

## Changes in Edinburgh's C.B.D.

### 1. The ST. James Centre.

The St. James Centre was built at the top of Leith Street in the early 1970's, to encourage economic growth in a part of the city which was very run -down. There were old tenements - these were knocked down, and the shopping centre and the St. James hotel were built. In the past 4 years, John Lewis, the major department store was completely refurbished and extended to compete with the arrival of the nearby Harvey Nicols store in 2005.

### 2. The Princes Mall

Again to provide a warm inviting environment for shoppers, and to replace old railway sidings beside Waverly station, the Princes Mall was build in the early 1980's to encourage economic growth in the city centre. This is currently undergoing major refurbishment, as it has faced very stiff competition from out of town shopping centres such as the Gyle and Fort Kinnaird. However, although it is now a government policy that no more out - of - town shopping centres are to



be built it is perhaps too late for the Princes Mall as many of the units are currently lying empty.

3. Out of Town Shopping Malls, and the Edinburgh Business Park beside the Gyle have had a major effect on Edinburgh's C.B.D. Some shops have relocated to the out-of-town malls as there is cheaper land, free parking, and good accessibility as they are located beside major road junctions. However, in many cases it is true to say that many shops have opened another branch and kept their city centre branch e.g. Boots , Gap, Argos ( Superstore), Next, M and S, River Island JD Sports etc. all have branches in Fort Kinnaird but have also kept their

C.B.D. Edinburgh's C.B.D. perhaps has not suffered from competition from out of town shopping centres as much as other town centres, as the major tourist function which Edinburgh has provides many customers for the shops in the C B.D

#### **4 EDINBURGH BUSINESS PARK**

The Edinburgh Business Park has had a very negative impact on the C.B.D. in terms of offices relocating. For example , The Royal Bank of Scotland, the world's fifth largest bank and one of Edinburgh's major employers, ( THIS MAY CHANGE CHANGE DUE TO THE CURRENT ECONOMIC SITUATION ) has re-located to a brand new world H.Q's beside the Business Park at Gogarburn. Other major Insurance offices e.g ( Aegon ) and other banks and offices have relocated from the C.B.D. The main reasons for this change is that land is much cheaper, traffic congestion is less, and accessibility is excellent due to location near to the junctions of major roads, and near to the intersection of the M8 and M9 motorways. The building of The Gyle and the Edinburgh Business Park, was on what was Greenbelt land . The change of land use was allowed because of the economic benefits brought to the city. Building on land that has never been built on before is known as a **GREENFIELD SITE.** ( Building on land that has had a previous land use is called a **BROWNFIELD SITE.**)

#### **4. THE BUILDING OF THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT**

The completion of the Scottish Parliament in recent times has brought about major change to Edinburgh. It has meant that there has been a very high rate of economic growth within the city - although in the current banking crisis and subsequent recession Edinburgh has been hit badly by the job losses in finance due to its dependence on the financial sector, especially as HBOS has been bought by the Llyods Group and RBS is now 70% owned by the Government. The Parliament was built on the site of an old, derelict brewery which was part of **THE INNER CITY.** However, this land has is now, due to a change of function, part of the C.B.D. This process, whereby the C.B.D has expanded into the Inner City is known as **ASSIMILATION.** The building of the PARLIAMENT IS

ALSO AN EXAMPLE OF BUILDING ON A BROWNFIELD SITE.



## 5. GAP SITES/ Major New Building.

Edinburgh, during the 70's and 80's had major " Gap Sites " - and was notorious for those. However during the mid 90's these gap sites( e.g. at the Western Approach Road where it meets Lothian Road there was a huge Gap site where there previously was old industry beside the railway) these gap sites have had major development - at the Western Approach Road there are major offices and new apartments and the Sheraton Hotel, and in Morrison Street there is the Edinburgh International Conference Centre which opened in 1995. Close to the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood Road there is the new SCOTSMAN Newspaper Office.



## 6. TRANSPORT CHANGES.

As in most cities Edinburgh has undergone major transport changes in recent times. The medieval road system of the Old Town ( narrow cobbled streets ) and the grid iron pattern of the New Town ( many junctions causing traffic congestion) and ever increasing car ownership has meant that Edinburgh's C.B.D. faced major traffic congestion. Various solutions have included:

(a ) **Park and Ride Schemes** - Edinburgh now has several - the latest being at Straiton, New Craighall and Sherrifhall - these have been introduced to encourage the use of public transport ( a major government policy) so as to ease congestion in the C.B.D. and to help Britain work towards achieving promised cuts in greenhouse gas emissions. These have only been partially successful as the public are somewhat reluctant to give up their reliance on cars.

( b ) **Bus Lanes - Greenways** Every major road into the C.B.D. now has a bus lane/Greenways and these mean that at rush hours vehicles

other than buses cyclists and taxis are allowed in the inner bus lane so that buses are therefore much faster than cars and it is then hoped that people will use public transport. However, although there are many people who do use the bus at rush hours, there are still plenty of cars on the roads. Cycle lanes and cycle paths( along the old railway lines) have also been majorly developed in Edinburgh and there is much evidence that these are well used.

### **( c ) One Way Systems**

One way systems have been introduced to try to alleviate traffic congestion - for example in Charlotte Square and St. Andrews Square. Princes Street is mainly open to buses and taxis only and not only does this alleviate congestion but makes a much more pleasant environment for shoppers and tourists. However, the traffic now banned from Princes Street has had to move elsewhere and this has led to Queen Street becoming the major thorough fare for traffic and is very congested. Edinburgh, unlike Glasgow has not got an inner by -pass and this also makes much of the centre very busy. However Edinburgh has had for many years now an outer by- pass and this takes some of the traffic which would otherwise have had to pass through the centre away.

### **( d ) Parking Restrictions.**

Many parts of the C.B.D and Inner City ( and indeed now some parts of the suburbs) have major parking restrictions with permit holders only and this is to again try to discourage people from using there cars.

### **( e ) Congestion Charge.**

A couple of years ago citizens voted no in a referendum to introduce the congestion charge like London has done and this is now not going to be an option available to the Council to reduce congestion. ( **e** )

### **New Tram System.**

Currently Edinburgh is in major traffic upheaval as the utilities are being rerouted to allow the new Tram System from Ocean Terminal to Edinburgh Airport to be completed in 2011. There is much congestion as this work is taking place, but when it is complete it should lead to much less congestion and be an environmentally friendly transport system.

## **7. Major New Tourist Developments.**

Major tourist attractions have been built - Dynamic Earth , Edinburgh Dungeons and many existing ones have been renovated - National Gallery for Scotland - and the Chamber Street Museum has had a

multi - million pound extension and the old part is currently closed for three years for refurbishment.

Many new hotels have been built - The Sheraton, Apex, and another is proposed for Princes Street although there are strong objections



from heritage groups.

### **8. George Street Changes.**

George Street has seen many changes in recent years - many banks and offices have changed function to restaurants, bars and clubs e.g. the Dome was a Bank and is now a major bar/ restaurant and Club - All Bar One - The Standing Order - Tiger Lilly - Opal Lounge - The Living Room.. George Street has also become much more of a major shopping street with up -market shops.

