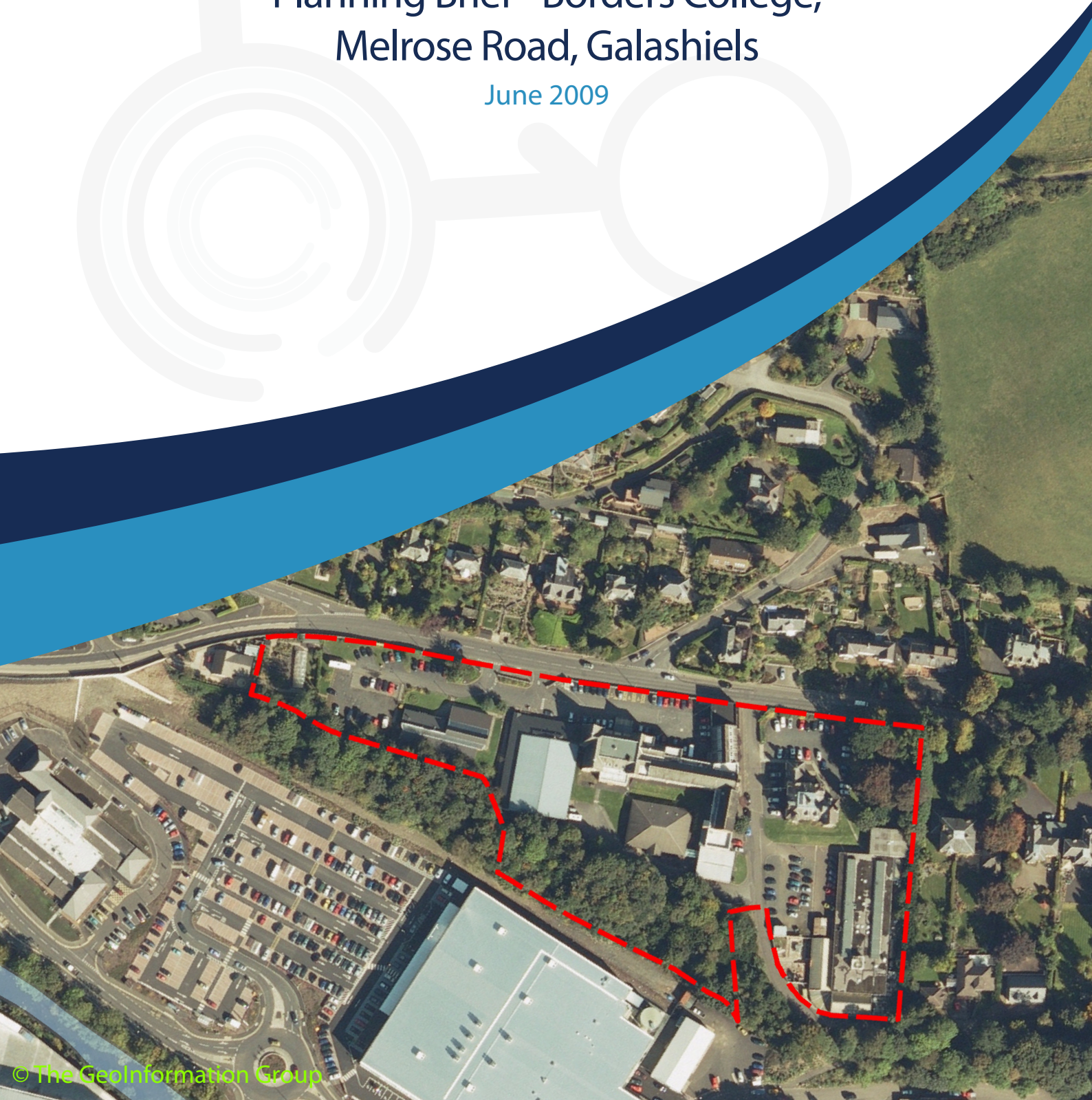


# Scottish Borders Local Plan

Supplementary Planning Guidance

## Planning Brief - Borders College, Melrose Road, Galashiels

June 2009



<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page No:</b>
1. Introduction	2
2. Site Context	2
3. History of Site	4
4. Policy Context	6
4.1 <i>National</i>	
4.2 <i>Structure Plan</i>	
4.3 <i>Local Plan</i>	
4.4 <i>Supplementary Planning Guidance</i>	
5. Development Vision	7
6. Development Guidance	10
6.1 <i>Energy Efficiency</i>	
6.2 <i>Parking and the External Environment</i>	
6.3 <i>Ecology and Habitat</i>	
6.4 <i>Waste management</i>	
7. Constraints	10
7.1 <i>Listed Building</i>	
7.2 <i>Access (vehicular &amp; pedestrian)</i>	
7.3 <i>Water, Drainage and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems</i>	
8. Development Contributions	12
8.1 <i>Education</i>	
8.2 <i>Waverley Line</i>	
8.3 <i>Play Areas</i>	
9. Housing Density	13
Alternative Format/Language Paragraph	14
Appendix One – Historic Scotland Listed Building Report	15
Appendix Two – Contacts within Scottish Borders Council	18
 <b>List of Images</b>	
Image 1: Entrance to Borders College	2
Image 2: Example of surrounding houses	2
Image 3: Southern aspect of Thorniedean House	10
Image 4: Listed gates of Thorniedean House	10
Image 5: Access to Sports Centre	11
Image 6: Entrance to Langhaugh Lane	11
 <b>List of Figures</b>	
Figure 1: Local context	3
Figure 2: Existing buildings	5
Figure 3: Redevelopment plans	9

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This planning brief sets out the main opportunities and constraints relating to the redevelopment site at Borders College, Melrose Road, Galashiels. It provides a framework for the future development of the site within the period of the recently adopted Local Plan, over the next five years.
- 1.2 The brief identifies where detailed attention to specific issues is required and where development contributions will be sought. The brief should be read alongside relevant, national, strategic and local planning guidance, a selection of which is provided within this document.

## 2. Site Context

- 2.1 Galashiels is located within the Central Borders, approximately 36 miles south of Edinburgh and connected via the A7. The town lies at the bottom of the steep sided valley, through which the Gala Water runs. Although the town presently has no railway service, the “Waverley Line” between Edinburgh and Tweedbank received royal assent to re-open in July 2006, with construction beginning in 2010 and with the rail line scheduled to open in 2013.
- 2.2 The Borders College Melrose Road Campus is 1.93 Ha (4.77 acres) and lies immediately east of Galashiels Town Centre (see Image 1). The site is located on the south side of Melrose Road (B6374) on an area of generally level ground. Residential properties rise in levelled tiers up the steep slope to the north (see Image 2). From within buildings on the site, views down into the town and across the valley are obtained. Figure 1 demonstrates the location of this site in Galashiels.



