

NEWSFLASH



Dundee Civic Trust
encouraging the best

The Road to Eden

Donald Gordon

The long-awaited, full planning application for the Eden Project Dundee was lodged in December, with no fewer than 69 documents, some extending to several hundred pages - each. The planning application for a bridge from the dock area over the railway and the road (permission in principle only) was lodged earlier.

The Trust welcomes this great opportunity for the further development of the city, region and Scotland, and we consider that the plan demonstrates a bold ambition. On your behalf, we have studied the proposals, and have commented on some but not all of the many documents which have been produced. Essential to the viability of the whole scheme is the need to maximise the number of visitors, and the regular refreshing of the attractions onsite will assist this, as will working together with other tourist sites.

Our comments are summarised as follows:

Planning Statement

The statement shows that the application contains exciting developments which will transform the area, though they are described in a general way. The fact that the proposal does not comply with some planning development guidelines is unlikely to be an issue. We need to see evidence for the assertions of the number of visitors and the financial impact on the area.

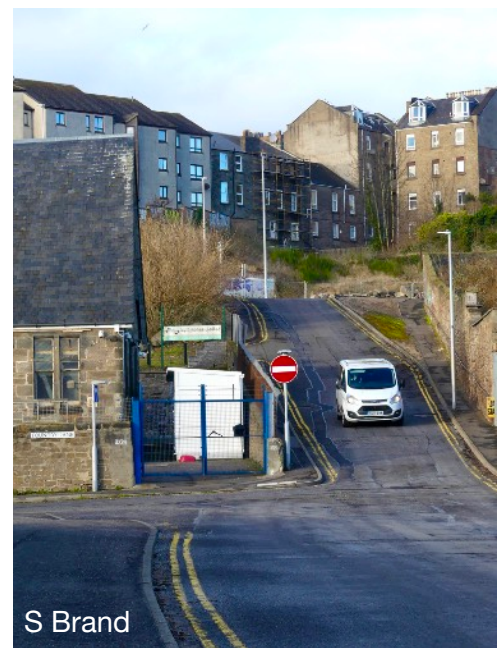
Travel and Transport

We have some serious concerns about access to the site:

Private car travel (estimated to be 62% of visitors) is to be discouraged, but it is not explained how this goal will be met. There will be congestion. Dropping off arrangements at Peep o' Day Lane will need to be improved. A "rubber train" should be considered from the city centre. The vacant retail unit at the railway station should be considered as a welcome venue.

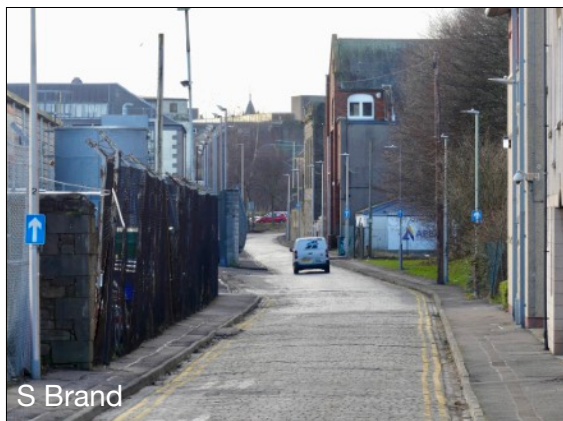
The provision of *Public transport* will require robust arrangements with all travel providers for pricing, bus turning and parking, and Active Travel routes.

In relation to *access routes*, the condition of *Seagate* is worrying, as this will be much used by visitors. It is the responsibility of Dundee City Council. *The Bridge over the road and railway line* is a vital requirement from the opening, to provide an appropriate statement entrance, as well as opening up the dock area.



Access to it from the centre must be carefully planned to encourage visitors to use that route. *Foundry Lane* is an obvious access point (though regarded only as “potential”), but significant issues of upgrading, access to buildings and traffic use must be addressed. *Peep o’ Day Lane* may suit visitors from the north of the city, but with a steep path it is not wholly suitable for disabled drop off, arriving from the city centre, or for cycle access.

Dock Street is wholly unsuitable for access, as it will be congested, cramped, dangerous and dirty, and not susceptible to upgrading. Large numbers of pedestrians would conflict with heavy through traffic and turning vehicles.



Design and Access

There is much to be commended in these exciting and thoughtful proposals. Rather more consideration, however, should be given to how Eden’s ethos of regeneration and sustainability may be demonstrated. Greater ambition means greater achievements, particularly in the buildings, which should be retained and made more energy-efficient, particularly the Gas Meter house and the Engine Shed. “Net Zero Carbon” should be a key driver, rather than just an aim for “operational energy”. This can be helped by reusing materials in new and old buildings, such as steel beams, and natural materials such as timber.

Buildings: We like the layout of *The Valve*, *Venue 3* and *The Lush Bunker*; toilets should have daylight, and flat rooflights should be pitched for cleaning. Care must be taken with the configuration of PV roof arrays.

The *Landscape Masterplan* contains good and original ideas. The *Water Line* should be better and more naturally planned, with soft corners which will improve water flow and help prevent debris building up. *The Meadows* will require suitable windbreak hedging.

Regeneration and Sustainability. We think that ambition is lacking here. Given the long-term presence of Eden Dundee, Net Zero carbon should be aimed for as a primary objective, employing Passivhaus Premium principles and accepted targets for embodied carbon. For ventilation, natural, slow moving displacement techniques should be used.

Energy

We consider that the basic approach to energy use is commendable, but unambitious. For example, Eden should strive to achieve higher goals than mere compliance with EPC standards. These standards will have to be tightened up in future, given the future improvements in technologies, global warming and more severe weather. Several additional means can be employed, including more PV panels on the slope at Peep o’ Day Lane and elsewhere; vertical wind turbines, with information digitally linked to schools; static bicycles for visitors to generate power; battery storage; cooperating with future-technology energy companies to demonstrate that Eden is in the forefront of developments; and design for self-sufficiency in energy.

It will be some months before the City Council consider and adjudicate on this very significant (in several senses) planning application, the most important one in Dundee for some years.

The Dundee Tapestry

Stephen Brand

For those who haven't already heard, there is a fascinating and interesting exhibition on Dundee's rich heritage which has just opened at the V&A. The Dundee Tapestry is a community project which illustrates Dundee history from the mid 19th century to where we are now. The project was conceived and developed by John Fyffe, MBE, of the Weaver Incorporation of Dundee, one of the city's Nine Incorporated Trades, and Dr Frances Stevenson, senior lecturer at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design. The panels were co-designed by Dr Stevenson and Andrew Crummy, MBE, the artist behind the Great Tapestry of Scotland.



The tapestry consists of 35 one-metre square panels which cover eight connected themes such as Industry, Women, Culture and Creative Dundee. The idea for the tapestry was conceived in October 2021 and over 140 volunteer stitchers from Dundee and the surrounding areas have been busy working on them since the spring of 2022.

The detail and the skill of the stitchers are plain to see. It is fascinating to go round the exhibition, looking at the panels and picking up all sorts of information about Dundee's history, much of which may not be known to you. As a Dundonian, I learned a lot of things I was unaware of about our city. It illustrates Dundee's diverse history and culture and many of its prominent citizens over the years. From Gang Jumpers and The Book of Inebriates to Joseph Knight, Anna Dodge and Jimmy Macdonald, they are all there ready to be explored. There is much to learn about our city in these panels.

The exhibition, which is free to attend, is on until 28th April. It is well worth visiting to see it in all its splendour. In addition, there is a very good website giving detailed information on each of the panels and an explanation of what the panel is illustrating. This can be accessed here.

www.thedundeetapestry.com



What makes good housing today? Bill Lynch

Members were treated to a 'tour de force' at the talk by Professor Fionn Stevenson on 15th January. There was a really good turnout for a cold wet winter's night. The subject matter was obviously of interest.

Fionn's background makes her especially knowledgeable to talk on this particular topic. She is a highly respected academic who, as a practising architect, was responsible for numerous projects across Europe. She has also been an adviser to Scottish Government.

The talk began with a look at the history of building standards starting with the pronouncement by King Hammurabi in Babylon 1758 BC that *'if building should fall down and kill the occupants then said builder would be slain'*. Later standards she mentioned included those for Roman housing as detailed by Vitruvius in 30BC; those requiring housing to be built of stone and brick as opposed to timber following the Great Fire of London 1667; and the requirement for housing to be linked to sewage and water systems, one of the elements of the 1875 Public Health Act. The space standard for a 3-bedroom house in 1875 was 102.4 sqm and this has gradually been reduced to 67.8 sqm in 2018. This is an amazing 34% reduction.



New Housing Standards for Scotland are expected in 2025 to cover the period to 2040. There is some speculation as to what will be included and Fionn took the opportunity to flesh out some of the key recommendations from the Dundee Housing Design Workshop last summer, an event organised jointly by the Trust and Dundee Incorporation of Architects and hosted by University of Dundee (see Newsflash 62 and the DCT website for more details). Fionn chose four recommendations to discuss using different projects that epitomised good practice.

Recommendation 1 indicates that developers and builders are expected to take cognisance of the local area, the type of buildings, construction materials, rooflines, green spaces etc., and build in keeping with what already exists. To emphasise this, Fionn used the example of Pilmuir Works, a former linen works in Dunfermline, to show a sympathetic restoration with aspects of new build stone and timber detailing.

Recommendation 2 emphasises mixed use and density. For this, Fionn chose the example of Ellengowan in Dundee, a new build complex for Hillcrest Housing with a mix of flats, semi-detached villas and villas. She highlighted the incorporation of a corner shop within the development and emphasised that there is an increasing need for new housing to be of sufficient density to enable such amenities to be built as part of developments. Placemaking is crucial here.

Recommendation 3 seeks improvements to the public realm. Fionn illustrated this aspect by using the Abode housing complex in Cambridgeshire. This development provides examples of 'shared streets' where cars share road space with pedestrians rather than having dominance. Tree planting, avenues, and brick work pergolas providing shade are also integral to the design.



Recommendation 10 is concerned with building material re-use and recycling – a ‘cradle to cradle’ approach where all materials are in effect dismantled and re-used. Such properties are concerned with zero-carbon. The example chosen here was the SEED co-housing project in Dundee, where the emphasis is on the use of timber and screws rather than nails to aid future dismantling for future re-use. She also illustrated a ‘fabric first’ Passivhaus retrofit of a tenement building in Niddrie Road, Glasgow as well as a Co-Housing project for older women, New Ground, in London, with attention to detail of residents’ needs and wants.

This was a fascinating talk which gave rise to a lively Q/A session. There is much more to be debated on this subject so I hope Fionn will agree to come back to speak to the Trust again.

*Stevenson F (2019) *Housing Fit For Purpose: Performance, Feedback and Learning*, RIBA

Congratulations

It is great news to hear that two local projects have been shortlisted for awards

Craigie Street Pocket Park, Stobswell, is on the shortlist for the Scottish Civic Trust My Place Awards - Community-led Projects. Nominated by: Stobswell Forum.. Architect or lead designer: Stephen Blacklaw and Stephen Page. The citation states:



“Local people have worked together to revamp an area in the Albert Street District Shopping Centre that was previously considered dull and grey, creating a high-quality pocket park in Craigie Street. Residents were involved in developing the plan for the area through both online and on-street consultations and discussions on what they wanted to see at the heart of the community. Today, the park has pedestrianised part of the local area to encourage active travel and increase the

quality public space within the district shopping centre. It now has Dundee’s first rainwater garden, new high-quality seating, signage, public art and cycle parking. Complementary works were also completed in other close-by locations along the shopping street to improve pedestrian access, increase safety and improve the shopping experience. The project has galvanised local spirit, with a majority of people now calling for further regeneration projects to improve their local spaces.”

The Royal Tay Yacht Club is a finalist in the Yacht Club Association Green Yacht Club of the Year 2024. The citation states:

“The Royal Tay Yacht Club in Scotland moved from their former clubhouse and purchased a new all electric eco-friendly clubhouse, working on reducing carbon emissions and cost-efficiency. This was a fundamental change to its operating model which had been in place for the last 68 years. These changes have been embraced by members and represent a cultural shift as well as behavioural change. The new building has underfloor heating generated by new air source heat pumps, a high standard of thermal insulation, maximising solar gain, and offers electric vehicle charging. Waste reduction, recycling, and regular beach clean-ups all take place.”



