

St Andrew Boat Club – work starts on new boathouse

St Andrew Boat Club (SABC) has announced that work begins this week on its new £1 million flagship boathouse on the canal.

Measuring nearly 600 square metres, the new facility is three times the size of the current building, which has been in use since 1984.

The new boathouse will be constructed on land leased from The City of Edinburgh Council on the same plot, and will provide space for boats and equipment sufficient to accommodate an expanding membership, as well as a much-needed area for land-based training.

Based at Meggetland, the club trains mostly on the 1500m stretch of the Union Canal and the construction coincides with SABC celebrating its 175th anniversary.

A key feature will be an indoor training area comprising 20 ergometers (indoor rowing machines) while there will be increased storage space for up to 100 boats and three changing rooms with showers for members.

President Sarah Whitley said: “It is very exciting for us to be at this stage now with the construction work ready to begin.

“We have been talking about this for maybe 10 years or more and it will be great to see it finally take shape, especially as we are celebrating a special milestone in the history of

the club.

“We have been using the current boathouse since 1984 and it is high time we had a new, bigger and more modern facility as it is no longer fit for purpose in delivering our aims of rowing for all in our local community.

“We need an indoor training space and that is going to make a big difference for us. There will also be more social space so we can develop more as a club.

“It is the most significant investment ever made in a boathouse for rowing on the Union Canal.”

The majority of the funding for the project has come from members’ donations and fund-raising from within the [club](#), while a grant application has also been made to sportscotland.



President Sarah Whitley

Captain Lindsay Flockhart said: “The project will secure our future in both the rowing world and the wider community for generations to come and allow us to continue to offer rowing for all levels from social rowers through to performance athletes.”

SABC is the oldest open amateur rowing club in Scotland – and the sixth oldest in the United Kingdom. It has produced many international class athletes, with representations at Home Internationals, Commonwealth and Olympic Regattas, including decorated Olympian Dame Katherine Grainger, whose medal haul includes gold in the double sculls at London 2012.

The club has a strong community focus and runs several courses a year for juniors and adults keen to learn how to row.

Membership currently stands around the 120 mark but it’s hoped the flagship boathouse will see that increase significantly as more people are introduced to the sport.

“The new facility will allow us to nurture talent across all age categories while continuing a heritage of race training to compete in the sport nationwide,” added Miss Whitley.

“The increased space will allow us to open up more opportunities to people in our community who would not otherwise have access to the sport through indoor training equipment and a larger fleet of boats suited to all ages and abilities.

“We have some members already competing at the top level of the sport. Our dream is to introduce more people to the joys of rowing and to see some of them have successful careers, and who knows, maybe another Olympian may emerge in time.”

Designed by Edinburgh architects GLM, the building work is being carried out by Livingston firm Maxi Construction with anticipated completion around mid-December.