
CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Title: REPORT ON CALLED-IN PLANNING APPLICATION

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(DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: ERECTION OF WOOD CHIP STORE AT SITE OF FORMER GRAVEL PIT, WEST OF DORBACK LODGE, NETHY BRIDGE

REFERENCE: 07/087/CP

APPLICANT: DORBACK ESTATE
c/o ANTA ARCHITECTURE, TAIN

DATE CALLED-IN: 9 MARCH 2007

RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL

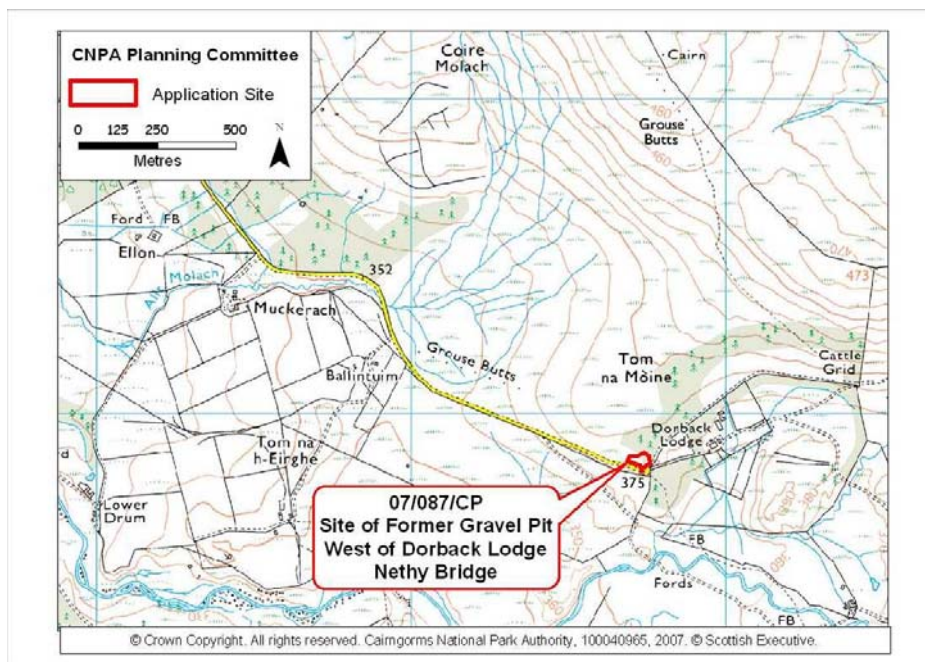


Fig. 1 - Location Plan

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. The site is a former gravel pit at the end of the Dorback Road approximately 400 metres to the west of Dorback Lodge (see fig 1).
2. Apart from the entrance the gravel pit is entirely set into the hillside at the start of a belt of trees to the north and east that provide shelter for Dorback Lodge. The access onto the site is directly from the road as seen in fig 2.



