

More student flats planned for Jock's Lodge

An Edinburgh community which fought against plans to turn their local pub into student flats is facing having more built directly next door.

A controversial bid to bulldoze buildings at Jock's Lodge to make way for 191 student beds attracted over 1,000 objections and was approved on appeal at the end of last year, following an initial refusal by councillors.

Although work is yet to begin the development will result in the loss of pubs The Willow and Limelite, as well as Chennai's Marina takeaway, however a new bar and grocery store are planned for ground floor units.

Now proposals have emerged to demolish neighbouring sports bar and pool hall The Ballroom as part of a bid to further increase the number of student flats.

Primer II Edinburgh Ltd, a different developer to the one behind the plans already consented for Jock's Lodge, has submitted a pre-application notice for 'purpose-built student accommodation including ground floor commercial space' on the site.

More detailed proposals for the site are set to be exhibited as part of public consultation events in November and December.

Online locals expressed alarm at the news that the Ballroom

could be lost too , with one writing: "Please, no more student flats or hotels! There's plenty! What about the actual residents of Edinburgh that need affordable homes?"

Another asked: "How will they try to justify that, other than ignore every concern like the decision next door."

The original plans sparked huge controversy as local residents feared they would "change the nature of the community". Objectors said they were not opposed to the idea of redeveloping the site, but felt it was unacceptable for the developer to replace six commercial units with one.

Historically Jock's Lodge was home to a coaching inn as the first place to change horses on the Edinburgh to London stagecoach, and in a report last year council planners said the area "is recognised as a local landmark in Edinburgh's historic landscape".

The authority's archaeologist said the "complete demolition of the buildings as proposed would be regarded as having a significant archaeological and historic impact".

And members of the Save Jock's Lodge group argued the seven-storey block would "overwhelm the junction" and have a "lasting and detrimental impact on the attractiveness of the area for future generations".

Developers said it was a chance to "contribute towards unmet need for student accommodation" and redevelop what it called a "an undefined corner".

But they were not supported by local councillors. The Greens' Alex Staniforth said the proposed flats didn't "represent the character of this junction," while SNP's Danny Aston stressed approval would mean "more than a third of the commercial floorspace" being lost.

An appeal to the Scottish Government's saw the council's

refusal overturned in December.

Documents submitted for the latest plans for Jock's Lodge state: "It is the Applicant's intention to hold the public events at the Willowbrae Parish Church on Wednesday 13th November 2024 from 4pm – 8pm and Wednesday 4th December between 2pm and 6pm. Specific details of the events will be shared with the Council in the coming weeks.

"The Applicant is preparing an online consultation website, details of which will be circulated shortly, which will provide details of the proposal and an opportunity to submit comments.

"We trust that the above and attached is satisfactory and we look forward to receiving formal confirmation of the receipt and validation of the Proposal of Application Notice in due course."

By Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter