

Save Leith Walk publish alternative plans for Stead's Place

Campaigners have published their ambitious alternative vision for the heart of Leith Walk.

Drum Property Group had controversial plans for Stead's Place unanimously turned down by the city council's development management sub-committee in January. The company has not yet launched an appeal or indicated that fresh plans will be submitted.

The company proposed to demolish the red sandstone building at Stead's Place to make way for a mixed development including a hotel, student accommodation and flats.



The Save Leith Walk campaign has now drawn up three alternative visions for the site to illustrate what could be provided on this and other development sites in the future.

Campaigners are investigating how the vision could be used by developers to influence ideas and the possibility of a community buy-out of the Stead's Place site if it becomes available. Community buy-out talks are at an early stage but discussions have taken place with a number of agencies who could support the campaigners if they decide to go ahead with that option.

The group's three visions have been drawn up to show a host of different ideas and initiatives that could be brought forward.



Ian Hood, from the Save Leith Walk campaign, said: “These plans reflect what the people of Leith want and need. They are the result of meetings, workshops and hundreds of conversations with the people whose opinion matters most – folk who live and work in this area.

“Time after time we see developers, backed by the university, impose their ideas on a community. The end result is invariably something that’s driven by one objective – to make as much cash as possible for the money men and their partners.”

He added: "What we're proposing might seem radical but it's

actually common sense. Work with the community to come up with a sustainable development that meets the needs of all parties – not just those looking to make a fast buck.

“Leith needs more social housing, more green space and places where small businesses can grow. A huge block of student flats isn’t what we need in this area.

“We urge Drum and their partners at the University of Edinburgh to work with us to bring our plans to life. Please stop thinking that you can ride roughshod over the people of Leith. It’s time to work with us rather than against us.”



The community cohesion elements of the vision include existing shops and businesses being “remastered” and small, low cost starter units being built and roof “pods” for small firms.

Housing blocks could include “colony-style” flats, a block of social accessible housing for older and disabled people – while open space could be provided and space for open air market and pop-ups.



An illustrative community housing model states “the land behind would be opened up to the Leith Walk community by creating a new archway through the centre of the building”. A range of different housing options include open market homes, intergenerational housing and co-housing could be provided – all to Passive House standard.

A shared guest house has also been touted to help “reduce the need for spare guest bedrooms” along with “affordable student housing owned by the community”.

Another approach could be a community enterprise model which could include a community bakery, a social enterprise and community space, housing with a “planted facade” and “incubator units” for media and creative firms. Large swathes of green space could include a petting zoo or community farm.

Drum declined to comment on the alternative vision.