



PLANNING STATEMENT

SITE ADDRESS

**SYNTON MAINS, LAND EAST OF AUBURN COTTAGE,
ASHKIRK, SCOTTISH BORDERS**

PROPOSAL

**ERECTION OF SINGLE DWELLINGHOUSE, GARAGE AND
ASSOCIATED WORKS**

APPLICANT

MR AND MRS DAVIES

JULY 2019

Main Office:

Shiel House | 54 Island Street | Galashiels | TD1 1NU

NI Office:

61 Moyle Road | Ballycastle | Co. Antrim | BT54 6LG

T 01896 668 744

M 07960 003 358

E tim@fergusonplanning.co.uk

W www.fergusonplanning.co.uk





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RTPI

Chartered Town Planner



1. INTRODUCTION AND PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement, prepared by Ferguson Planning, is submitted to Scottish Borders Council on behalf of the Applicants, Mr and Mrs Davies. Stuart Davidson Architects have submitted a drawing pack outlining the site and proposed development at Synton Mains, Ashkirk.
- 1.2 The purpose of this Statement is to provide a good level of understanding of the application site and the context within which it lies, before providing background to the proposed development and its compliance with planning policy.
- 1.3 Our Clients have identified the subject plot for their future semi-retirement from the nearby Synton Farm. It was chosen to enable them to reside in the local rural community and one that they have come to enjoy. The farm business is due to be sold in the not too distant future and, as such, the subject site was chosen, as sequentially, it was deemed to be part of a nearby housing group and not related to the farm (so as not to detract from a future sale). In addition, the site location is paramount as it ensures the Applicant is able to retain and run their Golf Driving Range business that exists in close proximity to the site. Other rural parts of the farm could have possibly been considered as part of a retirement dwelling but to avoid any operational overlap it was seen best to seek the retirement dwelling under Policy HD2 -Housing in the Countryside.
- 1.4 The site is bounded by agricultural land to the north and east, by an existing residential property known as 'Auburn Cottage' to the west and by a public road to the south. The western boundary of the site is defined by a dry stone dyke and the southern boundary by a post and wire fence. The northern and eastern boundaries of the application site are undefined.
- 1.5 The extract below indicates in red the defined plot for the purpose of the single dwellinghouse, associated works and tree plantation to the east which the client seeks to put in place.

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Proposal

- 1.6 The positioning, layout and scale of the proposal is demonstrated within the attached Site Plan. The footprint of the house is less than the dwelling recently constructed adjacent Auburn Cottage to the west. In keeping with the adjacent two houses to the south west, a detached garage is proposed to the west of the dwelling.
- 1.7 The plot will be accessed directly from the minor public road as illustrated on the Site Plan. The driveway will lead into an open space with a centred greenery as a means of a proposed suitable turning space for cars.
- 1.8 The plot will be serviced by private foul and surface water drainage arrangements. There is an existing septic tank located directly across the road to the west of the subject site.
- 1.9 The Applicant is committed to ensuring the dwelling would be a natural bookend to the east of the building group and has proposed extensive landscaping (outside of the application site but within the applicants ownership) to continue along the rest of the field to join with an existing tree plantation across the road further to the east.
- 1.10 Mixed berry/thorn hedging is proposed to confine the site on the northern and western boundaries. As already mentioned, tree plantation would confine the boundary to the east,

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which would also be implemented towards the south of the site to screen the proposed dwelling from the road.

- 1.11 The attached drawing indicative design follows a New England style approach which is typically defined by a simple rectangular form with side gabled pitched roofs, often with dormer windows, painted timber siding, open porches, and large sliding sash windows. The style is traditional and therefore respectful of the rural area within which it is located.
- 1.12 This application is for Planning Permission in Principle and therefore detailed drawings will be submitted in the next stage of the planning process.
- 1.13 The remainder of this statement considers relevant planning policy and thereafter provides a reasoned justification within the policy context. In addition to this statement the following drawings have been submitted as part of this application:
 - Location Plan
 - Site Plan
 - Indicative floor plan
 - Indicative elevations

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2. POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 This section provides an overview of key planning policies relevant to the proposed development. Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) sets out national planning policies and is a key material consideration in the determination of this application. The Development Plan is made up of the Strategic Development Plan for South East Scotland (SESPlan) and the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016).

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) 2014

2.2 SPP encourages rural development that supports prosperous and sustainable communities and businesses, whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality. SPP provides that, where appropriate, the construction of single houses outwith settlements should be supported provided such are well sited and designed to fit with local landscape character, taking account of landscape protection and other plan policies.

2.3 A key focus for SPP is the creation of well-designed, sustainable places and supporting sustainable economic growth and regeneration. SPP creates a presumption in favor of development that contributes to sustainable development. Policies and decisions will be guided by key principles, including:

- supporting good design and the six qualities of successful places;
- making efficient use of existing capacities of land, buildings and infrastructure;
- supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- having regard to the principles of sustainable land use;
- protecting, enhancing and promoting access to cultural and natural heritage;
- reducing waste, facilitating its management and promoting resource recovery; and
- avoiding over-development, protecting the amenity of new and existing development and considering the implications of development for water, air and soil quality

Scottish Borders Local Development Plan

2.4 Local planning Policy relevant to this proposal is contained within the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016). Key policies include:

- **HD2 – Housing in the Countryside**
- **PMD2 – Quality Standards**
- **HD3 – Protection of Residential Amenity**

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2.5 Housing in the Countryside Policy 2.5 The key policy under which the proposal must be assessed is the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016) Policy HD2 – Housing in the Countryside. This policy allows existing buildings groups to expand within a Plan period by 30% or 2 units, whichever is the greater, where suitable sites exist.

2.6 The policy requires that the proposed site should be well-related to the existing building group and have no detrimental impact upon the character of the group, the landscape or the amenity of the surrounding area. Any development proposal should also be appropriate in terms of scale, siting, design, access and use of materials. Applications for new houses relating to expansion of building groups will be assessed against: a) the presence or, otherwise, of a group; and b) the suitability of that group to absorb new development.

New Housing in the Borders Countryside SG

2.7 Supplementary Guidance ‘New Housing in the Borders Countryside’ provides additional detail in support of the above policy, setting out requirements where a new house is proposed in association with an existing building group. Requirements which are relevant to the development proposal include:

2.8 The scale and siting should reflect and respect the character and amenity of the existing group and the individual houses within the group;

- The new house should be situated in the area contained by the “sense of place”.
- The new house should be located within a reasonable distance of the existing properties within the group, with the distance between existing properties and the new house being guided by the spacing between existing properties in the group;
- Sites should not normally break into undeveloped agricultural fields or require the removal of trees which are in good condition.

2.9 The Guidance notes that the existence of a building group is identifiable by a “sense of place” which will be contributed to by: natural boundaries such as water courses, trees or enclosing landform, or man-made boundaries such as existing buildings, roads, plantations or means of enclosure.

Policy PMD 2 Quality Standards

2.10 This policy sets out a range of sustainability, placemaking and design, accessibility and open space/ biodiversity requirements, whereby the proposal must:

- Take appropriate measures to maximise the efficient use of energy and resources, in terms of layout, orientation, construction and energy supply;

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- Make provision for sustainable drainage;
- Incorporate appropriate measures for separate storage of waste and recycling;
- Incorporate appropriate landscaping to help integration with the surroundings;
- Create a sense of place, based on a clear understanding of context;
- Be of a scale, massing and height appropriate to the surroundings;
- Be finished externally in materials, the colours and textures of which complement the highest quality of architecture in the locality;
- Be compatible with, and respect, the character of the surrounding area, neighbouring uses and neighbouring built form;
- Be able to be satisfactorily accommodated within the site;
- Provide for appropriate boundary treatments to ensure attractive edges, and to help integration with the surroundings;
- Incorporate access for those with mobility difficulties;
- Not have an adverse impact on road safety in terms of the site access;
- Incorporate adequate access and turning space for vehicles including those used for waste collection purposes.
- Retain physical or natural features which are important to the amenity or biodiversity of the area.

Policy HD3 Protection of Residential Amenity

2.11 This policy requires development to have no significant adverse impact on the amenity of existing or proposed houses. The scale, form and type of development proposed must fit with the residential area and it should not have unacceptable effect in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy or sunlight. There should also be no unacceptable impact on visual amenity more generally.

Access

2.12 The ability to achieve safe and satisfactory access is a requirement of the creation of any new housing in the countryside. A vehicular access is required to have visibility splays appropriate to the location and to the speed of traffic on the adjoining road system.

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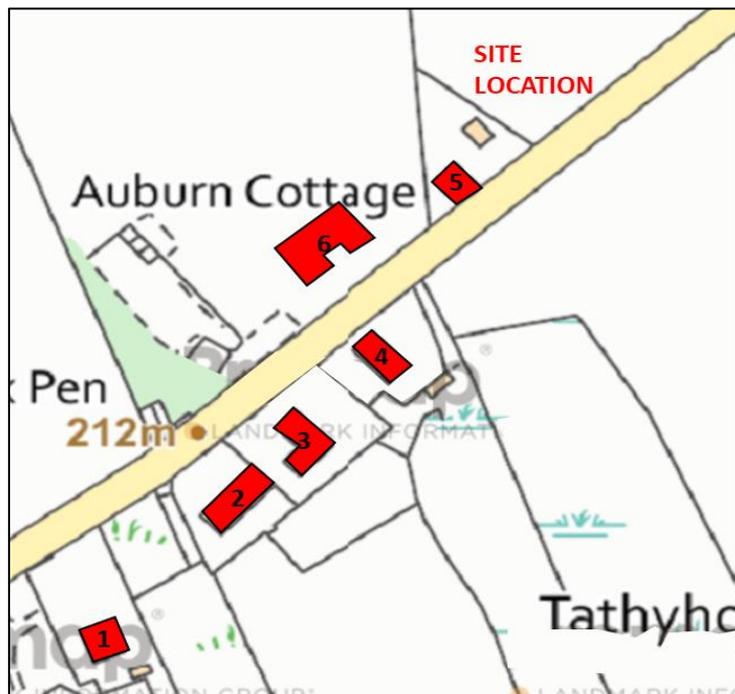
E tim@fergusonplanning.co.uk

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3. ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Building Group

- 3.1 There is a clear 6-unit building group at West Flemington. The proposed site lies to the east of the traditional dwelling known as “Auburn Cottage”. The proposed plot shares a clear sense of place with the building group and is located an appropriate distance from existing dwellings and Ashkirk.
- 3.2 The latest addition to the building group was the approval for the erection of a dwellinghouse to the west of Auburn Cottage 08/01607/OUT. The application was approved during the previous local development plan cycle and Approval of Matter Specified in Conditions were consented in application 12/00016/AMC. The development of this dwelling is currently under construction and it is noted the footprint of this house is particularly larger than the existing houses in the building group.
- 3.3 There have been no additions to the building group since that time. In threshold terms, the group has the capacity to absorb the development of one dwelling in compliance with Housing in the Countryside policy HD2.



- 3.4 It should be noted that the house noted as plot ‘5’ was once set in the same field as the proposed subject site. New Housing in the Borders Countryside Supplementary Guidance is a



reference for development of this nature, it notes that the preference is for natural boundaries but man made boundaries may be considered.

- 3.5 Indeed, this was the case in a recent recommendation of two plots at Carfraemill (18/01712/PPP). The Case Officer notes that, *'It is accepted that the approved SPG on new housing in the countryside states that sites should not normally break into undeveloped fields particularly where there exists a definable natural boundary between the building group and the field. The use of the words 'not normally' are particularly relevant in this case as this suggests that there may be situations where it is acceptable for sites to break into previously undeveloped fields, as is the case here.'... 'Proposed indicative planting as shown on the site plan would further assist in assimilating the development into the group. The precise details of structure planting can be covered by condition in the event of an approval. Furthermore, the proposed units would be located within a reasonable distance of the existing properties within the group and would be consistent with the spacing between these properties, consistent with supplementary guidance.'*
- 3.6 There is a stone wall boundary to the west of the application site which helps define the north eastern edge of the group however this is a man-made boundary and the guidance makes specific reference to natural boundaries taking precedence over man-made boundaries when defining the extent of a building group. Proposed indicative planting as shown on the site plan would further assist in assimilating the development into the group.
- 3.7 It is acknowledged that there is a requirement for a clear 'bookend' to the building group at this eastern edge, including landscaping to provide clear separation with the agricultural land and a natural "stop" to the building group. It is accepted that this proposal offers the opportunity for the last house on this edge of the building group.
- 3.8 Robust tree planting has been proposed to the eastern edge of the site outwith the development boundary. The Applicant is keen to create an area of woodland on the agricultural field that follows the length of minor public road.
- 3.9 The Applicant as current owners of Synton Farm are wanting to retire from agricultural work but still live on land within their ownership. Therefore, it is important to note that the dwellinghouse is not intended to be attached to the farmland and is instead a separate dwellinghouse. The development of this proposed dwelling on the subject site enables them to do so. Sequentially, it was deemed better to position next to an existing building group than in more remote parts of the farm.

Residential Amenity

- 3.10 A dwelling could be developed on the subjects without causing a detrimental impact upon the residential amenity of Auburn Cottage. The spacing between the subject site and Auburn

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Cottage is appropriate in terms of residential amenity, in compliance with Policy HD3, as well as the spacing between adjoining properties.

- 3.11 The proposed landscaping towards the western boundary will also help to eliminate any issues regarding privacy or overlooking to the adjacent property.

Planning History

- 3.12 Two applications have previously been submitted on the subject site. The first application 05/01209/OUT was for the erection of three dwellinghouses on a larger stretch of land than that proposed in this application. The second application 06/00190/OUT was submitted for the erection of one dwellinghouse.
- 3.13 Both applications relate to previous Local Plans and at the time were refused on the basis that a building group did not exist and instead a dispersed building group existed, therefore an isolated proposal could not be supported. The subject site was determined as being situated too far from the existing dwellings across the road and establishing a form of ribbon development.
- 3.14 Between present day and the determination of the above applications, three houses have been developed within the building group. With the most recent additions including the dwellinghouse 08/01607/OUT under construction at land south west of Auburn Cottage and the adjacent stable block (11/01172/FUL) situated on the same side of the road as the subject site. The building group has become more uniform and connected, therefore it can no longer be described as a 'dispersed' building group.
- 3.15 The presence of a building group was confirmed within the 12/00016/AMC application for the most recent addition to the building group, as stated by the Case Officer, '*A building group is present at the site, dating from the late 1980's and early 1990's.*'
- 3.16 The proposal would not comprise ribbon development, rather it would balance development which has occurred on the opposite side of the road. As Linn View house is situated further along the road to the west, the addition of this proposal to the east would mirror this development in the opposite direction. The applicant is keen to establish a robust woodland edge to the eastern part of the site, to join with woodland found further to the east across the public road.
- 3.17 It is also noted that Auburn Cottage originally broke out into the agricultural field where the subject site is proposing. The development of Auburn Cottage did not implement defined natural boundaries and instead the only containment is a low drystone wall on all borders.
- 3.18 The lands opposite the subject site have a private septic tank upon them together with marsh land making in an unviable prospect. This has been demonstrated within the attaches site plan.

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Access and Servicing

- 3.19 The site is located next to Synton Mill Road. A new access road into the site would be created from the Synton Mill Road to the proposed house as illustrated on the Site Plan. The road is single track with associated low speeds, particularly due to road geometry and a safe access can be achieved at a safe location. There are existing good standard sightlines along this road to allow for a safe access in and out of the dwelling.
- 3.20 The plot will be serviced by private foul and surface water drainage arrangements. A septic tank is positioned directly across the road into the lower lying agricultural field. Satisfactory private drainage arrangements can be achieved, subject to further details to be provided at the next stage in the planning process.

Flooding

- 3.21 Review of the web-based SEPA indicative flood maps indicate that the site lies out with the area assessed as having high, medium or low flood risk.

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4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Ferguson Planning has been appointed by the Applicant to submit an application for Planning Permission in Principle for the development of a single dwelling, garage and associated works on land which is well related to the building group at Synton Mains.
- 4.2 The subject site is situated within an identified building group at Synton Mains. Making note of the previous refusals on the site, the building group can no longer be described as 'dispersed', as development over the years through the addition of three dwellings known as The Pines, Tathie Moss and Barbachlaw have connected the building group to form a cohesive group. The proposed dwelling therefore shares a 'sense of place' with those existing properties.
- 4.3 The design of the dwelling proposed follows a traditional New England style approach which is typically defined by a simple rectangular form with side gabled pitched roofs, often with dormer windows, painted timber siding, open porches, and large sliding sash windows.
- 4.4 The footprint of the proposed dwelling is also less than the recently constructed dwelling to the west of Auburn Cottage. The scale of the dwelling is therefore in keeping with the character of the building group and would not negatively impact the rural setting within which it is located.
- 4.5 The proposal includes the introduction of extensive tree planting as indicated on the Site Plan which will help to assimilate the plot into the landscape, as well as forming a robust boundary and natural 'bookend' to the eastern edge of the building group. It again should be noted that the neighbouring house Auburn Cottage once stood within the same field as the subject site.
- 4.6 The proposal would comply with Housing in the Countryside policy (HD2) in terms of the 30% expansion capacity of the existing building group and the proposal would not have a detrimental impact upon the character of the group, with the scale, height, massing and design of the single dwelling having been taken into consideration during the design process.
- 4.7 The proposal is able to comply with policy on Protection of Residential Amenity HD3. The site is of sufficient size to contain a single dwelling of the size proposed without having detrimental impact upon the nearest property Auburn Cottage. Proposed landscaping would also form a firm natural boundary between the site and adjacent dwelling.
- 4.8 Satisfactory access to the plot can be achieved through the creation of a new access from Synton Mill Road which has low speeds and good visibility.
- 4.9 The site lies outwith the area shown on SEPA's flood risk maps as having a high or medium level of flood risk.
- 4.10 Satisfactory private drainage arrangements can be achieved, subject to further details to be provided at the next stage in the planning process.

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- 4.11 The erection of the dwelling on this site will enable the Applicant to retire from Synton Mains Farm but remain close by and participate within the community. The location also allows the Applicant to tend to other nearby businesses, such as the Golf Driving Range which they would retain.
- 4.12 The Planning Authority is respectfully requested to approve this application which will provide for one dwellinghouse on land which shares a sense of place with an existing building group and will enable completion of the building group at this eastern edge.

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