

Spurtle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER **Free**

'FRIENDLY' PLANS UNVEILED FOR SHRUB PLACE

Outline plans for the redevelopment of Shrub Place have been exhibited at McDonald Road Library as part of a preapplication notification (Ref. 12/04360/PAN).

EMA Architecture & Design envisages new housing and flats (25% affordable homes) on the 5 acre (2.1 ha) site. Key concepts are:

- Reinforcement of (currently vacant) historic streetscape along Leith Walk
- Retention of listed tram workshops – use to be decided following detailed structural survey
- Chimney to become a focal point, creating a sense of neighbourhood identity
- Creation of weaving routes through the site to encourage movement and connection whilst limiting vehicle speeds
- Colony-style/terraced housing
- Massing and density reduced from previously consented plan (Ref. 05/03128/FUL), with less than half as many dwellings proposed (formerly 401). Heights reduced from 6 to 5 storeys on Leith Walk; 4-storey flats; 3-storey Colonies.

The current owner of the site (Frasers Hamilton [Shrubhill] Ltd) has sought a more 'market-friendly' proposal in line with current economic conditions' – i.e. one likely to appeal to buyers and therefore investors.

Following analysis of public reaction and consultation with representative local bodies, the proposals will be refined in more detail and then entered into the Planning process, almost certainly in 2013. At that stage, locals will have another opportunity to express their opinions.

Leith Central Community Council has yet to respond formally to the PAN exercise, but Harald Tobermann of its Planning subcommittee describes the mixed-use development as seeming 'very community-friendly'. However, after so many delays and false dawns here, he expresses doubt about whether this particular proposal is 'for real'. Rather than continuing the struggle to finance grand schemes all in one go, LCCC wonders whether phased delivery of smaller parcels of land following an agreed overall design would be more practical.



UNITED ... IF ONLY IN MUTUAL IRRITATION

Leith Central Community Council and owners Unite PLC are at loggerheads over the short-term future of the derelict Shrubhill House site (Issues 213–14).

LCCC are investigating a range of temporary uses for the area in front of the building, including a market and/or community garden. They have even had early indications of financial support from the Forestry Commission.

However, Unite allegedly refuses to countenance such uses unless LCCC drops opposition to its application for a 5-year renewal of planning permission (Ref. 06/05371/FUL).

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CONSCIENCE ON THE WALL



It's heartening sometimes to find graffiti which looks beyond the specificities of local turf rivalries and tag boasts to address larger issues. These sentiments appear on the former tramway workshops of Dryden Street.

MEANWHILE, MORE SHORT-TERM TROUBLE IN STORE?

Readers will recall the recent efforts of Dryden Terrace and other nearby residents to limit disruptive use of the vacant Shrub Place site by tram contractors (Issues 210–13).

In November, the Council's Enforcement section finally curtailed 'recycling operations' (stone crushing) there. But Tram Project bosses have since officially applied for permission to use the site for 'storage' of tramwork-related materials for another 12 months.

In response, Planners will now request submission of a formal planning application for this use so that the matter can be fully considered.

Leith Central Community Council and locals must consider careful whether to object to any such change of use (it could after all set a precedent for other contractors later) and/or to lay down strict conditions about what is (safely) stored where, and the means and frequency with which it is accessed.



Briefly



CASA ANGELINA
VINTAGE TEA ROOM & PATISSERIE

Much as we deplore the departure to sunnier climes of **The French Fancies** (*Breaking news*, 21.2.13), we delight in the prompt arrival at 42 London St of **Casa Angelina**. Experienced patisserie chefs **Scott McLean** and **Marie-Claire Semera** (after whose grandmother the business is named) promise **French and Italian-influenced patisserie** in a vintage-style tearoom, and will cater too for those who prefer their pastries **gluten and dairy-free**.

The next meeting of the **Broughton History Society** will be at 7pm on 11 Mar in Drummond CHS. **Eric Melvin** will talk on 'The Movers and Shakers of Edinburgh's Golden Age'. Nothing to do with Bilfinger Berger or Lagan.

Volunteers will meet at Tanfield Bridge on 2, 3, 16 and 17 Mar to help improve the **Rocheid Path** (Canonmills-Inverleith) between **10am and 2pm** or however long you can spare. Bring gloves, secateurs 'and anything else you think might be useful' (not ships' bells or air fresheners, thank you.) For more info, call Mob. 07975 988090.

Welcome to **Bonsai**, Japanese bar bistro at 14 Broughton St and '**authentic affordable fun**'. Bonsai succeeds the popular **Siam Thani** whose owner has retired.

LGBT Age's next social event for the over-50s will be in the Centre at **9 Howe St** from 2–5pm on Wed 20 Mar. '**Chill-out to a classic matinée**'.

A **Red Nose Day and Kenya Partnership fund-raiser** will start in Drummond CHS at 7pm on Fri 15 Mar. Refreshments and lively music from local bands. Tickets £5 (under 12s, £2).

Planning consent has been granted for the **Chris Stewart Group's** redevelopment of **1–5 Baxter's Place** as a 4-star hotel with associated facilities (Ref. 12/04064/FUL). See *Breaking news* (22.2.13).

Edinburgh may be a '**dystopian wasteland**' and 'great city in abject decline' according to **Professor Richard Williams** in *Foreign Policy* magazine [<http://atfp.co/14TIOi9>], but plenty of people still want to live here. Office owners at **57/57a** and **28 Albany St** won planning consent to convert to residential use last month, and similar applications were made for **4 Bellevue St** (Ref. 13/00389/FUL) and **22 York Place** (Ref. 13/00422/FUL).

Local chefs mentor tomorrow's tasty talents

Budding Chefs is an innovative exchange programme for young Scottish chefs and their peers at the Lycée Hôtelier Dinard in Brittany.

Set up in 2011 by award-winning **L'Escargot Bleu** and Blanc patron Fred Berkmillier (right) and the Institut français d'Ecosse, the scheme aims to increase knowledge whilst cross-fertilising excellent and distinctive local produce with native cuisine from the other partner country.

Twelve French chefs will this month visit Scottish meat, fish, game and vegetable producers. Then on 15 March, at a pop-up restaurant in Edinburgh's Hub, they will serve 250 paying guests.

The 4-course menu remained a mystery at the time of writing, but will be planned and overseen on the night by Berkmillier and another well-known chef with recent Picardy Place connections – **Mark Greenaway**.

To book your £40 meal in advance, Tel. 225 5366. To find out more, visit: [<http://buddingchefs.net/>].



Allotments for Broughton Road?

Locals have long worried that underuse of Powderhall Bowling Green on Broughton Road might eventually lead to its closure and sale as housing (see Issue 160).

At a well-attended meeting in December 2012, Council officials recently stated their commitment to retaining the area as green space, but suggested partial use for alternative purposes might be desirable.

A report in the spring is now expected to contain recommendations for refurbishment of the pavilion, and for the usually deserted putting green to be used instead for around 30 allotments, using imported soil on raised beds.

Edinburgh currently has a waiting list for allotments numbering in the thousands, so this solution strikes *Spurtle* as a sensible one.



Audrey Grant, Man with Hand on Chest
Audrey Grant's enigmatic figures will feature in a solo exhibition at the Union Gallery on Broughton St this month. Grant depicts 'recognisable states of doubt, vulnerability, loneliness and becoming' against and amid heavily worked textured backgrounds. *Sprtle's* reviewer loved them in their last showing here two years ago (*Breaking news* 18.2.11).

Progress on Pilrig St

Neighbours say they are delighted by long-awaited improvements made to a controversial guesthouse at 26 Pilrig Street (Issue 214)

Following 5 years' of complaints by locals, and the recent close scrutiny of HMO licensing officials, the landlord has renovated the property's front elevation, improved the rear, and repaired the chimney.

An HMO official will address Leith Central Community Council on 25 March to clarify Council policy and practice on housing homeless people.



In Northumberland St's Gallery on the Corner this month, Keith Salmon's wonderfully atmospheric landscapes will show in an exhibition called 'In Sun, Rain, Mist and Snow'.

The work shown here, in acrylic and pastel, is 'From Ghias Beinn, December Afternoon'.

Incredibly, Salmon began to lose his sight in 1989 and is now registered blind: 'Over the last few years he has combined the scribbled pastel line with ... painted acrylic marks, stating that he is "trying to capture a little of how I experience these wonderful wild places"'.

See: [www.keithsalmon.org/].

New Elm Row eaterie

London-based London Cornwall Property Partners (LCPP) have applied for planning permission to turn vacant retail premises at basement and ground-floor levels of 40–4 Elm Row into a 375 sq.m. restaurant (Ref. 13/003117/FUL; 13/003118/LBC; 13/00321/FUL).

L CPP won planning consent to redevelop the former Gateway Theatre here in November 2011 (*Breaking news*, 23.8.11; 21.11.11). The scheme is scheduled for completion in August 2013.

New gate sought for Botanics

Plans progress for the rebuilding of the Botanic Cottage (formerly on Leith Walk) inside the Royal Botanic Gardens (*Breaking news*, 3.9.09; Issue 207). The site proposed is part of the Demonstration Garden backing onto Inverleith Place (and aligning with the central arch in the Beech Hedge).

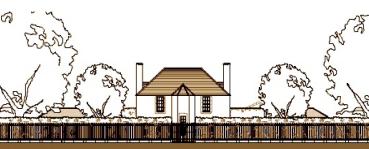


Figure 22 Proposed north elevation to Inverleith Place. S&B

Inverleith Place residents were recently consulted on alterations to the existing listed boundary railings to provide a new gate for occasional access to the Cottage outwith normal RGBE opening hours. The new gate would not be used for routine servicing. Planning consent has now been sought (Ref. 13/00423/LBC).



Figure 23 Proposed north gate to Inverleith Place. S&B

Architects Simpson & Brown's interesting, illustrated 'Design and Access Statement' – giving a history of the Cottage and the project to bring it back into use – is downloadable from the Council's Planning Portal at: [<http://bit.ly/VEbr1E>].

New Town high tide ebbs

Tramwork-related cross-New Town traffic is decreasing, officials told the New Town and Broughton Community Council last month.

The volume of diverted traffic on Albany Street peaked in July and August last year at around 500 vehicles per hour in the early afternoon.

Following removal of the 'Princes Street plug', levels dropped by 40 per cent over Christmas and the trend has continued downwards since. Road resurfacing will begin once traffic levels eventually return to their former levels.

One (perhaps the only) popular feature of recent diversions has been installation of a temporary pedestrian crossing on Abercromby Place. *Spurtle* understands locals may press to have it made permanent.

Picardy Place: situation normal – all fall down



The recent collapse of a ceiling at Fiddler's Elbow, 4 Picardy Place – which fortunately injured neither staff nor clients – was not without precedent. There was a

more disastrous occurrence along the way at No. 16 in 1833.

This was the address of the celebrated judge John Clerk jun., Lord Eldin. This 'chief luminary of the bar' was also a prodigious collector of art and antiques. After his demise in 1832, a sale was held in March 1833 at his home and attracted a great throng. A floor collapsed under the crowd's weight, resulting in one death on the spot and one later in hospital.

There were many anecdotes about Lord Eldin, who was known for his bibulous accomplishment. When staggering home one evening he was heard muttering 'Where's John Clerk's house?' When told 'Why, you're John Clerk!' he responded 'Yes, yes, but it's his house I want.'

On another occasion, when seen leaving a house at what seemed an unusually early hour, he was asked 'Done with dinner already?' He replied, 'Aye, but we sat down yesterday.' *JRM* (with thanks to John Dickie)

We have seen the future and ... it's dull



Is this the most boring 'green' space in Broughton?

No bees buzz. No birds sing. Twelve tubs of woebegone, wind-blasted privet. Endless red chippings. One-hundred-and-fifty paving slabs. Not a blade of grass nor a single flower to cheer the weary eye. Certainly no bench on which to rest a buttock.

Utterly unimaginative, this oasis of sterility between Nos 10 and 12 Hopetoun Street seems to have come straight from some Jaques Tati vision of heartless modernity.

Landscaping the site was a condition of planning consent in 2003 (Ref. 03/03523/FUL), but this area is in fact a failed dream.

Bluebell Estates (Hopetoun) Ltd – oh, the irony! – aspired for it to become a 'green link' extending north once the cash and carry business behind closed and was redeveloped. However, the Bellevue Cash & Carry continues to trade.

Surely, in the meantime, developers, factors, locals and Council officials could come up with something better?

Briefly

A significant revamp will take place from March–May at the east end of King George V Park. Biffa have made available £70K for new play equipment, and for a series of steps leading up the slope beside the slide. These will provide a place for kids to climb, young people to chat and – potentially – audiences to sit during Fringe or other events.

Belated Bohemian news: Archie Linklater sighted a large flock of Waxwings which briefly visited a willow tree on the north side of Barony St in late Jan.

Solicitors acting for Hawke & Hunter on Picardy Place have contacted locals offering reassurance about the firm's new layout. The Licensing Standards Officer has been told the business is to be run more as a hotel than a nightclub, and management there expect no disturbance for nearby residents.

Lothian & Borders Police say no suspicious circumstances attached to the death of 24-year-old Elm Row resident Sanjay Dhital, whose body was recovered from St Margaret's Loch on 27 Jan (Issue 215).

Road resurfacing along Eyre Place (Dundas St–Eyre Terrace) began on 4 Feb and is scheduled to continue until 15 Mar. **Westbound traffic permitted only.**

The long-awaited **pedestrian /cyclist ramp re-linking St Mark's Park and Warriston Bridge** appeared very close to completion as we went to press.

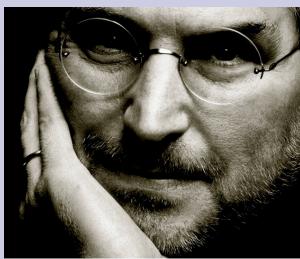
Regarding plans for **19 flats and maisonettes at 117 Bellevue Rd** (*Breaking news*, 11.12.12), New Town & Broughton Community Council found 'really very little to cavil at'. They did, however, request **mature tree-planting** to compensate for those being felled, and a **toddlers' play area** in line with Edinburgh Design Guidance.

A mysterious **black box** which appeared last month 10ft up a lamp-post at 56/8 East Claremont Street has been identified. **Cllr Blacklock** confirms that it was a Council radar, temporarily brought in at the request of locals to monitor what they allege is excessive traffic speed on this **20mph thoroughfare**. They have also successfully lobbied for the repair of a nearby speed hump.

City-Centre police report an increase in '**anti-social behaviour**' on **common stairs**. Tragically, it is largely explained by homeless people sneaking in to escape bitter weather.

TG Tip 4 — Now that the days are getting longer, plan to walk or bike to work on set days of the week. You don't need to do it every day, but perhaps start with 3 days a week. Remember to schedule the days in your diary and organise the gear you need the night before. Once you get in the habit, it becomes easy. You may even find that you save time on waiting on buses or stuck in traffic jams. It can be very liberating knowing you're getting exercise as you commute.

Moreover ...



Firsthands **floor layout plans** for the old Woolworth's site at 10–14 Princes St were described by the Cockburn Association last month as '**remarkably Applelike**' (Ref. 13/00497/FUL). Is this Edinburgh's worst-kept retail secret?

We have belatedly learned that **Albert of Annandale Street** has been found safe and well. The black cat initially took off in a **chihuahua-related huff** in Sept, but Spurtle coverage in Issue 211 helped pinpoint his **not-altogether consensual** new residence elsewhere. Domestic hiss has now been restored.

Scottish Gas mains replacement along Inverleith Row (the recently resurfaced section between Brandon Terr and Eildon St) is scheduled to last until 4 Apr.

David Watt of Bellevue Place has questioned our photographing the **frosty alps** of Drummond CHS playground in Issue 215 at an artistic angle. He mistook the effect for an **earthquake**. He asks whether the accompanying flurry of Scots will become standard after the referendum in 2014. We say: **Mebbe aye, mebbe no, perhaps neither.**

Spurtle's online seasonal baking suprema **Fiona Harvey** is leaving us to concentrate on a more important **bun currently in the metaphorical oven** and the resumption of her busy career afterwards. March's recipe will be her last. We extend thanks and best wishes.

Bill Giles has responded at length to our piece on access to the **private garden in Drummond Place** (Issue 215). For reasons of space, we reproduce his words in full in *Breaking news* (28.2.13).

Architecture students at Edinburgh University have been case-studying **Broughton's morphology, culture, power and ownership** as part of their final-year project. At a presentation attended by the *Spurtle*, they identified much piecemeal development, and political, social and cultural weaknesses in an area torn between Leith, the New Town and City Centre. *Spurtle* argued that the area's multiple identities and areas of focus can also be a strength.

Spring Term ends in Edinburgh state schools on Fri 22 Mar.

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1pm-2pm Stockbridge Library
NB. No Surgeries on Public Holidays.
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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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no appointment necessary;
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New Town/Broughton Community Council

The Community Council
represents the views
of local residents to
Edinburgh City Council

Next Meetings:
Monday 4 March
Monday 8 April

at 7.30pm

Broughton St Mary's Parish
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AM DECORATING

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