We look forward to hearing the results. Good luck.

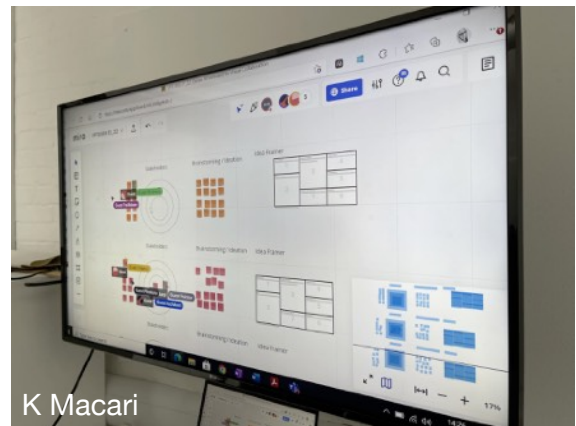
Positive Planning: Ambitious, Bold and Creative

Kirsty Macari

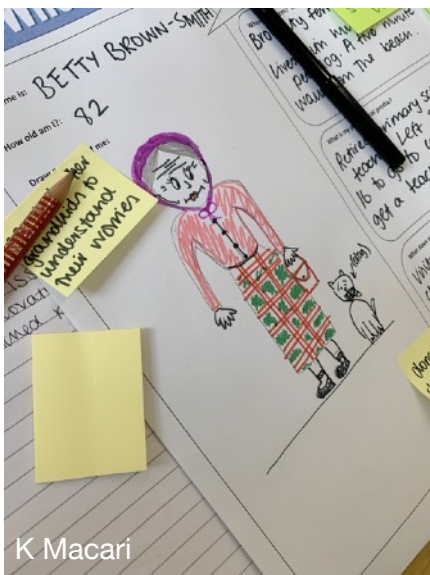
There is no doubt that “planning” in relation to our built and natural environments is often perceived critically. This perception can be driven by misinformation in relation to the purpose of planning, by the complexity of procedures involved or as result of negative personal experience. Whether addressed as town and regional planning, urban planning or spatial planning, planning has a positive role to play, however, in responding to the challenges that current and future places face.

Fundamentally, planning is a proactive and dynamic profession that aims to create sustainable, resilient, and inclusive places, supporting the protection of character and identity and balancing the shifting social, economic, and environmental demands that each of us contribute to. Nevertheless, planning is not without its challenges, with local authority planners often feeling the brunt of this as a result of constrained budgets and resourcing, factors that are outwith their control. The changes brought forward by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 have put additional pressure on planning to do more without additional resources, but they have also created an opportunity to invest in more diverse skills and new approaches such as the use of digital technology.

Planning can foster community engagement and social cohesion as part of the co-design of physical changes and policy development. National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4), launched in 2023, is the national spatial strategy setting out spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments, and planning policy. The foreword acknowledges that changes in our places can be difficult, but NPF4 aims to ensure an inclusive and fairer planning system with a clear focus on public participation that seeks to deliver sustainable, liveable, and productive places.



Communities are passionate about their places and the use of new Local Place Plans can create a catalyst for change in how they engage with the planning system. Local Place Plans can encourage a sense of place, vibrancy and empowerment as well as ensure that well-designed public spaces and places enhance public health and wellbeing through the promotion of physical activity, living local and access to green spaces.



The collective value of the role of planning was evidenced by the Royal Town Planning Institute (2020)¹ which highlighted that communities living in well-planned neighbourhoods can facilitate up to 59% of NHS-recommended weekly activity and that the variety of urban greenspaces across Great Britain provide approximately £16.5 billion in collective environmental, health and amenity value each year.

In my own role at the University of Dundee with a remit for planning, I am engaging with the planners of tomorrow and ensure that they are not only learning about decision making for the wider public good and fundamental principles of planning but that they also have new approaches with digital and design thinking that will ensure planning is well equipped to navigate the

complexities of modern living. They are encouraged to consider an A, B, C approach: be ambitious, be bold, be creative. The positive impact that can be realised by effective planning must be undertaken with acknowledgement from everyone that we all have a collaborative role to play.

1. RTPi (2020). Invest and Prosper. Available at: <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/research/2020/october/invest-and-prosper/> [Accessed 23



K Macari

Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan

Donald Gordon



Late last year, Dundee City Council published, for comment, their draft **Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan (STDP)**. We reviewed the Plan in some detail and have lodged detailed comments.

The Trust supports the introduction of a strategic transport plan for the city of Dundee. The provision of easy, efficient, cheap and healthy forms of public movement is essential for the well-being, in many senses, of the whole community, but transport for different purposes must be considered, which we thought had been insufficiently addressed in the Plan. These transport purposes include inter-regional travel, including the coordination of rail and bus; city-wide travel; and 20 minute neighbourhoods, involving travel within a small area. The Plan offered proposals covering several aspects of transport in the city, many of which are laudable, though we disagree on some of the

priorities, and there is insufficient detail on how the plans may be implemented, and when, and by whom, and at what cost. Some of the significant responses are detailed here.

Bus and Rail Services. The Transport Plan includes proposals to improve bus services. In our response, we replied: *“We welcome all the proposals to improve bus services, including the provision of digital information. Improvements should be the top priority in the Transport Plan as they underpin all forms of green transport in the city. They depend on the quality of the buses, the length of time the journey takes, bus frequency, and weather protection and access at bus stops.*



S Brand

“There are huge delays for buses crossing Kingsway and the Inner Ring Road, especially at peak times. The STDP should prioritise and solve congestion points at key junctions by giving priority to buses, improving routing through dense housing areas, and providing shelters/seating at all bus stops.

“Car parking at Leuchars station costs £1 for the day and £10.50 in Dundee station. Rail travel from Dundee should be encouraged by reducing the car parking charges adjacent to the station. We would also like to see greater emphasis given to improving local rail services, as Dundee has an important regional role for residents of Angus and east Perthshire.”

Active Travel Network. There are ambitious, and expensive, proposals for Active Travel, travel corridors and hubs. We responded: *“We welcome the proposals for cycle parking and storage in the city centre, which should be free, easy to find, secure and accessible. Better cycle storage is certainly required at Dundee bus station as well as other key sporting and cultural venues.*



S Brand

“The proposed dedicated Active Travel Routes are poorly thought out and extremely expensive. For example, it is not possible to prioritise both buses and cycles on Forfar Road/Pitkerro Road, and at the western end of Arbroath Road there is a significant pinch point, where buses and cyclists would have to share the same lane; this would be dangerous and unworkable. We would like to see a genuinely coherent and clearly identified cycle network prioritised and rapidly developed across the city which avoids main roads where possible. If there are to be dedicated arterial Active Travel Routes, these need to be continuous, not shared with buses, and not too narrow.

“It will be vital to the success of the Eden development that the link along the Docks and over the proposed bridge is completed as soon as possible.”

Road Safety. The proposals are fairly straightforward. We responded: *“We welcome the proposal to make many more roads in Dundee restricted to 20mph, excepting key Core Network roads. However, we would like to see all roads that have dense residential accommodation and containing schools included within the 20 mph zones.”*

Mobility. The proposals related partly to electric vehicles. In our response, we included that *“we are concerned that the strategy for public charging for electric vehicles is underdeveloped in the STDP. Local charging hubs are welcomed, but this does not solve the need for better access to EV use by the providing of local on-street charging facilities.”*

The consultation period for the draft transport plan has now ended, and we await with interest the publication of the final plan.



