

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL (PORTOBELLO PARK) BILL

OBJECTION 32 – CHRISTIANS ESTATE AND HOPE LANE RESIDENTS – ELAINE GOODLET AND 106 OTHERS

We are residents of the Christians estate and Hope Lane, adjacent to Portobello Park, and we object to the Portobello Park Private bill, which is being promoted by the City of Edinburgh Council, to change the use of the land at Portobello Park to enable the council to build a new Portobello high School. We object to the whole bill.

We object for the following reasons:

- Following the ruling by the Court of Session last year it is clear that it is illegal to build on this inalienable common good land and the Council should not be trying to circumvent this ruling by a private bill of parliament.
- The conditions of the original deed of sale should be respected and the land kept for public recreation of the people of Edinburgh in perpetuity.
- The council has identified other suitable sites for the new high school, which would not involve any loss of public parkland.
- This bill, if it is passed, would set a precedent which will be used by other councils across Scotland to take and use common good land for inappropriate purposes.
- All the concerns listed below.

Our interests would be severely adversely affected as follows:

1 Traffic

Hope Lane is a General Access Road and serves 300 properties in the Christian housing estate. Hope Lane is only five metres wide and with parking on one side there is no width for two-way traffic. Additional traffic movements will lead to congestion and confusion and will lead to increase accident potential with high level of pedestrians and cyclists.

There would be an increase in through traffic using narrow Hope Lane as a drop-off/pick-up point at peak times of day when residents are going to and returning from work.

The school run brings 21% of children to school every day, therefore for 1400 school this means 294 pupils. The road is only passable in one direction if there are parked cars on the road and There is no provision for dropping off pupils and increased traffic will cause severe congestion and queuing in the vicinity. This will be worse on cold/wet days when picking up and dropping off increases. It will also lead to increase likelihood for accidents for school children and local residents.

Traffic already uses Hope Lane as a ratrun to avoid Milton Road since bus lanes were introduced. This would be greatly exacerbated by the proposed introduction of a 20 mph speed limit on Milton Road at peak times, coupled with a new traffic light crossing midway along Portobello park for the new school entrance. A 20 mph speed limit on Milton Road along the proposed school frontage is not appropriate on a 4 lane strategic route. It will encourage further abuse of the bus lanes, and rat running through Magdalene, Hope Lane and Park Avenue – none of these roads will be regularly policed and this will inevitably lead to accidents.

This in turn would have huge disruptive effect/impact on residents of the Christians, as the only entrance /exit roads to the estate are immediately off Hope Lane. At present it is very difficult to exit onto Hope Lane from the estate, due to ratrun traffic at peak times.

Developers should ensure new developments provide adequate accessibility for people with disabilities. There are existing narrow footways, and no safe harbour area or central reserve refuge areas at crossing points, etc.

There is a lack of right turn ghost island safe storage areas for traffic turning right from or into Milton Road at Hope Lane (substandard), Baillie Place (substandard) and Park Avenue (nil). There is also substandard visibility to the east at Hope Lane. The additional traffic movements will lead to congestion at peak hours and the likelihood of increased accident potential.

2 Parking

There is only provision for parking for teachers and limited visitors and no provision for parents, night school classes or users of sports facilities. This will lead to congestion and confusion on adjoining streets which are not appropriate for traffic of this nature and will lead to accident risk to pupils and other road users.

All residential streets on and off Hope Lane, i.e. the Christians, would be used as a free parking facility by school users, despite a school car park on site. It will be deemed much easier to get onto the road network from the Christians and Hope

Lane to avoid queuing up, trying to vacate the school car park which leads directly onto the busy Milton Road, at peak traffic times.

3 Safety issues

Increased traffic, narrow roads being used above capacity, increased parking causing blind spots and traffic jams on Hope Lane and the Christians all leads to real potential to severely compromise safe crossing at residential streets at Hope Lane and the Christians. There would be a high risk of road accidents, i.e. to pupils and residents.

4 Litter

Dropped litter will be a huge problem in the nearby Christians and Hope Lane and the Golf Course and surrounding pedestrian routes, as these would all be main routes to the new school for school users approaching from the east and north of the catchment area. This is inevitable with the increased footfall in the area that would be caused by the new school.

5 Noise disruption

All-weather pitches proposed to be open until 10 pm for "community" use will lead to disruptive noise levels for residents of Hope Lane and the Christians and Milton Road.

6 Floodlight pollution

Pitch floodlights will cause light pollution, despite "angled shades on lights", to residents of Hope lane, Milton Road and the Christians. A prime example of the light pollution caused by a large school can be seen at the new Holy Rood High School, which has introduced a source of light pollution to the previously dark area of the Queen's Park.

7 Golfer disruption

There would be disruption to play for golfers using No 1 and No 2 tees and greens, as both are adjacent to the proposed path /cycle routes on the east side of the site. This has the potential to greatly reduce playing golf at Portobello Golf Course as an attractive proposition. This is likely to lead to a decline in footfall using the course and potential closure by the council. Then what? There is a great danger of the council reverting to its original 2006 plan of developing the whole area for housing, as well as the school.

8 Property damage

There is the potential for damage to property, e.g. cars, gardens, etc, with accidental or deliberate due to a huge increase in "footfall" and traffic through the residential area of Hope Lane and the Christians estate.

9 Green space facility for residents of Hope lane and Christians

The loss of this valuable facility will severely affect our amenity. Being "sandwiched" between the railway on one side and the busy A1 Milton Road on the other, the Christians estate - which is mainly comprised of flats with very little private garden space - has always regarded Portobello Park as a means of retreat and recreation. Whether walking the dog, walking around the park, playing golf, practising golf shots, formal and informal football games and picnics, generations of residents from the Christians have enjoyed and continue to enjoy the green space with its unmatched, protected views of Arthur's Seat and views to the Firth of Forth and are meant to enjoy it in perpetuity.

We ask that you take our objections on board, dismiss the bill and seek one of the alternative means of delivering a new school for Portobello.

23 June 2013