

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

**APPLICATION TO BE DETERMINED UNDER POWERS DELEGATED TO
SERVICE DIRECTOR REGULATORY SERVICES**

PART III REPORT (INCORPORATING REPORT OF HANDLING)

REF : 15/00071/FUL

APPLICANT : R & M Brockie & Son

AGENT : Ericht Planning & Property Consultants

DEVELOPMENT : Erection of dwellinghouse

LOCATION: Land North Of Wormiston Farm
Eddleston
Scottish Borders

TYPE : FUL Application

REASON FOR DELAY: Agent Delay in Responding

DRAWING NUMBERS:

Plan Ref	Plan Type	Plan Status
2014/46/101	Location Plan	Refused
2014/46/104/A	Elevations	Refused
2014/46/103/A	Floor Plans	Refused
2014/46/102/A	Site Plan	Refused
2014/46/105	Other	Refused
2014/46/106	Other	Refused
SUPPORTING STATEMENT	Other	Refused
SUPPLEMENTARY SUPPORTING STATEME	Other	Refused

NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIONS: 0

SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:

Consultation Responses

Roads Planning

No objections in principle but slightly concerned on the proposed location and feel it could be better related to the existing building group. However, this concern is not significant enough to object to the application and is merely an observation.

Notwithstanding the above, the following points must be incorporated into the design;

- Access to the plot to incorporate a service lay-by as per my specification (DC-3).
- The first 5 metres of the access must not exceed a gradient of 1 in 18, thereafter the maximum gradient is 1 in 8. The area intended for the parking and turning of motor vehicles must not exceed a gradient of 1 in 18.
- Construction specification for private driveway and parking area to be submitted for approval.
- Parking and turning for a minimum of two vehicles, excluding garages, to be provided within the curtilage of the plot prior to the dwelling being occupied, and thereafter retained in perpetuity.
- 1 No. passing place to be provided at an agreed location and constructed as per my specification (DC-1).
- Visibility splays of 2.4 metres by 90 metres in both directions onto the public road to be provided prior to the dwelling being occupied and retained as such in perpetuity. Any planting along the boundary

adjacent to the public road will need to cater for the visibility splays to ensure they are not impacted upon.

- Confirmation must also be provided as to where the existing field access is to be relocated to. The proposed location must be such that it does not cause a roadside danger.

A detailed plan must be submitted for approval which satisfactorily addresses the above points. Thereafter the works must be undertaken in strict accordance with the approved plan and completed prior to occupation of the dwelling. All work within the public road must be undertaken by a Council approved contractor. Forms to be included DC-1 & DC-3.

Environmental Health

No objections but require condition relating to private water supply and informatives relating to water supply, private drainage and solid fuel.

Education

The proposed development is located within the catchment area for Eddleston Primary School and Peebles High School. The secondary school is at or near capacity and therefore a contribution of £1289 is sought for the High School.

Landscape

First Response

While the site is somewhat detached from the rest of the building group by virtue of its location to the north of the enclosing tree belt I consider with a more substantial belt of trees planted along the northern boundary a house in this location could be assimilated into the wider valley landscape. I am attaching an amended Proposed Site Plan showing my suggested planting proposals, including a substantial belt of trees along the north boundary.

I have a further comment regarding a house in this elevated and relatively prominent location and its potential impact on the wider landscape of the Eddleston Water valley. The quality of the development in terms of building design is not strong enough. I suggest before a decision is made on the house design the applicant is encouraged to access the Scottish Government's Planning Advice Note 72 – Housing in the Countryside, especially the section on design which gives guidance on how to create more widespread good quality rural housing that respects the Scottish landscape. It suggests that 'the overall aim should be to ensure that new housing is carefully located, worthy of its setting, and is the result of an imaginative, responsive and sensitive design process.' It goes on to suggest that 'the main objective should be to adapt the best from the local elements and to interpret traditional shapes and sizes into a modern context. Overall, the envelope (the width, height and depth of the walls) together with the roof pitch (angle) determine a building's proportions.' I do not consider the current proposal achieves that, the indicative house design suggests a generic bungalow design that could be in any part of suburban UK.

Without a more robust planting scheme which would better integrate the house into this conspicuous site and further consideration given to achieving a more appropriate house design I would have concerns about supporting this application.

Second Response

I have had a look at the amended Site Plan and am satisfied that they have taken on board our suggestions regarding the screening/planting of the development in such a prominent location. We will need a Planting Plan with planting schedule to fully address any landscape condition, should this application be approved

Community Council

At our recent meeting we decided to comment favourably on this application as the property is very much needed. We have no planning related concerns and think that the additional screening that has been discussed using native hedge is a good idea.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICIES:

Scottish Borders Consolidated Local Plan 2011
G1- Quality Standards For New Development

G5 - Developer Contributions
D2 - Housing in the Countryside
H2 - Protection of Residential Amenity
Inf4 - Parking Provision and Standards

SPG - New Housing in the Borders Countryside

Recommendation by - Dorothy Amyes (Planning Officer) on 19th May 2015

The site is part of an agricultural field to the north of the Wormiston Farm building group and separated from it by a block of coniferous woodland that acts as a shelterbelt for the bungalow immediately to the south. The site is in an elevated position on the west side of the Eddleston Water valley and is visible across the valley for approximately half a mile of the A703, seen almost on the skyline at the northern end of Wormiston Farm. The site lies alongside (to the east of) the minor road from Eddleston to Lyne.

Although there have been no previous applications for this site, there have been two previous provisional enquiries for a house in 2007 and in 2010. It is noted in the last enquiry that the officer's response to the current applicant was as follows:

'new houses within the Countryside are only encouraged within an existing building group or within buildings that are capable for conversion. The proposed siting of the house does not relate well to the existing building group and it is considered that a house on this plot would result in a prominent building that would breach the skyline as viewed from the main public road (A703). Accordingly it is unlikely that the department would support a house on this particular site.'

It is proposed to construct a single storey dwellinghouse. It will be finished in render with natural stone features and slate on the roof. The windows will be timber framed. A new access will be provided close to the existing tree belt and a large parking area will be provided. The site is not flat and a certain amount of ground levelling will be required.

It is proposed to plant screening around site with low level native hedging along the eastern and western boundaries and a band of native tree planting along the northern boundary.

A supporting statement has been submitted with the application explaining that the house is required for a retiring farmer and outlining the site selection process. A supplementary supporting statement has been submitted providing further information to support the selection of the site.

As a proposed new house in the countryside the main policy considerations are Local Plan Policy D2 - Housing in the Countryside, G1 - Quality Standards for New Development and Supplementary Planning Guidance on New Housing in the Borders Countryside and Placemaking and Design.

There is an existing building group at Wormiston, the main farmhouse and three farm cottages. These are separated by a group of agricultural buildings but they do form a distinct and co-hesive group of buildings. The boundary of this group is strengthened by mature trees with an especially strong boundary at the northern edge. The trees also serve to screen and soften the impact of the buildings which are located in a prominent location above the Lyne Water. The proposed site of the house is outwith this clear boundary and is adjacent to the northern tree belt. It does not relate well to this boundary although additional planting is proposed which will serve to extend the building group.

In the supporting statement it is stated that the proposed house is for a retiring farmer. The farmer's son will move into the existing farmhouse and continue to run the farm. At present the son lives in one of the farm cottages.

Therefore, the application must be assessed against Policy D2 (E) Economic Requirement. It is accepted that the proposal complies with paragraph 2 of this section of the policy in that the house will be for a person last employed in an agricultural enterprise and that it will release another house for continued use by an agricultural worker.

It is accepted that within the old agricultural buildings there are no buildings suitable for conversion. However, it would appear that there may be an alternative suitable site within the building group and there is

a suitable existing house which is capable of conversion for the required residential use. In addition, there is a site on the opposite side of the road which might be suitable but which has been dismissed by the applicant for possible further farm expansion.

It is the view of the planning officer that the proposed dwellinghouse could be accommodated within the garden ground of the existing farmhouse which is a bungalow. The site is sloping and would involve levelling but the application site would also involve ground works. In the supplementary planning statement, this site has been dismissed as it is considered to be too close (approx. 9m) to a livestock shed and would impact on the residential amenity of the residents of the new house. Whilst this might be acceptable for residents not associated with the farm, the existing farmhouse is not significantly further away and it could be assumed that the occupants of the new house would continue to have an interest in the day to day operations of the farm. For this reason, it is considered that there is an existing site within the building group. In addition, plot 1 as noted in the supporting statement might be an alternative site but this has been dismissed for future farm expansion.

In relation to no other suitable existing housing being available, No 3 Wormiston Cottage will be vacated by the son. Whilst it is accepted that in its current form it may not be suitable for an elderly person, the cottage would appear to be capable of being extended and altered, at the ground floor level in particular. Additional plans have been submitted to try to demonstrate that this would not be possible but it is clear from these plans that the accommodation could be improved and adapted to suit all ages and abilities. A separate entrance exists to the house and the front of the property (which faces away from the road) could be fenced to provide more privacy for the occupant. It is not accepted that the residential amenity of a retiring farmer would be impacted by the day to day activities of the residents in the two other cottages. Indeed, many retiring farmers wish to retain an interest in daily activities. As the end terraced cottage, it is the furthest property away from the main farming activities. Although it is stated that this house may be used for students or seasonal workers, alternative temporary accommodation could be provided, if and when required.

It is considered that the proposals do not comply with points 4 and 5 of Policy D2 (E) in that an appropriate site exists within the building group and there is alternative housing available for the required residential use.

Any development that takes place under the Housing in the Countryside Policy should meet the following standard criteria:

1. No adverse effect on the viability of a farming unit or conflict with the operations of a working farm;
2. Satisfactory access and other road requirements;
3. Satisfactory public or private water supply and drainage facilities;
4. No adverse effect on countryside amenity, landscape or nature conservation;
5. No adverse impact on ancient monuments, archaeological sites, or on gardens or designed landscapes in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes in Scotland;
6. Appropriate siting, design and materials in accordance with the relevant Local Plan policies;
7. The safeguarding of known mineral resources from sterilisation unless this is acceptable following an assessment of the environmental implications.

In relation to the current application, it is considered that points 4 and 6 are not satisfactorily addressed. The remaining points are either satisfactorily addressed or are not relevant to this particular site. Furthermore, in terms of design and siting the application must be assessed against Local Plan Policy G1 - Quality Standards for New Development and SPG Placemaking and Design.

The new dwellinghouse will sit in a prominent position outwith the building group and it will be clearly seen from the A703. However, the main impact on the landscape will be on the expansive view of the valley and hills beyond when looking south towards Peebles from the minor road running adjacent to the plot. From a point just north of the site there are no buildings that are clearly visible. The new dwelling, in particular the northern elevation, if approved, would be in the foreground and will have a severe adverse impact on this outstanding view. Even with the proposed planting around the perimeter there will still be a significant impact.

Advice in the SPGs is that tree and hedgerow planting can be invaluable to visually integrate development with the landscape. The purpose of landscaping however, should not be to screen or hide development, but to enhance its setting. It would appear that the main purpose of the proposed planting is to screen the development.

In the SPG on New Housing in the Countryside it is noted that the main criticisms of previous developments of new housing in the countryside have been:

- the selection of obtrusive rather than sheltered sites;
- the failure to integrate new housing with the surrounding landscape;
- the introduction of suburban house types which, by virtue of their shape, shallow roof pitch, overhanging eaves and verges, window proportion, and general detailing including site layout are out of character with traditional rural building styles.

In SPG Placemaking and Design it is noted that

'there has been a lack of sensitivity and failure to refer to local design characteristics when considering house design, which has led to many examples of intrusive housing developments in prominent locations, which now detract seriously from our rural environment. 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. By referring to these key elements when considering the design of a house, it should be possible to ensure that the new building is sympathetic to, and compatible with, the traditional building form of the Borders.

It is recognised that on a site which is unduly prominent on a ridge or in a skyline position, it is extremely difficult to design a house which does not look out of place. It is noted that the new dwelling is single storey and the proposed materials will be natural slate on the roof, natural stone base course, wet dash render on the walls and larch cladding on the front porch. Some of the amendments to the design are to be welcomed. These include the addition of the cladding and the stone base course, a change to the window design. These do provide more traditional rural elements to the design. It is considered that the proposed change of pitch on the south east elevation does not fit well with the main section of the house and that the original design for this section would be acceptable.

However, the proposed house is a detached bungalow and, although design changes have been made, it remains a modern house of a fairly standard design. A design statement has not been submitted with the application and this would have provided an opportunity to demonstrate that thought had gone into a site specific design. It is considered that this proposal will not contribute to this part of the Borders countryside. As noted above, of particular concern in recent years, has been the considerable increase in the use of standard suburban designs which tend to ignore local building traditions. Irrespective of style, a house requires to be designed for its setting and the importation of standard suburban designs or the cosmetic modification of standard types, is never successful in a rural setting.

Given the above, it is considered that the proposal is not acceptable as it does not comply with Local Plan Policy D2 Housing in the Countryside, G1 - Quality Standards for New Development and SPG - New Housing in the Borders Countryside as it has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that there is not alternative site or accommodation within the building group and that the proposed development will have a significant adverse impact on the landscape.

The development attracts developer contributions towards Education and Lifelong Learning and the applicant has agreed to enter into a Section 69 agreement to secure the payment.

REASON FOR DECISION :

The proposal is not acceptable as it does not comply with Local Plan Policy D2 Housing in the Countryside, G1 - Quality Standards for New Development and SPG - New Housing in the Borders Countryside as it has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that there is no alternative site or

accommodation within the building group and that the proposed development will have a significant adverse impact on the landscape.

Recommendation: Refused

- 1 The proposal is not acceptable as it does not comply with Local Plan Policy D2 Housing in the Countryside, G1 - Quality Standards for New Development and SPG - New Housing in the Borders Countryside in that the site is not well related to the existing building group and it has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of the planning authority that there is no alternative site or accommodation within the building group.
- 2 The proposed development is contrary to Local Plan Policies D2 and G1 and Supplementary Planning Guidance New Housing in the Borders Countryside in that the new dwellinghouse will have a significant adverse impact on the landscape.

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