

AGENDA ITEM 5

APPENDIX 2

2017/0131/DET

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

HIGHLAND GAMES CENTRE BRAEMAR

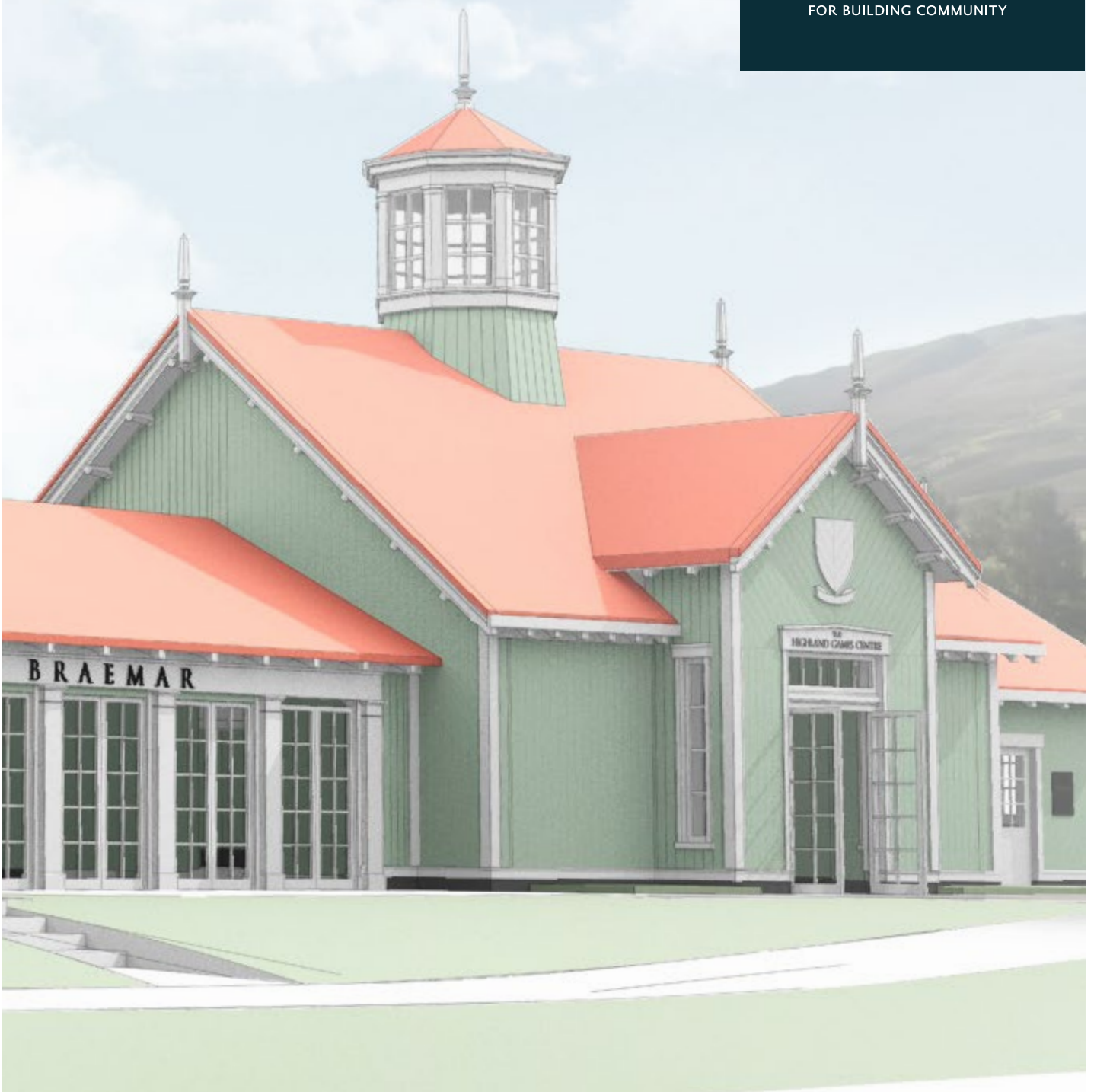
DESIGN & ACCESS
STATEMENT

MARCH 2017



PRINCE'S
FOUNDATION

FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY





THE PRINCE'S FOUNDATION
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TRANSFORMING LIVES through ENGAGING
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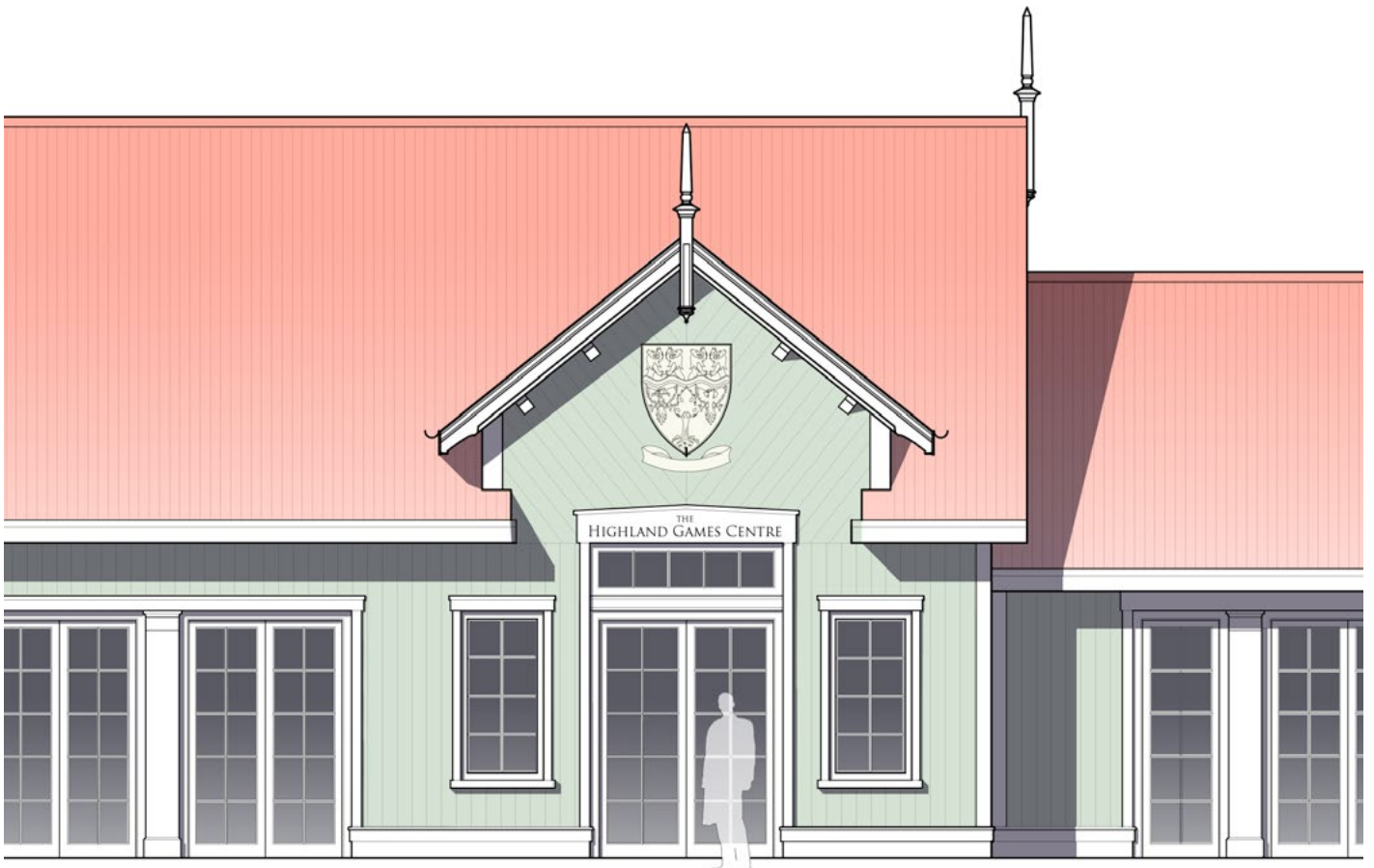
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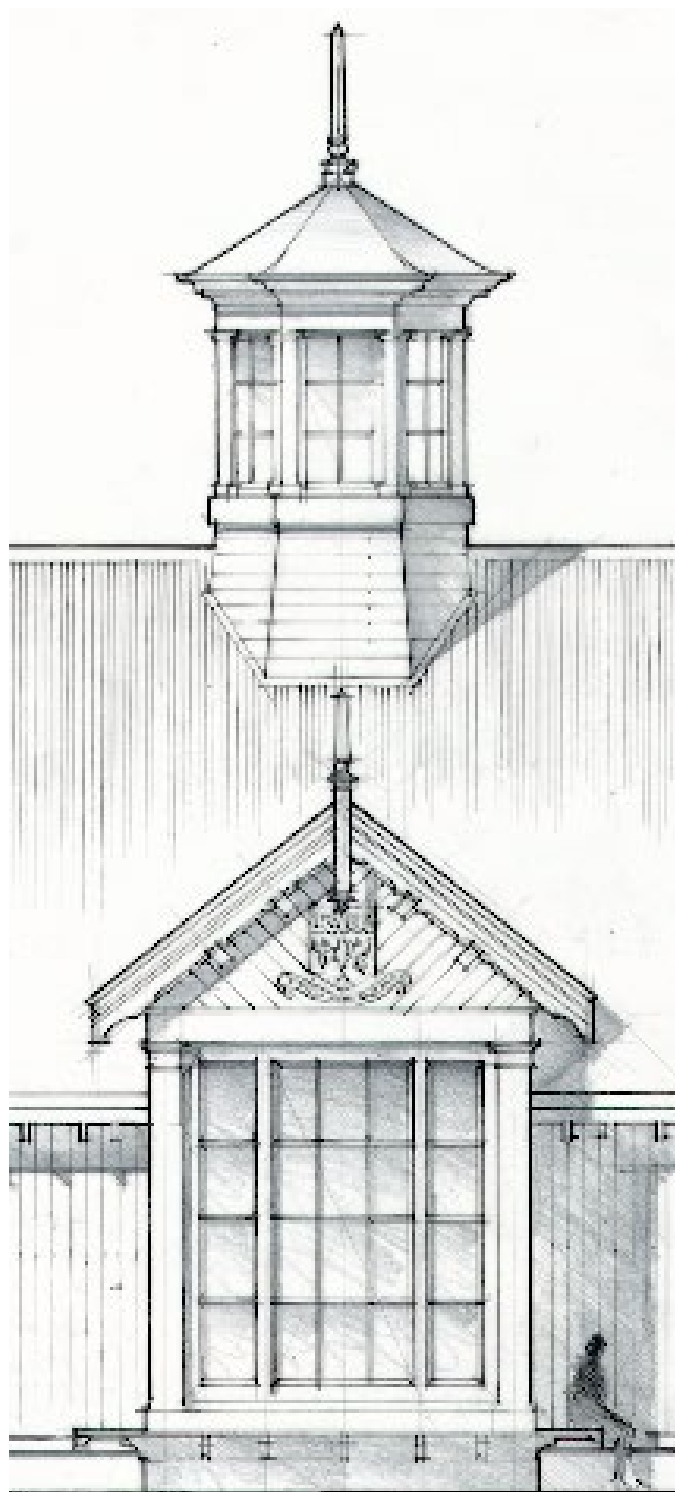
INTRODUCTION

The Prince's Foundation for Building Community has prepared this Design & Access Statement on behalf of the Braemar Royal Highland Charity. The aim of this document is to demonstrate the manner within which the standards and policies of the Cairngorms National Park Local Development Plan 2015 and those of Aberdeenshire Council have been considered and incorporated in the design proposals which form an integral part of an application for Full Planning Permission for the Braemar Highland Games Centre proposed to be located within the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park, Braemar.

Furthermore this statement seeks to demonstrate how the proposed design is in accordance with CNP LDP 2015 Policy 2: Supporting Economic Growth, Policy 3: Sustainable Design, and Policy 9: Cultural Heritage.

The Braemar Gathering has been organised by the Braemar Royal Highland Society since 1832 and from 2011, The Gathering has been organised by the Braemar Royal Highland Charity who are the Applicants and Developers of the proposed Braemar Highland Games Centre.

Highland games are a significant part of Scotland's cultural heritage, dating back to medieval times and popularized by royal patronage of the Braemar Gathering, organised annually by the Braemar Royal Highland Charity. The BRHC aspires to engage with the public throughout development of the Highland Games Centre at the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park, venue for the Braemar Gathering, the spiritual home of the Highland Games community.



SECTION 1

CLIENT, VISION, & BRIEF

The Prince's Foundation was approached by the Braemar Royal Highland Society to design a high quality, sustainable Highland Games Centre that would be sensitive to Braemar's local character, while embracing the spirit and heritage of The Gathering.

SECTION 1.1

HISTORY OF THE BRAEMAR ROYAL HIGHLAND SOCIETY

The Braemar Royal Highland Society was initially established as the Braemar Wright Society in July 1815 which was formally constituted in 1816 and following formal registration in 1817, remains the oldest surviving Friendly Society in the country.

In 1826, the name of the Society was changed to the Braemar Highland Society and in 1866, Queen Victoria ordered that the title “Royal” should be added to the name of the Society.

Since 1848, The Gathering has been attended regularly by the reigning Monarch and members of the Royal Family. The foot races at The Gathering are world’s oldest, having been organised on a regular basis by the same body since 1832.



SECTION 1.2

HISTORY OF THE BRAEMAR ROYAL HIGHLAND CHARITY

The Braemar Royal Highland Charity was established in 2006 to replace the Braemar Gathering Charitable Trust and has ownership of all of the parent Braemar Royal Highland Society's heritable property. The Charity maintains the 12 acre Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park as a public amenity. In co-operation with a parents committee, it runs the local Highland Dancing class. With financial assistance from local businesses the BRHC organizes pipe bands to play in Braemar Village in Summer, and provides financial support to the independent Braemar Charitable Trust.

BRHC CORE FUNCTIONS

1. To provide recreational facilities, or to organise recreational facilities, in the interests of social welfare with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the persons for whom the facilities or activities are primarily intended and which are available to members of the public.
2. To foster and promote community development for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Crathie and Braemar and the surrounding area.
3. To promote the education of the general public about the history, traditions, sports, language, culture and heritage of Scotland.
4. To advance the heritage and culture of Scotland by staging, managing, operating and promoting the Braemar Annual Royal Highland Gathering.
5. To advance public participation in sport through the organisation of professional events and non-professional events open to all comers.



SECTION 1.3

THE VISION

The BRHC aim to create a sustainable, year-round facility in keeping with the Games Park environment, Braemar, and the spectacular Cairngorms setting. Centred around conserving and enhancing cultural heritage.

OBJECTIVES

1. To display “core” heritage resources from the accumulated archives, artifacts, trophies and memorabilia relating to the Braemar Gathering. These heritage items are in the possession of BRHC and date back to the first games which took place under the society auspices in 1832 and are not currently publicly accessible. The heritage artifacts include items such as the cabers, stones and weights used at the Braemar Gathering every year and an unaudited collection of items relating to the connections between the Braemar Gathering and the visits of the Royal family to Balmoral and the Gathering. The Scottish Tartans Authority will contribute to the collection and be an important partner in the exhibition.
2. To provide a new headquarters for the BRHC.
3. To cater traditional Scottish food and drink to visitors and locals alike based.
4. Thereafter, the aim is to engage with games organisers worldwide to establish the games centre as a showcase for all aspects of Highland Games heritage and research as a resource for games events worldwide, with interest for Scottish, UK and worldwide audiences.



SECTION 1.4

THE BRIEF

Interactive discussions between the committee of the BRHC, the local community, and the Project Team have resulted in the considered development of the following Brief:

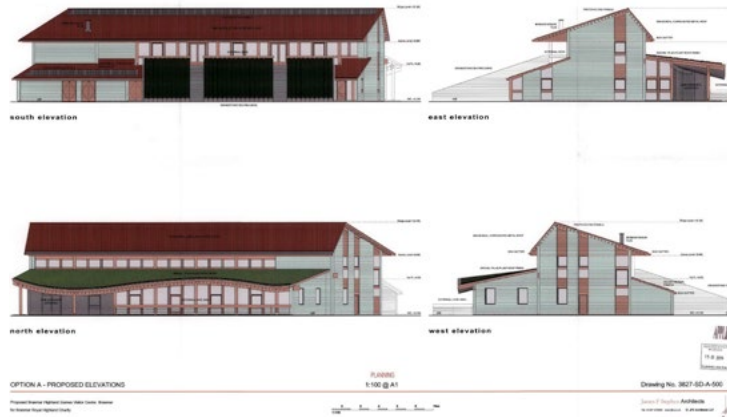
- Highland Games Exhibition Hall
- Temperature controlled Archive
- BRHC Meeting Room & Display Archive
- BRHC Office
- Café serving traditional Scottish food and drink
- Retail of a highlands themed nature
- Multi-purpose Gallery
- Scottish Tartan Authority exhibition consultation
- Genealogy area
- Space large enough for a Ceilidh
- Storage
- External patio for outdoor refreshment
- Small commercial kitchen
- Plant room
- WC facilities
- External landscape for picnics & small events

SECTION 1.5

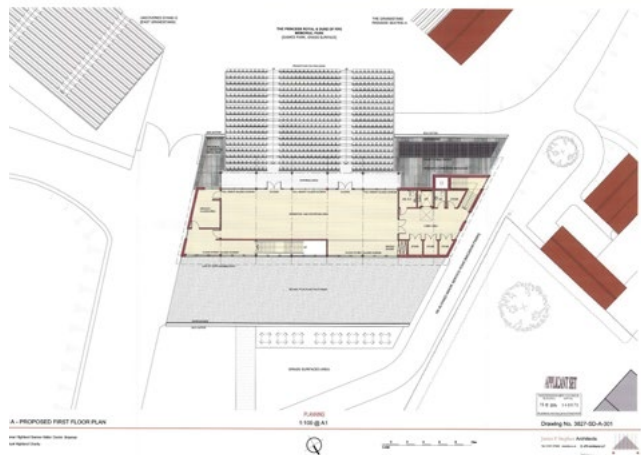
PREVIOUS PLANNING APPLICATION

Planning permission is currently granted to a previous proposal for a Highland Games Centre building on a site adjacent with an expiry date of June 2017. This previous proposal was to fulfill a similar brief and requirements, however, it was a 2 storey proposal of approximately double the Gross Internal Area (GIA), and was integrated into the stands facing directly onto the Games Field. The BRHC later took the view that a more economically viable scheme was needed, with a proposal positioned fully out of the Games Field, and a significantly reduced GIA.

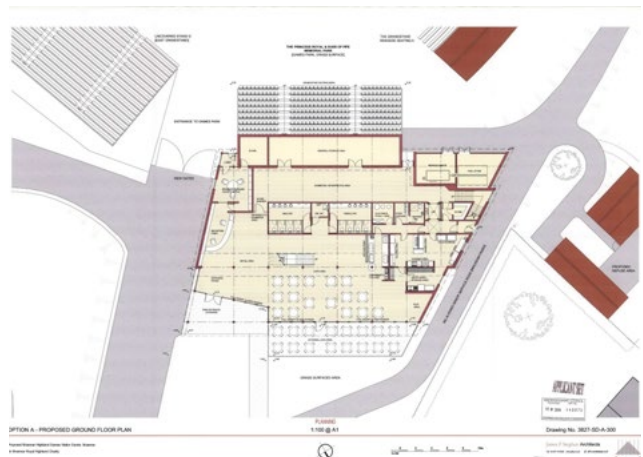
To that end, this Planning Application and associated building proposal supersedes all previous applications. The BRHC have confirmed that they will not build the previous proposal. In the Fall of 2016, the BRHC wrote to both the CNPA and Aberdeenshire Council to request the revocation of the planning permission for the previous proposal.



Elevations of previous design application



First floor plan of previous design application



Ground floor plan of previous design application

SECTION 2.1

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Project Name	The Highland Games Centre
Location	Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park, Braemar
Applicant	The Braemar Royal Highland Charity Society Office Braemar Aberdeenshire, AB35 5YU

SECTION 2.2

PROJECT DATA

Date	March 2017
Site Area	4863 m2 / 1.20 acres
Gross Internal Area	473m2 / 5091 sqft.
Height	1 Storey / 11 meters
Principal Uses	Museum, Archive, Café, Gift Shop, BRHC Office

SECTION 3 THE SITE & CONTEXT

The Site is contained within the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park, Braemar, and encompasses 1.2 acres. The Site falls within the administrations of the Cairngorms National Park Authority and Aberdeenshire Council where it forms part of the Braemar Conservation Area.

SECTION 3.1

THE SITE AND LOCALITY

The site is located in the North East corner of the Games Park outside of the Games Field and adjacent to Broombank Terrace. On a gently rising slope, the site was specifically chosen so that it would be welcome visitors by deferentially preserving and framing the outstanding view to the games pitch and Morrone corebett beyond, host of the Braemar Gathering hill race.

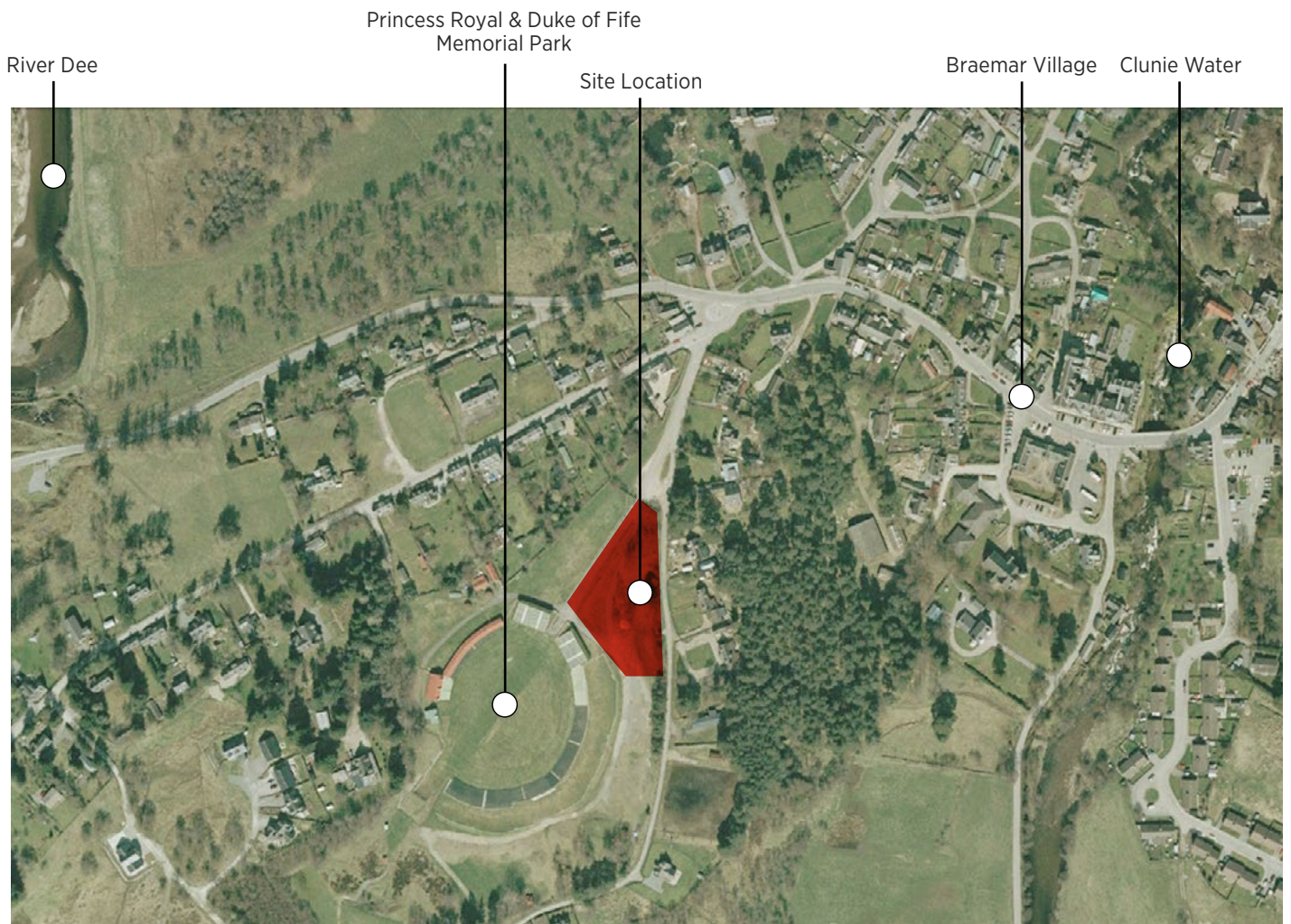


Fig 3.2 Location Plan

SECTION 3.2

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

The site is mostly a grassy terrain with stones embedded in the soil, and a collection of existing birch trees and a Scots Pine tree. On the eastern border of the site along Broombank Terrace is a post and wire mesh fence lined by intermittent birch trees.

A key objective is to retain and protect existing trees as much as a possible. To the extent that some trees would need to be removed, new trees would be planted in keeping with the species they replaced or that which is appropriate and native. Astell Associates, an arboricultural, environmental and landscape specialist, has undertaken a study on the site with regards to tree conservation, root protection and tree planting. Refer to the Ecology Report in the Appendix.



View of proposed site showing birch tree cluster. Proposed building is to the right of the path in this image.



The proposal would sit to the left of the path to maintain and enhance the view towards the pitch and Morrone corbett beyond.

SECTION 3.3

EXISTING STRUCTURE ON SITE FOR REMOVAL

On site there is currently a Toilet Block with an area of 45m², height average of 2.4m, and cubic volume of 108m³. The building would need to be demolished for the erection of the Highland Games Centre. The building is a simple unlined concrete block structure with a pitched roof to the west and flat roof to the east. The pitched roof is unlined corrugated sheeting supported by minimal wooden joists. The upper part of each gable is corrugated sheeting. The flat roof is covered by felt and is tightly sealed around its edges. Any toilet provision lost would be replaced inside the proposed Highland Games Centre.

BATS

This section is to be read in conjunction with the Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment in the Appendix. The Assessment of the Toilet Block found no evidence of past or present use of the building by bats. The bat roost potential is regarded as negligible as there is no suitable cover for roosting. There are no bat conservation implications for the planned demolition of the building.



View to the rear of the Toilet Block from Broombank Terrace.



View of Toilet Block with Broombank Terrace at right.



View to Site with Toilet Block beyond.



Toilet Block proposed for removal. Scot Pine in background shall be retained.

SECTION 3.4

LOCAL CHARACTER & ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Braemar has a strong sense of architectural character that resonates with its immediate natural environment evoking a timeless language of craftsmanship found in the Highlands. Gable-ended stone buildings with projecting eaves and profiled timber rafters, slate roofs, and stone chimneys feature prominently throughout Braemar. At the Park, the Edwardian structures are timber construction with exposed trusses, corrugated metal roofs painted red, and walls clad in vertically boarded shiplap painted mizzle green. The simple palettes of both Braemar village and the Games Park harmoniously resonate with the surrounding natural beauty of the Cairngorms National Park.

*This Page - Princess Royal & Duke of Fife Memorial Park
Above Right: The covered stands have open trusses clad in timber board and corrugated metal roof, with simple ornamentation at the eaves.*

*Page Opposite - Braemar village
The form and massing of various buildings here is representative of Braemar. The simple volumes give way to highly considered details such as the timber work shown in the eaves.*





SECTION 4

THE PROPOSED DESIGN

From the onset of the design process, the intention has been to create a visitor centre that is contextually appropriate amidst the setting of the Games Park, Braemar village, and the surrounding natural beauty. For the overall project to be sustainably successful, the visitor must enjoy an outstanding experience within a destination attraction that they would wish to revisit.

In this respect the architecture should be inspirational, attractive and welcoming with regards to the overall character, scale, appearance and selection of materials that is sensitive to both the existing architecture of the Games Park and natural scenic beauty of the Cairngorms.



SECTION 4.1

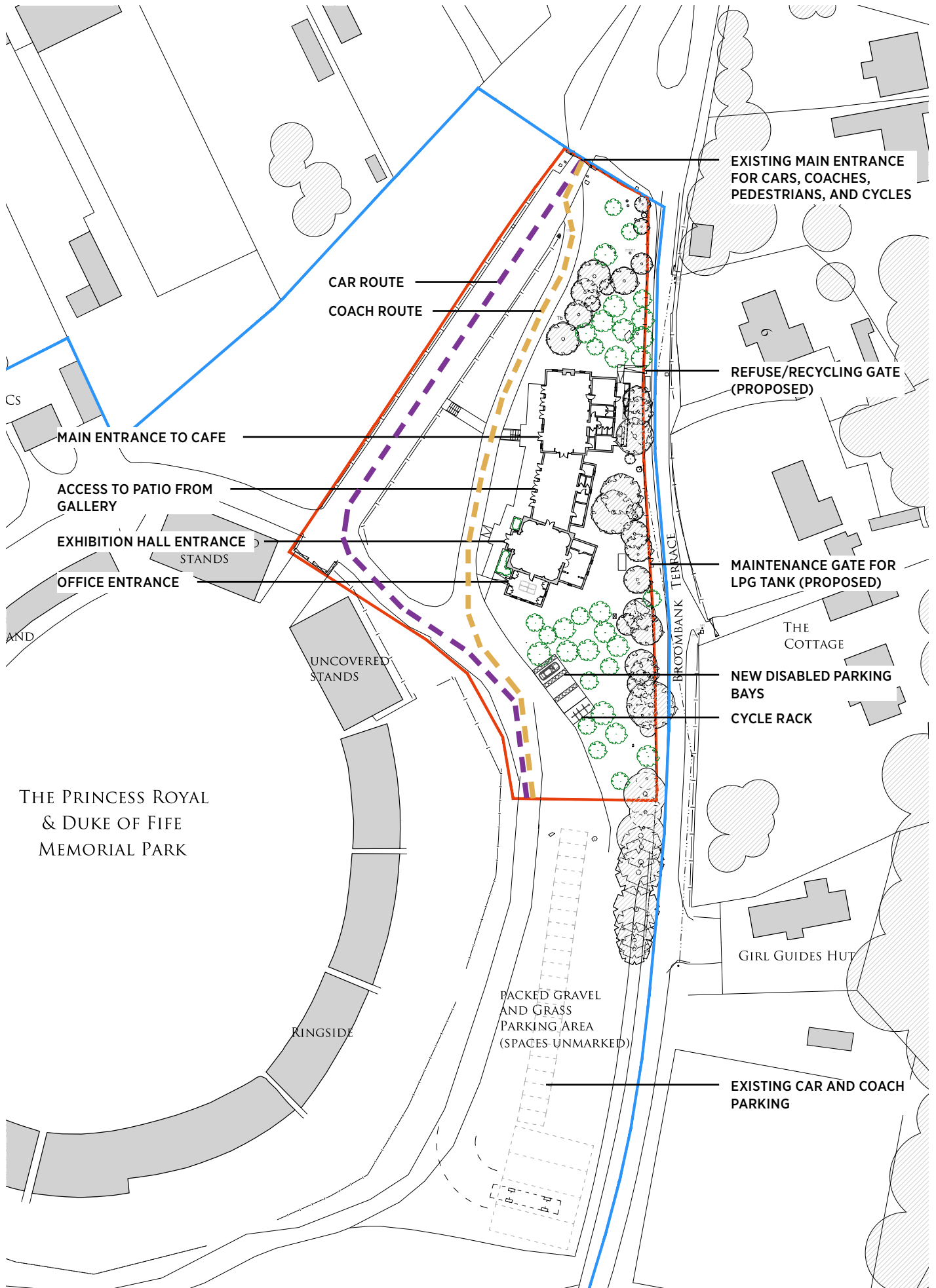
SENSE OF ARRIVAL & ACCESS

The humble disposition of the current structures at the Games Park and the striking views to the hills beyond have formed the basis for siting the building outwith the Games Field proper so that it is deferential to the existing natural beauty. When entering the Games Park the outstanding view of the Morrone corbett in the background with Games Field at the foreground is preserved while the proposed Highland Games Centre will serve as its frame.

The Games Centre has been consciously developed to be a welcoming and inviting structure, deferential to the Games Park and views of the Morrone beyond. All access for coaches, private vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians will be via the main entrance gates and the main access drive.

There are currently more coach, car, motorbike and bicycle parking facilities within the Games Park than ever will be required by operation of the Centre. Disabled person's visitor car parking will be provided in the closest proximity to the main entrance.





SECTION 4.2

THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

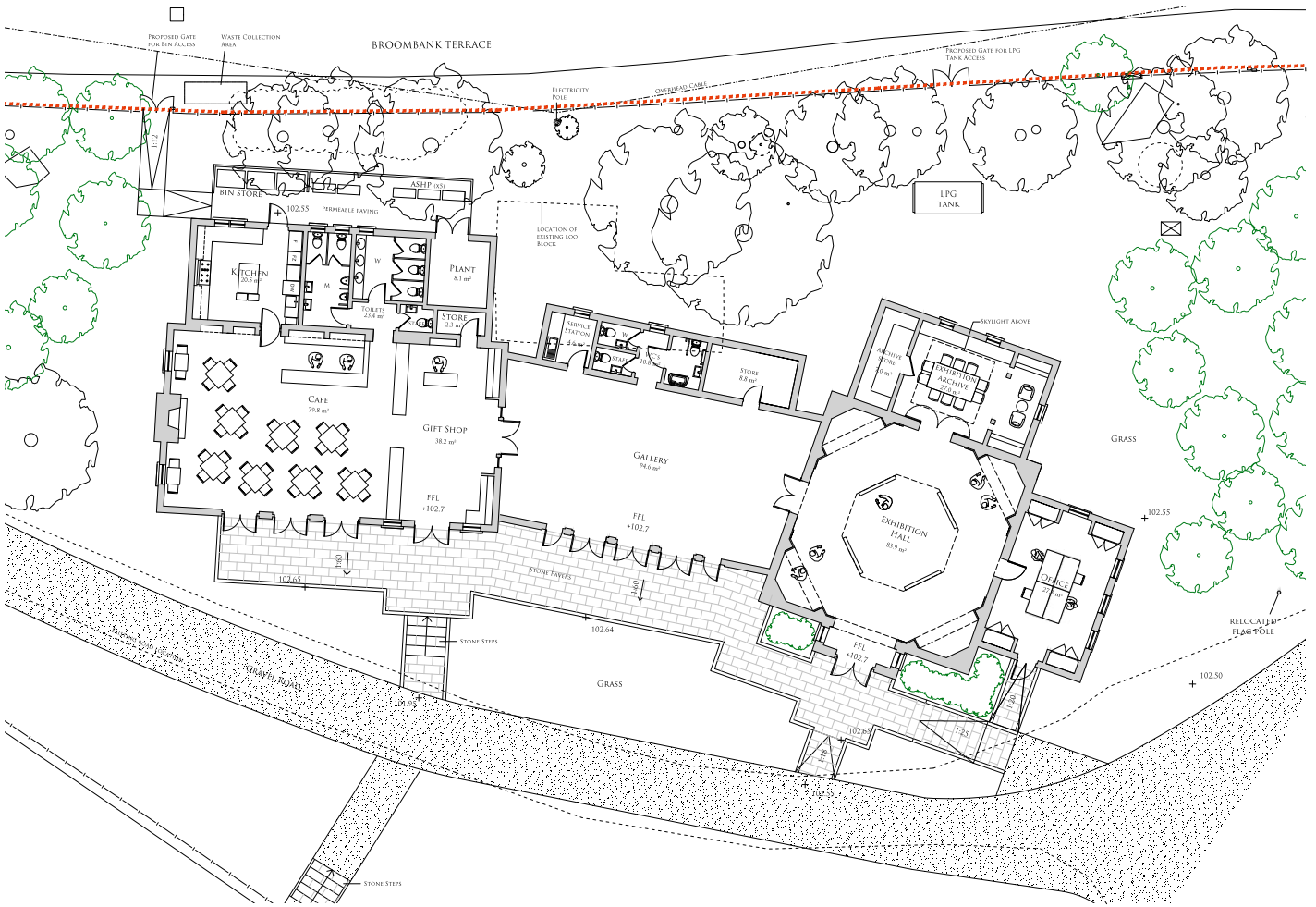
There key attraction of the Centre will be the Main Exhibition Hall supported and by an accompanying Café with Gift Shop and Multi-Function Gallery.

The Café will serve as the reception point which is visibly announced and punctuated by a dormer carrying a sign. Through the doors the visitor is welcomed into the Gift Shop that shares the open trussed space with the Café.

The Café is designed to cater to locals and tourists alike, offering traditional Scottish food and drink menu. The Café area can accommodate 30-40 covers. A modest kitchen of commercial quality is to be provided to allow the preparation of good quality Scottish cuisine to include starters such as cock-a-leekie, Cullen skink and scotch broth soups, main courses such as mince and tatties, stovies and oatcakes and haggis, neeps and chappit tatties, desserts such as raspberry cranachan cloutie dumpling and quality Scottish cheeses supplemented by the finest Scottish mineral waters, beers and malt whiskies, all representative of the best produce of Deeside and Donside. The Café will equally accommodate locals who are out for a walk and desire simple refreshment such as tea or coffee in a warm environment.

Between the Café and Main Exhibition Hall is a Multi-Function Gallery that will serve as a multi-function space for events such as a ceilidhs or receptions.

While the Café and Gift Shop will contribute to the atmosphere, the visitor experience culminates in the Main Exhibition Hall that is announced by it's projecting entrance with the Braemar Gathering shield and lantern. Inside is an octagonally-shaped room with display niches, decorative ceiling panels recalling various aspects of the Games reach towards the peak of the lantern which will allow subtle amounts of light in museum like setting while also providing a source of natural ventilation. The display will be curated by the BRHC in partnership with the Scottish Tartans Authority. The Archive Room will be multi-purpose as both an official meeting room of the BRHC, but also one that displays sensitive archival material for public viewing.



SECTION 4.3 MASSING

The building is composed of four primary volumes with heights tailored for their functions and scaled in proportion to the size of the site. Rather than produce one large all-encompassing volume, the massing has been broken up to convey a cluster of smaller buildings that are inline with building sizes found in Braemar and the Games Park.

They are positioned so that so that they together form a subtle concave inflection designed to be welcoming to the visitor while also reflecting the curvature of the stands. This helps to form a space between Highland Games Centre and the Games Park as one that is open and social with the possibility to host small outdoor events.

As requested by the CNPA during Pre-App discussions, a plaque shall be placed on the building indicating year of construction.

