

Plans lodged for new homes for rent at Chesser

Proposals for new homes for rent alongside facilities for the wider community at New Mart Road, Chesser, have been submitted to City of Edinburgh Council.

Watkin Jones Group, a leading developer and manager of homes for rent, has lodged a planning application with the Council to redevelop the former livestock sheds, which includes the World of Football and World of Bowling buildings (image of proposal attached).

The proposed high-quality mixed-use brownfield development will comprise primarily of build-to-rent (BTR) homes, including at least 25 per cent affordable homes, addressing a drastic and increasing shortage of rental housing in the capital. In addition to this will be a limited level of managed student accommodation (occupying approximately 25 per cent of the floorspace of the development) and community facilities.

The site, which has been operated by Marco's Leisure for 23 years, currently comprises listed and unlisted former auction mart buildings and livestock sheds which are over 120 years old.

While sensitive to local concerns about the loss of the facilities, independent assessments show that to bring the buildings up to standard would be an unsustainable burden and cost for any organisation. The current buildings require

constant maintenance, repair and upgrade, and development of the site will ensure their long-term future, with a significant proportion of frames retained and incorporated into the overall development.

Marco's Leisure wants to deliver new sustainable, environmentally friendly sporting facilities rather than maintain what is becoming an impossible task. The company, who are a family business with a long-term commitment to Edinburgh, are in discussions with the Council to explore alternative options for sporting facilities in the west of the city.

The proposed BTR apartments will comprise a mix of studios, one bedroom, two bedroom and three-bedroom flats. Community is built into the design of the development, which reflects how people want to live now and into the future with working from home and study space, a communal lounge, exercise facilities, management suite and reception, bike storage and large shared kitchen.

Each of the key outdoor public and residents' open outdoor spaces will be given an identity as part of the overall masterplan, reflecting the history of the site, including a large central public square. It is envisaged that the public square will be used by performing arts groups; farmers markets; and as a gathering space for the wider community. The development is proposed as a car free scheme with parking limited to accessible parking only, and residents will be encouraged to use the good quality public transport and active travel links to their homes.

The student housing portion of the building will also offer communal amenity spaces, bike storage, a management suite and reception areas.

Eve Ladden Timbers from Watkin Jones said: "Our planning application for this new development at Chesser will create a

thriving and diverse community as part of an overall redevelopment of the area.

“There is a massive shortage of homes for people to rent in the capital and through our build-to-rent, affordable and student homes these proposals will create much-needed places for people to live on a brownfield site.

“We have heard and understand people’s feelings about the football pitches but know that these are unsustainable in their current form due to the condition of the buildings. We will continue to listen to the community throughout development.

“We are aware that discussions are being held to look at alternative options for new sporting facilities.”

Paul Demarco from Marco’s Leisure said: “Investment in recent state of the art facilities, such as World of Football at Marine Drive, show what we can offer through delivering far more viable spaces without the ongoing cost that old out of date buildings unfortunately provide.

“As we are finding, it is proving near impossible to provide quality and affordable facilities under a nineteenth century livestock shed. To address this, we are currently in the process of discussing possibilities for the delivery of facilities on future sites in the west of the city with agents and City of Edinburgh Council.

“As a family business we have a long-term commitment to Edinburgh, and as the baton is passed on from the third to fourth generations of the family, who will be active for many years to come, we are dedicated to delivering high quality affordable leisure and sports facilities.”

