

Gamekeeper wants rural house to drive 'unusual vehicles'

A gamekeeper is fighting to build a family home in the countryside because his unsociable hours and 'unusual' vehicles are not suited to modern residential estates.

Gary MacPherson was refused planning permission for a new home at Newmains, Whitekirk, by East Lothian planners who said it was against their policy on new builds in the countryside, which have to have a link to a rural business.

However in an appeal lodged on behalf of Mr MacPherson it is argued that as a local gamekeeper he is an essential rural worker and coming and going on quad bikes or other farm vehicles would disturb neighbours.

They said Mr MacPherson and his partner, currently live in a cottage across from the farm land they want to build on to create a family home and had looked at buying but found properties were either too expensive or in the wrong location.

In an appeal statement they said: "This is a very specific project for the applicants who would occupy the new home. Mr MacPherson was born and brought up in the area, attended the local schools and works locally as an estate gamekeeper. He very much wants to raise his family in the area.

"His elderly parents live close-by and are increasingly dependent on his ongoing daily support.

“Their search has looked at some of the many new build properties across East Lothian as well as ad hoc established properties that have become available nearby. The latter tend to be very expensive whilst the former are not compatible with Gary’s occupation.”

And challenging the planners ruling that the house was not required to house rural workers connected to a business, they said: “This is true but not entirely. Part of the reason why the applicants have failed in securing a suitable home for their growing family has been that Mr MacPherson works as a farm gamekeeper and as such works unusual and anti-social hours often coming home in farm vehicles, not suitable or appropriate for modern housing developments.

“So on this respect and with this context in mind, the development does relate directly to rural and farming businesses in that it is providing accommodation for a farm worker who is otherwise finding it very difficult to find a home in the area.”

The appeal will be heard by the council’s Local Review Body later this month.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter