



Registered Charity No. SC003089

Newsletter No. 91: September 2017

Coming Events

Wednesday 25th October 2017: the Civic Society's **Annual Awards Ceremony** at the Town & County Hall at 7.30 for 8pm.

Wednesday 22 November 2017: The Greyhope Bay Project – Marine Science and Heritage Centre – a talk by Dr Fiona McIntyre, managing director of Greyhope Bay Ltd. At the Royal Northern & University Club, No. 9 Albyn Place, at 7:30 for 8 pm.

Wednesday 24 January 2018: Aberdeen Festivals – a talk by Angela Michael, Aberdeen Festivals and Culture Director of VisitAberdeenshire. At the Royal Northern & University Club, No. 9 Albyn Place, at 7:30 for 8 pm.

Wednesday 28 February 2018: Conservation-led Regeneration – Union Street – a talk by Jamie McNamara, Project Officer for the Union Street Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS). At the Royal Northern & University Club, No. 9 Albyn Place, at 7:30 for 8 pm.

Planning Matters

The Civic Society has made comments and objections to a number of recent planning applications. These include the proposals for the new stadium for Aberdeen Football Club, the demolition of the function room at the Bridge of Dee Bar and construction of student accommodation, the proposal to change the residence at 15 High Street, Old Aberdeen into a pub and the proposal to

change the garden of 254 Union Grove into an outdoor eating area. We have also commented on a number of smaller, but significant proposals.

The Cathedral Church of St Machar - 2020 Project.

Over the last year or so, the Kirk Session of St Machar's Cathedral have been drawing up plans for the refurbishment and expansion of the building to try and ensure that our beautiful church continues to be a unique place of worship and a major asset to the community of Old Aberdeen and the wider city, for many years to come.

First and foremost, St Machar's is open 365 days a year, both for formal worship and for quiet contemplation and prayer. We plan to replace the old pews with something more comfortable, and to enhance the toilet provision for congregation and visitor alike. It will always be our intention to retain the sense of beauty and peace.

There has been a church on this site since Celtic times and the current building mostly dates back to the 15th century. It has a wonderful story to tell and we hope to develop our interpretation and displays to tell the story of the Cathedral's role in the history of the area and of the nation, as well as telling the story of more recent times. We propose an enhanced interpretation centre at the East End of the Cathedral.

St Machar's Cathedral, with its superb acoustic, is a popular venue for choirs and ensembles to perform. We would like to see its potential further developed, with more and larger groups able to perform here. However, we are hampered by the lack of space and toilets. So, in the proposed East End extension we will be providing flexible space which can double as storage, meeting and preparation space for performers.

The community of Old Aberdeen walk past our door in their thousands every day. Some come in, but not nearly enough. We want the community of Old Aberdeen and beyond to look on St Machar's as their space, not just for worship and prayer but for meetings, casual social contact and even rest and

relaxation. The East End extension will have a coffee shop, along with flexible space, which can be set aside for meetings of all sorts.

The proposed work goes under the banner of the '2020 Project' as this is the year when the Heraldic Ceiling will be 500 years old. Preservation of the ceiling was part of our original vision and we plan to celebrate the anniversary and, we hope, the works with a major Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving for this unique reminder of over one thousand years of Christian worship in this place.

Contributed by Rev. Barry Dunsmore, Minister of the Cathedral Church of St Machar, Old Aberdeen.

Annual Awards Ceremony

The Civic Society Awards Ceremony for 2017 is due to take place at the Town & County Hall on Wednesday 25 October 2017. The evening takes the form of a drinks reception followed by an illustrated talk and award presentations. Awards are given to those property and project owners and their professional teams who, in the opinion of the awards panel, have been responsible for delivering a project that adds to the amenity of the City of Aberdeen. Award winners and special guests are invited to the event. Members of Aberdeen Civic Society are welcome to attend.

In 2016, Causeway View Student Housing (the former Causewayend Primary School at Mounthooley) was the main award winner.

The Causewayend Primary School is a large Victorian building with some character. When it became surplus to requirements as a school, many people had concern for its future.

The student-housing provider, Unite, converted the existing building and built a new building making it a block of student accommodation called Causeway

View Student Housing. Very little has changed to the existing elevations of the old granite building.

The new building next door is a very clever reflection of the Victorian facade. The materials are different but the windows have a vertical emphasis, the elevation steps in and out, and each of the stepped elevations is distinctly different, be it through the fenestration, the roof treatment, the height and the stepping. Granite panels have been introduced that take inspiration from the towers in the original building.

The new building compliments the old building, but it does not dominate. It is a great way to preserve one of our notable granite buildings. A worthy winner of our main award in 2016.

Other projects recognised as part of our awards in 2016 were:

- a house at 64 Kirk Brae, Cults,
- shop fronts at 364 and 366 Great Western Road,
- an office at Ardent West,
- railings at 20 The Chanonry, Old Aberdeen,
- the Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital garden and reception area,
- student housing at 2 Powis Place,
- replacement windows at a building on the corner of St Clement Street and York Place,
- the Robertson Family Roof Garden at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary,
- an office for A²B at Kingshill View, Prime Four, and
- repair work to doors at St Nicholas Church.

Contributed by Dominic Fairlie.

We welcome contributions from guest writers to our newsletter. Please send them to info@aberdeencivicsociety.org.