

# Comments for Planning Application 22/00422/AMC

## Application Summary

Application Number: 22/00422/AMC

Address: Site In Grounds Of Kingsmeadows House Kingsmeadows Kingsmeadows Road Peebles  
Scottish Borders

Proposal: Erection of block of residential flats comprising 14 No units with associated parking and access (approval of all matters specified in planning permission 19/00182/PPP)

Case Officer: Ranald Dods

## Customer Details

Name: Mrs Rosalyn Wardman

Address: 4 Victoria Park Drive, Peebles, Peebles, Scottish Borders EH45 9AD

## Comment Details

Commenter Type: Member of Public

Stance: Customer objects to the Planning Application

Comment Reasons:

- Contrary to Local Plan
- Detrimental to environment
- Land affected
- Poor design
- Road safety
- Trees/landscape affected

Comment: I am a Chartered Forester with 15 years' experience of operational forestry, woodland creation and forest policy. I can see the tips of the trees that form the woodland from my upstairs windows just a couple of streets away.

To be honest I don't know where to start with this objection because the role and benefits of trees and woodlands are so evidently well-known and widely discussed, that I am surprised this planning application was allowed to be considered.

I feel that the planning application for the block of residential apartments, car park and access road creates a gradual erosion of the woodland habitat and am wary of what could follow with the potential 'dwellinghouse' scheme. If this application were approved, it would set a precedent.

This proposal goes against:

- Scottish Government's policy on the Control of Woodland Removal which has a strong presumption in favour of protecting Scotland's woodland resource, and that woodland removal should only be allowed where it would achieve significant and clearly defined additional public benefits.
- Scottish Biodiversity Strategy which aims to halt the removal of priority habitats, and that local

action needs to align and contribute to national and international agendas.

- Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy in particular theme 3: Protecting and enhancing the Scottish Borders landscape, biodiversity and cultural heritage.
- SBC Local Biodiversity Action Plan which seeks to address the lack of recognition of the value of nature and to maintain or improve protected habitats.

The site provides an important habitat corridor along the SAC/SSSI River Tweed which supports numerous protected species, as outlined in many of the previous objections. The mature trees provide significant ecological resource which would not be replaced for approx. 100 years through any compensatory planting. SBC declared a climate emergency in 2020 - the time to mitigate against climate change and embrace biodiversity is now and not to wait.

It is saddening to see the majority of the trees to be removed categorised A and B on the Tree Survey, and therefore of good status and importance. Even the self-seeded and younger specimens (planned to be removed for apartments and car park) are offering succession which is part of a healthy woodland ecosystem.

The siting of the car park in close proximity to the SAC/SSSI River Tweed could have an adverse effect on increased surface run off into the water and reduction of riparian woodland. Has NatureScot been consulted?

As a local resident I also keenly object to the design of the residential apartments which are more akin to an office and not appropriate next to the existing historical Kingsmeadows House.

SBC requested an appropriate design for the Hydro Gardens development along Innerleithen Road, in recognition of the existing properties. If the residential apartments were to be approved, please could there be a more appropriate and inspiring design? Does the car park need to be made of tarmac? What about Geogrid/permeable paving? Does it need such a large car park especially with the national policy towards 20 Minute Neighbourhoods?

This mature riparian woodland has intrinsic value which is undervalued by the property developer. The natural capital within the site offers a far greater asset to the Peebles community than the financial return to one business and their stakeholders.