

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL (PORTOBELLO PARK) BILL

OBJECTION 10 – DANNY AND MO COSTELLO

We, Danny and Mo Costello, wish to object to the above Bill being promoted by The City of Edinburgh Council. Our objections, which are against the whole Bill, are set out below.

Personal: We bought our house 36 years ago in Park Avenue because it was a quiet residential road across from the park and although we have been tight on accommodation over the years, as we had our family, we put up with that because of the advantages that staying here afforded. We played with our children there and currently do the same with our grandchildren who we child mind for during the week. Building a school across the road from the house would also have a significant impact on the value of the house because a feature is the quiet residential nature of the street and a school would mean: Heavy Goods Vehicles using the street as the goods entrance is planned to be there; increase in car parking in the street which would make it more difficult for residents to park their cars. Pupil traffic would also have an impact on the nature of the street and would be off putting to many potential buyers.

Traffic: The City of Edinburgh Council plan to introduce a 20 miles per hour speed restriction on a section of the A1 on Milton Road which, given the, ever increasing, volume of traffic using that stretch will bring twice daily massive tail backs. That will cause incredible frustration to the drivers who will then seek to use other side roads as 'rabbit runs' to avoid this.

Loss of open space/ playing fields: Over the past twenty years because of the decisions of the City of Edinburgh Council we have seen the number of playing fields in the city diminished because of decisions to allow building on them, either fully or partially. These include: the Gyle, Hawkhill, Jock's Lodge, Canal Field and Meggetland. Portobello Park is currently freely accessible for all at any time but building a school would negate that opportunity and at a time where we are encouraging our children to get more active, a decision to build a school on the park would remove another facility where this is possible.

Impact on the Golf Course: The Council originally planned to build Houses on the golf course at the same time they announced their intention to build the school on the park but public pressure caused them to retract those plans. If the school was to be built on the park, however, the pupil traffic would have such an impact on the quality of the course, the interruption to the games and the safety of pupils that it wouldn't long before the Council was putting forward the case that the course was underused and the building of houses would again be on the agenda. The Council claim that the planned fences would direct the pupils around the course but we know that the instinct of people, and particularly children, is to take the shortest route to their destination and for many that would be across the diagonal of the course.

Precedent on the loss of Common Good land: A decision to change the law allow the City of Edinburgh to build a school on Portobello Park, which is Common Good land, would set a precedent which the Government would find difficult not to replicate

if other Council's came up with the same criteria. The government could find themselves inundated with such Private Bills as Council's seek to save or make money from the use of Common Good land in their areas. The appeal judges who judged that the Council would be in breach of the law presumably took that into account and saw the danger of setting such a precedent.

Alternative Sites: Portobello Park is not the only possible site for the building of the new school. The Council originally planned to build the school on its current site and has identified a couple of brown field sites as possibilities.

We would urge you not to pass this bill because of the issues we have raised above and there are others; Trinity Academy is getting to the stage where a new school will be required and its situation is not dissimilar to Portobello High School, do the Council follow this route and build the new school on Victoria Park? The ramifications of the government's decision could be far reaching.

22 June 2013