

Edinburgh brothel that turned Danube Street blue goes up for sale – at £1.4m

● Once infamous, Stockbridge home is now a pillar of respectability

By **NAINA BHARDWAJ**

With an asking price of £1.45 million, the stunning Georgian townhouse for sale in Edinburgh's Stockbridge is outside the price range of all but the most well-heeled.

But if walls could talk, then the stories of what once took place inside the lavishly-furnished A-listed rooms of 17 Danube Street would almost certainly add at least another million to the total.

Because although the sales particulars make it appear like it is just another fabulous townhouse mansion for sale, it was not so long ago home to one of the most notorious brothels in the whole of Scotland.

Run by infamous madame Dora Noyce, she preferred to refer to the business as a "house of leisure and pleasure" which she ran from the end of the Second World War until her death, aged 76, in 1977.

The address had around 15 girls in permanent residence who would be joined by up to 25 others during busier periods, including when the aircraft carrier USS John F Kennedy docked at Leith.

With hundreds of sailors pouring into the capital, the brothel is said to have earned around £4,000 before the ship's captain stepped in to declare the business a no-go zone for his men.

A former prostitute herself, Noyce earned a good living and owned several homes in Edinburgh and Blackpool despite being charged 47 times for living on immoral earnings and a prison stint in 1972.



↑ Now a respectable Edinburgh townhouse up for sale at £1.4m, 17 Danube Street was once the setting of a brothel run by Dora Noyce, below left, pictured leaving court

She would appear in court smartly dressed, pay her fine and then return to work.

However, her most memorable court appearance was when she quipped that her busiest time of year was during the Festival and the church gathering of the Kirk's General Assembly.

Now, 17 Danube Street is up for sale and many of its original features remain in place including a lovely, spiral staircase, detailed cornicing and standout fireplaces across the

three storeys. Estate agents Savill's says the sale represents a "unique opportunity to acquire a full townhouse on one of the most desirable and elegant streets in Edinburgh's New Town. This property is one of the finest Georgian townhouses on the market."

Brothels have never been a rarity in Edinburgh with the Royal Mile, Princes Street, Hanover Street, Rose Street and Leith Street, St James Square and parts of the New Town all functioning as red

light districts throughout the city's history.

Commenting on the sale of the property, local councillor Hal Olson said: "I often think, when I pass No. 17 Danube Street, of the history of what went on there.

"There may be no signs round about, no plastic bins on the streets because it is a World Heritage Area but behind every door and curtain, there is a real story, some might call this the real rich heritage of a neighbourhood."



Historic Botanic glasshouses set to be restored as part of £70m project

by **PAUL RODGER**

Historic glasshouses dating from 1670 will be restored at the Royal Botanic Gardens in Edinburgh in a bid to safeguard 4,000 plant species.

Clearing work is back under way at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) as part of the £70m Edinburgh Biomes project. The initiative aims to offer accommodation for the 4,000 plant species

being moved for the refurbishment of the 350-year-old public and research glasshouses.

The deteriorating A-listed heritage glasshouses, dating back to 1670, are in desperate need of upgrading and their refurbishment will avoid the loss of plant species central to research work in more than 35 countries.

The RBGE's Victorian Palm Houses and the 1960's "front-range" and research glasshouses require exten-

sive refurbishment. Work to the old glasshouses, which would've been deemed unsafe by 2025, will involve replacing heating and power systems with energy-efficient installations.

Boasted as the "most significant project in the garden's history", Edinburgh Biomes will help support conservation and provide education surrounding climate change.

RBGE expects to create around 100 jobs each year, as

well as apprenticeships, and provide opportunities for local people, graduates, long-term unemployed and people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Simon Milne MBE, regius keeper at RBGE, said: "Amidst the many personal, social and economic tragedies and challenges of the last few months, there is heightened awareness of interdependencies between human and environmental health, social justice, sustainable development and econom-

ic recovery. The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is a force for global change and, in the Edinburgh Biomes initiative, we can bring real benefits to people living and working in Scotland right now by ensuring this project is both ambitious and inclusive.

"Our future is dedicated to 350 more years and beyond, helping protect lives and economies by underpinning the need to protect the environment."



↑ The Victorian Palm Houses will also undergo renovation