

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER

Free

October
2021

No 311

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DUNDAS ST PLANS SENT BACK FOR RETHINK

Consent has been refused for revised plans to demolish properties at 108–14 Dundas St and replace them with 50 flats (12 affordable) and 3 ground-floor commercial units (20/05645/FUL; bit.ly/3ArXZmh).

In its presentation to the Development Management Subcommittee, New Town & Broughton Community Council focused on respecting the street's Georgian building line, not its anomalous Victorian one. The Cockburn Association had strong reservations about the design, and favoured re-use of existing sub- and superstructures for carbon management. A residents representative said the proposal was an 'unsympathetic, overbearing monolith with frills'.

Officials had earlier advised that the development would create an appropriate setting for nearby listed properties, and preserve the character/appearance of the Conservation Area. They said revisions on earlier plans had addressed Edinburgh World Heritage's concerns and would not detract from the EWH Site's Outstanding Universal Value. The design quality was good, and neither too high nor too massive. It considered the loss of 9 trees at the front to be 'unfortunate', but compensated for by planting 6 new trees at the back.

Councillors disagreed by 8 votes to 2. In refusing full planning permission and permission to demolish a building in a Conservation Area, they argued the design was ill proportioned, too high, and would have a negative impact on the historic setting. It would not improve on the existing buildings' positive contribution to local amenity, setting, and character. Loss of trees and active uses at the front would not be outweighed by improvements at the rear.

Councillors are not opposed to redeveloping the site, but feel proposals should be improved in line with Local Development Plan policies. Legal constraints prevented them including carbon-management aspirations among the reasons for refusal.



LOVE ME TENDER

The detailed tender for performance space and a National Centre for Music at the old Royal High School was submitted to Edinburgh Council last month [bit.ly/3zKrLCP].

As well as roomier educational facilities for St Mary's Music School, the RHS Preservation Trust plans a café, gallery, visitor centre, and accessible public gardens.



RHSPT gained planning consent for similar proposals in 2016, but in the latest document reveals alternative plans for two (controversial), 2-storey, octagonal practice-hubs at the back. These comprise an 'elegantly proportioned' low-lying entrance pavilion NW of the Hamilton building. It would, says architect Richard Murphy, provide a 'clear, distinctive, and contemporary entrance' to the school, improve views of its northern facade, and create 'cleaner and more usable' outdoor spaces.

Also outlined in the tender are partnerships with the International Music & Performing Arts Charitable Trust Scotland (IMPACT), the Benedetti Foundation, Drake Music Scotland, and Traditional Arts & Culture Scotland.

The charitable Dunard Fund promises increased financial backing – £55M – for capital and future maintenance costs. Independent auditors appraising the proposals say they'd contribute £3.7M per year to Edinburgh's economy. There again: payment, pipers, tunes

Public reaction to Spurtle's online coverage shared our enthusiasm. So far, Council officials have been tight-lipped about other organisations (if any) interested in developing the site.

HIGH TIME TO HELP



The local landmark and pillar of the community which is Broughton St Mary's faces financial crisis. When refurbishment began in the summer, it became clear that unforeseen, urgent, and unavoidable repairs were necessary. A crowdfunder now aims to raise the £80,000 required. Even modest contributions will help. Details here: [bit.ly/39rgKdw].

LEITH WALK FOOTWAY PLANS AN 'ABSOLUTE DISGRACE'

Leith Central Community Council members last month branded plans to reduce footway widths along parts of Leith Walk as 'dreadful', 'outrageous', and an 'absolute disgrace'.

LCCC wrote to the Tram Team after an FOI request by Living Streets revealed that 240–250m of the footways would be below the 2.5m minimum recommended by Edinburgh Street Design Guidance.

TT replied that ESDG provides for a flexible approach around segregated cycleways, mature trees, bus stops, utilities, and other obstructions.

It said its designs, arrived at after close consultation with the community and stakeholders, will 'deliver an enhanced public realm for pedestrians and cyclists while also ensuring space for quality public transport provision.'

LCCC was infuriated by this response. Members found it astonishing that a brand new plan for one of the capital's widest streets had not resulted in a better result for pedestrians.

Chair Charlotte Encombe said their views had been ignored by officials and elected representatives, although Cllr McNeese-Mechan said she shared their concern and was sympathetic about pushing for changes.

LCCC will now pursue its case in tandem with the New Town & Broughton Community Council. In related tramwork developments, LCCC also called for better signage, repair of potholes, and removal of litter.

Briefly

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be held via Zoom on 4 Oct. David Purdie will talk about '**The Enlightenment. A Tale of Three Cities**'. Members free, visitors £2. For details, see [bit.ly/3DMCRcC].

The legal agreement struck with Edinburgh Council will see **New Town Quarter** developers contributing: 25% housing provided at **affordable intermediate rent**; £201k towards education infrastructure; £122k for **King George V Park** improvement and better facilities; toucan crossing on **Dundas St**; upgrading **Eyre Ter** road and footway surfaces; and £23.5k towards 4 new **car-club vehicles**. Not everyone thinks 'affordable' housing is affordable: [bit.ly/2WWSAoE].

Celebrity potty-mouth and tantrumista **Gordon Ramsay** is opening a restaurant at **5 St Andrew Sq**. The venture – occupying 7k sq. ft – will be the first of his **Bread Street Kitchen & Bar** chain to operate outwith London. It is, we hear, a ****ing 'popular all-day dining concept'. The site was last occupied by **The Refinery**.



Preliminary consultations on two **new housing developments** began last month. The first, at **29 Beaverbank Rd** [bit.ly/3hfPQib], aims to replace the former Duncan's chocolate factory (**birthplace of the Walnut Whip**) with flatted accommodation and ground-floor **studios/cultural-commercial space** by 2025. The second proposes new dwellings on the site of the Edinburgh Furniture Initiative warehouse on **Logie Green Rd** [bit.ly/3BBIn0N]. **Spurtle welcomes both**, but would not want the area's character to stray too much further from its current mix of **residential and light-industrial uses**.

New Town & Broughton Community Council has decided not to meet again in person until **next year**. The decision (and consequent schedule) will be revisited by Nov. Meanwhile, **public meetings** continue on Zoom. Leith Central Community Council can't resume meetings in **McDonald Rd Library's Nelson Hall** while part of the building is used as a Covid-19 testing centre.

After **Monboddo's** at the corner of **York Pl** and **Dublin St** closed a few years ago, galloping graffiti soon lent it a **derelict air**. But that wasn't the end of the tale. Painters have now tidied up the outside and **refurbishment is under way within**. We anticipate good news soon.

Decisions about implementing a controlled parking zone in **Bonnington** have been delayed till summer 2022 pending further consultation.

Powderhall Phase 2 parked for now

Phase 2 of the Powderhall bowling green development (accessible housing, nursery, outdoor amenity space) has been knocked back (see bit.ly/3kXliddw and Issue 304).

The pink facing brick as first proposed – resembling the colour of uncooked chicken livers – has been superseded by variegated facing brick to create a greater variety of tone. It will now resemble the colour of something more akin to Spam. That wasn't the problem.

The position of the building has been moved about 1m to avoid tree roots at the west end of the site. That wasn't the problem either.

In fact, overall, councillors on the Development Management Subcommittee welcomed the proposal. But they worried about the lack of disabled parking, and were not prepared to wait for it to appear at an unspecified later date as part of an as yet undesigned, unconsented, and unfunded Phase 3. Instead, they demanded that architects and officials go away and devise an interim solution.



This was a principled stand by the DMS, two of whose members have personal experience of limited mobility. It is surprising that this Council-backed development got so far before such an obvious shortcoming was addressed.

Getting better at cutting clutter

Persistent lobbying by the Living Streets Edinburgh Group against pavement clutter has got results.

Under the Spaces for People scheme, between January and June this year, Edinburgh Council removed 226 bollards, 139 signs/poles, 300m of guardrail, 64m of barriers, 18 large car park signs, and 2 cycle racks. LSEG had hoped for more of the allocated budget to be spent, and for more to be done about bins and vegetation.

In a concluding report last month [bit.ly/3kTMJsU], LSEG made 16 recommendations, including:

- Improvements to CEC's management of decluttering and not creating clutter in the first place.
- Stricter rules on location of utility cabinets.
- Better maintenance of phone boxes and removal of unneeded ones.
- Removal of unused Royal Mail holding boxes.
- Reduced roadworks signage on footways.
- Removal of bollards and better enforcement of footway parking ban.
- Removal of as many guardrails as possible.
- Siting of cycle parking on roads not footways.
- Enforcement of ban on placing goods for sale on footways.
- Review of permits for tables and chairs on footways.
- Avoidance of mounting signs on individual poles; review of signage policy.
- Attention to new clutter risks, like e-scooters and e-vehicle charging points.

Beating the drum for new venue

At a presentation for the New Town & Broughton Community Council last month, designers behind the new Dunard Centre proposed for St Andrew Square (Issue 310) provided fresh insights in answer to questions.

• 'Crafted concrete' (comprising toned aggregates) would bring warmth and animation to the building, and blend with surroundings.

• High-quality Scottish whinstone setts around the site would be complemented by as much greenery as possible.

• The auditorium's exterior would resemble the drum of Robert Adam's rotunda at General Register House, not a giant hosepipe connector as we reported in Sept.

• Heavy rain events have been risk-modelled to ensure safe discharge of surface water, in part through new drainage below Elder St. Underground attenuation tanks are proposed to slow down the flow, and a 'blue roof' is being discussed [bit.ly/39JcYg5].

• The venue would have accessible drop-off points but no parking. A lot of accessible parking is available under the nearby St Jimmy. NTBCC liked the original proposal, and favours the latest one, too.



LEZ said the better

New Town & Broughton Community Council's response to the Council consultation on its Low Emission Zone plans [Issue 308; bit.ly/3EkBQsr] is damning. While supportive in principle, members say proposals:

- are unambitious, and should include a much larger area including London Rd, Regent Rd, Calton Hill, Queen St, Broughton, and the New Town
- facilitate diversion around the LEZ with unwelcome consequences for neighbouring residents
- concentrate too much on NOx and too little on CO₂ and particulates
- offer insufficient encouragement for e-vehicles
- lack resources for effective enforcement.

'This is just tokenism,' remarked one member. 'It ticks too few boxes, and sets us up for another Council failure.' Said another discontent, 'There's a lack of joined-up thinking here.' As ringing endorsements go, it clanged.

Resting in peace

'What is this life if, full of care, we have no time to [sit] and stare?' Edinburgh is particularly enriched by benches, original in design and with fascinating inscriptions, many in the fine Scots tongue.

Last year, Drummond Place Garden welcomed just such an addition to its pastoral delights. It is dedicated to the memory of David (Torquil) Watt, computer supremo and respected member of the Drummond Garden Committee, who left us on 14 May 2019, aged 56.

Like its neighbours, the newcomer 'moves around', though its main location is in the natural amphitheatre of trees toward the West, where the celebrated annual garden party is held.

A second bench in his memory was recently commissioned by David's long-term companion Maidie Cahill for the interior of her home nearby. It is the work of Steve Patterson, a member of the prestigious Scottish Furniture Makers Association, who is based near David's native Cullen.

This latest arrival was revealed to friends and neighbours last month, and bears the Doric inscription 'A guid douche min' (A good kind man); It is a fitting memorial to a benevolent and well-remembered local figure.—JRM



Briefly

When Nuveen Real Estate first began promoting the idea of a new **St Jimmy**, central to its purported vision was gleaming new public space for **outdoor rest and performance**. Now, though, before Cathedral Sq (at the corner of **St James Pl** and **Little King St**) is even finished, Nuveen has applied to use it for outdoor restaurant/bar/pub seating (21/04643/FUL). The proposed extent of this is unclear. You have until **8 Oct** to comment here [bit.ly/3nXdbVd].

The law has changed. By Feb 2022 **every Scottish home** must have: 1 smoke alarm in the **room you occupy most**; 1 smoke alarm in every **circulation space** on each storey; 1 heat alarm in the **kitchen**. They must be ceiling-mounted and **interlinked by radio frequency**. Any room with a carbon-fuelled appliance must have a **carbon-monoxide detector**. See: [bit.ly/3kYI6x9].

Locals report a chronic problem on **York Lane**, where a vacant plot opposite the **Premier Inn** attracts rough sleepers, drug takers, drinkers, fly tippers, and phantom defaecators. **Police have been helpful**. The Council, owners and their estate agent Lindsay's, not so [bit.ly/2W1bYR0].

Some readers will have fond memories of the public conveniences at **3 Royal Ter** (21/03632/FUL). After a stint as offices, they are to be repurposed again as a **bar, café, deli, and restaurant**. Plans for an extension include flashing/upstand and stained timber finish.



Sharing music and friendship

In the first initiative of its kind in Scotland, a new Music Hub began last month in Stockbridge Church. It aims to encourage interaction and friendship through creating, discussing, and listening to music.

Clea Friend is a freelance cellist who plays with the Artisan Ensemble, and Scottish Chamber and BBC Symphony Orchestras. As a professional community musician, she has now been recruited to work with schools, care homes, and individuals in the area, and will run classes for children on the autistic spectrum, adults with additional needs, and a 'cello choir'.

She says, 'The Hub facilitates integration, communication, and post-pandemic socialisation through music to promote health and wellbeing.' Details and updates can be found at [musichub.uk]. Whilst the project is based in Saxe Coburg Pl, and builds on the church's long tradition of music in that building, it is not itself a religious organisation.

Music Hub has been made possible by an initial 3 years' funding from Amati Global Investors, based in Coates Cres.

Disillusion and resistance

Campaigners opposed to bin-hubs in the Edinburgh World Heritage Site (Issue 310) have been refining their arguments and discussing tactics.

Key is what they regard as an affront to natural justice and statutory process – the Council's lack of consultation before, in April, deciding to proceed.

They say a new, citywide, one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate. They will seek allies across Edinburgh, including those in areas outwith the EWHS which may lack organised and well-resourced residents associations.

They say all forms of waste uplift across the city are poorly explained at present, these new arrangements in particular.

Disaster and disgrace

The Council's decision to push ahead in April was, they say, driven by politici

ans not officials. However, unless the Transport & Environment Convener agrees that there has been a material change of circumstances, the committee's decision cannot be reversed for six months.

Holyrood's introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme [bit.ly/3kapmvw] may offer such a change.

Money, money, money

Meanwhile, locals intent on retaining gull-proof sacks have launched a GoFundMe page to help finance potential legal action [bit.ly/3BHd3wB]. As Spurtle went to press, 49 donors had raised £5,205 of the £10k goal.



Image: John Haslam, Wikimedia



'Battle rope exercise' entails shaking two ends of a rope. It's a fashionable way to burn fat and build muscle. However, in **Inverleith Park**, when the rope is looped round a tree trunk, it causes **damage to the bark**. Officials say registered fitness groups in parks are told **not to attach anything** to trees and apparatus. They are contacting all such parties to refresh their memories.

Broughton Primary School celebrates its 125th anniversary this year. To mark the occasion, **headteacher Maria Gowans** seeks old class photos for display, and old classmates, friends, and families for memories. To help, contact [admin@broughton-pr.edin.sch.uk].

Grow Urban has opened its second Edinburgh flower shop at **8b St Vincent St**. It offers: gifts and prints, houseplants, pots and pins, **tools, totes, terrariums**, seeds, feeds, succulents, cacti, composts, care tips, coffee and cake. All **nicely curated** and a bit jingly.

Broughton tram route extension not cost-effective

A committee motion by Bailie White deals with a proposed tramway to connect Broughton Street to Leith Walk by way of East London Street and Annandale Street.

This proposal would mean the construction of a double line of tramway along East London Street and Annandale Street at a probable cost of £8500.

The effect of constructing this line would be to enable a service of cars to run from the Broughton Street district to Leith Walk, but in actual distance, it would only save 300 yards as against running on the existing track via Picardy Place.

It would, therefore, not be economical according to Cllr Pilcher. [Stop spluttering. This excerpt has been abridged from the Edinburgh Evening News, 13 June 1923. £8.5k in those days was equivalent to about £350k today.—AM]

Moreover ...



Can any reader explain this orra injunction, chalked on a **Bellevue Rd** pavement late in Sept? Was it intended for dogs? Or foraging foodies perhaps? **Suggestions, please.**

Royal London Mutual Assurance, a company not universally renowned for advancing the **best interests of Edinburgh residents**, proposes converting its office block on **1 Thistle St/2 Queen St** into a 115-bedroom hotel (21/04731/FUL). **Oh joy!** 14 parking spaces could be converted for use as meeting rooms and a gym in the basement. At least they're not knocking down and starting from scratch.

Prestige Awards [bit.ly/2XlgJoO] have announced Napier Bathrooms of Canonmills as **Bathroom Showroom of the Year Scotland**. We are delighted to plug this excellent and resilient local business after a difficult year.

Tramworks on **Elm Row** are scheduled to finish this winter; those between **London Rd and York Pl** in autumn 2022. For a useful visual guide to work along the **whole route**, see [bit.ly/3nVhv7f].

Aviva Life & Pensions UK Ltd seeks planning consent to replace its current building at the back of **28 St Andrew Sq** with a new one (21/04282/FUL; 21/04284/LBC). It also wants to build on the roof. **Proposed changes** entail a substantial glazed addition over the current car park towards **N St Andrew St Lane**. This neo-Jacobean **Category A-listed structure** on the square's NE corner was built for the **Scottish Equitable Life Assurance Company** in 1897-8. Extensive interior alterations were made in 1982 and the early 2000s.

The Council's **Street Naming Officer** has been consulting local elected representatives about what to call the mews lane between **East Claremont St** and **Claremont Bank**, where a home is being built for the first time. He proposes **East Claremont St Lane**, but that would be confusing because, to the southeast, on the other side of the road, lies a different service lane between East Claremont St and **Bellevue Pl**. It is not beyond the compass of this paper to offer unsolicited suggestions to officialdom. Therefore, considering the need for **clarity and ease of use**, we propose a formal designation for the new address as follows: **North West East Claremont St Lane South**.

Spurtle Team: E. Dickie, J. Dickie, J. Hart, M. Hart, D. Hill, A. McIntosh, J. R. Maclean, S. Michael, M. Orr, C. Roussot, E. Roussot, T. Smith, D. Sterratt, E. Taylor-Smith, D. Young.

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Printed by Minuteman Press, 63 Elm Row.

RODNEY STREET BARBERS

Julie 07989 441557, 42 Rodney Street
Tues–Fri, 11am–5pm; Sat, 10am–2pm



LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



Leith
Central
Community
Council

A forum for local people who want to engage with and work for their local community.

Participate in local democracy.

Make representations to City of Edinburgh Council, other public bodies and private agencies on everything that matters locally.

Next meeting: Monday, 18 October
on Microsoft Teams. For details contact
<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>

What's popping up at Leith Walk policebox?



Wed 6 Oct: How are you doing? Chats over a cuppa & cake.

Fri 8 Oct: Chicken Skoop – buttermilk chicken in a waffle cone.

Sat 9 & Sun 10 Oct: Photography exhibition by monochromeaud.

Sat 23 Oct: Lish Dish pies.

Sat 30 Oct: Nymeria Bloom seasonal flowers & vintage.

Fri 5 Nov: Typewronger 4th birthday party – all welcome.

@leithwalkpolicebox



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COFFEE MORNING
Saturday, 16 October
10am – 12 noon

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Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Northern and Leith
Constituency



Covid-19 Update

Because of Covid-19, and in accordance with the law and advice, my office is closed to the public until further notice. My team and I are working remotely and continue to assist constituents as normal.

Telephone/Video Call Advice Surgeries:

I have also had to cancel my weekly face-to-face advice surgeries. Instead I am holding regular telephone/video surgeries each week. Please leave a voicemail or email my office to book a 15 minute surgery appointment and someone in my team will get in touch to confirm a time.

(May 2021)

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NEW TOWN & BROUGHTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Representing locals' views
to City of Edinburgh Council.

Tell us what you think
and make a difference.

Next meeting:
Monday 11 October.
on Zoom.
For details contact
www.ntbcc.org.uk