

NEWSFLASH



Dundee Civic Trust
encouraging the best

Dundee does well in 'My Place Awards'

Fionn Stevenson

Many of us know and love the graceful Magdalen Green bandstand which sits in Dundee's oldest city park. Built in 1890 by Walter Macfarlane & Co of Glasgow at the Saracen Foundry, it was restored in 1991 and again in 2009 by Dundee City Council, and still hosts regular events and concerts.



H Smith



M Smith

What a pleasure, then, to see Hannah Smith of 34th Dundee Guides win the Scottish Civic Trust 'My Place' Photography Award (for secondary-age learners) at the awards ceremony in Glasgow Trades Hall on 13th March 2024, with her stunning photo of the bandstand in the winter snow titled 'Winter Wonderland'. Hannah had the idea in mind that the bandstand would look good in the snow but had to wait for some to arrive. She went straight out on the first snowy day with her father, and captured this image.

The new Craigie Pocket Park, developed by Stobswell Forum in partnership with Sustrans and Dundee City Council, was also shortlisted for a 'My Place' Award, but had to concede to The Corner, Darvel as worthy winners from Ayrshire – see the winning five minute video of this hugely impressive new village community development project [here](#). The new Chair of Dundee Civic Trust Planning Group, Professor Fionn Stevenson, who attended the awards on behalf of Stobswell Forum, said: "These awards are a

wonderful testament to the community groups in Scotland who work tirelessly to regenerate their local places. They also showcase the creativity of young people. Dundee can be proud to have been represented in two categories, revealing some of the wonderful places in our city".

Above the city streets

Robin Presswood

Look above you as you walk around the city. Our historic townscape is often neglected, with owners failing to maintain their properties and tackle damaged masonry, remove foliage and prevent water damage as they should.

Properties require regular maintenance to ensure that buildings do not deteriorate, and that public safety is not compromised. The responsibility for all repairs rests with the property owners. However, in the tenements, fragmented ownership, and access challenges due to height, can undermine even the most responsible owner's efforts.

This appears to be a bigger problem in Dundee than other Scottish cities. Dundee sandstone doesn't do us any favours in this regard. If gutters and downpipes are not properly maintained, water damage and frost can cause masonry to spall readily and the lack of compulsory factoring in the city means that we often start at a disadvantage to cities like Glasgow.

The primary legislation available to the Council falls under the Building (Scotland) Act 2003 (BSA2003). However, these powers are limited to addressing individual building elements which are suffering from a lack of maintenance.

The Building Standards Service discharges these duties, and should a building become dangerous, emergency works can be instructed and/or a notice can be served requiring owners to remove the danger. The Council can recover associated costs incurred from property owners. However, as the Council can only remove the danger rather than make a permanent repair, the deterioration of the building may continue.



The Council also has powers to serve Defective Buildings Notices. Typically, these powers can be used to address defective guttering, vegetation growth etc. In theory, early intervention should prevent buildings from becoming dangerous.

Council intervention under the 2003 Act can be time-consuming and distressing for diligent property owners, particularly in multi-ownership buildings when one or more are unwilling to pay their share.

Although local authorities see these powers as being useful tools, they are limited and fail to prevent the continued deterioration of traditional buildings.

The challenge of resourcing such interventions is significant and it's clear that there is no single solution to addressing the deterioration of the city's historic building stock. This will require greater collaboration between all relevant public bodies and the importance of educating property owners of

the need to invest in preventative repairs.

Although Dundee Civic Trust no longer runs its Buddleia Awards, I am grateful for the Trust's efforts in highlighting this issue.

Robin Presswood is Executive Director of City Development at Dundee City Council.



Photo City: How images shape the urban world

Barbara Illsley



Visiting the new Photo City exhibition at V&A Dundee recently, some well-known lines from the Robert Burns poem 'To a Louse' came to mind. *O wad some power the giftie gie us, to see oursels as ithers see us!* At the entrance to this fascinating exhibition is a new diorama of Dundee by the Japanese photographer, Sohei Nishino. This work is 5 metres in length and made up of thousands of images taken during a six week visit to the city. From a distance, it looks like a relief map of the city but, as you zoom in, you start to spot buildings, streets and then people. Some of the photographs are familiar but others less so having

been taken from unusual viewpoints. Right at the centre is the McManus Gallery pictured from above.

