



# Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal

Rink Farm

07/07/2016



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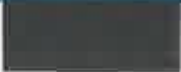
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# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This Landscape and Visual Impact Appraisal (LVIA) has been prepared to support a full planning application for the proposed residential development at Rink Farm, Galashiels, TD1 3PS. The proposal will consist of the construction of two (2 no.) holiday cottages and associated infrastructure.
- 1.2. The dwellings, landscaping, access and any ancillary works are hence referred to as '*the proposed development*' and the term '*proposed site*' will be used to define the application site boundary within the following text, as outlined by the red line on the site location plan (Figure 1).

## PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 1.3. This LVIA will provide an impartial assessment of the potential effects of the proposed development on the existing landscape and visual amenity of the site and surrounding area, following the guidelines set out in the "Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition" (GLVIA3)<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.4. Landscape effects as a result of the proposed development may be defined as changes in the physical landscape which may give rise to changes in its character and quality, landscape patterns, designations, features and elements.
- 1.5. Visual effects as a result of the proposed development comprise changes to the composition of existing views and visual amenity experienced by people, such as residents, recreational or vehicular users.
- 1.6. These effects may have a direct or indirect, adverse (negative), beneficial (positive) or neutral nature. They may vary in duration from short to long term and have irreversible or reversible effects.

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<sup>1</sup> Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013): Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 3rd Edition, London, Routledge

## SCOPE OF WORKS

- 1.7. The approach taken for this appraisal follows the best practice guidelines set out in the “Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, 3rd Edition” (GLVIA3)<sup>2</sup>. The methodology used for this LVIA is to be found in Appendix B: Methodology along with the chapter’s supporting figures. The assessment is based on the proposal drawings P415-SK-001 and P415-SK-003 and conceptual visualisations produced by Stuart Davidson Architecture.
- 1.8. The report will take the following approach:
- Firstly establish the existing landscape and visual baseline of the study zone, which extends 4km outwards from the site boundary limits;
  - Determine the landscape and visual receptors with potential to be affected by the proposed development and their sensitivity to the proposed changes resulting from the development;
  - Assess the interaction of the proposed development with the landscape and visual receptors and assert a judgement of the ‘degree of effects’ the proposed development will have upon each receptor; and
  - Wherever possible suggest appropriate mitigation measures to help alleviate any predicted effects.

## CONSULTATION

- 1.9. Pre-application consultation was undertaken with The Scottish Borders Council Planning Department to discuss the proposed development. Carlos Clarke, Lead Planning Officer made the following comment which has influenced the production of this LVIA;

*“...I must also consider that it is on an elevated site, within a Special Landscape Area, with potential visibility from the A7 and A707, as well as passing B7060. The visual impact of the buildings will be considered along with the impact of the track alterations and adjustments, car parking, and ancillary works such as lighting and utilities. These will all require particular care. I note the design concept of this proposal, but the information is not sufficient to be able to determine that this site is visually appropriate for this particular development because of its elevated nature and the topography associated with the access track and its alterations.”*  
(Emphasis added)

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<sup>2</sup> Landscape Institute & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2013): Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. 3rd Edition, London, Routledge

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1. The proposed development will consist of two single storey holiday cottages set partially into the slope of the hillside within a small area of a single triangular shaped field. The overall height of these buildings is not expected to exceed 3-4m above the ground level. The exterior of the buildings will be finished with a wide glass framed frontage enclosed on either side and above by a mix of dry stone walling, timber panelling, rendered walls and earthen embankments. The new and existing lengths of access track will be finished in a hardcore surface. The use of these materials are reflective of existing elements and features within the local landscape and will naturally age over time. The land has been reshaped to partially contain views of each holiday cottage, energy unit and associated car parking area.
- 2.2. Construction effects will occur during the construction phase which will last for a limited temporary period. Likely potential effects will include:
- Removal of the existing vegetation cover;
  - Change to landform levels through cut and fill remodelling;
  - Realignment and surfacing of the existing farm track way along with two passing places added.
  - The movement and presence of various machinery and workers through and off the site; to facilitate the building out of the proposed development;
  - Construction of structures and services above and below ground; and
  - Temporary stock piling of soils, site materials, welfare facilities and lighting during the construction phase.
- 2.3. The completion effects will occur once all buildings, surfaces, services and landscaping have been implemented. The permanency of the proposed development will mean that any predicted effects are likely to be long term. Likely potential effects include:
- Presence of two new holiday cottages, energy unit, parking areas, other hard surfaces and landscaping replacing the single agricultural field;
  - Night time internal and exterior lighting from the properties or vehicles; and
  - Movement of traffic from and to the properties and parked vehicles.

## 3. PLANNING POLICY

- 3.1. Local planning authority policies of relevance to landscape and visual issues in relation to the proposed development and the surrounding area are outlined below.

### LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

#### Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016)

- 3.2. The Scottish Borders Local Development Plan<sup>3</sup> replaces the Scottish Borders Local Plan and is intended to provide guidance up to 2025. The planning policies of relevance to landscape and visual issues of the proposed site and its surrounding are outlined below. These policies are further discussed in the Planning Policy Statement submitted in support of this application.
- 3.3. Paragraph 3.7 of the LDP determines that the Border's environment is its special quality. The Plan seeks to protect and improve this legacy as it is a key aspect of its attraction for inward investment, tourism, recreation and quality of life in general.
- 3.4. The site is identified as being within the Strategic Green Network situated within the Central Strategic Development Area.

#### Policy PMD1 – Sustainability

*“In determining planning applications and preparing development briefs, the Council will have regard to the following sustainability principles which underpin all the Plan's policies and which developers will be expected to incorporate into their developments:*

*c) the protection of natural resources, landscapes, habitats, and species*

*d) the protection of built and cultural resources”*

- 3.5. The ability of the proposal to protect the landscape will be assessed as part of this LVIA.

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<sup>3</sup> Scottish Border Council (May 2016): Local Development Plan [Online] Available at: [https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20051/plans\\_and\\_guidance/121/local\\_development\\_plan](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/info/20051/plans_and_guidance/121/local_development_plan)



## Policy PMD2: Quality Standards

*“All new development will be expected to be of a high quality in accordance with sustainability principles, designed to fit with Scottish Borders townscapes and to integrate with its landscape surroundings. The standards which will apply to all development are;*

*Sustainability*

*f) it incorporates appropriate hard and soft landscape works, including structural or screen planting where necessary, to help integration with its surroundings and the wider environment and to meet open space requirements. In some cases agreements will be required to ensure that landscape works are undertaken at an early stage of development and that appropriate arrangements are put in place for long term landscape open space maintenance,*

*Placemaking and Design*

*h) it creates developments with a sense of place, based on a clear understanding of the context, designed in sympathy with Scottish Borders architectural styles; this need not exclude appropriate contemporary and/or innovative design,*

*k) it is compatible with, and respects the character of the surrounding area, neighbouring uses, and neighbouring built form,*

*l) it can be satisfactorily accommodated within the site*

*m) it provides appropriate boundary treatments to ensure attractive edges to the development that will help integration with its surroundings,*

*Green Space, Open Space and Biodiversity*

*t) it provides meaningful open space that wherever possible, links to existing open spaces and that is in accordance with current Council standards pending preparation of an up-to-date open space strategy and local standards...*

*u) it retains physical or natural features or habitats which are important to the amenity or biodiversity of the area or makes provision for adequate mitigation or replacements.”*

## Policy PMD4: Development outwith Development Boundaries

*“Exceptional approvals may be granted provided strong reasons can be given that:*

*a) It is a job-generating development in the countryside that has an economic justification....*

*And the development of the site:*

*a) Represents a logical extension of the built-up area, and*

*b) Is of an appropriate scale in relation to the size of the settlement, and*

- c) *Does not prejudice the character, visual cohesion of natural built up edge of the settlement, and*
- d) *Does not cause a significant adverse effect on the landscape setting of the settlement of the natural heritage of the surrounding area."*

#### Policy ED7: Business, Tourism and Leisure Development in the Countryside

*"Proposals for business, tourism or leisure development in the countryside will be approved and rural diversification initiatives will be encouraged provided that they meet the stated criteria."*

#### Policy HD2: Housing in the Countryside

*"The Council wishes to promote appropriate rural housing development:*

*A) In village locations in preference to the open countryside where permission will only be granted in special circumstances on appropriate sites,*

*B) associated with existing building groups where this does not adversely affect their character or that of the surrounding area, and*

*In dispersed communities in the Southern Borders housing market area.*

*These general principles in addition to the requirement for suitable roads access will be the starting point for the consideration of applications for housing in the countryside, which will be supplemented by Supplementary Planning Guidance/Supplementary guidance on New Housing in the Borders Countryside and on Placemaking and Design....*

*In ALL instances in considering proposals relevant to the each of the policy sections above, there shall be compliance with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance where it meets the terms of this policy and development must not negatively impact on landscape and existing communities. The cumulative effect of applications under this policy will be taken into account when determining impact."*

#### SPG: New Housing in the Borders Countryside (2008)

- 3.6. This SPG<sup>4</sup> provides further information on the appropriate siting and design of buildings within the countryside. Some of the key factors in the SPG relating to this proposed development include: Siting, Design and The Elements of Buildings (Sections 3.1-3.3) and these have been taken into consideration to ensure any new development can be sympathetically fitted into the Scottish Borders landscape. The following is pertinent in relation to the proposed development;

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Border Council (December 2008): New Housing in the Borders Countryside [Online] Available at: [https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory\\_record/7443/new\\_housing\\_in\\_the\\_borders\\_countryside/category/28/approved\\_planning\\_guidance](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory_record/7443/new_housing_in_the_borders_countryside/category/28/approved_planning_guidance)

*“For a new house to be successful, the designer should draw on the widely appreciated and accepted traditions of Border house design rather than from models more suited to a suburban context or from designs which derive from other regions. It is therefore important to be aware of the key elements of building design which characterise the indigenous architectural form... Innovative designs, therefore, which are sympathetic to their setting and to the general principles in respect of siting set out above, will also be encouraged.”*

- 3.7. This LVIA will take into account the points raised within Policy HD2 and relevant SPGs when assessing the proposed development design in order to determine the potential impact on the immediate and surrounding landscape.

#### Policy EP5: Special Landscape Areas

*“In assessing proposals for development that may affect Special Landscape Areas, the Council will seek to safeguard landscape quality and will have particular regard to the landscape impact of the proposed development, including the visual impact. Proposals that have a significant adverse impact will only be permitted where the landscape impact is clearly outweighed by social or economic benefits of national or local importance.”*

#### Policy EP10: Gardens and Designated Landscapes

*“The Council will support development that safeguards or enhances the landscape features, character or setting of:*

- a) Site listed in the Inventory of Gardens and Designated Landscapes, or*
- b) Sites included in historic gardens and designated landscape records.*

*All development should be carefully sites, be of the highest of standards of design using appropriate finishing materials and planting, and be informed by and respectful of the historic landscape structure. Proposals that will result in an unacceptable adverse impact will be refused.”*

- 3.8. The proposal is not located within or adjacent to a Garden and Designated Landscape and should therefore be compliant with this policy in terms of potential impact.

#### Policy EP12: Green Networks

*“The Council will support proposals that protect, promote and enhance the Greenspace Network.*

*Where a proposal comes forward that will result in a negative impact on the natural heritage, greenspace, landscape, recreation or other element of a Green Network, appropriate mitigation will be required...”*

## Planning Summary

- 3.9. The application site falls within an identified Green Network between Galashiels and Selkirk as shown on Figure EP12a of the LDP. Policy EP12 is therefore the most pertinent for the determination of this application from a Landscape and Visual Impact perspective. The site is also within the identified Central Strategic Development Area. The Central SDA is set within a 'Countryside around Town' designation that is aimed at preventing coalescence, improving the quality of the surrounding countryside and providing a recreational resource for the population as part of a wider green network.
- 3.10. The application site falls within the Special Landscape Area No.3: Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow Confluences. The landscape quality of this designation is to be safeguarded by Policy EP5, which will have particular regard to any landscape and visual impacts of the proposed development. To the west of the site are a Forest Park, Black Grouse Recovery Project and Garden and Designated Landscape, however the application site is not located within these areas of note. The potential effects of the proposed development upon the landscape and designations within the study zone protected by these various policies will be assessed through this report.
- 3.11. The study zone contains a number of public walking routes including the long distance Southern Uplands Way and various shorter Council Core Paths, as shown on the Council's Adopted Core Path Plan Area 32 (Galashiels)<sup>5</sup>. The National Cycle Route No.1 passes next to the site entrance on the B7060. Potential visibility of the proposed development from across these routes which provide access to the surrounding countryside will be considered in this report.
- 3.12. The scale of the development will mean it would occupy only a small area within the countryside as well as offering opportunities to provide landscaping enhancements through the proposed development and access connections to the local area.

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<sup>5</sup> Scottish Border Council (May 2010): Scottish Borders Adopted Core Path Plan Area 32 [Online] Available at: [https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory/62/scottish\\_borders\\_core\\_paths/category/431/categoryInfo/29](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory/62/scottish_borders_core_paths/category/431/categoryInfo/29)

## 4. LANDSCAPE APPRAISAL

### BASELINE (LANDSCAPE)

- 4.1. The purpose of collecting and describing the landscape baseline data of the study zone is to help establish the context of the landscape into which the proposed development is to be located. It is also important to anticipate potential future changes to this landscape, excluding that of the proposed development. This will help in assessing the potential ability of this landscape to accommodate the proposed development.

