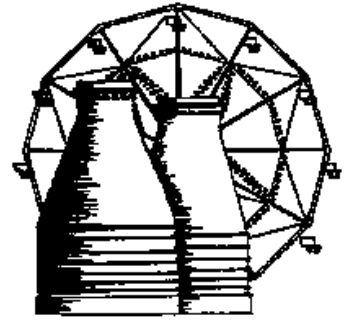


PORTOBELLO AMENITY SOCIETY

Newsletter - Winter 2008



Capital on large Coade Stone Pillar

Three Coade Stone pillars were erected in the Community Garden at the foot of John Street on the Promenade as described in PAS' Newsletter of autumn 2006. The pillars were much admired but there was universal comment that the large pillar looked unfinished because it had no top or capital,



L. to R. Alison Robinson, Celia Butterworth, John Stewart, Margaret Munro, Archie Foley: members of the Sub-committee responsible for the Coade Stone project.

while its neighbours boasted elaborate capitals designed in the 19th century work-shop of Mrs Coade. Following a great deal of work by PAS member Alison Robinson, a capital was made at Bridge Street Studios and placed on the large pillar in August of this year, an event celebrated during P.O.D.'s Prom party. This capital, a scaled-up version of the smaller capitals, is made in a modern version of Coade Stone practically indistinguishable from the original Coade Stone. The size (five feet at its widest diameter) and weight (280 kg) of the capital meant Alison had to make it in several pieces which she mortared together before the capital was fixed, by Graciela Ainsworth's stone conservation team, to the top of the large pillar.

All three capitals and pillars are secured by internal steel frame-works attached to a steel rod centred in each of the hollow pillars and cemented into the ground. Manufacture and placement of this capital, and the

pillars themselves, was funded by the the Heritage Lottery with contributions from Portobello Amenity Society, Portobello Community Council, Portobello History Society and the proceeds of a table sale held in August 2008.

Work at Kings Road Junction Will Now Take Longer

Although Portobello High Street has been closed between Kings Road junction and Fishwives Causeway since mid-November, the rest of the road is open and shops, cafes and other businesses are "Open As Usual". Diversion signs are directing traffic away from Portobello and traders are concerned that their businesses will be affected in the run-up to Christmas

Work to replace the roundabout with traffic lights should have been completed by the beginning of November. Temporary lights, installed to keep all five approaches open while work proceeded, did not operate successfully, so it was decided to temporarily divert High Street traffic along Fishwives Causeway, Baileyfield Crescent and Sir Harry Lauder Road. Measures required to put this in place caused the initial delay.

A council spokesman said at the beginning of November: "Subject to suitable weather conditions, it is still hoped to open the new junction to traffic prior to the Christmas holiday period". At the Portobello Community Council meeting on 24th November, however, Councillor Stephen Hawkins reported that he had just been told that the work will go on into next year and the diversion will be in place over the Christmas period.

This is really bad news for local businesses, so please support them whenever possible.

The Funpark Site

It is expected that a planning application will soon be lodged to build flats on the Funpark site on the Promenade between the Figgate Burn and Pipe Lane. Hackland and Dore, Architects, presented their proposals for the site at a recent Portobello Community Council meeting. They intend building two blocks of 4 storey flats along the line of the Promenade, rising to 5/6 storeys at either end. The Promenade would be widened at this point by 2 metres to reduce shadowing, while the ground floor flats would be provided with north facing private terraces. There would be access to the kilns from the Promenade through the development via a narrow path, while the area round the kilns would be landscaped and would form a mix of public and private space. The development would also have underground car parking. While most of the 2/3 bedroom flats would line the Promenade, two wings would extend south from either end and these would decrease in height as they extend away from the sea. The proposed external materials would probably be a mix of brick, stone and render but these have not yet been finalised.

Concern was expressed at the meeting regarding both the scale and the proposed height of the building, particularly as regards the existing modest 2 storey houses immediately to the south of the development. The recent N.W. Portobello Masterplan Design Brief recommends that housing on this site should be no more than 3 or 4 storeys high. It is also very important that any development on this site should take into account the historically important kilns and that their setting and their future use should not be compromised in any way by these proposals. Members of Portobello History Society have been meeting with both the architects of the new development and Council officials to see if there is the possibility that some sort of information point or activity relating to the history of the kilns can be incorporated into the new development. It is to be hoped that this will be possible and that comments made regarding the mass and height of the building and the importance of the visibility of the kilns from the Promenade will be considered by the architects before a detailed planning application is lodged which is expected to happen at the end of this year or early next year.

Waste Transfer Station

As most P.A.S. members will already know, the planning application by Viridor to build a waste transfer station on the former Freightliner Terminal site off the Sir Harry Lauder Road was refused by the planning committee on the 30th of July by 9 votes to 3. 700 objections to this application had been lodged, as well as standard letters and petitions. The application was soundly rejected by the committee despite

recommendations by the local authority's planning officials that the scheme should be granted. The planning committee members were in agreement with local objectors that the proposals would have a detrimental impact on the area through odour and noise pollution, as well as a huge increase in traffic congestion. The councillors were also not impressed with Viridor's calculations regarding the large number of lorries that would be accessing the site each day and backed the objectors' arguments that Portobello's road network would be severely affected by these proposals. They also felt that local and national waste strategies should be in place before applications such as this one should be decided. Viridor have until the 30th. of January to appeal this decision although they are perfectly entitled to lodge a different planning application for a waste transfer station on the same site at any time.

The Former Scottish Power Site

A planning application is expected to be lodged early in 2009 for the former Scottish Power site between the High Street, the Sir Harry Lauder Road and Fishwives Causeway. Although plans are at an early stage, it is likely that the development will be a mixed use scheme with 80% being residential and 20% workshops and studios. Some community based facilities such as a health centre will be incorporated into the development while there will be a landscaped edge to the Sir Harry Lauder Road.

The N.W. Portobello Masterplan Design Brief which was recently approved by the Council and which lays down the guidelines for all new development in this part of Portobello states that development on this site should be no higher than the Kings Road tenements. It also states that particular attention should be paid to the design and scale of new buildings fronting this part of the High Street.

The architects and developers who are currently working on the plans for this site are keen to engage in public consultation and have already given two presentations at recent Portobello Community Council meetings. Concerns were expressed at these meetings by local people about the heights and the density of some of the buildings proposed for this site and also about the building materials which might be used. While the proposals have not yet been finalised, it is hoped that the concerns expressed at these meetings by local residents will have been listened to by both developer and architects and that the finalised scheme when it is lodged will not only meet with public approval but will also enhance this part of Portobello.

Degree In Conservation For Local Architect

Iain Abbot, local architect and PAS member, was awarded an MSc in Architectural Conservation from the University of Edinburgh at a degree ceremony on 3rd December. Iain has already done a lot of excellent conservation work in Portobello (for example, the conversion of the former Misty's nightclub and Portobello Gift Centre premises into flats, and the exterior restoration of Jamiesons Victorian Tearoom); he also designed the lecterns for the information boards along the Prom and beside the Kilns. John Stewart, Chairman, congratulated Iain on behalf of PAS. We wish him continued success and hope Portobello will benefit further from his expertise.



The Pillar Capital under construction: courtesy Alison Robinson.

P.A.S. Monthly Meetings

Would you like to find out more about what is happening in Portobello? Would you like something done about Portobello's traffic and parking problems? Are you interested in protecting and enhancing Portobello's many listed buildings? Would you like to see the amenity of Portobello improved and environmental and landscaping projects carried out? If the answer to any or all of the above questions is yes, then you are most welcome to come along to any of P.A.S.'s regular monthly meetings to air your views and to find out just what the society is doing to improve Portobello for everyone who lives and works here. For details of meetings, please phone John Stewart on 669 6466.

Local Business Support For P.A.S.

Please use our excellent local businesses, especially those which help the society to make Portobello a pleasant place to live and to work. The society is very grateful to the following businesses for their continued support as associate business members: -

Allan's, Chemist; Robin Bond, CA; Findlay Meats; Brian Forde, Optician; Gordons, Butchers; Joppa Turrets, Guest House; H.S.Kidd, Chemist; The King's Manor Hotel; Kitchener's Delicatessen; Kristoffersen Carpets; McIntyre Lewis, Solicitors & Estate Agents; J & S Penman, Vets; Portobello Library; Jas. Scott, Funeral Directors; Shapes Hair.

Please support our local businesses, especially those who themselves support our local community.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions for the year April 2008 – March 2009 are now due. If you have not already paid for this year, please complete this slip and send it to:

Dr P.K.Wraith, 3 East Brighton Crescent, Portobello, Edinburgh EH15 1LR.

Name:

Address:

I enclose my subscription of:-

£5 per household (normal)

£2 per household (retired/unwaged)

(Please tick as appropriate)