

Ultra-modern house planned for New Town street would ruin views of Calton Hill

Community groups have spoken out against an ultra-modern house planned for a New Town street, warning that it would ruin one of the only views of Calton Hill from the west.

Sited at 12 Blenheim Place, the proposed home would sit beside the historic Greenside Parish Church, designed by famed Scottish architect James Gillespie Graham.

Planning permission was rejected in October last year, but the developers have since lodged an appeal, which is set to be considered by councillors this week.

The two-storey home would have a largely flat roof and be of sandstone construction, appearing as a single-storey home from street level.

The New Town and Broughton Community Council objected to the original application, and say they still stand by their concerns.

The community council says that the house would not respect the historical setback line designed by urban planner William Playfair, which other buildings in the area respect.

And it said the structure would block one of the 'few views of

Calton Hill' from the west.

They further said that the plot of land should be considered as woodland, as until a 2017 tree removal by the council it was a rare piece of 'urban woodland'.

Edinburgh World Heritage, a charity which works to maintain the UNESCO world heritage site over the city, also spoke out against the original application.

In a submission to the council, it said: "The nature of changing a historically landscape setting that contributes to numerous heritage values to a low building would unavoidably have a negative heritage impact."

The group pointed to the impact it would have on the presentation of Greenside Parish Church, and also discussed the negative impact it would have on views of Calton Hill.

Further, it said that the 'public benefits' of building a single home on the plot of land were limited.

However, not everyone is opposed to the development. One local, Jasmine Gilham, said: "I'm not too sure. I think it fits well with some of the other buildings. When I've walked around Calton Hill, I feel like it would fit in. I'm a fan."

Historic Environment Scotland had objected to earlier development plans on the site which involved building two three-storey homes, but did not object to the current plans.

According to them, the low-rising nature of the planned structure – while still impacting the setting of the church – did not bring them the same level of concern as the previous plans.

However, they did suggest that the developers consider amending the design so that it falls behind the setback line developed by Playfair.

Officers have recommended that councillors reject the appeal due to its impact on the conservation area overlaying New Town and the world heritage site.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter