

Petition to save the trees at Museum of Flight

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

A petition signed by 6,407 people objecting to plans to cut down 299 trees to make way for a new £15million museum centre has been accepted into an appeal evidence.

The new visitor centre for the National Museum of Flight at East Fortune was refused planning permission by East Lothian Council after it involved cutting down the trees in an ancient woodland to allow planes to be moved into it.

National Museums Scotland has lodged an appeal over the rejection of its plans with Scottish Ministers.

It said the tree removal was required to “decant large fixed-wing aircraft” from their current home to the new indoor exhibition centre, and saplings would be planted to replace the lost woodland.

However, objectors argued that an alternative site could still be found and the need to protect the woodland far outweighed the need for the new centre.

More than 200 written objections have been lodged with the Scottish Government Reporter as part of the appeal; however, an online petition was rejected initially because it was said to be the wrong format.

That decision has now been overruled by the Reporter, who has allowed the petition, which has 6,407 names on it, to be

included in evidence.

Alerting National Museums Scotland and East Lothian Council to the decision, case officer Laura Walker said: "An external link webpage was sent to myself back in June. The link opened up to a petition. I rejected this due to the format it was submitted (our policy is we cannot accept external links or webpages).

"The Reporter has now agreed that the petition can be accepted if sent in by a different format, which the organiser has done. "

The Reporter has confirmed an unaccompanied site visit will be carried out at the site proposed for the centre before a decision will be made over whether any additional information is required or a public hearing held.

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