

Over 400 objections filed against River Club redevelopment

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More than 400 objections have been filed against the development of the River Club in Observatory. File picture: David Ritchie/Independent Media

Cape Town - More than 400 objections have been filed against the development of the River Club in Observatory.

Tauriq Jenkins, chairperson of the Observatory Civic Association, said they were opposed to the development for a number of reasons.

“The scale and density of the development is inappropriate for the area.

“The development proposed is also very dense, and designed without imagination.

“It will create a characterless environment, particularly if only 20% of the development is for housing, and the majority of space is for offices or shops that are closed at night.

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“The development offers no sense of social cohesion,” he said.



An artist's impression of the River Club development. The developer has slammed claims it would mirror Canal Walk. Picture: Supplied

Environmental consulting firm SRK compiled an assessment report on a proposed development at the River Club. The firm was appointed by the Liesbeeck Leisure Property Trust to undertake the basic-assessment process in terms of the National Environmental Management Act, 107 of 1998.

In the final report's recommendations, SKR said: “The site is strategically located close to the CBD, and offers one of the last major development opportunities this close to the city. The site has been the subject of re- vitalisation initiatives for over 25 years but none have been viable, leading to the persistent under-utilisation of the site.”

“There can be no doubt that the development will forever destroy the sense of place at the site.

“It will hugely alter views looking into the site, and views looking out across parts of Cape Town.

“Once concrete and bricks are laid for 150000m2 of buildings, the site will be irrevocably changed,” said Jenkins.

For seven years the community of Observatory has been objecting to plans to redevelop the

Residents are also concerned that the proposed redevelopment on the banks of the river might have a negative impact on the environment and affect the area's history.

The Liesbeeck river is situated in the oldest urbanised river valley in South Africa. The redevelopment is set to cost R4billion, and will include residential, retail and commercial components including a hotel, offices, conference centre and schools.

The River Club, which is owned and operated by the Liesbeeck Leisure Properties Trust and Indigo Properties, which have been involved in the regeneration of the Old Biscuit Mill in Salt River, the Woodstock Exchange and the Daddy Hotels and Zenprop, which would fund the development, are the main drivers of the project.

Initially, it was recommended that the area's protection status be withdrawn. Developer Jody Aufrichtig said: "The site is severely degraded, under-utilised and closed off to the majority of the public. What is envisaged is a vibrant, sustainable mixed-used development that supports the city's vision of 'live, work, play'."

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