

# Discovery Garden has been saved

**Community council members in Leith, tree experts and local residents have welcomed news that the Discovery Garden at Ocean Terminal will be retained as part of the Trams to Newhaven project.**

The project team, working in partnership with Ambassador, who now own Ocean Terminal, met with local residents and members of the Leith and Newhaven Community Council to discuss their concerns about the established green space. It looked from the plans as though the garden was to be ripped out and used for storage by the tram project.

The Community Council had discovered that the garden was to be replaced by hard surfaces and a few specimen trees. This garden was established two decades ago and has a mix of trees and hedges. The planting represents the discoveries of the founding fathers of Scottish botany and this was planted in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

Happily the designs were amended to allow a collective approach meaning that the garden will stay in place alongside Ocean Terminal, where other parts of public realm are being redeveloped under the scheme.



Discovery Garden at Ocean Terminal which is under threat.  
PHOTO ©2020 The Edinburgh Reporter

Council Leader Adam McVey said: "We know how strongly the

community feels about this local greenspace, so I'm delighted that Ambassador and our Trams to Newhaven team have been able to secure its future as part of the site's redevelopment.

"Once complete this scheme will deliver a great many benefits to Leith, offering quality, sustainable transport, unlocking the area for housing and economic development. We want everyone to share in this, while retaining the local features that residents know and love, so I'm pleased we've reached a solution."

Jennifer Marlborough, Secretary of the Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council said: "Leith Harbour and Newhaven Community Council is very pleased and relieved to hear that Discovery Garden is to be retained. We have worked hard, alongside local residents and users of the Garden, to ensure that the cultural and environmental value of this small park is not lost in the midst of development.

"This is particularly important in an area already largely devoid of green and community spaces. We thank Trees of Edinburgh, #SOS Leith and the local community for their help with our campaign. We now look forward to continuing to work with the Trams to Newhaven team and Ambassador Group, the new owners of Ocean Terminal, to properly secure the Garden's future."

Chris Richardson, Managing Director of Ambassador Investments, from Ambassador Group said: "Ambassador, the owners of Ocean Terminal, were in agreement with the community council and local community that, where possible, elements of the Discovery Garden should remain within the constraints placed on Ocean Terminal due to the tram requirements. We are pleased that the revised designs have been amended which delivers a positive outcome for all parties involved."

The main construction for the project began on Leith Walk in June, following a break in work as a result of COVID-19. This

encompassed existing sites on Lindsay Road, Melrose Drive and Constitution Street too.



Illustration of what tram would look like arriving at Ocean Terminal

## TRAMS

An updated Final Business Case for Trams to Newhaven, reflecting on the impact of Covid-19, shows that the economic case for the scheme remains positive. It also states that the project is on track for completion within the originally agreed budget. The updated report will be heard by the full council when it meets next week. although it was already approved by the Transport and Environment Committee on Thursday.

The Tram to Newhaven update demonstrates a variety of scenarios, all of which could affect the council's reserves, but the report confirms that in 'all but one scenario' the project will cost more to cancel than to keep going. The overall price tag remains at £207.3 million, but the council will now have to borrow all of the funding and cannot depend on the special dividend of £20 million from Lothian Buses which was factored in at the beginning.

This is a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic and the ongoing advice to avoid public transport if possible.

The project can however call on developer contributions to make up the sum of just over £7 million. In all cases the borrowing from reserves will be paid back. In the best case this anticipates repayment by 2027 and in the worst case by 2055.

The council has already spent £32 million on the project. Clearly by spending money on cancellation there would be no

benefits to employment growth or economic growth. The business cases presented from the very beginning have shown these benefits would flow from the new transport link.