

Community Engagement Programme - The Project Support Officer

The new year has seen an increase in the opportunities for community engagement and education. The creative arts are very effective in engaging and relating local heritage for the community. Currently we have several creative artists working with the project and it has been wonderful to work with them.

The project's resident artist, Fiona Maher has been delivering print based workshops for schools and the community in Penicuik, exploring through visual art the deep, rich history of the paper industries on which Penicuik thrived and grew. Fiona has been collaborating with two of our key community partners, Penicuik Community Development Trust and Penicuik Alliance with residencies within their premises (Penicuik Press and Storehouse). Fiona will collate the pieces of printing created by the public into several large scale prints to be on permanent display in the Town Hall and they will relate the paper heritage. We are pleased to have launched a community lead drama project that will see the senior drama students at Beeslack

High School co-create a drama production to be performed in a public space for the Penicuik Community. The students will be supported and directed by Ron Fairweather and Fergus McNicol, the project resident performing artists.

Heritage workshops within schools has resumed with themes based on several heritage themes from wood craft to pewter smelting. The workshops are very interactive and creative supporting the integration of STEM within the classroom. The outdoor Heritage Hero Award which is delivered outdoors is also being offered to schools the spring and summer terms.



Fiona Maher, resident artist

If you would like to book a workshop please contact: Stephanie.walker@midlothian.gov.uk.



The Project Archivist

The Archivist project working alongside the Historical Society has until December this year to run. For the remainder of this time, the project will be prioritising documentary material held by the society - digitising it so as to safeguard it for the community and the society in the long term. This has already been achieved for the large amount of photographic material held by the society.

Material that will be prioritised includes the vast 'Tait Collection', a collection of photographic and written work that charts the rise of the local Tait builders and their family. The Tait's had a massive impact on Penicuik and developed a wide influence throughout the area. Their work included the construction of the Penicuik Town Hall as well as many other buildings still standing around the town.

Other documents digitised and now accessible through the Historical Society include church and papermaking records, social paraphernalia and commercial ledgers and a war memorial unveiling programme.



The old lemonade factory

Another interesting find is material relating to the old lemonade factory, Smith's of Milton Bridge.

Traditional Construction Skills Training Training Plan

The training plan was published in the spring of 2020. But a lot has happened since then. Phase 1 of the plan was delivered in March 2020 just before the pandemic lockdown i.e. demonstration workshops with Penicuik High School and Beeslack School. After the lockdown and subsequent issues in accessing the schools we had to adapt and amend the plan.

Phase 2 of the plan was delivered in the Penicuik Town Hall and St Mungo's churchyard. This was repurposing workshops for students at Penicuik High School and Beeslack School on the 25th and 26th January 2022 - 12 students from each school over the 2 days undertook to do the "Community Repurposing Challenge". This involved surveying an old building (in this case the old Hearse House in St Mungo's churchyard) drawing up the survey and coming up with ideas for how the building could be repaired and restored for a new use, to safeguard its future. We had presentations from Penicuik's Historical Society and from the PHRP to set the scene initially and then the students went out onsite to learn about the history of St Mungo's churchyard, the condition of the churchyard's stone boundary walls and to measure up the Hearse House. The students came back to the Town Hall to meet a number of professionals from the construction industry i.e. an architect, quantity surveyor, conservation officer and a contractor. They were able to learn about the roles of these professionals in the construction industry and to benefit from their advice and guidance in the afternoon workshop, drawing up their survey of the Hearse House and

coming up with ideas for its reuse. This generated a lot of discussion and some great ideas.

The next phase of the plan is for students from both schools to participate in workshops at Edinburgh College, where over two days, 28th and 30th March they were able to try out stone carving, repointing and repair and roof repair and restoration.

Then finally the two schools will be able to send students to undertake some onsite training at St Mungo's churchyard restoring, repairing and repointing some of the stone boundary walls with Craig Frew Conservation Ltd, one of the project's training providers. This is now programmed over a 3 week period from 9th May 2022.

Another element of the training plan is the delivery of seminars and workshops for apprentices, home owners, building professionals and contractors. These will be arranged over the summer/autumn with Craig Frew Conservation Ltd.



Repurposing template



Students surveying the Hearse House

Penicuik Townscape Heritage (TH) and Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS)

Penicuik
Heritage
Regeneration



NEWSLETTER #5

Spring 2022

This newsletter gives a brief update on the project so far which includes recent building grant approvals, the next phase of the public realm work and progress made with the community and education/training work.

Grant approved for 2-3 The Square

This grant award is to restore the building creating a new retail unit on the ground floor with two flats above. The existing ground floor natural stone walls will be restored with a new timber framed shop front. The upper floor will be lime rendered with new timber sash and case windows and a new slate roof.

This is a high priority building within the scheme.



Architects images of proposals



Proposed footpath and entrance improvements to the Town Hall

this stage only the public realm work can be tackled. This will involve widening the footpaths in yorkstone with a granite sett layby area to match the work already carried out in the High Street. New access steps and ramp will be provided to make the front of the Town Hall more accessible. The area up to St Mungo's Church will be resurfaced in a tarmac finish as this will continue to be overrun by vehicles parking outside the front of the Church.

A bid for additional funding was submitted to Midlothian Council for an allocation from the Government's Place Based Investment Fund for phase 2 of the public realm work. This has been approved for the public realm to be enhanced in front of the Town Hall and up to St Mungo's church together with the restoration of the Hearse House in St Mungo's churchyard. A tender for the work was returned that is significantly above the project estimate and may now mean that at



Hearse House



The Penicuik Heritage Regeneration Project is now in its 4th year and this summer will be the start of the fifth year of the project. Due to the pandemic and the increase in construction costs both materials and labour there has been a slowdown in the uptake of the grants and the fact that the grant sums available will not be enough for some of the projects that were originally envisaged.

25-28 THE SQUARE
 ARCHT:
 + Alex Fraser (project) with Archinord

Before

After

The left image is a black and white architectural sketch of a two-story building. It features a central entrance with a small porch supported by columns, flanked by large windows. The roof has two dormer windows. The right image is a color photograph of the same building, showing its white facade, dark green trim around the windows and doors, and a dark roof with white dormer windows.



Before

[illegible]

After

A number of grant applications have now been approved i.e.

[illegible][illegible]

Proposals are currently being worked up for 14-20 High Street and 8-10 John Street.