Fig 2 site entrance



Fig 3 Site looking west

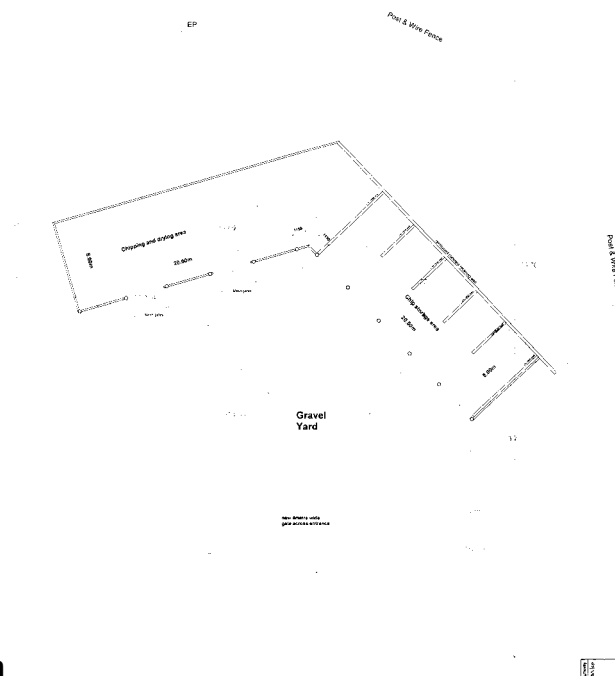


Fig 4 Layout Plan

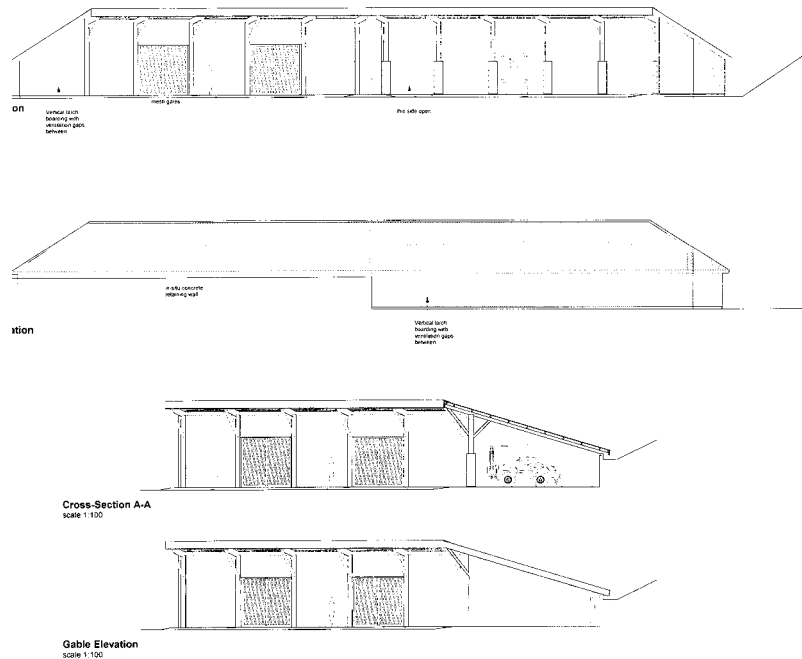


Fig 5 Elevations

3. The proposal is for a wood chip store building set in the former gravel pit (see fig 4). The design of the building is based upon two wings each measuring 20 metres long by 8 metres deep, the highest end of the roof is 5.5 metres high (see fig 5). Chipping and drying would take place in one wing with the other being used for storage. The building would have a mono-pitch roof in corrugated sheeting with vertical timber for the facings. The front of the building would have steel mesh gates to the chipping area and open bays to the storage area. A retaining wall would protect the building from the hillside to the rear. A gate across the entrance to the site is also proposed.
4. The applicant has confirmed that the store is for the use of the estate exclusively. It is the intention of the estate owners that that all new housing on the estate will be fitted with wood chip boilers and it is hoped that all existing housing and all other buildings on the estate will be run by woodchip provided from estate timber.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

Highland Structure Plan March 2001

5. **Policy L4 (Landscape Character)**, states that the Council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining and enhancing present landscape character in the consideration of development proposals. **Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability)**, lists a number of criteria on which proposed developments will be assessed. These include service provision (water and sewerage, drainage, roads, schools electricity); accessibility by public transport, cycling, walking and car; energy efficiency in terms of location, layout and design (including the

utilisation of renewable energy sources); use of brownfield sites, existing buildings and recycled materials; demonstration of sensitive siting and high quality design; contribution to the economic and social development of the community; and the impact on resources such as habitats. **Policy E8 Small Community Renewable Energy Projects** considers that the Council will support efforts to make more provision for small community renewable energy projects.

6. The **Badenoch and Srathspey Local Plan 1997** contains no policies which directly relate to the development being proposed.

Cairngorms National Park Plan 2007

7. Section 5.2 of the National Park Plan “**Living and Working in the Park**” includes strategic objectives under 5.2.4 Housing c) Improve the physical quality, energy efficiency and sustainable design of housing in all tenures throughout the Park. Under 5.1 “**Conserving and Enhancing the Park Strategic**” objectives include a) Promoting multi objective forest and woodland management that delivers environmental, economic and social benefits; d) Increase the value of timber and other local forest products, strengthen supply chains and develop new markets; g) contribute to national efforts to address climate change.

CONSULTATIONS

8. **Highland Council TEC Services (contaminated land)** have raised no objection to the scheme in principle but have requested a list of historic land uses at the site to consider if there is need for any formal contamination assessment. TEC Services have confirmed that this can be dealt with by planning condition.
9. **Highland Council TEC Services (Roads)** would only have interest if the development was likely to result in a significant increase in traffic in this area. This is not considered to be the case.

REPRESENTATIONS

10. A letter has been received from the applicant’s agents setting out the reasons for the application (attached at end of report). No other third party representations have been received.

