

Spurttle



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**November
2022**

No 323

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BROUGHTON'S INDEPENDENT STIRRER Free

THE CONFUSING WORLD OF POP-UP PLANNING

Moolmoor Waverley Ltd seeks permission to erect a temporary Festival Village (pop-up food-and-drink uses, retail kiosks, seating, performance spaces, bogs and bars) on the roof of Waverley Market for 3 years (22/04639/FUL).

How much of the time the village will operate over those years is less clear. No particular month-spans corresponding to any particular festival are mentioned. We approached property consultants Montagu Evans for details but received no reply.

However, Paragraph 2.10 of the Planning Statement suggests a continuous presence [bit.ly/WavMkt]. It states that, in stark contrast to previous iterations here, the current proposals seek to provide 'a year round facility, designed and able to operate in all weathers, with high quality semi-permanent structures designed to ensure safe, effective and efficient operation for front and back of house elements, and to deliver a high quality facility to enhance the site and surroundings'. In other words, a permanent temporary semi-permanence lasting 3 years.



Moolmoor Waverley says any 'minor' impacts on the historic environment would be outweighed by the social and economic benefits for the wider city.

Critics argue that what may constitute high-quality pop-up structures in a festival village or funfair do not constitute high-quality architecture in the heart of an historic city. They say Edinburgh's built heritage and established local businesses nearby deserve better than year-round gimcrack booze domes and a blighted view.

Others regard this application as a further instance of creeping 'festival' calcification, a phenomenon which may one day engulf open spaces in any reconfigured George St.

Comments can be lodged by 4 Nov here [bit.ly/objWM].

CHRISTMAS CRISIS AS ANGEL BRINGS BAD NEWS

News broke on 29 Sept that Angel Events Experience Ltd had informed Edinburgh Council it could not fulfil its contract (secured in June) to run Edinburgh's Christmas events (19 Nov '22-3 Jan '23).

Council Leader Cammy Day expressed 'huge disappointment' at the news, before officials secured a replacement operator last month, namely Unique Assembly which was already organising the capital's Hogmanay celebrations.

The old contract was due to net the Council over £5.47m. Last we heard, no reason for Angel Events pulling out had been shared with councillors outwith the Coalition. However, the Council has undertaken to conduct a thorough review. The new contract will last one year, with a conditional option for a one-year extension.

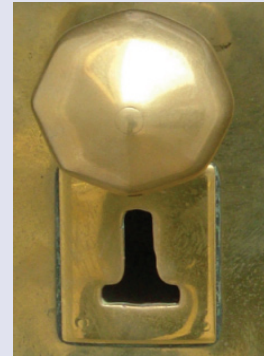
Christmas events will take place in E and W Princes St Gdns, the Mound, George St, and St Andrew Sq.

Meanwhile, on Twitter, a question by local resident @simonholledge stirred widespread interest in the days that followed: 'Does anyone really want a November 19 to January 3 "Christmas" Market? Would it be better to limit the duration - to Christmas! - and improve the quality focusing on local businesses?'

To this @macraewitches replied, 'Any Christmas market needs to be selling Scottish art & crafts, & providing Scottish food. It needs to be a showcase for produce from across Scotland. Not cheap tat bought in from elsewhere. Come on CEC support Scotland.'



THROUGH THE KEYHOLE



If you've ever noticed these distinctive inverted-T keyholes on some New Town tenement doors, you've probably wondered what type of lock once lay behind. On Page 3, Caroline Roussot enters the now odd but once familiar world of 19th-century cut-outs and night-latches.

FLAWED AUDIT DRAWS FLACK

New Town & Broughton Community Council's Deirdre Henderson welcomes the Council's 'George Street Women's Safety Audit' but identifies serious flaws in how future arrangements here have been assessed. She says:

- NTBCC's concerns about access to taxis and public transport at night and in the early morning have been ignored, particularly for people with impaired mobility.
- Issues faced by women of colour, disabled women, young women/girls, and women from outwith the city centre have not been separately considered.
- 'Overlooking by residences' and Council staff would be patchy at best and non-existent at night. No solutions are offered to hostile lurkers in ungated and unclockable parklets and 'hidden corners/places'.
- Absence of daytime taxis in convenient locations.
- Impact of development (and increased night-time economy) on women living in nearby streets.
- No current, baseline crime statistics or future projections.

TIS THE SEASON TO BE JOLLY GENEROUS

For many readers, now is the time to renew their annual subscriptions. For others, it's a good point at which to take out a first subscription for themselves or as an unusual Christmas gift for relations they don't like in Australia.

Subscriptions of any amount are welcome (we again suggest £15 for deliveries by hand and £22 for posted copies). These donations afford us financial stability and confirm a loyal rump of supportive friends whose advice we can seek should the need arise. No contributors or team members get paid by the *Spurttle*. We are a not-for-profit organisation run by volunteers eating our own biscuits.

If you're able to help, please make out cheques to Spurttle, and leave them c/o Narcissus Flowers at 87 Broughton St. Remember to tell us your name and address. Or email us at [spurtle@hotmail.co.uk] to arrange an electronic transfer. Thank you.

Briefly



Image: R. Davis.

This **self-seeded sunflower** brought a dash of colour to Broughton in Sept and Oct. Growing in a pavement crack and supported by a nearby fennel plant, it was spotted by neighbours Vikki Martineau and Neil Powers on **Bellevue Pl**, who watered it and defended it from **'the Bellevue drunk'** [a general term, not a single individual] using **strategically positioned brown bins**. 'Pretty much anyone who walks past, has commented on it, and it may be **one of the most photographed** sunflowers in the area', says Martineau. 'As we change season (although the timing of the bloom shows the lateness of autumn's impact), locals have enjoyed the **brightness of the flower**.' [See also bit.ly/Issue150 and bit.ly/Issue188.]

Nuveen Real Estate's effort to regularise summer use of **St James Sq** for an outdoor bar and public-entertainment venue was rejected last month (22/02035/FUL). As we reported online [bit.ly/StJSp], councillors found **August's events** here proved excessive noise would continue to **spoil nearby residents' amenity**.

However, Nuveen still proposes the return of Alpine-style **winter quaffing, scoffing, and yodelling huts** in St James Sq from Nov 2022 to early Jan 2023 [bit.ly/stjhuts]. Locals worry about disturbance.

Elsewhere, Nuveen ECF want to cover many of the **OMNi Centre's roofs** with solar panels (22/0475/FUL). These will be unmissable from **Calton Hill**, but Nuveen says 'it is considered, as a result of the varied roofscapes seen from this area, [...] the panels will **not look out of place** or have an adverse impact on the wider area' [bit.ly/omnipvpan]. Nothing ever seems to look out of place to Nuveen.

Academics from **Edinburgh, East Anglia, and Cambridge Unis** writing in the journal *Public Health Research* say **Edinburgh's 20mph speed limit** (introduced to 80% of city streets in 2016) has reduced collisions by 40% and casualties by 39%, including a 23% reduction in fatalities and a 33% drop in serious injuries. They found **public support for, and compliance with**, the 20 mph limit had increased after it started. The article concludes that, 'The citywide approach adopted by Edinburgh was **effective in reducing speeds** and positively affected a range of public health outcomes' [bit.ly/20mphnews]. *Spartle* is not the first to suggest figures may have been skewed by Covid-19 lockdowns, or that the **beneficial effects** of the 20 mph limit would be even greater if **more effort were made to enforce it**.

Cathedral opposes the roar in fou

New Town & Broughton Community Council has backed St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral in objecting to a provisional premises licence application (premium pub, bar and restaurant) for 3 St James Pl (formerly St Andrew's Hall).

The proposal is for core onsale hours from 11am–1.00am the next morning, and offsale hours from 11am–10pm. Outdoor breakfasts and non-alcoholic drinks would be served outdoors from 7.00am, and sports events (e.g., World Cup/Euros) could be screened outside outwith core hours.

NTBCC objected first on grounds of overprovision, as laid out in the Licensing Board's own Statement of Policy 2018 [bit.ly/ovrprov]. It says licensed premises have increased in the designated First New Town 'locality of overprovision' since the St James Qtr's arrival, and the subsequent replacement of shops on Princes St. It claimed drunken behaviour in this area already vexes neighbouring communities and constitutes a public nuisance.



Second, NTBCC objected to the application's insensitivity. It said drunken and/or noisy behaviour would disrupt Masses, funerals and weddings in the cathedral, whose precincts and single-layer stained glass windows back onto the proposed carousing and footie-cheering areas next-door.

It is a moot point whether the Licensing Board is serious about using overprovision rules to curb crime and disorder, limit public nuisance, improve public health, protect children and young people from harm, and secure public safety [bit.ly/Issue321p2]. It appears no applications for new-premises licences, provisional-premises licences or major variations have been refused in the First New Town since the 2018 Board's policy came into effect almost 5 years ago.

Locals blame buses for East London St blatter

The latest round of tramwork-related diversions has heaped further misery on E. London St residents.

Increased numbers of private cars haven't helped, but locals' greatest annoyance remains Lothian Buses, whose vehicles continue to rumble across the setts at up to 40 mph in a 20 mph zone containing a primary school. Some continue to cause noise, vibration, and disturbance as late as 3am. And despite LB undertaking 4 months ago to limit their traffic to 50 buses a day here, residents are now counting up to 50 an hour.



After 3½ years' campaigning, they have now had enough [bit.ly/Issue297p2; bit.ly/30July21]. They want an absolute ban on buses using the street between 7pm and 7am, and a few threaten direct action to disrupt LB services in protest. They say Edinburgh Council, as LB's majority shareholder, should be more decisive on voters' behalf.

All these points were raised at last month's New Town & Broughton Community Council meeting. Cllr Jule Bandel (Ward 5), who sits on LB's Board, and Deidre Brock MP promised to raise the problem with LB directors.

E. London St neighbours are not alone in their frustration. We hear similar complaints from residents in Gt King St and Gt Stuart St.

Room for development?

Parkulator [bit.ly/parkulator] by @thomasforth is an app which allows you to calculate the amount of parking in a town or city anywhere in the world.

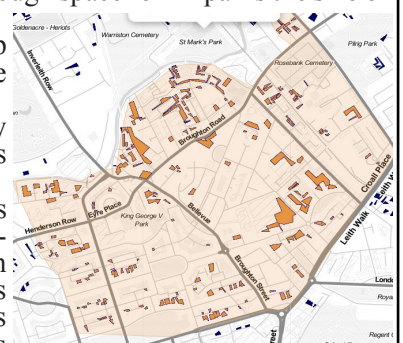
We drew a 7.1 ha shape corresponding to Spurtleshire (light shading). Parkulator then calculated the percentage covered by parking as 4% (dark shading).

This, says the app, is large enough to build 710 homes at London density, 2,130 at Paris density, or 3,550 at Barcelona density. Or enough space for 11 parks the size of Park Square in Leeds.

There are obvious flaws in this approach. The app seems to overlook on-street and run-in parking; there again, such space is not buildable on.

It doesn't recognise that any working town or city requires some parking, not least in a bus terminus like the one on Annandale St.

And it's not clear whether Edinburgh citizens would tolerate Continental levels of cheek-by-jowliness. Appendix 1 of a housing study undertaken 2 years ago as part of the City Plan 2030 gives examples of different housing densities across Edinburgh [bit.ly/canongdns]. The new Canonmills Gardens complex on Warriston Rd counts as high-density, with 240 units per ha. The app gives Paris's rate as 300 units per ha, and Barcelona's as 500 units per ha.



For all its limitations, the app is still a thought-provoking way to visualise relative priorities when it comes to urban planning.

Broughton Street and Beyond: An Unofficial Local Guide

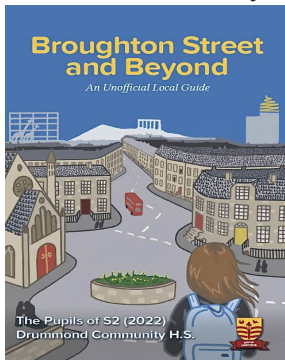
What do you have to gain by purchasing this new guide to local delights from Rodney St to Calton Hill and Elm Row to the St James Qtr? Fresh data, for a start.

The talented and perceptive writers of Drummond Community High School's S2 (2022) share their extensive knowledge of, and distinct perspective on, the area. Their love of sugar combines with their appreciation of the Marshmallow Lady's wares and the dessert buffet at the OMNi Centre's Cosmo (the guide's favourite restaurant).

Meanwhile, they share their research into the history of local establishments to provide fascinating information: such as the Playhouse being the second largest theatre in the UK, and our local giraffes being called Martha and Gilbert (as well as 'Dreaming Spires').

