

F E R G U S O N  
P L A N N I N G

LAND WEST OF PIRNHAUGH, INNERLEITHEN, EH44 6JX

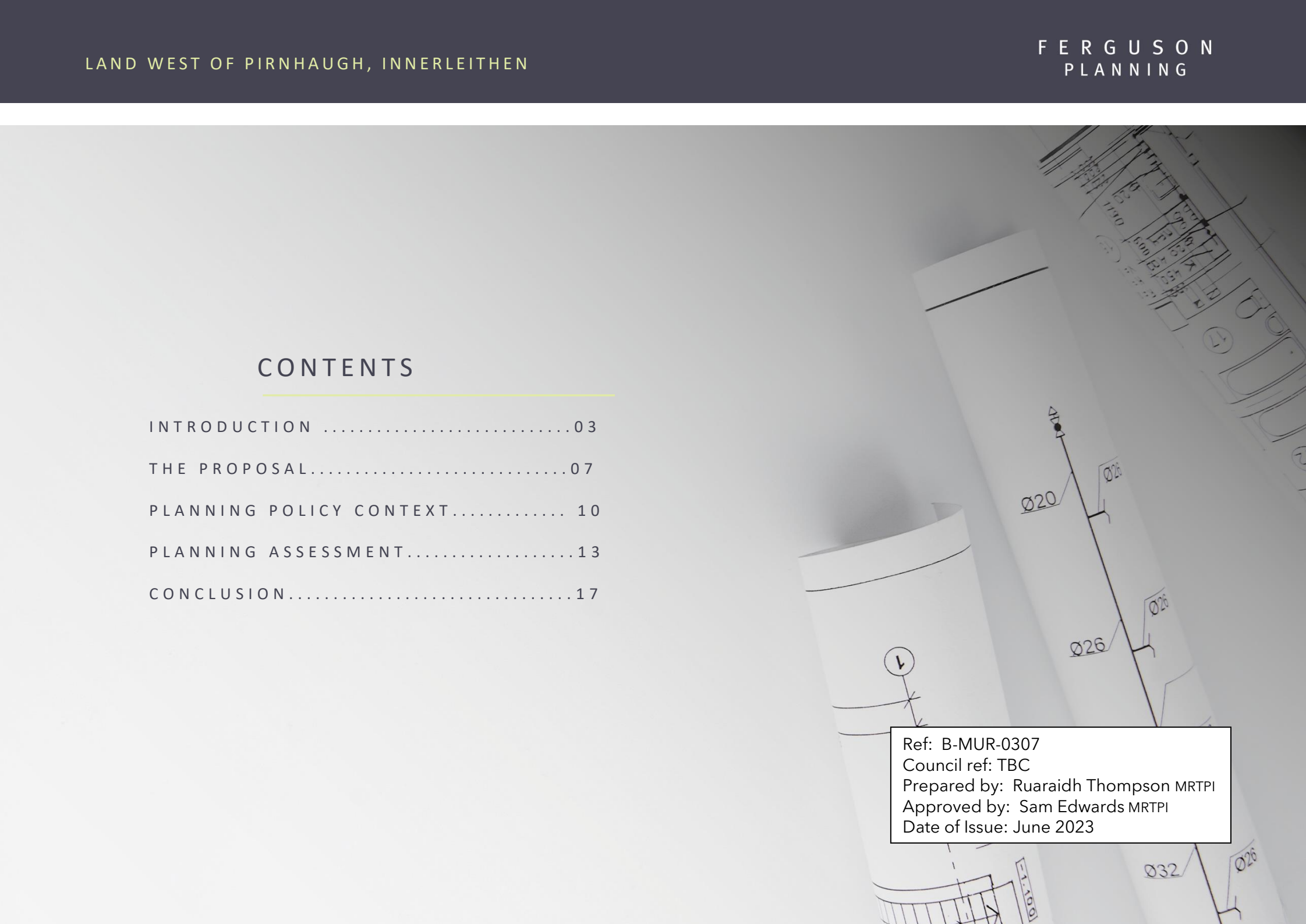
MURRAY CAMPBELL

JUNE 2023

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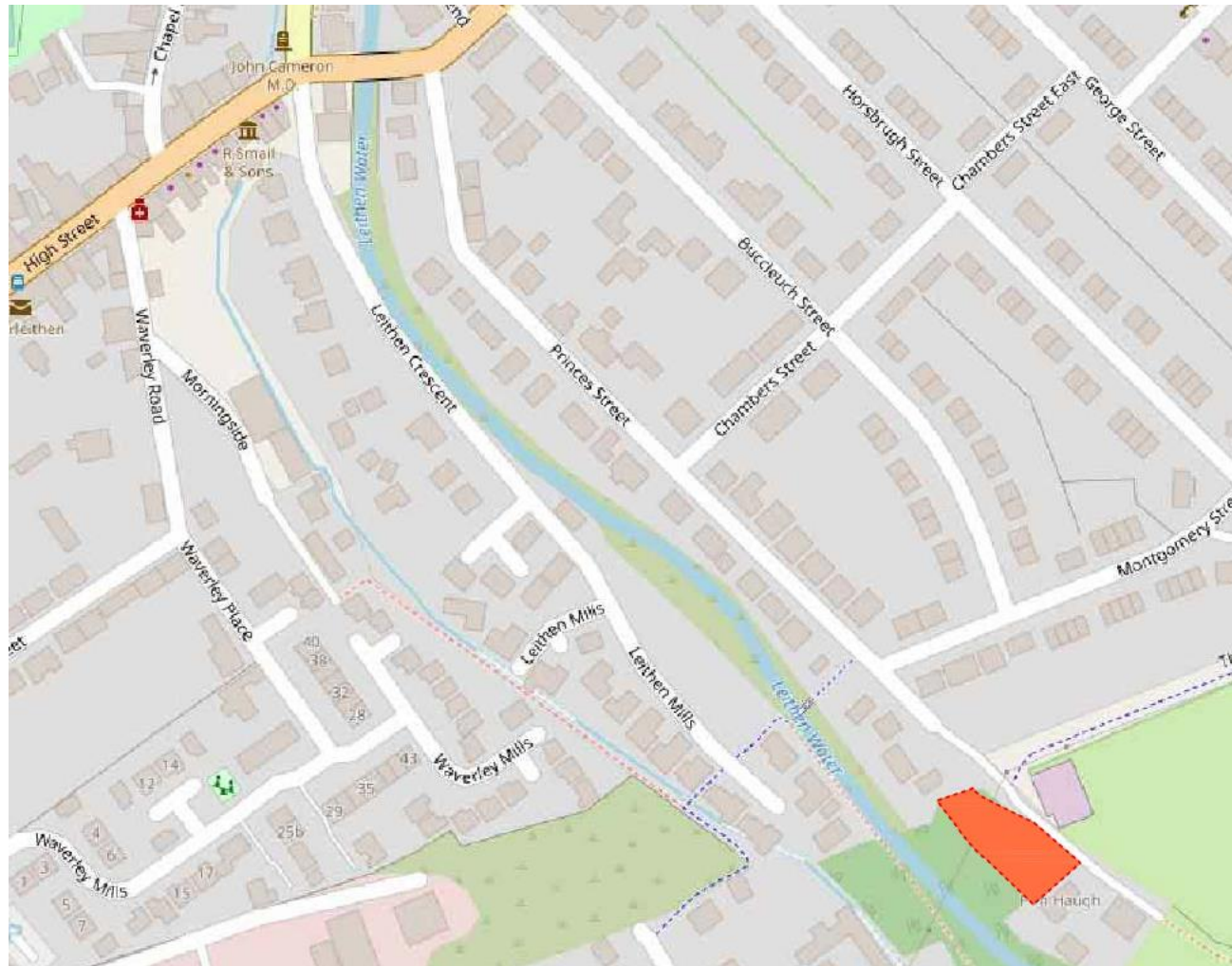
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INTRODUCTION

## INTRODUCTION

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- 1.1 This Planning Statement, prepared by Ferguson Planning, is submitted to Scottish Borders Council on behalf of the Applicant – Mr Murray Campbell. The Statement supports an Application for Planning Permission for a commercial storage facility comprising 30 no. storage containers together with associated works on land west of Pirnhaugh, Innerleithen.
- 1.2 The application site comprises existing hard surface which benefits from a security fence topped with barbed wire. Land levels are laid flat into useable yard. A portion of the north of the site is fenced off separately. The site is currently vacant.
- 1.3 The site lies in the south portion of Innerleithen. The site stands opposite the Electricity Distribution Site to the north-east. The Pirnhaugh View residential parcel lies a short distance to the south-east. The main residential area of Innerleithen extends to the north-west along Princes Street, visible in **Fig.1**. The Leithen Water flows past the site to the south-west circa 25 metres distant.
- 1.4 The site is accessed from an existing private way adjacent to the north-east of the site. The private way extends approximately 55 metres south-east of Princes Street and is wide enough for two vehicles to pass.
- 1.5 The site lies inside the Development Boundary defined for Innerleithen. The site does not sit in any Conservation Area. There are no Listed Buildings on-site or anywhere within a 200 metre radius of the site.
- 1.6 There are no environmental or ecological designations that cover the site. The Leithen Water is covered by a Special Area of Conservation, which sits fully beyond the site not closer than 25 metres. The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation that covers the River Tweed sits within 275 metres of the site.
- 1.7 The site has clearly been developed previously. It is believed that the site was previously in use as a wastewater treatment works. The local extract of the 1955 Ordnance Survey Map has been identified that shows cylindrical development on-site, immediately south of the (at that time) active railway, visible in **Fig.2**.



**Fig 1:** Extract from MDC-0148-L(-1)101 Site Location Plan.  
(Source: MacKenzie Design Company Architecture).

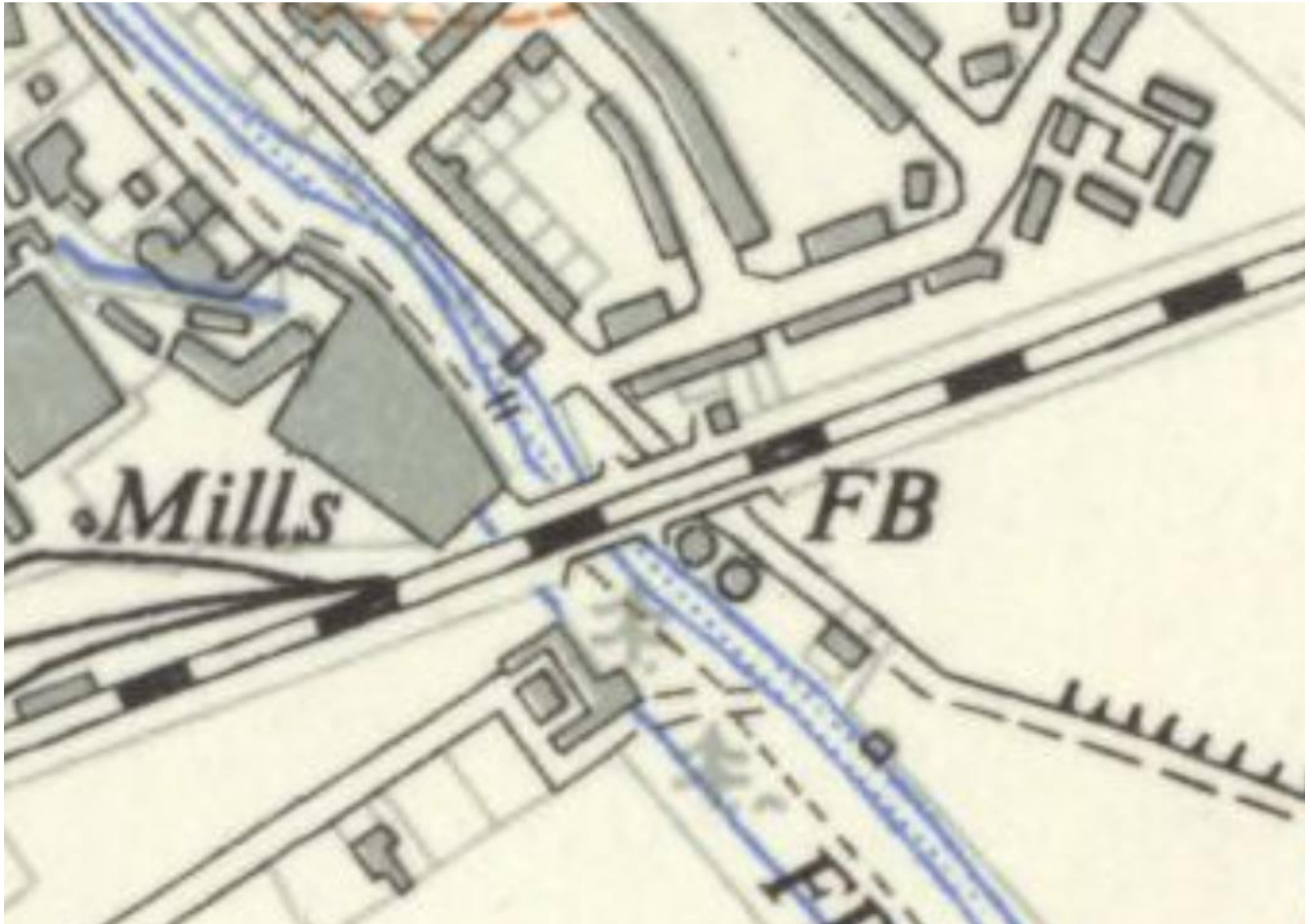


Fig 2: Local extract from Ordnance Survey Map 1955.

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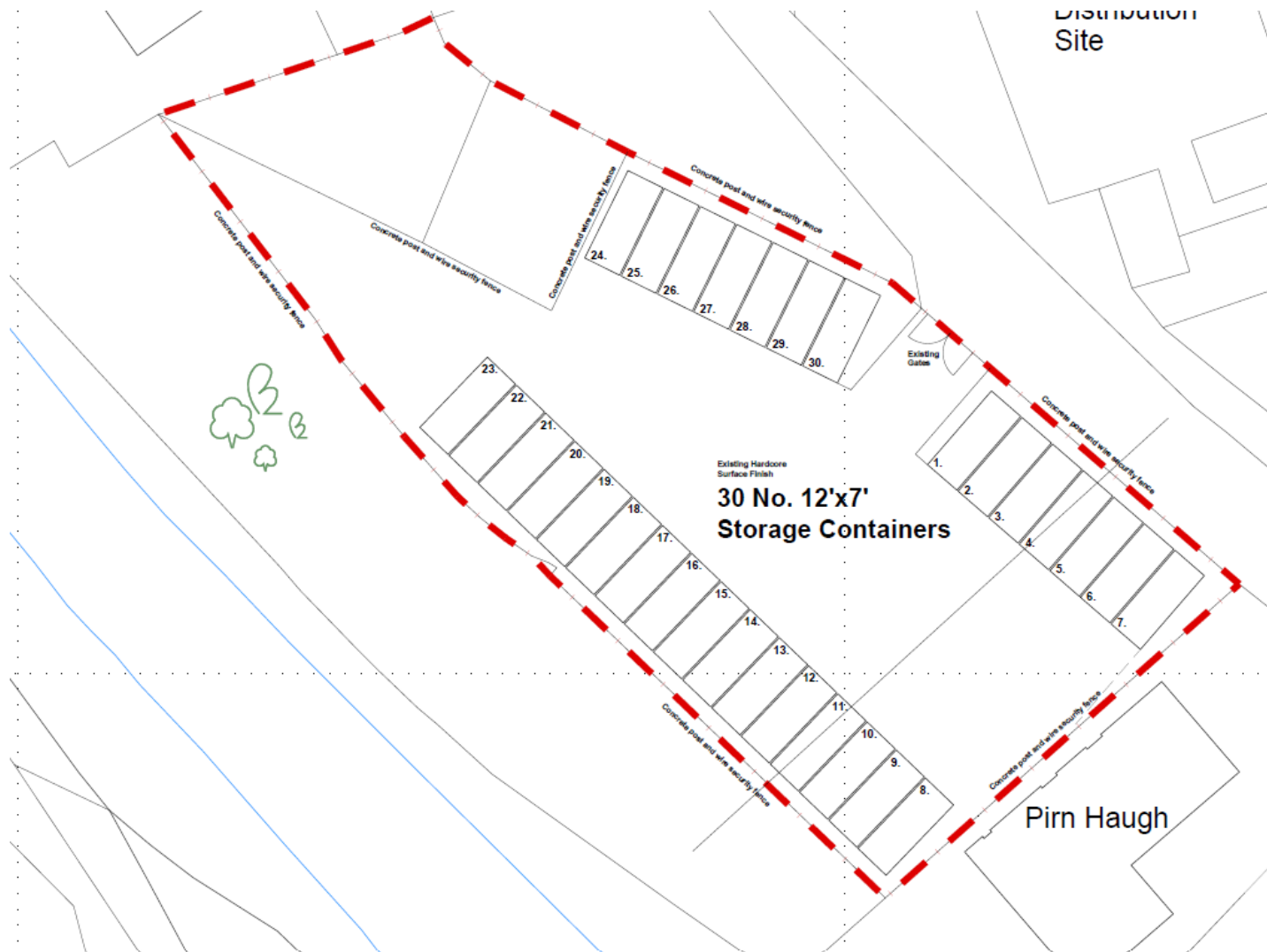
THE PROPOSAL

## THE PROPOSAL

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- 2.1 The proposal is for erection of a commercial storage facility comprising 30 no. storage containers together with associated works on land west of Pirnhaugh, Innerleithen.
- 2.2 The proposal centres on formation of a commercial yard fronted by storage containers to the north-east and south-west within the existing and pre-established boundaries of the site, as seen in **Fig.3**. Storage containers of standard dimensions will be placed upon concrete bases and let out for the use of small businesses. While the site benefits from security fencing with a locked gate, each individual container would also be locked separately.
- 2.3 Useable space in the interior of the yard shall provide for parking, turning, and loading. While occupiers shall have reasonable use of their unit, activities beyond storage and loading shall be restricted to those ancillary and necessary to the main business – occupiers will not be permitted to conduct their primary operations throughout the day from a storage container on-site.
- 2.4 Access to the site shall be provided for using the existing arrangements along the private way adjacent to the north-east. It is anticipated that the majority of traffic shall be accounted for in the morning (0800 – 0900) and evening (1600 – 1700), with the traffic volume in the morning being the higher of the two. Altogether little impact will be created on the private way particularly outside the morning peak. It is expected that the scenario in which all containers are accessed on the same day will not occur. The level of development proposed is too low for the site to become an active hub which requires daily access for all occupiers.
- 2.5 The market targeted by the proposal is small businesses with a requirement for small scale storage on a secure site. It is expected that this will largely attract tradesmen, small sole trader (work from home) businesses, and other small businesses with a requirement to own or use additional equipment which isn't often used (e.g. shops, beauty therapists, groundworks firms etc.). It is considered that the proposal shall draw the majority of its customers from Peeblesshire (especially Innerleithen, Walkerburn, and Peebles).
- 2.6 Economically, the objective of the proposal is to enable local businesses to continue trading successfully by having access to conveniently located and competitively priced storage capacity. In this regard, although this may remove a final hurdle to expansion and hiring more staff in some cases, the proposal could be understood as primarily aimed at supporting businesses to maintain existing employment with creating additional employment an important secondary aim.





**Fig 3:** Extract from MDC-0148-L(-1)151 Site Block Plan.  
(Source: MacKenzie Design Company Architecture).

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PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

## PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 This section provides an overview of key planning policies relevant to the proposed development. The Development Plan comprises National Planning Framework 4 and the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016).
- 3.2 National Planning Framework 4 sets out national planning policies which are material to the determination of planning applications. Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016) contains local planning policy that forms the cornerstone of the adopted planning policy context.

### NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK 4 (2023)

- 3.3 The National Planning Framework 4 was adopted in February 2023. The document addresses national planning policy and the Government's approach to achieving a net zero sustainable Scotland by 2045. While Policies 1, 2, 3, 13, 14, & 15 have relevance to the proposal, it is considered that Policies 9 & 26 are particularly pertinent.
- 3.4 **Policy 26** Business and Industry addresses employment development across the country. The Policy states that *"development proposals for business and industry uses will be supported where they are compatible with the primary business function of the area. Other employment uses will be supported where they will not prejudice the primary function of the area and are compatible with the business/industrial character of the area."*

- 3.5 **Policy 9** Brownfield, Vacant and Derelict Land and Empty Buildings sets out the government's strategy for reuse of brownfield sites. The Policy contains support for *"development proposals that will result in the sustainable reuse of brownfield land including vacant and derelict land and buildings, whether permanent or temporary, will be supported. In determining whether the reuse is sustainable, the biodiversity value of brownfield land which has naturalised should be taken into account."*

### SCOTTISH BORDERS LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (2016)

- 3.6 Local planning policy relevant to the proposal is contained within the Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (2016).

### Policy PMD5: Infill Development

- 3.7 The Policy permits *"development on non-allocated, infill, or windfall sites, including the re-use of buildings within Development Boundaries as shown on proposals maps will be approved where the following criteria are satisfied:*
- a) *where relevant, it does not conflict with the established land use of the area; and*
  - b) *it does not detract from the character and amenity of the surrounding area; and*
  - c) *the individual and cumulative effects of the development can be sustained by the social and economic infrastructure and it does not lead to over-development or 'town and village cramming'; and*
  - d) *it respects the scale, form, design, materials, and density in context of its surroundings; and*

- e) *adequate access and servicing can be achieved, particularly taking account of water drainage, and schools capacity; and*
- f) *it does not result in any significant loss of daylight, sunlight, or privacy to adjoining properties as a result of overshadowing or overlooking.*

3.8 *All applications will be considered against the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Placemaking and Design. Developers are required to provide design statements as appropriate."*

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PLANNING ASSESSMENT

## PLANNING ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The application site lies inside the Development Boundary defined for Innerleithen. The site comprises a hard surface which is laid level. The proposal represents new employment development within the existing urban area of Innerleithen. Therefore, Policy PMD5 is pertinent to the proposal.
- 4.2 The site does not lie within the existing town centre or employment areas of Innerleithen. However, the surrounding area is not densely developed residential units. The Pirnhaugh View residential parcel contains the only existing dwellings that sit beyond Princes Street. The space between between Princes Street and Pirnhaugh View extends to approximately 90 metres, in which the existing electricity substation stands opposite the site. The proposal is similar in character to the electricity substation as it would not be anyone's normal place of work and would be used largely for storage. Therefore, the proposal would not conflict with local land uses and satisfies criterion a) of Policy PMD5.
- 4.3 The contribution of the application site to local character at present is a brownfield, hard surfaced site which is enclosed in a substantial security fence. It is considered that this represents a poor-quality contribution. The existing character of the site would largely be retained as the site will still be security fenced and hard surfaced. It is considered that the proposal would represent a minor improvement to local character as the site would no longer be disused and would have a small number of daily users. Additionally, this would offer limited natural surveillance benefits.
- 4.4 The proposal would not detract from the character of the local area and is considered to satisfy criterion b) of Policy PMD5.
- 4.5 The proposal represents an increase in the economic infrastructure of Innerleithen. While the impact on social infrastructure is less clear, it is considered that the most likely effect will be one of improvement as it will help to support the number of small businesses in the town (business community) and contribute to local socioeconomic resilience. The proposal is consistent with criterion c) of Policy PMD5.
- 4.6 The proposal is considered to satisfy criterion d) of Policy PMD5; the heights, lengths, and widths of all structures on-site shall stand less substantial than those of existing buildings to both the north-west (Princes Street) and south-east (Pirnhaugh), the development is contained within the existing and pre-established boundaries of the site, and the density of development will be lower than at either Pirnhaugh View or Princes Street and commensurate with the electricity substation opposite.
- 4.7 It is considered that the proposal provides for adequate access and doesn't require access to other utilities (criterion e). The proposal would have no impact on the privacy of nearby dwellings or their access to either sunlight or daylight (criterion f).

- 4.8 NPF4 places great importance on maximising brownfield development opportunities at the expense of other development. The proposal represents the reuse of a long vacant brownfield site within the existing urban area of Innerleithen. The proposal is sustainable in its nature as it will command letting income from prospective occupiers (economic), financing itself, and will directly support existing small businesses in the local area (social). Therefore, the proposal is considered to accord with Policy 9 of NPF4.
- 4.9 The proposal represents business development within an existing urban area. While the local area contains non-residential development, this doesn't really define the character of the area. As set out above the proposal represents no prejudice to the function or character of the local area, as required by Policy 26 of NPF4. As the proposal would not prejudice the character of the area and represents business development in the urban area, it is considered to accord with Policy 26.
- 4.10 Policy PMD5 outlines support for "*development on non-allocated, infill, or windfall sites, including the re-use of buildings within Development Boundaries*". The proposal represents employment development within the Development Boundary defined for Innerleithen. As the proposal lies within the Development Boundary defined for Innerleithen and accords with the relevant adopted criteria of the Policy, the principle of development is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policy PMD5. The acceptability of the principle of development is further strengthened by Policy 9 & 26 of NPF4.
- 4.11 The proposal would not generate a large volume of traffic. At 30 no. storage containers the level of development proposed is not considered to be significant. Further it is inevitable that some of the containers will be used for longer term storage (i.e. storage of fitted shop parts, historic business records etc.) to which access on a daily or weekly basis shall not be required.
- 4.12 The vehicles that do access the site will tend to arrive and leave between 0800 and 0900 in the morning. While most will return, likely between 1600 and 1700 in the afternoon, some will not. The impact on traffic volumes generally, and in the 0800 to 0900 and 1700 to 1800 peaks specifically, will be very slight. In the PM peak, this aspect of the impact is likely to equate to one or two more trips daily.
- 4.13 All parking, turning, and loading shall be accommodated within the boundaries of the site. It is considered that the proposal is acceptable in parking and access terms.
- 4.14 The limited scale of development is considered not to represent a significant risk to amenity. Firstly, no industrial or chemical processes shall be undertaken on-site. The proposal is for commercial storage (Class 6) without Class 5 Uses. Therefore, the only possible amenity risk is from the movement of vehicles.
- 4.15 The proposed opening hours of the facility are 0800 – 1700. This will ensure no arrivals before 0800 and final departure after 1700. Use of the facility is likely to be primarily Monday to Friday but will be available at weekends. It is considered that the proposal represents a less significant amenity risk than the electricity substation as SP Energy Networks retain unlimited rights of access as operationally required. The proposal is predicated upon a far more limited level of use.

- 4.16 The proposal does not represent a significant risk to residential amenity and is considered to be acceptable in amenity terms.
- 4.17 It is noted that flood risk has previously been identified on the Leithen Water. The extent of this risk is understood to affect most of Innerleithen and all of the town centre. It is our understanding that the nature of the risk is generally low in that it is unlikely to have debilitating effect.
- 4.18 The proposal does not include any additional hardstanding on-site, paving or erected masonry, concrete, columns (steel or otherwise). Therefore, the proposal would not increase flood risk to any use or building.
- 4.19 Further storage containers are considered not to be vulnerable to flood risk. The storage containers and their contents do not need to be accessed every day. The contents of containers will largely be in longer term storage, access to which can be deferred in event of flooding. Deferring access to the storage containers will not create a threat to public safety, in the way that preventing access to dwellings, a GP surgery, or Fire Station would create a threat to public safety. Indeed, the proposal appears to be significantly less vulnerable to flooding than the electricity substation opposite and would benefit from measures to keep the substation accessible in an emergency period.
- 4.20 The Applicant is willing to contractually require prospective occupiers to agree not to access their units when advised not to by SEPA Floodline (and/or any replacement or successor service). The proposal is considered not to represent an unacceptable adverse flood risk.



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CONCLUSION

## CONCLUSION

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- 5.1 Ferguson Planning has been appointed by the Applicant to submit an Application for Planning Permission in Principle for a commercial storage facility comprising 30 no. storage containers together with associated works on land west of Pirnhaugh, Innerleithen.
- 5.2 The proposal represents employment development upon a site which lies within the Development Boundary and existing urban area of Innerleithen. The proposal supports local businesses and meets a pre-existing need locally. Delivery of the proposal would support jobs and assist existing businesses to invest in the local area. Therefore, the principle of development of the erection of a new dwelling upon the site is considered to be acceptable in accordance with Policy PMD5.
- 5.3 The existing vehicle access is to be retained to serve the proposal. The existing access is substantial in construction and proportions and is considered to provide for safe and adequate access. The impact of traffic volumes locally is considered not to be significant. The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in access and parking terms.
- 5.4 It is considered that the proposal is in accordance with relevant adopted policy of the Local Development Plan and is not afflicted by any other material considerations. It is respectfully requested that planning permission is granted.

# F E R G U S O N P L A N N I N G

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