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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

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2009**

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TESCO SETS OUT STALL FOR PICARDY PLACE

Tesco is planning a supermarket at 8 Picardy Place (currently Reid Furniture). It has sought permission for a new shop front, plant louvres on Broughton St Lane, and a complete three-floor fit out.

The B-listed building is in both a World Heritage Site and New Town Conservation Area. The objections received by City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) focused on architectural and aesthetic concerns, as no change to the existing Class 1 retail consent was necessary for Tesco to start trading.

Spurtle broke the story locally in early March in 'planning alerts' issued by hand and email, and the news was greeted with widespread alarm. Many locals fear that local small businesses – already struggling as a result of the recession – would be killed off by the competition or a reduction in passing footfall. **Bellevue Area Residents Association** is already fighting the proposal, liaising with campaigners against a new Sainsbury store on the former site of Woolworth's in Stockbridge.

In a cross-party joint statement, **Cllrs Beckett, Blacklock, Brock and Lang** said: 'Broughton Street is a vibrant independent shopping area with excellent services and specialist shops. The introduction of a Tesco...could spell disaster for this area. As local councillors we are opposed to this application.' **Malcolm Chisholm MSP** expressed strong opposition to the plan, and **Mark Lazarowicz MP** promised to campaign vigorously against it. The Cockburn

Association has also objected. Lothian **MSPs Gavin Brown and Shirley-Anne Somerville** offered support. Ms Somerville said she was very concerned by 'the creeping growth of the big supermarkets out of retail parks and into local communities', and she has tabled a motion in parliament in support of local businesses and communities.

Cllrs Mowat and Dundas cannot comment on planning applications as they sit on the CEC Development Sub-committee which will decide on the application, but have assured us that full note of all objections will be taken. The objection period is now closed, and a decision will be made by 17 April. Online plans are at Ref. 09/00385/FUL <http://citydevelopment.edinburgh.gov.uk/portal/portal.jsp>



PICARDY PLACE DEVELOPMENT

The CEC have recently produced a draft development principles document for **Picardy Place**. Proposals include the creation of a triangular development site, defined by Picardy



Place and the proposed tram stop to its north, the cathedral steps and frontage to the west, and the Leith Walk / Greenside corridor to the east.

The development aims to change the character of this city centre gateway from a roundabout prioritising traffic movement to a high quality public space designed around the needs of pedestrians.

The document can be viewed on the CEC website, or at the Planning & Building Standards reception area at the CEC offices at Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street.

Comments should be made in writing to Andrew Sikes, Principal Planner, Business Centre G.1, Waverley Court, 4 East Market Street, Edinburgh, EH8 8BG, andrew.sikes@edinburgh.gov.uk, by **10 April 2009**.

THE WORD ON THE STREET ...

- 'Tesco is the last thing Broughton needs or wants.'
- 'We had no warning of this.'
- 'The people and traffic congestion on Picardy Place will be even more of a nightmare, especially when the new tram stop is in place.'
- 'We didn't build up this village community to be dominated and threatened by a giant on our doorstep.'
- 'Who's to say Tesco won't extend into adjoining properties?'
- 'Where's the access for deliveries?'
- 'With branches in Broughton Rd, Leith Walk and Picardy Place, Broughton might as well be called the Tesco Triangle.'
- 'What's the Council doing to protect small businesses?'
- 'I think it's a good thing. Small shops charge far too much.'

Unite puts site on market

Unite PLC has put its site at 130 McDonald Rd on the market, within hours of winning an appeal to the Scottish Government for permission to build student accommodation (*Issue 168*).

The 1.07 acre plot, already cleared, was marketed last month by agents Retties & Co. as 'an outstanding development opportunity' with a closing date of 20 March. Unite bought at the top of the market (£5.5m in 2007), but – because of the Council decision to refuse planning permission – could not hope to complete its project until 2011 at the earliest. This made it an uneconomic proposition in the current climate, and the decision to appeal was simply to protect the value of the site. Unite will pursue compensation from CEC, and ride out the credit crunch by focusing new development exclusively on London for at least the next 2 years. A spokeswoman for the firm told *Spurtle* the decision to sell was 'unfortunate and disappointing'.

The property has changed hands 3 times since Martin & Frost left. Stewart Milne Homes first gained planning permission in 2005 for 71 domestic and 5 commercial units. In early 2007 Newbridge-based East Coast Property bought it for £3.5m and proposed 80+ luxury flats, but sold the site to Unite shortly after. *Spurtle* will continue to report on any developments.

Park plans make progress

A 'bespoke' youth shelter is planned for Scotland St Tunnel, and could be in place by the end of 2009. Designers hope to clear the brick barrier and create a new covered area with elegant lighting, seating and an attractive full-height screen at the rear. The scheme would harmonise with the original architecture, although would not permit access to the dripping deeps beyond.

Behind-the-scenes talks started last summer when 120 locals, parents, youth workers, young people, police and blue-sky thinkers discussed ways to enhance King George V Park. Now the Tunnels Youth Project's concepts are being turned into achievable and scheduled designs.

