

Project: Ratchill
Client: Prady
Project ref: 221
Revision: -
Date: 10 March 2023

NOTICE OF REVIEW TO LOCAL REVIEW BODY **APPEAL STATEMENT**

UNDER SECTION 43A(8) OF THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997 (AS AMENDED) IN RESPECT OF DECISIONS ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS

THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCHEMES OF DELEGATION AND LOCAL REVIEW PROCEDURE) (SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2013

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This document contains 35 pages.

ii. List of supporting information

Refer also to all other documents and evidence relating to application and listed below. We expect Scottish Borders Council to provide the Local Review Body all information pertaining to the original planning application submission, including any consultee responses and documents relating to the determination.

Original Planning submission documents

221_	Location Plan
221_	Design & Access Statement
221_PL_E101	Existing Site Plan
221_PL_101	Proposed Site Plan
221_PL_E01	Existing Cottage Plans
221_EL_E01	Existing Cottage Elevations
221_PL_DEM	Proposed Demolition Plan
221_PL_01	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
221_PL_02	Proposed First Floor Plan
221_PL_03	Proposed Roof Plan
221_EL_01	Proposed Long Elevations
221_EL_02	Proposed Short Elevations

Copies of correspondence during determination period

10 November 2022	Email from SBC to agent (redacted)
15 November 2022	Copy of letter from agent to SBC
17 November 2022	Email chain between SBC and agent (redacted)

Additional appeal documents

<i>This document</i>	Appeal Statement
221_EL_03	Site diagram

1. Key information

Application ref.:	22/01612/FUL
Development:	Alterations & extension to existing dwellinghouse
Site location:	Ratchill Farmhouse Broughton Scottish Borders ML12 6HH
Applicant and owner:	Mr & Mrs Jamie & Jane Prady
Architect and agent:	WT Architecture Ltd. 4-6 Gote Lane South Queensferry EH30 9PS
Key personnel:	Mr Thomas Fitzgerald (Senior Associate)
Planning authority:	Scottish Borders Council
Planning officer:	Mr Ranald Dods
Planning manager:	Mr Carlos Clarke
Application submission:	24 October 2022
Application determination:	15 December 2022 (refused)

A number of existing buildings make up the dwelling that was once Ratchill Farm. Throughout the application submission documents and in this appeal document, references are made to a Cottage, Byre, Mill, Bothy and Shed. For clarity, the naming of the buildings below are highlighted on the following site plan extract, which was included in the original Design & Access Statement:

Fig 1 - existing site diagram showing building naming conventions



2. Summary

We believe strongly that the plans submitted fully comply with Scottish Borders Council's Local Plan, with the aim of sustainably refurbishing and extending an existing dwelling to a high standard, to make it suitable for modern family living. The proposals are for carefully-considered, high-quality contemporary architecture, which will make a positive impact on the immediate and wider context of the Scottish Borders.

We appeal against Scottish Borders Council determination of refusal, based on the evidence set out in this submission and all prior correspondence relating to the application.

The SBC Report of Handling for the determination provides the following reasoning for refusal:

"The development would be contrary to policy PMD2 of the Local Development Plan 2016 in that the following criteria require that developments: h) create a sense of place based on a clear understanding of the context and are designed in sympathy with Scottish Borders architectural style; i) are of a scale, massing and height appropriate to the existing building; j) are finished externally in materials which complement the existing building; k) respect the character of the surrounding area and neighbouring built form. The proposed development is unsympathetic to the building which it would extend in terms of form, scale, height, massing and materials and would not complement that building. No overriding case for the development as proposed has been substantiated. This conflict with the development plan is not overridden by other material considerations."

The refusal explicitly lists policies PMD2 (h), (i), (j) and (k). This appeal document addresses how the proposed development complies with these policies, and addressing other specific points raised by SBC in the Report of Handling.

We appeal on the following grounds:

- a) The proposals do comply with policies PMD2 (h), (i), (j) and (k);
- b) SBC did not give sufficient consideration or weighting to the context of the historic existing buildings that make up the whole dwelling and the whole setting;
- c) SBC made errors in their assessment of the scale of the proposals, contrary to information provided by the applicant during the determination period.
- d) SBC applied an approach to judging "appropriateness of design" that is not supported by local or national planning policies, or by SBC supplementary design guidance;
- e) The proposals are appropriate to the existing context and, despite being an extension not a new dwelling, can be shown to adhere to SBC supplementary design guidance on *Placemaking & Design Principles*.
- f) The proposals will overall create a positive impact on the sense of place and character of the existing buildings and their setting.

3. Introduction

From the applicant

On Saturday March 6th, 2021, during Level 4 Covid restrictions, the applicant and their family went to visit Ratchill Farm, which was for sale, with a view to look around but with no firm plans to move house. Having just finished extensive renovations and extension of their home of 16 years in Blyth Bridge, they were in no hurry to move somewhere else nor would they have wanted to move further afield. The buildings at Ratchill were in a terrible mess, with rubbish strewn about the place, significant water damage, and effectively in an uninhabitable state. Doors and windows were smashed in, the garden was overgrown and the roofs were leaking. They looked at the incredible location at the edge of the hills set close to the village of Broughton, and the potential to bring the buildings and site back to life, and the following week made an offer to purchase.

Over the coming months they negotiated the significant challenge of buying an un-mortgageable property and finally moved on to the site on Wednesday 30th June 2021. The services were in an unknown state and unwarranted by the seller with the water and electric disconnected. None of the buildings were immediately habitable. The first thing they did was set up their tent which was to be their home for the next three weeks.

They set about making the Byre habitable in the short term, and within three weeks had made it mostly weathertight and moved in. They carried out repairs and redecorated whilst facing problems like building material shortages due to the pandemic. Since then, work has continued to slowly repair, tidy, and work out the best way to make the site suitable for family life. They soon realised that as a family with teenage children they would need to adapt the buildings for modern life whilst retaining the charm, character and setting that had appealed to them back in March 2021.

WT Architecture were appointed by the applicant at the end of August 2021, to consider how best the set of buildings at Ratchill might be rehabilitated to create a comfortable, sustainable and joyful family home. WT Architecture worked closely and intensively with the applicants through September and October 2022 to develop carefully-considered designs. The culmination of the work was the submission of a Householder application for Planning Permission to Scottish Borders Council at the end of October.

WT Architecture are an award-winning Scottish studio of architects and designers. Over nearly two decades in practice we have developed a reputation for delivering exceptional contemporary architecture in places of special historical, cultural and environmental sensitivity. We work across Scotland in Conservation Areas, World Heritage Sites, with Listed Buildings and in places with special natural heritage designations. Our work with historic existing buildings has even featured as an exemplar for good design in the Scottish Government's policy statement on architecture and place for Scotland: *Creating Places (2013)*.

Project brief (taken from Design & Access Statement):

Our brief was to consolidate the separate buildings of the site into a more coherent, comfortable and practical family home. Consideration was given to connecting the Cottage and Byre, but this option was discounted as it would have resulted in a compromised layout. The applicant also wishes to retain separate use of the Byre as an annex for their guests in future. An early decision was therefore made to extend the Cottage to make this the primary part of the dwelling. This also allows the applicant to continue living in the Byre whilst work is carried out to the Cottage.

4. Timeline

June 2021

Applicant purchases property.

24 October 2022

Householder application submitted by WT Architecture, as agents on behalf of the applicants.

10 November 2022 (Friday, 14:58)

Email correspondence received from Mr Ranald Dods of Scottish Borders Council Planning. In addition to stating that SBC could not support the application, the officer sought to impose a deadline of 18 November 2022 for either withdrawal or determination.

15 November 2022

WT Architecture response letter, on behalf of the applicant, issued to Scottish Borders Council.

17 November 2022

Various email exchanges

- i. Having received no response to their correspondence, Thomas Fitzgerald of WT Architecture emailed Mr Dods to confirm receipt.
- ii. Mr Dods responded with a terse statement that did not address any of the issues raised extensively by WT Architecture on behalf of the applicant.
- iii. Mr Fitzgerald of WT Architecture requested reasonable time an opportunity to discuss the application with SBC.
- iv. Mr Dods replied dismissing WT Architecture's request to discuss the application.
- v. Mr Fitzgerald of WT Architecture emailed expressing dissatisfaction with the Planning officer's handling of the application and requested an escalation to another more senior member of staff. Thereafter the matter was passed by Mr Dods to his Line Manger, Carlos Clarke.

18 November 2022

Mr Fitzgerald and Mr Clarke had a pre-arranged telephone call to discuss the application. WT Architecture made detailed notes subsequent to the call. During the call, Mr Clarke apologised for the manner in which the Planning officer had handled communications with WT Architecture, and acknowledged that this was not done in good faith or following best practice.

Mr Clarke summarised in more detail the reasoning for SBC feeling the design of the proposed extension was not 'appropriate'. The issues discussed can be summarised as:

- Mr Clarke outlined a general approach adopted by SBC requiring extensions to be subservient to host buildings, though recognising this was not enshrined in any SBC policy or guidance. Mr Fitzgerald reiterated that it was vital SBC consider the proposed development in relation to the whole existing building group, not just one of the buildings in isolation.
- Height: SBC would prefer the extension to be a single-storey building.
- Massing and orientation: SBC felt the projection of the south gable forwards of the existing building south elevation contributed to a sense of dominance, despite it mirroring the Mill building on the site.
- Roof/facade colour: SBC didn't like the red corrugated steel, and would prefer grey.
- Mr Clarke expressed anxiety on the part of SBC that the proposed extension could potentially be used as a separate dwelling. WT Architecture rebutted this argument as illegitimate and based on vague assumptions about what may or may not occur in the future. Regardless, the site already has two consented schemes for the subdivision of the grounds at Ratchill with the construction of a wholly separate new dwelling there are already two consented schemes for a whole new dwelling on the land at

Ratchill (refs. 14/01148/PPP and 11/00231/PPP) . Those applications contain conditions prohibiting more than two dwellings under separation ownership on the site.

- Mr Clarke expressed anxiety on the part of SBC that approving this development could invite more similar applications. WT Architecture reject this argument, since every application should be assessed on its own context and merits.

Throughout the conversation Mr Clarke repeatedly acknowledged that WT Architecture had set out “solid” and fair arguments for all aspects of the design, and that SBC could see the validity in all these arguments.

Mr Clarke concluded that the number and type of SBC objections to the scheme would make it difficult or impossible to materially alter the scheme within the determination period. Mr Clarke granted a period of two weeks in which to make a decision whether to withdraw the application or continue to determination.

1 December 2022

WT Architecture wrote to SBC to confirm the applicant would not be withdrawing the application, on the understanding that the application will proceed to determination and be rejected. WT Architecture reiterated their strong disagreement with SBC’s judgement and the way in which it has been formed

5. Planning Policies

5.1 PMD2 (h) Sense of Place

(h) 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.

SBC Supplementary Planning Guidance *Placemaking & Design Principles (2010)* defines “Sense of Place as follows:

“A feeling of appreciation for the distinct character of a locality. This will depend on characteristics of the observer (such as their cultural background or system of values and beliefs) as well as those of the place. The latin term, ‘Genius loci’, meaning ‘the spirit of the place’ is a closely related term founded on the belief that a place has an inherent character and influence that transcends any imposed order.”¹

The proposals respond to and positively enhance the sense of place at Ratchill Farm and the wider rural character.

The proposed extension contributes to the sense of place at Ratchill in the following ways:

- The layout and position is directly informed by a detailed understanding of the historic and contemporary landform and buildings patterns;
- The scale, massing and form is appropriate to the whole building group that make up Ratchill as well as the immediate host building with which it physically interacts;
- The forms positively engage with the natural topography and features of the site;
- The design and detailing faithfully echo the language of utilitarian agricultural buildings and materials that are distinct to the Scottish Borders and rural Scotland as a whole;
- The contemporary design is ‘of its time and of its place’, and avoids a pastiche of traditional features.

In the Report of Handling SBC acknowledge that the design is “of some design merit” but states that it does not comply with the above policy for various reasons but principally due to the detailing and material expression of the scheme.

In developing the designs for the proposed development, WT Architecture worked closely with the applicant to develop a faithful understanding of the historical development and contemporary setting of Ratchill, and its context with the wider Scottish Borders area.

Historic mapping evidence was provided during the original Design & Access Statement, to help explain how the site at Ratchill has undergone significant change over centuries of use. The Report of Handling offers no acknowledgement to how the site has evolved over time, nor of the architectural condition, value or significance of the site or existing buildings. Historic map references were presented in the original Design & Access Statement, and are clarified below in diagrammatic form. They show that a substantial range of buildings used to exist to the north of the extant Cottage and Byre. At least as far back as the mid-19th century for which mapping records are available, the range of buildings along the north represented the dominant building element on the site, larger than the Cottage or even the Mill. Due to their elevated position on the site, these buildings would necessarily have stood taller than the ridge lines of the Cottage. Some time in the later 19th or early 20th centuries, the larger buildings to the north were demolished, and since then the Cottage, Byre and Mill have undergone substantial smaller alterations.

¹ SBC SPG Placemaking & Design Principles (2010), p.88

The Mill with its attached 'Bothy' now dominates as the largest single building on the site in terms of scale, massing and height, particularly given that it frames the eastern boundary. Fortunately, unlike the Cottage and Byre the Mill building has survived reasonably untouched without its character being eroded by 20th century alterations.

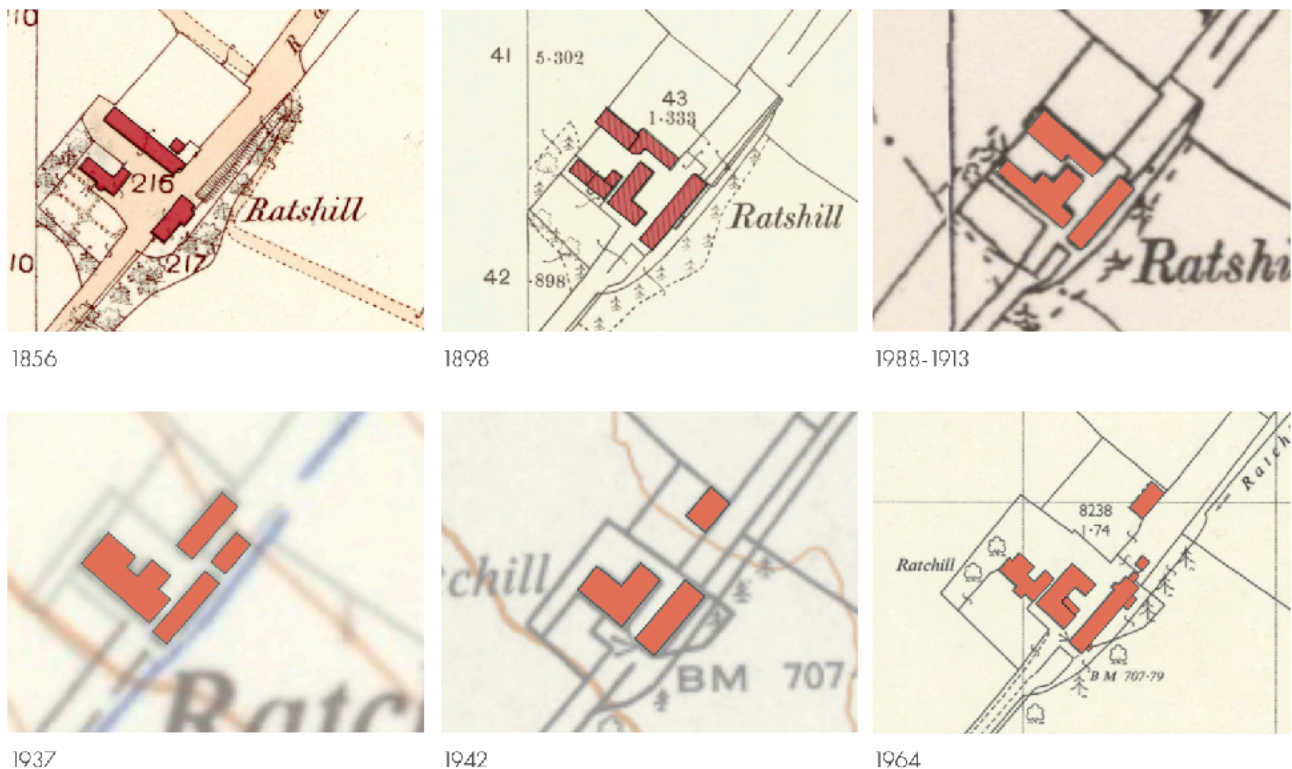


Fig. 2 - historic map extracts (with additional red annotations) highlighting changes in development pattern at Ratchill.

The character and sense of place at Ratchill has already been significantly weakened by poor-quality modern alterations.

As referred to in the application design statement - and would have been visible to the planning authority if they had visited the property - the whole site at Ratchill farm has undergone substantial change and, sadly, in recent decades suffered from erosion of its character due to neglect, vandalism and various poor-quality interventions.

The site and buildings at Ratchill were taken over by the applicant in a state of disrepair and neglect. The previous occupier had negligently and deliberately caused damage to occur to the buildings, after a longer period of deterioration and poor-quality interventions. All buildings on the site are now in need of comprehensive repairs and upgrades.

The Cottage in particular had suffered from vandalism and neglect and the north-east wing of the Cottage proposed as being removed, is a later addition of awkward and unpleasant spaces. Ceilings had collapsed in these areas due to water ingress from the partially-dilapidated roof.



Fig. 3 & 4 - examples of collapsed ceilings and dilapidation in the existing Cottage north-east wing.

The modern uPVC conservatory at the west gable of the Cottage is a distracting eyesore, constructed from poor quality materials and in a poor state of repair. The SBC Report of Handling makes only passing reference to the proposed removal of existing extensions including the conservatory. The Report gives no consideration to the visual improvements afforded by the removal of the incongruous conservatory. The removal of this component and replacement with the carefully-considered proposed extension would represent a substantial conservation gain for the site. The design of the extension, although larger in scale than the conservatory, would be offset from the Cottage to provide an essential visual breathing space and reveal more of original Cottage gable.



Fig. 5 & 6 - views of the existing conservatory and its poor state of repair.

The current 'sense of place' at Ratchill is of a once-thriving farm steading where some of the more historic and valuable architectural artefacts have been lost entirely or diminished due to ill-conceived modern additions. It is for this reason that the applicants engaged WT Architecture to take a more holistic approach to the site, looking at the building group as a whole and determining how best to enhance the sense of place through the creation of a family home.

The proposals must be viewed in context with the whole of Ratchill not solely the immediate building part onto which the extension connects.

As was asserted strongly throughout the application submissions and in correspondence with SBC during the determination period, the whole collection of buildings at Ratchill forms part of the existing dwelling that is being altered and extended, not just the Cottage. In assessing the scheme against PMD2 (h) the contribution of a new intervention to the wider 'sense of place' *must* take into account the whole context. However, through their determination SBC have placed too great an emphasis on the Cottage as an individual building, and insufficient weighting to the overall context. This point is vital, as it relates not only the consideration of PMD2 (h) Sense of Place, but all other relevant policies including PMD2 (i), (j) and (k).

Within the initial determination summary, the Report of Handling makes no reference to any of the other buildings that make up the wider site and dwelling at Ratchill. The officer simply describes the existing context as:



Fig. 7 - Proposed site plan sketch showing cottage NE wing removal and extension.

*"Ratchill Farmhouse is a traditionally proportioned and detailed single storey house, constructed of stone with a slate roof with white windows and later extensions."*²

Elsewhere the officer's report makes only passing references to the other historic buildings that form part of current building group. In their evaluation of the proposals, SBC make cursory references to "relationship of the proposal to adjacent buildings" but fail to give these adequate consideration and weighting:

*"Ratchill Farmhouse is traditionally proportioned and detailed and sits in close proximity to other similarly designed and detailed former farm buildings."*³

*"the relationship with the host dwellinghouse is the most visually critical aspect"*⁴

Ratchill is a tightly-knit grouping of existing former farm buildings, which now make up a single dwelling. With the exception of the metal Dutch barn "Shed" to the north, all the existing buildings are in very close proximity to one another, meaning that depending on viewing position the group can read as a single connected structure. In particular, the Cottage and Byre are separated by a gap less than 2m wide, and are so closely aligned in elevation, detailing and roofscapes that they appear as one continuous building. It would therefore be inappropriate to describe the Cottage as a distinct, isolated building, and to judge the impact of the proposals based only on this one existing building element.

We submit that a clear design concept has been adequately presented, and that the proposals in relation to the existing buildings *as a whole* are balanced and appropriate.

The rationale for the design of the extension in relation to the whole collection of former farm buildings at Ratchill, is explored further in section 5.2 overleaf.



Fig 8 - view of Ratchill looking east, showing the tightly-knit building group.

² 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.2

³ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.2

⁴ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.3

5.2 PMD2 (i) Scale, Massing, Height and Density

(i) is of a scale, massing, height and density appropriate to its surroundings and, where an extension or alteration, appropriate to the existing building.

This policy represents the crux of the matter. SBC's justifications for refusal lean heavily on their judgement that the scale, massing and height proposed development is not "appropriate to the existing building". As referenced in the response to *PMD2 (h) Sense of Place*, in our view SBC have not provided enough consideration and weighting to the whole of the building group at Ratchill, instead focusing too narrowly on the Cottage building.

Scottish Borders Council provide no clear parameters for judging 'appropriateness' of the design of extensions.

SBC have not published any clear parameters within Policy or Supplementary Design Guidance for assessing 'appropriateness' of the design of extensions in relation to existing buildings. The definition of 'appropriateness' is therefore highly subjective.

This lack of clarity clearly disadvantages applicants, who are invited to submit applications in good faith only to have them judged by an opaque and unpredictable set of criteria which have not undergone policy scrutiny, and are not made publicly available.

In correspondence during the determination period, SBC clarified that, in their view, in order to be deemed 'appropriate' any extensions should 'always be subservient to the host building'. A general requirement for physical 'subservience' is not a concept that is enshrined in any national or local planning policies, or within SBC supplementary design guidance.

Historic Scotland *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Extensions* (2010) recommend a bias toward extensions being "subordinate" for developments impacting on historic buildings, particularly those with statutory heritage designations such as Listed Buildings or within Conservation Areas, but the proposed site contains none of these designations. We would also observe that, while the buildings at Ratchill do have some historic value, this should not be overemphasised to justify requiring a disproportionate degree of deference and subordination from the proposed scheme.

The proposed design is a complementary addition that creates a "deferential contrast"⁵ to the existing buildings.

Even were it the case that SBC policies demanded subservience from all extension forms, for the reasons given during the application submissions and within this appeal statement, we disagree that this scheme is "dominating" the existing buildings. We submit that the design is "subordinate"⁶ to the Cottage and other buildings at Ratchill by virtue of its position, scale form and detailing. This point relates also to the response to policies PMD2 (h), (j) and (k).

- Scale and massing: despite assertions by SBC, the proposed extension does not increase the footprint of the existing building by more than 50%;
- Height: though the 1.5-storey extension is taller than the Cottage, the difference is not substantial or disproportionate, and is balanced carefully against the wider building group including the 2-storey Mill;

⁵ Historic Scotland *Managing Change in the Historic Environment* (2010) p.5

⁶ Historic Scotland *Managing Change in the Historic Environment* (2010)

- Density: The former farm at Ratchill encompasses over 700m² of buildings, most in a tight arrangement, meaning there is ample scope for more significant development without detrimentally impacting on the character and sense of place;
- Materials and character (explored further in section 5.3 and 5.4): Drawing reference to more utilitarian agricultural buildings through the materials and detailing emphasises that the extension is subordinate to the traditional stone existing buildings.

Scale and massing

Within the Report of Handling, SBC justify concerns over the scale of the proposed development based on their evaluation of the floor areas:

“Whilst a suitably designed modest extension to the house may be acceptable, more than doubling the footprint of the property cannot be described reasonably as appropriate.”⁷

This assertion made by SBC regarding the scale of the proposed extension is quantitatively incorrect, and fails to have regard to the information provided by the applicant during the determination period. In suggesting the footprint is “more than doubling” SBC appear to suggest that the proposed area of new development should be measured against the existing building after the proposed demolitions have taken place. This is unreasonable, since it does not judge the impact of the proposed development against the current physical context.

The proposals only increase the net-area of the building footprint by 46%.

Even when only focussing on the existing Cottage component to which the extension to the dwelling is proposed, and including the proposed new carport and other partially enclosed or sheltered external spaces, the proposed extension adds a net footprint area of 97m² to the existing building. As stated above, this represents only a 46% net increase on the existing (less than half) compared with the SBC claim of “more than doubling”. Excluding the carport, there is only a 49m² net increase, representing only 23% net increase to the existing building.

Full details of the existing and proposed footprint areas are provided below. These figures relate solely to the Cottage, though it bears repeating that the *whole* building existing building group should be taken into account.

	Footprint area / m ²	% of existing
Existing Cottage	210	100%
Existing - to be removed	68	-32%
Existing - to be retained	142	68%
Proposed extension incl. partially-enclosed car port	165	79%
Net increase - incl. car port	97	46%
Proposed new - excl. car port	117	56%
Net increase - incl. car port	49	23%

⁷ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.2

The design was carefully developed as a response to the physical and historical context of the group of buildings at Ratchill.

The planning officer notes:

*"It is acknowledged that the applicant has drawn an influence from the layout of the buildings to the south east but the relationship is entirely different due to the distance between the house and those buildings and the degree of projection to the front of the property."*⁸

We refute the assertion that the layout of the proposed extension is "entirely different" to the neighbouring existing buildings. The design of the extension was directly and closely informed by a detailed contextual understanding of the whole of Ratchill's existing buildings.

- The south gable of the extension echoes the Mill in position, massing and height.
- The south gable of the extension projects forwards of the Mill gable by approximately 1.7m, which is negligible in proportion to the overall building sizes and their separation, and is imperceptible in reality.
- The extension directly reflects the south-facing composition of the wider building group. The Cottage and Byre are centralised in the composition, with a narrow gap between. The perpendicular forms of the Mill and Extension are symmetrical, offset from the Cottage/Mill by wider gaps.

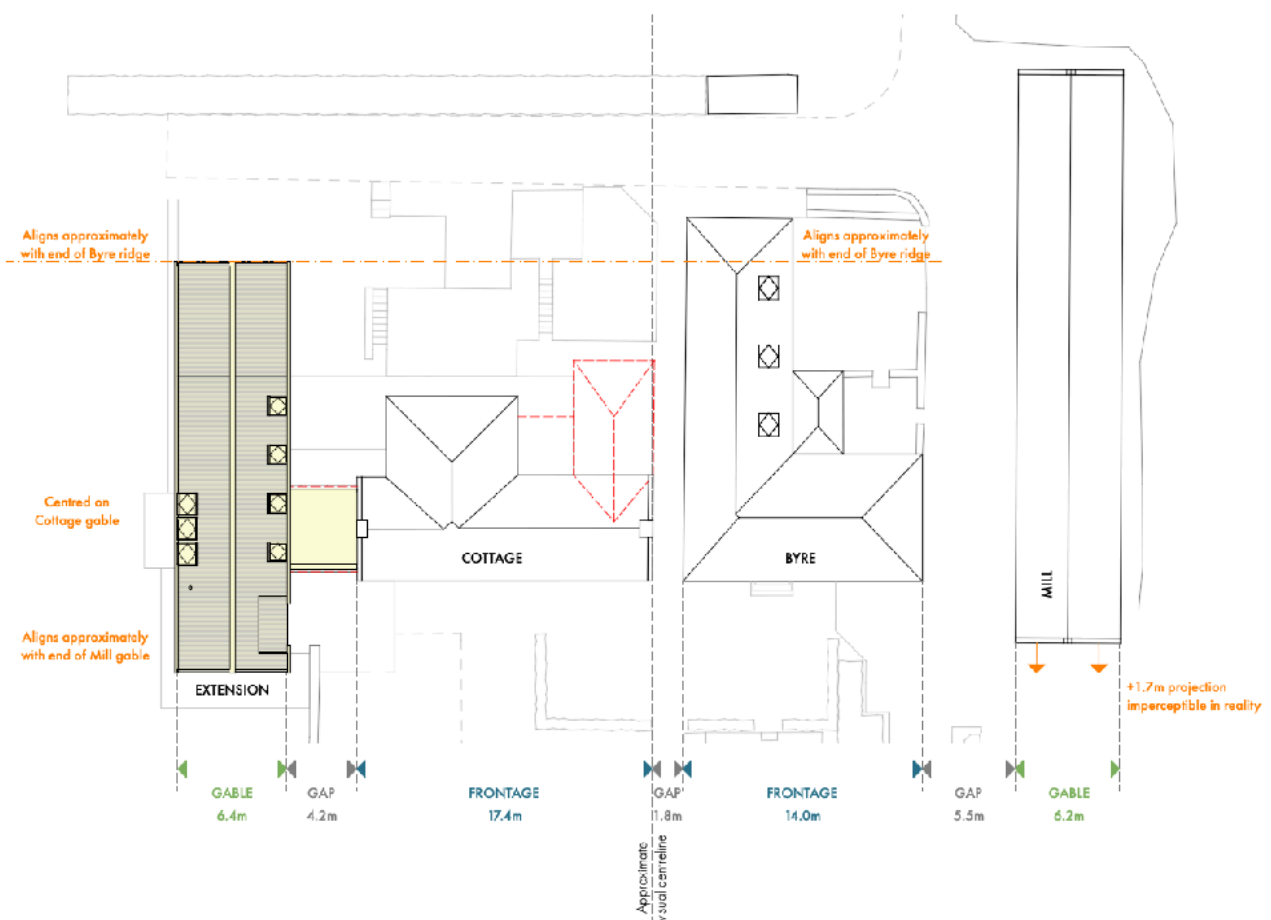


Fig 9 - Elevation diagram illustrating site composition.
Extract from drawing EL_03 submitted with this appeal.

⁸ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.2

Height

The composition of the proposed extension creates a strong horizontal datum at approximately 2.4m above the finished internal ground floor level of the Cottage. This aligns with the eaves levels of the Cottage and Byre, and also produces ceiling heights within the extension that are similar to the Cottage.

The eaves height of the 1.5-storey part of the extension align very closely with those of the Mill, again reinforcing the intended symmetry across the whole site.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the total height of the proposed extension is higher than the immediately-adjacent Cottage and Byre, the difference is not substantial or disproportionate, and is balanced carefully against the wider building group including the 2-storey Mill. The ridge height of the proposed extension aligns with the top of the chimney pots on the adjacent Cottage. The main body of the extension forms a 1.5-storey massing which is in-keeping with traditional vernacular rural building forms.

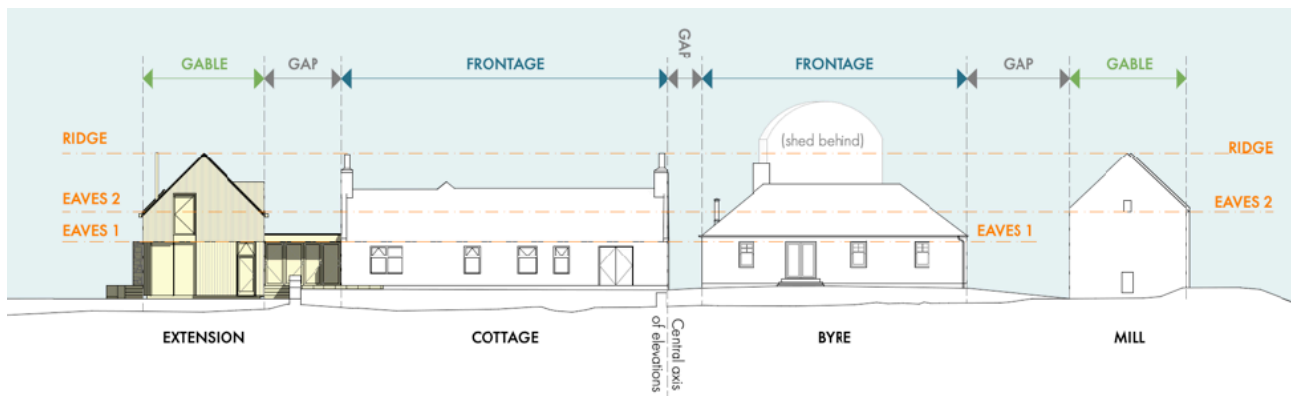


Fig 10 - Elevation diagram illustrating site composition and building heights.
Extract from drawing EL_03 submitted with this appeal.

Density

The land making up Ratchill encompasses an area of approximately 32,000m² (3.2ha). Within this, existing building footprints occupy an area of approximately 700m². The proposals will increase the total developed building footprint on site to 797m².

The proposals increase the net area of building footprints at Ratchill by only 14%.

As discussed above, the former farm at Ratchill has experienced significant expansion and contraction over the centuries, and at one time a significantly greater number of structures were present on the site within the same tight building grouping.

We submit that the proposed development therefore is entirely appropriate to the density of existing buildings at Ratchill, both in its current incarnation and set against its legacy of historic development. This also satisfies PMD2 (I) "it can be satisfactorily accommodated on the site".

Incidentally, we would highlight that there are already two consented schemes for a whole new dwelling on the land at Ratchill - refs. 14/01148/PPP and 11/00231/PPP. These approved developments would much more dramatically increase the built footprint of the site compared with the current proposed extension, completely eroding the setting and historical pattern of the existing building group by locating a new house in a previously-undeveloped north-west area of the site, and involving substantial destructive access routes and services installations over virgin ground. The applicants are keen to invest in restoring the neglected buildings at Ratchill to form a cohesive family home, with a preference for extending and altering rather than demolishing or starting from new.

SBC SPG <i>Placemaking & Design Principles</i> (2010)		Explanation of proposals
p20	<p>Rural placemaking</p> <p>“The scale and distribution of existing building groups should also be assessed to determine the appropriate scale and siting of new development within the rural landscape.”</p> <p>“Understanding patterns of settlement in either the urban or rural context is integral to the initial site appraisal.”</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>Though clearly not a ‘settlement’ the farm steading complex at Ratchill is a substantial collection of existing buildings in the rural landscape. The design carefully responds to the historic and extant building patterns on the site, in terms of layout, scale and form.</p>
p30	<p>Landform</p> <p>“Any new development should harmonise with the existing localised landform.”</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>The extension has been designed to coordinate with the existing topography without excessive cut-and-fill. The half-storey level of the proposed carport ties in with the higher levels of the site, improving access into the house.</p>
p31	<p>Slope</p> <p>“Development on sloping sites must utilise the landform as part of the overall character of the place wherever possible, rather than imposing a ‘development platform’ on the site through excessive cut and fill.”</p>	<p>An area of proposed stone cladding flanks the western elevation of the extension, which blends into the line of the slope and anchors the building visually into its context.</p>
p57	<p>Form/massing</p> <p>“New buildings should be simple in form, relating to traditional building forms in the area.”</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>The main form of the extension is respectful of traditional vernacular designs, is simple and rectilinear in nature, and corresponds in scale and shape to the buildings on the site.</p>
p57	<p>Form/massing</p> <p>“Traditionally, gable widths did not exceed about 6 metres.”</p> <p>“a narrow plan form with a plan depth of 6 metres can often give a harmonious form. This should relate to context [...]”</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>The width of the gabled two-storey part of the extension is 6.4m wide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cottage = 6.2m wide (E/W); 7.4m wide (N) - Mill = 6.2m wide - Byre = 7.4m wide (E); 6.2m wide (N).
p58	<p>Roof pitch</p> <p>“Traditionally buildings in the Scottish Borders were designed with a gabled or hipped roof pitch of 40-45 degrees [...] Modern buildings can work with such proportions in the local context, either as a direct reflection or a contemporary interpretation of the traditional form.”</p> <p>“the collective group of roof forms should be considered, and the overall visual composition and rhythm of the roofline designed as a whole.”</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>The proposed roof pitch is 45-degrees. The existing buildings at Ratchill have roof pitches varying between 35 and 45 degrees.</p>
p58	<p>Scale</p> <p>“The building size should be relative to its site and surrounding buildings.”</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>The extension has been carefully designed to fit in with the scale of the site and surrounding buildings.</p>
p60	<p>Proportion</p> <p>“new buildings should respond to existing building lines, eaves heights and lintol heights. By relating to existing features new buildings can relate positively to their surroundings.”</p>	<p>Complies</p> <p>The extension carefully responds to datums of floor, eaves and ridge heights on the other buildings.</p>

5.3 PMD2 (j) Materials

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

Materials and composition should complement
an existing building, not try to replicate it.

The planning officer notes:

"The proposed extension, although of some design merit, varies from the existing house in terms of proportions, materials, fenestration pattern, orientation, detailing and style.

The planning officer appears to imply here that contemporary design of extensions must not deviate from the style of the existing building, and must in some way replicate it. This contradicts with numerous national and local planning policies, and SBC's supplementary design guidance.

"... urban planning, contemporary architecture and preservation of the historic urban landscape should avoid all forms of pseudo- historical design, as they constitute a denial of both the historic and the contemporary alike. One historical view should not supplant another, as history must remain readable, while continuity of culture through quality interventions is the ultimate goal"⁹

[...] attempts to reproduce historic styles with modern materials can result in a weak interpretation of the original character."¹⁰

Metal roofing / cladding

In relation to the proposed metal roof and partial wall cladding, the officer notes:

In particular, the colour chosen for the cladding material is not one which is common to the area, being a colour more often found within the Highlands rather than found widely within the Borders."¹¹

"The colour of the proposed sheeting is not one which predominates in the Borders."¹²

The proposed use of red-roofed materials which partly dress down walls at the eaves, and timber cladding, is intended precisely not to conflict with the older stone buildings at Ratchill. The design of the extension purposefully draws its influence from the typology of agricultural buildings, with which materials such as red-coloured corrugated roofing are very commonly associated. This point relates not only to Policy PMD2 (j) but also to PMD2 (h) in ensuring that the new development contributes positively to the wider sense of place.

Metal roofing, either in traditional corrugated or standing-seam forms, is a well-established feature of rural vernacular architecture across the whole of Scotland, not just the Highlands as SBC assert. Red colours in particular are very commonly associated with traditional corrugated roofing materials. Aside from the obvious fact that untreated and weathered ferrous metals will quickly acquire a natural red oxidation, red-oxide coatings were regularly used before more modern enamelled or PVC coated options were developed.¹³

⁹ UNESCO Vienna Memorandum, 2005 (taken from SBC SPG Placemaking & Design Principles, p52)

¹⁰ SBC SPG Placemaking & Design Principles (2010), p52

¹¹ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.2

¹² 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.3

¹³ Historic Scotland, *TAN 29 - Corrugated Iron and Other Ferrous Metal Cladding*, 2004

The SBC SPG: Placemaking & Design Principles (extract opposite from page 61) explicitly states a preference for the use of both these types of metal roofing. Nowhere within any SBC policy or guidance are references made to restricting colour choices for metal roofing. In particular, red has historically been a common choice of paint for corrugated iron roofing

Whilst it may not be “predominate”, red-coloured metal roofing is very commonplace in the Borders. Looking solely within an approximate five-mile radius of the proposed development site, we have easily identified several red, metal-roofed buildings. Some of these are of more modern construction, and one is an extension to a dwelling approved in the last couple of years. As visible from these examples, red colourings are commonly used for corrugated agricultural barns of a similar type to the existing barn at Ratchill. Broughton Place Farm, immediately adjacent to Ratchill has red used amongst its buildings.

Preferred material choices:

Roof

- ✓ Reclaimed slate, colour: blue/grey
- ✓ Artificial slate (fibre cement), colour: grey
- ✓ Plain concrete tiles with a flat profile, colour: grey
- ✓ High quality metal sheeting (eg zinc, lead)
- ✓ Corrugated metal roofing (to match traditional corrugated iron roofing)
- ✓ Timber shingles/ boarding
- ✓ Turf/Thatch

Walls

- ✓ Traditional wet dash render
- ✓ Lime based render
- ✓ Polymer render
- ✓ Natural local stone
- ✓ Drystone walling
- ✓ Timber cladding (horizontal or vertical timber boarding)
- ✓ Corrugated metal cladding

Mr Dods - the same planning officer responsible for assessing this application, recently approved a development for a new dwellinghouse near Leadburn (19/01639/FUL), which proposed a red-painted metal roof as part of the design.



Fig. 11 - Map showing precedents of red metal-roofed buildings in the local area, identified through local research and aerial mapping. Photographs of some examples overleaf.



Fig.12 - Location 1 on precedent map.
Red corrugated barn and separate building roofing, Leadburn



Fig. 13 - Location 2 on precedent map.
Agricultural barns, Netherurd



Fig. 14 - Location 3 on precedent map.
Dwelling, Dolphinton



Fig. 15 - Location 4 on precedent map.
Red-corrugated agricultural barns and recently-constructed extension to dwelling, Dolphinton.



Fig. 16 - Location 6 on precedent map.
Dwellinghouse, near Skirling



Fig. 17 - Location 6 with additional context.



Fig. 18 - Location 5 on precedent map.
"The Big Red Barn Cafe"



Fig. 19 - Location 7 on precedent map. Red external materials used extensively at Broughton Place Farm



Fig. 20 - Location 8 on precedent map.
Red corrugated tin barn, adjacent to Ratchill at Rachan Home Farm (same postcode)

It should also be noted that there is a corrugated tin barn on site at Ratchill. There are no regulations in force which would prevent this from being painted red and immediately providing a reference on the site.



Fig. 21 - existing corrugated metal barn at Ratchill

Timber cladding

The report of handling does not directly refer to the proposed areas of dark-stained timber wall cladding. Use of timber-cladding is a material well-supported within SBC local plan policies and supplementary design guidance. A dark-stained finish has been proposed to minimise the massing of the extension, and ties in with the proposals for fenestration detailing. Where ground levels slope alongside the eastern elevation of the extension, hit-and-miss timber slatted screens matching the cladding are proposed in order to maintain the outline of the building form where covered external spaces cut underneath the eaves.

Stone

An area of stonework is proposed along the north-western elevation of the extension where it flanks the boundary to the open meadow. This area of natural stone is intended to echo surviving older portions of drystone dykes found on the site. In part the stonework forms a cladding material to the building, and in part extends to form a landscaping wall as it blends into the sloping ground. This is important in anchoring the building visually into the slope, and creating a stronger demarcation between the farm complex and undeveloped meadow.

Windows

With reference to fenestration, the planning officer notes:

“The windows would be dark coloured of varying proportions and opening methods, albeit most have a strong vertical emphasis. These departures in specifications (albeit they could be addressed by planning conditions in themselves) would also exacerbate concerns above regarding the scale of the proposal.”¹⁴

The planning officer’s comments are ambiguous, but appear to suggest that contemporary window sizes, styles and frame colours would not be appropriate to a contemporary extension, and somehow deviate from policy or guidance. It is unclear whether “departures in specification” relate to a difference from policy or guidance, or a difference from the existing context.

The fenestration detailing throughout the existing buildings provide no useful basis to frame the context of the contemporary fenestration. The majority of existing windows and doors are of an unsympathetic modern uPVC type with non-traditional openings styles. The applicant intends to upgrade the existing windows, though it should be observed that this would fall under Permitted Development Rights.



Fig 22 - Existing uPVC windows on Cottage in non-traditional style

SBC SPG Placemaking & Design Principles are very clear that “mock traditional window design” is to be avoided. The design, proportion, style and specification of glazing and doors throughout the proposed extension have been carefully considered to create a cohesive scheme. The window sizes, positions and specifications have been chosen to maximise natural solar gain and daylighting.

We are also concerned that, in the event that the Local Review Body uphold this appeal determine this application should be Approved, SBC may seek to impose onerous conditions to unreasonably constrain details such as fenestration arrangements, precise colours or materials.

¹⁴ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.3

SBC design guidance relating to windows and doors:

SBC SPG <i>Placemaking & Design Principles, 4.4 Proposed Building (2010)</i> windows/dormer windows; doors.		Explanation of proposals
p64	“When using contemporary sized windows, the traditional relationship between walls and windows should be maintained, so that large areas of glazing are counterbalanced by large areas of wall.”	Complies The composition of fenestration and solid facade areas has been carefully considered and balanced.
p64	“The colour of windows is important and, although white is commonly used today, other colours can be.”	Complies Dark-coloured window frames are proposed in order to coordinate visually with the dark-stained timber cladding, which minimises the appearance of the frame thickness. Skylights are proposed as having outer frames to match the roof colour, minimising their visual impact.
p64	“Modern materials such as aluminium can also be used, depending on circumstances.”	Complies The specification of contemporary window frames materials and colours is appropriate to the scheme as a whole.
p64	“Dormer windows should always align with the ground floor elevation, relating to ground floor windows and doors.”	Complies The proposed feature dormer window has been developed to create a direct relationship to the glazing areas on the ground floor below.
p64	“Normally, double width dormers should be avoided”.	Deviates Although the proposed feature dormer is larger, it is balanced carefully in context with the glazing below and the overall roof forms. As a single dormer, it is not in competition with other roof dormer forms.
p64	“The bulk of dormers can be visually reduced by the colour: for instance, painting the external joinery a dull grey to match the slate roof.”	Complies The material and colour of the dormer cheeks match those of the surrounding roof.

5.4 PMD2 (k) Respecting Character

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

Neighbouring forms

Making specific reference to criterion (k) in the report of handling, the officer states:

*"I consider that the relationship with the host dwellinghouse is the most visually critical aspect, and, therefore, I do not consider that the proposal would conform with criterion K."*¹⁵

As has been extensively set out in the discussion of PMD2 (h), (i) and (j) on earlier pages, we consider that SBC have failed to give adequate consideration and weighting to the proposals in relation to the wider historic building group at Ratchill. We also believe that the design of the extension performs a subordinate role to the existing buildings.

- The location of the extension on the far west of the site means that the extension does not impact on the historic pattern of buildings around what remains of the former farmyard, especially on approach to the site up the driveway.
- The extension being placed perpendicular to the Cottage and Byre south elevations, presents its narrow gable end towards the most visible frontages of the buildings, minimising its impact.
- Pushing the main form of the extension forwards of the south Cottage and Byre elevations, and extruding the new pitched roof it northwards, bookends the site along a historic boundary edge and mirroring the northern axis wing of the Byre and also the Mill to the east. This directly respects, responds and positively contributes to the site's sense of place.
- The greatest visual impact is felt when viewing the proposals from the field in the west, but the extension here aligns with a historic boundary condition, and other from than wild meadows and woodlands there are no places where this full elevation is viewable.

Wider impacts

The Report of Handling acknowledges that the site is "remote from the properties within Broughton". However, the report also alludes to potential impacts on the character of the surrounding area when viewing the site from Dreva Road:

*"The issue is particularly acute when viewed from the south east, when travelling along Dreva Road towards Broughton, especially given the materials chosen for the proposal."*¹⁶

None of the proposed development nor existing buildings are visible from any neighbouring building. There is a single dwelling approximately 260m away from the proposed development to the west. The edge of the settlement of Broughton is greater than 375m away to the north-west. The existing farm buildings and development at Ratchill are not visible from either of the nearest dwellings.

The farm building group is set back from Dreva Road by approximately 122m, with the ground floor level elevated by approximately 10m relative to the road level. Extensive gardens with mature shrubs and trees create a substantial visual foreground separation. The land forming part of the applicant's ownership at Ratchill is clearly enclosed by a consistent perimeter of dense mature trees on, including all along the Dreva Road boundary. The proposed development would be largely invisible from the southern edge of the property along Dreva Road, due to the topographical position and natural vegetation screening.

It is impossible to view the site and proposed development from any public location towards the west and north-west.

¹⁵ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.3

¹⁶ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.2

The eastern boundary of the applicant's land ownership has a more open aspect when viewed from the Dreva Road. However, from this position the proposed extension would form a subordinate backdrop to the whole building group at Ratchill, with the broad elevation of the Mill in particular in the foreground. Viewing the site from the south-east underlines the importance of judging the proposed designs against the whole context of Ratchill, not just the Cottage being extended.



Fig. 23 - View into site on Dreva road immediately adjacent property.
Site obscured by trees. (Google Streetview, June 2021)



Fig. 24 - View into site on Dreva road immediately adjacent property.
Site obscured by trees. (March 2021)



Fig. 25 & 26 - Long views to site from south-east along Dreva road.
More open aspect, but with all buildings at Ratchill reading as a group.
The east elevation of the Mill is the dominant form.

6. Other issues

6.1 Sustainability

Policies relating to sustainability within PMD1 and PMD2 were not referenced by the planning officer in the determination. Nonetheless, we consider these important and relevant policies that materially affect the validity of the proposed scheme.

PMD1 (a) the long term sustainable use and management of land

The applicant has expressed a desire to refurbish and sustainably maintain the whole building set at Ratchill. In their response to the application, SBC have suppressed the importance of the whole site as a whole and instead focused narrowly on one building - the Cottage.

PMD1 (d) the protection of built and cultural resources

The aim of the design is to reuse as much of the existing set of buildings as is appropriate to produce and adapt a building suitable for modern living. The proposals for an extension form part of a wider project to holistically refurbish and restore the neglected historic buildings at Ratchill.

The proposals include the removal of an energy-inefficient and unsightly conservatory, and also a more dilapidated and lower quality north-eastern existing wing to the Cottage. The retained north-western wing of the Cottage is to receive external insulation and cladding upgrades to improve its energy efficiency, designed in tandem with the architecture of the proposed extension. Elsewhere, the applicant intends to carry out a set of refurbishments and fabric upgrades to reduce the operational energy burden of the older Cottage building.

PMD1 (e) the efficient use of energy and resources, particularly non-renewable resources

PMD2 (a) in terms of layout, orientation, construction and energy supply, the developer has demonstrated that appropriate measures have been taken to maximise the efficient use of energy and resources,

By virtue of being a new construction, the extension will have excellent thermal insulation and energy efficiency values. The design of the building capitalises on solar gain through the aspect, orientation and design of the windows in the extension. Whilst this does not match the existing window scheme, it is intended to complement it, and allow for use of natural sunlight reducing the need for additional lighting and heating. The inefficient existing buildings are currently heated by oil boilers. The improved energy efficiency of the newer structures will make using low-carbon heating systems more attainable, such as ground or air-source heat pumps.

g) it considers, where appropriate, the long term adaptability of buildings and spaces.

The whole scheme is attempting to adapt and reuse the buildings at Ratchill suitable for modern living. The proposed extension to the cottage is reasonably large, but is still much more preferable to fully demolishing to reconstruct or erecting a new standalone building.

We have considered the adaptability of what is present in the proposed plans. The site at Ratchill as noted in our design statement has had numerous adaptations over the years, and the other buildings remain capable of further refurbishment and alternative uses.

6.2 Trees

The Report of Handling makes references to the “regrettable” loss of trees on the site.

“A number of trees to the north of the house have been removed. Those were not covered by a tree preservation order.”¹⁷

“The site previously had a number of semi-mature trees within it which were removed prior to the application being submitted. Their loss is regrettable but those were not protected by a tree preservation order.”¹⁸

The applicant is committed to preserving the many varied and high-quality specimen. In July 2021 the applicant commissioned a tree surgeon to assess and report on the trees within the wider grounds at Ratchill.

The applicant and tree surgeon assessed an isolated group of (Leyland cypress - *leylandii*) north-west the existing Cottage. The tree surgeon assessed that these *leylandii* were non-native, poorly-managed and low quality, with little ecological value. They were not protected by any designations and had a significant detrimental impact on the quality of the landscape setting and natural light around the existing buildings.

Following the advice of the tree surgeon, the applicant removed these *leylandii* in early October 2021 when there was low risk of nesting birds, and prior to the submission of any planning applications.

It is disappointing that SBC's Report of Handling makes reference to the loss of these trees as “regrettable”, since it had no information to make an assessment as to the nature of the trees, or the timing or reasons for their removal. Their removal has no bearing on the planning application in question and should not prejudice the determination.

¹⁷ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.2

¹⁸ 22/01612/FUL Report of Handling, p.3

7. Relevant local planning precedents

16/01575/FUL

Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse

Mossfennan Lodge Broughton Scottish Borders ML12 6QJ

Approved 27 February 2016

This is an extension to an existing dwelling, visible from a main road to the rear. The extension is 2-storey and stands higher than the existing dwelling. Like Ratchill, the site has a slope. It is situated around 2.7 miles from Ratchill and was approved on 27th February 2017 under the current local plan. The extension also uses a similar palette of materials as that chosen for Ratchill Farm whereby a modern extension with differing proportions is attached to an existing stone-built dwelling. From the Report of Handling:

“It is true that the extension would be higher than the existing dwellinghouse; this is not ideal, however it is almost inescapable for such a development due to the slope to the rear of the house.”



Fig. 27 and 28 - Mossfennan Lodge extension higher than existing stone built dwellinghouse. Extension first floor windows level with ridge line of existing building, and ridge of extension perpendicular to main ridge, as proposed at Ratchill. No chimneys which act to mitigate height difference at Ratchill.

17/00740/FUL & 18/01490/FUL

Change of use, alteration and extension

Steading Building West Of Kippit Farmhouse Dolphinton Scottish Borders

First application approved 28 June 2018

Second application approved 4 January 2019

This application was for the conversion and alteration of a steading building into a dwelling house, incorporating a substantial and visually-obvious extension. The 2018 application was for material amendments to the original 2017 proposals. The design of the proposed extension draws influence from agricultural buildings, especially red-coloured Dutch barns, which the planning officer supported. The support for red as a commonplace colour in vernacular architecture, directly contradicts the same officer's comments on the refused application being appealed. From the Report of Handling to the 2017 application:

"The applicant has indicated that the external joinery and rainwater goods will be painted in the same colour as the existing, that is, a red colour. This is acceptable as it retains the character of the building and is a traditional colour found on agricultural buildings."

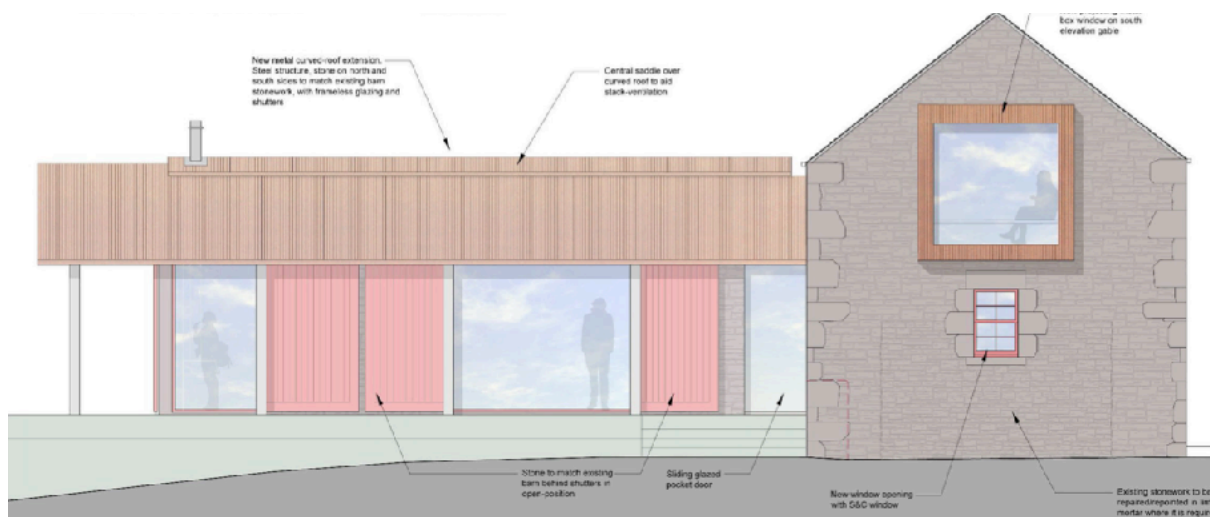


Fig. 29 elevation drawing extract from proposed application 18/01490/FUL showing proposed red metal roofing and cladding.

18/00457/FUL

Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse

The Inch Tweedsmuir Scottish Borders ML12 6QP

Approved 24 August 2018

This is a large extension to two ends of an existing house, larger than the previous building. From the Report of Handling:

"This proposal represents a significant change to the existing dwelling. Providing the building remains a single dwelling unit I will not object to this proposal".

In fact, the proposed development at Ratchill is significantly smaller as a percentage of building area than this. Like Ratchill, this site was considered fairly private in location. However, Ratchill is hidden more by surrounding greenery and there are no other dwellinghouses nearby. No attempts were made within the approval of this application to quantify the increase in the footprint.

19/01639/FUL

Erection of dwellinghouse

Kingside Cottages West Linton Scottish Borders

Approved 24 December 2020

This is a new build property, close to an existing stone-built steading located further up the A701, within the Scottish Borders, and approved by the same planning officer which rejected the proposed development at Ratchill.



Fig. 30 - red metal roofing, approved last part of new development at Leadburn, Scottish Borders by same planning officer.

The development contains an element of the building being covered in red metal roofing. No mention of this not being appropriate for the local vernacular was made, and whilst standard conditions were attached to the colour and building materials being approved by the council, no explicit mention was given to the use of red corrugated tin being inappropriate, and indeed the planning officer commented on the materials:

"The use of corrugated roofing and sliding barn doors would greatly benefit the appearance of the property and are welcomed."

21/00074/FUL

Alterations and extension to dwellinghouse

Whinfield Chesters Brae Chesters Hawick Scottish Borders TD9 8TQ

Refused. Later Approved via Local Review Body 22 November 2022

This application was for the substantial extension and alteration to a small, single-storey traditional cottage, not only increasing its footprint but also adding a whole second storey. Like Ratchill, the building was reasonably remote, not Listed or in a Conservation Area, and of limited other historic or architectural significance. However, the impacts of the development were larger than those proposed at Ratchill, since they fully subsumed the former building into a new form.