

F E R G U S O N P L A N N I N G

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Ms Louise McGeoch
Clerk to the Local Review Body
Scottish Borders Council

12th August 2022

BY EMAIL ONLY

Dear Ms McGeoch

Thank you for your recent correspondence and passing on the comments of the appointed Planning Officer. We are grateful for the opportunity to respond to those comments.

Soil Assessment

It is noted that the comments of the appointed Planning Officer criticise the Soil Assessment for not identifying arguments in favour of the position taken by Report of Handling 21/01421/PPP. The problem with this criticism is that the scientific evidence does not support the position taken in the Report of Handling.

Soil has been actively managed both on-site and in the rest of the field for centuries. Fertiliser has been used, including manure and natural compost, crops have been rotated, and drainage has been provided for. Indeed it must be noted that the fertility issue does not relate to drainage in any event. The site lies on the Berwickshire plain which is one of the principal agricultural areas in Scotland – arable agriculture is not novel to the area and soil management practices have now been incorporated into cultivation for several decades. It is indisputable that the fertility issue exists despite active soil management not in absence of it.

The results of the Soil Assessment are unaffected by the criticism contained within the comments of the Planning Officer.

It should also be noted that the spectre of “other potential sites” is addressed in paragraphs 3.14-3.18 of the Local Review Statement.

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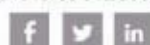
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Illustrative Visualisation (3D Image)

As stated in paragraph 3.22 of the Local Review Statement, the footprint of the proposed dwelling would not exceed 250m². The proposed dwelling would stand and appear smaller than the Category B Listed Woodend Farmhouse.

The comments of the Planning Officer also fail to accurately profile the relationship between the proposed dwelling and Woodend Farmhouse. The proposed dwelling shares a similar relationship with the Farmhouse as the existing cottages. Whereas Woodend Farmhouse sits at the end of the private way, measuring c. 250 metres in length, and represents the destination which is arrived at – the proposed dwelling sits off to one side (east) as a building which is passed as one travels to the destination much the same as the existing cottages to the west of the private way.

It is considered that the proposed dwelling would not harm the setting of Woodend Farmhouse. The Farmhouse would continue to be the principal destination, focal point, and centre of Woodend; which the proposed dwelling would frame.

It should also be noted that neither impact on the Listed Building nor any other heritage matter formed part of any reason for refusal.

Revised Site Plan

The acceptance of the Planning Officer that the revised Site Plan would reduce land-take is appreciated.

Nothing contained within the comments gives rise to revision of the Appellants' position that the site is well related to the existing dwellings and private way which comprise the existing Building Group at Woodend. This position is detailed in full in paragraphs 3.5-3.10 of the Local Review Statement.

In summary, the Local Review Statement remains accurate and correct. The proposed development accords with Policies HD2(A) & ED10 and no material considerations would justify refusing planning permission.

The Appellants are grateful for this opportunity to address the comments of the appointed Planning Officer and thank the Local Review Officer, the Clerk to the Local Review Body, and her staff accordingly.

It is our hope that members of the LRB find these comments to be clear and helpful in completing their determination of the matter at hand.

Your sincerely

