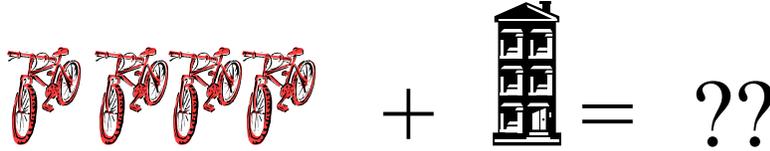


TACKLING CYCLE STORAGE FOR FLATS & TENEMENTS



For more information and project documents / materials etc, go to:

<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/downloads/technical-and-research/spokes-tenementsflats-bike-storage-project/>
or contact spokesbikestorage@tusks.org.uk

PROJECT PROGRESS – OCTOBER 2010

Residential cycle storage is a serious barrier to increasing every-day cycling in Edinburgh - a city with a high proportion of residents in traditional tenements as well as newer flats. Spokes was awarded a grant in Spring 2010 from the Climate Challenge Fund for a project to produce and disseminate information on how individuals and residents' groups might achieve practical improvements in bike storage for tenements and flats – to include in-flat, in-stair, back-green, on-street and other off-site solutions (such as communal stores serving a group of tenements/ flats). TPI Consultants have been working for us, looking at the practical issues – including planning, management and legal aspects as well as the hardware options. The materials based on this work should be available later this year.

We hope this work will stimulate actual practical storage improvements to help and encourage more people to use bikes for their everyday local journeys, raise the profile of the residential bike storage issue with relevant decision-makers in the Council / other relevant bodies, enhance understanding of the hurdles to achieving widespread practical improvements in storage and stimulate some commitment to tackling them (particularly given the inclusion now of residential storage in the new City of Edinburgh Council *Active Travel Action Plan*).

Research with Residents

Spokes carried out an online survey of residents' bike tenement storage problems in September 2010. The results, from tenement / flat dwellers who use a bike (or would like to) provide striking evidence of the seriousness of domestic storage problems, and its likely impact on cycling levels in central areas of Edinburgh. They also reveal its different facets and some possible solutions. We're now following this up with another survey targeted specifically at non-cyclists and at occasional cyclists who might like to cycle more. See below for some key points from the responses (more at <http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2010/10/spokes-tenements-storage-survey/>).

- Cycle storage is a significant problem for many tenement/flat residents in Edinburgh – the majority of respondents (86%) said it was inconvenient to some degree. Nearly a third said that storage problems stopped them from cycling as much as they'd like. Only 14% said that they didn't experience difficulties. Furthermore, over half of respondents (who we would expect, as regular cyclists, to be generally sympathetic to cycling and bike storage) found other people's bikes to be a problem where they lived.
- The majority of respondents try and store their bike indoors somewhere – outside parking overnight is not seen as viable given weather, risk of theft, vandalism etc.
- Residents in new-build developments also experience storage problems, despite the existence of design standards.
- The survey results point to strong interest in tackling storage problems in order to be able to cycle more, suggesting that tackling storage could have a substantial impact on city cycling levels.

“No storage facilities in flat, and would be unable to keep in the stair. Would love to have a bike!”

- The vast majority of survey respondents (92%) said that clear practical information on possible bike storage solutions would be of interest. 85% said they would discuss options with neighbours with a view to collective action (in stairwell/backgreen/on-street); 41% said they would look at buying equipment etc to make practical improvements within their own home. 52% said they would lobby councillors/others to take action.

- There seems to be significant interest in tackling problems in a more systematic, collective way, to provide quick, easy access to secure, dry storage, at ground-level or on-street.

Will the Council, landlords and developers join tenement/flat residents in real, practical action on this?

Some Practical Issues Identified by TPi ...

- There is a real lack of clarity around the planning permissions required in any given situation, for both inside and outside storage solutions. Listed building permissions may often apply too, given that a significant proportion of Edinburgh's buildings are covered by conservation designations.
- Most residents aren't aware of whom to contact in terms of obtaining permission to install cycle storage, or of what permissions should be obtained.
- Technically speaking, Building Controls (fire regulations) can pose a constraint to installing bike storage – for example, externally if any part would be located within 3m of a door or window to a flat; if the storage would be totally enclosed; and depending on where it would be located - in an open stairwell, landing or ground floor between the stairs and the door to the flat or main entrance, or in a separate airway (e.g., partitioned or cellar).

Some Outcomes From the Work so Far ...

- Engagement of a wide range of other organisations - community councils / residents' groups (e.g., Greener Leith, Edinburgh Backgreens Association), police etc, and also City Council officers / Councillors, with positive responses and much enthusiasm to participate in identifying and achieving residential storage solutions.
- Raising the profile of this issue – with residents and other stakeholders - as an important one to tackle in Edinburgh if the city is to achieve the significant increases in cycling it aspires to. Capacity-building and increased momentum amongst interested parties to take follow-up action.
- Development of a substantial evidence base of issues from residents' perspectives and possible solutions to these, giving weight to discussions with decision-makers around the way forward in practical terms.

Some Discussion Questions Arising From the Project so Far ...

- How might individuals best go about **getting their neighbours on-side** to tackle problems – what might help?
- Many tenement residents are tenants and **landlord permission** can be a hurdle. Might a 'Cycle-Friendly Landlord' accreditation scheme be developed and introduced?
- How might **abandoned bikes** be tackled systematically? Our survey suggests abandoned bikes are a significant problem in terms of occupying scarce space and also causing annoyance to some residents.
- How could **security** be improved – for individual bikes in-stairwell or on-street; for stairwells, for communal bike stores etc? Bike 'Neighbourhood Watch' equivalent?
- How might proposals for **on-street bike lockers** be viewed more favourably (by Planners etc) - cars / wheelie / recycling bins are apparently OK! Is it design - in which case how do things need to change, or something else??
- What sources of **funding** might be available to residents' groups interested in tackling their storage problems (e.g., via a communal in-stair, backgreen, or off-site solutions such as on-street lockers)?
- What might help lever better provision for **new-build flats** – could/should there be some type of 'Cycle-Friendly Developer' accreditation scheme?

Some Next Steps ...

- Production and dissemination of the information materials for residents etc.
- Discussion with Council officers in Planning, Building Control etc of the issues uncovered and possible ways to resolve these, to facilitate cycle storage improvements on a more widespread basis.
- Continue to build capacity amongst residents / groups to take forward practical projects to improve storage.

CYCLINATION CONFERENCE – SAT 6 NOVEMBER 2010, Eric Liddell Centre, Edinburgh

To register go to www.cyclination.org.uk. Session on the Spokes residential bike storage project.

SPOKES AUTUMN PUBLIC MEETING – THURS 25 NOVEMBER 2010, "Bike Storage at Home and Work." Augustine United Church, George IV Bridge. Meeting starts 7.30. Doors open 6.45 for coffee, Spokes stall, displays.

<http://www.spokes.org.uk/wordpress/2010/09/spokes-autumn-public-meeting-tackling-bike-storage/>