

Spurttle



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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

DUNDAS STREET POISED FOR A FIGHT

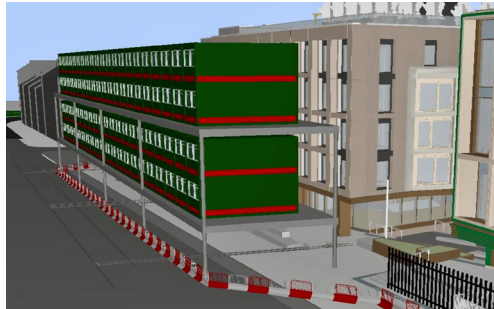
Developers Ediston and contractors Robert McAlpine are making tentative enquiries about temporary worker accommodation on Dundas St. We don't know if this means offices or sleeping/eating/recreation quarters.

The unlovely green erection would stand adjacent to the New Town Qtr site during its 2-5-year build. It would be 5-storeys high and 50 m long and occupy parts of the carriageway, including a bus stop and taxi rank. The footway would run underneath in an 'illuminated tunnel'. It's unclear where loos, fire exits, and kitchens would be positioned.

The idea has outraged neighbours, especially those whose amenity would be reduced by all-night lighting and being overlooked from 20 m closer than before.

One resident describes it as an 'unconscionable' intrusion in the World Heritage Site and New Town Conservation Area. He promises a massive fight if the proposal is progressed. Fettes Row & Royal Cres Residents Assoc also objects. A dissenting voice told *Spurttle*: 'Typical ****ing New Town demand for omelette without broken eggs.'

Some locals say developers should use parts of their own 3 ha site for this purpose. But they wonder if Permitted Development Rights will trump the conflicting requirements of a Road Occupation Permit. In Mar, 132 objectors failed to prevent a similar temporary worker compound near Haymarket (bit.ly/3SNz4TO).



FIRST CLOCK, THEN FLOCK



After 15 years in storage, the London Rd clock returned to the junction at Elm Row on 16 Aug. The popular landmark was first sited at Waverley Bridge in 1857, then moved to the West End between 1896 and 1955. Read about the clock's restoration here [bit.ly/3PNCOcd]. Stand by for doos roosting soon.

PICARDY PLACE DISCUSSION - LITTLE ROOM FOR MANOEUVRE

On 16 August, Council-appointed project management consultants Turner & Townsend presented preliminary proposals for the design of the c.2 ha central island in Picardy Pl., writes Peter Williamson, Chair of Picardy Residents' Association.

This first formal attempt to engage local people [see Issue 316] was attended by 2 City Centre councillors and 7 stakeholder representatives. The main points made at the meeting were:

- The design should prioritise the flow of pedestrians and cyclists rather than providing a sitting area/destination, whose attractiveness surrounded by traffic would be open to doubt.
- Greenery and soft surfaces should be maximised with an emphasis on biodiversity, shrubs, and 'real trees' rather than hard surfaces.
- The design should be sympathetic to the Cathedral, Gayfield Sq and Elm Row.
- The Conan Doyle statue should be positioned on the island. The north corner should have a plinth for temporary works of art or another statue or landmark.
- The 'Leith Stones' should not be located in the island.
- There should be no pop-ups or commercial spaces. Bicycle parking racks can be more conveniently located elsewhere. Hostile-vehicle mitigation should be made sympathetic (i.e., not bollards).

Turner & Townsend representatives said they would consider the suggestions. Lack of information about pedestrian/cyclist flows and sub-surface conditions, particularly for drainage, hampered discussion of the details.

It was made clear that the new proposals would go straight to Committee with no opportunity for further comment. Construction work will start in early 2023 as part of the tramworks. [*Spurttle will return to some of the questions surrounding this meeting on our website on 1 Sept.*]



EYRE PLACE PLANS FUEL LOCAL ANGER

CA Eyre Place (Edinburgh) Property Owner Ltd have brought forward revised plans for the former Jewson's site at 72-4 Eyre Pl. They comprise 142 studio flats for students across up to six floors, and, at the Scotland Yard end of the lane, nine 4-bedroom townhouses (22/03833/FUL; 22/03834/FUL).

A 'feature facade' devoid of features would front Eyre Place, with gold-effect cladding used to help residents find the way in. A 'sawtooth roofscape' is intended to add interest and reduce apparent massing. Blue/green roofs and solar panels will be incorporated, as will three roof terraces. There will be new and wider footways, including a Copenhagen crossing at the main entrance.

Opposition to the proposals [bit.ly/3QKB5yP] has been coordinated by a local residents group [bit.ly/3QwS33B] ahead of the 2 Sept deadline for objections. They have gathered 250+ signatures for a petition.

While welcoming the introduction of less obtrusive townhouses and the reduced number of student apartments, they object to the overall scale of the development, its overbearing presence blocking natural light for neighbours, and dense accommodation overburdening local infrastructure and amenity.

On a side issue, the relevant desk-based archaeological assessment says, 'The site may have been a focal point of the early mill and associated industries from at least the medieval period, and as such, there is the potential for waterlogged deposits to survive within the site which may contain paleo-environmental information as well as remains of evidence for medieval activity.'

Briefly



Award-winning patisserie **The Broken Clock Café** is leaving the bright lights of the St James Qtr and moving to **27 Broughton St** (formerly Gregg's). The business began on Park Rd, Glasgow in 2019, and has since developed a reputation for its **experimental pastries** (15 at any one time) combining 'high-end ingredients, latest technology and crazy ideas'. The idea has been to create a place where you can **enjoy your cake** without worrying about time.

Galliford Try Telecoms' bid to mount 4 antennas, 1 GPS module and 4 sets of 6 ERS modules to the outside of **Broughton St Mary's Parish Church** steeple has been refused, thank God. Officials agreed with the **Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland** that, despite vinyl camouflage, the equipment would have a **detrimental impact** on the listed building as well as the wider conservation area. It surprises the *Spurtle* that Broughton St Mary's ever countenanced the proposal, and that no other **amenity or heritage organisation** rang alarm bells.

During last month's 12-day strike by bin workers, some **Bellevue locals** sealed stuffed bins with duct tape and polite notices. They requested would-be users and side-dumpers to discourage vermin by **storing their rubbish at home**. As *Spurtle* went to press, this novel exercise in civic civility seemed to have worked.

Work was scheduled to begin last month on removing lampposts from footways and cycle paths along **Leith Walk**. Street lighting will now be incorporated into the central reservation's OLE poles (so named because construction staff working for **Spanish contractor Sacyr** become excited whenever they switch on). For interesting etymology, visit [bit.ly/3zUjFbw].

Revised plans have been submitted for a new street food hall in Units 6-7 of the **OMNi Centre** [bit.ly/3CiGtEL]. Edinburgh Street Food would comprise **10 food outlets and 2 bars**. Three trees would be removed to make space for **sedum-blanketed canopies** and seating outside. The applicant says it has addressed planning officials' previous concerns about an **unsympathetic, disjointed and unwelcome** addition to the street, adverse impact on historic and modern design of neighbouring properties, and **noise**. The new communal dining venue would act as a vibrant 'melting pot', bringing together all types of people regardless of their culinary interests, dining preferences, and table manners.

Over the top and blooming horrible

In Issue 319 we vented a reader's distaste for ersatz vegetation on city streets. An exuberant and egregious example has sprung to our attention since: the Kaleidoscope Whisky Bar on Queen St.

No. 28 is a Category A-listed building of 1798, and a 'significant surviving part of the original fabric of Edinburgh's New Town'. However, Gifford et al. (1983) note that it has already suffered from 'the raising of the top windows into the garlanded frieze'.

Reader @jamiwallace wonders what our problem is. 'Edinburgh has some of the most fantastic "living walls" of any city in the UK,' he tells us. 'When searching for a listed building on the Historic Environment Scotland website, you can now even filter results by nuclear holocaust resistance of floral display.'

The worldwide market for 'faux flora' is projected to grow from an estimated £2.4bn in 2020 to over £5bn in 2027.



Less overprovision – too much to hope for?

The Council's new Licensing Board must provide an updated Statement of Licensing Policy by 6 Nov 2023. This will include a policy on overprovision.

A new Licensing Forum, comprising an independent advisory panel of local experts must be appointed first. Efforts will be made to include 'young people' alongside Health Board, Alcohol Action Team, and other representatives.

Officials will compile data on current licensed premises (onsale and offsale) by locality over the next few weeks to provide a heatmap of what's where by Sep/Oct 2022.

Broad consultation (including via the Council's consultation hub) will aim to establish what does and doesn't work under current arrangements. Policy formulation will then be followed by a second, more focused, round of talks with relevant stakeholders.

A finished document (plus a pithy version accessible to lay readers) should be ready by June/July 2023, leaving a buffer period to wrangle any tweaks and challenges before the statutory autumn deadline.

Over the past five years, even observers who enjoy a drink have been heard to wonder why Edinburgh's current policy on licensing overprovision never seems to prevent new boozy venues springing up all over the overprovided city centre.

Festival pop-ups, George St, the OMNi Centre and St James Qtr, for example, are awash with alcohol, with consequences apparent on many Broughton pavements, particularly at weekends. It has long been suspected that the hospitality industry is too persuasive when it comes to watering down controls.

It's to be hoped that a revised overprovision policy will do more to control the situation for the better enjoyment of responsible pleasure-seekers and those living or passing nearby.

Aug's Licensing Board was the first to be webcast. This was a long overdue and welcome ray of light into an otherwise often murky corner of Council business.

Challenging times for Edinburgh World Heritage

Edinburgh World Heritage is preparing a new 5-year Management Plan to replace the existing one [bit.ly/3bSjP05], which expires at the end of this year.

Most people *Spurtle* knows admire and support EWH. But over the last 2 years, constructive critics have claimed that the cash-strapped charity has grown too cautious, unwilling to offend current or potential funders. They argue its 'inadequate' response to Edinburgh Council's proposal for communal bin hubs is a case in point.

Others describe EWH's printed management plans as glossy PR exercises whose ever 'woollier and fluffier' approach contains 'open-ended language dodging responsibility'. They want EWH to be stronger and more visible on contentious issues in civic debate.

Notwithstanding its work on 'Neighbourhood Focus Areas', some people *Spurtle* has spoken to doubt whether EWH has much understanding of local opinion or a genuine appetite for public engagement.

All of which should make for an interesting evening if EWH accepts the New Town & Broughton Community Council's invitation to present its management proposals at the next monthly meeting on 12 Sept.



Proud Leith and dog's breakfast

Tracy Griffen of Griffen Fitness will represent Leith in the Golden Spurtle World Porridge Making Championship at Carrbridge on 8 Oct. The Balfour St-based personal trainer and author says, 'My speciality porridge is a fitness meal for two – that is, one person and a dog. Yes, dog porridge!' This year's competition will be the 29th in a row, but the first in-person event since 2018. We wish Tracy and her chief porridge-for-pooches adviser Coco a stirring success.



Greener, happier, wealthier Edinburgh

edinburgh

LIVING LANDSCAPE



Edinburgh Living Landscape is a partnership to improve the capital's ecosystem by rebalancing the needs of nature and people for the benefit of both.

Begun in 2014, it's a landscape-scale project coordinating the Scottish Wildlife Trust, Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust, Edinburgh University, Edinburgh Botanic Garden, RSPB, and others.

Almost half the city already counts as green space – everything from private gardens to cycle tracks, allotments, cemeteries, golf courses, farmland, peatland, wetland, woodland, and coastal and intertidal areas.

The vision is to increase and enrich that existing biodiversity and create a network of connected habitats.

Micro-interventions include: removing invasive species; establishing more window boxes and roof gardens; planting additional trees, 'wee forests', pollinator-friendly square metres, and flower meadows like those in St Mark's and Pilrig Parks.

ELL is also integral to the strategic City Plan 2030, and informs the Council's Blue-Green Network as part of flood management, ecosystem services, active-travel routes, and local planning guidance.

ELL aims to deliver an effective model for other networks across Scotland, with the long-term goal of creating one of Europe's most sustainable low-carbon cities here by 2050. Community engagement is key.

ELL aspires to measurable socio-economic benefits (particularly in areas of deprivation), and improved health, well-being, and happiness for all. Future generations will perhaps scoff at the very thought of plastic foliage (p. 2). For more information, visit [bit.ly/3vjmC4d].

BT's limited appeal

BT's efforts to replace telephone boxes with street hubs (Issues 319–20) require both full planning application and advertising consents.

The latter are considered according to narrow criteria anent public safety and neighbouring amenity. This comparative simplicity may explain BT's decision to appeal against recent refusal of (some) advertising consents across Edinburgh (but not Dundas St or Hamilton Pl). If successful, they perhaps hope to prepare the ground for future appeals against more complex refusals of full planning permission at the same sites.

A sage observer has alerted *Spurtle* to BT's appeal to the Scottish Govt for a street hub near historic buildings on Dundee's High St (ADA-180-2016). In June this year, the Reporter found in their favour.

As well as legal niceties, his decision there appears to have turned on subjective assessments of amenity and attractiveness. That may concern those who dislike the prospect of high-tech street clutter in the capital's conservation areas.



Image: business.bt.com.

Tollhouse opens at last

The Tollhouse on Brandon Ter expects to open for diners this month. *Spurtle* visited the surprisingly spacious building in Aug, at the invitation of co-owner Paul Brennan.

The new restaurant will accommodate 36 covers, including private dining for 10 downstairs. It offers locally sourced ingredients with a 'contemporary twist', masterminded by the other co-owner (and Michelin-starred chef) Stuart Muir. Staff will number 24, half of them on the premises at any one time.

The interior is light, calm, modern, and panelled in smoked oak and walnut to absorb noise. Outside, there's a small smokehouse and terrace (open for coffees during the day) overlooking the Water of Leith. There are excellent views of wildlife and Canonmills. A sound-baffled extractor will prevent disturbance for neighbours.

This is the third restaurant to be opened by Dine; the others being at Murrayfield and the Traverse Theatre. The aim here is to cultivate a local and loyal clientele.

These aren't easy times to open a restaurant. Difficulties in accessing contractors, equipment, furnishings, and staff have prolonged a process that normally takes 2–3 months to 10 months. And prices have soared: 19% for drink, 27+% for food, 35% for payroll, and 300% for energy. Toilet-humorous flyposting adhered with industrial glue cost an extra unexpected £800 to remove and repair – not so funny in hindsight.



Briefly



Edinburgh North East Scouts in **Broughton, Leith, Stockbridge, and Trinity** seek adult volunteers. 'We're looking for those with a positive, can-do attitude who want to inspire and support our local young people.' No previous campfire experience necessary. Grills experience helpful.. Visit [bit.ly/3QR6qPU].

Friends of Inverleith Pk are struggling to irrigate the Sundial Garden. They've failed to get a permanent connection to the water supply via the **Council depot**, and are now trying for an alternative from **Portgower Pl**. Gardening volunteers of all abilities meet by the sundial on Wed mornings at 10 a.m. Just turn up to get involved. **To join the Friends**, click on Membership at [bit.ly/3JSazAJ].

Filming took place in **Claremont Ct** last month of scenes for *Outrun*: a screen adaptation of the best-selling novel by **Scottish novelist Amy Liptrot**. In brief, it's about a woman pulled between **Orkney on a sheep farm** and city life. We favour reasonable compromise and would prefer to keep sheep in Claremont Ct. More at: [bit.ly/3PVzHJ].

Work has started to convert the former store at **1 Gayfield Sq** into a multi-use building for class 3 food & drink, class 4 business and class 10 'non-residential institutions' with hot desking, cafe, events/conference/training space plus business areas for **SAFE** to operate along with an artificial interactive training suite. See [bit.ly/3PovMDo].

999 responders attended at **E Claremont St** on 5 Aug following a report of chemicals combining from various properties to form a '**toxic build-up**' near a basement flat. Four Fire & Rescue vehicles and an ambulance thronged to the pong. A **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service** spokesperson said: 'We were alerted at 15:41pm on Friday, 5 August to reports of **liquid materials appearing in the garden** of a tenement building in Edinburgh. Operations Control mobilised two appliances and a specialist unit to carry out precautionary checks at the scene on E Claremont Street. Crews worked to make the area safe before leaving.' **Neighbours were unconvinced**, one telling *Spurtle* a blocked sewage pipe had stunk out the block for days.

New Town & Broughton Community Council supports plans for St Mary's Music School to start operating from a refurbished and expanded **old Royal High School** in summer 2026. But it also backs **Calton Hill** neighbours' concerns about (as yet) unspecified arrangements for dust control, asbestos, diesel tanks, and displaced digger-hating rodents during the **2–4-year** demolition / construction phase. They are demanding more detail.

Moreover ...



The much-loved Italian soul-food supplier **Anima**, at **11 Henderson Row** opened in Nov 2004 and said *arrivederci* in Mar 2022. A new pizzeria will succeed it, owned by everybody's favourite celebrity **bocca con un vasino** Gordon Ramsay [#upyourstreet].

More swings and roundabouts than a Winter Festival. Some local councillors' committee appointments have changed since our report in Issue 319. **Bandell** leaves Policy & Sustainability and joins Governance, Risk & Best Value. **Dagleish** joins Licensing Board and Regulatory. **Graham** joins Licensing Board and Transport & Environment. **McNeese-Mechan** leaves Licensing and joins Planning Cmte and Development Management Subcmte. **Miller** leaves Policy & Sustainability and joins Edinburgh Integration Joint Board and Governance, Risk & Best Value, and Transport & Environment. **Osler** joins Culture & Communities and Planning, and convenes Development Management Subcmte. **Rae** joins Housing, Homelessness & Fair Work Cmte, and Licensing Subcmte.



After 40 years, the **Ferranti Sports Club** has lost its lease from Edinburgh Council for premises at the S.E. corner of **Inverleith Pk**. Since May, officials have been considering rival bids to run the building as an accessible community hub 'including a meeting space for local groups, public toilets and baby-changing facilities, storage for park activity groups, and a café'. A decision is expected this autumn, with a start date in spring/summer 2023. Part of the adjacent bowling green will be used for improved access and outdoor seating, but most of it will be incorporated into a larger children's play area. **Tanfield Bowling Club** continues next door on Arboretum Pl.

Crescent House (Claremont Cres) is offering a 10% discount on B&B for readers (and their visitors) all year round. Enter code **Spartle10** when booking. Discount shows at checkout. Cannot be combined with any other offer: [www.crescenthouse.scot].

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 Tues–Fri, 11am–5pm; Sat, 10am–2pm



LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

A forum for local people who want to engage with and work for their local community.



Leith Central Community Council

Participate in local democracy.

Make representations to City of Edinburgh Council, other public bodies and private agencies on everything that matters locally.

Next meeting: **Mon. 19 September, Nelson Hall, McDonald Road Library.**

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>

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"I am here to help and serve all constituents in Edinburgh Northern and Leith. If there is something I can assist you with, or if you would like to discuss any issues or ideas, please contact me or come and see me at one of my monthly Drop-in Help & Advice Surgeries."

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15:30 to 16:30 Leith Community Centre, 12A Newkirkgate, EH6 6AD	

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