

Beauty therapist to appeal planning decision to The Scottish Government

by Joseph Anderson Local Democracy Reporter

A beauty therapist who is trying to keep her business going through the coronavirus pandemic, says she will now appeal a decision of the council's planning committee to The Scottish Government.

When mobile beauticians were banned from operating due to coronavirus restrictions, the owner of Glam Mobile Beauty, Fiona MacDonald, built a standalone pod in her garden at 612 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, before applying to The City of Edinburgh Council for retrospective permission to run her business from there.

In September, council planning officers rejected her application for a certificate of lawful use, saying the application would constitute 'a material change of use' from residential to business premises.

Ms MacDonald says the decision has left her fearful for her livelihood. She said: "I already have permission for the pod itself, but what happened was I contacted the council and

asked if I should get permission to run the business from there.

"I thought to myself I want to do this right, as I've spent tens of thousands of pounds on this, and want to make sure everything is done properly. I'm expecting only four to five visitors a day, no more than would visit normally.

"I was a mobile beauty therapist, but we're not allowed to work in that manner due to coronavirus, so basically I'm out of a job. I can either sign on or find a way to keep working, and this is it for me."

Now, Ms MacDonald has taken her fight to The Scottish Government's Planning and Environmental Appeals Division (DPEA), and government officials, acting on behalf of ministers, will deliberate on the proposals.

Ms MacDonald's appeal statement, which she drafted herself as she says she cannot afford to pay consultancy fees, reads: "The premises at 612 Lanark Road remains firstly a domestic dwelling and business use second.

"This does not result in a material change of use.

"The use of the pod will be primarily for domestic residential purposes and secondly for occasional business use.

"Again I would like to reiterate that I have no intention of changing the primary purpose of my house and grounds at 612 to be anything other than a family dwelling as the principal use.

"Furthermore it is imperative to state that due to the recent Covid-19 restrictions my business is no longer allowed to operate as a mobile service.

"Therefore I have had to adapt, like many others, in this very uncertain climate, to be able to continue best we can.

"Once restrictions lift I propose to reestablish the business on a mobile basis as I have worked very hard over 15 years to achieve this."

Council planners are yet to lodge a response to Ms MacDonald's appeal to The Scottish Government, but DPEA officers have been set a target of January 2021 to decide on it.

Ms MacDonald added: "I'm right on the main road, right where there's a pharmacy, takeaways, and beauty salons.

“Lots of former mobile beauty therapists are working from home right now, I wish I hadn’t bothered to get permission, the council would have been none the wiser.

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