

Comments for Planning Application 22/02681/FUL

Application Summary

Application Number: 22/02681/FUL

Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Dr Eli Sheppard

Address: 25/8 Maryfield Maryfield Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I do not wish for this application to be approved.

Edinburgh already has an over priced and over subscribed rental market. Converting a long term let to a short term let only aggravates this problem.

Further more, it has been my experience that people staying in short term lets are often antisocial, causing noise and littering. The Abbey Hill area is a close knit community with the colony of artists at its centre. I feel that this property would be much better used to provide housing to someone who wants to live in the area and engage in the community rather than by a greedy landlord to extort profits from the community.

I hope you will consider my comments seriously and deny this application.

Sincerely,

Dr. Eli Sheppard

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Application Number: 22/02681/FUL

Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Ms Sophie Houlton

Address: 3/13 Salmond Place Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour-Residential

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I object to this proposal.

1). This proposal is contrary to the Scottish Government Housing policy on more homes - "everyone has a quality home that they can afford and that meets their needs"

2). This proposal is contrary to Scottish Planning Policy on "socially sustainable places" and "supporting delivery of accessible housing".

3). This proposal would have unacceptable impacts on neighbourhood amenity.

The Abbeyhill area is a thriving close-knit community, centred around the wonderful Colony of Artists. This community is what makes this area such a great place to live and this proposal would have a detrimental impact on that. Short term lets have significant impacts on neighbours including increased antisocial behaviour, noise, disruption, intrusion by a frequent turnover of strangers, loss of community, loss of security and impacts on bins and parking.

Edinburgh also has a housing crisis, particularly when it comes to accessible housing. This property would be better used to provide long-term housing for someone who actually wants to live in the area and engage with the community, rather than contributing to a ghost town of Airbnbs.

Please do not approve this application.

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Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Ms Katherine Chisholm

Address: 16 Carlyle Place Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: The demand for housing in Edinburgh is so great that housing should always be prioritized as a home. In exceptional circumstances where the property would not be suitable as a home, commercial short-term lets should only be allowed in detached properties that do not have close neighbors due to the impact on neighbouring homes in terms of security, disturbance and community cohesion.

Tenement type properties on all floors are unsuitable for commercial short-term letting due to the high level of disturbance brought and the impact on the safety and security of neighbouring families. This is supported by scores of planning DPEA decisions and the testimony of neighbours.

The unsuitability of flats for short-term letting incentivises main door properties for this use. This will have an impact on the availability of accessible homes if they are not protected. All main door or Colony/Mews type properties should not be used for short-term letting for all the reasons contained within.

Edinburgh is recognised as a city of high housing costs, so affordable homes need extra protection to support our businesses and services by ensuring that lower paid workers can afford to live in the city.

Negative impacts

Economic costs - The Economic Policy Institute finds that the economic costs imposed by short-term letting likely outweigh the benefits. Property owners may benefit but the beneficiaries are disproportionately high-wealth individuals who can own more than one property. Claimed increases in economic activity are often vastly overstated because the spending would have

occurred anyway by travellers staying in other accommodations. The Economic Policy Institute finds that there is little evidence that cities with an increasing supply of short-term Airbnb rental accommodations are seeing a large increase in travellers. Instead, accommodations supplied via Airbnb seem to be a nearly pure substitution for other forms of accommodation. Furthermore, the shift from traditional hotels to Airbnb lodging leads to less-reliable tax payments to cities[1]. Scottish Government figures report that there has been no significant increase in income from tourism since 2011. In fact, 2018 had the second lowest total tourist spend since 2011.[2]

Privacy - Residents of flats or properties with shared gardens are forced to share communal but still private areas of their homes with fee-paying strangers who they have never met before and are unlikely to meet again. This had been found unacceptable in planning and civil law. Colony type housing is particularly subject to horrific impacts of private gardens being directly outside lower doors bedrooms/sittingrooms. This is not acceptable.

Security - The security of communal spaces and gardens/outdoor area is completely lost. Neighbours cannot tell who is supposed to be in the property and who is not, or who has keys to shared areas. The insecurity of a shared building is advertised by key safes which are installed without permission from neighbours or listed building consent. Anecdotally there is evidence that short-term let customers are more likely to leave shared entrance doors open, which has resulted in residents coming home to unknown people using drugs, and engaging in other antisocial or threatening activities in their mutual shared areas.

Anti-social behaviour - Neighbours of short-term lets are almost guaranteed to experience anti-social behaviour from customers. Alcohol is a regular contributing factor which makes these situations particularly unpredictable and intimidating to deal with. Have first hand issues relating to waste disposal, parking issues, noise, people returning late at night or arriving early in the morning, customers ringing the wrong doorbells or trying to enter the wrong doors, banging on doors, setting off fire alarms, barking dogs when animals are not allowed, friends of "guests" attending the property, parties, over-occupation, verbal abuse, damage to property, intoxication, intrusion into private space, drinking and smoking in communal spaces, and tampering with residents' property.

Disturbance and noise - It is well established through planning and civil law that short-term lets bring an increased level of noise and disturbance. The groups occupying the property on a short-term basis are almost always on holiday with the associated holiday mindset seven days a week. Due to there being no personal belongings in short-term let businesses there is nothing to soak up sound resulting in an echo chamber being created where previously there would have been no noise pollution to neighbours, every scrape of a chair and conversation can be heard. Likewise, most properties in Scotland do not have carpeted entrances and hallways as hotels do, so the banging of suitcases at all hours and the excited chatter of customers echoes at entrances and in hallways. There is additional noise and disturbance as groups bring their belongings in and out of properties, including dragging suitcases and banging them off walls and doors, damaging the

paintwork. Cleaners and greeters attend to turn over each property between every short-term let, which can mean banging and vacuuming past midnight. Cleaners and laundry companies may leave trip hazards in shared areas such as large laundry bags. Some letting agencies offer "luggage drop off" services where suitcases are then left in common stairs to be retrieved by customers later.

Mental health impacts - Residents draw huge comfort from a home which has a basic level of familiarity, stability and security. The regular intrusion of transient pleasure-seeking strangers is deeply unsettling. Neighbours of short-term lets regularly describe feeling stress, anxiety and other mental health impacts. This disproportionately impacts on disabled people, people with long term health conditions, people who live alone, children and young people. During the pandemic neighbours of short-term lets found themselves in ghost towns, with no neighbours to rely on or have any connection with. As so many of the short-term let properties use key boxes for picking up the keys that mean that there is no one to complain to for the neighbours. Having key boxes attached to shared buildings also adds to a feeling of a loss of control of a person's home environment. In addition, the uncertainty that a stream of customers that are in charge of utilities, that they may not understand, creates additional risk that is not a risk in hotels or B&Bs. This may impact on a neighbour's mental health.

Attitudes of customers - Although most customers are not ill-intentioned, they simply have their own priorities and expectations about how they can use their "short-term let". They have paid handsomely to occupy the space and understandably wish to use it to maximise their enjoyment. The payment of money to what appears to be a reputable company seems to banish any conscience with regard to the invasion of privacy of any neighbours. They have no awareness of their impact or that of the scores of groups who have preceded and will follow them. Indeed their behaviour is encouraged by the advertisements of profiteering websites and absentee hosts, who beseech them to "live like a local" and "belong anywhere" without any of the responsibilities that brings.

Overcrowding - Short-term rentals often bring more than the advertised number of customers. Groups will also often invite their friends to visit and enjoy their short-term let bringing additional disturbance. Short-term let businesses often advertise for far more customers to stay than would normally reside in a property in relation to its size.

