

Scottish writers slam SA-backed property development

By [Marvin Meintjies](#)

17 Mar 2014

A property developer with powerful South African backing claims that his new building, which is planned for Edinburgh in Scotland, will be a "vibrant scheme".



This Edinburgh development by a South African company has drawn criticism from the media.

Image: [Edinburgh Architecture](#)

But a group of leading Scottish authors, supported by many others, say it will "tear apart the fabric" of a city that likes to style itself the Athens of the north.

Lukas Nakos, head of Artisan Real Estate, is backed by Sanlam and Atterbury Property. He has won permission from the Edinburgh city council to build the Caltongate development in the historic Old Town part of the city.

Among those opposed to the plan are Irvine Welsh and Alexander McCall Smith, author of The No 1 Ladies Detective Agency "This massive stale, sterile, modernist confection of concrete by a South African speculative developer is completely at odds with its surroundings," said the letter, which was carried in The Scotsman.

Nakos, who was born in Zimbabwe and educated in Cape Town, lives on the Isle of Man.

In an interview with the Sunday Times this week, Nakos said he was surprised by the late objections to what had been an "extensive consultation process".

"What exactly is it that's concerning them other than that there are foreign investors coming in and developing in Edinburgh?"

Nakos said the site he planned to build on had been a vacant "gap" that had been described as a blight on the city.

"We're doing it with sensitivity and we're saving historic buildings that were going to be demolished under a previous scheme [of a developer that went bust]," he said.

"The fact that we've spent two years consulting with people and applying different designs and concepts, and then you have this comment in the press and generic distaste and distrust of South African investors . it's rather disappointing," he said.

Despite the objections, construction of the building is going ahead.

"It's done and dusted. It's all been approved," said Edinburgh council spokesman Noel Miller.

Source: Sunday Times via I-Net Bridge

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