

from: Peter Hawkins <peterhawk@phonecoop.coop>
to: Euan.McMeeken@edinburgh.gov.uk
date: 18 September 2015 at 18:23
subject: Fwd: 15/03780/FUL Donaldson's College - objection

Dear Mr McMeeken,

We object to this application on two main grounds:

1 The absence, in the developers' plans, of connections from the site to the surrounding quiet streets, both on the west side (to Wester Coates Gardens) and on the east (to Douglas Cres./Magdala Cres., and to the Water of Leith path). Quite apart from the value of a potential through route for cyclists, ie from the North Edinburgh path network to the New Town, these connections will be important for the residents themselves, who otherwise will have no walking/cycling access other than via the main gates, which give onto the main Glasgow Road and are also used by vehicular traffic.

This will be a high-quality development; residents will feel entitled to better facilities, which would include direct access to the surrounding quiet streets and the paths to the Water of Leith - for example, even for dog exercising. Access only via the main gates, shared with traffic, is inadequate.

The developers claim that they cannot make these connections because they do not own the land which is needed. That is no excuse. They (or others) can approach the owners to negotiate a way-leave across the land.

They also claim that the connections "are not technically feasible"; there could be some small technical issues at the NE corner, because of differences of levels, but these are also not a valid excuse for doing nothing.

A letter from the Council (Appendix A, Matthew Simpson, 5 May 2015) states:

"Accessibility to include reference to linking to and through / across the site for cyclists / pedestrians. I appreciate that this raises some issues for your client but it is a requirement of the Council;"

The developers are completely ignoring this 'requirement'.

In sum, these connections should be made a Condition without which planning permission would not be granted.

2 The one-way system for the internal road network: current Council policy is that new one-way streets should include a two-way facility for cyclists. There is every reason why this should apply here. This could be achieved by, for example, a contraflow coloured lane for cyclists, and appropriate signage, at very small cost.

Again, implementation of this should be a Condition of planning consent.

Adequate provision for cyclists is an important aspect of the sustainability of this project. The developers have virtually ignored cycling, with comments such as that they expect cycle use to be extremely low (table 6.3); when in fact, the latest Scottish Household Survey shows 11.8% of trips to work in Edinburgh are by bike..

<https://twitter.com/SpokesLothian/status/636600096763867137>

Cycling levels can be expected to be even higher at this site, which is close to the city centre and many places of employment.

This development should therefore take full advantage of that evidence, and build on it, given council and government policies to increase cycle use substantially.

Yours sincerely,
Peter Hawkins, Spokes Planning Group