

Richard Murphy Architects will produce design vision for Custom House

Richard Murphy Architects appointed to design vision for Leith Custom House

Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) and The City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) have appointed award winning practice Richard Murphy Architects to work on Custom House. The firm will undertake a feasibility study to secure the building's future for the benefit of the community of Leith and beyond.

The feasibility study will develop the long-term masterplan for the building. Key to this will be consultation with the community in Leith, which will continue throughout the feasibility study process. The study will consider a range of options to deliver a financially sustainable model for the building in the long term, and will include a display of a number of key objects from the Museum and Galleries Leith collection. It is anticipated that the feasibility study will be completed by the end of 2019.

Una Richards, Chief Executive of Scottish Historic Buildings Trust, said: "The work that SHBT has undertaken so far to bring the building to life and draw people to the site has been very successful. As a result, Custom House is now a vibrant artistic hub, and we have brought new life to the Shore and to Commercial Street. This will continue to grow as the capital project to restore the building is developed. The feasibility

study will set out the future vision for the Custom House and will see it given its place back in the heart of Leith, for the community.”

Cllr Donald Wilson, Convener of Culture and Communities for the City of Edinburgh Council, said: “This is an important moment for Custom House and the Leith community. The building and the surrounding area share a rich history, with Custom House once acting as the main site of imports in Leith. The appointment of Richard Murphy Architects is the next step in developing the long-term masterplan for the future of building to the benefit of the Leith Community and beyond.”



Sink performing at Custom House Leith on June 18, 2017 as part of the Leith Lates events.

Daniil Dumnov : Accordion

Matt Wright : Saxophones

Tim Vincent-Smith : Violin

Photo credit: Sheila Masson

The Custom House was bought by the City of Edinburgh Council in 2015 using Common Good funding. Taking a building which has been used as a store for the last 30 years, SHBT has transformed the building into a creative hub, providing studios for artists and creatives as well as meeting and community spaces including in Custom Lane – a coffee shop, gentlemen’s outfitter, gallery and community space and the Edinburgh Tool Library. SHBT also provides space to host the Leith Market every Saturday in the Car Park adjacent to the building selling a range of produce, gifts and crafts as well as food stalls.

Since taking over the building, the local community have been welcomed and encouraged to visit and make use of the building. This has resulted in over 10,000 visitors in addition to specific open public events. Informal consultation has taken place with members of the community at a number of open days to canvas opinions on the longer-term vision for the building.

Richard Murphy Architects Director Bill Black: “Richard Murphy Architects are delighted to have been selected to work with SHBT on developing a truly exciting future for the Leith Custom House. Working creatively with historic buildings is something that has held a long fascination for us and is an important part of developing and maintaining our city’s heritage. We look forward to the challenges that this study will explore and the opportunities it can bring for the people of Leith.”



Open Day 2019