

# 17/00168/FUL Residential Development, Quartermile Objection from Spokes, the Lothians Cycle Campaign

## 1 General

In general we support developments of this kind. It comprises a re-use of 'brownfield' land; it is located in the City Centre, with excellent access to all amenities, thus *reducing the need to travel* (the prime objective of travel sustainability), and with excellent access to public transport as well as to local walking and cycle routes, all of which should encourage *healthy lifestyles* for the residents, and *minimal car use*.

It is therefore deeply disappointing that the developers have taken almost no notice of our comments from the PAN exhibition, and made no concessions, even though what we asked is do-able and affordable.

## 2 The PAC Report

There were only 6 comments left at the public exhibition, and three of these related to cycling. Below, we repeat the original comments (regular typeface, size 10), followed by the developer response (italics), followed by our response to these (regular, size 12):

### 2.1

What is needed is good cycle access to the western side of the Bryce Building or its southern side. The present street (Porter's Walk) is marked "Cyclists Dismount", and is too narrow for shared use. If it could be wider it could be useful for cycling.

*Access for all, including cyclists, has always formed an important part of the wider master plan.*

This is clearly not true. If cycle access had 'always formed an important part of the Master-plan', how is it that 'Cyclists Dismount' signage is now planned? 'Dismount' signage is an indication of poor planning. We have suggested remedies - use as much of the open space as possible, via signage and markings - but this has been rejected

### 2.2

Another limiting factor is that Nightingale Way is one-way westwards. Can it be made 2-way for cyclists (in line with council policy for new 1-way streets)?

*Careful cyclists are welcome to pass through the Quartermile site, but pedestrian safety remains a priority. This may require cyclists to dismount when moving through some areas of the Quartermile site.*

This response does not address the objection, which is to make the one-way street two-way for cyclists. It is still possible to achieve a counter-flow for cyclists along Nightingale Way, without impinging at all on pedestrian safety.

### 2.3

We'd like to suggest that the east-west shared-use path which runs along the

south side of our site should be widened, along the length of the site, to about 4m. It is obviously a well-used route, and the widening, by a metre or so, would ease congestion, while at the same time causing little disruption at the ends where the path would narrow again.

*Noted. This would be difficult to achieve, given the established pattern of development across the site, including the spaces between the buildings.*

This is a mendacious reply. The widening could be achieved by signage (and markings on the pavement) and would not be at all difficult.

## 2.4

Routes around your building, and through the middle of the site, will clearly be well-used for off-road access to the medical facility to the north (in the original part of the site), and we hope suitable cycle parking will be provided near the facility.

*There will be suitable cycle parking provided as part of the application proposals.*

Response misses the point. The main point being made is about the off-road routes TO the other building, not cycle parking.

## 2.5

My main comment is that Porter's Way needs to be opened for shared use cycling. The City of Edinburgh and the University are both keen to support cycling, and this is a simple way to do so. It is absurd that Quatermile, immediately adjacent to the excellent cycle route on Middle Meadow Walk, is so impermeable to cycles.

*The Quatermile development has always welcomed cyclists. However, in order to ensure pedestrian safety across the site, cyclists are asked to dismount and walk for short sections only.*

'Cyclists Dismount' is a sign of bad planning. Pedestrian and cycle safety can be achieved in a more welcoming way, for example by 'shared use' signage, or 'cyclists beware pedestrians'.

## 3 Our objections in summary

We have three basic objections:

### 3.1 Procedural

The developers have responded to our comments from the PAN but have made no effort to meet our reasonable needs - see above.

### 3.2 One-way streets

City of Edinburgh Council has a policy that any new one-way streets should have a

contraflow for cyclists:

**PCycle3** : *There will be a presumption that all streets will be two way. However, if new one-way streets have to be implemented to manage motor traffic, there will be a presumption that cyclists will be exempted from the one-way restriction.* (LTS, 9.2, p.45)

Here, both the main roads through the site - Nightingale Way and Simpson Loan - are one-way westwards, so cyclists coming from the south-west along North Meadow Walk (the main "cyclist highway" in the plans) cannot get to the carefully-placed cycle racks in the new development without walking along either street, or taking a long detour via Middle Meadow Walk, or an even longer and hilly detour crossing Lauriston Place twice.

The same problem will be met by cyclists wanting to reach the proposed Business School in the old Surgical Building.

There is plenty of room for a contraflow lane in both streets. Costs of making these changes would be small, since no engineering would be involved.

### 3.3 'Cyclists Dismount' signage

The need for such signage should never have arisen in the first place. If the site had been well designed, enough space would have been left (in Porters' Way, for example) to accommodate both modes with less risk of conflict. ***'Cyclists Dismount' is thus a marker of bad design.***

We suggest instead that a more cycle-friendly signage be used.

We urge the developers to take the fairly simple measures we have suggested to make the proposals conform with CEC policy and intent.

Yours etc,

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