Bloom volunteers were spotted working at the car park in Broughty Ferry in May. What a difference their efforts have made. They told us that new recruits would be very welcome

Royal Tay Yacht Club setting sail to new premises

Donald Gordon

Members of Dundee Civic Trust were recently treated to a short cruise around RTYC's new building in Ogilvie Road, Broughty Ferry. The building, formerly owned by the late Mrs Jean Elvidge, was built in 2007, and has a distinctly nautical theme, from portholes to mahogany planking complete with caulking between the planks; and a maritime *feel* to it. There are open views through the panoramic windows, and a spiral staircase to a roof garden from where Mrs Elvidge could admire the magnificent sweep of the Tay estuary. The house was designed by The Voigt Partnership Ltd and won a Dundee Civic Trust award in 2007.



And all of this was before the premises were bought by RTYC. It was, in the words of Stewart Murdoch, a director of RTYC, "a no-brainer and an obvious choice". This was especially true after it became apparent that the Club would no longer be able to afford to keep and properly maintain the original Fort William House, built from 1838 by George Mathewson as a classical, almost Palladian villa, and itself a Category B listed building. It was owned by the Club since 1955, and at that time, it was the obvious choice for the Yacht Club to acquire.

However, time sails on, and RTYC were fortunate to obtain a sale of Fort William House, and to purchase Mrs Elvidge's Glenogil House at the same time. The Club has made fairly minor but necessary alterations to a construction that might have been built for them, including an office, changing rooms and a commercial kitchen. One of the biggest advantages, at least for the residents of Ogilvie Road, is that the entrance has been moved to the south side, adjacent to the existing large car park. To the Club's credit, they have been able – and indeed wished – to retain and enhance many of the original features, giving the new Clubhouse a sense that RTYC have been there for the past fifty years, as well as being their home for the next fifty.

There may be an issue with erosion of the Grassy Beach area and cycle/walking path near the shore. These two photographs, supplied by Stewart Murdoch, indicate the extent of the erosion over twenty years. Presumably the Club, and the City engineers, as well as Sustrans, who have an interest in the path, will do what they can to allow the Club to fulfil their fifty-year aim.



Do you remember the Wellgate? Brian Cram

The Wellgate Project, launched by Leisure and Culture Dundee, Dundee Libraries and Dundee City Archives at the end in April, is looking to rekindle memories of the Wellgate as it was before the creation of the eponymous shopping centre that was built over the original buildings. The project hopes to



gather stories, photos and videos of the historic street and at the end of the year, these will be brought together into a publicly accessible Wellgate Collection.

My interest stems from the fact that my father-in-law was born in the Wellgate but unfortunately my wife and I have no written family records. The best we have is a 1959 edition of the Dundee Directory printed by Burns & Harris. I asked Robert Burns if he would mind my copying the entries, odd numbers only, for Wellgate and he readily agreed. His family firm carried out a tremendous amount of research and made countless visits to check the details.

Here are the addresses and details of the occupants. My hope is that Dundee Civic Trust members reading Newsflash might have a memory triggered and, if so, to share it with the Project.

There is also a discussion taking place about how our city centre is going to develop and one of the ideas is to try to restore the Wellgate and return it to a street that links the Hilltown and the Murraygate. For change to happen, our council officials and local councillors try to gauge the level of public support for ideas such as this and I would be interested to know what members think about the concept and merit of trying to restore Wellgate.

WELLGATE STEPS

- 75 Henderson & Co. (Dundee) Ltd.,
- ... Donaldson, James, boxmaker
- ... Thomas, Miss M.
- 69 Campbell, Walter, engineer
- 67 Young, James S., fish merchant
- 65 Robertson, R.W., newsagent
- 63 Marr, James, confectioner
- 57 S.C.W.S., Ltd., furnishing department

CHARLES STREET

- 51 Grafton's, costumiers
- 49 City Shoe Repairs
- 45 Johnston's Stores, Ltd., grocers
- 43 Cable Shoes
- ... Mitchell, Mrs J.
- ... Harrison, Geo. E., upholsterer
- 39 Brannan, F., carter
- 37 Caledonian Tailors
- 33 Menzies & Sons, Ltd., drapers

MORTONS SQUARE

- 31 Brown, Mrs John
- ... Anderson, Angus, manager
- ... Hutton, Mrs Jessie
- ... Christie, Mrs O.
- ... Bisset, E.T., fruiterer
- ... Watson, William, etcher
- ... Stewart, John
- ... Whitehurst, F.A., grocer
- 25 Watt's (D'dee), Ltd., music sellers
- 23 Temple, John, Ltd., tailors
- 21 Elena Mae, photographic dealers
- 18 Dundee Bedding Co.
- 16 Smith D.T., sunshade specialist
- 8 Central Photo finishers
- 5 Taylor, David

KIRK ENTRY

- 15 Hunter, Wm., & Co., Ltd., drapers
- 7 Home and Colonial Stores, Ltd.

BAIN SQUARE

- 5 Whyte, Wm J., spirit merchant
- 3 Boots, The Chemists
- 1 Style & Mantle Costumiers

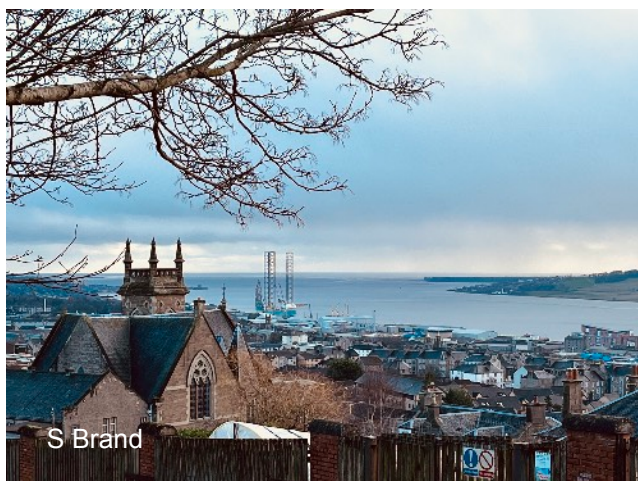
PANMURE STREET

Planning Update Nick Day

Once again, the Trust's Planning Group has been busy examining newly submitted planning applications and commenting on these to both applicants and to the Council as appropriate.

There have been two major applications for flat developments in the inner city on derelict sites. **134 flats with commercial and leisure ground floor use on the site of the former Hilltown Market on Main Street**, and **174 flats on the site of the demolished Halley's Mill (Wallace Craigie Works) on Blackcroft/Broughty Ferry Road**. Both are prominent developments of 5/6 storeys. We welcome the prospect of affordable housing on these brownfield sites and have proposed significant improvements to both of these major proposals: in terms of design, layout, car parking, landscaping, public art, and more sustainable design solutions to reduce carbon emissions. It would be disappointing if these plans were passed by the City Council without significant improvements being made.

Two smaller housing developments are proposed. **10 flats in a 3-storey block on Tannadice Street** replacing a former industrial unit. This will blend in well with existing tenements, but residents would benefit from more amenity space. And there is a fresh application on vacant ground off **Charleston Drive for 10 detached houses with 9 flats in a 3-storey building**. This is a difficult shaped site which it would be good to see developed, though the provision of more useable amenity space for residents would be welcome.



An interesting and very welcome proposal has been submitted to **convert the B Listed former St David's High Kirk, Kinghorne Road to form 8 flats**. The developer has previous experience in converting churches to residential use and given the plethora of redundant churches in the city and elsewhere the Trust will follow progress here with interest.

An application for a **215 bed 7 storey purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) on the site of the Mardi Gras nightclub in South Ward Road** has now been formally resubmitted. It is deficient in amenity space and

there are missed opportunities to create a low energy use development.

Pre-application consultations are underway for yes, you guessed it, another **PBSA development on the site of Willison House, the former Robertson's furniture store on Barrack Street**. The Trust has commented that more amenity space is needed for the student residents, along with better energy conservation measures, more distinctive features on the main elevations, and that public art proposals should be developed as an integral part of the development. And, no more ground floor retail units, please. The PBSA developments in the city with planning approval that seem likely to proceed will accommodate about 1500 students, but

demand is estimated to be greatly in excess of this. This is a striking example of how our universities and colleges are changing the face of the city - particularly in Blackness and adjacent parts of the city centre.

There are three pre-application consultations for **battery storage units which would store electricity generated by solar and wind power for release to the national grid at times of high energy use: on farmland at Star Inn Farm off the A90 on the western approach to the city; on unused land off George Buckman Drive, Camperdown Industrial Park; and in the buildings and site of the Locarno Works and the former Poundstretcher store by the Dudhope roundabout at Lochee Road/West Marketgait.** Land at South Road is already being developed for this purpose and there is a similar pre-application proposal at Birkhill in Angus. The first two of these proposals are examples of yet another competing use of land on the edges of our towns and cities. While we acknowledge that these developments are an appropriate response to the vital need to maximise use of energy resources, it must also be said that they are unlikely to be pleasing on the eye. Good screening with tree planting will be essential, particularly at Star Inn Farm from the A90, and at Camperdown Industrial Park from Coupar Angus Road.

And finally, we highlight below some of the planning decisions that have been made since Newsflash 59 was published in April.

