

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 January 2019 11:53
To: localplan <localplan@scotborders.gov.uk>
Subject: proposed use of the Netherbarns site (Grid Ref NT50466 34506)

Dear Sirs

I wish to lodge an objection to the proposed use of the Netherbarns site for housing development.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees of The Abbotsford Trust, James Holloway, has already submitted what I assume is the judgement of Abbotsford in this matter, and I concur with what he has written.

[REDACTED] Abbotsford since 2012, and in that capacity would like to add the following:

1. Abbotsford is an unique and historic literary house and as such attracts visitors from all around the world. In addition to their wish to visit the house built by Scotland's greatest-ever writer, what attracts them is the overall environment and ambience of the estate and the landscape and its sense of peace and tranquility. What they experience is, of course, what Scott intended - a sanctuary for a writer, a place to reflect on history and philosophy. This has always been felt within the confines of the walled gardens, the surrounding woodlands, and the aspect to the north of the house, facing as it does, the Tweed and the Border hills and meadows beyond. With the recent development of the pathways and woodland towards the river, this aspect of visiting Abbotsford has been enhanced - it is greatly appreciated both by visitors and locals as an area of outstanding beauty and tranquility. I have no doubt that a housing development at Netherbarns, being directly across the river, and in full view of Abbotsford, would seriously diminish the peace and enjoyment for many.

2. Over the past year I have contributed to a new development at Abbotsford - tours around the gardens, not primarily to talk about horticultural matters, but to describe the vision behind Scott's plans and layout. An important component of the tour is to conduct visitors to the north terrace (i.e. facing the Tweed). For Scott, this was a Picturesque Landscape (Picturesque: an aesthetic ideal pioneered in 1782 by William Gilpin, combining the beautiful and sublime in landscape) and he developed that area having been influenced by that artistic movement. That is another reason why a housing development right in the middle of it is inappropriate. But more than that, Scott suffered bouts of depression and found succour in contemplating landscape in general, and his Picturesque Landscape in particular. Abbotsford has already discussed (with Visit Scotland for instance) promoting that aspect; that is, its attraction to visitors in general, and to special groups in particular. The

special groups would include visits from residents of care homes, individuals with learning difficulties and so on. This is the concept of "nature as nurse", or "the therapeutic landscape", increasingly important in the non-pharmaceutical treatment of mental disorders. And again I stress that this initiative would be seriously hampered with the development at Netherbarns.

May I add that I also write this as [REDACTED] with a particular interest in mental health therapies. That experience leads me to believe that Abbotsford has a pioneering role to play in The Scottish Borders in what I describe in (2) above. As such, the preservation of the pastoral environment in and around Abbotsford is of crucial importance - housing development at Netherbarns would be highly detrimental. I am happy to discuss this further at any time with your Planning Department.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]