

NEW FILMHOUSE PLANNING APPLICATION 20/05527/FUL – SPOKES OBJECTION

From: publicaccess.alerts@edinburgh.gov.uk

Subject: Comments for Planning Application 20/05527/FUL

Date: 11 January 2021 at 11:11:20 GMT

You have been sent this email because you or somebody else has submitted a comment on a Planning Application to your local authority using your email address. A summary of your comments is provided below.

Comments were submitted at 11:11 AM on 11 Jan 2021 from Mr Simon Watkins.

Application Summary

Address: Land At Festival Square Edinburgh

Proposal: Application for planning permission proposing the "development of a new centre for film comprising cinema, offices, education, exhibition and function space, together with retail, cafe, restaurant and bar, and associated facilities, including landscaping and public realm works (Use Classes 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, and 11 and sui generis public house)" at Land at Festival Square, Edinburgh, EH3 9SR.

Case Officer: Emma Fitzgerald

Comments Details

Commenter Type: Amenity Body

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Reasons for comment:

Comments: I wish to object formally on behalf of Spokes to this application,

We were hoping not to object to this proposal as we do not oppose the proposal overall. Indeed it is a statement building in an otherwise drab and sometimes underused square, and Filmhouse is an important element of the city's life. However, we made representations at the PAN stage which have been completely ignored by the developers. We are therefore forced to object due to its negative impact on cyclists.

Specifically the development must ensure retention and drastic improvement of the (currently unmarked and shared-use) cycle connection along the northern side of the square, which links the Canal/Exchange/West End route with Lothian Road.

The design principles for the development state that: 'The outdoor landscaping must maximise the potential of the public space, be fully accessible, encourage sustainable transport use and create a welcoming and inspiring environment for all.' However, this is not the case at present from a cycling perspective.

There is an existing cycle path that runs through the Exchange development. It is well-signed, but poorly demarcated on the ground as the developers did not follow Spokes' advice on the matter. This emerges into Festival Square and in fact most cyclists who use it cycle across the square to access Lothian Road on the level, there being steps at the Northern End. The Filmhouse Development must ensure that this link is retained and indeed finished in a well-demarcated way as pedestrian traffic in the Square will increase enormously if this development goes ahead. Unmarked shared use would no longer be acceptable or safe.

The importance of this link is increased by the City Centre Transformation proposals which will result in a segregated cycle route along Lothian Road and a cycle/pedestrian crossing from Festival Square to the Usher Hall. It is essential that the cycle route across the North of the square links to this crossing.

It also appears that this route may be one of the quiet routes included within the Active Travel Action Plan - 2016 Refresh and as such would be council policy, having been approved by the Transport Committee.

We commented at the PAN stage on similar lines. This resulted in a meeting with the proposers in July at which the continuation of the cycle route was agreed by the proposers. We are bitterly disappointed by this volte face by the developers and lack of good faith. We therefore object to the proposal in the strongest possible terms. If the proposal is to be approved it should be under condition that a properly demarcated cycle route is provided from the existing one at the North West corner of the site to Lothian Road.

If the Council is to live up to its rhetoric in supporting cycling, it must ensure that this important link in its existing cycle network is not destroyed.