The reviews of outlets in the St James Qtr are particularly useful to those of us who haven't quite got round to checking them out much yet. The guide can also get straight to the point, as with the peerless observation that the Post Office on Elm Row has 'a wide range of staff with someone different at the counter every day so don't bother trying to make pals with them.' The book ends with a wonderful bonus section in which the authors tell us a little about themselves.

You can purchase the guide at Typewronger (also reviewed within). Hopefully, someone at the Mansfield Traquair Trust will read the book and arrange for their next-door neighbours at Drummond CHS to visit and see the murals.—*Ella Taylor-Smith* [Cover illustration by Grace Feakes, reproduced by kind permission of Super Power Agency.]



Briefly



Congratulations to reader **Tracy Griffen**, who made it through to the last round in the **traditional porridge-makers** category of this year's Golden Spurtle championship in Carrbridge (Issue 321). 'I didn't win', she tells us, 'but I figure I'm in the **top half-dozen Spurtlers IN THE WORLD!**'

The **Water of Leith Conservation Trust** last month asked the Council to empty a wastebin that had been filled and then piled upon in an area popular with canines and their walkers. In so doing, they coined a new phrase: '**dog-poo Jenga**'. Can this be right? Are people really easing out one bag of faeces at a time without letting the whole lot topple?

Edinburgh Street Food's application for outdoor food and drink provision under a canopy outside the **OMNi Centre** has been approved (22/03796/FUL). There were 3 objections, one from a neighbouring **Greenside** business which feared noise, litter, vermin, smells, reduced circulation and emergency access, and bad and boozy behaviour. The **Architectural Heritage Society of Scotland** criticised the quality of design, loss of trees and planters, visual clutter, and disruption of the picturesque view from **Leith St to Calton Hill**. Some 14 people wrote to support the application. They included **remarkably like-minded citizens** from Musselburgh, South Queensferry, Dunfermline, North Berwick, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Oslo.

Overhead lines on new sections of the tram route will be energised over the next 2 months. Once the final section of track is laid between **York Pl and Picardy Pl**, a testing and commissioning period will begin in early 2023. **Broughton residents** look forward to meeting our Newhaven cousins and are sure to extend them a warm welcome.

A window for comments on plans to build 19 flats at **5-6 Marshall's Ct** in Greenside (21/06219/FUL) reopened this summer after developers submitted a new **daylight, sunlight and overshadowing** study. When the window reshut last month, 37 objections had been registered and 1 letter of support. **Objections included:** excessive massing and scale of development, inappropriate materials, blocking of outlook, mistaken planning assumptions, negative impact on **historic site and character of the Conservation Area**, increased risk of flooding, increased traffic in confined space, reduction of daylight and sunlight for neighbours. A decision is expected by 21 Jan 2023.

Despite 30 objections, permission has been granted to build a **2-bedroom mews house**, incorporating part of the existing boundary wall, behind **43 Northumberland St** (22/01348/FUL). Officials said fears that excavation of a cellar would damage nearby properties were ungrounded.

Tram project: Need to focus now the end is nigh

Community Councils Together on Trams is an umbrella group representing those areas affected by extension of the route between Newhaven and York Pl. On their behalf, Leith Central's Harald Tobermann addressed the Transport & Environment Cmte last month.

As the tram project draws to a close, Tobermann outlined important issues requiring the rational (not panicked) attention of officials and local elected representatives.

- Potential project wobbles caused by: staff leaving to work elsewhere; driver, wheeler, and pedestrian behaviour; an inexperienced Administration in City Chambers.

- Need to fix defects on the ground before completion, using properly resourced contractors, Council project team, other Council departments responsible for public realm and legal guidance.

- 'Asset ingestion': massive increase in public property (e.g., lampposts, paving, road surfaces, gullies, bus stops) must be identified, described, located, and maintained.

- A resourced and tram-experienced staff must be maintained after completion.

- A commitments register detailing future amendments (e.g., at Elm Row) must be compiled alongside parallel measures to encourage a modal shift in Edinburgh's transport away from private car use. 'All journeys begin on foot' so the state of footways and public realm is key.

Tobermann welcomed the tram extension's delivery on time and on budget. He praised project leaders Hannah Ross and Rob Leach as 'courteous and competent'.

