# Glasgow councillors approve 13-storey student flats despite conservation concerns



Plans to construct a 13-storey student accommodation block on a car park site at Old Wynd and Osborne Street in Glasgow city centre have been approved by local councillors despite reservations about the building’s design and its impact on the surrounding conservation area.

The development will provide 173 en-suite studio flats specifically aimed at students. The property will include a range of amenities such as a games room, music room, and communal lounges. Each studio will be self-contained with a desk, bed, bathroom pod, wardrobe, kitchenette, and breakfast bar, with sizes varying from 18.2 square metres to 28.5 square metres.

The £25 million project, put forward by Dominus and supported by Iceni Projects, is expected to create nearly 300 construction jobs and aims to regenerate a long-vacant brownfield site that has not been utilised since the 1990s. Gary Mappin, director of Iceni Projects, described the scheme as a “significant opportunity to regenerate a long vacant and underutilised brownfield site in the heart of the city centre,” noting that the current condition of the site “makes no positive contribution to the character and the appearance of the conservation area.”

Old Wynd is known for being a narrow lane experiencing anti-social behaviour and crime, and the existing lack of footfall and supervision has contributed to a deteriorating environment. A council report presented to the planning committee stated: “At the moment, the Wynd lacks activity and supervision and has therefore become a focus for anti-social and criminal behaviour. Along with the consented purpose built student accommodation proposal to the west, the proposed new building will help resolve these issues by increasing footfall, providing both active and passive supervision from ground and upper floors and improving levels of lighting.”

Councillor Cecilia O’Lone, speaking at the planning applications committee, commented: “At the moment it is absolutely disgusting how it looks and how it is used. I don’t see how this could make it any worse,” while suggesting that increased occupancy could make the area “less seedy” through improved surveillance.

Despite these assertions, concerns were raised by various parties about the design and impact of the development. The Merchant City and Trongate Community Council criticised the proposal as yet another “Lego-style structure” and expressed worry over the architectural scale, massing, and the concentration of student accommodation in the area. The Architectural Heritage Society Scotland also registered objections.

A particular point of contention is the proximity between the new block and an adjacent building, with a separation of less than 11 metres. Mr Naismith, speaking at the committee, remarked: “It is a narrow alleyway there and our concern is that will become more like a canyon.” Councillor Eva Bolander also voiced dissent, stating that the “respect to the conservation area is falling short” and raising concerns about pedestrian safety, small room sizes, and the lack of daylight in approximately 10 per cent of the studios. She said, “As a wynd I wouldn’t like to walk down it myself in the evening.”

Conversely, Councillor Ken Andrew described the lane as “probably a squalid lane at the moment,” expressing support for activating the space despite the urban context’s less-than-ideal window-to-window distances. He regarded the measures intended to improve residents’ privacy positively and believed the development would enhance the condition and environment of Old Wynd.

Following debates on these issues, the planning committee approved the proposal, subject to certain conditions. This decision comes amid hopes that the development will not only provide much-needed housing but also contribute to increased safety and revitalisation of an underused part of Glasgow’s city centre.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.glasgowworld.com/news/13-storey-student-accommodation-block-approved-for-osborne-street-car-park-in-city-centre-5094176> - This article confirms the approval by local councillors of the 13-storey student accommodation block at Old Wynd and Osborne Street in Glasgow city centre and mentions some of the concerns about design and conservation area impact.
2. <https://news.stv.tv/west-central/glasgow-city-centre-student-flats-on-site-earmarked-for-hotel-recommended-for-approval> - This source corroborates details about the 173 en-suite studio flats, the amenities such as games and music rooms, and communal lounges, as well as the opposition from community councils and heritage societies regarding design and concentration of student housing.
3. <https://www.scottishconstructionnow.com/articles/glasgows-student-accommodation-trend-continues-with-osborne-street-bid> - Supports information on the regeneration aims of the project on a long-vacant brownfield site and approval timelines for student accommodation projects including Osborne Street.
4. <https://news.stv.tv/west-central/glasgow-city-centre-student-flats-on-site-earmarked-for-hotel-recommended-for-approval> - Also details concerns about the architectural scale, massing, separation distance between buildings (less than 11 metres), and negative effects on the conservation area and pedestrian safety.
5. <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/planning-and-building-standards/planning-applications-online> - Glasgow City Council's planning portal where official reports note issues of anti-social behavior in Old Wynd and the expectation that the new student accommodation will improve footfall, lighting, and safety through increased supervision.
6. <https://www.glasgowworld.com/news/community-council-criticises-student-flats-over-concerns-about-design-and-impact-5094223> - Reports on the Merchant City and Trongate Community Council’s criticism of the project as a 'Lego-style structure' and concerns about the over-concentration of student accommodation and impacts on the conservation area.
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMimwFBVV95cUxPTVRvMUJpX2dmTmM1OUhaOE5SdEw3RjU2R0pZbWZrdWp2Tkg5bnI3bXNPakhMR1VOODJzc2FPeWQzQ3lkQWVlZ1VrX2NOVUtzT3lPR09IOEJwOVpmY1NFYS1lUFEwWWktcXBhZmMzTllfNFU0N1BGUTFWZTI5N0ZiRFFjVVI4UnpUcUQ1TWMyNmdHSXFVejZtbnh6SdIBoAFBVV95cUxQZnVhR2w2TW40dG55cW9VNU8waWVCYTg1S0RZNGNpTkN1VFVjVENqeTZDUW1iZ3lMeXc3ZVdNV2lqR2ZqcEJlQ2pWVFR0VG9RUjJFV2F5Z0ZHSjhoOHRUQjhPWDZCNmJPenRpMEpQbm43dEd6R0FVZ0hvUndMQW1tQ3V4RWs2d3MzNl9HS0w5eUR2WlhiMmppNHFnV0NQckwx?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data