

To: Debs Jeakins
Planning Enforcement Officer
Environment



30 October 2013

Our reference: NL/INSP
Property reference: 1080091003

Re: Conversion of Garage to living accommodation, rear of 91, Burnside, Cambridge

My interest in the above is solely in connection with the assessment for Council Tax purposes. There is a statutory duty placed upon the billing authority, Cambridge City Council (CCC), to report any new properties, or alterations to existing properties, to the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) that may affect the Valuation List.

The Council Tax Team became aware of the proposed works at the above through the normal contact from Building Control/Planning. As the Property Inspector attached to Council Tax Registration I routinely visited the site to check for commencement of works and progress.

Aware that works had begun I visited the property, on a date not recorded, it is noted that they were at an early stages and there was no need to inspect further. However a contractor did invite me to look around. At plastering stage only and no further action for Council Tax purposes was needed.

Following an email on 1 March 2013 from Mr Waite advising that he had '*decided that the above property has changed use...to a non-licenced HMO...*' I visited again on 13 March 2013 and although it was clear that works were on going and I didn't need to see inside; Mr Kelly invited me to inspect the property.

The layout of accommodation was described to me by Mr Kelly, and was evident on site, as Reception room, Bedroom with walk-in wardrobe, Study/ bedroom 2(boxroom) plus shower room and kitchen. Photos taken.

I visited again on 22 May 2013. It was occupied by tenants, also present was a mother visiting one of them. I was advised by one of the tenants that they moved into the property on 6th May 2013. There were two tenants (male) one of whom was reported later by Mr Kelly as being homeless which is not correct as he was registered elsewhere within the city for Council Tax purposes until 11th May 2013.

It was noted that a double bed had been placed in the main reception room and can confirm that there was a fitted kitchen off this room.

On 23rd May 2013 a report was issued by CCC to the VOA regarding the above property. The property being referred to by both Mr Waite and Mr Kelly as a bungalow in email and by Mr Kelly verbally.

The VOA officer visited the property on 16 July 2013 and by then the kitchen had been removed from 'the bungalow'. As the bungalow no longer had a kitchen the VOA did not assess the bungalow as self-contained dwelling for Council Tax purposes.

The officer was accompanied by Mr Kelly who having showed her the property, which was occupied by tenants, also showed her the main house, but not the outbuilding/WC which had a kitchen, assumed the one from 'the bungalow', installed

When this came to my attention the VOA were informed but their decision was that it could not be 'disaggregated' from the main house and therefore 'the bungalow' could not be banded as a separate dwelling for Council Tax purposes. They have verbally confirmed that had the kitchen remained in 'the bungalow' then it would have attracted its own assessment; separate from the house.

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Nick Lovelock
Property Inspector
Council Tax. Revenues & Benefits.