

Responsible Construction

Edinburgh is the most economically thriving city in Scotland, so inevitable that considerable development pressure, much of which will result in new construction and infrastructure.

But also have very high city-centre residential component, unlike any other UK city (but in common with many continental ones) Therefore new developments have greater impact on residential (and business) amenity than elsewhere

We seem to be Living in a building site (my own case – 40 years and never been clear of construction or other)

In past, noise rightly identified as a key issue (plant especially piling, working out of hours etc) In my view, would say most major contractors better now – less inclination to go on at weekends or evenings – (thanks to council enforcement), although less control on sub-contractors. Still some

Some carelessness, e.g. loss of power / communications etc because cut through cables

But some issues remain:

Co-ordination between sites, utilities, contractors

Doesn't seem to be any overview in terms of road closures (more than one route blocked at a time), pedestrian blockages, traffic diversions; often double work (dig up, fill in, soon after dig up again)

Timescale

many works too protracted. Appreciate not everything runs to time but unacceptable obstructions for too long; many works seem to drag on, no sense of urgency. Need a Strict programme, set out beforehand and enforced (with fines?) by the Council

And where construction has to be prolonged, seek to minimise impact on street environment

Apart from major street occupations:

Street Clutter

plethora of signs, unnecessary, in wrong place (e.g. blocking pavements), left behind after works finished. Also discarded barriers

Parking

Council issues trade permits – for local businesses. However, being abused. St James Quarter promised in its application to have a green travel plan. In reality, this meant dumping all their vans in surrounding residential streets, denying access to residents and *bona fide* visitors. Weren't being used for working, just being used for worker's commuting – at £3 day, very cheap – parking suspended/obstructed by contractors vehicles

Quality of barriers etc

individual works always 'temporary' and are treated by the Council as if this is a one-off situation, whereas with the scale of activity it's actually the norm: at any time the city is filled with several often major sites at the same time.. Tacky red and white plastic barriers, heras fencing, cycle lane wands etc. look awful, not good enough street furniture for a World Heritage site, so much higher standards of street furniture are needed even for temporary measures. Not just for construction, also applies to street closures, eg Open Streets.

Communication

with residents through CC, Street Assocs etc. If film companies can do this, so can contractors. Explain their intentions, listen to and modify.

Control use of signage to minimum, Remove all clutter at end of work

Dirt and Dust

also mentioned in suburban areas

Suggested CEC activities:

- CEC set up a 'clash diary', requiring contractors to reschedule if their works will clash with others and create unacceptable conditions
- Circulate details of proposals to affected parties including contact details of contractors
- enforce timescales, with penalties for those projects that run over without good reason
- ensure that contactors' pledges (e.g. Green Travel) are honoured / enforced
- Limit number of parking permits per site / firm
- Design guide for the acceptable style and use of barriers, site boundary treatments
- Repair to cracked paving slabs etc, proper reinstatement of roads, landscaping etc
- Single point of contact within CEC to deal with all complaints (currently a maze of different functions (roads, planning, envt health etc)

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