

Liberton Housing development almost complete



L-R: Mike Afshar, Chairman of The Merchant Company of Edinburgh's Committee for the frail and elderly; City of Edinburgh Council Bailie, Elaine Aitken; Alasdair Ross, Director, J Smart & Co; Master of the Merchant Company of Edinburgh, Ian Watson. (Photo courtesy of Maverick Photo Agency)

The Merchant Company has toured the site of its new Edinburgh housing complex for the elderly as exterior work on the multi million pound development nears completion.

The £4 million project is the result of a partnership between The Merchant Company of Edinburgh's Endowments Trust, Edinburgh City Council, Dunedin Canmore Housing Association and J. Smart & Co. (Contractors) PLC.

Once complete, the development – in the city's Liberton area – will be home to thirty two flats designed specifically to provide a mixture of accessible socially rented and mid-market rented accommodation for pensioners.

Work on the site began in February with external construction due to end later this month and the first residents expected to collect the keys to their new homes next spring.

Master of The Merchant Company of Edinburgh, Ian Watson, said: -"There's often a misconception that The Merchant Company of Edinburgh is simply an association for business owners, but we actually have a rich history of community involvement. The Endowments Trust provides cash grants and ongoing support to Edinburgh's pensioners – from simply hosting an annual Christmas party to funding major developments, such as the

Little Road project.

“This development would not have been possible, had it not been for the commitment to partnership working from Edinburgh City Council, Dunedin Canmore Housing Association and J. Smart & Co. (Contractors) PLC. I’m incredibly proud of the progress that’s been made and I’m confident this development will be warmly welcomed by the new residents who will call it home next year.”

To make the project viable, an initial grant of £800,000 was provided by City of Edinburgh Council. Bailie Elaine Aitken commented: -“City of Edinburgh Council is delighted to work with The Merchant Company of Edinburgh to deliver warm, safe homes for the city’s growing elderly population. This partnership is a great example of collaboration between the private and public sector to ultimately improve the quality of life for residents in our thriving and growing capital city.”

The complex will be owned by The Merchant Company of Edinburgh and leased to the charitable body, Dunedin Canmore Housing Group, for thirty years. Business Development Director at Dunedin Canmore, Susan Napier, said: -“This is an excellent example of partnership working and Dunedin Canmore has been delighted to lead on the development work, funding it through our private finance facilities. On completion it will be transferred to The Merchant Company. This model of working together has already been successful at Brandfield Street, and we look forward to working again with The Merchant Company and Edinburgh City Council on future projects.”

Mike Afshar, Chairman of The Merchant Company of Edinburgh’s Committee for the Frail and Elderly added: -“The committee was formed to ensure that The Merchant Company responsibly delivered homes of high quality, with good space standards and the provision of social integration for the elderly. We are delighted to have Dunedin Canmore Housing Group as a partner in delivering superb homes for the elderly. The first phase of

20 units in Brandfield Street, which were officially opened by the Princess Royal in 2009, has been a great success and I'm confident our second phase in Little Road will be as well received."