

Whisky plant makeover plan to turn out red light in Leith

City chiefs in drive to, create green corridor, through crime area

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LEITH Links would be extended and linked to a new waterfront park under plans unveiled today for the regeneration of the former Whyte and Mackay whisky plant.

The plan would see the existing parkland connected to a new park proposed for Leith's dock-land area.

The redevelopment of the Salamander Street bottling plant would transform part of Leith's traditional red light district.

A series of new cycle paths, wider pavements and a memorial, to the 18th century origins of Leith Links golf course are also being proposed for the site.

The ideas are contained in a planning blueprint drawn up by council officials for development of the land.

The Links' existing allotments would be retained and extended under the broad-brush plans expected to be approved by city councillors later this week.

The new parkland is the third such major project announced for the Capital in the past two years, following a £2 million park being created at Leith's Western Harbour and a major public park planned for Craigmillar.

It is hoped that creating new housing in the former industrial neighbourhood will lead to a fall in the problems caused by prostitution and vandalism.

City planning chief Trevor Davies said: "This is a great opportunity to add green space to this area. The developers will be required to make land available for this purpose in order to build on the remaining land.

"This is part of our continued efforts to provide more green Space throughout the city."

The scheme was first mooted in 2004 by Teague Developments Ltd after it bought the whisky plant site from White & Mackay.

The firm, which was behind the Britannia Quay developments of 330 apartments near Ocean Terminal, announced that it had plans to transform the area into a new housing and retail development.

Strathclyde Homes currently has a neighbouring £23m shore development on Salamander Street, while Forth Ports is redeveloping the dockland area to the north of the site - in a scheme that includes the creation of the new parkland corridor stretching from Salamander Street to the coast.

Local councillor Phil Attridge said he was pleased to see more green spaces being proposed for the area.

However, Cllr Attridge added that he would prefer to see the existing parkland in Leith transformed first. He said: "These are still only ideas as yet and nothing has been finalised, so we shouldn't get carried away with the idea of new recreational areas being created.

"If they get the go-ahead, then of course they will be very welcome, but in the short term we should be looking at trying to do up what we already have at Leith Links.

"However, I do believe that any new development here will help transform the area and hopefully sort out some of the problems that are usually associated with this part of Leith."

Mike Towers, one of the architects contracted by Teague Developments, said extending the park was central to plans for the redevelopment. He said: "It is something that Teague are very keen to do.

Although putting a park strip into the site will mean there's less land for them to develop for housing, it will dramatically transform the area.

'If the council want more parkland, well definitely incorporate it into any future application'
MIKETOWERS

"If the council want more parkland-in that area, then we will definitely incorporate it into any future planning application.

"And with the other plans for the docklands proposing a new park to the north of the site, it could help link Leith Links right down to the shoreline.

"This has the potential to be a major addition to the area and could help to curb the problems of vandalism and crime that have plagued it in the past"

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