

[A 'Letter from America' from someone who has lived in  
Edinburgh, and who continues like many to love the city,  
but while hoping for the best is starting to fear the worst.....](#)

I've followed the discussion about alliance with other concerned groups of residents with interest. Excuse me for saying that it seems to have been a long time coming. I attribute that to the possibility that many residents have failed, until recently, to recognize the full scope of the threat posed to them by the trams misadventure, as you (*your group*) did from the outset.

Do you use the term "NIMBY'S" [Not In My Back Yard], for those who only understand a threat when it will be imposed directly upon them?

Perhaps they failed to see that, beyond the problems of traffic increases, noise, pollution, etc. etc., the real threat is that the city center could well become, by plan or accident, almost entirely devoid of residents and eventually entirely devoted to commercial enterprise.

For those who think that impossible, it might be worthwhile to note the increased commercial use that has already occurred. It should be noted that to be financially viable, the area would then have to generate income for sixteen hours or more almost every day. If they can grasp that, the follow-on is to ask them to guess what sort of "neighbors" they could have operating next door from 6pm to 2am. Perhaps not the kinds of neighbors and the sort of traffic they would prefer.

In this country, the process is called "block-busting". Vulnerable properties are acquired, allowed to disintegrate, and rented to undesirable tenants. Residents nearby find it intolerable, and accept "reasonable" purchase offers. Things continue to deteriorate, as the additional acquired building decline as did the first. Property values fall, and various buyers appear to purchase as prices drop. Eventually, as if by magic, the whole area is found to be owned by a developer or a commercial enterprise of some kind, with "re-development" construction plans at the ready to "revitalize" the decrepit old neighborhood..

An alliance could be most useful. But only if its members can correctly see both the array of specific injuries this stupid trams project has already inflicted on the city, but can also recognize that, cumulatively, a whole way of life, central to the character of Edinburgh, could easily be destroyed forever.