30 May 2014

Dear Mr Miller

Ref. No: 14_00136_FUL – Residential development comprising 13 dwellinghouses and 21 flats; Land East of Glentress House, Innerleithen Road, Peebles, Scottish Borders

Further to our submission of the 13th March, and in the context of subsequent responses to the planning application, we felt it appropriate to also submit our response to the pre-application consultation (attached below).

Included in this we relayed concerns raised with us by local residents about the introduction of a proposed new intersection on the Innerleithen Road (shown in red). We are of the view that a more appropriate access route would be a shared route via the western entrance to the Hydro, and then running along the back of the line of houses, retaining the centred access path at the front of the property as a pedestrian / cycle route, and preserving the symmetry of view of the front of the Hydro Hotel.

Yours sincerely

Crick Carleton
Convenor of Planning Committee
Proposed housing development, Innerleithen Road, Peebles

The Planning Committee of Peebles Community Council reported to the December meeting of the full Council on the nature of the pre-application information event, and discussed the proposal in more detail at its meeting in January. Below are our preliminary thoughts on the proposals for the site.

- Overall we take a somewhat neutral position to the proposals – the site is not in the current or proposed Local Development Plan, and we do not expect this to change
- The site is not an infill site – the void is to frame the view of the Hydro, from below and from the other side of the valley – a view that the key elements of which should be retained
- The site is not a gap site – for the above reason, and that there is no structured housing at the other end of the property
- Much is made of the trees located along the old railway line as blocking sight lines from the hotel outwards, so that the development as proposed would be largely hidden; this is slightly ingenuous – the trees were planted after the railway was dismantled, and in all likelihood haven’t been trimmed since – maybe it is time that their height was modified in the context of landscape and visual settings
- The lie of the land suggests that rather than having the highest new buildings at the front of the site, they should be at the back – offering more residents a view across the valley
- Innerleithen Road does not need another road junction – as proposed in your outline drawings; access to the site should be re-oriented via the western entrance to the Hydro
- The boundary and development proposals for this site bring into question how the strip to the west of the plot (to the rear of the row of existing houses) might be used in future – you have indicated that this site is not in the ownership of your client, but would become rather isolated should your proposed development proceed
- we would also wish to see some consideration (by your client and by the Hydro) of how this development might impact on future layout and redevelopment of the Hydro grounds to the rear of the site
- We have real concerns about the use of the old railway track to rear of your proposed development plot; should your proposed development proceed, we would wish to see this redeveloped as an extension of the Innerleithen-Peebles multi-use path – as an explicit right of way, or through transfer to community ownership
- This also brings into focus concerns about the relationship between the owners of the proposed development site and of the Hydro site
- There is a requirement to include 25% affordable housing on all developments – it is not clear how this is to be addressed with respect to this development

We will address the specific proposals at such time as a planning application is lodged with SBC planners.