



Scotland's Garden & Landscape Heritage

Environment & Infrastructure

Scottish Borders Council

Council Headquarters

Newtown St. Boswells

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By email only localplan@scotborders.gov.uk

29 January 2019

Dear Sir/Madam,

Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2: Main Issues Report (MIR) QUESTION 7 Do you agree with the alternative options?

AGALA029 Netherbarns, Galashiels Alternative Option Site

Having studied the above document Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage (SGLH), formerly the Garden History Society in Scotland (GHSS), wishes to register its concern about the allocation of the above site as an alternative option for 45 housing units due to the potential detrimental impact of this development on the Abbotsford designed landscape, included by Historic Environment Scotland in the INVENTORY OF GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES IN SCOTLAND. Inclusion in the INVENTORY acknowledges the landscape's national importance, with Abbotsford stated to be '*among the most significant designed landscapes in Scotland*'.

As the GHSS, SGLH opposed housing in this location in 2005, objecting to a proposed development of 89 houses at Netherbarns on the grounds that...'*it significantly adversely affects.....the setting of a site listed in An Inventory of Gardens & Designed Landscapes in Scotland*', contrary to policy BE3 of the then finalised Scottish Borders Local Plan. These plans were thrown out at Public Enquiry. Later that year GHSS (SGLH) therefore welcomed the deletion of the Netherbarns site from the draft Local Development Plan, following The Examination Report in which the potential impact of the proposal on Abbotsford House was recognised.

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SGLH sees development on this site as being contrary to National Planning, Local Planning and Historic Environment policies thus :

Scottish Planning Policy 2014

Policy Principles 137. *'The planning system should: · promote the care and protection of the designated and non-designated historic environment (including individual assets, related settings and the wider cultural landscape) and its contribution to sense of place, cultural identity, social well-being, economic growth, civic participation and lifelong learning.'*

Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Designed Landscapes 2016

'Inventory sites often have a planned relationship with landscape features beyond their boundaries, and these surroundings may contribute to the way they are experienced, understood and appreciated. Land outwith the boundary may provide a backdrop to a mansion house or terminate a vista. This 'borrowed' land is used as a feature to be enjoyed from the Inventory site.'

'Development outside an Inventory site boundary may therefore impact on the site's setting – for example, if it would affect a deliberately planned outward view. Proposals should be carefully designed and located to minimise any such impacts.'

Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2015

POLICY BE3 GARDENS AND DESIGNED LANDSCAPES

'Development will be refused where it has an unacceptable adverse impact on the landscape features, character or setting of:

1. Sites listed in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes'.

In 2017 The Abbotsford Estate Conservation Management Plan was commissioned from Peter McGowan Associates which clearly states that *'The view from the North Terrace, and from the North rooms of the house and from the haugh and riverside, continue to be unspoilt by development.... The view of the Netherbarns' bank and hillside is an outstandingly important part of the setting of Abbotsford and needs to be protected from intrusive development.'*

Whilst it is stated in the Main Issues Report that one of the requirements for development will be 'Reinforcement ... to the existing planting along the south eastern boundary of the site to further protect the setting of Abbotsford House' this will not offer sufficient protection, given that the existing planting is deciduous, offering little screening over the winter months. Furthermore, the screening effect is likely to be reduced as the mature trees are lost to old age, or as a result of climate change. Further thinning of the screen will occur

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in the medium to long term if, as has been proposed, the Borders Railway is extended beyond Tweedbank towards Carlisle.

For the above reasons, in answer to Question 7, Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage cannot agree with AGALA029 Netherbarns, Galashiels as an Alternative Option Site and would urge in the strongest terms that it is removed from the housing land supply and Local Development Plan.

Yours faithfully,


Scotland's Garden and Landscape Heritage Conservation Consultant
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