NTBCC Planning Committee Update – August 2025

Agenda Items

1. Spiegeltent Application – St Andrew Square gardens
2. Royal London offices (25/03716/FUL) : Henderson Row
3. Charlotte Square
4. Former RBS Site Amended Application (25/01899/FUL) – update
5. Other recent planning applications and appeals (to note/discuss)

1. Speigeltent in St Andrew Square Garden (25/03046/FUL)

"The Famous Spiegeltent hosting a variety of shows across Jazz Festival and The Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Site will include a bar, food offerings and toilets. Communal Bin Review".

Objection submitted along with the Cockburn and others – mainly commenting on the 'footprint' creep and increasing commercialisation of a quasi-public space but also on the planning process – with the application still being open for comments whilst the Spiegeltent etc. were being installed and operating. Although there were only 4 comments (objections) – it was routed to the DMSC on 6 August. There was a healthy debate but ultimately the application was approved by 6-4.

The NTBCC submission was previously circulated.

Hopefully as a result of this, there will be increased pressure placed on those applying to permission for festival events to have more respect for the planning process and submit applications earlier to allow proper scrutiny and not to place Councillors on the DMSC in a difficult position.

For more background, the whole saga was covered by the Broughton Spurtle
Concern for Trees, but Spiegeltent Approved

2. Former Royal London offices, Henderson Row (25/03716/FUL)

"Change of use from Class 4 office to residential apartments with removal of mansard roof space and erection of new double mansard roof to accommodate new apartments all with ancillary uses and works, facade refurbishment, new windows, landscape works and creation of south facing balconies at ground floor level."

NTBCC attended a pre-application presentation from the development team & whilst there were many positive aspects to the proposal, concerns were voiced regarding the proposed roof works, with a double height mansard roof.

The application is open for comments until Friday 22 August – there are currently 10 objections lodged.

Given the pre-application presentation, NTBCC will submit a representation highlighting the repurposing of the building from a vacant office to 64 residential units (incl. 35% Affordable units) but questioning the proposed roof works.

3. Edinburgh Council Charlotte Square Proposals

Several NTBCC members attended the drop-in event on this at the Kimpton Hotel in late July (It's also covered under the Transport agenda). There was also a Cockburn Association walk-through with the Council officer leading this more recently. It is unclear whether this is a heritage-led project, supported by the Charlotte Square owners or if it is transport-led, to facilitate a link between the recently completed CCWEL and the intended George Street project.

The documents that were made available, although setting out the intended road space uses, did not include sufficient detail to fully understand how the pavement will be modified to make it more accessible for all users. Understand that it is currently costed at ~£5M and will not progress until late 2027 at the earliest (as funding is uncertain – another one on the Visitor Levy shopping list ?).

There also seems a certain reluctance from Council officers to engage with amenity bodies / community councils. Also unclear what involvement (if any) Edinburgh World heritage has had / will have given this is one of the most important squares in the WHS.

4. Former RBS Site Amended Application (25/01899/FUL) – update

The recent application for 599 student beds (replacing the previously approved Build to Rent housing) & replacing the Class 4 office adjacent to Fettes Row with residential close for comments on 18 July. The proposal attracted 366 objections including from NTBCC & the Cockburn Association (with a solitary comment in Support). NTBCC had liaised with both residents on Fettes Row / Royal Crescent as well as those to the east. There was also a discussion at the FRRCRA AGM which NTBCC attended. EWHT submitted some robust comments on the proposal.

5. Other recent planning applications and appeals

NTBCC submitted comments on the proposal to convert the Clyde & Co. / Simpson Marwick office building at **Albany House**, 58 Albany Street (on the junction with Broughton Street) to a hotel (25/02873/FUL). There were a number of objections (13) with 3 Neutral comments and 1 in Support. NTBCC submitted a neutral comment based on input from several NTBCC members who live close by.

The application has essentially been approved subject to a legal agreement being put in place. The Report of Handling is not yet available so it's unclear whether the application was amended or approved as submitted.

NTBCC also submitted an objection to the proposal to convert the **Charlotte Baptist Chapel** to a boutique hotel (25/02951/FUL & 25/02944/LBC). Whilst a hotel in that location may be appropriate, the application proposed removal of the last remaining internal heritage items.

Somewhat surprisingly, the application received 37 comments in Support with only 7 objections. The application is currently 'Awaiting Assessment'.

NTBCC also submitted an objection to the height & scale of the proposed Royal London office refurbishment and redevelopment at **1 Thistle Street (25/03183/FUL & 25/03242/LBC).**

Although NTBCC had again been offered and attended a pre-application presentation where the general view was supportive of Royal London returning to St Andrew Square as their Scottish headquarters, but in order to facilitate this, there was a need to add a double height glazed extension which was over-dominant to adjacent buildings, including the 'C' listed building on Queen Street. It is also worth noting that previously permission had been granted for conversion of the Class 4 office building to a(nother) hotel.

The application only received 7 comments, 5 objecting & 1 in Support. Current status is ''Awaiting Assessment'.

Richard Price
For 11 August NTBCC meeting