

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

MAJOR DEVELOPMENT LOOMS FOR RBS SITE

Royal Bank of Scotland has consulted locals at the very earliest stages of a plan to develop land in Broughton.

The site is bounded by Dundas Street, Fettes Row, Royal Crescent, St Mark's Park and Eyre Place, which Edinburgh's City Local Plan (2010) designates as suitable for 'residential, commercial, institutional and other purposes'. RBS, however, envisages the development as being 'residential-led'.



New Town & Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) sees potential for much good here. It urges:

- building affordable and social housing as part of the mix, not just expensive investment vehicles
- ensuring height of any new buildings does not exceed that of the 'ziggurat' data centre (far right in photo)
- creating new job opportunities to offset those lost in departure of RBS.

Others *Spurtle* has contacted speak of:

- wanting the ziggurat's exterior (at least) to be retained
- the need for vehicle access from Dundas Street
- the importance of generous, accessible green spaces within the development, reflecting the New Town Conservation Area.

BATTLE LINES DRAWN ON PARKING CHANGES

Public reaction to the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) consultation on parking reform has been mixed (Issue 245)

Cynics say it's all just an ill-disguised CEC ploy to raise additional funds.

Some welcome sharing space with visitors. Others are wary of losing any residential parking at all.

Faith communities – particularly those drawing congregations from across Edinburgh on Sundays, and wider community users at other times – fear the effect of new charges on their viability.

Critics say CEC needs to stop overselling permits, and apply existing regulations more stringently (see website 14.10.15).

New Town & Broughton Community Council suggests redrawing parking zones in certain places, and focusing on particularly troublesome 'hotspots' in others. It favours a piecemeal, street-by-street response.

LOCALS RESIST CHOPS FOR COMMUNITY COPS

Leith Central and New Town & Broughton Community Councils will coordinate their responses to a possible £500k cut in CEC's £2.6m community policing grant for 2016–17.

Such a reduction would jeopardise the deployment of 41 community officers announced in August, including seven for the city centre and four for Leith.

The CCs will lobby the Council, ward councillors and MSPs in advance of the budget consultation deadline on 10 December.

The mooted cuts appear in a draft budget, which is part of a broader financial strategy to achieve recurring annual savings of at least £107m by 2019/20. Budget consultation: [<http://goo.gl/FTz5Xu>].



This charming and cheerful portrait – *The Mantilla* – is an etching by the British artist Joseph Simpson (1879–1979). Estimated to fetch between £300 and £500 at auction, it will appear in the sale of 19th and 20th-century pictures at Lyon & Turnbull in Broughton Place on 12 November. A mantilla is a scarf of silk or lace worn over the head and shoulders, originally by Spanish women.

COUNCIL FAILS ON LITTER

The New Town Clean Streets Campaign has lambasted CEC for failing to meet the Government's Code of Practice on clearing litter and refuse.

Writing for *Spurtle's* website (20.10.15), NTSC's Fred Street said CEC's 10-day response to reported litter was inexplicable in areas which were already meant to be cleared twice a week and to enjoy regular street-sweeping.

Furthermore, the 'Environmental Protection Act 1990: Code of Practice on Litter and Refuse (Scotland) 2006' stipulates a 3-hour response where heavy littering is reported in areas like Broughton.

NTSC calls on all locals to report overfilled bins and fly-tipping, and to insist on a timely clean-up in accordance with CEC's own pledges and statutory requirements. Only then will we see an improvement.



Briefly



Possible sightings of **Alfie** – missing from **Bellevue Pl** since mid-Sept – continue to be reported, and it's now thought some **kind-hearted local** may have taken him in. If you think you've seen him, please send us a photo, and/or take him to a vet to **check the microchip**.

The annual **Service of Remembrance at Warriston Cemetery** will be held by the War Memorial on 8 Nov at 9.45am. It will be conducted by the **Rev. Joanne Foster**, who will welcome all to the later full service at **Inverleith St Serf's Church, Ferry Rd**, at 10.50am. Enquiries to: [friendsofwarristoncemetery@gmail.com].

Leith Central Community Council seeks additional councillors. If you live in the area or have some other local attachment, you can be **painlessly co-opted**. Details at [<http://goo.gl/DraVAG>] or Tel. 538 7300.

Broughton History Society's next meeting is on 9 Nov in Drummond CHS. **Jean Bareham** will reveal all on 'Gardens of the Old Town'.

Three teenagers are sought in connection with a **fire at the Haddington Place** building site on 7 Oct. The lower-ground-floor blaze – started deliberately – caused **£250k+ damage**.

Rose St and Castle St traders have formed a new business association. It won't replace **Essential Edinburgh**, but we understand it's aimed at counterbalancing the latter's **disproportionate focus** on George St and St Andrew Sq.

Welcome to **Nice Stuff**, the new gift shop at 44 Broughton St. Lovely stock but no biscuits.

Vittoria Group seek permission to change **4 Blenheim Place** (formerly Dofos) from retail to office use (Ref. 15/04650/FUL). Instead of today's parakeet-red, they plan to paint the outside architect-grey.

LGBT Health & Wellbeing are running new, monthly meet-ups in the **Regent Bar (Montrose Ter)** on the 4th Wed of the month. They welcome anyone identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, non-binary, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, pan, poly or none or several of the above. 'We strive to make this evening a safe space where we do not make assumptions about each other'. More at: [admin@lgbthealth.org.uk].

Edinburgh energised over old Royal High

The public response to proposals for a luxury hotel in and around the old Royal High School was immense.

Some 2,517 comments were submitted online, briefly crashing CEC's Planning website and necessitating an extension of the deadline. An as yet unquantified mountain of letters was also submitted, and at least one petition.

This was an extraordinary level of participation. The relative numbers in support or against the proposal are, in theory, less important than the merits of their respective arguments, but will carry some political weight nonetheless.

Historic Scotland's objection means that, in the event of CEC consenting the application, the decision will be reviewed by Scottish ministers. In the event of it being rejected, developers will probably appeal.

Last month, three members of the UK International Council on Monuments and Sites viewed Edinburgh on a two-day assessment. Icomos advises Unesco, and it is significant that Planning Convener Ian Perry discussed with them the capital's planning process. He also invited Icomos to participate in a reassessment of the World Heritage Site management plan.

Some people now characterise the debate as one of progress versus stagnation, business versus old bricks. The true nub has always been about finding the minimum intervention for the Royal High that would ensure its sustainable survival. By that criterion, plans to rehouse St Mary's Music School there appear the better option.



Academy plans always to excel

Edinburgh Academy has outlined aspirations to upgrade, replace and better connect facilities at its Henderson Row campus.

Bursar Guy Cartwright has spoken of incremental improvements, unfolding as funds are raised, which could begin in two-three years' time and continue for another ten or more.

Architect Richard Murphy and planning and design consultancy Turley Associates are involved.

The school means to remain within current bounds, and retain today's pupil numbers at around 580-90.

Improved public transport links and better parental parking at drop-off and pick-up times will form part of ongoing discussions with CEC officials and police.

Uphill battle against anti-social behaviour

CEC-funded 'ward officers' from Police Scotland are tackling anti-social behaviour at Greenside, Picardy Place and the top of Broughton Street.

They've been reminding nearby off licences about their responsibilities regarding alcohol sales to drunk people. They're trying to improve CCTV coverage. They're conducting joint patrols with safety wardens at peak times over the weekend, and advising rough sleepers of more comfortable and safer alternatives elsewhere.

But will it work? 'I don't know,' PC Grant Saunders told locals last month. 'We're trying to put a sticking plaster on a gaping hole in the dam.'

PLEASE MIND THE GAP



Designed to assist the visually impaired, this Hopetoun Street pavement isn't working. We blame bad parking or oversized vehicles struggling to access the narrow service lane. Spurtle's Tim Smith has reported the multiple trip-hazard.

HOLEY MACKEREL



We don't know who painted it, and we don't know why. But we still rather like this enormous, blue, toplit fish-head which arrived overnight in the Rodney St Tunnel last month. Where's the rest of it?

A Manuscript of Monte Cassino – Part 2

While aspects of Sir Eduardo Paolozzi's 'Manuscript of Monte Cassino' sculptures are open to interpretation, it is important to note the artist's general intention. In July 1991, he stated that the group should be in tune with the city's 'fine historic architecture' and its theme should 'reflect the everlasting inspiration' that the city has drawn from classical models'. Hence the giant foot 'can be considered to be inspired by the foot of Constantine in the Campidoglio in Rome'.

The iconography of the outstretched hand seems more complex, although Paolozzi hoped it would attract playful children and birds drawn to its pools. The copulating locusts may refer to the Biblical plague, or promise future life after the Battle of Monte Cassino. The ball with geometric indentations, alluding to genetic engineering, may symbolise abundance (a reference to the pilgrim's hand receiving alms). Perhaps the stylised primordial animal is a Darwinian reference? The toy-like miniature building may be an echo of the original monastery – a welcoming refuge.

Two bronze plaques are on the encircling stone kerb behind the hand and foot. Alas, they are hard to locate and afford little illumination of sculptures which are, by any standard, of world-class quality. If they are to be relocated due to the alarming development of the St James Quarter, surely they should be given a more prominent explanatory plaque and signage? – *JRM* [See also our website, 1.11.15.]



Look out for: Winter Thrushes

As we move towards winter proper, the changing of the feathered guard from summer to winter visitors is all but complete. Many apparently year-round residents, however, actually *do* move south – so the blackbirds and thrushes now in your garden may have come from northern Scotland or Scandinavia. We also have two thrushes that are almost completely migratory, working their way south to avoid the worst of winter and devour berries. These are the Fieldfare and the smaller Redwing.

How to see them: Fieldfares are large noisy thrushes, giving out three short scolding notes. They have a complex pattern of grey, black and chestnut plumage. The much smaller Redwing resembles a Song Thrush but has a white eyestripe and orange flanks. Both thrushes are sociable and often travel together in large flocks. Keep an eye out for them in parks or bushes with berries. Putting out apples is a great way to attract them to your garden.



Also look out for: Our other resident speckled thrush – the Mistle Thrush. This big bold resident of our parklands is sometimes called the Storm-Cock due to its willingness to keep singing in the worst of weather. Folklore has it that they warn of storms or, worse still, summon them with their calls – let's hope not.

— *Miles Forde*

Wet wet wet in Bonnington

Devastating floods around Edinburgh were reported in the Caledonian Mercury on 12 November 1760.

'The situation of the inhabitants of Bonnytown [Bonnington], and [the other villages] on the Water of Leith is particularly dismal. All the people who occupied the ground floors, were, for self-preservation, obliged to get up to the top stories, where they remained, till the water subsiding a little, they were carried out in little boats, brought by land on carts from Leith. Two gentlemen went in a chaise to Bonnytown, in order to relieve some of the distressed inhabitants, but durst not approach the houses, as the whole village was laid under water, and they unacquainted with the road. The driver of the chaise, however, getting on horseback, and taking on behind him a man who knew the ground, rode into a close belonging to Mrs. Carmichael, to the imminent danger of their lives, as the hinder legs of the horse slumped into a deep hole, which had almost foundered him, and overthrown his rider. [...] The North-east wall of Mrs. Carmichael's house is beat down, and the garden walls levelled with the ground. Most of the other tenements have fared still worse. [...] We have not yet heard of any body being lost there, and we hope it will prove so in the event. As these poor people are, by this dreadful calamity, almost ruined, most of their effects being either washed away, or rendered useless, they are proper objects of the compassion and charity of all humane persons.'



Briefly

Police liked an NTBCC suggestion last month on how to deal with 'rogue cyclists'. Why not send those who mount pavements, jump lights, pedal the wrong way around roundabouts etc. on an **informative but inconvenient day course** with Bikeability Scotland?

A 6-session **Raising Teens with Confidence** course starts at Drummond CHS in Jan. Aimed at parents/carers of **S2, S3 and S4 pupils** at the school, the deadline to sign up is 30 Nov. Details: [<http://goo.gl/AN5OCI>].

CEC officials now say recycled and landfill waste **only appear** to be mixed in the same lorry (see Issue 245). In fact, there are **separate compartments** for each inside. Why did this explanation take **2 months**, and why did some managers **apparently not know** of the vehicle design? Locals remain unconvinced.

The lower ground-floor office at **91 East London St** will be converted into two flats (Ref. 15/03747/FUL). Former occupant **CMYK Design** (see website 29.11.13) has left and is winding up.

BottleDog at 25a Dundas St has now opened. Adjacent residents say the **sound-proofing** is inadequate. Expect rumbles at Licensing.

Edinburgh World Heritage Trust's director **Adam Wilkinson** addressed the World Heritage UK conference on 15 Oct. He said the city's **tourism strategy** needs fine-tuned, and criticised **overprovision of 3-star hotels** here thanks to an airport dominated by budget airlines.

A cyclist was seriously hurt at 8.45am on 20 Oct where **Haddington Pl meets Annandale St**. The 25-year-old male was taken to hospital. Police are investigating.

Home Energy Scotland are hosting a free event about cutting heat loss in **single-glazed** historic buildings. Drop in and warm up with experts between 5.00pm and 7.30pm on **16 Nov at 29–31 Abercromby Place**. Book at: [<http://goo.gl/jY9YbK>].

A competition run by **Lothian Life** and Pilrig St's online **Writing Classes** seeks 500-word stories on the subject of Home by 13 Nov. Free entry. See: [<http://goo.gl/OgGt6a>].

Critics of a plan for '**tutti-frutti**' signage outside Tanfield on Inverleith Row and Glenogle Rd have until 6 Nov to object (see website 13.10.15).

Plans to refurbish the **City Observatory** on Calton Hil and extend gallery facilities in the compound have been consented (Ref. 15/01828/FUL; see website 24.9.15). An **interesting report** is at: [<http://goo.gl/gC9xu1>].

Bellevue Chapel's Sunday morning services (10.30am) are now held in **Drummond CHS**. Evening services (6.30pm) continue on **Rodney St**.

Moreover ...



Christmas lights went up outside **John Lewis** last month amid much helpful advice from colleagues above and sarcastic remarks from passers-by below. Some were shouting: 'OY! THAT ONE'S NOT WORKING!'

Kingsford Developments Ltd (KD) have received permission to create two unexplained entries in railings around **54 McDonald Rd.** Officials found they would not detract from the **B-listed building.** Meanwhile, KD has been refused permission to fit **bush-hammered** Dormus tiles to the entrance platt at 76 Dublin St. Officials said they were **wholly uncharacteristic.** They would diminish the A-listed building's **architectural integrity and interest,** and the special character and appearance of the New Town Conservation Area.

Edinburgh Printmakers has secured £6m+ from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Creative Scotland, and Historic Scotland and a range of other benefactors, to create a **world-class visual arts centre** in the former North British Rubber Company Factory HQ. The flit from **Union St to Fountainbridge** will be completed in 2018.

Essential Edinburgh has applied to instal a CCTV camera at the corner of **Frederick and George Sts** (Ref. 15/04063/FUL). We asked why, on 15 Oct, and eagerly **await a response.**

CEC has **mothballed many city loos** to save money. Its alternative wheeze is to reward businesses that fling open their WCs to members of the public with a **£500 p.a.** reward. Businesses, though, are unlikely to welcome rough sleepers and al fresco imbibers, so expect convenient parks and alleys to remain **pungent** for years to come.

If you're concerned about recent Planning decisions, **stop moaning and be proactive.** The Scottish Govt is consulting the public on a review of the system. Deadline – 1 Dec: [<http://goo.gl/QI1J1O>].

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Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian Region



On the 1st and 3rd Monday of the month during term time I hold a surgery for Lothian residents at the Scottish Parliament between 11am and 1pm.

Please call to book a surgery appointment or to arrange another time and venue that is convenient for you.

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Property Management

New Town/Broughton Community Council

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL
REPRESENTS THE VIEWS
OF LOCAL RESIDENTS TO
EDINBURGH CITY COUNCIL

Next Meetings:

9 November

& 14 December

at 7.30pm

**Broughton St Mary's Parish
Church, Bellevue Crescent**

www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/

Deidre Brock MP Edinburgh North and Leith



Regular Surgeries

Leith: 1st Friday of the month
1–2pm, 166 Great Junction Street

Leith Walk: 2nd Friday
3.30–4.30pm, McDonald Rd Library

Pilton: last Friday of the month
4–5pm, Royston/Wardieburn
Community Centre

Further Surgery details at:
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