

Spurttle



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**November
2018**

No 279

Tel: 07455 770474

spurttle@hotmail.co.uk

BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

RBS DROPS PLANNING AND GOES STRAIGHT TO MARKET

The Royal Bank of Scotland has begun marketing its 5.89-acre site between Eyre Place and Royal Crescent, Dundas Street and King George V Park.

In Issue 277, we reported how RBS unexpectedly withdrew its application for Planning Permission in Principle (Ref. 16/05454/PPP). We expected it to redraft that application and try again.

Instead, RBS has employed real-estate experts Cushman & Wakefield to wax lyrical about the site's development potential to prospective buyers.

The resulting New Town North website and brochure [bit.ly/2J6IypT] make much of the (unconsented) 'concept master plan's' suggested mixed uses across over 409,200 sq.ft. But this 'is only one approach'. Alternative approaches 'could generate an enhanced scale of development, subject to planning'.

As for why the latest PPP application failed, the reason given is, 'Following extensive discussion, it proved impractical for the site owner to provide the level of design detail for blocks C, D, E and F ultimately required by the Planning Authority to recommend approval of the concept scheme [...], and the application was subsequently withdrawn.' All ink and no octopus.

However, it's claimed elsewhere on the website that RBS has a letter from the Planning Authority confirming that 'most parameters of the proposed scheme were agreed'.

This will come as news to the 664 locals who objected to the plans on grounds including unacceptable residential density (400 units), incongruous design, building heights, overshadowing, and increased traffic levels. They have yet to hear officials accept or refute their assertions in public.

Developers are rarely sentimental, as Cushman & Wakefield well know. Among other reasons to be cheerful, they note Edinburgh's 'chronic lack' of housing, and the effect of strong demand and limited supply on sales values. Prices, they salivate, are reaching £600+ per sq. ft, with sales values possibly rising by 4.1% p.a. until 2023.

Great news for investors. Not so great for first-time buyers.

NEW TRAM PLANS SPARK COMMENT

The Council's extended 'Trams to Newhaven' consultation runs until 11 November, gauging public reactions to modifications made in response to an earlier consultation in March. A separate consultation on £2.4m worth of measures mitigating tramworks' potential impact on Leith Walk businesses has also taken place.

For Leith Walk, it's now proposed that one general traffic lane and one segregated cycle lane will run in each direction. A redesigned central reservation will let pedestrians cross safely in more places.

A tramstop will be moved to avoid blocking Balfour Street. The principle of no right-turns out of side streets onto Leith Walk won't change, but traffic lights will be added at Albert, Balfour, and Manderston Streets.

On Elm Row, a revised public realm is planned, with cycle lanes on both sides of the road rather than down the middle.

Road/utility works will apparently be carried out at night under a 'two permit system'. We find no detail on when residents are expected to sleep.

Mitigation measures for businesses include 'service hubs', from which deliveries will be coordinated. Other initiatives seem contradictory. Some try to minimise pressure on transport infrastructure by discouraging customer visits (help with website design and social media, to move business off Leith Walk and onto the Internet). Others encourage people (who otherwise might have no reason to come at all) to throng round various new artists' spaces, markets, festivals, and performances.

Reaction has been mixed. Spokes welcomed the concession on segregated cycling, but regretted no dedicated through-route during construction. Most people we've heard from welcome a more pedestrian-friendly central refuge. Many firms say there still aren't enough parking/delivery points, and remain worried about disruption.

Some are concerned that public-realm improvements won't be paid for from within the main trams budget, and so are vulnerable to trimming. Some note apparent Council evasiveness on the project's net environmental benefits. Nearly everyone's anxious about potential engineering problems prolonging the 2+ years' disturbance. None we've met has a good word to say about CEC response rates to emails.

The Final Business Case has been delayed whilst officials 'vigorously test the cost and time estimates with the market'. The vote on whether to proceed will come in March 2019.

BACKWARD GLANCE WITH A FORWARD STARE



'Looking up at buildings in all great cities is one of life's absorbing pleasures,' says John Ross Maclean. 'Edinburgh is no exception. Above us are wonders and curiosities to behold.' ... Now turn to page 3 for the first in a new series.

BIKE SHEDS GALORE

The Transport & Environment Committee last month agreed to increase and accelerate citywide roll-out of secure, on-street bike storage.

Over the next two years, 180 additional units will be installed, with an option to increase that number later. Locations have yet to be finalised, but units are expected to be in place by late 2019.

A user fee of between £5 and £7 per month is envisaged, with a contractor being appointed to manage and maintain shelters for an initial 5-6 year period. Half the estimated cost (£600k) will be funded by Sustrans.

The relevant report to T&E says, 'A small number of parking spaces are expected to be lost as part of this project but there is predicted to be no net impact on overall revenue from residents' or public parking.'

Since successful trials at 5 locations in the Southside and West End began in 2014, there have been requests for similar storage from 292 people in 158+ streets, including Barony, Broughton, Dublin, Dundas, E. Claremont, E. London, and Scotland Streets and Bellevue Road.

Sustrans Scotland's Dave Keen said, 'By providing facilities for secure storage, we hope the move will enable more people to own a bike and make it even easier for Edinburgh residents to choose to travel round the city in an active and sustainable way.'

It will also, of course, free up more space in tenements for people to block the stairwells with pot plants, step ladders, and ludicrously large perambulators.



Briefly



The **Thistle Property Group** has brought out a new and improved design for the old **Canon Mill**. Despite certain reservations, we welcome it. **Cornerstone Property Development** has a new proposal to create a hostel at **Blenheim Place**. We deplore it. See our website 6/7 Oct.

A warm welcome to new arrival **Signature of Thai** at 51A London St, whose range of **relaxing and therapeutic massages** offers relief for Broughton's variously stressed-out and knotted throgs [bit.ly/2PIjKqy].

At Leith Central Community Council's discussion about **revised tram proposals** in Oct, it emerged that the latest plans do not acknowledge the presence of the **Croall PI police box**. As one person drily observed, 'It's not their strong point, putting things on maps.'

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will take place in Drummond CHS on 5 Nov at 7pm. **Gail Wylie** will talk on 'The Edinburgh of Miss Jean Brodie'. **Tea & coffee provided**. Bring your own crême.

Locals have taken to social media complaining about **noisy commercial waste collections** at unreasonable hours. Some have been woken as early as 6.45am by bottle-bins being emptied, others have been woken as late as 1.15am by dry waste being slung heartily into van cages. In **Inverleith ward**, Cllr Osler has at last managed to coax one firm into a dialogue, whilst Cllr Barrie is investigating whether such anti-social activity can be classified (and clamped down upon) as noise nuisance.

With a Section 75 agreement on a £29k contribution to the tram project now reached between the Council, **Zonal Retail**, and **Blagden Property (One) Ltd**, planning consent has been granted for 11 residential apartments at **14-16 Union St** (Ref. 17/03993/FUL). An **archaeological survey** of the site, and final agreement on materials, will precede work starting. Thus ends (perhaps) a saga which began in Aug 2012 [bit.ly/2JcRDNW].

Following gripes from the public, rubber kerbs separating **Gayfield Sq from E. London St** (originally installed as a traffic management measure during the first round of tramworks) have been adjusted to **let bikes through** whilst still discouraging motor vehicles.



The **general consensus** seems to be that this, though inelegant, would be effective but for parked cars.

Powderhall Place Brief in sight

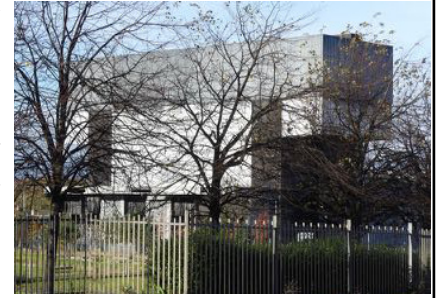
Seeking a holistic understanding of the Powderhall development site, Collective Architecture and Council representatives held another drop-in session, and gave a separate presentation to Leith Central Community Council (LCCC), in Broughton PS and McDonald Road Library last month.

Findings will appear in a comprehensive Place Brief going to committee on 12 Dec.

From October's meetings, it emerged that organisers are aware of local wishes to maximise green space in the area, particularly today's bowling greens. There's also local support for affordable and social housing among the 300 or more new residential units, with CEC retaining as much ownership as possible. As part of the overall plan, officials are considering nursery-care facilities in addition to those currently offered at Broughton Primary School.

Most people welcome this level of well-meant discussion, but pessimists fear pressure to maximise housing units (and profits) may result in over-development and an increased proportion of private sales.

LCCC will respond in the context of the overall neighbourhood (including Redbraes and the railway line), and coordinate with New Town & Broughton Community Council. See our website [bit.ly/20Lep5o].



Concern over Crescent

Residents and Council officials are concerned about a roof-top parapet on Claremont Crescent. The low wall above the Claremont Hotel is noticeably out of shape, and there are fears it will collapse.

To a layperson's eye, it looks like any such failure would result in masonry falling inwards towards the roof. But worries remain that masonry could fall outwards onto the pavement below, where visiting school parties often gather.

Several official examinations have been made, and a structural engineer has suggested it's stable in the short term. But neighbours aren't convinced, and want the owners to complete repairs as a matter of urgency.

Meanwhile, some locals are 'extremely disappointed' the Council will not take action on the hotel's 'eyesore' railings which, as we reported in Issue 267, were repainted a brilliant glossy white in 2017.

Some 40 Crescent residents (about half the street) petitioned the Planning Department, saying the A-listed building's railings should be a more conventional black. Officials, however, concluded that since they had already been white several years before the latest repainting, it would be unreasonable to issue any such order.

It is an understatement to say neighbours of the hotel are dissatisfied with the overall standard of outdoor decorating there, and with the occasionally unruly high spirits of guests in the street.

Gallery reopens on Calton Hill

Collective, the gallery and centre for contemporary art, will open its new Calton Hill home on 24 Nov.

Refurbished historic Observatory spaces and purpose-built new facilities will host work by internationally renowned artists, emerging talents, and food with a view. It's a major step-up from the portakabin and freezing snack-shack we'd come to know and love.

All this is the result of a 5-year partnership between Collective and the Council, with the £4.5M cost coming from CEC, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Creative Scotland, Edinburgh World Heritage and numerous charitable trusts, foundations and private donors.



Dear Subscribers ... it's that time again

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Please make out cheques to 'Spurtle' and deliver to the Narcissus address on p.4. For electronic transfers, email us for details. Thank you.—*The Spurtle Team*.



Edinburgh on high: Clió

Look up at the National Portrait Gallery in Queen Street, and there is the beneficent figure of Clió, Greek muse/goddess of history, looking over the rooftops of the New Town, across to the Kingdom of Fife, and on to the alluring North.

This is the 2013 creation of Alexander Stoddart, the Queen's Sculptor in Ordinary in Scotland, and replaced an earlier statue which had weathered beyond repair. It was sculpted in Stoddart's studio in Paisley, and cast in aluminium at a foundry on the Black Isle, Ross-shire. The £60k cost was met by private bequest.

Stoddart has stated that 'architectural sculpture is the highest application of the sculptor's art', and his representation of Clió embodies his devotion to the neoclassical tradition.

How appropriate that Clió, one of the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, goddess of memory, should stand serenely atop the Portrait Gallery, holding a scroll and pen, musing upon history.

As Queen's Sculptor, Stoddart succeeded resounding names such as James Pittendreich MacGillivray and Sir Eduardo Paolozzi. His more familiar works are the bronze sculptures of David Hume and Adam Smith on the High Street. and the mighty James Clerk Maxwell at the eastern end of George Street.—JRM



Briefly



Roadworks to upgrade the junction of **Rodney St, Eyre Pl, Canonmills and Broughton Rd** have now been completed, late, after a week's worth of 7pm–4.15am hell. Nearby residents were half-demented by the smell, vibration, noise, and **consequent sleeplessness**; all endured so that daytime car users would not have to continue sitting in queues for a little longer. Contracted workers did not endear themselves to locals with their reactions to **red-eyed pleas and complaints**. The sooner Edinburgh *transforms* its attitudes to city-centre traffic the better. The deadline for **public responses to the Council's online consultation** here [bit.ly/2NHPH5q] is 12 Nov.

Felling of over 40 trees in **E Princes St Gdns** caused outrage last month as startled and suspicious citizens wondered whether they were removed to facilitate the **Christmas Market**. In fact, consent for this was granted in June, and they've mostly been taken down as part of moves to **upgrade wheelchair access** to the soon-to-expand Scottish National Gallery. (Not everyone's convinced the gradient will be appropriate.) **New trees** will eventually be planted, although there are doubts about CEC's competence in this area. Meanwhile, the surviving trees' 'root protection areas' are supposedly 'sacrosanct', meaning the festive **Big Wheel and ice rink** should not return to their customary spots. We'll believe it when we don't see them.

Back in June, retrospective planning permission was refused for Notemachine's ill-towdent cashpoint at Category B-listed **20 Broughton St** beside the bus stop [bit.ly/2yvCAut]. In July, Notemachine revised the design, applying to remove the surround and re-site the ATM through glass. Last month, this too was **refused and enforced** on the grounds that it was not an improvement and formed a '**visually incongruous development**' detracting from the Conservation Area streetscape. Quite right. Good riddance. Don't come again.

A procession of **temporary lights** now adorns the path leading from **Warriston Bridge to Powderhall Bridge** beside the Water of Leith. They are there to aid pedestrians diverted by the closure of **St Mark's Bridge**. Users ascending at night report something akin to a **near-death experience** or visiting the Botanics at Christmas.

A warm welcome to new local Café '**OOO ... Your Coffee Nook**' at 19 Haddington Pl, and a belated howdy to the **Bushwick** bar and diner on E. London St.

A little of what you fancy



The fast-rising St James Quarter will not be Broughton's first retail palace to promise an escape from worrying times through buying more stuff. The following advertisement appeared in the *Edinburgh Evening Post and Scottish Standard* in July 1849.

**ANDERSON'S
BAZAAR AND FANCY REPOSITORY,
GREENSIDE STREET,
Near the Black Bull Hotel,
is now Open to the Public, and is daily establishing
for itself a fame beyond precedent, as
A MART,
CONTAINING AN ENDLESS ASSORTMENT OF
THE MERCHANDISE OF THE WORLD.**

Ladies should avail themselves of the present favourable weather to inspect the **GEMS of ART! ARTICLES OF VERTU!!** and most Recherche Selection, carefully chosen by MR ANDERSON, from the Stores of the First Dealers at Home and Abroad.

In returning his grateful thanks for the confidence the Public still continue to place on his taste and judgment, to supply them with the Richest and most Rare of Fancy Goods, at an almost *nominal rate of profit*, Mr A. begs to add that he has availed himself of the late convulsion, which has lately shook the greater part of Europe, and completely paralysed Merchants on the Continent, to judiciously invest his capital in the purchase of his present **VALUABLE and EXTENSIVE STOCK**, and he is now enabled to offer Goods to the Public that must, when known, *defy Competition!* Look at this!!

WORK BOXES, 2s. each.
ROSEWOOD TEA CADDIES, 2s. each.
AMERICAN CLOCKS, 12s. each.
Splendid GLASS DECANTERS, 10s. per Set.
Beautiful PAPIER MACHIE TRAYS, 16s. do.
BOHEMIAN GLASS VASES, 2s. per Pair & c.

The Bazaar offers the greatest attraction to the visitors to Edinburgh, and the Proprietor will feel most happy to those Ladies and Gentlemen who, during their morning promenade, will favour him with an inspection of his amalgamation of the various Luxurious Trifles and Articles for Domestic Use, which can be viewed *without the Spectator being expected to become a purchaser.*

Moreover ...



Congratulations to Lilly Rose Fraser who, along with younger sister Ella-Mae, mum and grandma, raised **£138** for the **Stafford Centre** by selling home-baked treats to peckish locals on **Broughton St.**

16 people objected to KAAS Properties' plan to knock down 5m of a listed wall behind **11a Abercromby Pl**, then rebuild and reposition it to create new vehicular access to the unadopted lane adjacent (Ref. 18/02762/FUL). The **Development Management Subcommittee** refused consent. They agreed nearby residents' amenity would be lost, said the proposal did not comply with various policies and guidelines, and would adversely affect the **character/appearance** of the listed building and Conservation Area.

Farewell to the Dunedin Bar on **Broughton Rd**, which, like gin from a bottle, has disappeared soon after opening.

In late Oct, the **last spoken evidence** and cross-examinations by lawyers were taking place in the **old Royal High School** inquiry. Final submissions by both sides will be given in Nov. **Reporters** will take at least 6 months to write a formal account and submit a recommended decision to **Scottish Ministers**. Ministers will then turn it over to the Scottish Govt's **Planning Unit** before coming to a **Cabinet** decision. We'll start picking through the giblets online this month.



The **new hireable bikes** have proved popular since their introduction in Sept. (Issue 278). So far, the greatest usage has been in the north of the city, with **Canonmills and Brunswick Pl** particularly popular as pick-up and drop-off spots. We hear the **downhill route along Leith Walk** late on Fri and Sat nights is an entertaining spectacle from a safe distance. A thousand '**Just Eat Cycles**' will be available come Dec, but, as this *Spurtle* reader's photo makes clear, they are no match for an Edinburgh East Wind.

Bellevue Chapel on **Rodney St** will hold an open day on 3 Nov, 3–5pm, and a **Starlight Christmas Market** on 7 Dec, 5–8pm. Meanwhile, to vote on what you want to sing at their forthcoming carol services, email [carols@bellevuechapel.org].

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

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Printed by Minuteman Press, 63 Elm Row.



Come and celebrate
Typewronger Books' 1st birthday
11am–6pm on Mon 5 Nov
at the Leith Walk policebox, Croall Place.
books, typewriters, cakes, fizz & bonhomie.



LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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



Leith Central Community Council

Participate in local democracy.

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

Next meetings: 7pm, 19 Nov and 17 Dec
Nelson Hall, McDonald Rd Library

leithcentralcc.co.uk/meeting-dates



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Member of the Scottish Parliament
for Edinburgh Northern
and Leith Constituency



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(no appointment necessary)

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5-6pm at
Leith Library
28-30 Ferry Road
Edinburgh
EH6 4AE

Every Friday:
4-5pm at
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre
Pilton Drive North
Edinburgh
EH5 1NF

Contact Ben

Office Address: 34 Constitution Street, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 6RS

E-mail: ben.macpherson.msp@parliament.scot

Telephone: 0131 600 0134 or 0131 348 5786

Website: www.benmacpherson.scot

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