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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 15 January 2021 09:18  
**To:** localplan  
**Subject:** Netherbarns development AGALA029

CAUTION: External Email

Dear Sirs

I wish to lodge an objection to the proposed use of the Netherbarns site for housing development.

I have been a volunteer tour guide at Abbotsford since 2012.

1. Abbotsford is an unique and historic literary house and as such attracts visitors from all around the world. In addition to their wish to visit the house built by Scotland's greatest-ever writer, what attracts them is the overall environment and ambience of the estate and the landscape, and its sense of peace and tranquility.

What they experience is, of course, what Scott intended - a sanctuary for a writer, a place to reflect on history and philosophy. This has always been felt within the confines of the walled gardens, the surrounding woodlands, and the aspect to the north of the house, facing as it does, the Tweed and the Border hills and meadows beyond. With the recent development of the pathways and woodland towards the river, this aspect of visiting Abbotsford has been enhanced - it is greatly appreciated both by visitors and locals as an area of outstanding beauty and tranquility. I have no doubt that a housing development at Netherbarns, being directly across the river, and in full view of Abbotsford, would seriously diminish the peace and enjoyment for many.

2. Over the past two years I have contributed to a new development at Abbotsford - tours around the gardens, not primarily to talk about horticultural matters, but to describe the vision behind Scott's plans and layout. An important component of the tour is to conduct visitors to the north terrace (i.e. facing the Tweed). For Scott, this was a Picturesque Landscape (*Picturesque: an aesthetic ideal pioneered in 1782 by William Gilpin, combining the beautiful and sublime in landscape*) and he developed that area having been influenced by that artistic movement. That is another reason why a housing development right in the middle of it is inappropriate. But more than that, Scott suffered bouts of depression and found succour in contemplating landscape in general, and his Picturesque Landscape in particular.

Abbotsford has plans to promote that aspect; that is, its attraction to visitors in general, and to special groups in particular. The special groups would include visits from residents of care homes, individuals with learning difficulties and so on. This is the concept of "nature as nurse", or "the therapeutic landscape", increasingly important in the non-pharmaceutical treatment of mental disorders. And again I stress that this initiative would be seriously hampered with a development at Netherbarns.

I write this as a retired Family Doctor with an interest in public health in general, and mental health therapies in particular. That experience leads me to believe that Abbotsford has a pioneering role to play in such initiatives in the Scottish Borders. As such, the preservation of the pastoral environment in and around Abbotsford is of crucial importance - housing development at Netherbarns would be highly detrimental.

3. The ongoing pandemic restrictions highlight the essence of my submission. Abbotsford and its environs provide an unique area and landscape for quiet and reflective contemplation, a place to connect the past with the present, and as such is unique and a jewel in the crown of the Borders' special places. Any disruption to this, and a development at Netherbarns will be a grotesque disruption, will be seen by future generations as incomprehensible, unforgivable, and shameful.

I am happy to discuss this further at any time with your Planning Department.

Yours sincerely

Dr Malcolm Morrison MSc; MB,ChB  
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