



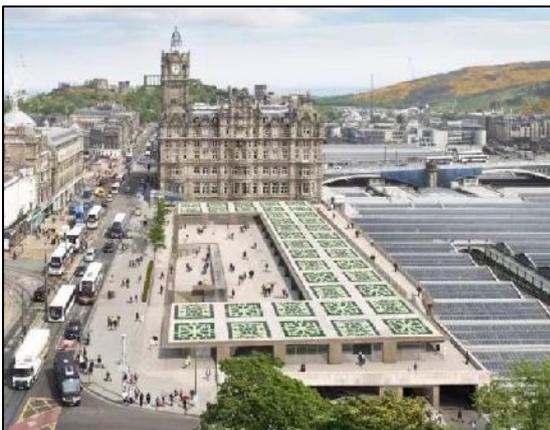
**THE COCKBURN
ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER**
February / March
2019

Waverley Mall: Cockburn criticises decision

The Cockburn Association is deeply disappointed with the recent decision of Edinburgh Council to grant consent, despite our objection, for the rooftop extension at Waverley Mall. The visual intrusion of this proposal will be permanent, undermining centuries of protection of this fundamental prospect.

In a letter to the Planning Committee, Director Terry Levinthal said, "Almost 40 years of consistent decision-taking by the Council has been undermined by this permission."

Since Waverley Mall was given permission 1981 repeated attempts to build upwards have been refused permission, the last one only three years ago....



"Open views not just between the Old and New Town, but across to Holyrood Royal Park and beyond will be lost or severely curtailed. The benefits that might accrue are minor against this and could have been achieved by other means. "

The Public Inquiry into the initial development in 1981 accepted a height restriction to preserve the open views across Waverley Valley. A scheme in 2004 for a smaller roof top extension was refused consent due to the impact on this open prospect. In January 2016, consent was refused for the erection of a traditional carousel due to its impact on the character of the Old and New Town Conservation Areas as well as having a detrimental impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the World Heritage Site.

The Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the World Heritage Site, adopted in June 2013 says, "The contrast between the organic medieval Old Town and the planned Georgian New Town of Edinburgh, Scotland, provides a clarity of urban structure unrivalled in Europe. The juxtaposition of these two distinctive townscapes, each of exceptional historic and architectural interest, which are linked across the landscape divide, the "great arena" of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley Valley, by the urban viaduct, North Bridge, and by the Mound, creates the outstanding urban landscape." This is emphatically compromised by this development.

New intern researches Cockburn's past campaigns

The Cockburn is pleased to welcome our latest intern, Lucas Tappa from Furman University, South Carolina, USA. Lucas is reading History and has so far found his stay in Edinburgh fascinating.



During his 5-month internship, Lucas is working on two projects. The first is defining the history of the Cockburn in 10 Campaigns looking at early advocacy work for improved greenspaces, to current issues such as the Old Royal High School. He is also researching a

possible publication defining the history of the City in 10 Buildings – no small feat! Needless to say, the short days and biting winds have been a bit of a culture shock.

Free events at the National Library

Two forthcoming free events at the NLS on George IV Bridge are likely to be of interest to Cockburn members. On 20 March the landscape architect John Byrom will give a talk on “The Care and Conservation of Shared Georgian Gardens”. He will link his theme to the future of “a greater and greener Edinburgh”. The talk will commence at 5.30pm and places can be reserved via the Eventbrite website (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-care-conservation-of-shared-georgian-gardens-tickets-53644517195>) or by phoning 0131 623 3734.



Then on 9 April in the afternoon, Cockburn Chair Cliff Hague will be in conversation with Dr. Lou Rosenberg, whose book *Scotland's Homes Fit for Heroes*, provides an in-depth and extensively illustrated account of the influence that the Garden City movement had on the development of our housing and cities between 1900 and 1939. Full details of timing and booking arrangements should be available soon from the NLS website (<https://www.nls.uk/events>) or again by phoning them.

Copies can be purchased for £14.99 from www.eotdt.org or ordered from The Word Bank, 14 Johnston Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2PW (Payable to Edinburgh Old Town Development Trust).

Chair's Notes



Trustees held an Away Day to review and develop the Cockburn's Strategy (commissioned in 2014). Quite a lot has changed within our Association since then, but Trustees reaffirmed the basic principles behind the Strategy.

We will continue to be a campaigning organisation that promotes a vision of a prosperous, healthy and sustainable Edinburgh. To this end, we are happy to work with other partners, as we have done, for example, in opposing the hotel proposals for the Old Royal High School. We also need to keep working on fund-raising to sustain and then extend our activity. Part of the Strategy is to ensure that we are realistic in the scope of our work in relation to our time and financial resources. We have not increased membership fees for about a decade, and roughly a quarter of our members are life members. Reluctantly, the Trustees have therefore decided that we should recommend an inflation-equivalent increase in subscriptions to the AGM which will be held on the evening of 6 May.

The Away Day was held in Granton. I must acknowledge that Granton is probably not a part of Edinburgh that might spring to mind when the Cockburn is mentioned. We must work harder to show that our concerns are not

confined to particular parts of the city. As the Strategy makes clear, we are “dedicated to caring for the whole of Edinburgh and its setting”.

The Granton:hub, also known as Madelvic House, is a historic building that can claim to be the oldest purpose-built car factory in the UK. The Madelvic Motor Carriage Company was founded by Edinburgh City Astronomer William Peck and manufactured... electric vehicles! What a story. Today the hub is run by volunteers, and not surprisingly they put a strong emphasis on local history. It is a place for people to meet, learn and take part in activities. Behind it is a community garden. For more info go to www.grantonhub.org.