Approval of conversion to form 20 student bed accommodation of Rose House, Constitution Terrace. Many local residents were concerned by the impact on their neighbourhood, but the Trust supported the application as hopefully securing the future use of this listed building. **Approval has been given to phase 2 of the redevelopment of the B Listed Eagle Mill prominently located at the junction of Dens Road and Victoria Road to form 34 flats, commercial and leisure uses.** An innovative vertical planting facility is proposed for the basement area in association, we understand, with the James Hutton Institute. The Trust welcomes this news but will do so even more once the redevelopment of the whole mill complex actually happens.

Re-approval has been granted to a 7-storey development at Trades Lane of 128 flats with commercial uses fronting South Marketgait. The Council did not agree with our concerns about the design, the unsuitability of commercial ground floor uses here and the possible adverse effect on the comprehensive development of the East Port area as identified in Council's City Centre Strategic Investment Plan. **Approval has been granted for change of use from proposed bar/restaurant to mixed use space for training, education, conferences and events Water's Edge, City Quay.** The Trust welcomes the developer's reassessment of the market adapting to changing demands. Water's Edge is a previous winner of a Dundee Civic Trust Award for contribution to the city's built environment.



Invitation to respond

Please feel free to get in touch about any of the items that appear in Newsflash. Suitable responses will be considered for publication in the next edition.

Contact us at info@dundeecivictrust.co.uk

Improving housing design in Dundee Bill Lynch

Dundee Civic Trust is keen, especially during our fiftieth year, to foster excellent working relations with other organisations in the city. Three such groups are the University of Dundee's Department of Architecture and Urban Planning (whose fourth year students compete annually for a DCT project Award, featured elsewhere in this issue); Dundee Institute of Architects (DIA); and Dundee City Council (DCC), particularly the Planning Department.

It was appropriate, therefore, that on 15th June two parallel workshops took place, (one focused on a greenfield site and the other an inner city site) initiated by DCT and DIA, hosted by the Dundee University, and attended by representatives of DCC. This is part of a process the ambition of which is to impart guidance on future housing design that can be woven into the forthcoming Local Development Plan (LDP3). DCC is, of course, very heavily involved in the preparation and production of LDP3, the consultation for which is to begin later this year. Some housing design is excellent, incorporating modern building and construction techniques which employ natural and man-made resources as efficiently as can be achieved. Too many houses are being designed and built with scant – or even no – regard for these best practices, however. We are equally concerned with how a building looks, as that is vital to the appearance of our cityscape, although the focus of the workshops on this occasion was on how housing develops and operates within its local context.

Some 27 individuals, representing numerous organisations and professions, took part in the two workshops, and it was really fruitful to have a range of views from various experts in town planning and architecture as well as contributions from Scottish Water, Passivhaus, Blue-Green-Infrastructure, private and social housing developers, and community representatives. The workshops were oversubscribed and there was a waiting list.

The discussions were both frank and informative, and the conclusions which were reached were both substantial and useful. Feedback from participants was encouraging and almost all attending felt positive about the discussions, and in particular the wide-ranging expertise being shared.

The next stage of the process is for the three organisers to consolidate the outputs from the workshops and incorporate these conclusions into a draft report which will be circulated to all those who attended for comment and feedback. A final report will be produced for discussion later this year, and this will be followed with further discussion with DCC planners. The final communique will be placed into the LDP3 Consultation process.

It is a case of – watch-this-space for further updates.



Future events

Dates for your diary

13 July 2023

6.30pm Dalhousie Building, Hawkhill

Prof. Ric Russell, 'Dundee - an evolving cityscape'

On Thursday 13 July, at 6.30pm, we have the pleasure of hosting a Celebrity 50th Anniversary Lecture, given by well-known local (and national) architect Professor Ric Russell OBE. The title of his talk is 'Dundee - an evolving cityscape'. Ric has practised in Dundee for over 50 years.

The event takes place in the Dalhousie Building, Hawkhill, in the large lecture theatre, starting at 6.30pm with a wine reception, kindly donated by McNicoll & Cairnie, Wine Merchants, of Broughty Ferry.

Please do come. There is no charge. For planning for the reception, it will be helpful to know that you will be attending, by email to info@dundeecivictrust.co.uk



B Illsley



CONTACT US

Happy to hear
from you at:

[DCT](mailto:info@dundeecivictrust.co.uk)

info@dundeecivictrust.co.uk

Editorial Team

B Illsley
D Gordon
S Connelly
B Cram
B Lynch
S Brand

Blackadders

Blackadders Solicitors are proud sponsors of **City Scene**

Head Office

30 & 34 Reform Street
Dundee DD1 1RJ

T 01382 229222

F 01382 342220

E enquiries@blackadders.co.uk

advantage you

www.blackadders.co.uk

Aberdeen

Dundee

Edinburgh

Glasgow

Perth