



PLANNING STATEMENT

SITE ADDRESS

PLOT 4, WESTCOTE FARM, HAWICK, TD9 8SX

PROPOSAL

ERECTION OF DWELLINGHOUSE

APPLICANT

MR D GLENDINNING

NOVEMBER 2021

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Planning Statement, prepared by Ferguson Planning, is submitted to Scottish Borders Council on behalf of the Applicant Mr D Glendinning. The Statement supports an application for Planning Permission in Principle for the erection of a dwellinghouse at Plot 4 at Westcote Farm, Hawick.
- 1.2 The proposal was presented to the Planning Authority in April 2021 as Planning Application 21/00706/FUL. Ferguson Planning were instructed to prepare this Statement, demonstrating its accordance with adopted planning policy, in October 2021.
- 1.3 The site forms part of the converted steading of Westcote Farm, lying around 900 metres east of Hawick (point-to-point displacement). The converted steading lies approximately 600 metres from the A698 travelling along a private way. Multiple dwellings have been developed in the former farmyard all of which take vehicle access from the private way.
- 1.4 In total the former farmyard comprises 7 no. existing dwellings which share three access points onto the private way. Very large agricultural fields surround Westcote Farm on all sides except the south-east.
- 1.5 The site comprises little-used grazing which bounds an existing track across its north-west boundary. The site is dominated by pasture grass with little in the way of other vegetation or landscaping. An field access onto the existing track sits into the north boundary of the site. The existing dwellings Westcote Farm House, Stable Cottage, Auld Byre, and The Bothy all sit opposite the site across the track from which access is taken.
- 1.6 The extract below indicates the application site in red together with other land within the Applicant's control in blue. The existing dwellings nearby and other buildings are also indicated.

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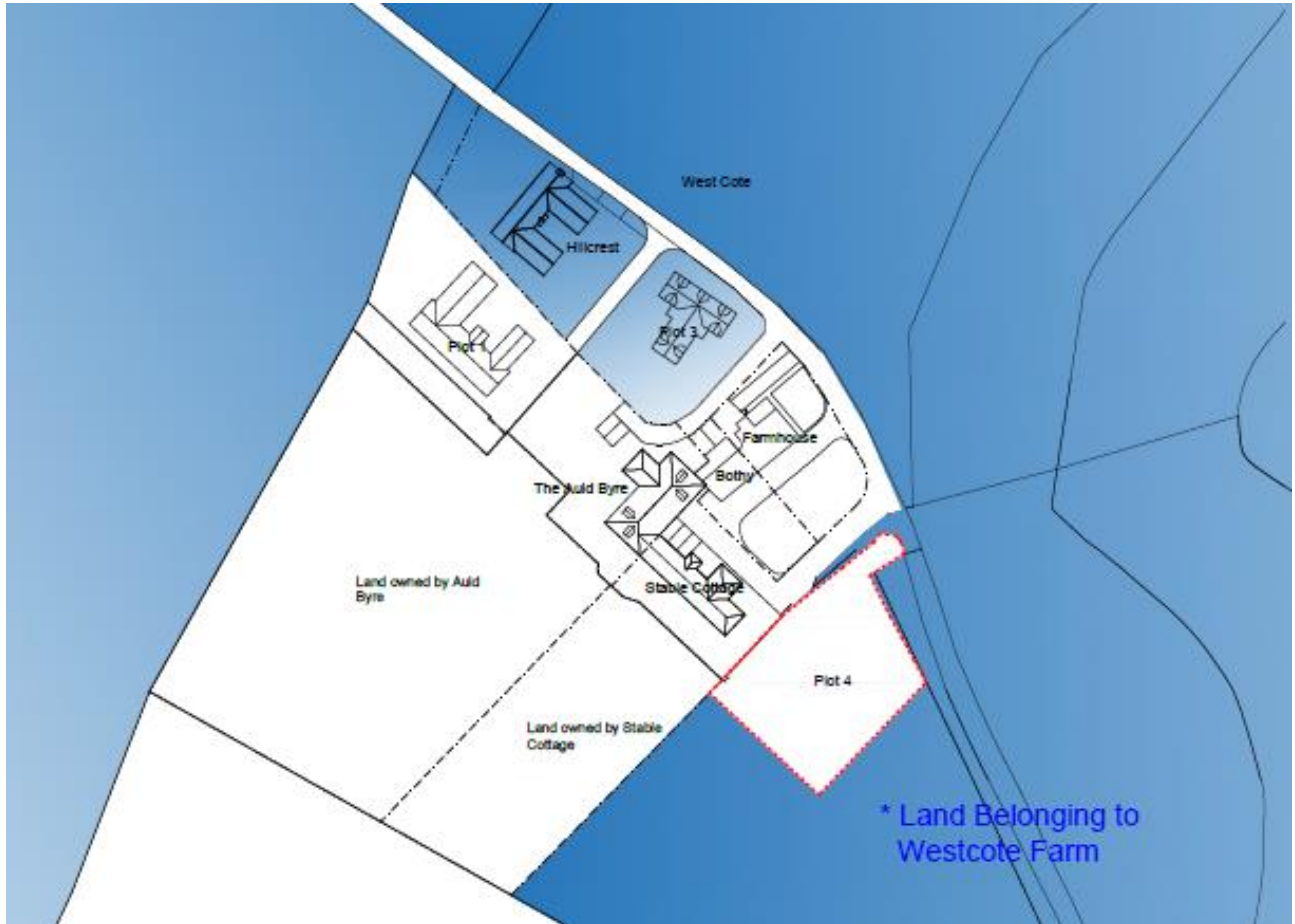


Fig 1: Extract from AT3514-L(-1)101(A) Location Plan, the application site is visible as a south-east bookend to the existing Building Group at Westcote (Source: Aitken Turnbull Architects).

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2. SUMMARY OF PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The layout and access arrangements of the proposed dwelling are conceptually illustrated on application plan AT3514-L(-1)107. The proposal is for the erection of a single dwelling on the site together with access, landscaping, and associated works.
- 2.2 The proposal includes a new dwelling placed relatively centrally within the site. The new dwelling is proposed in 'T-plan' form with orientation taken from the existing building line of Stable Cottage and Auld Byre to the north-west. A new drive with space for carparking and turning is proposed from the existing track to the north-west.



Fig 2: Extract from application plan AT3514-L(-1)107 conceptually proposed site layout of new house, garden, and access (Source: Aitken Turnbull Architects).

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- 2.3 The boundaries of the broadly rectangular site would be planted with hedgerow and native tree species. The proposed layout would fulfil the development potential of the Building Group's south-east edge and round-off this part of the cluster. This approach is in accordance with 2.b.1 of the New Housing in the Borders Countryside Supplementary Guidance.
- 2.4 The elevations of the new house are to be finished in render with base course and quoins of reconstituted stone. The 'T-plan' form of the building will preclude a domineering mass from emerging and retain the primacy of larger dwellings in the core of the existing Building Group. The roof is proposed in natural slate. The roof shall be gabled at each end, reflective of the rural location and character.
- 2.5 The proposed dwelling shall stand 1.75 storeys tall, with the roofline broken by dormers protruding from the external walls. The north-west elevation is proposed as principal, accommodating both the primary entrance and the integral garage. PV roof panels are proposed on the roof of the south-east elevation. Windows and doors are both proposed in uPVC frames.
- 2.6 The proposed dwelling will be serviced by connection to a privately held septic tank and soakaways within the Applicant's control. The Applicant proposes to connect to the mains water network which serves the existing dwellings at Westcote Farm.

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3. POLICY CONTEXT

3.1 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 planning applications. 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

3.2 SPP supports the creation and protection of successful, sustainable places which support sustainable economic growth and regeneration, and the creation of well-designed, sustainable places. This outcome sits side-by-side with the other three outcomes which target the delivery of low carbon places which reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the changing climate, natural and resilient places which protect and make use of natural and cultural assets, and better connected places which support and capitalises on transport and digital infrastructure.

3.3 SPP creates a presumption in favour of development that contributes to sustainable development and establishes that the planning system should support economically, environmentally and socially sustainable places by enabling development that balances the costs and benefits of a proposal over the longer term. The aim is to achieve the right development in the right place; it is not to allow development at any cost. Specifically, policies and decisions should be guided by key principles, including:

- giving due weight to net economic benefit;
- responding to economic issues, challenges and opportunities, as outlined in local economic strategies;
- supporting good design and the six qualities of successful places;
- making efficient use of existing capacities of land, buildings and infrastructure including supporting town centre and regeneration priorities;
- supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation including taking account of flood risk;
- improving health and well-being by offering opportunities for social interaction and physical activity, including sport and recreation;
- having regard to the principles for sustainable land use set out in the Land Use Strategy;
- protecting, enhancing and promoting access to natural heritage, including green infrastructure, landscape and the wider environment;
- reducing waste, facilitating its management and promoting resource recovery; and

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- avoiding over-development, protecting the amenity of new and existing development and
- considering the implications of development for water, air and soil quality.

3.4 SPP sets out how successful, sustainable places includes protecting and enhancing the vibrancy of rural, coastal, and island areas, with growing, sustainable communities supported by new opportunities for employment and education. The character of rural and island areas and the challenges they face vary greatly across the country, from pressurised areas of countryside around towns and cities to more remote and sparsely populated areas.

3.5 In rural areas the Government intends the planning system to:

- in all rural and island areas promote a pattern of development that is appropriate to the character of the particular rural area and the challenges it faces;
- encourage rural development that supports prosperous and sustainable communities and businesses whilst protecting and enhancing environmental quality; and
- support an integrated approach to coastal planning.

Scottish Borders Local Development Plan

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

- **Policy PMD1: Sustainability**
- **Policy PMD2: Quality Standards**
- **Policy HD2: Housing in the Countryside**
- **Policy HD3: Protection of Residential Amenity**
- **Policy EP5: Special Landscape Areas**

Policy PMD1: Sustainability

3.7 The preparation of the Local Development Plan was heavily informed by the acknowledged “*need for action on climate change*” and the Council’s Environmental Strategy, which sit behind the ‘support and encouragement of sustainable development’ across the Borders. Policy PMD1 sets out the “*sustainability principles which underpin all the Plan’s policies*” and that the Council expects to inform development proposals and planning decisions:

- the long term sustainable use and management of land
- the preservation of air and water quality
- the protection of natural resources, landscapes, habitats, and species
- the protection of built and cultural resources

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- the efficient use of energy and resources, particularly non-renewable resources
- the minimisation of waste, including waste water and encouragement to its sustainable management
- the encouragement of walking, cycling, and public transport in preference to the private car
- the minimisation of light pollution
- the protection public health and safety
- the support of community services and facilities
- the provision of new jobs and support to the local economy
- the involvement of the local community in the design, management, and improvement of their environment.

Policy PMD2: Quality Standards

3.8 The 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;
- 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.

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Policy HD2: Housing in the Countryside

3.9 Section A of Policy HD2 addresses development proposals for housing related to existing Building Groups. The adopted text of section A has been copied below:

“(A) Building Groups

Housing of up to a total of 2 additional dwellings or a 30% increase of the building group, whichever is the greater, associated with existing building groups may be approved provided that:

- a) the Council is satisfied that the site is well related to an existing group of at least three houses or building(s) currently in residential use or capable of conversion to residential use. Where conversion is required to establish a cohesive group of at least three houses, no additional housing will be approved until such a conversion has been implemented,*
- 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,*
- c) any consents for new build granted under this part of this policy should not exceed two housing dwellings or a 30% increase in addition to the group during the Plan period. No further development above this threshold will be permitted.*

In addition, where a proposal for new development is to be supported, the proposal should be appropriate in scale, siting, design, access, and materials, and should be sympathetic to the character of the group.”

