# Former John Lewis building set for go-karting and bowling revival amid local opposition



The former John Lewis building in Aberdeen is poised for a significant transformation. EP Properties has unveiled detailed proposals to convert the iconic site into an entertainment hub featuring go-karting, an arcade, and a bowling alley. This ambitious project is seen as a potential revitalisation strategy for the area, which has faced uncertainty since the department store's closure in 2021 after three decades of service.

Located on George Street, a thoroughfare that has struggled with economic decline, the development aims to inject new life into the centre of Aberdeen. Business leaders in the region view this initiative as a “catalyst” for change, hoping it will draw more foot traffic and reinvigorate surrounding businesses. Richard Tinto, a prominent architect involved in the revitalisation efforts, suggested the project could be pivotal in “bringing George Street back to life.”

Ground-floor blueprints reveal a 25-lane bowling alley complete with dedicated arcade and party areas. On the upper levels, the development plans to introduce multi-level go-kart tracks, a mini-golf area, and even a laser arena—an echo of the area’s past leisure facilities like the old Quasertag. These additions are designed to create a dynamic environment that remains active throughout the day and into the evening, enhancing the vibrancy of the neighbourhood according to the planning documents.

However, not everyone is on board with the plans. Local residents have expressed concerns regarding the potential for noise disturbances, particularly from the go-karts and the proposed party area. Some have voiced fears that the influx of visitors could lead to increased traffic congestion and anti-social behaviour in the area. In a show of opposition, 50 residents submitted objections while only seven supported the initiative.

Compounding the situation are worries from existing go-karting operators in Aberdeen, who question whether the market can sustain another venue. They argue that introducing a third go-karting option may lead to unhealthy competition that could undermine their businesses. There are fears that they may be forced to drop prices to attract customers, jeopardising their profitability. EP Properties has countered these claims, asserting that market research indicates a viable demand for additional leisure facilities.

The owners of the proposed facility have also addressed residential concerns by asserting that noise levels would be managed effectively, particularly through the use of electric go-karts, which are quieter than traditional models. They contend that the entrance to the venue will remain strategically located to minimise disruption to nearby homes, directly opposite the Bon Accord Centre and away from residential areas.

In response to the anticipated challenges surrounding traffic and noise, a recent assessment suggested that the impact on both commercial and residential properties would be minimal. EP Properties is confident that their plans, which align closely with previous usages of the site, will integrate well into the fabric of the area without significantly affecting local residents' quality of life.

While public sentiment remains divided, the proposed redevelopment of the former John Lewis site represents a critical effort to revitalise not just George Street but potentially the entire city centre. As the plans await the decisions of Aberdeen City Council, both supporters and detractors are left contemplating the future of this landmark location and its role in the economic landscape of Aberdeen.

As the debate continues, it is clear that the stakes are high—not only for the site itself but also for the broader community that sees the redevelopment as a both a revitalising force and a source of contention.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2. Paragraph 6
3. Paragraph 7
4. Paragraph 8
5. Paragraph 9
6. Paragraph 10
7. Paragraph 11

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6753218/john-lewis-go-karting-plans-update/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6753218/john-lewis-go-karting-plans-update/> - The owners of Aberdeen's closed John Lewis building have detailed plans to transform the site into a go-karting, arcade, and bowling destination. The ground floor will feature a 25-lane bowling alley, arcade, and party areas, while the second and third floors will house go-kart tracks, a mini-golf area, and a laser arena. The development aims to revitalize George Street and attract more footfall to the area. However, some residents and local businesses have raised concerns about noise, traffic, and competition with existing venues.
3. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/business/local/6700275/aberdeen-go-kart-track-owners-john-lewis-development-objections/> - Owners of existing go-kart tracks in Aberdeen have expressed concerns over the proposed development at the former John Lewis building. They argue that introducing a third go-karting venue could saturate the market and negatively impact their businesses. The development includes a two-level go-kart track, bowling alley, and arcade, operated by TeamSport, a national chain. The existing operators fear that the new venue could dominate the market and force them to lower prices unsustainably or lose customers, potentially leading to closures.
4. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6713122/john-lewis-aberdeen-neighbours-hit-out/> - Residents near the former John Lewis building in Aberdeen have raised objections to the proposed go-karting development. Concerns include potential noise disturbances from go-karts and the 'party area' on the ground floor, increased traffic congestion, and the possibility of attracting late-night revellers. Environmental health officials have acknowledged the potential for noise disturbance and have requested a special study to predict the impact. Some residents support the development, viewing it as a means to revitalize the area and attract more visitors to the city centre.
5. <https://aberdeenbusinessnews.co.uk/aberdeens-former-retail-giant-site-shifts-gears-with-go-kart-plans/> - EP Properties has submitted formal proposals to Aberdeen City Council to convert the former John Lewis building into a go-karting venue. The plans include a two-level go-kart track, bowling alley, arcade, and party areas. The development aims to revitalize the 200,000 sq ft Norco House and attract more footfall to the area. The project has sparked excitement among some residents, while others have expressed concerns about noise and traffic. The plans are currently under review by council planning officials.
6. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/business/local/6696102/aberdeens-john-lewis-development-go-be-catalyst-for-regeneration/> - The proposed transformation of Aberdeen's former John Lewis building into a go-karting venue is seen as a potential catalyst for regenerating George Street. The development includes a two-level go-kart track, bowling alley, arcade, and party areas. Lead designer Richard Tinto believes the project will bring more people into the city centre, drive business to George Street and the Bon Accord Centre, and help reimagine the area. The plans are part of a broader effort to revitalize the city centre and attract more visitors.
7. <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/aberdeen-aberdeenshire/6502318/aberdeen-go-karting-reaction/> - The proposed go-karting venue at the former John Lewis building in Aberdeen has received mixed reactions from the public. Some residents and go-karting enthusiasts support the development, viewing it as a means to provide new activities for young people and revitalize the city centre. Others have raised concerns about noise, traffic, and the impact on existing businesses. The plans are currently under review by Aberdeen City Council, with no official approval or timeline for the project's completion.