

Spurtle



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No 231

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

St JAMES QUARTER PARKING RAISES EAST END HACKLES

In the latest stage of the planning process, TIAA Henderson Real Estate has submitted for approval details about 'the precise location and extent of permitted uses' in the St James Quarter (Ref. 14/02070/AMC; see *Extras*, 19.6.14).

Partly in response to this, at its June meeting, New Town & Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) noted concerns that 59,890 sq.m. of the development are intended for car parking. Equating to 1,800 spaces (3 times as many as currently available in the St James Centre), this threatens to substantially increase traffic volumes in the East End.

Henderson insists this level of provision is the minimum required, partly because current behaviour suggests drivers will not use the Greenside multi-storey car park as it is too far away. For further background, see [<http://goo.gl/NmcFxI>].

All this seems bad enough, but is even more unpalatable given Henderson's successful arm-twisting to secure £61.4m of public money for public realm improvements, particularly a tram/bus interchange at Picardy Place (Issue 230).

At the NTBCC meeting, Councillor Joanna Mowat (City Centre) criticised the 'total lack of clarity about how that money will be spent' and described the way in which the Regeneration Accelerator Model had been pushed through as 'dirty politics at its worst'.

In a related development, Leith Central Community Council (LCCC) last month urged City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) to carefully manage Picardy Place development so as not to disrupt Leith Walk improvements here and on Elm Row, due for completion at the end of 2016.

SAFETY FEARS PREVENT DRUMMOND'S KENYA TRIP

A trip by Drummond CHS pupils to Muthambi Boys and Girls Schools in Kenya last month was cancelled two weeks before departure because of CEC security fears.

The decision – which also affected visits to Kenya by Currie and Portobello High Schools – was explained in a letter to parents from Andy Gray, Head of Schools and Community Services: 'I regret to inform you that the proposed school trip to Kenya is no longer able to go ahead given the significant risks posed to pupils and staff with regard to the recent disruption in Kenya.'

The UK Government's foreign travel advice about Kenya is particularly alarming about criminal threats in city areas, and terrorism in general. Six UK citizens were killed in the Sept. 2013 attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi. It says 'Further attacks are likely.'

The cancellation is a huge disappointment for all concerned, but staff have responded by reorganising the existing education programme to strengthen and enhance the strong links between the schools which have developed over the last eight years.

Librarian and Co-ordinator Annie Scanlon describes the new programme online at *Breaking news* (1.7.14).



ELM ROW CHEERS ON BELLEVUE'S 'GRANNY' THOMSON



Christina Thomson ran the London Road to Annandale Street leg of the Queen's Baton Relay on 14 June. The relay heralds the July start of this year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

'Granny' Thomson was nominated by parents at Broughton Primary School in recognition of her volunteer work both there and in the local community. 'I was shocked when I heard the news but absolutely thrilled to be a part of such a memorable event,' she says.

Mrs Thomson worked as a community night nurse with Marie Curie until her retirement in 2007. Since then she has enjoyed keeping in touch with the charity as a Great Daffodil Appeal collector. Locals may know her better as the green-fingered guerrilla gardener at the western end of Bellevue Place (*Breaking news*, 12.6.14; 14.6.14).

STUDENT HOUSING PLAN FOR HADDINGTON PLACE

York-based S. Harrison Developments Ltd (SHD) acquired the freehold for land at 34b-40 Haddington Place in May, and now proposes submitting a full planning application in August with building from spring 2015 to autumn 2016 (Ref. 14/02115/PAN).

So far, SHD has outlined a 3 or 4-storey building which is 'sympathetic' in terms of design and position with neighbouring tenements and McDonald Road Library. It proposes student accommodation, with retail, gym, café and restaurant uses at ground level.

Housing for 205-20 students (mostly in in shared flats) is envisaged, raising the student population density to 33% and 26% in the two relevant Edinburgh data-zones. The Council guideline is 30%.

Archaeological investigation of the Botanic Cottage site is planned this month, followed by a tidy-up and smarter hoardings around the perimeter.

Last month SHD held meetings with community councils, as well as a public consultation in McDonald Road Library. At this stage, though, the plans are very vague. *Spurtle* welcomes regeneration of what is a prime local site, although would have preferred to see affordable housing (*Breaking news*, 25.6.14).

SHD is certainly making all the right noises. Its supporting document claims the firm 'wholeheartedly embraces the importance of community engagement' and recognises that 'the best schemes are those which are supported by the communities in which they are based'.

Briefly



This old familiar face (and the modern building behind it) at **5 Warriston Rd** will be demolished if plans to build a **3-storey block of 10 flats** gets planning permission (Ref. 14/02315/FUL). The developer is linked to **Rayprographics Ltd**, which currently occupies the site (*Breaking news*, 17.6.14).

Welcome **48 Below**, a new basement cocktail bar on Broughton St **beside the Phoenix**. A soft opening on Fri-Sats in June and July will be followed by the full bells-and-whistles launch in Sept. Decor reflects **'the inside of a Christmas bauble'** with a dash of snakeskin wallpaper. Pre-clubbing **Melt nights** with **top DJs**, hard-to-source drinks, and an exclusive **leopard-skin powder-room** suggest the bar's **target clientele** does not include tweedy, pipe-smoking tram buffs aged 48 and above.

NTBCC has formally objected to **Broughton Rd Tesco's** application for extended delivery/collection hours (Issue 230). One member described the proposal as 'a race to the bottom'.

Two new delis are coming to **Dundas St**: one in the new units at **No. 120**, and another at **No. 158**. The latter, opening in mid-July, will be a café called the **Dundas Deli**, with access via the renamed **Dundas News** next door.

Friends of Pilrig Park will meet at Balfour St, 2.00-3.30pm on **29 July** for a clean-up.

An **updated map** detailing **40 cafés** in Edinburgh which raise funds for **local charities or community service** is available at [<http://goo.gl/FeBdj>].

Norma Prentice, head teacher at **Drummond CHS**, is to take over at Castlebrae Community High School for the **next school session (2014-15)**. The temporary move follows suspension in May of Castlebrae's principal - himself a secondment - **following allegations** of sexual impropriety with a female pupil and their **investigation**.

The ground-breaking attempt by **Cuckoo's Bakery** to **divine Independence Referendum voting intentions** by purchases of themed cupcakes continues to intrigue. Most recent figures show a narrowing of margins: **Yes: 34.4% No: 46.9% Undecided: 18.7%**. More more-ish than MORI.

Ins and outs on E. Scotland St Lane

On 11 June, CEC refused planning permission for Mr Dermot Ferrigan to use his 'garage' as an office (Ref. 14/01419/FUL; *Breaking news*, 13.3.14). Neighbours had sent in 26 letters of objection. CEC said the proposal was contrary to the Edinburgh City Local Plan.

On the same day, Mr Ferrigan bulldozed a nearby Council-owned slope to make a clearing and semi-circular track. CEC issued some form of stop order on 13 June, but by 16 June a parking or passing space had been completed, hardcore, put down, and a boarded-off area in the roadway created for potted plants. A more formal legal order was issued on 20 June. Mr Ferrigan gave forthright responses to all enquiries.

Meanwhile, neighbours have questioned whether another of his properties in the lane complies with its consent conditions. They are also anxious that it should not be used for residential purposes.

Spartle sought CEC clarification on 19 June. Regarding the passing/parking space, a spokesperson said: 'The lane is owned by the Council. We are aware of the latest actions taken this week. The matter is in the hands of our legal team who are taking the necessary steps to protect the Council's position.'

Regarding use of the office and possible demolition of the garage, the spokesperson was equally effusive: 'We are fully aware of the situation and are considering what our next course of action will be.'



Step in the right direction

Management at Margiotta's plans level access to their Dundas Street branch, *a local wheelchair user tells us*.

The welcome change follows years of patient requests and letter writing by pram pushers, wheelchair users, and others who have difficulty in getting up and down the shop's current 5-inch step.

Margiotta's intention is to move the door to the left, so levelling the entrance with the pavement. This will probably come as something of a relief to the kind staff in neighbouring premises who often help individuals with mobility problems to get in and out of the place.



Reed bends for Oregon bounce-back

On a day of thunderstorms and high pressure in Birmingham on 7 June, local hammer-throwing star Kimberley Reed could not quite do enough to secure selection for Team Scotland at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. She will now concentrate instead on the World Junior Championships in Eugene, Oregon (22-27 July).

L a s t m o n t h was not all bad news, **t h o u g h**. Kimberley **w a s** honoured **w i t h** the City Chambers to South Bridge leg of the Queen's Baton Relay. In the photo here she is pictured at the hand-over with community volunteer and sportsman John Smith.



Glamorous goodbye



S6 pupils from Drummond CHS marked the end of their school careers with a Prom at the Carlton Hotel last month. Depute Head Teacher Sharon Gibson paid tribute to what had been 'a fabulous year group' and wished them every success in the future.

Bookend building makes progress

Following CEC consents in October 2008 and April 2011, work began on site this time last year on architect Richard Murphy OBE's controversial Hart Street 'bookend' (*Breaking news*, 26.1.11). The project has come on apace since.

Designed in part to cover the 'unsightly gable end' next door, the new building has a roof containing photovoltaic cells to collect solar energy, and insulated shutters which will open and close depending on whether the roof is in net heat gain or loss. In addition, a fan will pump air from the very top of the building to a rock store in the semi-basement for night-time heating.

Work is expected to be complete by the end of this year.



Council fudge on botched roof

Claremont Court residents are increasingly angry about a long-running argument with CEC over who should pay to fix their defective roof.

In 2002, work on Blocks 1-3 was carried out under a CEC Statutory Repair Notice. Residents say either CEC or its appointed quantity surveyor/contract supervisor changed the agreed design of the job contrary to the contract, and that this defective design has since caused deterioration of the Category C-listed building's fabric.

Residents and their professional consultants say responsibility for that poor work rests squarely with either CEC or its consultant.

Along with a second independent report, they have also identified 'related questions of the remit and extent of the repair notice and works carried out to CEC property, wrongly charged to residents'.

So far, CEC appears to have no coherent response beyond a blanket denial of everything with no reasons given. Instead, it is insisting that a majority of the private owners in each block request CEC to organise remedial work (and pay in full up front) before it will take charge.

To cynical observers and exhausted sufferers, the problem resembles yet another malodorous ripple in the historic bog of CEC's former Property Conservation Department. However, CEC is probably understandably leery of saying anything as it tiptoes through the legal quagmire which surrounds its attempts to settle over 270 disputes about statutory repairs. Sarah Boyack MSP concisely summarises the problem and latest developments here: [<http://goo.gl/YGHk0s>].

In the meantime, Ward 12's Councillor Nick Gardner has been helping locals on the case, and Malcolm Chisholm MSP has now written to CEC's Head of Asset Management Alex Burns seeking a proper explanation.



An exultation of swifts

Welcome back to the joyous swifts above the north quadrant of Drummond Place and adjacent streets! Every year, they return to this vicinity. In the evening, they swoop, wheel and scythe, 'screeing' in their rapturous possession of the air, cavorting as well as feeding on the wing.

One of them has been observed at dizzying speed and seemingly vanishing directly into the roof of 1 Scotland Street. Local resident Gaby Holden confirms that the birds have nested in the eaves here for many decades. Once, she was appalled to witness an entire nest of fledglings plummet down to Sir Compton Mackenzie's garden below. Alas, if some survived, they would not have long withstood the riveted attention of Sir Compton's Siamese cats.

