

Five things you need to know today Edinburgh!



Planning matters – The Big Pedal – Walter Geikie – Daily email update – Edinburgh College

The council's planning team have recommended refusal of two key applications at tomorrow's Development Management Committee meeting.

The first is for the site at 14-16 Beaverhall Road where the developer Springfield has requested that the S.75 agreement between them and the council is discharged without payment. A S.75 agreement is registered against the title to ensure that the developer makes payment or does certain things to comply with the planning requirements. In this case the sum of £81,250 was agreed to be paid towards public realm works (that's pavements and stuff to you and me) in connection with the 60 flats to be built. The council confirm that the money would be used for works in the vicinity and not simply in a general fund for the city centre. The agreement states that the money would be paid when the final house was deemed complete and ready for occupation by the council's planners.

This is a mixed residential and commercial development and the proposed houses are [already advertised on Springfield's website.](#)

The Elgin based developer argues that the contribution does not meet any of the tests set out in a planning circular and is unreasonable. They also state that since the council does not have a specific project to upgrade the public realm in mind it is wrong to ask for a specific sum of money which is more of a best guess than a calculation.

The planners recommend refusal of the application on the basis

that the developer is incorrect in asking for it to be removed. They argue that the contribution was assessed and considered along with the planning permission first granted.

The Newtown and Broughton Community Council objected in relation to the previous and now withdrawn planning application to the developer's application to have this monetary obligation removed.

The other application which is up for a no vote tomorrow is the proposed development on Princes Street of retail on four floors along with installation of ATMs. This is a vacant site at 133 Princes Street and was last used as a GAP store in 2010. The current application is for a new entrance to the upper floors and new shop front with illuminated fascia signs. The proposal is for a restaurant at upper level and a bank on the ground floor. Previously application was made for a hotel and restaurant but this has been deleted.

In view of the fact that the council has stated an aim to develop the upper floors of properties along Princes Street it is perhaps regrettable that this application is not up for approval. It is being rejected on the grounds that the retail use is being lost. There would be a single storey modern extension to the rear which would only be seen in Rose Street anyway, but is deemed in keeping.

The main reason for objection seems to be that the shopping ambience would be weakened. Given that the site has been empty for four years this seems a fairly weak objection. The Development Management Committee meets tomorrow at 10am at the City Chambers.

Has your school or your child's school registered for [The Big Pedal](#) yet? This is an initiative backed by active travel charity Sustrans to get everyone cycling or scooting to school during the week beginning 3 March 2014. The idea is to

encourage pupils and teachers alike to cycle to school and the more children who do, the more points the school gets. There are prizes of bikes on offer.

All school results will be published on the Big Pedal website and then everything culminates in a Superhero day on 14 March 2014, as a fundraiser for Sustrans work in schools. There are also two challenge days on 5 and 14 March if two weeks is just too much!

Are you taking part? Will you send us a photograph of your bike? [You can do so by clicking here!](#)

Helen Smailes is Senior Curator of British Art at the Scottish National Gallery and [she is delivering a talk on Thursday at 2pm](#) at Museum of Edinburgh. Entry is free but you must book in advance.

To complement the exhibition *Walter Geikie (1795-1837): An Artist of Character*, she will be discussing the life and work of this remarkable artist, exploring some of the artworks featured in the exhibition.

To book contact Margaret Findlay on 0131 529 3963 or via margaret.findlay@edinburgh.gov.uk.

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While some of the lecturers are on strike today and tomorrow at Edinburgh College, we hope that may be resolved sometime soon. All the courses at Edinburgh College start in August 2014. You can find all the [details of how to sign up here](#) on the new look Edinburgh College website.

There are 900 courses on offer with full time, part-time and flexible study options available.

Edinburgh College yesterday made an improved offer to teaching staff, hoping this would satisfy the EIS union and avert planned strike action this week.

The college management say it is disappointed that the union felt unable to suspend strikes today and tomorrow while the detail of the offer is finalised.

The college is seeking to harmonise contracts for all teaching staff – making them equitable, fair and affordable and bringing all teaching staff together on one set of terms and conditions and the same pay scale.

The revised offer, made at a meeting with the EIS today, would raise the previous maximum salary offer of £34,700 to around £36,000 over a two-year period. Full details of this have yet to be confirmed.

The new offer would also introduce maximum number of teaching hours at 24 per week. A limit on weekly teaching hours is one of the reassurances the union has been asking for. The new offer retains the 800-hour annual maximum teaching hours that was part of the original offer, which was already significantly less than all three legacy colleges.

Edinburgh College principal Mandy Exley said: “We have listened to staff, considered what they need very carefully and come back with solutions to their issues. This offer

demonstrates that we're committed to preventing any more disruption to students and doing what is most important – ensuring their education needs are fully met and that we support our staff in a fair, affordable way.”

The chair of Edinburgh College's Board of Management, Ian McKay, said: “We're very disappointed the EIS officials have not suspended this week's strike action. They've been given a fair offer that they can now put to their members and striking this week will only harm the students. The college has done what we can to prevent this happening, so the decision now lies with the EIS and its members.”