

Corinne McGrath

From: Sebastian Skeaping <sebskeaping@icloud.com>
Sent: 02 February 2020 17:36
To: Corinne McGrath
Subject: Castle Mound, Cambridge

Dear Councillor McGrath,

I am writing to add my views to all the locals who are very upset by planned development on Castle Mound and Shire Hall.

My family and I, two adults, three children and two dogs have enjoyed Castle Mound and the green space between the Mound and Shire Hall for over two decades on a daily basis. The children enjoy climbing the stairs and the fascinating view over Cambridge and are learning about the historic nature of the area, dating back to the Norman conquest and before.

This is a valuable, historical, characterful area, part of what makes Cambridge special. It should be preserved under all circumstances. The archaeological and historical interest of the site should be self-evident. It would make daily life less interesting and enjoyable if this area was not preserved for public access and enjoyment.

Please do anything within your power to preserve this special place for the residents of Cambridge.

Best regards,
Sebastian, Samantha, Eleanor, John and Joseph Skeaping
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Dear Corinne Magrath,

I am a 63 year old Cambridge resident (living in Searle Street). I first went to Castle Hill and the grass forecourt of Shire Hall as a child, taken by my parents (who lived in Windsor Road). Later, I hung out there as a teenager, then moved away from Cambridge and returned decades later to take my children to play on the grass and the Mound. They grew up and then hung out there as teenagers and now I walk my dog there most days.

The flat grass area in front of Shire Hall is a valuable community resource. I have witnessed it being used by many groups; political, educational and religious, as well as extended families, etc. I see people there who I recognise as locals and, at weekends and on holidays, many who are evidently visitors to the area. It is not on the tourist trail but evidently provides a good quality experience for those who enjoy the space on their way into, or out of, the city's more obvious attractions. Part of the charm of the grass in front of Shire Hall is as a relatively low-key communal area with no other amenities like river or shops in the immediate vicinity.

I feel very strongly that free public access to the grass area and Castle Mound should remain in perpetuity. Cambridge is not blessed with hills so vantage points are few and far between. (Castle Mound, Gt St Mary's Church, the Gogs – that's it.) Stopping public access to the grass and Mound would therefore remove an important amenity.

The grass and Mound have very significant value as an open space. As a regular dog-walker, I am aware of the many different types of people who happily share the space. These regularly include young couples, groups of teenagers, students, joggers, (very few places to train for hill runs in Cambridge), shoppers, tourists and other dog-walkers. It is particularly popular at sunset. The space is also used by those who have just registered births, marriages or deaths.

The ability to see the city and surrounding countryside is of great benefit to people's well-being. This is especially obvious for visitors to the Registry Office. Although the Office may be moved as part of the plan, local births, marriages and deaths will obviously continue and the amenity should still be available for those who wish to put their lives into perspective by being able to see beyond a few streets.

Cambridge is proud to be a green city with good open spaces. Castle Mound is the only place that allows Cambridge's many trees to be appreciated from a distance. In a flat city in a flat county, it should remain open for all.

I would like to add, from a professional point of view, that I am employed by the University of Cambridge and work in the heritage sector. Cambridgeshire County Council are aware that the area in question is used by Kettle's Yard, The Museum of Cambridge, and others as a local resource. I contacted Susie Biller (cc-ed), Head of Communications at Kettle's Yard about the prospect of no longer having access to the area and she said, by email (Jan 30, 2020), that :

'the council have been talking to Kettle's Yard and the Museum of Cambridge about their plans and have suggested that access to the historic monuments and the mound will be maintained for all.'

I do hope that Cambridgeshire County Council's suggestion to Kettle's Yard is accurate and that you will decide to enable continued public access to Castle Hill. Thank you.

If you have any queries, then please do not hesitate to contact me.

With best wishes,

Spike Bucklow.

Spike Bucklow

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