

News

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Museum of St. Albans century-old time capsule reburied

A time capsule discovered on the site of the former Museum of St Albans has been reburied by Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure for future generations to discover.

The Mayor of St Albans, Councillor Rosemary Farmer, led celebrations to mark the reburial of a new time capsule donated by Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure.

The artifact, which was unearthed in November 2017, has been updated with new items donated by the Museum of St Albans, St Albans City and District Council and community group, Look! St Albans.

Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure has donated original blueprint site drawings of the Oak Tree Gardens scheme, where the company is currently delivering a new 10-home residential scheme on behalf of St Albans City and District Council. The new capsule also includes photographs of the construction team who are building the homes.

Guests at the ceremony included six of the new residents who will be moving into the town houses at Oak Tree Gardens later this year, as well as pupils from the nearby St Albans Gymboree and Alban City School.

The original time capsule was unearthed by Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure last year on the Museum of St Albans former Hatfield Road site.

It was discovered behind a stone plaque commemorating the building of the Museum of St Albans in 1898. The new capsule has been buried behind same stone plaque at the front gate of Oak Tree Gardens.

A note explains that a glass bottle was placed there on the 20 July 1898 by Dame Maria Millington Evans, who was an archaeologist and author, as well as the wife of one of the museum's founders Sir John Evans. The glass container also includes extracts from the Herts Advertiser and St Albans Times, along with a Victorian half-penny.

Another capsule, dated 1960, was discovered and is believed to have been placed there when the stone was removed from its original position.

The 10 homes within the Oak Tree Gardens scheme are part of St Albans City and District Council's major regeneration plan for the city centre. The former museum's original façade has been retained to preserve the site's historic character and extended to create four, four-bedroom and two, three-bedroom open-plan units.

A bungalow on the site has been demolished and replaced with four terraced homes, each featuring four bedrooms.

David Rowsell, area director for Morgan Sindall Construction and Infrastructure's Northern Home Counties region, said: "The Museum of St Albans has been a major part of the Hatfield Road and wider St Albans community for more than a century and we're very pleased to be working with the museum to ensure that its legacy will continue on the site where it stood for almost 120 years.

"As a company we're very experienced at working within sites of historical and cultural importance

and it's a privilege that our team was able to have the opportunity to discover such an important and special artifact as this.

"Oak Tree Gardens is a transformational and complex refurbishment project that forms part of the St Albans City and District Council's vision to regenerate the city centre. This has been a very memorable project for many reasons and we're looking forward to continuing to work with the council to deliver this exciting development for St Albans and to grow the great collaborative relationship we have with St Albans City and District Council."

Councillor Annie Brewster, Portfolio Holder for Sport and Culture for St Albans City and District Council, said: "The discovery of the time capsule from the Victorian era generated a great deal of local interest. It was thrilling to be connected in this way with the people who founded the museum back in 1898.

"I'm delighted that Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure has organised the reburial of the capsule and included items from 2018, the year in which a new St Albans Museum and Gallery has opened.

"Here is hoping that in a century or so, people might discover the capsule again and get a glimpse through the decades at all of us."

Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure's partners on the scheme include Tom Hallam Consulting, Mark Bell Architects, PEP Civil & Structures Ltd, EMEC, Gardiner & Theobald LLP and Silver Development and Construction Consultancy.

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