

Drum's Leith Walk plans approved

The site at Leith Walk has been considered by planners before, but in a very different form. Earlier plans which included demolition of the two storey red sandstone building on Leith Walk at Stead's Place were rejected, forcing the developer to go back to the drawing board.

The building on Leith Walk has been saved, and the remainder of the site can now be developed as the council approved plans for 148 apartments which will include 38 affordable homes, and what is described as an attractive landscaped residential scheme linking to Pilrig Park at its planning meeting on Wednesday. Cllr Chas Booth who represents the Leith Ward tried to have a condition attached to the permission ensuring that an active travel route would become part of the plans. He reported after the meeting that none of the other councillors seconded his request, which he says would have meant that the council acted in accord with its own guidelines.

Drum Property Group's plans for Stead's Place, near the foot of Leith Walk, were approved today allowing a major regeneration of the 2.9-acre site.

The developers say that the Stead's Place site has been

earmarked for development by the Council since 2008 and consists largely of an aged industrial estate and office space, together with the two-storey sandstone building. Drum will now replace the existing industrial units with 148 high-quality apartments, including 38 affordable homes, as part of an attractive landscaped residential scheme linking to Pilrig Park and beyond.

Cllr Neil Gardiner, Planning Convener, said: "It's great news that committee has agreed an application today that conserves this building loved by so many in the local community and beyond. The development will also provide more much needed affordable housing for the area and a number of quality units to be used for a variety of purposes. I am thankful for the community's active contribution towards this outcome and also for the developer reworking their proposal to produce this very positive outcome.

"A high quality active travel route passing through the middle of this car free development is included in the proposals. An additional route could have passed very near to rear windows which would impact on residents amenity and therefore this particular proposal by a member was not supported by the committee."



The sandstone building will be retained and refurbished and made available for commercial occupation, which the developers say will provide "a vibrant local retail and business frontage onto Leith Walk". During the previous planning process, Drum emptied almost all of the units in the red sandstone building by refusing to renew any leases. Businesses such as The Bed Shop have moved on to new premises elsewhere, others like Punjabi Junction which is the café arm of charity Sikh Sanjog ceased in one form, finding another [online](#) and as a pop up elsewhere.

Drum first bought the site in 2017 and have conducted

consultation with the local community in light of previous planning refusals. Almost three-quarters of those consulted either supportive or neutral about the revised plans.

Graeme Bone, Group Managing Director of Drum said: "Drum has worked hard to ensure our current proposals are aligned with the objectives and plans of local community groups. We listened carefully to their views, enabling us to draw on the positive characteristics of the surrounding area to create a real sense of place that features a mix of private and affordable housing with a refurbished, vibrant and dynamic retail frontage facing Leith Walk.

"Our proposals will replace old and tired industrial, office and retail space with new, more flexible, higher quality accommodation for people to live, work, shop, eat, drink and to be entertained in – as well as opening up a safe and landscaped thoroughfare connecting Leith Walk to Pilrig Park. We believe we have responded directly to the objectives and vision the community has for the site. Our proposals now offer the optimum solution for all parties, providing a refurbished retail and office parade combined with a new community of housing to the rear, set in landscaped grounds, enhancing the area's distinctive cultural feel and identity."

Drum say they will ensure the shop frontages on to Leith Walk retain the current individual style and size, reflecting and supporting the current local small trader units at the site whilst refurbishing the office suites for rent on the first floor in a revamped business centre offering.

Mr Bone added: "By retaining and refurbishing the red sandstone buildings facing on to Leith Walk, we are also contributing to the wider regeneration of the local area, providing investment to create an attractive and distinctive destination and focal point which is needed now, more than ever, as the local area recovers from lockdown and the new tram works are progressed. Drum are now looking forward to

building on the positive and productive relationships established over recent years to deliver a new development that continues the rich tradition of diversity, independence and interest which makes Leith Walk such an exciting destination in which to live, work and visit.”



Many tenants moved out including The Bed Shop



The Save Leith Walk campaign was successful in stopping Drum getting permission to demolish the older buildings on Leith Walk