

Hill, Laura (Planning HQ)

From: Beverley Rutherford [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 February 2014 10:40
To: localplan
Subject: The Abbotsford Trust Formal Objection to the Netherbarns Development Proposal
Attachments: Netherbarns formal objection Supporting Report.pdf; Netherbarns Formal Objection Lord Sanderson.pdf

Dear Sir
Please find attached documentation.
Hard copies hand delivered to the Council Headquarters 28th February 2014.

Beverley Rutherford
Acting Director
The Abbotsford Trust
Abbotsford
Melrose
Roxburghshire
TD6 9BQ



www.scottsabbotsford.co.uk



28th February 2014



Dear Sir,

Scottish Borders Proposed Local Plan, New housing etc. at Netherbarns, Galashiels (Ref AGALAO29)

I write on behalf of the Board of Trustees of The Abbotsford Trust, who are unanimous on this matter, to object to the proposal to allocate 7.4 hectares at Netherbarns for 45 houses and possible further "educational facilities" on the site.

At the outset, let me say that we are disappointed to be considering this matter again so comparatively soon after a larger development on that site was decided against by two separate Reporters, first, at a bespoke Public Enquiry and, secondly, as part at the overall Local Plan enquiry, both well within the last ten years.

Netherbarns is a greenfield site, lying directly opposite, to the north and well within sight of Abbotsford, Sir Walter Scott's house, gardens and wider estate and designed landscape. Quite apart from the Grade A listing of the buildings, Abbotsford is one of the most iconic buildings in Scotland, of world renown, and the first Scottish baronial house ever to be built, and it lies within an historically important designed landscape.

Of course, the house itself was built by one of Scotland's most famous sons, the first great historical novelist and an almost unrivalled celebrity of his time, within which his own collection of rare books and other artefacts lie pretty much intact as they were when he died in 1832.

It is our case that any development at Netherbarns will have a deleterious and wholly inappropriate impact, in many ways and especially, but not exclusively, visually, on Abbotsford.

It is well known that Abbotsford has undergone an £11.5 million capital works programme over the past 2 years, including a complete refurbishment of the house, the building of a new Visitor Centre (to include a free exhibition, a shop and restaurant), a new car parking area, and new interpretation both within and outside the house. The house services have all been renewed as has the internal and external structure, stonework etc and the Hope Scott wing has been converted into 5 star accommodation, indeed every aspect of Abbotsford as a Visitor Attraction has now been accredited with 5 star status.

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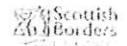
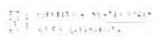
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Visitor numbers in 2013 were over 70,000, with 31,000 of those paying to go round the house despite the house only opening to the public half way through the year, after the Royal Opening on 3rd July 2013. A third of those visitors came from overseas and 73% from outwith the Scottish Borders. We are predicting 50,000 visitors paying to go round the house in 2014, over double the number of those who went round the house before the capital project took place.

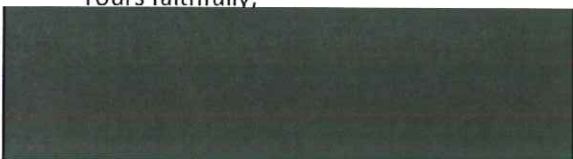
Abbotsford is the jewel in the crown of the Scottish Borders tourism assets, and with the advent in 2015 of the Borders railway with its terminus at Tweedbank, its potential for further growth is considerable.

Having invested so much in Abbotsford, it seems, to the Trustees, perverse that the Council Planning Department should now be considering any development which could possibly adversely impact that investment for the future.

It is to be regretted, if this matter is to be progressed in the way outlined in the Draft Plan, that the Trustees will have no option, in terms of their charitable charter and remit to protect Abbotsford, but to divert precious resources in both manpower and cash into trying to stop the proposed development, when those resources would be better spent in trying to ensure Abbotsford's financial sustainability and success for the future.

I would be most grateful if you could please acknowledge receipt of this objection.

Yours faithfully,



Lord Sanderson of Bowden (Chairman)

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