

Business Feature – Andrew Landsburgh of CoDE Pod Hostel

Andrew Landsburgh is very keen to show off the very bottom level of the building that CoDE Pod Hostel occupies in Parliament Square. And he has good reason to be excited about it. He did not even know it was there when he first bought the city centre property!

This is the party level and is the scooped out storey that was found completely by accident. It was a party place in the past too where some of the city's most learned people gathered, perhaps drinking coffee at John's Coffee House below.

Andrew said : "The Lost Close is amazing. I looked back in the history books to see what was here before. There was an infamous fire in 1824 when this whole section of Parliament Square – all the tenements here – just crumbled and burned down. I got all the architect's drawings of the new police station which they built here in 1830 and saw that there was a close called Steil's Close that came down and linked back into Old Fishmarket Close.



“Steil’s Close had vanished. You can see the map before the fire and that post fire and it has gone. They just built over it and down there you can see an archway underneath the building.” That archway led into Old Fishmarket Close, as did Royal Bank Close and Hangman’s Close which have both since disappeared.

This basement level is now incorporated into CoDE and offers a really unique space for private parties and beer and whisky tastings. They have a nightly beer tasting at 7.00pm, host open mic events and also have their own resident magician.

It is a real piece of history in the city. On the walls the plasterwork shows ancient craftsmanship at its most innovative – it has horse hair in it.



Andrew Landsburgh shows off the Lost Close PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Elsewhere in the building the former court room where Greyfriar’s Bobby’s case was heard is now a 24 person dorm

with a lovely bright central area with lockers and mirrors. Each pod has its own comfy bed with curtains and mood lighting. And the rates are affordable. On an out of season Tuesday night I could have stayed for £20 for the night. They are pitching their business at solo travellers who want to be right in the heart of the city. The reviews are all about cleanliness and this being an extremely nice place to be.

And if you don't want to stay over then just have a coffee in the cafe area near the front door. Andrew welcomes everyone who wants to come in for a look : "Come in, look at the history on the walls, enjoy a coffee and meet our lovely team. We've got lots of people from all over the world who work here." In all, there is a team of just under thirty staff looking after guests – and ensuring their safety by communicating with them on WhatsApp if need be. If anyone feels unsafe in any dorm then this is the ideal way to tell staff about any troublesome behaviour by other guests.



And the business has expanded beyond Edinburgh. Andrew said : "We recently completed a building on Talbot Place in Dublin

where we worked with a private equity fund on a joint venture. That has just been sold and we are looking for something else, but I feel that this building and the one on Rose Street are one-offs.”

The first CoDE is also in a corner building that no one can see on Rose Street. That started five years ago and it is a small building, with only 30 pods. Guests stay overnight in the hostel either in individual pods or in dorms in Parliament Square.

Listen to our chat with Andrew here :

Andrew got the idea when he was in Asia. He said :”Everyone was sleeping in pods in Japan and China and Indonesia and I thought it’d be a good idea if Edinburgh had some. So I tried it in Rose Street on a smaller scale and it worked. The reviews came back and it was brilliant.

“Rose Street is a nice wee family building, it feels very cosy and warm and and we’ve got a lot of repeat custom as well.”

Andrew is originally from Dundee but came to Law School here in Edinburgh and then went to work in the US at what he describes as his favourite job – selling golf holidays to rich Scots. He explained : “It was great fun but the guy I worked for did not pay very well so I left and then worked for a developer in Scottsdale in Arizona learning about real estate.” Andrew is a keen golfer which was definitely the attraction.

He then came back here and started a couple of businesses – one, Edinburgh Festival Rentals, was sold on to Rettie & Co., Destiny Scotland is a business managing serviced apartment blocks, and he has managed some student accommodation too.

Living in Edinburgh with his family he is either on a plane or getting on with his daily commute. Andrew said : “I feel really lucky living here – where I can walk to work.”

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