



# St Leonard's Neighbourhood Association

48 Wonford Road, Exeter, EX2 4LD.

01392-274667

stleonardsnassoc@gmail.com www.slna.org.uk

Charity Reg. No. 283568

---

Legal Services,  
Devon County Council,  
County Hall,  
Topsham Road,  
Exeter  
EX24QD

9th January 2024

Your ref:- DEV006/097

Dear DCC Legal Services,

With reference to Devon County Council's announcement of the planned disposal of Open Space in Matford Lane, Exeter, the St Leonards Neighbourhood Association would like to make the following points.

1. The land is within the Conservation area of St Leonards and as such its use and development are subject to the restrictions and controls of Exeter City Council's Planning Directorate. As I am sure you are aware Conservation Areas are intended to identify the special character of an area along with elements that are worthy of retention or enhancement as well as those elements that detract from the character. They will also act as a framework for the control of development and also by those proposing new development.
2. All trees within a Conservation area are protected and in this case the grounds of County Hall have been designated as 'Areas of Important Treescape'

Although we realise that should the County Council dispose of the land the purchaser will be the person or organisation which has to take account of and negotiate the above restrictions, we would ask that the County Council place restrictions by way of covenants on the land prior to the disposal in view of the historical and aesthetic value of the land to the local residents and visitors from the wider area. The grounds of County Hall are among the main attractions of the city, alongside Cathedral Green, the historic

quayside, Colleton Crescent and the canal & riverside area. The appraisal document states:

*“County Hall which includes the Grade 2\* County Hall building itself, Bellair, the original villa (Listed Grade 2\*) and the locally listed Coaver Club building. These buildings are set within superb landscaped grounds, including mature Lucombe oaks and sweeping lawns, providing an exceptional setting for the historic buildings. The Heavitree stone wall to Topsham Road is a reminder of the original enclosure of this area.”*

Whilst we understand that the prudential financial management of DCC’s assets is important to the population of Devon, partial and piecemeal development of the land would be an historic mistake and Devon County Council has it within its powers to prevent such development.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel FitzHugh

Chairman.