

Edinburgh Tram Inquiry Office Use Only

Witness Name: Richard Trotter STEEDMAN

Dated:

THE EDINBURGH TRAM INQUIRY
Witness Statement of Richard Trotter STEEDMAN

Statement taken by Raymond Gray on 27 October 2016.

My full name is Richard Trotter Steedman. I am aged 68, my date of birth being [REDACTED]. My contact details are known to the Inquiry.

My current occupation is Managing Director of Steedman, accountants and tax consultants.

Statement:

1. I have been Managing Director of my own company, Steedman, for about 29 years. The firm has approximately 1500 registered clients. These are mainly small to medium businesses. My clients are located mainly in the Edinburgh area however I do have a number of clients based elsewhere in the United Kingdom. My firm provides various financial services to these businesses including accountancy, VAT and tax returns.
2. I was aware through the media of the Edinburgh Tram Project (ETP). My business premises are not located near to where the construction work was carried out. As a result the tram project had no direct impact on my business.
3. A number of the local businesses that my firm dealt with were situated near to the construction area for the trams. Of particular note were two businesses, a restaurant and a public house in West Maitland Street. In addition also effected were four businesses in the Leith Walk area. These were a

hairdresser, coffee shop, tanning studio and a florist. I know from my professional interaction with these businesses that they all endured a reduction in turnover. This was due to the construction works taking place in the vicinity of their premises. I spoke with the proprietors of these businesses and they are aware of my contact with the Edinburgh Tram Inquiry. All the businesses were agreeable to me speaking on their behalf. I understand that I cannot refer to individual names or accounts due to data protection.

4. All the businesses I have referred to suffered a downturn in their annual turnover as a result of the tram works. This was clear to me in direct discussions with my clients and evidenced through their submitted accounts to my company. I know some suffered more than others including one of the clients in West Maitland Street who went bankrupt. I do not know if this was as a direct result of the tram work. I think it is fair to say that it would have had some influence on the resulting bankruptcy.
5. The hairdresser I referred to in Leith Walk informed me that she had lost a lot of customers. This was as a result of the tram work in the immediate area of her premises. My client believed customers found it difficult to access her salon either on foot or by car. This had a lasting effect on her business as it was difficult to entice these customers back once they had found somewhere else providing the same services
6. I am aware that some of the clients I have spoken about received money from the Edinburgh Council business compensation scheme. I think that the businesses' in Leith Walk area received £4000 although I cannot be certain on this. Given the amounts that my clients lost in revenue due to the tram construction work I do not think this is sufficient compensation.
7. I do not know if any of the clients I have mentioned have contacted the Tram Inquiry direct. This is something I will discuss with them and ensure they are aware of the procedure for contacting the Inquiry.

8. During the period of the tram work I had no reason to contact Edinburgh Trams direct. It is not something I had an inclination to do. What I would say is that I believe the trams were a waste of public money. I do not think the city needed them. We have a very good bus service in Edinburgh. I cannot see why there was a requirement for trams. I also believe that the on-going costs of the tram service should have been considered as this also has a bearing on public funds. It is also my opinion that the trams may have potentially been of more benefit to Edinburgh if they had ran to Leith as originally planned.

I confirm that the facts to which I attest in this witness statement, consisting of this and the preceding two pages are within my direct knowledge and are true. Where they are based on information provided to me by others, I confirm that they are true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

Witness signature.



Date of signing.....20-11-10.....

