

Design, Access & Planning Statement
Proposal for Two Dwellings
Plots at New Belses, Ancrum, Jedburgh, TD8 6UR
June 2021

Introduction

The applicant, Phen Farms – a family farming partnership based at New Belses Farm – seeks to erect two dwellings on an unproductive corner of land opposite Belses Smithy. The farm, which is almost all arable, is small by modern standards and the proposed development represents rural diversification in preparation for a time of change within the partnership and improvements to the farm business.

The site is an awkward corner of pasture isolated from the arable land by a tree belt. It fronts the B6400 and has options for access including an excellent safe spot at its eastern side. It is within a rural building group and will provide an excellent opportunity for the erection of two dwellings.

The applicant has decided to submit a pair of similar applications, each in respect of a single dwelling. This pair of applications follows withdrawal of 20/00411/PPP and 20/00412/PPP, a pair submitted last year for this same scheme – later withdrawn to allow time to resolve a query raised by Scottish Borders Council's Roads Department. That query related to the density of access points on the B6400. The applicant has now agreed to stop-up a field access and to restrict the existing farm access to light traffic only, in lieu of creating one new and safe access for the farm and these plots.

The time elapsed since submission of the original pair of applications, blighted as it was by the Coronavirus pandemic, has reinforced the need for diversification at this farm. The applicants recently made pre-application enquiries about placing shepherd huts on part of the old railway as a leisure diversification, which have been rejected as incompatible with Planning Policy IS4, so they propose to site this activity in the small field south of the railway next to the B6400, sharing the proposed new access. Although this will be the subject of a separate application, it is relevant to note it now because it reinforces the need for a new safe access at the north-east corner of the plots. The access further north, adjacent to the old railway bridge, is used as-of-right by occupants of the New Belses Cottages so it cannot be stopped-up at present. It may become a candidate for stopping-up and diversion to the new proposed access (once constructed) if the railway is reinstated to Hawick. In the meantime, it will be restricted to light traffic only; tractors, lorries and other heavy vehicles will be prohibited and will use the proposed new access.

1. Design & Access

Taking the headings from CABA guidance – *Design & Access Statements, How to Read, Write and Use Them*, we promote the scheme as follows:

Use

The use is currently a small pasture paddock within an arable farm.

Amount

The proposal is to erect two detached dwellings, each the subject of a separate planning application for Planning Permission in Principle.

Layout

The proposal is to erect two detached dwellings, each the subject of a separate planning application for Planning Permission in Principle. Indicative footprints are shown in the block plan accompanying the applications; the precise layout is to be confirmed in a later application for either full planning or approval of matters specified in conditions.

Scale

The aggregated area of the two plots is around half a hectare.

Landscaping

The proposal is to erect two detached dwellings, each the subject of a separate planning application for Planning Permission in Principle. The plots are bounded to the west and north by a belt providing a natural screen and a sense of containment; this shelter belt is immature and will thicken over time. The roadside hedge on the east side also provides elements of screening and containment. The plot has open views to the south, facing other dwellings. Further landscaping details will be confirmed in a later application for either full planning or approval of matters specified in conditions. It is anticipated that these details will complement the proposed dwellings and extend the domesticated landscape of the building group fully into the site.

Appearance

The proposal is to erect two detached dwellings, each the subject of a separate planning application for Planning Permission in Principle. Details of the appearance will be confirmed in a later application for either full planning or approval of matters specified in conditions.

Access

(i) Vehicular and Transport Links

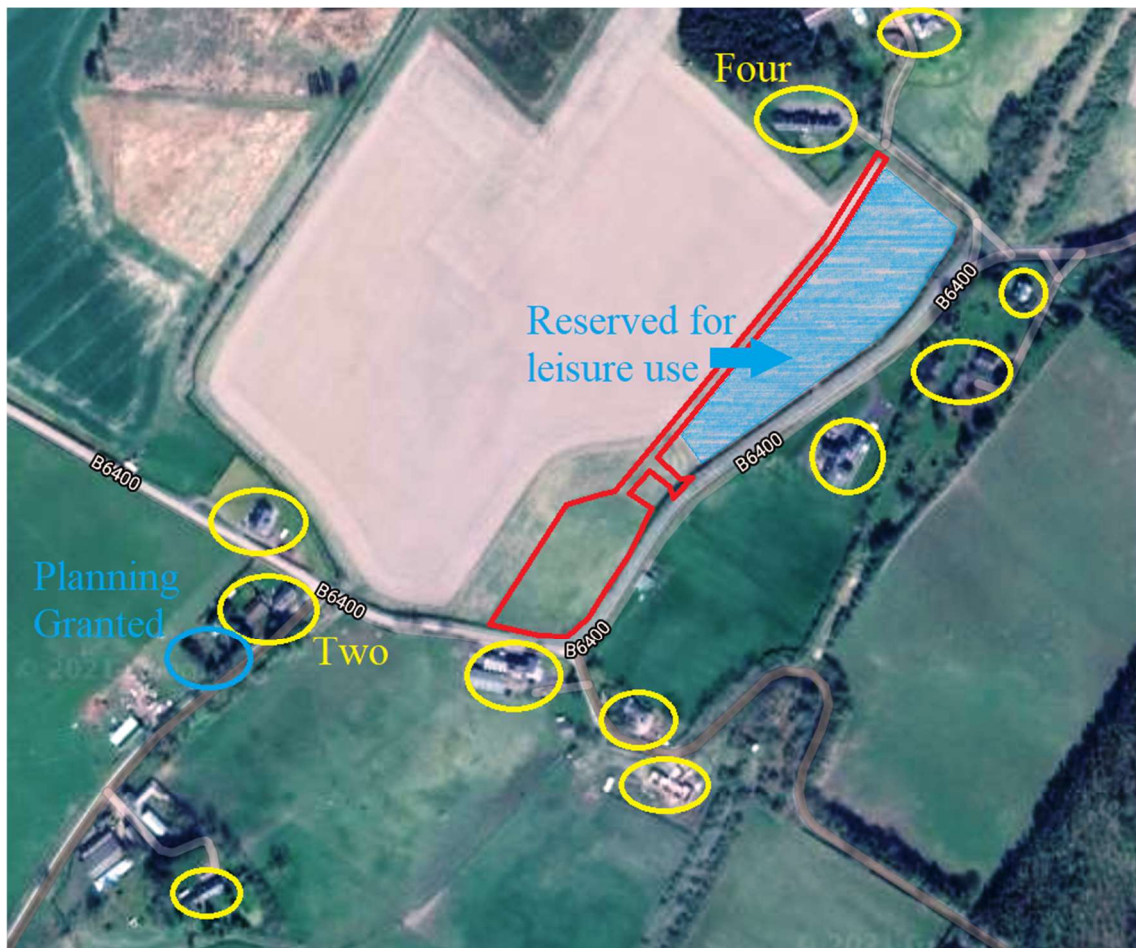
The plots have excellent vehicular and transport links being adjacent to the B6400 (Nisbet to Lilliesleaf), about 6km west of Ancrum and 4km east of Lilliesleaf. The nearest A-class roads are the A68 (St Boswells and Ancrum, each about 6km) and the A699 (St Boswells about 6km, Bowden about 5km). A new access is required from the B6400 into the plots. Visibility splays 2.5m by 100m are comfortably achieved at the proposed entrance. In lieu of the new access onto the B6400 the existing farm access will be restricted to light vehicles only, and the existing southern access to the adjoining field will be permanently stopped-up. These road improvements are shown on Road Layout Plan 20210609_BPHE01-08.

(ii) Inclusive Access

The proposal is to erect two detached dwellings, each the subject of a separate planning application for Planning Permission in Principle. Details of inclusive access arrangements will be confirmed in a later application for either full planning or approval of matters specified in conditions.

2. Planning

The proposal requires planning permission ... which is justified under Policy HD2A of Scottish Borders Council's adopted Local Plan. The applicant is satisfied that there is an existing group of more than three dwellings; the wider group could be defined as sixteen dwellings, as shown below. The group is characterised as fairly dispersed with dwellings on both sides of the road. The proposals complement the group and will have no adverse impact on it, or landscape, or amenity. There is headroom for development because only one new dwelling has been proposed here in recent years – application reference 20/00486/FUL. The proposals will have no adverse impact on wildlife, protected species or biodiversity. There is no flood risk. Overhead power lines running through the site have minimal impact on the scheme and may, in any case, be moved to the roadside by moving only one pole. The proposed access is through a young plantation, but it follows the electricity line, with no trees planted beneath, so the impact on trees is minimal and any losses will be made up severalfold in landscaping the plots.



Summary

We are satisfied that these two proposals, each for the erection of a single dwelling, merit support. The proposed development represents necessary diversification in an existing local farm business at a time of

change. It is in line with current Scottish Borders local plan policies for development in the countryside, will help satisfy a local need for family housing and will provide choices to the west of Ancrum, where there has been little development in recent years.

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