

Back to square one at Eyre Place with new planning applications

With a sense of déjà vu the residents of Eyre Place, Rodney Street and Eyre Place Lane are gathering themselves together to oppose two new planning applications for 139 purpose built student flats and seven townhouses.

The three separate groups – Rodney Street Residents Group, Eyre Place Resident Special Interest Group and Eyre Place Lane Owners Association – already have a long but ultimately successful campaign behind them, but these new applications are open for objections and comment until 6 October 2023.

[One application is for a series of townhouses in the Lane which you can read in full here.](#)

[The other application is for purpose built student accommodation which you can examine by clicking here.](#)

Close examination of the new applications to The City of Edinburgh Council shows details of the previous proposals by the same developer, CA Ventures, which were refused by Scottish Ministers following an appeal which CA Ventures made before the council had even held a hearing. This denied the

residents their opportunity of being heard. The council said they had agreed to hold a hearing, but had not done so within the time scale it should have complied with. In the new application the planning consultants Scott Hobbs Planning say that their client appealed against the “deemed refusal of the application in February 2023”.

The appeal was they say dismissed on the grounds of “massing of rear return and specific amenity issues all of which they confirm are addressed in the new planning applications. They claim that the scheme has been revised in terms of design, scale and massing.



The residents previously set up a website along with a petition. They all supported a well-organised campaign to oppose the student flats and the separate application for townhouses in the lane. [A new website has been created called](#)

Canonmills.net and residents say this will show that the wider community oppose the plans for much the same development which has already been rejected.

Previously 393 objections were lodged with the council and more than 500 people signed a petition against the development. The residents hope to gather this kind of support all over again, and in a very short space of time.

The new application looks similar to the first one but Vince Meiklejohn who has until now been one of the leading lights on the campaign group said there is a key difference. This time round the six storey block is one floor lower, but the number of flats has only reduced by three as the length of the building has been increased. Roof terraces are included in the plans as before.

Mr Meiklejohn said: "I think the general feeling having spoken to other neighbours and community groups is confused and outraged, actually. Obviously, the reporter's judgement pleased everyone, and the door was left slightly open, but we're astounded that this has come back in this format.

"I guess the hope was that the landowner Daltons would speak to some other developer and come back with some ideas on residential housing across the whole site in line with the original city plan, which hasn't been adopted yet.

"CA have again attempted a land grab as the townhouse plans show the plans go outwith the legal boundary and therefore cause access issues for the garages at the bottom of the Lane and the Yard.

"This was again documented by the Reporter when permission for the previous version of the townhouses was refused. It was noted that if permission had been granted, which it wasn't, it would be a condition that there would be no access issues for the Yard or neighbours and that the proposal was unacceptable."

In the new draft city plan the area is zoned for residential housing but the new guidance to planners and developers is still passing through the lengthy adoption process.

Vince said: "And it's exhausting for the community, because this is coming up for two years now. Everybody knows it's a gap site. And everybody's happy about some sort of development involving social housing, or townhouses or whatever. But I think, what surprised everybody, the developer seems to have completely ignored the major findings by the Scottish Government Reporter which was just that this was not an appropriate type of building for Eyre Place Lane. And it just didn't fit.

"Given the recent opposition to these plans by the residents which amounted to 400 objections and almost 500 petitioners, resident groups, the Yard, MP, MSPs local ward councillors, the New Town and Broughton Community Council and The Cockburn Association this is an extraordinary turn of events. In my opinion the landowner and the developer should quickly rethink and withdraw. The landowner, developer and the planning agent have not engaged with the community and I am very surprised that the council have allowed this to proceed to this stage."

Daylighting

A further claim by the residents is whether the information provided specifically about daylighting is accurate.

Planning officers rely on the documents provided by professional firms acting for the developer. In this particular case the residents themselves questioned the daylighting calculations – which are pretty complex.

Hannah Edwards said: "In response to my objection Scott Hobbs Planning admitted that they had removed permanent buildings (which are currently used by three separate and thriving businesses). They re-ran the calculations on two windows but this would affect many more." Hannah also confirmed the

“missing buildings” were depicted on some of the planning drawings implying that the calculations included these as well as the mass of the new building. She is clear that it made no sense that “the results seemed to suggest that some properties would enjoy an increase in daylight after the student accommodation had been built”.

She said: “There is a lot of trust from communities (and Planning Officers for that matter) that the information presented by respectable businesses (in this case Scott Hobbs Planning, Fletcher Joseph Architects) is correct. Decisions will be made taking these results into account and it is very difficult as a layperson (without the software or access to the drawings used on which to run the calculations) to check the reliability of what is being presented. Because some of the results were so unbelievable it raised serious doubts.

“All trust has been lost... If the applicant is able to make such blatant fabrications to get the results they want, it makes you wonder what other tweaks here and there have been made.”

The New Town and Broughton Community Council remain opposed to the proposal for student flats as before. ON Twitter the community council said: “Although this could be seen as a (very) marginal improvement vs. the previously refused scheme (on appeal), it simply does not address the concerns that ~400 objectors raised.”

The deadline for the public response to both applications is now 6 October.

The multi million dollar company, CA Ventures, which is behind this proposed development, is the owner and developer of many, many sites for student accommodation mainly in the US.

[You can read more about these here.](#)

Leith site owned by same landowner

In addition to this site on Eyre Place Lane which is owned by Daltons, a further site on Salamander Street which has been a scrap yard for more than three decades is also likely to become student flats following a consultation process which is about to end.

Dalton Metal Recycling owns the site at 2-66 Salamander Street and has lodged proposals to build a mixed use development with purpose built student accommodation included in that as well as retail and commercial space. A second public consultation event about this development will be held at Leith Library on 18 October from 3pm to 7pm.

Anyone may examine the exhibition boards on the consultation website and submit feedback to Orbit Communications by 4 October. [Read more here.](#)