### Regional Landscape Character

- 4.2. The landscape of the Scottish Borders Council area has been classified into areas with distinct landscape characteristics as part of the SNH Landscape Character Assessment<sup>6</sup> undertaken in 1998. The landscape has been classified from a broad regional down to more detailed local landscape level.
- 4.3. The Regional Character Areas (RCA) are defined by common characteristics at the macro scale; elements such as large scale variation in geology, topography and climate. Whilst the RCA does not necessarily contain discrete populations/subsets of landscape types, they do represent a distinctive assemblage of landscape types and landscape character areas. This is useful in establishing an overview of the range of variation in the landscape.
- 4.4. The site is located within the Central Southern Uplands. This is depicted by the following characteristics;

*"From its northern boundary, defined by the line of the Southern Uplands fault, and separated from the Moorfoots by the deep valley of the middle Tweed, a major belt of high ground extends south along the main watershed with the Clyde and Solway, finally merging with the western extremity of the Cheviot Range....Although they share with these areas the characteristic smooth slopes and, subdued, rolling land forms over most of their extent, the highest ground of the Tweedsmuir massif is differentiated by more sculpted shapes of corries; ridges and glaciated valleys deriving from Pleistocene times...*

*...The hills are dominated by heather moor and rough acid grassland, and there are extensive coniferous plantations, particularly in the upper Tweed valley and on the gentler plateaux further south at Craik and upper Teviotdale. Ribbons of improved grassland penetrate into the hills following the major valleys of the Tweed, Yarrow, Ettrick and Teviot."*

<sup>6</sup> Available at: <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/review/112.pdf>

## Local Landscape Character

- 4.5. The proposed site falls within the Upland Fringe Valley with Settlements (Landscape Type 27). This is described as being:

*“A densely settled, well ordered landscape of arable land, pasture and woods, in an enclosed valley setting.”*

- 4.6. The key characteristics of this landscape type are as follows:

- *“Medium to large scale flat bottomed valley, enclosed by undulating upland fringe hills*
- *Smooth large scale landform modified in places by undulating moraine deposits, steep bluffs and terraces cut by meandering river.*
- *Neat pattern of medium sized arable and pasture fields, divided by hedgerows, often with mature trees.*
- *Mature broadleaf woodlands and shelterbelts prominent along valley floor and lower slopes.*
- *Coniferous woodlands on valley sides contrasting with pastures, often well integrated into landscape.”*

*“Landscape Experience: This is densely settled landscape, with the evidence of human activity constantly present, yet nevertheless generally well-integrated with the geography of its setting, to give an impression of well-ordered harmony. Views along the valley corridor are diverse, with longer views available both along the flat valley floor and up to the surrounding hills. However, frequent intermediate visual horizons and enclosures are formed by tree cover and settlements. Although outside the boundary of this character area, the peaks of the Eildon Hills are a dominant feature on the skyline throughout much of this landscape. The celebrated ‘Scott’s View’ from the flanks of Bermersyde Hill, gives a fine panorama, taking in many of the key features which define the character of this landscape.”*

- 4.7. There a number of other LCTs and their subdivided LCAs within the 4km study zone, as illustrated in Figure 2, which include:

- Grassland with Hills LCT
- Southern Uplands Type with Scattered Forest LCT
- Undulating Grassland LCT
- Upland Valley with Woodland LCT

## Local Landscape Designations

- 4.8. The Scottish Borders Council produced Supplementary Planning Guidance<sup>7</sup> in 2012 which incorporated a review and update of Local Landscape Designations into the Council's planning policy framework. In recent years SNH and Historic Scotland guidance has sought to standardise the terminology related to Local Landscape Designations to 'Special Landscape Areas', to promote further understanding and awareness of the qualities of local landscapes in Scotland. Therefore this SPG uses the term Special Landscape Areas (SLA) and sets out a review of the Local Landscape Designations in order to identify suitable areas for inclusion as SLA within the authority.
- 4.9. The Summary of Analysis of the Local Landscape Designation Review (LLDR) identifies the site as being located within the Tweed/Gala/Ettrick Confluence (RV67). A summary of the key findings of the review is as follows;
- *"The area to the south-west around Selkirk was considered suitable for inclusion as a proposed SLA. This area forms a gateway into the Border valleys, and is closely associated with the upland areas which contribute to the valley setting, including Minch Moor and West Gala.*
  - *The western section of the Tweed valley, west of Melrose, was also considered suitable for inclusion. This area is closely associated with the landmark Eildon Hills and iconic features such as Scott's View.*
  - *The developed parts of the LCU and the settlement fringe areas have not been considered for inclusion, since the density of development is not considered appropriate. These areas are also covered by the Countryside Around Towns policy"*
- 4.10. Subsequent to the conclusions of this review, the site is identified as being located within SLA 3: Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow Confluences. The area was designated as an SLA for the following reasons;
- "Designation statement: The confluence of these three valleys form a key node within the Borders, linking the main population centre with the highly typical Border valley landscapes. The area has a strong sense of place, and contains representative Border features, albeit that each valley retains its own character. The enclosing uplands and upland fringes offer contrast and an attractive wider setting, and enable views across the valleys, the descending approach to Selkirk along the A699 being particularly scenic.*

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<sup>7</sup> Scottish Border Council (August 2012): Local Landscape Designations [Online] Available at: [https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/413/planning\\_guidance\\_local\\_landscape\\_designations](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/413/planning_guidance_local_landscape_designations)

*East of Thornielee, the Tweed flows in to a narrower section, winding between steep valley sides which are often densely forested. The Yarrow enters a narrow, picturesque section around Yarrowford, characterised by woodland and estate buildings. The Yarrow flows into the Ettrick south of Selkirk, where the valley broadens, and is characterised by parkland influences, with mixed woodland climbing the valley sides. North of Selkirk the Ettrick joins the Tweed, which here broadens as it approaches the Galashiels area. The valley sides running east form a major part of the setting of Galashiels, Tweedbank and Melrose. A series of estate landscapes give visual diversity to these valleys, including Abbotsford, Sunderland and Bowhill. The area forms the setting for Selkirk, the town with its prominent spire forming an attractive feature in the landscape since, unusually for the Borders, it is located on higher ground.*

*Although several A roads pass through the landscape, there are many tranquil areas. The Southern Upland Way follows the ridge between Tweed and Yarrow, offering views across the area, before crossing the Tweed towards Galashiels, and there are numerous other paths. Attractions in the area include Abbotsford and Bowhill, and the area is very accessible from the main Borders settlements and further afield."*

## Site and Surrounding Environment

### The Site Context

- 4.11. The proposed site is currently agricultural land located within the open countryside between Galashiels and Selkirk. The application site extends to 0.482ha covering part of a single field within the ownership boundary of the applicant. Topographically, the proposed site is notable for its steep northeast to southwest slope (from approximately 180m AOD to approximately 163m AOD), characterised by the sloping sides of the river valley associated with the River Tweed, approximately 310m to the south of the site. The site is currently used for sheep grazing.
- 4.12. The boundaries consist of a low stone wall along the northern boundary with an existing access track characterising the western boundary. The eastern and southern boundaries are not distinguishable by features on the site. Access from the site will run along the existing farm track before it diverts south eastwards through the lower lying adjoining field and exiting onto the B7060 road through a new entrance point break in the low dry stone walling boundary.
- 4.13. The B7060 road provides access to the A7 which links Selkirk and Galashiels. Mature trees line the northern carriageway providing a certain level of screening from the proposed development.
- 4.14. Close to the eastern boundary are two distinct areas of woodland. One of a noticeably dense, circular formation whilst the other is a more sparsely planted rectangular shape. The circular woodland is associated within the Scheduled Ancient Monument fort at Rink Hill, being located on top of the hill in a prominent location. The other woodland area forming part of historical earthworks. A ribbon of residential development at Rink Farm lies to the south of



this woodland, along the B7060. The development comprises a mixture of house types and sizes including, terraced, semi-detached bungalows and large detached housing.

