

Representation about short-term lets licence application for
42 George St, Blairgowrie PH10 6HP by
Mr Dougie Campbell + Mrs Lynne Carribine

The grounds of objection to this licence application
are as follows:

① Chronic Housing Shortage / Limits on short-term lets numbers

There is apparently a housing crisis in Scotland ^{and} a shortage of properties at the 'lower end' of the housing market (purchased or rented). If this property becomes a short-term let it means that yet another dwelling house will have been removed from the housing stock in Blairgowrie. This reduces the opportunity for people, especially young people to acquire a home. All over Scotland young folk have to move away because they can't get an affordable place to stay. Fields are currently being filled with new houses, all the while many decent, old (sometimes historic) homes are being bought up by 2nd-home-owners / developers and turned into short-term lets as an investment opportunity, thereby pushing up local house prices. This has been happening in an unfettered manner, and such a lack of control must have had some effect on housing availability.

There seems to be no overall control, by councils or government, on the numbers of short-term lets popping up all over the old part of Blairgowrie. It is not easy to find them or see just how many there are. Perhaps there should be a quota or limit on how many there can be in a specific area i.e. so many per 100 homes for instance.

I live in the old town centre and there are approximately 12 short-term lets within a few hundred metres of here.

② Erosion of communities / Inactive politicians

The Government and councils all over Scotland have been caught out by Air B+B etc, and are way behind with regulations, licences, permissions etc. They have so far failed in

their duty to protect communities from this erosion.

It used to happen to other places but now it's happening in Blairgowrie! (I witnessed a rash of holiday homes up in Pennan 20 years ago, the place was dead. And I've seen it in the West Highlands and the Borders too.)

It is surely the duty of councils and government to stand up for us? I hold both responsible for failing to see what this would do to communities without any action (until now, which is a bit late).

The old part of Blairgowrie where I live is a strong neighbourhood where we watch out for one another and lend a helping hand when needed. People stay here a long time. As we get older + die off, our homes could become short-term lets, diminishing the permanent population and then there will be NO COMMUNITY, just the sound of suitcase wheels running up + down the streets. The winners then will be the often absentee landlords + 2nd home owners who live elsewhere.

③ Privacy, security, parking etc

All four gardens at the back of Mitchell Square (and 42 George Street) are private to us and we feel relatively safe here. We may have a hedge or fence between properties but it is all relatively open. We all share a communal gate from George Street and so the possibility of strangers turning up to this (possible) short-term let property at 42 George Street, is a privacy issue, a security issue and a disturbance issue for us. It would be an intrusion into our lives, especially with possible 'garden parties' in the summer.

Not knowing who is your "neighbour" from one day to the next, and not knowing how they will behave is intrusive, possibly disruptive and creates anxiety.

Parking for residents has become increasingly difficult with the proliferation of short-term lets locally.

④ Anonymity of short-term lets / Empty hotels

Absentee landlords and property developers are being allowed to alter and empty our part of the town. There is not enough attention being paid to what they are up to in this uncontrolled industry. This is an industry, these are businesses / investment projects, not just someone letting out a spare room (They should not be confused with dedicated holiday accommodation such as chalets / pods etc, that has been a mistake made by authorities lumping them all together in the same category).

In the past B+B's (as well as guest houses / hotels) were proud to have a sign outside indicating their business. But now, due to the online booking of everything, short-term lets operate under a cloak of anonymity, allowing the world (and sometimes their neighbours) to think that these are just ordinary dwelling houses. There are no signs outside, the only thing that gives them away is the keypad entry system.

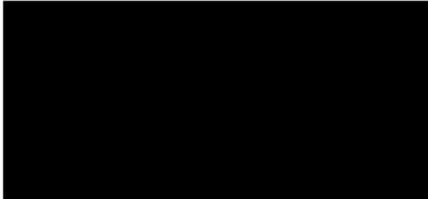
Gradually and quietly, and without many constraints, over the last 6 or 7 years developers have bought up properties here in the old part of Blairgowrie, both houses and flats to turn them into short-term lets. The sheer volume of these short-term lets available now must have had a detrimental effect on traditional hotels. The Royal Hotel, one of the main buildings on Blairgowrie's High Street has never re-opened after Covid. Perhaps this hotel may have come back to life if there was not the massive competition from local short-term lets.

This once busy, grand, old building sits empty and abandoned, boarded up and is a bit of a disgrace on our town.

2nd home owners / developers / short-term let operators are in many cases living elsewhere in the country and have no real interest in our town. (The property at 42 George Street is such an example.) I can't imagine that they would be entirely happy if several short-term lets invaded their neighbourhoods, but it's OK to travel many miles here to run such businesses.

Please council, stand up for permanent residents in our town and do not give permission for yet another short-term let to go ahead.

From Joist Hunter, Iris Bank, Mitchell Square, Blairgowrie PH10 6HR



6/3/24