

Save Leith Walk – down but not out

The council's planners have recommended an application by Drum Property to demolish and rebuild a two storey sandstone building on Leith Walk for approval.

Campaigners Save Leith Walk have called on councillors tonight to represent the wishes of the community, and vote against the demolition and proposed development at next week's meeting.

Save Leith Walk campaigners are extremely disappointed at the recommendations and urged councillors to listen to the local community when they meet on January 30 to discuss Drum's planning application for the site, near the foot of Leith Walk.

Last weekend Save Leith Walk held a Community Planning Workshop which helped to design a positive vision for the site that promoted the development of Leith in line with the views and needs of the people of the local area.



Ian Hood one of the campaigners

Ian Hood, of the Save Leith Walk campaign, said: “This is the model that Edinburgh City Council should be approving. It needs to listen to local residents and businesses and work with them on a shared vision for Leith.”

Ian noted that the planner’s report “glosses over serious problems and omissions in the development plan in order to justify approval.”

He said that in its own words the report actually suggests that the development should be refused for the following reasons:

- The proposed building is much taller than surrounding and facing buildings.
- The proposed development is of a greater density than the surrounding area.
- The proposed development is an infringement of the Student Housing Guidance.
- There is less Class 4 Business Provision than required

by the local area development brief.

- There is an unacceptable loss of open space for the Leith area.
- There are serious potential impacts on future residents in terms of noise and odours.
- There is an infringement of daylight guidance which will impact on neighbouring properties without their permission
- New building plans have been submitted which include an additional two metre chimney within the last two days without any consultation.
- The number of cycle spaces is significantly less than Edinburgh Design Guidance.
- Edinburgh Council's Economic Development Department has noted that this development will lead to less jobs than the existing site could do.

Ian added: "We are calling on all councillors on the Development Management Sub Committee to join residents rejecting this report on and to reject both the applications to demolish and to develop the site. We remain optimistic that democracy and good sense will win the day."



The developer's image of what Stead's Place might look like.

The Save Leith Walk campaign was formed in March to stop a demolition and development project in a conservation area proposed by Drum Property Group. The developer wants to build 471 student flats, a 56-bedroom hotel, 53 'affordable' homes as well as a restaurant, café and retail units.

Campaigners want to save the buildings, which lie in a conservation zone and are home to independent shops, businesses including the popular Leith Depot bar and live music venue.

Constituency MSP for Edinburgh Northern and Leith, Ben Macpherson said: "I am disappointed that Council Planning Officials have recommended the demolition of the building at Stead's Place, which would go against concerns raised by many people in Leith.

"The existing building makes a positive contribution to the Leith Conservation Area, so I don't understand how demolition of this building would help preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area."