

Spurtle



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2014**

No 236

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

CAUTIOUS WELCOME FOR NEW OLD SHRUBHILL PLANS



Architects Cooper Cromar displayed plans for the Shrubhill gap-site as part of a pre-application notification consultation last month (Ref. 14/03607/PAN). All plans on display were 'work in progress' and details may change.

The proposals, for developer People for Places (Shrubhill) Ltd, resemble those approved in August 2008 (Ref. 05/03128/FUL) but with changes to elevations, car parking, internal layouts and public realm among others.

A mix of 375 flats is envisaged: 1-bedroom (25%), 2-bedroom (60%) and 3-bedroom (15%). Space fronting Leith Walk, formerly earmarked for office use, will now be residential.

Each flat will have an underground parking space. There will be internal, ground-floor cycle parking and bin space.

The Masonic Club will sit at ground level in the heart of the development, with some natural light but no windows to look out of or into. A planted square will sit on top of it.

Roads within the development will be accessible only to bin lorries and emergency vehicles from the Leith Walk end. Pedestrian access will be east-west between Dryden Terrace and Leith Walk, with no way through the wall bounding the Shaw Colonies.

Access to a potential cycle route along the current railway to Powderhall will be built, and upgrading of the ramp at Dryden Terrace is a likely but unpromised possibility when refurbishment and conversion of the tram workshop there starts in about five years' time.

A full planning application is expected to be submitted in December.

What people say ...

Opinion we've heard is for the most part cautiously favorable.

- Some people found the designs bland. Others liked: stone elevations fronting Leith Walk; oatmeal brickwork, with ornamental relief, further in; and an overall stylistic modesty.

- There appears to be a good amount of grass and tree planting on-site, and ground-floor main-doors encourage community involvement.

- Some regretted the loss of Colony-style family housing seen in earlier plans. Others said a market need for first-time housing was being met.

- We heard warm support for high-quality bike storage and access, but concern that bin-space might not match changed CEC requirements/sizes in future.

- There was disappointment that no useful purpose for the listed brick chimney has yet been found.

LOVING TOUCH WOOS JUDGES



Congratulations to local Andrea Obzerova who recently won first prize in this year's Professional Photographer of the Year competition for a 3-portrait portfolio. Her affectionate and insightful studies of her grandparents were judged best out of 5,100 entrants from over 40 countries. See p. 2.

NO END YET TO 7-YEAR-LONG LEITH WALK FIASCO

During their meeting on 17 November, Leith Central Community Council members yet again voiced frustration at the state of Leith Walk repairs and improvements.

Slow progress and seeming interminable delays to work starting between Pilrig Street and Picardy Place were raised.

So was alleged poor or evasive communication from City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) officials. Freedom of Information requests are now necessary to extract basic information such as snagging lists. Contractors' woefully inadequate workmanship on some sections of the route has not lightened the mood.

The urge to withdraw from the long-troubled stakeholder group has so far been resisted – partly thanks to the pleas of local councillors – but how much longer LCCC will continue to participate looks doubtful to objective observers.

It's a shocking guddle which looks likely to continue without firm political leadership and vastly improved project management.

CEC RETHINKS MUSIC RULES

Musicians, venue managers and concert promoters have demanded CEC rethink live music in Edinburgh.

At an Usher Hall meeting on 17 November, advocates for change criticised what they see as overly strict rules which too often lead to small venues being shut down. (In October, the Barony Bar briefly had to suspend Sunday evening gigs, after 35 years, following one complaint.)

Cllr Hart, CEC's culture and sport vice-convenor, promised to look at how licensing/noise rules could be adjusted. *Pace*, St Stephen's Church chime fans.



Briefly



Photo: The Dragonfly.

We wish all our readers, subscribers, advertisers, authors, **well-placed whisperers, sage counsels**, nit-pickers, photographers, distributors, friends, bugbears, critics and hostile solicitors a **Merry Christmas and forgiving New Year.**

The **Drummond Place police box** has been bought by a local resident whose plans for the structure are not known. **Blue Bear Café** proprietors in Brandon Terrace have bought a police box in **Marchmont** and aim to rent it out as a micro-coffee shop in 2015.

The genuine Elspeth Morrison will talk to **Broughton History Society** on 12 January at 6.30pm in Drummond CHS about **'Hallmarking and the History of the Assay Office'**.

Weeds in the gutters are reaching **sapling level** on Great King St, Drummond Place and various other thoroughfares, we hear. **Are your bean-stalks in need of felling?** Tell us where and we will refer your outlandish growth to **locals with an axe to grind.**

Broughton-based band **Whisky Kiss** released a new single in November. **'McTomic' reached No. 77** in the US iTunes charts: [<http://goo.gl/4qCfCB>]. **'Amazing,' they say, 'for a wee unsigned ceilidh band!'**

Open seminars on **organising mutual repairs in tenements** will include Edinburgh Stair Management's advice on setting up owners associations. **Architects and surveyors will also contribute.** The next event is in Morningside Library on 15 Dec, 6.30–8.30pm, but **Broughton dates should follow** in the New Year. Watch this space (through the hole in your cupola). See: www.edinburghstairs.org.uk or Tel. 01968 677444.

While CEC keeps clearing **mattresses, flat-pack furniture and other junk** fly-tipped daily around bins, the **New Town Clean Streets Campaign** seeks locals' innovative ideas about how to stop the problem at source. Contact: newtowncleanstreetscampaign@gmail.com

Plans to expand Antigua St's **Ghurka Brigade restaurant** at the back have been approved. Plans to build 3-bedroom **mews flats on NW Cumberland St Lane** have been refused. See our website (10.11.14; 12.11.14).

Local Scouts' six reasons to shout



One Chief Scout Gold Award in 20 years was our local troop's best showing, *writes Scott Richard.*

Until Friday 7 November ... when six Broughton Scouts were presented with the coveted award by an inspiring person of their choice. Our plucky crew asked one granddad, one grandma, one mum, one young leader, one Beaver Scout leader and a former District Commissioner to do the honours.

Adrian, Charlie, Owen, Ruth, Ollie and Harry beamed with pride as they were congratulated by mums, dads, friends, family, other Scouts and leaders.

Assistant district commissioner Andy Campbell said, 'This evening is a culmination of a lot of hard work by the Scouts and their leaders, and I hope it inspires the younger members of the troop to keep the gold awards coming'.

The other triumph of the evening was Mrs Quill's homemade shorty served with the hospitality teas; worth its weight in gold.

Broughton St Mary's Scouts meet at Broughton Primary School gym hall each Friday in term time from 7–9pm. Contact: 11thescouts@gmail.com

Drummond courts success

Drummond Tennis Club may be small – two beautifully maintained blaes courts tucked away off East Scotland Street Lane – but it is the most welcoming friendly club in town, *writes Sophie Blake.*

I have run the coaching programme here for over five years and thoroughly enjoyed seeing it go from strength to strength. This year we've coached 100+ children and 50 adults, which is a huge achievement for such a small club.



I now have a wonderful team of coaches who assist me with everything from adult cardio to kids' lessons and summer camps. One of these is Alistair Stiven, who is qualifying as a level-2 coach. He has also successfully captained the Drummond Men's First Team, gaining promotion to Division 3.

The ladies' teams have also performed well, with the Ladies First Team being promoted to Division 1 for the first time in the club's history!

What makes this club so special is the people. It's full of personality, with a wonderful social committee putting on innovative events and getting people together. Friends are made, tennis is enjoyed, and fun is had by all.

See www.drummondtennisclub.co.uk and www.tenniswithsophie.com for further details.

Prize-winning portraiture

(Continued from page 1.) Readers may remember Andrea Obzerova. She worked in Crombie's as a cashier for two years before leaving to set up her own business – ABO Photography Ltd – in 2012 (Issue 212).

In May this year, on a trip back to her native Slovakia, she asked to take photos of her grandparents, now in their 80s, so that the family would always have something to remember them by.

'On the day of the photo shoot I was given 4–5 minutes to take their portraits ... My grandparents sat down on the couch, started interacting with each other, and I started shooting. I didn't want to stop, because they were so affectionate, loving and real. It was a beautiful moment.

'Every time I look at these images I feel warm inside and a little teary to be honest. It is great to see that even after 60 years of marriage you can be IN LOVE ... It was an honour to be part of this moment in their life and I will never forget it.'

For more images and Andrea's blog, see <http://goo.gl/J1YHBk>

City festivals – who should pay?

Local resident Caroline Roussot is annoyed at former Council Leader Donald Anderson's recent praise for the economic benefits of festival tourism, and his pre-emptive digs at anyone who dares not to be overjoyed (see our website 20.11.14).

What cheeses me off about these festivals, she writes, is not the tourists per se, or even the tackiness of CEC's 'vision', but the constant mutualisation of costs and privatisation of benefits.

While my family participates in and enjoys the Festival and Fringe each year, it continues to feel like an imposition because CEC says it simply cannot afford to step up city-centre public services (particularly street cleansing) at the same time.

CEC needs to find a way to collect extra funds so that residents do not suffer from the massive influx of visitors, and it should be collecting these funds from those who benefit most: tourists themselves or accommodation providers, bars and restaurants in the city centre.

I am aware that it was the Scottish Government which kyboshed CEC plans for a tourist tax ('transient visitor levy'). But the fact remains that Edinburgh Council Tax payers are contributing millions to various festivals, suffering overstretched and poor public services as a direct result, and all the benefits flow into the pockets of private companies.

Finally, to come back to the poverty of CEC's (ahem) 'vision' for Edinburgh's Winter Festival, the signs in St Andrew Square say it all. There is nothing there about the attractions of *Edinburgh*, for goodness sake: it seems all the organisers can think about is jetting off elsewhere!



Briefly



This oddly pleasing assemblage is called 'Nutshell', and is by **Rosemary Walker**. It caught our eye in a group Christmas Exhibition at **McNaughtan's Bookshop & Gallery** on Haddington Place which contains mainly 'smaller pieces suitable for presents'. It continues until 31 Jan.

In the run-up to Christmas, on 9 Dec at 6.30pm in McDonald Rd Library, the **Central Edinburgh Book Group** will discuss *The Pursuit of Love* by **Nancy Mitford**. All welcome. Happy hunting.

Vast Vs of geese – **150+ strong** – have been spotted heading east over the city towards sunset lately. We think they're **Pinkfoots** en route to roosts at Aberlady Bay. (See our website, 18.11.14.)

WGP Partnership will exhibit pre-application plans for a residential development at **24 West Bowling Green St (EH6 5PB)** on 2 Dec from 3–7pm in **McDonald Rd Library**. Further info from: **EMA Architects, The Stables, 38 Baileyfield Rd, Edinburgh EH15 1NA** (Tel. 468 6595; email rick.p@ema-architects.co.uk). **Comments to EMA (not Council) by 30 Dec.**

Police have warned people to **take care on Calton Hill** after two recent assaults. The incidents happened on Wed 19 and Fri 21 November, in the early hours of the morning. In one, a tourist was **punched in the face** and had his wallet and mobile telephone stolen. In the other, a man was **knocked to the ground and robbed**.

Welcome **Fabric Focus** which opened on E Claremont Street last month. New owner **Kevin McGovern** is the former manager of Mandors, and stocks haberdashery, craft, curtain and dress requisites. Sadly, **Elbow next door** has buckled under the strain and closed.

Welcome to **Pieute**, which has popped up in the space formerly occupied by **White Rabbit** at 44 Broughton St. It's testing the water here for 3 months with **designer T-shirts** from Trainerceratops, Mr Penfold and Conzo Throb. Enjoy a live wall mural from the **Too Much Fun Club** and hip hop sounds from Dj Sonny and P. Stylz. *Pieute* in French is a **friendly instruction to sleep**. Fat chance.

Also welcome to **Nordic Affair** who will be opening a Swedish and Norwegian food and delicacy store at **19 Haddington Place**, top of Leith Walk, on the 4th of Dec. just in time for Christmas hampers.

Leith Central Community Council's next meetings are on 15 Dec, 19 Jan and 16 Feb (7.00pm, **McDonald Rd Library**).

Old bird still fired up

Broughton Street's Phoenix Bar turns 30 this year, and current owners the Roberts family are holding a party to celebrate.

The free but ticketed event on 5 December (8.00pm–3.00am) promises 'bangin' tunes, fabulous 80s cocktails, and lots of faces from the "old days"', including previous owners John and Rosaleen's.

Stories, memorabilia, and dance moves unlikely to require paramedic attendance afterwards are all welcome.



St Andrew Square ... Bah, humbug!

Rejoice, Essential Edinburgh! Yes, let's go heelster-gowdie down the helter-skelter. Yes, let's take to the skates à la Reverend Robert Walker and zoom round Lord Dundas's draughty pillar (arse-over-tit spills notwithstanding). Yes, let's glug on some of that mulled stuff, and – yum – let's embrace the 'shameless, slap-wearing' hunks who can't help putting the sex in sextet in that spiffing Spiegelent.

Thanks a mill, oh Essential Reekie! Thanks for the apotheosis of your essential achievements in 2014. *Deo gratis*, your desecration of St Andrew Square is accomplished. PS: When will astroturf be installed, or essential paving, now that any semblance of actual grass is being progressively eliminated? *JRM*



Moreover ...

A report going before the **full Council** on 11 Dec will probably outline investment options for **5 Edinburgh tram scenarios**: (1) Do nothing; (2) Extend to McDonald Rd; (3) Go to the Foot of the Walk; (4) Go to Ocean Terminal; (5) Go the whole 14-mile hog to Roseburn. **We think Options 1 and 2 are most likely**, but the *Evening News* (10 Nov) 'understood' a route to the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary is 'back on the table'. **Details online from 5 Dec.**

Since 1995 **Edinburgh Community Mediation** has helped thousands of people resolve problems with their neighbours (**e.g. noise, fences, anti-social behaviour**). The service is free, impartial, confidential and voluntary. For details Tel. 624 5400 or email infoedincm@sacro.org.uk

The next printed *Spurtle* will appear in February 2015. Until then, online coverage of **Broughton** will continue in *Breaking news* at www.broughtonspurtle.org.uk

Pilrig St Paul's Church has applied for a public entertainment licence in order to mount **theatrical and musical performances**. The Cumberland Bar has withdrawn its application to **extend outside drinking hours** year-round (Issue 235).

Results of the latest public opinion surveys on **George St's partial pedestrianisation experiment** will be published on 16 Dec. Indications are that **90-95% of people polled approve**. Officials, though, want to improve a **sense of place** by better marquee design etc., and concede '**flipping**' cyclists from one side of the street to the other has not worked.

New communal bins arrived on Howe and E. Jamaica Sts and NW Circus Pl in Nov, *reports the New Town Clean Streets Campaign*. By the time you read this, road markings in Dublin and St Vincent Sts should be finished, and new bins may even be in place. Hart St residents still park on most available flat surfaces but **now NOT in front of the bins** – progress! CEC insists London St strongly favours gull-proof bags over communal bins. **If you disagree, let them know!**

ST VINCENT'S CHAPEL (corner of St Vincent & St Stephen Streets)

SUN 21 DEC: SERVICE OF LESSONS & CAROLS, 6pm
CHRISTMAS EVE: CRIB SERVICE, 5pm
MIDNIGHT MASS, 11.30pm
CHRISTMAS DAY:
EUCARIST, 10.30am

You are also welcome to join one of our regular services on Thursdays at 11am or Sundays at 10.30am and 6pm.
www.stvincentschapel.org.uk

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Saturday surgeries:
Leith Library, Ferry Road: 10am.
Royston Wardieburn Community Centre, Pilton Drive North: 12 noon.

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surgeries: second
Monday of the month
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:

8 December
at 7.30pm

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

www.ntbcc.org.uk/contact/

AM DECORATING

Your local painter & decorator **Alastair McAlpine**
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