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**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY**

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

**Prepared by: ROBERT GRANT, PLANNING OFFICER (DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT)**

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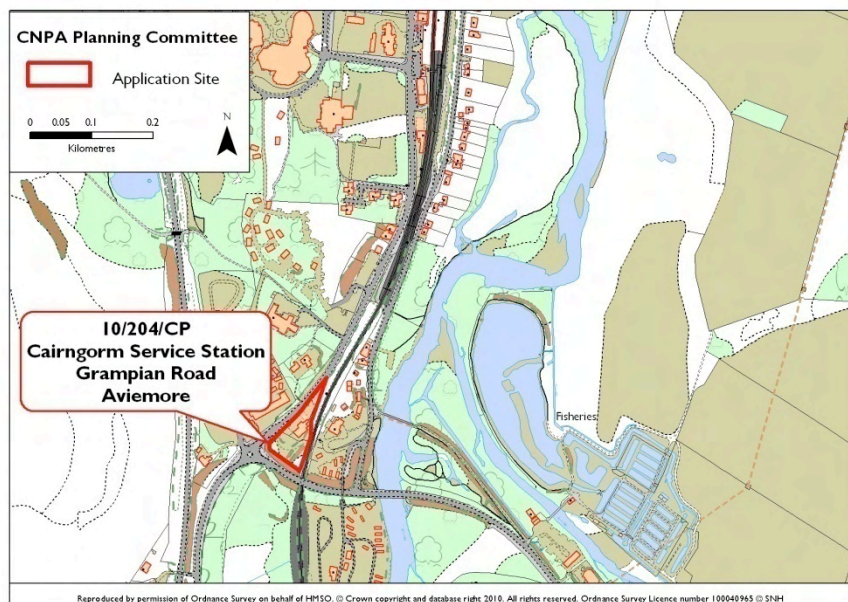
**DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED: PLANNING APPLICATION TO ERECT A NEW FIFTY THREE BEDROOM "TRAVELODGE" TYPE HOTEL WITH ASSOCIATED SITEWORKS AND LANDSCAPING AT CAIRNGORM SERVICE STATION, GRAMPIAN ROAD, AVIEMORE**

**REFERENCE: I0/204/CP**

**APPLICANT: UPLAND DEVELOPMENTS PER KEPPIE DESIGN LTD.**

**DATE CALLED-IN: 09 JULY 2010**

**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE SUBJECT TO DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS AND CONDITIONS**



**Fig. 1- Location Plan**

## SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL

1. The application site, comprising the former BP 'Cairngorm' Service Station, is located at the southern end of Aviemore, on the B9152 Grampian Road, and adjacent to the B970 Coylumbridge Road roundabout. The disused filling station, boarded-up and fenced off, has been vacant since 2005 and occupies a prominent position at the gateway to Aviemore.



**Fig. 2 – Site as viewed from B9152  
Grampian Road looking south**

2. The site extends to 0.4 hectares, is roughly triangular in shape and bounded by a stone wall to Grampian Road to the north west, the Aviemore railway line to the east and a significant area of trees to the south, beyond which is the roundabout. The forecourt, parking bays and station building are positioned on a flat area within the site, with significant ground level changes to the east, as part of the embankment and to the south, which dips into a natural hollow before rising up again to meet the Coylumbridge Road. Both of these areas are heavily wooded.



**Fig. 3 – Site as viewed from adjacent B970 roundabout  
looking north**

3. The adjacent area features a small number of buildings of different ages and styles, within a tree lined setting marking the urban fringe of Aviemore; the High Range Motel is located directly opposite on a higher bank, the former

tourist information centre (now used by an outdoor retailer) and the 'La Taverna' Restaurant are all close by. In addition planning permission for a 3 storey contemporary building featuring a retail unit and 8 flats on a neighbouring site, the site of the Osprey Filling Station, was granted by the CNPA in January 2006. This site is as yet undeveloped, permission was granted in January 2011 to extend the period of commencement of development for a further 15 months.

4. This is an amended application; planning permission is sought for the erection of a 53 bedroom 'Travelodge' type hotel. The site would be laid out with the building fronting the road, but set back behind the existing stone wall, with car parking for 50 cars offset to the rear and north. Some associated site works including retaining walls are required to form the car park, resulting in alterations to the railway embankment and the loss of a number of trees (16no. directly). Other areas of trees, including the significant area to the south are to be retained. A new vehicle access is to be formed to the north. The existing stone wall to the north west would be retained, but a number of minor alterations made to allow for the development.



**Fig. 4 – Proposed Site Layout**

5. The hotel building proposed would be of 3 storeys, with uniform fenestration, a pitched roof, 43.0 m in length (running SW to NE), 18.5 m width and 13.5 m in height at the ridge. A mix of external finishes is proposed including off white wet dash render (to be agreed), dark grey roof tiles (subject to alterations) and vertical larch timber linings, either stained or left untreated. The windows and doors would be powder-coated aluminium. The building would also feature entrance canopies to both the street frontage and rear elevations, allowing for access from the car park or from Grampian Road.



**Fig. 5 – Amended Grampian Road frontage and SW Elevation**

6. The hotel would comprise 53 standard ensuite bedrooms, with ancillary, office and reception areas amounting to 1931 sqm. No restaurant or bar facilities are provided within the building. A bin store is to be provided within the curtilage of the site.



**Fig. 6 – Amended rear and NE Elevation**

**Design Amendments**

7. A number of concerns were raised by the CNPA in the course of the assessment of this application in terms of the overall scale, design and appearance of the proposed hotel building. Following a series of draft design changes and discussions with the CNPA, revised drawings were formally submitted on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2010 responding to the concerns raised. The overall design of the building has been altered to produce a more symmetric and uniform pitched roof building, more in keeping with the traditional buildings in Aviemore and moving away from the approach originally conceived. The choice and mix of materials has also been amended to produce a simpler and less busy palette of materials.



**Fig. 7 – Original development proposals**

## PLANNING HISTORY

8. A previous application on the site for the erection of 24 flats (06/514/CP) was withdrawn following advice from CNPA planning officials in October 2009. This was due to concerns over the scale, design and massing of the proposed buildings, along with residential amenity issues due to the proximity of the railway line.

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN CONTEXT

9. Part 2, Section 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 as amended by the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006, requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan covering the application site comprises the Highland Structure Plan 2001 and the Cairngorms National Park Local Plan 2010.

### National Planning Policy

10. The consolidated **Scottish Planning Policy**<sup>1</sup> is a statement of the Scottish Government's policy on nationally important land use planning matters. Core principles which the Scottish Government believe should underpin the modernised planning system are outlined at the outset of **SPP** and include:
  - The constraints and requirements that planning imposes should be necessary and proportionate;
  - The system should ..... allow issues of contention and controversy to be identified and tackled quickly and smoothly; and
  - There should be a clear focus on quality of outcomes, with due attention given to the sustainable use of land, good design and the protection and enhancement of the built and natural environment.
11. The **SPP** emphasises the key part that development management plays in the planning system, highlighting that it should “operate in support of the Government's central purpose of increasing sustainable economic growth.” Paragraph 33 focuses on the topic of Sustainable Economic Growth and advises that increasing sustainable economic growth is the overarching purpose of the Scottish Government. It is advised that “the planning system should proactively support development that will contribute to sustainable economic growth and to high quality sustainable places.” Planning authorities are encouraged to take a positive approach to development, recognising and responding to economic and financial conditions in considering proposals that would contribute to economic growth.

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<sup>1</sup> February 2010. **SPP** supersedes a variety of previous Scottish Planning Policy documents and National Planning Policy Guidance.

12. Under the general heading of Sustainable Development, it is stated that the fundamental principle is that development integrates economic, social and environmental objectives, and that the “aim is to achieve the right development in the right place.”
13. As a replacement for a variety of previous planning policy documents the new **Scottish Planning Policy** includes ‘subject policies’, of which many are applicable to the proposed development. Topics include economic development, landscape and natural heritage. The following paragraphs provide a brief summary of the general thrust of each of the subject policies.
14. *Economic development* : planning authorities are required to respond to the diverse needs and locational requirements of different sectors and sizes of businesses and take a flexible approach to ensure that new economic opportunities can be realised.
15. *Landscape and Natural Heritage* : Planning authorities are encouraged to take a broader approach to landscape and natural heritage than just conserving designated or protected areas and species. It is recognised in the SPP that the landscape in the countryside and in urban areas is constantly changing and the aim is to “facilitate positive change whilst maintaining and enhancing distinctive character.” As different landscapes have different capacities to accommodate new development, the siting and design of development should be informed by local landscape character.
16. **Scottish Planning Policy** concludes with a section entitled ‘Outcomes’ in which it is stated that the “planning system should be outcome focused, supporting the creation of high quality, accessible and sustainable places through new development, regeneration and the protection and enhancement of natural heritage and historic environmental assets.” Planning authorities are required to be clear about the standard of development that is required. Quality of place not only refers to buildings, but also how the buildings work together as well as the relationships between buildings and spaces. Design is highlighted as an important consideration and planning permission may be refused solely on design grounds.<sup>2</sup> Finally it is stated that the planning system should be “judged by the extent to which it maintains and creates places where people want to live, work and spend time.”

### **Strategic Policy**

#### **Cairngorms National Park Plan (2007)**

17. Strategic objectives for the **Landscape, Built, and Historic Environment** include maintaining and enhancing the distinctive landscapes across the Park and ensuring that development complements and enhances the landscape character of the Park. The Plan also requires that new development in settlements and in surrounding areas and the management of public spaces should complement and enhance the character, pattern and local identity of

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<sup>2</sup> Para. 256.

the built and historic environment. In elaborating on this particular objective it is advised that new development should enhance the local identity, quality of public space and surrounding environment and that high quality design should be a feature of all new developments.

18. In relation to **Enjoying and Understanding the Park** there is recognition that enjoyment of the area is not only relevant to those people travelling to the Park, but is part of the everyday experience of those living in and around the area. The experience of residents and visitors alike should be of the highest quality. It notes that the Cairngorms is known for its outstanding environment and outdoor recreation opportunities and advises that the vision for the Park seeks to “go further and develop a world class destination which plays a significant part in the regional and national tourism economy.” Strategic objectives for sustainable tourism include:

- raising awareness of the Park as a premier, year round, rural tourism destination;
- recognising its outstanding natural heritage and its National Park status;
- improving and maintaining the quality of the experience of the Park for all visitors, communities and those working in the tourism industry;
- maintaining a high quality environment by encouraging sound environmental management by all those involved in tourism in the Park;

### **Structure Plan**

#### **Highland Structure Plan (2001)**

19. The Structure Plan seeks the creation of an improved business environment, looking to accommodate development and support new business growth. It states that tourism is a vital element of the Highland economy, and that general accommodation is not considered on the whole to be in short supply.
20. **Policy G2 (Design for Sustainability)** states that developments will be assessed on the extent to which they, amongst other things; are accessible by public transport, cycling and walking as well as by car; maximise energy efficiency in terms of location, layout and design; make use of brownfield sites; demonstrate sensitive siting and high quality design; promote varied, lively and well-used environments; and contribute to the economic and social development of the community.
21. **Policy L4 (Landscape Character)** states that the council will have regard to the desirability of maintaining and enhancing the present landscape character when considering development proposals

### **Local Plan Policy**

#### **Cairngorms National Park Local Plan**

22. **Policy 2 National Natural Heritage Designations** requires that development that would adversely affect the National Scenic Area shall only be permitted when the objectives of the designation are not compromised or they are clearly outweighed by social and economic benefits on national importance.
23. **Policy 6 Landscape** any development that does not complement and enhance the character of the Park will not be permitted unless there are clear socio-economic benefits and the adverse effects have been fully minimised and mitigated.
24. **Policy 11 The Local and Wider Cultural Heritage of the Park** development should protect, conserve and enhance the cultural heritage of the area.
25. **Policy 14 Contaminated Land** states all development shall be free of contamination or should include effective remediation to control and limit risk.
26. **Policy 16 Design Standards for Development** requires that all development minimises the effects of climate change, reflects the local vernacular and uses materials and landscaping that compliments its setting.
27. **Policy 18 Developer Contributions** any development which gives rise to a need to increase or improve public services, facilities or infrastructure will normally require the developer to make a fair and reasonable contribution in cash or kind towards the additional costs or requirements.
28. **Policy 33 Tourism-Related Development** proposals, including those for tourism accommodation, which has a beneficial impact on the local economy will be considered favourably if it does not have adverse impacts on the landscape, built and historical environments or the biodiversity of the National Park.
29. **For Information:** the CNP Local Plan is the subject of an appeal under Section 238 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 against the decision of the CNPA to adopt the CNP Local Plan 2010. The Appeal will be decided by the Court of Session and is a material consideration. Therefore, account has been taken of the Appeal in the determination and the recommendation made in respect of this application.

### **Supplementary Planning Guidance**

30. The **Sustainable Design Guide** requires development in the National Park to be well designed, sustainable and wedded to its location in this special place. It requires the design of all development to minimise the effect of the development on climate change; reflect and reinforce the local vernacular and



local distinctiveness, whilst encouraging innovation in design and use of materials; and demonstrate sustainable use of resources. It requires a Sustainability Statement to be submitted.

31. The **(Draft) Aviemore Design Framework** updates the current master plan for Aviemore which was published in 1997 and provides a design framework to guide future growth and make it more visually attractive. It states that Aviemore's buildings typically vary from 1 storey to 8 storeys. The southern gateway entry into Aviemore is located at the B9152 and the B970 junction. The roundabout, distinctive timber columned street lights and the use of iconic dry stone walls, provide a sense of arrival and entry to Aviemore. It identifies the site as a development opportunity for a feature gateway building, a 'gate lodge' to Aviemore.
32. **(Draft) Developer Contributions** sets out the framework for the provision of contributions per development. It sets out various payment mechanisms and states that the applicant may opt to remit the full amount due prior to the issuing of the planning permission. This course of action is widely used where the cost of putting in place a legal agreement is disproportionate to the planning gain contribution required.

### **Other Material Considerations**

33. **Cairngorms National Park Sustainable Tourism Strategy** was endorsed by the CNPA Board in January 2011. It states that tourism is critically important to the area, providing the major source of income and employment. The Strategy highlights that the quality grading of accommodation is quite high, with most properties achieving a 3-star rating or higher. Further to this, it sets a number of strategic objectives including SO1: Tourism Growth, which seeks significant growth in the value of tourism, leading to an increase in the profitability of local businesses and prosperity. Stemming from the objectives comes a range of actions which include 7f: Encourage improvement in the range and quality of accommodation and catering. This suggests that the availability of good quality accommodation, though not necessarily luxury or high price, is to be encouraged, in part by new investment and development.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

34. **Highland Council TEC Services (Contaminated Land Unit)** has no objections but recognise the previous use of the site and require a condition for a scheme to deal with any potential contamination issues to be submitted.
35. **Highland Council TEC Services (Roads Manager)** has no objections and is content with the parking provision on site, despite it being slightly less than the recommended ratio of 1 parking space per 1 bedroom plus 1 space per 3 members of staff. Its close links to the village centre and close

proximity of a bus stop ensure public transport is easy to access. A number of conditions for SUDS, visibility splays and street lighting are recommended.

36. **Highland Council TEC Services (Environmental Health)** require the development to incorporate into the design appropriate noise mitigating measures to reduce impact from external influences. They also recommend conditions setting out contractors working hours.
37. **Highland Council Archaeologist** has no objections and records no evidence of archaeological remains.
38. **Highland Council Forestry Officer** has no objections to the proposal however recognises that a significant number of trees would be directly and indirectly effected by the proposed development and that there may be little scope for replacement planting. A number of conditions are recommended for tree protection, replacement planting and further landscaping.
39. **Scottish Water** has no objections with drinking water and waste water capacity available in Aviemore.
40. **Network Rail** has no objections to the proposal. The applicant is required to fully consult on any retaining walls, requirements to change ground levels and any other works near to the railway.
41. **SEPA** previously objected to the application due to a lack of information on the drainage details for this site, subsequently a Drainage Impact Assessment has been submitted. SEPA confirm that they are now content with the additional information.
42. **Aviemore and Vicinity Community Council** support the application in principle but objected to the original proposed hotel design highlighting that it is unimaginative and of a poor standard of design. Comments are awaited on the amended design.
43. The **CNPA's Landscape Advisor** considers that there is scope for a reasonably large building to be developed on this site without significant adverse landscape effects. A number of conditions are recommended.
44. The **CNPA's Ecologist** states that the majority of the site is a brown field site with low ecological interest. The trees have been surveyed for squirrels and bats, with no dreys and no bat roosts recorded. A number of conditions are advised.
45. The **Cairngorms Business Partnership** welcomes and supports the application, suggesting that the development represents a major investment in the area, will enhance the range of accommodation in Aviemore and further increase capacity to meet demand at peak times. It further states that 'Travelodge' is a trade brand and not a style of hotel, the description of development is seen as unhelpful and potentially misleading.

46. The **CNPA's Sustainable Economy Manager** highlights that a Travelodge-style development might aim for the lower-end market, which would compete with middle-market B&Bs and hotels. The development is for accommodation only, so food and drink providers, and activity providers, will benefit from additional visitor capacity within the village at certain times of the year. Lodge-style accommodation typically employs low numbers of people, which typically tend to be around 8-10 housekeeping FTE staff and receptionists. It would be useful to have a more detailed economic impact assessment from the developers.

## **REPRESENTATIONS**

47. The application was advertised in the *Badenoch and Strathspey Herald* on 24 November 2010 and the amendments re-advertised on 12 January 2011. Three letters of representation were originally received in respect of the proposed development; these raise issues including concern at the increased availability of budget accommodation affecting the quality of tourist accommodation in the area, road access and drainage. No further representations have been received.

## **APPRAISAL**

48. In determining this planning application regard is to be had to the development plan and the determination shall be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan is highlighted in paragraphs 10 – 33 of this report; it includes the Highland Structure Plan 2001 and the recently adopted Cairngorms National Park Local Plan 2010. There are a number of issues to consider in assessing the proposal, including planning policy, the nature, scale and design of the development and its position at a prominent location at one of the key entrances to the village of Aviemore. The impact of additional tourist accommodation in Aviemore is also to be explored. Other matters such as impact on trees, landscape and other technical issues also require to be assessed.

### **Principle of Development**

49. In terms of the principle of the development, there is general support in the planning policy contained within the Development Plan to direct development to existing towns and villages; in this case, the development proposed is for tourist accommodation in Aviemore, generally recognised to be a key resort destination in the National Park. The site is highlighted to have been used previously and could be thought of as brownfield in that it is and has been historically developed. In general terms, it is considered that the development complies with Policy 33 Tourism-Related Development in that it would have a beneficial impact on the local economy, by adding to the range of accommodation on offer. The policy supports the principle of tourism accommodation, subject to such development being designed to not having

adverse impacts on the landscape, built and historical environments or the biodiversity of the National Park.

50. In terms of national policy, in the form of the Scottish Government's Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), it seeks to encourage sustainable economic growth. The proposal to build a 'Travelodge' type hotel would enhance the range of tourist accommodation and number of hotel bedspaces in Aviemore. This accords with the provisions of the SPP, as it allows an economic development opportunity to be realised and also provide employment, (estimated at creating 6/8 full time posts and up to 10 part time positions) as well as having the potential to deliver economic benefits to the wider area.

#### **Tourist Accommodation Impacts**

51. The CNP Local Plan highlights that a good range and quality of tourist facilities and accommodation is vital to a healthy tourism industry. The development is for accommodation only, so food and drink providers, and activity providers, will benefit from additional visitor capacity within the village. The CNPA asked that an assessment of the economic impact of the development was submitted to accompany the application. However the applicant has elected not to do this and has stated that there is an identified demand for this type of development in Aviemore and that a "budget hotel" would be of benefit to the village. While it may be desirable to have an assessment of the effects of the proposed development, it is not considered necessary to insist on one in this instance recognising that the Cairngorms Business Partnership has come out in support of the application. This partnership represents some 280 businesses across the National Park and welcomes the further investment to broaden the range and quality of the accommodation on offer. It is further highlighted that occupancy levels are thought to be at a level sufficient to not impact negatively on other accommodation in the village. The CNPA's Sustainable Economy Manager highlights that VisitScotland research shows occupancy levels in Highland of between 36% in January, to 84% in August (2008 figures). Winter occupancy levels in Aviemore will be much higher, and anecdotally the village is almost or completely full in the months of January, February when there is skiing, itself variable from year to year, and July and August (The Economic and Social Health of the Park 2010 report).
52. The newly endorsed CNP Sustainable Tourism Strategy delivers the objectives of the National Park Plan, broadly seeking significant growth in the value of tourism, an increase in the profitability of local businesses and improvements in the range and quality of accommodation. It is considered that the proposed hotel development makes a sizeable contribution to these objectives in that it would increase the number of bed spaces available and broaden the range and type of accommodation available in Aviemore.

#### **Landscape Impacts, Design and Trees**

53. In terms of Structure Plan and Local Plan policy, landscape is one of the most sensitive issues in the determination of this application. The site is highly prominent in the approach to the settlement from the south and glimpsed

views can be gained from the A9. Much of the site itself is covered in established and regenerating woodland. This and the greater area of woodland around the site frames views into the settlement, and towards the Cairngorms plateau along the Coylumbridge road. It is considered that the site itself is generally well contained and the extensive woodland coverage in the area would screen the development well, even on the edge of Aviemore as the site is. The development would be obscured by trees to the south west, to the north, and to the east including the sensitive areas around Glenmore and Rothiemurchus. The site would sit as part of the transition from the urban and commercial heart of Aviemore, through the woodland fringe of the settlement to the southern approaches to the village. It is considered that the development would not raise any issues in terms of landscape impact; there will be no significant impact on the National Scenic Area. A number of conditions are recommended so that the overall landscape design objective for the site should be for the creation of a wooded environment with the strategic placement of trees so that they contribute over time to the streetscape as well as the immediate environs of the hotel. The retention and planting of tall-growing native species should be a key part of the landscaping proposals.

54. The proposed site layout and development design, following amendments, are considered to be generally satisfactory. The design is now more of a traditional design, with a more uniform fenestration and symmetrical appearance, more inkeeping with traditional buildings found in the village. The height at 3 storeys is taller than that found in the older part of Aviemore, but is not without precedent as is highlighted in the draft Design Framework. It should be recognised that the originally conceived design appeared to be a contemporary building with a busy, unbalanced mix of materials and a disjointed profile metal roof. CNPA officers were of the view that this solution was inappropriate, ultimately unsympathetic to both the site and to the character of Aviemore, especially recognising that the site lies on a key gateway to the village and the surrounding area. A number of discussions between CNPA officials and the applicants incorporated these concerns and formed the basis for amended design proposals, moving away from the original design to a more sensitive traditional approach. Ideally such a prominent site demands an iconic building, a new landmark which is an exemplar of sustainable design as the Aviemore Design Framework highlights. However this needs to be balanced with the desire for the effective and timely regeneration of this prominent site, its physical constraints and the realisation that the proposed hotel is aimed at the 'affordable' end of the tourist accommodation market. These have been significant factors in the determination of the application; it should be recognised that the existing site, is unkempt and the abandoned garage detracts from the character of the area. It is unfortunate that the applicants did not wish to continue to pursue a higher quality design, a feature 'gateway' building as stated in the Design Framework. However, they maintain that the intention of the design is to provide an 'attractive building on this gateway site, constructed from materials that are indigenous, current and appropriate to the location.... Aviemore has lost much of the character of a 'traditional' Highland village and

the architecture or vernacular comprises an amalgam of sometimes disparate styles, materials and colours.’

55. In reaching this recommendation, CNPA officers have carefully considered the condition of the current site, the proposed design and its landscape impact. A series of design changes have led to the overall design being much improved and of a standard now acceptable to the CNPA. In the course of this application these amendments have been made to ensure that the development will complement the built fabric and historic environment of Aviemore, in terms of scale, design and materials, as required by Policy 33 Tourism-Related Development. In the context of the existing area, the surrounding buildings and the immediate streetscape marks the urban fringe of the village where, mainly modern buildings such as the High Range Motel are located in a dense wooded setting. The site is relatively constrained, squeezed between the railway and roads. The amendments seek to retain the prominent stone wall, keep as many trees as possible and incorporate materials albeit modern materials which reflect those commonly used in the local area. The site features a large amount of trees, located to the south in a hollowed area adjacent to the roundabout and to the rear down the embankment, which add to the distinctive character of the site. The footprint of the building has been relocated northwards to retain as many of these as possible, especially to the south. These trees would effectively screen the proposed building from the south, east and partially northwards. Many to the rear will have to be removed to allow for the development and for the appropriate remediation of the ground, however where appropriate, existing trees would be enhanced by additional planting. Further information is required demonstrating how the site levels will work particularly to the south and east of the site. More detail is required in plan and section showing the location and extent of cut/fill, any retaining structures and the proposed finished levels. It is recommended that these aspects of the proposal are further dealt with by conditions. A limited sustainability statement has been provided; this sets out a commitment to ensure the proposed hotel building is as sustainable as possible. However it is recommended that a more detailed and binding statement is required to be submitted.
56. Lastly, a number of changes to the amended design are still considered essential, not least the incorporation of a natural slate roof in lieu of concrete roof tiles, which would be more sympathetic and in keeping with the area. Using slates rather than concrete roof tiles would tend to make the roof less visually intrusive and less obvious in some views as well as reflecting the traditional materials used in the area. It is recommended that this requirement, along with increased areas of timber linings be included as a condition of any grant of planning permission. It is considered that the proposed design along with these changes allows for a building of sufficient standard to meet the requirements of Policy 16 Design Standards for Development as set out in the CNP Local Plan.

### **Other issues**

57. In terms of the Community Council's comments on the original submission regarding various issues including the design and appearance, it is considered that the amendments brought forward would provide a more suitable development at this key site in Aviemore than the original submission. It is considered the design fulfils the criteria of Policy 16 reinforcing local distinctiveness and, except for the roof, using materials which complement the setting of the site. Looking now at the comments from the objectors, including whether the need for a budget hotel in Aviemore, this has been considered elsewhere in this report. In terms of Planning Gain, it was asked that consideration should be given to some staff accommodation on site and that contributions be made to extend and enhance the core path network in and around Aviemore. However the applicant has declined to provide staff accommodation, stating that the development viability would be undermined by this. It has been agreed that the Developer Contributions are of a value that is disproportionate with the cost of putting in place a legal agreement and that the contribution would be paid prior to the issuing of any decision notice, in the event of planning permission being granted. Other issues regarding drainage and roads access have been fully assessed by the various consultees' and no objections or concerns raised.

### **Conclusion**

58. To conclude, the proposal does not raise any significant implications in terms of planning policy, indeed it has the broad support from Policy 33 tourism-related development in that it would have a beneficial impact on the local economy and would redevelop a long standing and sensitive brownfield site. The development proposed, following amendments to the design, and with the suggested conditions for further changes, is of a satisfactory level of design generally. It would assist in strengthening the streetscape and urban fabric of this prominent entry point to Aviemore, and would provide stronger definition to its approaches, while improving the visual appearance of the site. In landscape terms, this is an appropriate location for new built development. It is considered that the development will provide both social and economic benefits to Aviemore, increasing the choice and range of tourist accommodation on offer. A number of suspensive conditions are attached to the recommendation requiring further information to be submitted, the applicant expressed verbally an unwillingness to submit this prior to the determination of the application citing the time and cost burdens that this would further impose on them. It is recommended that permission be granted, subject to planning contributions and conditions.

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

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

59. The development will, with the changes as required, improve the urban townscape in this location and therefore enhance the cultural built heritage of the area. The development aims to retain as many trees on site as possible with various protection measures put in place.

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

60. The proposed development would use timber cladding which promotes the sustainable use of renewable materials and would include water saving sanitary appliances. A limited sustainability statement suggests the applicants would further explore the use of air or ground source heat pumps. Further to this, it highlights that the development makes efficient use of available brownfield land and being located within a settlement it also presents opportunities to minimise car travel. The suspensive conditions will ensure further sustainability measures are required.

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

61. The proposal would increase the availability and range of tourist accommodation in a key tourist resort destination in the National Park, which may be of benefit in attracting additional visitors to the area and could thereby encourage greater understanding and enjoyment of the area by visitors. Developer Contributions would go towards moves to enhance and extend the core paths network around the local area improving access and recreation.

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

62. The development provides positive implications in terms of this aim. The provision of additional tourism accommodation in a location close to the commercial core of Aviemore is likely to have a positive impact on the vitality and viability of existing shops and restaurants and could add to the general economic resilience of Aviemore. Some increased employment opportunities (estimated at around 8-10 housekeeping FTE staff and receptionists) would also be available within the proposed new development.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

63. **That Members of the Committee support a recommendation to GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION to erect a new fifty three bedroom "Travelodge" type hotel with associated siteworks and landscaping at Cairngorm Service Station, Grampian Road, Aviemore subject to:**
- (a) the payment of planning contributions for core path improvements; and**
  - (b) subject to the following conditions:**
    - I. The development to which this permission relates must be begun within 3 years from the date of this permission.



**Reason:** To comply with Section 58 of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 or amended by the Planning etc (Scotland) Act 2006.

2. Prior to the commencement of development, exact details, specifications and where appropriate samples (including details of colours) of all proposed external finishing materials (including roofing materials, eaves, windows and doors, wet harl finishes and timber linings and retaining walls) shall be submitted to and agreed by the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) acting as Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In order to ensure that the materials are appropriate to the character of the building.

3. Prior to the commencement of development, and notwithstanding any submitted drawings of the development hereby approved, revised drawings shall be submitted to and agreed by the CNPA acting as Planning Authority, showing:
  - (a) the roof shall be finished with an appropriate roofing slate and not the concrete roof tiles as detailed, and;
  - (b) the area of timber linings shall be increased towards the ends of the building.

Thereafter the development shall implement and retain these changes.

**Reason:** In order to ensure that the materials are appropriate to the character of the building.

4. Prior to commencement of any development, cross sections, site levels, plans and other elevational details which demonstrate any retaining walls or other retaining structures and any cut/fill or other built up ground areas shall be submitted to and agreed by the CNPA acting as Planning Authority in consultation with Network Rail. Thereafter the scheme shall be implemented as per the agreed detail.

**Reason:** To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping which will in due course improve the environmental quality of the development and to ensure the integrity of the slopes adjacent to the railway line.

5. No surface water shall discharge on to the railway or alterations and works affect the operation of the line. No external lighting shall give rise to confusion with railway signalling operations.

**Reason:** To ensure the safety of the railway line.

6. Prior to any development commencing on site, a scheme will be submitted by the Developer (at his/her expense) to deal with potential contamination on site to and agreed by the CNPA acting as Planning Authority in consultation with Highland Council. No construction work must commence

until such a scheme has been submitted to and agreed by the planning authority, and is thereafter implemented to its satisfaction. The scheme shall contain details of proposals to deal with contamination and must include:

- a. The nature, extent and type of contamination on site, identification of pollutant linkages and assessment of risk (ie Contaminated Land Risk Assessment and Remediation Plan).The scope and method of this assessment must be agreed in advance with the planning authority and undertaken in accordance with PAN33 (2000) and BSI0175:2001;
- b. Remedial Strategy (if required) to treat/remove contamination to ensure the site is fit for the uses proposed (this shall include a method statement, programme of works and proposed verification plan);
- c. Submission of a Validation Report (should remedial action be required) by the competent person employed by the developer who will validate and verify the completion of works to a satisfactory standard as agreed by the planning authority;
- d. Submission, if necessary, of monitoring statements at periods to be agreed with the planning authority for such a time period as is considered appropriate by the planning authority.

**Reason:** To identify and remove unacceptable risks to human health and the Environment.

7. Prior to the commencement of development, a landscaping plan and method statement shall be submitted to and be agreed by the CNPA acting as Planning Authority specifying the quantity, position, size, species and protection measures (tree shelters, stakes and ties) of all trees / shrubs to be planted. The landscaping plan shall also include the following:
  - a. proposals for shrub and tree planting (using native species - Scots pine shall be the predominant species) in order to reduce the visual impact of the development along the frontage of the site and all other boundaries;
  - b. proposals for the provision of native climbers, to be established on the retaining walls and any other retaining structures;
  - c. proposals for the planting of shrubs and replacement trees on land around the vicinity of the southern area.
  - d. proposals for the addition of climbing plants on some parts of some of the building facade on high-tensile steel cables.
  - e. proposals for all other general landscaping showing the finished levels. Any areas of disturbed ground shall be shaped to merge with the existing undisturbed landform. As many trees as possible shall be retained. The overall landscape design objective shall be for the creation of a wooded environment with the strategic placement of trees so that they contribute over time to the streetscape as well as the immediate environs of the hotel. The retention and planting of tall-growing native species shall be a key part of the landscaping proposals.
  - f. the location of those trees to be retained.

A maintenance programme shall also be submitted in conjunction with the landscaping plan. The landscaping shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed plan and shall be completed within one year of the commencement of works. Any trees or shrubs that die or become seriously damaged or diseased within a period of five years from the time of planting shall be replaced with others of a similar size and species, suited to the climate of the area, within the next planting season.

**Reason:** To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of landscaping which will in due course improve the environmental quality of the development.

8. Prior to the commencement of any development, a detailed method statement and tree protection plan shall be submitted to and agreed by the CNPA acting as planning Authority giving details of tree removal, tree protection, and the nature and timing of excavations of the whole site.

**Reason:** To ensure the implementation of a satisfactory scheme of tree works which will in due course improve the environmental quality of the development.

9. That no development shall commence on this site until trees marked for retention on the submitted and agreed within a tree protection plan, have been protected around the extremities of the crowns of these trees to the satisfaction of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority, and in accordance with BS5837:2005, Trees in Relation to Construction.

**Reason:** In order to ensure that no damage is caused to these trees during development operations, in the interests of amenity.

10. Visibility splays of not less than 70 metres shall be provided in each direction at the junction of the new access with the existing road prior to the commencement of the development and thereafter maintained free from any obstructions exceeding a height of 1 metre above the adjacent road channel levels.

**Reason:** In the interests of road safety; to ensure the provision and maintenance of adequate visibility at junctions and accesses.

11. The road layout shall be in general accordance with the submitted drawings. The internal road and parking areas shall be designed and constructed to the requirements of Highland Council's Road Guidelines for new developments for a minor access road. Prior to the commencement of development, the geometry of the access road at its junction with the public road shall be such that vehicles will be able to enter and leave the site in forward gear. Any gates that are provided should be set back from the edge of the public road and shall open inwards only. Sufficient temporary and permanent parking and

manoeuvring space shall be provided on site during both construction and operational phases. No water shall discharge onto the public road. These measures shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To ensure that all works undertaken meets the requirements of the Road's Authority and to control parking on the public roads close to the site.

12. Prior to the occupation of any of the development, the proposed surface water drainage system and other SUDS shall be completed in accordance with the approved Drainage Assessment, all to the satisfaction of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority.

**Reason:** To ensure that adequate surface water drainage measures are planned and implemented for the site.

13. Prior to the commencement of development, details of low level street lighting shall be submitted to and agreed by the CNPA acting as Planning Authority in consultation with Highland Council.

**Reason:** To ensure adequate street lighting and to allow the CNPA to have an input into the design and location of any lighting.

14. All public services for the development, including electrical, cable television and telephone cables, shall be located underground throughout the site. All such work shall be carried out prior to road surfacing and junction boxes shall be provided by the developer.

**Reason:** In the interests of the visual amenity of the area.

15. Prior to the commencement of any development, and notwithstanding any existing submitted information, a more detailed sustainability statement, as per the requirements of the CNPA Sustainable Design Guide, pertaining to the design, construction and future operation (in terms of energy efficiency and generation, water efficiency, waste and recycling) of the development shall be submitted to and agreed by the CNPA as Planning Authority. Thereafter its measures shall be implemented and adhered to.

**Reason:** To ensure that the building design and construction involve sustainable building methods, materials and operating systems consistent with minimising the impact of development on the natural environment and limiting carbon emissions.

16. The stone boundary wall shall be retained in its entirety with alterations to it limited to those as shown on the approved drawings.

**Reason:** To ensure the existing stone wall is retained to maintain the character and amenity of Aviemore

17. No vegetation clearance shall be undertaken during the breeding bird period March- August (Inclusive) unless agreed in writing with the CNPA acting as planning authority. In the event that a bat roost is found all work must stop immediately and SNH must be contacted and no works shall resume until appropriate licensing and/or mitigation has been agreed and implemented.

**Reason:** In the interests of ensuring the natural heritage of the area is appropriately protected.

18. Prior to the occupation of the development, appropriate noise mitigating measures are to be incorporated into the design in accordance with details submitted to and agreed with the CNPA acting as planning authority in consultation with Highland Council Environmental Health, thereafter the measures shall be implemented and retained in perpetuity.

**Reason:** In the interests of ensuring that a suitable level of amenity can be achieved, reducing the impact from external noise influences.

19. During construction activities on site all machinery and plant should be used in accordance with BS5228, Noise Control and Construction and Open Site and Control of Pollution Act 1974. The hours of operation should be restricted on site between Monday – Friday between 0700hrs and 2000hrs and on Saturdays between 0800hrs and 1300hrs only. Any work requiring to be carried out outwith these times shall only commence with prior written approval of the CNPA acting as Planning Authority.

**Reason:** In the interests of safeguarding the amenity of adjoining and nearby residents.

**Advice Notes:**

1. Specialist advice should be sought from the Bat Conservation Trust (01786 826792) on how bat roosts can be incorporated into building design.
2. The provision of good quality nesting and roosting opportunities for both bat roosts and swift nest sites should be incorporated into the design of new structures. There is a range of methods of incorporating nesting cavities for swifts into new building design, which can utilise purpose-designed cavities in brick work ('swift bricks', in boxed soffits or neatly fitted triangular boxes under the eaves at the apex of a gable end. The boxed soffits and 'swift bricks' can be easily incorporated within building structure, require no maintenance after installation and, have the advantage over appended nest boxes, of not impacting on building aesthetics.

**Robert Grant**  
**24 January 2011**

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY  
Planning Paper 2 4 March 2011**

*(This was Planning Paper 3 4 February 2011 which was withdrawn from that Agenda)*

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