
Planning Application in Principle Supporting Statement - Two Residential Plots

Old Cambus West Mains, Cockburnspath, TD13
5YS

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. Savills on behalf of its client, F J Usher Children’s Trust, would like to submit a Planning Application in Principle for the development of two units at land to the west of the steading at Old Cambus Mains, Cockburnspath.
- 1.2. Figure 1 below shows the site’s location circled in red, in relation to Cockburnspath to the west. Please refer to Appendix 1 ‘Location Plan’.
- 1.3. A Pre-application Enquiry was submitted to Scottish Borders Council in October 2020 (20/00615/PREAPP). This enquiry was in relation to the prospective release of three residential plots on land to the west of the steading and to the west of the single property named ‘Dalgeny’. The Pre-application Enquiry response advised that the land to the west of Dalgeny would not be suitable for development due to it being unrelated to the building group. However, it commented that the land immediately west of the steading may be acceptable under the relevant Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan policy, if sensitive layout, siting, design and landscaping is demonstrated.
- 1.4. It is on this basis we are proceeding to submit a Planning Application in Principle for the development of two residential units at land to the west of the steading.



Figure 2 - Wider Context Plan

2. Site Context

- 2.1. Old Cambus West Mains is approximately 3km east of Cockburnspath and lies just west of the food manufacturing warehouse owned by R & K Drysdale.
- 2.2. The land in question is a greenfield site and is immediately to the west of the steading. It allows an area of 0.1 hectares for developing the proposed two houses. Please see Appendix 2 named 'Site Plan' for further information on the site.
- 2.3. Access to the site can be taken by a minor road via the A1107. A new access point has been created providing a split access to the two plots centrally. Additionally, the existing field access to the south-east corner of the land in question has been relocated to the west of the proposed plots. Please refer to Appendix 3 named 'Indicative Site Layout'.
- 2.4. There are currently four existing properties to the east of the site including Old Cambus Farmhouse, 1 Old Cambus West Mains Cottages, 3 Old Cambus West Mains Cottages and 4 Old Cambus West Mains Cottages. In addition, there is the farm steading and various small outbuildings.
- 2.5. The Pre-application Enquiry response raises the importance of ensuring that future uses of the steading do not compromise the amenity of the occupants of the new dwellinghouses. We can confirm that the steadings are not within our client's ownership however our clients are aware that the owners have the intention to redevelop the steadings to provide a residential use.
- 2.6. The owners of the steading gained planning consent in 2014 to redevelop the steadings to provide six dwellinghouses (14/00488/FUL), however the consent was never implemented. Currently, the steadings are being used for low intensity timber storage purposes and we are not aware of any future plans to use the steading buildings for any other agricultural uses.
- 2.7. The residential property named 'Delgany' to the west is not considered to cause any impacts on our proposal.

3. The Proposal

- 3.1. We are submitting a Planning Application in Principle for the development of two residential plots to the west of Old Cambus West Mains Steadings. The indicative house design is shown as a 1 ½ storey design with a gross external area of 95m² plus attached garage of 29m².
- 3.2. Please refer to Appendix 3 'Indicative Site Plan' which shows how the site can accommodate two units designed to integrate well with the countryside built landscape. Plot 1 is 0.059 ha in size and Plot 2 extends to 0.065ha.
- 3.3. The positioning of the dwellings ensures that they have frontage to the road, similar to the cottages to the east. The Pre-application Enquiry response highlighted that any future residential plots should not extend as far west as Delgany. We have therefore ensured that the prospective plots are well-related to the steading building group by locating them in close proximity to the steading at the south-east corner of the field. The siting of the dwellings also ensure that the future occupants have maximum views of the sea and landscape to the north.
- 3.4. We note that the Roads Officer had no objections at the Pre-application Enquiry stage. As mentioned, a new single access point is proposed in a location which is central to the two plots. This access then splits off to provide separate entrances to the units with car parking areas to the front of the prospective dwellings. We have also shown the relocation of the existing field access to a new position to the west of the proposed plots, to retain access to the fields to the rear of the proposal site.
- 3.5. Appendix 4 'Access Visibility Splay Drawing' shows that with a speed of 40mph (average speed of traffic on this road), visibility from the relocated field access can be achieved to the east and west. Visibility can also be achieved both ways from the proposed plots access, with the removal of the hedge line on the opposite side of the road. This hedge is within our clients ownership and any hedgerows removed will be replanted elsewhere on the site .
- 3.6. Waste facilities would be situated outside each dwelling near to the access point. This will allow any waste vehicles to do their pickups at ease whilst being briefly stopped on the access track. As this track will be largely solely used by residents, we consider there would be minimum conflict with traffic on the minor access road.
- 3.7. We have not provided detail on boundary treatments as we consider this can be submitted at a later formal planning application stage. However the site can accommodate planted or fence boundaries to guarantee privacy for residents whilst also creating a boundary to help with creating a sensitive development that does not detract from the visual amenity of the surrounding landscape.
- 3.8. We have not provided detail on drainage as we also consider this to be something that can be agreed at a later stage but the site provides adequate space to accommodate separate or a combined private drainage system with a septic tank and soakaway.

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- 3.9. The Pre-application Enquiry response highlighted that the site appears to have housed a sheepfold and that the nature of this feature and activities associated with it are unknown. As far as we are aware, this land was used as an enclosure for sheep and no other activities leading to the contamination of land were undertaken.

4. Policy Context

Scottish Borders Council – Proposed Local Development Plan

HD2 – Housing in the Countryside

- 4.1. We consider that the critical planning policy in determining any prospective application for residential building plots is the ‘Housing in the Countryside’ Policy (HD2) within the Scottish Borders Proposed Local Development Plan, and its associated Supplementary Guidance.
- 4.2. Within the ‘Housing in the Countryside’ Policy, we consider that the proposal is permissible under Part (A) ‘Building Groups’. This policy allows for an additional 2 dwellings or a 30% increase of the building group, whichever is greater.
- 4.3. The policy also sets out the below criteria:
- a) the Council is satisfied that the site is well related to an existing group of at least three houses currently in residential use, provided that the group has scope for expansion and is not already considered complete;*
- b) the cumulative impact of new development on the character of the building group, and on the landscape and amenity of the surrounding area will be taken into account when determining new applications. Additional development within a building group will be refused if, in conjunction with other developments in the area, it will cause unacceptable adverse impacts; and*
- c) any consents for new build granted under this part of this policy should not exceed two dwellings or a 30% increase in addition to the group during the Plan period. No further development above this threshold will be permitted.*
- 4.4. At Old Cambus West Mains, there is a clear building group as there are four existing residences within the cluster. The addition of another two properties to the group allows for a design solution in keeping with the character and built form of the existing cluster and we outline our reasons for this assertion below. The principle of an established building group at Old Cambus West Mains has also been confirmed by the Pre-application Enquiry response.
- 4.5. In terms of boundaries, the site is framed by the access road to the south, Old Cambus West Mains Steading to the east and an appropriate boundary will round off the site to the west.
- 4.6. Two plots at this location will allow for high-quality residential properties to be built within an existing cluster which are sensitive to the surrounding landscape. With plot areas of approximately 0.059 ha and 0.065ha, there is adequate room to develop two family homes with large gardens and plentiful space surrounding. We consider these respective areas are similar in size and shape to the surrounding building group, and to typical Scottish Borders family homes in the countryside.
- 4.7. The properties would also be south-facing which brings the opportunity to take advantage of solar gain. We consider that the siting of the prospective dwellings also prevents any privacy issues with future properties at the steading, if it was to be redeveloped. Furthermore, we consider that the pattern of development proposed does not negatively influence the character of the building group or the surrounding landscape and amenity.

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EP5 – Special Landscape Areas

- 4.8. The land in question exists within the 'Berwickshire Coast' Special Landscape Area. We consider that the provision of two new family homes which fit sensitively into the environment will provide plots with excellent residential amenity whilst bringing increased investment to the area. Furthermore, through the Indicative Site Plan provided and the consideration of the setting of the site, we are confident that the proposal does not negatively influence the landscape and is permissible under Policy EP5.

ED10: Protection of Prime Quality Agricultural Land and Carbon Rich Soils

- 4.9. The soil capability at the site is 3.1 "Land capable of producing consistently high yields of a narrow range of crops and/or moderate yields of a wider range", as shown on the National Scale Land Capability Map (Scotland Soils). The land is currently used for grazing and is not suitable for arable crops. In addition, it covers a small area. As a result we do not consider there is any significant loss of prime agricultural land.
- 4.10. Furthermore, the Pre-application Enquiry response highlighted that there are unlikely to be grounds for refusal on policy ED10.

Desktop Constraints Assessment

- 4.11. A desktop constraints assessment was carried out to identify any additional restrictions on the site. Through this research, we did not identify any further limitations which would preclude development.

5. Policy Analysis

5.1. The ‘New Housing in the Scottish Borders Supplementary Guidance’ details criteria that is used to assess the suitability of any particular building group to accommodate new houses. These are analysed in the table below and provide commentary on each point in relation to the proposal site:

Building Group Policy Criteria	Fit with Policy
The scale and siting of new development should reflect and respect the character and the amenity of the existing group, and the individual houses within the group;	The proposal would be a logical extension to the existing building group and would respect the surrounding residential amenity, as the prospective plots are located close to the steading and having frontage to the road are similar to the cottages to the east.
New development should be limited to the area contained by that sense of place;	We consider that the proposal fits within an area which could readily be described and identified as Old Cambus and the proposal would consolidate this sense of place, integrating well with the surroundings.
Any new build should be located within a reasonable distance of existing properties within the building group, the distance between existing properties and proposed new builds should be guided by the spaces between the existing properties within the group	The plot sizes would allow provision of generously-sized family homes with adequate open space surrounding them. We therefore consider that the prospective dwellings are situated at a reasonable distance away from each other reflecting the local settlement pattern. As mentioned, the Pre-application Enquiry response raised the need to locate the dwellings close to the steading buildings to ensure the prospective dwellings integrate with the building group.
Proposals which involve the formation of new public roads for access (and public street lighting) will normally be of too large a scale;	No public roads for an access or public street lighting are required as the sites are well accessed by the A1107 and minor road to the south.
Sites should not normally break into a previously undeveloped field or require the removal of mature trees in a good condition;	The pre-application enquiry response flagged that the property named ‘Delgany’ was not part of the building group at Old Cambus and that any prospective housing site should not extend as far as its eastern boundary. It is for this reason that we have reduced the site boundary to ensure the dwellings are in close proximity to the steading. Furthermore, the response also flagged that two units close to the steading may be suitable.
Sites within 400m of existing livestock units, will not normally be permitted unless required in connection with the farm or business itself;	There are no livestock units within 400m of the land in question. As mentioned, the steading buildings to the east of the site are currently used for storage, and we understand that this use will continue. Previously planning consent was granted for redevelopment of these buildings, however we understand that this consent has lapsed.
Sites close to working farm buildings or other rural industries will be given careful consideration to ensure no potential conflict;	See comment above.
Existing groups may in themselves be complete, such as terraces of farm cottages and may not be suitable for further additions;	The existing group is not considered to be complete and this opinion is reinforced within the Pre-application Enquiry response that states that there may be an opportunity to extend the building group by up to two units, closer to the steading and farmhouse.
Extensions of ribbon development along public roads will not normally be permitted;	The road running south of the proposed development is an access track which provides access to Old Cambus West Mains and Old Cambus East mains only. We do not consider ribbon development to be an issue.

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There will be a presumption against development which would result in the coalescence of a group with a nearby settlement;

The nearest settlement is Cockburnspath 3km away, therefore the development would not result in any coalescence.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1. Overall, this statement shows that the land in question is a site which is capable of being developed to provide a residential use.
- 6.2. We consider that through the provision of 0.059ha and 0.065ha plots, there is ample room to develop two residential units with private amenity space, whilst avoiding any negative impacts on any of the surrounding land at the proposed site.
- 6.3. This statement shows that the proposed development is in line with the ‘Housing in the Countryside’ policy within the Proposed Scottish Borders Local Development Plan, as it is a logical extension to an existing building group. The principle of this has also been established within the Pre-application Enquiry response.
- 6.4. It is our opinion that the prospective dwellings are sensitive to the surrounding properties in relation to building group layout and they take into account the privacy of the existing residents. The residential amenity is also considered to be excellent.
- 6.5. We look forward to hearing the Council’s opinion on the proposal and we would be happy to provide further information if required.

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