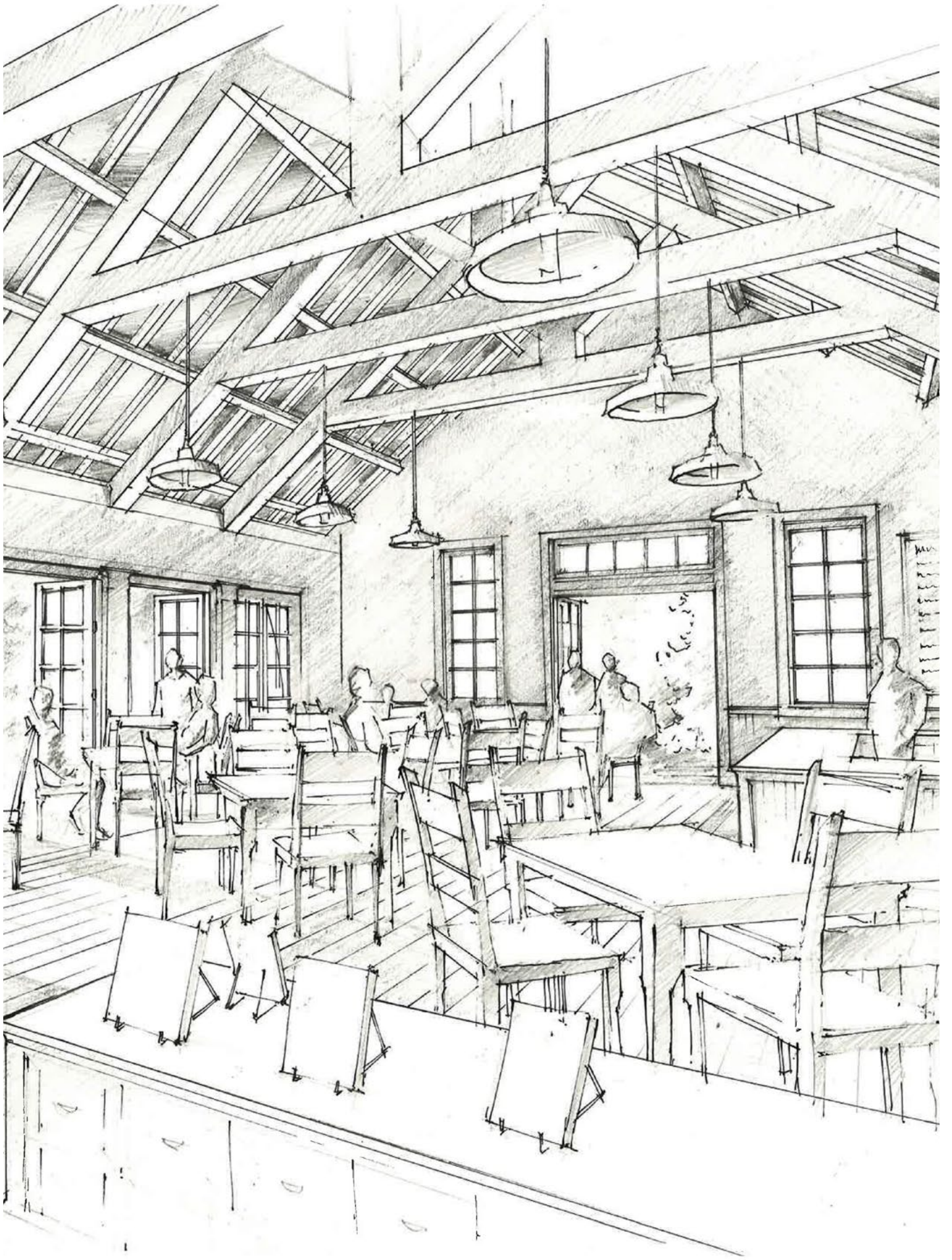
SECTION 4.4 CHARACTER & MATERIAL

Just as the volumes recall the scale of the proposal's context, the character evoked by the building will be in tune with both the Games Park and Braemar. Projecting eaves with exposed profiled timber rafters and finial posts reflect characteristics found throughout Braemar while dormers recall the covered stands at the Park and examples typical of Braemar and the Highlands.

A restricted palette of external materials has been selected to set the building in its immediate Games Park context. Vertically boarded timber cladding painted mizzle green, timber architraves and trim painted white, and russet-red corrugated metal roofing are hallmarks of the Park which are found in the proposal. A stone base and chimney will tie the foundation to buildings of Braemar. The structure will be constructed of predominantly sustainably sourced timber in the form of a structural post and beam/framed system with timber trusses.

All timber material to be used within the construction will be specified and selected from FSC/PEFC sources.





SECTION 4.5

LANDSCAPE

The proposal seeks to tie building and landscape together to convey a building in harmony with its natural setting. The planting of Birch and Scots Pine trees to replace those removed will be the key landscape features in the scheme. They will be planted primarily on the north and south ends of the building so that the building is set within the trees.

The building has been specifically positioned outside of the root protection zone of a large Scots Pine by Broombank Terrace in order to preserve it. During construction, roots of the Scots Pine and nearby trees shall be protected, as detailed in the report by Astell Associates in the Appendix.







SECTION 4.6

SUSTAINABILITY

This section is to be read in conjunction with the Sustainable Design Statement found in the Appendix.

Central to the ethos of this proposal is the design of a sustainable project and the contribution to a sense of place. With regards to CNPA LDP 2015 Policy 3: Sustainable Design.

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

- The proposal creates a sympathetic response to the traditional pattern and character of Braemar and its local vernacular and distinctiveness by using forms and materials familiar to both the village of Braemar and the Games Park.
 - The proposal conserves the view to the Morrone corbett from the entrance of the park. It further attempts to frame and therefore enhance the special view of the Game Field, the stands and the Morrone corbett beyond.
 - In terms of landscaping, a highly considered effort to offset the building from a large Scots Pine to preserve it and its root protection zone has been made. Though Birch trees on the hill will be removed, the proposal suggests the replanting of the same number of trees in either Birch or Scots Pine adjacent to the building.
 - The proposal incorporates materials which complement the setting of the development with its painted timber cladding and metal roof which match those existing on site.
 - All timber material to be used within the construction will be specified and selected from FSC/PEFC sources.
 - There is adequate provision for the storage and segregation of refuse and recycling between the building and Broombank Terrace. A fence, in keeping with the Games Centre aesthetic, is proposed to conceal the refuse area.
 - There is provision for bicycle parking to encourage cycling as a sustainable means of transport. Apart from this, the Games Centre would be located at a walking distance of 4 minutes from the centre of the village so walking would certainly be the most encouraged method for visitors staying in Braemar.
-

WAYS ENERGY DEMAND WILL BE REDUCED

- The provision of high quality levels of natural daylighting and ventilation within the building.
- A fabric first approach with the incorporation of higher performance insulation values in the construction, thereby relying less on bolt-on technology prone to misuse or malfunction.
- The incorporation of air tightness within the building.
- The installation of LED lighting components.
- PIR activated lighting systems.

WAYS HEATING DEMAND WILL BE REDUCED

- The incorporation of higher performance insulation values within the construction.
- The incorporation of air tightness within the building.
- Zonal control of the under-floor heating system to allow effective shut-off of areas not in use.

SECTION 5.1

WATER, WASTE & RECYCLING

FOUL & WASTEWATER TREATMENT

All foul and wastewater from the proposed Games Centre will be connected directly into an existing Scottish Water combined sewer along Broombank Terrace. Refer to Appendix for Engineer's Report.

SURFACE WATER RUN-OFF

Surface water run-off from the proposed Games Centre will be generated from the corrugated metal roof area and external paved areas associated with the Café and access path. The surface water will be connected to an existing culvert as part of estate field drainage system that is then discharged to the River Clunie.

FLOODING

With reference to SEPA, the Application Site is not located within an identified area of flood risk. Accordingly, the proposed development lies outwith the functional floodplain and there is not more than a 1 in 200 year flood risk.