### The Surroundings

- 4.15. Core Paths run to the northwest and southeast of the site. These paths effectively link Galashiels to the wider area and provide access to Selkirk in the south as well as the Yair Hill Forest to the west. A promoted path, which is defined as a route that forms one of the Council's self-guided walks, often sign posted and improved in agreement with the land owner, is located approximately 230m to the south of the site and runs along the banks of the River Tweed. This path joins the two Core Paths between Tweed Bridge and Fairlee Farm.
- 4.16. Approximately 550m to the west of the site is Fairlee Garden and Designated Landscape<sup>8</sup>. The site is designated for its outstanding Work of Art and Historical values. It also has high architectural, scenic and archaeological values and some nature conservation value.
- 4.17. Land to the south of the site drops away rapidly falling to approximately 11m AOD at its lowest point at the River Tweed and rising steeply on the opposing river bank. The southern river bank is populated by a large forested woodland which provides significant screening from the A707 and local roads on this side of the river. Views are also obscured by the trees from Sunderland Hall, a Grade B listed building to the south of the River Tweed.
- 4.18. Site levels also increase to the east of the application site culminating in a high peak at Rink Hill and dropping steadily to the north and east. The topography of land to the west of the site is mixed in character with land levels dropping towards the bend in the river and rising in a north westerly direction away from the site.
- 4.19. Land immediately surrounding the site also consists of parcels within agricultural use with pastoral sheep farming being prevalent. A number of large agricultural farmsteads can be seen within the surrounding area, although the majority of built form is concentrated to the south of the River Tweed. The River Tweed is identified as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as well as a designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 4.20. Land boundaries are predominantly made up of low stone walls with few hedgerows and scattered clusters of mature trees, with the exception being large patches of woodland of varying density and quality.

### Settlement Pattern

- 4.21. The site is located within the open countryside between the towns of Galashiels and Selkirk. The hamlets of Caddonfoot, Lindean and Boleshill are all in the surrounding environs of the application site. Settlements such as Tweedbank, Melrose, Gallonside and Darnick have merged to become part of the wider south eastern boundary of the settlement of Galashiels. To the southeast of the development is a small ribbon settlement at Rink Farm.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://portal.historic-scotland.gov.uk/designation/GDL00175>

Table 4-1: Settlements found within 4km of the Proposed Site

Receptor	Distance (Km) & Direction from Site
Settlements between 0 to 4km (outer edges)	
Selkirk	2.23km S
Galashiels	3.13km NE
Caddonfoot	3.4km NW
Llndean	2.1km SE
Boleside	1.9km NE

## Routes

- 4.22. There are a number of routes found within the study zone which link the two main settlements of Selkirk and Galashiels, as well as other more minor routes providing access to the wider region.

Table 4-2: Main Routes found within 4km of the Proposed Site

Receptor:	Distance (Km) & Direction from Site
Routes between 0 to 4km	
A7	1.16km E
A707	1.7km W
A72	3.8km NW
B7060	60m S
B6360	1.3Km E
B7014	2.5km S
B710	3.7km NW

## Designations

- 4.23. Designations are protected at either national level – ‘statutory designated sites’ (protected by legislative) or local level – ‘non-statutory designated sites’ (determined through local developments plans) from inappropriate development. Historic designations found within 2km of the proposed site are included as they contribute to the overall landscape character and quality. All of these designations are indicated on Figure 3.

## National Designations

## Gardens and Designed landscapes (GDLs)

- 4.24. GDLs are listed within the inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland, which is compiled and maintained by Historic Environment Scotland on behalf of the Scottish Government under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. These designed landscapes are noted as having a high value because of their national importance in contributing to Scotland's historic environment and landscape. They are protected by Scottish Planning Policy (SPP). The policies relevant to this impact assessment are located within the "Valuing the Historic Environment" section of the SPP, Paragraph 148 — Gardens and Designed Landscapes and Scottish Borders Council LDP Policy EP10 - Gardens and Designed Landscapes.
- 4.25. There are two existing GDLs found within 4km of the proposed site, details are included in the table below and show on Figure 3:

Table 4-3: GDLs found within 4km of the Proposed Site

Designation Name	Distance to Site	Historic Environment Scotland <sup>9</sup> Designation Summary
Fairnilee	540m West	<i>"The walled and formal garden grounds at Fairnilee comprise an excellent example of Edwardian design, restored and maintained to a very high standard. There is good physical and documentary evidence for the history of the site, while the mature woodlands around the house and gardens contribute to the scenery of the local upland valley landscape."</i>
Abbotsford	2.45km Northeast	<i>"Abbotsford is among the most significant designed landscapes in Scotland, renowned for its historical and artistic importance as the creation of prominent writer and poet, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832). The house itself is of major architectural importance and is recognised as the forerunner of the Scots Baronial Revival, while the wider estate contains a scheduled ancient monument and extensive woodlands that enrich the wider Tweed valley landscape."</i>

<sup>9</sup> Historic Environment Scotland (2015). [online] Available at: <http://portal.historic-scotland.gov.uk/designation/GDL00153>

### Historical, Cultural & Nature Designations

- 4.26. There is a single SAC to the south of the application site. This is part of the wider River Tweed Conservation Area which runs along the length of the River Tweed.
- 4.27. There are a large number of listed buildings within 2km of the proposal site. A large cluster can be found to the northeast of the site within the settlement of Galashiels. The closest listed building is Sunderland Hall to the south of the proposed development with other Grade B and C listed buildings including the Tweed Bridge located to the southeast. Grade A listed building High Sunderland is also to the south southwest of the application site.
- 4.28. Two Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) are located in close proximity to the site. Rink Hill Fort being the closest SAM which is described as a Prehistoric domestic and defensive fort situated to the top of Rink Hill in a prominent location.
- 4.29. The historical and cultural designations are assessed in full in the accompanying cultural heritage assessment.

### Recreational Access

- 4.30. The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 required the Scottish Borders Council to provide a system of paths through the council area known as core paths. The act allows responsible non-motorised access through most land and inland waterways throughout Scotland. There are a number of designated council core paths and cycle routes within the study zone, which provide a range of opportunities for people to freely access and enjoy the surrounding countryside.
- 4.31. The nearest core paths include: RBUS/29/1 1.15km to the east and CLOV/189/3 1 1.65km to the west. Much of the potential views along the lengths of these paths are contained by mature trees lining their roadside or waterways. The Promoted Path CLOV/41P/1 is approximately 265m to the south of the application site running along the banks of the River Tweed.

### Regional & Local Designations

#### Special Landscape Areas

- 4.32. As previously determined the site falls within Special Landscape Area 3: Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow Confluences. This sets out the potential pressures from development on the area as well as recommendations for management;

#### *Forces for change:*

- *Changes to forestry management practices*
- *Changes to estate management practices, which may affect large areas*

- *Development pressure at the edges of Galashiels and Selkirk*
- *Development of wind farms and wind turbines, and hillside access tracks*

*Management recommendations:*

- *Continue to promote sustainable estate management to balance the needs of biodiversity, recreation and tourism*
- *Careful management of land use at settlement edges*
- *Consider landscape and visual impacts of proposed developments in and around settlements*
- *Consider the effects of development on hilltops, such as masts or wind farms, which may be visible within the valley*

#### Scottish Borders Council Garden & Designed Landscapes Study

- 4.33. A review of the existing nationally protected GDLs and non-designated designed landscape within the Scottish Border Council area was carried out by Peter McGowan and Christopher Dingwall<sup>10</sup> on behalf of Scottish Borders Council in 2008. These designed landscape are recognised by the council as being a major contributor to the setting of the existing Scottish Borders landscape. The Draft SPG Gardens and Designed Landscape study assessed each designed landscape and assigned it a provisional value of significance. Currently only those designed landscapes of national importance which are designated as Historic Garden and Designed Landscapes are protected by Policy 5.10 of the Scottish Border Council LDP.
- 4.34. Further details of each site and their locations can be found in Annex 2: Map and Annex 3: Borders Designed Landscape Survey: Schedule of Identified Sites of the above study.

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<sup>10</sup> Peter McGowan Associates on behalf of Scottish Borders Council (2008). [online] Available at: [https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/1685/survey\\_of\\_designed\\_landscapes](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/1685/survey_of_designed_landscapes)

Table 4-4: Designed Landscapes found within 4km of the Proposed Site

Designation Name	Distance to Site	Peter McGowan and Christopher Dingwall <sup>11</sup> Designation Summary	Significance
Yair (No. 76)	418m South	Riverside parkland, woodlands with planned walks and distinctive agricultural layout.	Regional, High
Fairnilee (No.163) (Existing HGDL)	540m West	Early 20 <sup>th</sup> century House in older well managed Tweedside DL. Good restocking of field boundaries hedgerows etc.	Regional, High
Gala House (No. 75)	2.44km Northeast	Partially subsumed by Galashiels but providing setting for important buildings and uses.	Local, High
Abbotsford (No. 61) (Existing HGDL)	2.45km Northeast	House and landscape developed and planted by Sir Walter Scott of outstanding national Significance. Extensive planned estate that is a major component of the landscape between the Tweed and Elidon Hills west of Melrose Woods, trees, belts, hedgerows and agricultural parks with underused system of rides and paths.	National, Outstanding
Faldonside (No.138)	1.38km East	Riverside House with parkland-cum lawns and continuation of Scott's Landscape (of No.61).	Regional, High
Sunderland Hall (No.78)	375m South	Complex and disparate estate at confluence of Tweed and Ettrick. Prominent parkland between rivers. Two Modernist buildings	Regional. High

<sup>11</sup> Peter McGowan Associates on behalf of Scottish Borders Council (2008). [online] Available at: [https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/1685/survey\\_of\\_designed\\_landscapes](https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/1685/survey_of_designed_landscapes)

Philippaugh (No.79)	2.24km South	Very Extensive and well planned estate landscape. Good provision for public access.	National, Some/Regional, High
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## Landscape Value

- 4.35. The agricultural land of the proposed site is typical grassland which could be replaced and is of low/medium value. The proposed site boundary walls are of medium value, while the combination of these elements and site's steeply rising land is typical of this part of the Scottish Borders Landscape, having local importance of medium value. The designated landscapes and heritage features are themselves of national importance of high value.

## IMPACTS (LANDSCAPE)

- 4.36. Having established the landscape baseline into which the proposed development will be sited it is necessary to consider those landscape components known as 'receptors' which have the potential to be effected by changes brought about by the proposed development. The effects resulting from the interaction of the proposed development and landscape receptors will be identified for both the construction and completion phases.

## Landscape Receptor Sensitivity

- 4.37. The landscape sensitivity of the following receptors identified through the baseline study is determined by considering their susceptibility to change from the proposed development and their value based on professional judgement. Further details can be found in the accompanying methodology appendix.
- The Upland Fringe Valley with Settlements LCT will have varying levels of sensitivity. Its mature woodlands and valley sides will have a medium-high sensitivity, while its more populated areas will have low-medium sensitivity.
  - The site elements and features which include grassland, drystone boundaries and hardcore pathway will have a low to medium sensitivity.
  - The Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow Confluences. SLA is of local/regional importance with medium-high sensitivity. The Garden Designations Landscape are of national importance and of high sensitivity.

## Landscape Effects

- 4.38. The following section assesses the magnitude of effects the proposed development will have on the landscape character and resources of the landscape receptors. These effects will then be combined with the landscape sensitivity, as confirmed above, to determine the degree of effects. The level of effects are based on the matrix table within the methodology and professional judgement.

### Construction Phase

- 4.39. During construction, the predominant perceptual landscape impacts would be from construction noise, including noise of construction traffic, increased traffic movement along the existing access road, and on local roads. Construction works will include the presence of machinery, lighting and construction activities, these would be short to medium term temporary. All impacts would be local and temporary.

### Completed Phases

- 4.40. Once completed the main impacts will be the loss to agricultural land and increased vehicular and pedestrian movements from the site. There is also the potential to increase the urban character of this open countryside area, however mitigation measures could be implemented to enhance the existing screening.
- 4.41. The following assesses the landscape effects upon the landscape character type, site context and landscape designations.

### Landscape Character

- 4.42. It is implied that during the construction phase there will be a much localised temporary disruption to the tranquillity of the site and immediate landscape of the Upland Fringe Valley with Settlements LCT from the construction activity occurring on the site.
- 4.43. The two new properties will add a small holiday cottage development onto the elevated pasture farmland found within the Upland Fringe Valley with Settlements LCT. The proposed development's siting in the hill slope, low scale and use of natural materials found within the surroundings will help to accommodate it with this LCT. The LCT's characteristic steep sloping land and mature woods will further help to limit visibility of the proposed development from important inward and outward views along the steep valley sides. The proposed development is contained within the limits of the field away from key features including established boundaries and wooded areas. The alterations to the site levels by cutting into the land and resulting earthen mounds will have a minor localised change to the landform of this LCT.



- 4.44. Overall, the medium to high sensitivity of this LCT and low magnitude of change of the proposed development will after completion have a localised Moderate/Minor adverse effect upon the setting of the Upland Fringe Valley with Settlements LCT.

