

April 2015

Clerk to the Edinburgh Licensing Board

City of Edinburgh Licensing Board

249 High Street

Edinburgh

EH1 1YJ

Dear Clerk,

The Edinburgh Academical Football Club

Development at Raeburn Place, Edinburgh

Applications for Premises Licences (Main Facility and Retail Units)

I am writing in support of the applications for premises licence (provisional) for the main facility and additional retail units at Raeburn Place, Edinburgh submitted by Edinburgh Academical Football Club.

My reasons for supporting these applications are as follows:-

1. **Retention of sport at a historic sporting venue** - Fundamentally, this is a development which has as its' soul the provision and retention of sport at Raeburn Place. Raeburn Place is currently a sporting venue – the new development is a replacement of current (but sadly not fit for purpose) facilities. There is a commercial element in the development, which is an important part of these proposals as these retail elements will allow the project to be sustainable in the long-term. Long-term sustainability is crucial to the success of the development.

Raeburn Place is home to the Edinburgh Academical Football and Cricket Clubs (although EACC have been absent for a number of years because the current portacabins sit in the cricket outfield). These Clubs and the ground are part of our national history (indeed for rugby purposes the ground is of international significance). I believe that the new development brings great economic benefits for the City as a whole as well as to the Stockbridge area and cements Raeburn Place in the annals of rugby history.

As far as the new facilities are concerned, good facilities enable and encourage participation in sport. This is recognised by Government policy (Reaching Higher: Building on the Success of Sport 21"). These facilities will not only allow the Edinburgh Academical Football and Cricket Clubs to thrive – and remain in their home at Raeburn Place – but will also allow the likes of BATs and ACE to thrive. BATs provides a huge benefit to the community of North Edinburgh and this is all operated from Raeburn Place. BATs provides coaching, after school clubs and

sports camps to boys and girls across the north of Edinburgh, and it would be a sad indictment of us all if this were not allowed to be continued. These new facilities will encourage and allow other prestigious sporting events to come to Edinburgh and to Raeburn Place – this provides economic investment into the city.

2. **Community Benefit** - In addition to the economic benefits I have mentioned above that the city and Stockbridge will receive by virtue of this development, additional benefit to the community and the local economy will come through use of the function suites and the corporate spaces. These will be available for use by the local community – a local resource. The ground itself will still be used by local schools etc for sports and fun days. BATs will thrive. All of this encourages footfall which will add vibrancy to Stockbridge. Stockbridge community lacks a “community resource” on this scale. Surely having licensed facilities for hire by local people; space for adult learning courses; and café areas which can accommodate children is of huge benefit to the local people.
3. **Commercial/retail element** – 21st Century sport requires 21st century facilities and sport is not cheap to provide or sustain. The commercial element to these proposals will ensure long term sustainability, and being located on Raeburn Place/Comely Bank Road, they provide a logical extension in retail terms to what is there already in the defined Stockbridge town centre.

Stockbridge currently has a limited retail offering. More retail units would allow more traders into the area, increase the shopping experience and indeed spread the retail experience along to Comely Bank. Stockbridge is a thriving community, and it would absorb this provision. Competition is good – no one should have a monopoly, independent trader or not. Greater offering means greater footfall which means greater spending. It also means job creation. These proposals will help provide long term growth and ensure the health and vibrancy of Stockbridge.

Edinburgh Academicals seek three additional licences (to the main facility) and these are to attract operators to the site. The club would like to lease the units to a restaurant, general grocery store with off sales and something like an ice cream parlour/café. Without liquor licences, the desirability of these units decreases, and with that, potentially the quality of operator.

4. **Economic Impact/Job Creation** – This development will pump huge economic investment into the community and into the city of Edinburgh. It will also provide new permanent employment in the area.
5. **Assessment of Licensing Objectives** - I have reviewed the 5 licensing objectives and in my mind, the applications do not impinge on any of them. Edinburgh Academicals Football Club has held a licence at Raeburn Place for years. The club previously worked with Festival Inns before holding the current licence in their own name. They have a good history of working with local police and indeed the Licensing Board in relation to occasional licences. There is a full licensing history pertaining to Raeburn Place. The club is experienced in the operation of bars/function areas and stadia. Rugby clubs across the city operate successfully with liquor licences. Alcohol is part of the experience being offered and is requested by patrons. It is an ancillary, but important part of the experience being offered at Raeburn Place.

Please accept this letter as a letter of support in relation to the four applications submitted.

Yours sincerely