

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 20 January 2021 12:05
To: localplan
Subject: AGALA029 Netherbarns.

CAUTION: External Email

We write with reference to the above planning application, to register our objection to it. Quite apart from the fact that it is intended to build on land ever subject to flooding, which in itself I find surprising, we are particularly concerned at the effect that such a development would have on one of the Scottish Borders' chief attractions, namely Abbotsford.

Abbotsford for people the world over is synonymous with Scotland and represents far more than the dream house of a successful novelist. It may not be the image of Scotland which modern Borderers cherish as they get on with daily life (or not, as at the present time of lockdown), but it generates an enormous business in tourism, employment and infrastructure. In the time of the Maxwell Scott ladies both they and Abbotsford were iconic in their presence, as well as in the ladies' generosity in sharing their treasured home with other people. We can testify to a well-remembered Guide Camp below the house one wet weekend (which is how we know about the flooding problem).

When Abbotsford had to re-invent itself after the demise of Dame Jean and Mrs. Patricia (who was once the Tweeddale Press' 'Personality of the Year', so significant was her contribution to Border Life considered) the new Board of Trustees had a hard act to follow. They did indeed exceed most Borderers' expectations in turning around an estate and property which had gradually lost its polish. The new building for the museum and restaurant was a tour de force, and the development of the Hope Scott Wing to encourage a high-end tourism cachet has been outstanding. Such was the success and prestige of the new administration's achievement that the 'new' Borders railway link to Edinburgh was almost over-subscribed in its early months, as people took the chance to take the train to Tweedbank (which - in keeping with the 'Waverley' name of the Edinburgh terminus - should more properly have been named 'Abbotsford') in order to visit the newly re-launched Abbotsford House..

We find it hard to believe that the planning application to develop Netherbarns has been taken seriously. We have a unique heritage across the Tweed which would be so seriously affected by this blight that it might never recover. The Trust and its employees are hard-working, dedicated, inventive and creative, always aware of the need to generate income to keep this beautiful, eccentric distillation of Scott's vision of Scotland afloat and thus enrich the Borders. There will undoubtedly be persons who would make an immediate profit from developing Netherbarns - a profit enlarged by the fact that some people would pay a small fortune to be able to look over the Tweed towards Abbotsford. They would be selling the birthright of all Borderers. The inadequate thin screening by a plantation of young trees would not compensate for the visual impact such a development would incur; the number of visitors to Abbotsford would decline, and valued employees would lose their jobs.

Sir Walter Scott himself prized that view from his dining-room across the river above all others - his deathbed is legendary. And that's the point about Scott and Abbotsford: they are the stuff of legends. Scott created Scotland in his own image, perhaps, but we would be foolish to deny the value and importance of this creation, both in monetary terms and in cultural ones.

We urge SBC to bring a sense of proportion to this debate and to appreciate the monumental heritage we enjoy. You have named your Council Building at Newtown St. Boswells after the man - so honour his name

and respect his achievement and the benefits he has brought us Borderers. Do not allow this planning application for Netherbarns to proceed.

Please indicate that you have received this email.

Michael & Margaret Rustad

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[REDACTED]
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