

Community urged to breath life back into iconic Leith building



The Lord Provost opened the building to the public in June 2015 for the public to have their say on its future.

CUSTOM House has been an iconic landmark in Leith since it was built in the 19th century.

At one time it was a bustling, buzzing building where taxes and levies were collected as goods from across the world passed through the port. Ships docked outside.

For the last 30 years, it has been blacked out and used as a store room for the National Museum of Scotland.

Now, under a new initiative, the imposing, stone-built structure, built in 1812 by Robert Reid, said to be the oldest purpose-built Custom House in Britain, is becoming a bustling centre for creative industries serving the local community.

And Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) is now calling for proposals on how other space inside the building can be used for short-term community projects.

These can be one-off events to programmes lasting up to two weeks.

To support this long-term vision, and to continue this historical building's revival, SHBT bosses want local community groups to submit proposals and the deadline is January 31, 2017 at 5pm.

The plans can be to engage the local population, deliver a community benefit, promote the economic revival of the area, support local services, enhance the understanding of the

building and area and even to even to build evidence for the sustainable future of Custom House.

A SHBT official told the Edinburgh Reporter that they will pick four projects that can be programmed during 2017.

The projects will have the use of space with no hire costs and with support from the SHBT team.

An official added: "In planning your project you should consider the timing, materials needed, how to promote it, what volunteers you will need, what benefits this will bring to your group and the wider community.

"You may wish to use the space for an art exhibition showcasing community skills, an exhibition to tell the story of Leith and Custom House, a series of talks or discussions or a network event."