If successful, costs for these first 'enabling works' will be met by £15K in grants sought by Friends of King George V Park from 3 Neighbourhood Partnerships, with the shelter being seen as a catalyst for further, phased enhancements. Options include: landscaping, play equipment, goals/hoops/flexible social space, and seating, any of which would require liaison with the CEC Parks and Gardens Dept.

The project addresses a perceived rise in 'youth disorder' by listening to young people and offering them attractive things to do safely without disturbing others (*Issue 161*). Central to it is the sharing of space across age-groups at different times of day.

Research, consultation and funding applications are led by New Town architects Simon Laird Associates, who report to a project working group of councillors and other interested parties. For more information contact Andrew McRae: amcrae@simonlaird.com.

Broughton Books

Sir Tom Farmer, Scotland's best-known entrepreneur, formally opened **Brian Rafferty's Broughton St Bookshop** (*Issue 166*) on 7 March. Sir Tom praised Brian's can-do attitude as a great example to others and wished him every success. 'I hope the public will give him the support and encouragement he deserves.'



Shorter week for school lets

As of 1 April state schools will be closed to outside lets from 6pm on Thursdays onwards.

Children & Families claim costs have exceeded income from lets by about £100K each year. Existing lets will be honoured until the end of the session unless they can move to another day or location.

The change will seriously threaten many groups (including Beavers, Cubs and Scouts like the 5th Leith), but it may slightly ease budget worries for primary schools. While these are liable for overheads and janitorial overtime, to date they have not been allowed to retain or spend revenues raised from lets.

Hopetoun locals acknowledged

Hopetoun Village recently featured in the Scottish Government's Scottish Awards for Quality in Planning 2008. Locals **Gavin McGregor** and **Eileen and John Dickie** were closely involved in early discussions about the garden there from 1996–98, and the latter two were guests at the Awards Ceremony in The Hub on 12 Mar. Eileen also starred in an accompanying DVD. Commending CEC's good project management on the ground, judges were encouraged by the locals' role in identifying a need for informal greenspace in the area and helping to design its layout, with *Spurtle* being 'a key stakeholder' as 'disseminator of information' in this process. (*Issues 14–16, 23, 25, 30–1, 40, 43–9, 55, 57*).

D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (1829–1902)

Despite being born onboard ship, Thompson (DWT) did not follow his father in the life of a sea captain. After school years at Christ's Hospital, London, he studied Classics at Cambridge and in 1852 was appointed a master at The Edinburgh Academy, teaching Archibald Constable and Robert Louis Stevenson among others.

Around 1857 he settled at 3 Brandon St, which doubled as a home and boarding house for 7 teenaged boys. He married Fanny Gamgee (daughter of a famous veterinary surgeon) in 1859 and a son was born here in 1860. Fanny died a week later.

'A man of large humanity and gentleness of mind and spirit', DWT wrote *Day Dreams of a Schoolmaster* (1864), an account of his own education and later teaching career in Edinburgh. He advocated better ways of teaching the Classics, educating women, respecting pupils and the pedagogic vocation. However, his rejection of rote learning in classes of 60+ pupils, his opposition to corporal punishment, and his social 'presumption' earned him the distrust of fee-paying parents, who campaigned for his removal.

In 1864 he accepted a post as Chair of Greek at Queen's College, Galway, where one of his students was T.P. O'Connor (the later journalist, Irish nationalist, and MP). He remarried in 1866, and had 6 children in Ireland with Amy Drury.

He penned many reviews and translations, essays (collected as *Wayside Thoughts of an Asophophilosopher*) and poems, plus two collections of original nursery rhymes for his oldest son. The latter is commemorated by a plaque at his birthplace on Brandon St, and will be the subject of an article in a later issue. For more on DWT, see Magnusson's (1974) *The Clacken and the Slate*. AM

Nooks and crannies: Seeking a salamander

In Issue 160 we celebrated the **Scottish National Portrait Gallery (SNPG)** courtyard garden on Queen St, and in particular its pebbled mosaic with images of an owl, squirrel, salamander and wren. These were reputedly inspired by their representations in stone on the adjacent building, and presumably symbolise Wisdom, Thrift, Endurance and Prosperity.

A close perusal of the SNPG detected 11 owls, 10 squirrels, a possible wren, but no discernible salamander. Perhaps it lurks shyly within the plethora of vine leaves which also adorn this noble building. Any keen-eyed reader who can verify its whereabouts will receive due plaudits and a prize.

The building itself is the creation of Sir Robert Rowand Anderson. He intended the richly sculptured exterior to be an essential component of this literally iconic structure. It comprises representations of the 37 coats of arms of the royal burghs of Scotland, and 31 figures of poets, monarchs, statesmen, and others join 6 allegorical sculptures of History, the Fine Arts, the Sciences, the Ruder Arts (of the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages), War and Peace, and Scotland herself.

All these keep silent watch on Queen Street and far beyond. But where, oh where is the salamander which is, by repute, indestructible? JRM



Briefly

The **21st Science Festival** runs 4-18 Apr. with **St Andrew's Square** hosting a 'bold', 'impressive' and 'surprising' exhibition on astronomy. At the **Botanics** from 8 Apr. a wide range of talks and activities will cover everything from Darwin to dino-birds, and stone-age nosh to obesogenics. Kids (free in Glasshouses) shouldn't throw stones. Visit: www.sciencefestival.co.uk.

Broughton Primary School Parent-Staff Assoc. will hold a **Kids Nearly New Sale**, 10.30am-12.30pm on 25 Apr. in the Gym Hall. Buy all sorts of good-quality clothes, nursery equipment, toys, DVDs etc. **Entry 50p. All proceeds to the PSA.**

Spurtle spotted water gushing into the **Water of Leith** last month, just downstream of Warriston Bridge at a spot popular with **wintering goosander**. It came from an outflow pipe during dry weather, left a pale stain downstream, and smelt bad, so we reported it. **SEPA** responded on 3 Mar.: 'Scottish Water were finally able to clear a choke in the sewer yesterday although they seem to have had **quite a job**.' Report similar unseemly spillages to **SEPA's** pollution hotline on 0800 807060.

The mixed-use development of sites on **Logie Green Rd and Beaverbank Place** (*Issue 159*) has been granted planning permission. Private flats, student accommodation, shops, a restaurant and new 'village square' are part of the proposal.

Broughton History Society's next meeting will be on **27 Apr.** Nicholas Oddy will speak on "**The Machine in the Parlour**" - **Victorian Domestic Machinery**'. The May Meeting on the 11th features Christopher Fleet explaining '**Four Centuries of Local Maps, Plans & Their Makers**'. All meetings in **Drummond CHS Staff Common Room**. 7pm. Visitors £2, members free.

CEC has approved an £850m replacement for the **St James Shopping Centre**, New St Andrew's House and multistorey car park (*Issue 156*). Retail space will double in the new **mock-Milanese quarter**, which will include homes, offices, 'pedestrian boulevards', and cafés (of which there is a massive dearth in the city). Plans for a 'higher landmark element' crashed. Demolition: **Spring 2011 ... maybe.**

Gone Fishing. John and Margaret Bee, who run **Something Fishy**, Broughton's celebrated fish emporium, are retiring after 22 years in the piscatorial trade. We will sorely miss their unfailing courtesy and good humour, but wish them **bon voyage** and happy landings. Customers will be relieved to know that the business will continue under new management.

Belle's View

Hi fans



Easter is almost upon us – thrills and spills and daffodils! April showers? Yeah, *whatever* – the sun always shines on the cobbles of Broughton!

Spring makes Estelle and I yearn for travelling adventures – but we can have the fun of 'abroad' right here at home! Giving us a bit of Italian sunshine, local deli **Valvona and Crolla** are hosting a tutored wine tasting class (Thurs. 23 April, 6.30–8.30pm, £12.50). Enjoy 25 exciting new wines, with new vintages of old favourites, and take a voyage through Italian wines and around the world, without ever leaving the comfort of **Elm Row**! Dress code: Chic designer sunglasses!

Fancy Austria? Ooooooh *Vienna!* Fans of Brit electro-pop muzak from the '80s should get along to the **Edinburgh Playhouse** on Fri. 10 April, when **Midge Ure** will slap on a dollop of Brylcreem and dust off his big old girly shoulder pads to join his old pals **Chris Cross, Warren Cann** and **Billie Currie** in band **Ultravox** (7pm, Tix £29.50–£32.50, Tel. 0844 897 1660). Dress code: batwing jumpers!

And to be completely transported into another world, don't miss **The Beltane Fire Festival** on **Calton Hill**, Thurs. 30 April (9pm–1am, gates open 6.30pm; Tix £5.00 from www.hubtickets.co.uk, £7.00 on the night). Celebrate the start of summer with this wildly unique procession of fire, drumming and revelry, in a spectacular revival of the ancient Celtic festival. Dress code: a lick of body paint for the foolhardy, and woolly winter coats for the less hardy!

Till next time!

Persephone Belle

Independent city shopping ...



an acquired taste?

New Town/Broughton Community Council Vacancies for 3 Community Councillors

The Community Council represents the views of local residents to Edinburgh City Council.

Next meeting
6 April at 7.30pm
at 67 Northumberland Street
For details please contact:
mowats@blueyonder.co.uk

Malcolm Chisholm MSP Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:
5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 558 8358
Fax: 0131 557 6781
Saturday surgeries:
9am Leith Library
10.30am Royston/Wardieburn
Community Centre
12pm Stockbridge Library

Mark Lazarowicz MP for Edinburgh North and Leith



Constituency Office:
5 Croall Place, Leith Walk, EH7 4LT
Tel: 0131 557 0577
Fax: 0131 557 5759
mark@marklazarowicz.org.uk
www.marklazarowicz.org.uk
Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm Stockbridge Library,
42 Hamilton Place
5.00pm Ainslie Park Leisure Centre
6.00pm Constituency Office

Spurtle Team: Maria Hart, George Hosey, Alan McIntosh, John Ross Maclean, Fiona Watt.

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