

OXFORD WEST END REGENERATION NEWSLETTER

Old Fire Station Set for Grand Opening



The redevelopment of the Old Fire Station on George Street is on track for its grand opening in November. The centre is being transformed by Oxford City Council with the charity Crisis into a high quality community resource which combines creativity, enterprise and skills development in the heart of Oxford. The multi-million pound project began in August 2010 and was managed by the construction firm that built the original Victorian building in 1896. The 'new' Old Fire Station will be home to two organisations working in partnership: Crisis Skylight will run employment programmes for people who are homeless and vulnerably housed, including an inspirational social enterprise café. Arts at the

Old Fire Station will offer professional development for artists and creative activities for the public along with music, theatre and art exhibitions and a retail space for emerging artists. This 'two organisations, one building' model will restore the Old Fire Station to its central role in the arts and cultural sector whilst helping to address homelessness in the city, making it a true place of change. Find out more at <http://tinyurl.com/WEofs>.

Saïd Celebrates with Topping Out Ceremony

Saïd Business School celebrated the completion of the first stage of its £28m extension with a topping out ceremony in June. Wafic Saïd, the original benefactor of the School who is also supporting the construction of the new building, poured the final batch of concrete onto the superstructure. The building, designed by architects Dixon Jones who also created the award-winning main building, will provide additional facilities for teaching and executive education activities including lecture theatres, seminar rooms, a restaurant and roof terrace. Mr Saïd commented that the new building was the part of the earlier masterplan: "We knew that, if the school was a success, it would outgrow its original building in 10 years – and so it has proved." The work is expected to be completed in summer 2012.

Revamped Customer Services

A fully revamped Oxford City Council Customer Service Centre at St Aldate's Chambers will reopen to the public on September 12th. The new open plan, walk-in centre will include two dedicated self service areas with private interview rooms and free access to online services. The centre will deliver a wide range of services, including housing benefits, council tax, planning enquiries, and environmental health and waste management issues.

Land at Oxpens Goes on the Market



A sizeable area of land in Oxford's West End has been put up for sale by the British Rail Board (Residuary). The 7.9-acre site, formerly a goods marshalling yard, is located off Osney Lane to the south of the railway station, with the southern boundary fronting the Thames. The adjacent five-acre Oxpens site is largely owned by Oxford City Council with a smaller adjoining tract belonging to Royal Mail. The area as a whole is recognised in the West End Area Action Plan as the foremost housing and regeneration opportunity in the city centre. Colin Cook, Labour councillor with special responsibility for city development, said: "This is a significant development site in the heart of the city. We would be keen to work with a buyer to

regenerate this part of Oxford, including the five acres at Oxpens which we own, in a holistic way." Possible uses for a redeveloped Oxpens include housing and associated amenities, healthcare facilities, a hotel and conference venue and a public square. Expressions of interest are sought from potential developers by the end of September, however work is unlikely to commence on site until 2014 at the earliest.



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Scheme to Improve Wayfinding in Oxford



The West End team is working on a major redesign of Oxford's wayfinding system. The aim is to better convey the city's unique character and make it more legible, understandable and inviting to residents and

visitors alike. The project will include a range of high quality signs directing people to over 100 destinations with accompanying maps and visitor information. So far we've analysed Oxford's existing signage and identified key routes, arrival points and landmarks in consultation with stakeholders. We are now at the Public Consultation stage, and would like your feedback on the proposed system. Prototype signs will be installed in Bonn Square and St Ebbe's Street throughout October. Help us to get the most effective system possible by viewing the signs and telling us what you think of the design, variety of destinations and quality of information.

City Centre Footfall

Footfall cameras were installed in the city centre for the first time earlier this year and initial figures reveal how busy our shopping streets are. Cornmarket Street – our busiest thoroughfare – enjoys a level of pedestrian flow more than twice that of the Historic Towns Index, a national index which includes 14 towns and cities, such as Chester, Cheltenham and York. Measuring pedestrian volume, flow and dwell time will provide a better understanding of the pattern of activity and health of the city centre. In due course we will be able to use the data to inform local businesses of year-on-year trends so they can better plan their retail strategy.

Oxford Talkback Panel

Oxford City Council's consultation team asked over 400 members of the Oxford Talkback Panel to list what they liked best about their city centre. Take a look at the 'word cloud' to see what they said. Oxford's buildings, shops, museums and the Covered Market were clear favourites. What would your word cloud look like? Talkback is an interactive citizens' panel established in 1997 to explore the views of Oxford residents on a range of services and issues. To get involved or view the full results of the survey, visit <http://tinyurl.com/WEtalkback>.



Spotlight on... Oxford Open Doors



Locations across Oxford will throw open their doors to allow access to fascinating, famous and even frightening venues on the weekend of the 11th-12th September. Now the country's third largest Heritage Open Day, Oxford Open Doors will see 180 venues – many of them in the West End – open their doors for free. Organisers Oxford Preservation Trust and the University of Oxford say this year's programme is more varied than ever and promises something to interest everyone. The theme is Oxford's sporting heritage and among the sights and venues open to the public will be Oxford City and Oxford United football clubs, Oxford University Rugby Club and Cricket Pavilion, the Roger Bannister Running Track, Oxford Fencing Club and Hinksey Sculling School. West End highlights include Oxford Playhouse, Old County Hall and Court Rooms, Malmaison, Modern Art Oxford, the Old Fire Station, Carfax Tower, the Museum of Oxford and Secret St Ebbe's. Of the more unusual venues taking part this year, Oxford Food Bank will show people how it provides 5,000 meals a week to those in need, while the Aunt Sally Association will be demonstrating the traditional Oxfordshire game at Oxford Castle – and you can even find out what happens to your rubbish with a tour of the City Works. For a full list of events, visit <http://tinyurl.com/WEopendoors>.