

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL (PORTOBELLO PARK) BILL

OBJECTION 25 – IAN, SHEILA AND MORVEN ROBERTSON

We would like to object to the whole Bill promoted by the City of Edinburgh Council for the following reasons.

- Portobello Park was defined as inalienable common good land by the court and the Council agreed with this. The Council also recognised that an appeal to the Supreme Court was unlikely to succeed and therefore it is trying to change the law. This is not democratic.
- The Bill could set a precedent and make it easier for other local authorities to try and get around common good protection via the same route, putting common good land and green space at risk across the whole of Scotland.
- The Council had identified in 2006 & 2012 other suitable brownfield sites which could be used for the proposed building and in 2003 were happy to build on its present site as it stands at the moment. Therefore this Bill is not necessary.
- Other new Council schools in Edinburgh are being built to fit into brownfield sites, with designs being adapted to fit requirements, e.g. Boroughmuir placing a sports facility on the roof. This could also be done on the Council's alternative sites.
- The Council had refused permission for a small nursery to be located on the same main road due to traffic volume and safety on the main road.
- The present site already caters well for the additional school traffic on the road and footfall. Additional measures would need to be put in place on the new site as some pavements are very narrow and Milton Road is exceptionally busy at rush hours.
- One main access to the proposed school, from East Portobello, would be by a narrow and long footbridge over the East Coast main railway line where problems could arise.
- The proposed site on Milton Road will result in more children using and crossing this main road. Secondary pupils are not supervised when leaving school premises, many will be preoccupied by mobile phones, iPods etc. Milton Road has four lanes and will be more dangerous, for pupils and drivers, than the council's other proposed sites.
- If this Bill was to go ahead someone in Scotland buying property overlooking a park/open area, (which is currently protected from being built on) may find that having paid a premium for the open outlook, the local council may try and change the law using this as a precedent. After it has been used once, it is easier to frame a similar argument.

Environmental Issues

- Trees will be removed if the park is built on. The buildings will affect the ecosystem in the area, leading to changes in flora and fauna, e.g. bats and woodpeckers. This seems odd when the Government is presently promoting 2013 as the year of Natural Scotland.

- Local open space is now being seen to be of value in terms of mental health, as it has been seen to provide a less stressful environment. This is of great importance in an urban setting.
- People of all ages are able to use the Park at present for a variety of different uses. The Scottish Government encourage everyone to be active and enjoy the outdoors. This in turn encourages healthy living, a reduction in obesity and the playing of sports. Removing a park for a building goes against these views.
- The boiler house and its outlet will increase air pollution for local residents and golfers,
- If the Park is built on it will be lost for ever. A school building has a limited life span. Once again this taking over of parkland could be seen as a precedent by other councils.

Personal Issues

- The Park for many generations has provided local people of all ages (including ourselves and members of our family) an area of free, open recreational space for a variety of different activities, for example walking, playing and picnicking. It is free to use twenty four hours, seven days a week for everyone in the local community. If it is built on, this local amenity will no longer be available for us as the parkland will be permanently removed. Our access to the proposed school site will be restricted to times when the school doesn't need it.
- Any proposed replacement space would be out with the local vicinity and beside an already existing large park, which is further for us to travel, crossing many roads.
- The proposed park site for the new school will increase the volume of traffic on an already busy main road (one of the main routes into and out of Edinburgh), especially during peak times. This will lead to an increase in traffic as well as putting pedestrians, like ourselves, in danger on already narrow pavements.
- Surrounding narrow residential roads are not suitable for an increase in already heavy traffic. These narrow roads are not suitable for HGVs and with the speed bumps that are already in place, damage to these vehicles and possibly to my local property is likely. Park Avenue, where we live, is already used as a 'Rat Run' as traffic tries to avoid the congestion on Milton Road.
- The proposed building will reduce the price of our local houses, affect open outlooks and increase the amount of litter, traffic and pollution in my area. There will also be an increase in noise from increased number of pedestrians and light pollution from new floodlights.
- An increase in litter from the school and pupils using local fast food outlets will encourage rats, seagulls and foxes into the area.
- As golfers who use Portobello Golf Course (adjacent to Portobello Park), the school will inevitably affect our playing conditions. The building will spoil the environment and pupils will be at risk when crossing/playing on or near the golf course. One does not want to be held liable for injuries to pupils who will be on the golf course. Children use the most convenient route for them, not

always paths. Some architects do not put in paths until they see ground erosion caused by footfall.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

20 June 2013