

# Comments for Planning Application 22/00933/FUL

## Application Summary

Application Number: 22/00933/FUL

Address: Land South West Of West Loch Farmhouse Peebles Scottish Borders

Proposal: Erection of timber storage and processing facility with new access junction, yard area, landscaping, tree planting, SUDs and associated works and planning permission in principle for associated dwellinghouse with office for the timber processing facility

Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Dayne Hart

Address: East Loch, Peebles, Scottish Borders EH45 8QY

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to environment
- Noise nuisance
- Road safety
- Water Supply

Comment: I object to the planning proposal (ref: 22/00933/FUL) for the following reasons:

Noise pollution

Our home, Eastloch Cottage, is less than 1 km from the proposed planning area. Noise carries over the open fields such that Westloch's dogs can be heard barking from our home. A loud dog bark is considered 80 to 90 decibels. The UK government's Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that sawmill operation noise levels can exceed 85 decibels. The constant noise of an operational timber processing facility will reach our home and impact our lives significantly.

The wildlife in the area is rich, particularly near Portmore Reservoir (less than 1 km from the proposed planning area). The surrounding land provides natural habitat for deer, and birds of prey use the lands for hunting and nesting. The noise associated with the proposed facility will likely have a great impact on wildlife. As an example: if the birds of prey are scared away by the noise, mice numbers will likely increase due to lack of a predator.

Water source

Scottish Water have informed the applicant that there is no water infrastructure within the vicinity, and that they must seek private water. This will likely be from our water source in the fields between Eastloch Cottage and Portmore Reservoir, or severely impact it. Facilities such as the proposed require vast amounts of water, which will jeopardise our water availability.

#### Land suitability

The application states that the site is not within an area of known risk of flooding. I can confirm that the particular field in question is extremely prone to flooding. Each period of moderate, sustained rain has seen a large pool form in the field, near the road. I would estimate the pool at 15 metres long and 5 metres wide. The previous tenants of Westloch actually used this as a water source for their horses.

#### Unsuitable road

The road which would provide access to the proposed planning site is very narrow. Even passing another small vehicle means driving onto the verge. Meeting a long, wide vehicle capable of hauling logs would be extremely dangerous. The winding hill which leads to the site from the A703 is completely unsuitable for long, wide vehicles. Meeting a lorry on that particular stretch of hill would be terrifying. The corners are blind and the banks on the edge of the road are steep. Being forced off the road and onto these banks could lead to loss of life and should be a major consideration.

#### Conclusion

Should planning permission be granted, there are many ways in which our lives would change for the worse. The road we use many times a day would become far more dangerous. The constant noise would make our family home an awful place to live, and severely impact us every day for the rest of our lives. Our source of water would be at risk, and air pollution would increase.

The surrounding region is filled with wide open spaces without a single home within a 2 km radius. There are a multitude of better locations, which will not impact the lives of any residents whatsoever and could be accessed from the main road. A quarry and poultry farm exist nearby, just off the A703. These facilities do not impact anyone and are in a far more logical location. I implore you to reject the planning application at this site and suggest Pentland Biomass find a more suitable location which will not impact local residents.

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Miss Janina Airey

Address: 1 West Loch Farm Cottages, Peebles, Scottish Borders EH45 8QY

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to Residential Amenity
- Inadequate access
- Increased traffic
- Noise nuisance
- Road safety

Comment:Ref:- Planning Application 22/00933/FUL - Land South West of West Loch Farmhouse Peebles Scottish borders - Objection

Dear Sir

I wish to object to this planning application on a number of grounds. Specifically,

- residential amenity (noise)
- traffic access problems
- siting

The hamlet of Westloch (Not 'West Loch') is a quiet very rural residential community of, at present, approximately eight inhabitants with the expectation, as the old farm steading is developed, (Approved Planning Application 17\_01462\_FUL) for a further 4 to 8 or more inhabitants.

The proposed development of the land SW of the Farmhouse, Steading and Cottages, although nicely dressed up as an eco-friendly application, is simply a very noisy industrial unit, with serious frequent HGV access intended to be sited in close proximity to these residential properties and quite inappropriate for the site.

1. Noise

a. The applicants themselves acknowledge the potential levels of noise generated in Appendix 4, their Site Search Letter, which states "Due to noise from machinery, the site should be located at

least (my emphasis) 1000 metres from any existing or planned residential properties".

b. One of the specific reasons for relocating from their existing premises is the potential noise disturbance to the Allocated and Consented Housing site in Midlothian. Section 5.13 of the Supported planning Statement Appendix 3 specifically refers to the high likelihood of noise limits being exceeded at the properties and "will likely result in noise complaints from the prospective residential properties and make it impossible for Pentland Biomass to operate without breaching their planning consent." Midlothian's Environmental Health Manager had 'significant concerns' and recommends planning permission is refused unless suitable mitigation methods can demonstrate the sound levels will not exceed the 52dB limit.

c. The approximate distances from the applicants existing yard to the edge of the proposed housing development in Midlothian is in the range of 120 to 350metres. The distances from the proposed chipping shed to Westloch Farmhouse is 173 metres, to Westloch Farm Cottage no.1 - 350 metres, Cottage No. 2 - 393 metres and the Steading - 285 metres. These are all at a third or less of the distances the applicants themselves have identified as a safe distance, 1000 metres.

d. There is no noise mitigation built into the construction of the chipper shed and the likelihood is that the proposed metal sidings will only exacerbate the problem.

e. Additionally, there is the noise generated by heavy machinery moving around the yard and the noise from multiple HGV movements.

f. The applicants have given no details of expected sound pressure levels, nor does any modelling of estimated levels at the adjacent residential properties appear to have been carried out. A bland statement that the 'necessary separation distances have been achieved' does not suffice, particularly in view of Midlothian's determination that these are not sufficient separation. HSE publication RR618 "Noise emissions and exposure from mobile woodchippers" gives some idea of the potential levels for mobile units that can approach 125dB (the sound of a gunshot) though other sources give varying results from upper 80's to 130dB

g. The proposed site is SW of the residential properties and thus the prevailing wind will assist in carrying noise directly towards the residential area.

h. Noise abatement by planting is a recognised noise abatement method, however as Forest Research points out (<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/ftth/urban-regeneration-and-greenspace-partnership/greenspace-in-practice/benefits-of-greenspace/noise-abatement/>), it takes 30 metres of very specifically designed planting to reduce noise levels by 5 to 10dB. There is approx. 60 metres of mature trees between the site and the farmhouse but this is mostly open below the canopy so in itself may only achieve limited noise reduction. The planned berms will help but the proposed plantings will take years to provide any additional noise reduction.

i. The type of noise generated, being staccato in nature, will also exacerbate the problem. It is acknowledged that people can become used to low levels of background noise. The noise generated by this industrial site will be nothing like that.

j. It is very likely that, as detailed in the Midlothian planning application, this site will generate continued noise complaints to the Council and associated enforcement action will be required.

## 2. Traffic Access Problems

- a. Contrary to the applicant's statement, it does not have 'direct access to an approved timber transportation route'. The nearest such route is the A703, which is an approved route. The road connecting the A703 to the proposed site is a consultation route as they state elsewhere.
- b. Consultation routes are intended to allow the extraction of mature timber under certain specific conditions decided by consultation at the time of application. They are time limited generally and persist only while such works are ongoing. By their nature they may only be in use for a matter of days or weeks and due to the nature of timber growth, these periods are likely to be years or even decades apart.
- c. The applicants are expecting at least 400 movements a year of HGVs on a road that would never in its present configuration become an approved timber route. If their enterprise becomes even more in demand, as is likely, these movements would increase exponentially.
- d. Their Photograph D refers to the 'recently upgraded unclassified road'. This is incorrect. The road has been recently resurfaced, it has not been upgraded in any fashion and in fact the resurfacing has introduced an additional problem for passing vehicles. The road is narrow and over the part from the A703 to the proposed site has several places where cars meeting each other need to partially pull off the road to allow this manoeuvre. The additional height of the resurfacing has rendered some of these 'passing spots' unusable due to the drop off between road surface and dropped verge.
- e. The narrowness of the road and lack of passing places means that any encounter with large articulated HGVs is going to pose real problems for other road users, it would for instance be completely impossible for two such HGVs to pass each other without major off-road excursions where that is even possible.
- f. Additionally, proceeding to and from the A703 there are two tight hairpin bends with very poor sightlines. A site visit would illustrate the problem. These sightlines are going to deteriorate further as the planted forestry matures. There have already been several accidents on these bends involving vehicles leaving the road completely. The likelihood is that accidents will increase and the more successful and therefore used the proposed site is the worse the problem will become. This could potentially lead to the Council having to expend significant sums to upgrade the road from the A703 to the proposed site entrance to make it safe for such traffic.
- g. The third upper bend while not as bad as the first two is also degraded by poor sightlines.

