

Eyre Place Lane development – less than a week to make comments on appeals

The developer behind the student flats at Eyre Place Lane lodged an appeal with the DPEA, The Scottish Government planning and appeals division, just before Christmas.

A Government Reporter has now been appointed to hear the appeal on proposed development of the former Jewson's yard by CA Developments, but there is still time for the public to comment.

This appeal came hot on the heels of a unanimous decision by the council to throw out the revised planning applications for purpose built student accommodation and townhouses which was considered at the beginning of last month. There are two appeals – one for the student accommodation [here](#) and one for the townhouses [here](#).

This is the fourth time that residents have had to gather their papers together and mount a defence to a scheme which they think is wholly inappropriate for the site.

[Anyone can comment on the appeal until 18 January 2024.](#)

The founder member of the Eyre Place Lane Owners Association, Vince Meiklejohn, has already lodged his objection saying amongst other things that the developer has “failed to understand the importance of traditional and social housing that is needed in the area”. He continues that the site is wholly unsuited to student accommodation which owing to the transient nature of students will “weaken community bonds to the detriment of long term residents”.

The Edinburgh Reporter spoke with Hannah Edwards, another resident and member of the Association. Ms Edwards said: “What we’re focusing on is that it was a unanimous decision to reject the applications and it’s very popular. There’s no support within the community or local politicians.

“It is just not the best for that site, it needs a better design. I have done a lot of work on the daylighting where I’ve found inaccuracies. In the latest submission I found inaccuracies, then the developer resubmitted it to answer my findings. I realised that to get the daylighting studies they had used plans for the old student accommodation along with the new plans for the townhouses, so as to create a bigger gap. It looked as though they were giving better sunlight to the little townhouse.

“They have created a design for maximum profits and now they’re trying to fudge the figures to make all these policies fit their design, but it should be their design which fits policy guidance.”

Hannah says she has had her eyes opened on the way planning works in Scotland. She said: “There’s a lot of trust in this process but not much regulation around it. You think that the documents are submitted by professional people with integrity – until you really start to scrutinise the data.

“At the Development Committee Management Committee on 6 December there was a strong message to the developer that they should start engaging with the community.”

If the developer had spoken to residents they might find that there is not blanket opposition to the scheme, just the design. Hannah said that if the design incorporated cluster flats (apartments for several students sharing) rather than individual studios and huge open roof terraces which will be noisy there might not be so much opposition. She said that with the high density development in the plans the daytime sunlight which streams through windows of nearby homes will be lost as well as sunshine in the garden – a community space that is well used by residents.

She said: “Neighbours and locals are interested to see what the site could be. After all it is going to be developed. It is a great opportunity for something, but it just seems to cause too much harm to surrounding people this big building. There was never such a big building on that site so a residential development with a row of townhouses and some flats for students – just something more sympathetic to its surroundings would be better.”



Cllr Vicky Nicolson PHOTO ©2022 The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr Vicky Nicolson said: “It is disappointing that the applicant, again, wasted no time in lodging an appeal, this time against the unanimous decision of the Development Management Sub Committee at the hearing on 6 December.

“The community are hugely frustrated that, rather than engaging with the community, the applicant appears intent on bulldozing their way through with a development with almost 400 objections. Local people fear that the unanimous rejection by Councillors of this development at the planning hearing will be overturned. I have been assured by CEC planning officials that the entire contents of the hearing will be contained within the Planning Authority Written Statement as part of the Planning Authority response for consideration by the Reporter.

“In addition, constituents and I shared a concern that the DPEA originally published the deadline for comments as 18 January on their website for both appeals. Subsequently, late on Friday 5 January, the date was updated to 11 January for

comments by the council and members of the public which was very short notice. As it was not a guarantee that everyone would realise the deadline had moved, I wrote to ask for the deadline to be returned to 18th January and was relieved that this was honoured, and I urge people to use this opportunity to appeal.”

Cllr Max Mitchell said: “I find it deeply regrettable that the developer is once again trying to bypass local decision-making, and ignore the clear and genuine concerns put forward by the community.

“The minor tweaks made to the application were inconsequential as the potential impacts and risks to residents’ and the local area remained. The over 450 objections and the unanimous refusal by councillors provided a clear verdict. I hope this appeal is swiftly thrown out.”



Plans for Eyre Place Lane Image: CA Developments