

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

RBS PLAN – SNEAK PREVIEW?

Royal Bank of Scotland's planning application for the Dundas St/Fettes Row/Eyre Place site is not expected until later this month. But discussions between architects Michael Laird, consultants GVA James Barr and the New Town & Broughton Community Council suggest what to expect.

The proposals will mostly resemble those exhibited in February (Issue 250), with a few welcome but minor changes:

- 400 units, 525 concealed parking spaces, access only via Eyre Terrace. Residential and widest possible range of mixed uses. Aim is to establish size and massing, and to maximise the value of the site before sale.
- Eight slightly shallower blocks for Fettes Row and Royal Crescent, with the gap between them widened at Dundonald Street to improve view. No reduction in height.
- Easternmost block at foot of Scotland Street closer than before to King George V Park. Elsewhere, boundary with KGV Park softened with an accessible crescent. Suggestion of extending the park (see Issue 255) 'met with looks *suggesting* wide-eyed innocence'.
- Eyre Terrace block (4-5 storeys) slightly less deep and more open.

RBS's plan will establish the big picture. All details will have to be gone through again when the site is sold and a new developer brings forward its own proposals.



ARTIFICIAL PARADISE



This late 19th-century Pierrot and crescent moon by Leopold Lambert was expected to fetch between £12,000 and £18,000 at Lyon & Turnbull's Fine Furniture and Works of Art auction last month. It was formerly part of a rare automata collection assembled by singer/actor Roger Daltrey and his wife Heather. The Moon blinks and moves his mouth. The figure sticks out his tongue, nods and strums his lute, but then disappointingly fails to smash it up on stage afterwards. For more on this visit [goo.gl/Wu7OhC].

OLD ROYAL HIGH SCHOOL: NEW TWIST IS A SIST



Would-be developers of a luxury hotel in and around the old Royal High School have sisted (delayed) their appeal to the Scottish Government.

The case will now be considered at the same time as their plans for a new hotel scheme, which apparently addresses the reasons why the earlier application was refused by City of Edinburgh Council (see our website 20.9.16).

Members of the public will see the latest proposals when a pre-application consultation is held by Duddingston House Properties and the Urbanist Group at a date to be confirmed between 1 and 3 November (Ref. 16/04537/PAN).

NO SHELTER FROM ADVERTS

Last month, JCDecaux (JCD) presented to the NTBCC its outline proposals for five new bus shelters and four stand-alone community information panels (CIPs) on George Street

In the past there have been up to 12 bus stops on George Street, several of them carrying advertisements. The new digital ones can be adjusted to 'mitigate' movement, colour and illumination. Larger versions on Princes Street have proved popular, says JCD, and include bus information and phone chargers. They are self-funding amenities.

Double-sided digital CIPs (2m high) would be sympathetically positioned so as not to obstruct pavements or detract from surroundings. One in 12 screen shots could carry community information, the rest being advertisements.

NTBCC members and locals were sceptical. Similar JCD bus shelters in Edinburgh were ineffective against the weather. Sightlines were poor. Bus information needlessly duplicated the existing bus-tracking system and would probably soon be superseded by phone apps. Marion Williams, director of the Cockburn Association, said moving adverts would be a visual distraction, a profit-driven and retrograde step when CEC is trying to re-style George Street for the better.

CIPs were incorrectly named advertising hoardings, and unnecessary clutter. There was no clarity on who would edit any community content according to what agenda. A show of hands afterwards revealed a marginal majority in favour of the bus shelters. The room was unanimously opposed to the CIPs. For a link to visuals and *Spurtle's* view, see our website (22.7.16).

JCD expects to finalise its proposals in the next month or so.

Briefly

Broughton History Society meets next on 10 October in **Drummond CHS** at 7pm. Alistair McEwen will not drone on about *Pipers in World War I*.

TV cameras returned to the New Town's Murphy House in early Sept. The **Hart St book-end** is longlisted for Channel 4/*Grand Designs*/RIBA House of the Year, and features in the upcoming *Grand Designs House of the Year* series. Initial filming for the show took place in early summer. The crew's return, this time with **frontman Kevin McCloud**, suggests the controversial home is a step closer to success.

An **intoxicated local** was found guilty of threatening behaviour and fined £250 last month after the **ornamental olive bush** he had lifted from outside a pub some time earlier was pushed towards a **police officer's face**. The incident happened at 3am outside Treacle on **Broughton St**. A charge of assault was not proven.

The **Edinburgh Greens** have named their candidates for next year's **local authority elections** in May. Existing councillors **Chas Booth and Nigel Bagshaw** will stand again in Leith and Inverleith, respectively. **Susan Rae** will again contest Leith Walk, where she stood last year in the by-election. New Town & Broughton Community Councillor **Claire Miller** will stand in the City Centre ward. For the Lib-Dems, **Vita Zaporozcenko** will contest the City Centre, Broughton resident **David Stevens** will stand in Leith Walk, and Stockbridge local **Hal Osler** in Inverleith.

The **4-week closure of Picardy Place** and suspension of northbound traffic into **Broughton St** is scheduled to end on 3 Oct. The work was part of **cabling preparations** for the new St James Quarter.

Local resident **Pam Neilson** was one of those Edinburgh parents who inaugurated the **Glow Gold** campaign last month. For one week, the **Melville Monument, Edinburgh Playhouse** and other local landmarks were floodlit in golden **'Luminations of Love'** to raise awareness of childhood cancer (see our website 1.9.16).

Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) last assessed Edinburgh's **street cleanliness** in June. Its snapshots found that in **Wards 12 and 13**, 88% and 86% of streets were clean, with **Cleanliness Monitoring Index System** scores of 64 and 65. The Council's targets of 95% and 72 were not met, neither was KSB's 'acceptable' CMIS standard of 67. A **'major concern'** was resident satisfaction citywide, rated at only 64%. It would be interesting to see equivalent figures for the **month of August**, when bins the length of Broughton St and from Picardy Place to McDonald Rd **overflowed for weeks**. For the full report, see Item 7.6 at [goo.gl/OvrgBc].

Planning permission has been extended for a **Toblerone home** at 8-10 Tanfield (Ref. 16/03167/FUL). See our website (27.8.13). Consent was originally granted in 2008.

Horns locked over amplified music

Community Councils from Tollcross, Southside, New Town & Broughton, Morningside, The Old Town, Stockbridge & Inverleith, Leith Links, and Merchiston have written in strong terms to Councillor Maureen Child raising concerns about Council management of the Music is Audible debate (see our website 28.2.16).

The issues they raise with her as Convener of the Communities and Neighbourhoods Committee are:

- The Music is Audible subgroup of the Culture & Sports Committee, which began the drive for changes, comprised (apart from officials and councillors) those with a vested interest in promoting amplified music.

- Insufficient consultation with the wider public.

- Council papers from October 2015 refer to 'informal consultation' with community councils, but give no indication of when or with whom such talks occurred.

- Community representatives and Police Scotland opposed the reform when first presented with it at the Licensing Forum in December 2015. Since then, most recently in April 2016, the Forum's opposition has twice been misrepresented to the Licensing Board as approval.

- Community Council views have been publicly abused by the Licensing Board's Cllr Eric Milligan. 'Leaving aside the impropriety of this tirade, it will confirm the opinion of many that the Licensing Board is deaf to, and regularly discounts, the views of community bodies.'

- They call upon Cllr Child to reiterate in public community Councils' remit to speak up for residents.

Meanwhile, Cllr Joanne Mowat (City Centre), who convenes the Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee, has undertaken to raise the matter with the Council's Monitoring Officer. Cllr Lesley Hinds (Inverleith) has also expressed concern, and community councillors may now also formally approach CEC's chief executive Andrew Kerr. NTBCC presented its position on amplified music at a formal hearing of the Licensing Board on 26 September. Board members voted 6:2 to change the rules.

Batleys not budging

Last month we reported that the Batleys cash-and-carry had sold its property on McDonald Place for nearly £2m. We asked head office for clarification and received this statement from Martin Race, managing director of Bestway Wholesale.

'The Batleys Bellevue site in Edinburgh has been sold as an internal transfer as part of a company-wide reorganisation. This is part of a hive-up strategy to consolidate all wholesale companies previously listed under the Bestway Group of Companies – of which Batleys Bellevue was one – to give greater focus to the wholesale division of the Bestway Group.

'Depots continue to operate under their respective sub-brands of Batleys and Bestway and therefore the Bellevue depot will continue to trade as Batleys Bellevue and business will continue as normal for customers and suppliers.'

So: no move away or redevelopment. But Batleys faces renewed attention from CEC officials after fresh complaints from residents about untimely arrivals and inconsiderate parking by delivery drivers.



Work starts on Shrubhill gap-site

Work has at long last begun on a major residential development for the 2.1 ha gap-site at Shrubhill between Leith Walk and Dryden Street (Ref. 15/00643/FUL).

After more than a decade of objections, frustrations, delays, withdrawals, disappointments and numerous amendments, we're confused.

We think Places for People will build: 30 flats in the converted tramsheds; 373 new flats (of which 236 will be affordable) in 8 blocks; an underground car park; a car-free, people-porous public realm; a new Masonic Club; and a 24-hour gym for anyone who wants to pump iron wearing an apron in the middle of the night.

Housing Minister Kevin Stewart visited the site on 13 September, and Edinburgh Northern and Leith MSP Ben Macpherson spoke in Holyrood about the affordable homes component that would be created.

He hailed the Scottish Government's determination to build 50,000 new homes across the country in the next five years. Investment in housing allows communities to grow, he said, by stimulating 'a multiplier effect, attracting private interest and investment to the area'.

Last plot for fertile author

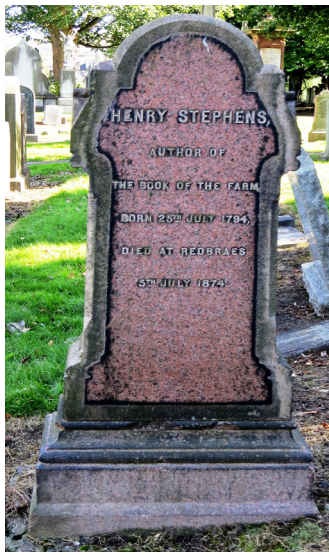
In Rosebank Cemetery, a modest headstone in pink granite commemorates 'Henry Stephens, author of *The Book of the Farm*. Born 25th July 1794, died at Redbraes 5th July 1874'.

Stephens was born in India, moved to Dundee aged 12, and later attended lectures at Edinburgh University on farming and agricultural chemistry before seeking practical experience in the field at home and in Europe. He then farmed in Forfarshire (1820–37) using the latest techniques.

From 1837 he rented the substantial (4 bedroom) Redbraes Cottage and began teaching and writing. In 1844 he brought out *The Book of the Farm*, aiming to provide a 'seasonable narrative of the principal operations [that would] show the young farmer that farming is really a systematic business, having a definite object in view, and the means of attaining it. The reasons for doing every piece of work in one way, rather than another, will convince him that farming is an art founded on rational and known principles'. It went through many editions over the next 60 years, and established Stephens as 'the foremost agriculturalist of his generation'.

Mourning this '[c]ourteous, generous, hospitable, skilled' man, the *Graphic* went on to observe: 'Throughout the entire kingdom all who pursue the practice of agriculture, and who have sought to keep abreast with sound advance in the science and its applications, will feel that they have lost their eldest and most trustworthy guide, counsellor, and friend'.

The Book of the Farm formed the basis of the series *Victorian Farm*, aired by the BBC in 2009.—AM



Look out for: Starlings

All animal populations are subject to fluctuations but few of our common birds have suffered such a rapid and as yet unexplained decline as the Starling.

As the autumn advances, Starling populations are boosted by migrants from Northern Europe. In the past they formed vast flocks that wheeled above favoured roosting spots in church spires, thick hedges or under suitable bridges. These murmurations move in a spectacular way, creating wonderful shapes in the sky until the birds pluck up courage to land and vanish into their roost, leaving only the weird squeaking and churring of their voices. For many years, Powderhall saw a small version of this show, but sadly this no longer seems to be the case.

Starlings are about Blackbird size and appear dark in colour. However, closer inspection shows an iridescent sheen and a natty white speckling to their plumage, especially in winter. Starlings are birds of open fields and without the availability of ready cover they need to rely on speed to evade predators, flying up to 60mph with their short powerful wings and fighter-jet profile.

Starlings are also opportunists and have a varied diet. They are sometimes seen as the hooligans of the bird table with their frenetic and garrulous feeding habits, but despite their poor table manners they need all the help they can get.—Miles Forde



Photo: Creative Commons – Share Alike

The warp of 'history'

Ask any Edinburgher about the gone-but-not forgotten emporia of the capital's glorious retail past, writes David Young, and they will reel off a list of familiar names: Patrick Thomson's and R.W. Forsyth, Marcus Furs and Baird the Bootmakers; or perhaps that more recent sad departure, Gray's of George Street.

Almost certainly absent from the list will be an establishment that makes these solid names look like fly-by-night cowboy traders. It's a business which, amazingly, started operating in the city almost 600 years ago. Even more amazingly, it's still to be found in the heart of Edinburgh today. How on earth can we all have overlooked ... Tartan House of Scotland?

As advertised on the entrance of its new premises at 135 George Street, this purveyor of quality knitwear was established here all the way back in 1437. With such a venerable history, surely its proud proprietors must have a fascinating tale to tell ... [cont. on p.4]



Briefly

Bungydom UK Ltd seek planning permission to erect a '**temporary entertainment structure**' on Princes Mall's western roof terrace for roughly 3 months **each summer from 2017–18** (Ref. 16/04038/FUL). Whether this is a new high or a new low for the city, or both in rapid succession, is debatable.

Planning permission and listed building consent have been granted to convert the health centre at **10–10A Union St** into 3 residential flats (Ref. 16/02816/LBC), one 3-bedroom, one 2-bedroom, one 1-bedroom at ground and basement levels. The site is currently occupied by the **Saheliya** mental health clinic.

Yum! Let out your trousers. **The Bearded Baker** – 'provider of bagels and doughnuts to the cafés and shops of Edinburgh' is about to open a **bakery and coffee shop** at **46 Rodney St**. For latest news: [http://www.thebeardedbaker.co.uk]

Based in Albany St, **The Rock Trust** works in Edinburgh and the Lothians with young people aged 16–25 who are **homeless or at risk of becoming homeless**. Imminent fundraising events are: **Forth Rail Bridge abseil** (9 Oct), **End Youth Homelessness sleep out** (4 Nov), **Under 21s' sleep out** (9 Nov). For details and links to sign up, visit [goo.gl/EKcAXH].

Deidre Brock, **MP for Edinburgh North & Leith**, has been appointed to the Scottish Affairs Committee, subject to **Parliamentary approval**. The SAC comprises 11 MPs and examines 'the expenditure, administration and policy of the **Scotland Office** and its associated public bodies'.

Transport & Environment Committee convener **Cllr Lesley Hinds** will address the NTBCC at its 10 Oct meeting. She will outline a **new action plan** to tackle waste collection problems across Edinburgh.

A reader has contacted *Spurtle* asking if other locals recall the **Royal Fusiliers Club** which formerly operated at **77 East Claremont St** (particularly from the mid-1950s until 1970). Send us your memories and we will pass them on.

Planning permission has been granted to AMA (New Town Ltd) to convert the **never-occupied offices** at 73 Logie Green Rd into **29 residential apartments** (Ref. 14/01376/FUL).

Two readers contacted *Spurtle* last month regarding an **unofficial waste tip** along E. Scotland St Lane. One worried that it was an **uncontrolled fire waiting to ignite** (see online *Letters* 2.9.16). The other alleged that the garden detritus originated in **Bellevue Cres**. Both want the mess cleared away.

New **allotments** were officially opened on a previously under-used bowling green in **Victoria Park** on 31 Aug. The site includes 17 plots (one reserved for **Trinity Academy** pupils), a loo and separate storage shed, and cost £50k to develop.

Moreover ...

'The warp of "history"' continued: Or perhaps not – *Spurtle* understands Edinburgh Since 1437 Lambswool & Cashmere are THS suppliers, **registered in 2014** and based in Warriston Ter. Let's hope they're still about in 2595.

A seasonal change was in evidence early last month as a blanket of white covered much of **St Andrew Square**. The wintery scene owed nothing to snow, however. It was a vast carpet of netting laid to protect the new grass seeded to replace the old grass **destroyed by events** over the summer. With any luck, it will be fully restored and flourishing just in time for the **Christmas entertainments** to kill it all off again. As Stuart Hay (aka @StreetWurrier) concisely tweeted on 4 September: 'Private garden now reopened with £2.6m grant as public space. Commercial use summer & winter>wrecked spring & autumn'. Meanwhile, **George Street** – recently hailed by officials and councillors as one of the capital's **principal splendours** – will this year host the gaudy light-show which obscured and ruined the Old Town last year. **It beggars belief.**

For sale in **McNaughtan's** on **Haddington Place** last month: 1st editions (1954) of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* in 3 volumes. 'Original red cloth, spines lettered in gilt, printed dustjackets. A **thin dampmark** along the top edge of the dustjackets (just showing slightly on the cloth in one or two places as well) with some resulting colour transfer on the interior, the dustjacket spine panels **browned and sunned** with several splashmarks as well, a couple of short edge-tears on each and otherwise just a little light soiling.' Yours for **£2,500**.

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Edinburgh North and Leith



Regular Surgeries

Leith: 1st Friday of the month
1–2pm, 166 Great Junction Street
Leith Walk: 2nd Friday of the month
3.30–4.30pm, McDonald Rd Library
Stockbridge: 3rd Friday of the month
1–2pm Stockbridge Library
Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre: Last Friday, 4–5pm
dbrockmp.scot
Tel: 0131-555 7009
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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 on 17 October, 7.00pm, McDonald Rd Library.
ALL WELCOME.

leithcentralcc.co.uk/meeting-dates



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or

1.00pm Bellevue Chapel, Rodney St
(includes free lunch)

or

7.30pm Liberton

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New Town & Broughton Community Council

represents the views of local residents to City of Edinburgh Council.

You're welcome to attend on **10 October at 7.30pm** Broughton St Mary's Parish Church, Bellevue Crescent

www.ntbcc.org.uk