

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

**APPLICATION TO BE DETERMINED UNDER POWERS DELEGATED TO
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER**

PART III REPORT (INCORPORATING REPORT OF HANDLING)

REF : 19/00330/FUL
APPLICANT : Mr And Mrs Cook
AGENT : Ferguson Planning
DEVELOPMENT : Erection of dwellinghouse
LOCATION: Land East Of Lilybrooke West Flemington
Eyemouth
Scottish Borders

TYPE : FUL Application

REASON FOR DELAY:

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Plan Ref	Plan Type	Plan Status
7649PL1	Proposed Plans	Refused
7649PL2	Proposed Elevations	Refused
7649PL3	Proposed Site Plan	Refused
7649PL4	Existing Site Plan	Refused
7649PL5	Location Plan	Refused

NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIONS: 0

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

CONSULTATIONS

SBC Education: No response at the time of writing.

SBC Environmental Health: No objection, subject to conditions relating to foul drainage and water supply. I note from the plans that two stoves are to be installed as part of the development and so long as it is less than 45kW no further information needs to be provided. If it is greater than 45kW then the applicant needs to declare this and provide additional information so that a screening assessment can be carried out.

SBC Roads Planning: No objection, subject to conditions relating to parking and turning, vehicular access and visibility splays. The site has previously had an application for a dwellinghouse at this location under 17/01654/FUL. Before this application was withdrawn, there were no roads objections raised.

Community Council: No response at the time of writing.

REPRESENTATIONS

None.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICIES:

Local Development Plan 2016:

PMD1: Sustainability
PMD2: Quality Standards
HD2: Housing in the Countryside
HD3: Protection of Residential Amenity
ED10: Protection of Prime Quality Agricultural Land and Carbon Rich Soils
EP5: Special Landscape Areas
EP7: Listed Buildings
EP10: Gardens and Designed Landscapes
EP13: Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
EP14: Coastline
IS2: Development Contributions
IS7: Parking Provision and Standards
IS9: Waste Water Treatment Standards and SUDS

Supplementary Planning Guidance:

Development Contributions 2011 (updated January 2018)
Landscape and Development 2008
New Housing in the Borders Countryside 2008
Placemaking and Design 2010
Privacy and Amenity 2006
Local Landscape Designations 2012

Other Considerations:

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP)

Recommendation by - Paul Duncan (Assistant Planning Officer) on 5th June 2019

BACKGROUND

This application seeks planning permission to erect a single dwellinghouse at the West Flemington building group near Ayton. The site is located to the east of the applicant's existing detached dwellinghouse, known as Lilybrooke. This application follows the withdrawal of a previous application for a dwellinghouse of alternative design on the same plot [planning reference 17/01654/FUL].

SITE DESCRIPTION

West Flemington is a small building group located on the lower slopes of Ayton Hill with a northerly aspect. The group is comprised of four detached dwellinghouses, a derelict B-listed former farm steading and a modern barn building. A public road serves the site from a junction with the C129 road between Ayton and the A1. The public road continues south of the proposed site and connects with the A1 at Burnmouth.

The site itself is located within a corner of a larger agricultural field which is bound by the East Coast Main Line and the A1. The southern boundary to the site is defined by well established hedging. There is no existing boundary to the north and the boundary to the east is not strongly defined. The proposed site slopes down to the north.

The site is outwith the Berwickshire Coast Special Landscape Area and Ayton Castle Designed Landscape.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed dwellinghouse would be comprised of a central hip-roofed element with flanking offshoot wings on either side. The two pitched roof wings would feature north-facing gable windows. A further flat-

roofed extension would sit off the eastern offshoot wing. A porch would be attached to the rear of the house. Two tall flues would rise above the roofline.

SITE HISTORY

Relevant planning history in the vicinity of the proposed site can be summarised as follows:

- 06/00872/FUL - Erection of dwellinghouse [Lilybrooke] with integral garage - Approved
- 16/00136/FUL - Change of use from storage barn, alterations and extension to form dwellinghouse [conversion of existing barn building to dwellinghouse] - Refused on appeal to LRB
- 16/01189/FUL - Change of use of land to incorporate into garden ground and erection of detached garage with annexe accommodation [to Lilybrooke] - Approved
- 17/01654/FUL - Erection of dwelling with integral garage [original design for house on proposed site] - Withdrawn
- 19/00625/FUL - Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse [Lilybrooke] - Approved

KEY PLANNING POLICIES

Planning policies of particular significance to this application would include:

Local Development Plan (LDP) policy PMD2 (Quality Standards) requires all development to be of high quality in accordance with sustainability principles, designed to fit in with Borders landscape surroundings. Development should be of a scale, massing, height and density appropriate to its surroundings.

Policy HD2 (A) allows new housing in the countryside provided that the site is well related to an existing building group of at least three houses or buildings capable of conversion to residential use. Any consents for new build granted under the building group part of the policy should not exceed two houses or a 30% increase in addition to the group during the Plan period. No further development above this threshold will be permitted. The cumulative impact of the new development on the character of the building group, landscape and amenity of the surrounding area will be taken into account in determining applications.

The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: New Housing in the Borders Countryside December 2008 states that the existence of a group will be identifiable by a sense of place which will be contributed to by natural and man-made boundaries. Sites should not normally break into undeveloped fields particularly where there exists a definable natural boundary between the building group and the field and the new development should be limited to the area contained by that sense of place. Any new development should be within a reasonable distance of the existing properties within the building group and this distance should be guided by the spacing between the existing properties in the building group. The scale and siting of new development should reflect and respect the character and amenity of the existing building group. Existing groups may be complete and may not be suitable for further additions.

The Council's Placemaking and Design SPG is also a material consideration and sets out detailed guidance on the design standards expected of new development within the Scottish Borders.

ASSESSMENT

Policy Principle

The principle of erecting a dwellinghouse at the proposed site must be assessed against Policy HD2(A) (Housing in the Countryside) and the Council's New Housing in the Borders Countryside SPG. Policy HD2(A) aims to support new rural housing where it is associated with existing building groups of three units or more. There are 4 dwellinghouses at West Flemington which are sufficiently well related to one another so that they represent a building group. This has been accepted for many years. This part of the policy test is therefore met. The policy sets a maximum total of 2 additional dwellings at a building group within the Local Development Plan period, or a 30% increase, whichever is higher. A maximum of 2 additional units may therefore be built at this particular building group within the current plan period. No houses have been

built since the start of the current plan period and there is one existing single unit approval [planning reference 16/01460/PPP]. The proposed dwellinghouse would be the second additional dwelling. The numerical requirements of the policy would therefore be satisfied.

The remaining tests of policy HD2(A) require a suitable relationship to be achieved between any proposed site and its respective building group. The effect of development on the character of the building group is also key and is assessed separately below. It is considered that land to the east of Lilybrooke would be sufficiently well related to the existing building group. The development pattern at this part of the building group is linear and the proposed site would continue this. Whilst I would be mindful of potential for sprawl, one further dwellinghouse would not produce any unacceptable effect of this nature. Any further housing to the east of the proposed site is unlikely to be satisfy current rural housing policies. Were this application approved, a further condition would be required to require tree/ hedge planting to the north and eastern boundaries of the site to provide an attractive and established boundary to the building group.

It should be noted that when Lilybrooke was granted planning permission, a condition was attached seeking a landscaping on the eastern boundary to provide a suitable edge to the building group. This condition was not adhered to. The period for enforcing the condition has passed.

Placemaking and Design

The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: New Housing in the Borders Countryside December 2008 states that new development should be limited to the area contained by the building group's sense of place. In terms of siting, the location of the proposed site is considered acceptable for the reasons outlined further above. The size of the proposed plot is a separate consideration. The appropriate scale of rural plot sizes is largely defined by the existing context in the vicinity of any given site. Very large plots with planning permission exist elsewhere within Berwickshire. At this location, the existing context is defined primarily by the adjoining two bungalows to the west. Both are relatively modestly sized in curtilage. I would not agree that the grassed area to the north of Lilybrooke is within its curtilage. The proposed plot is significantly larger than either of these two plots and is felt to be at odds with the existing context. Resultingly, it falls partially outwith the area contained by the site's sense of place.

Local Development Plan policy PMD2 (Quality Standards) requires to be designed in sympathy with the Borders' architectural styles. Development should respect the character of the surrounding area and neighbouring built form. Policy HD2(A) (Housing in the Countryside - Building Groups) requires new rural housing to be appropriate in scale, and design, and sympathetic to the character of the building group to which it must be well related.

The character of built form at the building group varies, but is more clearly defined closer to the proposed site. This was noted at the time of the previous application. Lilybrooke is a modestly sized bungalow with an L shape design that reduces the visual mass of the house. The dwellinghouse to the west, known as The Bungalow, is self evidently of single storey design, as is The Cottage further beyond. The traditional B listed farm buildings are also mainly single storey in appearance. The B listed farmhouse is larger in scale and massing but does little to define context at the group, being largely out of view to public receptors. Notwithstanding this, traditional farmhouses tend to dominate rural building groups within the Borders. In sensitive building groups of historic interest such as West Flemington, it would not normally be appropriate for new housing to compete with such buildings, even if direct setting impacts are not envisaged in this instance.

Contrary to the prevailing development pattern of dwellinghouse development at West Flemington, the proposed dwellinghouse would be very substantial in scale. The applicant's supporting statement acknowledges that the house would be larger than adjacent dwellinghouses. The north-facing frontage of the proposed development would measure some 33m in width, whilst the side wings would measure roughly 20m in length. The overall scale of the dwellinghouse would contrast markedly with neighbouring dwellinghouses to produce an unsuitable overall appearance. The scale and footprint of the house could have been reduced by relocating some living accommodation to the first floor (marked for storage). This was suggested at the time of the previous application but has not been adopted.

The house would dominate the entrance to the building group from the minor road which serves it. This would be exacerbated by the cut and fill earthworks that would create a very large level platform for the house to sit on. The Placemaking and Design SPG guides against excessive cutting and filling to create a

level site. A reliance on cut and fill earthworks is symptomatic of less considered development which does not seek to fit with local landform. This was raised at the time of the previous application.

In terms of massing, the proposals put forward within this application do improve upon the previously withdrawn proposals. The earlier proposals featured an overbearing central hipped roof element to the house. However, this has been achieved by introducing a shallow pitched roof design to the house which is itself at odds with traditional form and massing. The essentially flat-roofed design of the sun/ pool room would sit off the proposed house to the east would be read as a freestanding extension, exacerbating the flat roof appearance.

The Placemaking and Design SPG encourages buildings to be sited and orientated to address the site frontage. The proposed dwellinghouse would feature a porch on the north facing side of the house, which would be the rear elevation. The side of the house facing the road would not establish a strong roadside frontage. The two proposed flues are very large and prominent and could produce a somewhat industrial appearance, although this could be reduced by providing them with a matt dark grey finish. The proposed materials are natural slate to the roof and off-white render to walls, the latter would exacerbate the prominence of the house in the landscape. Natural stone would help the building sit more comfortably in the landscape but is not proposed for this dwellinghouse.

it is therefore considered that the proposal would be out of keeping with the character of the building group and prominent in the landscape to the detriment of visual amenity.

Roads and Vehicular Access

The proposals have been assessed by the Roads Planning Service. There is no objection to the proposals on roads planning grounds. Various access and internal plot arrangements would need to be put in place but could be controlled by conditions.

Residential Amenity

Policy HD3 (Residential Amenity) of the Local Development Plan states that development that is judged to have an adverse impact on the amenity of residential areas will not be permitted. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Householder Developments contains advice on daylight and privacy.

The neighbouring dwellinghouse is owned by the applicant, and no other residential properties would be affected by the proposals. An application to extend Lilybrooke was recently approved. Even if the property was in separate ownership, I would have no concerns of note in terms of privacy, loss of light or loss of sunlight.

The proposals are considered to satisfy Local Development Plan HD3 (Protection of Residential Amenity).

Landscaping and Trees

The proposed site plan appears to show indicative planting but no detail has been provided. As noted above, a boundary planting to the east and north of the site would be essential for development at this location. An opening in the existing hedge to the south of the site would be required to allow vehicular access to the site. Visibility splays would also be required.

There are no mature trees on the site.

Services

The proposed house would connect to the public water supply. Scottish Water have not responded to the consultation request and it must be assumed that there are no concerns.

Waste water would be treated via a new treatment plant which would discharge to land. The precise details would require scrutiny and agreement via a Building Warrant application. SEPA are no longer consulted as part of the planning process for small scale proposals of this character outwith Waste Water Drainage Consultation Areas. The proposed site is not located in such an area.

Surface water would discharge to existing field drains to the north of the dwellinghouse.

Development Contributions

Policy IS2 of the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2016 requires developers to make contributions through Section 75 or alternative legal agreements towards the cost of addressing deficiencies in local infrastructure and services created or exacerbated as a result of a development. In this instance, contributions towards Eyemouth High School and Eyemouth Primary School would be required.

Prime Agricultural Land

The site is recorded within the register of Prime Agricultural Land. It is not currently in agricultural use.

REASON FOR DECISION :

To conclude, the proposed development does not demonstrate a clear understanding or sympathy for local context. The size of the proposed site and the scale and mass of the proposed dwellinghouse are considered to be inappropriate for the site and the existing building group. The proposed development would not sit comfortably in the landscape and would dominate the building group. The proposed cut and fill earthworks would exacerbate these concerns and demonstrate that the development would fail to integrate suitably with the surrounding landform.

Recommendation: Refused

- 1 The development would conflict with Local Development Plan 2016 policies PMD2 (Quality Standards) and HD2 (Housing in the Countryside). The size of the proposed site and the scale and mass of the proposed dwellinghouse are not appropriate for the surroundings of the site and would not respect the character of the existing building group. The proposed development is not of a design quality that complies with the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance "Placemaking and Design" 2010 and does not attempt to integrate into the surrounding landform. The development will contribute negatively to the visual amenity of the surrounding area as a result.

“Photographs taken in connection with the determination of the application and any other associated documentation form part of the Report of Handling”.