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Ferguson Planning Ltd
38 Thistle Street
Edinburgh
EH2 1EL
E: georgia@fergusonplanning.co.uk
M: 07477864216

Fiona Henderson
Democratic Services
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswells TD6 0SA

12 October 2023

SBC Ref: 22/01905/FUL and 23/00031/RREF

RESPONSE TO COMMENTS OF THE PLANNING OFFICER IN RESPECT OF NEW INFORMATION

Thank you for providing copies of the comments of the Planning Officer in respect of the new information submitted with our notice of review.

In the first instance, we would like to make clear that these are visual representations of the proposed development, provided to aid in understanding how it will sit within the landscape of the area. The site visit that LRB Members are set to attend should provide them with a fuller appreciation of how the proposed dwelling will relate to the building group at Whiteburn and allow them a deeper appreciation of its context. We appreciate the time taken by the Members to attend.

We would also like to make clear that the materiality or design of the proposed dwelling was not given as a reason for refusal as set out in the decision notice that was issued on 18 April 2023.

Our response to the specific comments made is as follows:

The photos below (Figures 1 and 2) which were included in the Appeal Statement as Figure 4 and Figure 16, show a slightly different angle of 'Viewpoint 1' but still taken from the north-west

GALASHIELS

Shiel House, 54 Island Street
Galashiels TD1 1NU
T: 01896 668 744

EDINBURGH

37 One George Street
Edinburgh EH2 2HN
T: 0131 385 8801

NORTHERN IRELAND

61 Moyle Road, Ballycastle, Co. Antrim,
Northern Ireland BT54 6LG
T: 07960 003 358

WWW.FERGUSONPLANNING.CO.UK



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of the site looking towards the south-east. These clearly show the visual relationship between the site of the proposed dwelling and the other dwellings within the building group.

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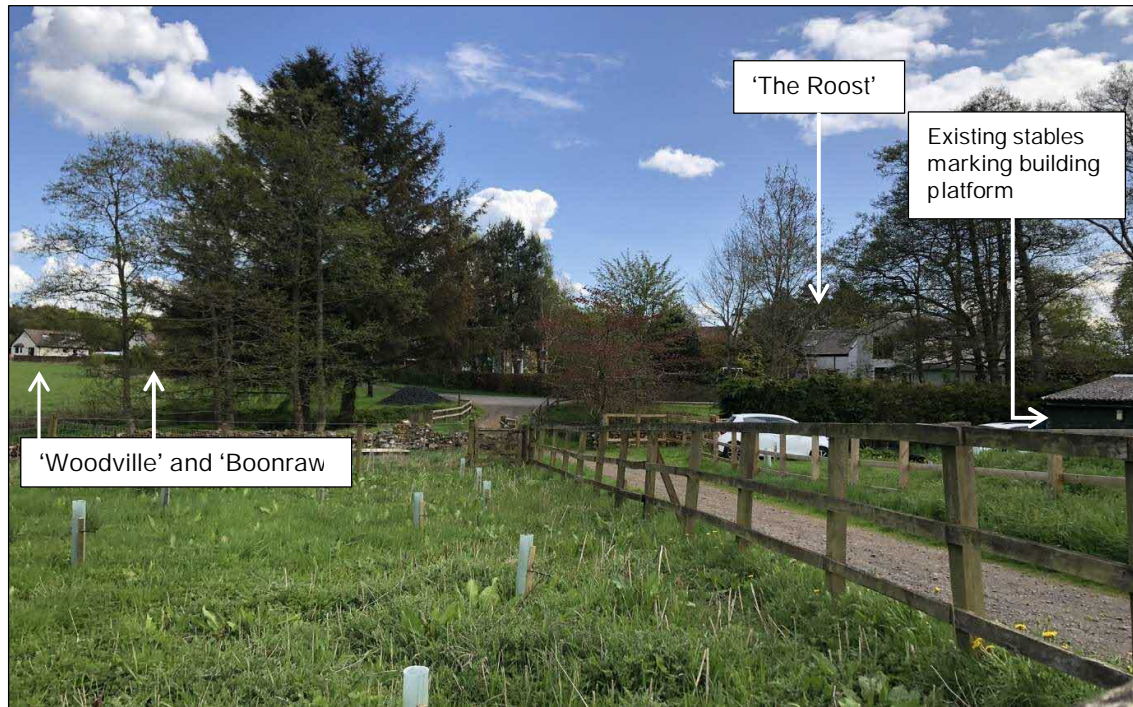


Figure 1. View of subject site from north-west looking towards building group at Whiteburn with 'The Roost', 'Woodville' and 'Boonraw' visible in background. Source: Ferguson Planning Site Visit.



Figure 2. Panorama of subject site between the dwelling at 'The Roost' to the left and outbuildings associated with 'The Roost' to the right. Source: Ferguson Planning Site Visit.

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The Planning Officer's comments regarding the distance between the subject site and the other houses within the building group was addressed in the initial Appeal Statement at paragraphs 4.16 –4.18 which have summarised here for completeness.

As shown in Figure 3 below, there is no characteristic spacing between the other dwellings within the Whiteburn building group. The minimum separation distance between the proposed dwelling and 'The Roost' is the same as the spacing between 'Whiteburn Farm House' and Merrick Cottage'.

As such, we consider it incorrect for the subject site to be characterised as being 'divorced' from the rest of the Whiteburn Group. Figures 1 and 2 also show that due to the siting of the dwellings at Whiteburn, the proposed dwelling would be apparent within the same view as several of the other dwellings at Whiteburn, thus reinforcing the sense of place.



Figure 3. Spacing between dwellings within Whiteburn building group. Source: Quercus.

Figure 3 also shows how there is no characteristic or distinct distance that the other dwellings within the Whiteburn group are set back from the boundary of the A697. The proposed dwelling would be a similar distance from the road as Merrick and Leaside cottages.

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The Planning Officer's comments regarding the presence of 'woodland' between the subject site and The Roost were also addressed in the initial Appeal Statement at paragraph 4.19. Our comments are summarised here for completeness and further photographs showing the characteristic interval of woodland between other dwellings within the Whiteburn building group are appended to this statement.

There is dense vegetation between 'Whiteburn Farm House' and 'Merrick Cottage', yet these properties have been confirmed as forming part of the same building group. The volume of vegetation between the subject site and 'The Roost' is not as great as that between these two dwellings. Figure 4 below shows the spacing and vegetation as viewed from the junction of the A6089 and A697.



Figure 4. Distance between Whiteburn and Merrick Cottage as viewed from the A6089 intersection. Source: Ferguson Planning Site Visit.

The photos appended to this statement also show the presence of dense vegetation between other dwellings within the building group and confirm that this forms part of the pattern of development, rather than forming a break or boundary to the group.

The materiality and design of the proposed dwelling is described by the Planning Officer in their most recent comments as not reflecting the character of existing houses within the building group. This aspect of the proposal was also addressed within the initial Appeal Statement at paragraphs 4.21 –4.28. Our assessment and conclusions on this aspect are summarised below for completeness.

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The New Housing in the Borders Countryside SPG does encourage the design of new dwellings to take account of the widely appreciated and accepted traditions of Border house design. However, it caveats this by warning that the guidance should not be applied unthinkingly or across the board and recognises that there are circumstances where, with sound reasoned justification, a different solution, in terms of building form, proportion and materials, can legitimately be pursued. Innovative designs, therefore, which are sympathetic to their setting and to the general principles in respect of siting, will also be encouraged.

The design of the dwellinghouse has been carefully considered and references many elements of the other dwellings in the Whiteburn building group and rural Borders housing generally, while representing a more compact and less resource intensive solution to a standard construction.

The proposed dwelling has a narrow frontage of approximately 4.8m and a depth of double this, creating a well-proportioned building which, in this way, is similar to that of traditional workers cottages.

The height of the proposed dwelling is in keeping with the built development in the surrounding area. For example, the dwelling in the Whiteburn building group, nearest the subject site, 'The Roost', possesses a two-storey western wing and 'The Coach House' and other buildings further east in the group are also of a reasonable height being two-storey or having enough height to allow for habitable space at the roof level.

The windows at the ground floor level of the dwellinghouse are vertically proportioned with multiple panes, an element of building design identified as desirable in the New Housing in the Borders Countryside SPG. The SPG also notes that porches are a common feature of housing in the countryside and encourages new porches to reference traditional styles. The proposed porch is simple and traditional in its form while also adding visual interest and breaking up the bulk of the building.

The exterior cladding materials and colour would be recessive in the environment with low reflectivity values to allow the building to be absorbed into its rural environment. Although none of the dwellings within the Whiteburn building group have a corrugated steel construction, the use of this material can be seen in the outbuildings at 'Boonraw' and 'The Roost' as well as in the farm buildings at to the north-west of the subject site.

The restricted scale of the dwellinghouse, in conjunction with the materiality, gives it the feeling of an agricultural building which is entirely appropriate for its context, while the form, proportion and detailing directly references dwelling in the Whiteburn group and the Borders Countryside more generally.

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The footprint of the proposed dwelling would be similar to that of the existing stable block and no greater than any of the other dwellings within the building group. As such, it would not appear obtrusive or dominant within its setting.

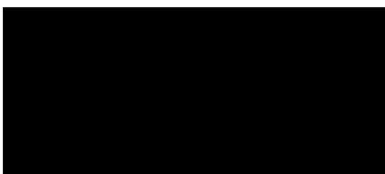
Works began in May / June of 2023 at the property adjacent to the subject site for the erection of a replacement garage which was granted planning permission on 28 July 2022 (reference 22/00781/FUL). The dwelling proposed at the subject site would arguably have a minimal impact on the character or appearance of this area, especially when compared to the new garage/workshop.



Figure 5. Construction of garage/workshop at 'The Old Steading'.

We trust the above is of assistance, however, we are more than happy to response to any further comments, enquiries or requests for clarification.

Yours faithfully,



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APPENDIX 1



View towards Whiteburn Farmhouse and Coach house illustrating the level of vegetation between those two properties within the existing building group.



View along access track looking towards Whiteburn Farmhouse, Coachhouse illustrating the level of vegetation between properties within the existing building group.



View along access track looking towards Woodville and Boonraw, illustrating the level of vegetation between properties within the existing building group.



View towards Whiteburn farmhouse and towards the Coachhouse illustrating the level of vegetation between properties within the existing building group.