

FAO : Declan Hall, Clerk to the Local Review Body
Scottish Borders Council [SBC]

RE: 23/00647/FUL : Appeal under Section 43A[8] regarding a Replacement Roof to Glasshouse

Dear Sir

I received notice from you on 16th February 2024 of a review of the decision of SBC to refuse planning permission for the replacement of the glasshouse roof at Garden House, Linthill. I write in response to your notification and to make further representation in support of the development.

I was surprised to receive notification of the refusal of planning permission by SBC on 15 November 2023 regarding the replacement roof for the glasshouse. As the nearest neighbour to Garden House I had written in support of this development, and I would like to repeat and reinforce my support by means of this letter.

Some time after I purchased the adjacent property [River Cottage] in 2014, I met my new neighbours [Mr and Mrs Longstaff] and became aware of the condition of the glasshouse adjacent to their property [Garden House]. It was in a rather de-lapidated condition, with several elements appearing life-expired to me. At some point – I cannot recall the exact date – they let me know that they planned to completely refurbish the glasshouse and eliminate any potential safety hazard it presented. As the glasshouse itself was invisible to me behind the garden wall about 12 feet high surrounding their property, I had no objection whatsoever to what seemed an entirely sensible and necessary improvement.

I have been told that the original glasshouse dates back perhaps 100 years and was a steam-heated ‘orangery’ of the sort in vogue in the Victorian era. In modern times, it is clear that the original technology is obsolete and the function is no longer appropriate. It seems to me to be entirely appropriate to renew and re-purpose such a life-expired structure within the context of the subsequent construction of Garden House within the original Linthill estate walled garden. Whilst preserving the essence of what was originally built, changes would have to be made to improve habitability and provide modern functionality. In essence the aim should be to allow the recycling and re-use of the facility in a pragmatic way, in sympathy with the original intent but nonetheless with a sensible and realistic design. In my opinion, the development has achieved these aims in a reasonable manner.

A few years ago, the original glasshouse was both redundant and life-expired in terms of its material condition. It was hidden behind a 12 foot high garden wall and could not be viewed by any member of the public without admittance to my neighbours garden through secure gates. I cannot understand how the repaired and modernised structure, and the roof in particular, can be considered to be an unacceptable development; this seems an unreasonable judgement which I do not support. I certainly believe the original decision should be reviewed, perhaps with a visit to the site to view the structure in the context of its surroundings. Furthermore, I am aware that my neighbours have spent considerable time, effort and resources to improve an unsafe and redundant structure in a pragmatic way; any requirement for major change to the current structure seems completely disproportionate to me.

The police are at pains to point out that they can only operate successfully with the support of the general public, and it seems to me that the planning function of SBC is in a similar position. Decisions which cannot be understood by those most affected, and appear to be both unreasonable and disproportionate, should be avoided lest the whole process be brought into disrepute.

For these reasons I urge the Local review Body to reconsider and revise the previous decision regarding 23/00647/FUL and instead grant approval for the development in its current state.

Yours Faithfully

Gordon J. Malcolm [Dr.]
River Cottage
Linthill, Lilliesleaf
Melrose