

# Support for student housing fails to sway councillors

**A bid to build more than 200 student housing units in Edinburgh have been rejected despite receiving dozens of letters of support.**

The proposals for two sites on Pitt Street, Leith, would have seen industrial buildings demolished to make way for 80 student bed accommodation and 140 flats.

However a meeting of the City of Edinburgh Council's development management sub committee heard planners had concerns the new buildings would have a negative impact on the rich architectural history of the conservation area.

And they urged councillors to reject both applications describing them as 'harmful to the amenity' of the area.

Plans for 117-129 Pitt Street were lodged by J.Smart & Co Contractors PLC for 80 student bed accommodation were lodged receiving 25 letters of support and nine objections.

Plans by Pitt Street Properties for 140 student flats at numbers 137-145 on the street also received 25 letters of support and just six letters objecting to them.

Planning officers said the loss of commercial space, lack of access for refuse workers and a negative impact on the setting of the conservation area were all reasons to refuse both developments.

Those supporting the applications pointed to a need for student accommodation in the city and welcomed the regeneration of the street.

In a report to councillors, considered this morning, officer said: "The architectural style fails to draw upon positive characteristics, including the rich architectural styles within the locality. Therefore, the proposed building would harm the character and visual amenity of the area and would not preserve, but instead, would harm the setting of Leith Conservation Area.

"Moreover, for the same reasons it would not result in a development that achieves the quality of being a pleasant or distinctive place. No commercial floor space is proposed in the application to meet the policy aims of City Plan 2030 to help meet the needs of small businesses and to compensate for this loss."

Councillors agreed to support the recommendation and refuse both planning applications.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter