

North Bridge - A catalogue of errors!

Every step of the way up and down North Bridge there are sights of great neglect, - by the council, shop keepers and workmen.



The City of Edinburgh Council is continuing to fail in its responsibility for the upkeep of one of Edinburgh's busiest and high profile streets. Lack of organisation and commitment results in one of Edinburgh's scruffiest places. The catalogue of pictures inside shows this is not an exaggeration.

**A follow-up report on Living Streets
Scotland's first report in August 2002**

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Introduction.

The author had believed the first report would have convinced the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) that there are problems on North Bridge (NB) which need serious attention, and that the update report would be quite brief especially in terms of photos. It was expected to be mainly text saying how well the council had responded, that the area is now clean, with lamp posts free of old posters, and a lot less clutter lying around etc; even though the scaffolding would still be up for along time yet.

However, a recent survey by us and a closer inspection of North Bridge shows little has been done to improve the area. The presentation of refuse had improved thanks to the work of the Environmental Wardens, and there was some improvement in the cleanliness of the pavements. Apart from this the problems remain. Why is this? It appears the Council are simply not responsive to these kinds of problems, or not able to deal with them.

This report shows a photographic record of North Bridge on 31st January 2003. It is broken up in sections of different subjects, such as bins, doorways etc.

UPDATE: Another visit on 10th February showed;

- *Scaffolding on the Argos side of NB was coming down. (enquiries to the scaffolders was not able to confirm if part or all was coming down).*
- *The scaffolding pole coverings (on the Scotsman side of NB) had been tidied up (rags removed and carpeting of poles redone).*
- *The Scotsman side of NB at the top end tended to be cleaner, though the other side appeared to have a lot less attention - especially the doorways and scaffolding area. Previous visits showed this to be a regular occurrence.*
- *A doorway on the Scotsman side had graffiti removed, (though other areas were just as bad as before).*
- *It is believed that before the new year one bin had been removed, maybe to reduce the obstacles in that area where the scaffolding is. Last November we were told by the council that all bins on NB would be replaced by Christmas, but the old shabby bins were still there.*
- *The graffiti seen in this report on the walls on the bridge itself (though not elsewhere) had been removed, but had resulted in highlighting the surrounding dirt that had been there for many months, making the appearance look very patchy.*

Please see the rest of the report for work not done by the council to improve North Bridge.

Steven Copeland.

February 2003

North Bridge : Update Report (Feb 2003) CONCLUSIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS.

It is evident from the photographic survey in this report that, although some progress has been made, the North Bridge is still left to accumulate dirt, clutter and graffiti over long periods. CEC is still not doing nearly enough to make it presentable.

Too little effective action has been taken, as the photographs show. It is hoped that this update report will convince CEC to take more determined and decisive action.

Notwithstanding the problems associated with the presence of scaffolding there is still a lot that can be done to clean and upgrade the area. For instance:

- Press traders on NB to be more responsible in cleaning their own frontages and doorways, through the Chamber of Commerce and any relevant traders associations, as well as with individual traders.
- Institute a regular and sufficiently frequent cleaning programme for the bus shelters. Can this not become a routine part of the weekly street cleansing programme?
- Regularly clean the walls of the bridge itself, and programme it for repainting. Again can the cleaning of the bridge walls not become part of regular street cleansing duties?
- Institute more thorough or more frequent washing of the pavements, to cope with the volume and nature of the activities along NB. If the promised weekly cleansing is actually happening, it is certainly not comprehensive or fully effective so far.
- Clean all posts and lighting columns thoroughly. Once fully cleaned up, can keeping all posts clean not also become a routine part of the street cleansing process? We need streetscape cleansing, not just street cleansing!
- Clean or renew a lot of the traffic and other signs themselves. Many are old and shabby.
- Remove all redundant signs.
- Remove all graffiti from the bridge and shops area.
- Remove fly posters and clean up associated mess.
- Where scaffolding is erected remove all A boards that are further reducing the pavement space available.
- Remove all stray traffic cones and plastic barriers.
- Pressure building contractors to regularly clean and tidy their own mess during and after work.
- Introduce procedures to ensure that when scaffolding is permitted it is designed to minimise pavement obstructions, and that time periods for permits are also kept to the minimum.
- Amend the requirements for the protection of scaffolding poles and joints, to ensure more effective and reliable protection while reducing shabbiness arising from loose and out of place material.
- Adopt the use of anti-graffiti paint extensively in areas of the City where there are persistent problems, such as NB.

Many of the problems that exist on NB are commonplace on other streets in Edinburgh. A step change improvement in streetscape management and cleansing is needed. Improved procedures adopted and developed for the NB could serve as a model for improved CEC streetscape cleansing and management procedures city-wide. We suggest that CEC uses the NB in this way to raise standards throughout the City.

City of Edinburgh's Councils response to Living Streets Scotland North Bridge Report of August 2002.

An initial response by the Chief Executive of the City of Edinburgh Council.

NORTH BRIDGE - FESTIVAL PERIOD/ STREETScape ISSUES

I refer to the series of photographs forwarded to the Council by Living Streets, Scotland, and your subsequent e-mail correspondence expressing concerns at the condition of North Bridge during the recent Festival period and a number of wider streetscape issues. The relevant officials have now reported to me on the matter.

Litter

The litter bins within the city centre are currently being replaced by new units in terms of a contract between the Council and Adshel. It is anticipated that these will enhance the amenity of the city. As part of this replacement programme, the older style units, as featured in the photographs, will be removed for use elsewhere. In addition, Adshel will provide a programme of regular washing and maintenance. To date 270 litre bins have been replaced.

Additional litter bins are also to be sited on all of the main arterial routes into the city. This will involve an additional 400 units. To date, approximately 200 units have been sited adjacent to bus stops. The remaining bins have been received from the manufacturer and placements are being determined.

Street Cleansing

The Director of Environmental and Consumer Services advises that all main routes in the city, including North Bridge, are cleansed several times throughout the day and night, with additional cleansing during the Festival.

Refuse

The photographs provided indicate that there was only one instance of identified waste presented for the Council to collect and that this was properly bagged and tied. The other instances identified waste put out for a private waste contractor. Again, this appeared to be properly presented. The Director suggests that, until such time as a containerised solution can be implemented in the city centre, refuse will be required to be presented in sacks for collection.

Frontages

The frontages identified in the photographs have been drawn to the attention of the Environmental Warden team who will consider enforcement action against the proprietor, if required.

Flyposting

Flyposting on street furniture is a major problem for local authorities across the country. It has generally proved very difficult to gain evidence of the perpetration of the offence and, as a result, prosecutions are very rare. The task is made even more difficult during the Festival period in Edinburgh.

Flyposted material on private property is the responsibility of the owner. Consideration is, however, being given to the possibility of the Council providing a service to property owners for the removal of graffiti and flyposting.

The issue is also under consideration by the City Centre Management Company. The Director of City Development suggests, however, that it would be overly optimistic to suggest that the problem can be resolved completely in the short term.

Scaffolding

One of the sites concerned was the location of a stonefall incident. It is the nature of historic city centres that long term building refurbishment will be required from time to time. Clearly, it is in the Council's interest to encourage owners to expedite such works. However, the powers available to do so are limited. The Council's primary responsibility is to promote and maintain public safety.

The Director of City Development recognises, however, that there is room for improvement in the appearance of scaffolding. Indeed, the Planning Committee, at a recent meeting, approved the recommendations of a report on amendments to the guidelines on advertisements and signs which, amongst other things, set out a draft policy on the sponsorship of scaffolding. A copy of the report is attached for your information. It is anticipated that this revised planning policy will enable an image of the structure concerned to be displayed on the scaffolding with a small area given over to a sponsor's logo. Clearly, there will be diverse subjective views on the desirability of this. However, the proposals have been drawn up only after a lengthy consultation period during which the Council has canvassed a variety of opinions.

Road Obstructions

You suggest that the Council might apply a financial penalty to contractors occupying lengths of road for excessive periods.

The Director of City Development points out that this practice, known as lane rental, is the subject of a trial in England and Wales. As yet, Scottish councils do not have the necessary powers to implement similar arrangements. Extending such powers to include the occupation of public spaces by scaffolding would be a logical step.

Obstructions and Trade Waste Bins

The proliferation of trade waste containers is an issue of concern to the Director City Development. He has written to the owners of a number of premises requesting the removal of trade waste containers at critical locations.

A-boards present a similar hazard to pedestrians. Should the Council's strategy in respect of trade waste containers prove successful, it will be applied to other type obstruction. Again, clearer legislation setting out and augmenting the Council's power would be welcomed.

T N AITCHISON Chief Executive. The City of Edinburgh Council. 16th October 2002

A meeting was held on 22nd November 2002 at the City Chambers Edinburgh.

The following note (by John Russell of LS) and the North Bridge report itself formed the basis for discussion at this meeting. (see page 11 for details on meeting)

Points for Discussion

North Bridge Report and related Streetscape Management Issues.

I have received a letter from the Chief Executive giving reactions to the issues raised in the North Bridge Report and my subsequent email. This followed reports from various officials. Living Streets Edinburgh has also held a meeting at which Paul Blaxter spoke and among other things he reported on actions taken by the Environmental Services Dept. at the N. Bridge. Living Streets is pleased to see the extent of the progress now being made with regard to litter, waste collection and cleansing and the further improvements programmed.

There is still a need for much more to be done, however, and on a number of related streetscape management issues there is little evidence of progress yet. The following comments on the Chief Executive's letter/ report raise some of these issues. The comments are ordered under the headings used in that letter.

Litter

The new litter bins are a vast improvement over the old ones in terms of appearance.

Their introduction though is leading to situations where there are several types of bin in use in the same street, as there are insufficient of the new bins for a comprehensive renewal and upgrading programme. We hope that the replacement programme will be extended to become fully comprehensive.

It is pleasing also to see that additional bins are being provided in some places, and that their location close to bus stops is now a priority. This should be the start of a much wider programme to provide the new bins that are needed in other locations. Many streets and parks are still grossly under provided for, if any provision is made at all. [For example the recent pedestrianisation scheme in Riego St. still has not been provided with litter bins some 2 years on, and it is almost invariably defaced by litter. Here bins should have been seen as an essential and integral part of the scheme's streetscape design from the outset.]

Inadequacy or absence of provision provides the litterbugs with an excuse for their behaviour that should not exist. It is essential that bins are provided in sufficient numbers, of sufficient size, and that they are emptied sufficiently often if habits of littering are to be changed. We suggest that a fully comprehensive programme of new bin provision needs to be implemented over the next few years.

Street Cleansing

We note the claim that the N. Bridge is cleansed several times a day. It is clear from photographs in our report that pavements on the N. Bridge at the time of the Festival had not been adequately cleaned, with litter and debris accumulated around scaffolding and doorway areas in particular. Perhaps some tighter requirements with penalties need to be specified for the contractor, or the contractor needs to be changed!

Adequate bin cleansing is also essential.

Refuse

Most of the trade waste in bags was properly presented but had attracted additional waste from passers by. This suggests there is a problem with the waste being presented too far ahead of collection times - something that it should be possible to avoid with the cooperation of traders. It also illustrates the need for additional litter bins referred to earlier.

The trade waste bags also constitute a serious obstruction to pedestrian and wheelchair movements, forcing pedestrians to use the carriageway - another good reason to insist that presentation times are kept to a minimum, especially in locations where there are other obstacles such as scaffolding.

Containerisation, as elsewhere, can be expected to improve the situation in terms of litter but the containers could replace temporary obstacles to pedestrian movement with permanent ones unless any permanent bins are located in the carriageway and there is effective management of the deployment of mobile bins by traders. In situations such as the N. Bridge where there are high levels of pedestrian activity, and where the service level provided by the pavement width is already insufficient to cater for the activity peaks, it is essential to avoid significant losses of pavement space.

Frontages

We are pleased that the Environmental Warden Service is now taking action with and if necessary against traders and proprietors to improve the management of frontages. The development of this service is strongly supported.

Flyposting

Accepted this is a difficult issue and we are pleased that efforts to deal with it are being stepped up. The removal of flyposted material from posts and street signs etc appears to be occasional - perhaps primarily in response to complaints?- rather than routine. Some of that illustrated in the N. Bridge photographs had clearly been in place for a considerable time. Why should the removal of flyposted material from posts and signs not be a routine part of the street cleansing process? This would prevent accumulations and perhaps eventually reduce the incidence as it is seen to be less effective.

Scaffolding

The Chief executive's response on this focuses on advertising and appearance issues, but not the main functional problem of pavement obstruction. The main issue we would like to see addressed is how to keep the time periods of scaffolding to a minimum. There can be no good reason for scaffolding to be in place for years as in the N. Bridge case.

Scaffolding requires permission, so presumably that permission can be time limited with a requirement for reapplication if not removed within the time limit? We are anxious to see the existing system used to exert consistent pressure to keep time periods to the minimum.

Road Obstructions

We appreciate that the Council does not have the necessary powers yet to charge contractors for occupying road space, either for excessive periods or on a lane rental basis. But is the Council pressing the Scottish Executive on its own behalf and through COSLA, for additional powers?

Will the Council also now press for similar powers in relation to scaffolding occupying pavements?

Obstructions and Trade (and other) Waste Bins

We understand that the location of trade bins on pavements requires permission and that many if not most of the existing bins are not permitted to be there. In this context 'writing to request their removal at critical locations' is a minimalist response to a growing problem. Surely only those bins with permission should be allowed to remain in place, and the Council should be taking enforcement action to remove illicit bins if those responsible for them fail to respond to a request to do so?

What are the criteria for granting permission for 'permanent' bin locations? Do these criteria ensure that standards of pedestrian service levels and wheelchair accessibility will not be compromised? Are there guidelines on bin location, as there are now for A-boards, covering temporary as well as 'permanent'? Are bin cleansing standards required? Is enforcement action now being taken against traders who leave temporary bins permanently on pavements? If not, why not, for all of the last 4 questions?

Is the Council pressing the Scottish Executive for the augmented and clarified powers that would help?

My email also pointed out examples of inconsistency in the deployment of public bins, by CEC itself, but no response has been made to this point. Again, are there now consistent guidelines that ensure pavement deployments are kept to a minimum, and not allowed where they would compromise pavement standards? Have older, less sensitive deployments been revisited to better locate the bins?

The problems in this area require more intensive management than there has been to date. The Chief Executive's response is disappointing in that it gives no commitments on improved management procedures, and it does not appear to commensurate with the seriousness of the obstruction problems posed for pedestrians and wheelchair users, quite apart from any issues of the appearance of the streetscape.

There are a number of related streetscape management issues that are not addressed in the Chief Executive's report or raised directly by the N. Bridge report. Comments on these are added below.

Parking Cones Removal (and plastic barriers)

There is a city-wide problem over the collection and removal of parking cones and plastic barriers following road works by contractors. Contractors frequently fail to collect and remove all the cones in particular, and of course they are sometimes shifted quite far away from the original work. They then lie around the streets, on pavements in particular. An example is shown in one of the photographs in the N. Bridge report. Can their removal not be done routinely in conjunction with refuse or litter collection?

Redundant Signs and Guardrail Removal

There are numerous old redundant signs and signposts cluttering up the streets unnecessarily, and there is no evidence of a programme to remove them. These include traffic signs, lighting columns, and posts whose original function is not apparent. Even when adjacent new works are undertaken the opportunity is often not taken to remove them. Will the Council initiate a programme to identify and remove all unnecessary signs and posts?

Temporary signs added to existing posts also tend to become permanent. An example is the signs erected to advertise work done under the 'Safer Routes to School' programme. These were arguably not necessary from the outset but are still in place long after the schemes were implemented. Will the Council ensure that these are removed?

Similarly there are miles of unnecessary and redundant pedestrian guardrail scattered around the City, creating unsightly conditions, reducing available pavement space and restricting pedestrian movement needlessly. The Council has indicated (in the Local Transport Strategy) its intention to initiate a pilot scheme to remove redundant guardrail, but there is no evidence of progress yet. When will this pilot be implemented and will the Council initiate a wider programme to remove all redundant railing by a specified target date?

Relocation of Road Signs

There are also many examples of badly located road signs, set back too far into the pavement and creating obstacles for pedestrians. Would the Council link a relocation programme for the worst examples to the suggested programme for removing redundant signs?

John Russell, for LIVING STREETS EDINBURGH 17/11/02

See over for Living Streets Scotland meeting with City of Edinburgh Council.

Details of the meeting held at the City Chambers Edinburgh, on 22nd of November 2002, to discuss the North Bridge Report and issues arising from it.

In attendance: Andrew Burns, Brian Fallon, Eddie McDowell, Sandy Wallace, Dougie Dolan, Carl (?) MacDonald from CEC; with Living Streets Scotland's John Russell and Steven Copeland, the author of the report.

This note was prepared from a taped transcript of the meeting. It summarizes the main points made, with statements attributed to LS and CEC rather than individuals.

LITTER BINS

CEC agreed the litter bins seen in the August report are "extremely old". Cleaning them is not the solution. It was agreed that replacement is needed.

CEC had obtained Scottish Executive funding to renew 1200 bins or increase their density. With funding for another 400 coming from another departmental source 1600 new bins in total were being deployed across the city. This did not include an unspecified number of additional bins being obtained by Recreation, Culture and Leisure.

NB is one of the locations which will receive attention, and this should happen before Christmas. **All the poor black and white bins in the photographs will be replaced by modern bins. There should be an increase in density, with the distance between bins reduced - all before Christmas.** Bus stops will have bins located nearby, as close as possible so there is no excuse for litter.

The bin half way up NB (on the Scotsman side) was discussed and the scaffolding was regarded as crucial. It limits the placement of bins, as well as the amount of street cleaning; without the scaffolding it would be possible to find preferable locations.

There are guidelines from the City Development Dept. about the placing of all street furniture, particularly litter bins. As the scaffolding already restricts pedestrian movements bin locations will have to be fitted in the best they can. CEC hopes to increase the density on NB with 4 or 5 bins in addition to replacement like for like.

A single style is intended to predominate, almost exclusively throughout the city centre. By next summer there will be a marked difference in the amount of litter bins in and around the main streets.

It is not only the costs of the bins that is involved but costs of staffing to empty the bins etc. These had been taken into account.

STREET CLEANING

It was stated that NB is cleaned twice a day, at least. The night shift clean NB at 5.00 in the morning prior to pedestrian / commuter traffic. It is cleaned again by a street cleaning squad, but is also visited by small street sweepers, that are new to the city in the last couple of months.

As NB has scaffolding the machines cannot operate there so it has to be hand attention. Since the issues were raised by Living Streets Scotland **it had been decided to put in a weekly washing programme**. Because brushes cannot get into the back of some locations, around the poles etc. they whole location would be washed, emphasizing the corners and backs of places. Flushing the area with water pressure is seen as the only way to lift this dirt. Other methods will not work.

LS mentioned a visit to NB just before the meeting and reported that the area pictured on page 11 of the report, showing a filthy doorway near the top of NB, had still not been cleaned, although we saw some cleaning activity taking place on the other side of the street. CEC said the area had been checked two days ago for the meeting, and a list had been made of things to happen. Asked if staff were going around with brushes it was affirmed that they were. This cleaning was not seen as adequate in the LS site visit, as the bases of the poles etc were still dirty and littered. CEC Environmental Services said it is a building site, and cleaning is very difficult, some of the debris coming from trade waste bags. **Wardens had been instructed to pay particular attention to traders putting out waste too early or not properly.**

City Development stated that traders have been leaving **trade waste bins** on the pavement illegally, with no authority to do so. Enforcement action was now being taken against that too. Traders are only authorized to present the bins for collection purposes, not to leave them on street. CEC was writing to traders who leave these bins on the footpath or carriageway, and advising them that these obstacles were in contravention of the Roads Scotland Act. **CEC would seek to persuade traders to remove them**, but if they did not the Council would remove them. It has removed bins in the past and this has been shown to be effective.

The Council's Environmental Wardens Section are based just up the road on South Bridge. So in terms of monitoring N B they are certainly handy. The wardens have done a lot of enforcement action in terms of presentation times.

If it is the council that is responsible it is easier than if there is a private trade waste disposal agreement. The agreement with the large companies is to present certain time for putting out and collecting waste. CEC feels that at present these companies do not build in the same slippage time across routes that the council might be able to do. For example, some of the waste with a presentation time of 7.00am is not being uplifted until the afternoon. The Wardens were going into these shops and giving them advice about presentation times, but also work with the collection organisations, to ensure that they operate correctly. Wardens had visited most the shopkeepers on North Bridge.

CEC were asked what the legal rules were on how long waste can be left out; staff present needed to take advice from the wardens service but stated that there is a legal requirement on putting out either domestic or trade waste. The worst period for problems is during the festivals when busy restaurants put their waste out at night, when they are closing at 2.00 in the morning. The environmental wardens were taking specific action against these premises. This consists of either verbal or written warnings, or fixed penalty notices. When the word gets around that the wardens potentially hand out fixed penalty fines of £25 it is amazing how persuasive this can be.

FLYPOSTING

The problem is seen as the volume of flyposting in the city. It is very difficult for CEC to deal with given the resources they have. The only way to deal with removing the fly posters is to power wash. The posters come off easily with power washing, but if not done properly it leaves a paste. **LS argued that this could be done alongside the weekly power washing of the ground** etc. and reported that the posters were still there that were referred to in the August report. **CEC indicated that this would be done** from now on. If the posters are removed often enough flyposting is reduced, although there may be some displacement to fresh sites; but in places such as N B this should not be a problem.

The problems are worst over the festivals period. **It was agreed that during the festivals period only so much could be done, and that a thorough clean up should be organized afterwards.**

CEC, asked about the removal of flyposters on private properties, said the practice / need was to go into the shops and ask if they had any objections.

Posts with flyposted stickers and graffiti:

LS referred to the problem of the posts covered in stickers, posters etc. and to Newcastle's use of a very effective artex type application (anti graffiti paint). LS asked if there are any plans for this to be used in Edinburgh. CEC were aware of this type of paint and said they are already using it and requesting that public utilities, in particular British Telecom and Telewest, either paint all of their cabinets or have a programme to paint them with anti graffiti paint. They could only be requested to do so and not forced to, but experience is that these companies are cooperating. **It was agreed that CEC would consider using anti-graffiti paint on its own road signs.**

CEC City Development said it wanted to remove stickers from posts and might involve their colleagues in Environmental & Consumer Services to assist. The road inspectors can't remove glued on stickers but they are issued with pair of scissors and regularly remove tied on posters.

LS suggested there seems to be a management problem over who cleans what, where departmental lines are being crossed. The reply was that there was a cross-departmental task force on cleansing. It is a new concept and CEC was the first council to do it. By the end of this year (2002) most of these teething problems should have been sorted out in terms of departmental crossover in cleaning the city. The whole concept of the task force is to streamline the service so when the public phone up, they are not sent from one department to another.

CEC is also localising, so that the public will contact their local task force environmental warden or task force manager. This would cut down the time factor and the need for messages to be passed on. The task force will be reporting to local development committees.

SCAFFOLDING

The report on North Bridge is an example of the problems CEC has on the issue of scaffolding. The Council, as a roads authority, gives consent for scaffolding to be erected on roads and footpaths.

Permission for the scaffolding to be erected would normally be given for 3 or 6 months time bands. Scaffolders are given temporary permission to have scaffolding erected and to "occupy the Council's road". To stay there longer they then would have to reapply.

