

# Proposed Dwelling Housing

Land South-West of Castleside Cottage, Ashkirk  
Selkirk

## Planning Statement October 2021



Prepared by



# Proposed Dwelling House

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## Appraisal

### The Application

The application is for Detailed Planning Permission to erect a single detached dwelling house.

### Introduction

This planning statement supports an application for a new house which is compliant with the current SBC planning policies and supplementary planning guidance; provides high quality housing which utilises existing infrastructure such as water & waste, district heating and road access; enhances an established building group by complementing previous development and completing a group in a sensitive way; helps meet the housing requirement for SBC; makes a positive contribution on the surrounding location; provides a needed house for the landowner.

The proposed design achieves this in an innovative and imaginative way, avoiding the risk of pastiche, whilst being respectful of its context, reflecting previous redevelopment and honouring what has gone before on an adjacent agricultural site. In doing so it echoes the best of other innovative architecture such as the nearby Wollrig Longhouse as well as wider afield in the Scottish Borders and aligns with the recent regulation change regarding the use of agricultural buildings for housing.

### The Application Site



The application site is located to the south-western end of a recognised building group at Castleside Farm. This group of buildings are approximately 1 mile from Ashkirk village travelling alongside the Ale Water. A semi-detached domestic property, Castleside Cottage adjoins the application site to the north-east.



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There is an existing vehicular access to the application site which is taken from the adjacent unclassified public road, using an existing splay and track owned by the applicant which is very lightly used.



The application site is triangular in shape running adjacent to the unclassified public road.

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The site is enclosed along the northern edge with an embankment which continues along the rear of the adjacent properties within the existing building group and to the west by an open ditch.

The garden of Castleside Cottage adjoins the north-eastern boundary of the application site.

The landform on which the proposed house is to be sited is generally flat and consistent with the topography of the adjoining dwellings. No further ground engineering works are proposed to accommodate the proposed house design, the open drain being removed as part of current drainage work.

### **Development Proposal**

The development proposal is to construct a detached, 3 bed, 5 apartment, two storey dwelling with private parking provided via the existing access from the public road.

### **Physical Constraints**

The site is not subject to any protection status or any allocated land use restrictions.

### **Site History**

There is no specific development or historic planning consents tied to the application site other than being included within the application site boundary of the works carried out to renovate the adjoining farm cottages (ref: 09/00119/FUL).

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## Pre-Application Planning Advice

To determine the likelihood of success, a request for pre-application planning advice was sought by the applicant from the Authority (ref: 21/00183/PREAPP) together with an indicative house design (see appendices 1 & 2).

The response dated 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 (see appendix 1) highlights the following policies against which the proposals would be considered.

Policy PMD 1 – Sustainability.  
Policy PMD 2 – Quality Standards.  
Policy HD2 – Housing in the Countryside.  
Policy HD3 – Protection of Residential Amenity.  
Policy EP1 – International Nature Conservation Sites and Protected Species  
Policy EP2 – National Nature Conservation and Protected Species  
Policy EP3 – Local Biodiversity  
Policy EP5 – Special Landscape Areas  
Policy EP13 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows  
Policy EP16 – Air Quality  
Policy IS2 – Developer Contributions  
Policy IS3 – Developer Contributions Related to the Borders Railway  
Policy IS7 – Parking Provision and Standards  
Policy IS9 – Waste Water Treatment Standards

### Scottish Borders Council Supplementary Planning Guidance

Development Contributions (2018).  
Householder Development (incorporating Privacy and Sunlight Guide) (2006).  
Landscape & Development (2008).  
New Housing in the Borders Countryside (2008).  
Placemaking and Design (2010)  
Trees and Development (2008).  
Waste Management (2015).

The following response is extracted from the Planning Department's assessment of the applicant's request for pre-application planning advice.

### Policy Principle

*“The Scottish Borders Local Plan (2016) sets out the proposal would be considered a “Local” development under the hierarchy of development.*

*Accounting for the adopted policies and guidance of the Council on Placemaking and Design, I can advise that the erection of a dwellinghouse to serve the farm would be assessed against Policy HD2 Part A (Building Groups).*

*Within this policy, the proposed replacement of an existing house may be acceptable provided that:*



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- a) *the Council is satisfied that the site is well related to an existing building 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 conversion has been implemented.*
- b) *the cumulative impact of new development on the character of the building group, and on the landscape and the 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 the 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.*

*The calculations on building group size are based on the existing number of housing units within the group as at the start of the Local Development Plan Period. This will include those units under construction or nearing completion at that point.*

***I consider the proposals meets the requirements of this policy.***

### Layout, Siting & Design

*“Based upon the submitted plan I can advise as follows:*

*It is important to ensure that all new development is of a high quality and respects the environment in which it is contained. The site plan shows the position of the dwelling at the rear of the site with parking situated behind with access taken from the farm track.*

*With respect to the site plan, given the comments from our Roads Planning Officer (see below) regarding access not being suitable. Consequently, the position of the house would have to be re-positioned so the access (with parking for two vehicles) can be taken directly off the public road.*

*The principle of the pitched roof design is acceptable, however, looking at the visualisations provided, I feel the proposal is too high and a single or one and a half storey house would be more appropriate in the context of the immediate surrounding area. The proposals must also ensure that adequate amenity ground is incorporated into the final designs.*

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*The external finishing materials make an important contribution to the overall character and appearance of a building and should relate to the neighbouring dwellings and be of a high quality.*

*The Council has supplementary planning guidance. "Placemaking and Design" emphasises that new development must integrate well with the existing pattern of development, build upon the established character of the area and contribute positively to a sense of place.*

***The proposed development of a house is considered to respect the character of the area and would contribute to a sense of place."***

**Our response to this aspect is detailed in the section titled "*Planning Considerations – Siting and Design of the Proposed Dwelling*"**

### Amenity & Privacy

*"The council has adopted supplementary guidance and planning policies which seek to protect residential amenity.*

*Any new development should ensure that it does not conflict with neighbouring properties to the northeast, particularly in terms of daylight, sunlight, overshadowing, overbearing and privacy. **Given the size of the plot I envisage no issues in respect of amenity and privacy."***

### Landscape

*"In order to comply with EP13 (Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows) and given the context of the site with hedgerows and mature trees, a tree survey with a tree protection plan will be required for any future application."*

### Road Safety

*"The Council's Roads Planning Officer has been consulted regarding the proposals.*

*The proposed site is situated on an unrestricted section of rural road. Recent development has seen the conversion of the steading to residential dwellings to the north-east of the proposed site with two existing cottages in between the two development sites.*

*An agricultural access lies immediately to the south of the proposed development site however the construction of this is not suitable for residential traffic and I have concerns over the visibility afforded to this access and the potential mix of use between residential and agricultural traffic. Providing suitable sightlines can be achieved it may be more advantageous to have direct access from the public road and turning within the site to allow vehicles to re-join in a forward gear."*

**Our response to this aspect is detailed in the section titled "*Planning Considerations - Vehicular Access/Visibility/Parking*"**

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*“Should the planning department be minded to support a dwelling at this location then the following points would need to be satisfactorily addressed at detailed planning stage;*

- Appropriate access to the plot for residential traffic.*
- Adequate visibility splays, appropriate to the speed of traffic at this location.*
- Parking and turning for two vehicles within the plot.”*

### Environmental Health

*“Environmental Health would be consulted and it is likely that further information/conditions regarding the proposed water supply and waste water systems would be requested/recommended. Evidence from Scottish Water would be required if the proposed site can be connected to the public mains and the public sewer.*

*If the proposals are to include a flue for a woodburning stove, a standard condition to safeguard neighbouring residential amenity would be attached to any future permission.”*

**Our response to this aspect is detailed in the section titled “*Planning Considerations – Environmental Health*”**

### Flooding

*“The Council’s Roads Planning Officer has been consulted regarding the proposals. Their comments are provided below:*

*In terms of information that this Council has concerning flood risk to this site, I would state that The Indicative River & Coastal Flood Map (Scotland) known as the “third generation flood mapping” prepared by SEPA indicates that the site is at risk from a flood event with a return period of 1 in 200 years. That is the 0.5% annual risk of a flood occurring in any year.*

*The Indicative River & Coastal Flood Map (Scotland) has primarily been developed to provide a strategic national overview of flood risk in Scotland. Whilst all reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the flood map is accurate for its intended purpose, no warranty is given. Due to copyright restrictions I cannot copy the map to you however, if the applicant wishes to inspect the maps they can contact me to arrange a suitable time to come in and view them.*

*The SEPA indicative flood mapping shows a 1 in 200 year flood envelope for the Ale Water encroaching onto the area of the proposed development and the only access/egress road to the site. I would therefore require that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is undertaken to develop a 1 in 200 year plus climate change flood level and assess if the new development is at risk of flooding and if appropriate how much flood plain storage is lost. The FRA should include the access road to the property. Should the FRA show that compensatory storage is required the FRA should include measures to provide this.*



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*Ideally a Finished Floor Level (FFL) above the 1 in 200 year plus climate change level should be developed with an appropriate allowance for freeboard.*

*The FRA should provide details of the flood risk associated with a 1 in 200 year flood event plus 35% climate change at this site and any level and survey information should be provided in metres Above Ordnance Datum.*

*The FRA should include:-*

- *Flow velocities*
- *Flood depths*
- *Flow paths*
- *Details of mitigation measures to reduce flood risk including details of compensatory storage*

*Additionally site boundary drainage will be required specifically to the rear of the proposed property. This is because the land to the rear of the property is a steep banking and could potentially cause some surface water run off towards the proposed house.*

*Please note that this information must be taken in the context of material that this Council holds in fulfilling its duties under the Flood Risk Management (Scotland) Act 2009.”*

**Our response to this aspect is detailed in the section titled “*Planning Considerations – Flood Risk*”**

### Contaminated Land

*“Policy IS13 advises that where development is proposed on land that is contaminated or suspected of contamination, appropriate site investigation and mitigation will be required.*

*If the site has been previously used for agricultural purposes the Council’s Contaminated Land Officer may require investigation into any potential contamination and mitigation, if necessary. This may be a condition of the Planning Permission, if approved.”*

**Our response to this aspect is detailed in the section titled “*Planning Considerations – Site Contamination*”**

### Heritage and Archaeology

***“I anticipate no issues in respect to this.”***

### Development Contributions

*“Developer contributions will be required in respect of Waverley-Line restatement. This currently stands at £2093.*

*I envisage no contributions would be required for affordable housing or education provision, although this may change.*

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*A legal agreement would be necessary to secure these contributions in the event that planning permission is granted.”*

### Ecology

*“The Council’s Ecology Officer would be consulted regarding the suitability of the proposals.*

*Given the site appears to be in an open field which is bounded by a steep bank to the rear with a number of mature trees located adjacent to the site with the Ale Water (part of the River Tweed Special Area of Conservation located opposite). Breeding birds, bats may use trees and shrubs and these may be affected by the development. The habitats may support commuting and foraging badgers.*

*Ideally planning applications should be supported by at least a preliminary ecological appraisal (<https://www.cieem.net/guidance-on-preliminary-ecological-appraisal-gpea->). Planning conditions are likely to be required to safeguard breeding birds, bats and possibly badgers.”*

**Our response to this aspect is detailed in the section titled “*Planning Considerations – Ecological Impact*”**

### Waste Management

*“Scottish Borders Council’s Waste Services collection vehicles will only collect waste and recycling from the nearest public road. Therefore provision should be made for a properly designed collection point at the junction with the public road.”*

## **Supporting Planning Policies**

Policy PMD2: Quality Standards states:

*“All new development will be expected to be of high quality in accordance with the sustainability principles, design to fit with the Scottish Borders townscapes and to integrate with it's landscape surroundings. The standards that apply to development are:-*

### **PLACE MAKING AND DESIGN**

*h) it creates developments with a sense of place, based on a clear understanding of the context, designed in sympathy with Scottish Borders architectural styles; this need not exclude appropriate contemporary and/or innovative design.*

*i) it is of a scale, massing, height and density appropriate to it's surroundings and, where an extension or alteration, appropriate to the existing building.*

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*j) it is finished externally in materials, the colours and textures of which compliment the highest quality of architecture in the locality and, where an extension or alteration, the existing building.*

*k) it is compatible with, and respects the character of the surrounding area, neighbouring uses, and neighbouring built form.*

*l) it can be satisfactorily accommodated within the site.*

*m) it provides appropriate boundary treatments to ensure attractive edges to the development that will help integration with it's surroundings.*

Policy HD3: *Protection of Residential Amenity* states:

*“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 development, including where relevant, any open space that would be lost; and*

*b) the details of the development itself particularly in terms of;*

*- the scale, form and type of development in terms of it's fit within a residential area.*

*- the impact of the proposed development on the existing and surrounding properties particularly in terms of overlooking, loss of privacy and sun lighting provisions. These considerations apply especially in relation to garden ground or “backland” development.*

*- the generation of traffic or noise.*

*- the level of visual impact.*

Supplementary Planning Guidance Document: *Placemaking & Design* states:

*“It is essential to establish an understanding of:*

- The local built character of the area*
- How it formed in that way: the built heritage and landscape characteristics that have shaped a settlement or place*
- The local sense of place*

*New development must seek to uphold and enhance the local character and sense of place.”*

It also states:

*“New development must pay due regard to :*

- appropriate scale of street, building plots and buildings in context*
- the pattern and form of building lines, setbacks, rooflines, and building elevations.*

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*Avoid arbitrary layouts that do not relate to a clear design concept and understanding of context.”*

## Planning Considerations

Whilst supporting the principle of development at this location, the Planning Authority highlighted some aspects in their pre-application advice that require the applicant to demonstrate that the following matters have been suitably addressed:

- siting and design of the proposed dwelling
- vehicular access/visibility/parking
- environmental health
- protection measures for existing trees and hedgerows
- flood risk
- site contamination
- ecological impact

In this submission we wish to acknowledge the aspects raised by the Council and have set out below how our design complies with the relevant Scottish Borders Council development policies and supplementary planning guidance.

## Siting and Design of the Proposed Dwelling

The consultation response asks for consideration to be given to the proposed building height.

Our assessment of the suitability of the proposed design takes into account the context of the building group as a whole which is characterised by a collection of buildings of differing styles and orientation. Essentially, the group is a traditional farming unit comprised of the following buildings:



1 - An original two-and-a-half storey farmhouse with rendered walls.



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- 2 - Former stone built steading buildings converted into a mix of three, two storey and storey and a half & one single storey private domestic dwellings and biomass boiler house with a mix of finishes and full height glazing.



- 3 - A pair of single storey semi-detached farm cottages with rendered walls.

As can be seen, there is clearly no single architectural style characterising the building group. Instead, it is the farming unit, which by function creates a hierarchy between the different buildings making up the group. This is reflected in the overall architectural narrative with the farmhouse acting as the host building.

We have looked back to recent times prior to the conversion of the existing steading buildings where a large steel framed cattle court occupied a prominent part of the site alongside the public road adjoining all of the remaining parts of the converted stone steading.



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We note that this structure was unmistakably agricultural in style with a low pitched roof and corrugated roof and side walls. This building clearly formed a significant part of the architectural narrative of the farming unit and building group at the time and was removed when the working farm steading was relocated. Prior to this a number of buildings including full height steel barns occupied the site.



Our proposed dwelling design responds to this strong architectural narrative and hierarchy of the various buildings within the farming unit by looking back to the form and simple agricultural style of the former cattle court and predecessor barns.

The SPG on Placemaking & Design states:

*“New housing design is often influenced by the latest architectural fashion or fad to varying degrees. This veers between the contemporary and traditional and both are not without their challenges. “Contemporary” forms without a firm design intent or contextual understanding can often be ill-fitted to their surroundings. Equally, attempts to reproduce historic styles with modern materials can result in a weaker interpretation of the original character. All new housing should therefore seek to be clear and honest in its aspiration – the concept should be clear from the outset. Regardless of the approach*

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*adopted, new housing development should always respect the most positive defining characteristics of the local area.”*

Great consideration has been given to the proposed dwelling design and our vision for this represents the most sympathetic and innovative way in which to the expand and enhance the character of the building group. A clear and coherent design narrative that takes its cue from the simple functional form of the barn type structures that formerly occupied the site seeks to continue the narrative of residential conversion of former agricultural buildings at this location and aligns with a recently approved policy to support permitted development rights for the conversion of simple rural structures (barns) to residential use. Embracing the simple form and rustic palette of materials for the exterior will without doubt will result in an attractive addition to the existing building group and deliver the highest standards of architectural design being promoted by this initiative. Attempting to replicate the irregular & worn-in style of the original adjacent buildings would not be practically possible. Any new linear structure in this style would harm the character of the building group and almost certainly “*result in a weaker interpretation of the original character.*”

There are many fine examples of where dwellings of this style have been successfully constructed in similar rural locations.





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Further consideration has been given to the location of the proposed house and we have concluded that the parking provision would be better relocated on the opposite side of the access to allow the dwelling to be sited further back in the plot. This aspect together with the two storey building form will create a “bookend” and complete the building group with the two storey farmhouse at the opposite end. The lower pitch of the roof will prevent the proposed dwelling becoming the dominant building of the group. To convey this we have included a contextual elevation within our submission documents which illustrates the proposed house sitting within the ridgeline of the existing farmhouse. The pre-planning response has acknowledged that given the size of the plot no issues in respect of amenity and privacy are envisaged.

### **Siting**

The location of the whole development is within a bowl, bounded by the public road, the height of which greatly exceeds the height of any of the buildings in the group as shown in the Contextual Elevation. Viewed from the road the new building is well below the intermediate sightline of an existing track let alone the crest of the ridge. Furthermore, extensive natural tree coverage of the slope provides a backdrop even in winter, ensuring the building would nest successfully within the contours.

### **Vehicular Access/Visibility/Parking**

Although the pre-planning response has indicated only that access may be an issue, this statement presents an opportunity to address these concerns. The roads planning authority have questioned the suitability of the existing access to be utilised which will be upgraded.

Access is directly off the public road using an existing access owned and controlled by the applicant. Enhanced visibility splays have been included within the proposed site plan to demonstrate that splays of 60m in both directions from a 4.5m set back can be achieved. The applicant has full control of the verges on both sides of the access allowing visibility to be improved upon if required.



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The roads planning authority state that the existing public road is presently unrestricted. Whilst this is acknowledged by the applicant, anecdotal evidence suggests that the road is lightly used and vehicle movements are predominantly at slower speeds. Recognition should also be given to the dynamics of the existing building group, i.e. the proximity of building & occupants to the carriageway, parking arrangements, potential vehicle movements on and off the carriageway, carriageway width and the cumulative effect these instances will have when determining a suitable assessment of speed in any given area. The addition of two vehicles will not materially affect these dynamics. A road users perception of risk is directly related to what speed they deem appropriate for given set of circumstances and it may be that speed restricted or suitable warning signage to road users may be deemed appropriate.

Parking provision and turning provision has been placed along at the south-western end of the site in a manner which will not inhibit the established use of the existing access and allow for two cars to be turned within the plot boundary and to re-enter the public carriageway in a forward gear.

The track provides an alternative route for access to the public road via the adjacent development.

## **Environmental Health**

The proposed building will be serviced by a private water supply previously approved and routinely checked by the local authority. Waste will be by connection to existing private waste water system serving adjoining properties which has the capacity to accept the new load. Consequently no issues are anticipated.

## **Protection Measures for Existing Trees & Hedgerows**

It is proposed that no existing trees will be directly affected by the development proposals. There are no trees or hedges within the proposed site and the existence of tracks and a ditch provide an effective cordon preventing potential damage to the existing trees in the adjoining woodland.

## **Flood Risk**

We refer to planning application ref: 11/00213/FUL for the conversion of the former steading buildings to create six dwellings and a biomass boiler house. An exercise to demonstrate the impact of the flood waters on the functional flood plane was undertaken in May 2011. The findings of this exercise were agreed with the Council's Floods Officer & SEPA to allow the above mentioned permission to be granted.

The data from the SBC Flood Map recorded the flood level in this location at 182.454m. CIRIA guidelines require a minimum of 600mm freeboard be incorporated when determining the finished floor level of a proposed development. The proposed floor level of 183.192m is above the required

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level of freeboard and general levels across the site are deemed not to affect the storage capacity of the functional flood plain. We have made reference to this within our submission proposals and further detailed information can be provided to demonstrate this if required.

## **Site Contamination**

There has been no recorded historic agricultural use of the application site, which is currently partly garden for the existing properties and partly woodland (previously removed due to threat to those buildings). Therefore there is no reason to anticipate any site contamination.

## **Ecological Impact**

A preliminary ecological assessment was undertaken at this location on 20/05/11 by Stones Wildlife Management which was subsequently approved by the Council's Ecologist. We would propose that the findings and subsequent mitigation works (all of which were implemented) are still relevant in to this application and would refer the planning authority to this document which can be provided should it be deemed necessary.

## **Summary**

We believe the proposals outlined in this application are well considered and uphold the principles defined in the relevant Planning Developments Policies and Supplementary Planning Guidance of Scottish Borders Council.

RM Architecture Ltd