

MAC BROWN RIAS RIBA  
Chartered Architect  
Mill Cottage  
Annay Road  
Melrose TD6 9LW

Tel. 01896 822557  
07748 213 129

John Hayward  
Planning and Development Standards Manager  
Scottish Borders Council  
Newtown St Boswells  
Melrose TD6 0SA

14<sup>th</sup> October 2022

FAO Scott Shearer, Esq.

Dear Sir,

**GROUND AT GREENBRAEHEAD FARM, HAWICK TD9 9SX -REF: 22/00869/PPP**

Further to my letter of 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022 I have now had further discussions with Mr Stephen Murray, the applicant, in connection with the above.

Mr Murray has taken a twenty five year agricultural lease on the farm which is proof of his serious intention to make this a viable working farm although the surrounding farm landlords eg. Buccleuch Estates and private landlords are now letting grass parks and farms on a very small time schedule, i.e. five years or annually indicating that neighbouring farmers are making a living and running viable businesses on much shorter farm leases.

There are sheep, cattle and pigs on the farm and when it comes to breeding times in the interest of the welfare of these animals it is essential that there is someone, i.e. himself on site to attend to their needs.

As you can appreciate animals do not have a convenient slot for lambing, calving or to farrow.

Mr Murray is in the process of starting a pedigree flock of Texel sheep which are far more valuable and often prove to be more labour intensive, requiring constant care and vigilance by someone on site thus allowing high quality stock to be produced to the standards that UK food production demands.

A letter from Cheviot Vets Ltd. is enclosed endorsing the above.

With regard to farm safety one has only to read the statistics by Police Scotland to appreciate the danger of rural theft particularly in the Scottish Borders which is en route to Newcastle, Glasgow etc. Farms that have been targeted are close by and Greenbraehead Farm is in the unfortunate position that anyone can enter from

either end of the property which would certainly emphasize the need and benefit of having the farmer on site to act as a deterrent from thievery.

It is worth noting that £2.3m worth of livestock was stolen in 2020 and there was a 10% rise in reports of sheep rustling in a two year period.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of thefts of farm machinery, quad bikes, power tools and 4 x 4 vehicles. Now due to the rising cost of fuel, large tanks of diesel are worth thousands of pounds and are becoming too great a temptation for thieves. The heavy plant machinery that was working on the flood defence operation on the outskirts of the farm was targeted only recently and fuel was stolen from the diggers.

Mr Murray has invested a great deal of money and resources in farm machinery, tractors, quad bikes, stock trailers, muck trailers and farm vehicles. While every precaution is taken to lock and store machinery when not in use, this is obviously not a deterrent to thieves as statistically proven and hence all the more need to have a farmer/stockman presence on site.

While Mr Shearer, the Planning Officer dealing with the application cited the Council's policy of the three house policy in rural areas as a possible stumbling block, Mr Murray has pointed out the two other houses adjacent to the proposed site are in no way connected to the farm, are privately owned and therefore could not be rented out to farm workers etc.

The house owners have confirmed that they have no objections to another dwelling and the proposed house would in no way be a blot on the landscape as the location is very private and would not actually be visible from the main road.

I have enclosed photographs of the livestock and breeding programmes supplied by Mr Murray and would confirm that there are no horses on the farm and that the existing stable buildings are used for animal husbandry.

The farm has a holding number and the amount of money that has been invested to date in animal and machinery is surely definite proof that Greenbraeheads is a working farm and would benefit greatly by having accommodation for the farmer.

I trust that this is sufficient for your immediate purpose and will now allow you to reach a successful outcome.

Yours faithfully,

*Mac Brown*

Mac Brown

Copy to Mr Stephen Murray