Image 1: Entrance to Borders College

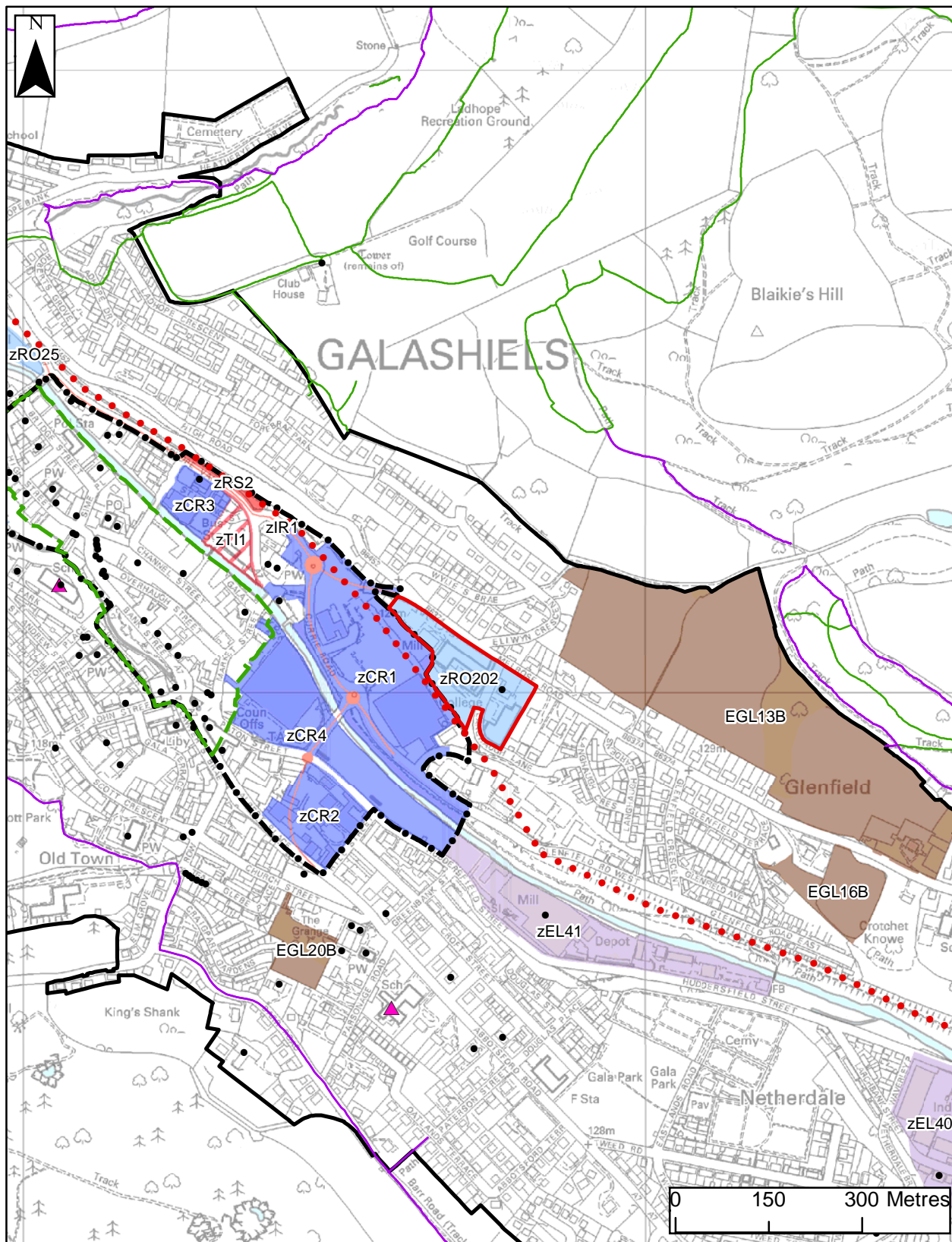


Image 2: Example of surrounding houses

- 2.3 There are a range of different buildings on the site. On the western campus, the dominant property in terms of scale is the stone built former Galashiels Academy building, which has been subject to extension and alteration at its eastern extent. Behind this property there is a single storey brick built ‘Vocational Training’ building. To the west of the Queens Sports Centre is the ‘Electronics Building’ which is single storey with a brick façade. There are car parking areas at the front and a walled herb garden to the west of these buildings. In the eastern extent of the campus, the Category ‘C(S)’ Listed Building of Special Architectural and/or Historic Importance, Thorniedean House, is situated. To the south of this structure, on a lower level and utilising the levels to provide accommodation are the ‘Technical Workshops’. Figure 2 shows the existing buildings on the site.


# Fig. 1 - Local Context

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## Key

- |  |   |
|--|---|
|  zRO202 Redevelopment Site          |  Commercial Redevelopment (H3)     |
|  Development Boundary (G8)          |  Inner Relief Road (H3)            |
|  Town Centre (ED5)                  |  Railway Station (H3)              |
|  Conservation Area (BE4)            |  Transport Interchange (H3)        |
|  Employment Land Safeguarding (ED1) |  Core Path Network                 |
|  Transport Safeguarding (Inf1)      |  Rights of Way Network             |
|  Housing (H3)                       |  Primary Non-Denominational School |
|  Redevelopment (H3)                 |  Listed Building                   |

