

CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO PLANNING OR RELATED APPLICATION



Comments provided by	Officer Name and Post: Mark Douglas Lead Officer (Built Heritage & Design)	Contact e-mail/number: mtdouglas@scotborder.gov.uk 01835 826563
Planning Application Reference	18/00137/FUL	
Proposed Development	New house	
Site Location	Land NE The Rest, Murrayfield, St Abbs	
Date	09/04/2018	
Background	<p>The application site lies within the St Abbs conservation area.</p> <p>The focus of the conservation area is the harbour but the area extends to the small headland beyond Castle Rock house. The development pattern close to the proposed site is generally characterised by terraces of “fishing” cottages on Murrayfield and this pattern has generally been picked up by more recent development with the housing with houses generally being parallel to the street in a grid a grid pattern, both Southlea and the original part of the The Rest faced SE at right angles to the streets. Castle Rock is an exception to this and stands alone.</p> <p>I also note that the conservation area boundary only takes in part of the grounds of The Rest.</p> <p>A Design Statement has been submitted in support of the application</p> <p>I apologise for the delay in responding to this consultation.</p>	
Key Issues (Bullet points)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential impact on the character or appearance of the conservation area. 	
	<p><i>The following observations represent the comments of the consultee on the submitted application as they relate to the area of expertise of that consultee. A decision on the application can only be made after consideration of all relevant information, consultations and material considerations.</i></p>	
Assessment	<p>The site proposed lies in a prominent position and would form the end house on the SW side of Murrayfield; this would be viewed from the coastal path.</p> <p>My initial thought is whether this is the best location for a new house in terms of impact on the conservation area; there is no mention in the Design Statement about what other parts of the garden belonging to The Rest had been considered. There is a potential site between The Rest and 11 Brierydean, but I appreciate that this does not have the same views to the sea but would actually be outwith the conservation area boundary.</p> <p>I have concerns about the scheme as currently proposed and do not consider that the proposals can be said to “preserve or enhance” the conservation area nor than they can be considered to have a neutral impact on the conservation area.</p>	

My concerns can be broken down into two main areas:

Location within the site and its relationship with neighbouring properties

The new house is not "anchored" in the site in terms of its relationship with the adjacent buildings, which as described above are generally laid out with building lines parallel to the roads. The Design Statement does not explore other locations within the land owned by the applicant. I appreciate that the view would not be as good but Option A illustrated below would fit better into the grain of the conservation area.

If option A is ruled out, then potentially option B is a better solution which at least has a better relationship with adjacent buildings and still has a good outlook.



Detailed design

Whilst I have no objection to the principle of an energy efficient house in a contemporary style; I think that the current proposal could be simplified in form to reduce its impact.

Walls:

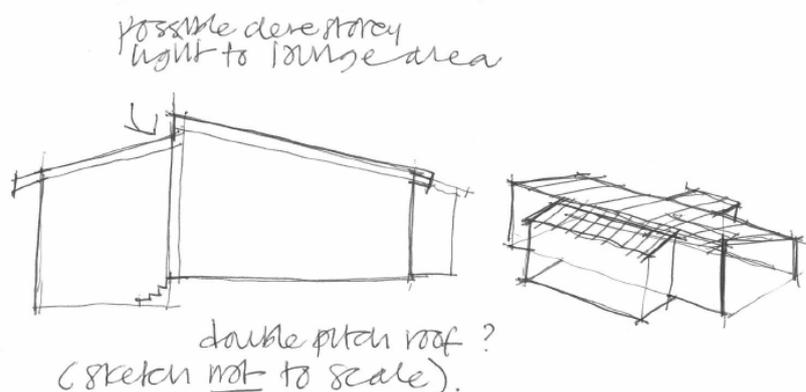
I am content with the proposed use of a natural stone skin, although I suspect that it will be difficult to get a matching St Abbs purple / black stone which is what the two adjacent buildings and wall is built with.

Windows:

Could be better to be a dark colour than brilliant white

Roof form:

I appreciate the desire to keep the height down, but this results in a high front eaves; I wonder if an alternative solution would be to use two contra pitched roofs; see sketch (for discussion) below:



	<p>I have concluded that I cannot support the proposals as currently lodged; I however I think that there is some scope to work with the applicant to develop a revised scheme that is more acceptable in terms of impact on the conservation area.</p>		
Recommendation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not object	<input type="checkbox"/> Do not object, subject to conditions
Recommended Conditions			
Recommended Informatives			