The reason the scaffolding on the west side of N B is that there was a dangerous building with masonry falling, or threatening to fall. At that stage it was erected not to repair the building but to protect the public.

The building is private property. CEC's Property Management section served a repairs notice on that property. In this case there is no time limitation for the scaffolding given the basis that it is there is for safety reasons. There is also no time limit within which the building must be repaired. An undertaking was given by the owners to repair it, and they are getting grants from World Heritage and Historic Scotland as it is a "million pound job". There is nothing else CEC can do, currently.

The latest information (on 22nd Nov 2002) is that this scaffolding could be up for another year. The Council is not happy with this, and on reflection it is also not happy with the way the scaffolding was erected. It had probably been hastily erected on safety grounds. The main concerns are how the poles were placed in terms of causing obstruction. The poles in certain places should have been set further back to the building wall and others nearer to the carriageway, to allow more space for pedestrians. [Placement of the poles was discussed in detail.] **CEC undertook to go back to the applicant / owners of the property to see whether anything could be done to reduce obstructions**, but it cannot take enforcement action. It has various powers regarding moving obstructions, but this scaffolding has been up for two years at time of this meeting.

It was put to CEC that the large scale scaffolding on the other side of NB is just as bad, in terms of adding to obstruction and cleaning difficulties. And this was not put up in a rush. The reply to this was that it is down to the design of the scaffolding. CEC procedures do not particularly check the design, although it does apply conditions in regard to lighting and protection etc. **It was agreed that CEC procedures should be improved to ensure that obstructions for pedestrians are minimized.**

Condition and appearance of scaffolding poles

CEC admitted the examples shown in the report of torn and shabby bits of carpet stuck to the poles were not acceptable. Carpets on the poles used as protection can work in a lot of cases, done in the proper way. Cladding would be much more acceptable though rather than just tape with carpets etc. Special cladding is available for this purpose. There are proprietary materials such as foam lagging, but again the Council cannot insist on this. What is looked for is something safe for the public.

LS confirmed that the examples were still there. CEC agreed that of the material used such as underlay and hessian were not good for this purpose. It was agreed a lot of poles were not in a safe condition, being unprotected. **It was agreed that an inspector must go back and have the problems dealt with.**

There follows photos of North Bridge taken during a survey done on 31st January 2003

They focus on the individual problems that are wide spread throughout North Bridge. - Creating a shabby

The problems through North Bridge categorised under;

- ◆ Scaffolding
- ◆ A boards
- ◆ Doorways and shop fronts
- ◆ Path cleaning problems and general obstacles.
- ◆ Bridge and other walls
- ◆ Posts etc
- ◆ How Newcastle prevents fly posters and stickers on street posts and boxes.
- ◆ Bus shelters and bins

There are a lot of pictures, but this reflects the extent of the problems.

These pictures document the true reality of Living Streets concern that things need to change.



If you stand in just the right place, North Bridge looks fine,
(from a distance) -

But lets try other parts to see how it looks.

SCAFOLDING

Scaffolding having been there for some years, is the worst problem.

But it is questioned why the council has not ensured this was erected, the work done and the scaffolding removed as soon as possible.



A typical sight on North Bridge.



A maze of pipes - with worse yet to come.



Something that makes this scaffolding worse is how tatty pieces of material are fitted to the pipes.

They don't remain in place, making the place look even more shabby.



A BOARDS

On both sides of the street are many A boards which add to the maze of obstructions for the walking public.



The Council know about the obstructive scaffolding, so should the use of A Boards be allowed too?



DOORWAYS AND SHOP FRONTS

Another on going issue which is a "no mans land" for responsibility is doorways and alcoves.



31st January 2003

The small picture is from the last report dated 19th August 2002,

And the larger picture taken on 31st January 2003 shows the door is worse than 5 months ago.

The council has said it will approach these businesses - but have they been contacted?

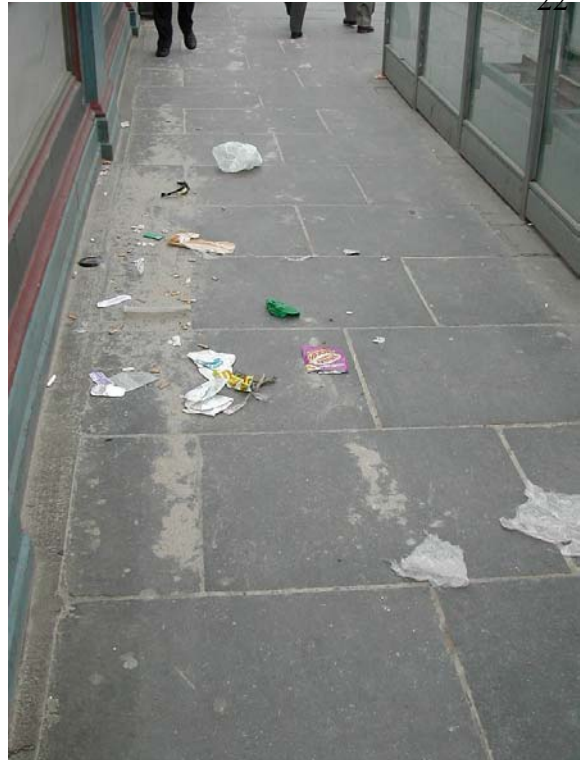
A photo from the last report, dated **19th August 2002,**



Doorways on the East side of North Bridge, near the top.



PATH CLEANING PROBLEMS AND GENERAL OBSTACLES.



"GARDYLOO" -
as one shop keeper does
swill their door way -
but oh dear, what a mess.

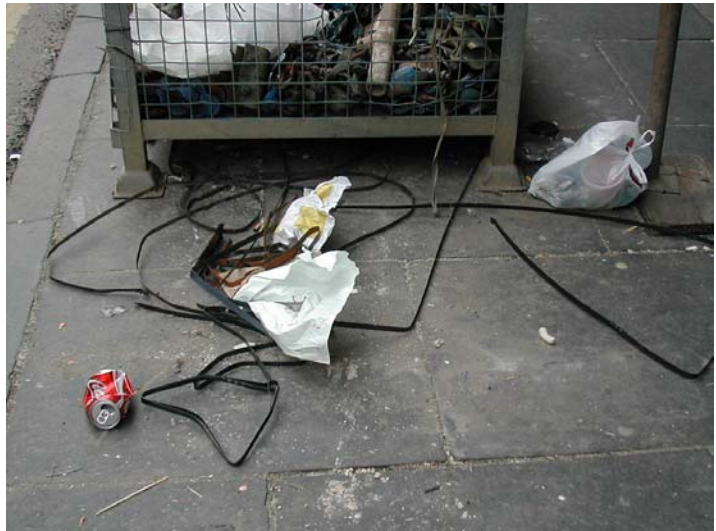




The Council should clean North Bridge regularly, especially around the scaffolding and shops areas that are prone to a lot of dirt and rubbish collecting.

There appears to be an oversight in cleansing by the Council resulting in the what we see here.





Irresponsible building work.

The builders are not operating in an environmentally friendly manner.

The council are not ensuring that they do.



More to offend the eyes.

A major problem in the area are telecoms units like this which are not being maintained by the companies. Are the council approaching them to ensure these do not lower the tone of the city?



Glue left after the "removal" of the flyposters is not removed - leaving an unsightly mess. Graffiti can also be left without attention.

Rubbish put out by local businesses, add to the bad image of the area - though at least it is better presented than seen in the last report.

But how long is it before collection?



Right two pictures.
Fly posters seem to be accepted.

Even the wall and ground are not cleaned.



Bottom two pictures.

Who does this bin belong to - should it be there?

Several traffic cones seen on NB add to the bad state of the area. They are still not being recovered.

More walls left very grubby, but who would take responsibility to clean them?



BRIDGE AND OTHER WALLS

Neglected paint work of the walls of the bridge gives one of Edinburgh's famous walks a shabby image.

Graffiti not removed makes this worse.



This goes on all the way up North Bridge on both sides.



Close to the CULT clothes shop, is this neglected site.



This area is appalling showing total disrespect to the architecture seen by thousands of tourists world wide.

See over for more on this area.



Nearby.



As people walk past the area seen above, another eyesore is also within easy sight of passers by.



POSTS ETC

Posts are one of the worst problems where fly posters are not removed -or not removed properly.

This page shows posts at the lower end of North Bridge (both sides).



A sign with no purpose -
so why is it there?



Life's not perfect, -

but is it too much to ask the Council to wash and even paint these shabby blocks now and then.

This is not really a trivial complaint as this all adds to the shabby image of this area, and the rest of the city.

And there are much worse ones in the city.

Still at the lower end.



**Halfway up North Bridge.
(both sides).**



Another post in a grubby condition, plus a pedestrian crossing unit which is filthy.

East side at the top of North Bridge.

Shabby workmanship, showing a cavalier attitude to the look of the area.

The post is in a very grubby state.



Taped up posts - seems to be a bad habit.

One of the problems discussed with CEC on 22nd November 2002 and shown in our report dated 19th August 2002 -

5 months later - nothing has been done about it.



See over for a solution to this problem.

HOW NEWCASTLE PREVENTS FLY POSTERS AND STICKERS ON STREET POSTS AND BOXES.

The City of Newcastle.

Seen here is Anti graffiti paint which provides a surface that is very rough, preventing glue being effective. Though the author does not have many pictures at present of this scheme, and not much knowledge, it is known the artex type paint, (available in different colours) can be applied to almost any surface making it virtually impossible to stick posters and stickers on.



