

BARBARA DICKSON ONLINE

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PRESS ARTICLES

Article from The Sunday Times from September 2006.

DICKSON FIGHTS BID TO BUILD ON 'PEOPLES PARK'

Barbara Dickson, the pop singer and actress, has condemned plans to build a business school in a park Andrew Carnegie, the Scots philanthropist, bequeathed to his home town.

Dickson, who was born in Dunfermline, has accused trustees of ignoring the famous philanthropist's wish that the park should always belong to the people of the town.

Carnegie, who gave away £186m during his lifetime, gifted Pittencrieff Park to the people of Dunfermline with the express wish that it should be used for their leisure.

However, the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust is now considering leasing part of it - known locally as The Glen - to developers, who plan to build a business school on the 76-acre site. The scheme is backed by chancellor Gordon Brown.

Local residents claim the development would deprive them of a unique amenity. More than 5,000 have signed a petition opposing the scheme.

Dickson said: "I spent hours of my time, like all Dunfermline children, in the park, as did my father and all his brothers and sisters."

Andrew Carnegie, fourth cousin of the steel magnate, is backing the campaign.

The park was bought by Carnegie in 1902. As a boy, he had been banned from entering it by James Hunt, its then owner, because of a family feud with Carnegie's relatives.

Only 12 when he left Dunfermline, Carnegie retained an affection for the park, and when he returned to Scotland in 1902 having made his fortune, bought it and donated it to the people of Dunfermline so that "no wee child would ever feel locked out".

Mace, the management and construction company behind the Royal Bank of Scotland's corporate headquarters in Edinburgh, is carrying out a feasibility study into the project.

Last night Angus Hogg, chairman of the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, insisted no decision had yet been made on the park's future.

"The feasibility study covers a wide range of issues, only one of which is the possible siting of the business school in the park," he said. "We are looking at this because we need to find some other activity in the park to sustain its future. We had to withdraw our bid for Heritage Lottery funding because we did not have any business activities there. There is no prospect of us selling any part of the park, though we would consider leasing a small part of the ground."

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