

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL (PORTOBELLO PARK) BILL

OBJECTION 48 – HAZEL THOMAS

This objection was signed by the objector and reproduced in typed (electronic) form by the clerking team

I wish to object to the above Bill in full, promoted by the City of Edinburgh Council. My objections are this:-

The loss of the park space which would mean the loss of Common good land, this land is important to myself and family. It has been used for a safe place for children and adults to exercise and walk. My children and now my grandchildren have used the park which has been an invaluable area for flexible uses. Only one of its kind, with a golf course at the one end and the other end for sports and recreation for every age.

The whole park has protected views to Arthur's Seat and from the top end all the way down to the Firth of Forth.

It is a haven for wildlife and there are many different types of birds, Bullfinches, Goldfinches, Blackcaps and many more, also the migratory ones that just drop by for a couple of days. The woodland area surrounding the park supports wildlife and flowers. A lot of the mature trees would be lost if the school is built here.

Since 2004 the council have neglected to maintain the park and 5 years ago closed down the football and dug up bits of the park in long ruts. I have reason to believe, because they were testing for foundation possibilities for the proposed new school. They left the ground badly rutted which rendered it useless for playing sports and made it difficult for people like myself to walk over it. I believe that the council now have made plans to flatten and reseed it prior to the Bill.

Park Avenue is not a wide street and if this were to be the entrance and exit for the pupils and the main entrance and exit for the buses and heavy goods vehicles it will be very difficult. Most of the residents have no off-street parking and if the council makes the park side of the road a cycle-way it will be difficult for large vehicles to exit and enter the school.

I am also concerned that if we lose this common good land for the school build this will set a precedent which will affect the safety of other common good land and private lands in other parts of the country.

There are a couple of sites earmarked by the council as suitable for the High School and playing fields to be built on. They are brownfield sites so would protect our very valuable green space.

The building that the council intend to build is a lot higher than first promised and would cause the houses at the top end of Park Avenue to lose a lot of light and be

overlooked by the building. It would also cause us to lose our views over the Firth of Forth.

At the present moment the traffic along the Milton Road side of the Park is getting heavier due to all the new houses being built in East Lothian. The traffic is very heavy in the morning just as the school is going in and also in the late afternoon. This is not helped by the bus lanes which cause quite a pile up of traffic and drivers take fast turns down Park Avenue to avoid the lights in the morning. In the evening the traffic up Park Avenue gets a bit busy. I fear for accidents with children who very often don't pay attention.

In this day and age when we are trying to encourage the youth to get out and exercise in the fresh air and for health reasons older people like myself who cannot walk far but appreciate a park to walk in with open spaces, also the park for all ages to enjoy with football and other sports.

I have been using the park for over 70 years and my children grew up with their friend playing many games of rounders, etc. and now my grandchildren can use the park. It is a good place for running, jogging, walking and exercising the dog, away from traffic. Up until the park was rutted I have seen people come to play cricket, football and American football in little friendly groups from other parts of the city. There are a lot of families round here who would use this park if the council started to properly maintain it. Please help us keep our precious park.

22 June 2013