### 3. Siting

- a. The reasons behind the rejection of other locations are not available to the general public but I would make the following observations.
  - i. The applicants state they were in 'extensive discussions and negotiations with the Estate Owners', but apparently all other estate locations were ruled out. This surprises us as there are very similar areas to the northwest of the Forest Estate which have all of the attributes of the Westloch site including the access to 3 phase electrical supply, which runs across the estate north of the farmhouse towards the Cowieslinn Quarry, not only that but creating a direct access to that area from the A703 would have been comparatively simple. These areas are well over the 1000 metre separation from any residential areas.
  - ii. The suspicion is therefore that the proposed site was the cheapest option.
  - iii. Here again they refer to "easy access to existing timber transportation routes" which the

unclassified road is not.

Yours sincerely,  
J. E. Airey

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Stephen Hutchison

Address: 2 West Loch Farm Cottages, Peebles, Scottish Borders EH45 8QY

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to Residential Amenity
- Increased traffic
- Noise nuisance
- Smell

Comment: I object to Planning Application 22/00933/FUL

1 Noise

The Applicant states themselves that the site must be 1000 metres from existing or planned residential properties. All the current and planned residential properties are well within this distance.

In clause 7.24 on the application it says we will not hear any noise from the site .They seem to be contradicting themselves.

What is the separation distance mentioned in 7.23 .

The site is SW of the properties at Westloch and the prevailing wind will surely carry sound across

2 There is no mention of Kilns for drying logs in application, Pentland Biomass sell Kiln dried logs would they intend installing them too . Any smoke/smell from site would blow across to houses.

3 The applicant states they anticipate 8 lorries a week in/out of site. Is that just the timber coming in to be processed, or does that include all processed timber going out. Pentland Biomass sells firewood so I assume there will be deliveries going out from site, and therefore more traffic than stated. The road up from A703 is not at all suitable for a business of this kind.

4 The Westloch Estate owners replied to the original advert thinking that the Top Steading at Westloch may have been suitable. Pentland Biomass said it wasn't and that was that.

There was no "Following extensive discussions and negotiations with the Estate Owners they

opted to release to the market a 3 hectare field " That is Untrue!!!

All the houses at Westloch have been sold. The Farmhouse and 3 hectare field had been previously let together and were going to be sold as one lot but the Selling Agent advised the owners to sell separately to accommodate any potential buyer who only wanted house .Not To Accommodate Pentland Biomass!!!

There are I think misleading statements in this application.

Stephen Hutchison

2 Westloch Farm Cottages

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Miss Kirsty Hutchison

Address: 5 Moorlands, Manse Road, Symington ML12 6ZR

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to environment
- Inadequate access
- Increased traffic
- Road safety

Comment: Dear Sir/Madam

I would like to object to the proposed planning for Pentland Biomass on the following grounds.

My parents are my main support for looking after my children (who are very young) and so my children are at West Loch Cottage for sleep overs and full weekends regularly and school holidays.

The current road is narrow, with a number of blind bends in places of an incline and it is not maintained very well.

At the moment this road is already dangerous due to the volume of traffic (commuters but also increased visitors of people enjoying the natural surroundings since lockdown) and the speed at which people choose to travel on this road.

We have had numerous near misses both as a driver but also whilst out walking in the area with my young children.

