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[REDACTED]  
Head of Planning  
Scottish Borders Council  
Council Headquarters  
Newtown St. Boswells  
Melrose TD6 0SA

21 January 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

### **Proposed housing development at Netherbarns – objection by the National Trust for Scotland**

The National Trust for Scotland wishes to object to the proposed allocation of land for housing at Netherbarns (AGALA029), which would compromise the nationally and internationally important landscape at Abbotsford House.

The National Trust for Scotland does not usually comment on Local Development Plan preparations, except where these concern heritage in the care of the Trust. However, we do reserve the right to make comment where we are concerned at the potential impacts on heritage of national or international importance.

In the case of the proposed housing allocation at Netherbarns, and the impact this would have on the cultural landscapes at Abbotsford, we consider this test has been met.

Walter Scott is a cultural figure of international importance, and his landscapes, national and local, mattered a great deal to Scott and featured in his writing. In fact, Scott is often given credit<sup>12</sup> for raising awareness and appreciation of Scotland's landscapes around the world.

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<sup>1</sup> *Cunningham, David (1996), Scott-land: The role of his native landscape in the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott*  
<sup>2</sup> *Oliver, Susan (2017), Trees, rivers, and stories: Walter Scott writing the land, The Yearbook of English Studies, Vol 47 pp279-299*

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The National Trust for Scotland, Hermiston Quay, 5 Cultins Road, Edinburgh EH11 4DF  
Tel: 0131 458 0200 Fax: 0131 458 0201 Email: [information@nts.org.uk](mailto:information@nts.org.uk) Web: [nts.org.uk](http://nts.org.uk)

The National Trust for Scotland for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC007410

Patron – HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay KG KT GCB OM, Chairman – Sir Mark Jones, Chief Executive – Philip Long OBE FRSE

The landscape that is threatened by the proposed housing allocation forms an integral part of the experience of his house at Abbotsford, which Scott considered one of his more important works. We consider that converting the green field land at Netherbarns to housing will cause irreparable damage to the quality of this landscape, and that adjustments for housing density or attempts at screening will not alleviate the impact.

Scottish Borders Council has in the past recognised the importance of Walter Scott and Abbotsford, including:-

Recognising Abbotsford House as a key tourism magnet for the region (Midlothian & Scottish Borders Tourism Destination Audit 2015).

The specific identification of "*Heart of 'Scott Country' including Scott's View and Abbotsford House*" in the Council's Local Landscape Designation Review (June 2012).

These values were subsequently incorporated in the Council's *Supplementary Planning Guidance: Local Landscape Designations* (August 2012), including recognition that for Special Landscape Area 3: Tweed, Ettrick and Yarrow Confluences: "*a series of estate landscapes give visual diversity to these valleys, including Abbotsford, Sunderland and Bowhill.*"

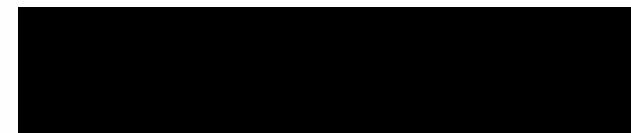
Abbotsford itself is inscribed in the national Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes, described in the Inventory (see link below) as "*among the most significant designed landscapes in Scotland, renowned for its historical and artistic importance as the creation of prominent writer and poet, Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832).*"

<http://portal.historicenvironment.scot/designation/GDL00001>

Designed landscapes often "borrow" views from the surrounding countryside and the quality of the surrounding area is an important part of the experience. Scottish Planning Policy<sup>3</sup> states that "*Planning authorities should protect and, where appropriate, seek to enhance gardens and designed landscapes included in the Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes and designed landscapes of regional and local importance.*"

On behalf of the National Trust for Scotland, I therefore object to the proposed housing allocation, and would ask that you identify other areas for the proposed 45 housing units which would not compromise the setting of this internationally important heritage site.

Yours sincerely


  
 Chief Executive  
 The National Trust for Scotland

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Government (December 2020), *Scottish Planning Policy*