

# **Penicuik home owner warned to check for birds before replacing windows**

**A home owner has been warned to check for birds before replacing windows after planners spotted a nest on Google Maps during a check.**

The owner of the house on Tipperwell Way, Penicuik, applied for permission to replace timber window frames with UPVC after it was claimed the original ones were 'substandard'.

However photographs submitted to Midlothian planners sparked concern as they appeared to show a house martin nest on the property leading officers to check images on Google Maps.

In a report recommending the replacement windows are approved officers said: "The council's biodiversity consultant (TWIC) have commented stating that the photos submitted by the applicant appear to show house martin nests on the rear of the property.

"Google Street View from May 2022 shows one nest above a window on the side of the property. Works to replace upper floor windows on these two elevations should avoid the bird breeding season (March to August inclusive).

"If works are to be carried out during the bird breeding season, a check for active nesting house martin should be completed prior to works commencing. If an active nest is

identified, then an appropriate protection zone should be installed within which there can be no works until the chicks have fledged.”

House martins and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 after the population saw a sharp decline.

Applying to replace the windows with UPVC in the conservation area, the home owner pointed to other properties on the modern estate which had already been allowed to carry out the same work.

One representation was received in support of the application, the officers report said.

It added: “It states that the windows supplied for these houses were well below standard for the type of house and Scottish weather and that other houses in the area have successfully replaced windows without damaging look and conservation standards.”

The application was approved by Midlothian Council planners.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter