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# CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

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**Title:** REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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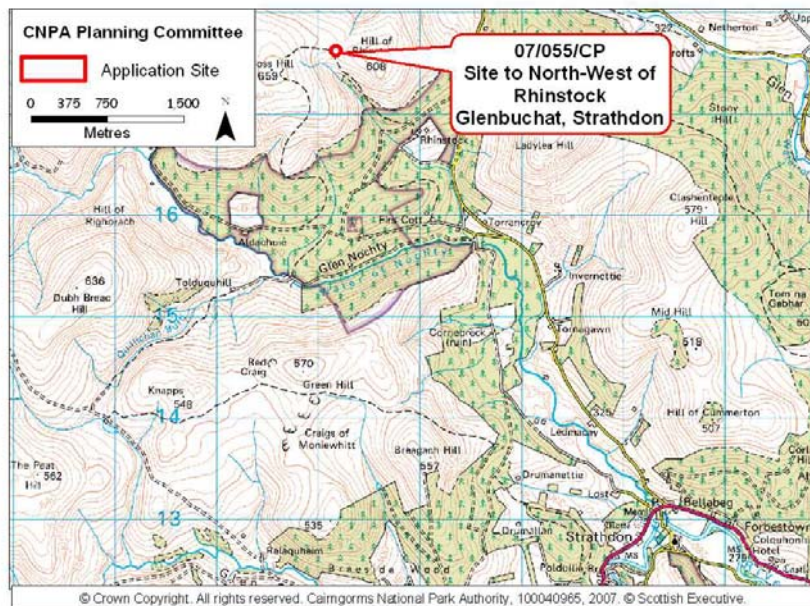
**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED:** ERECTION OF LUNCH HUT, SITE TO THE NORTH WEST OF RHINSTOCK, GLENBUCHAT, STRATHDON (RETROSPECTIVE)

**REFERENCE:** 07/055/CP

**APPLICANT:** CANDACRAIG ESTATE C/O ROBB KEIR DESIGN, BRIDGEND, BRIDGEVIEW ROAD, ABOYNE, AB34 5HB

**DATE CALLED-IN:** 23 FEBRUARY 2007

**RECOMMENDATION:** GRANT RETROSPECTIVE PERMISSION



**Fig. 1 - Location Plan**

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. Retrospective planning permission is being sought for the retention of a lunch hut located on the side of a hill between the Hill of Rhinstock and the adjacent summit of Moss Hill. The Hut is positioned close to the main track and built into the hillside (see Fig 2).



**Fig. 2: Photo taken in a north east direction showing the depth at which the structure is burrowed into the hill and the existing track.**

2. The Lunch Hut measures approximately 4.5m in length, 3m in width and 3.4m in height and is constructed of corrugated steel which sits on wooden stilts in heather moorland surroundings (see Fig 3).



**Fig. 3: Photo taken in a northern direction showing the Lunch Hut and the existing track.**

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

3. **The Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Structure Plan 2001-2016, Policy 19 (Wildlife, Landscape and Land Resources)** concludes that development which would have an adverse effect on regional/local designations, including Areas of Landscape Significance, will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that any damaging impact is considered acceptable overall or there is a public interest which outweighs the conservation interest.
4. In the **Finalised Aberdeenshire Local Plan** there are a number of relevant planning policies. The Lunch Hut lies within an **Area of Landscape Significance (Policy ENV\5B)**. Development within such an area will not be permitted where its scale, location or design will detract from the quality or character of the landscape, either in part or as a whole. In all cases the highest standards of design, in terms of location, scale, siting, aesthetics and landscaping will be required.
5. Other policies include **EMP\10 Sports, Leisure and Recreation** where participation sports and recreational activity facilities requiring unimpeded access to remote open countryside will be approved in principle, if they respect the character and amenity of the surrounding area. **GEN\2 The Layout, Siting and Design of New Development** states new development will be approved in principle if, it respects existing natural and built features on or about the site which are worthy of retention and the characteristics of landscape in which it will be situated. **GEN\5 Landscaping Standards** development will be approved, in principle, if the provision of landscaping and proposals for its subsequent maintenance conform to the requirements in Appendix 5.
6. The recently approved **Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007** highlights the importance of the 'Economy and Employment' within the Park as well as 'Enjoying and Understanding the Park'. Under **Strategic Objective (a)** the plan encourages the 'creation of conditions conducive to business growth and investment that are consistent with the special qualities of the Park and its strategic location'. The Plan also details the strategic objectives for the 'Enjoyment and Understanding of the Park' which includes the promotion and management of outdoor access, recreation and visitor services, which is an integral part of developing a sustainable approach to tourism, in line with the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism. **Strategic Objective (f)** under 'Sustainable Tourism' states the importance of 'developing and managing a wide range of opportunities for visitors to experience and enjoy the special qualities, distinctiveness and natural and cultural heritage of the Park'.

## CONSULTATIONS

7. **Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)** does not object in principle on landscape grounds. However, **SNH** recommends that the location for this type of structure is chosen so that the hut is related to suitable landscape features, or 'enclosing' landform. This is so it does not appear to be 'on its own' without any 'context'. It is also recommended that a condition is attached to any planning consent requesting that the external materials chosen to build the structure are unobtrusive and appropriate.
8. **Natural Heritage Group (NHG)** has positively highlighted the siting of the Hut, which is dug slightly into the hillside. This allows plenty of cover and reduces the height so that from many areas it is not visible on the skyline. The material for the hut is reclaimed from previous structures which are already weathered, therefore blending with the existing colours of the moor. Consequently there is no objection to the Lunch Hut as there is no significant negative impact on the local surroundings.
9. **Economic and Social Development Group (ESD)** outlined two factors which were used to assess the impact of the development. Firstly, the monetary worth of shooting to the local economy and secondly, the visual effect on the landscape as regards to visitor enjoyment of the area and hence any impact on tourism business income. In view of the size of the hut it is felt that there is no detrimental effect on the landscape in relation to visitor enjoyment. Therefore, due to the importance of shooting to the local economy and the additional infrastructure which is beneficial to this activity, **ESD** approve of the retention of the Lunch Hut.

## REPRESENTATIONS

10. Although no objections have been made, background information was sent by the applicant and is attached at the back of the report.

## APPRAISAL

11. The development is small in scale and sits comfortably within the surrounding area. The applicants, Candacraig Estate, have provided information on the background of the Lunch Hut and the importance of the building in relation to traditional outdoor sporting on the Estate and the general health and safety of estate management. The importance of traditional sports to the local economy has also been supported by the CNPA's **Economic and Social Development Group**.

12. There are no specific policies in relation to traditional outdoor sports and sporting estate management within the relevant Development Plans and the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007. However, landscaping, siting and design are still critical in fulfilling the appropriate use of the site. The development at its current scale, siting and use of materials complies with all the relevant policies, as detailed in paragraph 3 - 6 of the report.
13. The CNPA's **Natural Heritage Group** has no objection to the development. The NHG particularly approves of the location of the building as it does not have an adverse impact on the skyline. Moreover, the Hut is constructed of appropriate weathered materials which help it blend with its surroundings. **SNH** generally agree with the views raised by the NHG and include the use of appropriate conditions to alleviate any issues surrounding the use of materials on site.
14. In conclusion the Lunch Hut will not have a detrimental impact on the landscape of the area and will help to sustain the use of the area for traditional outdoor sports. Therefore, the retention of the Hut is wholly justifiable and complies with all the relevant Development Plan policies and strategic objectives as stated in the Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK**

### **Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area**

15. The Lunch Hut does not have a negative impact on the natural heritage of the area as it is appropriately located and blends in with the heather moorland surroundings in terms of design and use of materials. Traditional outdoor sporting activities are an important part of the cultural heritage of the area and the retention of the hut would encourage further growth of outdoor sports in the area.

### **Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources**

16. The Hut is built using reclaimed corrugated steel from structures which, were originally placed elsewhere on Candacraig Estate.

### **Promote Understanding and Enjoyment of the Area**

17. Improvement of or additional infrastructure in relation to traditional outdoor sports are beneficial in retaining and promoting this activity, thus, improving visitor enjoyment and understanding of the Park.

## **Promote Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area**

18. Outdoor sporting activities and other land management aspects of the estate are an important part of the local economy. The Hut, therefore, would encourage wider use of outdoor sporting opportunities. This in turn should continue to improve the local economy and also help to create a safer working and recreational environment for all.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

19. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to:

**Grant Retrospective Planning Permission for the erection of the Lunch Hut on Candacraig Estate at the site to the north west of Rhinstock, Glenbuchat, Strathdon.**

**Iram Mohammed  
24 May 2007**

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