

Forward Planning
Council Headquarters
Newtown St Boswell's
Scottish Borders
TD6 OSA

AGALA029 Netherbarns Local Development Plan

Dear Sir,

I am writing to register my objection to the proposed 45 dwelling housing development (AGALA029 Netherbarns in the Local Development Plan) opposite and within the sight line of Abbotsford the historic home of Sir Walter Scott.

The proposed development would impact negatively and permanently this unique historic site which is of local and national interest.

My objections are supported by the National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) which "recognises the cultural heritage to our economy, cultural identity and quality of life" and which "enrich our lives, contribute to our sense of identity and are an important resource for our tourism and leisure industry". By any objective standards Abbotsford qualifies on these grounds alone.

The argument that the proposed site would be screened from view by a thin planting of trees is dubious not least as they would take years to mature. Also assertions that visibility in winter is unimportant as Abbotsford is closed are also false.

Abbotsford is open annually in December with the Visitor Centre open all year round. A "people counter" on Abbotsford recorded 13,000 visits in December 2020 alone with 84,000 visits since its inception in July 2020. Undoubtably the proposed development would impact visitor experience year round but most especially in winter.

LDP2 (Local Development Planning 2) underestimates the importance of Abbotsford's economic impact on our region. Between 2014 – 2019, Abbotsford welcomed 160,000 paying visitors. It contributes £7.4 million to the local economy, supports 148 jobs including creating 35 new jobs at Abbotsford itself. The proposed development risks reducing footfall and negatively impacting the local economy and the jobs it supports.

2021 is the 250th anniversary of Sir Walter Scott's birth. The pandemic notwithstanding Abbotsford plans to celebrate this important anniversary. A building site directly opposite would be an eyesore and undermine Abbotsford and the region's efforts to rebuild after a very challenging year.

For these reasons I would urge you to reject the Netherbarns proposal to preserve the unique, incalculably valuable character of Abbotsford now and for future generations.

