



15 Birks View
Galashiels
Selkirkshire
Scotland
TD1 1NR

18/01/2014

Reference: Extension of Birks View

Reference Number: AGALA027

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you in respect of the proposed extension of Birks View. We are firmly against any such plans to extend our street as we do not feel the plans are justified or in the interests of existing residents. The reasons for our opposition to your plans are summarised below with expanded details given for each point after.

1. Lack of demand for houses on Birks View
2. Disruption to existing residents
3. Increased traffic
4. Damage to the road and pavements
5. Lack of alternative routes to Birks View
6. Ownership of land to the west end of Birks View
7. Numbering of houses on Birks View

There is a lack of demand for properties on the street at present which has been evidenced by houses having to be listed below home report valuation or those that have had to sell significantly below the asking price. Houses that have been put up for sale have taken considerable time to sell or remain available for sale. The simple economics are that increasing the supply will not solve this problem. I feel the council is overestimating the increase in demand to live in Galashiels following the development of the Border Railway, which will effectively be a loss-leading exercise south of Midlothian. If the council is expecting such an influx of people from Edinburgh in light of the new railway, then any new properties should be built closer to the railways train stations on the north side of Galashiels,

Tweedbank or Stow. Any proposals to increase supply of properties on Birks View are economically unviable and are to the detriment of existing residents whose property values will suffer as a result.

Any construction will involve disruption to existing residents. One of the main attractions to current residents living on Birks View is the peaceful environment; however construction trucks and work will severely impede this tranquillity and affect the quality of life experienced by residents.

New houses and construction vehicles will increase traffic. This will increase noise and raise safety concerns for households with children and pets. Again, this will impact current residents' quality of life. The street is not wide enough for large vehicles to turn with the exception of the west end of the street or the entrance to the street. As a result construction vehicles will have to drive to one of the ends of the street, thus creating significantly more traffic which jeopardises the safety of children that often play on the street. As a young couple that may start a family in the near future this is a grave concern to us and we firmly oppose your plans.

There has been damage to the road and pavements on Birks View lately caused by a burst pipe. The council took no ownership of the issue and it has been left to the residents to pay for the damage to the road and pavement to be repaired. In addition, we have written to the council in the past regarding the lack of maintenance to the drain covers on the road and pavement which are in need of repair, however the council again has shown a complete lack of ownership on the matter and the residents are left to tolerate this. Given the complete lack of ownership from the council on such matters, we have no faith in them to fulfil the duty of care they owe the residents of the street in respect of the proper maintenance of the road and pavements. This again leads us to oppose any action that will only create more damage to our street.

There are currently four residential streets in Catrail Road, Birks View, Manse Lane and Manse Place that all lead onto Manse Street. Should there ever be a major incident on Manse Street, there is no other evacuation route for residents in this area. If another twenty houses were to be built into this one road escape system, evacuation becomes increasingly difficult and unsafe.

The land at the far west end of Birks View is owned by the Birks View Residents Association (BVRA) and is maintained by this organisation. Your plans involve construction and destruction of this land. The council have not given any indication of an offer to take ownership of this land (i.e. remuneration to the BRVA, etc). If the council looks to rezone and reclaim the land from the BVRA then again it will be to the financial detriment of the residents.

Finally, the street already has established house numbers which run from 1-18 on the south side and 19-31 on the south side. The creation of new house at the end of the street will create issues in terms of the house numbers on the street. Any efforts to reallocate house numbers will cause disruption and costs to existing residents. Again the proposed plan fails to consider the interests of existing residents and will only be detrimental to those currently living at Birks View.

Your proposed development plan for the extension of Birks View is detrimental to existing residents. It will cause safety concerns, a deterioration of property values, detriment financially to existing residents, increase noise pollution, damage to the street's road and pavements, and general disruption to residents. The plans have not been well thought out and are completely unviable from an economic point of view. The council has built no goodwill with the residents of Birks View in the past and there is a complete lack of faith in them to properly maintain or repair the damage the proposed development will create. We are firmly opposed to your plans and will resist them as much as possible as they will only be detrimental to us and our neighbours. We strongly urge you to consider other locations for such developments which are viable and better suited.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Alastair Seaton and Karen Purves