Executive Director of Place Paul Lawrence later described Tobermann's points as 'important and chunky', and claimed they were already part of Council thinking and practice.

Ross said the Project Team was pushing to rectify defects before operation begins but were hampered by shortages of labour and materials; some rectifications would be delayed. In answer to a question from Cllr Miller (Ward 11), Ross said the Team was considering priority release and dedicated phases for cyclists at signalised junctions.



The ups and downs of New Town security

The *Odell night-latch* (or *French night-latch*) was a fairly primitive lock, operated by inserting the key into the T slot, and then raising it.

Once past the wards on the inside of the lock, the key would directly raise a finger on the back of the inside latch. There was no sort of mechanism; it depended simply on the key's pattern of cut-outs matching that of the lock. The lock is operated from the exterior by the key, and from the interior by lifting the latch by hand.

One of its advantages was the key's small size (about 6 cm long), compared to others of the time, which made it conveniently portable. But it offered only basic security, as the number of possible combinations of cut-outs on the key was low, and it looks as though it would have been quite easy to bypass the wards and lift the latch with a bent wire (or even produce a 'skeleton' key with no cut-outs at all).

Nevertheless, this type of latch was ubiquitous in Edinburgh and Glasgow throughout much of the 19th century – at least in those tenements grand enough to boast a front door.—*Caroline Roussot*.



Moreover ...



The latest draft design for the **Picardy PI central island** full of noises was shared with councillors on the Transport & Environment Cmte in Oct. You can see it in clearer detail here [bit.ly/PicPI]. **Eye-catching potential elements** include a water fountain, 2 rows of hostile vehicle mitigation bollards, a 'Fourth plinth' for exhibition of temporary monuments, a soft embankment rather than hard terrace, improved pedestrian access, and 7 cycle-hire stands. **Extensive planting** (though whether trees or shrubs is not specified) will, it is hoped, baffle obtrusive traffic sounds and facilitate sweet airs that give delight and hurt not. **Critics of the draft design** suggest some of the bollards are wrongly positioned and would not protect pedestrians. They question whether they are wide enough apart to let electric wheelchairs and double buggies through, and wonder about additional measures to keep children from running into the road or cycle path. Importantly, they call for a **ramp rather than steps** so that children and disabled people can access parts away from car exhausts at the outer edge. The inclusion of a cycle-hire stand appears aspirational rather than realistic at present. A senior official will seek approval to proceed with a **final design this month**. Procurement will be completed in Dec. Construction will run from Jan to spring 2023. **The project's cost is estimated at £2.7m.**

Police Scotland last month released figures showing the number of **registered sex offenders** across the country by postcode area. Those areas including **parts of Spurtleshire** were as follows: EH1, 43; EH3, 10; EH6, 38; EH7, 38. Figures for EH2 were exempted for reasons we don't understand. Postcode areas at this **coarse level of granularity** are not useful in assessing the issues faced by differently organised neighbourhoods and communities. For example, EH1 includes much of the Old Town but also the **St James Qtr, Leith St and Broughton St**; EH7 includes both **Warriston Rd** and the edges of **Portobello**. In *Spurtle's* view, ordering the areas like a league table (as the *Edinburgh Evening News* and much of the mainstream media did) is unhelpful and misleading.

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LEITH CENTRAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

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Participate in local democracy.



Leith Central Community Council

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

Next meeting: 7pm, Mon. 21 November, Nelson Hall, McDonald Road Library.

<https://leithcentralcc.co.uk>

ARCHITECTURE LECTURE

ORNAMENTS & OBELISKS AT TYNINGHAME

Mon 14 Nov 18:30
 full info: bit.ly/AHSSlectures

Winter lecture series at United Augustine Church, George IV Bridge, and on-line. Bookings via Eventbrite



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Ben Macpherson MSP

Member of the Scottish Parliament for Edinburgh Northern and Leith Constituency

"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."

Drop-in Help & Advice Surgeries
 first Friday of every month

<p>9:30 to 10:30 Royston/Wardieburn Community Centre, 11 Pilton Drive North, EH5 1NF</p>	<p>11:00 to 12:00 West Pilton Neighbourhood Centre, 19 West Pilton Grove, EH4 4BY</p>
<p>15:30 to 16:30 Leith Community Centre, 12A Newkirkgate, EH6 6AD</p>	

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