

Short term let on Circus Lane must be removed from AirBnB

The owner of a short-term let on one of Edinburgh's most photographed streets has been ordered to take his property off Airbnb – almost a year after being refused permission to continue letting it out as holiday accommodation.

Robert Murray was served with an enforcement notice and told to stop taking bookings after failing to comply with the decision issued by planners last May, which found it was 'unacceptable' for the Circus Lane flat to be used as a short-term let (STL).

The picturesque lane, often described as the capital's 'most Instagrammable', is a popular spot for tourists and influencers to take photos.

It is also home to a number of holiday lets. Five applications seeking change of use of Circus Lane properties have been made in the last two years since the council's change in policy over STLs began.

Following the introduction of the new rules Mr Murray applied for retrospective change of use of the two bedroom home in October 2022.

In an objection, a neighbour said there was "disturbance

caused to me when short term guests have parties". They said: "This has happened quite a lot in the last few years and the noise is an issue in my flat, which is just at the back of the premises".

After reviewing plans, officers refused the bid and said it would have an "unacceptable impact on neighbouring amenity" and that the loss of residential accommodation had not been justified in plans put to the council.

Now an inquiry has discovered that the owner ignored this decision – and has continued to take bookings through Airbnb for nearly 12 months after it was issued.

The investigation was launched following three enquiries regarding the property's use to the council – and recently confirmed it was still listed on the booking site as a "Charming Mews Apartment" advertised as sleeping accommodation for up to four people with three night minimum stays.

A report said: "Three-night minimum stays ... results in a significant number of changeovers in a year.

"This is materially different to how the property would be used as a principal home with an individual or family residing in it on a permanent basis. The intensity of the use is reflected in the Airbnb listing which details 276 reviews to date. This level of activity demonstrates that the property is being used for short term visitors in a materially different way to its lawful residential use."

The enforcement notice said Mr Murray had until April 28 to 'cease the use of flat for short-term let accommodation' or face 'prosecution and/or remedial action by the council'.

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter

