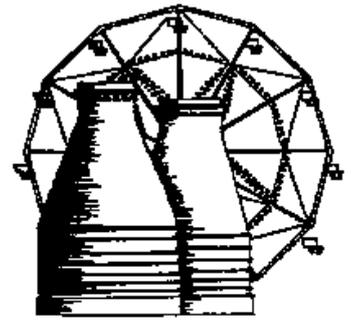


PORTOBELLO AMENITY SOCIETY

Newsletter - Spring 2000



ADOPT A MONUMENT

The City of Edinburgh Council is introducing a new scheme called “Adopt a Monument” to encourage individuals and groups to adopt a statue, sundial, commemorative plaque or other monument or memorial. The hope is that a closer eye will be kept on the monuments; some research could be done on less well-known monuments; a monument trail could be devised.

If you are interested in participating in the scheme as an individual (your amenity society is already participating as a group) please contact: Paul McAuley, Assistant Keeper of Conservation (Monuments), The Writers’ Museum, Lady Stair’s Close, Lawnmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2PA.

So far, the fountain on the Promenade at the foot of Marlborough Street, the sundial in Brighton Park and the pillars which used to stand in a garden off the High Street have been adopted. If you have any information regarding these or other monuments in the city’s care, please contact Mr McAuley.

Gardening

We hope you have all enjoyed the sight of the tete-a-tete daffodils in Brighton Park, last Autumn’s planting has certainly added to the display there. The Joppa Pumping Station hard-landscaping has almost been completed and we hope the new trees will survive any cold blast off the sea. We haven’t managed to replace the Morton Street tree yet but hope this will be done this Spring. Remember to collect your Garden Competition entry forms from the Portobello Garden Centre, judging will probably be in August this year.

Information Boards

“The Geology of Joppa Rocks” was unveiled on a bright windy March day by Robert Gatliff who supplied the geology. This board, the third in a series of seven to be placed by PAS and the Community Council along the Promenade, is situated on the grassy area on the Joppa side of Rock Cottage on the Musselburgh Road. Joppa rocks are clearly visible on the shore behind the information board. Placement of the geology and the two “horizon” boards, which we’d hoped to have in position by the end of last year, has been delayed by the need to cover all boards with clear polycarbonate panels as protection from vandals. The “horizon” boards should be erected on the Promenade, one at the foot of King’s Road and the other at the foot of John Street, later this spring for the enjoyment and enlightenment of all promenaders. Work on the remaining two boards, namely “Portobello as a Seaside Resort” and “The Natural History of the Seashore” is in hand. It is planned to involve local children in the latter board; anyone with a child over nine years old who would like to draw the plants and animals of Portobello sea-shore on a day to be arranged this summer should leave a message for Alison Robinson at Portobello library.

Portobello Conservation Area Character Appraisal

P.A.S. has recently been involved with the planning department in writing the character appraisal for the Portobello Conservation Area. This document defines the special qualities and the architectural and historic interest which makes Portobello a conservation area. It identifies essential features of the area which should be preserved or enhanced, establishing a framework against which future development proposals can be assessed for their impact on the character and appearance of the conservation area. Major new developments within the conservation area will, in future, have to be accompanied by a contextual analysis that demonstrates how the proposals take account of the essential character of the area as identified in the appraisal.

As well as outlining the historical development of Portobello, the document identifies key features of Portobello as regards the Promenade, the High Street and the Victorian and Georgian residential areas. It also discusses the particular pressures and issues that these areas face.

P.A.S. wrote large sections of the draft of this document and we are pleased that the planning department has accepted and included almost all of the material which we submitted. The character appraisal, when finalised and published, will give far greater protection to the conservation area and P.A.S. was happy to co-operate with the planning department in voicing the issues which local people thought important and in defining the essential character of the area as local people see it.

Planning Issues

There have been many recent planning applications for the Portobello/Milton area, three of which have created strong local opposition.

- 1) 24, Milton Road East, (within the grounds of Jewel and Esk Valley College), - the erection of an indoor bowling centre. This application, to erect a large metal clad building, - (59 metres by 48 metres), has been granted. There was strong local opposition from people who felt, quite rightly, that their houses would be overshadowed by such a large structure and who questioned whether Portobello needed two such centres. 80 letters of objection were received by the planning department, including one from P.A.S., but the application was granted.
- 2) 5, Bellfield Lane, (Thorburn's). This application, to erect a two storey block of 9 flats has been refused. Again this application created a great deal of opposition. Local people felt that the proposal was out of character with a conservation area and did not respect the building line of the street. Fortunately the planning committee agreed, and refused the application on seven counts. It is however within the rights of the applicant to submit an amended scheme for this site.

- 3) 24/26 Brunstane Road. This application, to build 53 flats in several 2-, 3- and 4-storey blocks, on the site of the former Heather Valley Woollen Factory, has yet, (at the time this newsletter was printed), to be determined. Although the site is just outside the conservation area, the design and materials of the proposed new build do not match the quality of the nearby Victorian villas. The development would also access Brunstane Road at a very vulnerable point and add considerably to the traffic problems which the road already has. It is to be hoped that this planning application will be refused.

PORTOBELLO TOWN SCHEME GRANT

A Guide to Grants for Conservation is available from the Planning Department, 1 Cockburn Street Edinburgh EH 1 1ZJ. The aim is to concentrate on works of a relatively modest scale which would not normally qualify for a conservation grant but could improve the character of the Conservation Area.

The normal maximum grant is £3,000 and the total budget is £30,000, so you may not get a grant in the year that you first apply, but contact the above address if you are considering restoration and reinstatement work using the best traditional methods and materials for: shop fronts to the original form including glazing patterns and carved ornament; timber sash and case windows with original astragal patterns; fanlights and box-lights with original glazing patterns; stone chimneys, copes and skews, slate or pantile roofs, lead parapet gutters, flashings, valleys, etc; dormers to the original design; stone garden walls; cast iron railings, gates and balconies.

The removal of non-traditional features which are detrimental to the character of the Conservation Area will also be eligible. For example, removal of paint, using a method which will not damage stonework; removal of render applied to original stone or brick frontages; modern flush or pseudo “historic” doors; dropped fascias and boxed roller shutters from shop fronts.

In most circumstances, the following type of work **will not qualify** for a Town Scheme Grant: Internal repairs or restoration; General maintenance such as roof repairs, treatment of wet/dry rot; repairs to standards normally required by planning policies; repairs in modern materials, e.g. uPVC, aluminum or concrete; the introduction of historically inaccurate features, e.g. “catalogue” doors.

If you wish to apply, please request a special Town Scheme application form available from the Head of Planning, City of Edinburgh Council, City Development Department, at the above address. With the application you will be required to submit: two genuinely competitive tenders; drawing with notes and photographs.

If you wish further information, please contact the City Development Department of the City of Edinburgh Council.

Annual General Meeting Wed May 24th.

“The Past And The Future Of Edinburgh's Railways”

The society's annual general meeting will be held at 7.30 on Wednesday 24th. May in St. Mark's Church. Ken Falconer of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society and John Webster of Capital Rail Action Group have very kindly agreed to give an illustrated talk on Edinburgh's railways, both past and future. As many local individuals and groups, including P.A.S., support C.R.A.G.'s campaign to bring back a suburban railway system to Edinburgh, one which includes a station at Portobello, the talk should be of particular interest to all. There will be a brief business section before the talk and refreshments afterwards. All members, their family and friends will be most welcome.



Local Business Support For P.A.S.

Please use our excellent local businesses, especially those which help the society to make Portobello a pleasant place to live and to work. The society is very grateful to the following businesses for their continued support as associate business members: -

Allan's, Chemist; Robin Bond, CA; Boots, Chemist; The Citizens' Advice Bureau; Findlay Meats; Brian Forde, Optician; Gordons, Butchers; Joppa Food Store; H.S.Kidd, Chemist; The King's Manor Hotel; Kitchener's Delicatessen; Kristoffersen Carpets; Lapland Gems; McAlpine's, Jewellers; McIntyre Lewis, Solicitors & Estate Agents; Nazim, Newsagent; J & S Penman, Vets; The Portobello Garden Centre; Portobello Library; Jas. Scott, Funeral Directors; Shapes Hair; Sibbald Travel; Thomson's, Ironmongers.

Our especial thanks also go to McIntyre Lewis, and J & S Penman, Vets for their generous donations towards our planting projects throughout Portobello.

Please support our local businesses, especially those who themselves support our local community.

P.A.S. Monthly Meetings

Would you like to find out more about what is happening in Portobello? Would you like something done about Portobello's traffic and parking problems? Are you interested in protecting and enhancing Portobello's many listed buildings? Would you like to see the amenity of Portobello improved and environmental and landscaping projects carried out?

If the answer to any or all of the above questions is yes, then you are most welcome to come along to any of P.A.S.'s regular monthly meetings to air your views and to find out just what the society is doing to improve Portobello for everyone who lives and works here. For details of meetings, please phone **John Stewart** on **669 6466**.