# Glasgow plans 437-bed student complex on historic Old College Bar site



Plans to transform a significant site on Glasgow's High Street into student accommodation have emerged amidst the backdrop of a fire that destroyed the historic Old College Bar, an establishment long cherished by locals. Glasgow City Council has received a proposal from Carnegie Property Glasgow Ltd to erect a new development comprising 437 student beds on land where the pub once stood. The new structure would feature 261 studios and 176 en-suite rooms, alongside commercial space on the ground floor, a roof terrace, a sky lounge, a games room, and a gym.

Historically known as one of the city's oldest pubs, the Old College Bar was demolished in 2021 following a devastating fire that resulted in extensive damage to its structure. The incident raised not only safety concerns but also questions about the preservation of Glasgow's architectural heritage. Following the fire, the site has been described as a "significant eyesore," with Carnegie Property asserting that their project will revitalise this prominent location and provide "much needed purpose-built student accommodation."

Notably, previous attempts to redevelop the site had faltered, with earlier plans suggesting residential flats instead of student housing. Another developer, Structured House Group, had submitted a contrasting proposal for a 12-storey student accommodation complex earlier, which included preserving elements of the Old College Bar’s façade in an effort to maintain its historical character. Their vision also aimed to be part of a broader £300 million investment into student facilities, reflecting a growing demand for such accommodation in the city.

As competition for prime locations in Glasgow intensifies, the proposed developments may signal a shift in the city’s approach to enhancing student experiences while grappling with historical preservation. This tension is not unique to the Old College Bar site; similar regeneration efforts, such as the proposal to transform the former O2 ABC venue on Sauchiehall Street into a combination of student flats and a food hall, underscore a city-wide trend to address the shortage of student accommodation while reclaiming vacant or derelict properties.

The application for the High Street site also includes plans for retrospective approval concerning the demolition of buildings within a conservation area. This adds another layer of complexity, as there is often tension between the need for modern development and the desire to protect historical sites. The B-listed Linen Bank building, adjacent to the proposed development, remains under separate ownership and is not included in the current plans, highlighting the fragmented nature of urban development amid preservation efforts.

Local businesses are poised to benefit from the influx of residents should the plans come to fruition, increasing footfall in the area. The commitment to restoring an “active frontage” along George Street aligns with broader urban regeneration objectives. While the development promises to enhance both community engagement and student life, it also illustrates the ongoing debate over modernising urban spaces whilst honouring their historical significance.

The evolution of this site encapsulates the broader challenges and opportunities facing Glasgow today—in balancing a rich cultural heritage with the pressing needs of a growing student population. As the city continues to adapt and plan for its future, the outcomes of such developments will be closely watched by residents and stakeholders alike.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 5
2. Paragraphs 3, 4
3. Paragraph 4
4. Paragraph 2
5. Paragraph 2
6. Paragraphs 3, 5
7. Paragraph 2

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/glasgow-student-flats-plan-famous-31677413> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.glasgowlive.co.uk/news/glasgow-news/full-plans-revealed-student-accommodation-12515510> - Developers Structured House Group (SHG) have submitted plans to Glasgow City Council for a 12-storey, 426-bed student accommodation complex on the site of the Old College Bar, one of Glasgow's oldest pubs. The proposal includes retaining elements of the pub's facade and interior to preserve its historic character. SHG aims to enhance the student accommodation experience in Glasgow by integrating the development with the surrounding area and providing quality facilities for students and local residents. The project is part of a £300 million investment plan by SHG.
3. <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/19124491.demolition-plans-historic-glasgow-pub-make-way-flats/> - Plans have been submitted to demolish the historic Old College Bar on High Street and replace it with an 11-storey block of flats. The development, proposed by Structured House (Merchant Residential) Ltd, includes 239 flats with rooftop terraces. Despite the building's poor condition, the developers plan to reinstate the Old College Bar in its original location, incorporating salvaged interior elements to maintain its historical significance. The proposal is awaiting assessment by Glasgow City Council.
4. <https://www.glasgowtimes.co.uk/news/19278090.old-college-bar-fire-cops-launch-probe-high-street-blaze/> - An investigation has been launched into a fire that caused significant damage to the Old College Bar building on High Street. The blaze, which occurred in the early hours, led to the destruction of the building's structure. Police are seeking witnesses who were in the area around the time of the incident and may have seen any suspicious behavior. The fire has raised concerns about the future of the historic pub, which is currently the subject of a proposed city center development featuring an 11-storey apartment block.
5. <https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/19279459.old-college-bar-fire-police-launch-probe-glasgow-blaze/> - Police are investigating a fire that severely damaged the Old College Bar building on High Street. The incident occurred in the early hours and caused significant structural damage. Authorities are urging anyone with information or who witnessed suspicious behavior around the time of the fire to come forward. The fire has intensified concerns regarding the future of the historic pub, which is part of a proposed development for an 11-storey residential block in the city center.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cv2w1e43kqlo> - The former O2 ABC venue on Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street, which was severely damaged by a fire in 2018, could be transformed into a food hall and student flats. Urban regeneration company Vita Group has proposed developing the site into student accommodation and a ground-floor food hall. The building, dating back to 1875, has been vacant since the fire and is considered a 'blight' on the area. The proposal aims to regenerate the site and address the shortage of student flats in the city.
7. <https://news.stv.tv/west-central/police-appeal-after-fire-rips-through-old-college-bar-building> - An appeal has been launched by police after a fire caused significant damage to the Old College Bar building on High Street. The fire occurred in the early hours and led to the destruction of the building's structure. Authorities are seeking witnesses who were in the area around the time of the incident and may have seen any suspicious behavior. The fire has raised concerns about the future of the historic pub, which is part of a proposed city center development featuring an 11-storey apartment block.