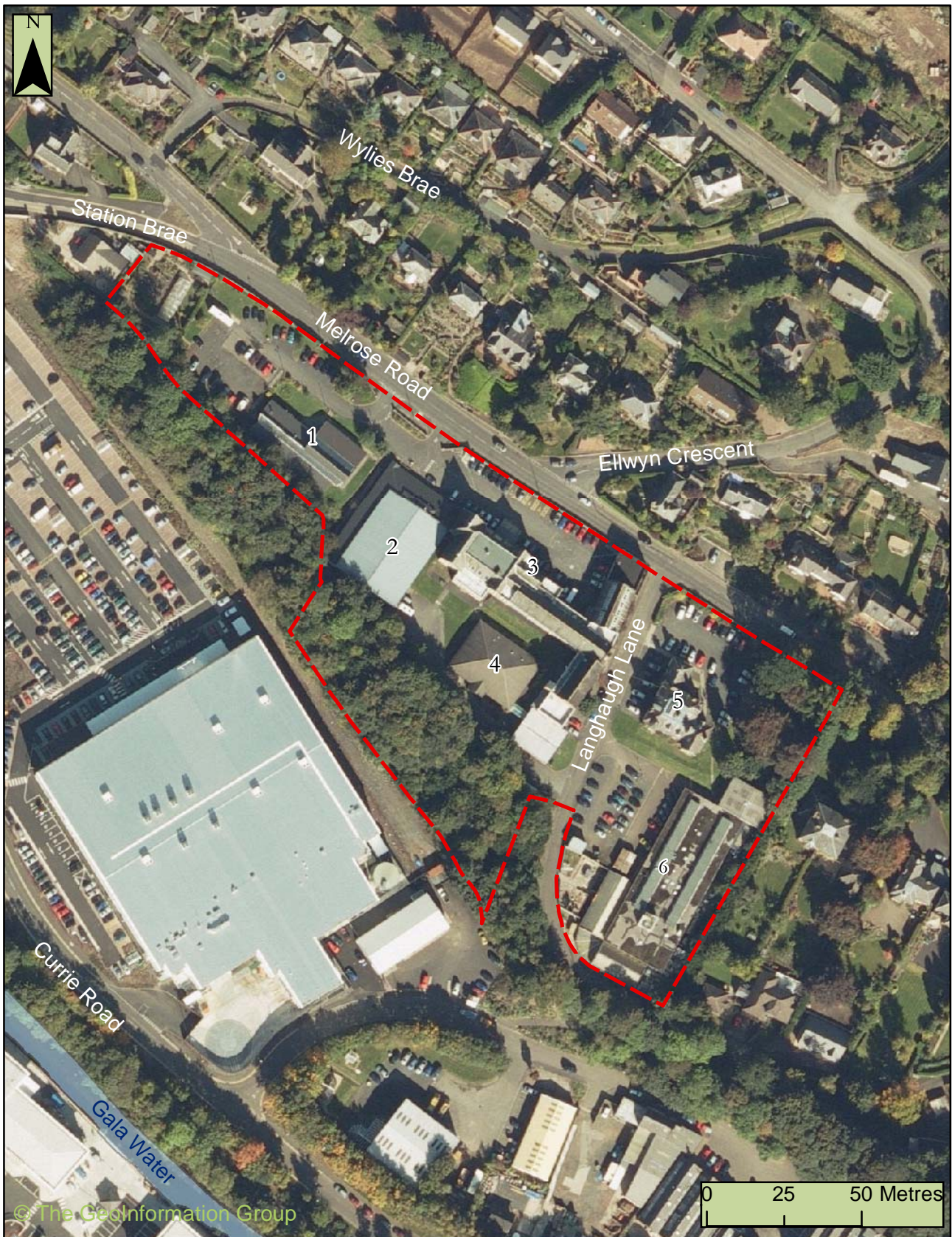
- 2.4 It should also be noted that the Queens Sports Centre within the western area of campus is owned by the Scottish Borders Council. This landholding does not form part of the developable area and will remain in situ. This section of the site could be incorporated into the developable area if an alternative location were found for the Queens Sports Centre in Galashiels.
- 2.5 There are currently three access points into the campus: the car park entrance and exit on the western section of the site and Langhaugh Lane on the eastern side adjacent to Thorniedean House, a private road that bisects the eastern and western halves of the campus. The nearest bus stop is located at the entrance to the site and has a good town service and is a stopping point for many of the country services to other Border towns.
- 2.6 There is a boundary wall and gates to the front of Thorniedean House that is also listed. The boundary to the south is tree lined, before the land, which is currently landscaped, falls down to the Langhaugh Industrial Estate and two supermarkets. A pedestrian access links this site with the Estate. Mature trees and shrubs make up the existing open space within the site.
- 2.7 Figure 2 provides an aerial image of the existing buildings on this site.

### **3. History of Site**

- 3.1 The site has always been used for educational purposes, having been built originally for Galashiels Academy in the inter war years. Thereafter the site was used by Galashiels Technical College.
- 3.2 Borders College was formed in 1984 by the amalgamation of Galashiels Technical College, Henderson Technical College (Hawick), Duns Agricultural Centre and the Agricultural Centre, Newtown St. Boswells and the site has been used by Borders College from 1984 to date.
- 3.3 Thorniedean House was built in approximately 1868 as a residential villa for William Sime of Sime & Sanderson, the original owners of Botany Mill in Galashiels. During the Second World War the house was used by a girl's school that was evacuated from Edinburgh. Thorniedean House became part of Galashiels Academy thereafter in 1949 and has been used for educational purposes to date. Thorniedean House was used by the Council's Assessors from 1975 to 1984.