WASTE & RECYCLING

Adequate Provision will be accommodated for the buildings activities. To screen the waste and recyclable materials the design proposes a vertically boarded painted fence in keeping with Games Centre materials and aesthetic, to be located between the Main Building and Broombank Terrace.

SECTION 5.2

TRANSPORT

The very nature of the development of the Highland Games Centre is that it should sustain, retain and increase the number of visitors to Braemar.

Currently, the majority of coach tour operators tend to drive into the Princess Royal and Duke of Fife Memorial Park albeit as apart of a fleeting visit.

There is currently more coach, car, motorbike and bicycle parking facilities within the Games Park than ever will be required by operation of the Centre. Additionally, a provision for disabled person parking places is being made as part of this proposal.

It will be essential that coach tour operators make a reservation for entry to Games Centre as part of an overall daily booking management system.

Although private motorists will be encouraged to make advance reservations for entry to the Games Centre, it is recognised that this is likely to be more of an ad hoc arrangement than an organised one.

Cycle parking facilities will be provided at the existing eastern park area in the Games Park.

SECTION 6

PUBLIC & PROJECT STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

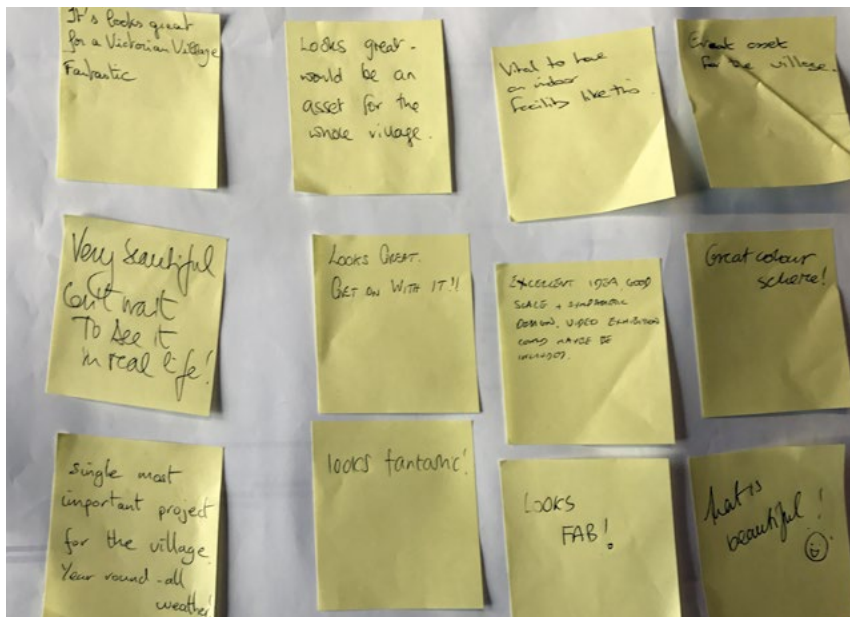
In October, 2016, approximately 60 members of the public attended an open public meeting held in Braemar Village Hall to update the Community Action Plan and consider the new Highland Games Centre proposal.

The BRHC President presented the new scheme based on the new site (different from the previous application) and engaged in open discussion with all attendees being afforded the opportunity to raise questions or comment on any aspect of the project. All feedback received was positive and enthusiastic and hopeful that progress will be made soon.

Approximately 60 members of the public attended. The original action plan was in favour of the development and open consultations over the past few years have all had a positive response. However, the previous plans were not affordable in the current economic climate.

Responses from the open process regarding the concept of the proposed project were very positive and suggested that:

- There was agreement that the new site is fitting for the Games Park.
- There was a re-affirmation that the Highland Games is in need of a visitor centre.
- Comments were that the proposal sits well with Braemar. Furthermore there is agreement that the Highland Games Centre should be “traditional” and sensitive to the natural scenic beauty and contextual setting of the Games Park.
- There was a re-affirmation that the new proposed Highland Games Centre will have a positive impact on the community of Braemar.
- Continued interest in the Highland Games Centre incorporating local genealogy, history, archive repository and study resource facility.



SECTION 7

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC GROWTH

The BRHC aims to create a viable and sustainable heritage based business which would attract a wider variety of demographic groups to the area, encourage them to spend more time in Braemar and create economic benefits for the local economy.

The BRHC envisages that the Centre should be a destination attraction in its own right and that the Braemar community will benefit from the increased business generated by more people being attracted to and staying longer in the area.

The Highland Games Centre is therefore envisaged as a unique and engaging attraction, sharing the history and heritage of the Highland Games and celebrating games past, present and future, in the context and setting of the historic and colourful Braemar Gathering. The Centre also has the potential to be a focal point for knowledge and resources relating to Games and Gatherings across Scotland and around the world.

WAYS LOCAL ECONOMY WILL BE BOOSTED

1. The project will support the key aims and objectives of the Braemar Community Action Plan 2013 which outlines under Theme 1: Visitor Strategy, Attractions & Services “an appetite to develop a Highland Games Centre [sic].” The CAP goes on to suggest ways to make Braemar even better which include the desire for a café, restaurant, and pub which the Centre’s proposal attempts to partially fulfil.
2. It is anticipated that visitor numbers to the village would increase by adding a “must see” attraction to the itineraries of independent visitors and coach tour companies – *survey research with tour guides suggests that there would be additional visitors attracted to the community rather than simply causing displacement of existing ones.
3. The project will create a year round heritage based visitor attraction to add to the attractiveness of Braemar as a winter destination. It can therefore extend visitor stays through enhancing the itineraries offered by tour operators.
4. Overall it will offer more employment opportunities on a year round basis.
5. The centre will not detract from existing businesses, rather it will aid them through increased numbers of visitors to Braemar by virtue of its attraction. The Café’s traditional Scottish menu will be unique for Braemar’s current offerings, and the proposed Gift Shop does not have space allocation nor will it have the niche focus of other shops in Braemar to compete or detract from them.

**In support of the assertions that visitor numbers would increase in Braemar, the BRHC have conducted two separate pieces of audience research.*

SURVEYS

Surveys and consultations with residents, businesses and potential stakeholders in Braemar and area has been undertaken. Additionally, another survey has been made of members of the Scottish Tour Guides Association – Blue Badge Guides – who are key decision makers in determining where visitors go, based on what they believe are places worth visiting.

Based on these, there are four key audiences for the centre which are broadly as follows:

Tourists

- Day visitors within a one to two hour drivetime
- Staying visitors (including car and coach borne visitors)
- Overseas visitors
- Visitors from within Scotland and the UK

Residents Of Braemar Area

- Local Community groups as users for community events.
- Meetings and functions hire, corporate and event hire.

Group Visits By Schools And Special Interest Groups

- Historians and researchers with a special highland games interest
- Games organisers and competitors from across the world
- People with ancestral links to Scotland and to Braemar
- Visitors attracted by the Royal connections with the Braemar Gathering
- People with interests in Scottish Tartans.



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