

'Intrusive' CCTV camera still in place six months after removal ruling

A CCTV camera, ordered to be removed after claims it pointed into a neighbour's bathroom, is still in place nearly six months after the ruling.

East Lothian councillors refused planning permission for the camera at the property in Gullane after hearing from the woman who lived next door.

She told a meeting earlier this year she was horrified to spot the camera pointing into her downstairs bathroom leaving her unable to use the room because of concern over her privacy.

The home owners who placed the camera as one of a number of CCTV security measure around their property, insisted it had a 'curtain' system which protected its neighbour's privacy.

However the planning committee meeting in May refused to allow the camera in question to remain ruling it was intruding on the neighbour's privacy.

Now the home owner has applied for planning permission for a new CCTV camera near the offending one which will not look into the neighbour's property.

But a report due to go before the council's planning committee next week reveals the CCTV monitor which was ordered to be removed is still in use.

In a report to councillors, officers recommend the new camera is approved but ask for a condition to be added insisting the old one is taken down at the same time.

The report says: "The camera is still in place and has not yet been removed. To ensure the residential amenity of the neighbouring house to the west is safeguarded, it would be prudent to impose a condition on any grant of planning permission for the new CCTV camera that requires the removal of that the existing camera within a period of 1 month of the date of any grant of planning permission."

In May councillors heard from the neighbour of the property who said she first realised the security system had been installed when she stepped into her garden and heard an alarm announce 'you are being recorded'.

She told the committee she realised there was one outside her bathroom when she went for a shower in it.

She said: "At that point, to my absolute horror, I realised a CCTV camera had been installed on the wall directly outside my bathroom, clearly reflected on the wall mirror facing the shower, and I am even more horrified to say the toilet.

"I cannot begin to tell you the emotional distress this has caused, namely of who has seen this footage of myself in intimate part of my home, where it may have been shared and whether or not the footage has even been deleted."

The owners of the CCTV system said the cameras were installed because of an increase in house break-ins in the area.

The new application is due to go before the planning committee next week for a decision.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter