

The Tram Sheds

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unique journey





the
engine



enward

The Tram Sheds

Big Shed
Wee Shed
Gap Building



ast meets present

1871 2023

It's over 150 years since Edinburgh's first horse-drawn trams ferried passengers across this vibrant city. When horsepower was eventually replaced with a cable-hauled system, engine rooms and workshops were needed to house the tramway's machinery so in 1898 the Shrubhill Tramway Workshops were built. But a little over half a century later — with buses gaining momentum — Shrubhill was destined to lie derelict. Until now.

The Tram Sheds is the latest exciting addition to The Engine Yard's unique urban Community of contemporary homes. It's a story of rediscovery and the sensitive restoration of an iconic and much-loved industrial landmark — coupled with the long-awaited return of the city's trams...

Edinburgh's tramway opened in 1871 but before long the system that served Scotland's hilly capital became known as the country's most difficult horse tramway to run. The solution lay more than 5,000 miles away in another hilly city — San Francisco.

1871

Right: Junction between Princes Street and Waterloo Place, circa 1893.

Below: Edinburgh tramcar in Main Street, Newhaven, circa 1956.

Cable haulage — a system whereby tram cars grip onto an endless loop of subterranean moving cable powered by steam engines — was the perfect answer to Edinburgh's transport problem. But in order for Edinburgh and District Tramways to roll out its cable-tram system across the city, the existing tracks would need to be rebuilt to accommodate the cables while a power station was needed to drive the system.

An area known as Shrub Hill off Leith Walk was already being used as stables and workshops for the horse-drawn tramway — where better then to site the new depot?





Shrubhill Tramway Workshops and Power Station was completed in 1898, with the first cable-hauled tram departing on 1 June 1899. The depot consisted of a tall 8-bay, 1-storey and basement ashlar stone block, 3 wide single-storey bays, and a single-storey, 4-bay rubble block with round-headed windows and 8 circular windows, all overlooked by an imposing octagonal brick chimney.

The workshops — or Tram Sheds — were where Edinburgh's trams were built and maintained and included the Big Shed, Wee Shed and today's intervening Gap Building, while the accompanying power station housed the haulage engines and cable winding gear.

But cable haulage couldn't compete with the fast-approaching electrification era and by June 1923, the cable-hauled trams had pulled into Shrubhill for the final time. For the next three decades, the depot was still very much in use until buses became the preferred mode of travel.

On Friday 16 November 1956, the last tram service terminated at the depot, which was briefly repurposed as a bus depot, a museum and finally a Fringe venue before a leaking roof caused it to be abandoned completely.

The Tram Sheds — neglected yet gloriously distinctive still — were waiting for their next chapter to begin...

1871

Edinburgh's 150-year love affair with the trams began when the Edinburgh Street Tramways Company opened a 3.5 mile horse-powered line running from Leith to Haymarket.

1888

The limitations of horse power in a hilly city were overcome with the introduction of a cable-hauled tram system, inspired by the one in San Francisco — still in use today.

1898

The Shrubhill Tramway Workshops and Power Station — part of the city's cable-tram system being rolled out by Edinburgh and District Tramways — opened in Shrub Hill off Leith Walk.

A 150-year love affair

Operators of the Tramways

- Edinburgh Street Tramways (1871-1904)
- Edinburgh Northern Tramways (1888-1897)
- Edinburgh and District Tramways (1893-1919)
- Leith Corporation Tramways (1904-1920)
- Musselburgh and District Electric Light and Traction Company (1904-1928)
- Edinburgh Corporation Tramways (1919-1928)

1899

The first official cable car journey on the new system took place, when a party of dignitaries left Shrubhill for the short journey to St. Andrew Square and back again.

1904

The city's first electric trams began to run in neighbouring Musselburgh (1904) and Leith (1905), meeting the existing cable-hauled trams at Joppa and Pilrig respectively.

1956

On the evening of November 16, Edinburgh's trams rolled into the Shrubhill depot for the final time, bringing the city's love affair with the trams to a temporary halt.

2014

A tramway returned to Edinburgh, with Edinburgh Trams Ltd operating the new trams along a 15-stop 14km line between St Andrew Square in the New Town and Edinburgh Airport.

2016

The first phases of The Engine Yard opened on Leith Walk. These unique, contemporary homes formed part of the ongoing sensitive restoration of Edinburgh's architecturally distinctive former tram depot — the Shrubhill Tramway Workshops.

2020

Works began on the Big Shed, Wee Shed and Gap Building — collectively known as the Tram Sheds — to create a stunning collection of modern apartments and duplexes with a charming, historic twist.

All change for luxury living

Discover how our expert team has lovingly reimagined a new and exciting future for a long-forgotten masterpiece...

2023

As the trams return to Leith, the Engine Yard launches the Tram Sheds — a spectacular collection of unique, high-specification apartments and duplexes in one of Edinburgh's most exciting new places to live. These beautiful one, two and three-bedroom homes have been cleverly incorporated into the original structure of an iconic industrial landmark — the Shrubhill Tramway Workshops and Power Station. The result is a fascinating fusion of old and new — gorgeous, contemporary interiors strikingly offset by ornate, industrial architecture.

Restoring a landmark's former glory

Looking at the Tram Sheds today, it's hard to imagine them standing empty and derelict against the Leith landscape, providing a tantalising, wistful glimpse of their industrial heyday.

Yet up until just a couple of years ago that's exactly how they were, when the talented team at LDN Architects unveiled an ingenious design to redevelop these historic buildings into unique, luxury homes. It focused on the sensitive restoration of the Big Shed and the Wee Shed — both listed — and the creation of a new infill building positioned between the two — the Gap Building.

Demonstrating painstaking attention to detail, our construction team has carefully interpreted the architects' blueprints, which — for both sheds — involved creating two contemporary apartment blocks against each structure's eastern and western external walls, and leaving an open courtyard between them.

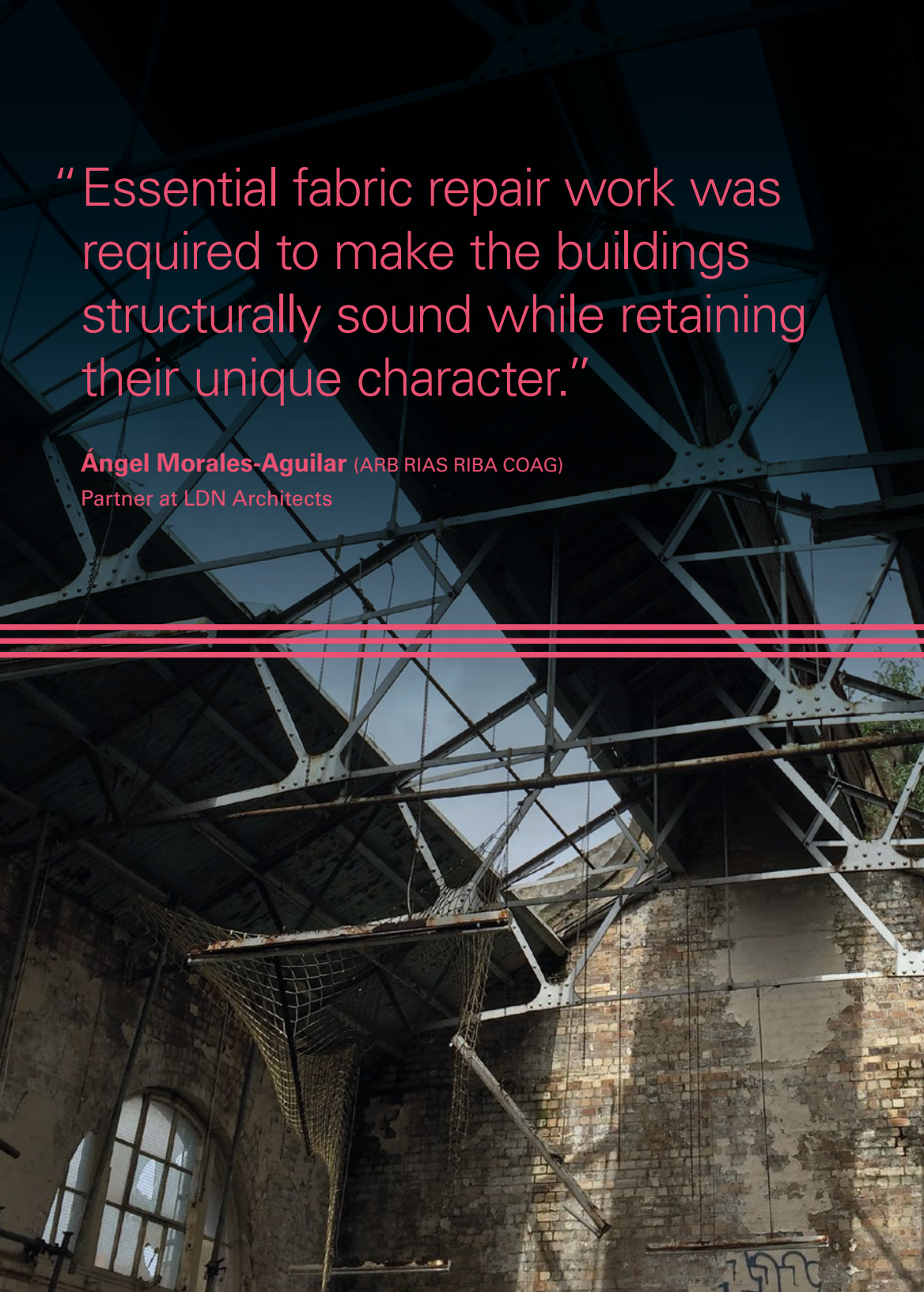
The Big Shed's ornate detailing and grand arched openings — whose masonry has been lovingly repaired and replaced where possible — are a striking contrast to the brickwork's modern, aluminium-framed openings. And the original roof structure — even with the trusses removed — provides an eye-catching framework for the spectacular, light-filled Atrium at the structure's heart.

An intentionally rustic finish highlights the building's distinctive past while additional character comes from each home's individual relationship with the external walls.

In the Wee Shed, the original roof has also been removed and replaced but unlike the Big Shed, its structure has been altered to make room for the homes within. The central space has been left uncovered to create a bright communal courtyard benefitting from attractive, soft landscaping. With a roof terrace for each south-facing property and rooflights incorporated into the north-facing living areas, we've taken every opportunity to maximise space and light.



Left and above: Our construction team starts to peel back the layers of dereliction.



“Essential fabric repair work was required to make the buildings structurally sound while retaining their unique character.”

Ángel Morales-Aguilar (ARB RIAS RIBA COAG)
Partner at LDN Architects



Above: The structure's original walls provide a frame for the new apartment blocks.


Left: The Big Shed is lovingly restored into a spectacular, light-filled Atrium.

The boldly-designed Gap Building signals a new chapter in the life of the Tram Sheds. The main entrance to the new homes, this modern structure is the connecting core to all three buildings — an impressive open space that cleverly links the Big Shed's Atrium and the Wee Shed's courtyard while providing access to and across all three floors. From Dryden Street, you will see it's also set back slightly from the original building to subtly separate the old from the new.

In our thoughtful reinterpretation of the Tram Sheds, we've created something truly special. Our experts have worked hard to bring these historic buildings back to life while sensitively preserving their rich industrial architecture — but no one could have imagined how seamlessly the new homes would integrate with their urban heritage. Living here presents a rare opportunity to enjoy the best of both worlds — a contemporary home that uniquely embraces the charm and character of the past.



PÅRES



SENTINEL

The Engine Yard's newest collection of high-specification one, two and three-bedroom homes marks an exciting new era for the Tram Sheds. Thoughtfully designed to offer premium living within a unique, historic setting, our luxury apartments and duplexes benefit from ultra-modern interiors alongside the traditional character of a much-loved Edinburgh landmark.

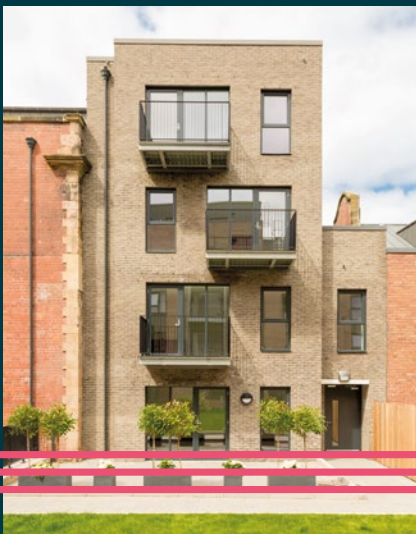
Each spacious home encompasses a contemporary, open-plan design, with an industrial theme evidenced by the sleek handle-less kitchens in matt anthracite and the stylish black sanitaryware to the bathrooms and en-suites. Beautiful arched and oval windows — and for some homes private gardens and roof terraces — offer stunning views of Edinburgh and beyond.

The trams are back and so are the Tram Sheds – reimagined as stunning, contemporary homes.

At The Engine Yard you will be part of an architecturally distinctive, urban Community, where our heritage-led design continues into the outer spaces and the historical chimney provides a magnificent focal point.

And where better than vibrant Leith to call home? This hive of creativity and cultural diversity is packed with chic eating and drinking spots, delicious delis and eclectic shops, all conveniently on your doorstep. For a more mainstream offering, the retail paradise known as St James Quarter is easily accessible too.

On foot, the city centre is less than 15 minutes away. But the newly opened tram link means you can be there in under five. Exactly a century after the last cable-hauled tram made its way back here, the story of the trams — and the Tram Sheds — has come full circle.











Now the hard work's done, we're ready to make some noise!

Here at The Engine Yard, we're more than a little excited to be launching Shrubhill's beautifully restored Tram Sheds as part of one of Places for People's most ambitious restoration projects yet.

Join us on a tour of these uniquely-designed apartments and duplexes and discover for yourself how these high-specification homes — with their generous room sizes, standout features and timeless sophistication — offer the ultimate in contemporary city living. Steeped in the capital's rich industrial heritage and located in Leith's popular, thriving Community the Tram Sheds is a destination not to be missed.

Why not be a part of this exciting restoration story and let our friendly, expert team guide you on your journey towards making this exceptionally captivating setting your home.







The Tram Sheds

07919 381 278

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