Policy HD3: Protection of Residential Amenity

3.10 The Policy states that *“development that is judged to have an adverse impact on the amenity of existing or proposed residential areas will not be permitted. To protect the amenity and character of these areas, any developments will be assessed against:*

- a) the principle of the development, including where relevant, any open space that would be lost; and*
- b) the details of the development itself particularly in terms of:*
 - i. the scale, form, and type of development in terms of its fit within a residential,*
 - ii. the impact of the proposed development on the existing and surrounding properties particularly in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy and sunlight provisions. These considerations apply especially in relation to garden ground or ‘backland’ development,*
 - iii. the generation of traffic or noise,*



iv. *the level of visual impact.*”

Other Material Considerations

New Housing in the Borders Countryside SPG

- 3.11 The Supplementary Planning Guidance provides “advice and assistance with the siting and design of new housing in the Borders countryside”. Pertinent sections of the Guidance have been identified below.
- 3.12 The Guidance accepts that “the Borders area is not uniform in its landscape character” and that for “new housing to be absorbed successfully into a particular landscape it is important that the setting is selected by respecting the local landform, the field patterns and the tree and hedgerow cover”.
- 3.13 The Guidance continues to establish that the development of “new housing in harmony with its immediate and wider surroundings” is possible by “respecting the local landform, the pattern of fields and the distribution of tree and hedgerow cover”.
- 3.14 The Guidance sets out that the existence of a Building Group “will be 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.”
- 3.15 The Council’s expectations for elements of the proposed design which relate to access are also included in the Guidance, “in the interests of public safety it is therefore important that any new houses in the countryside are served by a vehicular access of a safe standard and provided with adequate on site facilities for vehicle movement and parking.”

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4. ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

Principle of Development

4.1 The application site sits adjacent to the south-east of 7 no. existing dwellings which comprise a Building Group. The Building Group comprises the following existing dwellings:

- Hillcrest;
- The Court Yard;
- Minto View;
- Westcote Farm House;
- The Bothy;
- Stable Cottage; and
- The Auld Byre.

4.2 The existing Building Group does not have distinctly defined boundaries. Rather each dwelling in the Building Group sits in close proximity to the other, at largest the group measures c.100 metres in length by c.65 metres in width. The proposal respects and replicates this pattern of development by rounding-off the south-east of the cluster in a regularly shaped plot, visible on Fig.3.



Fig 3: Annotated aerial image of Building Group at Westcote Farm.

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- 4.3 The application site sits adjacent to the south-east of the existing track which provides access to the existing dwelling Stable Cottage. The proposal would also serve to complete the courtyard aesthetic of this part of Westcote by developing the final plot and completing the Building Group. Given the position of the site in relation to the nearby existing dwellings and the existing track serving residential properties, the site is considered to be well related to the existing Building Group at Westcote Farm and to accord with criteria a) of section (A).
- 4.4 A review of the Council’s online planning records has indicated that one new dwelling has been consented and subsequently constructed at Westcote Farm within the current LDP period. The dwelling constructed within the current LDP period is Minto View, approved under Planning Permission 17/00857/FUL. It is noted that Planning Application 16/01124/PPP previously sought consent for two new dwellings although was withdrawn before determination.
- 4.5 The existing Building Group at Westcote Farm dominates the local landscape. Expansion of the Building Group, which already comprises seven dwellings, by one dwelling is considered to have a negligible landscape impact. The proposed dwelling stands off from Stable Cottage, the closest existing dwelling to the site. The proposed dwelling is considered not to give rise to any overlooking issues or other issues of amenity.
- 4.6 Given the limited impacts on landscape and amenity associated with the proposed development, it is considered that an “unacceptable adverse impact” would not be created and that the proposal accords with criteria b) of section (A).
- 4.7 As the Building Group at Westcote Farm comprises seven existing dwellings, extension by two additional dwellings is allowed for by the Policy. As identified above only one new house (Minto View – 17/00857/FUL) has been approved in the current LDP period. The proposal is considered to accord with criteria c) of section (A) as the existing Building Group has capacity to expand by one more dwelling in the current LDP period and one new dwelling is proposed.
- 4.8 The principle of development of the erection of a dwellinghouse is considered to be acceptable in accordance with section (A) of Policy HD2. The proposal represents the erection of a single dwelling, expanding an existing Building Group in an appropriate fashion.

Residential Amenity and Local Character

- 4.9 The proposal has been prepared to provide for good amenity for the occupiers of the proposed dwelling and surrounding dwellings. The type of development (a single detached dwelling) is considered to be appropriate to the site and the local area. The Applicant has intentionally prepared a detailed application to allow for full consideration of amenity at this stage.
- 4.10 The location of the site is generally conducive to good residential amenity with seven existing dwellings essentially forming the adjoining Building Group. Stable Cottage would be the closest

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existing dwelling and lies a short distance away across the existing track. The proposal includes both a new drive placed between the proposed dwelling and Stable Cottage as well as new boundary planting comprising trees in addition to a new hedgerow.

- 4.11 It is considered likely that it would not be possible to see downstairs windows in either Stable Cottage or the proposed dwelling from the downstairs windows of the other. While it may be possible to see the downstairs windows of Stable Cottage from the upstairs windows of the proposed dwelling, the distance would be so great (c. 20m or 65 feet) that intervisibility between the two is extremely likely to be impossible.
- 4.12 There is considered to be essentially no risk of impacting upon the amenity of other existing dwellings. Moreover, the proposed dwelling is set in a large garden which would provide for a good quality of amenity for the occupiers.
- 4.13 The context of the local area is conducive to new development. The existing Building Group is held in private ownerships with essentially no public land or places. Visual aspects from and outside every existing dwelling are defined and dominated by the Building Group (i.e. existing dwellings) itself. As discussed above, the existing Building Group already dominates the landscape locally and defines views toward it. Overall the visual impact of the proposal on the local area is considered to be slight in degree.
- 4.14 As the proposal provides for good amenity on-site and in the surrounding area in addition to respecting local character, it is considered to accord with Policy HD3 and Policy PMD2.

Access

- 4.15 Vehicle and pedestrian access to the site is proposed via a new drive to the existing track which feeds into the private way running north towards the A698. On-site parking and turning for two cars is provided within the curtilage of the proposed dwelling.
- 4.16 It is noted that the Roads Planning team have commented on the application proposal and not objected.

Site Servicing

- 4.17 The proposed dwelling will be serviced by connection to the nearby mains water network. Foul and surface water drainage will be managed by connection to private means. Satisfactory connection arrangements can be achieved, subject to further details to be provided at the next stage in the planning process.

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5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Ferguson Planning has been appointed by the Applicant to prepare a Planning Statement support Planning Application 21/00706/FUL for the erection of a dwellinghouse at Plot 4 at Westcote Farm, Hawick.
- 5.2 The proposal represents the enlargement of an existing Building Group by one dwelling upon a site which is well related to the existing dwellings and shares a single connective axis. The site represents the final plot which is well related to the existing Building Group and occupies the final access to the existing track. Proposed tree and hedge planting would also provide a new boundary enclosing the site and precluding any further development into the countryside. Therefore the erection of the proposed dwelling upon the site is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policy HD2(A).
- 5.3 The proposal has been designed in accordance with Policies HD3 and PMD2 and represents an acceptable form of development in this location. It is considered that the proposed dwelling would benefit from good amenity, safeguard the privacy of surrounding dwellings, and respect local character at Westcote Farm.
- 5.4 It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with relevant adopted policy of the Local Development Plan and is not afflicted by any other material considerations. It is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

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