

Spurtle



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**February
2022**

No 314

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

MORE STUDENT HOUSING

Snappily named London-based developer CASL Eyre Place (Edinburgh) Property Owner Ltd is proposing purpose-built student accommodation on the former Jewson's site at 72-4 Eyre Pl (21/06729/PAN).

An online consultation is scheduled for 15 Jan-9 Mar (URL to be confirmed), and a 'virtual feedback event' for 23 Feb (3pm-7pm).

Not everyone is thrilled at the prospect. On Twitter, for example, @berry9green remarked, 'Aarrmmrrggggghh - WHAT?!?! Edinburgh needs affordable housing for families, workers, pensioners - NOT more temporary accommodation that can be let out to tourists at peak (non-term) times!'

The more specific concerns of Eyre Place Lane Owners Association include:

- Likely additional demands on parking and access, and increased traffic along their busy cul-de-sac.
- Possible noise, disruption, litter, anti-social behaviour, and smoking on the street.
- High-density development resulting in more pressure on local infrastructure, including the 'already overused' King George V Park.
- Overprovision of student housing - existing sites within 1 mile are on Logie Green Rd, Leith Walk, and McDonald Rd, with more proposed for Halmyre St.

Eyre Pl Lane falls within Ward 5, so Cllrs Barrie, Mitchell, Osler, and Whyte will no doubt be taking a keen interest. New Town and Broughton Community Council will discuss the issue this month



NEW FACE ON BROUGHTON RD



There's a new cheerful face behind the window at the Powderhall police box on Broughton Rd. You may already have met Zoe, who'll be operating what is now The Bonnie Nook - a temporary pop-up (until June) while Yossi is recuperating from his broken leg. Zoe will be selling her own choice of coffees, cakes, etc. Mon-Sat. For more details including opening hours, check out The Bonnie Nook on Facebook [bit.ly/3qRs7Ur]-TS

GRIDLOCK AND GRINDING TEETH

Tramworks across the Broughton St/Picardy Place junction began on 17 January and are scheduled to continue until around 9 May.

Access from Broughton St into Picardy Place remains open, but not the other way round.

Cars are diverted via London Rd, Leith Walk, Annandale St, E London St, and Broughton St; or via Leith St, Princes St, St Andrew Sq, York Pl, and Broughton St.

HGVs are diverted via Leith St, Princes St, St Andrew Sq, and York Pl.

Sixteen Lothian Buses services are affected. See [bit.ly/33qVKVd] for details. Buses and HGVs are meant to avoid E London St, but time will tell.

Casual observation by the *Spurtle* suggests most motorists are not treating the inconvenience as an opportunity to practise mindfulness and positive thinking.



EVERY TOKEN HELPS



Drummond CHS stands to gain from a Tesco Community Grant scheme over the next few weeks.

From now until the end of March, shoppers at the Broughton Rd, Picardy Pl, and Leith Walk branches can use post-purchase tokens to support the school's bid for charitable funding.

Money raised will go towards buying equipment for young people on Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions. The aim is to widen access and affordability.

Nicola Clark-Tonberg, secretary of Drummond's Parent Council, says, 'This year more pupils are taking part in the Award than ever, and it would be amazing to be able to securely embed DoE here so that any student can take part, without incurring costs of hiring equipment.'

'The application was developed with input from staff, pupils, and the Parent Council, so was a real team effort.'

SPEY STREET ABDUCTION

A local man was abducted and threatened as he walked home along Spey Street last month.

The incident happened on 6 January at around 10.45pm. The victim was forced into a stolen blue Volkswagen Tiguan, and driven back to his place of work at the Scotmid supermarket on Leven St.

Once there, he was forced to open the premises, and a four-figure sum was stolen.

The suspects drove away at around 11.25pm, abandoning and setting light to the vehicle (registration number SFO 2PU) in Lochend Park.

Detective Inspector Kevin Tait said, 'We believe that this was a targeted attack and that those responsible had been following the victim.'

'While this was a very frightening experience for him, thankfully he was uninjured, and we are now pursuing a number of lines of inquiry to trace the suspects.'

Anyone with information should contact Edinburgh CID on 101, quoting incident no. 3131 of 6.1.22.

Briefly

A belated Happy New Year to all our readers. And a reminder ... *Spurtle* contains **many times** as much information as appears on the printed page. Simply copy and paste the relevant short URL **between the square brackets** (not the brackets themselves) into your search box and prepare to be transported [bit.ly/3EVnLAF].

Vuse Inspiration will open a shop at **14 Leith St** soon, selling all manner of vaping requisites and sickly sweet billowing e-pongs.

Edinburgh Street Food Ltd's application to create an external bar, canopy, and seating between **Leith St** and **Greenside Row** is expected to be determined by 11 Feb. We raised doubts about potential disturbance for **Calton Hill** residents here: [bit.ly/3eY6BYA].

The scaffolding has gone from the tower at **Broughton St Mary's** now that repairs are finished. Refurbishment of the **vestibules and sanctuary** is near completion, with services resuming in the latter last month. Among other **interior improvements** is a brand-new audio-visual system, which promises to amplify future hustings candidates' **sotto voce half-truths** with perfect clarity. Meanwhile the JustGiving page which was opened to raise money towards an **unforeseen overrun in repair costs** remains open here [bit.ly/3qciYab]. Last time we looked, **52 supporters** had donated £6.4k (8%) of the £80k target.

Deterioration of a retaining wall has again forced closure of the Water of Leith walkway between **Newhaven Rd** and **Anderson Pl**. For how long is anybody's guess. An alternative route is via **W Bowling Green St** and **Graham St**. It's not as scenic, but there's less chance of being crushed to death.

A new pedestrian crossing at the junction of **London St** and **Drummond Pl** is expected by summer 2022, pending successful conclusion of a Redetermination Order to **change the road layout**. We anticipate it will involve extended pavements and everyone's favourite séance moment: an **uncontrolled raised table** [bit.ly/32YeVEX].

Maddeningly, Covid-19 has reduced office occupation at **10 York Pl**. The owner therefore seeks to return the Category A-listed property to residential use, creating two 5-bedroom flats in the former townhouse (21/06197/FUL). **Sane Investments Ltd** also proposes partial demolition and reconstruction of the associated windowless storage block at **32 Dublin St Lane S** to form a three-storey 3-bedroom dwelling. The original pend would be retained.

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be at 7.30pm on 7 Mar. Una Race will talk on the **History of the Dog Trust**. To participate by Zoom, email [spurves004@btinternet.com].

Leith Central Community Council has objected to proposed parking controls on **Spey St Lane** and the NW side of **Spey St**. It says double yellow lines here could kill off 10–15 small businesses in the area.

Events, dear boy, events

In December 2021, New Town & Broughton Community Council submitted a formal response to the Council's consultation on Use of Public Spaces in Edinburgh for Events and Filming. You can read it here [bit.ly/3zk3fbO].

Key points included NTBCC's support for 'well-managed events which reflect the character of our city and contribute socially, aesthetically and economically. We do not require intrusive over-scale interventions beyond the city's capacity to accommodate without detriment.'

It observed that revenue streams may not outweigh negative effects on public access, local economic and social well-being ('community wealth'), or match Edinburgh Council's other environmental and employment policies.

NTBCC called for:

- A simplified process for screening out unsuitable proposals and facilitating small local-community ones.
- Area-specific conditions addressing impact on cityscape, environment, residential amenity, and local businesses.
- During decision making and planning, need for transparent, accessible, timely engagement with those affected
- 'Officers must recognise that it is not a given that all filming should take place if it does not benefit Edinburgh communities. Increased future over-tourism is not a good measure of success.'
- Need for carbon neutrality.
- Need to define 'social value', and to enshrine rules for protecting it.

On recent evidence, there is nothing to suggest sufficient politicians have the vision or backbone to support these principles. But the looming local authority election this spring may concentrate minds if voters insist their candidates reflect residents' priorities.

Change of tune in June a boon

This summer, the old Royal High School complex will host Hidden Door 2022: a 10-day festival of live music, dance, the spoken word, and visual art.

Since its start in 2014, Hidden Door has specialised in adapting disused urban sites for creative purposes [https://hiddendoorarts.org]. For this year's audiences, exploring the old RHS's labyrinth of corridors and passageways will be an integral part of the event's appeal.

Organisers are liaising with Council officials and others concerned with developing the building to ensure indoor and outdoor spaces are safe and compliant with Covid restrictions.

'The setting of the old Royal High School is a perfect canvas for the imagination', says Kenneth Taylor, headteacher of St Mary's Music School. It will 'open doors to memories of its past and excitement about its future –especially as it will become the home for our pupils'.

The festival will run from 9–18 June, with a full programme to be announced this month, and tickets available from [bit.ly/3IhM65I].



Fresh start at Broughton St Mary's

Following her induction in early Dec, the new minister at Broughton St Mary's is Laurene Lafontaine.

A graduate of Whitworth College (BA) and Princeton Theological Seminary (MD), Lafontaine was ordained by the US Presbyterian Church in 1987, and later ministered in Denver, Colorado and Rochester, Minnesota.



After settling in Scotland in 2017, she had placements in South Leith and Mayfield Salisbury Parish Churches before moving to Aberdeen as minister of Kingswells Parish Church in 2019. She brings with her a reputation for effective community outreach, fundraising, and LGBT activism.

In the Jan edition of the *Broughton Beacon*, Lafontaine lists her interests as including: wildlife photography, hill and coastal walks, vegetarian food, fish suppers, cats and dogs (Ragdolls and Berners), woodwork, rocks and gemstones, ancient spiritual sites, and entertaining. We wish her every success in her new post.

Ross Maclean (1942–2021) – a fond farewell

John George ‘Ross’ Maclean – a longstanding Spurtle friend, team member, and contributor – died on 13 Dec, aged 79.

Born on 1 Dec 1942 in Dalnessie, Rogart, the youngest of 3 brothers, he was the son of a farm manager/shepherd – Alexander Maclean – and a former staff member at Dunrobin Castle, Alexanderina MacDonald.

He grew up at remote Dalmichie and then Dalchorck, being educated at Lairg Primary and Golspie High School. He graduated with an MA from Edinburgh Uni in 1965 and soon after embarked on postgraduate study of the French Symbolist Gustave Moreau (1826–98). An appreciation of painting and sculpture was central to him thereafter.

Maclean spent time in New York in 1971 and travelled back and forth to Sweden between 1977 and 1980, at times working in the latter as a postman and teacher of medical English at the university. He learned Swedish and enjoyed surprising people with it.

During the 1970s he also worked as a nurse in Inverness, before returning to Edinburgh and running the Broughton Bookshop as owner/manager from early spring 1977 until late autumn 1978.

His association with Drummond Pl began around this time, first renting a room and then a garden flat at No. 33B. From here he tended an award-winning allotment beside the tennis club on E Scotland St Lane. He was an instantly recognisable figure in the neighbourhood: courteous, diffident, and with a lived-in wardrobe worn with quirky sprezzatura.

Prior to his retirement in 2004, Maclean worked as a carer for the Church of Scotland, of whose employer credentials he took a dim view.

For many years he wrote articles, letters and obituaries for the *Scotsman* and *Herald* newspapers. As a man of nocturnal habits, he often featured on Radio 5 Live’s *Up All Night* programme, whose presenter Dotun Adebayo he had first encountered in Stockholm. In 2018 he contributed an entry to the *New Biographical Dictionary of Scottish Women* on his first Drummond Pl landlady, the labour movement activist and charity campaigner Elizabeth Girling.

Maclean adored cats, poetry, painting, European film, tennis, Highland lore, fine art, fine wine, New Town gossip, and the *Broughton Spurtle*. We will miss him. This brief account supplements a more impressionistic one at [bit.ly/3lgvMCP], to which readers are welcome to add recollections. Email us at [spurtle@hotmail.co.uk].



Briefly

Local firm **Playfair Jiu Jitsu** seeks to repurpose former office space at **62A–62B Newhaven Rd** to offer ‘flexible expert martial arts training, to all age groups, in an attractive, accessible, pleasant family-friendly environment’ (22/00063/FUL). It describes its service as ‘**progressive**’, with less bowing and fewer rigid hierarchical structures. An unrelated **family-friendly video** – demonstrating some of the ‘yielding art’s’ techniques for blows, throws, takedowns, kicks, leg sweeps, traps, holds, pins, disengagement, joint locks, hair pulling, chokeholds, biting, gouging, and strangulation – is **available on YouTube** here [bit.ly/3Ii8Kee].

All 3 community councils in Leith support preservation of the railway arches on **Manderston St**. ‘Not only do they contribute to Leith’s collective memory, they also help Edinburgh reconcile itself to its industrial past by revealing layers of railway, manufacturing and service traditions.’ The **joint view** emerged in response to a Council consultation late last year about extending the **Leith Conservation Area** to include Jane St, Manderston St, and the former Capitol Theatre.

In Jan, **Leith Central Community Council** welcomed the first (virtual) Police presence at one of its monthly meetings for 2 years. Members were pleased at the return of **robust and detailed statistics** on local crime. However, there were calls for these to be consistently compiled across time and the 4 **Edinburgh area commands**. Cllr Rae (Ward 12) requested all crimes of a **sexual nature** be classified as such and listed separately.

Spurtle hears moves are afoot to convert interconnected offices at Forth House and Playfair House on **Forth St and Broughton St Lane** into an aparthotel. Both were on the market as a combined lot for offers over £4.5M, and we understand **Supercity Aparthotels** are the new owners. Radio Forth retains a lease on Forth House until 20 June.

Some 25 neighbours in **Greenside End, Marshall’s Ct, and Blenheim Pl** have responded to a new application by London-based Kerwick Ltd to develop 19 new flats at 5–6 Marshall’s Ct (21/06219/FUL). The neighbours (2 of them commercial) welcomed reductions in **height, length, and massing** compared to a previous application refused in Feb 2021 [bit.ly/3zkOeXb]. But they sought reassurances on issues including:

- Fair Council processing of plans for the former car park owned by the Council.
- Some attractive treatment (not bare bricks) of an in-your-face gable end.
- More realistic recognition (and solutions to) current/future flood/drainage problems.
- Need for robust traffic modelling, given likely increased busyness of narrow cul-de-sac.
- Damages to neighbouring properties sustained during construction to be repaired at developer’s expense.

A determination by the Development Management Subcommittee was expected by 21 Jan.

Mapping Edinburgh’s slave-owning past

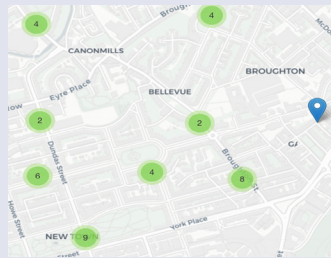
The Council’s consultation on its Edinburgh Slavery and Colonialism Legacy review closed on 19 Jan. It sought views on how best the city could address issues of historic racial injustice to stem modern-day discrimination.

The lengthy consultation document was a welcome and time-consuming challenge, with few simple or sufficient solutions.

Readers of this paper have been aware of Broughton’s involvement in (particularly Jamaican) slavery [bit.ly/32RQ329] since we covered it in 2013. But a new resource has emerged since we first accessed University College London’s online records.

The same institution has now produced an interactive map showing the names and addresses of those who benefited from the slavery-abolition compensation scheme of 1841.

To our surprise, it identifies over 40 individuals in Spurtleshire alone. You can access the map at [bit.ly/3t1Ua6o].



Green light for Pilrig corner site

Planning permission was granted last month to demolish the undistinguished 2-storey house at 50 Pilrig St on the corner with Dryden St, and redevelop the site as a 6-storey building of nine 1–4-bedroom flats (21/00246/FUL).

There were 57 expressions of objection (including Leith Central Community Council’s), and 17 of support.

Officials concluded that the proposal complied with the Local Development Plan and was of an appropriate scale, form, and design. It would not detract from neighbouring listed buildings or the Conservation Area. (It’s worth noting that the rear elevation is of a more contemporary design than the one facing Pilrig Street.)

Neighbouring amenity, they said, would not be ‘unreasonably’ impacted despite some overlooking, and the new homes would provide a satisfactory living environment for future occupiers. Sufficient green space was proposed in an enclosed back green to the rear, and Pilrig Park offers more.

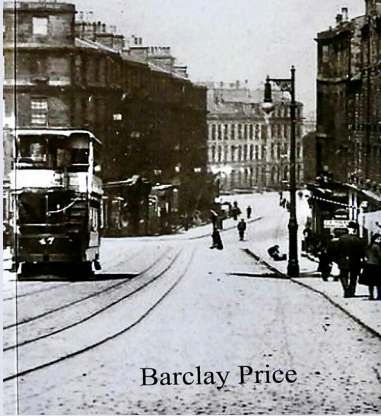
They found there would be no transport or flooding issues, and the proposal would contribute to sustainability and biodiversity.

Councillors on the Development Management Subcommittee unanimously granted consent, on condition that (as already agreed by the developer) the size of all flats complies with Edinburgh Design Guidance.

Moreover ...

BROUGHTON STREET

A history of a street



Barclay Price

Local resident Barclay Price's fascinating new book *Broughton Street: A History of a Street* traces 200 years of shops, churches, schools, war, theatre, links with slavery, political and social action, and the inhabitants of one house. It comes **generously illustrated**, costs £15, and is available from various **Broughton St outlets** and albanystreetedinburgh@gmail.com.

Retrospective permission is sought for change of use from residential flats to short-term rentals at **10A Blenheim Pl, 6A Forth St, and 2 NE Cumberland St Lane**. Permission has already been granted for conversion of garages and apartments at **44 Arthur St** to form 3 short-term lets.

Police are making their presence felt around **Leith Walk PS** to tackle poor parking and dangerous driving at drop-off and pick-up times.

We first reported Edinburgh World Heritage's thoughts on **adapting to climate change** in Issue 300 [bit.ly/3tGGWMH]. Consequences of, and responses to, the crisis were apparent in an application last month by residents of two listed **Fettes Row** basement flats. They seek to protect themselves from further damage by installing **flood-protection doors** to the front and rear of the properties (22/000333/FUL).

As revealed in Aug [bit.ly/3t3U3ra], Nuveen and the charitable **Ken Buchanan Foundation** hope to erect a bronze statue of the Leith-born former undisputed world lightweight champion at the foot of **Little King St**. If agreed this month, it would stand here for a year until an **appropriate permanent location** can be found. Backers have their eyes on the **Picardy Pl island**. We don't object to that in principle. It's just that we're not sure the **quality of the artwork** matches the quality of its subject. See what you think here [bit.ly/3G2zdMo].

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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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 meeting: 7pm on Mon. 21 February, Microsoft Teams.

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>

Deidre Brock MP Edinburgh North & Leith



Regular constituency surgeries are now resuming by appointment only.

Full details can be found on my website dbrockmp.scot or contact my office by email or phone for more information about surgery dates and locations.

Stay safe, Deidre.

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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.

You're very welcome to attend.
Come along and make a difference. Next meeting:
Mon. 14 February at 7.30pm in **Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent**

www.ntbcc.org.uk

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