



SAVE SCOTT'S
COUNTRYSIDE

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25 JAN 2019

22nd January 2019

Lead Forward Planner,
Scottish Borders Council,
Headquarters,
Newtown St. Boswells.

Dear Charles Johnston,

Main Issues Report—Response To Consultation
from Save Scott's Countryside

Q.7 Additional Housing

Darnick, by Darnlee ADARN005

We believe the proposed house numbers of ten are too high/dense for this 0.8ha site, especially as it would be very visible on entering the village and appear incongruous next to the parkland surroundings of Darnlee.

A more tree-scaped development of five houses could be more acceptable.

Netherbarns AGALA029

We are strongly opposed to this proposal.

The issue cannot be reduced to being just about the views, seasonal or otherwise, from Abbotsford House.

Protecting the Setting of Abbotsford is about more than just hiding a housing estate behind curtains of tree-planting along the south-eastern boundary of the site.

The Setting would still be shamefully compromised—for visitors, including those heading for the Eildon and Leaderfoot National Scenic Area, arriving along the A7 from the Selkirk direction; from the historic Designed Landscape and its footpaths, now enjoyed all year round by increasing numbers of walkers and visitors to Abbotsford; and from the surrounding hills.

We are, understandably, exasperated that the Council and the Developer/Owners are once again pursuing the idea of suburban development at Netherbarns—which has four times in the last twelve years been found against at Public Inquiry/Local Plan Examination.

We again say it is inappropriate for Galashiels to spread further over the Kingsknowes 'shoulder' into land associated with the Area of Great Landscape Value; and further upstream in relation to the Tweed, which is not the natural water valley of the town.

We have said previously that a housing estate would be inappropriate in character and scale, but that a small, landscaped build of just several houses with associated features, such as orchards, woodland or stables, would provide a softening of the town's present hard edge at Kingsknowes-- and an appropriate, irrevocable transition between town and countryside.

We believe the conclusions of the last Public Inquiry, reported on by Mr Richard Dent in 2015, remain definitive:

“ Despite the lack of a formal objection by Historic Scotland, I concur with the conclusions reached at the previous local plan inquiry. It appears to me that cultural and landscape considerations combine to provide an asset which should remain free of the impact of the suggested allocation and any subsequent development of Netherbarns. I do not accept that the woodland screening would adequately mitigate the adverse impacts of the allocation on the setting of the house or the designed landscape. Additionally, the re-opening of the railway link to Galashiels is likely to increase the volume of visitors to Abbotsford, therefore further strengthening the need to protect the heritage of the vicinity.”

Harmony Hall Gardens, Melrose AMELR013

This would represent the loss of a valued community resource and attractive open space within the town.

It is difficult to believe that developers could deliver housing without significant loss of trees and damage to the southern stone wall, even if (only) building five houses. Buildings higher than single storey would indeed need to be excluded or would be intrusive on the setting of Harmony Hall as seen from the road that runs in front of Melrose Abbey.

The proposed house numbers would only make a small contribution in the town of Melrose, where there are unbuilt allocations on the Dingleton site; and other potential brownfield sites in Melrose, currently owned by a local developer, at West Grove and Priorwood House.

Q.8 Housing In The Countryside

At present we support the Preferred Option.

However, we would be supportive of the Alternative Option, in this or a subsequent Local Plan, if more detailed reassurances about setting, design and materials are specified.

The stand-alone option would clearly encourage higher standards of innovative design than are likely at present when adding to, complementing and blending with, existing groups.

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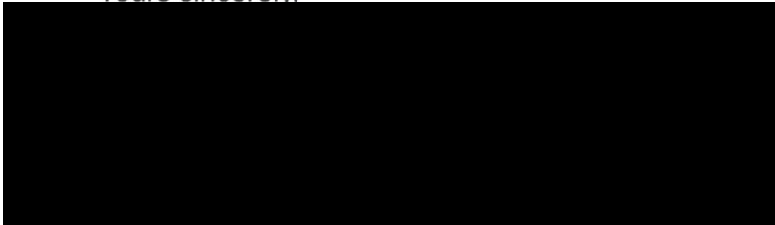
Q.14 National Park

We are strongly supportive of this idea and of the Campaign For A Scottish Borders National Park, believing that a National Park would greatly improve qualities of life, health and well-being; benefit tourism by the designation itself and by attracting appropriate investment; and provide another layer of protection for our much-valued landscape.

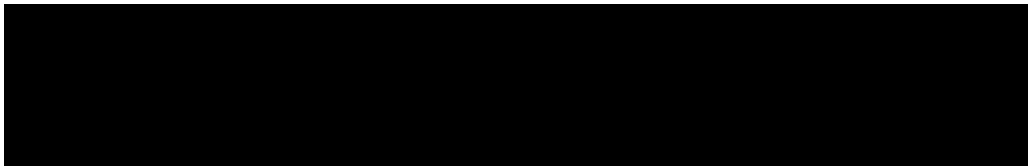
We believe it should, as far as practicable, be co-terminus with the Northumberland National Park and that it should largely occupy the area indicated by The Campaign.

However, we think it should also extend westwards from the Eildon and Leaderfoot National Scenic Area to include Scott's Designed Landscape and the Tweed as far as Traquair, before swinging south to encompass the lands of the ancient Ettrick Forest by including its southwesterly tributaries of Yarrow, Ettrick, Ale, Borthwick and Teviot.

Yours sincerely,



Chairman, Save Scott's Countryside.





30th January 2019

Lead Forward Planner,
Scottish Borders Council,
Headquarters,
Newtown St. Boswells.

Dear Charles Johnston,

Main Issues Report—Response To Consultation
from Save Scott's Countryside
Netherbarns AGALA029

A Further Submission— A Netherbarns Masterplan Competition.

Save Scott's Countryside has plans for a Nation-Wide Competition For A Masterplan for Netherbarns, to be launched in the event that the site is adopted for modest development, as outlined in our earlier submission.

The aim would be to find a resolution to the long-running Netherbarns saga, enabling some development on the site while providing substantial areas of tree-planting to ensure minimum negative impact on Abbotsford House and its Designed Landscape.

The competition would be open to all those involved in both architecture and in landscape, whether at professional or student level.

The organisers would wish to work with Scottish Borders Council and others to ensure that the maximum amount of relevant material is available to contestants.

Save Scott's Countryside fully understands the Abbotsford Trustees' opposition to development at Netherbarns, a position which many of our members share. We would therefore also wish to work closely with Abbotsford so that contestants may be further informed about Abbotsford and allowed access as appropriate.

Not all visitors to Abbotsford are aware that Scott planned the layout of the Abbotsford estate, and planted much of it, himself.

The competition would therefore also be designed to highlight Scott's importance as a pioneer in landscape design.

To be absolutely clear, this competition will only be launched in the event of Netherbarns being allocated for modest development.

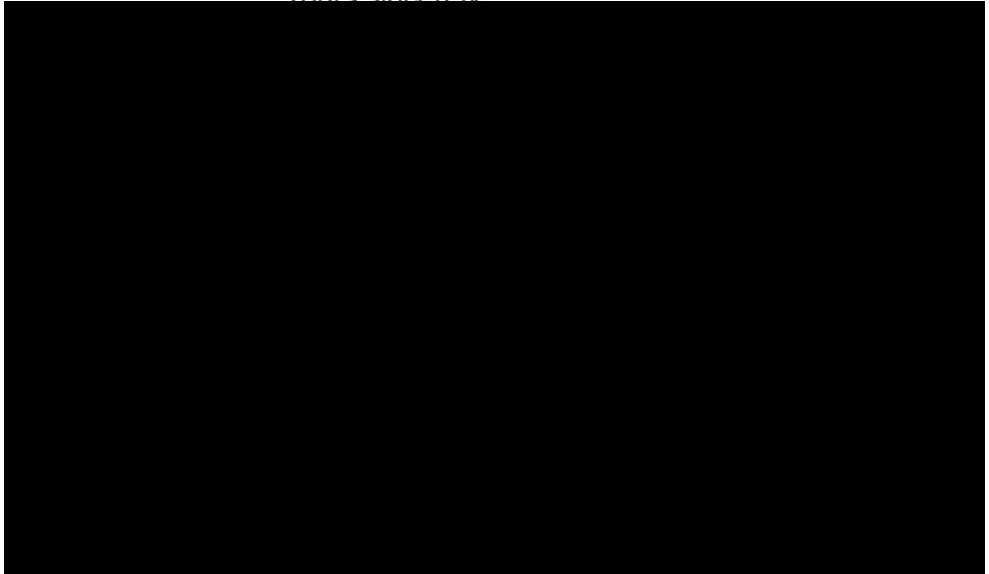
Save Scott's Countryside would not wish to be associated in any way with a scale of development which would damage heritage assets of international significance.

The competition will not be launched if the proposal in the MIR is adopted.

Please ensure that this submission is lodged alongside our earlier submission.

Letterhead illustration kindly drawn for Save Scott's Countryside by Quentin Blake

Yours sincerely



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