



Edinburgh Old Town DEVELOPMENT TRUST

for a living city

Councillor Alasdair Rankin
Convenor of the Finance and Resources Committee
The City of Edinburgh Council
City Chambers
High Street
Edinburgh
EH1 1YJ

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16 March 2015

Dear Councillor Rankin,

**Re: Finance and Resources Committee meeting 19 March 2015,
Item B1.3 8-20 King's Stables Road - Objection to sale of Council-owned
property on grounds of the proposed major uses**

We are writing to object to the sale of this 'strategic' Council-owned property to Peveril Securities/Campus Design Management Limited (recommended in the report by the Acting Director of Services for Communities) for a hotel and student housing-led development. While the possibility of a minor element of housing, subsidised workshops / gallery and retention of the existing stone wall are all welcome, we regard their inclusion as a means to placate objections to the proposed primary uses. Our Trust concurs with local resident opinion made during the consultation process for the site brief that permanent residential accommodation, particularly affordable and family housing, should form a dominant part of the uses for this site.

We believe the developer selection has been overly led by the development industry's current preference for hotels and student housing and the resulting capital receipt to the Council. We are aware that the Council has the opportunity as current landowner to steer the mix of uses in order to deliver a development better than the market alone could. We appreciate that this will possibly require reconsideration of a lower capital receipt from the sale. You will be aware that part of Edinburgh's appeal to visitors is its living city centre; new development that ignores this is not only eroding its appeal but damaging a unique residential community. A strengthened resident population in the Old Town, with affordable and family housing, is a key part of the future success of the city centre.

The question the Committee should ask is 'has there been adequate consideration of a developer proposal where permanent residential accommodation forms the majority use for the site?'

We understand the disposal of the property was approved by the Economy Committee on Thursday 13 February 2015, based on a recommendation in the report (not publicly available) by the Acting Director of Services for Communities. We are aware that the report was discussed by the Committee in private because it is covered under Part 1, paragraph 9 on Schedule 7A Access to information: Exempt Information of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. Because neither the report nor the committee discussion is accessible to the public this calls for especial scrutiny of this item by councillors.

We are aware the deal is contingent on Planning Permission. We are also aware the site classed as a Major Development and will require Pre-Planning consultation. However our experience is that this is too late to impact on the mix of uses on the development and our fear is that if the Finance & Resources Committee supports this proposal we will be heading towards protracted objections during the Planning process.

We understand the options open to the Committee are 1) to approve, 2) not to approve or 3) to defer the item to the Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee (and then possibly to the full Council) as has been done with the Tron Kirk.

We strongly urge the Committee not to ratify this decision for the reasons we have stated above.

Yours sincerely,
Sean Bradley

Sean Bradley, Chair

Email copy to:

Old Town Community Council - Bill Cowan, Chairperson -
chairperson@edinburgholdtowncc.org.uk

Cllr Andrew Burns, Leader of the Council - andrew.burns@edinburgh.gov.uk

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Cllr Ian Perry, Conv. Planning Committee - ian.perry@edinburgh.gov.uk

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