B Illsley

Keiller Centre

Brian Cram



S Brand

I'd like to encourage our readers to support, at every opportunity, the efforts being made by Kathryn Rattray to bring the Keiller Centre/Forum Shopping Centre back to life. As you may recall from Newsflash 60, Kathryn and Donna Holford-Lovell took over the management of the centre last May with the goal of creating a space in the heart of the city where the arts can thrive alongside retailing. They have been successful in attracting a varied range of cultural events including: an exhibition of drawings by artist Kirsty Lockhart entitled Journeys on the 28 bus; Dundee Fringe, a 9-day festival of comedy, cabaret and children's theatre; a Wellbeing Food Illustration session hosted by the University of Dundee, and, most recently, the Evening Telegraph's exhibition of photos of Old Dundee Shops.

During a recent visit, I was surprised by the appearance of the access walkways and the internal atmosphere of the Keiller Centre, however. The space this building provides should be a hive of enterprise and commercial activity and it seemed to me as though it was like a lonely wee snowdrop pushing up through the frozen ground. The businesses that were operating had products and services that were obviously able to serve their regular customers. The frustrating thing, from my point of view, was that there should be so many more.



S Brand

This city centre property needs to find new ways to be relevant to the citizens who live within the confines of the Inner Ring Road, at the very least, and in addition, if possible, be a magnet to draw customers into the city.

The events that have been provided demonstrate that there is a demand for exhibitions, pop up stalls and entertainment. These projects have generated positive returns for the providers, but they lack the continuity that most bricks and mortar-based retailers need to sustain a city centre business.

From talking to people who work in the property market in Dundee it seems that the Keiller Centre has had a long tradition of being supported by small locally owned businesses, businesses that could not afford a standalone High Street presence. One would think that with the growing interest in repurposing space in city centres, the Keiller Centre would be an ideal place to locate a number of local services such as clinics, dentists, and medics, as well as the more commonly imagined shops, hairdressers, galleries and cafes.

It seems to me that Kathryn Rattray, the gallery owner who is trying to revive the Keiller Centre is in need of a patron who shares her vision, a patron who can bring in commercial property management and contacts.

Planning Update

Nick Day

The Trust's Planning Group has spent a lot of time focussing on making detailed comments on the applications for the **Eden Project and the bridge across to the Waterfront** as featured elsewhere in this edition of the Newsflash, but we have also been busy looking at other important proposals.

Kirkwood Homes have submitted proposals for **38 houses next to their existing Balgillo Heights development** north of Clearwater Park, north of Arbroath Road. A similar development was refused permission by the Council, a decision upheld on appeal by a Scottish Government Reporter. A promise of an hourly bus service is the only significant new factor, but residents would still be largely car dependent, and the Trust has urged the Council to maintain its opposition to this development.

63 affordable flats with ground floor workshops for Hillcrest Housing in a 7 storey development are proposed with the demolition of 60 Brown Street in Blackness. The Trust supports the principle of mixed use developments like this in Blackness, but wishes to see a number of design improvements before the application is approved. And our concern about the close juxtaposition of these flats with the student housing being built on an adjoining site, reflects the need for a master plan for the area.



There are two more proposals due to be considered by the City Council for **battery energy storage systems** which will be designed to store, in large shipping container sized units, electricity generated by solar and wind power for release to the National Grid in times of peak demand. One is contained entirely within the **former Locarno Works building and Poundstretcher unit** on West Marketgait and Lochee Road. At the Trust's suggestion public art is to be used to improve the bland Locarno facade facing the Dudhope roundabout, with staff from the Art College managing its installation. And the second proposal is to utilise the wasteland of the **former gas works site at Midmill** off Pitkerro Road.

Applications decided include **approval to the conversion of the Listed Caird Rest on Nethergate to 5 flats, approval of 215 bed student accommodation on the site of the former Mardi Gras nightclub on South Ward Road, and approval of 48 dwellings, including 8 sheltered homes on Hebrides Drive, Mill 0' Mains.**



The application for the **redevelopment of the Wallace Craigie Works, Broughty Ferry Road for 144 flats** has been refused on the basis of poor design and overdevelopment of the site with insufficient outdoor amenity for residents.

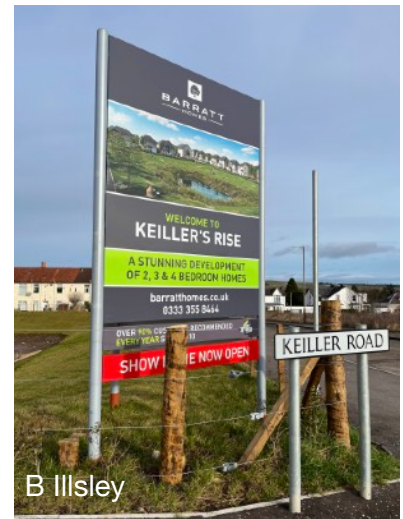
Draft Dundee Housing Land Audit 2023. This audit analyses the projected demand for housing against

the supply of sites and buildings for the next 10 years. This confirms that the current allocation of land supply can accommodate housing units just exceeding the projected demand of 430 new units per year. The draft Audit however highlights that the new Dundee Local Development Plan must allocate land up to the year 2038 and that this will require sites and building conversions sufficient

to accommodate over 2000 units in the period 2033 to 2038.

The Trust contends that this should, and can, be achieved by developing sites within the built up area of the city, in particular in the city centre and inner city areas. No further greenfield sites are needed beyond those already allocated in the current Dundee Local Development Plan. Such a policy will enhance existing city communities and reinforce the 20 minute neighbourhood principle of all local services being accessible without a car. This will though require a focussed effort by public authorities and private investors to remove constraints such as site preparation costs and the renewal of outdated infrastructure, particularly drainage.

The alternative of releasing land more for greenfield housing sites is likely to create more car dependent communities and the need for substantial unaffordable public infrastructure. Witness the much-publicised need for a new school and major disruptive road improvements for the Western Gateway.



Gas holder park, Granton

Barbara Illsley

Gas holders once dominated the skylines of UK's cities, a striking visual reminder of our industrial past. Designs changed over time. The oldest Victorian ones had frames made of cast iron and were often architecturally elaborate using classical features; by the late 1890s, new designs were introduced with lattice-work uprights and horizontal girders constructed of wrought iron and steel; and the 20th century saw the introduction of spiral-guided gasholders, without a frame but with a telescopic bell that would rise as it filled with gas. Dundee's gas holder was of this final type.

As these structures became redundant following the introduction of North Sea gas, many were demolished and the sites redeveloped for other uses. Some have survived, however, and have found imaginative new uses. The gas holder at Granton in Edinburgh is one such example.



Built in 1902, the Granton gas holder has a frame of riveted rolled steel, made up of 24 vertical posts with finials divided into 4 horizontal tie beams with latticework bracing between (HES website). It was listed (Category B) in 1987 as one of the best examples of this type of gas holder in Scotland. Work is now underway to restore the frame to its original condition, to decontaminate the site and to create a new park within and around the frame which will include spaces for public art, relaxation, and the staging of outdoor events. This major regeneration project is being financed through a £16.4 million grant from the UK Levelling Up Fund with a further £1.2 million from Scottish Government.

This is an exciting project which will create a facility not just for local residents but for the wider communities of north Edinburgh. Although Dundee's gasworks site does not have a similar listed structure, the proposals for Eden Dundee are creative and innovative and, when implemented, will result in the

transformation of this large derelict site. Let's hope the project can also attract necessary funding from UK and Scottish governments.

Future events

Dates for your diary

15 February 2024

7.00pm Dundee Art Society Galley Roseangle

Roderick Stewart - A Hacklemaker's Tale

“The Hecklie”, as Wm R Stewart & Sons (Hacklemakers) Ltd was known, was an unorthodox Dundee company founded in 1874 which expanded from making hackles for jute machinery to become the world leader in supplying pinned products to a wide range of industries with its own subsidiary, Stewarts of America Inc., in the USA. The story covers the company's transition from traditional wooden staves to high-tech aluminium pinned tubes and also includes the stories of the ‘Nutshell’ folding caravan, ‘HMS Hackleworks’ and company’s role in the saving of HMS Unicorn and the return of RRS Discovery to Dundee.



21 March 2024

7.00 pm Dundee Art Society Galley Roseangle

Joint meeting with the Friends of Dundee Heritage Trust
Jaquie Roberts and Beth Bate - Dundee Contemporary Arts 25 years on



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