While Mrs Holden continues to fear for the vertiginous nests, the exultation in the evening sky is unabated. We, who are privileged to experience it, can only marvel at the continuing magic and mystery of these exquisite birds and their rejoicing in being. *JRM*



Briefly

Do you have over **£1m rattling around down the back of your sofa?** If so, you may be interested in buying the 1.6-acre gap-site on **Broughton St Lane** which has recently gone back on the market. Prosper Holdings Ltd had detailed planning permission (Ref. 07/01631/FUL) for **11 news flats** here in 2008, which was extended for another 3 years in April 2014 (13/01217/FUL). Bids in to Rettie's by **noon on 3 July**.

Does any reader have contact details for the proprietor of the now waned **Blue Moon on Broughton St?** Former customers are desperate to secure his **macaroni cheese recipe**.

By the time you read this, LCCC will have held its **Independence Referendum Debate** (30 June). Scheduled speakers were: (Yes) **Lari Don**, children's author; **Jil Murphy**, Business for Scotland; (No) **Malcolm Chisholm MSP**; and **Joanna Mowat** (Ward 11 councillor). Full report online at *Breaking news* (31.6.14).

NTBCC has conveyed to CEC local disquiet about **Essential Edinburgh's** extensive programme of non-essential events in **St Andrew Square**. Critics say the area's grass and serenity are being **ruined by over-use**.

Welcome to the **McPherson Day Gallery**, newly opened at 13 Dundas St. Alan Day and Harry Douglas-Hamilton specialise in **Chinese, Japanese and Indian art and antiques**.

Meanwhile, upstairs at **13a Dundas St**, another welcome to **Arusha**, newly transferred from Palmerston Place. The gallery specialises in established and emerging artists from the UK and abroad.

Substantial refurbishment of the former newsagent's premises at **76 Dublin St** is complete, and owners Kingsford Estates say it is suitable for **shop or office use**. They invite rental bids of £16.5K+ per year. A warrant shown to the *Spurle* shows 1 Drummond Place was first converted from domestic to retail use in **July 1831**.

New building in the bottom playground of **Broughton Primary School**, providing 4 extra classrooms, is **expected to be complete** by the start of the new session in Aug.

NTBCC will press CEC to restore permanently the **former traffic refuge** in Broughton St at the junction with Albany St. It was temporarily removed to allow buses to turn during tramwork-related diversions.

Next meetings of **local community councils**: Leith Central, 18 Aug; New Town & Broughton, 4 Aug; Stockbridge & Inverleith Community Council, 20 Aug.

Moreover ...



Legal challenges to the **Traffic Regulation Orders** have delayed roll-out of further **communal wheelie-bins** across the New Town. Some people objected to where the bins would be sited. Therefore expect continued **World Heritage Site** squalor like this until at least the winter.

Video-game developer **Rock Star North** is upscaling from **Greenside** to Barclay House in Holyrood Rd. Meanwhile, indebted **Johnston Press** – publisher of the *Scotsman* and some ailing local tabloids – downsized last month from Barclay House to **much cheaper premises** on Queensferry Rd. Letting agent Jones Lang LaSalle/Montagu Evans had earlier marketed Orchard Brae House as ‘seven floors of virtually column free floor space’.

Changes to the astonishingly good services run by **Lothian Buses** came in on 1 June and affect Broughton. The **No. 8** now runs every 12 minutes, Monday–Friday, with an improved timetable on Sunday mornings and evenings. Over the summer, the **new No. 9** will run every 20 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays from the Botanic Garden to the National Museum of Scotland on Chambers Street via Mansfield Place, Leith Street and Waverley Bridge. The **No. 36** now connects Ocean Terminal to Edinburgh Napier’s Craiglockhart campus via Broughton Road, Canonmills, Stockbridge, Lothian Road and Morningside. These and other less eye-catching changes are summarised at: [<http://goo.gl/dU6tyv>].

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surgeries: second
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1:30pm

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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.

Contact me on 0131 348 6421
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Friday advice sessions:
4.00pm **Stockbridge Library**,
no appointment necessary;
5.00pm **5 Croall Place**;
other surgeries throughout the constituency – phone for details

New Town/Broughton Community Council

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

Next Meeting:

4 August

at 7.30pm

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

www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/

AMDECORATING

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