Granton has extensive tracts of brownfield land but is also cut off from the foreshore by an area of industrial and storage buildings. It also suffers from relatively poor accessibility, despite being only a couple of miles from the city centre. It has a vital role in the future of our city.

Annual General Meeting

All members are cordially invited to attend the 144th AGM of the Cockburn Association on the evening of 6 May. The venue and time have yet to be confirmed, and these will be posted in the next newsletter. The AGM will be followed by a Members' Reception.

Nominations are invited from Members wishing to serve on the Council of Trustees. Nominations must be made and seconded by Members and must include the consent of the nominee. Nominations should be sent to the Director at the Association's office at Trunk's Close, 55 High St, Edinburgh EH1 1SR, or by email to admin@cockburnassociation.org.uk. They should be accompanied by a personal statement by the nominee, not exceeding 250 words in length. The cut-off for receiving nominations will be **Monday 22 April at 5pm**. For further information and an informal chat, please call our Director, Terry Levinthal.

Trees of Concern

Given recent problems with tree felling in the city, the Cockburn held initial discussions with Trees of Edinburgh to better coordinate action. ToE is a new campaign group with the objective to increase Edinburgh's tree cover, by growing appreciation and knowledge of trees throughout Edinburgh society.

Old Royal High School Update

The major Public Inquiry into the proposed luxury hotel scheme at Thomas Hamilton's 1832 Greek revival masterpiece ended in October with our Final Statement of case being submitted in November. The Inquiry served the purpose of debunking several of the myths with this proposal, including the view that guests would be new to Edinburgh and would only come if such a hotel was built – instead, the proposal would cannibalise over 80% of its clientele from other 5* hotels. This undermines the argument that it would be “of national significance”.

The Reporters who heard the inquiry hope to have their Report and Recommendations finalised by the end of March. This will be passed to the Minister for Local Government, Housing & Planning Kevin Stewart MSP for his decision. Working with other organisations involved in the inquiry, the Cockburn is gearing up for the lobbying phase of the campaign.

The significant overrun of the Inquiry has left us about £2,000 out of pocket despite the very successful fund-raising campaign last year. We are extremely grateful to members who made donations – further support would be extremely welcome!

Tourist Tax

Anyone who has experienced the City Centre in the height of the tourism season will know the challenges faced by Edinburgh by the sheer volume of visitors, which in some places is past the threshold of reasonableness. Due to our concerns about the impact of tourism, the Cockburn supported the introduction of a nominal bedroom charge like many, many cities across the world. However, in

recognising the fact that the top reason why people visit Edinburgh is its historic townscape and architecture, we proposed that the income should be ringfenced for the improvement of the city's heritage and not be consumed by the general budget of the Council. In this way, we would address the increasing problem of lack of maintenance and reinvest in what makes Edinburgh so special. Speaking of which...

Local v Imported Stone

One material that Scotland has an abundance of is natural stone. It may then come as some surprise that in Edinburgh (and in many other town centres around the country) that the stone you are walking on may have travelled more than 10,000 miles on a container ship from a Far East port, usually from China. The giveaway is usually some eclectic mix of colourful granites which bear no resemblance to what would have been historically sourced locally.

There has been a recent renaissance in the use of natural stone for streetscapes in Scotland, partly driven by cheap imports, which has also led to the reintroduction of local material, such as granite, Caithness stone and whinstone.

Scotland's stone manufacturing industry, having been decimated throughout the last century, is only now recovering. The loss of a generation of skilled workers to war, the use of tarmac and concrete for roads, and natural stone generally falling out of fashion all saw a declining industry. We're now seeing an interest and pride in using natural stone again. In recent years, Edinburgh has seen stone locally processed for hotel developments, the Edinburgh trams project, high street projects and the Scottish Parliament.

It is therefore disappointing to learn that St Andrew Square Gardens is using Chinese setts when local stone can be produced to complete this job. Quarries that can provide stone are only 20 miles away from Edinburgh. So the next time you are walking through St. Andrews Square gardens, try and spot which is the Portuguese Granite, and which is

Chinese. Have a wander along by the new St. James development and try to spot the German Cladding and Portuguese Kerbs. Why is it being imported thousands of miles when we can be using local stone to complement the built heritage and environment, thus supporting the Scottish economy.

Article provided by Trustee John McKinney with permission of the Scottish Stone Group

Other News

Cockburn welcomed the rejection of the student accommodation and hotel development at Stead's Place, Leith Walk. Our main concern was the demolition within a Conservation Area. Our Director presented a technical policy case to the Planning Committee on why demolition was unacceptable. The Committee refused consent unanimously.

Members of the Cockburn Urban Design Group visited the former House of Fraser's Department Store at the west end of Princes Street with the design team for Diageo's proposed Johnny Walker Experience. Putting aside any views on the specific product, we felt that the architectural approach was reasonable and sensitively handled. As far as the use, whilst we weren't enamoured with such a large tourism development, the retention of ground floor retail and other aspects of the scheme made it preferable to, say, another hotel development. Wider management issues such as tourist coach drop-off were highlighted.

Doors Open Days 2019

We are in the process of preparing for this year's DOD, to be held on the last weekend of September. Any suggestions for new buildings or landmarks welcomed, especially outside the City Centre. Contact Joe at admin@cockburnassociation.org.uk

thecockburn**association**

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