

Neighbour of brickworks site fears years of disruption

A neighbour of Armadale's brickworks site fears years of noise and disruption from work agreed on the site by councillors last week.

And Mark Harrison, who lives just 12ft from the edge of the site admitted his own business plans mean he may have to move from the house he's lived in for more than 20 years.

Plans to develop the brickworks site in Armadale surprised Mr Harrison when it came before the council's Development Management Committee last week.



The boundary fence is only 12ft from Mr Harrison's front door. he fears a road will run along the front of his home. Copyright Reach



New homes in Violet Drive loom over the Harrisons back garden.
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Councillors approved planning permission to infill a quarry on the site and permission in principle to build 550 homes on the brownfield site.

Despite living only 12ft from the southern boundary of the 66-acre derelict site the first Mark Harrison knew about it was when he read the Local Democracy Reporting Service report.

He told the LDRS: "I didn't know it was going to the committee. My biggest worry is that we are going to have four or five years of disturbance with the ground works and then the housebuilding.

"I want to be able to develop a small business in the future doing steel fabrication and car restoration and I'm worried that they will rezone the area, and I'll have to move."

Mr Harrison told the LDRS this week he'd had initial conversations with the owners of the site and had sought assurances on his access road and had written to planners to air his concerns... but heard nothing more.

He fears that the housing plans could put paid to his own

ideas to set up a metalwork shop on his own land where he restores and builds cars.

West Lothian Council said neighbours would have their say when detailed plans come back to the public committee.

When Mr Harrison and his family moved into his home, a former farmhouse, in 2003 it stood in open land, with green fields to the south and the vacant brickworks site behind. Now new houses occupy the southern side – 50 feet from his back door, and potentially a road will run 12ft from his front door.

He told the LDRS: “We knew something would get built on the brickworks site because it’s brownfield, but we were assured years ago that nothing would be built on the greenbelt on the other side, and it has.”

Homes in Violet Drive now loom over the back garden of Mr Harrison’s home, with residents there having to install higher fencing to the already standard 1.8m fences which line their gardens.

“My wife and I used to sit in the back garden and have our breakfast with only fields and cows to look at,” he said.

AC Land was given planning permission last week to infill a former quarry on the brickworks site and permission in principle for 550 homes on the site which occupies the land at the front of the Harrisons’ home.

Mr Harrison’s fears were echoed at last week’s meeting by his near neighbours at the firm ECCS, which emphasised concerns that their business could eventually be forced to move if new housing generated complaints about noise.

Managing Director Willie Connolly said this week that he fears the plans could stop the business developing, by restricting the introduction of new machinery onto the ECCS site which would be bounded by three earthwork bunds. The firm has been

on site for 22 years. It recycles and makes polypropylene pipework.

Both ECCS and Mr Harrison said they have regularly complained about fly-tipping as well as reporting fly-tippers to the police having found evidence in waste dumped around their properties.

AC Land told a meeting of the Development Management Committee last week that it plans to press ahead with land restoration works on site as quickly as possible before more detailed plans on the housing development come back to council.

A West Lothian Council spokesperson said: "All neighbours of this site were notified of the application, with many submitting comments on the proposal.

"All comments were included in the papers considered by the council's Development Management Committee.

"Further planning applications for the detailed layout and design of the development will be required. Neighbours of the site will be notified when these are submitted and given the opportunity to make further comments."

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter