

Planners reject bid to build new homes in Penicuik

A fresh bid to build new homes next to a former mill lade on a slope in Penicuik has been rejected by planners.

Craig Meikle applied for permission to build three split level homes on land at Craigbank Road, Penicuik, two years after Midlothian Council rejected a similar proposal over safety concerns.

But despite reducing the number of houses involved and addressing concerns about access to the mill lade with plans to fill it in, planners ruled it was not acceptable.

Refusing permission they said the houses were too big, out of character and did not provide enough amenity for residents whose gardens would be overlooked by their neighbours.

And they said a request for an assessment of the impact on protected trees and hedgerow on the site had not been provided.

Mr Meikle had previously applied for permission to build four houses on the site with plans to retain the former mill lade and build footbridges over it as part of the gardens of the new homes.

The initial proposals were rejected and at an appeal hearing at the council's Local Review Body, further concerns were raised about emergency access to existing homes on the private street during construction and the garden design.

One councillor said the sloping gardens with a bridge at the bottom felt 'unsafe'.

The revised application proposed filling in the mill lade which the applicant said had "ceased to exist in all but torrential downpours of rain" which they said would open up the whole garden space for beneficial use for residential amenity.

However planners rejected the proposal saying the fact the houses overlooked each other meant the garden space was still not acceptable.

They said: "This does not provide adequate private garden ground as each proposed house would overlook the garden ground of the adjacent house and so have a detrimental impact on the amenity of these occupants."

And they said the size and scale of the new homes would have a "significant detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, adjacent special landscape area and landscape character of the surrounding area."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter