Savile Area Residents Association  
SARA serves to promote the preservation and improvement of Savile Area.

SARA community requirements for the redevelopment of St Crispin’s school site.

Objectives:
Preservation and Improvement
Diversity
Community integration
Sustainability
Biodiversity

Preservation-
Preserve valued local characteristics: diversity, a friendly caring community, a safe place to live, a varied mix of residents, of building types, sizes & access arrangements, of residential and compatible land uses, with prominent cared-for shared green-spaces, flowering trees, and on Watertoun Road, sufficient on-street car parking and an absence of through traffic. New development should preserve and respect these valued local characteristics.

Improvement-
The new development should contribute positively to the shared public realm.
New buildings should be energy efficient and powered by renewable energy, including solar panels.
Minimise additional road traffic by promoting active, not sedentary travel.
Minimise the carbon footprint of any new buildings.
Protect established trees and plant more. Fence tree root protection zones to prevent soil compaction during construction.
Fund the replacement of several missing and declining street trees on West Savile Terrace.
Provide sufficient on-site vehicle parking during and after construction.
Include a safe, clean, fenced space for toddlers’ outdoor play equipment.
Address social isolation by promoting social interaction eg. community shed, community polytunnel, shared growing space.
Retain and reuse existing buildings and/or their materials eg. the timber swimming pool.
Include rain-gardens for sustainable urban drainage compliance.
Include workspace and employment opportunity, such as a cafe with co-working space.
Practical details to include in the redevelopment of the former school site:

Re-purpose or reuse -
Conserve resources. None of the developer plans show retention or reuse of the timber swimming pool. The timber building should be dismantled with care for reassembly elsewhere. Sell or donate to a good cause.

Active travel -
Contribute to the public realm as an Active Travel destination, a walking-friendly place, with sunny planting-sheltered benches and other surfaces to facilitate outdoor social interaction. Bicycle storage should be more conveniently located than car parking spaces. Car parking at a less convenient distance from dwellings promotes neighbour interactions and more active travel alternatives. Make provision for electric vehicle infrastructure, eg cable ducts to car parking spaces.

Visual amenity -
Buildings should be well designed and of good quality materials, enhancing the local built environment. Bin stores should not be positioned prominently. They are eyesores. Most roofs should be fitted with solar panels.

Green infrastructure -
Multi-functional ‘green infrastructure’ contributes to climate change resilience.

Sustainability - Both hard and soft landscaping should have low embodied energy. Locally sourced, minimally processed durable materials have low embodied energy. Young plants obtained from local growers reduce road transport from Europe and reduce risk of importing disease/pests.

Carbon capture - Long term planting of hardwood and fruitwood trees, predominantly green (not grey) ground surfaces, with deep-rooting plant species. Biodiversity - Dense and complex plantings of diverse shrubs and perennials enables reduced use of biocides.

Edible and playful shared landscape - Flavoursome fruits, climbable trees, balance logs, sand and boulders promote active sociable outdoor play.

Biodiversity -
The built environment and associated landscaping should be wildlife-friendly, of value to bees, birds, beetles, butterflies and other invertebrates. Include clusters of swift bricks in north-facing wall-heads, include bee-bricks in sunny south-facing walls. Interconnect private gardens with hedgehog-permeable boundaries to increase local biodiversity & link to wider habitat networks. Preserve wildlife permeability along the allotment boundary. Allow for dense perennial planting standing through winter to shelter invertebrates.

Rainwater Management - Capture rainwater from roof downpipes in water butts and rain-gardens. Capture and absorb runoff from roofs and hard landscaping. Disposal of rainwater to surface water sewers should be indirect, after saturating rain-gardens. Parking surfaces should be permeable and of low embodied energy, eg stabilised gravel over hardcore.

Savile Area Residents Association
25 February 2020
Youth Survey prepared by Natalie Homer, Savile Area Residents Association:

Survey: Local Children’s perspective of development on the St Crispin’s site

Background: A list of 5 questions were asked of children who live close to the St Crispins site in the Savile Area and play on the existing Watertoun Green (Feb 2020). 5 open questions:

Questions:
1. What would you like in the new space for the community when St Crispin’s School goes?
2. What kind of buildings do you think would fit in to the existing space?
3. Do you want trees or open space or both?
4. Does anything worry you about what might be built there and what it might change?
5. If you have been to the site what would you miss about it when it goes?

The answers were written down on a separate piece of paper. 4 children answered the survey and their answers are shown below, along with the age of the child.

RESULTS COMPILED:

11 year old
1. I would like a play area
2. I think there should be something to encourage sports and also something that will be good for the environment
3. I think more trees should be in the area
4. I would hate a lot of buildings accompanied by a big car park
5. I haven’t been to the site

11 year old
1. All weather ping-pong; an indoor gym; an outdoor gym; BBQ area; Green space
2. Flats and houses should be no more than 2 floors high
3. More trees
4. More houses and people will make the area more crowded
5. It is a great place to cycle around at the moment.

13 year old:
1. Café or shop
2. Sports area (Basketball/football court)
3. More trees in area needed
4. More people/families – which will make it busier and there would be more cars in our street
5. Haven’t been to the site, wouldn’t miss anything
13 year old
1. A designated nature garden, a donut/coffee shop/smoothie bar; a plant shop or allotment shop – with an option of work experience or jobs; a socialising space
2. Flats or house (No more than 2 floors high) with a coffee shop/donut shop/smoothie bar. Houses occupied by young families
3. Definitely have more trees
4. The more people, the better
5. Won’t miss anything about the school now

Savile Area Residents Association
26 February 2020

SARA comments specific to the Cala development proposal:

Savile Area Residents Association welcomes the re-development of St Crispin’s School site if the re-development positively enhances our neighbourhood. Now that we know the identity of the City of Edinburgh Council’s preferred bidder, SARA seeks to engage constructively with Cala to enhance the potential contribution that the development can make to Savile Area.

The bid outline plan, which we understand is not definitive, indicates a general arrangement of roadway, buildings, access, parking, gardens and trees, with indications of the heights of the proposed structures. The only printed plan we have seen to date is incomplete and of low resolution. We need to consider elements of the proposed development in more detail to fully understand their relevance for our neighbourhood.
At this early stage, SARA has identified several matters to discuss with Cala concerning their site development proposal:

1. The depth of commitment to seriously addressing climate change in the design of the proposed development. For example, increasing opportunities in north-south buildings for passive solar gain through south-facing windows and roofs fitted with solar panels. Increasing the internal and external use of timber. Renewable energy technology such as heat pumps, soon to become the new-build norm. Embodied energy of construction materials.

2. The extent to which the development proposal will respect the particular character, appearance and setting of Watertoun Road. There are no townhouses on Watertoun Road. No right-angled road junctions. Buildings are unaligned with each other and with the roadway. There is no symmetry of plan. Asymmetry underlies the form of this particular place.

3. The potential for more road traffic and higher vehicle speeds. The proposed straight access road would predictably increase vehicle speeds. The all-residential with parking at the front-door proposed development will provoke drive-to-work-elsewhere car journeys. Active travel is not promoted by distant out-of-sight bicycle storage.

4. The proposed arrangement of buildings shows an apparently limited selection of aligned repetitive building forms. Where are the anomalies and discontinuities that make a place distinctive?

5. Cala’s proposed site layout seems to lack imagination or any clear focus. It certainly lacks a green heart, such as an outdoor play-space safe from passing traffic and passively monitored by overlooking windows.

6. The degree to which Cala is willing to collaborate with the community. With goodwill from all parties, none of our concerns are irreconcilable with the needs of the developer and the city council.

Savile Area Residents Association
27 February 2020