

VIDEO – Building gets underway at Portobello



The new school at Portobello will take up a large part of the park bounded by Hope Lane, Park Avenue and Milton Road.

Almost all of the trees planted at the beginning of this century in the middle of the park will be removed to make way for the building and the sports pitches. The council has promised replanting to replace these and is providing sports facilities which can be used by the public as well as school pupils. These sports pitches will be available free of charge as part of the compensation for using the public park as the site for what will be the largest secondary school in Edinburgh.



Balfour Beatty are in charge of construction



Cllrs Burns and Godzik cut the first sod



Cllr Paul Godzik Education Convener addresses the assembled audience



The site of the existing school will be used as a park in the future and a budget of £1m has been set aside for that transformation.

Not everyone at today's ceremony was in total agreement about the site for the new school. The Edinburgh Reporter spoke to Keith Richards who admitted that he did not live in the area but he had objected to the school being built in the park due to the design of the building, especially the main entrances.

Mr Richards from East Lothian explained to us that these lead on to the A199 which is a main arterial route into the city and part of the East Coast's gateway to Edinburgh. He also claimed: "Impact assessments for this project were carried out during school holiday periods when there is a 60-70% reduction in traffic at rush hours. I also note that in the haste to start the project trees are being felled. This is a park rife

with wildlife, in particular bats which are a protected species under law. I wonder if Scottish Natural Heritage know of these actions?"

The Edinburgh Reporter searched the internet and it appears that SNH do not have any objection to the school being built on this site provided bat-sensitive lighting is used. You can read more in a letter dated from 2010 which we reproduce for you below:

<http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/getEdmDoc.pdf>