## Fig 2 - Existing Buildings

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### Key

- 1 - Electronics Buildings
- 2 - Queen's Sports Centre
- 3 - Former Galashiels Academy
- 4 - Vocational Training Building
- 5 - Thorniedean House
- 6 - Technical Workshops

## 4. Policy Context

### 4.1 National

The Scottish Government has a number of policy and guidance documents that could be useful to this development:

- ❑ SPP 3: Planning for Housing
- ❑ SPP 6: Renewable Energy
- ❑ SPP 17: Planning for Transport
- ❑ PAN 61: Planning & SUDS
- ❑ Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland
- ❑ PAN 65: Planning & Open Space
- ❑ PAN 67: Quality Housing
- ❑ PAN 76: New Residential Streets
- ❑ PAN 77: Designing Safer Places
- ❑ PAN 78: Inclusive Design

### 4.2 Structure Plan

The Scottish Borders Council Structure Plan was approved in 2002. Galashiels lies within the 'Primary Hub' that is to be promoted as part of the strategic development strategy (Principle S3) to accommodate additional housing, retail and employment generating development. An alteration to the Structure Plan on housing was approved with modifications by the Council in May 2008 and submitted to the Scottish Ministers in summer 2008.

### 4.3 Local Plan

The Local Plan identifies the Melrose Road Campus in land use terms as a Redevelopment Opportunity (zRO22). Under policy H3 a number of uses as housing, employment (classes 4, 5 and 6 of the Use Class Order), retailing, community facilities or open space, can be considered on a redevelopment site. The following policies also closely relate to this development:

- ❑ Policy G1 – Quality Standards for New Development Housing
- ❑ Policy G6 – Infill Development
- ❑ Policy H1 – Affordable Housing
- ❑ Policy H3 – Land Use Allocations
- ❑ Policy BE 1 – Listed Buildings
- ❑ Policy NE4 – Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows

### 4.4 Supplementary Planning Guidance

The Council has produced supplementary planning guidance (SPG) on a number of topics for further policy guidance. For development of this site SPG on affordable housing, renewable energy and the draft SPG on play areas should be specifically considered.

## 5. Development Vision

5.1 This is an exciting opportunity to provide a new use for the former Galashiels Academy, the listed Thorniedean House and the College campus, creating a distinct and attractive new residential area within Galashiels. The vision for this site is to produce a well designed and sustainable development that can take advantage of great views across the town and good linkages into the centre. Maintenance of existing and proposed planting and landscaping should be addressed as part of any planning application for this site. Any development proposal submitted to the Council is required to demonstrate that existing trees within and adjoining the site are not affected by new development. This includes consideration of overshadowing from existing trees. Figure 3 represents the main aims of this vision.

5.2 The key requirements of this development are as follows (see figure 3):

### □ Site A

1. Retention of Thorniedean House and listed features of the property
2. Conversion and subdivision of Thorniedean House
3. Existing mature woodland and shrubs to be retained and enhanced
4. Creation of attractive open space surrounding listed building
5. Retention, enhancement and extension of stone boundaries on northern boundary of site facing Melrose Road
6. Car parking to be located in existing northern edge location for flats

### □ Sites B & C

1. Housing (terraced) in site B should be no higher than 2 stories
2. Housing (terraced) in site C should be no higher than 1 ½ stories and fully consider any potential issues with overshadowing from existing trees
3. Housing layout to reflect courtyard
4. Parking should be kept to the rear of the houses
5. Retention and enhancement of the private Langhaugh Lane to ensure access to existing residential houses
6. Visitor car parking required for listed building and new housing to be landscaped to ensure minimal impact on views from Thorniedean House

### □ Site D

1. Retention of former Galashiels Academy building for renovation and conversion into flats
2. Any new build proposals for this area must be designed to a high standard and with architectural merit to reflect the existing building.
3. Retention and enhancement of pedestrian linkages into town centre
4. Parking located to the rear of the property and not visible from Melrose Road
5. Landscape area to front of building to be pedestrian dominated space

### □ Site E

1. Replacement of college extensions and buildings with new build flats that reflect the height and proportions of the former Galashiels Academy
2. Parking located to the rear of the property and not visible from Melrose Road
3. Car parking for the Queens Sports Centre to be sited at front of the development and limited to 15 spaces



- Site F & G:
  1. Creation of a new play area on site F
  2. Retention, enhancement and maintenance of existing woodland boundary in site G


# Fig 3 - Redevelopment Plans

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## Key

- |   |   |   |                              |
|---|---|---|------------------------------|
|  | Local Plan Site Boundary                            |  | Listed Wall - To Be Retained |
|  | 1 1/2 Storey Housing (C)                            |  | Sports Centre                |
|  | 2 Storey Housing (B)                                |  | Sports Centre Parking        |
|  | 2/3 Storey Housing (E)                              |  | Residential Parking          |
|  | 2/3 Storey Housing - Existing Building Retained (D) |  | Visitors Parking             |
|  | Pavement  |  | Landscaped Areas             |
|  | Road  |  | Required Planting            |
|  | Listed Building (A)                                 |  | Existing Planting (F)        |
|   |   |  | Existing Woodland (G)        |

## 6. Development Guidance

### 6.1 Energy Efficiency

The development will be expected to comply with all relevant national policy to reduce carbon emissions from development, to achieve high standards of energy conservation and to provide on-site renewable energy production where appropriate. These provisions are highlighted in Policy G1 (5) – Quality Standards for New Development of the adopted Local Plan and the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Renewable Energy. Developers must comply with these policies and provide evidence of how they have addressed them. On site energy generation should be incorporated into the development wherever possible as well as sustainable building construction and design.

### 6.2 Parking

Where car parking spaces are allocated to individual properties the provisional requirement will be two car parking spaces per dwelling unit (discounting garages). There will be a 25% requirement for visitor parking to be provided in groups of two spaces or more. For communal car parking the provisional requirements, which include visitor parking, is 1.5-1.75 spaces per dwelling unit.

### 6.3 Ecology and Habitat

A phase one habitat survey of the site will be required to ensure that the ecological and fauna implications of the development proposal are taken into account from the outset. This must also allow for habitat reinforcement and creation through the development proposal and connections to the wider green corridors/network.

### 6.4 Waste Management

Waste management facilities for recycling and collection should form an integral part of the development, in terms of storage provision within the site and off site collection. Waste material needed in the construction of the development should only be carried in if a waste management licence is in effect or SEPA are aware of the activity.

## 7. Constraints

### 7.1 Listed Building

7.1.1 Thorniedean House, located at the eastern end of the site, is included on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural and/or Historic Interest at Category C(S), see Image 3. Appendix 1 provides the “list description” associated with Thorniedean House. It should be noted that both the interior and exterior are listed, and that in particular the boundary walls, railings and gatepiers are also specifically included in the listing, see image 4.



Image 3: Southern aspect of Thorniedean House



Image 4: Listed gates of Thorniedean House

7.1.2 Redevelopment proposals for the listed building, including alterations or extension, will be assessed taking account of the advice contained in the “Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas” published by Historic Scotland. It should be noted that there is a presumption in favour of the retention of the property. It is recommended that pre-application discussion is undertaken with the Planning Authority in connection with the proposals for the redevelopment of this property. The notes included as part of the list description comment that Thorniedean House is of particular interest for the quality of its interior, and as such high quality proposals will be required.

## 7.2 Access (vehicular & pedestrian)

7.2.1 The Melrose Road Campus presently has two access points to the western extent of the campus that require to be rationalised according to the Technical Services, slight modifications are also required to meet the junction visibility standards of 3m x 90m (see Image 5). The Council will also wish to ensure that access to the Queens Sports Centre remains in place. Any requirement to replace or extend the frontage stone walls will need to accommodate revised sightlines.

7.2.2 The eastern extent of the campus, including Thorniedean House, and rear of the western extent of the campus, is accessed from Langhaugh Lane, a private road that bisects the eastern and western halves of the campus, it is in poor condition in terms of geometry and state of repair, according to Technical Services (see Image 6). The sight lines and visibility splays at the junction of Langhaugh Lane and Melrose Road do not meet current standards, but have been used by the College and residents for a significant period of time. As there is sufficient land within the College’s control to the east and west of this junction, visibility improvement work is capable of being undertaken, if required. It should be borne in mind that to the east of this junction, the boundary walls, gatepiers and railings are all listed, therefore the opportunity to improve this visibility splay will have to take account of the built environment considerations. Stone walls are required to be rebuilt in a position accommodating improved sightlines. Technical Services note that the developer will be expected to meet the cost of or contribute towards the cost of, identified off-site transport work as a result of the development and/or the cumulative effect of the development in a wider scale. In this regard a Transport Assessment will be required.