Waste disposal - Recycling is rarely carried out. Communal bins are often used and permanent residents are expected to manage putting out and collecting bins on behalf of the absent owners. Rubbish bags are often left out in communal stairs. Cleaners usually clean inside the short-term let properties but do not usually clean any shared areas. Sometimes, the cleaners drag the refuse bags down the stairs, they rip open, and leave a mess. This leaves the residents to clear up after the customers or live in a poorer quality environment. More waste can be created in short-term lets as they buy food that cannot be eaten in the time of their stay, unlike permanent residents.

Effect of multiple lets - Where multiple lets are operating, the issues are multiplied similarly and the burdens are shouldered by even fewer residents. This effect is most intense during July and August - a time when families most wish to enjoy the peace and privacy of their homes and gardens.

Displacement of community - Our places need to be inhabited to stay habitable. As more and more dwellings are turned into short-term lets, an area loses its community. The burden of reporting issues with antisocial behaviour, disturbance or noise falls to fewer and fewer people who eventually give up and move on. The long term impact is to see no one noticing or addressing the maintenance of the fabric of the building.

Displacement of workers - There is high levels of concern about stifling economic development due to lack of labour caused by housing shortages.

Safety - There is no requirement for any safety checks putting visitors and neighbouring properties at risk.

Insurances - Short-term letting requires specialist insurance which many do not have, especially where title deeds prohibit commercial usage. The voiding of communal insurances has been the matter of a court case in London.

Impact on rents and housing prices - A property which is used solely for short-term letting is no longer part of the housing stock. Dwindling numbers of properties will obviously impact housing availability, house prices and rents. It is suggested by Shelter that this forces people into accommodation that they cannot afford, leading to homelessness and people living in unsuitable housing. For every commercial short-term let that is changed from being a home, another household is displaced to live in hotels and other temporary accommodation, or pushed into poverty. The social and economic impacts of this are likely to cost public services more in the long term. There appears to be a growing pattern of previously long term rented accommodation being changed to student lets for Oct-May and for the remainder of the year being short-term let businesses. This provides owners with short-term letting opportunities over all the holiday periods while making it harder for students to develop long term relationships with their neighbours. Four months of intensive holiday letting over the summer will certainly have unlawful impacts on amenity for close neighbours.

Impact on traditional guest houses, bed and breakfasts and other lawful accommodation providers - There is evidence that traditional accommodation providers are being significantly disadvantaged by the proliferation of unlawful short-term letting businesses. Lawful accommodation providers struggle to compete with unlawful lets who can often offer lower prices by avoiding the costs of compliance.

Reduced spending by tourists - Research commonly finds that visitors staying in properties with

self-catering facilities spend a third less than those in hotel-type accommodation, often buying supermarket meals rather than using local cafes and restaurants. We do not believe that tourism should be limited to high-wealth individuals, however, where residential accommodation is being repurposed for holiday lets under the auspices of boosting tourism, a clear knowledge of the true benefits and costs is essential.

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Application Summary

Application Number: 22/02681/FUL

Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Ms Jackie Oudney

Address: 27/4 Edina Place Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour-Residential

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I was a direct downstairs neighbour of Scott's for 5 years at this address in Montgomery Street while he ran his Airbnb from the property and in this time I have seen him be instrumental in much of the stair maintenance either repairing himself or often funding and managing the repairs personally. I find him to be a very personable, conscientious Airbnb host - ensuring there are never any issues that would effect his neighbours, whilst maintaining his position as a responsible property owner.

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Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mr Can (Business owner) Misirlioglu

Address: Écosse Éclair 88 Easter Road Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour-Commercial

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Airbnb's in the area definitely help our business survive. We have many tourist customers and would 100% struggle to stay open without the extra footfall Airbnb's create for the top of Easter Road.

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Application Summary

Application Number: 22/02681/FUL

Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Ms Fiona Kelly

Address: 131/3 Montgomery Street Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour-Residential

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I have known Scott Garcia as my direct next door neighbour in a block with 9 other flats. Scott and his wife are both absolutely wonderful neighbours. Scott regularly does repairs around the stairwell and communal garden, eg, changing bulbs, repairing the entry phone system and maintaining the garden. They are lovely people, offering any help needed to me and my family. Since renting out their apartment to Air BNB 5 years ago, I can honestly say there has never been an issue with their guests and I live directly next door sharing 2 walls so I would know. Further, they have always made it clear that if there are any issues, to contact them straight away and they would deal with it.

