

Trainspotting scrapyard in Leith saved

Proposals to create new student flats on a scrapyard in Leith featured in Trainspotting 2 have been refused over concerns over flooding.

Plans first lodged in late 2023 would have seen a scrapyard at the corner of Salamander Street and Salamander Place demolished and 46 student flats developed, providing housing for 230 students, as well as 46 private units.

But on Wednesday the proposals, which had faced local opposition, were thrown out by councillors, after officers said that the proposed flat block failed to meet parts of Edinburgh's Development Plan.

A local councillor said it was the "right decision" for Leith residents, after locals raised concerns over the abundance of student housing and lack of affordable units in the area.

Alongside 126 objections from members of the public, SEPA objected to the principle of the development due to insufficient plans over egress from the property in the case of severe flooding.

Officers also said that the property did not meet density requirements for the planning rules covering the site.

The scrapyard was featured in Trainspotting 2, with Renton seen entering Sick Boy's pub which bordered the site.

In presenting their case for the project, the developers said that it was a “once in a lifetime opportunity” to move the scrapyard out of a densely-populated community.

Cllr Hal Osler, convener of the Development Management Subcommittee, encouraged the developers and property owner – present in the gallery – to apply again once the objections raised were corrected.

She said: “One thing we can all agree upon is that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Our hope is that that opportunity can be developed further and actually conform to our plan.

“There is much in this that looks very good – widened pavements, a different usage and a removal of a scrapyard.”

Cllr Chas Booth, Green councillor for Leith, said: “This is the right decision for Leith residents, who desperately need genuine affordable housing and not student accommodation on this site.

“I hope the developer will now reconsider, listen to the views of local residents and bring back an application which delivers mainstream housing, including social rented accommodation, on this site.

“If they can do that, and also address concerns over flooding and air quality, then I feel confident they will get a more positive decision.”

By Joe Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter