

Application for Planning Permission for change of
use for units 8-2 & 8-3 to mixed use including
Classes 1 & 10

at
U-Stor Business Units
Spylaw Road
Kelso

on behalf of

U-Stor Business Units Ltd

June 2023



Background

This application is for Planning Permission for the change of use of two units within a wider group of buildings owned and operated by U-Stor Business Units Ltd at Spylaw Road, Kelso. The application is for Units 8-2 and 8-3 to become mixed use including Classes 1 and 10.

The building group has a long history of uses and changes of formal Planning Consent provision. It was known previously as Ancroft Tractors which provided a workshop and sales outlet for agricultural machinery and equipment.

Previous Consents have been granted: veterinary practice (11/00028/FUL); storage and meeting area (14/00712/FUL); furniture manufacturing unit (14/01047/FUL).

The Applicant's main building on the site is sub-divided into a number units providing opportunities for nine business, other than the Wonky Giraffe, which occupies the units that form the basis of this application. There are other businesses within the Applicant's site.

Units 8-2 and 8-3 comprise approximately only 24% of the total floor area of the main building.

The Applicant's business model has been to renovate a building that was in deteriorating condition and create a number of units of varying sizes to allow different business demands and needs to be met. This process of redevelopment and fabric improvement has been on-going, as can be demonstrated by the Applicant's own statement that accompanies this submission. It is evident that U-Stor Business Units Ltd is a conscientious property owner and landlord who has sought to create opportunities for local economic development within Kelso.

The Wonky Giraffe business moved to the U-stor premises in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic and in response to an advert. This was a new business venture that was established as an on-line retailer of quilting and haberdashery products.

The business took a change of direction shortly after starting, when it became apparent that it needed to be much more than just an online shop to satisfy the demands of customers. Additional space was required to accommodate the stock held, and, following customer feedback, the owner was keen to organise and run training classes and hold open group sessions.

At this time she explored the premises available within the town centre and the edge of town (as identified in Policy ED3). There were very few vacant premises at the time, and they were either too small or the layout did not fit the business model. It is worth noting that the classification within both of these areas would not have permitted her to hold classes for teaching, as these would have required classification 10 – provision of education - which the town centres do not allow and therefore rendered anything within these areas unsuitable.

A larger unit became available for rent within the U-Stor building: Unit 8-2. Relocating to this unit allowed the business to continue the online retail function and establish an element of "in person" retail as people became aware of the business, but it also allowed the Wonky Giraffe to start hosting classes and organise training sessions. This has now become the main element of the business, so when the unit next door became available (8-3) it made complete business sense to take this on to create a dedicated, safe, comfortable and inclusive place for all to come along and join in. This has led to the creation of a community of crafters who share knowledge, learn new skills and support other local businesses in Kelso and surrounding areas. The

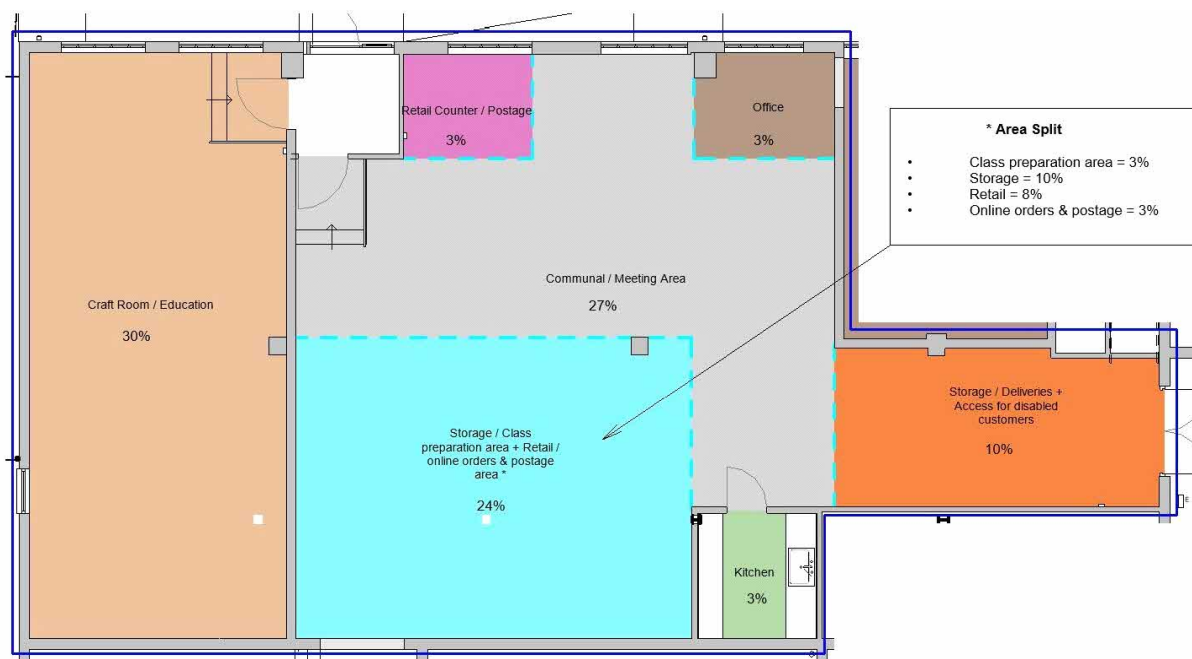
proximity and functions of the two units plus the tenant's business model are inextricably linked: neither could operate in isolation of the other. In short, this has been a successful business story that would not have been possible without the availability, quality and flexibility of the U-Stor premises.

Planning Application

During the Planning Application process a request was made for additional information relating to parking provision on the site. This was the only additional information requested and was duly provided.

The Council's Forward Planning Team are understood to have visited the premises as part of the application process, but it is suggested here that in doing so they misunderstood the actual operational nature of the Wonky Giraffe business and its operating model, by concluding that Retail comprised 70% of the floor area. It is recognised by the Applicant and tenant that this is an understandable assumption; however, had this been issued to the Applicant for confirmation / clarification during the initial application it could have been addressed easily. The table below sets out the actual position.

Space	%
Craft Room	30%
Kitchen	3%
Storage / Delivery / Access	10%
Office	3%
Retail Counter / Postage	3%
Storage / Class Preparation / Retail / Online & Postage	24%
Communal / Meeting Area	27%



A further analysis of the space in relation to Planning Categories indicates the following breakdown of the space occupied by the Wonky Giraffe business:

Description	Category	%
Retail	1	11%
Storage & ancillary + online	4	29%
Craft / Education	10	60%

The tenant of the units subject to this application has provided the following breakdown of sales for the previous year:

Room Hire	Classes (Kits & Materials)	Retail (in person)	Retail (Online)
36%	48%	9%	7%

Sales figures are, understandably, confidential and not suited to wider publication; however, the tenant has indicated a willingness to share these in confidence with the Local Review Body should it seek further confirmation.

Planning Decision

An extract from the Local Development Plan (Kelso) is appended to this document, as is a street plan showing the Spylaw Road / Station Road area as defined in the LDP as zEL205. This plan has been overlaid with the Planning categories to demonstrate the existing mixed use of the estate. A further appendix includes a list of these businesses by name and type. It is key to note that the U-Stor Business Units are located within a “local safeguarded and industrial site” and not a strategic one. As such, the Planning Authority possesses greater flexibility in its determination of the occupancy categories permitted and, as is noted below, has already chosen to do so for a number of existing businesses on the estate.

zEL205	Spylaw Road/ Station Road	8.5	N/A
Site Requirements			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a local safeguarded business and industrial site as defined in Policy ED1. 			

Within the 'Formal Notice of Refusal' there were two reasons for refusal:

1

The proposal is contrary to National Planning Framework 4 Policy 26 as the proposal is not for business and industry uses on a site allocated for such uses in the Local Development Plan, and the Class 1 and Class 10 uses are not compatible with the business and industrial character of the area and would prejudice the function of the area.

In addition, the proposal is contrary to National Planning Framework 4 Policy 27 and the Town Centre First Approach, as it has not been adequately demonstrated that the proposed uses cannot be accommodated within the town centre or edge of centre or that there will be no significant adverse effect on the vitality and viability of the town centre; the proposal would set an undesirable precedent when town centres should be supported.

- **National Planning Framework 4 Policy 26** – Policy intent states “to encourage, promote, and facilitate business and industry uses to alternative ways of working such as home working, live-work units and micro-businesses”. Policy 26, section b, specifically states that “Development proposals for home working, live-work units and micro-businesses will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the scale and nature of the proposed business and building is compatible with the surrounding area and does not impact on amenity or neighbouring uses”.
- In total, 21 neighbours were notified of the change of use application and there was not one objection. The Wonky Giraffe has been operating for almost 3 years on this mixed-use street and has not had any negative impact on the surrounding areas or businesses.
- In 2019, rooms within the former dairy directly opposite U-Stor Business Units were advertised by Edwin Thompson LLP as Offices/Workspace/Storage/Studios and it was claimed that they ‘provide considerable flexibility for a range of office, workshop, storage, work rooms, beauty/treatment rooms, artisan studios or similar’. In 2019 a dog groomer took on one of the rooms and two years later (in June 2021) a bakery took another. This required a change of use (21/01006/FUL). The application was successful and permitted a change to the storeroom to form a bakery shop (Room 3) and a new storage area from workshop (Room 4). The timeframe between advertising and tenants taking on these leases demonstrates that these properties have remained empty for a significant period of time, and therefore contradicts the comment in the refusal for this application that states; “it would be most undesirable if future class 4, 5 and 6 businesses were detracted from locating and investing at Spylaw Road/Station Road due to insufficient space.” There is evidence therefore that sufficient space does exist (and has done) on the estate & that this has traditionally exceeded market demand.
- The Foundry, Station Road, Kelso (RKELS001) (which is approx. 350 metres from the U-Stor business units) was advertised by Edwin Thompson in 2019. Noted within the sale information it states it is a site zoned for re-development within the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2016. It also states that ‘it is in a mixed-use area’. This site is still listed on the Edwin Thompson website 4 years later, which again would suggest that there is not a high demand for either industrial or mixed-use buildings/development in this particular area.
- Whilst Spylaw Road is noted within the Local Development Plan as industrial use only, over the years it has clearly been allowed to develop into a mixed-use area. Alongside housing there are retail businesses, garage workshops, car sales, hot food takeaways, a

nursery, a gymnasium, a dog groomers, a raw food company and a removal/storage business. Far from The Wonky Giraffe setting a precedent should the application be approved, the precedent for this street has already been set with the current range of businesses that operate there. If it is not currently recognised as a mixed-used site, then it seems reasonable that a full review of all business operating there should be undertaken, and the classification of this street amended. It is contended that, if the units along Spylaw Road were to be vacated as a result of such a review, and reverted back to Industrial only, the street would be filled with redundant buildings that would fall into disrepair which, in turn, would contravene **Policy 9** – Brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings. This states “to encourage, promote and facilitate the reuse of brownfield, vacant and derelict land and empty buildings”. **Policy 25** – Community Wealth building, which is to support improving community resilience, increase spending within communities and local job creation would also be contravened.

➤ Policy 27 – City, town, local and commercial centres

- It is accepted that all town centres and edge of town centres must be protected, and that a town centre first assessment should be carried out. At the point when The Wonky Giraffe changed to accommodate its demand and growth, there were no suitable places within the town centre or on the edge of town centre, primarily due to size and layout, but also because of the classification of use. The Wonky Giraffe did not clearly fall into any of the classification of use categories. This business is a “perfect fit” for the Spylaw Road development, especially when considering its adjacency to an education establishment in the next building (Castlegate Nursery) and a mix of part and predominately-retail businesses opposite and elsewhere on the same street.
- The size of the Wonky Giraffe business cannot be altered or reduced in scale to allow it to be accommodated in a town centre as it relies upon sufficient space for materials, large equipment (sewing machines for use and for retail) **and** activity (workshop) space. The sale of sewing machines can be considered comparable to the sale of agricultural spares in other nearby buildings: goods that are too large to carry any distance and that therefore require adjacent parking – something that is rarely available in a town centre location.
- It is also perhaps worth recording that there has been a total of 42 small town centre haberdashery / fabric store closures in Scotland and the North of England since the pandemic started; this is a significant amount for this sector. The emerging models of haberdashery / fabric stores are now generally located within industrial sites; they are much bigger destination stores and offer more than any town centre can accommodate. Examples of these similar businesses are noted as an appendix to this document.
- The expressed concerns presented in the Decision Notice of there being a detrimental impact to both the town centre business activity / character and to the availability of industrial land are unfounded. The existence of the Wonky Giraffe has had no adverse effect on the vitality and viability of Kelso town centre. In fact, the opposite could be said as it brings people to the town from outwith the area and is a generator of economic benefit to the wider settlement, including to other local businesses. In this sector these

stores are fast becoming destination stores. Brick-and-mortar businesses must offer experiences that will draw customers into their premises in order to survive and, in doing so, must operate a model that is suited to their customers' needs. The Wonky Giraffe does this, which is why it has grown exponentially in its early years. The large volume of notes of support in response to the original application also help to demonstrate this point.

2

The proposal is contrary to Policy ED1 of the Local Development Plan 2016 in that the proposal would result in the loss of safeguarded business and industrial land and the Class 1 and Class 10 uses are not compatible with the predominant surrounding uses and would set an undesirable precedent for other retail uses, which are more suited to town centre locations, prejudicing the long term provision of business and industrial land in Kelso.

In addition, the proposal is contrary to Policy ED3 of the Local Development Plan 2016, which seeks to develop and enhance the role of town centres by guiding retail development to town centres.

- The aim of the **Policy ED1** is to rigorously protect strategic business and industrial sites for employment uses. Kelso is fortunate to have various sites allocated for strategic business and industrial uses: Pinnaclehill Industrial Estate (BKELS005), Pinnaclehill Industrial Estate extension (zEL206), Wooden Linn Phase 1 and Wooden Linn Phase 2 (BKELS003), as well as the vacant Foundry site on Station Road (RKELS001). At the moment there are vacant premises within the Pinnaclehill Industrial sites. These have been vacant for several years. The building of the sites at Wooden Linn has not yet started. It is suggested that, between the empty premises and yet-to-be-built premises, there is adequate provision for any industrial businesses that may wish to establish themselves within Kelso in the future. Policy ED1 also states that 'Local sites' allocated for business and industrial use, are considered to have a lower priority and therefore alternative uses are likely to be supported. Retail may also be acceptable on local sites where they are located within or adjacent to the town. Spylaw Road and Station Road are on a Local site (zEL205). Over the years this site (zEL205) has developed into a mixed-use area as per Policy ED1 Section 2d) the predominant land uses have changed owing to previous exceptions to policy such that a more mixed-use pattern is now considered acceptable by the Council. As mentioned in the above, the precedent for this street has already been set with the variety of businesses operating there.
- Spylaw Road / Station Road (zEL205) sit within the lowest classification of industrial land defined in the Council's Local Development Plan as "local" and, as such offers the greatest flexibility of choice regarding use classification and the capacity of the Planning Authority to support such.

3. LOCAL SITES

Although Local sites are allocated for business and industrial use, these are considered to have a lower priority and need for retention in the hierarchy of all business and industrial sites. Consequently alternative uses are likely to be supported.

Policy ED3 – Town Centres and shopping development. It is the Council's role to seek to develop and enhance the role of the town centres. If a business cannot be accommodated within the town centre it can be allowed within the edge of town centre. An out-of-town centre location will only be considered where there is no suitable site within the town centre or edge of town centre. The Wonky Giraffe is such a business. At the time of opening, the U-Stor Business units were exactly what this start-up required. As the business grew, the owner looked for alternative locations, both within and on the edge of town, but there were no suitable premises that would meet her needs. The business did not fit into either town centre or edge of town sites. It was an online business, with one-to-one training, operating classes and running open group sessions. The business has thrived in its current location and, whilst a small percentage of retail is a result of people visiting The Wonky Giraffe, the main element of retail comes as a by-product of the training and classes, which is the education element of the business.

It is also acknowledged that within the industrial estate there are some established businesses which have a retail element however these sell bulky items that would not be appropriate or would be difficult to site within a town centre. It is not felt that the applicant has set out any exceptional circumstances explaining why it is necessary for the business to be located on an industrial estate.

No information was requested during the determination period as to why it was necessary for The Wonky Giraffe to be located outwith the town centre. The decision notice sets aside the use of precedent for other long-established businesses on the estate; this point is contested in that a precedent has, indeed, not only been established, but permitted, and therefore it should be taken into consideration.

There are several businesses along Spylaw Road and Station Road that started off with only an element of retail, but over the years these have become (and have been allowed to become) so much more than just an element of retail. One such business that has grown over the years, and is a fantastic asset to Kelso, is Country Corner. It has many elements to its business and some elements would be difficult, but not impossible, to site within a town centre. It could at least, therefore, be argued that the upstairs clothing department for men, woman and children could be sited separately and accommodated in the town centre.

Not only would it be difficult to find premises in the town centre or edge of town centre that would physically accommodate The Wonky Giraffe, relocating to the town centre would contravene Policy ED3 which states that only retail/shop (Class 1), food and drink (Class 3) and offices (Class 2 & 4) are permitted to operate in the town centre. The Wonky Giraffe requires Class 10 (provision for education) to operate, which is not authorised in the town centres as per Policy ED3. Herein lies the issue: the retail element of the business can operate under Class 1 within the town centre while the training and education elements, under Class 10, require the industrial estate, but nowhere in Kelso will permit both in the same place. This is a thriving business, (a tenant of the Applicant's own thriving business), that brings custom to the town, and, additionally, impacts positively on the mental health and well-being of many of its dedicated customers. It is again worth noting that many of the supporting comments received in response to the original application indicated customers who come from outwith the local area specifically to use this

business and who also stay within the town generating much needed economic activity to the local community.

It is also worth referencing precedent elsewhere in the Scottish Borders where similar decisions have been reviewed and overturned by the Local Review Body:

21/00015/RREF – Cavalry Park, Peebles (Strategic High Amenity Site)

22/00002/RREF - Netherdale Industrial Estate, Galashiels (District Site)

It is considered that by allowing a retail use within a safeguarded business and industrial site, it would set an undesirable precedent especially at a time when we are trying to support town centres. There are two similar businesses located within Kelso town centre and it is considered that this business could be located within a town centre retail unit and does not need to be located within the safeguarded business and industrial site.

The precedent element has been addressed in previous paragraphs.

The comment above states that there are two similar shops in the town centre; this is not correct. One of the shops, (Clothworks) stocks upholstery fabrics, which is entirely different to the Wonky Giraffe shop. Whilst it does have a lot of fabric on show, it also operates from a series of catalogues, allowing customers to order the quantity required for curtains, blinds etc.. This is a long-established business with a fantastic customer base, and provides an excellent service to Kelso and the surrounding areas. The Wonky Giraffe works closely with the owner of this shop and directs anyone looking for this type of fabric to her. The second shop mentioned is a very different retailer. The Wonky Giraffe carries an extensive stock of fabric and a considerable number of other products, including sewing machines (**bulky items**), sewing machine accessories, wool, knitting and crocheting accessories, embroidery and needlework threads, hoops, frames as well as a wide range of haberdashery. The other shop carries a more limited range of fabrics and haberdashery, by comparison.

Conclusion

Planning Policy, and the Local Development Plan in particular, are formulated to provide a framework in the interests of the Scottish Borders Council. They seek to establish frameworks that allow consistency of approach across the region; however, they are limited in their capacity simply because the built environment is not a homogenous entity that can respond to a binary approach in decision making.

This paper, and its appendices, has set out why this is the case. A redundant manufacturing building within an industrial estate (classified as the lowest safeguarding category of Local) has been renovated by the applicant. In doing so he has extended the life of this building in a sustainable manner that responds to one of the Council's stated goals. He has also created the opportunity for economic development at a scale that suits a variety of micro and small businesses that is not readily / widely available elsewhere in the town. One of the Applicant's tenants has developed a business model that has thrived in this location, so much so that it

required to expand in order to meet growing demand, and took advantage of the availability of additional space within the same building. All of this in the midst of the global pandemic at a time when many businesses were closing and others were seeking to diversify in order to survive.














U-Stor Business Units Ltd and its tenant, The Wonky Giraffe, are examples of successful Borders businesses that require to be supported in their ventures in order to continue the economic benefit that they bring to Kelso, and the wider, Scottish Borders economy.

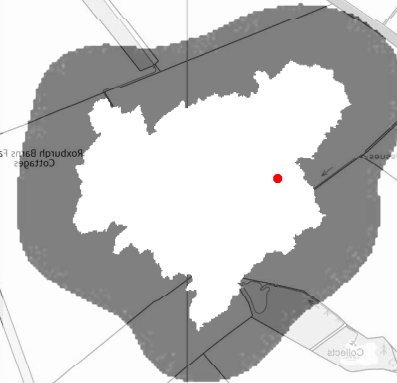
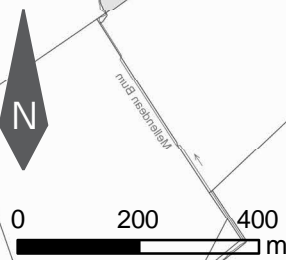
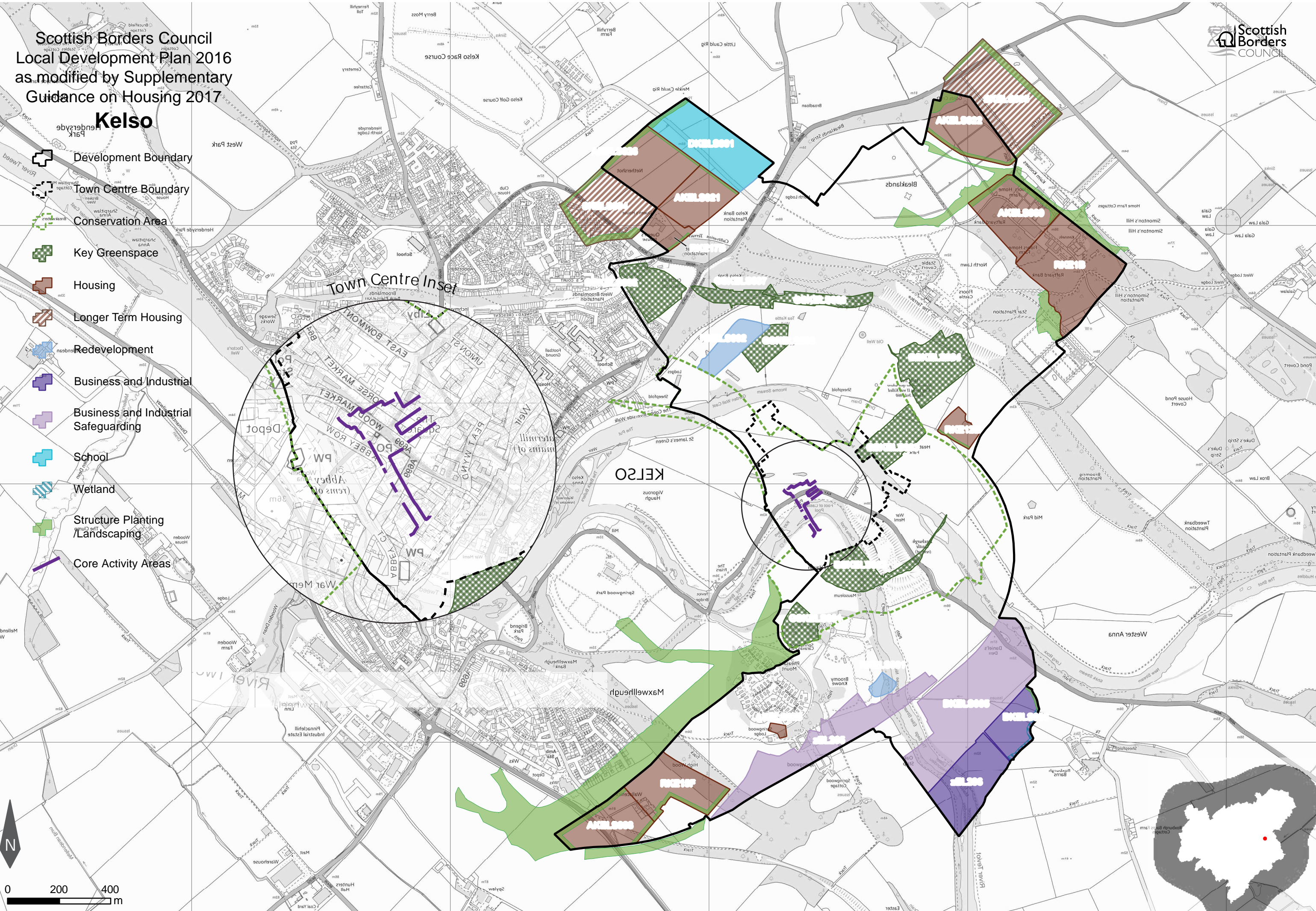
APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Kelso Local Development Plan Map

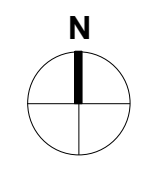
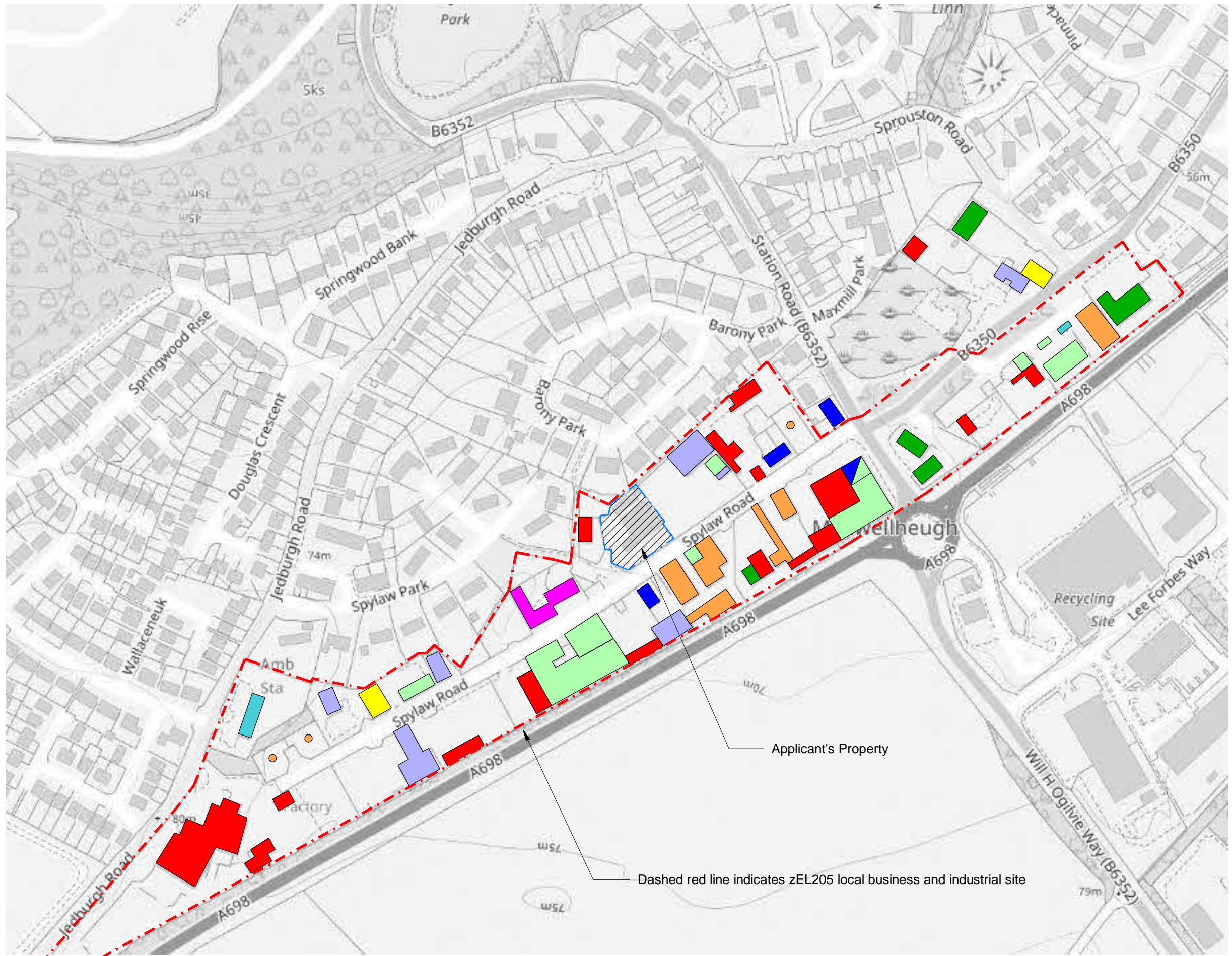
Kelso

-  Development Boundary
-  Town Centre Boundary
-  Conservation Area
-  Key Greenspace
-  Housing
-  Longer Term Housing
-  Redevelopment
-  Business and Industrial
-  Business and Industrial Safeguarding
-  School
-  Wetland
-  Structure Planting/Landscaping
-  Core Activity Areas



APPENDIX 2

Street Plan of Current Use Category Within zEL205



Health & Safety Information	

- Retail presence - Class 1
- Retail presence - Class 1 Sui Generis
- Professional, etc - Class 2
- Offices / Light industry - Class 4
- General Industry - Class 5
- Storage / distribution - Class 6
- Housing - Class 9
- Institutions - Class 10
- Assembly - Class 11

RAY CHERRY ARCHITECT

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 Website: www.raycherry-architect.co.uk

Project:
 U-stor Business Units Ltd
 Spylaw Road, Kelso

Existing Planning Land Use

Scale (@A3) As indicated

Date: June 2023	Project No.: 22-016
Drg. No.: 303	Rev.: D1

Map extract from SBC Website for underlay purposes

APPENDIX 3

List of Businesses Within zEL205

Businesses in Zone zEL205

Motor Sales & Repairs

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Maxwell Motors | Car Sales & Service |
| 2. Complete Auto Repairs | Motor Repairs |
| 3. Ken Hope | Car Sales & Service |
| 4. Bernie Murray | Motor Repairs |
| 5. Tweedside Light Commercials | Van Sales & Service |
| 6. James Hume | Motor Repairs |
| 7. C & R Tyres | Tyre Supplies & Fitting |
| 8. SAB Services | Motor Repairs |

Manufacturing

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 9. Kyle Engineering | Steel Fabrication |
| 10. ICOM ScoΣ ech | Electronics |
| 11. DH Design & Print | Signage |
| 12. Bheula Framing | Picture Framing/Retail |
| 13. Border Concrete | Concrete Products |
| 14. Border Ornamental Ironwork | Gates & Railings |
| 15. Food Factory | Bakery/Retail |
| 16. Kelso Powder Coating | Painting |

Contractors

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 17. A R Transport | Haulage |
| 18. Crop Services | Crop Spraying |
| 19. CSS | Pressure Washer Sales & Service |
| 20. ScoΣ Mckenzie | Joiner |
| 21. James Nairn | Electrician |
| 22. Cockburns | Ware & Drainage Services |
| 23. Derek Welsh | Plasterer |
| 24. Borderloo | Toilet Hire |
| 25. Grant Morrison | Landscape |
| 26. T. L. Joinery | Joinery |
| 27. Darren Paxton | Plumber |

Gymnasium

- 28. K.D. Fitness
- 29. The Muscle Factory

Retail

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 30. T.M.S Motor Spares | Motor Spares |
| 31. Car Parts for U | Motor Spares |
| 32. Country Corner | Country Stores |
| 33. Border Row Penfold | Pet Food |
| 34. Agri Parts | Agricultural Spares etc |
| 35. The Wonky Giraffe | Haberdashery/Education |

Residential

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 36. Ashville | Semi Detached House |
| 37. Holmwood | “ “ “ |
| 38. Helensville | Bungalow |
| 39. Country Corner | Flat |

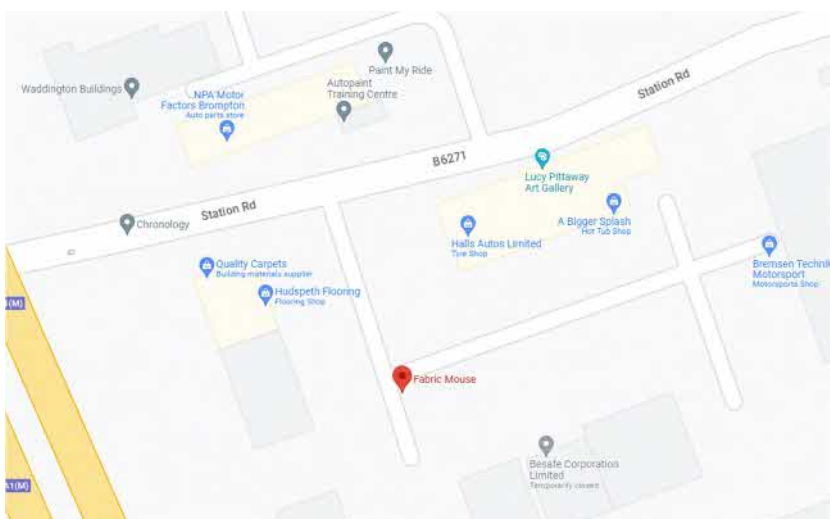
Miscellaneous

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 40. SBC | Council Yard |
| 41. Kyles Funeral Directors | Depot |
| 42. R.I. Wilson | Furniture Store |
| 43. Castlegate | Nursery |
| 44. Noon Entertainments | Events Equipment |
| 45. Susan Gibson | Massage Therapy |
| 46. EOSE | Sports Planning |
| 47. Vicki Paerson | Nail Bar |
| 48. Andrew McLean | Water Services Design |
| 49. Tanya Davidson | Skin Care |
| 50. K.A.O.S | Costume Store & Hire |
| 51. D. H. & Co | Document Store |
| 52. Kenneth Gibson | Store |
| 53. U.B.U.L. | Store |
| 54. Travis Perkins | Builders Merchant/Retail |
| 55. Wessex North | Storage |

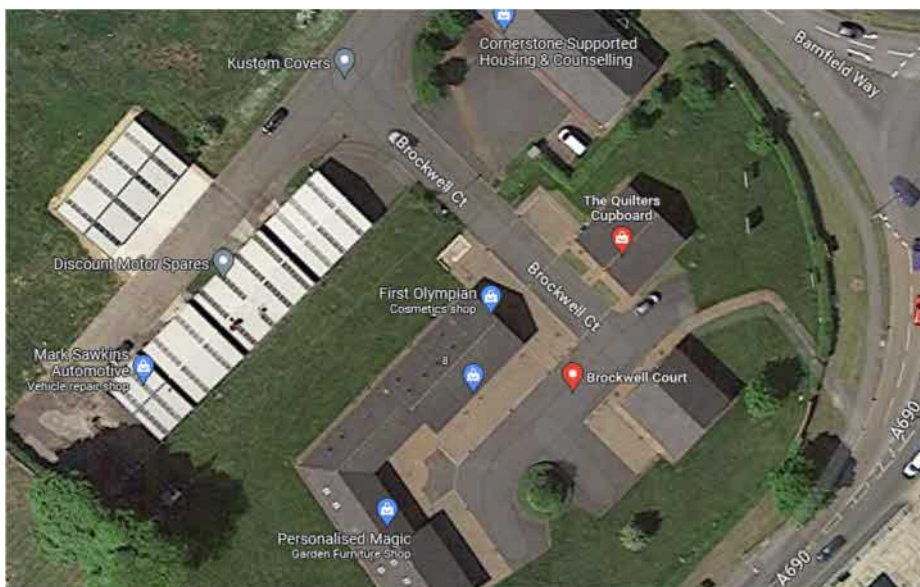
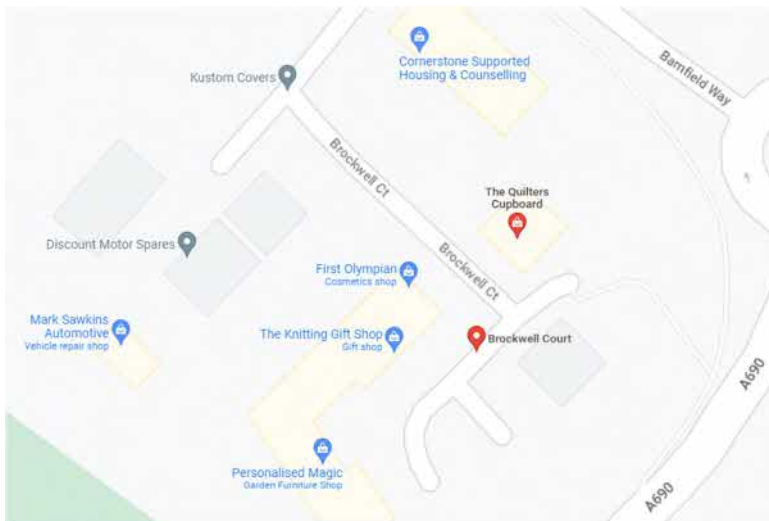
APPENDIX 4

Similar Businesses Within Industrial Estates

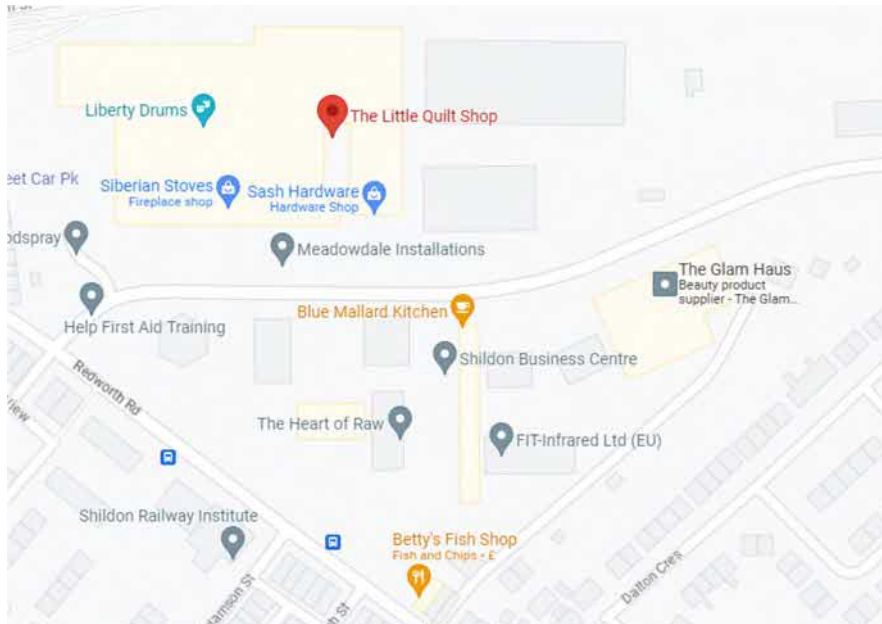
Fabric Mouse
Unit 5, Station Road Business Park
Brampton On Swale
Richmond
North Yorkshire
DL10 7SN



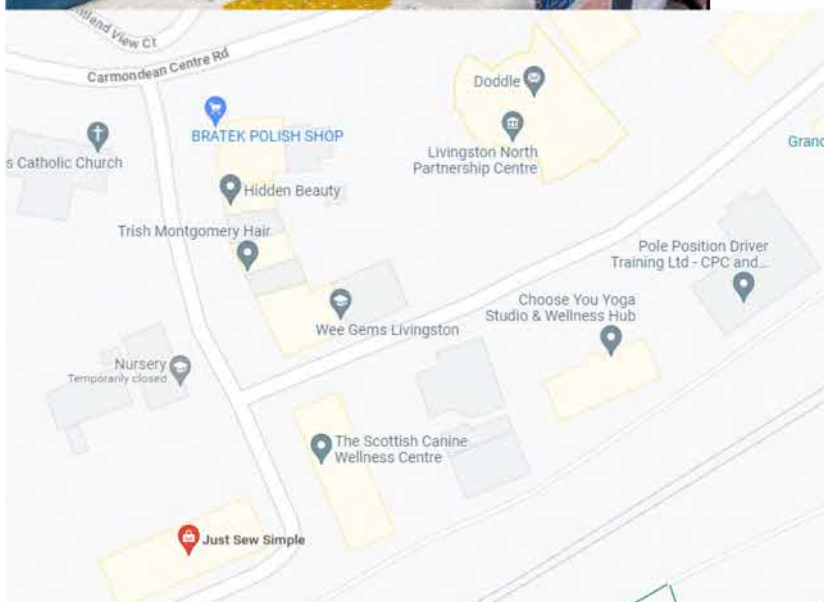
The Quilters Cupboard
Unit 1, Brockwell Court Industrial Estate
Low Willington
County Durham
DL15 0UT



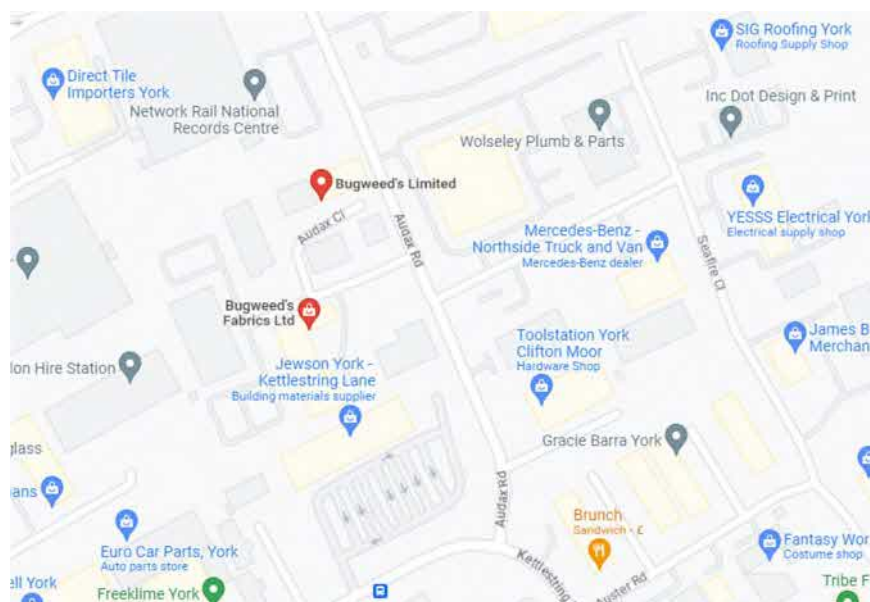
The Little Quilt Shop
Unit 11, South West Durham Business Centre
Dabble Duck Industrial Estate
Shildon County Durham DL4 2QN



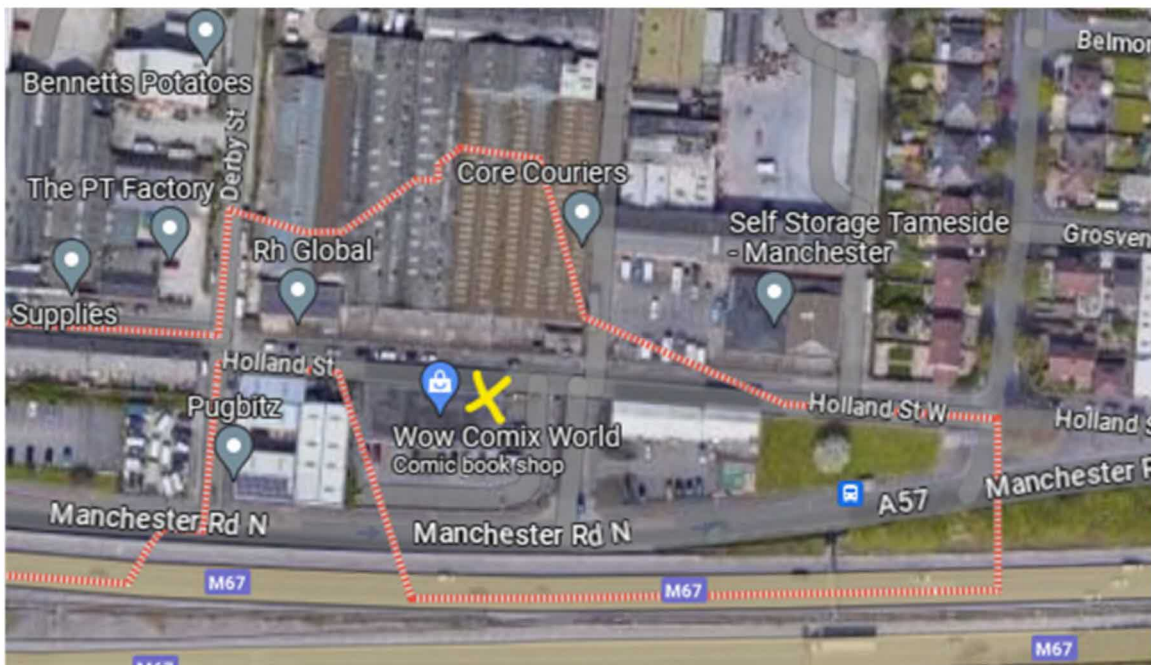
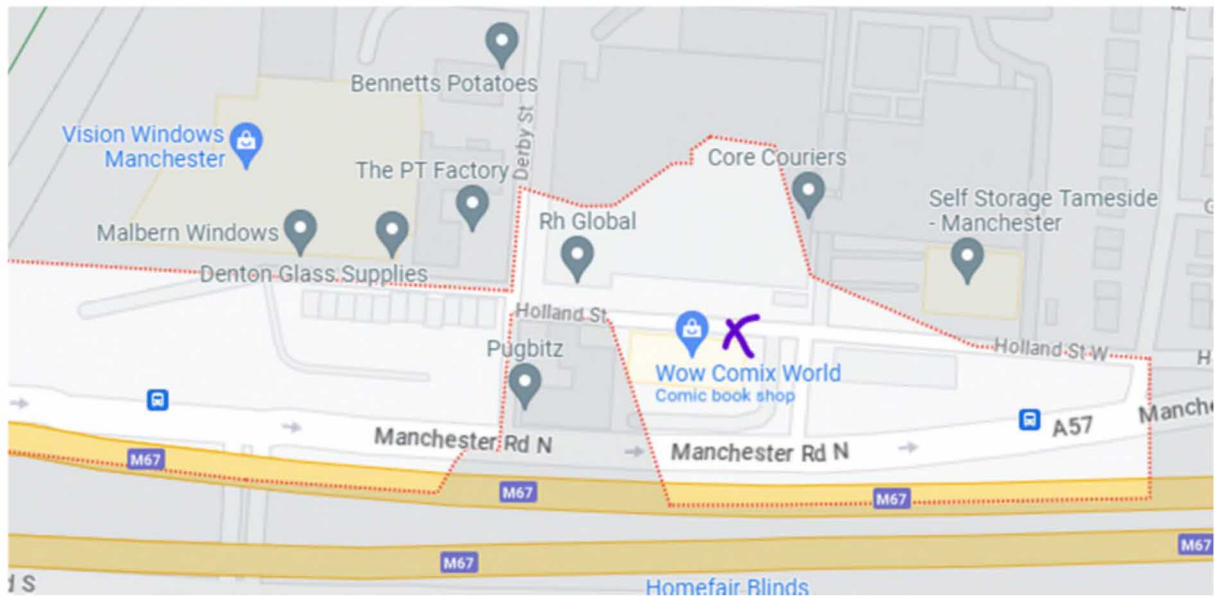
Just Sew Simple
Unit 9, Carmondean Business Units
Livingston
West Lothian
EH54 8PT



Bugweeds Fabrics & Crafts Ltd
Unit 3, Lancaster Park
Audax Close
Clifton Moor York North Yorkshire YO30 4RA



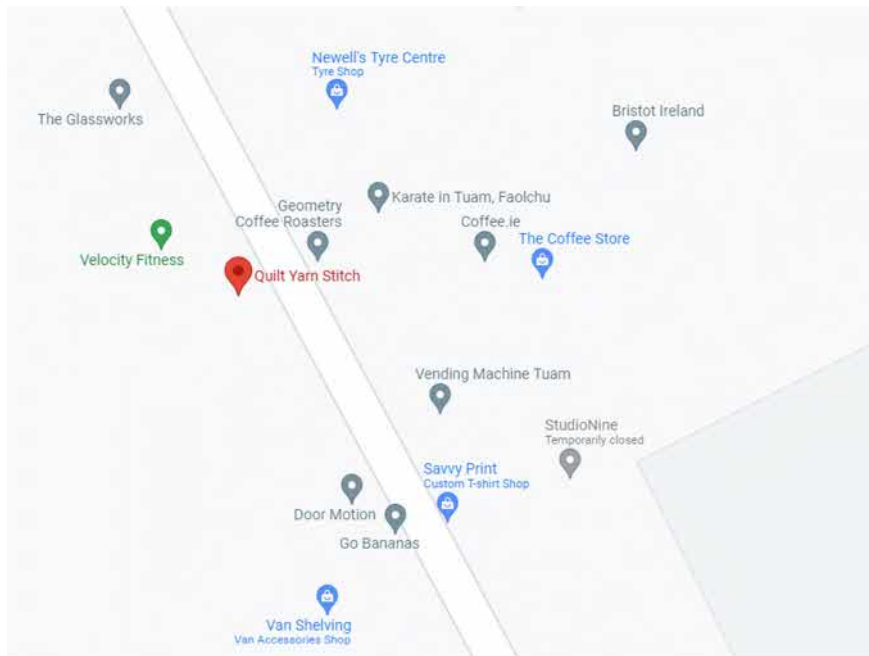
Mimi and Bee
163 Holland Street
Denton Manchester M34 3GE.



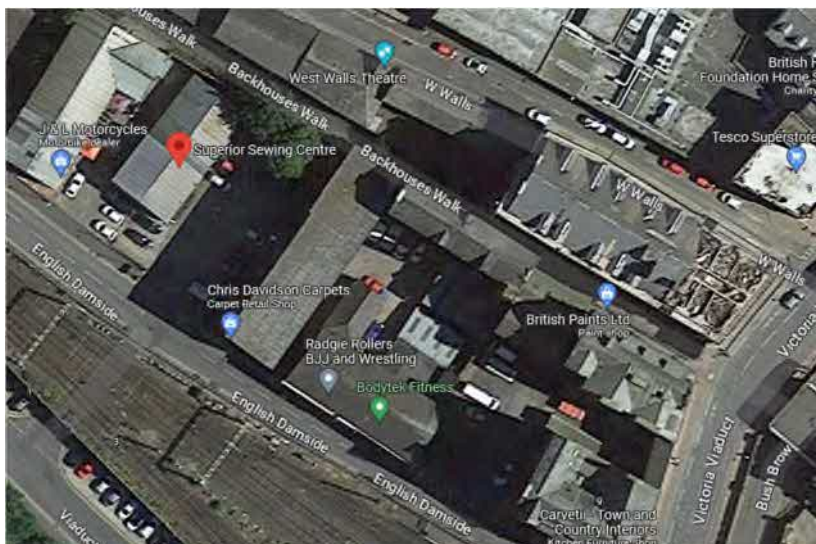
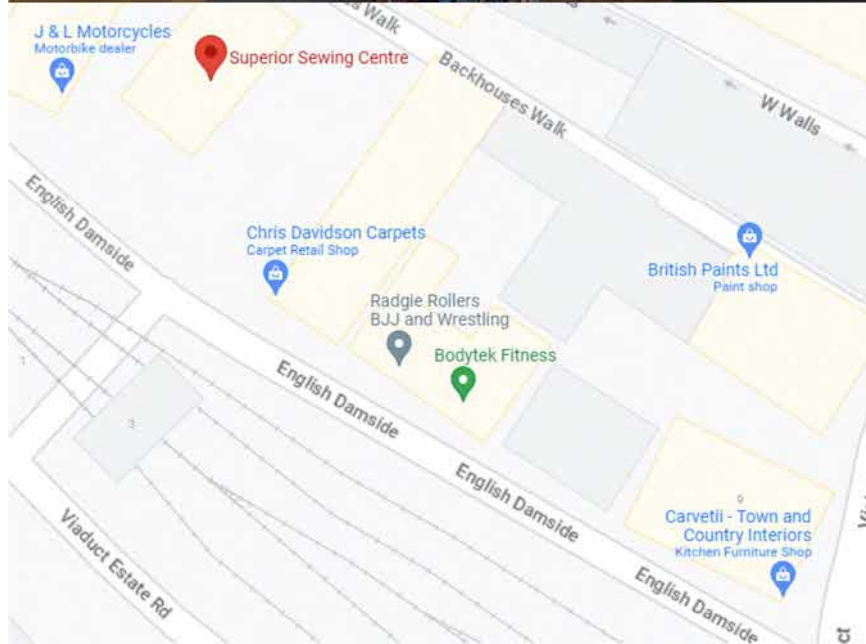
Quilt Yarn Stitch

1st Floor

Unit 19 MG Business Park Galway Road, Tuam, Co Galway, H54 YF25.



Superior Sewing Centre
Phoenix House
English Damside
Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8AU.

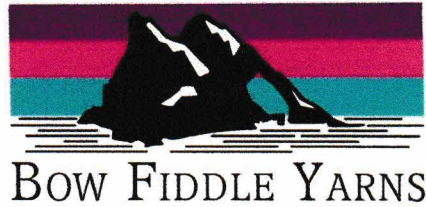


Just Quilting
Unit 3, Morgan Business Centre,
Mylord Crescent, Camperdown Industrial Estate, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE12 5UJ.



APPENDIX 5

Additional Notes of Support



I am an independent yarn dyer based in the North East of Scotland and have an online presence (web shop) and also travel around the UK to yarn festivals and craft shows to showcase my hand dyed yarns.

It is very difficult to build a business when the product is very tactile, and the nuances of colour can be distorted on a computer monitor. Therefore, having a presence in a bricks and mortar craft business is vitally important. I have been lucky enough to be stocked at The Wonky Giraffe in Kelso, and it is my only outlet in the Borders and I am indebted to Louise for her trust and faith in my product.

Whilst primarily a fabric shop, crafters are notorious about wanting to try new techniques, learn new skills and find new products and the yarn stocked at The Wonky Giraffe complements the range of fabrics.

The space that Louise has created is very welcoming, airy and relaxing which is the perfect environment for not only shopping, but the workshop space is also a haven for inspiring and teaching students. This, in my opinion, is one of the best craft shops that I have visited, and that has been a lot across the globe, including Houston and Singapore.

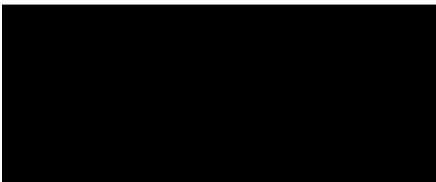
I am aware of 2 yarn shops closing in other parts of the UK this week, and whilst it may seem that craft is not an essential service, I am concerned that the impact and loss of community this will have on the local populace of these areas.

I am passionate about the positive impact that creating makes to mental health. Learning new skills and the sense of achievement in making something with your hands is a skill everyone should embrace.

In 2017 I had to step back from my full time job as an accountant due to a cancer diagnosis and spent the year, knitting, sewing, colouring in and trying new projects. The ability to either switch off with an easy pattern when my foggy brain wasn't retaining information, or tackling a complex colourwork pattern so that I could completely focus on the project and not think about how scary the treatment was, I credit craft as the best way to spend hours productively. It was also the catalyst for launching my yarn dyeing business and encourage people to try new things.

At the heart of any craft business is a passionate owner, who wants to share that love of colour, fabric, creating and learning with everyone who steps through that door and also encourage others to build not only skills, but confidence and a community which will last a lifetime. Louise has curated, not only an amazing shop, but a group of people that give back so much to the community and it would be a shame to lose this from the heartland of textiles.

Louise Davidson





Susie Stitch

To whom it may concern:

I am a freelance embroidery tutor based in the Scottish Borders who runs workshops at a variety of premises throughout Scotland and the North of England.

Over the last few years I have been lucky enough to work extensively with Louise Whittle from The Wonky Giraffe on a number of occasions, primarily running classes at the premises on Spylaw Road, Kelso. The opportunities Louise has provided for me has meant that I have been able to develop my own business much further than I would have otherwise been able to.

These premises are ideal for teaching a variety of crafts. A great deal of thought and work has gone into ensuring that the space is suitable for workshops and I have been unable to find other premises of such a high standard in the Kelso area. In fact, there are very few premises in the country which provide the facilities and atmosphere which is found at The Wonky Giraffe.

I know that other tutors and participants travel from neighbouring counties because the accommodation, access, parking and facilities are second to none. If the Wonky Giraffe is unable to continue trading from this location then I and other tutors will be forced to look much further afield for suitable premises. Unfortunately local village halls and buildings such as Abbey Row are not fit for purpose.

The workshops I run give people the chance to learn new skills but more importantly they offer the opportunity for likeminded people to come together in a safe space, something which is increasingly important as we place more emphasis on mental as well as physical well-being. As we recover from the after effects of COVID lockdowns the groups meeting regularly at the Wonky Giraffe have meant that many older members of our community have been able to integrate back into meeting friends in public in safety.

1st June 2023



Susie Stitch

The retail space provides not just a much larger range of products than other similar retail outlets but also different ranges of fabrics, threads, yarns and haberdashery which would otherwise have to be purchased online. The convenience of having workshop and retail space side by side means that anyone forgetting something essential for a class is able to purchase it on the premises.

Far from taking business away from the town centre the goods and services provided from these premises actually enhance and complement retailers, food outlets and attractions within Kelso. Many visitors choose to make a day of their visit and spend additional revenue in other outlets throughout the town. The business has been featured in a number of local and national magazines and media outlets further spreading the positive image of Kelso to crafters and visitors.

A number of community projects have been co-ordinated from these premises in recent years which have benefitted residents and visitors alike. As well as Kelso-centred projects, the Welcome Panel for the Great Tapestry of Scotland was completed and readied for exhibition here.

I am currently working on a new commission from the Borders Railways Community Partnership, a tapestry panel designed by Andrew Crummy which will be displayed in the Galashiels Interchange once completed. Several stitching sessions have already taken place at the Wonky Giraffe and my intention would be to again carry out the final completion stages on site as the space available is much more suitable than my own small studio space.

In a relatively short period of time, and during a global pandemic, Louise has built not just a thriving business but a flourishing community and we should be encouraging and celebrating this success.

[REDACTED]

Susie Finlayson

[REDACTED]

1st June 2023

APPENDIX 6

Applicant's Note on the History of the Business

U-STOR Business Units Ltd

This document provides the history of U-STOR Business Units Ltd in relation to the retrospective application for Change of Use for Units 8-2 and 8-3 at Spylaw Road, Kelso.

Throughout the Borders redundant church, school, agricultural and industrial buildings have been revitalised and repurposed for various uses. In Spylaw Road in Kelso a number of properties have been converted over the years for use e.g. as a nursery, a bakery, a gym, country store, hardware sales and indeed a residential flat.

U-STOR Business Units Ltd have continued on a well trodden path by utilising the buildings formerly used as a Sawmill, Haulage Depot and Agricultural Engineers to provide premises suitable for today's businesses and to meet current demand. This conversion which we have carried out over the last 10 years has produced 20 small units, offices, stores and workshops providing accommodation for 15 businesses who employ 17 full time and 6 part time staff. Nineteen off-street parking spaces are available for our tenants and their customers and the overall result is a small vibrant business hub.

The cost of repairs and improvements to the buildings since its purchase is circa £330k with the majority of the work being carried out by local contractors.

Planned improvements for this year are the resurfacing of the entrance to the premises (long overdue) and the final phase of replacing the Asbestos roofs with insulated composite panels.