

Securing the future of Leith Custom House

Custom House in Leith has a secure future thanks to a partnership between Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT) and Leith Civic Trust.

The proposal is to create a town square for the 21st Century, a community space with Scotland's first fully digital museum, all intended to celebrate Leith's unique culture and heritage.

SHBT will now adopt the Leith Civic Trust as the future operator of the museum, marking a new chapter for the trust which has worked for the last two decades and more to champion Leith's history. The cooperation will mean that SHBT will offer support to the trust in growing its membership and recruiting new trustees.

An event was held on Friday when the new partnership was celebrated, and other organisations invited to join in the fundraising and development phase.

Cllr Jane Meagher, Leader of The City of Edinburgh Council said: "The City of Edinburgh Council is delighted to support Leith Custom House which will benefit both the local community and Leith's economy as a major destination in its own right.

"When we bought this building with the city's Common Good Fund over a decade ago, we could not have hoped for such an exciting concept as is being proposed. There's widespread enthusiasm for the project, which would bring pride to the local area and an important new visitor attraction on the Shore.

“With these new partnerships and the project’s strong candidacy to benefit from Edinburgh’s Visitor Levy, we feel the time is right to unlock the potential of Leith Custom House.”

Maggie Wright, Chair, Scottish Historic Buildings Trust, said: “We are thrilled to be partnering with Leith Civic Trust to help us realise the long-held community desire for a museum for Leith. The ambition has always been for this museum to be managed by the community through a community-led charitable trust who would ensure that the museum responds to local needs and aspirations, Leith Civic Trust will help us realise this goal together.

“This project has been a long-time in development, but following the agreement last year with Edinburgh Museums & Galleries, we are delighted that the project now has real momentum”

Cron Mackay, President, Leith Civic Trust, said: “Since our foundation in 1968, Leith Civic Trust has been dedicated to preserving and championing the beauty, history and character of Leith. Leith has a wealth of distinctive stories to tell, and we are delighted that the new museum at Custom House will be a space where all Leithers, old and new, can see themselves represented. We look forward to welcoming new Members as we embark on this exciting journey together with SHBT and encourage anyone who may be interested in being involved to get in touch.”

All those who would like to be involved are invited to register their interest by signing up on the SHBT website: www.SHBT.org.uk/LeithCustomHouse

The Custom House, Leith is the oldest Custom House in Scotland, designed by Robert Reid in a neo-classical style, it was constructed between 1810-12 and had later alterations in 1825 by William Burn. It is a place where people have arrived

and departed over the centuries including significant historical figures such as Mary Queen of Scots and George IV.







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