

# MSPs support local residents in fending off student development

**Lothian MSPs, Conservative Miles Briggs and Labour's Foyso Choudhury, both met with around 100 residents at Eyre Place Lane on Saturday.**

The residents were continuing their protest over the proposed student development on the former builders' merchants' yard which has bypassed a hearing at The City of Edinburgh Council planning committee. As the developer referred it on to the Scottish Government, the matter will now be heard by the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) who have appointed a government reporter, and now the fear is that none of the almost 400 objectors will have the right to be heard.

Residents objected to the plans, saying it is too big a development for the site, and that student accommodation was unsuited to the location. There are two planning applications although the developer initially applied for permission for the [townhouses](#) and the [purpose built student accommodation](#) as a single application.

A spokesman for the residents said: "Basically we now need to wait as it is with the Scottish Reporter at DPEA.

"There remains widespread dismay within the community at the developers' move to avoid public scrutiny, and deny the community a voice, and the City of Edinburgh Council planning

officers' report which is in our view seriously flawed.

"We hope that in this final stage our concerns and objections will be heard."

There have been many objections and comments added to the DPEA site before it closed for comments, including one from the Eyre Place Lane Owners' Association, representing the residents of Eyre Place, Rodney Street, Rodney Place, Logan Street and Canonmills. The letter runs to 52 pages, and is difficult to paraphrase here, but mentions over development of the site, the need for the Reporter to visit the site to see for herself the narrow access to The Yard, which is a special needs unit. In addition with reference to the 20 minute neighbourhood policy adopted by the council, the objectors point out that there is no college within a 20-minute bus commute from the proposed site, far less a 20 minute walk, and all colleges (with the exception of the University of Edinburgh at George Square) are more than a 20 minute cycle ride from Eyre Place Lane.

Lothian MSP, Miles Briggs, said: "Today's demonstration shows the extent of local feeling against this development.

"The scale of the proposed development is out of keeping with the current neighbourhood and would be inappropriate.

"Decision makers have dismissed the opinion of local residents so far, but cannot continue to do so"

"There is cross party support that this development should not go ahead as planned.

"I have previously called on a moratorium to building student accommodation in Edinburgh and this proposed development is an example of why."

A cross party letter, signed by all Lothians MSPs from the Scottish Conservatives and Scottish Labour has been sent to

the Minister for Public Finance in support of local residents who are opposing the development.

The letter states that the concerns with the proposal include “the high density of Student Flats, leading to an overdevelopment of the site, loss of open space, potential noise and disturbance, loss of daylight and sunlight, impact on privacy, views and a reduction in car parking.”

There have also been concerns highlighted by The Yard, located at 22 Eyre Place Lane who were recently been awarded a five-year contract for the care of children with extreme medical needs. These concerns include the disruption and inconvenience to the service users, with particular concern over access for ambulances and other emergency vehicles.

The cross party letter was submitted to the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA) who have confirmed that the reporter will consider the terms of the letter (which is embedded below).

*Today, I joined with local residents at Eyre Place Lane, to demonstrate at the proposed student development on the old building yard.*

*The scale of the development is out of keeping with the current neighbourhood and would be inappropriate. [@scotgov](#) Reporter must reject plans. [pic.twitter.com/L7ctSMkpK0](https://pic.twitter.com/L7ctSMkpK0)*

*– Miles Briggs MSP (@Miles4Lothian) [March 18, 2023](#)*

Foyso Choudhury MSP said: “This morning, I joined the residents, who have been objecting to the planning application in Eyre Place Lane. I have supported the residents for over a year and support them in their campaign to persuade the government Reporter to refuse this application.”

*This morning, I joined the residents, who have been objecting*

*to the planning application in Eyre Place Lane.*

*I have supported the residents for over a year and support them in their campaign to persuade the [@scotgov](#) Reporter to refuse this application. [pic.twitter.com/kunkeRya2S](https://pic.twitter.com/kunkeRya2S)*

*– Foysol Choudhury MBE MSP (@FoysolChoudhury) [March 18, 2023](#)*



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