#### Site Context

- 4.45. The construction works will result in a loss of vegetation coverage, changes to the site levels, new entrance point, temporary works, storage of materials and movement of site workers, machinery and deliveries. During site works any necessary storage of material or machinery outwith the site will be sited eastwards of the access track to protect the trees along the neighbouring boundary. It may be necessary to trim a short branch of a single oak tree which partially overhangs the cattle grid to prevent snagging of it from any construction machinery. Any boundary walls which are accidentally disturbed during the construction works will be fully reinstated.
- 4.46. The proposed development, once completed, will result in a permanent land use change from one of grazing land to a small development consisting of two holiday cottages. The proposed development will add two distinct properties of a contemporary style along with additional infrastructure onto this plot of land, together with a low level movement of people and traffic on and off the site. It should be noted that the proposed development site will only occupy a small proportion of the larger triangular field which will continue to be used for grazing.
- 4.47. The siting of the holiday cottages has been designed so as to cut into the existing profile of the slope of the land rather than standing tall and being prominent within the landscape. The cut material will be used to create screening mounds. These elevated mounds will have a rounded profile and be covered in grass to help integrate them and the built structures into the local land.
- 4.48. The proposed development will be sited away from the existing field's dry stone boundaries, with the exception of the new site entrance point. This entrance will require the breaching of a short length of the field's boundary wall next to the B7060 road. The proposed mitigation measures will ensure that the new entrance point will be designed to tie in with the existing wall on either side.
- 4.49. The existing access track surface and gradient will be upgraded to allow the access of cars onto the site. A new short length of track will run from the new entrance point off the B7060 road to the existing track which will have a matching surface finish.
- 4.50. Overall, the low to medium sensitivity of the site and low magnitude of change of the proposed development will, after completion, have a localised Minor to Moderate/Minor adverse effect upon the setting of the proposed site.

#### Designations

- 4.51. The proposed development is located within the Tweed, Etrick and Yarrow Confluences SLA. The initial construction works will occur on a very small proportion of lands within the SLA.

The works will have a localised increase of activity occurring on the site lands and movement of traffic on/off the local roads. This will result in localised temporary effects on rural character of this SLA. The visual extent of this work across the SLA will be greatly limited by the designation's distinct mature woodlands.

- 4.52. The two holiday cottages have been intentionally designed to minimise their visibility across this SLA through their setting into the western side of Rink Hill, low scale and exterior finishes. The SLAs characteristic woodland and steep valley sides will also help contain views towards the proposed development. There will be some slight localised movement of people and traffic upon this low hill associated with the new development. Though the tree lined valley sides will help to contain such views with some distant elevated views possible to the southwest and southeast.
- 4.53. The proposed development will have no direct effect on the area's distinct woodland or the setting of the Abbotsford HGDL which form key characteristics of the part of this designation found within the study zone.
- 4.54. All six selected viewpoints which are considered later in this chapter fall within the extent of this SLA and show the limited extent of visibility of the proposed development. The greatest of views of the proposed development looking across the SLA are experienced on short stretches of road from viewpoints 2 and 5.
- 4.55. Overall, the medium-high sensitivity of this designation and low magnitude change of the proposed development will, after completion, have a localised Moderate/Minor adverse effect upon user's experience of the Tweed, Etrick and Yarrow Confluences SLA.
- 4.56. The accompanying Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment has assessed the visual effects of the development upon the Fairnilee House GDL as be "Low to negligible". The ZTV shows that the proposed development will not be visible within the grounds of Abbotsford GDL.

## 5. VISUAL APPRAISAL

### BASELINE (VISUAL)

- 5.1. In order to be able to assess how the proposed development will potentially affect the existing views experienced by people and their visual amenity within the study zone, it is necessary to first determine the extent of the proposed development's potential visibility and those likely to be effected. This was established by determining the following criteria:
- The area in which the proposed development may be visible, based on the bare earth ZTV, desktop study and during the field visit;
  - The different groups of people (known as visual receptors) who may experience views of the proposed development; and
  - The viewpoints where they will be affected and the nature of views at those points.

### Views of the Site & Receptors

#### Site Visibility

- 5.2. A review of the proposed site's visibility across the study zone has found many potential receptor's views are restricted by the area's characteristic lines and groupings of mature trees. Potential views will be further contained by the proposed development site's setting on the north western flanks of Rink Hill and notable topographical variations across the local landscape.
- 5.3. Views from the north are restricted by the steeply inclined sloping land which rises up from the proposal site towards the hill fort on the summit of Rink Hill. There are more open views across to the proposed site from the east stretching as far as the mast on Lindean moor. A number of residents clustered around Lindean will experience a mix of ground and upper floor views. Yet many inward views from this direction are screened by the dense blocks of mature woodlands. Views from the south extend to the hills by Yair Hill in the distance, with the more open moorland allowing distance elevated views across to the proposed site. Some closer views are possible along short stretches of the road network of the A707 and B7060 or pathway by the River Tweed. Yet, such views will be affected the intervening tree coverage. Similarly, views from the west are contained by higher land beyond Hog Hill and Craig Hills as well as areas of woodland.

## Viewpoint Selection

5.4. A total of six viewpoints representative of several receptor types were chosen from publicly available views, with none selected from private dwellings or lanes. These viewpoints are located across a range of directions with views looking towards the proposal site, as mapped in Figure 4. All views were photographed and the extent of the site annotated within each view as illustrated in Figures 5 to 10. A photomontage has been developed from viewpoint 5 (Figure 9b) which has the clearest inward views towards the proposed site.

Table 5-1: Selected Five Representative Viewpoints

Viewpoint Number, Location and Grid Co-ordinates	Receptor	Sensitivity	Distance from proposed site	Direction of View from proposed site	Reason for choosing included in assessment
Selected viewpoints for assessment					
1: Junction of A1 Road with Bridgelands Road 348065E 630921N	Road Users Walkers	Medium-High	1.63km	SE	Main Transport Route between Galashiels and Selkirk which also serves as a corepath.
2: Local Road 340m southeast of Sunnycroft Farm, Lindean 349369E 630578N	Road Users	Medium	2.57	SE	Elevated views from southeast from minor route connecting the A7 and A699.
3: B7060 Road and National Cycle Route 1 347929E 632326N	Road Users	Medium-High	320m	SE	Road directly passing the edges of the site. It is also an important cycle route
4: Footpath along the banks of the River Tweed 347460E 632290N	Walkers	High	275m	SW	One of Scottish Borders Council's promoted paths
5: Along the A707 at Yair Hill Forest. 346913E 632277N	Road Users	Medium	740	SW	Views across the Tweed Valley from this main route. Within Yair (No.76 Borders Designed Landscape)

6: Hog Hill on the Southern Upland Way 346746E 633702N	Walkers	Medium-High	1.39km	NW	Views from the long distance walking route
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## IMPACTS (VISUAL)

- 5.5. The following section considers the potential changes of the proposed development upon the views and the sensitivity of each receptor during the construction and operation stages.

### Viewpoint Assessment

#### Viewpoint 1: Junction of A1 Road with Bridgelands Road

##### Existing Context of View

- 5.6. This viewpoint is taken next to the road junction of the A7 with this minor road, both of which are also Council Core paths. The dense band of mature deciduous and coniferous trees in the middle ground of this view, located on either side of the River Tweed banks, fully screen any views in the direction of the proposal site.

##### Change to View

- 5.7. The proposed development during any phase is fully screened from this point due to the thick band of woodland. The mix of coniferous trees will further help to limit views during the winter months from this viewpoint when other trees are lacking any leaf coverage.
- 5.8. The ZTV shows the proposed development has some potential limited visibility across this main transport route. However, such views are fully screened by either trees directly alongside the road or intervening landscape as shown from this viewpoint. Therefore the existing views of road users including walkers will remain unaffected by the proposed development.

##### Degree of effect

- 5.9. The medium to high sensitivity of these vehicular users, cyclists and walkers together with a no change magnitude of change will result in no visual effects on their existing transient views.

**Viewpoint 2: Local Road 340m southeast of Sunnycroft Farm, Lindean****Existing Context of View**

- 5.10. This view looks to the northwest across an elevated section of this unnamed road, which provides a thoroughfare between the main A7 and A699 roads. Views moving further west towards the A7 become more obscured by the roadside vegetation and variations in the topography.
- 5.11. The proposed site can be clearly seen as part of the larger triangular field in which it is located upon the slopes of Rink Hill in the middle ground of this view. The small cluster of houses eastwards of the proposed site are those around Rink Farm. The land continues to rise across a series of hills further up towards the northwest against the background of this view, including Hog Hill (Viewpoint 6) and higher Meigle Hill.

**Change to View**

- 5.12. The proposed site openness and elevated slopes will mean that there will be views of all the construction works as it progresses on the site. These views will include the movement of site workers, deliveries, evacuators, telescopic loaders and storage of material occurring at various stages of the works which will be of a temporary nature and at a distance of approximately 750-800m away.
- 5.13. The proposed development will add two distinct new built feature into this view, occupying a small area of existing agricultural land. Views will contain side profiles of the two proposed holiday cottages stepped down into this land along with partial views of the associated parking, energy features and pathway from this point. There will be also be some infrequent movement of visitors through the proposed site and travelling to/from it. The distance from the site will mean the proposed development will be viewed as a minor element within this view, experienced as glimpses moving east to west along this road.
- 5.14. The design of the buildings and parking have been partially cut into the land or surrounded by earth mounds to help contain them within the site and limit their views from road users. The exterior finishes will consist of a range of materials like whinstone, timber and grassed mounds which will complement the range and colour of natural elements in the local area. Limited lighting emissions at night will be viewed with other properties lower down the hill by Rink Farm.

**Degree of Effects**

- 5.15. The medium sensitivity of road users with a low magnitude of change will result in Minor adverse effect.

### Viewpoint 3: B7060 Road and National Cycle Route 1

#### Existing Context of View

- 5.16. This view is looking across the road towards the location of the proposed site entrance. The new entrance will be taken off the existing field track which is partially visible within this view, found to the east of a group of trees. The main proportion of the proposed site is barely visible due to low drystone walling along the outer field boundary and steep variations in the topography.
- 5.17. The main views along this section of route look away from the proposed site. With one's view drawn across the Tweed Valley to the undulating lands within Yair Hill Forest and beyond to the west and south of this point.

#### Change to View

- 5.18. Views of the construction activity will be greatest during the creation of the new site entrance and upgrading of the existing track way. Views of works within the main site will be partially contained by the hillside. There will be views of construction traffic moving directly on/off this road and within the site.
- 5.19. The proposed development will slightly alter the existing land profile, with minor partial views of the tips of mound or roofline peering above the outline of the existing land profile. The smoothly shaped grassed mounds will help to reduce the visibility of these buildings side profiles from passing road users. The majority of built form of either building and energy units across the proposed site will be hidden from view due to their low lying setting into the existing hill slope or by the fluctuation in the immediate surrounding land's topography.
- 5.20. The length of track way will be clearly visible from this point. Though the new section of track will gently follow the existing field contours and tie into the existing length of track. The track will be surfaced with a suitable locally sourced aggregate and the new site entrance will respect the existing roadside boundary wall. These measures will help to integrate these elements into the local landscape.
- 5.21. There will also be a slight increase of traffic on and off the site, though such will be a low number and infrequent.
- 5.22. Potential for light spillage from the exterior or interior of these holiday cottages at night will be minimal, as any lighting will be contained by the mounds and variations in the local topography.

#### Degree of Effects

- 5.23. The high sensitivity of cyclists and medium sensitivity of vehicular users together with a negligible/low magnitude of change will result in a None-Minor adverse effect on the views of the various road users when directly passing by the site.

#### Viewpoint 4: Footpath along the banks of the River Tweed

##### Existing Context of View

- 5.24. The view is from a short section of the Scottish Borders Council Promoted Path running along the banks of the River Tweed. It can be accessed from the Old Tweed Bridge approximately 1.35km to the east or off the B7060 by Rigged Craig approximately 1.27km to the west northwest of this location.
- 5.25. Views in the direction of the proposed site are looking northwards across the immediate pastureland which steeply rises up towards the site. This is located in the background of this view. The site is only partially visible due to the screening provided by several mature trees which line the B7060 road. The existing access track which serves the proposed site and surrounding fields is demarked by the exposed sandy soils along its edges.

##### Change to View

- 5.26. There will be partial views of the construction activity through the site including that of machinery like dumpers, HGVs, top loaders or excavators. Views will also include these vehicles moving along the existing farm track way.
- 5.27. The proposed development will only be partially visible through gaps in the trees, with some structures partially screened by the branches of these mature trees. Views in the winter months will slightly increase when these trees lack any tree cover. The relatively small scale of both holiday cottages and sitting lower down into the lands will help limit their visibility, appearing only as a minor element within this view. The use of natural material to their exteriors finishes will help assimilate these elements into the local landscape. There will be some infrequent movement of traffic along the access track which will be partially screened by the same trees and a small block of woodland next to the B7060. The small carpark area will be similarly screened by the roadside trees. It will be set into the hill slope and screened by mounding.
- 5.28. The main views along this route, which look towards the banks of the Tweed River, will not be affected by the proposed development.

##### Degree of Effects

- 5.29. The high sensitivity of walkers and negligible/low magnitude of change will result in a None-Minor adverse effect on their views.



### Viewpoint 5: Along A707 at Yair Hill Forest.

#### Existing Context of View

- 5.30. This viewpoint is from the eastern access entrance to the Forestry Commission's Yair Hill Forest, approximately 970m east of the main public parking area.
- 5.31. The view from the A7074 road looks across the Tweed Valley towards the proposed site visible upon the upper slopes of Rink Hill to the northeast in the back ground. The boundary of the site and wider field are defined by the dry stone walls. The adjacent access track is again demarked by the exposed sandy soil along its edges. The various mature trees lining the sides of the River Tweed and B7060 in the middle ground are a dominant feature of this view. While the small group of trees in the background are within the Rink Hill Fort.

#### Changes to View

- 5.32. The proposal sites openness and elevated slopes means there will be clear views of all the construction works as they progress on the site. These views will include the movement of site workers, deliveries, and machinery such as evacuators, telescopic loaders and storage of material occurring at various stages of the works which will be of a temporary nature. The distance of approximately 750-800m will lessen the visual prominence of the activity from this viewpoint.
- 5.33. The proposed development will add two distinct new built feature into this distinct rural view, as illustrated in the photomontage (see Figure 9b in the appendix). Views will contain full front profiles of the two proposed holiday cottages sited within the slope of the site and partial views of the proposed energy features and pathway from this point. Views of the main parking area will be partially contained by the shaped embankments around it. There will be some minor light emissions from these buildings at night. There will be also be some movement of visitors through the proposed site and travelling to/from it.
- 5.34. The design of the buildings and parking have been partially cut into the slope of the land and will be surrounded by earth mounds to help contain them within the site. The exterior finishes will consist of a range of materials like whinstone, glass, timber and grassed mounds which will complement the range and colour of natural elements in the local area.

#### Degree of Effects

- 5.35. The medium sensitivity of the road users together with low/medium magnitude of change will result in a Moderate to Moderate/Minor adverse effect. These views will be experienced transiently and at a distance which will help reduce the prevalence of the development.

## Viewpoint 6: Hog Hill on Southern Upland Way

### Existing Context of View

- 5.36. This view is looking out from along the Southern Upland Way towards the proposed site to the south east. This expansive view which extends as far as the large transmission mast by Lindean Moor contains a mix of pastoral farmland, large woodlands, rural dwellings and the settlement of Selkirk (outwith the image – to the south).
- 5.37. The proposal site is located within the middle ground of this view, though the dry stone wall along its western boundary fully screen inwards views of the parcel of land.

### Changes to View

- 5.38. There will be some partial views of construction works taking place on the site peering above the stone wall, including machinery such as the extended arms of excavators and telescopic loaders. The proposed site's downward sloping nature to its south eastern end helps to further limit the extent of the construction activity visibility from this point.
- 5.39. The proposed development will be barely visible from this point due the lower setting of the holiday cottages and parking which will be cut into the existing land and will greatly help to contain potential views. There may some very minor views of the grassed tips of the raised embankments created to help screen the buildings and the roofs tips slightly jutting over the existing stone wall along the northern boundary. The minor changes in the topography will be hard to distinguish from the existing undulating variations across the wider field grassland already visible peering above the dry stone wall field boundary.

### Degree of Effects

- 5.40. The high sensitivity of the walkers together with negligible magnitude of change will result in No adverse visual effect.

## 6. MITIGATION MEASURES

- 6.1. The mitigation measures have been recommended for the proposed development in order in order to help avoid, reduce or compensate for any predicted degree of effects on both the landscape resource and visual amenity.

### CONSTRUCTION PHASE

- 6.2. A number of measures which can be taken to help minimise disturbance of the landscape resources or visual receptor will include:
- Following best construction codes of practices including the stock piling of soils and safe storage of materials;
  - No materials or machinery should be temporarily stored on the western side of the laneway to ensure protection of the trees rooting area and away from dry stone walling to prevent damaging these landscape features;
  - Any necessary works within the Root Protection Areas of trees to be carried out in accordance with BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction. Recommendations;
  - Any accidentally disturbed or weakened dry stone walling will be fully reinstated;
  - Site works will take place at agreed times with Scottish Borders Council; and
  - Use of site lighting should be directed down and away from any visual receptors.

### COMPLETION PHASE

- In order to help visually integrate the scheme into the landscape the holiday cottages and car parking spaces will be set cut into the existing land profile with the land gently graded back towards the holiday cottages and surrounding land;
- The site entrance will be tied into the existing field boundaries;
- Finishes to exterior surfaces will be of subtle colours and materials respective of the local landscape; and

- Any lighting should be designed to prevent light spillage into the wider land.

## 7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### SUMMARY

- 7.1. The proposed development of two holiday cottages will be sited upon a small plot of pasture lands within a larger triangular shaped field upon the slopes of Rink Hill.
- 7.2. The setting of the proposed development will be contained upon Rink Hill by cutting and earth mounding, the use of local natural stone and timber exterior finishes and its low scale. This will help to limit the effects upon the characteristics of the Upland Fringe Valley with Settlements LCT to have a localised Minor/Moderate adverse effect. The greatest effects on the existing site's features or elements will result from the permanent changes to the landform and change of use from pasture to leisure use resulting in a Minor to Moderate/Minor adverse effect. The effects on the Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow Confluences SLA in which the proposed development is sited will be confined by its lower scale and the SLA characteristics areas of woodland and valley sides which restrict its visibility. Where visible the proposed development will result in localised Moderate/Minor adverse effect upon user's experience of the SLA.
- 7.3. The bare earth ZTV coverage shows the proposed development will have limited visibility across the study area due to the screen of it by the steeply inclined higher valley sides. During the field visit it was found many potential views are further restricted by the areas distinct bands of mature woodland.
- 7.4. A total of six viewpoints were assessed with the resulting visual effects ranging from None to Moderate adverse effects. The majority of receptors having limited views towards the proposed site due to dense screening provided by the areas distinct mature woodlands resulting in None/Minor adverse effects. The two building's structures and supporting infrastructure have been intentionally designed so that they will have limited visibility from any local visual receptors. This has been achieved by cutting into the hill and surrounding the buildings by earthen embankments and stone walls while also keeping the roofline level flush with these new screening features.
- 7.5. The greatest views will be experienced at a distance from the proposed site where there are open unobstructed views across the Tweed Valley towards the proposed site as shown from Viewpoint 2 on a local road and Viewpoint 5 along the A707. The produced photomontage (Figure 5b: Viewpoint 5) illustrates the small scale of the proposed development with each house's front profile spanning approximately 22m in length, including the stone walls. These buildings relatively low height, siting into the hill and subtle natural material finishes all help to reduce the prominence of the new buildings and parked cars from these limited views of travellers. The views of road users passing by both viewpoints will be experienced only for a brief period of time. The existing roadside hedgerows and trees quickly hinders views further

along these routes. Lighting of the proposed development at night will be kept to a minimal by using directional lighting to restrict light spillage onto the wider rural lands.

## CONCLUSION

- 7.6. The location and design layout of the proposed development will ensure it has no prominent adverse effects upon the characteristics of the Upland Fringe with Settlements LCT, Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow Confluences SLA or views of various visual receptors. It will be possible to integrate the proposal into the local landscape in keeping with Policies HD2: Housing in the Countryside and EP5 Special Landscape Areas.

## 8.APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: FIGURES

Figure 1	Site Location Plan
Figure 2	National Landscape Character Types with ZTV
Figure 3	Landscape Designation Map with ZTV
Figure 4	Viewpoint Locations Map with ZTV
Figure 5	Viewpoint 1: Junction of A1 Road with Bridgelands Road
Figure 6	Viewpoint 2: Local Road 340m southeast of Sunnycroft Farm, Lindean
Figure 7	Viewpoint 3: B7060 Road and National Cycle Route 1
Figure 8	Viewpoint 4: Footpath along the banks of the River Tweed
Figure 9a	Viewpoint 5: Along the A707 at Yair Hill Forest (Existing View)
Figure 9b	Viewpoint 5: Along the A707 at Yair Hill Forest (Photomontage)
Figure 10	Viewpoint 6: Hog Hill on the Southern Upland Way

### APPENDIX B: LVIA METHODOLOGY