The increased traffic from those who will be working at the site but also these heavy goods timber lorries (of which the road is not designed for) will make what is already a dangerous situation even

more so.

Those visiting this area to explore the rich eco system of wildlife have very limited options on where to park safely and when the current parking options which holds proximity 3-4 cars is full these visitors park on the verge of the road opposite this site.

This would make travelling down this road and meeting one of these lorries with parked cars on the verge a nightmare to navigate (assuming everyone involved was travelling at a safe speed to be able to slow down in time to avoid a collision). Should a pedestrian, cyclist, rider on horse back - all of whom travel on this road frequently be added into the mix there would only be further safety concerns.

The increased noise and pollution to the area will impact to rich wildlife, as mentioned in other objections, this rich eco system will be massively impacted by the addition of this site and the wildlife will have to try and find somewhere else suitable to rear their young, feed etc.

In a rich farming area this wildlife also helps keep predators away from farm animals during lambing session and a drop in wildlife population would have an impact predator food source and therefore would surely have an impact the farming community.

This road is not a priority road and therefore during winter months is not a priority to be treated with salt for ice and snow which has cause a number of near misses and small cars coming off the road.

What would happen in such conditions if one of the lorries was to become stuck or come off the road on one of the number of tight blind bends which are on an incline? How would the residents who live near by get access to their property? How would I be able to pick up my child without having to drive a very long de-tour?

Thank you for considering my views and the impact this will have not only on those who live in the area but also those who use this road on a daily basis.

Kind Regards

Kirsty Hutchison

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Miss Heather Ronaldson

Address: Smiddy Cottage, Moorfoot, Gorebridge, Midlothian EH23 4TF

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Road safety

Comment: I am concerned on our already busy road with single file traffic and the very occasional passing place, that the amount of lorries and traffic in general in relation to the running of the biomass organisation, will overwhelm and cause a concern for safety and a lot more cost to the upkeep to a road that already has regular issues with potholes and lack of passing places.

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Atif Adeel

Address: West Loch Farmhouse, Peebles, Scottish Borders EH45 8QY

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to Residential Amenity
- Health Issues
- Increased traffic
- Land affected
- Loss of view
- Noise nuisance
- Smell
- Trees/landscape affected
- Value of property

Comment: The noise of tree cutter machine at industrial scale is very loud and highly disturbing.

There will be increased traffic and lorries for this site on the single access road which is not suitable for this.

The location is a tourist hot spot and this is very damaging for such lovely views and residential area.

My house is only metres away from this land and it would affect my way of living and peace of the area.

Any neighbours I have spoken to have the same thoughts and are totally against this.

This is country side environment and we would not like this to be turned into a industrial commercialised venture causing damage to the environment and the residents living near by.

There is a huge population using this road to the property either walking or cycling and this would be dangerous if there was lorries using this road. Also loaded lorries being equally dangerous with trees etc going past you inches away while walking or cycling.

16 August 2022

Planning and Regulatory Services  
Council Headquarters  
Newtown St. Boswells  
Melrose  
TD6 0SA

Ref:- Planning Application 22/00933/FUL - Land South West of West Loch  
Farmhouse Peebles Scottish borders - Objection

We wish to object to this planning application for the following reasons:-

**Traffic access and Siting including incorrect information given by applicant to Planning.**

**Traffic access**

We travel from our home near Innerleithen to Westloch frequently. The minor road from the A703 is not an upgraded road as the applicant state.

It was recently resurfaced but this has brought its own traffic problems due to the width of the carriageway. Throughout most of the bit to Westloch it has constricted ability for two cars to pass each other, often requiring one car to go partially off the carriageway to allow the other to pass safely.

The road is already quite busy with traffic of various sizes including being a very popular cycling route. If you meet a large van or HGV on this section there are few places where it is possible to pass safely there are no designated passing places.

The resurfacing has added to the problem due to the increased height of the drop off to the verge from the carriageway further restricting suitable safe pull off areas. Two HGVs meeting on this route would pose a significant problem. There have been several traffic accidents on this route some involving one car leaving the road completely.

