

Laura Crawford

From: Planning
Subject: FW: Regarding LA01/2023/1142/F planning application

From: Robert Macintosh
Sent: Sunday, February 22, 2026 3:07 PM
To: me me
Subject: Regarding LA01/2023/1142/F planning application

Good afternoon

Please find the following submission in relation to myself and my family's objection to the above application.

This application proposes to build a two-storey "garage with art studio" at the bottom of 42 Dhu Varren, Portrush. This bit of land sits on the private road Blackrock Road. This would be the first two-storey structure on this southerly side of Blackrock Road, should it be passed and built. It would be in no way in-keeping with the traditional and current arrangement of houses on Dhu Varren, which usually have a single, single-story garage in one bottom corner of their garden. The proposed building would dwarf all other buildings on this side of Blackrock Road, would block light from both 40 and 44 and would, again, not fit in with the 100-plus-year-old house styles and lay-outs in the vicinity of this historic part of Portrush. Should this application be approved, it would also set a dangerous precedent that would enable every house along Dhu Varren to do the same, effectively building up the entirety of Blackrock Road to an extent that would radically change the nature and feel of the area, and would be unsustainable for this private, unadopted road. This building - and those that would inevitably subsequently be built - is effectively a second home within a second home. It is clearly intended to be a separate living unit in all but name - in all likelihood, one that will be rented out.

According to the Portrush Town Plan, published just last year, CCGBC is committed to strengthening planning regulations in order to "to prevent overdevelopment and protect the town's unique character". It also states that "developments must reflect the needs of residents rather than catering solely to high-end tourism or speculative investment". It is hard to see how prioritising the over-development of this traditional area of Portrush with a two-storey arts studio - at the clear detriment of the area's character - fits into this vision. A personal arts studio is also unlikely to be near the top of many residents' list of "needs" for the town. It does nothing to help the local housing situation - it supports the creation of a second-home property that will remain outside the financial reach of the vast majority of locals whenever it next comes on the market. All the benefits are personal and all the detriments are public. While the Council's ambition to strengthen planning regulations is admirable, in this case there already exist clear planning rules and mechanisms through which this application may be rejected. I - and all the other local families in objection to this application - would merely ask that you use them.

I am sure you would agree that facilitating the increasing spread of short-term rentals and second homes in Portrush - at the direct detriment to the local area itself and while locals continue to struggle to secure affordable housing - is a trend that must be resisted. Portrush, and the entire north coast, has seen areas both gentrified and stripped of its historic and traditional character. I would ask

that - in this, seemingly insignificant case - the protection of a particularly traditional area of the town is prioritised, so that the incremental deterioration of the town's character is stemmed. While seemingly insignificant, this application, that would help open the door to a 'death-by-a-thousand-cuts' precedent. It is not just the establishment of one out-of-character building that must be considered here. It is whether or not such a precedent should be set, which would legitimise a trend of large, two-storey properties being built all long the south side of Blackrock Road.

In addition to the two-storey garage plans, the applicants of the above project have failed to show how risk to my own property at 44 Dhu Varren would be mitigated. As a 120-year-old property, with undetermined structural integrity, no steps have been made - or even mentioned - as to how damage from the significant building work proposed would be prevented, measured or put right. Until this is established, it would be remiss for any application to be approved and to proceed. It is common practice during construction projects to establish the existing state of neighbouring properties - those that may be damaged by significant demolition or excavation - so that any and all subsequent damage can be accurately attributed to those responsible. It must be made clear how it is proposed this will be done, should plans for the main house be approved. Common methods include Tell-Tale crack monitors, vibration monitoring and plant trials prior to commencement of works.

Should you require any more information, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Kind regards,

Rob Macintosh

44 Dhu Varren
Portrush

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