A telecoms box also covered in this paint.

Is Edinburgh willing to make this move which will solve the problems seen on the previous pages?

City of Edinburgh Council have said they do not use this and is doubtful they have plans to use it, which is a shame as it would be cost effective in the long term, and be much more attractive than the persistent problem of shabby posts we see now.

Naturally, old (historical) lamps etc as seen lower down on North Bridge should not have this done - but modern types should.



BUS SHELTERS AND BINS

Bus stops on North Bridge, in an appalling state.

Filthy shelters, inside and out.

Some shelters had graffiti on and the timetable cases grubby and badly scratched.

Old dirty bins add to the eyesore.

Bus users have to stand very close to this bin to see the timetables.



See over for more.

Why is the Council's system failing to keep these shelters clean to a high standard?

This not only gives this area a bad image, but public transport too.



These do not just need a quick wipe down as the council would do, but need a thorough hosing down.

This has been complained about before but nothing has been done to ensure these shelters are kept clean.

These shelters were bought by the previous Lothian Regional Council with only base paint, battleship gray.

And once installed - forgotten about?



Regular traffic passing by causes a lot of dirt to collect on the shelters, but they are very rarely cleaned, if ever.

Another very old and grubby bin, at the lower end of North Bridge.



This is the same bin which was shown in the last report, 5 months ago, yet has not been cleaned - or replaced.



The Council told us they would be replaced by the end of 2002, but these recent pictures show no action.

The shelter behind is not maintained.

"Bad press"
(a few samples).

Tough on litter

M CHAPLIN'S letter (October 1) today is simply the latest in a long line of similar correspondence bemoaning the disgraceful state of our city streets caused by litter.

On a visit to California I was impressed by the high degree of cleanliness of city streets and never a sight of discarded gum welded to pavements. National monument areas were also spotless. Even rest areas on the freeways were immaculate.

There were two observable reasons for this. Firstly, there was always a suitable receptacle nearby to receive litter and, secondly, frequent signs proclaiming that littering attracts a fine of \$1000.

This tough policy has changed the mindset to one where littering is socially unacceptable. Shouldn't we be doing the same?

Jim Taylor
The Murrays Brae, Edinburgh

October 02

City's streets paved with litter

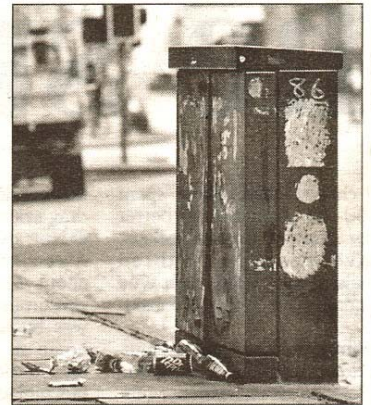
DOORS Open Day. Town packed. What a shame about the litter. Filthy pavements and doorways.

South St Andrew Street, from McDonalds to the top. The doorway next to McDonalds gradually filling up with rubbish, two beer cans on the beautiful garden at the Bank of Scotland. High Street - very busy with an overflowing litter bin near City Chambers.

North Bridge appalling as usual with east side of the bridge "decorated" with the remains of food. Same as Waverley Bridge, especially on Sunday mornings.

Don't managers of offices, shops and restaurants ever check how dirty the entrances to their establishments are?

M Chaplin
India Street, Edinburgh



MESS: Rubbish in town centre

On-street bins need to be cleaner

FURTHER to Miss Marjorie B Wood's letter (October 22) about the lack of cleaning provided for on-street refuse containers, I would refer her to a recent report to the Council Executive.

Following a Liberal Democrat Group motion for a cleaning programme to be introduced, the department of environmental services proposed a twice-yearly cleaning programme which would both eliminate odours and extend the life of the bins.

Unfortunately, the administration refused to accept the additional costs this would entail. My colleagues and I will continue to press for the cleaning programme to be implemented.

Councillor Sue Tritton, Liberal Democrat Group environmental spokesperson,
Edinburgh City Council



PROGRAMME: Containers

29th October 02

Author Member of:

- The Bus and Coach Watchdog
- Engine Idling Monitoring and Research Group
- Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland
- Friends Of The Earth Derwentside (local group in England)
- Friends of the Earth Scotland
- Gateshead Access Panel
- Gateshead Transport Advisory Committee, (as a member of NECTAR)
- Living Streets Scotland
- NEAT (North East Action on Transport)
- Newcastle Healthy Cities Project
- North East (of England) Combined Activists Round Table (NECTAR)
- Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance
- TRANSform Scotland
- Transport 2000 Northumbria

Further colour copies of this report and the first report can be obtained from Living Streets Scotland.

(A condensed version of this 39 page report is to be available).