

# Comments for Planning Application 20/00923/PPP

## Application Summary

Application Number: 20/00923/PPP

Address: Land North West Of Whinneybrae Skirling Scottish Borders

Proposal: Erection of dwellinghouse

Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Mr John Sinclair

Address: The Glisk, Skirling, Scottish Borders ML12 6HD

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Comment:1. Application against Planning Policy which -" reduces development of inappropriate isolated housing "
2. Access via unmade track, not in applicant's ownership and not likely to withstand construction traffic. Also restricted roadway access via narrow roads around Skirling Village Green.
  3. Approval of small farm building to accompany house would lead to possible additional farm buildings being given approval in the future.

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## Customer Details

Name: Mr Robert Hunter

Address: Skirling House, Skirling, Scottish Borders ML12 6HD

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Contrary to Local Plan
- Detrimental to environment
- Inadequate access
- Increased traffic
- Land affected
- Legal issues
- Road safety
- Trees/landscape affected

Comment: John Hayward CC. Ranald Dods

Planning & Development Standards Manager

Scottish Borders Council

Melrose

Your Ref: 20/00923/PPP

Dear Mr Hayward

Comments and objections on the proposal to erect a dwelling house and lambing shed by R E Wood And Sons on land North West Of Whinnybrae, Skirling.

We have several concerns relating to the above application for outline planning outwith the village plan.

The acreage of the fields referred to is 36 acres not 40 acres (ref SGRGID data).

The relative sizes of the dwelling house and the lambing shed do not seem to make sense with a large house and a shed of insufficient size even for the relatively small number of pedigree ewes that could use the fields. The proposed size of house at 251 m<sup>2</sup> is large by the standard of a house generally provided for a regular agricultural employee

The location of the site is difficult to pinpoint accurately from the plans shown but assuming that it

is at the large gate halfway up the hill it omits to show a line of mature trees running along the field edge at that point. A survey to highlight any hazardous trees that we commissioned in 2009 for land under our ownership abutting these fields noted that all the mature trees were highly likely to contain roosting bats, and current observation would confirm that assessment.

Access to the site is over an unpaved track that is in our ownership. The current users of the path have just had to spend a considerable amount of money to repair the path from the degradation caused by the current level of agricultural vehicles to the fields that lie alongside it and from the small amount of vehicular traffic to Whinnybrae, an ex gamekeepers house which has sat at the top of the loan for over 200 years. Both we ourselves and the residents of Whinnybrae would not agree to further upgrading the road as the steep incline and sharp bends would make it impassable in winter, and in the summer would attract traffic driving up to access the woodland paths at the top of the hill.

The extra traffic will also have to negotiate the narrow roadways around Skirling Green.

The current track, reached by crossing the Village Green, is used heavily by both dogwalkers and other leisure walkers. To give you some idea of the number of walkers up and down the path, a quick calculation reveals that of 76 occupied houses in Skirling village and at Skirling Mill, 25 walk the track and the paths it leads to at least daily, and another 13 probably once a week or more. Several people from close by Muirburn and Biggar also use the paths. The path is so popular because it is one of the few walks in the area away from both traffic and livestock where you can allow both dogs and children to run freely. It offers access both to the pedestrian and equestrian right of way to Broughton and to a network of paths at the top of the hill through varied woodland and scrubland which have been specifically developed as a village amenity with open access to walkers in mind.

Given that we understand that the applicants own land close to the village fronting directly on to a public road, and that there is currently a house for sale of an appropriate size (128 m<sup>2</sup>) on Skirling Village Green, almost at the foot of the Loan, and within 500 yards of the fields we consider that a dwelling place on this open field site is unnecessary.

Although we understand that there is not a legal requirement to do so, both the neighbours at Whinnybrae and ourselves as the owners of the only access to the site find it surprising that we were not afforded the courtesy of being notified of the application by the applicants and were fortunate to learn of it through the requirement to notify Skirling Community Council.

In addition, although possibly not a direct planning consideration we should point out that, having taken legal advice, there is no right of access to the fields for a residential property and such a right of access would not be granted as things stand.

We look forward to the consideration of these points and objections.

Yours sincerely

R H M & I J Hunter

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## Customer Details

Name: Mr Callum D Wight

Address: Whinneybrae, Skirling, Scottish Borders ML12 6HD

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

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Comment:Reference to:-

1.2 Firknowe is not a farm or holding, it is a 36acre block of land made up of 4 fields

1.3 The land at Firknowe would only sustain around 150 breeding ewes. Given that the current recommendations by Agricultural Advisory companies is nearer to 1500 ewes per labour unit means that 90%of the work for the member of staff would be elsewhere. Therefore the house should be where that work is.

1.4 Double fencing solves the health and welfare issues and complies with SRUC Premium Sheep and Goat Health Schemes (PSGHS) Note the land at Firknowe does not comply with SRUC PSGHS.

2.3 I would question this point as being in the pedigree sheep business myself, there is no way I would let a member of staff perform any of the key operations with pedigree livestock of the value of the animals in question. I would suggest that the house would be for a member of the R E Wood & Sons family partnership.

2.4 See 1.4

2.6 10 labour units equates to 15,000 ewes or 2500 Beef animals. Not having seen the Laurence Gould report, but I am familiar enough with the R E Wood business to know they are not running the number of stock detailed above.

2.10 1) labour requirements and financial viability may well have demonstrated the need for a house site where 90% of the work is not 10% of the work.

2) ie 90% of the work would not be at Firknowe

3) Subjective, lots of pedigree business operate the livestock at a different location from the house.

4) The proposed shed is not big enough to house the stock that could be carried at Firknowe so it follows that there will be more development than initial proposal.

5) That's because 36 acres is not a viable unit

6) Not if you live in the nearest existing dwelling.

7) Irrelevant, Forestry commission Scotland are busy taking thousands and thousands of acres out of agriculture every year.