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Clerk of the Local Review Body  
Council Head Quarters  
Newtown St Boswells  
Roxburghshire  
TD6 0SA

Dear Ms McGeoch

**Reference: 20/00018/RRREF**

It is with sadness I again find myself writing to you again in connection with the above application and subsequent appeal. However, having had the opportunity to review the latest submission by the applicant, there are a number of significant points that need to be highlighted to the Review Body.

First, I question the accuracy of a measured building survey and topographical survey of the High Street being undertaken by persons not qualified or experienced in doing so. Such surveys are reasonably complex tasks – tasks which take built environment professionals significant time and training to learn and master. This brings in to question the accuracy of the drawing provided. For example, the statement dated 28<sup>th</sup> August notes; a measurement was taken to the eaves of number 9 and then the ridge height calculated by using the pitch. Was the roof pitch actually measured or estimated? Was the width of the gable measured or scaled off plan? The statement continues - a GPS measurement was then taken of the road height adjacent to number 9. What is the difference in height between where the eaves were measured and the adjacent GPS readings? Where were the GPS reading taken, were they in line with the gable, downhill a bit, uphill; this has the potential to significantly affect the drawing. All of the same can be said asked of the measurements taken at Valleydean Et al. There is a significant elevation drop between these cottages, how was that ascertained? What was measured at Burnsyde? There is no mention of a GPS elevation measurement at Burnsyde, so how do we know the height difference is the 2644mm as indicated on the drawing? The answer is we don't. If a GPS elevation was taken where about was it taken and how does it reference to any building height measurements. In addition, the garage at Burnsyde prevents access to one corner, so measuring the width would be awkward – was it done off plan? How about the pitch, was an inclinometer used? It's quite easy to imagine how a small error in one or multiple of these readings can easily lead to a much, much bigger margin of error. One is therefore left wondering, if the drawing is to be relayed upon, just how accurate is it? The words "or thereby" on the drawing would suggest to me a good degree of inaccuracy.

Second, depending on the quality of the GPS instrument used, there will be a margin of error, particularly and most notably when recording elevation. What instrument was used? Has it been calibrated? Again, if being asked to rely on this drawing, how accurate is it?

Third, the drawing itself. What is presented is not the requested cross section drawing. Instead, presented is a half attempt using GPS elevation readings from random locations on the road. If I read the submission document correctly, no elevation measurements have been taken on the proposed site and none down through the gardens at either side of the proposed site. There is no plan showing where measurements have been taken and there is no datum shown from which to reference any of the heights provided. Furthermore, ground levels, in parts, vary significantly between road and the "allotments", which makes one question how relevant the information provided actually is.

Fourth, without accurate elevation measurements at Burnside, it is impossible to dismiss fears about how the proposal will dominate the principle view south from the Village Green key greenspace. Similarly, it is impossible to conclude anything other than the proposed development causing an unacceptable loss of amenity to neighbouring plots, the Village Green key greenspace and the verge other greenspace.

Fifth, with reference to comments in First above, there are inconsistencies between this and previous submissions. There now appears to be a retaining wall to the south of the site as shown on the Site Sections Plan, and the same plan appears to show the southern half of the site being excavated down to a reasonable level below road height, scaled off screen circa 1.2m. These, on plan, appear to be much more pronounced than the existing site features, so one presumes they are to be newly created. Neither of these features was specified in the LRB or initial planning documents. If excavation is required, this will surely require some works over the verge to provide an incline down into the site – work specifically ruled out in previous submissions. If excavation is not required then this brings into question the levels provided and thus the proposed dwellings height in relation to those around.

Sixth, the Site Sections Plan shows a hawthorn hedge to be replanted. It's not the applicant's hedge that has been removed in the first instance so it should be noted as a new hedge, if that is what is intended. However, similar to Fifth above, there is no note of this feature in the planning application.

Seventh, the recognised timber extraction route is not merely for the Fair Park plantation, it will also be capable of being used for extraction of other felled commercial plantations over in the Halterburn Valley. So, whilst the Fair Park is now cleared, other forestry blocks can be expected to be cleared in coming years. In addition to this point, it's important to note that the High Street is used more and more by large agricultural vehicles which get progressively bigger and bigger each year! As machines have become more powerful, land once only suitable for grazing is now coming into use for cropping as silage or hay or other arable crops. This progression into more intensive agriculture is commonplace in and around the Cheviot foothills. As way of illustration of the difficulties this poses a 1964 Massey Ferguson 135, a mainstay tractor, weighed 1.7tons and was 182cm wide. A modern John Deere 7R 330, a typical modern-day tractor, weighs 11.4tons and is 2.55m wide. This presents a clear problem; roads such as the High Street were never designed for such vehicles. Couple these with parked cars (including my own) and there is a real safety risk to be considered, and that's before you even begin to factor in the exponential increase in traffic from "staycation" visitors to Halterburn driven by the COVID-19 pandemic. The most recent statement from the agent notes there would be no changes in traffic movements as future owners or tenant vehicles of Clifton Cottage would sit amongst neighbours cars. That's not strictly true; different households park on different sides of the street, so in effect the High Street is a bit of a chicane of cars. Another one or two cars outside Clifton Cottage would tighten that chicane effect substantially and make navigating up the High Street even more dangerous and significantly more difficult and hazardous for larger

HGV's and agricultural vehicles. As the parent of a young family I can't stress enough the concern I have about road safety on the High Street.

With the apparent inaccuracy and failure to meet the brief from the Local Review Body, I do not see how the latest submission can add anything other than a general indication of how a house would sit on a sloping site, with all references to adjacent buildings and heights being disregarded. The information provided does not arrest any fears over the detrimental and domineering impact the proposal would have over the character and appearance of the conservation area, or the amenity of the key and "other" greenspaces. If anything, the latest submission reaffirms fears that the proposal will be a huge and obtrusive, overbearing mass, detracting from the character, charm and history of Kirk Yetholm.

I politely and respectfully continue my request for the Committee dismiss the appeal.

Yours sincerely

Kristoffer Smith