

Edinburgh Napier sells Craighouse Campus

✘ Edinburgh Napier University's historic Craighouse campus has been sold to the Craighouse Partnership for a proposed exceptional residential development.

The 51 acre site dates back to the 12th century and has a colourful past as the home of an asylum and the man who introduced skyscrapers to Japan.

The proposed redevelopment includes the restoration of the site's seven Category A listed buildings for residential use, accompanied by a range of carefully placed new homes designed to complement the existing buildings and landscape.

The development plans will be based around a detailed conservation audit carried out by leading conservation architects, Simpson and Brown, which found that new buildings are possible on a number of discreet sites within the campus boundary without damaging the overall significance of the site.

The University will continue to occupy the site until mid 2013. Students and staff based on the campus have either already moved to the University's new £60m Sighthill campus or will move to the current Merchiston campus during 2012/13.

Funds from the sale will be re-invested in the Edinburgh Napier University estate, in order to provide the best possible learning and teaching facilities for students.

Access to the grounds for members of the public who use it as a recreational facility will be maintained. Weddings and externally hosted events in the main New Craig building, including the Turmeau Hall, will continue as normal until December 2012.

The Craighouse Partnership is led by local Edinburgh company, Sundial Properties, who are recognised as the leading restorer of listed buildings for residential use within Edinburgh and will manage the restoration of the listed buildings on the Craighouse campus.

The other two partners in the partnership are Mountgrange Real Estate Opportunity Fund, a £300 million fund targeting UK property and related assets, managed by Mountgrange Investment Management LLP, who have funded the acquisition and LA&P, a specialist residential planning and development company, who will oversee the plans for the site. Edinburgh Napier University will be a joint partner in the planning application process.

Consultation with the local community and stakeholders will take place in Spring and Summer 2011, with a planning application to be submitted thereafter. Find out more at www.edinburghcraighouse.co.uk

Pending the outcome of the planning application process, some re-development may take place during 2012 with a full handover of the site in 2013.

The University purchased the site in 1994 from Lothian Health Board and used it as home for students from the School of Arts and Creative Industries and the School of Health and Social Sciences, as well as administration staff.

Professor Dame Joan Stringer, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Edinburgh Napier University said: "I am extremely pleased that the historic campus will be reborn once again by experts in the restoration of listed buildings and the community will still be able to enjoy the stunning grounds.

"We see ourselves as custodians of the site preserving it for future generations and we will be joint partners in the planning process.

“The campus will continue to be a beautiful base for students until 2013. Whilst we will all be sad to leave such magnificent buildings behind, the funds will be re-invested in our estates to provide students with the very best, modern learning environments.

“Students will be based at our new state of the art Sighthill campus, the Merchiston campus which will be upgraded over the next two years or our Craiglockhart campus which was refurbished in 2004.”

Sundial Properties’ Director, William Gray Muir, added: ‘We are delighted to be leading the restoration and development of such an important piece of Edinburgh’s property landscape.

“The plan is to create a broad mix of homes of the highest quality within a wide price range. The site will include a mix of property types and will be sensitive to the history of Craighouse and its grounds.

“We recognise that access to the campus green space is highly valued by the local community and this space is something we will be looking to enhance further.

“As such, we will be inviting relevant stakeholders and residents to form an important Community Liaison Forum in the coming months that will act on behalf of the local community.

“We believe that our plans for the regeneration of the Craighouse campus can deliver a sustainable economic future for this highly sensitive group of buildings and important landscape to ensure their long term preservation.”

John Sanders, Simpson and Brown Architects, stated: “These are fascinating buildings with a remarkable story to tell about the enlightened care for mental health at the end of the 19th century.

“Edinburgh Napier University has looked after them well, but I

am sure that the use that will sustain this site in the longer term and retain its special character is as houses and flats.”