

46 Newpark Road  
Bellsquarry  
Livingston  
EH54 9AE

14<sup>th</sup> September 2018

FAO Matthew Watson

Planning application 0740/FUL/18

Land in Garden of 1-2 Blythfield, Cottages.

Comments on letter from applicant's architect dated 14/09/2018

The letter seeks to persuade that this is not a tandem development.

The council's own document which was adopted by West Lothian Council Executive on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2013 **Supplementary Planning Guidance - Single Plot and Small Scale infill residential development in urban areas (how to avoid town cramming)** states and is very specific about the requirement that an infill development site 'where it has no street frontage, has to have an INDEPENDENT vehicular access from an unadopted private driveway or road. This site does not and will not have this as the applicant and their agent both acknowledge that it is a shared access that is proposed, one that already used by 3-4 Blythfield alone for decades.

This sharing means it is not an infill development but a tandem development site as defined on page 6 of the above SPG.

A further point to support that this proposal is tandem development can be seen by the position of its footprint, directly behind 46 Newpark Road, which they try to spin as an advantage in that my house would shield the proposed house from the view of Newpark Road. As such, they are acknowledging that the proposed house would be situated in tandem with my house on Newpark Road. So, on one hand they seek to suggest it's not tandem development but then quote a benefit of the proposed house's location resulting from the tandem nature of the proposal. Further to this, the fact that the proposed house is behind my house and being crammed into a back garden of less than the 1 acre required by a tandem plot is the definition of town cramming and precisely the situation these guidelines were designed to prevent.

The examples of previous applications used by the agent are not valid.

The application for the bungalows on Newpark Road is from the 1980's and the application for Sandygate Cottage LIVE/0729/P/99 is from 1999 – hardly an example of current planning policy. What was considered to be in accordance with the Planning Regulations of 20-35 years ago is clearly not acceptable now and has been superseded by the above SPG.

Moreover, the bungalows are in the heart of the village, at the furthest end away from the application site. They were built in the 1980's, in a time when Bellsquarry was separate from Livingston and none of the houses along Bellsquarry South/Murieston/Bankton/Adambræ even existed.

Similarly, in 1999 when Sandygate Cottage, Murieston Road, at the end of what became Murieston Valley, got its permission, the whole suburb area of Murieston Valley barely existed as it was under construction; the whole area was one big building site. The context of these sites applications at the time of application has to be considered not just the fact that these houses now exist.

The Planning guidelines that allowed these approvals have long been superseded. Applications in 2018 are determined using the planning regulations and supplementary planning guidance that are current in 2018, utilising recent examples from these regulations if they have a precedent.

A recent example is 0604/P/09 which applies in this case. In that application, the issues were the same as this proposed site and the outcome was a refusal.

The applicant's agent talks about Blythfield as though it were a settlement (i.e. "completing the settlement") when in reality it is just 2 semidetached cottages and the proposed house is situated behind my home, as far as physically possible from Blythfield Cottages.

The agent in today's letter has still not addressed the issue of the requirement in the above SPG page 9, to have a minimum separation distance of 18m between windows of habitable rooms directly facing each other, as would clearly be the case here. The distance of 13m that they state does not meet the minimum that is needed to comply with the council's own planning guidelines.

Their letter also states that "there would be no impact of this house visually from any surrounding area so this house is completely hidden from view". This is untrue. The removal of all trees on the western boundary will make it clearly visible from the two storey units occupied by Eurofins at Cochrane Square, Brucefield . It would also not be hidden from our view as we over look it with the windows of 7 habitable rooms. If as they seek to persuade it is infill, it would be in view in an existing street. It is, however, not positioned like that but rather out of view behind another house - a tandem position.

More than once the letter talks of the dense existing landscaping which shields the plot and will shield the new house. This is the same landscaping that will be removed to allow the construction of the house - the landscaping they refer to will not be there to provide this amenity barrier.

There are a number of clear planning violations associated with this planning application. Claims from the agent that they have made attempts to fulfil such criteria are irrelevant – they have not been fulfilled. As such, it is plain and obvious that an approval cannot be granted.

Regards,

Jill Lind