If I can be of any further help, please do not hesitate contact me on my mobile, 07951836663.

Kind regards, Fiona Kelly

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Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mrs Joanna Tarnowska (Business owner)

Address: C team Cleaning 35 Moredunvale Way Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Other

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I have worked with Scott Garcia and his wife as their co-host and cleaner for their short-term lets for over 5 years. I have always found Scott to be a pleasure to work with. I manage a cleaning team of up to 10 people and without work from Airbnb and short-term lets my business would probably close. My cleaning business is our principle source of income. I clean Scott's properties between guest stays. Any issues in the communal stairs are either addressed directly or reported to Scott and he manages the repairs personally. I instruct my staff to always be respectful of the stair environment and to be friendly to the people who live there. My cleaners try to be as quiet as possible when cleaning the flats and only work between 11am and 4pm to keep noise and disturbance to a minimum. We don't need to carry anything other than 1 bag of laundry to and from the property as vacuum and cleaning products stay permanently at the property. On average we would visit each property 10 times per month between guest stays as most stays are between 3 and 4 nights.

Best wishes

Joanna

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Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mrs Ernestina Doku (Business owner)

Address: Dazzelustrous 32 Easter Road Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour-Commercial

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Our customers are between 30% and 50% tourists depending on the season. One of the only ways that tourists come to find Easter road is through Airbnb's. A thriving area needs balance and local air bnbs are relied upon in the Easter Road neighbourhood for local businesses.

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Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mrs Joanna Susik

Address: Sapphire Shine Ltd. (Property Maintenance) 7/14 Lochend Park View Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour-Commercial

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment:

I helped Mr Garcia with property management at this short-term lets in Edinburgh. My company employs 22 people and calls in tradesmen, laundry services and other staff sub-contracted to deal with any specific maintenance issues if required. The loss of good Airbnb and short-term let hosts would put an end to a huge amount of economic activity in the area and would have a huge negative effect on my business and the businesses of the people I work with. We take great care to work harmoniously with the other residents in the stairs and discuss this with all staff. Staff are instructed to be polite to other residents, work as quietly as possible and to generally be respectful of the peaceful stair environment. Any material issues in the stair are reported back to the owner by the cleaners and generally addressed promptly and often at the owners expense. Our cleaners sweep up any litter found in the communal stairs when they visit. Under normal circumstances staff would generally only need to access properties 10 times per month to clean between guests. Access inside the properties is generally only between the 11am check-out and 4pm check-in times of guests. I find Mr Garcia to be a very conscientious and considerate owner who routinely puts care for residents before his own convenience.

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Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mr Mariusz Wrazka

Address: (Business owner) Happy Bean Café 14 Easter Road Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour-Commercial

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Short-term lets definitely help my business. The only reason so many cafes can survive on Easter Road is because of the Airbnb's here. There can be a place for short-term lets in a neighbourhood away from the city centre which wouldn't get the main tourism footfall without airbnb

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Application Number: 22/02681/FUL

Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mr Andrew Buchan

Address: 1/23 Saunders Street EH3 6TQ Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Scott Garcia is a perfectly decent and dependable individual and goes the extra mile for his tenants and has always helped with matters relating to the communal building including the installation of a full new security system last year which has greatly improved the stair environment. I am a trustee of the Saunders Streets residents association that takes care of matters concerning the block and I am more than happy to recommend him as a landlord and a host.

Comments for Planning Application 22/02681/FUL

Application Summary

Application Number: 22/02681/FUL

Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Ms Emma Nolan

Address: 69/3 Montgomery Street, Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I have known Scott Garcia and his wife since 2014, first as their yoga teacher, as their friend, as godmother to their son and as now as co-trustee with Scott for our yoga charity. I have always known him to be a responsible, thoughtful and caring person and have witnessed first-hand the care he takes in hosting guests in his home and properties over the last 7 years, providing a clean, safe and welcoming space and facilities for guests to enjoy some time away from their own homes. I have also seen how much care he takes in maintaining good relations with neighbours, keeping them informed with group communications and creating stair Whatsapp groups, being considerate of their peace and privacy and asking their guests to be considerate too, as well as helping to maintain cleanliness and good condition of common property areas for the benefit of all the residents.

Regards

Emma Nolan

Comments for Planning Application 22/02681/FUL

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Application Number: 22/02681/FUL

Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mr Simon Illingworth (Business owner)

Address: The Safari Lounge 21 Cadzow Place Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour-Commercial

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Tourists coming to this area mostly via short-term lets make up a big part of our customer base at the Safari Lounge. Our lunch and dinner custom would take a big drop in numbers without short-term lets.

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Application Number: 22/02681/FUL

Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Ms Rachel Stockton 6 (PF1) Bothwell Street EH7 5PR

Address: 6 (PF1) Bothwell Street Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: The Garcias have been friends and neighbours for around 5 years.

In that time Scott has worked hard to restore and maintain flats that had seen better days - this includes improving communal areas to the benefit of everybody in the stair.

Scott and his partner actively encourage their guests to support local business.

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Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I am Scott Garcia (the applicant's sister) and help him with the running of his short-term lets since he relocated with his family to Peebles a year and a half ago. I do not help with the day to day running but act as a local contact for guests if they have any problems during their stay. I live just 5 mins walk away from most of the properties. Having lived in many of the flats myself over the years I know the specifics of each property and can generally quickly help guests with any occasional problems they might have, either in person or over the phone if Scott is unavailable. Scott tries to be the best host he can be and does more than his share in the communal areas, changing broken lights and financing small repairs.

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Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mr Grant McNeil

Address: (Business owner) The Mash Tun Pub 154 Easter Road Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour-Commercial

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: The Mash Tun was here before Airbnb's and we can remember a huge uplift in custom post-Airbnb. Around 50% of our lunch time trade is from tourists who only get to this area because they stay in Airbnb's nearby. It's a worry what we'll do if it stops.

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Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mr Roy Buchanan

Address: 131 (2F3) Montgomery Street Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment:Ellie and Scott have been my direct downstairs Neighbours in Edinburgh. In the years that they have been renting their property out there's never been any problems with their guests but occasional general stair and building problems crop up where Scott is very quick at responding and helping out. Scott has given me his phone number in case of any issues. Both Scott and his partner Ellie are a delight to talk to while passing in the stair. They are always positive minded and enthusiastic about life.

Roy

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Address: 1F1 131 Montgomery Street Edinburgh EH7 5EP

Proposal: Change of use from residential to short-term lets.

Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mr Asif Awan

Address: 2 (GF3) West Norton Place, Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: Having being a resident and now a landlord in the Easter Road neighbourhood for over 6 years, I have to admit I'm very indebted to the support Scott has provided the flat stair committee. From small maintenance changes to helping start the stair committee resulting in countless improvements in full repaint, damp proofing and renovation of the stair. Scott has hosted Air bnb guests at his property for over 7 years but they have never been a problem to me or, I believe, anyone in the stair.

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Case Officer: Lesley Porteous

Customer Details

Name: Mr Chris Denmark

Address: 2F2, 2 West Norton Place Edinburgh

Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer made comments in support of the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

Comment: I live in the Easter Road neighbourhood and have known Scott for 11 years. His property shares its lounge wall directly with my bedroom and I have never had any problems with noise etc, over the 6 years he has hosted Airbnb guests. I have found him to be a reliable and responsible owner of the property. He set up our stair committee with another owner which has been invaluable in facilitating our ongoing building improvements. Contact me on if you require any further information

Chris Denmark