Image 5: Access to Sports Centre



Image 6: Entrance to Langhaugh Lane

7.2.3 Utilising the Central Borders Traffic Study, developers will have to assess the impact of the development on the road network and contribute to the cost of identified upgrades required on a proportional basis. It is also noted that any development proposal should have a Street Layout compliant with the concepts of PAN 76. This document will be replaced by the ‘Designing

Streets' manual later this year, its replacement will encourage innovative street design with well connected less car dominant layouts, where traffic calming is achieved more naturally.

- 7.2.4 The existing pedestrian access to the south of the site leading to Langhaugh Industrial Estate needs to be retained at present. Potential issues with the Waverley line route and pedestrian access to the site should be further investigated and alternative access may be required to achieve best possible access to the town centre.

7.3 Water, Drainage and Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems

There are no surface watercourses within the site and the nearest watercourse, the Gala Water lies 200m to the south. A Drainage Impact Assessment will be required at the planning application stage by Scottish Borders Council together with an assessment of water capacity. Early work on these matters in conjunction with Scottish Water is encouraged as is any change to existing infrastructure. Sewerage disposal should be connected to the public foul sewer. Developers may be required to fund works that mitigate the impact on existing networks. Provision for Sustainable Urban Drainage, effectively managing the flow of rain water run off by treating it within the site, which accords with current design principles, as detailed in *Planning Advice Note 67 – Housing Quality* will be required.

**8. Development Contributions**

8.1 Affordable Housing

This site is located within the Central Borders Housing Market Area in which on-site affordable housing provision is sought at a rate of 25% for residential developments exceeding 4 units. There are a variety of means by which the requirements emanating from policy H1 can be satisfied and potential developers would be encouraged to make contact with the Planning Authority to establish potential solutions.

8.2 Education

Currently, in terms of educational infrastructure, developer contributions for Galashiels Academy (secondary schooling) are £1,361 for each house and £204 for each flat. For Langlee Primary (primary schooling) the amount requested from developers is £3,162 per house and £474 for each flat. Galashiels Schools' Review will take place in 2009 and the outcome will determine exact level of contribution for both the High School and Primary School. It is likely that a combination of significant extension with remodelling and new build is required. Exemptions are available for houses/flats that are one bedroomed and for affordable housing. Contribution levels are updated via the BCIS index in March every year.

8.3 Waverley Line

Due to the site's location and the anticipated benefit that will result from the reinstatement of the Waverley Line, Development Contributions will be necessary to comply with Policy G6. Waverley Line reinstatement contributions are currently required at a rate of £1,829 per unit, though are not sought from units complying with SBC's affordable housing definitions. This contribution level is reviewed annually on 1<sup>st</sup> April in line with BCIS indices.

8.4 Play Areas

According to the Council's standards relating to the provision of children's play space, and reflected in the draft SPG for Play Areas, developments exceeding 9 family dwellings are required to provide play facilities on site.

There are a variety of methods by which this play provision can be satisfied, potentially including enhancement of any suitably located existing facilities and the options can be discussed accordingly.

8.5 Transport

Contributions are required in respect of work identified in a Transport Assessment which links into the Central Borders Traffic Study.

**9. Housing Density**

9.1 The site has been assessed as developable for an indicative capacity of 68 housing units. The number of units will depend on final design and size of units. The assessment has identified the following breakdown of density:

- ❑ Up to 8 houses (terraced)
- ❑ Up to 10 flats in redeveloped listed building
- ❑ Up to 50 flats in redeveloped/rebuilt buildings on main part of site

The development must consider height of surrounding buildings, open space and car parking requirements.

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## Appendix One - Historic Scotland Listed Building Report

**HISTORIC SCOTLAND****GALASHIELS  
BURGH**

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

**STATUTORY LIST**Information Supplementary to the Statutory List  
(This information has no legal significance)

HB Number 50710

Item Number: 75 -

Group with Items:

Map sheet:

Category: C(S)

Group Category:

Date of Listing 30-MAR-2006

**MELROSE ROAD,  
THORNIEDEAN  
HOUSE INCLUDING  
BOUNDARY  
WALLS, RAILINGS  
AND GATEPIERS****Description:**

c1868 with later additions. 2-storey and attic over basement, 4-bay extensive L-plan villa. Prominent bargeboarded gabled bay and turret-roofed canted bay. Squared rusticated buff sandstone with smooth ashlar dressings. Base course, band course at first floor level. Corbelled stack to SE wall, Mullioned and transomed windows to sides and rear. Chamfered surrounds.

**GARDEN (SW) ELEVATION:** asymmetrical. Canted bay to outer left. 3-storey bargeboarded gable-fronted bay to outer right with chamfered corners and tripartite windows. Tripartite pedimented timber-fronted dormers.

**ENTRANCE (NE) ELEVATION:** projecting ashlar doorway in re-entrant angle. Irregular fenestration; tripartite and quadripartite mullioned and transomed windows. Prominent stair window. Projecting service block on north corner.

Predominantly plate-glass timber sash and case windows, with some fixed light stained glass windows to entrance elevation and multi-pane upper lights to dormers. Purple slate piended roof with clay ridges. Corniced ashlar wallhead stacks; corbelled projecting stack on SW elevation.

**INTERIOR:** much of decorative scheme has survived in good condition (2005). Formal entrance hall, panelled to dado height, with elaborate canopied timber chimneypiece and Gothic stair arcade, also featured in upper stair. Balustraded stair of turned balusters and elaborate fretwork, with carved foliate newels. Geometric stained glass stair window with figurative painting. Several rooms retain elaborate plaster cornices, many above later ceilings. Principal dining room has trefoil-headed windows, with geometric stained glass. Panelled timber doors throughout.

**BOUNDARY WALLS, RAILINGS AND GATEPIERS:** squared sandstone and whin rubble boundary walls with ashlar copes. Decorative wrought iron railings. Octagonal gatepiers with bellcast



## Appendix One - Historic Scotland Listed Building Report

**HISTORIC SCOTLAND****GALASHIELS  
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**STATUTORY LIST**Information Supplementary to the Statutory List  
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capstones.

**References:**

2nd edition Ordnance Survey map (c1896). Galashiels, A Modern History, (1983), p97. Margaret Lawson, Forgotten Families of Galashiels, (nd), p46. K Cruft et al., Buildings of Scotland, Borders, (2006), p300.

**Notes:**

Thorniedean House is a notable large villa, of particular interest for the quality of its interior. The house, built as one of a series of exceptional mill-owners houses in Galashiels, has an important connection to the industrial heritage of the town. Although the house has had a variety of uses through the 20th century, the notable decorative scheme of the reception area has remained largely intact.

Melrose Road began to develop slowly from the later 19th century, with a series of villas built along the road as far as the burgh boundary. Thorniedean House was built for William Sime, of Sime and Sanderson, the original owners of Botany Mill.

The house appears to have been altered in the late 19th century. This work involved the addition of the 3-storey square bay on the front elevation, the addition of a third floor in the roofspace, including a billiard room in the east corner

The north wing, also an addition of the late 19th century appears to have been used as a service wing, with further services, probably stables, in the north corner. Very little remains of what appears to have been informal gardens, as most of the area is now occupied by Borders College buildings.

Thorniedean House became part of Galashiels Academy in 1949, after having been used by a girls school evacuated from Edinburgh during the war. The house later passed to Borders College for use as offices, converted in 1964 by architects Scott and Mackintosh.

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Appendix One - Historic Scotland Listed Building Report

**HISTORIC SCOTLAND**

**GALASHIELS  
BURGH**

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**STATUTORY LIST**

Information Supplementary to the Statutory List  
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proposed works to a listed building or its setting should be addressed to the local planning authority in the first instance. All other enquiries should be addressed to: Listed Buildings Section, Historic Scotland, Longmore House, Salisbury Place, EDINBURGH, EH9 1SH. Tel: +44 (0)131 668 8707 / 8720 / 8702 / 8981. Fax: +44 (0)131 668 8722. e-mail: [hs.listingandconsents@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:hs.listingandconsents@scotland.gsi.gov.uk). Web: [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk).

## **Appendix Two - Contacts within Scottish Borders Council**

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