Additionally the sight lines in either direction through the hairpin bends are almost non existent and will become worse as the tree plantings grow and mature.

The idea of using this route for an additional minimum 400 HGV movements per year (and who is going to check that that is all there is?) plus more employee car and supplier van/lorry traffic on this narrow road is simply not reasonable on the road as it exists today.

### **Siting**

Supported Planning Statement Section 4.11. "There was also an essential requirement for the new timber yard to be located within reach of an existing 3 phase electric supply and within easy access of existing timber transportation routes. This ruled out a number of more remote locations within the Estate which didn't meet those requirements." And Section 7.2 "its location adjacent to a 3 phase electrical power supply;"

Supported Planning Statement Section 4.13. "This site was purchased as it met all of the site search requirements"

None of these statements are true.

The electrical supply that runs just to the north of and adjacent to the proposed site, isn't a three phase supply. It is a two phase supply. The nearest 3 phase supply is the far side of the A703 to the west some 1.5km away in a straight line. There are many other areas on the Westloch Forestry Estate much closer to the A703 and this supply.

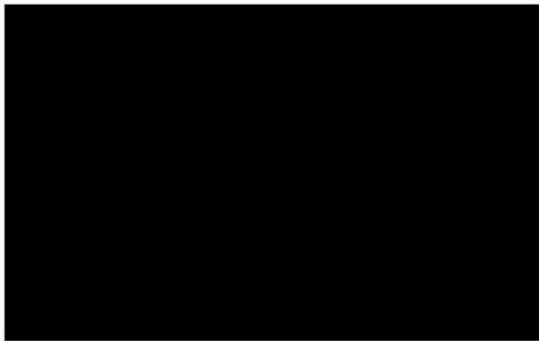
It is not within easy access of an existing timber transportation route as mentioned in the traffic access objection. The minor road is a consultative route. As we understand it these are there to provide very limited occasional access to allow extraction of mature timber, not for permanent 365 days a year access for HGVs and log lorries in perpetuity, that is what an approved route is for.

We cannot see what other sites were looked at by the applicants but it seems clear to us that a site on the edge of the forestry estate about 1km west of the proposed site would have easy access from the A703 via location of the existing gate at first hairpin on the minor road and then north to achieve the 1km noise separation from nearest residential buildings they said they need in their advertisement for a site.

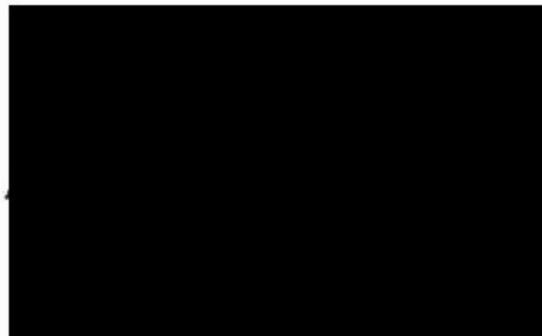
This area is unplanted and would meet all of the site requirements with the exception of having to run the 3 phase supply across the A703, however much closer than running this supply to the proposed site. The sight lines

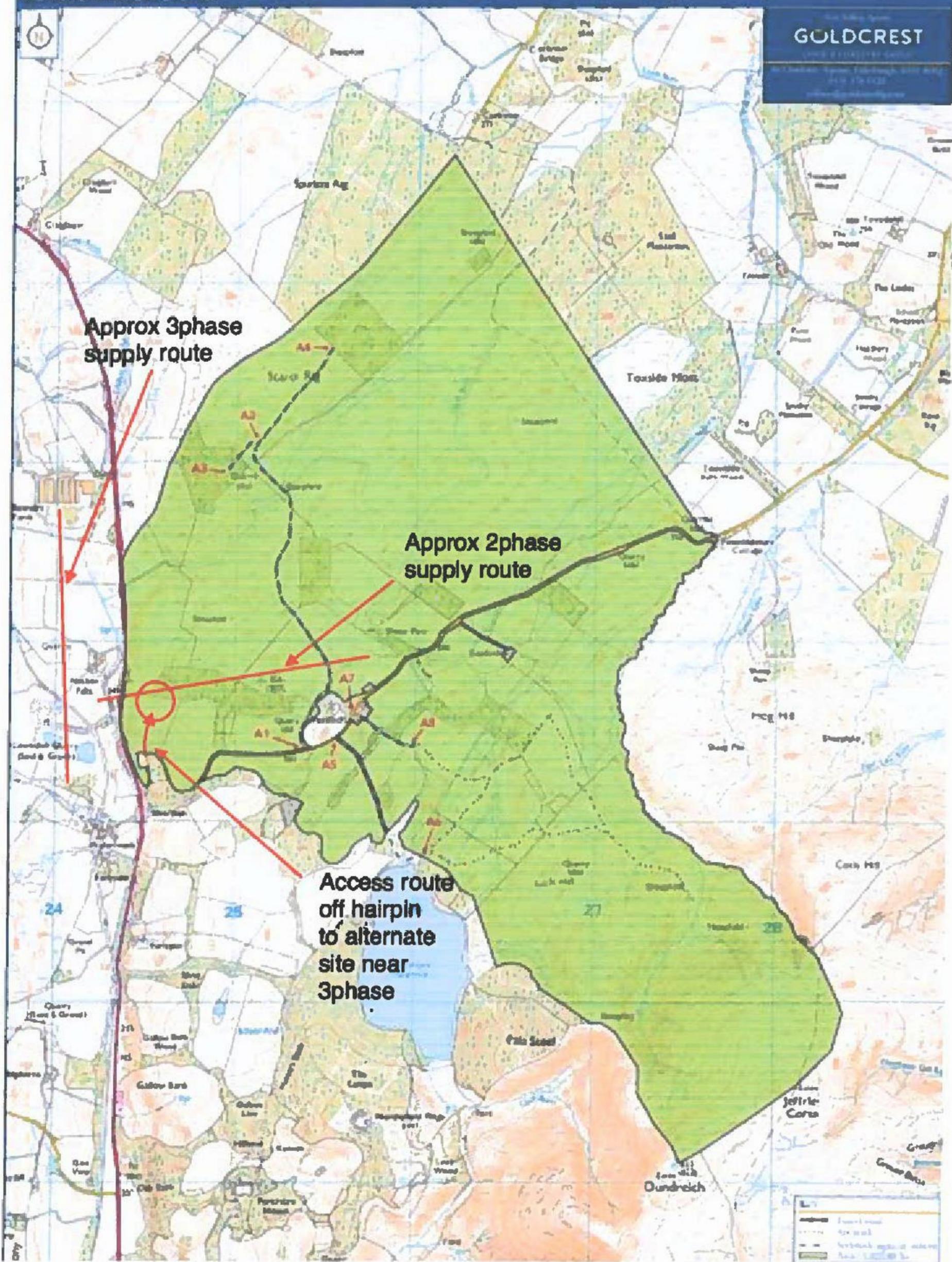
on the minor road would not be compromised as the traffic on the short section from the A703 to the first hairpin would be visible and at most a single passing place on the straight section would be all that is required to allow traffic to move safely on that section. Why this area wasn't chosen/ looked at during their "extensive discussions/negotiations with the estate owners" we can only guess. I have attached an annotated map to indicate the point.

Yours Faithfully



Mr C.M. Airey & Mrs M.A. Airey





**Approx 3phase  
supply route**

**Approx 2phase  
supply route**

**Access route  
off hairpin  
to alternate  
site near  
3phase**

—	Footpath
---	Footpath
---	Footpath
---	Footpath

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Mr david neave

Address: West Loch Farm Steading, West Loch, Eddlestone EH45 8QY

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Neighbour

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to environment
- Health Issues
- Inadequate access
- Increased traffic
- Noise nuisance
- Smell

Comment: I understand that this is a business relocation from Loanhead to Westloch, It appears to be a substantial industrial business with large machinery, articulated vehicles in and out daily, my objection focussed on three areas, the increase of heavy articulated vehicles along a narrow road where two vehicles will NOT pass, this road is heavily used by walkers / cyclists daily, secondly the constant cloud of sawdust / dust in the air blowing over residential areas which must have a detrimental effect to health, lastly the noise and smell, I think there is clear historic evidence that this machinery will exceed the recommended noise level, further noise level from the movement of machinery would be an annoyance to neighbouring property.

With the increase in energy costs, I can only see this business increasing in size, more machinery, movement of trucks.

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Mr John Hamilton

Address: 8 Louis Braille Way, Gorebridge EH23 4LD

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Contrary to Local Plan
- Detrimental to environment
- Health Issues
- Inadequate access
- Increased traffic
- Noise nuisance
- Road safety
- Smell

Comment: I wish to object to the above Planning Application for all of the above reasons - in particular, the following:-

Road Safety:

For the past 30 years my whole family have enjoyed the beautiful peaceful countryside around Westloch walking and driving the narrow unclassified road on route to the A703 and onwards to Eddleston and Peebles and back again to Midlothian. Many times a year we park safely at the Westloch Farm and walk up to Portmore Reservoir.

Over the years we have noticed the huge increase in traffic using the narrow road where two ordinary cars meeting need to severely slow down to ensure safe passing. Meeting an oncoming large lorry requires more or less stopping and crawling into the verge, with all the associated problems and dangers.

The huge number of trucks supplying this industrial plant and also distributing from the site does not bear thinking about.

Sustainable Residential Community:

Planning Permission has already been granted for the conversion of Westloch Farm Steading into

a small number of houses - this application was approved in accordance with Planning Policies as it enhanced and strengthened the existing small group of houses making it more sustainable. The proposal for (essentially) a heavy industrial use just a few metres away, with all the associated noise, dust, smoke, smell, access problems and road congestions / dangers, would completely contradict the policy of enhancing the existing small group of house and the proposed / approved houses in the farm steading. Such a proposal would actually have the very opposite effect the policy strives to create, and may actually destroy the small group or community. I would therefore respectfully request that you refuse this application.

Many thanks in anticipation.

John & Bea Hamilton

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Miss Betsy Williamson

Address: 2 Littlejohn Road, Edinburgh EH10 5GN

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to environment
- Land affected
- Noise nuisance

Comment: I have friends in the local area where I enjoy to walk and run. Whilst I support industry I object to this development due to the significant noise and environmental impact on this beautiful site. It will ruin the atmosphere and have a direct impact on the local wildlife due to the noise caused by this development.

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Mr Stuart Gunderson

Address: 2 Littlejohn Road, Edinburgh EH10 5GN

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to environment
- Land affected
- Loss of view
- Noise nuisance
- Privacy of neighbouring properties affected
- Trees/landscape affected

Comment: I regularly visit this area where I greatly enjoy the beautiful unspoilt surroundings with trees and wildlife.

This proposed development would be detrimental to the landscape, and nature, with significant noise and knock on environmental impact.

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Ms Rosalind Livingstone

Address: 22/1 Grove Street, Edinburgh EH3 8BB

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to environment
- Increased traffic
- Loss of view
- Road safety
- Trees/landscape affected

Comment: Having enjoyed many scenic walks in this area over the years I was sad to learn of the loss of amenity in the area and the increase in traffic.

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Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Dr Drummond Begg

Address: Howieson Hall, Station Road, West Linton, Scottish Borders EH46 7EL

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Detrimental to environment
- Increased traffic
- Noise nuisance

Comment: I have been contacted by a number of local residents raising concerns at the choice of site for this timber processing plant.

The 3 major concerns are around dust, noise and heavy goods traffic. All appear problematic.

Unfortunately the Chair of Eddleston Community Council has stepped down and I am uncertain as to whether the local Community Council will provide a response.

As the local Councillor who does not sit on the planning committee I have been asked to comment;

I share the concerns that the processing plant appears to be on a site which is close to a residential area impacting on a number of households. It is hard to see how noise and dust pollution can be mitigated satisfactorily. It is also hard to see how lorries required for the operation will operate without impacting on cyclists and walkers in this tourist area.

I hope these observations are of use