Business Plan For conversion of Toilet Block to Café with Public Toilet in Roseburn Park





BEFORE AFTER

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SUMMARY

The Roseburn Park toilet block is degenerating and either needs to be demolished or refurbished. The Friends of Roseburn Park (FORP), a charity committed to improving the park for all users, would like to refurbish the building and let it to a local entrepreneur who would run it as a business. The refurbished building would contain a café and a public toilet. The café owner would be responsible for keeping the toilet clean and open when the café was open, which would be at a minimum of 5 days a week, from Wednesday to Sunday, but more likely 7 days.

Given the current state of the building, the new use will help to generate an activity stream, breathing life back into the building which will indirectly sustain its upkeep and longevity. It is well known that if a building has a viable purpose with a sustainable use, the building is more likely to be properly maintained in the future. Without this refurbishment work, the building is likely to fall into a further state of dereliction and become hazardous to park users.

FORP are in the processing of securing planning permission and a lease on the building and will obtain grant funding to undertake the required improvement works. FORP believe that if appropriate care and attention is given to the refurbishment of this historical shelter and it is reinstated to its former glory, then it will stand to represent the aspirations, the care and the energy that has been invested in the area by the FORP community group. The building will house a café and public toilet which the community wants, will accommodate FORP for meetings and generate revenue for park improvements. It will service the growing needs of the various groups who use the park now and in years to come.

Location



Roseburn Park sits on the Water of Leith and in 2000 was the site of a flood which created millions of pounds worth of damage and wrecked many homes. The Council has completed Phase 2 of the Flood Prevention Scheme for the Roseburn/Murrayfield stage, which was a £23M scheme to build flood walls and make changes to the land form, the better to protect residents from future flooding.

This led to the park seeing the construction of 1.2km of flood defences at Murrayfield, works which included structural walls and earth embankments, flood gates, pumping stations, drainage and the construction of two new bridges to replace the bridges at Baird Drive and Saughtonhall Avenue. Site work concluded in November 2017.

To help plan for the many changes the park has seen, in 2016 FORP undertook a consultation with residents and park users around how the park might be improved. The resulting improvement plan (see Appendix) will take at least five years to realise. The refurbishment of the toilet block is the top priority.

To this end, a planning application was submitted to Edinburgh Council for its change of use and refurbishment. The costs of submitting the application and additional costs of securing a building warrant, up to a total of £1,000, have been met by the Council's West Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership. The plan was approved, then revised by FoRP and then approved again in March 2017, with reference 17/00175/FUL.

Here is the current version of the plan, based on how the park looked when the floodworks were concluded; the FORP improvements are marked in orange



The park has always been used for sports; 100 years ago it was for polo, before the first rugby union ground was constructed in the 20s. This became the SRU Murrayfield Rugby Stadium in the early 80s. There were historically two cricket pitches formed in 1900 and the park continues to be used extensively by sports groups including Murrayfield-DAFS cricket club who use the adjacent Roseburn Park Armoury building- now also used by the

Edinburgh Wanderers; keeping up the historic tradition of the sport in the park. Edinburgh Leisure let the changing pavilion and the three pitches to cricket, rugby and football clubs.

The Friends of Roseburn Park commissioned murals on the Armoury building- the first in 2009 on the East elevation, the rest in 2019 on the remaining walls, and an all-weather table tennis table and chess table located on the hard-standing. Entrances are heralded by flower beds. A clock on the sports pavilion helps children know when to go home. Railings have been painted by volunteers; daffodil bulb-planting organised with local volunteers and pupils from Roseburn Primary school. They presently plan to get the disused drinking fountain working again and helped the Council consult on the recently installed new playpark, which is proving hugely popular. They run a biannual newsletter. These improvement works in Roseburn Park instigated by FORP suggest a feeling of pride in the area and help to crystallise a real sense of place, capturing the essence and spirit of a community's identity with its surrounding environment. This type of 'investment in locus' made by the Friends of Roseburn Park will ensure the park continues to be enjoyed by local residents, social groups and visitors to the area. FORP organise community events such as fun days and carol singing, which they use to generate income to pay public liability insurance, for consultation and architects fees; room bookings, publicity, etc. (See examples of flyers in Appendix)

The Wanderers

Change is afoot. The Murrayfield Wanderers rugby club have left the SRU and seek a new base. They need a pavilion/changing rooms and pitches and their first choice is to seek these in Roseburn Park. They presently use the Armoury building, next to the toilet block; they are considering seeking permission to establish a clubhouse in the park.

FoRP have the title deeds to the park. They are important in that they lay down what can and cannot be built in the park. The land was transferred in two parts – in 1898, the first tranche of land was passed to the Council by the Balfour family and the deeds can be viewed here:

<u>www.friendsofroseburnpark.org.uk/files/2016/06/TitleDeeds_1898.pdf</u> The second tranche of land was transferred in 1906 and the deeds can be downloaded at <u>www.friendsofroseburnpark.org.uk/files/2016/06/TitleDeeds1906.pdf</u>

The site of the Armoury and toilet block falls into the 1906 deeds. These deeds contain the following phrase:

[The Council or anyone else] shall not be entitled to erect on the area of ground hereby disponed any buildings of any description except Pavilions Shelters Bandstands or buildings of a similar nature and such as may be required in connection with the said area of ground which is disponed for the purpose of being used by my said disponees solely as and for a public park and for the uses for which the public parks in the city may be applied and for no other use or purpose whatever.

A pavilion, in the online dictionary, is defined as "..a light, usually open building used for shelter, concerts, exhibits, etc., as in a park or fair."

FORP aim to work with the Wanderers to meet the conditions of the deeds by encouraging them to utilise buildings currently erected in the park- for example, to modify and use the existing pavilion and to develop a clubhouse in the Armoury.

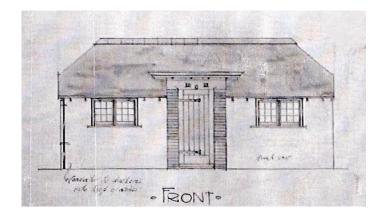
It is clear that a new-build café could not be construed as being "required in connection with the said area of ground". However, if a café were to be established in a building that was <u>already</u> erected then FORP feels that would not breach the terms of the deeds. We therefore consider that converting the toilet block for café use, with the continuing provision of the public toilet element, would be in keeping with the understanding that was set by the benefactors when the land was transferred to the Council.

History of Toilet Block

The staff shelter and tool store was built circa. 1903 by the City Architects Department and used as a bothy by the park keepers. The building was later converted for use as a public toilet in 1936 having the open air lavatories roofed over and replaced with WC cubicle compartments. The building has largely been unoccupied in recent years and has been used predominantly for storage.

The toilet block refurbishment is a major project and our architect, Craig Proudfoot of One Foot Square, has prepared plans. Three builders have provided estimates for the work. The cheapest, along with project management costs, lease fee and contingency costs, indicates a refurbishment cost of £77,575. (Note that demolition would cost at least £10,000). FORP will raise these costs through crowdfunding and grant applications.





Toilet block as it was in 1905, then a tool store

From original 1903 drawing







Toilet Block now- the roof slates are missing and plants have taken hold; the cladding is shedding

A Cafe for Roseburn Park

In 2012, FORP first explored how the toilet block might be best used. At that point we did not think the Council would agree to its use as a café, so the original Feasibility Study proposed its use as a community hub. However, there are already meeting rooms for hire in the area and FORP were unwilling to commence fundraising unless clear demand for a new facility could be demonstrated.

The idea of converting the block to a café was mooted at the West Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership Environmental Sub-Committee where the Environmental Neighbourhood Manager, Dave Sinclair, suggested that it actually might be possible to allow the block to be sublet commercially, citing examples from East London St and the Hermitage as examples of disused Council buildings on park land that had been refurbished and let to commercial operators.

FORP decided to explore whether there was interest in this from any local businesses and so advertised in their January 2016 newsletter, which went to 700 people. There was immediate interest from two businesses and on the

back of this, FORP decided to seek support from the Council Estates Dept. It was intimated that a Business Plan was required if permission was to be explored by the Council.

In order to be sure that there really was demand for a café in the park, FORP undertook a consultation in April 2016 which indicated that of all the improvements proposed, this would be the most popular, with 89% indicating support. (More details below)

It was clear that the 2012 Feasibility Study that was presented to Council Committee would now be out of date and so FORP commissioned the same architect to work with the two businesses on a redesign of the floor plan. A key proviso was that the toilet block should house not only a cafe but a public toilet too. The revised floorplan that resulted can be seen below.

A New Public Toilet

The incorporation of a public toilet into the design was because there were no toilets in the area and on numerous occasions when running events, FORP had been called upon to provide a toilet.

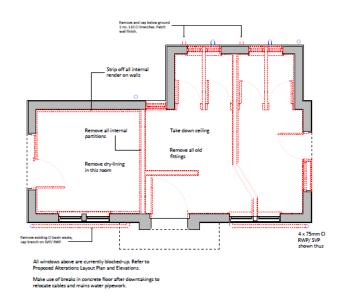
The cafe proprietor would be expected, as part of the lease, to maintain and clean the toilet, access to it being from within the cafe. The cafe lease will require the toilet to be open for use 5 days a week at least, from the hours of 10am to 4pm. Since there would likely be most trade at weekends, it is anticipated the proprietor would open the cafe those days. The two days of closure would most likely be Monday and Tuesday.

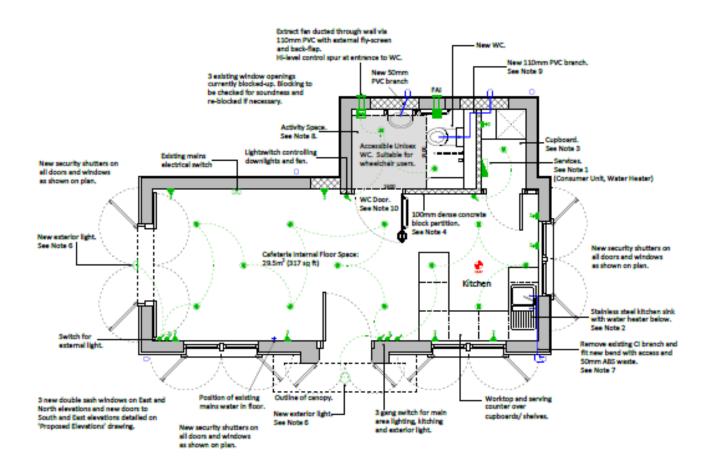
However, there is a strong likelihood that the proprietor would choose to employ sufficient staff to keep the cafe open 7 days a week. It is most likely that the 7-day-a week arrangement would run through the summer months, from May until October.

There is the risk that there will not be enough trade in the winter months to keep the café open. That being the case, the café proprietor may decide, if economy demanded it, to only open the café from May till October. If that were to happen, FORP would not demand that the public toilet be made available in the winter months. However, the proprietor would still be expected to pay the monthly building rent. Ideally the proprietor would run a business of some sort from the building all the year round.

The Proposed New Floorplan

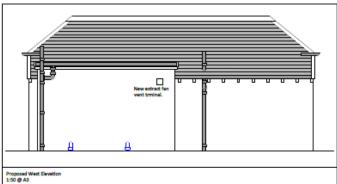
Downtakings:

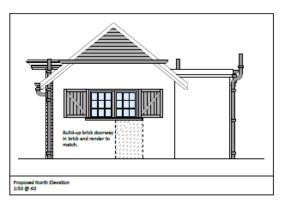


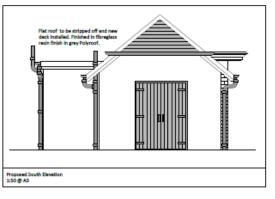


With elevations as follows:









Proposed new roof: Strip off all filts and sarking. Replaces all demaged roof jointy rafters. Replace sarking with new Zarm SW treated boards. Apply layer of U-coat roofing fall. Fit new Spanish gray 'Campo' Brim gray slates, double naffed.

Install new steel guttering and heavy duty brackets.

Apply 2 costs Zinc Phosphate Epoxy Primer and 2 costs gloss finish to client's specification.

New windows to be timber such and case, extregalled as shown and painted to match client's scheme for exterior.

oternal security shutters to be 12.5mm redwood T&G ordering on 90 x 32mm 5W frames with 18mm WBP olywood backing for increased security. New exterior doors to be inward opening and glazed in safety siless in 18 5006. Eventually, as part of the wider vision for the Park, FORP aims to site cycle parking hoops (for cycling customers) by the cafe, along with outdoor seats (chosen in consultation with elderly users) and an outdoor covered shelter something like this:



These facilities must also be fundraised for and will be sought once the café is open. These facilities will add both to the amenity of the park and will allow cafe users to make use of space in addition to that outlined for customers in the floor plan.

It should be noted that FoRP has already negotiated with the Council the provision of two picnic tables near the toilet block, which are now in situ, that would be suitable for cafe users. There will also be passing trade- those users who will buy something to take away.

Pulling all these extra facilities together will mean that the cafe will be able to service the needs of many more customers that could be seated in the cafe indoor space.

Planning Permission

Planning approval has been secured. FoRP were successful in achieving planning permission and in March 2017 received revised permission with the current improved design- the plans can be seen on the Council planning portal with reference 17/00175/FUL.

The Rent and Terms of Lease

The Council is sympathetic to leasing the toilet block to FORP; the decision to do so was approved by its Finance & Resources Committee on 23 March 2017- see

http://www.bcgwebdesign.co.uk/forp/files/2019/08/ltem 8.2 Proposed Lease of toilets Roseburn Park.pdf .

It explains how FORP would seek a lease from the Council of 25 years from the date of entry, with a rent of £1 pa. Given the challenge and risk involved, FORP would like annual break options for the first 5 years, and the option to break at each five-yearly rent review over the term of the lease. FORP would be responsible for Non – Domestic Rates and would call upon the tenant to bear this cost. The property will have to be assessed for rateable purposes by Lothian Valuation Joint Board. FORP estimate that this might result in a rateable value of £2,000. At current rates of 50p in the £, FORP estimate this would amount to £1,000 per year, or £20 per week.

FORP would seek a Full Repairing and Insuring (FRI) Lease.

The FORP Committee propose, in turn, to sublet the café at rental of £10/square foot per annum, which will, at 258 sq ft in floor area, total £2,580 per annum, or £49.62 per week. This figure is based both on the market rental rates of retail units in the area, with the burden of running a public toilet in addition taken into consideration. No rental would be charged on the public toilet element. The sublet to the café proprietor would, in turn, be on similar FRI terms. That lease would be for an initial 5-year term with an option of a regular 5-year extensions.

The proprietor would be obliged (at the proprietor's own expense) to keep the premises in good and substantial repair and in tenantable condition at all times during the currency of the lease, and should leave the premises in good and substantial repair and in tenantable condition at expiry or earlier termination of the lease, consistent with due performance of all the tenants obligations under the terms of the lease.

It is understood the Council will pay the annual premium for the Buildings Insurance and associated risk (Fire, Lightning, Aircraft, Explosion, Riot and Civil Commotion, Earthquake, Impact Damage by 3rd Party, Malicious Damage, Storm and Flood) and will reclaim the cost of this from FORP.

It is noted that the Council's insurance policy does not cover

- (a) Glass.
- (b) Sub Tenant's fixtures, fittings and Improvements,
- (c) Sub Tenant's Contents including all furniture
- (d) Damage in course of theft or attempted theft,
- (e) Occupier's liability.

It will therefore be FoRP and the sub-tenant's responsibility to arrange such insurances. In this case the café proprietor, whose insurance must include the public toilet.

Should either the FORP or the café proprietor seek to carry out Work and Alterations, non-structural alterations will be allowed subject to obtaining written Council consent, not to be unreasonably withheld.

The tenants (FORP) would be permitted to assign the lease of the whole of the subjects with the Council's consent (not to be unreasonably withheld), but not to assign part of the lease of the subjects in any circumstances;

It will be the café proprietor's obligation to ensure that all statutory requirements for operating within the premises are met.

This includes but not limited to

- 1. DDA 1995
- 2. Asbestos Management
- 3. Environmental Issues
- 4. Health & Safety Act and Other Issues
- 5. Fire (Scotland) Act 2005

FORP will be responsible for the all legal costs and fees arising from the Transaction including the Council's fees.

FORP will be responsible for any Registration Dues in the normal manner if required.

FORP will pay a Surveyor's fee of £250 prior to the date of entry to the Council's Director of Services for Communities.

The Future Proprietor

All those possible café proprietors seeking to take on the lease live or work locally. FORP would prefer the cafe to be taken on by a business where the owner had catering experience. The favoured proprietor at present is the owner of Art et Facts at 19 Roseburn Terrace, who was the first to indicate a desire for the lease. The owner, George Rendall, previously ran a successful pizzeria for the customers of the highly regarded Fire Island disco at 128 Princes St (Fire Island was forced to close in September 1988 when the owners of the Princes Street building sold the premises to the Waterstones chain of bookstores).

Should Art et Facts pull out, there are four sets of partnering residents who have indicated a desire to take on the lease.

The FORP Committee would reserve the right to use the building for its monthly evening meetings, on the understanding that they would do so only when the cafe was otherwise closed.

The Income Accruing from the Let

If the Council held to a peppercorn rent of £1 pa, then FORP, a registered charity, would make a profit on the let of £2,579 pa. This income would be used to:

- cover FORP's running costs,
- pay for maintenance or redecoration of the premises should the lease fail or the proprietor pull out of the lease, thus ensuring a new business was found to take on the building.
- any remaining profits would be used to
 - o fund maintenance costs elsewhere in the park, should the Council find itself strapped for cash.
 - o subsidise community events or,
 - o as part of a new FORP capital fund, help pay for other park improvements.

FORPS objects are:

"The provision of recreational facilities, or the organisation of recreational activities with the object of improving the conditions of life for the public and users of the green space known as Roseburn Park in the City of Edinburgh."

- and any income would go towards meeting those objectives.

Since the funding would be below the VAT threshold, there would be no need for FORP to become VAT registered, although it is assumed that proprietor would pay VAT if that was applicable.

Market - demand

FORP carried out a local consultation on a wide range of improvements proposed for the park. The survey seeking residents views was made available online from 1 April 2016 and closed on 15 April 2016. In hard copy 1,000 fliers were distributed in the local area, and an online version of the survey was promoted widely through Friends of Roseburn Park's Facebook page and website. The survey was also promoted through the local April edition of the newsletter Murrayfield Grapevine and the Edinburgh Evening News (see cutting in appendix). Both online and hard copy versions were accompanied by a plan of the park marking various ideas to date. There were 141 responses; of these the percentage identifying with various kinds of park user was as follows:

Dog Walker 19%, Cyclist 29%, Pedestrian 72%, Jogger 13%, Play team sport 6%, Playground user 23%, Home overlooks park 21%, Other 14%

Rating of main ideas

Respondents were asked to rate each idea with one of: Love It, Like It, Don't Mind It, Have Doubts, Dislike It. The table below combines Love It and Like It, and it combines Have Doubts and Dislike It. It is in descending order of popularity (Love or Like).

The top 3 of the 20 changes mooted were these:

	Num. who answered	% Love or Like	% Don't Mind	% Doubt or Dislike
Refurbish toilet	141	89	4	7
block into café				
with public toilet				
Public shelter with	138	80	12	8
seating near the				
cafe				
New play park in	99	80	17	3
sunny northeast				
corner for 2-12s				

The café is clearly the most popular of all the improvements proposed, scoring 89% in favour.

Some comments:

"Cafe would bring the place to life and change the ambience for the better. Really want it to be a lovely green space in an urban environment."

The demographics

Extract from 2011 Census, showing population in area around Roseburn Park. Of the 4,573 households around the park, almost 60% are owner-occupied and over 20% are renting from private landlords. Whilst the average proportion of pensioners is around 12% in the city, in Roseburn & Murrayfield it is over 18%; there are many elderly people. Car ownership is 6% higher than average, again confirming the relative affluence of the area. These people with money and time on their hands will be the target market for the café.

In addition, there are many sports teams that use the park – the Roseburn Primary School football club (every Saturday morning), the Murrayfield DAFS (in summer) and Edinburgh Wanderers (in winter) (both- many afternoons and evenings), various lets on Saturday and Sundays to football and rugby teams; Hearts FC practise occasionally through the week: all these players – and parents of players- will likely use the café.

There is also a constant flow of dog walkers, elderly people and cyclists through the park. (It is a main thoroughfare on the Water of Leith cycle route, with cyclists travelling through the park to get from the West of the city to destinations East, North and South.

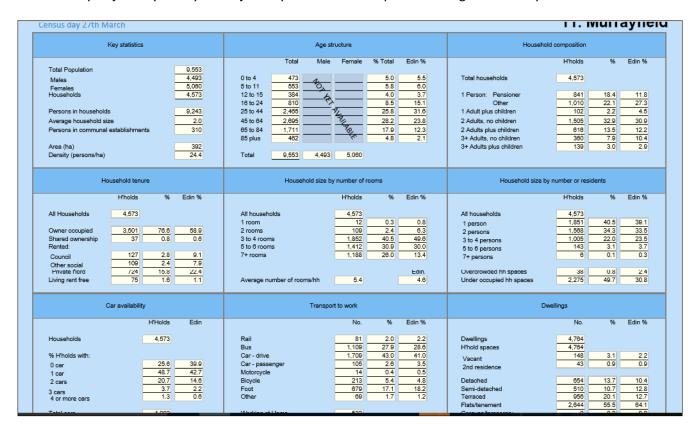
[&]quot;Have reservations that a cafe in the park will be cost effective, perhaps only during summer."

[&]quot;Some doubts about whether there will be enough trade to sustain a cafe business all year round"

[&]quot;Not sure of financial viability of café but love the idea. "

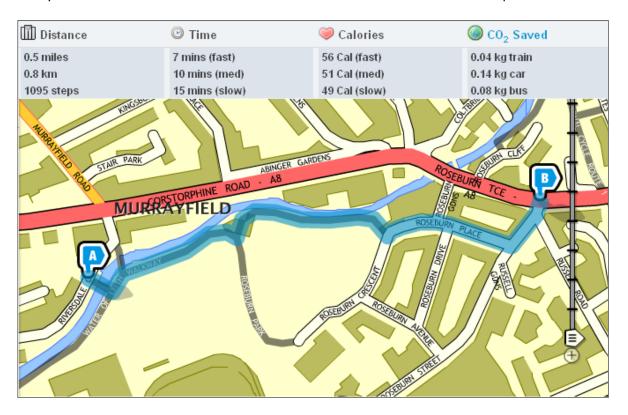
[&]quot;Great to have the cafe in the park, ideally with some outside space to sit with a coffee in the sunshine."

There is a footfall recording device in the middle of the park. Its data output over the period Apr-Nov 2015 indicated about 450 cycle journeys a day. Foot journeys over the same period average 1800 a day.



The competition

The closest cafes are on Roseburn Terrace. The nearest is 0.5 km away. Many elderly people use the park and walk slowly. It would take them about 12 minutes to walk to a café that was not in the park.





Roseburn Park revamp includes public toilet cafe, BMX track



An 80-year-old oak tree is felled at Roseburn Park during flood prevention works last month. Picture: Scott Taylor

IAN SWANSON, Tuesday 05 April 2016

A PUBLIC toilet converted into a cafe, a BMX track, an outdoor gym and a brand new playground are among the plans for a new-look Roseburn Park drawn up by residents.

The proposed revamp comes as flood prevention works costing £25 million get under way on the stretch of the Water of Leith bordering the park. Some of the trees felled to make way for the new flood barrier would be used to create seats at the park entrances.

The vision has been put together by the Friends of Roseburn Park and a consultation is under way with a residents' survey and a public drop-in event on Wednesday next week at Roseburn Primary School from 5pm to 8.30pm.

The centrepiece is the plan to convert the existing disused public toilets into a cafe.

Friends chairman Pete Gregson said: "Kids do football training on a Saturday morning and there are parents standing around, but there's nowhere to get a cup of coffee. Older people go for walks in the park, but you can't get a cup of tea." He said they hoped to lease the toilets from the council, an architect was working on designs for the cafe and a couple of local businesses were interested in taking it on.

Mr Gregson said the existing playpark, in the southernmost part of the park, was in the wrong place – on muddy, low-lying land which will become isolated by the new flood wall. The plan is to replace it with a new playpark at the eastern end with new equipment designed for two to 12-year-olds instead of the current age group of two to six-year-olds.

The Friends also want to make the park more attractive to teenagers with a mini-physical assault course or trim trail, a goal end, basketball net and teen shelter. There would be a BMX track, too, allowing people to cycle all the way round the park, and an adult gym with outdoor fitness equipment. The proposals have been costed at £250,000. The Friends have already held bake sales and other fundraising events and say they are optimistic they can win support from the Lottery and various trusts and foundations.

A council spokeswoman said: "The council has worked closely with Friends of Roseburn Park to consider a number of suggestions to enhance the area. We would encourage park users and members of the local community to contribute their feedback on proposals to the informal consultation being run by the group."

 $\label{lem:http://www.edinburghnews.scotsman.com/news/roseburn-park-revamp-includes-public-toilet-cafe-bmx-track-1-4090793$

Some event flyers