APPRAISAL

11. There are no principle, locational policies that apply directly to this kind of development. The key issues revolve around the appropriateness of the use at this site and the detailed siting and design of the building proposed.
12. In principle, the proposal would appear appropriate to the site. The building would be sited on the Dorback Estate to utilise the forestry resource of the Estate. While there are no policies which dictate the location for this type of development, it is located at a strategic point on the estate. In addition, Highland Council Policy E8 on small scale community renewables would appear to support the spirit of what is being proposed as do the strategic objectives of the National Park Plan. These make specific mention of local efforts to address climate change and the strengthening of local markets and supply chains for local forest product. The proposed building is intended to provide wood chip for houses and other buildings on the Estate and would in my view contribute in principle to these strategic objectives.
13. In terms of siting the building is ideally located. It re-uses an existing site that has historically been subject to gravel extraction and is currently in a relatively untidy state. The building proposed has a profiled metal roof and timber cladding which will give the appearance of a modern agricultural building. However, regardless of this, in landscape terms the gravel pit will easily accommodate the building and provide ready made screening for it from all angles apart the entrance where a new gate will be positioned. The building itself would screen a scar at the back of the pit.
14. In terms of the technical aspects there is concern from Highland Council TEC Services that there could be contamination at then site but this issue can be dealt with by planning condition. Highland Council TEC services (Roads) were not originally consulted on the application as the site is beyond the public road. In any case, I have subsequently consulted with Roads who have no interest in the application unless it would generate a significant amount of traffic and this was considered not to be the case.
15. Overall, this is a positive proposal in terms of local sustainability and offers an opportunity to clean up the area and provide additional landscaping which can be achieved by planning condition.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE AIMS OF THE NATIONAL PARK

Conserve and Enhance the Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Area

16. The building will assist in cleaning up a former gravel pit and planning conditions can be placed on any approval to ensure that the site, in visual terms is enhanced over and above its current condition.

Promote Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

17. The proposal performs well in terms of this aim by creating a localised market for heating based upon the timber resource of the estate. Solid wood fuel is generally regarded as an environmentally friendly form of heating, particularly where the forest resource is managed sustainably.

Promoting Understanding and Enjoyment

18. The proposal is not directly relevant to this aim.

Promoting Sustainable Economic and Social Development of the Area

19. The proposal should help to maintain local estate worker employment.

RECOMMENDATION

20. That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to:
GRANT Full Planning Permission for the erection of a wood chip store, site of former gravel pit, West of Dorback Lodge, Nethy Bridge subject to the following conditions:
 1. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within five years from the date of this permission.
 2. The development shall be landscaped and maintained in accordance with a scheme which shall be submitted to and approved by the CNPA acting as planning authority before development commences. The scheme shall include indications of all existing trees and landscaped areas on the land, and details of any to be retained, together with measures for their protection in the course of the development and shall indicate the siting, numbers, species and heights (at the time of planting) of all trees, shrubs and hedges to be planted and to the extent of any areas of earthmounding, and shall ensure:-
 - (a) Completion of the scheme during the planting season next following the completion of the development, or such other date as may be agreed in writing with the CNPA acting as planning authority.
 - (b) The maintenance of the landscaped areas in perpetuity in accordance with the detailed maintenance schedule/table. Any trees or shrubs removed, or which in the opinion of the planning

authority, are dying, being severely damaged or becoming seriously diseased within three years of planting, shall be replaced by trees or shrubs of similar size and species to those originally required to be planted.

3. Exact details and specifications of all proposed external finishing materials (including roofing materials and details of entrance gate) shall be submitted for the further approval of the Planning Authority before any work commences on site.
4. Prior to any development commencing on site, a list of previous land uses for the gravel pit shall be submitted to the CNPA acting as planning authority in consultation with Highland Council TEC Services. On the basis of this list and the potential for contaminative uses a scheme shall be submitted by the developer (at his/her expense) to deal with any potential contamination on site. No construction work must commence until such a scheme has been submitted to and approved, in writing, by the CNPA acting as Planning Authority in consultation with Highland Council TEC services, and is thereafter implemented to like satisfaction. The scheme shall contain details of proposals to deal with potential contamination and must include:-
 - a. The nature, extent and type of contamination on site, identification of pollutant linkages and assessment of risk. The scope and method of this assessment shall be agreed in advance with the Planning Authority, and undertaken in accordance with PAN33 and BS 10175:2001.
 - b. Remedial strategy (if required) to treat/remove contamination to ensure that the site is fit for uses proposed (this shall include a method statement, programme of works, and proposed verification plan).
 - c. Submission of a validation report (if remedial action is required) by the competent person employed by the developer who will validate and verify the completion of works to a satisfactory standard as agreed with the Planning Authority.
 - d. Submission, if necessary, of monitoring statements at periods to be agreed with the Planning Authority, for such time as is considered appropriate.

Andrew Tait

Date 23 May 2007

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