Nishino's Dundee diorama joins a list of cities he has captured in this way, including Tokyo, London, San Francisco, New Delhi, Amsterdam and Rio de Janeiro. It is a unique piece in which you will spot something different each time you view it. We are seeing Dundee 'as Nishino sees it' but in a way that gives us fresh insight into our city.

The main exhibition is equally impressive. It combines photographic images, old and new, with film, video art, cameras, books and magazines. The music of Philip Glass can be heard in the background. The material is organised around themes demonstrating the development of photography, from urban recording to modern technological surveillance. Looking at the world from above has always fascinated me and we are shown how aerial photographic techniques progressed from using hot air balloons to take to the sky through to today's drones. The images in the section described as Photography as Social Advocacy record everyday life in cities, highlighting poverty, social injustice and poor housing. My favourite image is Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen's photograph *Girl on a Spacehopper*, Byker, 1971. Other themes include Photography

as Urban Study, Capturing City Life, and Establishing Icons. You can also take part in a new videogame called Gimbal City, developed by Dundee graduates *Sasha Belitskaja* and *Shaun McCallum*.

The exhibition, co-curated by V&A Dundee and V&A South Kensington, marks the 10th anniversary of Dundee’s designation as UNESCO City of Design. It runs from 29 March 2024 to 27 October 2024 and is well worth a visit or maybe more than one visit as there is so much to see. I for one will be back.



B Illsley



B Illsley

New stadium application

Donald Gordon



B Illsley

Most of our readers will be aware that an application for planning permission in principle has been lodged with Dundee City Council by the owners of Dundee Football Club. This large development includes, not only a football stadium, naturally, but also a crematorium, a hotel, and 160 flats and houses. There will also be hundreds of additional parking spaces, accessed off a new exit from Kingsway, very near to the Coupar Angus flyover and roundabout. The date for responses has closed, and DCT lodged a substantial submission.

The stadium, along with other enabling works which are essential to assist the financial viability of the development, is, in our view, the wrong development in the wrong place. Nearly every aspect presents issues that are difficult to accept, including:

1. the unsafe, dangerous and congestion-inducing transportation proposals,
2. the substantially increased car use which will be inevitable, given the relatively isolated location from existing residential centres,
3. the fact that the excessive congestion in the whole area will not be limited to football match days, but will extend to the times – possibly over more than one day – when the stadium will be used as a “concert venue set-up – 8,000-20,000 [spectators]”.
4. the residential developments for the proposed 180 homes, both flats and houses, which are contrary to the Local Development Plan,
5. the hotel, situated on the outskirts of the city rather in the centre, which is contrary to policies in the Local Development Plan 2019 [LDP2],
6. the crematorium, for which no significant demand is established, and which is unsuitably located,
7. the increase in commercial operations, which will adversely affect other businesses, and are contrary to Town Centre First Policy and which will result in loss of jobs elsewhere,
8. the lack of any published consideration of alternative solutions in the Club’s existing site, or ground sharing at Tannadice,
9. the additional environmental pollution and carbon emissions, both in the construction and the subsequent use of the development,
10. the poor design of many aspects of buildings, especially the stadium itself, open areas, housing and access arrangements,
11. the area not being suitably developed as a 20-minute neighbourhood,
12. the encroaching onto green, public open spaces which have for decades been set aside for public enjoyment, and the use of which is enshrined in legislation,
13. the consequential destruction of trees, flora, open land, and visual amenity, which provide for the well-being of park and tourist visitors,
14. the insufficient ambition in the proposed energy uses, though some aspects are commendable, and
15. the many planning matters which contravene (despite assertions to the contrary by the applicants) many of the national and local policies and guidelines, such as the recent National Planning Framework [NPF4], LDP2, Town Centre First Policy, and Active Travel guidelines.



It is not possible to comment on every aspect of the application. Some matters will have to wait until more detail is apparent in any planning application for full permission. The detailed

submission by Dundee Civic Trust covers matters in the application such as Transport, the Planning Supporting statement, Design and Access and Energy and Sustainability.

Our concerns are most serious relating to transport and access matters, and we invited the City Council to consider all of these issues, and urged a complete review of the traffic projections, to take account of the mass parking available at Camperdown Leisure Park.

Dundee Civic Trust recommends that this application in principle be refused. However, we accept that Dundee FC must do something in order that the Club can progress as an important part of the city's sporting and economic future. So in this submission we suggested ways in which Dundee FC could develop the improved facilities which it needs.

If Dundee City Council is minded to approve this in-principle application, and then to move to consider any application for full permission, we consider that the following matters should be thoroughly researched and included as planning conditions before full planning approval is granted. We see these as crucial to the development being completed and succeeding:

1. The Transport and Access Plan must be completely reviewed and its replacement must demonstrate an ability to deal with all the issues raised in this submission, failing which, consent should be refused.
2. It must be demonstrated that resources are available to deliver the offsite road, the pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and that these works are completed before any development is occupied.
3. The stadium must be operational before the housing and commercial developments are occupied.
4. The ice rink extension is to be used only for sports and recreational purposes in the event that its use for ice sports ceases.
5. The training pitches, situated in a currently public area of the Park, must be available for public use.



Our submission illustrated that the proposals, taken as a whole, are unacceptable for the reasons documented, and in particular, they are unacceptable in the context of:

- the planning requirements of NPF4 and LDP2,
- traffic safety and congestion,
- the unsuitable siting of the hotel, crematorium and residential development,
- the unambitious plans for renewable and sustainable energy, and
- the use of part of Camperdown Park.

Our submission concluded that the planning application should be refused.

Stadium proposal - a member's view Clive Luhrs

Dundee City Council has seen two large planning proposals lodged with its Planning Department, each of which will have a significant impact on the two intended localities. It is, therefore, vital that the Council considers how appropriate each site is for the proposed use.

In a recent interview with The Courier, the owner of Dundee FC made an interesting admission: he revealed that among the sites they considered was the former Gas Works on Dock Street. This set me thinking, and the more I considered his comment the more I felt that Dock Street would be a far better venue for the Club. Public Transport access to the site could be improved immeasurably by construction of a basic rail halt on the adjacent railway line. This would be an appropriate contribution to the Council's Sustainable Transport Delivery Plan, reducing traffic congestion and pollution.

I would suggest a better place for the Eden Project would be the various green sites along the length of Riverside Avenue/Drive. This would be a much more pleasant situation than the drab surroundings of the Dock Street area. There would be an additional opportunity for Dundee University Botanic Garden to link in with the Eden Project in some way.

Finally, as a footnote: assuming Dundee FC are still suggesting a crematorium as part of their plans, why is this so? The existing Dundee Crematorium together with those at Friockheim, Perth and St Andrews, coupled with the new one approved, or at least being reconsidered, for Duntrune, is surely sufficient capacity for Tayside.

Traditional Building Skills Roadshow Barbara Illsley

For two days last month, young people from schools across Dundee and Angus had the opportunity to learn new skills from the world of traditional construction. They participated in practical workshops in stonemasonry, joinery, slating, craft decorating and, important but not so traditional, building surveying using drones.



G Logan

The Traditional Building Skills Roadshow, held on 20/21 March, was organised by Dundee Historic Environment Trust (DHET), in conjunction with Dundee and Angus College, Historic Environment Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and other partners. Its purpose was to enable S2/S3 pupils to experience techniques associated with historic building conservation and construction so they can make future careers choices from a more informed position.

Adam Swan, Director of DHET, explained, "Dundee has a wealth of historic buildings that are part of the city's cultural heritage. These buildings have helped shape the city's identity, providing links to our past, but they also offer economic, environmental and

educational opportunities, such as boosting tourism, fostering sustainability through adaption and re-use, and providing resources for learning. We hope that this joint initiative can play a part in keeping traditional building conservation skills alive by acting as a steppingstone for young people into careers such as craft-skilled masons, carpenters, slaters and surveyors. We are already thinking about next year's follow-up event."

Watching from the side-lines, it was clear that the pupils enjoyed the hands-on activities, as did Dundee Civic Trust's chairman, amongst other invited visitors!



A Swan

Planning Update

Fionn Stevenson

I would like to introduce myself as the new Chair of the Trust's Planning Group and to thank Nick Day for his years of sterling service in this role.

The main activity of the group since the last Newsflash has been an extensive and detailed response to the Planning in Principle Application for a **new stadium, housing, crematorium and other leisure activities** immediately to the **east of Camperdown Park**, and in fact encroaching on it. Our main thrust is that the stadium should remain where it is and upgraded, possibly as a joint stadium using Dundee United's current stadium site. The Dundee City Council Planning Committee meeting will consider this application on the 12th August. The Trust intends to organise a Deputation for that meeting, with a seven minute oral presentation of our views to the committee members. We may coordinate with other groups appearing at the planning committee. There is an excellent short summary of our response in this issue of Newsflash and the full response is on the Trust's website.

The Trust also produced a broad critique of the **transport arrangements for this stadium application** which has been sent directly to Transport Scotland for comment – to date we have received an acknowledgement but nothing more. There is a real prospect of the Kingsway experiencing dangerous congestion as a result of this application.



The Trust has developed a comprehensive proposal describing how the **A94 might be upgraded** with a few small by-passes to help relieve the **Kingsway traffic congestion**. This slimmed-down approach would be a useful alternative to the major bypass that has been proposed in the past. This proposal was widely circulated to all the relevant local authorities. To date we have received a number of responses, with most declining it on the grounds that it is too costly and disruptive, and that Dundee has plans of its own to deal with the congestion.

Comments were also submitted from the Trust in relation to the **proposed new Magdalen Bridge Active Travel Route** - these have been noted by the relevant consultant. We also received a response from the Council claiming that the new bridge was essential to link up with other cycle routes. We believe the proposal is excessive and that funding would be better directed elsewhere to improve active travel in the city.

Applications decided include **approval of the conversion of the old BT Office block on Ward Street to student accommodation** which the Trust welcomed as a high quality development, and **approval of the part conversion of the old Caledonian House office block on Greenmarket to student accommodation**, which the Trust were pleased to see. The application for the development of **58 houses next to Dykes of Gray Road** as part of the Western Gateway was objected to by the Trust, with an additional verbal Deputation at the relevant Planning Committee meeting. It





was successfully defeated with a vote of 15 members against to 7 for it, due to the lack of a “Community Benefit Statement” and a lack of social housing. Hillcrest withdrew their application for a **63 affordable flats a with ground floor workshops and a work unit with the demolition of 60 Brown Street in Blackness**. This development would have been greatly overshadowed and far too close to the new student accommodation block on the opposite side of the road. It demonstrates the need for a proper masterplan for Blackness.

The Trust responded to an invitation to meet with representatives from the University of Dundee concerning their proposal to **demolish 16-18 Airlie Place** and replace it with **a new nursery playground and shelter** to support the University nursery further down this street. The Trust recommended that these fine Victorian tenement buildings be renovated rather than demolished.

Finally, The Chair of the Trust, together with the Chair of the Trust’s Planning Group, **met John Alexander, the Leader of Dundee City Council on the 3rd April**, to discuss high level strategic development issues including city council boundaries, transport strategies and housing development. This is part of our ongoing engagement with the Council to help improve our city.

Images of Old Dundee

Stephen Brand

Fifteen years ago, Dundee Civic Trust, in conjunction with the Tay Valley Family History Society, began an ambitious project to identify, date, record and digitise around 40,000 photographs of Dundee mainly from the period 1945 to 1995. A Lottery Grant was awarded to support the project and an enthusiastic group spent many hours doing this. The ultimate object was to put the photographs on the internet.

The photos were organised using ‘Portfolio’ software and stored on a Hard Drive, with the Council and the Trust each having access to the archive. Unfortunately, the ‘Portfolio’ software that was used became obsolete and, for a few years, we were unable able to access the Hard Drive. Thankfully, this problem has now been addressed. However, we think there are about 7000 photographs that have not been catalogued. Below are a few examples.



No 1



No 2



No 3



No 4



No 5



No 6



No 7

We are looking for volunteers to form a group to identify the unclassified photographs. Would you be interested? It would be helpful to involve someone with computer skills, especially with knowledge of photo management software such as 'Portfolio'. If you are willing to help, please get in touch with me at info@dundeecivictrust.co.uk

McNicoll and Cairnie Offer

Identify yourself as a member of Dundee Civic Trust, and you will be eligible to receive a 10% discount on purchases from McNicoll and Cairnie, Wine, Whisky and Gin Merchants, 100 Gray Street, Broughty Ferry.

Future events

Dates for your diary

18 April 2024

7.00pm Dundee Art Society Gallery Roseangle

**Dundee Civic Trust AGM followed by
Bruce Keith Are We Nearly There Yet? The Story
of Scottish Milestones**

Bruce Keith will tell us about Scottish Milestones - based on his book 'Are We Nearly There Yet?' - but not just as distance markers. This talk will also provide an insight into early methods of measurement and mapping in Scotland, as well as the travellers of the 18th and 19th century whose journals laid the foundation of the Scottish tourist industry. The book was, the author claims, 'inspired by the Road and the Miles to Dundee', the familial reason for this being explained during the talk.



16 May 2024

7.00 pm Dundee Art Society Gallery Roseangle

**Jim McGeorge and Rose Jenkins
Dundee University's buildings and future plans**



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