



29 April 2024

Mr Andrew Kerr
Chief Executive
City of Edinburgh Council
4 East Market Street
Edinburgh EH8 8BG

Dear Mr Kerr

I am writing to you on behalf of the New Town & Broughton Community Council (NTBCC) regarding the complaint Canonmills Owners and Residents Association (CORA) made to the City of Edinburgh Council concerning the Council's sale of land at Eyre Place and the associated Planning Application (23/01201/FUL).

At its meeting on 8 April, NTBCC heard a presentation from a member of CORA about this matter, which was specifically focused upon the very serious concerns the residents had about the loss of the garden area adjacent to their property.

Community Councillors were very disappointed by the handling of this matter by the City Council. The City Council disposed of a site that was a communal garden which had been used for decades by residents of 1-6 Canonmills without informing or consulting with them about the disposal. Furthermore, when CORA raised the matter with yourself on 21 March, your written response (22 March) simply stuck to the technicalities of the disposal of land by the Council, and disregarded the point that the subject of the complaint by residents was about the loss of a valued local amenity and that there had been no engagement at all with them about this.

NTBCC believe that the residents concerned should receive a full written explanation of how the disposal was handled by the City Council and take appropriate action to rectify any failings that are identified in that. It is also very disappointing that, while there is an outstanding complaint being pursued by CORA, the clearance of the site has proceeded such that, even if the complaint were upheld, it would not be possible to preserve the status quo or anything like it for local residents.

In addition to the above, CORA raised with the Community Council a number of other issues regarding the disposal. Firstly, they suggest that the documentation presented by the Director of Place and the Head of Estates to the Finance & Resources Committee (26 January 2023) contains a number of material errors. Secondly, the report presented to the Management Development Sub-Committee by the Chief Planning Officer (9 August 2023) on the planning application for the land contained material errors. Thirdly, that Council officials

may have confounded the disposal and the planning application leading to detriment in the achievement of best value.

NTBCC does not have access to the information that would allow for it to determine the precise position regarding those three issues. However, given the nature of the suggested errors, NTBCC is of the view that the Council should now disclose in an open and transparent way the information that could provide reassurance that there were no material errors, and if there were that appropriate action would be taken to rectify the position.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Williamson
Chair New Town & Broughton Community Council