

Planning permission denied for Holyrood ApartHOTEL

Plans for an extension to a modern hotel in the heart of Edinburgh's historic Old Town have been thrown out by councillors over concerns they would damage the area,.

The Holyrood apartHOTEL had been seeking permission to add 26 rooms to their premises off Holyrood Road through two extensions.

But councillors disagreed, agreeing with officers that the plans would not preserve or enhance the conservation area in Old Town.

Officers had specifically pointed to the failure of the roof to fit in with the surrounding buildings, and the development being out of proportion to the neighbourhood.

Green councillor Alex Staniforth said in committee: "There is something to be said for increasing the amount of tourist accommodation in this area without taking away from residential.

"But it makes no sense to increase the amount of accommodation available to tourists while damaging something that is why tourists come here – and the character of the Old Town is the reason why the area is so popular with tourists.

"Councillor Mowat in a totally unrelated conversation recently

used the metaphor 'the golden goose'.

"And I really do think that this would be killing the goose that lays the golden egg if we start letting aparthotels and any other kinds of hotels to damage the character of the Old Town in order to accommodate more tourists."

Conservative councillor Jo Mowat agreed, saying: "The most egregious thing was the way they had filled in the courtyard.

"It looks like a welcoming space, which would have been completely infilled into a narrow ginnel.

"That feels less safe for many people using that, in addition to using completely the wrong design language to basically cram a site in what is a dense and well-developed site."

The expansion would have been in two parts. One would have seen a five-storey extension to the building added on top of the property's carpark, while the other would have added another storey to part of the existing building.

The carpark currently forms a courtyard with an adjacent close, but the new extension would have consumed almost all of the open space.

The Edinburgh Collection, which owns the Holyrood apartHOTEL, declined to comment.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter