

Mrs C Earl

19th January 2021

Forward Planning
Council Headquarters,
Newtown St Boswells,
Scottish Borders,
TD6 0SA

Dear Sir,

Objection to proposal **AGALA029 Netherbarns** in the Local Development Plan

I wish to object to the above proposal of building a new housing development on the land at Netherbarns, directly opposite Abbotsford.

The proposed development site is situated on a sloped elevation that runs down to the River Tweed and lies directly opposite Abbotsford. Abbotsford, the former home of Sir Walter Scott is a unique and significantly historic building, at the heart of the heritage of Scottish literature. Sir Walter Scott was arguably the most influential and well-known Scottish writer of his time. Abbotsford is therefore, one of the most important tourist attractions in the Borders.

Having further development on this site will forever adversely affect not only the current wonderful natural setting and views that change throughout the year, but also the serenity and peaceful atmosphere currently associated with the open spaces of Abbotsford. This serenity is a vital element of the visitor experience and ensures that it is as close as possible to that which Sir Walter Scott would have known in his day.

The suggested proposal to plant trees to act as a screen for both the sound and visual protection of Abbotsford, is seriously flawed. The types of large native 'parkland' trees: oak, beech, ash, that would be needed to give the height, density and conformity to that currently planted around Abbotsford, will take many, many years to begin to offer to most basic, if any, level of potential protection. This in itself makes the proposal untenable. Further as stated before, the site lies on an elevated position meaning that it will be impossible to ever effectively screen the proposed development and guarantee that Abbotsford is not adversely affected.

The importance of Abbotsford as an existing tourist attraction with potential for further growth and economic benefits to the area appears to have been underestimated. The visitor centre for the Great Tapestry of Scotland (due to open in Spring 2021) will draw many new people to Galashiels, giving these visitors an opportunity to also visit Abbotsford. There can never be an alternative site for the historic building of Abbotsford with all its importance on the history and literary heritage of Scotland. By contrast, a different site for a housing development can and should be found and the proposed Netherbarns development permanently rejected.

Yours sincerely


Mrs C Earl