

Continued demand for review of Stockbridge dome

Campaigners in Stockbridge continue to demand a review of a decision to allow an inflatable dome in their leafy community.

The structure, housing tennis and padel courts, was erected in October last year, by the Grange Club.

City councillors had rejected plans for the structure, but their decision was overturned by a Scottish Government planning reporter on appeal.

Campaign group Stockbridge Residents Against the Plook (StRAP) say the structure is “a monstrous blight” on the “cherished conservation area”.

They have written to Scott Ferrie, the Chief Reporter in the Scottish Government’s Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA), to call for a review of the way the case was handled.

Nearby residents claim they were not informed about the appeal decision and were unable to raise further objections or seek a judicial review within the six weeks allowed after planning permission was granted.

The letter says: “Local opposition to the erection of the tennis and padel courts remains significant. Residents were not notified of the decision so were unable to submit their objections within the designated time scale.

"We respectfully request a thorough internal review of this decision, particularly considering the strong local opposition, lack of sufficient consultation, and the contrasting conclusions reached by the experienced planning committee.

"We request that consideration is given to a lack of transparency in the process and the subsequent nuisance effects, in terms of noise and light infringement, which have resulted from the erection of the courts."

Residents in nearby Reid Terrace have told how they close windows and shutters to keep out the sounds of players and hum of electric fans that keep the dome inflated, as well as the dazzling lights.

They include Sarah Hill, who said: "This was a lovely, tranquil neighbourhood until the courts were built, but now I have to endure 14 hours of relentless ball-bashing and players' shouts every day.

"Doubles matches are really awful and it's particularly bad at night when the area is quiet, and it goes on after 10pm.

"I knew nothing about this latest development until they started to build it, so something is not right about it."

Keith Hughes, who says the noise keeps him awake at night, started a petition to call for alterations to be made so it is more in keeping with the surrounding area.

The [petition](#), already signed by over 740 people, states: "The new structures are a visual blight on our neighbourhood and mar the aesthetic of our cherished conservation area.

"They stand in disturbing contrast with the existing Victorian Pavilion, built in 1893 by Grange Club members who were clearly mindful of their legacy and built a structure to be admired rather than one that is ugly and ill fitting."

Peter Hamilton, who lives in nearby Raeburn Place, said: “The outlook across a beautiful area has been devastated by these massive structures, not just for surrounding residents but also for passers-by and visitors to this conservation area.

“Since ‘the Plook’ went up we’ve stopped looking out of our windows. It’s the only way to avoid the lowering of mood that the thing provokes. There is the light pollution too and the noise of the fans, which can be heard indoors with the windows closed.

“It is unfathomable that one person, the Reporter, who overturned our democratically elected council’s decision to reject this theft of peace, quiet and green space, proceeded without anyone who objected even knowing it had gone to appeal.

“For structures with this level of impact on the local amenity there should have been a much wider and more thorough consultation. The lack of engagement with their neighbours, at any point in the proceedings, doesn’t reflect well on The Grange.”

Mairi Buchanan, whose home on Saxe Coburg Place overlooks the site, and whose signature appears on the letter to Mr Ferrie, added: “It makes me wonder what the point of a conservation area is, if a monstrosity like this can be built in its midst.”

The group say they are continuing to examine other courses of action, [after claiming the Grange Club](#) refused to discuss any compromise with them.



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Inflatable dome at The Grange Club Stockbridge is controversial.

PHOTO Alan Simpson